

# **THE THOUGHT OF MOU ZONGSAN**

**Nganying Serina Chan**

**Centre for Asian Studies**

**University of Adelaide**

**PhD Thesis**

**Completed for Submission November 2009**



# Contents

<b>Abstract</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>Thesis Declaration</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
An Overview of Mou's Moral Metaphysics/2	
The Objectives of the Study/10	
The Methodology of the Study/12	
Chapter Outlines/13	
Mou's Life/14	
An Overview of Mou's Writings/20	
<b>1 The Philosophical Influence of Xiong</b>	<b>29</b>
Xiong's Thought and his Theory of Non-Separability of Fundamental State/Condition and Function/31	
Xiong's Philosophical Influence on Mou/38	
(a) Eclecticism and Syncretism/38	
(b) Unequivocal Identification with <i>Rujia</i> /42	
(c) Moral Idealism/44	
(d) Orientation towards the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind/48	

	(e) Emphasis on Personal Verification of a Spiritual Oneness with the Myriad Things/58	
	Concluding Remarks/63	
<b>2</b>	<b>Cultural Nationalism: Xiong’s Influence and Mou’s Discourse</b>	<b>67</b>
	The Han Cultural Nationalist Influence of Xiong Shili/68	
	Mou’s Identification of Chinese Culture with <i>Ruxue</i> /77	
	The Third Epoch of <i>Ruxue</i> /81	
	The <i>Santong</i> Proposal/85	
	Concluding Remarks/96	
<b>3</b>	<b>The Influence of Hegel</b>	<b>99</b>
	Mou’s Introduction to Hegel’s Philosophy of History/100	
	Hegel’s Dialectic/103	
	Mou’s Neo-Hegelian Assessment of the Legalists/107	
	Hegel’s Influence on Mou’s Cultural Nationalist Discourse/109	
	Hegel’s Influence on Mou’s Philosophical Construction/110	
	(a) Critical Support for Inner Sageliness/110	
	(b) Introduction of Dialectic as a Key Metaphysical Method/112	
	(c) Introduction of the Dialectical Concept of “Self-Negation”/119	
	Concluding Remarks/123	
<b>4</b>	<b>Mou’s Moral Metaphysics and Kant: Inner Sageliness</b>	<b>125</b>
	Kant’s Three Critiques/126	
	Mou’s Philosophical Engagement with Kant/128	
	Mou and Kant: Common Understanding of Morality and Different Objectives/131	
	Mou’s Assertion of Human Beings’ Possession of Inner Sageliness (Intellectual Intuition)/137	

	The Central Metaphysical Paradigm of Mou’s Moral Metaphysics: The “Two-Tiered Mind” Paradigm/144 Concluding Remarks/152	
<b>5</b>	<b>Mou’s Moral Metaphysics and Kant: Noumenal Knowledge and Ontology</b>	<b>157</b>
	Kant’s Problematic Negative Conception of Noumenon/158 Mou’s Positive Conception of Noumenon to Substantiate Kant’s Transcendental Distinction between Phenomena and Noumena/160 Mou’s Advancement of Two Types of Knowledge and Truth/167 Mou’s “Two-Tiered” Ontology/176 Concluding Remarks/179	
<b>6</b>	<b>Mou’s Moral Metaphysics and Kant: The Highest Good and the “Perfect Teaching”</b>	<b>181</b>
	The Highest Good and Due Correspondence between Virtue and Happiness/182 The Tiantai Paradigm of “Perfect Teaching” and the Unity of Virtue and Happiness/188 <i>Ru</i> Moral Metaphysics as the Ultimate “Perfect Teaching”/198 Kant’s “Imperfection” and Mou’s Cultural Nationalist Triumph/204 A Reflection on the Philosophical Significance of Mou’s “Perfect Teaching” Dissertation/207 Concluding Remarks/209	
<b>7</b>	<b>Mou’s New Daotong</b>	<b>213</b>
	<i>Daotong</i> as the Genealogical Transmission of the <i>Ru</i> Moral and Religious Tradition/213 Mou’s Revisionist Assessment of Song-Ming <i>Ruxue</i> /215	

	Mou’s New <i>Daotong</i> /218	
	Mou’s Indictment of Zhu Xi/223	
	Revisiting the Historical Debate over “the Differences and Similarities between Zhu Xi and Lu Xiangshan”/241	
	Concluding Remarks/244	
<b>8</b>	<b>Mou and the <i>Xin Rujia</i> Movement</b>	<b>247</b>
	The <i>Xin Rujia</i> Movement/247	
	Mou’s Pivotal Role in the Movement/250	
	The 1958 Declaration/252	
	(a) The Proper Way to Pursue Sinology/253	
	(b) Basic Understanding of Chinese Culture/255	
	(c) Critiques of and Proposals for Chinese and Western Cultures/259	
	(d) The Vision for a Harmonious and Compassionate World Culture/266	
	Concluding Remarks/270	
	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>273</b>
	A Philosophical and Cultural Nationalist Triumph/274	
	A Spiritual Legacy /277	
	Departure from the Spirit of Classical <i>Ruxue</i> /280	
	Lack of Practical Relevancy to China’s Development/286	
	A Moralistic Discourse of Power/289	
	<b>Works Cited</b>	<b>295</b>

## Abstract

This study introduces and examines the thought of Mou Zongsan 牟宗三 (1909-1995), generally recognised as the most creative and systematic *Xin Rujia* 新儒家 (New Confucian) thinker. Because very little about his thought has been written in English, this study contributes to the understanding and interpretation of Chinese thought by filling a gap in Western scholarship on a key twentieth-century *Ru* thinker.

The study accomplishes four objectives. The first objective is to examine the making of Mou's thought by tracing the various influences that shaped his philosophical thinking. Mou's thought is multi-faceted and complex. It reflects the historical time he lived in, the person he was, and the many ideological and intellectual influences that shaped his thinking. Scholars usually regard Mou's thought as a contemporary moral metaphysical reading of *Ru* thought based on the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind, the stream of Song-Ming *Ruxue* (Neo-Confucianism) associated with Lu Xiangshan 陸象山 (1139-1193) and Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472-1529). Yet, as this thesis shows, Mou's thought is also cultural nationalist, anti-Communist, moral idealistic, Hegelian, and Kantian.

The second objective of this thesis is to introduce Mou's thought as a contemporary reading of *Ruxue*—in the form of a moral metaphysics based on the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind. Mou's moral metaphysics reflects his understanding of the human mind as informed by the teachings of Mengzi 孟子 (Mencius) (ca 372-289 B.C.), the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind, and the writings of Song-Ming *Ru* thinkers besides Lu and Wang. It seeks to elucidate the metaphysics of the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind using Mahāyāna *Fo* (Buddhist) paradigms and Kantian terminology.

The third objective is to reveal the strong Han cultural nationalism that drove Mou's philosophical career. While most scholars recognise that a major, if not the most significant, contribution of Mou is in the metaphysical development of *Ru* thought, much of his writings can be seen as a relentless attempt to provide a systematic and theoretical grounding for his proposal for China's cultural reconstruction, a proposal known as the *santong* 三統 (three-unities) proposal. My aim is to show that Mou's moral metaphysics and cultural nationalist discourse are entwined. I examine his conception of Chinese culture and *Ruxue* and his notion of the third epoch of *Ruxue*. I also study his *santong* proposal, his new *daotong* 新道統 discourse (new genealogical account of the transmission of the way), which is based on his revisionist assessment of Song-Ming *Ruxue*, and the key role he played in the *Xin Rujia* movement.

The last objective is to examine critically the scholarly reception of Mou's thought and discuss how the legacy of Mou's *Xin Rujia* thought has lived on. Mou's system of thought is rigorously logical and coherent when assessed in terms of its internal philosophical premises and paradigms. Supporters embrace and acclaim it. Distracters, however, find fault with it, sometimes harshly. I highlight the major merits and deficiencies of Mou's thought as perceived by his critics.

## Thesis Declaration

This work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

I give consent to this copy of my thesis, when deposited in the University Library, being made available for loan and photocopying, subject to the provisions of the Copyright Act 1968.

I also give permission for the digital version of my thesis to be made available on the web, via the University's digital research repository, the Library catalogue, the Australasian Digital Theses Program (ADTP) and also through web search engines, unless permission has been granted by the University to restrict access for a period of time.

Signature:..... Date:.....



## **Acknowledgements**

In writing this study, I have benefited from the advice and constant feedback given by my supervisor Professor John Makeham. During my period of doubt in the early stages of this study, the only thing that kept me from quitting was his confidence in my ability to meet the challenges and complete the study. To him I owe a debt of gratitude. I thank the University of Adelaide and the Centre for Asian Studies for granting me the Australian Postgraduate Award for my PhD program. I also thank Dr. Xianlin Song and other staff as well as postgraduate students at the Centre for their kind support. Thanks also go to my family for loving me and to G. Y. for inspiring me.



# Introduction

This study introduces and examines the thought of Mou Zongsan 牟宗三 (1909-1995), a major *Rujia*<sup>1</sup> 儒家 thinker of the twentieth century. It is the first thorough study of Mou's thought in English and aims to contribute to the ongoing project of interpreting and understanding Chinese thought and Chinese culture. While Western scholars in general have yet to pay significant in-depth attention to the neo-conservative philosophical and cultural movement retrospectively called *Xin Rujia* 新儒家 (New

---

<sup>1</sup> I use the Chinese transliteration "*Rujia*" rather than "Confucian", the Latinised version, because Mou identified himself as a *Rujia*—a follower of the teachings of the historical Kongzi 孔子 (Confucius) (551-479 B.C.) and Mengzi 孟子 (Mencius) (ca. 372-289 B.C.). Mou's reading of the streams of thought associated with the teachings of Kongzi and Mengzi is a reading of an indigenous intellectual tradition of China. Moreover, the reading is from the perspective of a Chinese thinker whose life reflected and whose work influenced to a considerable extent the fate of that tradition in twentieth-century mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong. This is despite the fact that Mou had an academic grounding in Western philosophy and sought to present *Ru* teachings using Western philosophical categories—those of the prominent Enlightenment thinker Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) in particular. In the West, vastly different meanings and understandings have been associated with the term "Confucianism" and its derivatives, rendering their usage highly problematic. Michael Nylan interrogates the rendering of "*Rujia*" as "Confucianism" or "Confucian". She also points out that "the original term *Rujia* (classicists) indicated not a precise moral orientation or body of doctrines, but a professional training with the general goal of state service", meaning that not all *Ru* were "devotees of the Confucian Way identified with the Ancients" (see p.3 of her book entitled *The Five "Confucian" Classics*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001). Nonetheless, contemporary Chinese scholars and thinkers, including Mou, Xiong Shili 熊十力 (1885-1968) and Qian Mu 錢穆 (1895-1990), do use "*Rujia*" in a broad sense to subsume the various streams of thought associated with the teachings of the historical Kongzi and Mengzi, which we in the West might or might not subsume under the term "Confucianism". "*Rujia*" refers to either these streams of thought or the followers of them. Often it is used as an adjective, as in "*Rujia* thinker" (Confucian thinker) or "*Rujia* thought" (Confucian thought). When the emphasis is on learning and scholarship, rather than the teachings, the transliteration "*Ruxue*" 儒學 (which stands for *Rujia xueshu* 儒家學術; see p. 67 of Qian Mu, *Zhongguo xueshu tongyi* 中國學術通義 (A Primer of Chinese Learning and Scholarship), expanded ed., Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1982) is used instead. In this thesis, I use the terms *Rujia* and *Ruxue* (or *Ru* for short) in the way used by contemporary Chinese scholars and thinkers as described above and avoid the more imprecise and controversial translations of "Confucianism" and "Confucian". To be consistent, I also use the terms *Daojia* 道家 and *Fojia* 佛家 (or *Dao* and *Fo* for short) instead of the Westernised terms "Daoism" and "Buddhism". However, I do not use "*Daoxue*" 道學 to mean the learning of the way in the context of *Daojia*. As noted in Chapter 7, the term "*Daoxue*" was used narrowly to denote a strand of *Songxue* 宋學 (Song Learning) in China.

Confucianism) or *Dangdai Xin Rujia* 當代新儒家 (Contemporary New Confucianism), the movement is at the heart of a revival of interest in *Ru* thought in Northern America and Asia since the late 1970s. It gained momentum in the 1980s and 1990s and has exerted a significant influence on contemporary cultural and intellectual thought in Hong Kong, Taiwan and mainland China. University students and researchers in all three places have studied the systems of thought of *Xin Rujia* thinkers intensively and evaluated them critically. Scholars and educators in mainland China have adopted an increasingly receptive attitude towards *Ru* thought and Western thought (including the moral philosophy of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)) since the country opened its door to the rest of the world in the late 1970s. As Lionel Jensen observes, “it is now politically correct to appreciate Kongzi [孔子 (Confucius) (551-479 B.C.)]” in China.<sup>2</sup> In late 1986, the mainland Chinese government formally recognised *Xin Rujia* thought as a high-priority research item in the area of philosophy and social sciences. In 1990, its Ministry of Education formally recognised as a top-priority item “the experimental research into the teaching of traditional Chinese virtues”. Moral education and traditional *Ru* values have since become regular discussion and research topics in the ministry’s monthly research publication entitled *Jiaoyu yanjiu* 教育研究 (Educational Research).<sup>3</sup> Since Mou is generally recognised as the most creative and systematic *Xin Rujia* thinker,<sup>4</sup> and because very little about his thought has been written in English, this study contributes to the understanding and interpretation of Chinese thought by filling a gap in Western scholarship on a key twentieth-century *Ru* thinker.

## **An Overview of Mou’s Moral Metaphysics**

Mou described his thought as a moral metaphysics. In this thesis, I use the term “metaphysics” and its derivatives in the sense used by Mou. Mou in turn followed Kant’s use of them to refer to the philosophical investigation into the pure a priori principles (a priori means entirely non-empirical—dependent of all experience; pure

---

<sup>2</sup> Lionel M. Jensen, *Manufacturing Confucianism: Chinese Traditions & Universal Civilization*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> See discussion in Chapter 8.

<sup>4</sup> Zheng Jiadong 鄭家棟 gives a factual report of Mou’s academic influence on pp. 223-225 of his book entitled *Mou Zongsan* 牟宗三, Taipei: Dongda tushu, 2000.

means “entirely a priori”, with nothing empirical intermixed)<sup>5</sup> relating to distinct objects of the understanding.<sup>6</sup> Metaphysics is thus “cleansed of everything empirical”<sup>7</sup> and is distinguished from logic, which is concerned with “the universal rules of thinking in general, without distinction of objects.”<sup>8</sup> When it relates to nature (what happens), it is a “metaphysics of nature”; when it relates to the human will (what ought to happen), it is a “metaphysics of morals”.<sup>9</sup>

Both Kant and Mou distinguished “metaphysics” and “theology”: metaphysics deals primarily with a priori principles as discussed above, theology with God and other religious concepts.<sup>10</sup> Kant denied that human beings have intellectual intuition, which is intuition that is non-sensible and supposedly needed if one were to intuit and acquire knowledge of objects of the noumenal realm (noumena or things in themselves as they really are). He postulated the freedom of the will, the immortality of the soul and the existence of God based on his metaphysics of morals—his investigation into the pure a priori principles relating to the human will—and his critique of moral reason. Mou, on the other hand, asserted that human beings have intellectual intuition—understood by him to be the spiritual function of the moral mind, which he identified not only with Mengzi’s 孟子 (Mencius) (ca. 372-289 B.C.) original mind (*benxin* 本心 or *xin* 心) and human nature (*xing* 性) and Wang Yangming’s 王陽明 (1472-1529) innate moral consciousness (*liangzhi* 良知)<sup>11</sup> but also with Kant’s free will<sup>12</sup>—and promoted *Ruxue* as a moral metaphysics. Even though Mou, like Kant, upheld the a priori nature of

---

<sup>5</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998, pp. 136-137.

<sup>6</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. and ed. Mary Gregor, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.1-2.

<sup>10</sup> Kant’s term for this is natural theology. See his *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 191.

<sup>11</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingti* 心體與性體 (Onto-cosmological Grounding of the Mind and of Human Nature), Taipei: Zhengzhong shuju, 1968-1969, vol I, p. 127. “*Liangzhi*” 良知, which I render as “innate moral consciousness”, was a term used by Mengzi to refer to the original mind as a spontaneous knowing requiring no premeditation (the *locus classicus* is *Mengzi* 孟子 VIIA: 15). Wang Yangming expounded the term and it became centrally associated with his teaching. Lee Ming-huei 李明輝 renders the term as “original knowing”. (See his “Wang Yangming’s 王陽明 Philosophy and Modern Theories of Democracy: A Reconstructive Interpretation” in *Dao*, 2008(7) (published online July 24, 2008), p. 284.)

<sup>12</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingti*, vol. I, p. 123.

morality—that it is strictly universal and necessary (categorically imperative)<sup>13</sup>—and moral autonomy,<sup>14</sup> his moral metaphysics is fundamentally different from Kant’s metaphysics of morals. Mou actually coined the term “moral metaphysics” based on Kant’s sense of “moral theology”. A “moral theology”, according to Kant, is a theology that grounds the concept of God in morals.<sup>15</sup> Mou used “moral metaphysics” to mean a metaphysics that grounds the first creative principle in human beings’ innate moral consciousness:

康德只說道德的神學而不說道德的形上學。Moral metaphysics 和 moral theology 這個 moral 是形容詞。就是說這個宗教、形上學是基於道德。儒家不說道德的神學而說道德的形上學，因為儒家不是宗教。<sup>16</sup>

Kant talked only of moral theology and not of moral metaphysics. “Moral” here is an adjective, meaning that the theology or metaphysics in question is based on morals. *Rujia* talks of moral metaphysics and not moral theology because *Rujia* is not a religion [in the sense understood in the West].

In other words, Kant’s metaphysics of morals is an investigation into the pure a priori principles of morals whereas Mou’s moral metaphysics not only investigates the pure a priori principles of morals but also grounds the first creative principle in morals.

What are the main features of Mou’s moral metaphysics? The five main ones are as follows. First, it is a metaphysics based on the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind (Lu-Wang *Xinxue* 陸王心學)—the stream of Song (960-1279)-Ming (1368-1644) *Ruxue*<sup>17</sup> 宋明儒學 associated with Lu Xiangshan 陸象山 (1139-1193) and Wang Yangming. Second, it is highly syncretic. As mentioned, Mou derived the term “moral metaphysics”

---

<sup>13</sup> According to Kant, experience yields only “assumed and comparative universality (through induction),” and necessity and strict universality are “secure indications” of a priori judgements. See his *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 137.

<sup>14</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingti*, vol. I, p. 137.

<sup>15</sup> Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 584.

<sup>16</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang* 中國哲學十九講 (Nineteen Lectures on Chinese Philosophy), Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1983, p. 76.

<sup>17</sup> I use the term “Song-Ming *Ruxue*” to cover the various streams of *Ru* thought as interpreted and promulgated by major *Ru* thinkers of the Song and Ming periods. Song-Ming *Ruxue* is often referred to in the West as “Neo-Confucianism”. Mou understood Song-Ming *Ruxue* in a narrow sense to mean the Song-Ming “learning of the mind and human nature” (*Song-Ming xinxing zhi xue* 宋明心性之學). He also

from Kant's notion of "moral theology"; and his moral metaphysical recasting of the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind is inextricably engaged with Kant's critical philosophy and employs many conceptual terms appropriated from Kant—the two key ones being "intellectual intuition" and "noumenon". In addition to Kant, the Hegelian concept of "self-negation" also inspired Mou's theoretical construction and two metaphysical paradigms of Chinese Mahāyāna *Fo* origin—the "two-tiered mind" paradigm and the "perfect teaching" paradigm—provided the skeletal frame for his moral metaphysics. Mou envisioned his syncretic recasting of the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind to bring out clearly the moral metaphysics he saw embedded in it.<sup>18</sup>

The third feature of Mou's moral metaphysics is that it is an onto-cosmology (*benti yuzhou lun* 本體宇宙論)<sup>19</sup> centred on heaven (*tian* 天) cosmologically as the primal creative principle and ontologically as the ultimate transcendent reality and grounding for all that exists in the cosmos. Mou distinguished between Western ontology and Chinese ontology. On his view, Western ontology investigates primarily the inherent properties of a phenomenal thing, properties by virtue of which a thing has existence or being, whereas Chinese ontology, found in *Ru*, *Dao* as well as *Fo*, seeks to explain the existence of the myriad things. He used the term "onto-cosmology" to describe Chinese ontology thus understood:

。 。 。 中國無靜態的內在的存有論，而有動態的超越的存有論。此種存有論必須見本源。 。 。 。 這種存有論即在說明天地萬物之存在。 。 。 。 不在明萬物之構造。此種存有論亦函着宇宙生生不息之動源之宇宙論，故吾常亦合言而曰本體宇宙論。<sup>20</sup>

In China, one finds not an ontology that relates to the inactive and inherent [properties of existence] but an ontology that relates to the active and transcendent [first creative principle]. This type of ontology must reach the original source of creation.... It aims to explicate the existence of the myriad

---

referred to it as "Song-Ming *Lixue*" 宋明理學, the literal translation of which is "the Learning of the Principle of the Song and Ming Periods". See his *Xinti yu xingti*, vol I, pp. 1, 4.

<sup>18</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingti*, vol. I, p. 11.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 9-10.

<sup>20</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Yuanshan lun* 圓善論 (A Treatise on the Highest Good), Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1985, p. 338.

things...and not their constitution. Also contained in this type of ontology is a cosmology based on the incessantly generating force of the cosmos. This is why I often refer to them together using the term “onto-cosmology”.

There are two key terms in this regard: “*benti*” 本體 (the fundamental state/condition) and “*shiti*” 實體 (the onto-cosmological transcendent reality, which is also the ultimate transcendent reality), with the same abbreviated form “*ti*” 體 used for both of them. The Song-Ming *Ru* as well as Mou’s mentor Xiong Shili 熊十力 (1885-1968) used the term “*benti*” to mean the absolute, all-encompassing transcendent reality and the primal creative source or principle—called variously as heaven, the way (*dao* 道), the way of heaven or the heavenly way (*tian dao* 天道), the decree of heaven (*tianming* 天命), the heavenly principle (*tianli* 天理) or principle (*li* 理)—that ceaselessly brings about the flourishing of the myriad things in the cosmos and is also immanent in human beings’ original mind or nature. Mou adopted Xiong’s explicit onto-cosmological construction of *Ruxue* and subscribed to Mengzi’s identification of the original mind with human nature, the Song-Ming *Ru*’s identification of empathetic compassion (*ren* 仁) with human nature, and the Lu-Wang identification of the original mind with the heavenly principle. These identifications prompted Mou’s use of the term “*benti*” to mean “*benxin xingt*” 本心性體 and to render “*ren*” 仁, “*xin*” 心, “*xing*” 性 and “*dao*” 道 onto-cosmologically as “*renti*” 仁體, “*xinti*” 心體, “*xingt*” 性體 and “*daoti*” 道體—with the various onto-cosmological terms used to refer to *benti* from different perspectives.<sup>21</sup> The following is Mou’s elucidation of *benti* in the context of Song-Ming *Ruxue*:

。 。 。 在本體一面所反省澈至之本體，即本心性體，必須是絕對的普遍者，是所謂「體物不可遺」之無外者，頓時即須普而為「妙萬物而為言」者，不但只是吾人道德實踐之本體（根據），且亦須是宇宙生化之本體，一切存在之本體（根據）。<sup>22</sup>

...as regards the fundamental state/condition—the fundamental state/condition arrived at ultimately through thorough-going moral introspection and which is

<sup>21</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingt*, vol. I, p. 44.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 8-9.

the original mind-cum-onto-cosmological grounding of human nature<sup>23</sup>—it is necessarily an absolute universal. It is what [Kongzi] referred to as that which “embodies the myriad things without omission” with nothing being outside it.<sup>24</sup> In an instant, it necessarily extends universally to be “what is referred to as the wondrous transformation of the myriad things”.<sup>25</sup> It is not only the fundamental state/condition (grounding) of our moral praxis but also necessarily the fundamental state/condition for cosmic generation and transformation and the fundamental state/condition (grounding) for all existence.

This shows clearly that Mou used “*benti*” to refer to the “*benxin xingti*” 本心性體, the *benti* immanent in human beings’ mind. In other words, *benti* (fundamental state/condition) is, in the context of Mou’s onto-cosmology, the original mind-cum-onto-cosmological grounding of human nature. Whereas Xiong continued to use the term “*benti*” to refer to the objective first creative principle of heaven, Mou often substituted “*benti*” in the objective sense with the contemporary metaphysical term “*shiti*”, which he rendered as “reality”, in the metaphysical, transcendent sense<sup>26</sup>:

就其統天地萬物而為其體言，曰實體；就其具于個體之中而為其體言，則曰性體。<sup>27</sup>

In terms of its being the fundamental state/condition of the entirety of the myriad things between heaven and earth, we call it *shiti*; in terms of its being the fundamental state/condition possessed by individuals, we call it *xingti*.

Thus, Mou read the profound and incessant heavenly decree lauded in the *Shijing* (*Zhongyong* XXVI) as “the metaphysical transcendent reality that enables cosmic generation and transformation” (使宇宙生化可能之實體).<sup>28</sup> To reflect this specific

---

<sup>23</sup> I render *xingti* 性體 as “the onto-cosmological grounding of human nature” based on Mou’s explanation in this quotation. The rendering of *benxin xingti* 本心性體 as “the original mind-cum-onto-cosmological grounding of human nature” reflects Mou’s vigorous assertion that Mengzi identified the original mind with human nature—for Mou, the original mind is human nature.

<sup>24</sup> This is from the *Zhongyong* 中庸 (The Doctrine of the Mean) XVI.

<sup>25</sup> See the *Shuoguzhuan* 說卦傳 (Discussion of the Eight Trigrams, one of the Ten Wings) in *Zhouyi* 周易 (the *Book of Changes*), *Shisan jing zhushu* edition, Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1985, p. 9.6a.

<sup>26</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingti*, vol. I, pp. 21-22.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 30-31.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 30.

rendering and the fact that Mou's moral metaphysics is an explicit onto-cosmological construction of *Ruxue*, I translate “*shiti*” as “the onto-cosmological transcendent reality”. Like “*benti*”, “*shiti*” is the grounding for moral praxis (道德行為所依據之實體).<sup>29</sup>

The fourth main feature of Mou's moral metaphysics is its strong religious or spiritual undertone. Mou valorised the moral mind as the site of human beings' inner sageliness based on the feeling of spiritual oneness rooted in empathetic compassion (*ren* 仁). This theme, together with the *Ru* notion of human beings' capability to unite in virtue with heaven, form the basis for assertions of *Ru* spirituality by Xiong, Mou and other *Xin Rujia* thinkers. Spirituality is not easy to define. It involves primarily a subjective state of mind, a devotion to the divine. The editors of a recently published scholarly series on world spirituality reached the consensus that what is in general intended by the term “spirituality” is “that inner dimension of the person called by certain traditions ‘the spirit’”. They further clarify that “[t]his spiritual core is the deepest centre of the person. It is here that the person is open to the transcendent dimension; it is here that the person experiences ultimate reality.”<sup>30</sup> Mary Evelyn Tucker observes that “[a]mong the world's religious traditions, Confucianism has the distinction of being the tradition that is least understood as having religious or spiritual aspects.” Instead of describing the *Ru* tradition as a religion, she suggests that it manifests “a religious worldview with distinctive spiritual dimensions.”<sup>31</sup> Mou referred to *Ruxue* as “*Rujiao*” 儒教 when he wanted to emphasise that *Ru* as a spiritual moral philosophy fulfils the two main functions of Christianity and other religions. The first main function of religion, according to Mou, is to prescribe rituals, ceremonials, and, in some cases, even a particular way of daily living. Thus, Christianity prescribes specific rituals for praying and worship and ceremonials for marriage and funerals; *Fojia* 佛教 (*Fo* as a religion) prescribes precepts for daily living; and *Rujiao* prescribes not only rituals, ceremonials and music for major events but also proper ways of relating in the five basic human relations (covering the respective relations between the emperor and the minister,

---

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 6.

<sup>30</sup> Ewert Cousins, “Preface to the Series”, in *Confucian Spirituality*, ed. Tu Weiming and Mary Evelyn Tucker, New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2003, vol. 1, p. xii.

<sup>31</sup> Mary Evelyn Tucker, “Introduction” in *Confucian Spirituality*, ed. Tu Weiming and Mary Evelyn Tucker, vol. I, p. 2.

the father and the son, brothers, the husband and the wife, and friends).<sup>32</sup> The second main function, which Mou rated as more important than the first one, is to provide guidance for spiritual development. In his understanding, Christians follow Jesus Christ on a spiritual path; *Fo* followers strive towards enlightenment; and *Ru* followers should learn to realise the way of heaven by practising empathetic compassion in their daily living and basic relations.<sup>33</sup> Mou's overall understanding of *Rujiao* is that it is not a religion as commonly understood. Rather, it is a spiritual moral philosophy that fulfils the main functions of a religion and entails a high degree of religiosity among its followers.<sup>34</sup> He referred to Song-Ming *Ruxue* as “the learning of inner sageliness” and promoted it as a “moral religion” for humanity:

此「內聖之學」亦曰「成德之教」。「成德」之最高目標是聖、是仁者、是大人，而其真實意義則在於個人有限之生命中取得一無限而圓滿之意義。此則即道德即宗教，而為人類建立一「道德的宗教」也。<sup>35</sup>

This “learning of inner sageliness” is also known as “the learning of moral attainment”. The highest goal of “moral attainment” is sagehood—becoming a person of empathetic compassion, a great person; and its true significance lies in obtaining in an individual's finite life a meaning that is infinite and full. This then means that morality and religion mutually entail, thus establishing for humanity a “moral religion”.

Lastly, Mou's moral metaphysics emphasises moral praxis as a ceaseless process of cultivating and practising empathetic compassion. The attainment of sagehood entails the merging of one's mind with heaven and the myriad things in a spiritual commiseration. Mou's moral metaphysics is complex. A proper understanding calls for a firm grounding in Song-Ming *Ru* metaphysics, an essential understanding of Kant's critical philosophy and an adequate comprehension of the two Chinese Mahāyāna *Fo* paradigms appropriated by Mou. Mou's syncretic approach and the unique premises and dialectic of his moral metaphysics mean that he had to modify the original meanings of

---

<sup>32</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue de tezhi* 中國哲學的特質 (The Characteristics of Chinese Philosophy), 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1974, pp. 126-128.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 128-130, 133.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138.

<sup>35</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingti*, vol. I, p. 6.

and the presuppositions governing the key terms appropriated by him. As rightly cautioned by Sébastien Billioud, there is “an absolute need for recontextualization” of imported terms.<sup>36</sup>

## **The Objectives of the Study**

This study seeks to accomplish four specific objectives. The first objective is to examine the making of Mou’s thought by tracing the various influences that shaped his philosophical thinking. Mou’s thought is multi-faceted and complex. It reflects the historical time he lived in, the person he was, and the many ideological and intellectual influences that shaped his thinking. Scholars usually regard Mou’s thought as a contemporary moral metaphysical reading of *Ru* thought based on the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind. Yet, as this thesis shows, Mou’s thought is also cultural nationalist, anti-Communist, moral idealistic, Hegelian, and Kantian.

The second objective of this thesis is to introduce Mou’s thought as a contemporary reading of *Ruxue*—in the form of a moral metaphysics based on the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind. Mou’s moral metaphysics reflects his understanding of the human mind as informed by the teachings of Mengzi, the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind and the writings of Song-Ming *Ru* thinkers besides Lu Xiangshan and Wang Yangming. It seeks to elucidate the metaphysics of the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind using Mahāyāna *Fo* paradigms and Kantian terminology.

---

<sup>36</sup> Sébastien Billioud, “Mou Zongsan’s Problem with the Heideggerian Interpretation of Kant”, *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 33(2) (June 2006), p. 229. In this article, Billioud laments that Mou failed to take the influential German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) on his own terms and so wasted the opportunity for a fruitful dialogue (pp. 243-244 of his article). My view is that Mou did not see the possibility of a fruitful dialogue when his prime interest—an onto-cosmology with a religious undertow—clashed loudly with the philosophical premises of the non-religious Heidegger. Billioud’s assertion that “[i]f Kant’s works have to be interpreted in Heidegger’s way, the whole philosophical system of Mou Zongsan is threatened” (p. 226 of his article) is perplexing. I find Heidegger fascinating, but given the fundamental divergence between him and Kant in spirit as well as in theory, I have to say that the possibility of Kant’s works having to be interpreted in Heidegger’s way is nil. Billioud does not seem to appreciate that Mou engaged with Kant mainly because the two thinkers shared a common understanding of morality and a deep faith in the divine—with Kant at least linked (by postulation) his conception of the divine to human beings’ moral reason. I do not believe that Mou would have engaged with Kant had Kant’s main objective in his practical philosophy not been “to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith” (see discussion on Kant and his objectives in Chapter 4 of this thesis).

The third objective is to reveal the strong Han cultural nationalism that drove Mou's philosophical career. While most scholars recognise that a major, if not the most significant, contribution of Mou is in the metaphysical development of *Ru* thought,<sup>37</sup> much of his writings can be seen as a relentless attempt to provide a systematic and theoretical grounding for his proposal for China's cultural reconstruction, a proposal known as the *santong* 三統 (three-unities) proposal. Admittedly, Mou was only one of many Chinese intellectuals in the twentieth century who championed for a cultural reconstruction in the wake of vast cultural damages brought about by May Fourth (1919) iconoclasm or Marxism. Yet, he distinguished himself in that he coupled his fervent cultural nationalism with a philosophical vigour that competed with Kant. Moreover, for the past fifteen years, he has been the thinker most closely associated with the *Xin Rujia* movement. My aim is to show that Mou's moral metaphysics and cultural nationalist discourse are entwined. I examine his conception of Chinese culture and *Ruxue* and his notion of the third epoch of *Ruxue*. I also study his *santong* proposal, his new *daotong* 新道統 discourse (new genealogical account of the transmission of the way), which is based on his revisionist assessment of Song-Ming *Ruxue*, and the key role he played in the *Xin Rujia* movement.

The last objective is to examine critically the scholarly reception of Mou's thought and discuss how the legacy of Mou's *Xin Rujia* thought has lived on. Mou's system of thought is rigorously logical and coherent when assessed in terms of its internal philosophical premises and paradigms. Supporters embrace and acclaim it. Distracters, however, find fault with it, sometimes harshly. I highlight the major merits and deficiencies of Mou's thought as perceived by his critics. Since Western scholars have yet to publish in-depth studies of the systems of thought of Mou and other *Xin Rujia* thinkers, all of the well-known critics of Mou's thought are ethnically Chinese. They either live in or have migrated from mainland China, Taiwan or Hong Kong. The influential ones are Yu Yingshi 余英時, Li Zehou 李澤厚, Zheng Jiadong 鄭家棟, Lin Anwu 林安梧, Liu Shuxian 劉述先, Lee Ming-huei (Li Minghui) 李明輝 and Tu

---

<sup>37</sup> See Yan Binggang 顏炳罡, *Mou Zongsan xueshu sixiang pingzhuan* 牟宗三學術思想評傳 (A Critique of Mou Zongsan's Thought), Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 1998, p. 220. Also, Zheng Jiadong, *Mou Zongsan*, p. 225; and Lin Anwu 林安梧, *Ruxue geming lun: Hou Xin Rujia zhixue de wenti xiangdu*

Weiming 杜維明. Since this is a Western study of Mou's thought, I also include three major Western scholars who have engaged with Mou's thought: John Berthrong, Roger T. Ames and Arif Dirlik.

## **The Methodology of the Study**

In terms of methodology, this study takes the form of a systematic presentation and analysis of relevant literature. I include an overview of Mou's oeuvre at the end of this introduction. The study draws extensively from Mou's major works and uses all the books he published except (a) two of his early works—his study of the *Zhouyi* 周易 (the *Book of Changes*) during his university years and *Luoji dianfan* 邏輯典範, his first book on logic—both written before his mature phase; (a) his Chinese translation of Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and his book on the School of Names and Xunzi, entitled *Mingjia yu Xunzi* 名家與荀子, neither of which bears on the subject matter of this study; and (c) the six books of his that are redundant<sup>38</sup> because they have either been incorporated into or republished under a new title. Because Mou's books provide a complete and systematic coverage of his thought, they are my main references for this study. His journal articles furnish detailed discussions of particular topics and I refer to them when the occasional need arises. Only a very small portion of Mou's works has been translated into English.<sup>39</sup> His *Zhongguo wenhua de xingcha* 中國文化的省察 was published in a Chinese and English bilingual version in 1984.<sup>40</sup> The Foundation for the Study of Chinese Philosophy and Culture (FSCPC), which "is entrusted by Mou's estate to ensure that his philosophical thoughts are faithfully preserved in translation", has published electronically several chapters of Mou's *Wushi zishu* 五十自述 (An Autobiography at Fifty) and *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang* 中國哲學十九講 (Nineteen

---

儒學革命論：後新儒家哲學的問題向度 (Discussions on Confucian Revolution: The Orientation of Problematics in New Confucian Philosophy), Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1998, preface, p. II.

<sup>38</sup> See footnote 79 for the titles of these six books.

<sup>39</sup> Zheng Jiadong reported in 2000 that Mou's *Zhongguo zhexue de tezhi* was being translated into French and German. See Zheng Jiadong, *Mou Zongsan*, p. 224, footnote 1.

<sup>40</sup> This is as noted on p. 219 of Cai Renhou's 蔡仁厚 *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuesi nianpu* 牟宗三先生學思年譜 (A Chronology of Mou Zongsan's Academic Career), Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1996. Also, as noted in footnote 79, all of the articles in this book were subsequently incorporated into Mou's *Shidai yu ganshou* 時代與感受 (The Times and Sensibilities), 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Taipei: Ehu chubanshe, 1995.

Lectures on Chinese Philosophy) in English.<sup>41</sup> The subject matter of this study requires that I draw also on the writings of Immanuel Kant and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) and of Xiong Shili, Wang Yangming and other *Ru* thinkers. All English translations of passages from Chinese classics and of writings in Chinese by Mou, Xiong and others are mine. Where appropriate, I include comments of scholars on Mou's thought. The transliteration system used for Chinese characters in this study is the *pinyin* system.

## **Chapter Outlines**

To accomplish the four objectives discussed above, this thesis is divided into eight chapters. I provide the historical backdrop to Mou's thought and introduce his life and his writings later in this introduction. The first seven chapters fulfil the first two objectives. Chapters 1 and 2 examine the profound philosophical and Han cultural nationalist influences on Mou of his mentor Xiong Shili when Mou's thought was in a formative stage. Chapter 3 studies the significant influence on Mou of the idealist thinker G. W. F. Hegel. The subsequent three chapters (Chapters 4, 5 and 6) present Mou's thought as a moral metaphysics and show how Mou's ongoing philosophical engagement with Kant determined the development and substance of his own system of thought. Mou not only admired Kant but also made a vigorous attempt to extend the German thinker's moral philosophy to meet with the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind. The three-chapter presentation focuses on Mou's affirmation of the inner sageliness of human beings, his controversial use of the term "transcendence", his "two-tiered" understanding of the human mind and of ontology, and his presentation of the metaphysics of Song *Ru* thinker Hu Wufeng 胡五峰 (1100-1155) as the ultimate "perfect teaching". It includes a discussion of the two Mahāyāna *Fo* paradigms Mou appropriated for his moral metaphysics—the "two-tiered mind" paradigm and the "perfect teaching" paradigm. Chapter 7 analyses a key aspect of Mou's moral

---

<sup>41</sup> Information about the organisation and the translated chapters is available at [www.fscpc.org/mouzongsan/mou.asp](http://www.fscpc.org/mouzongsan/mou.asp), accessed December 18, 2008. An English translation of *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang* by Julie Lee Wei was available electronically at [www.nineteenlectures.org](http://www.nineteenlectures.org) in 2006, but it was no longer available when I tried to access the site on December 18, 2008. A 2006 fundraising update on the FSCPC site mentions that the organisation was taking legal action against unauthorized translations. This might explain the disappearance of Lee Wei's translation.

metaphysics—his new *daotong* discourse and his hegemonic positioning of the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind, which forms the basis of his moral metaphysics.

The third objective is accomplished in Chapter 2, which presents Mou's cultural nationalist discourse. In addition, I highlight, where appropriate throughout the thesis, the cultural nationalism underlying Mou's thought and examine in the last chapter (Chapter 8) Mou's participation in the *Xin Rujia* movement and his cultural nationalist discourse in the global context. I meet the last objective by providing in the conclusion of the study a review of the strengths and weaknesses of Mou's thought as perceived by his major critics.

## **Mou's Life**

Near the end of the Ming period (1368-1644), the Manchus, a people originated from the Jurchens,<sup>42</sup> established the foreign dynasty of Qing in Manchuria. They subsequently conquered all of China and their rule of China lasted from 1644 until late 1911, when Chinese revolutionaries finally succeeded in bringing down the inept empire. For the Manchu rulers and Chinese literati, China's defeat in the Opium Wars (the Anglo-Chinese Wars, the first one from 1839 to 1842 and the second one from 1856 to 1860) marked for them the end of "China's geographical centrality and its corollary, China's moral and cultural superiority over the rest of the world".<sup>43</sup> China's utter inability to cope with imperialist expansionism heightened the sense of crisis among the Chinese people and generated an intense need among them to strengthen their country economically and militarily. As Mou noted, it also generated an ongoing debate among them as to how Chinese culture should develop in order to meet the need.<sup>44</sup> In 1905, the Chinese civil service examination, with the *Ru* classics forming an important part of its curriculum, was abolished.<sup>45</sup> In the New Culture movement, which started in 1915 and joined with the May Fourth movement in 1919, Chinese intellectuals condemned *Ru*

---

<sup>42</sup> The Jurchens had ruled the northern half of China during the Song.

<sup>43</sup> Lucien Bianco, *Origins of the Chinese Revolution 1915-1949*, trans. Muriel Bell, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1971, p. 2.

<sup>44</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Shidai yu ganshou*, pp. 294-295.

<sup>45</sup> Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of China*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 264.

thought, which had exerted a tremendous influence over the Chinese people, as a main cause of China's ills.<sup>46</sup> More than half a century later, in the politically charged anti-Kongzi (anti-Confucian) campaign in Communist China, which began in early 1972 and gathered momentum in 1974<sup>47</sup> before subsiding in mid-1975,<sup>48</sup> Kongzi was condemned as reactionary and his teaching harshly criticised.<sup>49</sup> Against this adverse historical backdrop, Liang Shuming 梁漱溟 (1893-1988), Xiong Shili and other *Ru* thinkers and their followers, including Mou, have attempted to revive *Ruxue* as a living cultural force in China. As discussed in Chapter 8, the endeavours of these Chinese intellectuals have coalesced into a modern movement retrospectively labelled as the *Xin Rujia*.

Mou, one of Xiong Shili's foremost disciples, was born into a peasant family in the Shandong Province in China in 1909 and died in Taiwan in 1995.<sup>50</sup> From an early age onwards, Mou showed an interest in and derived deep satisfaction from working independently. Even as a child, he told us, he was often absorbed in making things with his hands or in exploring a toy. He observed that the absorption was very much a mental absorption in systematic construction based on intuition and not driven by practical concerns.<sup>51</sup> Mou was finishing primary school in early 1923<sup>52</sup> when Zhang Junmai 張君勱 (1886-1969) raged a yearlong public debate by asserting that science must be guided by a humanistic vision of life.<sup>53</sup> Later that year, Mou left the village to study in the county high school. In 1929, he completed the matriculation program at Peking

---

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 267, 270. Scholars have not assigned an exact date for the end of the New Culture movement, which started in 1915 and joined with the May Fourth movement in 1919. The May Fourth period started around 1917 and ended around 1921. This is based on the following remark in Benjamin L. Schwartz's edited volume on the movement: "May 4 thus gave its name to a whole period of cultural renaissance that began with the *pai-hua* or vernacular language movement about 1917 and included the rising interest in the Soviet revolutionary example, which led to the founding of the Chinese Communist Party in 1921." See East Asian Research Center, "Foreword", in *Reflections on the May Fourth Movement: A Symposium*, ed. Benjamin I. Schwartz, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972, p. vii.

<sup>47</sup> *The Anti-Confucius Campaign in China*, ed. R. F. Price, Victoria, Australia: La Trobe University, 1977, p.1.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>50</sup> Cai Renhou, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuesi nianpu*, pp. 3, 92.

<sup>51</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Wushi zishu* 五十自述 (An Autobiography at Fifty), Taipei: Ehu chubanshe, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1993, pp. 6-7.

<sup>52</sup> Cai Renhou, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuesi nianpu*, p. 3.

<sup>53</sup> Benjamin A. Elman, "'Universal Science' Versus 'Chinese Science': The Changing Identity of Natural Studies in China, 1850-1930", *Historiography East & West*, 2003, 1: 1, pp. 96, 101-102.

University and went on to do his university studies in the philosophy department there.<sup>54</sup> The university subjects of interest to him included New Realism, the philosophy of Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) and mathematical logic.<sup>55</sup> Outside his university studies, he developed a deep interest in the process philosophy of English mathematician and philosopher Alfred N. Whitehead (1861-1947), which inspired him to undertake a study of the numeric order and the cosmology-cum-moral philosophy contained in the *Zhouyi*<sup>56</sup> (In this thesis, the *Zhouyi*, which I refer to as the *Yi* for short, is understood to include the group of commentaries known as the *Yizhuan* 易傳 or the *Shizhuan* 十傳 (Ten Wings)). The study was completed before he graduated from the university in 1933 (at the age of 24). It was self-published in 1935 and became his first published book entitled *Cong Zhouyi fangmian yanjiu Zhongguo zhi Xuanxue ji daode zhexue* 從周易方面研究中國之玄學及道德哲學 (A Study of Chinese Metaphysics and Moral Philosophy Based on the *Zhouyi*).<sup>57</sup>

Mou met Xiong for the first time in the winter of 1932, when Mou was 23 and still a student at Peking University.<sup>58</sup> Xiong, who had taken a long sick leave from the university,<sup>59</sup> had just published the first version of his masterwork entitled *Xin Weishi lun* 新唯識論 (The New Consciousness-Only Treatise) and returned to the university to teach.<sup>60</sup> The first version of *Xin Weishi lun* was originally written in classical Chinese. The translation into vernacular Chinese was completed in late 1941.<sup>61</sup> Xiong added a new third section to the book in 1942 and 1943, and the finalised three-section vernacular version was published in 1944 and represents the mature version of Xiong's onto-cosmological construction of *Ruxue*.<sup>62</sup> I discuss Xiong's thought and his philosophical influence on Mou in Chapter 1. Here it suffices to say that his *Xin Weishi lun* presents his discourse on the onto-cosmological totality of *Ru* thought based on his

---

<sup>54</sup> Cai Renhou, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuesi nianpu*, pp. 3, 4.

<sup>55</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Wushi zishu*, p. 43.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

<sup>57</sup> Cai Renhou, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuesi nianpu*, p. 6.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>59</sup> Cai Renhou, *Xiong Shili xiansheng xuexing nianbiao* 熊十力先生學行年表 (a Chronology of Xiong Shili's Academic Career), 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1991, p. 22.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 26-28.

<sup>61</sup> Xiong Shili, *Xin Weishi lun* 新唯識論 (The New Consciousness-Only Treatise), vernacular version, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 2000, vol. I, preface by Xiong Shili, p. 1.

Mahāyāna *Fo* understanding of the mind and his reading of the *Yi*. Xiong preferred teaching in small group settings at his home. Mou saw Xiong for the first time (in the winter of 1932) when he sat in the first and only classroom lecture given by Xiong, at Peking University. Later in that winter, a university lecturer Mou befriended gave him a copy of Xiong's work to read and invited him to a gathering where he formally met and talked to Xiong for the first time.<sup>63</sup>

After his graduation from Peking University, Mou took up various teaching posts in mainland China and continued to develop his understanding of logic. On the eve of the Communist takeover of the mainland in 1949, he migrated to Taiwan. He lived and taught philosophy at universities in Taiwan for eleven years from late 1949 till late 1960, when he left for Hong Kong to teach Chinese philosophy at Hong Kong University. Responding to the political turmoil in Taiwan following the Communist takeover of the mainland, he took charge of the cultural nationalist discourse there and invigorated it with new themes. His philosophical thinking during his Taiwan period was deeply influenced by Hegel and was marked by fervent cultural nationalist and anti-Communist sentiments and an intense preoccupation with China's cultural reconstruction. Yet, up until the end of the Japanese occupation of China in 1945, his main philosophical and intellectual writings involved abstract thinking in metaphysics and logic.<sup>64</sup> His early interest in logic led him to *Principia Mathematica*, a monumental work produced jointly by Whitehead and Russell. He had doubts about Russell's realism and came to realise that logic is pure (a priori) reason displaying itself. Such a realisation was instrumental in his understanding and appreciation of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the first critique by Kant.<sup>65</sup> (Kant was regarded as one of the most influential Western thinkers of post-classical time, and his three critiques were among many Western works introduced into China around the turn of the twentieth century.) How did Mou's thought shift from abstract thinking in metaphysics and logic to *Ru* thought and China's cultural

---

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. II, preface by Xiong Shili, p. 1.

<sup>63</sup> Mou Zongsan, "Xiong Shili xiansheng zhuinian hui jianghua" 熊十力先生追念會講話 (Talk Given at the Commemorative Gathering for Xiong Shili), in Xiong Shili, *Dujing shiyao* 讀經示要 (A Guide to the Study of Confucian Classics), Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1984, vol. II, appendix, pp. 3-5.

<sup>64</sup> Cai Renhou, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuesi nianpu*, pp. 5-26.

<sup>65</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Wushi zishu*, pp. 66-75.

reconstruction? His mentor Xiong Shili played a key role in this, and Tang Junyi 唐君毅 (1909-1978), another foremost disciple of Xiong, facilitated the process.

Mou maintained close contact with Xiong during the ten years following his first meeting with Xiong in 1932.<sup>66</sup> As discussed in Chapter 2, Xiong was an ardent Chinese nationalist and his nationalist discourse took the form of a strong Han ethnic group identification and a bold culturalist (*Ruist* moral-metaphysical) assertiveness. Culture, descent, race, and nation intertwine in the Han cultural nationalist thinking of Xiong. Subscribing to Xiong's Chinese nationalism, Mou identified himself as a member of the Chinese "nation-race" (*zhonghua minzu* 中華民族),<sup>67</sup> reckoned quietly and sadly with the intellectual temper of the time and contemplated deeply about life and its principles.<sup>68</sup> He held Xiong in great esteem. In his eyes, Xiong's "primeval" (*yuanshi* 原始) life and learning connected with the spirit of Han Chinese culture. By "primeval", Mou had in mind the quality of directness, intuitiveness and a meshing of primordial Chinese wisdom with strong nationalist sentiments for the Chinese nation-race.<sup>69</sup> In late 1939, Mou met Tang Junyi, who interested him in Hegel's dialectic, and the two became close associates in the mainland.<sup>70</sup> From the end of 1941 to the autumn of 1942, Mou lived with Xiong in a college in Chongqing.<sup>71</sup> During this period, he related, Xiong "admonished and encouraged me day and night and enlightened me a great deal."<sup>72</sup> Even though Mou's main philosophical and intellectual writings remained focused on metaphysics and logic, his interest and thinking underwent a shift from abstract conceptualisation far removed from practical living to issues concerning the development of Chinese culture. His anti-Communist sentiments gathered strength after 1942: "Previously my anti-Communist sentiments were based on my rejection of their thinking and arguments—thus they were merely at an intellectual, theoretical level. Now

---

<sup>66</sup> Cai Renhou, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuesi nianpu*, pp. 5-10. See also pp. 10-15 of Mou's "Xiong Shili xiansheng zhuinian hui jianghua", appended to Xiong's *Dujing shiyao*, vol. II.

<sup>67</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Wushi zishu*, p. 107. In agreement with Frank Dikötter, I have rendered "*minzu*" as "nation-race". See related discussion near the beginning of Chapter 2.

<sup>68</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Wushi zishu*, p. 85.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 102-103.

<sup>70</sup> Cai Renhou, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuesi nianpu*, pp. 9, 12. Also, Mou Zongsan, *Wushi zishu*, pp. 108-109.

<sup>71</sup> Cai Renhou, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuesi nianpu*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>72</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Daode de lixiang zhuyi* 道德的理想主義 (Moral Idealism), revised ed., Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1992, preface to the revised edition, p. 1.

they are at an existential and experiential level, and therefore also involving sorrow and mental anguish.”<sup>73</sup> His cultural nationalism in the 1940s was further stimulated by Hegel. As will be seen in Chapter 3, Hegel’s determination that the East represented “the childhood of History” forced Mou to confront the deficiency of Song-Ming *Ruxue*—its failure to address the problematic lack of political freedom or democratic development in China. The German idealist thinker’s philosophy of history also prompted Mou to look at Chinese history in a new light, and it was in 1945 that Mou first thought of writing a philosophy of history for China.<sup>74</sup>

Xiong’s decade-long mentorship with Mou, during the formative years of Mou’s thought, exerted an enduring influence not only on Mou’s understanding of China and Chinese culture but also on Mou’s basic philosophical orientation. In his autobiography *Wushi zishu*, written when he turned fifty, Mou relates that while his personal hardships following the Japanese invasion of China in 1937<sup>75</sup> forced him to live on an existential rather than intellectual plane, it was Xiong who was his beacon of inspiration. He believed that Xiong “primeval” life and learning “opened the [spiritual] source of my life” (開吾生命之源).<sup>76</sup> In his 1979 talk to commemorate Xiong, he reiterates this theme unreservedly:

。 。 。 又假定我沒有遇見熊先生，我究竟是不是現在這個我，是很難說的。恐怕我在北大畢業出來後，也和其他人一樣，很自然的便跑到中央研究院的系統裏去了。由於有抗戰這大事件，那是民族的生死鬥爭；但這還只是客觀的因素，光是這個並不够，還是要碰見熊先生，我才是現在這個我。<sup>77</sup>

...And if I did not encounter Mr. Xiong, it would be hard to say whether I would end up being the person I am now. I’m afraid that [in that case,] after graduating from Peking University, I also would naturally have gone off to work in the Academia Sinica system just like other people. [I am the person I am] because of

---

<sup>73</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Wushi zishu*, p. 116.

<sup>74</sup> Cai Renhou, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuesi nianpu*, p. 12.

<sup>75</sup> See Mou’s account in his *Wushi zishu*, pp. 91-102.

<sup>76</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Wushi zishu*, p. 102.

<sup>77</sup> See page 9 of Mou’s “Xiong Shili xiansheng zhuinian hui jianghua”, appended to Xiong’s *Dujing shiyao*, vol. II.

the great event of the Anti-Japanese War—it was a matter of life and death for the [Chinese] nation-race. Yet, this was but an objective factor. It alone does not provide an adequate explanation: only because I have encountered Mr. Xiong am I the person I am now.

It was not until Mou had moved to Hong Kong in late 1960, when he was fifty-one, that the raging of his cultural nationalist and anti-Communist sentiments subsided enough to allow him to concentrate on the writing of his magnum opus *Xinti yu xingti* 心體與性體. (Onto-cosmological Grounding of the Mind and of Human Nature) and resume his philosophical engagement with Kant's critical philosophy. The renewed engagement with Kant lasted for more than three decades until the end of Mou's philosophical career. The next section gives an overview of Mou's writings.

### **An Overview of Mou's Writings**

Mou was a prolific writer. In addition to many journal articles, he published thirty-one books during his life.<sup>78</sup> Six of the books are redundant because they have either been incorporated into or republished under a new title.<sup>79</sup> Several of the remaining twenty-five titles contain two or three volumes; and a few of them comprise a selection of previously-published journal articles, talks, and lectures to university students. A thirty-three-volume collection of Mou's writings, talks and lectures—the *Mou Zongsan xiansheng quanji* 牟宗三先生全集—was compiled by his disciples and published in 2003.<sup>80</sup> This is a comprehensive collection and includes some of his previously unpublished writings.

Although a prolific writer, Mou was a late bloomer. He did not consider his own philosophical thinking to have reached a mature stage till after the age of fifty (he turned

---

<sup>78</sup> See a complete listing in Cai Renhou, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuesi nianpu*, pp. 215-219.

<sup>79</sup> These six are *Cong Zhouyi fangmian yanjiu Zhongguo zhi Xuanxue ji daode zhexue* 從周易方面研究中國之玄學及道德哲學; *Lixing de lixiang zhuyi* 理性的理想主義; *Xunxue dalue* 荀學大略; *Wang Yangming zhi liangzhi jiao* 王陽明致良知教; *Wei-Jin Xuanxue* 魏晉玄學 and *Zhongguo wenhua de xingcha* 中國文化的省察. They correspond to items 1, 3, 4, 5, 11 and 24 of Cai's complete listing mentioned in the last footnote. All of the articles in *Zhongguo wenhua de xingcha* were subsequently incorporated into Mou's *Shidai yu ganshou*.

fifty around the middle of 1958 by Chinese measure) and told his students in 1978 not to read the books he wrote before that age (“至於我五十歲以前所寫的那些書，你們不要看。”<sup>81</sup>). Yet, each one of his works sheds light on the development of his thought. While none of the articles or books he wrote prior to fifty was important to his moral metaphysics, together they display the beginning of his abiding interest in abstract metaphysical thinking (this reflects his academic training at Peking University) and in China's cultural reconstruction (this reflects the influences of Xiong Shili and Hegel). In the following, I give a summary of Mou's writings during his mainland period and then discuss his works after his permanent departure from the mainland in 1949 (when he was forty).

According to Cai Renhou's 蔡仁厚 chronology of Mou's academic career, Mou started publishing articles in 1932, when he was still a student.<sup>82</sup> As mentioned, Mou held various teaching posts in the mainland after his graduation from Peking University and went through hardships in his career and financially during the Japanese occupation of China. Many of the early articles he wrote on contemporary social and political issues were published in the journal that was the mouthpiece of Zhang Junmai's minor political party, and from early 1937 through mid-1941, Mou worked on and off as the editor of that journal.<sup>83</sup> In 1947, Mou started a monthly on his own but had to stop after four issues because of lack of funding.<sup>84</sup> Volumes 25 and 26 of the complete collection of his works collect sixty-eight articles written by him prior to his permanent departure from the mainland. These articles fall under five broad categories: ten articles under “Discussions of Logic”; eight under “Discussions of Knowledge”; sixteen under “Discussions of Philosophical Issues”, twenty-seven under “Discussions of

---

<sup>80</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng quanji* 牟宗三先生全集 (The Complete Collection of the Works of Mou Zongsan), Taipei: Lianhe baoxi wenhua jijin hui, 2003.

<sup>81</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 407.

<sup>82</sup> Cai Renhou, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuesi nianpu*, p. 5.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6-10. For a brief biography of Zhang Junmai, see Hu Weixi 胡偉希, *Chuantong yu renwen: dui gangtai Xin Rujia de kaocha* 傳統與人文---對港臺新儒家的考察 (Tradition and Human Culture: An Investigation into the New Confucians of Taiwan and Hong Kong), Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992, p. 288.

<sup>84</sup> Cai Renhou, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuesi nianpu*, p. 13.

Contemporary Social or Political Situation”, and seven under “Discussions of Literature”.<sup>85</sup>

Besides the sixty-eight articles mentioned above, Mou published other articles during his mainland period. These are either articles that have been incorporated by Mou into his books, or articles that involve largely the translation of a foreign work and are collected in a separate volume (volume 17) of the complete collection.<sup>86</sup> In addition, volume 26 of Mou’s complete works contains eleven articles that were not published until after his death, all of which were written during his mainland period.<sup>87</sup> In terms of books, Mou wrote three prior to leaving the mainland. The first one was his study of the *Yi*. As mentioned, he wrote this prior to his graduation from Peking University. The work was self-published in 1935 and republished in 1988 under the revised title of *Zhouyi de ziran zhexue yu daode hanyi* 周易的自然哲學與道德函義 (The Natural Philosophy of the *Zhouyi* and its Moral Implication).<sup>88</sup> The second book was *Luoji dianfan* 邏輯典範 (A Paradigm of Logic), published in 1941.<sup>89</sup> He completed the writing of *Renshi xin zhi pipan* 認識心之批判 (Critique of the Cognitive Mind) prior to leaving the mainland. The book was published in 1956 (volume one) and 1957 (volume two).<sup>90</sup>

Mou wrote twenty-two books (excluding the few that were redundant) after his permanent departure from mainland China. All but four of them were written during his mature phase (after he turned fifty in mid-1958). These four were *Lize xue* 理則學 (The Study of Logic); *Lishi zhexue* 歷史哲學 (The Philosophy of History);<sup>91</sup> *Shengming de xuewen* 生命的學問 (the Learning of Life), a collection of twenty-one published journal articles written in Taiwan from 1949 to 1957 on Chinese culture and other topics;<sup>92</sup> and *Daode de lixiang zhuyi* 道德的理想主義 (Moral Idealism), a collection of fourteen

---

<sup>85</sup> See the contents section at the front of *Mou Zongsan xiansheng quanji*, vol. 25.

<sup>86</sup> See the compiling and proofreading foreword of *Mou Zongsan xiansheng quanji*, vol. 25.

<sup>87</sup> See the contents section near the back of *Mou Zongsan xiansheng quanji*, vol. 26.

<sup>88</sup> Cai Renhou, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuesi nianpu*, pp. 6, 70.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 21, 23.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>92</sup> See p.1 of Mou’s preface in his *Shengming de xuewen* 生命的學問 (the Learning of Life), Taipei: Sanmin shuju, 1970.

journal articles, which were written and published by Mou in Taiwan during 1949-1954 and present his vision of a *Ru* modernity for China.<sup>93</sup> For the purpose of this thesis, I have divided the eighteen mature works into three groups. The first group relates to his elucidation of Chinese thought. The second group relates to the development and elucidation of his moral metaphysics and its engagement with Kant's critical philosophy. The last group relates to his cultural nationalist discourse and thoughts on Chinese culture. I add his *Daode de lixiang zhuyi* to the last group as the work lays the foundation for his cultural nationalism even though it was written before he turned fifty. The following is an annotated listing based on this division:

### Mou's Elucidation of Chinese Thought

1. *Zhongguo zhexue de tezhi* 中國哲學的特質 (The Characteristics of Chinese Philosophy), a collection of twelve introductory lectures on Chinese philosophy delivered by Mou in 1962
2. *Caixing yu xuanli* 才性與玄理. (Material Human Nature and the "Profound Thought" [of the Wei-Jin Period], written in 1962), a critical study of the Profound Learning (*Xuanxue*) of the Wei-Jin period (220-420) in China
3. The three-volume magnum opus, *Xinti yu xingti* 心體與性體 (Onto-Cosmological Grounding of the Mind and of Human Nature; vol. 1 & 2, published in 1968; vol. 3, published in 1969)—This work combines with *Cong Lu Xiangshan dao Liu Jishan* (see next item) to form a four-volume critical study of Song-Ming *Ruxue*. It also provides a sketch of Mou's philosophical engagement with Kant and his formalisation of his own system of thought into a moral metaphysics.
4. *Cong Lu Xiangshan dao Liu Jishan* 從陸象山到劉戡山 (From Lu Xiangshan to Liu Jishan, published in 1979)
5. *Foxing yu bore* 佛性與般若 (Buddha Nature and Wisdom, published in 1977), a critical study of *Fo* thought in China, with the focus on the Tiantai School

---

<sup>93</sup> Cai Renhou, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuesi nianpu*, p. 25.

6. *Mingjia yu Xunzi* 名家與荀子 (*Mingjia* and *Xunzi*, published in 1979)—This combines in a book form Mou’s separate writings on *Mingjia* and on *Xunzi*.
7. *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang* 中國哲學十九講 (Nineteen Lectures on Chinese Philosophy)—This book consists of nineteen chapters corresponding to nineteen lectures Mou gave to postgraduates in Taiwan in 1978. Because the lectures were delivered after the completion of Mou’s major writings on Chinese thought, the work presents a valuable synoptic summary of Mou’s mature reading of Chinese thought.<sup>94</sup> It serves as a primer of Mou’s thought. The information here is concentrated, but one can readily turn to Mou’s more specialised writings for elaboration.

#### Mou’s Moral Metaphysics and Philosophical Engagement with Kant

8. *Zhi de zhijue yu Zhongguo zhexue* 智的直覺與中國哲學 (Intellectual Intuition and Chinese Philosophy, published in 1971 ) and
9. *Xianxiang yu wu zishen* 現象與物自身 (Phenomena and Noumena, published in 1975)

As reflected in the titles, these two books seek to develop Mou’s reading of Lu-Wang metaphysical thought as a moral metaphysics by appropriating two key Kantian terms—intellectual intuition and noumenon—while modifying substantially Kant’s understanding of the human mind and refuting Kant’s epistemological negation of human intellectual intuition and human knowledge of noumena.

10. *Yuanshan lun* 圓善論 (A Treatise on the Highest Good, published in 1985)—This is the culmination of Mou’s philosophical career. Mou aims to accomplish four objectives in this work. The first is to affirm that the concept of the highest good is the crowning concept of Kant’s moral philosophy and to uphold Kant’s ideal of due correspondence between virtue and happiness (*yuanshan* 圓善). The second is to present an in-depth elucidation of Mengzi’s assertion of the innate goodness of human beings (*xingshan* 性善) and to contrast Mengzi’s

---

<sup>94</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, preface, p.1

understanding of human nature with that of Kant. The third objective is to elucidate Kant's concept of due correspondence between virtue and happiness and to employ the "perfect teaching" paradigm to compare and contrast the ontologies Mou sees embedded in the three main strands of Chinese thought—*Ru*, *Fo* and *Dao*—with the conclusion that the moral metaphysics of Song *Ru* thinker Hu Wufeng represents the only ultimate "perfect teaching" truly capable of delivering an actual onto-cosmological unity of virtue and happiness non-contentiously (meaning "perfectly" for Mou). The last objective is to argue that Hu's dialectical formulation of an onto-cosmological unity of virtue and happiness is more "perfect" than Kant's formulation of the highest good by theological postulation.

11. Mou's Chinese translation of Kant's *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* and *Critique of Practical Reason* (published in one volume in 1982)
12. Mou's Chinese translation of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (published in 1983)
13. Mou's Chinese translation of Kant's *Critique of Judgement* (published in 1992 and 1993)
14. *Mingli lun* 名理論, Mou's Chinese translation of Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, published in 1987

#### Mou's Cultural Nationalist Discourse and Thoughts on Chinese Culture

15. *Daode de lixiang zhuyi* 道德的理想主義 (Moral Idealism)—This is a collection of journal articles written and published by Mou during 1949-1954 and presents his vision of a *Ru* modernity for China. The book, first published in 1959, lays the foundation for Mou's cultural nationalism. It was expanded to include two additional articles in the appendix and republished with a new preface in 1978.
16. *Zhengdao yu zhidao* 政道與治道 (Rulership and Governance)—This is Mou's analysis of Chinese rulership and governance based on his early understanding of the spirit and characteristics of Chinese culture vis-a-vis Western culture. Most

of the chapters in the book were written at the start of his mature phase. The work was published in 1961 and republished in 1980 with a new preface.

17. *Shidai yu ganshou* 時代與感受 (The Times and Sensibilities)—This is a collection of twenty-four talks given by Mou on Chinese Communism, Chinese culture, Chinese philosophy and other topics. Mou delivered most of the talks to a general audience in the 1970s and 1980s. The collection was published in 1984.
18. *Wushi zishu* 五十自述 (An Autobiography at Fifty), an autobiography written by Mou at fifty (published in a book form in 1989)—The work, comprising six chapters, gives a rare glimpse into Mou the person and reveals the strong cultural nationalist fervour that drove his long philosophical career.
19. *Zhongxi zhexue zhi huitong shisi jiang* 中西哲學之會通十四講 (Fourteen Lectures on the Reconciliation between Chinese and Western Philosophy)—This is a collection of fourteen lectures given by Mou at Taiwan National University around 1980. The lecture series reiterates many philosophical points in his *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang* and expounds his thesis that because Kant's system—in particular his understanding of human reason and of the distinction between noumena and phenomena—is the only Western philosophical system that is compatible with the “two-tiered mind” paradigm, it serves as the essential bridge between what Mou dichotomised as Western and Eastern philosophy.<sup>95</sup>

Mou published many journal articles in Taiwan and Hong Kong after his permanent departure from the mainland. Fifty-five of these were republished after his death in a sequel to *Shidai yu ganshou* (reproduced as volume 24 of the complete collection).<sup>96</sup> Volume 27 of the complete collection collects another forty-two of these articles.<sup>97</sup> The rest of the articles are either ones already incorporated into books by Mou

---

<sup>95</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongxi zhexue zhi huitong shisi jiang* 中西哲學之會通十四講 (Fourteen Lectures on the Reconciliation of Chinese Philosophy with Western Philosophy), Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1990, p. 225.

<sup>96</sup> See the contents section at the front of *Mou Zongsan xiansheng quanji*, vol. 24.

<sup>97</sup> See the contents section at the front of *Mou Zongsan xiansheng quanji*, vol. 27.

or articles involving largely the translation of a foreign work and are collected in volume 17 of the complete collection.<sup>98</sup>

---

<sup>98</sup> See the compiling and proofreading foreword of *Mou Zongsan xiansheng quanji*, vol. 27.



# 1

## The Philosophical Influence of Xiong

While Mou's system of thought differs from that of his mentor Xiong Shili in both form and content, Mou's basic philosophical orientation was deeply inspired and influenced by Xiong. When Mou read Xiong's *Xin Weishi lun* 新唯識論 (New Consciousness-Only Treatise) for the first time in 1932, he admired the writing but did not comprehend very much of it. At the time, he knew a lot about mathematical logic, the process philosophy of Whitehead and the cosmology-cum-moral philosophy contained in the *Yi* but very little about *Foxue*, and his understanding of Song-Ming *Ruxue* was at a superficial and conceptual level.<sup>99</sup> During the ensuing years up until his permanent departure from the mainland in 1949, Xiong was his sole mentor in Chinese thought and the two kept in close contact. Xiong's *Shili yuyao* 十力語要 (Selected Letters and Talks of Xiong Shili) and its sequel<sup>100</sup> include altogether seven items of correspondence between them from 1937 to early 1949. Mou's thought was in a formative stage during this period, and it is amply clear from reading these seven items of correspondence that Mou read Xiong's writings and put great effort into unravelling, with Xiong's help, the similarities and differences among the streams of Song-Ming *Ruxue* and between Song-Ming *Ruxue* and *Foxue*. Ng Yu-kwan exalts Xiong to being "the first Confucian after Wang Yangming to inherit and promote moral spirituality in general, and moral metaphysics in particular." According to him, Xiong's metaphysical theory of non-separability of fundamental state/condition and function (*tiyong bu er* 體用不二), forms the foundation of *Xin Rujia* thought. Furthermore, he thinks that Mou and the other two of Xiong's foremost

---

<sup>99</sup> See pages 4-5 of Mou's "Xiong Shili xiansheng zhuinian hui jianghua", appended to Xiong's *Dujing shiyao*, vol. II. See also Mou Zongsan, *Wushi zishu*, pp. 44-45.

<sup>100</sup> Xiong Shili, *Shili yuyao* 十力語要 (Selected Letters and Talks of Xiong Shili), Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1989; and Xiong Shili, *Shili yuyao chuxu* 十力語要初續 (The First Sequel to Selected Letters and Talks of Xiong Shili), Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1990.

disciples, Tang Junyi 唐君毅 (1909-1978) and Xu Fuguan 徐復觀 (1903-1982), were “deeply indebted to him [Xiong] for the cultivation of a sophisticated philosophical orientation and a superior personality.”<sup>101</sup> John Makeham highlights the shared conviction among Liu Shuxian, Zheng Jiadong and others that what Mou inherited from Xiong was a spiritual legacy. Makeham also gathers from the writings of these scholars that this spiritual legacy consists in Xiong’s enlightened insights into the moral mind or nature and Xiong’s intense “desire to open up a spiritual direction for the future path of Chinese culture.” On Makeham’s view, Mou and his followers fabricated the spiritual legacy to build lineage and bolster their claim to be legitimate *Xin Rujia* (the *Xin Rujia* movement is the subject of Chapter 8).<sup>102</sup> Mou and his followers did resort to lineage building as a hegemonic device to strengthen their authority, and precisely this suggestion is made in Chapter 7. Yet, this does not mean that Mou was insincere when he said he was inspired by Xiong and that he was the person he was because of his having encountered Xiong. This chapter examines Xiong’s philosophical influence on Mou. I begin with a brief introduction to Xiong’s thought and his theory of non-separability of fundamental state/condition and function. Because both Xiong and Mou drew from classical *Ruxue* and Song-Ming *Ruxue* and since Mou very rarely referred explicitly to Xiong in his philosophical writings, I aim not to ascertain a direct transmission of philosophical thought between mentor and disciple. Rather, I identify five key features or themes that Mou inherited from Xiong and built into his system of thought. These are eclecticism and syncretism, an unequivocal identification with *Rujia*, moral idealism, an orientation towards the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind and an emphasis on personal verification of a spiritual oneness with the myriad things. I aim to show that Xiong emboldened Mou to engage with *Foxue* and Kant’s moral philosophy, that his unequivocal identification with *Rujia*, moral idealism and faith in *Ru* ethico-spirituality inspired Mou deeply and that his mentorship was instrumental in orienting Mou’s reading of *Ruxue* towards the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the similarities and key differences between the systems of thought of the two thinkers.

---

<sup>101</sup> Ng Yu-kwan, “Xiong Shili’s Metaphysical Theory about the Non-Separation of Substance and Function”, in *New Confucianism: A Critical Examination*, ed. John Makeham, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, p. 219.

## Xiong's Thought and his Theory of Non-Separability of Fundamental State/Condition and Function

Like some of the Song-Ming *Ru* thinkers and following Liang Shuming, who is retrospectively regarded by many scholars as the founder of the *Xin Rujia* movement, Xiong Shili studied *Fo* texts, in particular those of the *Weishi zong* 唯識宗 (Consciousness-Only School), in search of metaphysical truth and the meaning of life, felt dissatisfied with the world-denying orientation of *Foxue*, and embraced *Ru* thought as the teaching that espouses metaphysical truth and the right way of living. After leaving the Nanjing institute, where he spent two years studying with the *Weishi* master Ouyang Jingwu 歐陽竟無, Xiong taught the *Weishi* teaching at Peking University but became dissatisfied with the basic *Fo* orientation away from worldly living and towards the attainment of nirvāṇa. His quest for metaphysical truth and the meaning of life did not end until he finally arrived at a deep understanding of the teaching of the *Yi*, which he found to resonate with the onto-cosmological truth he had arrived at through meditative realisation. His masterwork *Xin Weishi lun* was a vigorous attempt to correct what he thought was an erroneous cosmology and a misunderstanding of the human mind in the *Weishi* teaching.<sup>103</sup>

There is no question that Xiong's *Xin Weishi lun* was deeply influenced by *Foxue*. Ng Yu-kwan relates that Xiong went back and forth between various *Ru* classics and *Fo* texts<sup>104</sup> before reaching the metaphysical understanding presented in *Xin Weishi lun*. Regarding Xiong's metaphysics, Ng remarks, "On the one hand, he was deeply impressed by *The Book of Changes*, which claims that the universe is perpetually and vigorously changing. On the other hand, he also absorbed the [Mādhyamaka] Buddhist idea of quiescence [based on the key *Fo* concept of "emptiness" (*kong* 空), to be explained below]. As a result, he formulated the metaphysical doctrine of an ontological

---

<sup>102</sup> John Makeham, "The New *Daotong*" in *New Confucianism: A Critical Examination*, ed. *idem*, pp. 58-60.

<sup>103</sup> Xiong Shili, *Xin Weishi lun*, vol. I, pp. 142-143. Also, Cai Renhou, *Xiong Shili xiansheng xuexing nianbiao*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>104</sup> As pointed out by Ng, Xiong studied the *Weishi* texts of the Vijñāna-vāda School as well as the *Prajñā-pāramitā* texts of the Mādhyamaka, the other main Mahāyāna philosophical school. See Ng's "Xiong Shili's Metaphysical Theory", p. 221.

substance, which is both active and quiescent.”<sup>105</sup> Ng also points out the limitation in Xiong’s understanding of *Foxue*:

What he meant by Buddhism is primarily the Mahāyāna Vijñāna-vāda and secondarily the Mahāyāna Mādhyamika [Mādhyamaka], What he meant by Vijñāna-vāda is again confined to the doctrines of Dharmapāla (Hufa 護法) explicating the thought of Vasubandhu (Shiqin 世親). This is precisely the Vijñāna-vāda that blossomed in China. As for the other development of the thought of Vasubandhu,...Xiong knew nothing. ...Xiong could only read Buddhist classics in Chinese translations but not the original Sanskrit classics or any Buddhist classics in Tibetan translations. ...<sup>106</sup>

Another limitation on Xiong’s understanding of *Foxue* is his confounding the *Fo* and *Ru* notions of *benti* 本體 (fundamental state/condition)<sup>107</sup> in his writings. Xiong and Mou used the term “*benti*” (“*ti*” 體 for short), to denote in the *Ru* context the ultimate onto-cosmological principle and transcendent reality, which is also immanent in human beings as their innate nature. In contrast, *benti* in the *Fo* context is not an actual onto-cosmological first creative principle positively generating the myriad things even though it is also immanent in human beings as their *Foxing* 佛性 (Buddha-nature). Xiong’s confounding the two notions of *benti* created a divergence of views between him and Mou, but only in terms of their understanding of *Foxue* and not *Ruxue*.<sup>108</sup>

*Xin Weishi lun* establishes itself on Xiong’s theory of non-separability of fundamental state/condition and function, with fundamental state/condition understood

---

<sup>105</sup> Ng Yu-kwan, “Xiong Shili’s Metaphysical Theory”, p. 221.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 241.

<sup>107</sup> Ng rendered *ti* 體 (short for as *benti* 本體) as “substance”. To avoid the term being misunderstood to be “substance” in the Western sense of the word and to convey the literal meaning of the Chinese term, I render *ti* 體 as “fundamental state/condition”.

<sup>108</sup> Xiong Shili, *Xin Weishi lun*, vol. I, pp. 156, 162. See also Lin Zhenguó 林鎮國, “Zhongguo Fojiao xingshangxue de xushuo xingtai: Xin Rujia lun Fojia tiyong yi” 中國佛教形上學的虛說形態：新儒家論佛家體用義 (The Mode of Empty Designation in Chinese Buddhist Metaphysics: New Confucian Discussions about the Meaning of Fundamental State/Condition and Function), in *Rujia sixiang zai xiandai dongya: Zhongguo dalu yu Taiwan pian* 儒家思想在現代東亞：中國大陸與臺灣篇 (Confucian Thought in Contemporary East Asia: Papers on Mainland China and Taiwan), ed. Liu Shuxian 劉述先, Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan, Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiusuo choubeyi, 2000, pp. 33-39. Mou alludes to a difference between his and Xiong’s understandings of *Foxue* at the end of his preface to his *Yuanshan lun* (preface, p. xvi).

to be the first creative principle and the ultimate transcendent reality. The theory aims to negate the cosmology propounded by *Youzong* 有宗 (the Consciousness-Only School in China). The latter is based on eight separate consciousnesses, with the eighth (the *ālayavijñāna* 阿賴耶識 or storehouse consciousness) understood to be the basis of all things.<sup>109</sup> The *Xicizhuan*'s 繫辭傳 (the Great Commentary, part of the *Yizhuan* or Ten Wings) equation of Qian 乾 (the first hexagram of the *Yi*, representing heaven) and Kun 坤 (the second hexagram of the *Yi*, representing earth) with *he pi* 闢闢 (the meaning of which is explained below)<sup>110</sup> informed Xiong's theory, so did the saying by Laozi 老子 (traditionally regarded as an elder contemporary of *Kongzi*) that "the way begets one; one begets two; two begets three" (*Laozi* XLII). Relating the saying by Laozi to the three lines of the *Yi* trigrams,<sup>111</sup> Xiong's theory is an elaborate application of the cosmological principle of "mutual completion through opposition" (*xiangfan xiangcheng* 相反相成) and aims to show how fundamental state/condition manifests itself in the phenomenal world. The principle of "mutual completion through opposition", Xiong asserted, is what the *Yi* elucidates.<sup>112</sup> He presented it as the most basic and universal principle of change involving the following three steps. First, there is fundamental state/condition (the one that is about to manifest itself in the manifold), understood by Xiong to be a non-material, absolute and incessant creativity that is inconceivable to the human mind (as it is beyond time and space) and has no beginning and no end.<sup>113</sup> Then, fundamental state/condition manifests itself incessantly and entirely in material form by a contracting and condensing movement called *xi* 翕 (same as *he* 闢 and represented by the Kun trigram with the broken *yin* lines reflecting the relative nature of things). *Xi* is the two begotten by the one and represents the incessant, materialising force of fundamental state/condition that brings about the myriad things in the cosmos. Lastly, based on the principle of "mutual completion through opposition",

<sup>109</sup> Xiong Shili, *Xin Weishi lun*, vol. II, p. 555.

<sup>110</sup> See the *Xicizhuan* in *Zhouyi*, p. 7.28a. Xiong related that at the age of eighteen, he came across the equation of *he* and *pi* with Qian and Kun in the *Xicizhuan* and instantly realised that *he* and *pi* correspond to matter and mind. See p.15 of the publisher's preface in Xiong's *Xin Weishi lun*, vol. I.

<sup>111</sup> Xiong believed that Dao thought was derived from the *Yi* and maintained that the line "one begets two, two begets three" in the *Laozi* issued from the mutual entailment premise of the *Yi* and explains why the *Yi* trigrams contain three lines each. See his *Xin Weishi lun*, vol. I, pp. 97, 119.

<sup>112</sup> Xiong Shili, *Xin Weishi lun*, vol. I, p. 108.

each *xi* movement simultaneously calls forth or entails an opposing, expanding movement called *pi* 闢 (represented by the Qian trigram with the solid *yang* lines reflecting the non-material and indivisible spirit of fundamental state/condition latent in the myriad things). *Pi* is the three begotten by the two. Because *pi* asserts and retains the non-material and independent nature of fundamental state/condition and rules over *xi* and the myriad material things, Xiong thinks of it as “the three that contains the one and the two.”<sup>114</sup> The following diagram captures the three steps:

1. Fundamental state/condition about to manifest itself in the manifold

NOTE:  
This figure is included on page 34  
of the print copy of the thesis held in  
the University of Adelaide Library.

3. Opposing *pi* arises to assert the sprit of fundamental state/condition, represented by the Qian trigram (containing three solid lines) shown next to the upward arrow above.

2. Fundamental state/condition manifests itself through *xi*, represented by the Kun trigram (containing three broken lines) shown next to the downward arrow above.

Diagram 1. The Manifestation of Fundamental State/Condition (*Benti*)

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 94-95. In Xiong’s understanding, time and form relate to the phenomenal world only and do not apply to fundamental state/condition, see pp. 145-146 of the same source.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 96-102, 111.

Informed by the doctrine of conditioned arising (*yuanqi xingkong* 緣起性空) taught by the *Kongzong* 空宗 (the Mādhyamaka School in China), Xiong saw the myriad things (*xi*) as “empty” in that they possess no true selves and arise as a result of causes and conditions.<sup>115</sup> Nonetheless, their appearances are in accordance with the myriad principles contained in fundamental state/condition. This, Xiong explained, is what the *Shijing* (the *Odes*) means by “where there is a thing, there is a pattern” (有物有則) (*Mengzi* VIA: 6).<sup>116</sup> In Xiong’s understanding, the phenomenal world is ever-changing—phenomena arise and perish right away within the shortest duration of time—and the apparent persistence in time and transformation of the material world is actually sustained by the incessant manifestation of fundamental state/condition in *xi* and *pi*.<sup>117</sup> This incessant transformation or change, Xiong told us, is what is referred to in the *Shijing* as “The decree of heaven, profound and incessant!” (*Zhongyong* XXVI).<sup>118</sup> *Pi* retains the spirit of fundamental condition/state. It is everywhere: it pervades every single bit of material and thus the entire cosmos. Xiong illustrated the manifestation of fundamental state/condition in *xi* and *pi* with the *Fo* metaphor of the seawater turning into foam masses. In Xiong’s application of the metaphor, all of the seawater turns into foam masses so that the seawater pervades each foam mass and is found only in the foam masses.<sup>119</sup> Both *xi* and *pi* are functions, but even though *pi* is technically a function, it represents fundamental state/condition as manifested in the phenomenal world and entailed in the material function (*xi*).<sup>120</sup> Xiong called *pi* the cosmic mind (*yuzhou xin* 宇宙心) or cosmic spirit (*yuzhou jingshen* 宇宙精神).<sup>121</sup> He believed that by virtue of *pi*,

---

<sup>115</sup> “Emptiness” means that everything in the phenomenal world (what Xiong calls a function) arises as a result of causes and conditions and is given a name but is “empty” in reality in that it has no real independence or permanence—no real self to speak of. For example, a plant comes about as a result of a seed (the cause) receiving water, sunlight, and nutrients from the soil (conditions). A plant is “empty” in that it is but a name we give to the aggregate of the seed and conditions that have brought about the seed’s growth. (See Xiong’s *Xin Weishi lun*, vol. I, pp. 45-46). Thus, while fundamental state/condition is independent, non-material, permanent and real, its manifestation in the myriad functions is “empty”.

<sup>116</sup> Xiong Shili, *Xin Weishi lun*, vol. I, p. 138.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 99, 126-127, 136-137, 141.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 136.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 113, 315. The metaphor of the seawater and the foam masses can be found in the *Lengyanjing* 楞嚴經 (*Śūrangama Sūtra*). See *Lengyanjing yidu jianzhu* 楞嚴經易讀簡註 (The *Lengyanjing* (annotated)), Hong Kong: Hongda yinshua sheji gongsi, 1993, Chapter II, p. 5 and Chapter VI, p. 23.

<sup>120</sup> Xiong Shili, *Xin Weishi lun*, vol I, pp. 101-102.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 112, 115.

fundamental state/condition is imparted not only to human beings (as their innate moral nature) but also to all other things in the cosmos, including inorganic, inert objects like rocks.<sup>122</sup> He brought this home using the *Fo* metaphor of “the moon casting its shadow on each one of the myriad streams” (*yue yin wanchuan* 月印萬川), with the moon representing fundamental state/condition—the one absolute creative principle that holds the myriad principles and casts itself in each and every matter (*xi*) in the form of *pi*.<sup>123</sup> His understanding is that “[t]hey (all things) indeed have latent within them an upward non-materialising force (what we call *pi*). Yet, for this force to manifest itself involves much difficulty”<sup>124</sup> and it is in human beings’ innate moral nature that this force is most manifest.<sup>125</sup>

Xiong’s theory of non-separability of fundamental state/condition and function stipulates that there is no fundamental state/condition outside of function.<sup>126</sup> In other words, “[one] must not seek the large body of seawater [fundamental state/condition or *pi*] outside of the masses of foam [*xi*]”.<sup>127</sup> Mind (cosmic mind or *pi*) and matter (*xi*) are thus seen as two opposing yet mutually entailing (non-separable) aspects of the indivisible fundamental state/condition fully manifesting itself in functions.<sup>128</sup> That they are non-separable does not mean that they are not opposite, for their mutual completion through opposition is what brings about change. In describing the phenomenal as “empty” (without a permanent self), both Xiong and Mādhyamaka philosophy aimed to reveal the ultimate reality in the myriad phenomena. Xiong likened this to revealing the hemp in the rope or the seawater in the foam masses. On his view, *Kongzong* has profound insight into the impermanence of the material world and the quiescence of the ultimate reality but errs in emphasising them exclusively, thus overlooking entirely the boundless creative potential of the ultimate reality.<sup>129</sup> This prompted his assertion that “Śākyamuni [the founding Buddha] turned upside down [from excluding to embracing

---

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. II, pp. 417, 419. Xiong equated the innate nature of human beings with Mengzi’s original mind or Wang Yangming’s innate moral consciousness. See pp. 434, 437 of the same source.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 432.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 112.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 419.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 95.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 315.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 102-103.

the boundless creative potential of the ultimate reality] is Kongzi.”<sup>130</sup> In Xiong’s metaphysics, the myriad physical and mental phenomena (the foam masses) in the ever-changing phenomenal world<sup>131</sup> are “empty”, but they are also real by virtue of the fundamental state/condition (the seawater) pervading the entire cosmos and immanent in each phenomena. Thus, fundamental state/condition and function are not separate, and the Mādhyamaka negation of the physical world as being “empty” is fused with a metaphysical principle and reality of incessant creation that brings about life, change, and procreation. As a result, “the entire cosmos is reality in its fullness.”<sup>132</sup>

The dialectical depiction of fundamental state/condition in the form of *xi* and *pi* and the fusion of the Mādhyamaka notion of emptiness with the *Ru* notion of heaven’s boundless creativity, as presented above, was Xiong’s unique contribution to *Ru* thought. The dialectic led him to realise the profound truth of the absolute one (fundamental state/condition) manifesting itself in the manifold (*yiben wanshu* 一本萬殊).<sup>133</sup> In stating that *pi* or the cosmic mind rules over matter, Xiong was obviously championing the power of mind over matter. He was inspired by the constant vigour of heaven (which he understood as fundamental state/condition<sup>134</sup>) described in the *Yi*.<sup>135</sup> Edward L. Shaughnessy thinks of the *Yi*, which “was given first place among China’s classics” during the Han dynasty, as “perhaps the single most important work in China’s long intellectual history.” He observes that “even in the pre-Han period the original divination text had already undergone a long process of interpretation and re-interpretation, resulting in the incorporation of a group of commentaries, the so called ‘Ten Wings’ (*shih i* [*shi yi*] 十翼), into what was to become one of the classical texts. By virtue of their canonical status, these commentaries, which reflect the world view of the late

---

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 85. Also, Xiong Shili, *Yuan Ru* 原儒 (Original Confucianism), 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1997, p. 146. (Note that here, as on p. 145, Xiong refers to Śākyamuni as *foshi* 佛氏.)

<sup>130</sup> Xiong Shili, *Yuan Ru*, p. 147.

<sup>131</sup> Xiong used the term “*xing*” 行 to refer to physical and mental phenomena and all of them are functions. See his *Xin Weishi lun*, vol. I, pp. 84, 86.

<sup>132</sup> Xiong Shili, *Xin Weishi lun*, vol. I, p. 91.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 277.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 186.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 119, 141-142. Passages lauding the virtues of heaven and suggesting that they be emulated by human beings abound in the *Yi*. The *Xiangzhuàn* 象傳 (Commentary on the Images, part of the *Yizhuàn* or Ten Wings) on the Qian hexagram, for example, describes the vigour of heaven as follows: “Heaven moves with constant vigour; the morally cultivated person should therefore strive incessantly to better himself” (天行健，君子以自強不息). See *Zhouyi*, p. 1.8a.

Warring States or Han periods, ensured that thereafter even the original stratum of the text would be interpreted according to moralistic concerns.”<sup>136</sup> Xiong’s interpretation of the *Yi* was obviously not limited to moralistic concerns. As mentioned, the *Yi* answered his quest for metaphysical truth and the meaning of life and accorded with the onto-cosmological truth he had arrived at through meditative realisation. His understanding was that constant vigour is the characterising virtue of fundamental state/condition and, more specifically, human beings’ nature and that it is in the spirit of constant vigour that one should live one’s life.<sup>137</sup>

Xiong’s stipulation that “[one] must not seek the large body of seawater outside of the masses of foam” holds the key to the mind-settling power of his metaphysics. If the ultimate reality, truth, and principle of human living (what Xiong called fundamental state/condition, represented by the seawater) lies nowhere except in the myriad manifestations of it in the phenomenal world (what Xiong called functions, represented by the foam masses), if incessant change in accordance with the myriad principles held within the absolute first creative onto-cosmological principle is the only constant in the world, then there is no need to search for meaning and purpose beyond the here and now, and with one’s mind thus settled, one can attend fully to the task of discovering and learning about these principles and realising them in day-to-day worldly living.

## **Xiong’s Philosophical Influence on Mou**

### **(a) Eclecticism and Syncretism**

Unlike his Song-Ming Ru predecessors, who were too orthodox to admit to borrowing materials from *Dao* or *Fo*, Xiong appropriated *Fo* terminology liberally and referred to Zhuangzi and Laozi many times in his *Xin Weishi lun*.<sup>138</sup> One of the main ingredients of Mahāyāna *Fo* is the adoption of the bodhisattva path, and despite his objection to *Fo*’s world-denying orientation, Xiong thought that the bodhisattva spirit of great courage and

---

<sup>136</sup> Edward L. Shaughnessy, “*I Ching* 易經”, in *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide*, ed. Michael Loewe, Berkeley, California: the Society for the Study of Early China and the Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1993, p. 216.

<sup>137</sup> Xiong Shili, *Xin Weishi lun*, vol. I, pp. 86, 118-119, 141-142, 184-186.

<sup>138</sup> Examples can be found on pp. 97, 137, 140 of his *Xin Weishi lun*, vol. I.

great compassion resonates with the *Ru* spirit of empathetic compassion.<sup>139</sup> He also commended occasional attempts by Islamic scholars to reconcile *Ruxue* with Islamic teachings.<sup>140</sup> This reflected his belief that sagely teachings are reconcilable: “Truth [arrived at by different sages] is one and the same”<sup>141</sup> and “those who are enlightened reach the same enlightenment”.<sup>142</sup>

Xiong prided himself on his eclecticism and his syncretism of *Ruxue* and *Foxue*: “People might suspect that my *Xin Weishi lun* is *Fo* on the outside and *Ru* on the inside. Only Zaiping [his close friend Lin Zaiping] knows that it is a self-made system—it enters into and departs from the various schools of thought and is complete, rounded, and without hindrances.”<sup>143</sup> He touted his eclecticism as the correct way of doing philosophy. His view was that “Chinese *Ru* and *Dao* texts are extremely difficult to read” and that eclecticism facilitates synthesis and a holistic understanding of the issues at hand.<sup>144</sup> It is important to note that for Xiong, synthesis and understanding are not merely intellectual processes. As discussed below, he advocated grounding speculative thinking in a spiritual oneness with the myriad things to arrive at an enlightened comprehension.

Mou, following Xiong, did progress from eclecticism to syncretism. A letter from Xiong to Mou during the first half of the 1940s shows that Xiong supported and even guided Mou’s engagement with Kant:

---

<sup>139</sup> Xiong Shili, *Dujing shiyao* 讀經示要 (A Guide to the Study of Confucian Classics), vol. I, Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1999, p. 415.

<sup>140</sup> Xiong Shili, *Zhongguo lishi jianghua* 中國歷史講話 (A Talk on Chinese History), Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1984, p. 22.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>142</sup> Xiong Shili, *Dujing shiyao*, vol. I, preface, p. 6.

<sup>143</sup> Xiong Shili, *Shili yuyao chuxu*, pp. 29-30. Xiong’s claim to having come up with his own self-made system appears to have been inspired by the following prescription by Mengzi for “arriving at the way on one’s own”: “The morally cultivated person studies the way intensively because he wants to arrive at it on his own. Having arrived at it himself, he will settle in it comfortably. Having settled in it comfortably, he will draw deeply from it. Having drawn deeply from it, he will come upon its source whenever he turns. That is why the morally cultivated person wants to arrive at it himself” (*Mengzi* IVB: 14). (See Xiong’s *Xin Weishi lun*, vol. I, p. 144.) Xiong’s claim is not entirely boastful. As mentioned, his dialectical depiction of fundamental state/condition in the form of *xi* and *pi* and his fusing the *Fo* notion of emptiness with the *Ru* notion of heaven’s boundless creativity in the phenomenal world, as given in his theory of the non-separability of fundamental state/condition and function, is his unique contribution to *Ru* thought. This is despite my remark below that his specification of human beings’ moral mind as *pi* or the cosmic mind can be seen as a cosmologically intricate restatement of the Lu-Wang metaphysical thesis of “mind is principle”.

<sup>144</sup> Xiong Shili, *Shili yuyao*, p. 6. See also Xiong Shili, *Xin Weishi lun*, vol. I, p. 143.

...You wish to elucidate Kant and make a return to this path.<sup>145</sup> This is a worthwhile effort. Yet, the three concepts that Kant calls God and the soul, and the free will—they are too fragmented. Suppose you did away with God and the soul, and excelled in discussing the free will—wouldn't that be fantastic! ...Kant's free will, if skilfully developed, can merge with the incessant subtlest signs of creation [referring to the first creative principle] described in the *Yi*<sup>146</sup> (this is in respect of cosmology) and be spoken of as an inner ruler (which can be termed the original mind) uniting heaven and human beings. Now wouldn't that be fantastic!<sup>147</sup>

Xiong mentioned Kant also in his *Dujing shiyao* 讀經示要 (A Guide to the Study of Confucian Classics), first published in 1945. There Xiong remarks, “[t]he German philosopher Kant conceives of fundamental state/condition as something that is beyond the reach of [theoretical] reason and can be responded to only through moral practice. His main idea can be reconciled with the spirit of our classical learning.”<sup>148</sup>

Mou's writings are marked by liberal appropriation of *Fo* paradigms and *Fo* and Kantian terminologies. He explored in depth the Profound Learning (*Xuanxue*) of the Wei-Jin period (220-420), Song-Ming *Ruxue* and *Foxue* and identified common themes and paradigms among the various strands of Chinese thought.<sup>149</sup> On his view, although the two metaphysical paradigms that form the basic theoretical framework of his system of thought—the “two-tiered mind” paradigm and the “perfect teaching” paradigm—are *Fo* in their most developed theoretical expression, they are also present in or applicable

---

<sup>145</sup> It is not clear what “this path” refers to specifically, but from the preceding discussion on *Foxue*, the *Chan* (Zen) School, and *Chan* influences on *Ru* thinkers, I think that Xiong had in mind a combination of *Ru* thought and *Chan* thought.

<sup>146</sup> Xiong referred to the incessant first creative principle described in the *Yi* as *zhenji* 真機, which I render as “the incessant subtlest signs of creation”. The term focuses on the subtlest signs of incipient changes in cosmic transformation as given in the *Xicizhuan*. (See *Zhouyi*, p. 7.25b.)

<sup>147</sup> Xiong Shili, *Shili yuyao*, pp. 327-328. The letters and talks collected in *Shili yuyao* and *Shili yuyao chuxu* are not dated. *Shili yuyao* consists of four books, each spanning four or more years. The respective time periods are as follows: 1932-1935 for Book 1, 1937-1940 for Book 2; 1941-1946 for Book 3 and 1924-1928 for Book 4. This is according to Cai's *Xiong Shili xiansheng xuexing nianbiao*, pp. 25, 30, 35, 41-42. Cai does not specify the time period for items in *Shili yuyao chuxu*. Based on Xiong's foreword in the book, it is reasonable to assume that they relate to the second half of the 1940s.

<sup>148</sup> Xiong Shili, *Dujing shiyao*, vol. I, p. 123.

<sup>149</sup> He called these common themes or paradigms “*gongfa* 共法”, a term he borrowed from *Foxue*. Discussions of common themes or paradigms abound in his *Zhongguo zhaxue shijiu jiang*. See instances on pp. 151, 237 and 324 of the book.

to *Dao* and *Ru* and should be regarded as common paradigms.<sup>150</sup> His research into the development of Chinese thought led him to two conclusions. The first was that the many schools of pre-Qin thought contending during the late Zhou period provided the prototypes for Chinese thought, and that *Ru* thought was the orthodox school of thought.<sup>151</sup> *Ruxue* was orthodox, Mou argued, because it was heir to the Chinese cultural system that began with the ancient rulers Yao 堯 and Shun 舜 and developed further in the three pre-Qin dynasties of Xia, Shang and Zhou.<sup>152</sup> As shown below, the same argument had been put forth by Xiong. Mou's second conclusion was that *Ru* thought exerted a strong influence on both the development of Chinese thought and the absorption of foreign systems of thought into China.<sup>153</sup> He pointed out that the central *Dao* concept of not-having (*wu* 無) can be found in *Ru* classics<sup>154</sup> and that the *Yi*, considered a key *Ru* classic by Song-Ming *Ru* thinkers, was among the three books of Profound Learning studied by the Wei-Jin scholars.<sup>155</sup> According to him, Profound Learning represented a further development of *Dao* thought and facilitated the spread of *Fojiao* (Buddhism as a religion) into China.<sup>156</sup> He thus portrayed *Ru* as the main trunk of Chinese thought and presented *Dao* and *Fo* as extensions branching out from the main trunk.<sup>157</sup> Seen in this light, the syncretism of *Ruxue* with *Foxue* in Mou's system of thought was more the consequence of his understanding of the historical development of Chinese thought than a product of deliberate design. His uncovering of common paradigms among *Ru*, *Dao* and *Fo* facilitated a deeper understanding of cross-fertilisation among them and pointed to the significant role the *Yi* played in the development of Chinese thought. In contrast, the syncretism of the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind with Kant's moral philosophy was entirely by design and reflects Mou's commitment to reconcile Chinese and Western thought.

---

<sup>150</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, pp. 298, 301, 384, Also, Mou Zongsan, *Yuanshan lun*, preface, p. x.

<sup>151</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Caixing yu xuanli* 才性與玄理 (Material Human Nature and the "Profound Thought" [of the Wei-Jin Period]), Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, revised ed., 1993, original preface, p. 1.

<sup>152</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Lishi zhexue* 歷史哲學 (The Philosophy of History), expanded ed., Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1962, p. 270.

<sup>153</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Caixing yu xuanli*, original preface, p. 1.

<sup>154</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 137.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 227.

<sup>156</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Caixing yu xuanli*, original preface, p. 1.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*

In addition, as discussed in the next two chapters, Mou adopted the spiritual theme of Hegel's philosophy for his cultural nationalist discourse serving China's cultural reconstruction and appropriated the Hegelian concept of self-negation for his philosophical construction. Resonating with Xiong's assertion that "those who are enlightened reach the same enlightenment" and reflecting Hegel's assertion that Spirit evolves in dialectical stages, Mou remarks as follows:

學問的層面與領域是一層一層逼出來的。只要逼到那一層面那一領域，理路是一樣的，尤其在精神表現這一方面，或者全隔，或者全契，因為這不是技術的知解問題，所謂前聖後聖，其揆一也。<sup>158</sup>

The plane and area of one's learning is pressed upon level by level. On a particular plane in a particular area, the lines of reasoning are the same. This is especially so respecting the manifestation of spirit—there is either a complete falling out or a complete consonance, since what is involved is not a matter of skill or cognitive comprehension. This is the meaning of the line "the sage that went before and the sage that is forthcoming, their teachings are the same" [*Mengzi* IVB: 1].

#### **(b) Unequivocal Identification with *Rujia***

Despite the *Fo* influence on his thought, Xiong had, ever since arriving at his understanding of the metaphysical truth as presented in the first version of *Xin Weishi lun*, identified himself as a *Ru* thinker: "Only [Lin] Zaiping knows that I follow *Ru* as my main lineage while drawing on diverse sources."<sup>159</sup> Moreover, he wholeheartedly embraced *Ruxue* as being superior to *Foxue*. In his eyes, *Ruxue* is orthodox Chinese thought:

*Ruxue* aggregated the experiences of the sages and virtuous men of the ancient past and the three dynasties [the pre-Qin dynasties of Xia, Shang and Zhou] and reached its completion in Kongzi. Its origin is far away; for this reason, it is the orthodox [system of thought]. Concerning the many strands of pre-Qin thought,

---

<sup>158</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Wushi zishu*, p. 114.

<sup>159</sup> Xiong Shili, *Shili yuyao chuxu*, p. 29.

there was not one that was not derived and deduced from *Ru*; for this reason, they are collateral lines.<sup>160</sup>

It is thus no wonder that Xiong's writings entailed a determined tracing-back to the original precursors, which he identified to be two *Ru* classics—the *Yi* and the *Chunqiu* 春秋 (the *Spring and Autumn Annals*), with a higher authority accorded to the former.<sup>161</sup>

The clear identification with *Ru* thought is also evident in Mou's writings. Despite his employment of *Fo* paradigms in developing his moral metaphysics, he states clearly that, "I am not a *Fo* follower" (我非佛教徒).<sup>162</sup> Echoing Xiong, Mou singles out the *Yi* and the *Chunqiu*:

中國的文化生命，慧命，不能不說是集中在易經與春秋。<sup>163</sup>

We cannot but acknowledge that China's cultural life, the life of wisdom, is centred on the *Yi* and the *Chunqiu*.

Later on, he makes a shift in his magnum opus *Xinti yu xingt*:

據吾看，論、孟、中庸、易傳是孔子成德之教（仁教）中其獨特的生命智慧方向之一根而發，此中實見出其師弟相承之生命智慧之存在地相呼應。

<sup>164</sup>

In my view, the *Lunyu*, the *Mengzi*, the *Zhongyong* and the *Yizhuan* developed single-rootedly from the unique orientation of Kongzi's wisdom of life as contained in his teaching of moral cultivation (the teaching of empathetic compassion). Here we really see the wisdom of life of master and inheriting disciples resonate existentially.

Either way, Mou affirmed Xiong's primary identification of Chinese thought with Kongzi's teaching as promulgated in *Ru* texts. As will be seen in Chapter 6, Mou also concluded from his "perfect teaching" dissertation that *Ru* moral metaphysics as

---

<sup>160</sup> Xiong Shili, *Dujing shiyao*, vol. I, p. 420.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, preface, pp. 5-6.

<sup>162</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Foxing yu bore* 佛性與般若 (Buddha Nature and Wisdom), Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1992, vol. I, preface, p.5.

<sup>163</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Wushi zishu*, pp. 44-45.

<sup>164</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingt*, vol. I, p. 19.

expounded by Song *Ru* thinker Hu Wufeng 胡五峰 (1100-1155) is the ultimate “perfect teaching” superior to *Fo* or *Dao* ontology. For Mou, this conclusion vindicates Xiong’s rejection of the world-negating orientation of *Foxue*: “Teacher Xiong was always dissatisfied with *Fo* teachings and contested with lay Buddhists and monks. His many discussions and arguments all aimed to bring out this point [the superiority of *Ru* moral metaphysics]. What he argued for boiled down to this [principle of] creativity [the world-affirming first creative principle contained in *Ru* moral metaphysics].<sup>165</sup>

### (c) Moral Idealism

In his study of Mou’s *Wushi zishu*, Zheng Jiadong maintains that Mou as well as Xiong and other contemporary *Ru* thinkers in general suffered deep psychological conflict and tension in promulgating *Ruxue* during a historical time of great political, social, and cultural turmoil in which the objective, practical links between *Ruxue* and daily living had been severed<sup>166</sup> and the actualisation of traditional *Ru* values, especially those tied to the family, had gone amiss.<sup>167</sup> He thinks that Mou’s inner world (as disclosed in Mou’s *Wushi zishu*) reflected the outer fate of *Ruxue* and that both were marked by “solitariness, alienation and suspension [being suspended from practical living]”.<sup>168</sup> On Zheng’s view, “in the later development of Mou’s thought, the many conflicts and issues displayed in *Wushi zishu* did not get resolved: [they] merely stopped surfacing on the theoretical plane, but as deep subconscious factors, [they] constrained the development of his thought and the construction of his theories.”<sup>169</sup> Zheng reasons that such constraints affect contemporary *Ru* thinkers in general and manifest themselves in the thinkers’ retreat into moral idealism and the increasing emphasis they place on the religious [spiritual] import of *Ru* thought—an import not tied directly to concrete practical living.<sup>170</sup> Zheng’s thesis is problematic because Mou left mainland China shortly before

---

<sup>165</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Yuanshan lun*, pp. 327, 330.

<sup>166</sup> Zheng Jiadong, “Gudu, shuli, xuanzhi—Mou Zongsan yu dangdai Rujia de jingyu 孤獨、疏離、懸置--牟宗三與當代儒家的境遇” (Solitariness, Alienation, and Being Placed in Suspension: Mou Zongsan and the Circumstances of Contemporary *Rujia*) in *Rujia sixiang de xiandai quanshi* 儒家思想的現代詮釋 (Modern Interpretations of *Rujia* Thought), ed. Lee Ming-huei 李明輝, Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan, Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiusuo chouben, 1997, pp. 172-173.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, author’s footnote 33 on pp. 171-172.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 154-155.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 169-170.

the Communist takeover in late 1949 and thereafter lived and taught in Taiwan and Hong Kong, where *Ruxue* and traditional *Ru* values actually thrived. The thesis also fails to take into account major changes in Mou's personal life after he finished writing *Wushi zishu* in 1957. Mou remarried in 1958 and a son from the second marriage was born in 1959.<sup>171</sup> The second marriage was at least stable (if not also happy) and lasted until Mou died in 1995.<sup>172</sup> It is true that a preoccupation with the metaphysical and spiritual import of *Ru* thought and a subscription to moral idealism are features common to the systems of thought of Xiong and Mou, but my reasoning is that they were the causes rather than the effects of the thinkers' embrace of *Ruxue*. Xiong inspired in Mou a zealous cultural nationalism that championed the spirit of *Ruxue* as the collective cultural spirit of China, and both mentor and disciple subscribed to the Lu-Wang metaphysical thesis of "mind is principle". Given that during the decades prior to the Communist takeover of mainland China in 1949, Westernised May Fourth iconoclasts, led by Hu Shi 胡適 (1891-1962), and Marxist-turned intellectuals, such as Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀 (1879-1942) and Li Dazhao 李大釗 (1889-1927), were also raging their respective nationalist discourses for the reconstruction of China, one might ask: why did Xiong and Mou choose a Lu-Wang culturalist discourse over a Marxist nationalist discourse or a nationalist discourse based on wholesale Westernisation? The answer has to lie beyond Chinese nationalism. In his 1976 study of New Confucianism, which was the earliest study of *Xin Rujia* in the West, Hao Chang reasons that the *Xin Rujia* "identification with the ethicospiritual symbolism of *Ruxue* is above all a response to the crisis of meaning"<sup>173</sup> suffered by Chinese intellectuals since the late nineteenth century.<sup>174</sup> Xiong himself admitted to this. He related that his study of *Foxue* (before turning to *Ruxue*) was not motivated by a wish to broaden knowledge and appear learned. Rather, it was "driven by the great hope of exploring the ultimate truth as the ground for settling one's mind and establishing oneself."<sup>175</sup> The fact that Xiong looked for the meaning of life in *Weishi* and other *Fo* texts rather than in Marxism or in the May Fourth

---

<sup>171</sup> Cai Renhou, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuesi nianpu*, p. 24.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>173</sup> Hao Chang, "New Confucianism and the Intellectual Crisis of Contemporary China", in *The Limits of Change: Essays on Conservative Alternatives in Republican China*, ed. Charlotte Furth, Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1976, p. 301.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 281.

<sup>175</sup> Xiong Shili, *Xin Weishi lun*, vol. I, p. 142.

wholesale embrace of Western culture is crucial, for it reveals a faith in and a desire to understand human consciousness. My reasoning is that Xiong's inward turn towards the mind rendered incompatible the other two forms of theoretical and ideological choices—Marxist materialism and Western positivism and liberalism—available to him in his time and predisposed him towards Lu-Wang metaphysics. As observed by Chung-ying Cheng and shown below, the Lu-Wang philosophy of mind is, to a great extent, their total philosophy: “In the Lu-Wang school, there is little doubt that the mind plays a role fundamental to the existence of everything, for the significance of everything depends on the mind.”<sup>176</sup>

While Xiong's faith in human consciousness and his rejection of the world-denying orientation of *Foxue* might have predisposed him to Lu-Wang metaphysics, what determined his subscription to the Lu-Wang thesis of “mind is principle” was the *Ru* discourse of moral idealism. The discourse unfolds a utopian vision of a moral society based on the ancient *Ru* ideal of the Great Harmony (*datong* 大同) as informed by the *Liji* 禮記 (the *Rites Records*): “When the great way [the great moral way of the five ancient kings] prevails, the rulership is open to the public. Men of virtue are selected, and the rulership given to the talented. Mutual trust is founded and harmony maintained. Thus, people love not only their own parents and care for not only their own children but also those of others. ... This is called the Great Harmony.”<sup>177</sup> This idealistic discourse rests on the equally idealistic *Ru* political doctrine of “inner sageliness-outer kingliness” (*neisheng waiwang* 內聖外王).<sup>178</sup> The doctrine advocates government by moral suasion. It is an ‘inside out’ doctrine that teaches that when the ruler attains moral perfection (inner sageliness, as a result of realising one's moral mind) through vigorous moral cultivation of his inner moral character and outer moral demeanour, he will achieve moral command over the people, which will enable him to rule effectively without resort to force (thus achieving outer kingliness). The *Zhongyong* captures the

---

<sup>176</sup> Chung-ying Cheng, *New Dimensions of Confucian and Neo-Confucian Philosophy*, Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1991, p. 506.

<sup>177</sup> *Liji* 禮記 (the *Rites Records*), *Shisan jing zhushu* edition, Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1985, p. 21.3.

<sup>178</sup> The term “內聖外王” originated from the *Zhuangzi* (in the chapter entitled “*Tianxia* 天下” (Under the heaven)). See *Zhuangzi* 莊子, annot. Guo Xiang 郭象, Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1983, p. 569. Xiong preferred “天德王道” to “內聖外王”. The former term was used by Wang Chuanshan 王船山 (same as Wang Fuzhi 王夫之) (1619-1692) to convey the same meaning. See Xiong's *Dujing shiyao*, vol. I, pp. 118-119.

doctrine in the following lines: "...the conduct of government depends on able men. Able men are obtained through the ruler's personal character, the cultivation of the person through the way, and the cultivation of the way through empathetic compassion" (*Zhongyong* XX). Both Lu Xiangshan and Wang Yangming invoked these lines as the principle for government.<sup>179</sup>

There is no question that the discourse of *Ru* moral idealism answered fully Xiong's quest for existential and metaphysical meaning. He believed that the Great Harmony ideal (which he reconciled with his understanding of the *Yi*) issues spontaneously from human beings' moral selves (*xingfen* 性分<sup>180</sup>) and represents the peak of human aspiration and the highest ideal. He was undaunted by the vast gap between the highest ideal and practical reality. One should forge ahead steadfastly towards the highest ideal and not be concerned about whether it will or will not be fulfilled, he urged. His rationale was that "aspirations that must be fulfilled are low-grade aspirations" and that the unfulfilled peak aspiration is what drives human efforts towards continuous progress.<sup>181</sup> Following Xiong, Mou, who in his autobiography remarks that "the mood of idealism is inseparable from me from beginning to end",<sup>182</sup> subscribed also to the discourse of *Ru* moral idealism. Ever since their first meeting in 1932, Xiong's dauntless faith in *Ru* moral idealism remained a deep inspiring force for Mou in his long philosophical career. Because of what he had learned from Xiong, Mou became inspired to reach a future that "has not been reached or cannot be reached" and that "forever awaits my upward reaching effort."<sup>183</sup> He was deeply impressed with Xiong's point about human beings' peak aspiration: "...the point that the aspiration issues from one's moral self and needs not be fulfilled is admonitory and admirably made—instantly my spirit soared to a great height."<sup>184</sup> Such was the zealous faith Xiong and Mou had in human beings' moral consciousness and in *Ru* moral idealism. They

---

<sup>179</sup> See Lu Jiuyuan 陸九淵 (same as Lu Xiangshan), *Lu Xiangshan quanji* 陸象山全集 (The Complete Collection of the Works of Lu Xiangshan), Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1992, p. 149 (also pp. 267, 269); and Wang Yangming 王陽明, *Wang Yangming quanji* 王陽明全集 (The Complete Collection of the Works of Wang Yangming), Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1992, vol. I, p. 38.

<sup>180</sup> Xiong used the term "*xingfen*" to mean a person's moral self. See p. 409 of his *Shili yuyao*.

<sup>181</sup> Xiong Shili, *Dujing shiyao*, vol. I, pp. 106-107. See also Xiong Shili, *Shili yuyao*, p. 4.

<sup>182</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Wushi zishu*, p. 42.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>184</sup> The words are quoted from Mou's letter to Xiong Shili, written sometime between 1941 and 1946. See Xiong's *Shili yuyao*, p. 400.

certainly shared Kongzi's spirit of "persisting with what one knows cannot be done" (*Lunyu* XIV: 38). One is reminded also of Tu Weiming's appreciation of what *Ru* moral actualisation entails: "Yet the burden is heavy and the road long; it requires a total commitment no less intensive than the bearing of the cross."<sup>185</sup> Frederick W. Mote remarked bluntly that "[a] stultifying moral zeal was one of the diseases of Neo-Confucianism";<sup>186</sup> he would no doubt have said the same thing about the thought of Xiong and Mou.

#### **(d) Orientation towards the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind**

This section introduces the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind, which forms the basis of Mou's moral metaphysics. My aim is to show that Xiong subscribed to the Lu-Wang metaphysical thesis of "mind is principle" and that to a significant extent his mentorship laid the groundwork for the more specific alignment with the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind that Mou developed in his later thought.

The Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind evidences a strong *Fo* influence. According to Peter N. Gregory, new research suggests that "far from signalling a decline, the Sung [Song] was a period of great efflorescence in Buddhism".<sup>187</sup> He identifies Chan (Zen) 禪 and Tiantai 天臺 as the two most influential schools<sup>188</sup> in the Song.<sup>189</sup> Peter K. Bol points out that "[i]deas about all things sharing the same principle and, above all, the importance given to the 'mind' in moral cultivation were in origin Buddhist but by Song times had become current in literati society."<sup>190</sup> He observes that "[b]y and large, those Neo-Confucians who found compatibilities between their own and Buddhist ways of thinking were those who found a shared interest with Chan masters in the practice of

---

<sup>185</sup> Tu Wei-ming, *Centrality and Commonality: An Essay on Confucian Religiousness*, revised ed., Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1989, p. 21.

<sup>186</sup> Frederick W. Mote, *Intellectual Foundations of China*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1989, p. 56.

<sup>187</sup> Peter N. Gregory, "The Vitality of Buddhism in the Sung", in *Buddhism in the Sung*, ed. Peter N. Gregory and Daniel A. Getz, Jr., National City, California: Kuroda Institute for the Study of Buddhism and Human Values, in association with the University of Hawaii Press (Honolulu), 1999, p. 2.

<sup>188</sup> The Chinese term for a school is "zong" 宗, with each *zong* clearly identified by a lineage traced back to a founding patriarch.

<sup>189</sup> Gregory, "The Vitality of Buddhism in the Sung", p. 1.

<sup>190</sup> Peter K. Bol, *Neo-Confucianism in History*, Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008, p. 104.

introspection.”<sup>191</sup> Indeed, Qian Mu 錢穆 (1895-1990) and other scholars noted that almost all of the prominent Song-Ming *Ru* thinkers, including Zhou Lianxi 周濂溪 (1017-1073, also known as Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤), Zhang Hengqu 張橫渠 (1020-1077, also known as Zhang Zai 張載), Cheng Mingdao 程明道 (1032-1085, also known as Cheng Hao 程顥) and Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200), had studied Daoist or *Fo* texts or taken up *Daoist* or *Chan* meditative practices before embracing *Ruxue*.<sup>192</sup> In time, the preoccupation with the mind became the distinguishing mark of the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind. The Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind espouses the inner sageliness of human beings in the form of an innate moral consciousness and teaches ways to cultivate one’s awareness of it and to put it into practice in one’s daily living. Its central metaphysical thesis is “mind is principle” (*xin ji li* 心即理). (It is important to note that even though I render the Chinese term “*xin*” 心 as “mind”, the term has a broader meaning than “mind” because it refers to the heart also.) Like other Song-Ming *Ru* thinkers, Lu Xiangshan and Wang Yangming used the term “principle” (*li* 理), the heavenly principle (*tianli* 天理), the way (*dao* 道) and the heavenly way (*tiandao* 天道) interchangeably to mean the first creative principle-cum-ultimate reality that creates, nurtures and permeates the myriad things. (*Li* is *tianli* abbreviated, while *dao* is *tiandao* abbreviated.) The Lu-Wang metaphysical thesis is based on both the Four Books,<sup>193</sup> especially the doctrine of innate goodness (*xingshan* 性善) in the *Mengzi*, and the *Yizhuan*. To understand the thesis, one has to grasp Mengzi’s doctrine and the key *Ru* concepts embedded in it. Mengzi teaches that each one of us is born with a moral mind, which manifests itself in the form of four inborn precursors to morality. The first manifestation is the innate capacity to empathise (with the suffering of others) as the beginning of empathetic compassion (*ren* 仁). He defines empathetic compassion in terms of a sensitivity in all human beings that makes them “not want to bear to see harm befalling others”. To illustrate empathetic compassion (in its incipient form), he says that any

---

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>192</sup> Qian Mu 錢穆, *Song-Ming Lixue gaishu* 宋明理學概述 (A Brief Account of Song-Ming *Ruxue*), Taipei: Lantai chubanshe, 2001, pp. 29, 41, 53, 106. See also Xiong’s comments on the *Chan* influence on Song-Ming *Ru* thinkers in his *Shili yuyao chuxu*, pp. 321-325.

<sup>193</sup> The Four Books are the *Lunyu* 論語 (the Analects), the *Mengzi* 孟子 (the Mencius), the *Zhongyong* 中庸 (the Doctrine of the Mean) and the *Daxue* 大學 (the Great Learning).

person seeing a child about to fall into a well would feel a spontaneous sense of alarm, sympathy and concern. The second manifestation is the innate capacity to feel shame and aversion as the beginning of rightness (*yi* 義). The third is the innate capacity to feel respect for others (and to defer to them) as the beginning of *li* 禮 (propriety). The last one is the innate capacity to know right from wrong as the beginning of *zhi* 智 (wisdom) (*Mengzi* IIA: 6). What he is saying is not only that human beings are innately good by virtue of their being morally constituted but also that moral feelings inform one's sense of right action. He also refers to the moral mind by other terms. He calls it "original mind" (*benxin* 本心) to highlight its being a capability originally present and possessed by every human being at birth to discriminate between profit and rightness (*Mengzi* VIA: 10). Emphasising it as a spontaneous capability requiring no learning, he calls it "moral capability" (*liangneng* 良能); as a spontaneous knowing requiring no premeditation, "innate moral consciousness" (*liangzhi* 良知) (*Mengzi* VIIA: 15). Focusing on it as human beings' unique endowment, he calls it "human nature" (*renxing* 人性 or *xing* 性). He disapproves of Gaozi's argument that human nature is neutral. For him, "[t]here is no human being who is not good" just as "there is no water which does not flow downwards" (*Mengzi* VIA: 2, 6). Furthermore, since animals other than human beings do not have this inborn (moral) nature, he thinks that the inborn (moral) nature of human beings is that by virtue of which human beings are human beings and that which, given proper cultivation, would enable human beings to live a life qualitatively different from other animals (*Mengzi* IVB: 19; VIA: 3, 8).<sup>194</sup> The crucial point here is that Mengzi thinks of human beings as innately good (not neutral) and morality as a natural and spontaneous unfolding of human nature. Thus, for him and his Song-Ming *Ru* followers, the moral life is the natural and right way of life (*dangran* 當然 or what ought to be) for human beings. The presupposition of innate goodness, as well as the subjectivist approach to morality and the emphasis of the moral life, underlies not only Mengzi's teaching but also the teachings of all major Song-Ming *Ru* thinkers and the thought of Xiong, Mou and other *Xin Rujia* thinkers.

---

<sup>194</sup> In this regard, Mou cautioned against defining *benxin* (*xing*) as the essence of humanity. This is because the term "essence" is merely a classification concept and *benxin* (*xing*) understood as fundamental state/condition, which is a universal principle, is much more than a classification concept. See his *Xinti yu xingt*, vol. I, pp. 39-40.

Empathetic compassion (*ren*) is a key concept in the teachings of Kongzi, Mengzi and the Song-Ming *Ru* thinkers. Responding to a disciple's question as to what constitutes empathetic compassion, Kongzi says, "Loving others" (*Lunyu* XII: 22). In the same vein, Mengzi says, "A person of empathetic compassion loves others" (*Mengzi* IVB: 28). Empathetic compassion is always for the welfare of others. Kongzi states that it is rooted in being filial to one's parents and respectful to one's elder brothers (*Lunyu* 1: 2). When asked by his disciples what he has set his mind upon, Kongzi says, "I wish for the elderly to be taken care of, for friends to be trusted, and for the young to be held dear and close" (*Lunyu* V: 26). He also thinks that one ought to act in ways one feels at peace with and points to the failure to feel uneasy about one's inadequate behaviour as a lack of empathetic compassion (*Lunyu* XVII: 21). Mengzi does not state the precise relations among empathetic compassion, rightness, propriety and wisdom, but he distinguishes empathetic compassion as a person's mind (*Mengzi* VIA: 11), the most precious endowment from heaven and a person's safe haven (*Mengzi* IIA: 7). He also states that empathetic compassion refers to a person and that the way is a person and empathetic compassion put together (*Mengzi* VIIB: 16).

The conception of heaven or heavenly principle as the first creative principle that generates and nurtures the myriads things can be found in both the *Yizhuan* and the *Zhongyong*. The *Xicizhuan* (part of the *Yizhuan*) states that "[t]he supreme virtue<sup>195</sup> (*dade* 大德) of heaven and earth is called bestowing life" while the *Zhongyong* lauds the ceaseless fecundity of the way [*Zhongyong* XXVI]. Mengzi, however, did not state clearly the relation between the moral mind (or human nature) and principle (heaven). Neither did Kongzi. Kongzi speaks of knowing the decree of heaven at the age of fifty [presumably as a result of practising empathetic compassion] (*Lunyu* II: 4) and mentions heaven in terms of the ongoing change of season and the flourishing of the myriad things (*Lunyu* XVII: 19). Mengzi suggests a unity of heaven and human beings when he speaks of "[t]he myriad things are within me" (*Mengzi* VII A: 4) and teaches that "to realise fully one's mind is to know one's nature" and "to know one's nature is to know heaven" (*Mengzi* VII A: 1). Likewise, the *Xicizhuan* and the *Zhongyong* mention the nature or

---

<sup>195</sup> *Zhouyi*, p. 8.3b. Note that Mou followed Xiong and rendered *de* 德 as the defining quality (of heaven and earth) rather than virtue. (See his *Zhongguo zhaxue de tezhi*, p. 33 and Xiong's *Xin Weishi lun*, vol. I, p. 184.) There is no fundamental difference in the two renderings since the defining quality of heaven and earth is embodied in their "virtuous" way.

empathetic compassion and heaven without equating them. The *Xicizhuan* describes the way<sup>196</sup> as “manifested in the various kinds of empathetic compassion, hidden in the various kinds of functions, promoting all things yet not sharing the distress and concerns of sages.”<sup>197</sup> The opening chapter of the *Zhongyong* states, “What heaven ordains is called human nature. To follow human nature is called the way. Cultivating the way is called teaching [*jiao* 教]” (*Zhongyong* I). Another chapter suggests that human beings can join with the way: “Only the utterly sincere can realise their nature. Being able to realise their nature, they can realise the nature of others. Being able to realise the nature of others, they can realise the nature of things. Being able to realise the nature of things, they can assist with the transforming and nurturing carried out by heaven and earth. Being able to assist with the transforming and nurturing carried by heaven and earth, they can join with heaven and earth” (*Zhongyong* XXII). It is in the teachings of the Song-Ming *Ru* thinkers that one sees the explicit use of empathetic compassion (*ren*) to represent human nature (the moral mind) and a clear connection between empathetic compassion and the myriad things. Cheng Mingdao 程明道 (1032-1085), whose teaching preceded Lu Xiangshan’s by almost a century, says, “The student must first know about empathetic compassion. A person of empathetic compassion is one with the myriad things. Rightness, propriety, wisdom, trustworthiness are all empathetic compassion.”<sup>198</sup> Extrapolating from the words of Mengzi, he also says, “Just the mind alone is heaven. To realise it fully is to know the nature. To know the nature is to know heaven. Right here is what one is to recognise and grasp. Furthermore, one must not seek outside of it.”<sup>199</sup>

In the thought of Lu Xiangshan (1139-1193) and Wang Yangming (1472-1529), the moral mind is identified with heavenly principle. Lu was a precocious child, and although his central metaphysical thesis of “mind is principle” resonates with Cheng

---

<sup>196</sup> The way is the way of heaven, also referred to as the way of the *yi* or *yidao* 易道 in the annotation of the *Xicizhuan*.

<sup>197</sup> *Zhouyi*, p. 7.12b, 7.13a.

<sup>198</sup> Cheng Mingdao 程明道 and Cheng Yichuan 程伊川, *Er Cheng quanshu* 二程全書 (The Complete Collection of the Works of the Two Chengs), Zhonghua shuju edition based on the Song edition (*zhenzuo songban yin* 珍做宋版印), vol. I, *yishu* 遺書 (Sayings Recorded by Disciples) IIA, p. 3.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, *yishu* IIA, p. 3. According to Mou Zongsan, this saying is Cheng Mingdao’s because it is listed in the *Mingdao xue’an* 明道學案 (Biography and Philosophical Writings of Cheng Mingdao) of the

Mingdao's teaching, it actually evolved from his own realisation, at the age of thirteen, that "[t]he cosmos is my mind; my mind is the cosmos."<sup>200</sup> In Lu's thought, empathetic compassion also assumes an overarching importance: "Kongzi shed light on the way with the concept of empathetic compassion; his words were seamless. Mengzi traversed it, leaving nothing hidden."<sup>201</sup> Lu also taught that the most important things for the student are "[t]o have the mind set on the way, to adhere to what is virtuous and to follow empathetic compassion".<sup>202</sup> He explicated many passages in the *Lunyu* and the *Mengzi* and related that "[a] thorough insight [into the way] was not attained [by me] until I saw Mengzi's doctrine of innate goodness."<sup>203</sup> Wang Yangming was the most influential *Ru* thinker of the Ming period. Like Lu, he understood "mind" in Mengzi's terms, identified it with human nature and asserted that "mind is principle". His catchphrase for moral cultivation, "Get rid of selfish desires; retain the heavenly principle,"<sup>204</sup> highlights that mind is principle only when it is "unobscured by selfish desires".<sup>205</sup> Following Mengzi, he also referred to the moral mind as "innate moral consciousness" (*liangzhi* 良知); and the latter term became centrally associated with his teaching. Echoing Mengzi's elaboration of innate moral consciousness as an innate capacity to know right and wrong spontaneously, without premeditation, Wang stated that "knowing is the fundamental condition/state"<sup>206</sup> of the [moral] mind. The mind by its nature is capable of knowing: seeing one's father one naturally knows to be filial; seeing one's elder brother one naturally knows to be respectful; seeing a small child about to fall into a well one naturally knows to be concerned and sympathetic. This then is what we mean by 'innate moral consciousness' needing nothing from without'.<sup>207</sup> In Wang's understanding, "[i]nnate moral consciousness is where heavenly principle is clearly intuited in a state of enlightenment. Thus, innate moral consciousness is heavenly

---

*Song-Ming xue'an* 宋明學案 (An Anthology of Biographies and Philosophical Writings of Ming Confucians). See Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingt*, vol II, p. 95.

<sup>200</sup> Lu Jiuyuan, *Lu Xiangshan quanji*, pp. 315-317.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 253.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 281.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 263.

<sup>204</sup> Wang Yangming, *Wang Yangming quanji*, vol. I, pp. 13, 31-32.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 2.

<sup>206</sup> Here Wang used the term "*benti* 本體" in the broad sense to mean "essential nature" (which in this case happens to be also imparted by heaven) whereas Xiong and Mou used the term in the onto-cosmological sense only to refer to heaven as the first creative principle and ultimate reality.

<sup>207</sup> Wang Yangming, *Wang Yangming quanji*, vol. I, p. 6. See Mengzi's elaboration in *Mengzi* VIIA: 15.

principle” (良知是天理之昭明靈覺處，故良知即是天理).<sup>208</sup> The state of enlightenment refers to the heavenly-endowed capacity of innate moral consciousness itself to know right and wrong. Wang also taught that it is the empathetic compassion rooted in human nature that is spontaneous, enlightened and one with the myriad things.<sup>209</sup> He even went so far as to equate innate moral consciousness and empathetic compassion: “...innate moral consciousness is but the place where heavenly principle is spontaneously intuited in a state of enlightenment; it is but sincere empathetic compassion, which is its fundamental state/condition” (良知只是一個天理，自然明覺發見處，只是一個真誠惻怛，便是他本體).<sup>210</sup> In other words, innate moral consciousness is none other than principles clearly manifesting themselves in one’s mind as one reaches out with empathetic compassion to people and things in particular situations. Thus, in the Lu-Wang metaphysical thesis of “mind is principle”, the moral mind is understood in terms of empathetic compassion and identified with heaven (principle)—from something that is ordained by heaven and could enable human beings to know and join with heaven, it is now heaven (or principle). “Mind is principle” means that the moral mind is principle intuited in a state of enlightenment—not that the moral mind is one thing which becomes the same as another thing called principle.<sup>211</sup>

What was Xiong’s reception of the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind? Xiong claimed that his *Fo*-inflected system of thought is a self-made system and was critical of the Song-Ming *Ru*. He embraced the Six Classics of *Ru* (the *liujing* 六經),<sup>212</sup> especially the *Yi* and the *Chunqiu*,<sup>213</sup> and criticised the Song-Ming *Ru* for their narrow-minded focus on the Four Books.<sup>214</sup> While he objected to the world-denying orientation of *Fo*, he was of the view that the Song-Ming *Ru* should have examined the strengths and

---

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 72.

<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 968.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 84. See footnote 206 above for the meaning of *benti* 本體 intended by Wang.

<sup>211</sup> See Mou’s elucidation in this regard in his *Cong Lu Xiangshan dao Liu Jishan* 從陸象山到劉戡山 (From Lu Xiangshan to Liu Jishan), 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 2000 (year of reprint, year of edition not given), pp. 216-219.

<sup>212</sup> They are the *Shijing* 詩經 (the *Odes*), the *Shujing* 書經 (the *Documents*), the *Lijing* 禮經 (the three *Rites Canons*), the non-extant *Yuejing* 樂經 (the *Music Canon*), the *Yi* and the *Chunqiu* 春秋 (the *Spring and Autumn Annals*).

<sup>213</sup> Xiong Shili, *Dujing shiyao*, vol. I, pp. 1, 6 of preface, pp. 39-40.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 417, 426.

inadequacies of *Fo* teachings rather than treating *Foxue* as taboo.<sup>215</sup> Furthermore, he frowned on the Song-Ming *Ru*'s lofty emphasis on meditative, solitary cultivation of the mind, arguing that such emphasis was deeply influenced by *Chan* and led to a narrow focus of interest and a de-emphasis on speculative thinking.<sup>216</sup>

Xiong's criticisms of the Song-Ming *Ru* might give the impression that his system of thought is far removed from Song-Ming *Ruxue*. It is not. His system of thought might be broader than Song-Ming *Ruxue* in that it drew also from *Fo* and *Dao*; it might be bold in its assertions and opinions, but in terms of central metaphysical thesis, it adheres to the Lu-Wang thesis of "mind is principle". In fact, Xiong's system of thought has been received by many as a reconstruction of *Ruxue* based on the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind.<sup>217</sup> Ng Yu-Kwun observes that Xiong exalted the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind as well as the thought of Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619-1692).<sup>218</sup> Yet, in terms of central metaphysical thesis, the following statements of Xiong make it clear that he sided with Wang Yangming and frowned on Wang Fuzhi: "...Wang Yangming based his teaching on extending innate moral consciousness—this is similar to Kongzi's expounding empathetic compassion"<sup>219</sup> and "Wang Chuanshan [Wang Fuzhi] did not understand Kongzi. His *Du sishu daquan shuo* [讀四書大全說] conceives of the heavenly way literally as something external that transcends us human beings. This is extremely confused and mistaken."<sup>220</sup> In his *Dujing shiyao*, Xiong states that he is one with Wang Yangming with regard to the metaphysical thesis of "mind is principle".<sup>221</sup>

---

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 428.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 6 of preface, pp. 422-423. Also, Xiong Shili, *Shili yuyao*, pp. 533-536. On p. 536 of *Shili yuyao*, Xiong retracted his view that the Song-Ming *Ru* advocated abstinence.

<sup>217</sup> Refer to p. 1 of the publication exegesis of Xiong's *Dujing shiyao*, vol. I. Also, Song Zhiming 宋志明, "Xiong Shili" in *Zhongguo xiandai zhaxue renwu pingchuan* 中國現代哲學人物評傳 (Biographical and Critical Accounts of Contemporary Chinese Philosophical Figures), ed. Li Zhenxia 李振霞 and Fu Yunlong 傅雲龍, vol. II, p. 523; and Lin Anwu 林安梧, "Xiong Shili xiansheng de guhuai hongyi ji qi Yuan Ru de yili guimu" 熊十力先生的孤懷弘詣及其《原儒》的義理規模 (The Solitary Aspiration and Great Attainment of Xiong Shili and the Scope of Key Principles in his *Yuan Ru*) in Xiong Shili, *Yuan Ru*, preface by Lin, pp.12-13.

<sup>218</sup> Ng Yu-kwan, "Xiong Shili's Metaphysical Theory", p. 225.

<sup>219</sup> Xiong Shili, *Xin Weishi lun*, vol. II, p. 463. By "extending innate moral consciousness", Wang means removing selfish desires so that one extends sincerely the empathetic compassion rooted in one's innate moral consciousness to other people and things. See *Wang Yangming quanji*, vol. I, p. 6.

<sup>220</sup> Xiong Shili, *Xin Weishi lun*, vol. II, p. 465.

<sup>221</sup> Xiong Shili, *Dujing shiyao*, vol. I, pp. 135-136.

To underscore the non-separability of mind and matter central to his *xi-pi* theory and to correct the tendency among followers of Wang to discount the importance of the material world, Xiong also suggested extending the Lu-Wang thesis to “principle is mind, and principle is also matter” (理即心，理亦即物).<sup>222</sup> The suggestion does not change the basic metaphysical orientation of Xiong’s system of thought towards the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind. To a great extent, Xiong’s theory of non-separability of fundamental state/condition and function (his *xi-pi* theory) can be read as a cosmologically intricate and dialectical restatement of the Lu-Wang thesis of “mind is principle” using theoretical resources drawn from *Foxue* and the *Yi*.

Like the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind, the orthodox stream of Song-Ming *Ruxue*, associated with Cheng Yichuan 程伊川 (1033-1107) and Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200), also subscribes to the overarching importance of empathetic compassion and advocates getting rid of selfish desires to realise one’s moral nature. It does not, however, identify the moral mind with human nature and holds different views regarding the correct approach to moral cultivation. Xiong disapproved of the Cheng-Zhu conception of the moral mind and human nature: “Among Song-Ming *Ru* thinkers, there are some who think that the mind is not the nature. This fails to understand the meaning of the original mind.”<sup>223</sup> On his view, Wang Yangming’s understanding of the mind and the myriad things represents “a ‘lineal’ transmission of the teachings of Kongzi and Mengzi (孔孟以來一脈相承的).”<sup>224</sup> I have shown above that Xiong supported and even guided Mou’s engagement with Kant. The following excerpt from a letter he wrote Mou in the late 1930s indicates that he further guided Mou towards the Lu-Wang rather than Cheng-Zhu stream of Song-Ming *Ruxue*:

In *Ru* learning, only Yangming effectively succeeded Kongzi and Mengzi. He blended into one heaven, decree, the nature, the moral mind, principle, knowing.... This calls for in-depth study. The Cheng-Zhu fragmentation lies merely in its separating the mind and the nature, the mind and principle, and the mind and the myriad things. The great and deep aspects of Yangming—not only

---

<sup>222</sup> Xiong Shili, *Xin Weishi lun*, vol. I, pp. 37, 318-319. Also Xiong Shili, *Shili yuyao chuxu*, p. 7.

<sup>223</sup> Xiong Shili, *Xin Weishi lun*, vol. I, p. 8.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 40.

are they not recognised by his attackers but also few among his disciples are able to comprehend them in their entirety.<sup>225</sup>

Additional evidence that Xiong's mentorship was instrumental in orienting Mou's reading of *Ruxue* towards the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind is found in a letter Xiong wrote to Mou around 1948. In it, Xiong explicates the main themes of his *Xin Weishi lun* and states that the work "returns to the fundamental state/condition immanent in human nature [歸本性智 *guiben xingzhi*<sup>226</sup>] and still elaborates Yangming's point".<sup>227</sup> In addition, he remarks that Wang Yangming's greatness lies in "his exposition of innate moral consciousness", which brought about "a liberation of [moral] reason"—a liberation "not accomplished by Cheng Yichuan and Zhu Xi".<sup>228</sup>

Mou based his moral metaphysics on the Lu-Wang Learning of the mind and championed the Lu-Wang central metaphysical thesis of "mind is principle". Following Lu, Wang as well as Xiong, he identified the moral mind primarily with empathetic compassion and upheld the latter as the supreme *Ru* virtue and the fountainhead of *Ru* moral principles.<sup>229</sup> In addition, he adopted Xiong's onto-cosmological approach and applied it to Song-Ming *Ruxue*. Thus, the onto-cosmological import of key terms such as "the way", "heaven", "mind", "human nature", "empathetic compassion" as employed by Cheng Mingdao, Lu, Wang and some other Song-Ming *Ru* thinkers was explicitly stated and emphasised.<sup>230</sup> Mou subscribed to the cosmological role of *yin* and *yang*<sup>231</sup> but made no specific reference to Xiong's *xi-pi* theory. Lin Anwu 林安梧 notes that

---

<sup>225</sup> Xiong Shili, *Shili yuyao*, p. 290.

<sup>226</sup> By "*xingzhi* 性智", Xiong means fundamental state/condition as immanent in human beings' mind, with the emphasis on its being enlightenment in itself (see Xiong's *Xin Weishi lun*, vol. I, p. 4). Xiong equated *xingzhi* with Mengzi's original mind (see his *Xin Weishi lun*, vol. I, p. 8), which he identified with Wang Yangming's innate moral consciousness and empathetic compassion (*Xin Weishi lun*, vol. II, p. 464). He also spoke of *xingzhi* as the enlightenment of the true self, with enlightenment and the true self being one and the same. Enlightenment here means not only that *xingzhi* is marked by the absence of delusion and the knowing of right and wrong but also that it is the storehouse of all of the principles for the myriad things and the source of all knowledge (*Xin Weishi lun*, vol. I, p. 4). This is in agreement with Wang Yangming's understanding that "[i]nnate moral consciousness is where heavenly principle is clearly intuited in a state of enlightenment. Thus, innate moral consciousness is heavenly principle."

<sup>227</sup> Xiong Shili, *Shili yuyao chuxu*, p. 7.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>229</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingt*, vol.1, p. 26.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 27, 32, 43-44.

<sup>231</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhaxue de tezhi*, p. 80.

Mou replaced Xiong’s theory with his “two-tiered mind” paradigm.<sup>232</sup> My view is that because Mou’s prime focus was on the moral mind and its relation with the ordinary cognitive mind, his “two-tiered mind” paradigm, which I discuss in Chapter 4, is a specific application of Xiong’s theory to the human mind rather than a replacement of the theory. Xiong developed his *xi-pi* theory independent of the “two-tiered mind” paradigm. In the appendix of his *Xin Weishi lun*, he clarified his position on the paradigm in a rejoinder to a friend’s critical remarks: “I did not say that the ‘two-tiered mind’ paradigm in the *Dasheng qixin lun* [大乘起信論 (The Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna)]<sup>233</sup> is right. What I said was that the paradigm at least recognises the *zhenru xin* 真如心 [Buddha-mind, same as Buddha-nature] and is thus superior to the theory of eight consciousnesses—comprising the *ālayavijñāna* and others—as put forth by Asaṅga<sup>234</sup> and his followers.”<sup>235</sup> It appears that Xiong’s firm grasp of the notion of mutual entailment or “mutual completion through opposition” in the *Yi* and the *Fo* doctrine of conditioned arising enabled him to devise his *xi-pi* theory without needing further theoretical recourse. It is obvious that Xiong would not approve of the emphasis on quiescence inherent in any *Fo* paradigm. Yet, in terms of schematic representation, the “two-tiered mind” paradigm is in total accord with Xiong’s *xi-pi* theory. This is borne out by the fact that Mou employed the metaphor of the wave and the seawater to illustrate the *Fo* paradigm in the same way that Xiong used the metaphor of the seawater and the foam to illustrate his *xi-pi* theory.<sup>236</sup>

#### (e) Emphasis on Personal Verification of a Spiritual Oneness with the Myriad Things

Like many of the Song-Ming *Ru* thinkers before him, Xiong insisted that his system of thought was a product of his personal verification (*shizheng* 實證) of the metaphysical truth embedded in *Ru* teachings. In the opening lines of his *Xin Weishi lun*, Xiong

<sup>232</sup> Lin Anwu, “Xiong Shili xiansheng de guhuai hongyi ji qi *Yuan Ru* de yili guimu”, p.12.

<sup>233</sup> This treatise is discussed in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

<sup>234</sup> Asaṅga is traditionally identified as the founder of the Yogācāra (Vijñāna-vāda) tradition in India between the third and fifth centuries. The *Weishi* School in China subscribes to the concept of *ālayavijñāna* or storehouse consciousness and regards it as the eighth consciousness. See entries for Asaṅga 無著 and *ālayavijñāna* 阿賴耶識 in Charles Muller’s Digital Dictionary of Buddhism at [www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb) (accessed on June 4, 2009).

<sup>235</sup> Xiong Shili, *Xin Weishi lun*, vol. II, p. 626.

<sup>236</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhixue shijiu jiang*, p. 296.

writes: “My aim in writing this treatise is to awaken all those who study metaphysics to understand that the fundamental state/condition of all things does not lie in a realm (*jingjie* 境界)<sup>237</sup> external to one’s own mind or reside in a realm where knowledge is deployed. The reason is that it is to be sought only within and corresponded with through personal verification.”<sup>238</sup> The first character “*shi* 實” in “*shizheng*” means “real” and accords with Xiong’s understanding of fundamental state/condition as the ultimate reality. Fundamental state/condition being the central subject matter of his thought, Xiong’s heavy emphasis on personal verification is understandable given his basic premise that although fundamental state/condition is most manifest in human beings as their innate moral consciousness, it cannot be known intellectually or verified objectively. While one can certainly arrive at an intellectual understanding of fundamental state/condition, its true nature, Xiong told us, can be known only through personal verification.<sup>239</sup>

What exactly does personal verification of fundamental state/condition entail in practice? Xiong stated that it involves a state of mind—meaning the moral mind within each person—that is self-aware and self-conscious.<sup>240</sup> He gave the following example of personal verification of innate moral consciousness—the fundamental state/condition immanent in human beings—by way of inner personal experience:

However debauched a person maybe and even though his innate moral consciousness has been obstructed for a long time, if he utters a dishonest line to another person, his moral mind always knows that he has cheated. This knowing is that of knowing right and wrong, good and evil. It is his innate moral consciousness. This is rooted within and is self-knowing. It requires no inference. It is not something that adds lustre to him from without. He is naturally clear and cannot be deceived or obscured. A person’s life lies precisely in this very quality.<sup>241</sup>

---

<sup>237</sup> Xiong is referring to the outside material world here. See his *Xin Weishi lun*, vol. I, pp. 37, 54.

<sup>238</sup> Xiong Shili, *Xin Weishi lun*, vol. I, p. 1.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 154-155.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 10-12.

<sup>241</sup> Xiong Shili, *Shili yuyao*, p. 96.

Xiong also asserted that innate moral consciousness is a presence. Mou related in a much-quoted anecdote that he overheard Xiong make the assertion during a discussion with Feng Youlan 馮友蘭 (1895-1990) in the early 1930s:

You say that innate moral consciousness is a postulate [apparently in keeping with Kant's postulate of the existence of free will]. How can you say that it is a postulate? Innate moral consciousness is utterly real. Moreover, it is a presence. One needs to be conscious of this presence directly and affirm it directly.<sup>242</sup>

Mou applauded the assertion, describing it as “an awakening thunderclap that lifted one's level of enlightenment to that of the Song-Ming *Ru*.”<sup>243</sup>

In emphasising personal verification of fundamental state/condition, Xiong also emphasised the feeling of oneness with the myriad things. This is in accordance with his *xi-pi* theory, which posits that although mind (the moral or cosmic mind, which he called *pi* and which represents the spirit of fundamental state/condition that permeates the entire cosmos) rules over matter (*xi*), mind and matter are nonetheless two opposing yet mutually entailing (non-separable) aspects of the indivisible fundamental state/condition fully manifesting itself in the phenomenal world. The theory also maintains that the cosmic mind present in each human being is also present in each of the myriad things. Thus, only in a state of spiritual oneness with the myriad things does one resonate with the cosmic mind within: “...merging with and taking in the myriad things into the self, right here and now is the absolute [fundamental state/condition].”<sup>244</sup> For Xiong, “expansion of the notion of the self to the extent of having nothing relative to one [thus coinciding with fundamental state/condition or what Xiong also termed “the true self”] is the realisation of the highest ideal in human living.”<sup>245</sup> As mentioned, the feeling of oneness with the myriad things was understood by Cheng Mingdao and Wang Yangming to be empathetic compassion. Xiong agreed with them.<sup>246</sup> Furthermore, he echoed Wang stating that “[e]mpathetic compassion is the moral mind, which is the

---

<sup>242</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Wushi zishu*, p. 88.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.* Feng, however, was not receptive and did not respond to Xiong's assertion. Mou used the incident to portray Feng as the epitome of Western-educated Chinese intellectuals subscribing to Western epistemology and having no true understanding of Song-Ming *Ruxue*.

<sup>244</sup> Xiong Shili, *Xin Weishi lun*, vol. I, p. 40.

<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 39.

<sup>246</sup> Xiong Shili, *Xin Weishi lun*, vol. I, p. 39; vol II, p. 462.

same as the fundamental state/condition possessed by us human beings and the myriad things.”<sup>247</sup> In sum, fundamental state/condition for Xiong is *pi*, the vigorous, morally uplifting moral or cosmic mind, which presents itself as empathetic compassion or the feeling of oneness with the myriad things. This is the distilled insight of Xiong’s *Xin Weishi lun* and is also the basis for Xiong’s rather grand claim that “the spiritual essence [*shensui* 神髓] of Chinese learning lies in what Mengzi described as the spontaneous sense of alarm, concern and sympathy one feels upon seeing a child falling into a well”:  
248

At this time in one’s mind, there is no distinction at all between the child and the self. This is the spontaneous movement of heaven and is beyond one’s control. Manifesting and expressing what is felt—it is not anything else but this mind. Herein lies the spiritual essence of Chinese learning.<sup>249</sup>

Xiong called the personal meditative verification of the enlightenment of fundamental state/condition “meditative realisation (*zhenghui* 證會)”<sup>250</sup> According to him, the state of mind involved in meditative realisation is that which *Ru* followers have described as “being united in virtue with heaven” (*yu tian he de* 與天合德, which is the same as *tian ren he de* 天人合德).<sup>251</sup> To achieve personal verification of the moral or

---

<sup>247</sup> Xiong Shili, *Xin Weishi lun*, vol II, p. 462.

<sup>248</sup> Xiong Shili, *Shili yuyao*, p. 443.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>250</sup> Xiong Shili, *Xin Weishi lun*, vol. I, p. 155. Also, Xiong Shili, *Shili yuyao*, p. 445.

<sup>251</sup> Xiong Shili, *Xin Weishi lun*, vol. I, pp. 153-154. The notion of such a unity can be traced back to the *Zhongyong* and the “Qianzhuan 乾傳” (“The Exposition of the Qian hexagram”). The *Zhongyong* states that “being able to assist with the transforming and nurturing carried on by heaven and earth, they [human beings] can join with heaven and earth” [*Zhongyong* XXII]. The “Qianzhuan” is one of two parts of the *Wenyanzhuan* 文言傳 (the expository commentaries on the texts on the first two hexagrams), which in turn forms part of the *Yizhuan* or Ten Wings. The “Qianzhuan” depicts heaven as the first creative principle (fundamental state/condition) represented by the Qian hexagram, the very first hexagram of the *Yi*. Qian, like Xiong’s *pi*, is the functional manifestation of heaven—it represents heaven (the fundamental state/condition) as manifested in the phenomenal world. It thus symbolises the strength and tenacity of heaven and heaven’s function of bestowing life and nurturing the myriad things incessantly and tirelessly. (One might recall that the *Xicizhuan* states that “[t]he supreme virtue of heaven and earth is called bestowing life”.) The incessant and tireless life-bestowing vigour or supreme virtue of heaven is called *jian* 健 (vigour); when expressed by Qian, it is called *yuan* 元 (greatness), reflected in the giving of life to the myriad things. The other virtues associated with the Qian hexagram are *heng* 亨 (endurance), expressed in the smoothing of the path for growth and development; *li* 利 (benefit), expressed in the development of what is right for each of the myriad things and what is harmonious for the whole; and *zhen* 貞 (stability), expressed in the persevering in what is right leading to the fulfilment of the myriad things. Because human beings are seen to possess the virtues of *ren* 仁, *li* 禮, *yi* 義 and *xin* 信, which correlate

cosmic mind, Xiong suggested using mind-purifying practices, available in *Ru*, *Dao* and *Fo* traditions, to rid one's mind of delusions and selfish or unwholesome thoughts as these obstruct the moral mind.<sup>252</sup> He likened the obstruction to clouds blocking the sun.<sup>253</sup> In a letter to a friend, in which he lamented not having the energy to practise meditation, Xiong made the following observation:

When the mind becomes concentrated [during meditation], it is clear, empty and bright; and no capricious thoughts arise. At this time, one is indeed in a state of oneness with heaven and earth and the myriad things. As soon as one feels mentally scattered, one has already wandered off with thoughts going hither and thither trying to get others to follow one's way [憧憧往來、朋從爾思<sup>254</sup>]. One then begins to feel as if one has fallen off from the great cosmic life and turned into a spiritless thing.<sup>255</sup>

That personal verification involves the feeling of oneness with the myriad things makes it clear that it is not an intellectual, epistemological exercise. Xiong's view was that the reality and mystery of fundamental state/condition is not something that resonates with conceptual deliberation<sup>256</sup> and that meditative realisation is “the pinnacle of learning.”<sup>257</sup> He cautioned, however, against abandoning conceptual or speculative thinking and emphasised the need to progress from speculative thinking to personal verification.<sup>258</sup>

Mou upheld Xiong's emphasis on empathetic compassion. He pointed out that sagely figures such as Kongzi, Jesus Christ and Śākyamuni (the founding Buddha) “had no theory, no system, no elaborate conceptualisation or speculation. All they had was an

---

with the four virtues of Qian, by practising *ren* and the other virtues, they are able to unite in virtue with heaven. See *Zhouyi*, pp. 1.1a, 1.1b, 1.6b, 1.8a, 1.10a, 1.10b, 1.20a. Also, Xiong Shili, *Xin Weishi lun*, vol. I, p. 186.

<sup>252</sup> Xiong Shili, *Xin Weishi lun*, vol. I, pp. 10-12.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. II, pp. 458-459. These mind-purifying practices aim to strengthen one's mindfulness to the extent that one is aware of one's thoughts as they arise. Mindfulness training is also known as meditation training.

<sup>254</sup> Xiong borrowed the line “憧憧往來、朋從爾思” from the commentary on the image of the 31<sup>st</sup> hexagram (Xian 咸) in the *Yi*. The line carries the meaning of not being in total emotional accord with others, with thoughts going hither and thither trying to get others to follow one's way. See *Zhouyi*, p. 4.3a.

<sup>255</sup> Xiong Shili, *Shili yuyao*, p. 109.

<sup>256</sup> Xiong Shili, *Xin Weishi lun*, vol. I, p. 152.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 154.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 154-155.

authentic feeling (*shigan* 實感)—an ardent love, a great compassion issuing from the depths of their lives. Thus Kongzi talks about empathetic compassion, Jesus Christ about love, and Śākyamuni about compassion.” The only way to resonate in spirit with these sagely figures, Mou told us, is by way of authentic feelings.<sup>259</sup> For Mou, authentic feelings are feelings rooted in real-life experience or praxis,<sup>260</sup> and his autobiography at fifty leaves one in no doubt that he did progress from speculative thinking to authentic feelings.<sup>261</sup> As a thinker, his intelligence definitely surpassed his emotion and his writings display great strength in speculative philosophical thinking. Yet, like Wang Yangming and Xiong, he understood the moral mind or innate moral consciousness to be a mind of empathetic compassion capable of embracing the myriad things in a spiritual oneness<sup>262</sup> and asserted that “the fundamental state/condition of the cosmos is empathetic compassion.”<sup>263</sup> It is not clear from reading Mou’s writings if he practised meditation or personal verification of spiritual oneness with the myriad things. In the preface of his *Yuanshan lun*, which he wrote late in life, he discusses Xiong’s equal emphasis on speculative thinking and deep feelings and dismisses the innuendo by critics that speculative thinking is empty theoretical talk not based on personal verification.<sup>264</sup> Mou being a faithful disciple of Xiong, it is reasonable to think that in defending Xiong, Mou was also defending himself.

## **Concluding Remarks**

In this chapter, I have explored Xiong’s spiritual legacy and his philosophical influence on Mou by identifying five key features or themes that Mou inherited from Xiong and built into his system of thought. They are eclecticism and syncretism, an unequivocal

---

<sup>259</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Wushi zishu*, pp. 81-82.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 22.

<sup>261</sup> See his *Wushi zishu*, pp. 127-130, 146-147. Mou wrote his *Wushi zishu* around the age of fifty. When the book was published three decades later, he wrote a preface in which he remarks, “Time passed without my noticing and I am now eighty years old already. My development in the last three decades was a flourishing of the authentic feelings described in this autobiography” (吾今忽忽不覺已八十矣。近三十年來之發展即是此自述中實感之發皇) (page 2 of his preface in *Wushi zishu*).

<sup>262</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhi de zhijue yu Zhongguo zhexue* 智的直覺與中國哲學 (Intellectual Intuition and Chinese Philosophy), Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1971, p.191.

<sup>263</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Daode de lixiang zhuyi*, p. 59.

<sup>264</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Yuanshan lun*, preface, pp. xiv-xv.

identification with *Rujia*, a subscription to moral idealism, an orientation towards the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind and an emphasis on personal verification of a spiritual oneness with the myriad things. These shared themes and features not only show the continuity in basic philosophical orientation between mentor and disciple but also shed light on Mou's public acknowledgement that he was the person he was because of his having encountered Xiong. Mou's mature philosophical writings, over a span of more than three decades, was driven by two major goals: to elucidate the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind and elevate it above the Cheng-Zhu stream of Song-Ming *Ruxue*, and to syncretise the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind with Kant's moral philosophy. I have shown that to a considerable extent, these major goals were inspired and guided by Xiong.

Having examined Xiong's philosophical influence on Mou, one might ask what key similarities and differences exist between the two thinkers' systems of thought. Both systems subscribed to the Lu-Wang metaphysical thesis of "mind is principle". Both mentor and disciple promote *Ruxue* as a positive, worldly philosophy with a moral metaphysical principle of flourishing embedded. Both understand this principle as issuing from human beings' innate moral consciousness, which when cultivated will enable one to realise the spirit of fundamental state/condition by ceaselessly transforming oneself and nurturing all beings in the world. For them, life is moral metaphysical and authentic when lived in the spirit of fundamental state/condition. Lin Anwu points to this in the case of Xiong: "Mr Xiong remarks that 'the key value of my teaching lies in having insight into fundamental state/condition.' 'Having insight into fundamental state/condition' refers to 'having clear insight into authentic existence'. Here authentic existence means the ceaseless transforming cosmic fundamental state/condition, which is also that by virtue of which human beings are human beings."<sup>265</sup> Mou described *Ruxue* as "the learning of life" (*shengming de xuewen* 生命的學問), with life understood in the ethico-spiritual sense.<sup>266</sup> An authentic life, according

---

<sup>265</sup> Lin Anwu, "Xiong Shili xiansheng de guhuai hongyi ji qi *Yuan Ru* de yili guimu", p. 2.

<sup>266</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 32.

to him, is “vertical” (*zongguan de* 縱貫的) in that it is lived in the spirit of fundamental state/condition<sup>267</sup> and marked by moral creativity.<sup>268</sup>

In 1993, two years before his death, Mou suffered a heart and lung ailment and was hospitalised. In one of his exchanges with his disciples while they visited him at the hospital, he made the following remarks in tearful reminiscence of his relationship with Xiong:

熊先生一輩子就想找一個人能傳他的道，我的聰明智慧都不及他甚多，但他知道自己有見識而學力不及。我所知雖只一點點，但要到我這程度也不容易，其他的人更差多了。熊先生知道我可以為他傳。。。<sup>269</sup>

All his life Mr. Xiong wanted to find a person who could transmit his teaching. Neither my intelligence nor my wisdom matched his, but he knew that he himself had insight and knowledge but was short in academic training. Although what I knew amounted to only a little bit, but even getting to the level I was at was not easy; the other people were considerably worse. Mr Xiong knew that I could transmit for him...

The philosophical continuity between mentor and disciple as established in this chapter attests to Mou’s intimation that he was heir to Xiong’s philosophical legacy.

Despite their similarities, the two thinkers’ systems of thought differ in objective, emphases, methodology, formal theoretical framework and style. Xiong syncretised his understandings of *Fo* and *Ru* teachings and the syncretism enabled him to forge his cornerstone theory of non-separability of fundamental state/condition and function. He expounded *Ruxue* based on this theory and emphasised the equal importance of the spiritual and the material. He assumed the traditional role of a master, a wise teacher transmitting *Ru* insights to his disciples in the form of cultural nationalist lectures and bold assertions. Even though he did not move beyond traditional Chinese thought and *Foxue*, he traversed freely among the many streams of Chinese thought and his

---

<sup>267</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Shengming de xuewen*, preface, p.2.

<sup>268</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 431. In Mou’s understanding, all of the great religions of the world are concerned with the vertical relation between the first creative principle and the myriad things rather than with knowledge on the phenomenal (what he called “horizontal”) plane. See pp. 113-114 of the same source.

reconstruction of *Ruxue* convey metaphysical depth and breadth of scope. Mou, on the other hand, recast the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind using formal *Fo* paradigms and *Fo* and Kantian categories and reconciled his thought with Kant's moral philosophy. In expounding his metaphysics, he assumed the role of a contemporary theoretical builder of *Ruxue*, and beneath his formalistic style and preoccupation with the metaphysical, one finds an amazing depth and senses an inspiration on his part to transform himself into a Chinese Kant. Lin Anwu captures the differences between mentor and disciple as follows:

What Mr. Xiong did was rectify the understanding of fundamental state/condition in the *Ru* Learning of the Mind in response to the demands of social praxis. From there he aimed to deal with the contemporary world by constructing a doctrine of social praxis, with the hope that *Ru* thought would thus achieve a radically new development. In the case of Mr. Mou, he reconstructed the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind tradition and established his two-tiered ontological paradigm. In addition, he intended to use the "two-tiered mind" model to set firm boundaries between inner sageliness and outer kingliness and reconstruct the transcendental basis—that is, the learning of inner sageliness—for the learning of outer kingliness. Regarding these two successive contemporary *Xin Rujia* thinkers, both of whom are representative theoretical constructors, even if there is a trail to be found from [Xiong's] *Xin Weishi lun* to [Mou's] *Xianxiang yu wu zishen*, it is without doubt that their systems of thought represent two different types.<sup>270</sup>

In the area of *Ruxue*, Mou made only one major departure from Xiong and that is his revisionist assessment of Song-Ming *Ruxue*, the subject of Chapter 7. The following chapter turns to Mou's cultural nationalism and Xiong's influence on Mou in this regard.

---

<sup>269</sup> Cai Renhou, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuesi nianpu*, p. 85.

<sup>270</sup> Lin Anwu, "Xiong Shili xiansheng de guhuai hongyi ji qi *Yuan Ru* de yili guimu", p.12.

## 2

# Cultural Nationalism: Xiong's Influence and Mou's Discourse

China's development since the Opium War of 1839-42 has been treacherous and marked by revolutions. Mou's life spanned most of the twentieth century, a century marked by the Chinese Revolution (1911), the May Fourth Movement (1919), the Communist Revolution culminating in the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, and the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). When the Manchu empire collapsed in 1911, Mou was only two years old, but Xiong, his future mentor, had joined the army around the turn of the century and participated in revolutionary activities to overthrow the Manchus.<sup>271</sup> Xiong was an ardent nationalist and his nationalist discourse became a major influence on Mou during Mou's early adulthood in the 1930s. Yet, unlike Xiong, Mou had no strong interest or active involvement in politics. During his matriculation year, he joined the Guomindang as a provisional member, but he stopped participating soon afterwards because he was ill at ease with the prevalent leftist mindset of the party members at the time. After graduating from Peking University in 1933, he was recruited by Zhang Dongsun 張東蓀 into a minor political party founded by Zhang himself together with Zhang Junmai 張君勱 (1886-1969) and others. In 1937 and 1939, Mou worked as the chief editor of a social political magazine published by Zhang Junmai. Mou's goal, however, was to pursue an academic career in philosophy and his association with the party and the magazine soon came to an end after a falling-out with Zhang Junmai.<sup>272</sup> As mentioned, during the years after graduating from university, Mou

---

<sup>271</sup> Song Zhiming, "Xiong Shili", pp. 523-526.

<sup>272</sup> Cai Renhou, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuesi nianpu*, pp. 5-9. Also, Mou Zongsan, *Wushi zishu*, pp. 95-101.

maintained close contact with Xiong and was inspired by Xiong's meshing ancient Chinese wisdom with strong sentiments for the Chinese nation-race. In late 1939, Mou met Tang Junyi 唐君毅 (1909-1978), who interested him in Hegel's spiritual philosophy of history and became his close associate in the mainland. During the following decade, Mou held various teaching jobs in universities in the mainland. He migrated to Taiwan in 1949, shortly before the Communist takeover of the mainland, and started teaching in Taiwan in late 1950.<sup>273</sup> His cultural nationalist and anti-Communist sentiments were rampant during his Taiwan period. He took charge of the cultural nationalist discourse there and invigorated it with new themes. This chapter examines Mou's cultural nationalism. I trace Xiong's Han cultural nationalist influence on Mou in the context of Chinese nationalism in the twentieth century. I then look at Mou's problematic Hegelian-inflected identification of the spirit of Chinese culture with *Ruxue*. This leads to a discussion of the "third epoch of *Ruxue*" heralded by Mou and the key mission of cultural reconstruction he formulated for contemporary *Ru* scholars. The rest of the chapter focuses on the centrepiece of Mou's cultural nationalist discourse—the *santong* proposal he put forth as the blueprint for China's cultural reconstruction.

### **The Han Cultural Nationalist Influence of Xiong Shili**

To understand the nationalism of Xiong and Mou, one has to put it in the context of Chinese nationalism in the twentieth century. According to Frank Dikötter, "[n]ationalism, in its broadest sense, endows the members of a national population, variously referred to as nation, people, nationality or even 'race,' with an identity which is thought to be unique and distinct from other population groups." The nation implicit in nationalism is thus conceived as "a relatively homogeneous entity with shared characteristics which transcend internal divisions of class, status and region."<sup>274</sup> Following John Hutchinson, Dikötter understands cultural nationalism to be the type of nationalism that "imagines the nation to have a distinctive civilization based on a unique history, culture and territory."<sup>275</sup> He further notes that in Chinese nationalist discourse,

<sup>273</sup> Cai Renhou, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuesi nianpu*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>274</sup> Frank Dikötter, "Culture, 'Race' and Nation: The Formation of National Identity in Twentieth Century China", *Journal of International Affairs*, Winter 1996, 49, no.2, p. 590.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 591.

“[t]he conflation of ‘race,’ descent and nation has been expressed throughout the twentieth century by the term *minzu* [民族], signifying both a descent group and a cultural community”.<sup>276</sup> He renders “*minzu*” roughly as “nation-race”. According to his observations, the Chinese “nation-race” is the main branch of the broader “yellow race” (*huangzhong* 黃種) and is “distinguished by unique cultural features”<sup>277</sup> and confers a widespread racialised national identity and sense of belonging to the inhabitants of mainland China as well as to other population groups (in Taiwan and Singapore, for example) that identify themselves as “Chinese”.<sup>278</sup> Jonathan Unger, on the other hand, notes that Chinese nationalism is multi-faceted and reflects what he calls the “multi-layered complexity of Chinese perceptions of Chinese nationhood.”<sup>279</sup> His 1996 study of Chinese nationalism shows that contemporary Chinese nationalism “comprises an inter-stitching of state-inculcated patriotic political appeals, Han ethnic identification, and culturalist pride; a confusion of aspirations for national greatness alongside growing sub-national assertions of regional identity; open-minded optimism and anti-foreign resentment.”<sup>280</sup>

Back in the 1930s and early 1940s, when Mou’s nationalist thinking was shaped by Xiong, Chinese nationalism for Xiong took the form of a strong Han ethnic group<sup>281</sup> identification and a bold culturalist (*Ruist* moral-metaphysical) assertiveness. Xiong’s preference for cultural nationalism is clear from the following advice he gave to a student after the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931:

Nowadays with insults from abroad intensifying, our nation-race is in increasing danger. We must rouse nationalist thinking. Keep this in mind constantly. None

---

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 594.

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 592, 597.

<sup>279</sup> Jonathan Unger, “Introduction”, in *Chinese Nationalism*, ed. *idem*, New York and London: M. E. Sharpe, 1996, p. xiii.

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xvii. See also Guangqiu Xu’s observation of the noticeable rise of anti-foreign resentment in China during the 1990s in his article entitled “Anti-Western Nationalism in China, 1989-99”, *World Affairs*, 163.4 (Spring 2001), on-line copy, pp. 1-16.

<sup>281</sup> I use the term “ethnic group” as commonly defined in the dictionary. The Macquarie Dictionary defines “ethnic group” as “a group of people, racially or historically related, having a common and distinctive culture.” See *Macquarie Concise Dictionary*, revised 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., New South Wales: Macquarie University, 2004, p. 400.

of our [nation's] intrinsic intellectual thought, rituals, beliefs—provided that practicing them causes no harm—must be abandoned....<sup>282</sup>

Xiong was, of course, keenly aware that the survival of Han culture depended on the survival of Han Chinese as an ethnic group and of China as a nation. He subscribed to the prevalent thinking that the Chinese nation-race comprises of the putative five main ethnic groups in China (the Han, the Manchus, the Mongols, the Muslim Turkic peoples, and the Tibetans) and is represented by Han Chinese because of their overwhelming majority.<sup>283</sup> While insisting that it was the teaching of Kongzi that would save the Chinese and prevent all humanity from self-destruction,<sup>284</sup> he also articulated a firm belief that the putative five main ethnic groups in China descended from one ancestral stock in pre-historic time.<sup>285</sup> Prasenjit Duara observes that “it is very hard to distinguish ‘culturalism’ as a distinct form of identification from ethnic or national identification.”<sup>286</sup> Culture, descent, race, and nation intertwine in the Han cultural nationalist thinking of both Xiong and Mou. Xiong instilled in Mou a deep and abiding love for China and Han culture. He lamented that the *Ru* spirit was utterly damaged during the Qing (1644-1911) (儒學精神，至此剝喪殆盡) and had not recovered since. He highlighted the need for a change by referring to a scholar’s warning that “learning could deteriorate to the extent that the country perishes” (學術之敝，至於亡國).<sup>287</sup> Mou subscribed to Xiong’s strong Han ethnic group identification and *Ruist* moral-metaphysical culturalism, and he was even more explicit than Xiong in identifying Chinese culture with Han culture. In his talks on Chinese philosophy in the late 1970s, Mou lamented the distortion to China’s cultural life under Manchurian rule.<sup>288</sup> Informed by Hegel’s understanding that the State is the embodiment of a People’s Spirit,<sup>289</sup> he was

---

<sup>282</sup> Xiong Shili, *Shili yuyao*, p. 19.

<sup>283</sup> Xiong Shili, *Zhongguo lishi jianghua*, pp. 1-2. Sun Zhongshan (also known as Sun Yat-sen) (1866-1925), who became the first (provisional) president of the newly-founded Republic of China in 1912, promoted this understanding of the Chinese nation-race. See his *Sanmin zhuyi* 三民主義 (the Three Principles of the People), 18<sup>th</sup> ed., Taipei: Sanmin shuju, 1996, p. 5.

<sup>284</sup> Xiong Shili, *Zhongguo lishi jianghua*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 33-35.

<sup>286</sup> Prasenjit Duara, “De-Constructing the Chinese Nation”, in *Chinese Nationalism*, ed. Jonathan Unger, p. 32.

<sup>287</sup> Xiong Shili, *Dujing shiyao*, vol. I, pp. 452-454.

<sup>288</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 193.

<sup>289</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1956, pp. 17, 50. According to the translator, “[t]he philosophical appropriation of

of the view that China perished (spiritually) as a country when it fell into Manchurian rule in 1644:

。。。所以一個國家不能亡，其理在此。中國亡於滿清，滿清的統治是軍事統治、異族統治，它不能繼承中國傳統文化的精神，所以知識分子完全變了。<sup>290</sup>

Thus, here [in Hegel's philosophy of history] lies the reason a country must not perish. China perished as a country [spiritually] in the hands of the Manchus. Manchurian rule was military rule, rule by a foreign ethnic group. It could not inherit the spirit of the traditional Chinese culture [Han culture]. As a result, there was a radical change among intellectuals.

A salient feature of Xiong's cultural nationalist discourse is the assertion of a particular cultural spirit inherited and shared by the Chinese people (meaning Han Chinese). In his 1951 writing on the *Ru* Classics, for example, Xiong claims that "the particular spirit of the Chinese people" (*Zhongguo ren zhi teshu jingshen* 中國人之特殊精神), which governs how they should live and how they should build their nation, lies in *Ruxue*, understood by him to be the orthodox strand of Chinese philosophical thought.<sup>291</sup> The assertion that the Chinese people possess a particular "spirit" was not unique to Xiong. Many contemporary Chinese writers and thinkers had made the broad assertion, and each had ventured his own identification of the particular cultural spirit of China. One sees the assertion made in 1915 in the title of a book—*The Spirit of the Chinese People*—written in English by Ku Hung-Ming, an English-educated Chinese defender of traditional Chinese culture.<sup>292</sup> The same assertion underlies Liang Shuming's 1921 talk entitled "*Dongxi wenhua ji qi zhexue* 東西文化及其哲學" (Eastern and Western Cultures and their Philosophies). As pointed out by John Makeham, Liang and Xiong "have become widely recognized as first generation New Confucians and the founders of the New Confucian movement" and the above-

---

ordinary terms is generally indicated by capitals, e.g. 'Spirit,' 'Freedom,' 'State,' 'Nature,' etc." See p. v of translator's introduction by J. Sibree.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 418.

<sup>291</sup> Xiong Shili, *Lun liujing* 論六經 (Discussions on the Six *Ru* Classics), revised ed., Taipei: Wenhai xueshu sixiang yanjiu fazhan wenjiao jijin hui, 1998, pp. 1-2.

<sup>292</sup> Ku Hung-Ming, *The Spirit of the Chinese People*, Beijing: Waiyu jiaoxue yu yanjiu chubanshe, 1998.

mentioned talk by Liang in published form “is often described as being the first New Confucian text.”<sup>293</sup> The text states that “Chinese culture bases its fundamental spirit on the adjustment and moderation of one’s desires.”<sup>294</sup>

That the assertion of a particular Chinese cultural spirit also underlies Mou’s Han cultural nationalist discourse is obvious from his Hegelian-inflected remarks cited above. As discussed below, he identified this cultural spirit with the *Ru* moral mind. Furthermore, as will be seen in Chapter 4, he equated the *Ru* moral mind with Kant’s free will, thereby merging the universal with the particular by giving universality to the cultural spirit particular to the Chinese people. On Mou’s moral idealistic view, “cultural development is but the [spiritual] purification and clarification of life and the expression of reason” (文化之發展不過是生命之清澈與理性之表現).<sup>295</sup> By “reason”, he meant moral reason (innate moral consciousness) in *Ru* terms or practical reason in Kantian terms. He understood culture as “the expression of the spirit of sages and other great characters from antiquity to the present time.” (古今聖賢豪傑諸偉大人格的精神表現).<sup>296</sup> In addition, he argued that there are universal principles relating to human life itself. Because subjectivity is involved, their universality cannot be established precisely as is the case with inanimate objects—but it can be validated through empathy experienced in the concrete reality of life. He referred to this kind of universality as “concrete universality”, a term he appropriated from Hegel.<sup>297</sup> His view of culture is both “universalist” and “particularist”. He believed that there are universal truths and values that can be appreciated by the entire humanity, but that no one culture expresses all of these truths and values. Rather, each culture tends to express in its particular concrete way some of these truths and values, and cultures enrich one another by

---

<sup>293</sup> John Makeham, “Introduction”, in *New Confucianism: A Critical Examination*, ed. *idem*, p. 11.

<sup>294</sup> Liang Shuming 梁漱溟, *Liang Shuming quanji* 梁漱溟全集 (The Complete Collection of the Works of Liang Shuming), vol. I, Shandong, China: Shandong renmin chubanshe, 1989, p. 383.

<sup>295</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Caixing yu xuanli*, original preface, p.1. In Mou’s understanding, *Ru* moral praxis leads to the spiritual purification and clarification of life. See his *Xinti yu xingti*, vol.1, p. 6.

<sup>296</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Daode de lixiang zhuyi*, p. 246.

<sup>297</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, pp. 34-35. See Hegel, *Hegel’s Logic (Part One of The Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1830))*, trans. William Wallace, London: Oxford University Press, 1975, p. 285 (paragraph 227) for a brief discussion by Hegel of the distinction between “abstract universality” and “concrete universality”. Frederick Beiser explains the distinction in terms of “the traditional scholastic distinction between a composite (compositum) or totality (totum).” See his *Hegel*, New York and London: Routledge, 2005, p. 317. It will be seen in the next chapter that the concrete universal emerges in the last stage of Hegel’s dialectic.

offering different paths to the realisation of universal truths and values. In this regard, he was of the view that Chinese culture has tended to focus on “life”—meaning the cultivation of empathetic compassion and other moral values that settles one’s mind and brings about human flourishing in society—while Western culture (along the Greek tradition) has tended to focus on nature and emphasise theoretical reason and objective knowledge of the empirical world.<sup>298</sup>

Another salient feature of Xiong’s cultural nationalist discourse is his proposal for China’s “national salvation”. Again, this was a common feature of Chinese nationalism. A nationalist discourse based on Han ethnic identification, culturalist pride, and learning from the West can be traced back to the Tongzhi Restoration (1862-74).<sup>299</sup> After seeing first-hand the devastation of the First World War in Europe while on a visit there in 1919,<sup>300</sup> Liang Qichao 梁啓超 (1873-1929) devised a four-fold mission for China’s younger generation with the hope that the young people of China “will, first of all, have a sincere purpose of respecting and protecting our civilization; secondly, that they will apply Western methods to the study of our civilization and discover its true character; thirdly, that they will put our own civilization in order and supplement it with others’ so that it will be transformed and become a new civilization; and fourthly, that they will extend this new civilization to the outside world so that it can benefit the whole human race.”<sup>301</sup> Tu Weiming remarks that “saving the nation” has become a mission of great historical significance for educated Chinese because of their collective memory of “the cumulative injustice and humiliation that China, as a civilisation-state, has endured in modern times.”<sup>302</sup> He laments that each generation of Chinese people “relives and re-experiences the century-long tragedy of China, sharing a poignant sense that new painful realities will have to be endured as well” and that “[n]o one in the Chinese cultural universe is spared this historical and existential weight.”<sup>303</sup> Western aggression being

---

<sup>298</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, pp. 39-41. Also, Mou Zongsan, *Daode de lixiang zhuyi*, pp. 249-250.

<sup>299</sup> Tu Wei-Ming, *Way, Learning, and Politics: Essays on the Confucian Intellectual*, Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1993, pp. 150-151, 163.

<sup>300</sup> *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, compl. Wm. Theodore de Bary, Wing-tsit Chan, and Burton Watson, New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1960, p. 846.

<sup>301</sup> Liang Qichao 梁啓超, “Travel Impressions of Europe”, in *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, compl. and trans. Wm. Theodore de Bary and others, p. 849.

<sup>302</sup> Tu Wei-Ming, *Way, Learning, and Politics*, p. 172.

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 252-253.

one of two main sources of the injustices and humiliation suffered by China in modern times (Japanese aggression was the other main source), how China should defend itself and cope with the continuing dominance of the West and of its technologically advanced culture has been the burning issue preoccupying the Chinese. It is also the central issue in Chinese nationalist discourse.

For Xiong, national salvation and the success of the struggle of the Chinese people against foreign invasion and domination depended upon unity among the so-called five main Chinese ethnic groups and the survival of Han Chinese culture, which he identified primarily with *Ru* thought. He also proposed that Chinese culture strengthen itself by learning about the modern culture of the West and absorbing its scientific knowledge.<sup>304</sup> In addition, he felt that it was important to study Western philosophy.<sup>305</sup> Asserting the universal worth of *Ruxue*, he lamented over the Darwinian state of world affairs and promoted empathetic compassion (*ren*) and other *Ru* virtues and principles as the key for world peace.<sup>306</sup> Under Xiong's influence and appropriating Hegel's understanding that a People's Spirit (taken by Mou to mean cultural ideal) drives the production of culture,<sup>307</sup> Mou believed that "the issues we encountered in our time are still [ultimately] cultural issues" (吾人所遭逢之時代問題仍是文化問題),<sup>308</sup> meaning that they are symptomatic of disharmony and clashes among cultural ideals.<sup>309</sup> On his analysis, a superficial understanding of Chinese and Western cultures and a lack of cultural conviction among political leaders and Chinese intellectuals led to the cultural iconoclasm of the May Fourth era.<sup>310</sup> He also reasoned that, since cultural spirit drives cultural production, the failure of Chinese intellectuals to recognise that science and democracy are compatible with the ethico-spiritual ideals of Chinese culture accounted for China's failure to develop scientifically and democratically.<sup>311</sup> It is therefore not surprising that the national salvation plan Mou came up with for China was culturalist. As discussed below, he heralded in a new epoch of *Ruxue* to regenerate the

---

<sup>304</sup> Xiong Shili, *Zhongguo lishi jianghua*, pp. 3-5, 152-155.

<sup>305</sup> Xiong Shili, *Dujing shiyao*, vol. I, p. 9.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, preface, pp. 2, 4. See also Xiong Shili, *Zhongguo lishi jianghua*, pp. 4-5, 37-38.

<sup>307</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, p. 50.

<sup>308</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Daode de lixiang zhuyi*, preface to the revised edition (written in 1978), p. 2.

<sup>309</sup> *Ibid.*, original preface, pp. 3-4.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 252-253.

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 258.

cultural spirit of China and put forth his *santong* proposal to guide China's cultural development.

Xiong thought that nationalism, properly guided, is conducive to the self-preservation of nation-races and their peaceful co-existence.<sup>312</sup> Mou found nothing objectionable about nationalism in itself. For him, a nation, like a person or a family, is an individual body formed by the gathering together of particulars:

個人是一個體，家庭國家亦是一個體。皆有它的個體性（Individuality）。凡是說到實現，必有特殊者之糾結或結聚。每一結聚即是一「個體」。<sup>313</sup>

A person is an individual, so is a family and a nation. All possess their respective individualities. Whenever we speak in terms of actualisation, we are dealing with the entanglement or gathering together of particulars. Each gathering together is an individual.

Informed by his “universalist” and “particularist” view of culture, he saw the individuality of a nation in terms of the disposition of the people making up the nation (the nation-race), which conditions the particular way in which universal truths are expressed in their culture:

從文化的創造，真理的實現方面說，民族的氣質，個人的氣質，是它的特殊性，是它實現之限制而又是它實現之具體的憑藉，因此，家庭國家就是實現真理創造文化之個體，它們是普遍者與特殊者結合而成的。<sup>314</sup>

In terms of the creation of a culture and the actualisation of truths [expressed by the culture], the disposition of a nation-race and that of individual persons are its [referring to the culture] particularity—they are both the constraints and the concrete means of its actualisation. Thus, families and nations are the individuals involved in the actualisation of truths and the creation of cultures. They are the result of the combination of the universal [referring to truths expressed by them] and the particular [referring to members of a family or a nation].

---

<sup>312</sup> Xiong Shili, *Shili yuyao*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>313</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Daode de lixiang zhuyi*, p. 58.

<sup>314</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

Mou referred to nationalism as “*guojia zhuyi* 國家主義”. While the literal translation of “*guojia zhuyi*” is state nationalism, a type of civic nationalism based on the strictly enforced requirement that members of the state contribute to the maintenance and strength of the state, state nationalism is not what Mou espoused. This is because he supported democracy, as evidenced by his *santong* proposal, and democracy pre-empts state nationalism. As mentioned, culture, descent, race, and nation intertwined in the Han cultural nationalism of both Xiong and Mou. Mou saw nationalism, in the form embraced by him, as the natural outcome of nation-races holding their respective cultures in esteem, with nothing inherently undesirable:

國家主義既不是封建的狹隘的，亦不是侵略的，而「國家」更不是壓迫的工具。它之建立，除由文化之實現上說，還可以由人之自尊上而顯示。一切文化離不開人性之尊嚴，人道之尊重。自尊其人性，即須尊人之人性，自尊其獨立，即須尊人之獨立。凡稍有自尊心者，何能不尊其國，不尊其文化；凡稍有人性者，何能不尊人之國，不尊人之文化。侵略與壓迫何關於國家？病從口入，豈便因而閉口不食？<sup>315</sup>

Nationalism is not feudalistic or narrow-minded, nor is it about aggression. Moreover, “nation” is not a tool for oppression. The building of a nation, other than in terms of the actualisation of a culture, can be seen in terms of human dignity. All cultures are inseparable from human dignity and respect for humanity. Respecting one’s own humanity requires respect for other people’s humanity. Respecting one’s independence requires respect for other people’s independence. Anyone with some self-esteem cannot but respect his country and his culture; anyone with some humanity cannot but respect another person’s country and culture. What do invasion and oppression have to do with “nation”? Germs enter through the mouth. Do we then close our mouth and refuse food?

In the above remarks, Mou’s reproach on Western and Japanese powers for past invasion of China is hidden but loud. Xiong and Mou were most concerned that Chinese culture would be eroded and displaced by Western culture. This concern became a main preoccupation of Mou during his Taiwan period and underlay a declaration he co-

---

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

authored with Xu Fuguan, Tang Junyi and Zhang Junmai in 1958. I critique this declaration in the context of the *Xin Rujia* movement in Chapter 8. The rest of this chapter examines the key elements of Mou's Han cultural nationalist discourse.

### **Mou's Identification of Chinese Culture with *Ruxue***

As mentioned, Mou affirmed Xiong's identification of the cultural spirit of China with *Ruxue*, understood by both of them to be the orthodox strand of Chinese thought. Mou also subscribed to Hegel's thesis, that a people's history is the display of their Spirit in concrete reality.<sup>316</sup> In Mou's Han cultural nationalist discourse, therefore, the assertion of *Ruxue* as the cultural spirit of China mingled with his Hegelian reading of Chinese history. The mingling served to frame culture in a historical context, albeit only in the Hegelian sense. It also enabled him to conflate the intellectual thought, culture and history of China and assert the primacy of *Ru* thought in Chinese culture to the extent that the fate of Chinese culture depends on the rise, demise and revival of *Ru* thought:

儒家是中國文化的主流，中國文化是以儒家作主的一個生命方向與形態，假如這個文化動源的主位性保持不住，則其他那些民主、科學等都是假的，即使現代化了，此中亦無中國文化，亦只不過是個「殖民地」的身份。<sup>317</sup>

*Rujia* is the mainstream of Chinese culture. Chinese culture is a direction in life and a way of life as determined by *Ru* thought. If the primacy of this culture-generating force [meaning *Ru* thought] cannot be maintained, then democracy, science and the rest do not really count. A modern China without Chinese culture possesses but a "colonial" status.

Mou's Hegelian-inflected identification of Chinese culture with *Ruxue* was central to his cultural nationalist discourse. He was of the view that Chinese philosophy started with Kongzi because he was the first person to reflect on the cultural past of China:

---

<sup>316</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, p. 53.

<sup>317</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Shidai yu ganshou*, p. 327.

中國可以說哲學，應該是從春秋戰國時代說起，從先秦諸子說起。既然從春秋戰國開始，那麼只能從孔子開始。。。。這是因為從孔子才開始對堯舜夏商周三代文化有一個反省，有了反省才自覺的提出一個觀念，建立一個原則。有觀念有原則，我們的生命就有一個明確的方向。因此我們說只能從孔子講起。<sup>318</sup>

We can say that to speak of philosophy in China, we should begin with the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods and with the thought of the pre-Qin thinkers. Since we are to begin with the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States periods, we must begin with Kongzi. ...This is because it was beginning with Kongzi that there was a reflection on the cultures of Yao, Shun and the three dynasties—Xia, Shang and Zhou. Only because of reflection were there a self-conscious proposition of a concept and the building of a principle [referring to the key concept of *ren* propounded by Kongzi<sup>319</sup>]. As soon as we have a concept and a principle, our lives have a clear direction. This is why we say that we can only begin with Kongzi.

He also maintained that the languishing rites of Zhou was the preoccupation of major pre-Qin thinkers<sup>320</sup> and that among the major strands of pre-Qin thought contending during the late Zhou period and providing the prototypes for Chinese thought, *Ruxue* was the only one aiming to renew and restore the Zhou rites.<sup>321</sup> *Ru* thought predated *Dao* thought, he argued, because *Dao* thought represents a negation of the *Ru* preoccupation with rites.<sup>322</sup> (Xiong was of the opinion that *Dao* thought was derived from the *Yi*—generally recognised as a *Ru* classic—and is thus a branching out from *Ruxue*.<sup>323</sup>)

Mou and Xiong's identification of Chinese culture with *Ruxue* is problematic in that it mutes the richness, complexity and multiplicity of Chinese culture and narrowly equates it with the occupation of Chinese literati. Michael Nylan observes that “[as] early Confucian learning [she uses ‘Confucian’ and its derivatives to refer to “the self-

---

<sup>318</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 51.

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 61-62.

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>321</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61, 63-65.

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>323</sup> Xiong Shili, *Xin Weishi lun* vol. II, p. 610.

identified followers of Confucius’s ethical teachings and their cultural products”]<sup>324</sup> was inextricably intertwined first with pre-Confucian ideas about the central importance of family obligation and ancestor worship (which it reflected and through which it was interpreted) and later with other non-Confucian theories, it is no more possible to cleanly distinguish a Confucian history from the rest of history and civilization of China or East Asia than to neatly disentangle the history of Christianity from the European enterprises sponsored by state and church.”<sup>325</sup> She was, however, critical of famous advocates of Kongzi’s teaching, such as Mengzi and Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824), who “deliberately sought to prove the ultimate validity of Confucius’s Way by tying it to the preservation of a distinctive Chinese identity”.<sup>326</sup> Furthermore, she criticises “[m]odern proponents of a Confucian Revival”<sup>327</sup> for following the lead of these famous advocates and compounding confusion about the meaning of the term “Confucianism” by “speaking of a Confucian classicism that constitutes a worldview, a social ethic, a political ideology, a scholarly tradition, and a way of life in a China bound by tradition to its neighbours [Japan, Korea and Vietnam].”<sup>328</sup> She would no doubt also frown on Mou and Xiong’s conceptions of Chinese culture and *Ruxue*.

While it is noteworthy that in portraying *Ruxue* as the positive essence of Chinese culture, Xiong and Mou corrected the May Fourth and Marxist iconoclasts’ portrayal of it as the dross of Chinese culture, the two thinkers erred just as much as the iconoclasts in perpetuating what Theodore Hutters describes as a “narrowing of the view of the intellectual world of traditional China” around the turn of the twentieth century. In the minds of the iconoclasts, the narrowed ground was “the locus of all that is undesirable for the devoutly wished new social and intellectual order” and “coterminous with a new and truncated notion of ‘Confucianism’” that admitted only the negative;<sup>329</sup> in the minds of Mou and Xiong, it was the locus of all that was desirable for the cultural development of China and coterminous with a new and ethico-spiritual notion of *Ruxue* that left out the negative.

---

<sup>324</sup> Nylan, *The Five “Confucian” Classics*, author’s footnote on p. 2.

<sup>325</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 5.

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>329</sup> See discussion in the subsection entitled “Critiques of and Proposals for Chinese and Western Cultures” in Chapter 8 of this thesis.

It is true that the *Zhuangzi*, considered a key text of *Dao* thought, contains many parodies of Kongzi and his prime disciples<sup>330</sup> and could be read as an intellectual stream countering *Ruxue*. This, however, does not change the fact that Mou's use of *Ruxue* to represent Chinese thought and—through a Hegelian slide from thought to spirit to culture—Chinese culture was highly ideological. By “ideological”, I mean that it was a hegemonic signifying strategy, a mode of “ascribing meanings to words and things” in order to establish control over the regulation of statements about a particular contested arena.<sup>331</sup> Mou's hegemonic positioning of *Ruxue* as the spiritual and orthodox representation of the main trunk of Chinese philosophy-cum-culture from antiquity to the present time discounts the other main philosophical and cultural strands that are part and parcel of Chinese culture—*Fo* and *Dao*—and turns them into heterodoxies. It also obscures the on-going intermingling, cross-fertilisation and dynamics among the three cultural strands. That Xiong and Mou could, on the one hand, downgrade *Foxue* as heterodox and, on the one hand, borrow substantially from it in constructing their systems of thought is disconcerting. Moreover, as will be seen in Chapter 7, Mou not only identified the spirit of Chinese culture in terms of *Ruxue* but also construed *Ruxue* in terms of a particular *daotong* or genealogy—that is, in terms of its orthodox transmission through a particular single lineage he reconstructed. This made him and his followers authoritative transmitters of and legitimate spokespersons for *Ruxue* and Chinese culture and allowed them to judge *Ru* thinkers whose readings of *Ruxue* differ from theirs as illegitimate. These ideological features of Mou's conceptualisation of Chinese culture and *Ruxue* suggest that it is a discourse in the sense employed by Michel Foucault (1926-1984)—that is, it is a politics of truth.<sup>332</sup>

---

<sup>330</sup> See, for example, the chapters entitled “Daozhi” 盜跖 (Robber Zhi) and “Yufu” 漁父 (The Old Fisherman) in the *Zhuangzi*, annot. Guo Xiang, pp. 520-538, 544-553.

<sup>331</sup> I derived this definition of “ideological” from that used by Thomas A. Wilson. See his *Genealogy of the Way: The Construction and Uses of the Confucian Tradition in Late Imperial China*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1995, p. 14.

<sup>332</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon and others, New York: Pantheon books, 1980, p. 133.

## The Third Epoch of *Ruxue*

Having identified the spirit of Chinese culture with *Ruxue*, Mou envisaged what he termed “the third epoch of development and promulgation of *Ruxue*” (*Ruxue zhi disanqi zhi fayang* 儒學之第三期之發揚.)<sup>333</sup> According to him, the first epoch, marked by the teachings of Kongzi, Mengzi, Xunzi 荀子 (ca. 313-238 B.C.) and the thought of Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (179-104 B.C.), was a formative period, during which *Ru* rituals and customs were laid down.<sup>334</sup> The second epoch of development and promulgation of *Ru* thought, Mou told us, started with the efforts of *Ru* thinkers to revive *Ruxue* during the early Song—more than a millennium after the death of Dong Zhongshu—and ended with the conquest of China by the Manchus (in 1644). Song-Ming *Ruxue* was the great accomplishment of this epoch,<sup>335</sup> and he regarded Zhou Lianxi 周濂溪 (1017-1073, also known as Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤) as its spearheading founder.<sup>336</sup> Appealing to Hegel’s philosophy of history, he explained the second epoch as the inevitable unfolding of the spirit of *Ruxue*:

。 。 。 中國文化生命發展至北宋，已屆弘揚儒家內聖之學之時，此為歷史運會之自然地所迫至者。<sup>337</sup>

When the development of Chinese cultural life reached the Northern Song period, it was time for the promulgation of the *Ru* learning of inner sageliness. This was the inevitable and natural outcome of the working of history.

It is not clear when the third epoch actually began according to Mou. While his conception of the first two epochs of *Ruxue* corresponds in a way to the historical development of *Ruxue*,<sup>338</sup> he linked the third epoch to an initiative on his part to charge contemporary *Ru* scholars with what he saw to be their historical mission of cultural

---

<sup>333</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Daode de lixiang zhuyi*, p. 2.

<sup>334</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2. As mentioned in footnote 17, Mou understood Song-Ming *Ruxue* in a narrow sense to mean the Song-Ming learning of the mind and human nature (*Song-Ming xinxing zhi xue* 宋明心性之學).

<sup>336</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, pp. 389-390.

<sup>337</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingti*, vol I, p. 321.

<sup>338</sup> It is interesting to note that in discussing the development of *Ruxue* in a talk in 1964, Mou used a continuous periodisation so that the first epoch covered the pre-Qin and most of the Han, the second epoch covered the end of Eastern Han to the end of the Tang, and the third epoch covered the Song and the Ming periods. See *Mou Zongsan xiansheng quanji*, vol. 24, p. 171.

reconstruction. In his chronology of Mou's academic career, Cai Renhou indicates that Mou made first mention of the third epoch of *Ruxue* in a 1948 talk in the mainland.<sup>339</sup> The talk is included as one of the previously unpublished writings in the thirty-three-volume complete collection of Mou's works, published in 2003.<sup>340</sup> In the talk, Mou laments the dismal state of affairs in contemporary China and calls for the third epoch of *Ruxue*:

。 。 。 今日問題，又較以往任何時期為困難。禮俗傳統崩壞無餘。儒家思想湮沒不彰。是以人喪其心，國迷其途。而吾人今日所必欲達之階段，又為一切須創造之階段。國家須建立，政制須創造，社會經濟須充實，風俗須再建。在在無有既成可繼者。 。 。 。

。 。 。 開出創造之坦途，又非賴反求諸己不為功。而反求諸己，正有其可反之根據。此則必須有儒學之第三期之發揚。<sup>341</sup>

...The issues we face today are more difficult than those of any other time in the past. The tradition of rituals and customs has collapsed totally. *Ru* thought has fallen into a decline and become obscure. As a result, people have lost their moral mind and the country has lost its way. Moreover, the stage we must hope to arrive at is a stage where everything has to be created. The nation has to be built, the governmental system has to be created, society and the economy have to be invigorated, and customs have to be established. Everywhere there is a lack of continuity...

...Any attempt to develop a smooth path of creation will be in vain unless we turn inwards and ask of ourselves. Turning inwards and asking of ourselves must have a basis—this then calls for the third epoch of development and promulgation of *Ruxue*.

---

<sup>339</sup> Cai Renhou, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuesi nianpu*, p. 15.

<sup>340</sup> See pp. 13-20 of the previously unpublished writings in vol. 26 of *Mou Zongsan xiansheng quanji*. Most of the talk was incorporated into a journal article, entitled “Rujia xueshu zhi fazhan ji qi shiming 儒家學術之發展及其使命” (The Development and Mission of *Ruxue*), published in a Taiwanese journal in September 1949. The journal article was subsequently incorporated into Mou's *Daode de lixiang zhuyi* (see pp. 1-12 of the book).

<sup>341</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng quanji*, vol. 26, p. 15 of previously unpublished writings.

In the autumn of 1950, Mou began teaching in the teachers' college in Taipei.<sup>342</sup> His cultural nationalism and anti-Communism inspired many students, who gathered together regularly during the weekend to hear him talk about Chinese thought and Chinese culture.<sup>343</sup> In one of these talks in 1955, he reiterated the three epochs of *Ruxue* and stated that the third epoch was “now.”<sup>344</sup> This suggests that the third epoch began in the mid-1950s when he was taking an active role in promulgating *Ruxue* in Taiwan. The assumption is reasonable in light of a journal article he published in December 1954 in which he spoke of the third epoch in terms of “what needs to happen now” (現在正需要第三期之時).<sup>345</sup>

One of Mou's slogans for the third epoch was “Oppose Communism and Build the Nation!” (*fangong jianguo* 反共建國).<sup>346</sup> Like Xiong, Mou was undaunted by the rejection of *Ruxue* by intellectuals of the May Fourth or Marxist persuasion. He stated the diametrical opposition between the materialist beliefs of the Chinese Communist Party and what he intended to promote in the third epoch of *Ruxue*—the ideal of Chinese culture based on *Ru* humanism and the Hegelian understanding that a people's history displays their Spirit:

文化就是「人文化成」中的那個文化。人性、人道、個性、價值，就是「人文」的根源。你知道共產黨是徹底反這些東西的。歷史就是一個民族在其集團實踐中實現理想的精神表現過程。你知道共產黨是徹底否認這種歷史觀的。<sup>347</sup>

By culture, we mean culture as referred to in “transformation attained through human cultural forms”.<sup>348</sup> Human nature, the humane way, character,

---

<sup>342</sup> Cai Renhou, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuesi nianpu*, p. 17.

<sup>343</sup> See p.1 of the compiler's foreword by Cai Renhou in Mou Zongsan, *Renwen jiangxi lu* 人文講習錄 (Transcribed Talks Given at the Humanities Study Club), compl. Cai Renhou, Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1996.

<sup>344</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Renwen jiangxi lu*, p. 86.

<sup>345</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng quanji*, vol. 27, p. 94.

<sup>346</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 24, p. 59.

<sup>347</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 24, pp. 59-60.

<sup>348</sup> “Transformation attained through human cultural forms” (*renwen huacheng* 人文化成) originated from the following line in the commentary on the meaning of the Bi 賁 hexagram in the *Yi*: “[The sages] observe human cultural forms [such as poetry, writing, rituals and music] and use them to transform people in the world” (*guan hu renwen yi huacheng tianxia* 觀乎人文以化成天下). See Zhouyi, p. 3.14b.

value—these are the origins of “human cultural forms”. As you know, these are things thoroughly opposed by the Communist Party. By history, we mean the process that embodies the spirit of a nation-race in their group practice of actualising their ideal. As you know, this way of looking at history is thoroughly negated by the Communist Party.

The task of nation-building for China, on Mou’s view, must be guided by *Ruxue* and therefore necessitates the re-establishment of continuity with the severed *Ru* tradition and the further development of it. This is reflected in his *santong* proposal, his blueprint for China’s cultural reconstruction, discussed below. His ideological control was, however, loud and clear when he stated, in 1949 in Taiwan, that in the new epoch, thinkers were to play the central role of the “go-between”, presumably between the way and the people:

此第三期，。。。將為積極的，建構的，綜和的，充實飽滿的。唯此期將不復能以聖賢之人格為媒介，而將以思想家為媒介，因而將更為邏輯的；。。。<sup>349</sup>

[In] [t]his third epoch... [the development of *Ruxue*] will be positive, constructive, consolidating and full of vigour. Yet, in this epoch, we will not be able to repeat what happened before [in the first epoch] and use the personal character of sages and the virtuous as the go-between. Instead, we will use thinkers as the go-between. Thus, [the *Ruxue* in the third epoch] will be more logical; ...

Each historical period in China, on Mou’s view, poses a main philosophical challenge or theme for Chinese scholars. Thus, the main challenging task for the Wei-Jin period (220-420) was to reconcile and harmonise *Ru* teachings with *Dao* thought, for the Sui-Tang period (581-907) to absorb *Fo*, and for the Song-Ming period to resist *Fo* and promulgate *Ru*. In addition to the third-epoch mission of developing and promulgating *Ruxue* as the basis for China’s cultural reconstruction, the challenging task that contemporary Chinese scholars are charged with, Mou told us, is to harmonise and

---

<sup>349</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Daode de lixiang zhuyi*, p. 11. The article was the same as the one mentioned in footnote 340 and was first published in 1949 (see Cai Renhou, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuesi nianpu*, p. 16).

reconcile Chinese and Western cultures<sup>350</sup>—meaning, according to Mou’s appropriation of Hegelian logic, Chinese and Western thought. As will be seen in later chapters, Mou met this challenge himself with his Kantian-and-*Fo*-inflected moral metaphysics, which aims to bridge the gap between Song-Ming *Ruxue* and Kant’s moral philosophy. Even in his last written note to his students, composed while hospitalized in December 1994, four months before his death, he urged them to work hard at harmonising and reconciling Chinese mainstream thought (meaning *Ruxue*) and mainstream thought outside China (meaning Western thought).<sup>351</sup>

Mou’s periodisation of *Ruxue* into three epochs served to distinguish his own system of thought from Song-Ming *Ruxue* (of the second epoch). In time, however, Mou’s “third epoch of *Ruxue*” was appropriated by some scholars studying the retrospectively created *Xin Rujia* movement to mark the start of the movement.<sup>352</sup> I discuss the *Xin Rujia* movement in Chapter 8. In the next section, I look at Mou’s landmark contribution to the “third epoch of *Ruxue*”—his *santong* proposal for China’s cultural reconstruction.

### **The Santong Proposal**

Mou’s *santong* proposal for China’s cultural reconstruction responded to China’s need to modernise. It also countered iconoclastic attacks on Chinese culture and calls for wholesale Westernisation during and following the May Fourth and New Culture movements with a deep faith in the transformative power of *Ruxue*. Mou acknowledged the troubling state of Chinese culture:

我也常說，中國文化，從主流方面說，到最後只有三點：社會是五倫，政治是大皇帝，學問是「靈明」（良知）。<sup>353</sup>

I have often said that to speak of Chinese culture in terms of the mainstream leads ultimately to only three points: the five basic relations with

---

<sup>350</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 234.

<sup>351</sup> Cai Renhou, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuesi nianpu*, p. 89.

<sup>352</sup> Makeham, “The New *Daotong*”, p. 65.

regard to society, the emperor in the political realm and “enlightened knowing” (innate moral consciousness)<sup>354</sup> in the area of learning.

Yet, undaunted, he not only proposed that Chinese culture be reconstructed scientifically and democratically but also maintained that the reconstruction has to be directed by *Ru* moral values for it to be spiritually rooted and enduring.<sup>355</sup> As shown below, the main argument underlying his *santong* proposal is that Chinese culture can develop science and democracy even though it used to lack them because, contrary to the belief of many Chinese intellectuals of May Fourth persuasion, science and democracy are entirely compatible with *Ru* values and should be conceived as inherent demands of *Ru* moral idealism as expressed in the *Ru* doctrine of “inner sageliness-outer kingliness”. The “inner sageliness-outer kingliness” doctrine in its classical form holds that a ruler has to be a sage within if he is to be a true king without. The premise is that benevolent governance (guided by the central *Ru* concept of empathetic compassion) is the outer manifestation of a ruler’s inner moral cultivation and perfection. Mou was, of course, keenly aware that the idealistic doctrine failed to materialize throughout the long political history of imperial China. To inspire confidence and highlight the modern features promised by his proposal, he added the word “new” to “outer kingliness” and turned the new concept into a slogan for the third epoch of *Ruxue*: “Develop new kingliness” (*kai xinwaiwang* 開新外王),<sup>356</sup> with “new kingliness” standing for democracy and science.<sup>357</sup>

Specifically, the *santong* proposal prescribes three interconnected paths in three different areas for China’s modernisation. The first and foremost is the continuation of the country’s *Ru* moral and religious tradition (*daotong* 道統). *Ruxue* was no longer a mainstream living force in mainland China in Mou’s time. It still is not—even though the mainland Chinese people no longer reject it vehemently, they remain a long way from identifying with it culturally. Mou sought to revive *Ruxue* as a mainstream living

---

<sup>353</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhengdao yu zhidao* 政道與治道 (Rulership and Governance), expanded ed., Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1991, p. 45.

<sup>354</sup> As discussed in Chapter 1, Mou, following Wang Yangming, understood innate moral consciousness to be “where heavenly principle is clearly intuited in a state of enlightenment.”

<sup>355</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Daode de lixiang zhuyi*, pp. 258, 260.

<sup>356</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Shidai yu ganshou*, pp. 308-309.

<sup>357</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 312.

cultural force in China. To continue the *Ru* moral and religious tradition means, for Mou, to uphold the *Ru* learning of inner sageliness—and his own contemporary reading of the Lu-Wang moral metaphysics in particular. He saw this learning of inner sageliness to be the basis for normalising daily life outside the political realm:

其內容自應以內聖之學為核心，此即為道德宗教之本義，而其外王一面，則應只限於日常生活的軌道而言之，此為道德宗教之末義。在此末義下，化民成俗之禮樂亦函於其中。<sup>358</sup>

The [*daotong*] core should be based on the learning of inner sageliness, which is the fundamental import of morality and religion. The outer-kingliness aspect [of *daotong*] relates only to the guiding and regulating of day-to-day living [outside the political realm], which is the peripheral import of morality and religion. Included in this peripheral import are rituals and music that transform the people and make up the customs.

As pointed out by John Makeham, Mou also used the term “*daotong*” in a different but related sense to mean the transmission of the mainstream unified cultural system of China, a system conceived by Mou as “an interconnected main thread”.<sup>359</sup> This is discussed in Chapter 7.

The development of new kingliness is addressed by the second and third paths in Mou’s *santong* proposal. These two paths are different from yet guided by the main path of *daotong*, understood to be the learning of inner sageliness as discussed above. The second path aims to establish and develop a tradition of scientific learning (*xuetong* 學統) in China in order to provide theoretical and specialized knowledge and technical skills needed to modernize the production of goods and meet the demands of complex, modern society.<sup>360</sup> On Mou’s view, Chinese culture used to subsume *xuetong* under *daotong* and value intuition of the moral mind (innate moral consciousness) over the logical,

---

<sup>358</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Daode de lixiang zhuyi*, p. 260.

<sup>359</sup> Makeham, “The New *Daotong*”, pp. 62-63.

<sup>360</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Shidai yu ganshou*, pp. 313, 357.

conceptual thinking of the cognitive mind<sup>361</sup> and such a mindset has to change to meet the demands of the modern age:

中國人以前的理想在講道德宗教，學術往高處講，依現在的話說，即是「談玄」。我們現在所講的下面這一層，亦即現代化的問題，在以前那種社會裏並不成個問題；依著它那種形態，在當時是够了，也有相當的合理性，所以講學的重點不在科學知識，而在講超越科學知識的道德宗教。但由於缺乏這一層，現代人即可責備以往之不足。<sup>362</sup>

The ideal of Chinese people in the past was in terms of morality and religion. Their learning tended to be lofty—what we call “profound talk” nowadays. The lower level [of learning] we are talking about at present, namely, that which relates to modernisation, was not an issue in societies of the past. In those days, relying on the mode [of learning] then was sufficient and rather reasonable. This was why the emphasis of learning then lay not in scientific knowledge but rather in that which transcended scientific knowledge—morality and religion. Yet, owing to the absence of this lower level [of learning], people nowadays can see that as a cause for reproach.

In addition, Mou argued that scientific knowledge should be seen as an inherent demand of *Ru* thought:

在以前的社會中，那些老知識也就足够應付了，然而今天的社會進步，往前發展、要求新知，亦屬應當的要求。儒家內在的目的即要求科學，這個要求是發自於其內在的目的。何以見得呢？講良知、講道德，乃重在存心、動機之善，然有一好的動機却無知識，則此道德上好的動機亦無法表達出來。所以，良知、道德的動機在本質上實即要求知識作為傳達的一種工具。<sup>363</sup>

In societies of the past, people managed with the old knowledge they had. Yet, societies nowadays have progressed, and the demand for further

---

<sup>361</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Daode de lixiang zhuyi*, pp. 260-261.

<sup>362</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Shidai yu ganshou*, p. 326.

<sup>363</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 313.

development and new knowledge is considered a proper demand as well. The inner goal of *Ru* thought demands science. This demand springs from its inner goal. Why is this so? When one talks about innate moral consciousness or morality, the stress is on the goodness of one's intent or motive. Yet, if there is a good motive but no knowledge, the morally good motive cannot be expressed either. Thus, innate moral consciousness or moral motive essentially entails the demand for knowledge as the instrument for its transmission.

The third path in the *santong* proposal aims to establish a clear understanding of China's political past and develop a democratic political tradition (*zhengtong* 政統) in China. Mou thought that, as was the case with *xuetong*, Chinese culture used to subsume *zhengtong* under *daotong*.<sup>364</sup> He frankly admitted to the inadequacy of *Ru* political thought:

但此 [外王] 一面在先秦儒家即未達定型之境，只有一大體之傾向，只順現實歷史稱贊堯舜三代。但堯舜三代究不如內聖面之完整與清晰。內聖面可即得其完整而永恆之意義，而外王面之堯舜三代却並不能即代表政治形態之完整而永恆之意義。是以儒家之政治思想尚只在朦朧之發展中。宋明儒對此亦貢獻甚少。只以堯舜三代寄托其外王之理想。。。。對於內聖面有積極之講習與浸潤，而對於外王面則並無積極之討論。彼等或以為只正心誠意即可直接達之治國平天下，實則政治問題不如此之簡單。<sup>365</sup>

Yet, pre-Qin *Ru* thought with respect to this [outer kingliness] was not fully formed and amounted to only a general tendency of lauding Yao and Shun and the three dynasties [of Xia, Shang and Zhou] in accordance with historical accounts. Yet, Yao, Shun and the three dynasties were, after all, not as complete and clear as was the case with inner sageliness. With respect to inner sageliness, its full and eternal meaning can be obtained readily. Yet, with respect to outer kingliness, Yao, Shun, and the three dynasties fail to represent readily the full and eternal meaning as regards political form. This is why *Ru* political thought is still in a stage of unclear development. The Song-Ming *Ru* did not contribute

---

<sup>364</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Daode de lixiang zhuyi*, p. 260.

<sup>365</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingt*, p. 5.

much to the development of *Ru* political thought either. They merely rested their ideal of outer kingliness upon Yao, Shun and the three dynasties... With regard to inner sageliness, there were positive discussions, practice, immersion and gradual absorption. With regard to outer kingliness, there were no positive discussions. They [the Song-Ming *Ru*] might think that proper cultivation of the mind and sincerity of intent would lead directly to the proper government of a state and the attainment of world peace. The fact is that political matters are not so simple.

With regard to political form, Mou noted that in *Ru* thought, *chanrang* 禪讓 or yielding rulership to a man of talent and virtue, as practised by Yao and Shun, was the highest ideal of rulership; followed by *wangdao* 王道 or kingship, as practised in the three ancient dynasties of Xia, Shang and Zhou; and then *badao* 霸道 or hegemony, usually associated with the states of Qi and Jin during the Warring States period (475-221 B.C.). He placed below hegemony the autocratic system put in place by the Legalists and practiced in imperial China for more than two thousand years since the first emperor of Qin.<sup>366</sup> Separating *Ru* moral idealism from *Ru* thought as politicised to support autocracy, he was of the view that *Ru* thinkers have never approved of the autocratic system:

儒家自孔子開始就不喜歡這一套。孔孟喜稱堯舜是以其禪讓，不是家天下，後來宋明理學家也是如此，沒有一個贊成。<sup>367</sup>

*Ruists* starting from Kongzi have not liked the [autocratic] system. Kongzi and Mengzi lauded Yao and Shun because the two rulers each yielded rulership to a man of talent and virtue. They did not keep the rulership within the family. Later on, the Song-Ming *Ru* thinkers thought the same; none of them approved of the autocratic system.

On his analysis, the autocratic political system was the reason that the *Ru* ideal of “inner sageliness-outer kingliness” failed to materialise in the long political history of imperial China. He was sympathetic with the political plight of the *Ru* thinkers:

---

<sup>366</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Shidai yu ganshou*, p. 309.

<sup>367</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 292.

但是中國人的頭腦却「至此而窮」，沒有想出適當的解決辦法。儒家從沒法子中行一個辦法---君主既是無限體，就將他當作一個無限體來安排：無限體要法天（天也是無限體），要和天一樣，天是「無為而治」，「無為而成化」，法天就是要「具天之德」，以這個觀念來套他。儒家在中國政治上所盡的責任是這個責任。<sup>368</sup>

But the Chinese people came to the end of their wits and were unable to come up with a good solution. The *Ruists* did the best they could given the situation. The emperor being an “unlimited entity” [by virtue of his unlimited power], they treated him as so: they constrained him with the moral dictate that being an “unlimited entity”, he should emulate heaven (heaven is an “unlimited entity” also) in “ruling through inaction” and “completing the transforming through inaction”. To emulate heaven is to be like heaven in virtue. This was the responsibility fulfilled by the *Ruists* in the political realm.

Mou asserted that, based on historical development, constitutional democracy represents the last stage of political development.<sup>369</sup> He urged the Chinese people to have a clear understanding of democratic freedom, rights, citizens’ duties and other key democratic concepts in the West and commit themselves to a political reconstruction in the form of a constitutional democracy.<sup>370</sup> Such political reconstruction would ensure people’s rights and guarantee individual liberty. It would also protect those in subordinate positions from abuse of power by those in controlling positions<sup>371</sup> and effect orderly transfer of political power.<sup>372</sup> In this regard, he pointed out the need to persist in the spirit of attaining goals through steady effort:

中國人傳統的風氣，尤其是知識分子，不欣賞事功的精神，乃是反映中華民族的浪漫性格太強，而事工的精神不夠。。。。中國人的文化生命正視於聖賢、英雄，在此狀態下，事功的精神是開不出來的。<sup>373</sup>

---

<sup>368</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 292-293.

<sup>369</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 387.

<sup>370</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Daode de lixiang zhuyi*, pp. 261-262.

<sup>371</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Shidai yu ganshou*, pp. 385-386.

<sup>372</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 389-390.

<sup>373</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 311.

It is the traditional habitual way of the Chinese people, especially that of the intellectuals, to not appreciate the spirit of attaining goals through steady effort. This reflects the excessive romantic character of the Chinese nation-race and a deficiency in such a spirit....The cultural life of the Chinese people takes seriously the sages, the virtuous men and the heroes. Under this condition, it is hard to develop the spirit of attaining goals through steady effort

The spirit of attaining goals through steady effort is important, he maintained, because it is the spirit entailed in the new kingliness.<sup>374</sup> He was of the view that the *Ru* distaste for heroism should facilitate the shift towards the steady mind-set.<sup>375</sup>

Mou further argued that democracy, as is the case with science, should be seen as an inherent demand of *Ru* thought because only in a democratic political system can the goals implicit in *Ru* moral idealism be attained:

但是在以前那種狀況下，儒家的理性主義既不能贊成英雄，故其理性主義在政治上亦無法表現。儒家的理性主義在今天這個時代，要求新的外王，才能充分地表現。。。。事實上，中國以前所要求的事功，亦只有在民主政治的形態下，才能够充分的實現，才能够充分的被正視。。。。。

。。。民主政治即為理性主義所涵蘊，在民主政治下行事功，這也是理性主義的正當表現，這是儒家自內在要求所透顯的理想主義。<sup>376</sup>

Yet, under circumstances prevailing in the past, since *Ru* moral idealism could not approve of heroes, it could not manifest itself politically either. In these times, *Ru* moral idealism must demand the development of new kingliness for it to manifest fully....In fact, only in a democratic political system can the steady effort and attainment of goals demanded in the past materialise fully and be taken seriously.

...democracy is entailed in *Ru* moral idealism. To attain goals through steady effort within a democratic system—this is the proper manifestation of

---

<sup>374</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 310.

<sup>375</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 312.

<sup>376</sup> *Ibid.*

moral idealism as well. This is the moral idealism revealed from within the inherent demands of *Ru* thought.

Mou's *santong* proposal has three significant features, all of them asserting the primacy of the *Ru* moral and religious tradition (*daotong*) in Chinese culture. First, as discussed, it emphasises the central directing role of *daotong* in China's cultural reconstruction, especially the compassionate desire to improve the people's material well-being and protect them from abuses of power. Mou was by no means the first to assert the central directing role of *Ru* values for China's development. Zhang Junmai, for example, had asserted in a yearlong public debate back in 1923 that science had to be guided by a humanistic vision of life. Yet, to correct the thinking of Chinese intellectuals who believe that modernisation requires wholesale Westernization and the abandonment of the entire *Ru* cultural tradition, Mou not only upheld Zhang's assertion but also imparted theoretical vigour to it. He went to great theoretical lengths to show that modernisation is entirely compatible with *Ru* thought using his "two-tiered mind" metaphysical paradigm and his doctrine of "self-negation of innate moral consciousness". As will be seen in later chapters, the paradigm depicts the human mind in a spiritual state, in the form of innate moral consciousness, as being one with all other beings and infinitely compassionate because it makes no distinction between self and others. Mou maintained that this compassionate *Ru* spirit is that which drives the modernisation effort. He used his doctrine of "self-negation of innate moral consciousness" to show that innate moral consciousness readily negates itself and descends into a cognitive, thinking and differentiating mode—that is, it turns into the ordinary cognitive mind—when it deals with facts and engages in the business of ordinary living. He thus "proved" that modernisation requires a dialectical shift from the moral mind to the cognitive mind to focus on the development of science and democracy but not at the expense of the *Ru* moral and religious tradition. In asserting the central directing role of *daotong*, Mou was not saying that innate moral consciousness (the site of inner sageliness) leads to the new forms of outer kingliness—science and democracy. Rather, he was saying that innate moral consciousness or inner sageliness together with the additional developments of *xuetong* and *zhengtong* will produce the desired modernity in China.

The second significant feature of Mou's *santong* proposal is its argument that to develop scientifically and democratically is not tantamount to Westernisation. The argument is contrary to the common perception held by many within or outside of China. Appealing to the *Fo* concept of common themes and paradigms (*gongfa* 共法), Mou presented the argument as follows in a published letter to a friend:

學統之成是心靈之智用之轉為知性形態以成系統的知識（此即學之為學）所發展成。自知性形態以成系統知識言，這是無國界，無顏色的。故科學就其成為科學言，是無國界無顏色的。這是每一民族文化生命在發展中所應視為固有的本分事。（注意這是說發展出科學是固有的本分事，不是說我們已固有科學了。）如是，科學雖先出現於西方，其心靈之智用雖先表現為知性形態，然吾人居今日，將不再說科學是西方文化，或西方文化所特有，而當說這是每一民族文化生命在發展中所共有，這亦如佛教所謂「共法」，非「不共法」也。。。弟視民主亦與科學同，俱視為每一民族文化生命發展其自己之本分事，不在這裡說西化。如是，縱使一民族發展出科學與民主，亦不是西化，或全盤西化。從這裏說全盤西化是無意義的。因為這都是「共法」。<sup>377</sup>

The development of *xuetong* results from the intellectual functioning of the mind in which the mind shifts to the mode of understanding to enable systematic knowledge (this is learning in the cognitive sense of the word).<sup>378</sup> From the viewpoint of enabling systematic knowledge in the mode of understanding, this is irrespective of national boundary or skin colour. It follows that science is science irrespective of national boundary or skin colour. It [the development of science] ought to be regarded as an inherent obligation in the development of the cultural life of every nation-race. (Note that what is said here is that the development of science is an intrinsic obligation and not that we have intrinsically possessed science.) Thus, although science originated first in the West, and the intellectual functioning of the mind in the West manifested itself in the mode of understanding [that enabled systematic knowledge] ahead of other

---

<sup>377</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Shengming de xuewen*, pp. 62-63.

<sup>378</sup> Mou explained what he meant by “*xue zhi wei xue* 學之為學” on p. 261 of his *Daode de lixiang zhuyi*.

peoples, we people nowadays will no longer say that science is Western culture or that it is something possessed by Western culture in particular. Rather, we should say that this [the development of science] is something commonly possessed by all nation–races in the development of their respective cultural lives. This is similar to what is called “common themes and paradigms” in *Fo*—that is, it is not a “unique theme or paradigm” [*bugongfa* 不共法]....I look at democracy in the same way as I look at science. I see them both as intrinsic obligations in the development of the cultural life of every nation-race and do not speak of them in terms of Westernisation. Thus, even if a nation-race has developed science and democracy, it is neither Westernisation nor wholesale Westernisation. To speak of wholesale Westernization here is meaningless because they [science and democracy] are both “common themes and paradigms”.

Mou’s description of scientific development in terms of the “enabling of systematic knowledge in the mode of understanding” is problematic. Scientific knowledge is not just systematic knowledge. The Chinese developed much systematic knowledge throughout history, a prime example being Chinese herbal medicine. What they failed to develop in pre-modern times was scientific knowledge, which is knowledge acquired using the scientific method of making hypotheses and testing them objectively by means of experimental studies using reproducible observations and measurements of variables. This point, however, does not change the logic of Mou’s argument. In his understanding, science and democracy are instrumental to the actualisation of the ideals held in a people’s *daotong*. They are intrinsic demands of *Ru* moral idealism and intrinsic obligations of the cultural development of every nation-race in modern times. In other words, he regarded science, democracy—and scientific truth—as means for the realisation of *Ru* moral idealism. As will be seen in later chapters, this is consistent with the subordination of the cognitive mind to the spiritual moral mind in his “two-tiered mind” paradigm.

The third significant feature of Mou’s *santong* proposal—the delimitation of the application of democracy and science and condemnation of scientism—is related to the other two features discussed above. Mou insisted that even though China should develop

democratically, democracy and its underlying principles of liberalism and equality, while desirable for regulating the political aspect of modern life, must not be used to regulate social relations and life as a whole. On his view, doing so will encourage ego-centrism and self-indulgence and disrupt the harmonious and reciprocal functioning of basic human relations.<sup>379</sup> The delimitation reflects Mou's *Ruist* understanding of the self and the meaning of life in terms of how one harmonises with the family, the society, the country and the rest of the world—an understanding that negates the central emphasis on individualism underlying Western liberal culture. Similarly, Mou insisted that science must not be used to regulate life as a whole, even though he proposed that China develop scientifically to provide theoretical, specialised knowledge needed to modernise the production of goods and establish a modern society. He warned of the danger of scientism—the use of science as the only measure of truth and value—and the resulting displacement of morality by science.<sup>380</sup> As will be seen in Chapter 5, Mou maintained that there are two broad types of truth, scientific truth being one of them rather than the only truth there is. The other type of truth as conceived by him is of a higher order, deals with life as a whole, and is where human beings can find abiding happiness and peace of mind. According to him, this other type of truth as found in *Ru* moral metaphysics should regulate daily living in China. This reflects his understanding, discussed above, that science as well as democracy is but a means for the realisation of *Ru* moral idealism.

### **Concluding Remarks**

In this chapter, I have documented Xiong's Han cultural nationalist influence on Mou and examined the key elements of Mou's cultural nationalist discourse serving China's cultural reconstruction. While Mou's ideological conception of *Ruxue* as the Hegelian-inflected collective cultural spirit of China is problematic, his third-epoch slogan of "Oppose communism and build the nation" might retain some relevance as long as mainland China remains Communist or under dictatorial rule. Mou's *santong* proposal, the centrepiece of his cultural nationalist discourse, is significant not because it advocates that China reconstructs itself scientifically and democratically but because

---

<sup>379</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Daode de lixiang zhuyi*, p. 257.

<sup>380</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 254-255. Also, Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 279.

Mou's doctrine of "self-negation of innate moral consciousness" provides theoretical vigour to the assertion implicit in the proposal that science and democracy are compatible with the *Ru* tradition. Mou's argument that scientific and democratic development is not tantamount to Westernisation seems moot, though it serves to underscore the anguish felt by Chinese patriots like him in the face of a dominating Western culture threatening to displace traditional Chinese culture. On the one hand, the *santong* proposal's delimitation of science might serve to ward off the tendency towards scientism. On the other hand, not everything in life has to do with morality and religion, and the proposal's unconditional commitment to *Ruxue* smacks of moralism.<sup>381</sup>

This and the last chapter cover Xiong's profound influence on Mou. The next chapter examines the important impact of Hegel's thought on the thinker.

---

<sup>381</sup> Lee Ming-huei is of the view that the moralism in Mou's *santong* proposal is of a weak form. See related discussion in the section entitled "A Moralistic Discourse of Power" in the conclusion of this thesis.



### 3

## The Influence of Hegel

At the end of the last chapter, I underscored the profound influence of Xiong Shili on Mou by concluding that Mou was, as he himself said, the person he was because of Xiong. Kant's long-standing influence on Mou and Mou's philosophical engagement with Kant are covered in the next three chapters. This chapter examines the influence of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel on Mou's thought. Compared to Xiong and Kant, Hegel exerted a less profound but still highly important influence on Mou. While Mou's moral metaphysics engages inextricably with Kant's moral philosophy based on the free will, his understanding of the development of Chinese history, his cultural nationalist discourse and his employment of dialectic as a metaphysical method reflect a deep Hegelian influence. In this chapter, I first discuss Mou's introduction to Hegel, Hegel's spiritual philosophy of history and Hegelian dialectic. I then look at Hegel's impact on Mou's reading of Chinese history and his cultural nationalist discourse. The rest of the chapter examines the three major ways in which Hegel's thought affected or aided Mou's philosophical construction. First, it furnished Mou with a prominent Western voice lending critical support for the inner sageliness of human beings—a main theme of Mou's moral metaphysics. Second, Hegel's thought introduced “dialectic” to him as a key metaphysical method and emboldened him to appropriate *Fo* dialectics and paradigms in his theoretical construction. Third, Hegel furnished Mou with the formal dialectical concept of “self-negation” (*ziwo kanxian* 自我坎陷), which Mou appropriated and used to describe the dynamics in his cultural nationalist *santong* proposal and his “two-tiered mind” paradigm.

## Mou's Introduction to Hegel's Philosophy of History

Mou's interest in Hegel started as a result of his friendship with Tang Junyi 唐君毅 (1909-1978). Mou, Tang and Xu Fuguan 徐復觀 (1903-1982) were the three foremost disciplines of Xiong, but Mou did not meet Tang for the first time until late 1939, when Mou was thirty. At the time, Mou was preoccupied with logic and Kant's epistemology and had little understanding of Hegel. In line with the philosophical grounding he acquired at Peking University, Mou believed that "philosophy must be primarily based on theory and speculative thinking" and felt a strong repulsion (有強烈的反感) towards Hegel's "arbitrary metaphysics" (*wu dingzhun de xingshang xue* 無定準的形上學).<sup>382</sup> Tang not only changed Mou's assessment of Hegel's thought but also became a close associate of Mou. Mou described Tang as "a friend most compatible with me in philosophical discussions and in disposition" (談學問與性情最相契的一位朋友) and felt greatly indebted to Tang for interesting him in Hegel's spiritual philosophy:

他確有理路，亦有理論的思辨力。我並且因著他，始懂得了辯證法的真實意義以及其使用的層面。這在我的思想發展上有飛躍性的開關。我的「邏輯典範」那時已寫成，我已接近了康德。但對於形上學，我並無積極的認識，只是根據「知性」有一個形式的劃分。但自此以後，我感覺到只此形式的劃分並不够。對於彼岸，我還差得遠。我知道裏面有豐富的內容，須要從只是形式的劃分，還要進到具體的精察。這就是黑格爾所開關的領域。我因此對黑格爾也有了好感。這都是由君毅兄所給我的提撕而得的。我得感謝他，歸功於他。<sup>383</sup>

He [Tang] indeed had clear lines of thinking and possessed strong speculative powers as well. Moreover, it was owing to him that I started to understand the true significance of dialectic and its realm of application. This brought about a soaring development in my thinking. At the time, I had finished writing *Luoji dianfan* [邏輯典範 (A Paradigm of Logic)] and was familiar with Kant. Yet, with respect to metaphysics, I had no substantive knowledge. I only knew of its

---

<sup>382</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Wushi zishu*, p. 108.

<sup>383</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

formal distinction from “theoretical reason”. Henceforth I felt that the mere formal distinction [between metaphysics and theoretical reason] was not enough. I was far from reaching the other shore. I knew that there was rich content entailed and that I had to enter into concrete examination. This was the territory opened up by Hegel. I even formed a liking for Hegel as a result. All this came about because of the uplift given by Brother Junyi. I must thank him and give credit to him.

Mou lauded Tang for his command of Hegel’s thought:

。 。 。 而環觀海內，無有真能了解黑氏學者。惟君毅兄能之。此其對於中國學術文化之所以有大功也。<sup>384</sup>

...And in the entire country, not a single soul can truly understand Hegel’s thought—only Brother Junyi can. This is his [Tang’s] great contribution to Chinese learning and culture.

He captured the significance of Kant and Hegel to the development of his own moral metaphysics as follows:

熊師所給我的是向上開闢的文化生命之源。關於這一骨幹，光宋明儒亦不够，佛學亦不够。惟康德黑格爾之建樹，足以接上東方「心性之學」，亦足以補其不足。<sup>385</sup>

What Teacher Xiong gave me was the source of an uplifting cultural life. Regarding this main frame [referring to the main frame of the moral metaphysics—which he called “authentic metaphysics” (*zhenshi xingshangxue* 真實形上學) in the early days—that he himself was developing], just Song-Ming *Ruxue* is not enough, neither is *Foxue*. Only what Kant and Hegel have established philosophically is able to reach and connect with the “Learning of the Mind and the Nature” [Mou’s term for Song-Ming *Ruxue*] of the East, and make up for the latter’s inadequacy as well.

---

<sup>384</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111.

<sup>385</sup> *Ibid.*

In Mou's opinion, Hegel's thought represents a spiritual development of Kant's transcendental idealism.<sup>386</sup> Hegel indeed furnished Mou with rich, relevant content, for in Hegel's spiritual philosophy of history, Kant's free will (practical reason), through a breath-taking theological metamorphosis, becomes Spirit (Geist), whose realisation in the World accomplishes what was intended by Divine Wisdom.<sup>387</sup> "Spirit" is the motif and basis of Hegel's philosophy. J. Sibree, who translated Hegel's *Philosophy of History* points out that "[T]he German "Geist," in Hegel's nomenclature, includes both intelligence and will, the latter even more expressly than the former. It embraces in fact man's entire mental and moral being".<sup>388</sup> The essence or sole truth of Spirit is Freedom<sup>389</sup> and Spirit differs from matter not only because it is free but also because it is self-conscious. In the following passage, Hegel presents a differentiation between spirit and matter that brings to mind Xiong's formulation of the mutual completion through opposition between *xi* and *pi*:

Matter possesses gravity in virtue of its tendency toward a central point. It is essentially composite; consisting of parts that *exclude* each other. It seeks its Unity; and therefore exhibits itself as self-destructive, as verging toward its opposite [translator's note: an indivisible point]. If it could attain this, it would be Matter no longer, it would have perished. It strives after the realization of its Idea; for in Unity it exists *ideally* [freely, as spirit rather than matter]. Spirit, on the contrary, may be defined as that which has its centre in itself. It has not a unity outside itself, but has already found it; it exists *in and with itself*. Matter has its essence out of itself; Spirit is *self-contained existence* (Bei-sich-selbst-seyn). Now this is Freedom, exactly. For if I am dependent, my being is referred to something else which I am not; I cannot exist independently of something external. I am free, on the contrary, when my existence depends upon myself. This self-contained existence of Spirit is none other than self-consciousness—consciousness of one's own being.<sup>390</sup>

---

<sup>386</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 112-113

<sup>387</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, p. 15.

<sup>388</sup> See pp. iii-iv of "Translator's Introduction" by J. Sibree in Hegel's *The Philosophy of History*.

<sup>389</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, p. 17.

## Hegel's Dialectic

Understanding Spirit to be “never at rest and always engaged in moving forward”,<sup>391</sup> Hegel asserted that “[t]he History of the world [as Universal History<sup>392</sup>] is none other than the progress of the consciousness of Freedom.”<sup>393</sup> In other words, the History of the World is the “process of development and the realization of Spirit”<sup>394</sup> displayed “in its most concrete reality.”<sup>395</sup> This process of development is rational, meaning that the World is “not abandoned to chance”<sup>396</sup> but that Reason governs it and its history.<sup>397</sup> It is also dialectical. Dialectic being Hegel’s philosophical method, a brief account of it is in order.

Frederick Beiser points out that Hegel’s dialectic first appeared “in its fully mature form in his 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit*.”<sup>398</sup> The work presents the progressive, dialectical path that has been taken by World-Spirit on its way towards Science<sup>399</sup> and asserts that “[c]onsciousness knows and comprehends only what falls within its experience”.<sup>400</sup> Science, in Hegel’s understanding, is what he calls “actual knowing”<sup>401</sup> or “genuine knowledge,”<sup>402</sup> which means knowing or knowledge enabled by “the [dialectical] experience of itself which consciousness goes through”.<sup>403</sup> It will be clear from the discussion of Hegel’s dialectic below that “genuine knowledge” for the idealist thinker is based on his key premise that “[t]he True is the whole.”<sup>404</sup> In this regard, Hegel saw himself as an “advanced Spirit”, whose “formative education” had enabled him to experience in his own consciousness the formative process of Science.<sup>405</sup> Beiser

---

<sup>390</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>391</sup> Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 6 (Paragraph 11).

<sup>392</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, p. 16.

<sup>393</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>394</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 457.

<sup>395</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>396</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>397</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>398</sup> Beiser, *Hegel*, p. 169.

<sup>399</sup> Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, pp. 15-17 (paragraphs 27-29).

<sup>400</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21 (paragraph 36).

<sup>401</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3 (paragraph 5).

<sup>402</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15 (paragraph 27).

<sup>403</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56 (paragraph 89).

<sup>404</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11 (paragraph 20).

<sup>405</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17, 44 (paragraphs 28, 29, and 71).

aply notes that “[i]n making experience his standard of knowledge, Hegel was embarking upon nothing less than a *transcendental deduction* of metaphysics”, with the aim of showing that “the ideas of metaphysics are a necessary condition [synthetic a priori principles] of actual experience.”<sup>406</sup> In other words, what is presented in the *Phenomenology* is Hegel’s attempt at resurrecting metaphysics on a “scientific” basis founded on the dialectical experience of consciousness.

Dialectic is about change—movements and development. The dialectic of change is a common underlying theme of the *Yi* and Hegel’s philosophy. It aims to explain development in terms of resolution of opposing forces. Opposing forces as thus regarded as interactive with each other rather than mutually exclusive. Reflecting their different origins and historical contexts, the *Yi* and Hegel’s philosophy represent two distinctly different systems of thought. Yet, implicit in both is the premise of mutual entailment—that is, opposites entail each another. Opposition is thus understood as movement on a continuum rather than in terms of a dichotomy. The *yin-yang* anagram (see Diagram 2 below) depicts this clearly. Neither *yin* nor *yang* rules completely—they are constantly in a state of flux. Within utter blackness (*yin*), there is still a tiny speck of white (*yang*) entailed, and vice versa. The mutual entailment of opposites is that which enables change in real life.

NOTE:  
This figure is included on page 104  
of the print copy of the thesis held in  
the University of Adelaide Library.

Diagram 2. The *Yin-Yang* Anagram

(image taken from [www.taoism.about.com/.../Yin-Yang-Symbol.-.jj.htm](http://www.taoism.about.com/.../Yin-Yang-Symbol.-.jj.htm) on August 9, 2009)

---

<sup>406</sup> Beiser, *Hegel*, p. 170.

As discussed previously, Xiong Shili's *xi-pi* theory is a theory of change based on the premise of "mutual completion through opposition" expounded in the *Yi*. In his *Xin Weishi lun*, Xiong clarifies that the Qian 乾 and Kun 坤 trigrams (which he used to represent *xi* and *pi*) oppose as well as harmonise with each other and must not be "regarded from a dualistic perspective."<sup>407</sup> Like Xiong's dialectic, Hegel's consists of a three-stage system involving negation and resolution.<sup>408</sup> The purpose of Hegel's dialectic was to "study things in their own being and movement and thus to demonstrate the finitude of the partial categories of understanding."<sup>409</sup> He described dialectic in terms of three moments: the abstract moment of the understanding, the dialectical moment of negative reason and the speculative moment of positive reason.<sup>410</sup> The moments, in his understanding, are sides or stages "of every notion or truth".<sup>411</sup> In the first stage, thought, as understanding, "grasps the objects in their fixed character"<sup>412</sup> and invests "its subject-matter with the form of [abstract] universality."<sup>413</sup> It "sticks to fixity of characters and their distinctness from one other: every such limited abstract it treats as having a subsistence and being of its own."<sup>414</sup> The second stage involves negative reason in the negative moment of dialectic proper, with understanding contradicting itself as its one-sided and limited predicates<sup>415</sup> "supersede themselves" and "pass into their opposites."<sup>416</sup> Hegel asserted that "thought in its very nature is dialectical, and that, as understanding, it must fall into contradiction—the negative of itself".<sup>417</sup> He explained, in statements strikingly reminiscent of *Fo* discourses on the impermanence of things, that contradiction arises because "everything finite, instead of being stable and ultimate, is

---

<sup>407</sup> Xiong Shili, *Xin Weishi lun*, vol. I, p. 111.

<sup>408</sup> I find striking similarities between Xiong's understanding of *benti* (the first creative principle immanent in the myriad things) and Hegel's understanding of the Absolute (God or the unconditioned, the infinite) even though there is no reason to believe that Xiong was influenced by Hegel (though Xiong apparently learned about Hegel and his dialectic, as will be seen in the last section of this chapter) or that Hegel was influenced by the *Yi* (though Hegel might have been influenced by *Fo*, see footnote 422 below). This observation is not relevant to the study here but is an intriguing point for scholars exploring Xiong's or Hegel's thought.

<sup>409</sup> Hegel, *Logic*, p. 117 (paragraph 81).

<sup>410</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113 (paragraph 79).

<sup>411</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>412</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114 (paragraph 80).

<sup>413</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113 (paragraph 80).

<sup>414</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>415</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116 (paragraph 81).

<sup>416</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115 (paragraph 81).

<sup>417</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15 (paragraph 11).

rather changeable and transient”.<sup>418</sup> He used life as an example—that “life, as life, involves the germ of death”—to show that “the finite, being radically self-contradictory, involves its own self-suppression [also termed variously as negation, abrogation<sup>419</sup> or diremption<sup>420</sup> by him].<sup>421</sup> That this example also happens to be one commonly found in *Fo* dharma talks suggests a common understanding shared by Hegel’s philosophy and *Fo* thought.<sup>422</sup> The last stage of Hegelian dialectic is the Speculative stage, where positive reason arrives at truth by apprehending “the unity of terms (propositions) in their opposition”.<sup>423</sup> While understanding only accepts these terms “in their separation and opposition”,<sup>424</sup> reason embraces them in “a unity of distinct propositions”<sup>425</sup>—that is, as mutually entailed within a whole. Hegel stressed that this “‘reasonable’ result, though it be only a thought and abstract, is still a concrete, being not a plain formal [abstract] unity, but a unity of distinct propositions.”<sup>426</sup> In other words, the universality in the unity is a “concrete universal”—a “real universal”, one that is “self-particularizing or self-specifying,”<sup>427</sup> in contradistinction to the abstract universality featured in the first two moments. He uses the term “speculative” to distinguish the concrete and all-embracing nature of positive reason from the abstract and fixed nature of understanding.<sup>428</sup> On his view, dialectic, in the broad sense of a unity of opposites within a whole as discussed above, is “the very nature and essence of everything predicated by mere understanding—the law of things and of the finite as a whole.”<sup>429</sup> He further

---

<sup>418</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118 (paragraph 81).

<sup>419</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116 (paragraph 81).

<sup>420</sup> Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 107 (paragraph 171).

<sup>421</sup> Hegel, *Logic*, p. 117 (paragraph 81).

<sup>422</sup> Apparently, Hegel was informed of the *Fo* notion of emptiness. He mentioned that the Nought (Nothing) is the second definition of the Absolute (Being is the first definition) and added that “[t]he Nothing which the Buddhists make the universal principle, as well as the final aim and goal of everything, is the same abstraction.” See his *Logic*, p. 127 (paragraph 87).

<sup>423</sup> Hegel, *Logic*, p. 119 (paragraph 82).

<sup>424</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 121 (paragraph 82).

<sup>425</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119 (paragraph 82).

<sup>426</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>427</sup> *Ibid.* p. 227 (paragraph 163). Hegel referred to the universal as “concrete universal” on pp. 266, 273 of the same source. J. N. Findlay explicates Hegel’s “concrete universality” in his *Hegel: A Re-Examination*, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1958, pp. 225-226.

<sup>428</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120 (paragraph 82).

<sup>429</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116 (paragraph 81).

maintained that “[w]herever there is movement, wherever there is life, wherever anything is carried into effect in the actual world, there Dialectic is at work.”<sup>430</sup>

Having discussed Hegel’s dialectic, I now turn to Hegel’s influence on Mou.

### **Mou’s Neo-Hegelian Assessment of the Legalists**

As mentioned, Hegel understood the History of the World as a dialectical march towards Freedom, especially in the form of political freedom within the State. He regarded the State as “the perfect embodiment of Spirit” because “the State is the universal spiritual life, to which individuals by birth sustain a relation of confidence and habit, and in which they have their existence and reality.”<sup>431</sup> Issuing from the above understanding was Hegel’s critical assessment that China represents the under-developed phase of History: “[In the East,] [u]nreflected consciousness—substantial, objective, spiritual existence—forms the basis; to which the subjective will first sustains a relation in the form of faith, confidence, obedience. In the political life of the East we find a realised rational freedom, developing itself without advancing to subjective freedom.”<sup>432</sup> He further observed that in the East, “[s]ubstantial forms constitute the gorgeous edifices of Oriental *Empires* in which we find all rational ordinances and arrangements, but in such a way, that individuals remain as mere accidents. These revolve round a centre, round the sovereign, who, as patriarch—not as despot in the sense of the *Roman* Imperial Constitution—stands at the head. For he has to enforce the moral and substantial: he has to uphold these essential ordinances which are already established; so that what among us belongs entirely to subjective freedom, here proceeds from the entire and general body of the State.”<sup>433</sup> He thus concluded that the East represents “the childhood of History”<sup>434</sup> and that “[t]he Orientals have not attained the knowledge that Spirit—Man *as such*—is free; and because they do not know this, they are not free. They only know that *one* [the sovereign] *is free*.”<sup>435</sup> This assessment forced Mou to confront the

---

<sup>430</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>431</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, p. 104.

<sup>432</sup> *Ibid.*, p.105.

<sup>433</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>434</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>435</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

deficiency of Song-Ming *Ruxue*—its failure to address the problematic lack of political freedom or democratic development in China. It also prompted Mou to look at Chinese history in a new light. He offered the following neo-Hegelian critique of the impact of the rise of the early Legalists during China’s Warring Period (475-221 B.C.):

以往 [我們] 總認為春秋戰國時代是衰世，又籠統地反對法家，就是因為不了解法家工作的意義。 。 。 。 申不害韓非的那套思想當然不對，但前期的法家並不錯。由精神的表現來看，前期法家所完成的工作確是實現了一些客觀的價值。精神的表現就是價值的實現。<sup>436</sup>

In the past [we] persistently held the view that the Spring and Autumn (770-476 B.C.) and Warring Periods were times of decline and categorically opposed the Legalists. This was because we did not understand the significance of the work of the Legalists. ...the kind of thinking of Shen Buhai and Han Fei was, of course, wrong, but the early Legalists were not bad. Seen from the perspective of spiritual manifestation, the work completed by the early Legalists indeed realised some objective values. Spiritual manifestation is realisation of value.

Even though Legalist policies were instrumental in bringing about imperial rule in China,<sup>437</sup> which lasted for more than two thousand years, Mou appreciated that the early Legalists did advance objective freedom in China through “the abolition of feudal domains and the establishment of commanderies and prefectures” (*fei fengjian, li junxian* 廢封建，立郡縣). As a result of this radical change, the ruler, the gentry and the peasantry were liberated from the heavy constraints imposed on them by the powerful aristocrats.<sup>438</sup> There was no advance in freedom under the long imperial rule in China, and Mou lamented that the current dictatorial rule of mainland China by the Chinese Communist Party reflected the spiritual lowness of Chinese intellectuals since the Qing.<sup>439</sup> His *santong* proposal, discussed in Chapter 2, aims to upgrade the spiritual life of Chinese intellectuals and bring about democratic development in China. In the

---

<sup>436</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 184.

<sup>437</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 185.

<sup>438</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 178-184.

<sup>439</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

following section, I look at the impact of Hegel's spiritual philosophy of history on Mou's cultural nationalist discourse.

### **Hegel's Influence on Mou's Cultural Nationalist Discourse**

Mou moved to Taiwan from mainland China shortly before the Communist takeover of the mainland in late 1949. His thinking during his Taiwan period (the eleven years from late 1949 through late 1960) reflected the political turmoil in Taiwan and was marked by fervent cultural nationalist and anti-Communist sentiments. It was also deeply influenced by Hegel. Both Hegel and Mou conceived of culture in terms of the objective realisation of a people's higher aspirations and ideals—the expression of their particular mental life and spirit. For Hegel, the human Spirit is the conduit to Truth and connected to Divine Wisdom. For Mou, the human spirit in the form of innate moral consciousness is heavenly principle clearly intuited in a state of enlightenment. The two thinkers differed in regards to the object of spirit: the human spirit according to Mou seeks to realise the moral mind through the practice of empathetic compassion; the human Spirit according to Hegel seeks to realise Freedom, especially in the form of political freedom within the State. This difference does not change what I have shown in the previous chapter, that Mou's appropriation of Hegel's thought furnished, to a great extent, the spiritual philosophical template for his cultural nationalist discourse and furnished him with the spiritual "logic" to conflate *Ruxue*, Chinese culture and Chinese history. The influence of Hegel can be readily seen in Mou's major writings during this period. His *Lishi zhexue* 歷史哲學 (The Philosophy of History), Mou told us, was Hegelian-inspired.<sup>440</sup> His *Daode de lixing zhuyi* 道德的理想主義 (Moral Idealism) championed empathetic compassion as the Hegelian-inflected spiritual principle.<sup>441</sup> His *Zhengdao yu zhidao* 政道與治道 (Rulership and Governance) argued for science and democracy to be developed from within Chinese culture dialectically through the process of "self-negation of innate moral consciousness", the conception of which was based on Hegel's key dialectical concept of self-negation. The 1958 document entitled "Wei Zhongguo wenhua jinggao shijie renshi xuanyan 為中國文化敬告世界人士宣言" (Declaration on

---

<sup>440</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Lishi zhexue*, original preface, p. 4.

Behalf of Chinese Culture Respectfully Announced to the People of the World, hereafter referred to as the 1958 Declaration), which was jointly published by Mou, Zhang Junmai 張君勱, Xu Fuguan 徐復觀 and Tang Junyi 唐君毅 and regarded by many as the manifesto for the *Xin Rujia* movement, appropriated Hegel's understanding of history and culture as the objective expression of the human spirit.<sup>442</sup>

Hegel's spiritual philosophy not only invigorated Mou's cultural nationalist discourse but also aided his philosophical construction in three major ways. The rest of the chapter discusses these three aspects one by one.

## **Hegel's Influence on Mou's Philosophical Construction**

### **(a) Critical Support for Inner Sageliness**

As will be seen in the following chapters, Mou sought to syncretise the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind with Kant's moral philosophy and the greatest challenge in this undertaking was Kant's epistemology. Kant restricted human knowledge to objects of sensible intuition in the phenomenal realm. This negates a central theme implicit in Chinese thought and central to Mou's own moral metaphysics—the inner sageliness of human beings, which affirms human beings' ability to know the divine (in the Christian perspective) or the enlightened way (in the Chinese contexts of *Ru*, *Dao* and *Fo*). Mou saw Hegelian thought to be a valuable development of Kantian thought:

而由康氏之路所契入的真實形上學以及其究竟了義與究竟落實，卻根本是精神生活上的事。因此，由只見形式的劃分，必須進入具體的精察與感

---

<sup>441</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Daode de lixiang zhuyi*, p. 8.

<sup>442</sup> Mou Zongsan, Zhang Junmai, Xu Fuguan and Tang Junyi, "Wei Zhongguo wenhua jinggao shijie renshi xuanyan" 為中國文化敬告世界人士宣言 (Declaration on Behalf of Chinese Culture Respectfully Announced to the People of the World), in *Dangdai Xin Rujia* 當代新儒家 (Contemporary New Confucianism), ed. Feng Zucheng 封祖盛, Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1989, p. 8. For an English translation of the declaration (by Zhang Junmai (Carsun Chang) and with a couple of sections omitted), see Carsun Chang, Tang Chun-i, Mou Tsung-san, and Hsu Fo-kuan, "A Manifesto for a Re-appraisal of Sinology and Reconstruction of Chinese Culture", in Carsun Chang, *The Development of Neo-Confucian Thought*, vol. II, New York: Bookman Associates, 1962, appendix, pp. 455-483. For a critique of the declaration, see Chapter 8 of this thesis.

受。形式的釐清與劃分是康德的工作，而具體的精察與感受則是黑格爾的精神哲學之所展示。<sup>443</sup>

Yet, the authentic metaphysics one enters into through the theoretical path of Kant and its ultimate meaning and ultimate realisation are fundamentally matters of spiritual life. Therefore, one needs to move from the mere formal delineation to concrete examination and personal experience. Formal clarification and delineation is Kant's work, whereas concrete examination and experience is what Hegel's philosophy of spirit displays.

Of great significance was Hegel's open negation of Kant's epistemology, an epistemology that places the divine beyond human knowledge:

...But in noticing the recognition of the plan of Divine Providence generally, I have implicitly touched upon a prominent question of the day; viz., that of the possibility of knowing God: or rather—since public opinion has ceased to allow it to be a matter of *question*—the *doctrine* that it is impossible to know God. In direct contravention of what is commanded in holy Scripture as the highest duty—that we should not merely love, but *know* God—the prevalent dogma involves the denial of what is there said; viz., that it is the Spirit (der Geist) that leads into Truth, knows all things, penetrates even into the deep things of the Godhead....In the Christian religion God has revealed Himself—that is, he has given us to understand what He is; so that He is no longer a concealed or secret existence. And this possibility of knowing Him, thus afforded us, renders such knowledge a duty. God wishes no narrow-hearted souls or empty heads for his children; but those whose spirit is of itself indeed, poor, but rich in the knowledge of Him; and who regard this knowledge of God as the only valuable possession. That development of the thinking spirit, which has resulted from the revelation of the Divine Being as its original basis, must ultimately advance to the *intellectual* comprehension of what was presented in the first instance, to

---

<sup>443</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Wushi zishu*, p. 111.

*feeling and imagination*. The time must eventually come for understanding that rich product of active Reason, which the History of the World offers to us....<sup>444</sup>

Although Hegel spoke of Divine Wisdom from the Christian perspective, his assertion that human beings can know God and his understanding that the realisation of Spirit in the World accomplishes what was intended by Divine Wisdom furnished Mou with a prominent Western voice that lent critical support for the inner sageliness of human beings. Mou commended Kant highly for his grasp of the nature of morality but criticised him for erecting a self-imposed barrier to metaphysical insight with his epistemology. Much of Mou's writing aimed to remove that barrier. With Hegel's understanding of the human mind, Mou's satisfaction was complete:

其學是明心性之發展與實現而至全體透明之境。<sup>445</sup>

His learning is an understanding to the point of utter clarity of the development and realisation of the [moral] mind and [inborn human] nature.

On Mou's view, Hegel's spiritual philosophy of history corresponds to the *Ru* idealistic doctrine of "inner sageliness-outer kingliness",<sup>446</sup> which both he and Xiong upheld.

### **(b) Introduction of Dialectic as a Key Metaphysical Method**

The second major way in which Hegel's thought aided Mou's philosophical construction was by introducing "dialectic" to him as a key metaphysical method. The dynamics of dialectic was not new to Mou—he had a solid grounding in the *Yi* even back in his university years and certainly understood the dynamics of change and development involving opposites. In his twenties, he not only studied Xiong's *xi-pi* theory, which involves mutual completion through opposition, but also wrote several articles refuting Karl Marx's dialectical materialism, which was in vogue among intellectuals at the time.<sup>447</sup> Yet, the term "dialectic" itself (translated into Chinese as *bianzheng* 辯證) was Western in its origin and gained currency among Chinese intellectuals largely as a result of the introduction of Marxism into China during the early twentieth century. Though

---

<sup>444</sup> Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>445</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Wushi zishu*, p. 113.

<sup>446</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Shengming de xuewen*, p. 218.

<sup>447</sup> Cai Renhou, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuesi nianpu*, p. 5.

the term was used by scholars in the twentieth century to describe Mohist thought—the thought of Mozi 墨子 (ca. 479-381 B.C.) and his followers—and the stream of Chinese thought called the School of Names (*Mingjia* 名家),<sup>448</sup> Xiong did not use the term to describe his *xi-pi* theory. It was only after Mou had developed an appreciation of Hegel’s thought that he started employing dialectic terminology explicitly in his philosophical construction and mentioning Hegel in this regard. This can be seen in his *Renshi xin zhi pipan* 認識心之批判 (Critique of the Cognitive Mind), which was written after Tang had introduced Hegel’s thought to him.<sup>449</sup> At the back of his *Lize xue* 理則學 (The Study of Logic), an early work on logic first published in 1955, Mou appended a chapter expounding dialectic with the aim of refuting dialectical materialism and showing that “[d]ialectic, seen as a metaphysical method, can enable us to open up the source of what is good (開闢價值之源), erect the ethico-spiritual self (樹立精神主體) and affirm a humanistic world (肯定人文世界).”<sup>450</sup> Indeed, dialectic became the key metaphysical method employed by Mou in the construction of his moral metaphysics. As shown in the following chapters, the two main theoretical paradigms of his moral metaphysics—the “two-tiered mind” paradigm and the “perfect teaching” paradigm—are both dialectical.

It is important to note, however, that although Hegel introduced dialectic as a key metaphysical method to Mou, Mou found the idealist thinker’s dialectic preliminary and inadequate. Xiong had previously expressed dissatisfaction with Hegel’s dialectic in his *Xin Weishi lun*:

世之言黑格爾辯證法者、殊不識仁。<sup>451</sup>

Those who speak in terms of Hegel’s dialectic nowadays really know nothing about empathetic compassion.

<sup>448</sup> An example is Fung Yu-Lan’s (Feng Youlan) use of the term “dialectic” or a derivative of it in his discussions of *Mingjia* and Mohist thought. See Fung Yu-Lan, *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, ed. Derk Bodde, New York: The Free Press, 1948, pp. 80, 120.

<sup>449</sup> See Mou Zongsan, *Renshi xin zhi pipan* 認識心之批判 (Critique of the Cognitive Mind), revised ed., Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1990, vol. I, p. 434 and vol. II, pp. 194-195.

<sup>450</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Lize xue* 理則學 (The Study of Logic), Taipei: Guoli bianyiguan, 1971, preface, p. 5.

<sup>451</sup> Xiong Shili, *Xin Weishi lun*, vol. II, p. 431.

Mou concurred with Xiong. He extolled Hegel's spiritual philosophy of history<sup>452</sup> but expressed a deep reservation about Hegelian dialectic's being detached from praxis:

。 。 。 黑氏的大邏輯學却是憑空架起，他截斷了「人的實踐之精神表現」那個背景，他只憑空取了一個光禿禿的「絕對」作為辯證發展的起點，而這個辯證發展是純思想地純理智地從「絕對自身」開始，弔詭以演成，他由此把一切範疇都給推出。這實在是思想自身的弔詭，是一個不必要的大把戲。<sup>453</sup>

...Yet, Hegel's great Logic was erected without a basis. He cut off the background of "the expression of spirit in human praxis" and without any basis adopted a bare "absolute" as the starting point of his dialectical development. In addition, this dialectical development began with "the Absolute itself" in the medium of pure thought and pure reason<sup>454</sup> and unfolded paradoxically to the end. In this way, he deducted all the categories. This is really a paradox of thought itself and is an unnecessary grand trick.

Mou rendered a more favourable view of the neo-Hegelian dialectic of Francis Herbert Bradley (1846-1924):

柏拉得萊的講法仍不同於黑格爾。黑格爾是由絕對實有 (Absolute Being) 開始，絕對實有就是空無所有 (Empty)。這絕對實有經過辯證的發展 (dialectical development) 一步步地充實其自己，這種方式是擴展的辯證 (expansive dialectic)。而柏拉得萊的方式我們可名之曰消融的辯證 (reconciliatory dialectic)，一切矛盾、衝突的現象，當消融到 the immediate this 中，這 immediate this 即成了 reality，矛盾就沒有了，而且更反過來充實 the immediate this，而成爲其豐富的內容。這種消融的辯證方式很有意義。<sup>455</sup>

---

<sup>452</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Shengming de xuewen*, p.218

<sup>453</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>454</sup> By "pure", Hegel meant a priori—that is, entirely "in the abstract medium of Thought" (see his *Logic*, p. 25 (paragraph 19)), including "nothing else but what depends on thinking and what thinking has brought into existence" and not mixed with any material from experience (see his *Logic*, p. 39 (paragraph 24)).

<sup>455</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 258.

Bradley's approach was nevertheless different from Hegel's. Hegel started with the Absolute Being. The Absolute Being is empty. This Absolute Being through a process of dialectical development fills itself up step by step. This is the style of an expansive dialectic. On the other hand, Bradley's style is that of what might be called reconciliatory dialectic: all contradicting and conflicting phenomena become reconciled within the immediate this, and this immediate this turns into reality. Contradictions thus disappear; moreover, they end up filling up the immediate this and become its rich content. This reconciliatory dialectic style is very meaningful.

It appears that what Mou appreciated about Bradley's dialectic was its movement back to concrete existence, the realm of praxis, for surely reconciliation also takes place in Hegel's dialectic (in the last stage).

Bradley's dialectic did not really satisfy Mou anyway, for he found it to be limited when compared with the dialectic of either Zhuangzi or Mādhyamaka philosophy:

柏拉得萊的思想仍與此 [佛教] 不同。因此他所說的 *immediate this* 還不是佛教的「如」，他仍是新黑格爾學派講辯證法的思路。黑格爾正反合式的辯證是很初步的方法，柏拉得萊仍以此為基礎。但莊子之衝破對偶性以及佛教的八不緣起却與此不同。例如講「不二法門」。若照黑格爾以相對之二之綜和統一 (*Synthetical unity*) 的方式達不到不二，雖有強度性 (*intensity*)，但其實只能算個過程，這不是真正的不二。因此在維摩詰經中對於不二法門先列有各種講法，都是由二以達不二，這統不行。至文殊師利說「不說就是不二」，而維摩詰居士卻當下默然，實際表現出不二，連「不說就是不二」都不說了，這不是很美嗎？完全沒有虛假相，這就是最美最圓最平最實的境界。莊子也是如此。至終一定要將緊張性化去而歸於平平、輕鬆，才是最高的境界。<sup>456</sup>

Still, Bradley's thought is not the same as this [*Fo* thought], and what he called "immediate this" is therefore not the same as the "suchness" in *Fo*. His

---

<sup>456</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 261-262.

way of talking about dialectic is still the neo-Hegelian way. Hegel’s dialectic of thesis, antithesis and synthesis<sup>457</sup> is a very preliminary method, and Bradley still used it as the basis. Zhuangzi’s breaking through the principle of duality and the eight negations of conditioned arising<sup>458</sup> are, on the other hand, different from this [Hegel’s dialectic]. Take the discourse on “the teaching of non-duality” for example. Using Hegel’s synthetical unity of a dual pair would not lead us to non-duality. Even though it [Hegel’s synthetical unity] has intensity, the truth of the matter is that it can be regarded as a process at best. What we have here is not really non-duality. This is why in the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra* the various discourses on “the teaching of non-duality” are enumerated first. They all go from a dual pair to non-duality; and none of them works—until Mañjuśrī says, “not saying it is non-duality” while Vimalakīrti turns mute right there and then and expresses non-duality in actual fact. Not even saying, “Not saying it is non-duality”! Isn’t this beautiful? Entirely devoid of unreality and falsity, this is the state of mind that is most beautiful, most rounded, calmest and closest to reality. Zhuangzi is like this too. In the end, tension must give way to the calm and easy for the mind to be at the highest state.

Hegel conceived of truth as the absolute,<sup>459</sup> which is the (unconditioned) whole arrived at by the development of self-consciousness of spirit (mind), and this whole embraces as an integral part of it the concrete universal as discussed above:

...philosophical cognition includes both [existence and essence], whereas mathematical cognition sets forth only the genesis of the *existence*, i.e. the *being* of the nature of the thing in *cognition* as such. What is more, philosophical cognition also unites these two distinct processes. The inner coming-to-be or genesis of substance is an unbroken transition into outer existence, into being-

---

<sup>457</sup> J. N. Findlay notes that “[t]he terms ‘thesis’, ‘antithesis’ and ‘synthesis’, so often used in expositions of Hegel’s doctrine, are in fact not frequently used by Hegel: they are much more characteristic of Fichte [Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814), whose thought had an important influence on Hegel]” (See J. N. Findlay, *Hegel: A Re-Examination*, pp. 69-70).

<sup>458</sup> The “eight negations” originated from Nāgārjuna’s 龍樹 (ca. 150-250) *Mādhyamaka-kārikā* (Verses on the Middle Way) 中論. See Mou’s discussion of it in his *Foxing yu bore*, vol. I, pp. 89-92.

<sup>459</sup> Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 47 (paragraph 75). As clarified by Frederick Beiser, Hegel used the term “the Absolute” loosely to mean “God” or “truth” and more precisely to mean “that which has a self-sufficient or independent existence and essence”. See Beiser, *Hegel*, p. 315.

for-another, and conversely, the genesis of existence is how existence is by itself taken back into essence. The movement is the twofold process and the genesis of the whole, in such wise that each side simultaneously posits the other, and each therefore has both perspectives within itself; together they thus constitute the whole by dissolving themselves, and by making themselves into its moments.<sup>460</sup>

Yet, the concrete universal thus arrived at philosophically is still a thought. The dialectic of either Zhuangzi or Mādhyamaka philosophy, in contrast, does away with thought altogether to reveal the ultimate reality beyond thought and language. Mou clarified the difference as follows:

般若的性格是「融通淘汰」，是將以前分別說的法，加以消化。這種消化，不同於黑格爾所作的消化；黑格爾所作的消化，是把分別說者予以辯證的綜合，這是積極的消化。而般若的消化，並不是把分別建立的法，綜合起來；它用的方式是融通淘汰，所以是無所建立。它不是如黑格爾那樣，經過辯證的統一而成立一個大系統；它的融通，為的是要去除執着，所以是一種消極的態度。融是融化，通是通達，融通不是代表統一，而是要化除執着、封限。因為，凡是分別說所建立的概念，都有限（limitation），一有所限，人就順此限制而有所執着，此即是封限，這就好比莊子齊物論中所說的：「夫道未始有封，言未始有常」之封。淘汰即去掉執着，所以融通淘汰即是化除封限，去掉執着。而去掉執着，即是去掉衆生之病。所以融通淘汰的目的，是要歸於諸法實相，而不是綜合起來成一個大系統，所以與黑格爾的辯證思想是不同的，這就是般若經的特殊性格。

同樣的，要了解莊子的思想，亦復如此。莊子從是非相對，達到超是非，並不是說有一個甲，一個乙，然後再把它們綜合起來。所以東方的思想，有其特殊性格，不能因其也講消化、辯證，就用黑格爾那一套辯證思想來概括。<sup>461</sup>

---

<sup>460</sup> Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, pp. 24-25 (paragraph 42).

<sup>461</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, pp. 354-355.

The characteristic of *prajñā* [wisdom based on insight of “emptiness”]<sup>462</sup> is that of “*rong tong* [melting down, reaching] *taotai* [getting rid of the unfit]”. It entails the breaking down of all that has been previously expounded using the analytical approach. The breaking down here is different from that featured in Hegel’s thought. The breaking down in Hegel’s sense synthesises dialectically what has been established analytically. This is a positive breaking down. In the case of *prajñā*, breaking down does not mean synthesising what has been established analytically. Its way is that of *rongtong taotai*. Thus, it establishes nothing. It is not the same as is the case with Hegel, where a large system is established by means of a dialectic unity. Its way of *rongtong* aims to remove attachment to conceptual fixity. It is therefore a negative approach. “*Rong*” means melting down; “*tong*” means reaching. “*Rongtong*” does not represent unification. Rather, it seeks to melt down and remove the attachment to conceptual fixity and the [conceptual] blocks. The reason is that all concepts built analytically have [are based on] limitation. As soon as limitation exists, the human mind will observe it and become attached to the conceptual fixity. This then is the [conceptual] block and is like the blocking off mentioned by Zhuangzi in his “Discourse on Making all Things Equal”: “The Way has not had any blocking off [it is all pervasive], and words have never had any permanence.”<sup>463</sup> *Taotai* means to get rid of attachment to conceptual fixity. Thus, “*rongtong taotai*” is melting down and removing [conceptual] blocks and getting rid of attachment to conceptual fixity. To get rid of attachment to conceptual fixity is to get rid of the sickness of sentient beings. This is why the aim of “*rongtong taotai*” is to return to the reality of all things and not to unify them into a large system—it is thus different from Hegel’s dialectic thinking. This then is the particular characteristic the *Prajñā* [*Prajñā-pāramitā*] sutras.

Similarly, the above applies to understanding Zhuangzi’s thought. Zhuangzi goes from the duality of right and wrong to where right and wrong have been transcended. He is not talking about having an A and a B and then

---

<sup>462</sup> “Emptiness” is the key concept explicated in Mādhyamaka philosophy.

<sup>463</sup> Zhuangzi, “Qiwu lun” 齊物論 (Discourse on Making all Things Equal), in the *Zhuangzi*, annot. Guo Xiang, p. 52.

synthesising them. This is why Eastern thought has its particular characteristics and cannot be subsumed under Hegel's dialectical thinking simply because Eastern thought also talks about breaking down and dialectic.

Hegel's dialectic also seeks to eliminate attachment to conceptual fixity, but the whole that is the True arrived at in the end is vastly different from the ultimate reality revealed by the either Zhuangzi or the Mādhyamaka philosophy. Given that Mou's moral metaphysics is centred on the fundamental state/condition as the ultimate reality, which is non-conceivable and beyond thought, the dialectic of either Zhuangzi or Mādhyamaka philosophy obviously suited Mou better than Hegelian or neo-Hegelian dialectic. As will be seen in Chapter 6, Mou used the dialectic expounded in *Prajñā-pāramitā* sutras to bring out the "non-analytical" characteristic of a "perfect teaching". It suffices to conclude here that although Mou was not as enthusiastic about Hegel's dialectic as he was about the idealist thinker's spiritual philosophy of history, Hegel's dialectic modelled for him the use of dialectic as a key metaphysical method and emboldened him to appropriate *Fo* dialectic in the construction of his moral metaphysics.

### **(c) Introduction of the Dialectical Concept of "Self-Negation"**

The third major way in which Hegel's thought aided Mou's philosophical construction was by furnishing Mou with the formal dialectical concept of "self-negation" (*ziwo kanxian* 自我坎陷<sup>464</sup>). Negation is the working concept in Hegel's dialectic and "covers difference, opposition, and reflection or relation".<sup>465</sup> Moreover, the working of Hegel's dialectic involves not only negation but also negation of the self or "self-negation" since "the negative [the other] is the self"<sup>466</sup>—that is, the positive and negative are but parts of the self, which is the whole. "Self-negation" was not a working concept in Chinese thought before Mou. It was Hegel's dialectic that introduced Mou to the concept, which Mou then appropriated for his own theoretical construction.

Mou's moral metaphysics grounds all first principles in human being's innate moral consciousness ("the transcendent mind" in his early writings). Innate moral

---

<sup>464</sup> For Mou, "ziwo kanxian 自我坎陷" is the same as "ziwo fouding 自我否定". See Mou Zongsan, *Xianxiang yu wu zishen* 現象與物自身 (Phenomena and Noumena), Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1990, p. 122.

<sup>465</sup> See p. ix of J. N. Findlay's foreword in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

<sup>466</sup> Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 21 (paragraph 37).

consciousness, in Mou's understanding of the human mind, is different yet non-separable from the ordinary thinking mind (the cognitive mind). As pointed out by Zheng Jiadong, Mou employed the dialectical concept of "self-negation" from very early on.<sup>467</sup> In his early work *Renshi xin zhi pipan*, Mou used the concept to explain the dialectic between the transcendent mind and the ordinary thinking mind:

然形上的心坎陷其自己轉化而為識心，則即退處而與物對，只以覺照了別為性，不復如形上的心之為實現原則。<sup>468</sup>

Yet, when the transcendent mind negates itself and turns into the cognitive mind, it right away takes a step back, standing in contrast to things, and simply adopts as its character the illumination of cognition/perception; it no longer resembles the transcendent mind in the latter's functioning as the principle of actualisation.<sup>469</sup>

Mou started writing the book shortly after Tang got him interested in Hegel's metaphysics in 1939 and completed the writing in early 1949, prior to his permanent departure from the mainland.<sup>470</sup> In a 1951 journal article on Hegelian dialectic, Mou systematically laid out the dialectic involved in innate moral consciousness's self-conscious negation of itself in order to change into a "political subject":

此須良知天理從獨體的道德人格中之道德主體再委曲自己降下，來轉而為「政治的主體」，要自覺地成為一個「政治的主體」(Political Subject)。這一步自覺也，是對於良知本覺的神智妙用之否定，。。。<sup>471</sup>

This requires innate moral consciousness-cum-heavenly principle to change into a "political subject" by bending itself—the moral subject within the singular moral character—and pushing itself down. It has to turn self-consciously into a "political subject". This self-conscious step is a negation of innate moral consciousness' divine intelligence and cosmic creativity...

---

<sup>467</sup> Zheng Jiadong, *Mou Zongsan*, p. 82.

<sup>468</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Renshi xin zhi pipan*, vol. I, p. 16.

<sup>469</sup> In Mou's understanding, a principle of actualization is a first creative principle. See p. 104 of his *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*. See also his *Renshi xin zhi pipan*, vol. I, p. 8, where he uses the same rationale to explain why the cognitive mind is not a principle of actualisation.

<sup>470</sup> Cai Renhou, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuesi nianpu*, p. 16.

In a much later work entitled *Xianxiang yu wu zishen* 現象與物自身 (Phenomena and Noumena), Mou provides a clearer indication that Hegel's dialectical concept of "self-negation" had inspired his doctrine of "self-negation of innate moral consciousness". There he lays out the dialectic of the doctrine formally and begins his discussion with a clear statement that the dialectical unfolding being discussed is Hegel's and not Kant's sense of dialectic.<sup>472</sup>

That Hegel had inspired Mou's formulation of the doctrine of "self-negation of innate moral consciousness" did not seem to have lessened the acclaim given to Mou because of it. The doctrine has become a celebrated theoretical landmark of Mou's thought and the *Xin Rujia* movement. The philosophical as well as cultural nationalist implications of the doctrine are immense. I identify four major ones below. First, as discussed previously, Mou used the doctrine to explain the dialectical dynamics underlying the centrepiece of his cultural nationalist discourse—the *santong* proposal. The doctrine thus added theoretical vigour and an intellectual dimension to both the *santong* proposal and his cultural nationalist discourse and helped pave the way for him to become "the most important philosopher among the contemporary *Xin Rujia*" (當代新儒家最重要的哲學家<sup>473</sup>). Second, although Mou's argument that to develop scientifically and democratically is not tantamount to Westernisation seemed moot, the doctrine of "self-negation of innate moral consciousness" did serve to "prove" that, contrary to the belief held by May-Fourth and Communist iconoclasts, modernisation is compatible with the *Ru* tradition. The following remark by Mou underscored the need for such a "proof":

而我們中國人要現代化，正是自覺地要求這個事功精神，並且得從學術的立場，給予事功精神一個合理的安排、合理的證成。<sup>474</sup>

---

<sup>471</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Shengming de xuewen*, p. 225.

<sup>472</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xianxiang yu wuzhishen*, p. 122. Note that in this work Mou refers to innate moral consciousness as *zhiti mingjue* 知體明覺 (the onto-cosmological grounding of knowledge and enlightened intuition).

<sup>473</sup> I borrow this description of Mou from Wu Ming 吳明. See Mou Zongsan, "Dangdai Xin Rujia (dawen lu)" 當代新儒家 (答問錄) (Contemporary New Confucians (an interview with Mou Zongsan)), interview conducted by Wu Ming, in *Jimo de Xin Rujia* 寂寞的新儒家 (The Lonely New Confucians), 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., ed. Zhou Boyu 周博裕, Taipei: Ehu chubanshe, 1996, p. 183.

<sup>474</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Shidai yu ganshou*, p. 327.

And we Chinese people want to modernise—precisely this means that we self-consciously demand this spirit of attaining goals through steady effort. Moreover, we must from the standpoint of [Chinese] learning address and validate rationally this spirit of attaining goals through steady effort.

Even Lin Anwu, who was a vocal critic of Mou, acknowledged the significance of the doctrine:

由良知的自我坎陷以開出知性主體，這樣的主體轉化的創造發展，在思維方式上，固然已經克服了徹底的反傳統主義的危機，而真能站在自家傳統文化立場來思考問題。 。 。 。<sup>475</sup>

To develop the cognitive subject from the self-negation of innate moral consciousness—this creative development by virtue of the transformation of the subject, in terms of manner of reasoning, has certainly overcome the crisis of radical anti-traditionalism. Moreover, it truly demonstrates the ability [Mou’s ability] to consider issues from one’s own traditional cultural perspective...

The cultural nationalist significance of the doctrine, as Yan Binggang suggests, is that it vouches for the primacy of *Ru* thought. Chinese culture, according to the doctrine, is capable of developing science and democracy from within itself.<sup>476</sup> It appears, from the following remark by Wang Bangxiong, a close disciple of Mou, that being able to affirm the primacy of Chinese culture while meeting the May Fourth demand for science and democracy, even if only theoretically, was a significant cultural nationalist breakthrough for Mou and his followers:

。 。 。新儒家的奮鬥，不僅僅是科技器物的奮鬥或政經制度的奮鬥，而是精神文化理念的奮鬥。<sup>477</sup>

---

<sup>475</sup> Lin Anwu, *Ruxue geming lun*, p. 22.

<sup>476</sup> Yan Binggang, *Mou Zongsan xueshu sixiang pingzhuan*, p. 89.

<sup>477</sup> Wang Bangxiong 王邦雄, “Cong Zhongguo xiandaihua guocheng zhong kan Dangdai Xin Rujia de jingshen kaizhan 從中國現代化過程中看當代新儒家的精神開展” (Looking at the Ethico-Spiritual Development of Contemporary New Confucianism in the Course of China’s Modernisation), in Mou Zongsan, *Shidai yu ganshou*, foreword, p. 25.

The struggle of the *Xin Rujia* is not merely a struggle concerning technology and equipment or one concerning political and economic systems; it is a struggle concerning ethico-spiritual and cultural ideals.

Third, the doctrine bolstered theoretically the Lu-Wang understanding of the human mind and human nature. This undoubtedly strengthened Mou's conviction of the inadequacy of the Cheng-Zhu stream of Song-Ming *Ruxue* in this regard. As will be seen in Chapter 7, Mou proceeded to challenge the Cheng-Zhu orthodoxy with his revisionist new *daotong* in the 1960s. The move was controversial, but the philosophical vigour on display helped secure his reputation as the theoretical genius behind, and the spokesperson for, the retrospectively created *Xin Rujia* movement. Lastly, as shown in the following two chapters, the doctrine is the key to explaining the dialectic of one of two *Fo* paradigms he appropriated for his moral metaphysics—the “two-tiered mind” paradigm—and crucial to his argument against Kant's negation of human intellectual intuition (inner sageliness in Mou's terms), even allowing Mou to assert that his moral metaphysics brought Kant's moral philosophy to a proper completion. For Mou and some of his disciples, this represented a splendid triumph of Chinese culture over Western culture and boosted their cultural nationalist pride in the face of the continuing global dominance of Western culture.

### **Concluding Remarks**

This chapter discussed Hegel's spiritual philosophy of history and dialectic and examined the German idealist thinker's influence on Mou. Hegel's critical assessment of China focused Mou's attention on China's lack of democratic development and prompted Mou's neo-Hegelian acknowledgement of the advance in objective freedom effected by the early Legalists in China through “the abolition of feudal domains and the establishment of commanderies and prefectures”. Hegel's spiritual philosophy of history stimulated Mou's reading of Chinese history and Chinese culture and provided the template for Mou's cultural nationalist discourse serving China's cultural reconstruction. The German thinker's thought also aided Mou's philosophical construction in major ways. It furnished Mou with a prominent Western voice lending critical support for the

inner sageliness of human beings—a main theme underlying Mou’s moral metaphysics yet precluded by Kant’s epistemology. Even though Mou was not as enthusiastic about Hegel’s dialectic as he was about his spiritual philosophy of history, Hegel’s dialectic modelled for him the use of dialectic as a key metaphysical method and emboldened him to appropriate *Fo* dialectic in the construction of his moral metaphysics. Hegel also furnished Mou with the formal dialectical concept of “self-negation”, which Mou used to formulate his doctrine of “self-negation of innate moral consciousness”. The doctrine became a celebrated theoretical landmark of Mou’s thought, added theoretical vigour to his *santong* proposal and was one of the accomplishments that secured his reputation as the theoretical genius behind, and the spokesperson for, the retrospectively created *Xin Rujia* movement.

I would like to close this chapter with an observation about Mou’s subscription to Hegel’s concept of Spirit. Despite Mou’s clear identification with *Ru* thought, he also subscribed to the *Fo* concept of karma (*ye* 業), at both the individual and collective levels. He saw human degradation, including his own succumbing to the call of the flesh, as the playing out of uncontrollable karmic forces<sup>478</sup> and described the Communist takeover of China as a collective karma (*gongye* 共業) of the Chinese people.<sup>479</sup> The *Fo* concept of karma is entwined with the *Ru* concept of fate (*ming* 命) and the popular Chinese concept of fate-fortune (*mingyun* 命運), both of which Mou subscribed to also.<sup>480</sup> Mou’s subscription to the concepts of karma, fate and fate-fortune might explain why he was receptive to the Hegelian concept of Spirit. These congenial concepts obviously have their respective philosophical origins and belong to different belief systems. Mou’s employment of all of them reflected the impact of *Fo* on Chinese culture and illustrated the broad-brush syncretism that characterises his system of thought.

---

<sup>478</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Wushi zishu*, pp. 153-154.

<sup>479</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145.

<sup>480</sup> See Mou’s subscription to the notion of *mingyun* in his *Shidai yu ganshou*, p. 1 of Mou’s preface, pp. 296, 305. See also Mou’s discussion of the concepts of fate and fate-fortune in his *Yuanshan lun*, pp. 142-157.

## 4

# **Mou's Moral Metaphysics and Kant: Inner Sageliness**

Mou described his thought as a moral metaphysics. He coined the term “moral metaphysics” based on Kant’s sense of “moral theology”. A “moral theology”, according to Kant, is a theology that grounds the concept of God in morals. Mou used “moral metaphysics” to mean a metaphysics that grounds the first creative principle in human beings’ innate moral consciousness. In other words, Mou’s moral metaphysics not only investigates the pure a priori (meaning “entirely a priori”, with nothing empirical intermixed) principles of morals but also grounds the first creative principle in morals.<sup>481</sup> Even though Mou developed his moral metaphysics based on the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind, his philosophical engagement with Kant was so inextricable that one can fairly say that his moral metaphysics is what it is because of Kant. This and the next two chapters present Mou’s moral metaphysics and Kant’s profound influence on Mou. In this chapter, I focus on the cornerstone of Mou’s moral metaphysics—inner sageliness. I begin with a brief introduction to Kant’s three critiques. I then give a chronological account of Mou’s philosophical engagement with Kant and discuss the two thinkers’ common understanding of morality and their different philosophical objectives. The rest of the chapter focuses on Mou’s understanding of the human mind. First, I highlight Mou’s assertion of human beings’ possession of inner sageliness, a key assertion that contradicts Kant’s negation of human intellectual intuition. This is followed by a discussion of the central metaphysical paradigm of Mou’s moral metaphysics—the “two-tiered mind” paradigm—and the related doctrine of “self-negation of innate moral consciousness”. The paradigm depicts the human mind as consisting of two tiers or two minds—the moral mind (innate moral consciousness),

which is the site of inner sageliness, and the ordinary thinking mind, with the two tiers of mind linked dialectically, meaning that they are mutually entailing and therefore different yet non-separable. The chapter ends with an account of Mou's promotion of the "two-tiered mind" paradigm as a universal metaphysical paradigm and his dissatisfaction with Kant's distinction between phenomena and noumena.

### **Kant's Three Critiques**

Kant's critiques adopt the tripartite division of the higher cognitive faculty into understanding, the power of judgement and reason,<sup>482</sup> which correlates with "the tripartite division of the powers of the mind more generally into cognition, feeling, and desire".<sup>483</sup> The lower faculty of cognition, in contrast, consists of sensibility and imagination.<sup>484</sup> Kant's first critique, the *Critique of Pure Reason*, investigates pure reason. Pure reason, meaning pure theoretical reason or pure reason in its theoretical use, is pure understanding governing objective inquiries. As noted by Roger J. Sullivan, "although he [Kant] often used the terms 'speculative' and 'theoretical' synonymously, Kant also called theoretical thinking 'speculative' in a narrower sense to designate thought about concepts of objects 'which cannot be reached in any experience' and which are the proper subject matter of metaphysics."<sup>485</sup> It is important to note that although the *Critique of Pure Reason* "looks to the faculties of cognition as a whole,"<sup>486</sup> it does not critique the faculty of reason per se. As clarified by Kant, he used the term "pure reason" in the general sense to mean the "faculty for cognizing things *a priori* [non-empirically]," which pertains not to the faculty of reason but rather to "the understanding in accordance with its *a priori* principles, excluding the power of

---

<sup>481</sup> See the overview of Mou's moral metaphysics in the introduction of this thesis.

<sup>482</sup> Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 267. Note that I have not reproduced the bold or italic type used in Kant's three critiques to highlight concepts, definitions and critical points as there is no need to draw attention to them in the context of this thesis.

<sup>483</sup> Paul Guyer, "Editor's Introduction", in Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer, Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. xxiii.

<sup>484</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>485</sup> Roger J. Sullivan, *Immanuel Kant's Moral Theory*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989, note 7 on p. 301.

<sup>486</sup> Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, p. 55.

judgment and reason (as faculties likewise belonging to theoretical cognition).”<sup>487</sup> According to Kant, “[a]ll our cognition starts from the senses, goes from there to the understanding, and ends with reason”.<sup>488</sup> Cognitions are based on representations through intuitions and concepts and relate to objects: objects are “given to us by means of sensibility, and it alone affords us intuitions [sensible intuitions]; but they are thought through the understanding, and from it arise concepts.”<sup>489</sup> Thus, a significant part of the first critique deals with time and space, “the pure forms of all sensible intuition”<sup>490</sup> and the pure concepts of the understanding (the categories),<sup>491</sup> which are pure forms of thought governing our cognitions and experiences of nature.<sup>492</sup> The second critique, the *Critique of Practical Reason*, investigates pure practical reason. Practical reason means reason in its practical (rather than theoretical) use<sup>493</sup> or reason “as a practical faculty, that is, as one that is to influence the *will*”<sup>494</sup> As will be shown in subsequent discussions, pure practical reason is moral reason that governs moral and practical conduct according to the pure will. In Kant’s understanding, the pure will is not merely volition;<sup>495</sup> it is rather the free will determined entirely by freedom,<sup>496</sup> meaning freedom from natural causality, with no empirical motives involved.<sup>497</sup> Kant recognised that “there can, in the end, be only one and the same reason, which must be distinguished merely in its application [either theoretical or practical]”,<sup>498</sup> and a unity of practical and theoretical (speculative) reason is arrived at in his third critique, the *Critique of the Power of Judgment*. This last critique examines both the aesthetic and the teleological powers of judgement. Aesthetic judgements “concern the beautiful and the sublime in nature or in art”,<sup>499</sup> while teleological judgments are about the objective purposiveness of nature.<sup>500</sup>

---

<sup>487</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>488</sup> Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 387.

<sup>489</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>490</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 166.

<sup>491</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 212.

<sup>492</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 255.

<sup>493</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, in *idem, Practical Philosophy*, trans. and ed. Mary J. Gregor, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 148.

<sup>494</sup> Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 10.

<sup>495</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>496</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>497</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-4.

<sup>498</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>499</sup> Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, p. 57.

<sup>500</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79.

Kant understood “a causality through freedom” in terms of “the ground for determining the causality of natural things to an effect that is in accord with their own natural laws [as determined by theoretical reason or, more specifically, by the concepts of the understanding] but yet at the same time is also in unison with the formal principle of the laws of [practical] reason”.<sup>501</sup> He used the concept of teleology (purposiveness of nature) to unify the sensible domain (nature, the world of sense), determined a priori by theoretical reason through the concepts of understanding, and the supersensible domain (beyond the world of sense), determined a priori by practical reason through the concept of freedom.<sup>502</sup>

### **Mou’s Philosophical Engagement with Kant**

Mou’s philosophical engagement with Kant started early in his philosophical career. As mentioned, Mou studied Western philosophy at Peking University and the university subjects of interest to him included New Realism, the philosophy of Bertrand Russell and mathematical logic. After graduating from university, he held various teaching jobs and continued to develop his understanding of logic. It was his doubts about Russell’s realism that led him to realise that logic is pure reason displaying itself, a realisation that was instrumental in his understanding and appreciation of Kant’s first critique, the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

It is widely known that Kant is difficult to understand. Mou attested to this with a concrete account of his experience of reading Kant’s first critique, a book of five to six hundred pages in length:

讀起來，既須心思凝聚，精神沉斂，而又不期然地引起內心的緊張。讀一兩頁後，便須鬆一口氣。精力不及的，便頭昏眼花了。<sup>503</sup>

Reading it not only calls for mental concentration and deep absorption but the reading also unexpectedly triggers a tension within. After reading one or two pages, one has to let out a breath. When one’s stamina falls short, one feels faint.

---

<sup>501</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

<sup>502</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 62-64, 81-82.

<sup>503</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Wushi zishu*, p. 75.

Mou made no mention of any Chinese translation of Kant's first critique being available at the time, and since Mou's own Chinese translations of Kant's three critiques in later years were all based on their English versions,<sup>504</sup> one can reasonably assume that the version mentioned in the above account was the English version. If reading Kant in English is daunting to a native English reader, one can imagine the challenge to Mou of reading Kant in a second language! Mou was in his early thirties at the time. His interest in and command of logic might have facilitated his understanding of Kant's first critique. Not only is the work highly technical, formalistic in style and elaborate in overall structure but it also contains layer after layer of logical reasoning and adheres strictly to definitions, reasoned principles and formal criteria for universality (universal laws) and objective validity<sup>505</sup> (truth as determined by "the agreement of cognition with its object"<sup>506</sup>). In line with his philosophical studies at Peking University, Mou believed that "philosophy must be primarily based on theory and speculative thinking (*lilun sibian* 理論思辨)."<sup>507</sup> On reading Kant's work, he marvelled at the masterly critical technique displayed: "With every argument structured and balanced appropriately (枝枝相對，葉葉相當), it is structural speculation (*jiagou sibian* 架構思辨) at its best."<sup>508</sup> He aspired to develop the technique himself,<sup>509</sup> and indeed abstract reasoning and a technical, intellectual style mark the moral metaphysical writings he was to produce in later years.

I mentioned in Chapter 1 that Mou's early philosophical engagement with Kant was supported and even guided by Xiong. By the time Mou turned forty (in 1949), he had substantially completed the writing of his *Renshi xin zhi pipan* 認識心之批判 (Critique of the Cognitive Mind), which presents his understanding of the a priori constitution of the cognitive mind (the understanding in particular). Mou conceded that

---

<sup>504</sup> This is noted on p. 3 of Mou's translator's foreword in his Chinese translation of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (*Kangde chuncui lixing zhi pipan* 康德純粹理性之批判, vol. I, revised ed., Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1986-1988); p. vii of his translator's foreword in his Chinese translation of Kant's moral philosophy (*Kangde de daode zhexue* 康德的道德哲學, Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1982); and p. III of his translator's foreword in his Chinese translation of Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (*Kangde panduanli zhi pipan* 康德判斷力之批判, vol. I, Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1992).

<sup>505</sup> Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 241.

<sup>506</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 197.

<sup>507</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Wushi zishu*, p. 108.

<sup>508</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

<sup>509</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

the work was “not a mature work of mine”<sup>510</sup>—indeed, it was superseded by two of his later works, *Zhi de zhijue yu Zhongguo zhexue* 智的直覺與中國哲學 (Intellectual Intuition and Chinese Philosophy) and *Xianxiang yu wu zishen* 現象與物自身 (Phenomena and Noumena). Nonetheless, he thought of it as “the important end product of my pure philosophical studies and thinking before the age of forty.”<sup>511</sup> The fact that the work attempted to modify Kant’s understandings of the relationship between time and space and mathematics and of the categories<sup>512</sup> attested not only to Mou’s capacity for independent and vigorous philosophical thinking but also to his ambition to engage with Kant’s philosophy and reconcile it with the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind. The work is significant also in that it identified a metaphysical question that was to become central to his moral metaphysics. A similar question vexed Kant for a long time. Kant’s question was what enables the transition from theoretical reason to practical reason. Simply stated, the question asks why human beings, being imperfectly rational beings, are interested in morality at all. As mentioned above, Kant eventually answered the question laboriously—and highly unsatisfactorily on Mou’s view<sup>513</sup>—using the concept of a purposiveness of nature in his third critique. Corresponding to the question that vexed Kant, the one that vexed Mou was how to explain the transition from the cognitive mind to the heavenly mind (one of Mou’s early terms for innate moral consciousness). Mou posed this question near the end of his lengthy critique of the cognitive mind in his early work. There he theorises that because the cognitive mind is limited to sensible experience and cannot reach the unconditioned and because it also cannot provide a first creative principle for the myriad things, the unconditioned and the first creative principle must be sought outside of the cognitive mind in the heavenly mind. The crux of the matter, he concludes, must lie in “how to shift from the cognitive mind to the mind that is the onto-cosmological grounding of fundamental state/condition, meaning the heavenly mind” (由認識之心如何能轉至道體之心即天心).<sup>514</sup> For Mou, the question concerns the dynamics between the two minds and its theoretical

<sup>510</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Renshi xin zhi pipan*, p.1 of reprinting remarks.

<sup>511</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>512</sup> Mou’s *Renshi xin zhi pipan* is based heavily on logic. Mou discussed what the work aims to achieve on page 1 of his preface to *Zhi de zhijue yu Zhongguo zhexue* and pages 77-80 of his *Wushi zishu*.

<sup>513</sup> Mou Zongsan, “Shangque” 商榷 (Summary Discussion), in *Kangde panduanli zhi pipan*, trans. idem, vol. I, p. 33.

<sup>514</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Renshi xin zhi pipan*, vol. II, pp. 244-245.

articulation. I return to this question in the section below on the “two-tiered mind” paradigm.

Mou completed the writing of *Renshi xin zhi pipan* in the mainland in early 1949. As mentioned previously, he migrated from mainland China to Taiwan later that year and found teaching work in Taiwan within a year or so. He lived and taught philosophy at universities in Taiwan for the following decade, until late 1960, when he left for Hong Kong to take up a Chinese philosophy teaching post at Hong Kong University. As discussed, his philosophical thinking during his Taiwan period was marked by fervent cultural nationalist and anti-Communist sentiments and deeply informed by Hegel’s spiritual philosophy of history. It was not until he had moved to Hong Kong in late 1960, when he was fifty-one, that the raging of his cultural nationalist and anti-Communist sentiments subsided enough to allow him to concentrate on writing his magnum opus *Xinti yu xingti* and resume his philosophical engagement with Kant’s critical philosophy. The renewed engagement lasted for more than three decades until the end of his philosophical career. He published *Yuanshan lun* 圓善論 (A Treatise on the Highest Good) in mid-1985. As will be seen in Chapter 6, the book explores the Kantian ideal of due correspondence between virtue and happiness (*yuanshan* 圓善) and represents the culmination of Mou’s philosophical career.

### **Mou and Kant: Common Understanding of Morality and Different Objectives**

Both Mou and Kant shared a deep interest in metaphysics and morality. Mou had a deep and abiding admiration for Kant: “Kant’s philosophy is the display of a great soul as well as a treasury of philosophy”<sup>515</sup> (康德的哲學是偉大靈魂的表現，也是哲學的寶庫). In addition, he maintained that “among Western philosophers, Kant was the first Western philosopher to have an earnest understanding of the pure and solemn nature of moral consciousness” (在西方哲學家，只有康德始認真地認識了這徹底而嚴整的

---

<sup>515</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Wushi zishu*, p. 73.

道德意識).<sup>516</sup> Kant understood morality in terms of practical reason. On his analysis, practical reason brings about practical good by determining the will objectively—“from grounds that are valid for every rational being as such.”<sup>517</sup> His second critique states that the pure will is determined solely by the fundamental law of pure practical reason, which stipulates that one is to “act that the maxim of your will could always hold at the same time as a principle in a giving of universal law.”<sup>518</sup> He called this fundamental law the moral law.<sup>519</sup> Morality, for Kant, is thus “the relation of actions to the autonomy of the will, that is, to a possible giving of universal law through its maxims.”<sup>520</sup> He thought that the practical reason and the will of perfectly rational beings coincide and their actions are invariably and pre-eminently good (moral).<sup>521</sup> Human beings, he told us, are rational beings that are not perfectly rational, and the objective laws of reason (laws that are valid for all rational beings, regardless of subjective conditions) for them are practical (moral) laws—commands or imperatives of reason that express what they ought to do.<sup>522</sup> These moral laws command categorically—the actions are prescribed by reason unconditionally as ends in themselves because they are good in themselves and absolutely necessary for all rational beings.<sup>523</sup> This unconditional nature of morality means that morality is not tied to contingent or empirical grounds.<sup>524</sup> Kant made two very important points here. The first point is that moral conduct is based on the pure will—that is, pure good will without material or empirical motive and subject to no contingent grounds. It is good in itself and is carried out from duty—“the necessity of an action from respect for [moral] law”<sup>525</sup>—alone and never from inclination, self-interest or incentives of the will (be it happiness, perfection or self-realisation) or interest for others.<sup>526</sup> The second point is that moral worth is independent of effect—what the moral

---

<sup>516</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingt*, vol. I, p. 120.

<sup>517</sup> Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 25.

<sup>518</sup> Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 164.

<sup>519</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

<sup>520</sup> Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 46.

<sup>521</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24. For Kant, the moral (based on strict conformity with the moral law) is “the pre-eminent good”. See p. 14 of the same source.

<sup>522</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>523</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 25, 27.

<sup>524</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 27, 31, 35. Only experience can furnish contingent grounds according to Kant. See p. 35 of the same source.

<sup>525</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>526</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10-12.

conduct effects or accomplishes.<sup>527</sup> These are very crucial points, for they rule out the determination of morality in terms of the matter or content of an action: “[W]hen moral worth is at issue, what counts is not the actions, which one sees, but those inner principles of actions that one does not see.”<sup>528</sup> This leads to Kant’s formalistic thesis that the form and principle of moral action—namely, the action’s universality or suitability for functioning as a universal law—alone determines its moral worth.<sup>529</sup> To illustrate, if I help an old lady carry a heavy load across the road, the action in itself has no moral significance. Moral significance lies in the presence of a good will arising out of my recognition that it is how everyone in the same situation should act, whether one is inclined to do so or not. Morality is not relevant if I help the lady for an empirical reason rather than out of a sense of duty based on such a good will, such as if I help the lady in order to conform to her expectation or those of others or to comply with a code of behaviour conditioned within me.

Mou agreed with Kant on the universal and imperative nature of morality and observed that Mengzi, in stating that one should value righteousness more than one’s life (*Mengzi* VIA: 10), put an even stronger emphasis on the imperative nature of morality than Kant did.<sup>530</sup> Even though Mou and Kant had different conceptions of the first creative principle, both thinkers saw the main role of human beings in the world to be moral. Kant understood virtue to be “the capacity and considered resolve to withstand” “what opposes the moral disposition within us,”<sup>531</sup> and the moral law forms the basis for what can be considered as the crowning concept of his moral philosophy—the highest (complete) good. According to him, the highest good in a person consists not only in virtue as the supreme good<sup>532</sup> and the worthiness to be happy but also in happiness itself and “happiness distributed in exact proportion to morality [due correspondence between

---

<sup>527</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 8, 13-14.

<sup>528</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>529</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 27, 31.

<sup>530</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingti*, vol. I, p. 119. I might add that the *Ru* golden rule—commanding one not to do to others what one would not want others to do to one (*Lunyu* XII: 2)—captures perfectly the universal nature of morality.

<sup>531</sup> Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals* in *idem*, *Practical Philosophy*, trans. and ed. Mary J. Gregor, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 513.

<sup>532</sup> According to Kant, virtue is “the *supreme* [meaning unconditioned] *condition* of whatever can even seem to us desirable and hence of all our pursuit of happiness” and “is therefore the supreme good”. See his *Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 228.

virtue and happiness]...constitutes the highest good of a possible world.”<sup>533</sup> On the premise that human existence “contains the highest end [the highest good in the world] itself,”<sup>534</sup> he stated that the human being “as a subject of morality” (“the human being under moral laws”<sup>535</sup>) is the final end of creation.<sup>536</sup> With Mou, it should not be difficult to draw from previous discussions that he also saw the main role for human beings in the world to be moral. He sought to present the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind as a moral metaphysics, a metaphysics that grounds all first principles in human beings’ innate moral consciousness or moral mind. He called his moral metaphysics “the learning of life”, whereby one learns to live an authentic life. An authentic life, on his view, is a moral life directed by the moral mind: one cultivates one’s moral character centring on empathetic compassion and other *Ru* virtues, directs one’s life morally and extends oneself virtuously to care for one’s family, society, country and the world at large.

Their common understanding of the nature of morality and their common belief in the centrality of morality notwithstanding, Mou and Kant pursued different objectives. Kant was primarily interested in resolving controversies and contradictions concerning the existence of God, freedom, and the immortality of the soul and Mou in reconstructing and promulgating the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind; and they accomplished their respective objectives through radically different paths. Kant pioneered the critical method for which he was famous. He converted ontological questions into epistemological ones by transforming “questions about what sort of things there must be into questions about the conditions under which it is possible for us to make claims to knowledge about things.”<sup>537</sup> His approach to metaphysics is thus epistemological, and true knowledge for him is grounded in logical thinking and has objective validity, meaning that it involves an empirical object—an object intuited by way of sensible intuition and experienced in the phenomenal world of sense.<sup>538</sup> According to his reasoning, it is in the deductive nature of speculative reason to regress from what is known and raise metaphysical questions involving the supersensible, and

---

<sup>533</sup> Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, pp. 228-229.

<sup>534</sup> Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, p. 302.

<sup>535</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 311.

<sup>536</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 302-303.

<sup>537</sup> Paul Guyer and Allen Wood, “Introduction”, in Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 25.

<sup>538</sup> Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 341.

the key metaphysical questions relate to the existence of God and freedom (the free will) and the immortality of the soul.<sup>539</sup> This led to his finding that “that which necessarily drives us to go beyond the boundaries of experience and all appearances is the unconditioned, which [speculative] reason necessarily and with every right demands in things in themselves for everything that is conditioned, thereby demanding the series of conditions as something completed.”<sup>540</sup> To complete the series of the condition that everything in the phenomenal world is caused, for example, reason comes up with the idea of an uncaused first cause (the unconditioned).<sup>541</sup> Kant termed objects of the phenomenal world, cognised by us through our sensible intuition, appearances (phenomena).<sup>542</sup> In contrast to appearances are “things in themselves” (noumena), and a thing in itself is “something actual for itself but uncognized by us”<sup>543</sup> because our cognitions relate to appearances only.<sup>544</sup> He concluded that conflicting answers to key metaphysical questions (those involving God, freedom and immortality) arise and remain unresolved by speculative reason because the answers are all erroneous and pretentious.<sup>545</sup> They are erroneous because they bear no objective validity; they are pretentious because they are mere ideas relating to the unconditioned and are “beyond all bounds of experience through concepts to which no corresponding object at all can be given in experience”,<sup>546</sup> hence ‘transcend[ing] every capacity of human reason.’<sup>547</sup> In other words, speculative reason is simply not capable of knowing the answers relating to these subject matters. His *Critique of Pure Reason* thus aimed to bring metaphysics onto “the secure course of a science”<sup>548</sup> by “removing all those errors that have so far put [speculative] reason into dissension with itself in its nonexperiential use”.<sup>549</sup>

Kant’s main objective, however, goes beyond denying human beings knowledge of supersensible ideas—chief among them God, freedom and the soul. It is, as he tells us

---

<sup>539</sup> Guyer and Wood, “Introduction”, in Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 15. Also Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 139.

<sup>540</sup> Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 112.

<sup>541</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 490.

<sup>542</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>543</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>544</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 360-361.

<sup>545</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 99-102, 139.

<sup>546</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>547</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>548</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114.

in his famous line, “to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith”.<sup>550</sup> This main objective he planned to achieve through a critique of practical reason: “Now after speculative reason has been denied all advance in the field of the supersensible, what still remains for us is to try whether there are not data in reason’s practical data for determining that transcendent rational concept of the unconditioned, in such a way as to reach beyond the boundaries of all possible experience, in accordance with the wishes of metaphysics, cognitions *a priori* that are possible, but only from a practical [moral] standpoint.”<sup>551</sup> In other words, by denying human beings knowledge of God, freedom and the soul, Kant aimed to shift these ideas from theoretical reason, where knowledge is founded on objective validity, to practical reason, where the fundamental moral law triumphs and furnishes human beings with reasons to believe in these ideas. Based on human beings’ upholding of the moral law, his second critique (*Critique of Practical Reason*) advances three postulates: (a) the existence of freedom (freedom from natural causality) as a precondition for the existence of the pure will, which is a free will “independent of empirical conditions”;<sup>552</sup> (b) the immortality of the soul—“the existence and personality of the same rational being [of the sensible world] continuing endlessly”;<sup>553</sup> and (c) the existence of God.<sup>554</sup> Morality (what one ought to do) presupposes freedom or the free will. Freedom or the free will, according to Kant, belongs to the self in itself (called the “noumenal self” by Mou), which is independent of empirical conditions. In contrast to the self in itself, the self as appearance (called the “phenomenal self” by Mou) is governed by natural causality and is the self known and experienced by human beings.<sup>555</sup> Given that human beings are imperfectly rational, Kant postulates the immortality of the soul to allow for the “endless progress” of the human will towards “holiness”, where the will conforms completely to reason.<sup>556</sup> In addition, he postulates the existence of God to bring about due correspondence between virtue and happiness, which, in his opinion, is something human beings rationally aspire to but

---

<sup>549</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

<sup>550</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.

<sup>551</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>552</sup> Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 162.

<sup>553</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 238.

<sup>554</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 246.

<sup>555</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 218.

<sup>556</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 238.

cannot realize on their own.<sup>557</sup> Thus, he rests the traditional theological claims of the immortality of the soul and the existence of God on purely moral ground.

Mou accomplished his objective of reconstructing and promulgating the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind by presenting it as a moral metaphysics<sup>558</sup> in his four-volume critical study of Song-Ming *Ruxue*, comprising the three-volume *Xinti yu xingt*, which he took eight years (from 1961 to 1968) to write,<sup>559</sup> and *Cong Lu Xiangshan dao Liu Jishan*, which was written much later and published in 1979.<sup>560</sup> Mou's moral metaphysics upholds the central Lu-Wang metaphysical thesis of "mind is principle". The thesis focuses on human beings' inner sageliness by identifying the original mind (the moral mind)—which Wang Yangming, following Mengzi, referred to as "innate moral consciousness" (*liangzhi*)—with "principle", the heavenly first creative principle that creates and nurtures the myriad things. Thus, even though Mou agreed with Kant regarding the pure and imperative nature of morality and its centrality, his moral metaphysics valorises the human mind as the site of inner sageliness, thus challenging Kant's denial of human intellectual intuition and epistemological restriction of the human mind to sensible intuition and knowledge of phenomena. The rest of this chapter examines this major departure of Mou from Kant and the metaphysical paradigm Mou used to strengthen his position.

### **Mou's Assertion of Human Beings' Possession of Inner Sageliness (Intellectual Intuition)**

Like Wang Yangming, Kant also had a conception of conscience. Yet, as noted by Roger J. Sullivan, Kant was of the view that "the judgements of our conscience are mainly limited to questions about the moral *legality* of our behaviour and about our effort to act dutifully."<sup>561</sup> Conscience, for Kant, is thus separate from practical reason and the free will, and Mou was quick to point out the difference between Kant and Wang Yangming:

---

<sup>557</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 240.

<sup>558</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingt*, vol. 1, pp. 8-11.

<sup>559</sup> Cai Renhou, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuesi nianpu*, pp. 27, 34.

<sup>560</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

。 。 。 它本身不是一義務，亦不是一法則，它不是道德底客觀條件，而是感受義務這感受底主觀條件，而義務則是由法則底命令而成。法則是理性所立。照這分別的說法，顯然良心與法則是二，不是一；而且良心亦不是法則之源，法則亦不出于良心。但是王陽明所說的良知却是心理是一者：。 。 。<sup>562</sup>

...It [referring to “conscience” as conceived by Kant] in itself is not a duty,<sup>563</sup> nor is it a law. It is not an objective condition of morality but rather a subjective condition of receptiveness to the concept of duty,<sup>564</sup> and duty arises from the command of a [moral] law. [Moral] laws are established by reason. According to this differentiation, conscience and [moral] laws are clearly separate and not identical. Moreover, conscience is not the source of [moral] laws, and [moral] laws do not issue from conscience. Yet, innate moral consciousness spoken of by Wang Yangming is that which identifies the mind with [the heavenly] principle...

What is at issue here stems from the different understandings of the human mind by Mou on the one hand and Kant on the other. There are two key differences. First, while Kant asserted that the pure will belongs to the noumenal self and rested the traditional theological claims of the immortality of the soul and existence of God on purely moral ground, he did not identify the pure will with the noumenal self or with the first creative principle (God). Second and more importantly, Kant maintained that human beings lack intellectual intuition. In contrast to sensible intuition, which allows us to sense objects and function in the world of sense (the phenomenal world), intellectual intuition is intuition that is non-sensible and supposedly needed if one were to intuit and acquire knowledge of objects of the noumenal realm—noumena or things in

---

<sup>561</sup> Sullivan, *Immanuel Kant's Moral Theory*, p. 60.

<sup>562</sup> Mou Zongsan, “Daodexue lun liangxin” 道德學論良心 “Discussion of Conscience in Kant’s Doctrine of Virtue”, in Immanuel Kant, *Kangde de daode zhexue*, trans. Mou Zongsan, appendix II, p. 449.

<sup>563</sup> This refers to Kant’s statement that conscience is “not something incumbent on one, a duty, but rather an unavoidable fact.” See Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 529.

<sup>564</sup> This refers to Kant’s statement that conscience, together with moral feeling, love of one’s neighbour and respect for oneself, lies “at the basis of morality, as *subjective* conditions of receptiveness to the concept of duty, not as objective conditions of morality.” See Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 528.

themselves as they really are.<sup>565</sup> In Kant's theorising, God possesses intellectual intuition and has knowledge of noumena<sup>566</sup> while human beings possess sensible intuition, with intellectual intuition lying "absolutely outside our faculty of cognition".<sup>567</sup> Mou's moral metaphysics reflects the Lu-Wang understanding of the human mind. Departing from Kant, it identifies the pure will with the moral mind (innate moral consciousness) and subscribes to the Lu-Wang understanding of the latter as not only the real (noumenal) self but also the sagely or divine self by virtue of its being the heavenly-decreed human nature—understood as the heavenly principle immanent in human beings. Mou maintained that the *Ru* understanding of the human mind—as informed by the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind—justifies the departure from Kant:

當然康德並未把他所講的自由自主自律而絕對善的意志連同着它的道德法則無上命令視為人之「性」。但儒家却可以這樣看。<sup>568</sup>

Kant, of course, did not conceive of what he described as the free, autonomous and absolutely good will, together with the categorical imperative prescribed by its moral law, as human beings' "nature". Yet, *Ruists* can have such an understanding.

Upholding the Lu-Wang thesis of "mind is principle", with mind referring to the moral mind and principle the heavenly first creative principle, Mou expounded the inner sageliness of human beings based on the unity of the transcendent (heavenly principle considered objectively) and the immanent (heavenly principle as immanent in human beings' moral mind, which can be accessed only subjectively). He saw "the unity of the transcendent and the immanent" as an important theme underlying the three main traditions of Chinese thought. The theme represents, in his opinion, the most fundamental difference between Chinese culture and Western culture.<sup>569</sup> Some scholars, however, have found Mou's characterisation of heaven as both transcendent and immanent—his assertion of what Roger T. Ames terms "immanent

---

<sup>565</sup> Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 360-361.

<sup>566</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 191-192.

<sup>567</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 361.

<sup>568</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingt*, vol. I, p. 129.

<sup>569</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhaxue shijiu jiang*, p. 78.

transcendence”<sup>570</sup>—confusing or problematic. Relating to this, Ames and David L. Hall, in their work *Thinking Through Confucius*, criticised Mou’s use of “transcendence” to describe heaven (as used in the period before Kongzi)<sup>571</sup> and started a “transcendence debate”, with Lee Ming-huei 李明輝, a disciple of Mou, coming to Mou’s defence.<sup>572</sup> Responding to Lee’s defence, Ames pointed out that even though Mou did clarify that he was not using “transcendence” in a strict sense, his characterisation of heaven’s decree as an “immutable and unchanging standard” corresponding to “justice” in Greek philosophy<sup>573</sup> was nonetheless misleading in that it “evoke[d] dualistic notions of transcendence”.<sup>574</sup> I can see that the comparison Mou made to Greek philosophy could cause unnecessary misunderstanding. Leaving aside Ames and Hall’s criticism and looking only at Mou’s notion of “immanental transcendence” in his moral metaphysics, I deem the notion acceptable because the Lu-Wang thesis of “mind is principle”, which informs Mou’s moral metaphysics, does convey “immanental transcendence”, with principle referring to the first creative principle-cum-ultimate reality, which is also immanent in the human mind.

Mou’s notion of “immanental transcendence” pre-supposes human beings’ possession of an inner moral intuition or knowing, which leads to an enlightened insight into and a spiritual oneness with the infinite creativity and ceaseless generative principle of heaven:

客觀說的天道生德之創生之不禦究竟落實處即在此主觀說的“心知之誠明”之創生之不禦。<sup>575</sup>

The ultimate realisation of the inexhaustible<sup>576</sup> quality of the life-generative creativity of the virtue of the way of heaven—understood in objective terms—is

<sup>570</sup> Roger T. Ames, “New Confucianism: A Native Response to Western Philosophy”, in *Chinese Political Culture: 1989-2000*, ed. Shiping Hua, Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2001, p. 87.

<sup>571</sup> David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, *Thinking Through Confucius*, Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1987, pp. 204-205.

<sup>572</sup> See Lee Ming-huei’s defence of Mou in his *Dangdai Ruxue de ziwo zhuanhua*, pp.118-136 and Ames’ response in his “New Confucianism: A Native Response to Western Philosophy”, pp. 87-94.

<sup>573</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue de tezhi*, pp. 23-24.

<sup>574</sup> Ames, “New Confucianism: A Native Response to Western Philosophy”, pp. 92-93.

<sup>575</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhi de zhijue yu Zhongguo zhexue*, p. 186. Here Mou is expounding lines taken from a work entitled *Zhengmeng* 正蒙 (Correcting Ignorance) by Zhang Zai (same as Zhang Hengqu 張橫渠)

right here in the inexhaustible quality of the life-generative creativity of “the utter sincerity and enlightenment of the knowing of the moral mind”—understood in subjective terms.

On his view, such an inner moral knowing or intuition, obviously not sensible, falls under Kant’s “intellectual intuition”. Based on this, Mou asserted that the moral mind is a presence one can intuit directly. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Xiong had made the same assertion in an exchange with Feng Youlan back in the early 1930s, when Mou was under Xiong’s tutelage, and the assertion had awakened Mou to what he deemed as the superior enlightened insight of Song-Ming *Ruxue* (vis-a-vis Western epistemology) into the human mind.

When Mou wrote his three-volume masterwork *Xinti yu xingti* in the late 1960s, he lauded and appealed to Kant’s understanding of morality as laid out in the German thinker’s *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*.<sup>577</sup> Yet, he was also keenly aware that because Kant restricted human intuition and knowledge to the phenomenal, he merely postulated the existence of the free will—he did not affirm it.<sup>578</sup> Since Mou identified the free will with the moral mind and understood intellectual intuition as the spiritual function (the inner moral intuition or knowing) of the moral mind,<sup>579</sup> Kant’s denial of human intellectual intuition ran directly counter to the central thesis he was developing regarding the inner sageliness of human beings. He turned to this burning issue right away after the publication of the third volume of *Xinti yu xingti* in mid-1969 and the result was his *Zhi de zhijue yu Zhongguo zhexue*,<sup>580</sup> which he completed before the end of that year.<sup>581</sup> He then went on to write *Xianxiang yu wu zishen*, which he

---

(1020-1077), a major Northern Song *Ru* thinker. See Zhang Zai, *Zhangzi quanshu* 張子全書 (*The Complete Collection of the Writings of Zhangzi*), Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1935, p. 46.

<sup>576</sup> Mou understood “不禦” as “inexhaustible” based on the following line in the *Xicizhuan*: “乎易廣矣大矣以言乎遠則不禦” (“The way of the *Yi* is expansive and great. In terms of its being distant it is inexhaustible”). See *Zhouyi*, p. 7.14b.

<sup>577</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingti*, vol. I, pp. 120-126.

<sup>578</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 133.

<sup>579</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 304. Also, Mou Zongsan, *Zhi de zhijue yu Zhongguo zhexue*, p. 186.

<sup>580</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhi de zhijue yu Zhongguo zhexue*, preface, pp. 2-3.

<sup>581</sup> Cai Renhou, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuesi nianpu*, p. 34.

completed in 1973.<sup>582</sup> By the time he finished the second book, he had re-read Kant's work and finished translating (from English) to Chinese Kant's first two critiques.<sup>583</sup>

As reflected in the titles, the two books *Zhi de zhijue yu Zhongguo zhexue* and *Xianxiang yu wu zishen* seek to elucidate Chinese thought using two key Kantian terms—intellectual intuition and noumenon—while modifying substantially Kant's understanding of the human mind and refuting Kant's epistemological negation of human intellectual intuition and knowledge of noumena. Rendering Kant's term “noumena” as “*wu ziti*” 物自體 (things in themselves), Mou asserts in the earlier book:

康德言物自體是只取其消極的意義，因為他不承認我們人類能有“智的直覺” (intellectual intuition)。我以中國哲學為背景，認為對於這種直覺，我們不但可以理解其可能，而且承認我們人類這有限的存在實可有這種直覺。這是中西哲學之最大的差異處。我們以“人類可有智的直覺”為背景，故對於“物自體”一概念可有親切而清晰之理解，不似康德處之籠統與空洞。<sup>584</sup>

Kant spoke of things in themselves only in the negative sense, because he did not acknowledge that we human beings can have intellectual intuition. Backed by Chinese philosophy, I hold that with regard to this type of intuition, we not only can comprehend its possibility but also [can] acknowledge that we beings of limited existence can indeed have this type of intuition. This is the greatest difference between Chinese and Western philosophy. Because we came from a background that accepts that “human beings can have intellectual intuition”, we can have a close and clear comprehension of the concept of things in themselves. This is unlike Kant, who treated the concept in a manner that was unclear and without content.

This major disagreement with Kant was declared with the utmost urgency in the later book:

---

<sup>582</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>583</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xianxiang yu wu zishen*, preface, p. 3. The checking of the translations against Kant's works must have involved a substantial amount of time, as the translations were not published until 1982 and 1983. See Cai Renhou, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuesi nianpu*, pp. 54-55.

<sup>584</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhi de zhijue yu Zhongguo zhexue*, p. 118.

如若真地人類不能有智的直覺，則全部中國哲學必完全倒塌，以往幾千年的心血必完全白費，只是妄想。這所關甚大，我們必須正視這個問題。<sup>585</sup>

If indeed human beings cannot have intellectual intuition, then all of Chinese philosophy cannot but collapse completely, and all the great endeavours of the past several thousand years will be in vain—nothing but erroneous thoughts. The implication of this is enormous. We must confront this problem.

His argument was that the teachings of all three main streams of Chinese thought—*Ru*, *Dao* and *Fo*—“cannot be expounded except through the affirmation of intellectual intuition” (非通過智的直覺之肯定不能說明)<sup>586</sup> because of their common theme of inner sageliness:

依康德智的直覺只屬於上帝，吾人不能有之。我以為這影響太大。我反觀中國的哲學，若以康德的詞語衡之，我乃見出無論儒釋或道，似乎都已肯定了吾人可有智的直覺，否則成聖成佛，乃至成真人，俱不可能。因此，智的直覺不能單劃給上帝；人雖有限而可無限。有限是有限，無限是無限，這是西方人的傳統。在此傳統下，人不可能有智的直覺。但中國的傳統不如此。<sup>587</sup>

According to Kant, intellectual intuition belongs only to God; we human beings cannot have it. On my view, the impact of this is way too severe. Looking back at Chinese philosophy, if we use Kant’s terms, I can see that Chinese philosophy, whether it be *Ru*, *Fo* or *Dao*, appears to have already affirmed that human beings can have intellectual intuition, for otherwise it would not be possible to become a sage, a Buddha or an “authentic person” [in the Dao context]. Therefore, intellectual intuition cannot be marked off for God only; human beings are finite, yet they can be infinite. Finite is finite, infinite is infinite—this is the tradition of Westerners. Under this tradition, human beings cannot have intellectual intuition. Chinese tradition, however, is not like this.

---

<sup>585</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xianxiang yu wu zishen*, preface, p. 3.

<sup>586</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>587</sup> *Ibid.*

In both books, Mou found fault with Kant's lack of clarity regarding the concept of noumena or things in themselves. I discuss Mou's criticisms in this regard in the next chapter. The following section presents Mou's "two-tiered mind" paradigm, which Mou used to bolster his Lu-Wang understanding of the human mind and affirm inner sageliness.

### **The Central Metaphysical Paradigm of Mou's Moral Metaphysics: The "Two-Tiered Mind" Paradigm**

The human mind is central to the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind and Mou's moral metaphysics. Following Mengzi and the Song-Ming *Ru*, Mou understood the human mind as having a double nature. In his early work *Renshi xin zhi pipan* (completed in 1949), he identified the human mind as consisting of the heavenly mind (one of his early terms for the moral mind) and the cognitive mind. In addition, he devised the doctrine of "self-negation of the heavenly mind", a doctrine inspired by Hegel's dialectical concept of "self-negation", to explain the dialectical shift from the heavenly mind to the cognitive mind. As he developed his thought in the late 1960s, he saw the severe implication of Kant's negation of human intellectual intuition and sought to refute Kant. Around the mid-1970s, it occurred to him that he could use the Mahāyāna *Fo* paradigm for the human mind—the "yi xin kai er men 一心開二門" paradigm, which I have rendered as the "two-tiered mind" paradigm—to bolster theoretically the Lu-Wang understanding of the human mind and modify Kant's understanding of the same.<sup>588</sup> Mou had previously given a lengthy elucidation of the paradigm in an appendix to the first volume of his *Xinti yu xingti* (published in 1968),<sup>589</sup> but his focus there was to contrast the *Fo* understanding of the ultimate reality (*shiti*) with that of the Song-Ming *Ru* and it was not until several years later that he saw the import of the paradigm relative to Kant's philosophical system.

The paradigm has its origin in the *Mahāyāna-śraddhōtpāda-śāstra* (*Dasheng qixin lun* 大乘起信論) (The Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna). The

---

<sup>588</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, pp. 291, 299-300.

<sup>589</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingti*, vol. I, pp. 580-599.

treatise is of foundational importance to Chinese Mahāyāna *Fo* thought,<sup>590</sup> but its authenticity as a Sanskrit treatise has been disputed.<sup>591</sup> The paradigm depicts the human mind as having a double nature and comprising two mutually entailing “minds”—the Buddha-mind (*zhenxin* 真心; also called Buddha-nature) and the *ālayavijñāna* 阿賴耶識.<sup>592</sup> The Buddha-mind is pure consciousness without thought and unmoved by selfish emotions<sup>593</sup> (chief among them greed or attachment, and anger<sup>594</sup>), materiality or empirical circumstances and having enlightened insight into the “emptiness” of all phenomena—that phenomena arise as a result of the coming together of right conditions and are empty of a permanent, independent existence.<sup>595</sup> The *ālayavijñāna* is the ordinary thinking mind, which interprets sense perceptions and operates cognitively at the phenomenal level. It is the mind that sees the world in dualities<sup>596</sup>—up and down, right and wrong, desirable and undesirable, and so on—and driven by greed and attachments.<sup>597</sup> Like Xiong Shili’s theory of non-separability of *ti* and *yong*, the “two-tiered mind” paradigm refutes the *Weishi* conception of the *ālayavijñāna* as a storehouse consciousness that is the basis of all things in the phenomenal realm.<sup>598</sup> Instead, it conceives of the *ālayavijñāna* as created by thought and bringing about the “empty” phenomenal realm—a consciousness different yet dependent on and non-separable from (fused with) the permanent and quiescent Buddha-mind.<sup>599</sup> The *Mahāyāna-śraddhōtpāda-śāstra* calls the Buddha-mind “*ti* 體” (short for *shiti*, the ultimate reality).<sup>600</sup> Mou noted that the construal of the Buddha-mind as the ultimate reality conveys its being both the root (*genyuan* 根源) of the *ālayavijñāna* and everything else in the phenomenal realm—everything, including the *ālayavijñāna*, depends on it—and

<sup>590</sup> Yinshun 印順, *Dasheng qixin lun jiangji* 大乘起信論講記 (Talk on The Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna, transcribed by Yanpei and Xuming, revised ed., Taipei: Zhengwen chubanshe, 1992, pp. 4-5. See also the entry for *Dasheng qixin lun* 大乘起信論 in Charles Muller’s Digital Dictionary of Buddhism at [www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb) (accessed on May 4, 2009).

<sup>591</sup> Yinshun, *Dasheng qixin lun jiangji*, pp. 1-4.

<sup>592</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 85-87.

<sup>593</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 69-73.

<sup>594</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>595</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 79-81.

<sup>596</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71.

<sup>597</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 91, 98.

<sup>598</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19, 91-92. See Mou’s elucidation in Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, pp. 267, 284-285.

<sup>599</sup> Yinshun, *Dasheng qixin lun jiangji*, pp. 86-87.

the transcendental (a priori)<sup>601</sup> and innate grounding for Buddhahood.<sup>602</sup> He was careful to point out, however, that “ultimate reality” used in the *Fo* context is devoid of the sense of real existence implicit in the same concept in the *Ru* moral metaphysical context because the overriding *Fo* notion of “emptiness” negates real existence in the *Ru* sense.<sup>603</sup>

The same dialectic of non-separability and mutual entailment is in play in the “two-tiered mind” paradigm as in Xiong’s theory of non-separability of fundamental state/condition and function. In fact, the *Mahāyāna-śraddhōtpāda-śāstra* employs the metaphor of waves (representing the *ālayavijñāna*, the active thinking mind) originating from a large body of seawater (representing the quiescent Buddha-mind, which is without thought)<sup>604</sup> to depict the non-separability of the two minds in the same way that Xiong used the metaphor of the masses of foam originating from a large body of seawater to depict the non-separability of fundamental state/condition and function. In keeping with Xiong’s assertion that “[t]he Buddha turned upside down [from negating to embracing the boundless creative potential of the heavenly principle] is Kongzi”, Mou appropriated the “two-tiered mind” paradigm and replaced the Buddha-mind with the moral mind, and the *ālayavijñāna* with the ordinary cognitive mind, with the dialectic remaining intact. Since the moral mind in Mou’s “two-tiered mind” paradigm is the same as Mengzi’s original mind-cum-human nature, the paradigm furnishes theoretical support for what Mengzi vouched for—that human beings are morally constituted and possess a sagely nature. On Mou’s understanding, the moral mind is the transcendental (a priori) basis for sagehood:

。 。 。 孟子一開始即強調「人人皆可以為堯舜」，同時更指出「人人皆有聖性」。孟子所說的性善之「性」，是指「聖性」，乃是通過道德實踐而

---

<sup>600</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>601</sup> Note that Mou used the term “*chaoyue*” 超越, which he rendered as “transcendental”, to mean “a priori” (*xianyan de* 先驗的, meaning non-empirical). He also associated “a priori” (*xianyan de* 先驗的) with “innate” (*xiantian de* 先天的). See his *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, pp. 284-285.

<sup>602</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Foxing yu Bore*, vol. I, pp. 473-475.

<sup>603</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 475-478.

<sup>604</sup> Yinshun, *Dasheng qixin lun jiangji*, p. 131.

呈現的，而道德實踐之最高境界即是成聖人。在此，聖性並非單屬於聖人之性，而是指成聖所以可能之根據。<sup>605</sup>

Mengzi emphasised right at the start that “every human being can become a Yao or a Shun”.<sup>606</sup> Moreover, he pointed out at the same time that “every human being has a sagely nature”. The nature mentioned in Mengzi’s doctrine of “the innate goodness of human nature” refers to “sagely nature”, which becomes present through moral praxis; and sagehood is the highest state attained in moral praxis. Here, sagely nature refers not to the nature belonging only to the sages but rather the grounding that enables sagehood.

The paradigm also furnishes a dialectical schema for the Lu-Wang understanding of inner sageliness based on the *Mengzi* and the Lu-Wang metaphysical thesis of “mind is principle”. *Ru* moral praxis for Mou involves the elimination of selfish and unwholesome desires. Metaphorically, this means the elimination of the wind that has brought about the waves.<sup>607</sup> Rather than adopting Xiong’s *ti* (fundamental state/condition) and *yong* (function) structure, Mou continued to explain the dialectic between the two minds or the two tiers of mind using the Hegelian concept of self-negation: the moral mind negates its inherent quiescent and non-thinking nature in order to allow the cognitive thinking mind to arise.<sup>608</sup> Mou used different terms in different writings to refer to the moral mind, the “heavenly mind” mentioned above and “the soul-cum-noumenal mind” discussed below being two of them. The term most commonly used by contemporary *Ru* scholars to refer to the moral mind is “innate moral consciousness”. In time, Mou’s “two-tiered mind” paradigm became centrally associated with his moral metaphysics and his theory of “self-negation of innate moral consciousness” a celebrated theoretical landmark of his thought and the *Xin Rujia* movement.

Most importantly for Mou, the “two-tiered mind” paradigm refutes Kant’s negation of human intellectual intuition by positing intellectual intuition as the spiritual function of the moral mind. When intellectual intuition is directed to itself, the moral

---

<sup>605</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 289.

<sup>606</sup> This refers to the virtuous legendary King Yao and King Shun in pre-historic times. See *Mengzi* VIB: 2.

<sup>607</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 295. Also, Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingti*, vol. I, p. 651.

mind becomes an immediate presence; when directed to objects, noumena are intuited.<sup>609</sup> The former is Mou's reading of Wang Yangming's assertion of innate moral consciousness being self-enlightenment, the latter is in accordance with Kant's understanding of intellectual intuition. Kant obviously did not subscribe to the existence of a quiescent moral mind in human beings. He insisted that the intelligible character of human beings (meaning the character of human beings' noumenal selves) could never be known immediately (intuitively<sup>610</sup>) because human beings lack intellectual intuition.<sup>611</sup> Mou elaborated the working of the moral mind, which he referred to as the "soul" to mean the noumenal self,<sup>612</sup> as follows:

靈魂既是心，它自是一個活物，它能思，能識，能覺，能意。但是思、識、覺、意可有兩觀：一是心象觀，一是自體觀。心象觀，則順思、識、覺、意之活動而想其有思時，亦有不思時，思時思起，不思時思滅，是以思有起有滅，此即思為一心象，識覺與意亦復如此。但如作自體觀，則思識覺意收歸于靈魂心體之自己，思即如如常思而無起滅，覺亦如如常覺而無起滅，識與意亦復如此；此即思之動--動而無動（無動相），亦即思而無思（無思相）；既無動相，亦無思相，則思即是靈魂心體之自己，而非一心象。識與覺意亦復如此。<sup>613</sup>

The soul being mind, it is without question a living thing. It can think, recognise, sense and conceive. Yet, there are two ways of looking at thinking, cognising, sensing and conceiving—one phenomenally, another noumenally. Phenomenally, we can go with the activity of thinking, cognising, sensing and conceiving and think of the mind as at times thinking and at times not thinking. Thoughts arise during thinking and cease when thinking stopped. Thus, thoughts

---

<sup>608</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xianxiang yu wuzhishen*, pp. 121-124.

<sup>609</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhaxue shijiu jiang*, pp. 303, 304. See also Mou Zongsan, *Xianxiang yu wuzhishen*, p. 45.

<sup>610</sup> Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 155.

<sup>611</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 536.

<sup>612</sup> "Soul" was a controversial concept Kant examined in his first critique. Even though Kant asserted that the pure will belongs to the noumenal self and postulated the immortality of the soul to allow for an endless progress toward holiness (the state of complete conformity of the will with the moral law), he did not identify the soul with the noumenal self. Such identification was, however, advanced by Mou. See Mou's *Zhi de zhijue yu Zhongguo zhaxue*, pp. 135-136.

<sup>613</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhi de zhijue yu Zhongguo zhaxue*, pp. 136-137.

arise and cease and such is thinking as a phenomenon of mind. The same applies to cognising, sensing and conceiving. Noumenally, however, thinking, cognising, sensing and conceiving retires into the soul-cum-noumenal-mind itself. Thinking is absolute thinking without arising and ceasing. Likewise, sensing is absolute sensing without arising and ceasing. The same applies to cognising and conceiving. This then is the movement of thinking—movement that is without movement (without the phenomenon of moving), which is the same as thinking that is without thought (without the phenomenon of thinking). Without the phenomenon of either moving or thinking, thinking is thus the soul and the noumenal mind itself and not a phenomenon of mind. The same applies to cognising, sensing and conceiving.<sup>614</sup>

Thus, while the obvious significance of the “two-tiered mind” paradigm to Mou is that it enabled him to depict the Lu-Wang understanding of the mind based on the *Mengzi* and bolster the Lu-Wang thesis of “mind is principle”, its real philosophical significance to him is that it affirms human beings’ inner sageliness (and intellectual intuition by extension) and refutes Kant’s negation of human intellectual intuition and human knowledge of noumena:

。 。 。 所謂有意義、有貢獻，當然是針對康德的哲學體系而言。依照康德哲學，「自由」、「靈魂」、「上帝」等理念，在實踐理性中雖有其實在性，然卻仍只是「設準」(postulate)，我們的知識是無法達到它們的，其實在性仍只是實踐的，而非知解的。因為我們對於這些理念，沒有直覺(intuition)，所以無法令這些理念「呈現」。康德的問題，在於他雖強調人的實踐理性，卻未肯定人有智的直覺；他不承認人具有大乘起信論所肯定的如來藏自性清淨心，或如王陽明所說的良知意義的心，甚至如陸象山根據孟子所說的「本心」。<sup>615</sup>

---

<sup>614</sup> Mou’s description of the working of the moral mind as “without arising and ceasing” resonates with the following brief sketch of the intelligible character of human beings given by Kant: “Now this acting subject, in its intelligible character, would not stand under any conditions of time, for time is only the condition of appearances and not of things in themselves. In that subject no action would arise or perish, hence it would not be subject to the law of everything alterable in its time-determination that everything that happens must find its cause in the appearances (of the previous state).” See Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 536.

<sup>615</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, pp. 299-300.

...what we mean by [the “two-tiered mind” paradigm’s] having significance and having much to contribute is, of course, in relation to Kant’s philosophical system. According to Kant’s philosophy, ideas such as “freedom”, “the soul” and “God”, despite their reality from the standpoint of practical reason, are still just “postulates”. Given that our knowledge cannot reach them, their reality is in merely practical and not theoretical terms. Because we lack intuition for these ideas, we cannot make them “present”. The problem with Kant is that while he emphasised human beings’ practical reason, he, nevertheless, failed to affirm that human beings have intellectual intuition. He did not acknowledge that human beings possess a *tathāgata-garbha* pure mind [the Buddha potential<sup>616</sup>] as affirmed by the *Mahāyāna-śraddhōtpāda-śāstra* or a mind such as one having the import of what Wang Yangming called innate moral consciousness. He did not even acknowledge that human beings possess a mind such as that which Lu Xiangshan called “the original mind” based on the *Mengzi*.

Refuting Kant, however, is not the same as proving Kant wrong. Kant conceived of truth and knowledge in terms of objective validity and such a conception has prevailed in the modern world. Mou’s “two-tiered mind” paradigm merely furnishes theoretical support for an alternative view of truth and knowledge in transcendental (a priori), subjective terms not amenable to objective proof. As will be discussed in the next chapter, Mou made this alternative view explicit with his assertion of two types of knowledge and his proposal for a “two-tiered” ontology. Yet, it does not appear that Mou’s assertion and proposal have won the struggle against the sceptical tide of modern times. The next chapter will explore this issue further.

Having garnered theoretical support for the Lu-Wang understanding of the mind from the “two-tiered mind” paradigm, Mou was keen to promote the paradigm as a common philosophical (metaphysical) paradigm:

---

<sup>616</sup> The *tathāgata-garbha* “refers to the capability for becoming a *tathāgata* [Buddha] that is present in the minds of unenlightened sentient beings.” See the entry for the Chinese term “如來藏” in Charles Muller’s Digital Dictionary of Buddhism at [www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb) (accessed on August 3, 2009).

。。。就哲學發展的究極領域而言，這個架構有其獨特的意義。我們可以把它看成是一個有普遍性的共同模型，可以適用於儒釋道三教，甚至亦可籠罩及康德的系統。<sup>617</sup>

...this frame [referring to the paradigm] has a unique significance in terms of the development of philosophy in the area relating to the ultimate. We can regard it as a common model that can be applied universally. It can be applied to the three teachings of *Ru*, *Shi* [*Fo*] and *Dao* and can even cover Kant's system.

Mou drew a parallel between the cognitive mind and Kant's theoretical reason and between the moral mind and Kant's practical (moral) reason. He argued that Kant's transcendental distinction between the phenomena and the noumena, strictly speaking, is an application of the "two-tiered mind" paradigm.<sup>618</sup> Mou's "two-tiered mind" paradigm subsumes the cognitive mind to the moral mind. This subsumption consists in what he described above as the retiring of thinking, cognising, sensing and conceiving into the soul itself, much like the waves returning to the large body of seawater. Similarly, Kant's system subordinates theoretical reason to practical reason by asserting the supremacy of pure practical reason.<sup>619</sup> While Mou deemed highly satisfactory Kant's development of the phenomenal tier of the mind based on the pure concepts of the understanding,<sup>620</sup> he was highly critical of Kant's development of the noumenal tier. On his analysis, Kant's development of the noumenal tier was inadequate and incomplete because the German thinker negated human intellectual intuition and spoke of noumena only in the negative sense—that they are absolutely beyond the reach of human intuition.<sup>621</sup> Mou's critique of Kant in this regard is the subject of the next chapter.

In Western philosophy, there is no theoretical model akin to the "two-tier mind" paradigm. Mou probably hoped that elevating the paradigm to the status of a common metaphysical model would add weight to his refutation of Kant's negation of human intellectual intuition. As will be seen in the next chapter, Mou ventured to use the paradigm to "perfect" Kant and advanced a "two-tiered" ontology. He envisioned the

---

<sup>617</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 298.

<sup>618</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>619</sup> Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 237.

<sup>620</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 305.

<sup>621</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 300-304.

paradigm to be a mutually beneficial bridge between Kant's moral philosophy and *Ru* moral thought:

。 。 。 若要使康德哲學再往前推進，則必須與中國哲學互相摩盪，互相結合；同時，要使得中國哲學更充實，更往前推進，亦必須與西方康德哲學相接頭，如此才能往下傳續。這種文化的交流，正顯出佛教「一心開二門」這一架構的重要性。<sup>622</sup>

...for Kant's philosophy to move forward, it must interact with Chinese philosophy and combine with it. At the same time, for Chinese philosophy to become fuller and to move forward, it must meet with Kant's philosophy in the West—only then can it further its transmission. This kind of cultural exchange brings out perfectly the importance of this “two-tiered mind” *Fo* framework.

Mou no doubt saw himself and his Kantian-inflected moral metaphysics at the centre of the cultural exchange he had in mind.

### **Concluding Remarks**

This chapter examined Mou's moral metaphysics and its close engagement with Kant with the focus on inner sageliness. Mou moral metaphysics grounds all first principles in human being's innate moral consciousness. My discussion has shown that although Mou used Kant's understanding of morality and assertion of the centrality of morality as a contemporary point of departure for his moral metaphysics, his vigorous defence of Mengzi's doctrine of innate goodness and of the central Lu-Wang theme of “mind is principle” founded on the ancient doctrine forced him to diverge from the German philosopher. The specific point of divergence was on whether human beings possess what Kant called “intellectual intuition”, meaning intuition of the supersensible (the noumenal). Understanding intellectual intuition as the spiritual function of innate moral consciousness, Mou affirmed the Lu-Wang assertion of inner sageliness by stating that human beings possess intellectual intuition, thus countering directly Kant's epistemological restriction of human intuition to the sensible (phenomenal). Although

---

<sup>622</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 308.

some scholars find Mou's dialectical conception of heaven's "immanent transcendence" as the basis for human beings' inner sageliness to be confusing or problematic, such a conception was implicit in Lu-Wang metaphysics. Mou appealed to a Chinese Mahayana *Fo* paradigm—the "two-tiered mind" paradigm—to bolster his Lu-Wang understanding of the human mind centred on the metaphysical thesis of "mind is principle" and devised a Hegelian-inspired doctrine of "self-negation of innate moral consciousness" to explain the dialectic in the paradigm.

The major divergence of viewpoints regarding human intellectual intuition notwithstanding, there is no question that Mou admired Kant deeply and thought highly of the German thinker's philosophical work. To overcome criticisms casting doubt on the compatibility between Chinese thought and Kantian thought, Mou even appealed to an imagined camaraderie between him and Kant:

假若中國這一套之本義，實義，與深遠義能呈現出來，則我以為真能懂中國儒學者還是康德。<sup>623</sup>

If the original import, the true meaning and the deep and far-reaching significance of this school [of thought] in China [referring to *Ruxue*] can be brought out, then I think the person who can really understand *Ruxue* is none other than Kant.

Yet, rivalry also marked Mou's philosophical relationship with Kant and the camaraderie expressed above did not stop Mou from rating his own system of thought as being above Kant's. Even though Mou marvelled at Kant's critical thinking, he believed that the strength of Kant's thinking was also its weakness. He observed that Kant's thinking was marked by "forceful exploration and vigorous search for the answer" (*qiangtan lisuo* 强探力索) and the "step-by-step analysis and construction" typical of the Western philosophical tradition. On his view, such an objective approach is not conducive to a final harmonious synthesis.<sup>624</sup>

Needless to say, Mou prided himself on the final harmonious syntheses that mark his own moral metaphysics. As will be seen in Chapter 6, the existential arrival at a

---

<sup>623</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhi de zhijue yu Zhongguo zhexue*, preface, pp. 4-5.

<sup>624</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingt*, vol I, p. 115.

unity of virtue and happiness in a deep meditation on oneness was an ultimate harmonious synthesis achieved in his system of thought. Mou told us that another ultimate harmonious synthesis that Kant failed to reach by way of critical, objective reasoning relates to the perceived conflict between the actuality of natural laws and the moral imperative of moral reason and the accompanying question as to why human beings, being imperfectly rational beings, are interested in morality at all:

他們 [宋明儒] 自始就有一種通透的、具體的圓熟智慧，而把那道德性之當然滲透至充其極而達至具體清澈精誠惻怛之圓而神的境地。這裏是一個絕大的原始智慧，不是概念分解的事，說艱難亦艱難，說深奧亦深奧，可是把這一關打通了，說容易亦容易。。。。若把這一關打通了，那道德底當然與自然底實然之契合便不是問題，而是結論了。若無這原始智慧，則只有像康德那樣認它為直接搏鬥的問題所在而去強探力索、曲折建構了。這是中國儒家言道德之當然與康德的道德哲學之最根源的而為人所不易察覺到的差異處。<sup>625</sup>

They [the Song-Ming *Ru*] always possessed a clear, concrete, all-encompassing and mature wisdom, which enabled them to infuse to the utmost that normative pull of one's moral nature to arrive at a divine, all-compassing state of mind that is concrete, pure and clear, utterly sincere and full of empathetic compassion. Herein lies a great primeval wisdom, which has nothing to do with conceptual analysis. If you say that it is difficult, it is indeed so. If you say that it is profound, it is indeed so. Yet, if one has broken through this obstacle [that impeded the attainment of such primeval wisdom] and now say that it is easy, then it is indeed so. ...If this obstacle has been broken through, the correspondence between the normative pull of the moral [nature] and actuality according to nature [the natural laws] is not a question but a conclusion. If one does not have this primeval wisdom, then one has to do what Kant did—to treat it as a question to be struggled with directly, which leads one to explore forcefully and search vigorously for the answer and to develop contorted [theoretical] constructions. This is the most deep-rooted and overlooked difference between the Chinese *Ru*

---

<sup>625</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

treatment of the normative pull of one's moral [nature] and Kant's moral philosophy.

Mou regarded the “two-tiered mind” paradigm as the bridge between Kantian philosophy and *Ru* thought. The paradigm was significant for Mou because it provided not only a needed transcendental basis for moral praxis but also a theoretical refutation of Kant's negation of human intellectual intuition. As noted, however, Mou's refutation of Kant does not render Kant wrong as it merely suggests—in subjective terms not amenable to objective proof—that objective validity is not the only stamp of truth and knowledge. This chapter ended with Mou's promotion of the “two-tiered mind” paradigm as a universal metaphysical paradigm and his dissatisfaction with Kant's transcendental distinction between phenomena and noumena, a distinction regarded by Mou as an application of the paradigm. The next chapter examines Mou's critique in this regard and delves into another key Kantian concept appropriated by Mou—the concept of noumena vis-a-vis phenomena.



## **Mou's Moral Metaphysics and Kant: Noumenal Knowledge and Ontology**

The previous chapter discussed Mou's use of the "two-tiered mind" paradigm to bolster his assertion of human beings' inner sageliness, his affirmation of the central Lu-Wang metaphysical thesis of "mind is principle" and his refutation of Kant's negation of human intellectual intuition and human knowledge of noumena. This chapter continues the presentation of Mou's moral metaphysics with the focus shifted to the Chinese thinker's vigorous critique of Kant's transcendental distinction between phenomena and noumena and his refutation of Kantian epistemology—a refutation that took the form of an assertion of two types of knowledge. On Mou's view, even though the transcendental distinction between phenomena and noumena represented the most profound and fundamental insight of Kant, it was underdeveloped. I begin with Mou's charge that the phenomena-noumena distinction put forth by Kant was on shaky ground because of Kant's negative conception of noumenon. I then examine Mou's proposal to cure Kant's deficiency by giving positive content to noumena using his own "two-tiered mind" paradigm. This leads to a discussion of Mou's advancement of two types of truth, which furnished Mou with the basis for putting forth a "two-tiered" ontology. Because the second type of truth, knowledge and ontology advanced by Mou is of a transcendental (a priori), subjective nature not amenable to objective proof, I discuss the difficulty this presents. In concluding the chapter, I address a common criticism of Mou's moral metaphysics and explore why Mou sought to propagate *Ruxue* from a high moral metaphysical ground.

## Kant's Problematic Negative Conception of Noumenon

The transcendental distinction between phenomena and noumena,<sup>626</sup> Mou noted, is a key premise underlying Kant's entire system of thought, and he applauded it as a great insight of Kant—one that involves the most profound and basic metaphysical questions. A major problem with Kant's phenomena-noumena distinction, Mou pointed out, is that Kant failed to explain clearly what he meant by a thing in itself (a noumenon) and as a result invited scepticism regarding his phenomena-noumena distinction.<sup>627</sup> Kant defined noumenon in merely negative terms, and this, on Mou's view, is inadequate and unsatisfactory:

從物自身那方面說，物自身好像是一個彼岸。就人類的知識言，這個彼岸只是一個限制概念，此即康德所說只取“物自身”一詞之消極的意義，即只說其不是感觸直覺底一個對象而已。如是，物自身一詞底內容與意義太貧乏，甚至究竟有無具體的內容與真實的意義亦成問題。<sup>628</sup>

[Examining Kant's phenomena-noumena distinction] from the side of noumena, a noumenon seems to be the other shore. In terms of human knowledge, this other shore is but a limiting concept. This is taking only the negative meaning of “noumenon” as prescribed by Kant—that is, taking it as merely not an object of sensible intuition. Looking at it this way, the content and meaning of the term “noumenon” are too poor. It is even questionable whether the term has any concrete content or real meaning.

More importantly, Mou thought that Kant failed to give a convincing argument for his phenomena-noumena distinction and as a result, the distinction is on shaky ground:

說我們的感性知性不能及於上帝，不朽，與自由，這是明顯的，但說它們不能及於物之在其自己則並不如此之顯明。從我們的感性知性說上去或說

---

<sup>626</sup> Note that Kant did not specifically describe the distinction between phenomena and noumena as “transcendental” (rendered by Mou as *chaoyue* 超越), though he described the distinction between sensibility (which pertains to phenomena) and the intellectual (which pertains to noumena) as “transcendental” to mean that it is not empirical—that it cannot be established empirically from experience. See his *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 186.

<sup>627</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xianxiang yu wu zishen*, preface, pp. 1-2.

<sup>628</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

出去，我們的感性知性是敞開的，是一個既成的事實，並未予以價值上的決定與封限；而到需要說它們所知的只是現象，而不是物之在其自己時，便憑空引出了這超越的區分而予以重大的封限；但這超越的區分是一個重大的預設，事前並未有交代，亦未予以充分的釐清；單憑與上帝對照，這區分本身就脆弱不穩，物之在其自己這一概念就很糊塗（隱晦），因此，現象這一概念底殊特義亦不能被穩定。如是，因着這樣不穩的超越區分而來的對於我們的感性知性之封限亦封不住，人們可以不理，或只隨着康德那麼說，很少能真切正視其確義，。。。<sup>629</sup>

That our sensibility and understanding cannot reach God, immortality or freedom is obvious. Yet, it is not so obvious that they cannot reach things as they are in themselves. Whether to take them upwards [towards God] or outwards [towards objects], our sensibility and understanding are wide open [unrestricted]. This is a given fact; no determination or restriction entailing values [what Mou meant by “a determination or restriction entailing values” will be explained below] has been put on them. Yet, [when Kant] needed to say that what is known by our sensibility and understanding is merely phenomena and not noumena, he brought out this transcendental distinction out of nowhere and imposed a great restriction [on our sensibility and understanding]. Furthermore, this transcendental distinction was a great postulate made by Kant without prior explanation or sufficient clarification. Based merely on a contrast between human beings and God, this transcendental distinction itself is weak and shaky. The concept of noumenon is very confused (obscure) to begin with, and this means that the particular significance of the concept of phenomenon cannot be firmed up either. As a result, the restriction imposed on our sensibility and understanding based on this shaky transcendental distinction cannot hold. People can simply ignore it, or they just go along with what Kant said—very few are able to discern the true significance of the transcendental distinction....

Mou’s point was that while Kant’s delineation of the finite and peculiar nature of our sensibility and understanding—such as that they must intuit in time and space—allows

---

<sup>629</sup> *Ibid.*, preface, p. 5.

us to “say that what we know is finite or unclear”, it does not allow us to reach the determination that “what we know is only phenomena and not noumena”. The reason, Mou explained, was that Kant did not state clearly whether “noumenon” involves factual existence of things or something entailing values.<sup>630</sup> If “noumenon” entails values, then our sensibility and understanding are clearly restricted because they cognise only what is (factual things about which we form knowledge) and not what should be (that which entails values). Kant’s insufficient qualification of “noumenon” allowed Mou to argue above that our sensibility and understanding, as delineated by Kant, are “wide open”—having possible unrestricted access to both noumena and phenomena.

### **Mou’s Positive Conception of Noumenon to Substantiate Kant’s Transcendental Distinction between Phenomena and Noumena**

Mou further argued that if the distinction between phenomena and noumena is indeed transcendental (not empirically based) as asserted by Kant, then “noumenon” cannot be something in factual terms—such as an original thing that is more objective than what can be perceived through our sensibility and understanding. This is because a “noumenon” in factual terms, however objective, will still fall within the realm of phenomena and render the noumenon-phenomenon distinction non-transcendental.<sup>631</sup> Taking “noumenon” as definitely not in factual terms, Mou proposed to treat it as “a concept with a high degree of value implicature”<sup>632</sup> (*yige gaodu jiazhi yiwei de gainian* 一個高度價值意味的概念) in order to substantiate the transcendental nature of the noumena-phenomena distinction:

縱使譬況地可以說原樣，如說“本來面目”，亦不是所知的對象之“事實上的原樣”，而乃是一個高度的價值意味的原樣，如禪家之說“本來面目”是。如果“物自身”之概念是一個價值意味的概念，而不是一個事實概念，則現

---

<sup>630</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>631</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>632</sup> The term “implicature” is taken from analytic philosophy. I render *jiazhi yiwei* 價值意味 as “value implicature” since the intended meaning in terms of value is implied rather than overtly or logically expressed.

象與物自身之分是超越的，乃始能穩定得住，而吾人之認知心（知性）之不能認知它乃始真為一超越問題，而不是一程度問題。<sup>633</sup>

Even if we can speak of it [noumenon] metaphorically as an original, as in “the original face”, it is not the “factual original” of an object of cognition. Rather, it is an original that has a strong value implicature, as is the case with “the original face” in the *Chan* (Zen) context [which refers to an ultimate reality that is not in factual terms]. Only if “noumenon” is a concept having a value implicature rather than a factual concept can the transcendental distinction between phenomenon and noumenon be firmly established and the inability of our understanding to know a noumenon truly become a transcendental issue rather than a matter of degree [of objectivity or clarity].

Kant’s exclusive assignment of intellectual intuition to God and the resulting restriction of human intuition to sensible intuition, however, created a major problem with Mou’s proposal. Mou stated the problem using two terms appropriated from George Berkeley (1685-1753): “finite mind” (*youxian xin* 有限心) referring to the human mind or, in Kantian terms, the finite and peculiar nature of human sensibility and understanding, and “infinite mind” (*wuxian xin* 無限心) referring to God’s mind or, in Kantian terms, intellectual intuition.<sup>634</sup>

可是如果我們把無限心只移置於上帝處，則我們不能穩住價值意味的物自身。我們可以在上帝處設想一智的直覺，但我們不能確知祂的直覺所面對而創造之的有限物定是有價值意味的物自身而不是現象。因為祂所創造的定是有限的存在物；有限是決定的有限。。。。我們很難在祂所創造的有限物上，（如果有限是決定的有限），設想它雖有限而可具有無限性之意義。如是，物自身之價值意味便保不住。<sup>635</sup>

Yet, if we assign the infinite mind exclusively to God, we cannot firmly secure noumenon as having value implicature. We can suppose that there is intellectual intuition where God is, but we cannot know for sure that the finite beings that his

---

<sup>633</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xianxiang yu wu zishen*, p. 7.

<sup>634</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>635</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

intuition has created and stand in front of him are noumena having value implicature and not phenomena. This is because [in Kant's understanding] God's creations are definitely finite. Finite means determinedly finite....We find it hard to suppose that such a creation can have an infinite significance [as noumenon in God's mind] even though it is finite (if finite means determinedly finite). Thus, we cannot firmly secure noumena as having value implicature.

Lee Ming-huei 李明輝 clarifies the problem by casting it as a contradiction inherent in Kant's conception of noumenon:

。 。 。 問題是：物自身既系屬於上帝之無限心，且與有限的現象為對，理當是無限的；但它又是上帝所創造的，相對於上帝的無限性，理當是有限的。它到底是有限還是無限呢？還是我們得承認兩個“有限性”的概念呢？這樣由於“有限性”的介入，使“物自身”的概念搖擺不定，甚至陷於自相矛盾。<sup>636</sup>

...the question is as follows: Since noumenon relates to God's infinite mind and contrasts with phenomenon, which is finite, it ought to be infinite. Yet, being God's creation and in contrast to God's infinite nature, it ought to be finite. Is it finite or infinite? Are we supposed to admit two conceptions of "finite nature" instead? The introduction of "finite nature" into the concept of "noumenon" thus renders it unstable or even self-contradictory.

The way to resolve the ambiguity and firmly secure the value implicature of noumenon, according to Mou, is to assign intellectual intuition to human beings also:

我們如想穩住這有價值意味的物自身，我們必須在我們身上即可展露一主體，它自身即具有智的直覺，它能使有價值意味的物自身具體地朗現在吾人的眼前，吾人能清楚而明確地把這有價值意味的物自身之具體而真實的意義表象出來。<sup>637</sup>

---

<sup>636</sup> Lee Ming-huei, *Dangdai Ruxue de zivo zhuanhua*, p. 31. See also Mou's discussion in his *Xianxiang yu wu zishen*, pp. 105-106.

<sup>637</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xianxiang yu wu zishen*, p.16.

If we want to secure noumenon as having value implicature, we must reveal a subject within our own persons. This subject in itself possesses intellectual intuition and can concretely and clearly display in front of our eyes noumena having value implicature. In this way, we can clearly and unambiguously represent the concrete and real significance of noumenon having value implicature.

Mou's remaking of Kant's "noumenon" into "a concept having a high degree of value implicature" thus led back to Mou's Lu-Wang-based understanding of the human mind as being "two-tiered", consisting of a finite cognitive mind intuiting phenomena through sensible intuition and an infinite moral mind capable of intuiting noumena through intellectual intuition. This remaking was a highly creative syncretic move in Mou's moral metaphysics.<sup>638</sup> Giving "noumenon" a positive content involving value did not

---

<sup>638</sup> Not all scholars agree with me, however. Hans-Rudolf Kantor, for example, is not satisfied that Mou has demonstrated "convertibility between 'intellectual intuition' and 'apprehension of religious-moral values'" in the first place and is adamant that the negation of human intellectual intuition is so fundamental to Kant's thought that refuting it as attempted by Mou only serves to destroy the integrity of Kant's thought. On a merely technical basis, Kantor maintains that a fundamental incommensurability exists between Kantian thought and Chinese thought and objects to both Mou's applying the *Fo*-derived "two-tiered mind" paradigm to Kant's transcendental distinction between noumena and phenomena and his appropriating Kant's transcendental distinction for Chinese thought and using it to develop a "two-tiered" ontology. Kantor writes as if Mou was unaware of the various points of departure between Kantian thought and Chinese thought, and his apparent lack of appreciation for Mou's moral metaphysics is such that he seems to regard it as nothing more than an ill-conceived syncretic project. (See his article entitled "Ontological Indeterminacy and its Soteriological Relevance: An Assessment of Mou Zongsan's (1909-1995) Interpretation of Zhiyi's (538-597) Tiantai Buddhism", *Philosophy East & West*, vol. 56, no. 1, January 2006, pp. 25, 27-28, 35-36). I see no reason why Kant's system of thought should be off-limits to syncretic attempts such as those attempted by Mou. Also, given that Chinese thought affirms inner sageliness and that Kant understood intellectual intuition broadly as "an intuition other than the sensible one" (See p. 361 of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*), I deem it reasonable for Mou to regard intellectual intuition as the spiritual (non-sensible) function of what he understood as human beings' spiritual mind (the moral mind in the *Ru* context). Kantor's article aims to demonstrate three points (see p.19 of his article). The first point is that "Mou's attitude toward Kant" is "ambiguous" and his appropriation of Kant inconsistent. My presentation of Mou's philosophical engagement with Kant demonstrates the opposite. The second point is that "Chinese Mahāyāna Buddhist concepts of soteriology—particularly that of Tiantai Buddhism—...cannot be interpreted according to the Kantian distinction between noumena and phenomena. Mou's concept of ontological transcendence, derived from his interpretation of Kant, does not fit Tiantai Buddhism's tendency to reject subordinate levels of being." Yet, Mou never suggested that Chinese Mahāyāna *Fo* concepts of soteriology be interpreted according to the Kantian distinction between noumena and phenomena. He appropriated the "two-tiered mind" paradigm of *Fo* and used it to assimilate and extend Kant's transcendental distinction between phenomena and noumena. As discussed in the previous chapter, Mou's understanding of ontological transcendence is framed by the "two-tiered mind" paradigm and is in the form of "immanent transcendence". In addition, Mou's "perfect teaching" paradigm upholds "Tiantai Buddhism's tendency to reject subordinate levels of being." As will be seen in the following chapter, the Tiantai notion of perfect pan-Buddhahood, which rejects Huayan's positioning of the dharma body at the top of a pyramid of realms, was precisely one of the key reasons Mou rated Tiantai as more "perfect" than Huayan. Kantor's third point is that on his view, Tiantai's ontological speculation, "unlike Mou's interpretation", "does not follow the metaphysical scheme according to which

prevent him from reaping Kant's success in clearing metaphysics of epistemological tangles by denying the cognitive mind of knowledge of noumena. Rather, it enabled him to advance—in spite of Kant and in order to “perfect” Kant—a logical argument to support his Lu-Wang-based assertion of human beings' inner sageliness by assigning knowledge of noumena to the moral mind.

Specifically, Mou's “two-tiered” understanding of the mind substantiates Kant's transcendental distinction between phenomena and noumena by characterising the cognitive mind using the *Fo* concept of “grasping nature” (*zhixing* 執性).<sup>639</sup> By means of its grasping nature, the cognitive mind holds onto itself as a real and permanent “self” (the cognitive subject)<sup>640</sup> and sees the myriad objects presented phenomenally through sense perception and the understanding as distinct objects of fixed forms in time and space in the outside world.<sup>641</sup> Mou explained that the inherent grasping nature of the cognitive mind is what brings about the phenomenal world (the world of sense) in the first place.<sup>642</sup> On his reasoning, characterising the cognitive mind in terms of “grasping nature” amounts to a restriction entailing values—it clearly and firmly determines that the cognitive mind knows only phenomena and not noumena because of its inherent phenomena-producing grasping nature:

如果這一步已作到，我們即須進而把我們的感性與知性加以封限，把它們一封封住，不只是把它們視為事實的定然，而且須予以價值上的決定。這個決定即是說明它們只是“識心之執”。如是，它們不只是在一定樣式下的事實上的有限性，而且有其本質上的執着性。有限心即是執着心，亦就是識心，故云“識心之執”。作為認知心的知性亦就是這識心之執。感性的攝

---

worldly diversity appears to be a finite modification of its transcendent or non-empirical origin (Mou's infinite dimension in human existence).” Yet, Mou's metaphysical scheme does not posit worldly diversity as a finite modification of its transcendent origin. As a matter of fact, Mou stated clearly that his understanding of a “Buddhistic ontology” in Tiantai is strictly and only “in terms of Buddha-nature's warranting the existence of the myriad things and beings and endowing that existence with necessity” (see discussion in the following chapter).

<sup>639</sup> “Grasping nature” (*zhixing* 執性) is the shorthand for the Yogācārin concept of *parikalpita-svabhāva* (*bianji suoji xing* 遍計所執性), which means “nature of existence produced from attachment to all-pervasive discrimination.” See the entry for the Chinese term “遍計所執性” in Charles Muller's Digital Dictionary of Buddhism at [www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb) (accessed on August 9, 2009).

<sup>640</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xianxiang yu wu zishen*, p. 166.

<sup>641</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169.

<sup>642</sup> *Ibid.*

取外物亦只是識心之隨順感性行，故亦屬於識心之執。由於這執着性，遂把感性與知性封住了，即定住了（在康德，是做開未決定的，只視為事實之定然而不可轉）。由於這執着性之定住，它們所知的必然是現象。它們不但只知現象，而且同時即挑起或纏起現象，由於其執着性而挑起或纏起。它們就着什麼而纏起或挑起現象呢？它們就着無限心處有價值意味的物自身而纏起或挑起現象。<sup>643</sup>

If this step [of assigning intellectual intuition to human beings and revealing a noumenal subject within ourselves] has been accomplished, we should then impose a restriction on our sensibility and understanding. We do this not only by regarding them as being fixed in fact but also by imposing on them a determination entailing values, which effectively states that they are but “the grasping of the cognitive mind”. Thus, they are not merely a factual finite nature under a fixed mode [in time and space]; they also possess their fundamentally grasping nature. We talk of “the grasping of the cognitive mind” because the finite mind is the same as the grasping mind or the cognitive mind. What we see as the understanding of the cognising mind is the grasping of this cognitive mind. Likewise, the taking in of external objects by sensibility is nothing more than the cognitive mind’s working in accordance with sensibility and thus also falls under the grasping of the cognitive mind. This grasping nature thus operates as a restriction on sensibility and understanding. In other words, they become determined—with Kant, they are wide open and not determined and are merely seen as being fixed in fact and incapable of being otherwise. Because of this determination by way of grasping nature, sensibility and understanding can only know phenomena. They not only know only phenomena, but they also, by means of their grasping nature, stir up or activate phenomena. What furnishes the basis for their stirring up or activating of phenomena? They stir up or activate phenomena from the basis of noumena having value implicature, which are present in the infinite mind.

---

<sup>643</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.16-17.

Mou further theorised that because grasping nature is a determination entailing values, it does not have to be there all the time:

執着性是一個價值性的決定，因此，也可以有，也可以無。當其有也，同時即必然地有現象，其所知的亦必然地是現象。當其化而為無也，則現象即無，而亦必然地復歸於物自身。如是，我們的感性何以必須以時空為形式，我們的知性何以必須使用這樣的概念，則有理由可說。<sup>644</sup>

Grasping nature is a determination entailing values. Therefore, it can be present or absent. When it is there, simultaneously there are necessarily also phenomena, and what it [the cognitive mind] knows is necessarily phenomena. When transformed with the grasping nature absent, phenomena cease to exist, and the mind reverts to noumena. Thus, we can explain why our sensibility must operate in time and space and why our understanding must use concepts involving time and space.

In other words, because actualisation of values depends on the human will (which Mou identified with the moral mind), grasping nature can be “willed away” (become absent) when the moral mind chooses to revert to its natural state. Mou noted that all three main streams of Chinese thought contain notions that convey “things as they really are”. As understood by him, the *Fo* notion of “suchness” (*ru* 如), the *Dao* notion of “self-existing” (*zizai* 自在)<sup>645</sup> and the *Ru* notion of “self-attainment” (*zide* 自得)<sup>646</sup> all point to a state mind in which things are intuited as they really are (as noumena), in the absence of grasping nature. A key merit of looking at the cognitive mind in terms of grasping nature, according to Mou, is that it affirms human beings’ ability to change:

有限是有限，無限是無限。這是事實定命論底觀點。如是，人乃不可轉，。依我們的說法（實是依中國的傳統），人可[以]是執而不執的。<sup>647</sup>

---

<sup>644</sup> *Ibid.*, p.17.

<sup>645</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>646</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 100. “*Zide*” originated from a saying by Cheng Mingdao.

<sup>647</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

Finite is finite; infinite and infinite—this is from the perspective of factual determinism. If so, human beings are not able to change...According to our viewpoint (actually, according to Chinese tradition), human beings can be grasping as well as non-grasping.

### **Mou's Advancement of Two Types of Knowledge and Truth**

For Kant, human beings can establish knowledge, truth and ontology in objective, empirical terms only. In contrast, Mou, having given positive content to noumena and thereby substantiated Kant's transcendental distinction between phenomena and noumena, centred his moral metaphysics on the moral mind and asserted that a second type of knowledge, truth and ontology can be established subjectively and moral metaphysically. Following the Song-Ming *Ru*, Mou understood the innate moral mind to be omniscient and self-enlightened. It is present in human beings as their spontaneous innate moral consciousness and enables what the Song-Ming *Ru* thinkers termed “*dexing zhi zhi* 德性之知” (inner moral knowing or knowledge).<sup>648</sup> It is true that, as noted by Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, Kant was, since the early beginning of his career, “intent on showing that human freedom [the free will], understood not only as the presupposition of morality but also as the ultimate value served and advanced by the moral law, is compatible with the truth of modern science.”<sup>649</sup> Nonetheless, Mou was adamant that, while Kant asserted the primacy of practical reason, the assertion was futile because he failed to affirm human intellectual intuition.<sup>650</sup> He frowned on Kant's restriction of human knowledge to the empirical:

康德因爲不承認人有智的直覺，故他不能言德性之知。是則吾人亦不能有德性之知。吾人所有的只是見聞之知，這是由我們的感性與知性而展現出的，只此才算是知識。我們人類只有這感性與知性足以成知。理性只能推想，實則是無所知的。實踐理性（理性之實踐的使用）可以使吾人直接意識到自由的必要，並可以使吾人契接物自身，契接上帝與靈魂不

---

<sup>648</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>649</sup> Guyer and Wood, “Introduction”, in Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 2,

<sup>650</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xianxiang yu wu zishen*, p. 23.

滅，然因無智的直覺，故它亦不能成德性之知。不但不能德性地，智的直覺地知不滅的靈魂與上帝（絕對存在），且甚至對於意志自由本身亦不能知。這樣，我們的知性與感性盡了知識底一切。<sup>651</sup>

Because Kant does not acknowledge that human beings have intellectual intuition, he cannot speak of inner moral knowing. This being the case, human beings also cannot have inner moral knowledge. What we can have is empirical knowledge only, as displayed by our sensibility and understanding—only this counts as knowledge. We human beings have only this sensibility and understanding to suffice for the establishment of knowledge. Reason can only infer; it actually knows nothing. Practical reason (the practical use of reason) can make us directly conscious of the necessity of freedom. It can also enable us to connect with noumena, God and the immortality of the soul. Yet, because of the lack of intellectual intuition, practical reason, [as is the case with theoretical reason], also cannot enable inner moral knowledge. Not only [are we] incapable of knowing by way of moral capacity and intellectual intuition the immortal soul and God (the absolute being) but moreover [we] cannot even know the free will itself. Thus, our sensibility and understanding exhaust the entirety of knowledge.

As shown below, Mou understood inner moral knowing or knowledge as “knowing or knowledge enabled by intellectual intuition”. Even though he did not spell out explicitly the relationship between intellectual intuition and empathetic compassion (*ren*), the following description he gave of inner moral knowing suggests that the latter is critical to the functioning of the former:

此。 。 。 根本是另一種知， 此在橫渠即名曰“德性之知”。吾人今日可隨康德名曰“智的直覺”之知。在此知上之“合內外”不是能所關係中認知地關聯的合，乃是隨超越的道德本心之“遍體天下之物而不遺”而為一體之所貫，一心之圓照，這是攝物歸心而為絕對的，立體的，無外的，創生的

---

<sup>651</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.23-24.

合，這是“萬物皆備于我”的合，這不是在關聯方式中的合，因而嚴格講，亦無所謂合，而只是由超越形限而來之仁心感通之不隔。<sup>652</sup>

This...is fundamentally a different kind of knowing or knowledge and was termed “inner moral knowing or knowledge” by [Zhang] Hengqu [張橫渠 (1020-1077), also known as Zhang Zai 張載]. Nowadays we can follow Kant and call it the knowing or knowledge enabled by “intellectual intuition”. The “unity of what is within and without” in this knowing or knowledge is not a combining that entails a cognitive linking together within a relation between the knower and the known. Rather, it is a penetration of oneness brought about by the transcendent moral original mind’s “embodying the myriad things without omission”<sup>653</sup>—a perfect illumination of the [moral] mind. This is taking the myriad things into the [moral] mind, thus enabling a unity that is absolute, onto-cosmological,<sup>654</sup> all-encompassing and creative. This is a unity in which “[t]he myriad things are within me” [*Mengzi* VII A: 4] and not one in the form of relating and connecting. Thus, strictly speaking, there is no unity to speak of, and what it is is but a non-separation brought about by the empathy of the mind of empathetic compassion [the moral mind].

Liang Shuming, on the other hand, gave a more explicit account of the link between empathetic compassion and intuition. He referred to the original mind (Mou’s moral mind) as the true mind (*zhenxin* 真心) and saw it as where intuition (*zhijue* 直覺) issues from.<sup>655</sup> He conceived of the flow of intuition from the true mind as empathetic

---

<sup>652</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhi de zhijue yu Zhongguo zhexue*, pp. 186-187.

<sup>653</sup> The two phrases “unity of what is within and without” (合內外) and “embodying the myriad things without omission” (“遍體天下之物而不遺”) originated from *Zhongyong* XXV and XVI respectively. Zhang Hengqu expounded both phrases in his *Zhengmeng*. See Zhang Zai, *Zhangzi quanshu*, pp. 34, 46.

<sup>654</sup> I render *liti* 立體 as “onto-cosmological” based on the following remark by Mou: “Next [to the establishment of a clear understanding of the heavenly-decreed human nature] is the process of practising empathetic compassion, through which the affirmation of family, country and the entire world (*datong* 大同) is renewed. Its ultimate is “oneness with the myriad things between heaven and earth. This then establishes a *liti gangwei* 立體綱維 [a main onto-cosmological regulator, with heaven understood as the *benti* 本體 (the fundamental state/condition) of the myriad things, which is also immanent in human being as their heavenly-decreed nature]....” (See Mou’s *Daode de lixiang zhuyi*, preface, p. 5).

<sup>655</sup> Liang Shuming 梁漱溟, *Liang Shuming jiang Kong-Meng* 梁漱溟講孔孟 (Talks on the Teachings of Confucius and Mencius by Liang Shuming), compl. Li Yuanting and Yan Binghua, Beijing: Zhongguo heping chubanshe, 1993, p. 43.

compassion (*ren*),<sup>656</sup> which he understood as an innate liveliness, an emotional suppleness and sensitivity,<sup>657</sup> and a spontaneous, non-instrumental loving-kindness for others.<sup>658</sup> He also described intuition as a kind of innate knowing that gives us a spontaneous sense of direction in the here and now without premeditation. This sense of direction, marked by an absence of instrumentality and requiring no analysis of one's circumstances or objectives, is a subjective sense of what is right or what one should do in a given situation.<sup>659</sup> Shedding light on the subject matter, Liang remarked that "[t]he true mind is not an instinct"<sup>660</sup> because one can disregard its intuitive prompting and act contrary to it habitually to the extent of becoming totally desensitised to it.<sup>661</sup> Instincts, on the other hand, are instrumental, totally pre-programmed and therefore much more consistent and unfailing than the working of the true mind.<sup>662</sup> As an example, he pointed to the mother's caring for the offspring. With respect to human beings, the mother's caring for the offspring is a feeling that issues primarily from the true mind (that the maternal instinct is very weak explains the many incidences of deliberate abortion and neglect of care for one's children); with respect to other animals, however, it is a feeling that issues entirely from instinct.<sup>663</sup>

In linking inner moral knowledge to the moral mind, Mou was arguing that there are two types of knowledge or truth. The first type is objective, empirical information, which relates to objects or parts in the phenomenal realm that are analysable by the cognitive mind and lends itself to objective validation. Kant and many Western thinkers since the Enlightenment uphold this as the only type of knowledge or truth. Arriving at this type of knowledge or truth requires an intellectual, objective and empirical approach. The other type of knowledge or truth, as advanced by Mou, is subjective and mental and involves feelings, moral reason or value judgements.<sup>664</sup> He made the emphatic point that

---

<sup>656</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>657</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 46, 52.

<sup>658</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 36, 41, 42.

<sup>659</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

<sup>660</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 42.

<sup>661</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>662</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

<sup>663</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41-42.

<sup>664</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, pp. 21-32. See also pp. 6-8 of the same source.

this second type of knowledge or truth is not concerned with analysis but with the meaning of life taken as a whole or with human living as a holistic inner experience:

這個真實性是屬於人生全體 (human life as such, human life as a whole) 中的那個真實性。<sup>665</sup>

This quality of truth falls under that quality of truth associated with human life as a whole—human life as such.

According to him, literature, metaphysics, religion and philosophy capture this second type of knowledge or truth, prime examples of which are inner moral knowledge as enabled by innate moral consciousness and knowledge of the way as expounded by *Dao* and *Fo*. Because this second type of knowledge or truth deals with an experiential whole rather than with analysable parts, it hinges on the subject rather than the object and does not lend itself to objective validation. Mou made this clear with regard to innate moral consciousness:

。 。 。 這個良知所表示的這個主體永遠不能客觀化，不能對象化。你如果把它客觀化當個對象來看，那你是看不到良知的。良知只有在你不把你自己當成對象，而存在地歸到你自己身上來，主體恢復為主體而不是把主體推出去當成客觀，人恢復為人，把人當個人看，只有在這種情形下，良知這個明才呈現出來。<sup>666</sup>

The [moral] subject expressed by this innate moral consciousness can never be objectified or turned into an object. If you objectify it and look at it as an object, you will not see innate moral consciousness. Only when you do not treat yourself as an object and instead return to yourself existentially—only when a subject is recovered as a subject and not externalised as an object, when a person is recovered as a person and regarded as a person—can this enlightenment that we call innate moral consciousness present itself.

Since innate moral consciousness or the moral mind, on Mou's understanding, is not empirically conditioned and is in a state of spiritual oneness with the myriad things and

---

<sup>665</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>666</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

united with the absolute spirit permeating the whole universe, this inner moral knowing and the interconnected whole disappear when they are converted into objective items to be analysed and studied objectively. To reach the second type of knowledge or truth, one has to do so experientially, subjectively, inwardly—what Mou terms “existentially”.<sup>667</sup>

It should be noted that even though truth expressed in literature and inner moral truth enabled by innate moral consciousness both belong to the second type of knowledge or truth advanced by Mou, he distinguished sharply between the two. On the one hand, he cautioned that literature is unenlightening (文學正好不使人明，而是使人無明)，<sup>668</sup> probably because it dwells on human passions. On the other hand, his moral metaphysics catapults *Ru* moral metaphysical truth or knowledge to the status of the highest order of truth or knowledge because it relates to the noumenal and corresponds to the higher moral mind (the noumenal mind) in his “two-tiered mind” paradigm (objective truth and knowledge correspond to the cognitive mind). The distinction obviously reflects Mou’s moral idealistic bent and his privileging the moral and metaphysical over the sensible and physical. A key point of contention relating to the moral mind and inner moral knowledge as valorised by Mou is that they are not amenable to objective proof, which many in the contemporary world regard as the only stamp of truth. This point of contention might even apply to the entirety of Mou’s moral metaphysics. After all, what he expounded is a moral metaphysics and not the physical scheme of things. In full accord with Kant, Mou conceded that innate moral consciousness or the moral mind and related knowledge of the noumenal are not amenable to objective proof since they are not objects knowable by the cognitive mind. He, however, argued for a broadening of the definition of knowledge or truth: that universality rather than objective proof be the stamp of knowledge or truth. The second type of knowledge or truth, he maintained, possesses universality because it can be validated interpersonally through empathy.<sup>669</sup> Empathy with others’ suffering is indeed the only way to validate the central *Ru* concept of empathetic compassion (*ren*), famously illustrated by Mengzi’s observation of a person’s spontaneous sense of alarm,

---

<sup>667</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>668</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>669</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

sympathy and concern on seeing a child on the verge of falling into a well. Mou clarified his understanding of the universality of empathetic compassion as follows:

。 。 。 凡是哲學的真理都是普遍的 (universal)；哲學裏面建立一個概念、一個原則，通常都是有普遍性的。比如說孔夫子講仁，孔子是春秋時代的人，是中國人，但是孔子講仁並不是單單對中國人講。 。 。 。 他是對全人類講。人人都應該有，所以「仁」這個概念不是具有普遍性嗎？<sup>670</sup>

All philosophical truths are universal. In general, a concept or principle established within philosophy possesses universality. For example, Kongzi talked about empathetic compassion. He was a person of the *Chunqiu* period, a Chinese, but in talking about empathetic compassion, he was not addressing merely the Chinese....he was addressing the entire humanity. Everyone ought to have empathetic compassion. Doesn't the concept of "empathetic compassion" therefore possess universality?

The moral mind is a mental presence, and as Xiong remarked, "[o]ne needs to be conscious of this presence directly and affirm it directly"—by way of "personal verification". Mou thought that moral consciousness arises when one pays attention to one's inner mental life—one's inner state of mind, in particular whether one feels ease or disease about the way one has conducted one's life. Such a moral concern, on his view, underlies *Ru* thought:

。 。 。 人對自己的生命，自己的言行，如有錯誤，馬上就有罪惡感，這點古人就會了，所以說德的意識很「簡易」、「坦然明白」，若太複雜人們就不能了解了。假若你演算數學的問題演算不出來，證明不出來，這並非罪惡。你不懂數學不是罪惡，但若說錯話或做錯事，你自己就難過，所以德的意識很容易被人注意，古人對這方面有清楚的觀念，是很合乎情理而很可了解的。而正相反，現代人就不了解德。所以「疾敬德」就是要你趕快使自己像個人樣，好好做事，好好為人，故言「天視自我民視，天聽自我民聽」，你不要妄為。古人一下把問題落在這個地方，就重視這個問題。

後來孔子出來，再往裡一層一層地深入前進，于是中國的哲學就開出了孔子傳統，。。。<sup>671</sup>

...about one's life, one's words and action, if there is a wrongdoing, one right away has a feeling of guilt. The ancients already knew this, and this is why they said that consciousness of morals is "simple" and "plainly understandable". If it is too complicated, people will not understand. If you fail to deduce a mathematical proof, there is no wrongdoing. Not knowing mathematics is not a wrongdoing. Yet, if you say or do something wrong, you will feel ill at ease. This is why consciousness of morals is easily noticed by people. The ancients had a clear conception of this—it is reasonable and understandable. contemporary people, on the contrary, do not understand morals. Thus, [the *Shijing* says,] "Delay not in showing respect in morals"<sup>672</sup>—it admonishes one not to delay conducting business and life in the way befitting a human being. Thus, [Mengzi says,] "Heaven sees with the eyes of the people; heaven hears with the ears of the people" [*Mengzi* VA: 5]—it admonishes one to stop acting haphazardly and unreasonably. The ancients right away grounded problems in this place and showed deep concern about this issue.

Later on Kongzi appeared and moved [the teaching] forward, deepening it step by step. Hence, a Kongzi tradition was developed within Chinese philosophy.

Mou bolstered his case with the observation that Kant was also of the view that it is easy for ordinary people to know what should be done in accordance with the principle of the autonomy of the will.<sup>673</sup> Indeed, even though Kant's conception of conscience differed fundamentally from Mou's, the German thinker thought that "what *duty* is, is plain of itself to everyone".<sup>674</sup> Kant further stated that "the moral law

---

<sup>670</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>671</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongxi zhexue zhi huitong shisi jiang*, pp. 21-22. Mou discussed the same point in his *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>672</sup> See the *Shangshu* [the *Shujing*] 尚書 in *Xishu wujing (xiandai ban)* 四書五經·現代版 (The Four Books and Five Classics (a contemporary edition)), ed. Yan Binggang 顏炳罡, Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 1996, p. 661.

<sup>673</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 15.

<sup>674</sup> Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 169.

commands compliance from everyone,” and “[a]ppraising what is to be done in accordance with it must, therefore, not be so difficult that the most common and unpracticed understanding should not know how to go about it, even without worldly prudence.”<sup>675</sup> Despite the concurring view of Kant, however, and even though Kongzi’s concept of empathetic compassion and Mengzi’s doctrine of innate goodness were unquestioned by the Song-Ming *Ru* and accepted by many in pre-modern China, Mou’s assertion of the universality of *Ru* moral truth based on empathetic compassion might alienate readers in the modern world. Mou might have a better chance of winning the support of contemporary readers, who operate largely in accordance with objective rules in contemporary society, if he asserted commonality among human beings in terms of a shared aspiration for a just society. Despite the spread of global capitalism with its inherent stress on profit and the countless cases of observable apathy to human suffering in the modern world, many would agree that empathy, kindness and charity have continued to thrive locally and even internationally. A trend that lends support to the *Ru* emphasis on an inner moral sense is that, although much of moral philosophy in the West has remained preoccupied with the building of a just moral code and its rational justification, there has been a growing recognition of the critical role emotions play in issues concerning justice, morality and what it means to be human. Raimond Gaita argues that our experience of and reflection on our inner lives, which consist of our emotions, is basic to our sense of humanity—“[o]ur sense of the difference in kind between human beings and animals”.<sup>676</sup> He adds a moral dimension with his observation that the inner life is composed of states that “profess their authenticity” and that “[w]e are required to be lucid about our inner lives under pain of superficiality.”<sup>677</sup> In other words, authenticity of feelings—such as that our love is indeed real love and not

---

<sup>675</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>676</sup> Raimond Gaita, *A Common Humanity: Thinking about Love & Truth & Justice*, Melbourne: The Text Publishing Company, 1999, pp. 240-241. Gaita’s distinction between human beings and animals appears to but does not in fact support speciesism, which puts the interests of the human species above those of other non-human animal species. As pointed out by Peter Singer, equality among animals (humans included) “is a moral ideal, not a simple assertion of fact [actual equality]” (See his “All Animals are Equal”, in *Applied Ethics*, ed. Peter Singer, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986, pp. 220-221). On his view, “[t]he basic principle of equality” is “equality of consideration” (p. 217), which prescribes equal consideration of interests for humans and other animals (pp. 220-221). It does not negate differences among human beings or between human beings and other animals. Rather, “equal consideration for different beings may lead to different treatment and different rights” (p. 217).

<sup>677</sup> Gaita, *A Common Humanity*, p. 240.

infatuation or that our grief is genuine and not self-indulgent—matters to us.<sup>678</sup> To be fully human, for Gaita, is to be “the kind of being whose reflection on the real and the counterfeit forms of the inner life can deepen without limit.”<sup>679</sup> Robert C. Solomon is unreserved in his defence of an emotional foundation for justice. It is unlikely that he has heard of Mou, but the following observation by him displays a striking similarity between them:

Justice is not, first of all, a set of principles or policies; it is first of all a way of participating in the world, a way of being with other people, a set of feelings of affection and affiliations that link us—not through “reason”—with other people. Without the cultivation of these feelings—and some of them are by no means attractive—the principles of justice are nothing but abstract ideals, and the policies that would make us just, however justified, seem overambitious and even irrelevant, but in any case unsuited for application in “the real world,” people being—as cynics and skeptics of all varieties so readily remind us—“the way they are.”<sup>680</sup>

### **Mou’s “Two-Tiered” Ontology**

Having argued that human beings are capable of knowing the noumenal, Mou moved from knowledge to ontology and proposed the construction of a “two-tiered” ontology. Like the two types of knowledge or truth he advanced, the “two-tiered” ontology corresponds to his “two-tiered mind” paradigm and consists of a phenomenal tier and a noumenal tier. He termed the phenomenal tier “phenomenal ontology” (*xianxiang jie de cunyou lun* 現象界的存有論) or “attached ontology (*zhi de cunyou lun* 執的存有論)” as it stays attached to the phenomenal realm and deals with phenomena as produced by the finite or grasping nature of the cognitive mind. On his understanding, the a priori logical constitution of the cognitive mind and Kant’s transcendental philosophy—the

---

<sup>678</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 237.

<sup>679</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 240.

<sup>680</sup> Robert C. Solomon, *A Passion for Justice: Emotions and the Origins of the Social Contract*, Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1995, p. 32. Solomon cited, as an example of unattractive feelings, the sense of indignation “when the government taxes away your hard-earned income to help those who are in need.” See p. 30 the same source.

transcendental deductions of the pure concepts of the understanding and of other a priori conditions for the possibility of experience—form the basis of phenomenal ontology.<sup>681</sup> The noumenal tier was called “noumenal ontology” (*benti jie de cunyou lun* 本體界的存有論) or “non-attached ontology” (*wuzhi de cunyou lun* 無執的存有論) by Mou as it relates to the noumenal realm and deals with noumena as intuited by the infinite (non-attached or non-grasping) mind, which is the same as the moral mind. While Mou’s moral metaphysics aims primarily to establish the noumenal ontological tier, the two tiers follow the dialectic of the “two-tiered mind” paradigm and together form a non-separable whole.<sup>682</sup>

In accordance with the central Lu-Wang metaphysical thesis of “mind is principle”, Mou’s noumenal ontology centres upon the infinite or moral mind—the original mind-cum-human nature identified by Mou as the fundamental state/condition and ultimate onto-cosmological transcendent reality immanent in human beings. The significance of noumenal ontology, Mou told us, is that it allows human beings to see beyond their phenomenal reality—to see that that they are more than creatures with a finite nature, that, by virtue of the fundamental state/condition immanent in them, they are also noumenal beings with an infinite nature.<sup>683</sup> The moral mind is united with all things in one homogeneous noumenon that has no distinction between self and non-self.<sup>684</sup> As discussed previously, the moral mind has two important functions. One is to manifest itself as innate moral consciousness that guides the individual’s choice of action. The other is to negate itself in order to derive from itself the cognitive mind that enables experience and empirical knowledge—through the process of “self-negation of innate moral consciousness”. Mou understood Kant’s free will, the immortal soul and God as conceptions of the absolute. He applied the same understanding to the *Ru* concept of heavenly principle and his own concept of the moral mind and argued that because there can be only one absolute and one infinite mind, all of these concepts in effect represent one and the same thing—the first creative principle or creativity itself

---

<sup>681</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xianxiang yu wu zishen*, pp. 33-35, 38-39. See also Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 245-266.

<sup>682</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xianxiang yu wu zishen*, pp. 38-40.

<sup>683</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 30, 92.

<sup>684</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

and the absolute onto-cosmological transcendent reality.<sup>685</sup> Thus, in Mou's understanding, heavenly principle, in terms of its being objectively the first creative principle or creativity itself—the absolutely unconditioned, the transcendent—in the *Ru* context, is equivalent to the Christian concept of God:

。 。 。 儒家由天命不已、天地之道的道體所表示的創造，就叫做創造性自己、創造性本身 (creativity itself)。耶教的人格神---上帝---嚴格講就是創造性自己，也叫做創造性原理 (principle of creativity)。創造性自己就是天地萬物之本體，人格化就是上帝，不人格化就是創造性本身，亦即創造的實體 (creative reality), 是絕對的實體。<sup>686</sup>

...The creativity expressed in the *Ru* concept of the onto-cosmological grounding of the way that is based on “the incessant decree of heaven”<sup>687</sup> and “the way of heaven and earth” is called “creativity itself”. Strictly speaking, the personal God of Christianity is “creativity itself”, which is also known as the [first] “principle of creativity”. “Creativity itself” is the fundamental state/condition of the myriad things. When personalised, it is God. When it is not personalised, it is “creativity itself”, which is the same as the “creative reality”, an absolute reality.

As discussed in Chapter 4, Mou saw inner sageliness—which he explained in terms of a unity of the transcendent (heavenly principle considered objectively) and the immanent (heavenly principle as immanent in human beings' moral mind, which can be accessed only subjectively)—as the most fundamental difference between Chinese culture and Western culture. In addition, he thought that the admission of intellectual intuition in Chinese thought represents the greatest difference between Chinese and Western philosophy. Since inner sageliness for Mou is in terms of human intellectual intuition, which is the spiritual function of the moral mind, the two sets of difference cited by him are closely related. On his reasoning, both stem from a fundamental divergence in understandings of the human mind and of knowledge, truth, reality and ontology between what he dichotomised as Western thinking on the one hand and

---

<sup>685</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61. Also, Mou Zongsan, *Zhi de zhijue yu Zhongguo zhexue*, pp. 200-201.

<sup>686</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p.117.

<sup>687</sup> This originated from *Zhongyong* XXVI: “The decree of heaven, profound and incessant!” (維天之命，於穆不已).

Chinese thought on the other. According to him, the primary focus of Western thinking as a whole has been on the objective, quantitative study of nature and the phenomenal, and this led to the development of logic and science. In contrast, Chinese thought focuses heavily on the qualitative study of human living and on the noumenal and mental and seeks to answer questions concerning the ultimate meaning of life and the way to attain inner peace (in the case of *Ru*) or liberation (in the case of *Dao* and *Fo*).<sup>688</sup> He raged against the prevalent tendency in the contemporary West to admit knowledge, truth and ontology in objective, empirical terms only:

科學知識那一面只是人生整個的一部分，你為什麼單單說那一部分是真實、是真理，而其他的都不是真理呢？<sup>689</sup>

The side involving scientific knowledge is but a part of life as a whole. Why is it that you only say that that part is true—that it is truth—and that the rest is not truth?

In lament, he answered his own question:

道是完整的，它是個全。由於人各得一察焉以自好，於是「道術將為天下裂」。<sup>690</sup>

The way is whole. It is a whole. Because each person gleans a partial perspective of the way, taking it as a marvellous insight, “[t]he way is broken into pieces by people in the world”.

## **Concluding Remarks**

Lin Anwu regards Mou’s *Xianxiang yu wu zishen* as a classic example of a philosopher’s work and the thinker’s most important work.<sup>691</sup> The theoretical vigour displayed in the work was one of the accomplishments that secured for Mou the

---

<sup>688</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, pp. 14-16. Also, see Mou’s elaboration in his *Zhongxi zhexue zhi huitong shisi jiang*, pp. 12-15, 18-19, 35-42, 95-106.

<sup>689</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 24.

<sup>690</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7. “一察焉以自好” and “道術將為天下裂” originated from the chapter entitled “Tianxia 天下” (Under the heaven) in the *Zhuangzi*, annot. Guo Xiang, p. 569.

<sup>691</sup> Lin Anwu, *Ruxue geming lun*, p. 308.

reputation of being the theoretical genius behind the *Xin Rujiu* movement. Nonetheless, Lin finds Mou's moral metaphysics lacking in that it fails to engage with practical human living and actual history. He criticises Mou for taking the teachings of *Ru* sages to a high metaphysical ground, where he delivered his critique of Kant and ventured to reconcile *Ruxue* with Kant by way of philosophical abstraction without taking into account the different cultural backgrounds giving rise to each.<sup>692</sup> Mou's thought is indeed highly metaphysical, and the lack of practicality is a common criticism raised by his detractors. Mou emphasised often the importance of turning inward and attuning to one's innate moral consciousness, but this was about all the advice he had for *Ru* moral praxis. Why did Mou seek the high moral metaphysical ground? Perhaps, he felt that he had done all he could on the practical ground with his *santong* proposal serving China's cultural reconstruction, which advocates the renewal of *Ru* teachings to guide the development of science and democracy. Mou's assessment of Chinese cultural heritage—that it consists mainly of “the five basic relations in regard to society, the emperor in the political realm and innate moral consciousness in the area of learning”—might provide another clue. In addition, given his serious cultural nationalist intent amid growing influence of Western thought in the world, perhaps he decided that expounding innate moral consciousness in a Kantian-inflected moral metaphysics was the best way to reverse the iconoclastic impulse of Chinese intellectuals and revive traditional Chinese culture. Lastly, personal conviction might be a key factor. Given the tumultuous historical time he lived in and his personal circumstances, perhaps he did derive needed comfort and deep meaning in a moral metaphysics bordering on a religion. There is no reason to doubt that he was not sincere when he stated that one cannot speak of happiness (*xingfu* 幸福) until one has taken refuge in a place which “possesses the goodness of heaven and earth” (*bei yu tiandi zhi mei* 備於天地之美) and “matches the capacity of the divine” (*chen shenming zhi rong* 稱神明之容).<sup>693</sup>

---

<sup>692</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 308-309.

<sup>693</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhaxue shijiu jiang*, pp. 7-8. “備於天地之美” and “稱神明之容” are from the chapter entitled “Tianxia 天下” (Under the heaven) in the *Zhuangzi*, annot. Guo Xiang, p. 569.

## 6

### **Mou’s Moral Metaphysics and Kant: The Highest Good and the “Perfect Teaching”**

This chapter concludes the presentation of Mou’s moral metaphysics with an examination of the thinker’s engagement with Kant’s conception of the highest good. Kant conceived of the highest good in a person as consisting in not only virtue (the capacity and resolve to obey the moral law) as the supreme good and worthiness to be happy but also happiness itself; and due correspondence between virtue and happiness is a promise embedded in the concept. Kant also postulated the existence of God to bring about the due correspondence, which, in his opinion, is something human beings rationally aspire to but cannot realise on their own. Mou appreciated that the concept of the highest good is the crowning concept of Kant’s moral philosophy and upheld Kant’s ideal of due correspondence between virtue and happiness. He, however, deemed contentious and “imperfect” Kant’s resorting to theological postulation to bring about the ideal. The non-contentious and “perfect” approach, he argued, is by way of *Ru* moral metaphysics in the form of a “perfect teaching”. I begin with Mou’s understanding of Kant’s concept of the highest good and the ideal of due correspondence between virtue and happiness. I then introduce the Tiantai paradigm of “perfect teaching” and Mou’s reading of a “perfect” unity of virtue and happiness entailed in it. This involves many *Fo* terms but I will keep them to a minimum. The discussion continues with an examination of Mou’s application of the Tiantai paradigm of “perfect teaching” to *Ru* and his presentation of the moral metaphysics of Song *Ru* thinker Hu Wufeng 胡五峰 (1100-1155) as the ultimate “perfect teaching” truly capable of delivering an actual onto-cosmological unity of virtue and happiness non-contentiously—which means “perfectly” for Mou. This leads to a discussion of Mou’s critique of Kant’s “imperfect” approach by theological postulation and my observation of Mou’s cultural nationalist intent. The

chapter ends with a reflection on the philosophical significance of Mou's "perfect teaching" dissertation and concluding remarks on Mou's moral metaphysics and its relation with Kant's critical philosophy.

## **The Highest Good and Due Correspondence between Virtue and Happiness**

Kant lamented that the highest good was a forgotten concept in the West,<sup>694</sup> and Mou noted that the situation had not changed since.<sup>695</sup> Mou also observed that neither the correspondence between virtue and happiness (termed *yuanshan* 圓善 by him) as highlighted by Kant nor the classification of teaching methods as either analytical or non-analytical as put forth by Chinese Mahāyāna *Fo* had concerned *Ru* thinkers.<sup>696</sup> Nonetheless, Mou upheld Kant's conception of the highest good as the crowning concept of the German thinker's moral philosophy. In addition, he regarded the ideal of due correspondence between virtue and happiness as an ultimate issue yet to be resolved satisfactorily by Western philosophers. Moreover, he was of the view that applying the Tiantai School's paradigm of "perfect teaching", which emphasises the non-analytical teaching method, to moral thought would shed light on this ultimate issue:

假如你真正明白了「圓教」的概念，「圓善」的概念自然會豁然呈現在你眼前。當初我也沒想到這麼多，單單把最高善當作西方哲學中的問題。但後來我把圓教講明白了，圓善的概念也豁然開朗了。這兩個問題是相應的，必須同時解決。假如我們要以非分別說來消化分別說，最後一定要講到圓教才能完成；而西方哲學思考的發展必須到圓善才能完成。<sup>697</sup>

If you really understand the concept of "perfect teaching", naturally the concept of "the highest good" will open up and present itself clearly in your mind's eye. In the beginning I did not think of all this either and simply regarded the highest good as an issue within Western philosophy. Subsequently, however, I was able

---

<sup>694</sup> Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 192.

<sup>695</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 369.

<sup>696</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 329, 354.

<sup>697</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 370.

to articulate clearly [the concept of] “perfect teaching”, and the concept of the highest good also opened up and became clear. These two issues correspond and must be resolved simultaneously. If we are to use the non-analytical approach to break down [what is taught by] the analytical approach, we will reach completion only when we arrive at the “perfect teaching”; and the development of Western philosophical thinking will reach completion only with the highest good.

Before examining the Tiantai paradigm of “perfect teaching” and the non-analytical method, it is important to clarify Mou’s understanding of the concept of the highest good and the accompanying ideal of due correspondence between virtue and happiness and note Mou’s divergence from Kant in this regard. There are four key points. First, Mou upheld Kant’s thesis that the central import of the concept of the highest good lies not in the supreme nature of virtue but rather in the “perfect” nature of virtue, which means, specifically, the promise of due correspondence of virtue and happiness embedded in the concept:

。 。 。 這個 *sumum bonum* [*summum bonum*<sup>698</sup>] 照康德的說法，有兩種意義：一是最高的，另一則是最圓滿的。因此現在英文翻成 *highest good* 也不甚恰當，因為康德說 *sumum bonum* [*summum bonum*] 主要是取其圓滿之義。 。 。 。 我們可以說所謂最高善就是指最純粹的道德性而言。 。 。 。 但是康德所說的最高善不取這個意義，他一定主張德與福相合，也就是 *virtue* 與 *happiness* 兩方面相配合在一起。<sup>699</sup>

*Summum bonum*, according to Kant, has two meanings: one is the highest, another is the perfect [the complete]. Thus, the contemporary English rendering as “the highest good” is not very appropriate, since in speaking of *summum bonum*, Kant had in mind mainly the meaning of its being perfect. ... We can say that what is called “the highest good” refers to the purest moral capability....but Kant did not take this meaning when he spoke of the highest good. He definitely asserted the correspondence of virtue and happiness—that is, the two sides of virtue and happiness mutually correspond.

---

<sup>698</sup> Mou is using the Latin term for the highest good, the correct spelling of which is *summum bonum*.

<sup>699</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, pp. 327-328.

Indeed, Kant stated that “[t]he highest can mean either the supreme (*supremum*) or the complete (*consummatum*). The first is that condition which is itself unconditioned, that is, not subordinate to any other (*originarium*); the second is that whole which is not part of a still greater whole of the same kind (*perfectissimum*).”<sup>700</sup> Since the German thinker had already established the supreme nature of virtue by postulating the autonomy of the will, he went on to specify that “virtue and happiness together constitute possession of the highest good in a person.”<sup>701</sup> He further added that “happiness distributed in exact proportion to morality (as the worth of a person and his worthiness to be happy) constitutes the highest good of a possible world.”<sup>702</sup> For him, the highest good of a possible world means “the whole, the complete good, in which, however, virtue as the condition is always the supreme good”.<sup>703</sup>

Second, Mou placed primary attention on “the whole” that Kant had in mind when speaking of the perfect or complete good. Given that due correspondence between virtue and happiness does not exist in the sensible world, the perfect whole envisioned by Kant embraces noumenal existence.<sup>704</sup> On Kant’s epistemological reasoning, this perfect whole embracing the noumenal is unknowable by human beings. For Mou, however, it is an ontological and actual infinite whose presence can be intuited by the human mind (the moral mind in the *Ru* context). This divergence of viewpoints reflects Mou’s refutation of Kant’s epistemology and his steadfast affirmation of human intellectual intuition:

我們 [佛教] 不能只是肯定有佛，必須實際上真正可能有佛才行。而這個所以可能有佛的關鍵即在於肯定人有智的直覺。不僅佛教，儒道二家亦需肯定智的直覺。儒家認為現實上有聖人，人人可以成聖人，這個可以成聖的根據就是智的直覺。因此，儒釋道三教均共同肯定人有智的直覺，也因為此種共同肯定，所以它所呈現的圓滿無盡、主伴俱足的無限，才能成為 ontological infinite，而且是 actual infinite。<sup>705</sup>

---

<sup>700</sup> Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 228.

<sup>701</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229.

<sup>702</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>703</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>704</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 232.

<sup>705</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 326.

We [in the context of *Fo*] cannot merely affirm that there are Buddhas; what is called for is the actual and real possibility of their existence, and such a possibility hinges on the affirmation of human intellectual intuition. *Fo* is not the only teaching that affirms human intellectual intuition; *Ru* and *Dao* do so as well. *Ruists* maintain that sages actually exist and that everyone can become a sage. The ground for this possibility of attaining sagehood is human intellectual intuition. All three teachings of *Ru*, *Fo* and *Dao* thus share the common affirmation of human intellectual intuition. Moreover, it is because of this shared affirmation that the infinite—the ultimate that is “perfectly complete and interpenetrating with all things”—presented by way of intellectual intuition can become an ontological infinite, which is also an actual infinite.

I discuss the meaning of being “perfectly complete and interpenetrating with all things” in the next section. Suffice it to say here that Mou sees a close analogy between the *Fo* state of the infinite and the perfect whole intuited by the moral or infinite mind by way of empathetic compassion (*ren*) in the context of *Ru* onto-cosmology:

。 。 。 儒家的無限智心必扣緊「仁」而講，而體現此無限智心之大人之「以天地萬物爲一體」之圓境亦必須通過仁體之遍潤性與創生性而建立。 。 。 。<sup>706</sup>

Any mention of the infinite mind in the *Ru* context is invariably bound up closely with the concept of empathetic compassion. Moreover, the “perfect” state of “embodying the myriad things between heaven and earth” as realised by the infinite mind of the great person has to be established through the pervasive moisturising quality and the creativity of the onto-cosmological grounding of empathetic compassion.

The third key point regarding Mou’s understanding of the highest good and due correspondence of virtue and happiness focuses on whether virtue and happiness are synthetic (meaning that they are heterogeneous concepts) or analytic (meaning either that they are identical concepts or that one is contained in the other).<sup>707</sup> Mou noted that

---

<sup>706</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Yuanshan lun*, p. 306.

<sup>707</sup> See the meaning of “synthetic” and “analytic” according to Kant in his *Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 229.

for Kant, the relationship between virtue and happiness is a synthetic one.<sup>708</sup> Indeed, Kant frowned on thinkers who evaded the issue of due correspondence by subsuming either happiness within virtue (as was the case with the Stoics) or vice versa (as was the case with the Epicureans).<sup>709</sup> Furthermore, Kant stated that virtue and happiness operate by heterogeneous principles and “are two specifically quite different elements of the highest good”<sup>710</sup> whose combination “must be thought synthetically”,<sup>711</sup> with virtue as the fundamental concept. Mou commended Kant for stating clearly the synthetic relationship between virtue and happiness thereby drawing proper attention to the issue of due correspondence between the two.<sup>712</sup> Yet, as shown in a later section, Mou also made it clear that Kant’s insistence that the relationship between the two concepts is synthetic rendered the German thinker’s thought system “imperfect” because of its failure to reach the ultimate truth.

The last and most important point regarding Mou’s understanding of the highest good relates to the necessity of due correspondence between virtue and happiness. Mou asserted that Kant failed to make a convincing argument for the necessity of due correspondence:

然而康德只說最高善是意志的必然對象，而未加以說明。但這個觀念不是自明的，因為一般人可以說：我不要幸福，「正其宜不謀其利」不就可以了嗎？所以康德在這裏說明得不够。我當初看到這裏，覺得康德的說明總是弱了一點。。。。不能使人豁然開朗，使人完全了解，所以人總可以懷疑。<sup>713</sup>

Yet, Kant merely stated that the highest good is a necessary object of the will<sup>714</sup> and provided no explanation. This concept [the highest good], however, is by no means obvious, and people can say, “I don’t want happiness. ‘Restoring things to what is appropriate and not seeking selfish gains’ will suffice, won’t

---

<sup>708</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 374.

<sup>709</sup> Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 229.

<sup>710</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 230.

<sup>711</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 231.

<sup>712</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, pp. 374-375.

<sup>713</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 377-378.

<sup>714</sup> Kant asserted that the highest good entailing virtue and happiness is “an a priori necessary object of our will”. See his *Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 231.

it?”<sup>715</sup> Hence, on this point Kant did not give sufficient explanation. When I first came upon this point, I could not help but feel that Kant’s explanation was a bit weak. ...It did not open up to enable the reader to see clearly and understand completely. As a result, people can cast doubt on it.

Like Kant, Mou also appealed to the noumenal (the ontological infinite in Mou’s case) for the realisation of due correspondence between virtue and happiness. Yet, unlike Kant, he did not do so by maintaining the epistemological negation of human intellectual intuition and postulating the existence of a transcendent God to deliver the ideal. As will be seen, Mou put the onus back on human beings: it is up to human beings to cultivate their moral mind and bring it to a noumenal state of meditative selfless perfection in which virtue and happiness not only correspond but also unite as one. Mou contended that the necessity of due correspondence that Kant established by way of theological postulation is but a necessity to be granted by God, meaning that the attainment of the ideal of due correspondence is beyond human capability:

。。。康德始終肯定德與福的關係是綜和關係。所謂「綜和」，是對我們人類而言。德福一致的觀念在我們的現實人生中根本不能呈現，其可能性只有靠上帝的存在來保障。我們的實踐理性只是要求它，其必然性只是要求上的必然性。我們根本不能呈現它，只有上帝才能。這樣就把人與上帝分開了。<sup>716</sup>

...Kant from beginning to end affirmed that the relationship between virtue and happiness is a synthetic one. What he called “synthetic” is with regard to us human beings. The concept of the unity [due correspondence in the case of Kant<sup>717</sup>] of virtue and happiness basically cannot present itself in our practical life. The only way to warrant its possibility is by means of the existence of God. Our practical reason merely demands it; and its necessity is merely a requested

---

<sup>715</sup> This is the qualification of a man of *ren* (empathetic compassion) given by the *Ru* thinker Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (179-104 B.C.). See “Dong Zhongshu zhuan 董仲舒傳” (Biography of Dong Zhongshu), in Ban Gu 班固, *Han Shu buzhu 漢書補註* (The Annotated Book of Han), annot. Wang Xianqian 王先謙, Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1959, vol VI, p. 4020.

<sup>716</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 382.

<sup>717</sup> Mou made it clear that Kant spoke of only due correspondence—not unity—between virtue and happiness. See his *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 383.

necessity. We basically cannot intuit its presence; only God can. Human beings are thus separated from God.

In contrast, as will be seen below, in Mou's "perfect teaching" dissertation based on Tiantai, the necessity of the unity of virtue and happiness is entailed in the "perfect" realisation of human being' infinite mind in the context of *Fo* as well as in those of *Ru* and *Dao*.

### **The Tiantai Paradigm of "Perfect Teaching" and the Unity of Virtue and Happiness**

In Chinese Mahayana *Fo*, there emerged two important synthesising schools—Tiantai 天台 and Huayan 華嚴. Both schools developed their teachings based on a synthesis of different texts and flourished during the Tang (618-907) but have contended with each other since with regard to which *Fo* text contains the most "perfect" teaching given by Śākyamuni the founding Buddha. For the Tiantai School, the right choice is the *Lotus Sutra* (the *Fahua Jing* 法華經), which forms the basis of its teaching; for the Huayan School, it is the *Garland Sutra* (the *Huayan Jing* 華嚴經).<sup>718</sup> Mou sided with Tiantai because on his view, its paradigm of "perfect teaching" conveys the all-encompassing Buddha-nature—the ultimate concept in Mahayana *Fo*—most fully and non-analytically.

Adopting the criteria put forth by Tiantai, Mou maintained that whether a teaching is a "perfect teaching" hinges firstly upon its content and secondly, and critically, upon its method of teaching. A "perfect teaching" as defined by Tiantai not only reveals the ultimate and absolute truth—the reason being that it cannot be said to be "perfect" or compete if it fails to reveal the ultimate and absolute<sup>719</sup>—but also employs the non-analytical method of teaching to convey it. Thus, Mou cautioned that "perfection" in the context of Mahāyāna *Fo* is not in terms of the realisation of

---

<sup>718</sup> For a brief discussion of these two schools, see entries for the Chinese terms Tiantai *zong* 天台宗 and Huayan *zong* 華嚴宗 in Charles Muller's Digital Dictionary of Buddhism at [www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb) (accessed on August 16, 2009). (As noted in footnote 188, the Chinese term for a school is "zong" 宗, with each *zong* clearly identified by a lineage traced back to a founding patriarch.) Mou gave an overview of the "perfect teaching" debates involving the two schools in his *Foxing yu bore*, vol. I, pp. 556-572.

<sup>719</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Yuanshan lun*, p. 267.

nirvāṇa<sup>720</sup> (it is a goal common to all schools, even Theravādan ones); nor is it in terms of how self-sufficient or logical a particular system is (all schools would claim to be thus).<sup>721</sup> Rather, it is primarily in terms of how encompassing (complete, ultimate) Buddha-nature is as taught by a particular teaching and additionally and critically, whether a particular teaching uses non-analytical means to convey the notion of Buddha-nature. I elaborate these two requirements below.

Reflecting the Mahāyāna spirit of helping all beings cross the sea of suffering, Buddha-nature has to be all-encompassing (complete) for a *Fo* teaching to be called a “perfect teaching”. Mou reiterated this point as follows:

假定我們照圓滿無盡、主伴俱足來瞭解圓教，則翻成 Perfect teaching 是恰當的，而且這個意思正好是圓教的 essential meaning。因為圓教所以為圓教，是從主伴俱足、圓滿無盡處來說，所以這是它的 essential meaning。<sup>722</sup>

If we understand “perfect teaching” in terms of [Buddha-nature’s being] “perfectly complete and interpenetrating with all things”, then it is appropriate to render it as “perfect teaching”. Moreover, this understanding is precisely the essential meaning of “perfect teaching”. Because a “perfect teaching” is a “perfect teaching” by virtue of [Buddha-nature’s being] “perfectly complete and interpenetrating with all things”, the understanding is its essential meaning.

The above description of Buddha-nature as “perfectly complete and interpenetrating with all things” actually belongs to the Huayan School.<sup>723</sup> The description is based on the *Garland Sutra*’s depiction of Buddha-nature as the dharma-body of the Vairocana Buddha (*Piluzhena fo fashen* 毘盧遮那佛法身) with its capability of manifesting countless realms and beings—the Vairocana Buddha as the embodiment and realisation

---

<sup>720</sup> Nirvāṇa is “the extinction or end of all return to reincarnation with its concomitant suffering, and the entry into bliss” and is “the goal of spiritual practice in all branches of Buddhism.” See the entry for the Chinese term *niepan* 涅槃 in Charles Muller’s Digital Dictionary of Buddhism at [www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb) (accessed on August 16, 2009).

<sup>721</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 321.

<sup>722</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 324.

<sup>723</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Foxing yu bore*, vol. I, pp. 493-494. See related discussion in the entry for the Chinese term *shi xuanmen* 十玄門 in Charles Muller’s Digital Dictionary of Buddhism at [www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb) (accessed on May 20, 2009).

of the all-encompassing Buddhist truth.<sup>724</sup> Specifically, “interpenetrating with all things” means that the myriad worlds within the dharma-body of the Vairocana Buddha interpenetrate among one another<sup>725</sup>—“[a]ll are contained in one and one in all”.<sup>726</sup>

The perfectly complete, all-encompassing and interpenetrating nature of the dharma-body of the Vairocana Buddha is the basis for the Huayan assertion of its teaching being a “perfect teaching”. Mou’s reiteration quoted above shows that he deemed the Huayan depiction of Buddha-nature in fulfilment of the primary requirement of a “perfect teaching”. Yet, siding with Tiantai, he contended that meeting the primary requirement of a “perfect teaching” is but a necessary qualification and not sufficient to qualify the Huayan teaching as truly “perfect”:

。 。 。 天台宗並不就佛法身之圓滿無盡圓融無礙說圓教也。因為就此說圓教，這只是分析的，這不是圓不圓問題之所在，因為這裏無問題故。<sup>727</sup>

The Tiantai School does not base “perfect teaching” on the dharma-body’s being perfectly complete and all-pervasive without hindrance. This is because to speak of “perfect teaching” on this basis is merely analytical—this is not where the issue of perfection lies, since no issues lie here.

The Huayan approach of basing a “perfect teaching” on the perfect completion and pervasiveness of the dharma-body or Buddha-nature is analytical because an analysis of the former (“perfect teaching”) yields the latter (the perfect nature of Buddha-nature)—in other words, the latter constitutes the essential meaning of the former. Upholding the criteria put forth by Tiantai, Mou pointed out that the critical issue regarding the perfection of a teaching relates not to content but rather to the method of teaching employed—a “perfect” teaching must employ the non-analytical method of teaching.<sup>728</sup> According to Mou, a “perfect teaching” rises above the incompleteness and the

---

<sup>724</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Foxing yu bore*, vol. I, pp. 483-488.

<sup>725</sup> The Garland Sutra (Sanskrit: *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*) illustrates this interpenetration with the infinitely vast and grand tower of the Vairocana Buddha as seen by the youth Sudhana—“In one place one sees all places, and this applies to all of the myriad places”, with the infinite intermingling happening without interfering with one another. See Mou Zongsan, *Foxing yu bore*, vol. I, p. 496.

<sup>726</sup> I borrowed this line from Peter Harvey. See Peter Harvey, *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices*, Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990, p. 119.

<sup>727</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Foxing yu bore*, vol. I, p. 557.

<sup>728</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 360.

contestability inherent in any teaching or system of thought using the analytical method.<sup>729</sup> This is because all concepts being dual in nature, a system which uses the analytic method—however self-sufficient, logical, and complete in itself—is able to validate only one of two sides of a conceptualized formulation and inevitably leaves out the contending side:

而任何透過語言文字的方式來表達的系統，都不是圓教，因為各種說法都對立不一。。。<sup>730</sup>

Moreover, none of the systems that convey by way of language or words is a “perfect teaching”. This is because the various viewpoints oppose one another and fail to achieve unity...

Mou further clarified that a “perfect teaching” is a teaching but not an alternative system.<sup>731</sup> An alternative system leaves out its opposite and cannot be said to reveal the complete, ultimate and absolute truth; what can be contested is not the absolute.

Non-analytical methods of teaching seek not to establish a particular doctrine, but to show how teachings established analytically (conceptually) fail to reveal the ultimate and absolute truth. Mou used the term “dialectic” to describe the non-analytical method employed in “perfect teachings”. Here he referred not to the dialectical synthesis of two discrete opposites as employed by Hegel, but to the nullification of opposition as employed in the *Fo* exposition of *prajñā-pāramitā* (*bore boluomi* 般若波羅蜜).<sup>732</sup> *Prajñā-pāramitā* is a Sanskrit Buddhist term, which is usually rendered as “perfect wisdom”. “Perfect wisdom” is the “supreme, perfect wisdom of emptiness that allows the bodhisattva to perceive reality”.<sup>733</sup> It refers to the capability of Buddha-nature or the true mind to intuit the “empty” reality of the phenomenal world: that everything arises as a result of a cause and enabling conditions and has no real independence and permanence, hence no real “self,” to speak of.<sup>734</sup> Because one can understand the

---

<sup>729</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 356, 372.

<sup>730</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 320.

<sup>731</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 321-322.

<sup>732</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 354.

<sup>733</sup> See the entry for the Chinese term *bore boluomi* 般若波羅蜜 in Charles Muller’s Digital Dictionary of Buddhism at [www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb) (accessed on August 19, 2009).

<sup>734</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 268.

phenomenal world only conceptually with one's cognitive mind, one sees this world in dualities. "Perfect wisdom" enables one to be mindful of the "emptiness" of the phenomenal world and let go of the tendency of the cognitive mind to fixate on the inherent dualities. In other words, "perfect wisdom" is the letting go of the attachment to dualities.<sup>735</sup> Mou pointed out that "perfect wisdom" is a presence intuited by the mind and that its true meaning cannot be captured using concepts (because it encompasses the whole—both sides of conceptual dualities).<sup>736</sup> This explains why the *Diamond Sutra* (the *Jingang Jing* 金剛經) and other *Prajñā-pāramitā* sutras have to resort to dialectic—by way of paradoxes and negations—to convey what "perfect wisdom" is.<sup>737</sup> Mou cited as an example the following line from the *Diamond Sutra*:<sup>738</sup>

如來說第一波羅蜜非第一波羅蜜。是名第一波羅蜜。<sup>739</sup>

The *parama-pāramitā* [the highest *pāramitā*, which is *prajñā-pāramitā* or "perfect wisdom"] spoken of by the Buddha is not *parama pāramitā*. Rather, it is called *parama pāramitā*.

Dialectic as employed in *Prajñā-pāramitā* sutras aims to nullify oppositions and separations inherent in the phenomenal world as we perceive it. Mou deemed the Huayan teaching "imperfect" because it conveys the all-encompassing Buddha-nature analytically, thus separating the Buddha realm from the other nine non-Buddha realms (comprising the six realms marked by the cycle of rebirths, including the human realm and the hells, and the three higher realms of the *śrāvaka*, the *pratyekabuddha* and the bodhisattvas):

。 。 。 蓋此種圓滿無盡圓融無碍只是佛法身的事，其頓現萬象。 。 。 是本其因地久遠修行所經歷之事到還滅後重新映現出來，或一起倒映進來而成為佛法身之無量功德、無量豐富的意義，寄法顯示，因而便成為法界緣起之圓滿無盡圓融無碍。這並不是說佛是即于六道衆生乃至聲聞緣覺菩薩這九法界不隔而成佛。 。 。 。 因為那是塔頂上的佛法身自身之圓滿與圓融， 。 。 。 。<sup>740</sup>

<sup>735</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 355.

<sup>736</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 356.

<sup>737</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>738</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>739</sup> Jingkong 淨空, *Jingang Jing jiangyi jieyao* 金剛經講義節要 (An Abridged Exposition of the Diamond Sutra), Taipei: Huazang fojiao tushuguan, 1995, p. 110.

<sup>740</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Foxing yu bore*, vol. I, p. 560.

...This is because this kind of perfect completion and all-pervasiveness without hindrance [the kind taught by Huayan] relates only to the dharma-body. Its sudden manifestation of the myriad phenomena...is based on events experienced during the long and distant praxis that formed the ground for the attainment of the dharma-body—they are manifested anew at the point of cessation [upon attaining nirvāṇa] or they are reflected altogether in the dharma-body, thereby bringing out the import of the dharma-body's infinite merit and richness. This is manifestation by means of the myriad things,<sup>741</sup> and it brings out the perfect completion and all-pervasiveness without hindrance associated with the conditioned arising of the various realms. This [understanding of perfection] does not mean that the Buddha attains Buddhahood while still being connected with beings in the nine realms, including the six paths of rebirth and the realms of the *śrāvaka*, the *pratyekabuddha* and the bodhisattvas....This is because that [perfection as taught by Huayan] is perfect completion and pervasiveness of the dharma body itself positioned at the top of the pyramid [of realms], ....

An important consequence of the separation between the Buddha realm and other realms in Huayan, according to Mou, is that Huayan cannot warrant the necessity of the existence of the myriad things:

隨緣隨到處可有法起現，隨不到處則無法起現，是則于一切法之存在無圓足保證也。<sup>742</sup>

Where conditions arise, the myriad things can be manifested. It follows that where conditions fail to arise, there will be no way for the myriad things to be manifested. Thus, there is no complete and perfect warrant for the existence of the myriad things.

This has an important bearing on the highest good because one cannot speak of happiness, let alone due correspondence between virtue and happiness, when one cannot secure the existence of the myriad things:

---

<sup>741</sup> I render *fa* 法 (*dharma*'s in Sanskrit) as “the myriad things” since the term in this context refers to “all things, or anything small or great, visible or invisible, real or unreal, affairs, truth, principle, method, concrete things, abstract ideas, etc.” See the entry for the Chinese term *fa* 法 in Charles Muller's Digital Dictionary of Buddhism at [www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb) (accessed on September 13, 2009).

而幸福的觀念是寄託在法的存在上。法的存在就是現實世界的存在。現實的自然生命要肯定得住才行。假如現實世界保不住，其存在無必然性，那麼幸福要寄託在那裏呢？<sup>743</sup>

Yet, the concept of happiness rests on the existence of the myriad things. The existence of the myriad things is the existence of the actual world. The actual natural life must be warranted. If the actual world is not warranted—if there is no necessity regarding its existence—upon what can happiness rest?

On Mou's assessment, the teaching of Tiantai is the only true “perfect teaching” in *Fo* because it conveys the perfect completion and pervasiveness of Buddha-nature dialectically (non-analytically) through the notion of “the all-entailing mind” (*yinianxin* 一念心, literally a “mind of a single thought”). The “all-entailing mind”, Mou told us, entails “three-thousand worlds”:

。 。 。 此「一念心」不但只是一念心，而且是即具一切法的一念心。 。 。 。 此亦即是「一念三千」也。<sup>744</sup>

...this “mind of a single thought” is not just a mind of a single thought but also a mind of a single thought entailing the myriad things. ...This is also the same as “one thought entailing three thousand worlds”.

The “three-thousand worlds” encompass everything in existence because they cover all of the three-hundred types of possible words in each of the ten realms:

十界互融，每一界具十界，總成百法界。 。 。 。 百法界再配上三十種世間，所以說「一念三千」。其實所說就是一切法。<sup>745</sup>

The ten realms merge and mutually entail. Each realm entails ten realms, thus producing a hundred realms in total. ...Coupling the hundred realms with thirty types of worlds [in each realm], we can therefore say “one thought entailing three thousand worlds”. It actually means the entirety of the myriad things.

---

<sup>742</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Yuanshan lun*, p. 272.

<sup>743</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 378.

<sup>744</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Foxing yu bore*, vol. II, p. 604.

<sup>745</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 381.

The realisation of Buddha-nature grounded in the “all-entailing mind” defines the Tiantai concept of the “perfect pan-Buddha” (*yuan fo* 圓佛).<sup>746</sup> Perfect pan-Buddhahood thus understood is a state of mind non-separable from, and by virtue of, all that exists within the cosmos. Recurring here is the same theme of dialectical mutual entailment and nullification of oppositions (between the Buddha realm and other realms in this case) that features in both Xiong’s theory of non-separability of fundamental state/condition and function and Mou’s “two-tiered mind” paradigm.

The dialectical mutual entailment of the different realms, Mou explained, is that which warrants the existence of the myriad things:

照圓教的說法，九法界中沒有任何一個法界可以去掉，成佛非就這裏成不可。這樣豈不是能保住地獄等法界的存在，而使之有必然性嗎？<sup>747</sup>

In accordance with [the Tiantai] description of the “perfect teaching”, none of the realms amongst the nine [non-Buddha] realms can be done away with. The attainment of Buddhahood has to happen here [in the non-Buddha realms]. Doesn’t this specification warrant the existence of hells and other realms and endow it [the existence of non-Buddha realms] with necessity?

He termed this warrant of the existence of the myriad things a “Buddhistic ontology”:

可見不達到圓教，法的存在是無法保住的，而從保住法的存在這一點來看，我即給它規定一個名詞，叫做「佛教式的存有論」(Buddhistic ontology)。本來佛教講無自性，要去掉「存有」(Being)，根本不能講存有論；但是就着佛性把法的存在保住，法的存在有必然性而言，那麼就成功了佛教式的存有論。<sup>748</sup>

This shows that the existence of the myriad things cannot be warranted until one arrives at the “perfect teaching”; and on this one point of warranting the existence of the myriad things, I prescribe a term for it: “Buddhistic ontology”.

---

<sup>746</sup> The perfect pan-Buddha embraces “all things in every direction” and is the same as “Vairocana, identified with Śākyamuni.” See the entry for the Chinese term *yuan fo* 圓佛 in Charles Muller’s Digital Dictionary of Buddhism at [www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb) (accessed on October 8, 2009).

<sup>747</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 382.

<sup>748</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 362.

Originally, *Fojiao* espouses the lack of a self-nature, aims to do away with “being” and basically does not permit any talk of ontology. Yet, in terms of Buddha-nature’s warranting the existence of the myriad things and endowing the existence with necessity, a Buddhistic ontology is enabled.

In contrast to Huayan, the presence of a Buddhistic ontology in the Tiantai’s paradigm of “perfect teaching” as discussed above provides the requisite existential basis for happiness and thus renders the paradigm ontologically “perfect” (complete). Focusing on the paradigm’s non-analytical teaching on perfect pan-Buddhahood with its implicit Buddhistic ontology, Mou saw more than just due correspondence between virtue and happiness. He saw a perfect unity of the two because of the dialectical nullification of oppositions and differences through mutual entailment:

存有論的圓既經確立，則就「三道即三德」，在「不斷斷」之圓修下，即可達至佛教式的「德福一致」之圓善。蓋般若、解脫、法身之三德，依德福問題言，俱屬德邊事。但般若之智德是就三千世間法而為智德，解脫之斷德。。。是就三千世間法而為斷德，涅槃法身德是就三千世間法而為法身德（佛法身即九法界而成佛法身），主觀面之德與客觀面法之存在根本未曾須與離，而幸福即屬於「法之存在」者（存在得很如意即為幸福）。在此圓修下，生命之德（神聖的生命）呈現，存在面之福即隨之。。。但在此圓修下，存在無定性的存在（非如上帝所創造者然），當德呈現時，由解心無染，通達惡際即是實際，行于非道通達佛道，魔界即佛，是故一切存在即隨之而轉，一切善惡淨穢法門皆成佛法，咸稱常樂，此即是福。（「三千在理同名無明，三千果成咸稱常樂」。既稱常樂，自然是福。）是則德福必一致，「自然」（存在）必與「德」相諧和。<sup>749</sup>

Ontological perfection having been securely established, a *Fo*-styled “unity of virtue and happiness” can be attained right away in the “perfect” [dialectical] praxis of “not cutting off what are to be cut off”<sup>750</sup>—in accordance

<sup>749</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Yuanshan lun*, pp. 278-279.

<sup>750</sup> “What are to be cut off” are defilements including lust, anger and ignorance. See Mou Zongsan, *Foxing yu bore*, vol. II, p. 600.

with “the mutual-entailment between the three paths and the three virtues.”<sup>751</sup> This is because in speaking of issues concerning virtue and happiness, “perfect wisdom”, emancipation and the dharma body [the three virtues] all belong on the side of virtue. Yet, the virtue of “perfect wisdom” is that which has come about by virtue of entailing the myriads things in the three thousand worlds. The virtue of emancipation...is that which has come about by virtue of entailing the myriad things in the three thousand worlds. The virtue of the dharma body upon attaining nirvāṇa is that which has come about by virtue of entailing the myriad things in the three thousand worlds (the Buddha dharma-body is attained by virtue of entailing the nine [non-Buddha] realms). Virtue on the subjective side and existence on the objective side have not been separated for even a brief moment, and happiness is that which belongs to “the existence of the myriad things” (existing in a satisfying way is happiness). In this “perfect” praxis, as the virtue of life (sacred life) presents itself, happiness on the existential side right away follows.... Yet, in this “perfect” praxis, when virtue presents itself, all manners of existence (existence that is impermanent, unlike creations of God) right away become transformed with it. This is as a result of insight into the untainted nature of the mind [Buddha-nature], which leads to the realisation that reaching the ultimate ground is non-separable from reaching the evil ground, that treading the wrong path is non-separable from arriving at the way of *Fo* and that the realm of the evil demons<sup>752</sup> is non-separable from the Buddha realm.<sup>753</sup> All ways good or evil, pure or defiled thereby turn into the way of *Fo*. All accords with permanence and bliss—this is happiness. (“The three thousand worlds abide with the principle [Buddha-nature] and are all called ignorance; the three thousand worlds attain fruition [perfect pan-Buddhahood] and all accords with permanence and bliss”<sup>754</sup>—being in accord with permanence and bliss, it is, of

---

<sup>751</sup> The three paths are those of illusion, karma, and suffering; and the three virtues or potencies are perfect wisdom, emancipation and the dharma body. See Mou Zongsan, *Foxing yu bore*, vol. II, p. 606.

<sup>752</sup> I follow Charles Muller’s Digital Dictionary of Buddhism in rendering *mojie* 魔界 as “the realm of evil demons”. See the entries for the Chinese terms *mo* 魔 and *mojie* 魔界 at [www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb) (accessed on October 8, 2009).

<sup>753</sup> The insight and realisation mentioned here are central to the Tiantai teaching. See Mou’s elucidation in his *Foxing yu bore*, vol. II, pp. 598-601, 646-647.

<sup>754</sup> This is a saying of the Tiantai patriarch Jingxi 荆溪. The three thousand worlds contain within them the principle [Buddha-nature] or the seed for enlightenment. They are called ignorance because the seed has

course, happiness.) In this way, virtue and happiness necessarily unite, with “nature” (existence) and “virtue” necessarily harmonising with each other.

In summary, in Mou’s understanding of the Tiantai paradigm of “perfect teaching”, the spiritual culmination in perfect pan-Buddhahood is marked by ontological perfection and the actual unity of virtue and happiness. In this state of mind, everything in the non-Buddha realms are seen as non-separable from and necessary for spiritual praxis and attainment of perfect pan-Buddhahood through mind cultivation and transformation. In the following section, I look at Mou’s application of the Tiantai paradigm to Song-Ming metaphysics and his assertion that the moral teaching of Song *Ru* thinker Hu Wufeng represents the ultimate “perfect teaching” in Chinese thought.

### **Ru Moral Metaphysics as the Ultimate “Perfect Teaching”**

Dialectic aims to nullify oppositions and separations inherent in the phenomenal world as we perceive it so that the transcendent principle immanent in all things and uniting all things is revealed. In *Fo*, this transcendent principle is the “emptiness” that is inherent in all things. In *Ru*, it is the way of heaven that encompasses everything. While Mou elevated the “perfect teaching” paradigm of Tiantai above that of Huayan, he also treated it as a universal philosophical paradigm and applied it to *Dao*, *Ru* and even Kant’s philosophy.<sup>755</sup> On his assessment, the expositions of the moral mind by the Song *Ru* thinker Hu Wufeng, a contemporary of Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200), not only meet the general requirements specified by Tiantai but are also superior to the Tiantai teaching or *Dao* teaching.

Many Song-Ming *Ru* thinkers have elaborated *Ru* moral metaphysics analytically. Mou highly commended the elaboration by Wang Yangming because it seeks to turn Zhu Xi’s thinking around to conform to Mengzi’s understanding of the original mind.<sup>756</sup> Wang’s teaching, as summarized by Mou, posits the way of heaven as the transcendental

---

yet to reach fruition through mind cultivation and spiritual praxis. See Mou’s elucidation in his *Foxing yu bore*, vol. II, pp. 840, 845-846.

<sup>755</sup> See Mou’s *Yuanshan lun*, p. i of preface, p. 267. Also, Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, pp. 322, 370.

<sup>756</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Yuanshan lun*, pp. 312-313.

creative principle that brings about the myriad things. This creative principle is also immanent in human beings as their innate moral consciousness—their innate capability to tell right from wrong. When an action is motivated by selfish or excessive desires, it is wrong. When an action is in line with the benevolent, life-nurturing principle of heaven, it is a form of moral creativity identical to heaven’s creativity. Wang understood moral praxis in terms of four components: the mind (*xin* 心), the intent (*yi* 意), the knowledge (*zhi* 知) and the behaviour (*wu* 物<sup>757</sup>). According to his four-line teaching (*siju jiao* 四句教) on moral praxis, moral effort involves reflecting upon one’s intent (*yi*) by resorting to one’s moral consciousness (*zhi*) and correcting wrong desires so that behaviour (*wu*) conforms to the mind of heaven (*xin*).<sup>758</sup> Mou, however, did not consider Wang’s four-line teaching a “perfect teaching”.<sup>759</sup> He pointed out that it teaches analytically and focuses on the empirical<sup>760</sup> and is therefore contestable (by followers of Zhu Xi, for example). On Mou’s assessment, the thesis of the four “non-beings” (*siwu* 四無) developed by Wang Longxi 王龍谿 (1498-1583), a foremost disciple of Wang Yangming, is more “perfect”. Wang Longxi’s thesis of the four “non-beings” is a noumenal rendering of Wang Yangming’s four-line teaching. In it, Wang Yangming’s components of intent and behaviour retire to the non-differential noumenal realm of mind and innate moral consciousness so that the division between the noumenal and the phenomenal disappears. Thus, mind becomes “the mind that is not mind” (*wuxin zhi xin* 無心之心), intent becomes “the intent that is not intent” (*wuyi zhi yi* 無意之意), knowledge becomes “the knowledge that is not knowledge” (*wuzhi zhi zhi* 無知之知) and behaviour becomes “the behaviour that is not behaviour” (*wuwu zhi wu* 無物之物).<sup>761</sup>

---

<sup>757</sup> As pointed out by Mou Zongsan, Wang Yangming understood “*wu*” 物 primarily in terms of behaviour rather than objects or things and the term denotes what Mou called “*xingwei wu*” 行爲物 (things that are behaviours). See Mou’s *Yuanshan lun*, p. 314.

<sup>758</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Yuanshan lun*, pp. 312-315.

<sup>759</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 316.

<sup>760</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 320.

<sup>761</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 316-317. Peng Guoxiang 彭國翔 presents a detailed study of Wang Longxi’s thesis of the four “not-having” in his *Liangzhi xue de zhankai: Wang Longxi yu zhongwan Ming de Yangming xue* 良知學的展開：王龍谿與中晚明的陽明學 (The Unfolding of the Learning of Innate Moral Consciousness: Wang Longxi and the Learning of Wang Yangming in the mid-late Ming), Beijing: Sanlian Shudian, 2005, pp. 170-227.

Despite the portrayal of the “perfect” infinite mind in Wang Longxi’s thesis of four “non-beings”, Mou did not consider Wang’s thesis truly “perfect” by Tiantai standard. This was because it contrasts with Wang Yangming’s four-line teaching and is therefore obviously contestable.<sup>762</sup> Mou maintained that in *Ru*, only the teaching on the moral mind by Hu Wufeng meets the Tiantai criteria for “perfect teaching”.<sup>763</sup> Mou highlighted the following line of “perfect” teaching on the moral mind by Hu: “The way of heaven and human desires relate to the same matter but differ in what that matter expresses; they move through the same events but differ in emotional facts” (天理人欲同體而異用，同行而異情<sup>764</sup>). Similar to the Tiantai “perfect” praxis of “not cutting off what are to be cut off”, Hu’s line above affirms that worldly living and events are necessary for and non-separable from the realisation of the heavenly way (through mind cultivation and the accompanying transformation of emotions). The line teaches non-analytically by not separating the heavenly way and human passions despite their differences. Similar to the state of perfect pan-Buddhahood, Hu’s line emphasised the entailment of the material world in the *Ru* moral mind:

。 。 。 而真正圓教。 。 。 則似當依胡五峰「天理人欲同體而異用，同行而異情」之模式而立。 。 。 。 同一世間一切事，概括之亦可說同一心意知物之事，若念念執着，即是人欲：心不正，只是忿懣、恐懼、好樂、憂患之私心；意不誠，只是自欺欺人之私意；知只是識知，非智知；物只是現象之物（有正不正並有物相之物），非無物之物。若能通化，即是天理：心為無心之心，意為無意之意，知為無知之知，物為無物之物。此如色心不二，煩惱心遍即是生死色遍，此即是人欲；若能通化自在，以其情應萬事而無情，以其心普萬物而無心，則即是天理。<sup>765</sup>

...As regards the true “perfect teaching”...it appears that it should be established in accordance with the model found in Hu Wufeng’s saying that “[t]he way of heaven and human desires relate to the same matter but differ in what that matter

<sup>762</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Yuanshan lun*, pp. 323-324.

<sup>763</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 324.

<sup>764</sup> Hu Wufeng, in Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingtai*, vol. II, p. 454. I follow Mou in rendering these two lines in the moral praxis context as intended by Hu rather than in the onto-cosmological context of fundamental state/ condition (*ti*) and function (*yong*). See Mou’s discussion on pp. 454-457 of the same source.

<sup>765</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Yuanshan lun*, p. 324.

expresses; they move through the same events but differ in emotional facts.”... Taking all of the events within a world, or taking what can be generally called events entailing mind, intent, knowledge and behaviour, if every thought is grasping and attached to the sensible, then it is human desire—the mind is not right and is merely a selfish mind marked by anger, fear, indulgence and worries; the intent is not sincere and is merely selfish intent aiming to deceive oneself and others; the knowledge is merely cognitive knowledge and not enlightened knowledge; the behaviours are merely phenomenal behaviours (behaviours that are either good or not good and possess physical form) and not behaviours that are neither good nor bad. If the mind can transform and reach beyond [human passions], then it is heavenly principle—the mind is that which is not mind, intent is that which is not intent; knowledge is that which is not knowledge and behaviour is that which is not behaviour [based on Wang Longxi’s thesis of the four “non-beings”]. This is similar to the doctrine of non-separability of mind and matter. The vexed mind everywhere means matter arising and perishing everywhere—this is human desire. [But,] if the mind can transform and be self-existing [free of the grasping nature of the cognitive mind<sup>766</sup>], with emotions going along with all events without conscious emotion and with the mind reaching all things without conscious intent,<sup>767</sup> then it is heavenly principle.

Mou cautioned that Hu’s “perfect” teaching on the moral mind serves only to reveal the ultimate goal of moral cultivation. This ultimate goal lies beyond *Ru* teachings that are analytical—such as the teachings of Wang Yangming and Wang Longxi. Yet, one must have a firm grasp of these other teachings before one is able to go beyond them.<sup>768</sup> On Mou’s understanding, Hu’s dialectical teaching on the moral mind culminates in an actual unity of virtue and happiness, as is the case with the Tiantai teaching on perfect pan-Buddhahood, because action issuing from the moral mind is not

---

<sup>766</sup> As mentioned in the previous chapter, the *Dao* notion of “self-existing” (*zizai* 自在) is similar to the *Ru* notion of “self-attainment” (*zide* 自得) and both point to a state of mind marked by an absence of mental grasping.

<sup>767</sup> This originated from the following saying by Cheng Mingdao: “The unchanging principle of heaven and earth lies in their mind’s reaching all things without conscious intent; the unchanging principle of the sage lies in his emotions’ going along with all events without conscious emotion” (“天地之常以其心普萬物而無心，聖人之常以其情順萬事而無情”). See Cheng Mingdao, *Er Cheng quanshu*, vol. II, *Mingdao wenji* III, p. 1.

only virtuous and untainted by selfish motives but also in total accord with one's morally-directed wishes, thus effecting satisfaction and happiness:

心意知遍潤而創生一切存在同時亦函着吾人之依心意知之自律天理而行之德行之純亦不已，而其所潤生的一切存在必然地 隨心意知而轉，此即是福---一切存在之狀態隨心轉，事事如意而無所謂不如意，這便是福。這樣，德即存在，存在即德，德與福通過這樣的詭譎的相即便形成德福渾是一事。<sup>769</sup>

The [noumenal] mind-intent-knowledge gives moisture everywhere and creates all that exists. At the same time, it also contains the utter purity of our action as directed by the autonomous heavenly principle rooted in mind-intent-knowledge. Moreover, all existences moistened and created by the mind-intent-knowledge necessarily change with it. This is what happiness is—happiness results when the conditions of all existences change with the mind and everything is satisfactory, with no dissatisfaction to speak of. In this way, virtue and existence mutually entail, and through this dialectical mutual entailment, virtue and happiness merge as one.

---

<sup>768</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Yuanshan lun*, pp. 324-325.

<sup>769</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 325. Peng Guoxiang observes that Mou employed Wang Longxi's thesis of the four "non-beings" as a key resource for the construction of a *Ruist* "perfect teaching" (See Peng, *Liangzhi xue de zhankai*, p. 306). Indeed, Mou appealed to Wang Longxi's thesis of the four "non-beings" in his portrayal of the *Ru* moral mind cited above. Mou did not, however, consider Wang's thesis truly "perfect" by Tiantai standard. Actually, for Hu Wufeng's teaching to be deemed the ultimate "perfect teaching" by Mou, Hu's teaching must have possessed the same understanding as Wang Longxi regarding the noumenal and ultimate nature of the moral mind. This is because such an understanding is the necessary condition for a teaching to be deemed "perfect" in the *Ru* context. Mou nominated the teaching of Hu rather than that of Wang Longxi as the model for the ultimate *Ru* perfect teaching because Hu employed the non-analytical method of teaching—he made no contrast between the moral mind and the ordinary mind whereas, as mentioned, Wang Longxi's thesis of the four "non-beings" contrasts with Wang Yangming four-line teaching. Peng is also of the view that ultimately, Mou could not avoid doing what Wang Longxi did—reducing happiness to virtue in the context of *Ru* moral praxis—and ended up, to a significant extent, on the same path taken by the Stoics (see same source as above). It is true that the perfect unity of virtue and happiness as envisioned by Mou's appropriation of Tiantai's paradigm of "perfect teaching" is, after all, a state of mind. Yet, this state of mind is a noumenal state of mind and it arises only at the moment of attaining perfect pan-Buddhahood or realising the moral mind—the moment when happiness (happiness is attained when the conditions of all existences are embraced and transformed by the infinite mind) and virtue lose their separate identity and merge as one. Until that moment, virtue and happiness are synthetic. At that moment, there is a unity of virtue and happiness, not a reduction of happiness to virtue.

Mou further asserted that among Chinese thought, *Ru* is more “perfect” than *Dao* and *Fo*. He acknowledged that the infinite mind in all three streams of Chinese thought—be it the moral mind in *Ru* moral metaphysics, Buddha-nature (*Foxing*) in *Fo* or the mind of *wuwei* 無爲 (non-interference<sup>770</sup>) in *Dao*—are non-grasping in nature (free of the grasping tendencies of the cognitive mind) and capable of knowing the noumenal reality. Yet, he also maintained that neither Buddha-nature nor the mind of *wuwei* can be understood as an actual onto-cosmological first creative principle positively generating the myriad things and immanent in human beings, as is the case with the *Ru* moral mind. Even though the *Laozi* (the *Daodejing* 道德經) describes *wu* or non-being (the way in *Dao*) as a creative principle, Mou argued that *wu* does not entail actual cosmological creation:

道德經又說：「天下萬物生於有，有生於無」，這不明明用生嗎？。。。儘管也用生字，但照道家的講法這生實在是「不生之生」。<sup>771</sup>

The *Daodejing* says, “The myriad things under heaven are generated from having; having is generated from non-having.” Does this not clearly employ the term “generation”? ...Despite the employment of the term “generation”, generation here, according to the way it is expounded in *Dao* teachings, is really “generation that does not generate”.

The creative principle in *Dao* generates without generating, he explained, because it is merely a subjective state of mind marked by profound virtue 玄德 (the virtue of non-interference<sup>772</sup>), which allows the myriad things to thrive without interference.<sup>773</sup> As for Buddha-nature, it is obvious that the doctrine of emptiness (conditioned arising) negates any significance in cosmological speculation, and as discussed previously, Mou was of the view that Tiantai’s “perfect teaching” is the only *Fo* teaching that warrants the

<sup>770</sup> I render *wuwei* 無爲 as “non-interference” to highlight the “virtue of non-interference” discussed in footnote 772 below.

<sup>771</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 104.

<sup>772</sup> I render *xuande* 玄德 as “profound virtue” or “the virtue of non-interference” based on the following line in the *Laozi*: “Generating without possessing, acting without presuming, letting flourish without controlling—this is called profound virtue” (生而不有，爲而不恃，長而不宰，是謂玄德) (*Laozi* X, LI).

<sup>773</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, pp. 106-107

necessity of the existence of the myriad things.<sup>774</sup> For him, the absence of an actual cosmological first creative principle in *Dao* and *Fo* is what renders them “imperfect” relative to *Ru*:

。 。 。 于彼兩系統中言德福一致，德實非真正道德意義之德也。在道家只是玄德，在佛家只是清淨德。此只是消極意義的德，非正物，潤物，生物之積極意義的道德創造之德。故仍非大中至正保住道德實踐之真正圓教，實只是解脫之圓教。<sup>775</sup>

... [V]irtue as mentioned in the unity of virtue and happiness within those two systems [*Dao* and *Fo* vis-a-vis *Ru*] is actually not virtue of real moral significance. In *Dao*, it is merely profound virtue [the virtue of non-interference], and in *Fo*, merely the virtue of purity. This is virtue in a negative sense only—not virtue of moral creativity in the positive sense of rectifying things, giving moisture to things and generating things. Thus, [neither one of those two systems] is a true “perfect teaching” that is mainstream, centred and orthodox—one that warrants moral praxis [as in the case of *Ru*, where the moral mind as an actual cosmological first creative principle warrants the existence of the myriad things and is the transcendental (a priori) basis for and the grounding that enables moral praxis and the attainment of sagehood and the highest good]. In fact, they are merely “perfect teachings” of liberation.

Having presented the moral metaphysics of Hu Wufeng as the ultimate “perfect teaching” delivering an actual onto-cosmological unity of virtue and happiness, Mou went on to declare “imperfect” Kant’s resorting to theological postulation to deliver the highest good. I discuss this in the next section.

### **Kant’s “Imperfection” and Mou’s Cultural Nationalist Triumph**

The “perfect teaching” paradigm is entirely absent in Western philosophy. The main mode of thinking in the West is critical thinking, which is analytical and adversarial

---

<sup>774</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>775</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Yuanshan lun*, p. 327.

rather than dialectical. Mou's argument against Kant as regards the highest good was similar to the argument he used against the Huayan teaching. Kant no doubt conceived of God as perfect, but Mou pointed out that the method Kant used to convey the perfection was "imperfect":

。 。 。 光說上帝本身圓滿並不能說是圓教，必從表達上帝的方式來判其圓不圓。<sup>776</sup>

...merely talking about the perfection of God does not turn it [a teaching] into a "perfect teaching". [We] must assess its perfection based on the way it conveys God.

In addition, Mou stressed the limitation of the analytical method of teaching:

而任何透過語言文字的方式來表達的系統，都不是圓教，因為各種說法都對立不一，如基督教有一套，回教也有一套；既各有一套，則統統不是終究之圓教。<sup>777</sup>

Moreover, none of the systems that convey through language or words is a "perfect teaching". This is because the various viewpoints oppose. For example, Christianity has a system, so has Islam; and since each of these teachings has its own system, neither is the ultimate "perfect teaching".

Most importantly, Mou maintained that Kant's theological postulation separates morality (moral praxis) and religion (realisation of the infinite mind or god). This separation maintains the synthetic relationship between virtue and happiness and rules out the possibility of an ultimate unity similar to that delivered dialectically by the moral metaphysics of Hu Wufeng. As a result, the highest good remains a requested necessity in Kant, in contrast to its being an actual goal necessarily reached in the full realisation of the *Ru* moral mind as described above.<sup>778</sup>

Mou believed that Tiantai's conception of "perfect teaching" sheds light on Kant's concept of "the highest good" and that the development of a teaching is not

---

<sup>776</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 320.

<sup>777</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>778</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Yuanshan lun*, pp. 332-333.

complete until it fulfils the Tiantai's criteria for a "perfect teaching". If the concept of the highest good is the crowning concept of Kant's moral philosophy, then Mou's presentation of the moral metaphysics of Hu Wufeng as the ultimate "perfect teaching" to bring about the highest good—in the form of an onto-cosmological unity of virtue and happiness—is the crowning glory of Mou's philosophical career. What shone through Mou's effort in this regard was his independent creative and syncretic spirit harnessed by his quest for the ultimate metaphysics. Yet, here, once again, Mou's moral metaphysics and cultural nationalism were entwined. In his "perfect teaching" dissertation, Mou came across as the usual proud and incisive thinker with an amazing syncretic power and a firm grasp of irreconcilable differences, his eye focused steadfastly on a metaphysical horizon far removed from modern living. And, as usual, a cultural nationalist agitation stirred beneath the surface of his discourse, the same agitation that had engaged him in the inexorable task of elevating Chinese metaphysics above its Western counterpart. The following remarks reveal the cultural nationalism powering his moral metaphysical quest:

這個中國文化維持其主位性的問題，在這個時代中，究竟表現在那些方面呢？就是表現在這個文化的主流與其他幾個大教的比較問題上，亦即表現在「判教」的問題上。<sup>779</sup>

In what ways does this issue of Chinese culture maintaining its primacy manifest itself in this age? It manifests itself in the question of how the mainstream teaching of this culture compares with other major teachings—that is to say, in the question of assessing them [in terms of how "perfect" they are].

At the conclusion of his *Yuanshan lun*, Mou composed an ode trumpeting the development of Song-Ming moral metaphysics and Hu Wufeng's "perfect" formulation of an onto-cosmological unity of virtue and happiness. Mou deemed the development of Song-Ming moral metaphysics complete and Kant's formulation of the highest good by theological postulation "imperfect" by comparison. The last lines of the ode vented, in words as deliberate as they are proud, his fierce cultural nationalist sentiment:

德福一致渾圓事，

---

<sup>779</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Shidai yu ganshou*, p. 328.

何勞上帝作主張。  
我今重宣最高善，  
稽首仲尼留憲章。<sup>780</sup>

The unity of virtue and happiness being a matter of the perfect whole,  
There is no need to bother God and ask Him to decide.  
I now re-declare the highest good,  
And prostrate to Zhongni [Kongzi] for having left us the charter.

The charter no doubt refers to Kongzi's teaching of empathetic compassion (*ren*), which the Song-Ming *Ru* expounded onto-cosmologically.

### **A Reflection on the Philosophical Significance of Mou's "Perfect Teaching" Dissertation**

Mou based his "perfect teaching" dissertation on his previous assertion of human intellectual intuition (inner sageliness) and a "two-tiered" ontology. The dissertation was theoretical. Yet, it is precisely because it was theoretical that Mou was able to extend the contributions made previously to the study of Chinese thought by other key contemporary thinkers such as Xiong Shili and Liang Shuming. For example, while Mou's "two-tiered mind" paradigm provides basic, analytical support for Xiong's key assertion that "[t]he Buddha turned upside down is Kongzi", it is really Mou's appropriation of the Tiantai "perfect teaching" paradigm and theoretical embellishment of *Ru* moral metaphysics as the ultimate "perfect teaching" that bring home the import of Xiong's assertion. Mou's "perfect teaching" dissertation also validates a striking and highly significant statement I came across in the writings of Liang Shuming. Liang stated that the question of "why" is a preoccupation of the cognitive mind (理智出來打量才有個爲什麼<sup>781</sup>) and that it is futile trying to figure out analytically the ultimate meaning or purpose of life as a whole:

---

<sup>780</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Yuanshan lun*, p. 335.

<sup>781</sup> Liang Shuming, *Liang Shuming jiang Kong-Meng*, p. 98.

凡評論有意義、價值、目的，通是部分對於全體，零星對於總體而說。小段的生活對於整個人生，可以說意義、價值，但整個的人生，既不是部分的，又不是附屬的，本身就是個全體，再沒有比他更大，所以不能在他之外再有目的，再有總體。苟當作小段生活着，則是錯誤。蓋一為相對的，一為絕對的。相對固有意義、價值可說，而絕對則一切均無可說。<sup>782</sup>

To speak of having significance, value or purpose invariably entails a relationship of parts to a whole or of the sundries to the collective. Taking a small segment relative to one's entire life, one can speak of significance, value or purpose. Yet, regarding life in its entirety, it is not a part, nor is it an attachment to something larger—it in itself is the whole with nothing larger than it is. Thus, there cannot be any purpose, any collective beyond it. If you treat it [life in its entirety] as a small segment to live in, then it is a mistake. This is because one is relative while the other is absolute. Regarding what is relative, one can speak of significance or value; regarding the absolute, nothing can be said.

Mou's elucidation of the Tiantai paradigm of "perfect teaching" from the non-analytical vis-a-vis analytical perspective showed that the all-embracing whole (the way) can only be intuited non-analytically, thus giving formal theoretical support to Liang's statement as well as to Mou's own emphasis on spiritual praxis as a non-analytical journey towards ultimate meaning. Mou's "perfect teaching" dissertation also demonstrated theoretically that compatibility if not commonalities exist among the three seemingly discrete streams of Chinese thought. It rendered the *Fo* paradigm of "perfect teaching" and the ideal of due correspondence between virtue and happiness relevant to not just one but all of the three streams. It also issued the *Ru* stamp of approval to a key theme articulated in *Dao* and Tiantai *Fo* regarding the true way—that it is the ultimate whole, and being the ultimate whole, it defies differentiation by words and concepts. As theorized by Mou, all three streams concur that the true way as the ultimate whole cannot be thought and has to be realised non-analytically through spiritual praxis, by letting go of thoughts and perceptions of differences so that all becomes one.

---

<sup>782</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 98-99.

## Concluding Remarks

This chapter concludes the presentation of Mou's thought as a moral metaphysics. Inner sageliness (what Kant calls intellectual intuition) is the cornerstone of Mou's moral metaphysics. It enabled Mou to assert human knowledge of the noumenal and advance a "two-tiered" ontology. It also allowed him to present the moral metaphysics of Hu Wufeng as the ultimate "perfect teaching" superior to *Fo* or Kantian thought. Yet, Mou's moral metaphysics is not just about inner sageliness; it is also about the importance of cultivating the moral mind (the site of inner sageliness) and about the infinite goodness supposedly issuing from such a praxis, with the unity of virtue and happiness being the highest good. The key difference between Mou and Kant lies in the affirmation of inner sageliness or human intellectual intuition by Mou and the negation of the same by Kant. This key difference stems from their respective beliefs in whether the noumenal—encompassing all noumenal objects, including God and the soul for Kant and heaven and sageliness for Mou—is immanent in or transcendent to the human mind. Cultivating inner sageliness would not make sense for Mou if he did not believe that it is immanent in the human mind in the first place. It is not coincidental, therefore, that Mou's moral metaphysical engagement with Kant bore out his own assertion that the greatest difference between Chinese and Western philosophy is their respective negation or affirmation of human intellectual intuition.

Mou's moral metaphysics is highly eclectic. Discussions in this and the previous two chapters, however, reveal that even though Mou appropriated *Fo* terminology and paradigms for his system of thought, he did so mainly to borrow theoretical strength from *Fo*. Even though he dressed *Ru* moral metaphysics in *Fo* garb, he frowned on the quiescent orientation of *Fo* and valorised *Ru* as the mainstream of Chinese thought holding the key to China's cultural greatness. Repeatedly, he lined up *Ru* moral metaphysics—now inflected in and theoretically reinforced by *Fo*—against Kant's moral thought and declared the former superior. This is not to suggest that Mou's judgement did not have a sound basis. My main point is that he appropriated *Fo* primarily to bolster *Ru* moral metaphysics theoretically. With regard to Mou's appropriation of Kant, the pertinent question is on the nature of the relation between Mou's thought and Kantian thought. Zheng Jiadong remarks that "differing from some

other scholars, I think that the influence of Western philosophy, including Kant's philosophy, on Mou was mainly in terms of the form of articulation. In other words, Western philosophy did not influence or change Mr. Mou's basic understanding of the cosmos or human life; it merely influenced and changed the way he expressed this understanding."<sup>783</sup> Zheng further observes that Mou's system of thought features the relation between *Ru* thought and Kantian thought as one that is marked by contrast rather than fusion.<sup>784</sup> The discussions in this and the previous two chapters have provided ample support for Zheng's observations. I have shown that Mou's understanding of *Ru* thought was not substantially influenced by Kant—it was influenced by Xiong and was grounded in his own research into Chinese thought. From another perspective, however, it is clear that the substantive goal of Mou's philosophical career was, as Mou himself stated, to reconcile Chinese thought and Western thought; and Kant's philosophy was identified by Mou as the bridge between the two.<sup>785</sup> Bearing this in mind, it can be argued that Mou's adoption of Kantian terminology in articulating *Ru* moral metaphysics and the contrast he made between *Ru* thought and Kantian thought were of central importance to his system of thought.

As mentioned previously, admiration and competitiveness marked Mou's philosophical relationship with Kant, and even though Mou marvelled at Kant's critical thinking, he believed that the strength of Kant's thinking—his “forceful exploration and vigorous search for the answer” and the “step-by-step analysis and construction” typical of the Western philosophical tradition—was also its weakness because the analytical approach was not conducive to a final harmonious synthesis.<sup>786</sup> Mou prided himself on the final harmonious syntheses that mark his own moral metaphysics and it should come as no surprise that he saw his moral metaphysics as representing a stellar advancement or perfection of Kant's thought:

---

<sup>783</sup> Zheng Jiadong, *Mou Zongsan*, p. 231.

<sup>784</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>785</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Yuanshan lun*, preface, p. xiv.

<sup>786</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingt*, vol I, p. 115.

吾愧不能如康德，四無傍依，獨立運思，直就理性之建構性以抒發其批判的哲學；吾只能誦數古人已有之慧解，思索以通之，然而亦不期然而竟達至消融康德之境使之百尺竿頭再進一步。<sup>787</sup>

I am ashamed that I am not like Kant, who was able to think independently without leaning on anything and articulate his critical philosophy straight from reason's architectonics. I can only recite and enumerate the insights already reached by the ancients, pondering them in order to understand them fully. Yet, unexpectedly I reached a stage where I was able to break down and merge Kant [into the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind], thus advancing what was already a great achievement [by Kant].

Mou published the first part of his translation of Kant's third critique, *the Critique of Judgement*, in late 1992<sup>788</sup> and the second part in early 1993,<sup>789</sup> when he was in his eighties. He said he was the person he was because of Xiong. I might add that his moral metaphysics is what it is because of Kant. He extended Kant's thought and reconciled it with the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind. His pride in this philosophical accomplishment is evident in his last written note to his disciples, composed while hospitalized in December 1994, less than four months before his death:

你們這一代都有成，我很高興。

我一生無少年運，無青年運，無中年運，只有一點老年運。無中年運，不能飛黃騰達，事業成功。教一輩子書，不能買一安身地。只寫了一些書，却是有成，古今無兩。

現在又得了這種老病，無辦法。人總是要老的，一點力氣也無有。

你們必須努力，把中外學術主流講明，融和起來。我作的融和，康德尚作不到。<sup>790</sup>

Your generation is accomplished, and I am very glad.

---

<sup>787</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Yuanshan lun*, preface, p. xiv.

<sup>788</sup> Cai Renhou, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuesi nianpu*, p. 81.

<sup>789</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>790</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

I had no luck in my youth, no luck in my young adulthood, no luck in my middle age—I have had but a little bit of luck in my old age. Having no luck in my middle age, I was not able to reach a stellar height and attain great success in my career. Teaching all my life, I cannot afford a grave. I have only written some books, yet making accomplishments nonetheless, in a way unparalleled hitherto. Now I have this illness from old age and there is nothing I can do about it. One cannot help but age. I have not a tiny amount of strength.

You must work hard to elucidate and reconcile mainstream learning within and outside China. The reconciliation that I did, even Kant could not do.

Having presented Mou's thought as a moral metaphysics, I turn now to two key components of Mou's thought. The next chapter discusses Mou's new *daotong* discourse and his hegemonic positioning of the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind. The last chapter looks at Mou's cultural nationalist discourse in the global context through his participation in the *Xin Rujia* movement.

## Mou's New *Daotong*

This chapter examines Mou's hegemonic positioning of the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind by means of his new *daotong* discourse. I begin with an explanation of Mou's use of the term "*daotong*" in the context of a genealogical transmission of the *Ru* moral and religious tradition. I then examine Mou's revisionist assessment of Song-Ming *Ruxue* based on his controversial *biezi wei zong* 別子爲宗 (establishing a collateral line as the main line) argument against Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200). This re-assessment repudiated the orthodox status enjoyed by Zhu, first in the context of Song-Ming *Ruxue* and then in the broader context of *Ruxue* taken as a whole, thus reopening the historical debate over "the differences and similarities between Zhu Xi and Lu Xiangshan" (*Zhu-Lu yitong* 朱陸異同). I discuss Mou's new *daotong* and examine his indictment of Zhu. I then summarise Mou's contribution to the *Zhu-Lu yitong* debate before closing with some concluding remarks.

### **Daotong as the Genealogical Transmission of the *Ru* Moral and Religious Tradition**

As mentioned previously, Mou used the term "*daotong*" in two different but related senses. First, he used it to mean the *Ru* moral and religious tradition, as was the case with his *santong* proposal. Second, he used it to mean the genealogical transmission of the learning of this tradition, with the tradition understood as the mainstream unified cultural system of China in pre-modern time and conceived by him and other authors of the 1958 Declaration in terms of an interconnected main thread of culture and thought. This chapter examines the use of *daotong* in this second sense, which was first

articulated by Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824) even though he did not actually employ the term. Han upheld the true *dao*, against rival discourses put forth by *Dao* and *Fo* propagators, as the cultural system set down in the *Ru* classics and transmitted through a lineage starting with the mythological ancient ruler Yao. According to this lineage, Yao handed down the true *dao* to the mythological ruler Shun, who handed it down to the founding ruler of the Xia. The transmission then moved successively through the founding ruler of the Shang, King Wen of the State of Zhou, King Wu the founder of the Zhou dynasty, the Duke of Zhou, Kongzi and Mengzi, with whom the transmission entered an extended hiatus.<sup>791</sup> Han also suggested a Kongzi-Zengzi-Zisi-Mengzi lineage by stating that “Mengzi took Zisi 子思 [492-431 B.C.]<sup>792</sup> as his teacher, and Zisi’s learning came from Zengzi 曾子 [a disciple of Kongzi].”<sup>793</sup> The Song-Ming *Ru* thinkers generally accepted the genealogy thus figured by Han and saw themselves as transmitters of the true *dao*. Cheng Yichuan 程伊川 (1033-1107) extended the lineage to put himself and his elder brother Cheng Mingdao 程明道 (1032-1085) as successors of Mengzi following the extended hiatus. Zhu Xi accepted Cheng Yichuan’s extension and coined the term “*daotong*” to describe the genealogical transmission of the way.<sup>794</sup> History tells us that the Cheng-Zhu stream of Song-Ming *Ruxue* subsequently “became state orthodoxy in 1241 under the Song”,<sup>795</sup> and this established orthodoxy continued in the Yuan<sup>796</sup> and the Qing.<sup>797</sup> Many contemporary Chinese scholars, including Qian Mu, uphold the Cheng-Zhu orthodoxy.<sup>798</sup> Mou, however, raged against it and put forth a new revisionist *daotong* discourse.

---

<sup>791</sup> Han Yu, “Yuandao 原道” (The Original Way), in *Han Changli ji* 韓昌黎集 (Collected Writings of Han Yu), Beijing: shangwu yinshuguan, 1958, section 3, pp. 62-63.

<sup>792</sup> Zisi was Kongzi’s grandson.

<sup>793</sup> Han Yu, “Song Wang xiucai xu 送王秀才序” (Preface presented to Master Wang), in *Han Changli ji*, section 5, p. 24.

<sup>794</sup> Makeham, “The New *Daotong*”, p. 57.

<sup>795</sup> Hoyt Cleveland Tillman, “Reflections on Classifying ‘Confucian’ Lineages: Reinventions of Tradition in Song China”, in *Rethinking Confucianism: Past and Present in China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam*, ed. Benjamin A. Elman, John B. Duncan and Herman Ooms, Los Angeles: University of California, 2002, p. 33.

<sup>796</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>797</sup> Benjamin A. Elman, “Rethinking ‘Confucianism’ and ‘Neo-Confucianism’ in Modern Chinese History” in *Rethinking Confucianism: Past and Present in China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam*, ed. idem and others, p. 525.

<sup>798</sup> Qian Mu, *Song-Ming Lixue gaishu*, p. 90.

## Mou's Revisionist Assessment of Song-Ming *Ruxue*

Mou accepted the lineage figured by Han Yu, and understanding “transmission” as a form of mental resonance (*xintai xiangying* 心態相應) based on authentic feelings<sup>799</sup> and the spiritual feeling of oneness with the myriad things, he even asserted the historical veracity of the lineage (*cishuo zhi suo zhi benshi yi shishi* 此說之所指本是一事實).<sup>800</sup> Yet, he repudiated the orthodox status of the Cheng-Zhu stream of Song-Ming *Ruxue* by alleging that Zhu Xi, the presumed philosophical heir to the four major Northern Song *Ru* thinkers Zhou Lianxi 周濂溪 (1017-1073), Zhang Hengqu 張橫渠 (1020-1077), Cheng Mingdao and Cheng Yichuan, actually inherited only the teaching of Cheng Yichuan:

朱夫子以一程概括二程，再以二程作中心，來概括周濂溪和張橫渠，以此方式消化這四家。因此，就表面上看，大家都以為朱夫子是宋儒的正宗，是正統派，是所謂的道學家。宋史裏有「道學傳」，其中有所謂「濂、洛、關、閩」，共五人。陸象山不在道學傳裏面，這是宋史作者的偏見 [註：陸象山見於「儒林史」]。那表示說，宋儒的學問以濂、洛、關、閩為正宗。「濂」指周濂溪，「洛」指二程，「關」指張橫渠，「閩」便是指朱夫子，因此以他所傳的為正宗。可是朱夫子在北宋四家只能傳程伊川。<sup>801</sup>

Master Zhu subsumed the two Cheng brothers under one of them [Cheng Yichuan] and then used the Cheng brothers as the core to subsume Zhang Hengqu and Zhou Lianxi. This was how he broke down these four streams of thought. Because of this and based on a superficial perspective, everyone

---

<sup>799</sup> This is seen, for example, in his remarks on the teachings of Song-Ming *Ru* thinker Zhou Lianxi 周濂溪 (1017-1073):

亦非真有難解者在，斯理平常，特真有實感者，生命相應，故契接順適耳。。。。所謂心態相應，生命相應者，實即道德意識之豁醒。

It is not really that there was something hard to understand. The [*Ru*] teaching was nothing out of the ordinary. It is just that [Zhou Lianxi] in particular was one who possessed authentic feelings and the correspondence in real living thus brought about a smooth mental connection....What is meant by a correspondence in mindset and in real living is actually the awakening of moral consciousness. (See Mou's *Xinti yu xingti*, vol. 1, p. 322.)

<sup>800</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu Xingti*, vol. I, pp. 191.

<sup>801</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhaxue shijiu jiang*, p. 391.

presumes Master Zhu to be belonging to the Song *Ru* orthodox line of transmission—that he was of the orthodox school and was a so-called *Daoxue* [Learning of the Way<sup>802</sup>] thinker. Contained in the *Song Shi* [the official History of Song] is the “*Daoxue* Biographies”, which mentions the so-called “Lian, Luo, Guan and Min” [streams],<sup>803</sup> comprising five people in total. Lu Xiangshan is not in the *Daoxue* biographies; this was the bias of the author of the *Song Shi*.<sup>804</sup> This indicates that as regards the learning of the Song *Ru*, the Lian, Luo, Guan and Min streams are considered orthodox. “Lian” refers to Zhou Lianxi; “Luo” the two Cheng brothers; “Guan” Zhang Hengqu; and “Min” Master Zhu, meaning therefore that what Zhu transmitted was orthodox. Yet, of the four streams of the Northern Song, Master Zhu was able to transmit only Cheng Yichuan.

Hoyt Cleveland Tillman’s examination of Song alternatives to Zhu Xi and Zhu’s reactions to them confirms some of the assertions made by Mou above. Tillman relates that “[w]hile compiling the *Yi Luo yuanyuan lu* 伊洛淵源錄 (Records of the evolution of the Yi-Luo School), Zhu used this geophilosophical label (Yi Luo 伊洛) to conflate the other Northern Song masters and their associates under the rubric of the two brothers, Cheng Hao 程顥 [Cheng Mingdao] and Cheng Yi 程頤 [Cheng Yichuan]”.<sup>805</sup> He notes that “[s]ince the Cheng brothers were already often used emblematically for the whole Learning of the Way fellowship, this aspect of Zhu’s 1173 compilation was not pathbreaking.”<sup>806</sup> Yet, he also mentions that “by the 1340s, when the Mongols supervised the compilation of the official history of the Song (the *Songshi* 宋史), both Sima [Sima Guang] and Lü [Lü Zuqian] (along with many other significant leaders) were excluded from the Learning of the Way biographies. That officially promulgated

---

<sup>802</sup> According to Hoyt Cleveland Tillman, *Daoxue* 道學 or the Learning of the Way was a *Ru* fellowship that can be traced back to Zhou Lianxi of the Northern Song (960-1126) (See Tillman’s “Reflections on Classifying ‘Confucian’ Lineages”, pp. 35, 46). Zhu Xi came to dominate this fellowship in his time (same source, pp. 46-48). Tillman correctly sees *Daoxue* as a strand of *Songxue* 宋學 or Song Learning. He describes the latter as “a ‘Confucian renaissance’ that blossomed in the eleventh century” (same source, pp. 40-41). The four major Northern Song *Ru* thinkers—Zhou Lianxi, Zhang Hengqu, Cheng Mingdao and Cheng Yichuan—were centrally associated with the *Daoxue* fellowship.

<sup>803</sup> These are names of the regions of origin of the five major *Ru* thinkers of the Song period, used as labels for their respective streams of thought.

<sup>804</sup> Mou inserted a footnote here stating, “Lu Xiangshan was included in the *Rulin Shi* [The History on the Forest of Confucian Scholars].”

<sup>805</sup> Tillman, “Reflections on Classifying ‘Confucian’ Lineages”, p. 46.

<sup>806</sup> *Ibid.*

history—a master narrative that owed much to Zhu’s *re*-formulations of tradition—completed the *re*-invention of the tradition to centre authoritatively on a narrow line leading to, and descending from, Zhu Xi.”<sup>807</sup>

Instead of the generally accepted bifurcation of Song-Ming *Ruxue* into the orthodox Cheng-Zhu stream and the rival Lu-Wang stream, Mou advanced a revisionist assessment in the three-volume *Xinti yu xingt* he wrote in the 1960s. This revisionist assessment asserts that among the four major Northern Song *Ru* thinkers listed in the *Daoxue* biographies, three of them—Zhou Lianxi, Zhang Hengqu and Cheng Mingdao—shared a common metaphysical understanding. Based on this, it regards these three thinkers together with their two alleged successors—Hu Wufeng 胡五峰 (1100-1155) in the Southern Song and Liu Jishan 劉戡山 (1578-1645) in the Ming—as the orthodox main line of Song-Ming *Ruxue*. Mou excluded Cheng Yichuan, the youngest of the four major Northern Song *Ru* thinkers, from his revisionist main line because, on his analysis, the metaphysics of Cheng departed from that of the revisionist main line. Thus, instead of the usual two main streams of thought (the Cheng-Zhu and the Lu-Wang) based on what have been conceived as two separate intellectual lineages, we now have three; and, Mou told us, it is the additional third lineage-cum-stream, as identified by him, rather than the now diminished Cheng-Zhu lineage-cum-stream (diminished to include only Cheng Yichuan and Zhu Xi), that should be regarded as orthodox Song-Ming *Ruxue*.<sup>808</sup> Mou further dramatised his revisionist assessment by claiming that even though Cheng Yichuan and his successor Zhu Xi belonged to a collateral line, Zhu used his dominance to turn himself into the heir of the main line of Song-Ming *Ruxue*. This is Mou’s controversial *biezi wei zong* 別子爲宗 (establishing a collateral line as the main line) argument against Zhu.<sup>809</sup> It is controversial not only because it repudiated the conventionally recognised orthodoxy of the Cheng-Zhu stream but also because of the obvious ideological implications in all discourses on orthodoxy regardless of champion. Further to the above argument, Mou, as will be shown below, also maintained that the

---

<sup>807</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>808</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, pp. 392-393.

<sup>809</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingt*, vol. I, p. 45.

Cheng-Zhu metaphysical understanding of mind (*xin* 心<sup>810</sup>), human nature (*xing*) and heaven (*tian*) deviated fundamentally from the understandings of Kongzi and Mengzi and declared on this basis that the diminished Cheng-Zhu stream departed fundamentally from orthodox *Ru* thought. He thus intensified the controversy by applying his *biezi wei zong* argument against Zhu not only in the context of Song-Ming *Ruxue* but also in the broader context of *Ru* thought taken as a whole. This also reopened the historical debate over “the differences and similarities between Zhu Xi and Lu Xiangshan” (*Zhu-Lu yitong* 朱陸異同).

### **Mou’s New *Daotong***

Focusing on Mou’s reassessment of *daotong* within the overall *Ru* tradition, we might ask which Song-Ming *Ru* thinkers Mou nominated as the legitimate heirs of Kongzi and Mengzi. Given his commitment to the reconstruction of *Ruxue* as a moral metaphysics, it comes as no surprise that the criterion he used in this regard was, like the one he used for deciding the main line of Song-Ming *Ruxue*, a metaphysical one. In his summary arguments against the Cheng-Zhu stream, Mou showed how the pre-Qin *Ru* understanding of the key concepts of heaven and human nature underwent an evolution that can be traced through a review of four of the five key *Ru* texts regarded by the Song-Ming *Ru* as representative of the pre-Qin *Ru* tradition of *Kongzi*. These four texts are the *Lunyu* 論語 (the Analects), the *Mengzi* 孟子 (the Mencius), the *Zhongyong* 中庸 (the Doctrine of the Mean) and the *Yizhuan* 易傳 (the group of commentaries included in the *Yi*, also known as the *Shizhuan* 十傳 or Ten Wings).<sup>811</sup> The one text that stands apart from this group of four is the *Daxue* 大學 (the Great Learning), which, as will be seen, received prime attention from Zhu Xi. Mou maintained that the *Mengzi* predates the *Zhongyong*<sup>812</sup> and the *Daxue*.<sup>813</sup> He traced the conceptual evolution from the *Lunyu* to the *Mengzi* and then to the *Zhongyong* and the *Yizhuan*. Firstly, Kongzi spoke of

---

<sup>810</sup> As mentioned previously, “*xin* 心” is a broader concept than the English term “mind” as it refers to the heart (human emotions) also.

<sup>811</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingtí*, vol. I, p. 19.

<sup>812</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 46.

<sup>813</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 47.

knowing the decree of heaven at the age of fifty [presumably as a result of practising *ren* or empathetic compassion] (*Lunyu* II: 4)<sup>814</sup> and mentioned heaven in terms of the ongoing change of seasons and the flourishing of the myriad things (*Lunyu* XVII: 19).<sup>815</sup> Then, Mengzi suggested a unity of heaven and human beings. He spoke of “[t]he myriad things are within me” (*Mengzi* VII A: 4) and taught that “to realise fully one’s mind is to know one’s nature” and “to know one’s nature is to know heaven” (*Mengzi* VII A: 1).<sup>816</sup> Finally, one finds strongly onto-cosmological lines in the *Zhongyong* and the *Yizhuan*, where heaven is conceived as the divine first creative principle that creates and nurtures the myriad things and is immanent in human beings as their nature. The opening line of the *Zhongyong* states, “What heaven decrees is called human nature” (*Zhongyong* I),<sup>817</sup> while the statement of the Qian hexagram (part of the *Yizhuan*) says, “The way of Qian [the hexagram representing heaven] effects change and transformation and sets in right order the inborn nature and destiny of each individual living thing”<sup>818</sup>

On Mou’s view, the *Zhongyong* not only accords with but also extends the conception of innate human nature in the *Mengzi* so that innate human nature is elevated to the status of the onto-cosmological grounding in the human mind (*xingtì*<sup>819</sup>) and seen as uniting with the ultimate onto-cosmological transcendent reality of the heavenly decree (*shiti*<sup>820</sup>):

---

<sup>814</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 17, 220.

<sup>815</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 22, 220.

<sup>816</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 17, 26, 221.

<sup>817</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 17, 29-30.

<sup>818</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 17, 32-33. The line originated from *Zhouyi*, p. 1.6a.

<sup>819</sup> Mou identified the original mind (*benxin* 本心) with human nature (*xing* 性) and rendered them onto-cosmologically as “*benxin xingtì*” 本心性體, which is the *benti* 本體 (the fundamental state/condition) immanent in human beings’ mind. For Mou Zongsan, *benti*, *benxin xingtì* and *xingtì* 性體 are interchangeable and refer to “not only the fundamental state/condition (grounding) of our moral praxis but also necessarily the fundamental state/condition for cosmic generation and transformation and the fundamental state/condition (grounding) for all existence.” To reflect this and the fact that Mou’s moral metaphysics is an explicit onto-cosmological construction of *Ruxue*, I render *xingtì* as “the onto-cosmological grounding of human nature”. In other words, *benti* (fundamental state/condition) is, in the context of Mou’s onto-cosmology, the original mind-cum-onto-cosmological grounding of human nature. See a detailed discussion of these terms in the introduction of this thesis.

<sup>820</sup> As explained in the introduction of this thesis, I render “*shiti*” as “the onto-cosmological transcendent reality” in order to reflect (a) Mou’s defining *shiti* as “reality”, in the metaphysical, transcendent sense to mean “the fundamental state/condition of the entirety of the myriad things between heaven and earth”, (b) Mou’s reading of the profound and incessant heavenly decree [the fundamental state/condition] lauded in the *Shijing* (*Zhongyong* XXVI) as “the reality that enables cosmic generation and transformation” (使宇宙

由孟子之自道德自覺上實踐地說性，由其如此所體證之性之「固有」義、「天之所與」義、以及本心即性、「萬物皆備于我」、心性向絕對普遍性申展之義，則依一形而上的洞悟滲透，充其極，即可有「性體與天命實體通而為一」之提升。中庸如此提升，實與孟子相呼應，而圓滿地展示出。

821

Extending from Mengzi's understanding of human nature from the perspective of praxis based on moral self-awareness—that is, extending from the import of human nature's being intrinsic and “heaven-bestowed” as verified through such a praxis; as well as from the import of the original mind's being the nature, as informed by “the myriad things are within me”, with the mind and the nature extending towards absolute universality—one can, by way of a fully developed transcendent insight and penetration, reach the elevation where “the onto-cosmological grounding of human nature [*xingtì*] and the onto-cosmological transcendent reality [*shìtì*] of the heavenly decree interpenetrate as one”. Such an elevation is found in the *Zhongyong*, and it actually resonates with Mengzi and displays fully [his onto-cosmological intent].

In addition, Mou saw the onto-cosmological interpenetration of heaven and innate human nature in the *Zhongyong* clearly depicted in the statement of the Qian hexagram (the hexagram that represents heaven) in the *Yizhuan*:

天命實體之下貫于個體而具于個體即是性，此義中庸雖未顯明地言之，而實已函之，而顯明地表示之者則為易傳之乾象 [「乾道變化，各正性命」]。<sup>822</sup>

That by which the onto-cosmological transcendent reality of the heavenly decree connects with individuals in the physical realm below and is possessed by individuals is human nature. Even though the *Zhongyong* does not state this clearly, it is actually implied. That which clearly indicates it is the statement of the Qian hexagram [which says, “The way of Qian effects change and

---

生化可能之實體), and (c) the fact that Mou's moral metaphysics is an explicit onto-cosmological construction of *Ruxue*.

<sup>821</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingtì*, vol. I, p. 31.

transformation and sets in right order the inborn nature and destiny of each individual living thing”].

Mou acknowledged that Cheng Yichuan and Zhu Xi also subscribed to the onto-cosmological elevation of innate human nature in the *Zhongyong* and the *Yizhuan*. Yet, he was of the view that it was in the metaphysical thoughts of thinkers on the main line of Song-Ming *Ruxue* as revised by him, rather than in Cheng-Zhu metaphysics, that the import of the elevated theme was positively grasped and fully developed:

由于中庸之提升，宋明儒即存在地與之相呼應，不但性體與天命實體上通而為一，而且直下由上面斷定：天命實體之下貫于個體而具于個體（流注于個體）即是性。「於穆不已」即是「天」此實體之命令作用之不已，即不已地起作用也。。。。流注于個體即為個體之性。此是承中庸之圓滿發展直下存有論地言之也。此雖與中庸稍有間，然實為中庸之圓滿發展之所函。宋明儒如此斷定，不得謂無根也。

此斷定幾乎是宋明儒共同之意識，即伊川朱子亦不能外乎此，即象山陽明亦不能謂此為歧出。惟積極地把握此義者是橫渠、明道、五峰與戴山，此是承中庸易傳之圓滿發展而言此義者之正宗。<sup>823</sup>

Because of the elevation in the *Zhongyong*, the Song-Ming *Ru* resonated existentially with the elevated theme. The onto-cosmological grounding of human nature not only interpenetrates as one with the onto-cosmological transcendent reality of the heavenly decree above but also becomes directly determined by what is above—that by which the onto-cosmological transcendent reality of the heavenly decree connects with individuals in the physical realm below and which is possessed by individuals (flows into individuals) is human nature. “Profound and incessant!”<sup>824</sup> means that the decree and effects of the onto-cosmological transcendent reality that is heaven is incessant, that it produces the effects incessantly...That which flows into the individual is the

---

<sup>822</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 32-33.

<sup>823</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 31.

<sup>824</sup> This refers to the incessant transformation of heaven as lauded in the *Shijing*: “The decree of heaven, profound and incessant!” (*wei tian zhi ming, yu mu buyi* 維天之命，於穆不已) (*Zhongyong* XXVI).

individual's human nature. This is speaking directly and ontologically and assuming the full development of the *Zhongyong*. Even though there is a small gap between this understanding and the *Zhongyong*, this understanding is really implicit in the *Zhongyong* as fully developed. The Song-Ming *Ru* reached a determination this way, and one cannot say that their determination was rootless.

This determination was the common understanding of nearly all Song-Ming *Ru*. Even Cheng Yichuan and Zhu Xi could not stand apart from it. Nor could Xiangshan and Yangming say that it is a divergence. Yet, the ones who grasped positively the import of this common understanding were Hengqu, Mingdao, Wufeng and Jishan.<sup>825</sup> They were the orthodox elucidators of this import in accordance with the *Zhongyong* and the *Yizhuan* as fully developed.

Most importantly, Mou pointed out that the *Ru* thinkers on the main line of Song-Ming *Ruxue* as revised by him upheld indirectly the Lu-Wang metaphysical thesis of “mind is principle”, with mind referring to the original mind-cum-human nature, and principle referring to heavenly principles or heaven. On his analysis, the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind is based directly on the *Mengzi* while the teachings of thinkers on the revised main line accord with the *Mengzi* indirectly by embracing the onto-cosmological thought embedded in the *Zhongyong* and the *Yizhuan*, which, as he argued above, represents the full development of the metaphysical import of Mengzi's thought. Based on this common moral metaphysical consonance with Mengzi, Mou proposed that the revised main line of Song-Ming *Ruxue* be combined with the Lu-Wang lineage and the combination be regarded as the orthodox line of *Ru*.<sup>826</sup> This constitutes the “new *daotong*” of Mou, “new” relative to the self-centred *daotong* propagated by Zhu Xi and subsequently accorded orthodox status in fact.

---

<sup>825</sup> Mou did not mention Zhou Lianxi here. His assessment of Zhou was that his thought reflected “the interpenetrating as one of the way of heaven and the heavenly-decreed innate human nature” but did not pay adequate attention to the *Lunyu* and the *Mengzi*. See Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingt*, vol. I, p. 43.

## Mou's Indictment of Zhu Xi

Mou devoted the entire third volume (totalling 556 pages) of his *Xinti yu xingti* to the elucidation of Zhu Xi's system of thought. He made a cutting statement about his effort:

朱子嘗自謂實肯下工夫去理會道理，吾竊自謂亦實肯下工夫去理會朱子。

827

Zhuzi once remarked on himself that he was indeed dedicated in his effort to understand principles. I venture to say to myself that likewise, I am indeed dedicated in my effort to understand Zhuzi.

Mou's main finding about Zhu's system of thought was that it represented a new tradition developed from within the *Ru* tradition established by Kongzi:

夏商周三代這個道之本統到了春秋時代孔子出來，振拔了一下，另開一個新傳統，我們可以叫它為「孔子傳統」。這兩者要分別開來，孔子傳統固然有承於夏商周三代這個道之本統，但不是完全等於這個道之本統，。。。後來孔子傳統裏頭又開出一個新傳統來，這就是宋明理學家裏邊的「朱子傳統」。<sup>828</sup>

The original tradition of the three dynasties of Xia, Shang and Zhou continued until Kongzi appeared during the Spring and Autumn Period. He invigorated it to some extent and developed a new tradition. We can call the new tradition “Kongzi's tradition”. We have to separate these two traditions. Kongzi's tradition certainly inherited from the original tradition of the three dynasties of Xia, Shang and Zhou. Yet, it was not entirely the same as the original tradition....Later on, another new tradition was developed from Kongzi's tradition. This was “Zhuzi's tradition” within Song-Ming *Ruxue*.

Mou observed that Cheng Yichuan and Zhu Xi privileged the *Daxue* over the other three of the Four Books. Yet, the main reason he thought that Zhu's system

---

<sup>826</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, pp. 414-415. See also Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingti*, vol. I, pp. 32, 48-49.

<sup>827</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingti*, vol. III, p. 64.

<sup>828</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 52.

represented an essentially new tradition was that its understanding of the fundamental state/condition diverged fundamentally (*qichu* 歧出) from the pre-Qin tradition:

。 。 。 伊川朱子 [對於大學] 之講法，再加上其對於論、孟、中庸、易傳之仁體、心體、性體、乃至道體理解有差，結果將重點落在大學，以其所理解之大學為定本，則于先秦儒家原有之義有基本上之轉向，此則轉成另一系統。此種新于本質有影響，此為歧出之「新」。此一系統雖在工夫方面有輔助之作用，可為原有者所允許，然亦是迂曲歧出間接地助緣地允許，不是其本質之所直接地允許者，即不是其本質的工夫之所在。至于在本體方面，則根本上有偏差，有轉向，此則根本上非先秦儒家原有之義之所允許。<sup>829</sup>

The way Yichuan and Zhuzi interpreted the *Daxue*—combined with their insufficient understanding of the onto-cosmological grounding of empathetic compassion, the onto-cosmological grounding of the original mind, the onto-cosmological grounding of human nature and even that of the way,<sup>830</sup> as contained in the *Lunyu*, the *Mengzi*, the *Zhongyong* and the *Yizhuan*—led to their putting the emphasis on the *Daxue* and regarding their own understanding of the *Daxue* as the definitive version. This, then, constituted a fundamental shift from the original import of pre-Qin *Ru* thought and turned their system of thought into another system. This kind of newness<sup>831</sup> impacted on the essential nature [of pre-Qin *Ruxue*] and was a diverging “newness”. Even though with respect to the task [of moral cultivation] this system provided a supplementary function that could be allowed by what was originally there [in pre-Qin *Ruxue*], the allowance was made only in a contorted and divergent way, indirectly and with a view to facilitate, and not in a way that was based directly on the essential nature [of pre-Qin *Ruxue*]. This is to say, it [the supplementary function with respect to moral cultivation] was not where the essential moral effort [of pre-Qin *Ruxue*] lied.

---

<sup>829</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingti*, vol. I, p. 18.

<sup>830</sup> As explained in the introduction to this thesis, Mou used these onto-cosmological terms to refer to *benti* (fundamental state/condition) from different perspectives based on his identification of heaven with empathetic compassion, the original mind, human nature and the way.

<sup>831</sup> “Newness” here refers to the term “*Xin Ruxue*” (新儒學 or “New Confucianism”), used by some scholars to designate Song-Ming *Ruxue* in order to distinguish it from pre-Qin *Ruxue*.

Regarding [the Cheng-Zhu understanding of] the fundamental state/condition [which Mou understood as the original mind-cum-onto-cosmological grounding of human nature],<sup>832</sup> there was fundamentally a deviation and a shift. Fundamentally, this was not what could be allowed by the original import of pre-Qin *Ru* thought.

It is clear from the above quotation that Mou claimed that Zhu diverged from pre-Qin *Ruxue* in two fundamental ways. First, Zhu's understanding of fundamental state/condition diverged fundamentally from the original import of pre-Qin *Ru* thought. This claim obviously implied the opposite for Mou's own understanding of the key onto-cosmological concept—that it is in line with the original import of pre-Qin *Ru* thought. The second fundamental divergence of Zhu, according to Mou, was that Zhu mistakenly put the prime emphasis on the *Daxue* and asserted as definitive his views about moral cultivation, which were based on his interpretation of this text, when these views were different from and merely supplementary to the central moral cultivation themes taught in the other four texts of pre-Qin *Ruxue*. I examine these two charges one after another below.

The first charge centred upon “the original import of pre-Qin *Ru* thought”. It should be obvious from the discussion above that in Mou's mind, “the original import of pre-Qin *Ru* thought” radiated from the evolved conceptions of the original mind, human nature and heaven in the *Lunyu*, the *Mengzi*, the *Zhongyong* and the *Yizhuan*. These evolved conceptions, on his view, underwent full development in the metaphysical thought systems of the Song-Ming *Ru* thinkers he deemed orthodox and led to the identification of the original mind with human nature and of human nature with principle—in other words, the upholding of the Lu-Wang metaphysical thesis of “mind is principle”. In onto-cosmological terms, the Lu-Wang metaphysical thesis conceives of principle cosmologically as the first creative principle and ontologically as the onto-cosmological transcendent reality (the *shiti*), with ontological being (*cunyou* 存有) understood as noumenal being-cum-reality—that is, noumenal being in terms of principle as the onto-cosmological transcendent reality (*shiti xing de cunyou* 實體性的

---

<sup>832</sup> See footnote 819 for an explanation of Mou's understanding of *benti* (the fundamental state/condition) as the original mind-cum-onto-cosmological grounding of human nature.

存有).<sup>833</sup> On Mou's analysis, Zhu's understanding of the fundamental state/condition diverged fundamentally from the original import of pre-Qin *Ru* thought because Zhu followed Cheng Yichuan rather than thinkers on the revised main line. Cheng Yichuan, Mou told us, was analytical and practical by nature and was the first among the major Northern Song *Ru* thinkers to feel the need to ascertain a practical, systematic approach to moral cultivation.<sup>834</sup> The problem with Cheng Yichuan, according to Mou, was that he also adopted an increasingly analytical approach to understanding the mind and human nature:

伊川對於道體之體悟已漸不澈不透，只收縮提煉而為理氣之分，此則甚截然而突出。依理氣之分，落實於道德實踐上，遂有性情之分，又進而正視氣性與才性。。。。其論心已不透澈，此因其對於道體、實體之體悟已不透澈，故其論心亦不能上遂而就道體實體之原義而融于一，亦不能相應孟子所言之本心而言本心即性，本心即理。性情之分，理氣之分，與形上形下之分，即已函心性之三分，心只是實然的心氣之心，而心不即是性。（伊川雖未說「心氣」一詞，然其了解心之實義固如此也。故朱子得以隨而完成之）。<sup>835</sup>

Yichuan's personal realisation of the onto-cosmological grounding of the way<sup>836</sup> gradually showed a lack of thoroughness and clarity. All he did was condense his understanding to draw a distinction between principle (*li*) and *qi* [understood as a kind of psycho-physical energy]. This distinction was very clear-cut and pronounced. Applying this *li-qi* division to moral praxis led to a division between

---

<sup>833</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingt*, vol. I, p. 26. Mou rendered *cunyou* 存有 as “ontological being” (see p. 58 of the same source). He also rendered ontology as “*cunyou lun*” 存有論 and understood *Ru* moral metaphysics in terms of a noumenal ontology—one that relates not to the inactive and inherent properties of phenomenal existence, as is the case with many ontologies in the West, but to the active and transcendent first creative principle, which is also immanent in the human mind. According to him, *Ru* ontology “reach[es] the original source of creation” and “aims to explicate the existence of the myriad things...and not their constitution [as is the case with ontologies in the West]”. He also referred to *Ru* ontology as “onto-cosmology” because it contains “a cosmology based on the incessantly generating force of the cosmos”. (See related discussions in the introduction and Chapter 5 of this thesis.) In other words, “*cunyou*” 存有 (“ontological being”), for Mou, is “noumenal being” even though the term “ontological” can be understood both phenomenally and noumenally.

<sup>834</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingt*, vol. III, p. 44.

<sup>835</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. III, pp. 44-45.

<sup>836</sup> See the discussion of the term “*daoti*” 道體 in the introduction of this thesis.

human nature and emotions and further to his taking seriously *qi*-endowed nature and the raw nature....His discussions of mind had already lacked thoroughness and clarity. This was because his personal realisation of the onto-cosmological grounding of the way and of the onto-cosmological transcendent reality [of heaven] had been lacking in thoroughness and clarity. [This deficient personal realisation] thus led to an understanding of mind on his part that failed to rise above to merge with the onto-cosmological grounding of the way and the onto-cosmological transcendent reality [of heaven] in accordance with their original import. Such an understanding also failed to accord with Mengzi's understanding of the original mind. Had there been an accord, he would have said that the original mind was human nature, that the original mind was principle. Regarding the division of human nature and emotions, of principle and psycho-physical energy and of the metaphysical and the physical, implicit in them was the tripartite division of mind, human nature and emotions. Mind is but the phenomenal mind, the mind in terms of psychological temperament; and mind is not human nature. (Although Yichuan did not use the term "psychological temperament", his understanding of the real import of mind was indeed so. This was why Zhuzi was able to follow his understanding and complete its development.)<sup>837</sup>

In other words, the analytical approach of Cheng Yichuan turned mind and principle into distinct concepts, and based on the tripartite division of mind, human nature and emotions, he and Zhu Xi conceived of human nature in terms of principle only—not in terms of mind (the original mind). Mou saw this as highly problematic because the two thinkers' conception of human nature is deprived of the import of mind and the associated import of activity that are present in the *Lunyu*, the *Mengzi*, the *Zhongyong* and the *Xicizhuan* (part of the *Yizhuan*). The import of mind and that of activity, Mou argued, together form the basis for the common understanding of human nature in these four texts—that it is not just noumenal being-cum-reality immanent in

---

<sup>837</sup> Mou used the terms "caixing" 才性 and "qixing" 氣性 interchangeably to refer the different psycho-physical or material endowments among individuals. The varying endowments account for differences in disposition, temperament, manner, intelligence, talent and so on among individuals. See Mou Zongsan, *Caixing yu xuanli*, pp. 1, 44, 46.

the human mind but also an active cosmic mind inherent in the human mind capable of bringing about cosmic generation and transformation and moral creation:

客觀地自「於穆不已」之天命實體言性，其「心」義首先是形而上的，自誠體、神體、寂感真機而表示。若更為形式地言之，此「心」義即為「活動」義（Activity），是「動而無動」之動。此實體、性體、本是「即存有即活動」者，故能妙運萬物而起宇宙生化與道德創造之大用。與論孟通而為一而言之，即由孔子之仁與孟子之心性彰著而證實之。是故仁亦是體，故曰「仁體」；而孟子之心性亦是「即活動即存有」者。<sup>838</sup>

Speaking of human nature objectively in terms of the “profound and incessant” onto-cosmological reality of the heavenly decree [in the *Zhongyong*], its import with respect to mind is, first of all, transcendent.<sup>839</sup> Such an import is conveyed in the following three expressions: the onto-cosmological grounding of utter sincerity [in the *Zhongyong*], the onto-cosmological grounding of divine capability [in the *Xicizhuan*], and the quiescent responsiveness that generates the subtlest signs of incipient change [also in the *Xicizhuan*].<sup>840</sup> If we speak of it further in terms of form, this mind carries the import of “activity”—the activity that moves without movement [because it is quiescent]. This onto-cosmological transcendent reality or onto-cosmological grounding of human nature is originally “the noumenal being-cum-reality<sup>841</sup> that is at the same time active”. It is by virtue of this that it [human nature] is capable of bringing about the divine movements of the myriad things, thereby activating the great functions of cosmic

<sup>838</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingt*, vol. I, p. 42.

<sup>839</sup> Mou used the term “*xing er shang*” 形而上 (metaphysical) in the transcendent sense. See his *Xinti yu xingt*, vol. I, p. 21-22.

<sup>840</sup> *Cheng* 誠 is utter sincerity that leads to luminosity as described in *Zhongyong* XXI. *Shen* 神 is the divine quality associated with the *yi* 易—the first creative principle—in the *Xicizhuan* (see the *Zhouyi*, p. 7.24b). *Jigan zhenji* 寂感真機 is the *Xicizhuan*’s description of the way of the *yi* at the beginning of cosmic transformation, when the subtlest signs of incipient changes are present (see the *Zhouyi*, pp. 7.24 b, 7.25b). Mou added the suffix “*ti*” to first two terms to come up with *chengti* 誠體 and *shenti* 神體 to highlight the *shiti* 實體 (the onto-cosmological transcendent reality of the heavenly decree, denoting the first creative principle and the ultimate transcendent reality) immanent in human nature.

<sup>841</sup> As discussed above, Mou understood “*cunyou*” 存有 as “noumenal being” in terms of principle as the onto-cosmological transcendent reality (*shiti xing de cunyou* 實體性的存有), which I render as “noumenal being-cum-reality”. In Mou’s terminology, “existence” is “*cunzai*” 存在 and not “*cunyou*” 存有. While “existence” or “existent” can relate to the noumenal as well as the phenomenal, it does not convey the definite transcendent and noumenal import intended by Mou.

generation and transformation and moral creation. Connecting it [the above discussion of human nature based on the *Zhongyong* and the *Xicizhuan*] with the *Lunyu* and the *Mengzi* means giving it exposure and clarity and validating it by way of Kongzi's concept of empathetic compassion [*ren*] and Mengzi's concept of original mind-cum-human nature. In this way, empathetic compassion will be the onto-cosmological grounding as well and thus be termed "the onto-cosmological grounding of empathetic compassion"; and Mengzi's original mind-cum-human nature will become that which is "active and is at the same time the noumenal being-cum-reality".

Putting the stress on human nature's being "active and being at the same time the noumenal being-cum-reality", Mou aimed to emphasise the unity of mind (original mind-cum-human nature), which is active, and principle, which is the noumenal being-cum-reality. He cited the writings of Zhou Lianxi, Zhang Hengqu and Cheng Mingdao to show their respective understandings of the way of heaven, human nature and principle. According to him, the writings of Zhou Lianxi did not yet clearly reflect the understanding that the onto-cosmological transcendent reality of the way of heaven and the onto-cosmological grounding of human nature are one nor the understanding that they are principle. He thought that the writings of Zhang Hengqu and Cheng Mingdao, on the other hand, clearly reflected these two understandings.<sup>842</sup> He pointed to these two understandings in the metaphysics of Cheng Mingdao:

神、誠、心是活動義，同時亦即是理，是存有義。理是此是誠、是神、是心之於穆不已之易體之自發、自律、自定方向、自作主宰處。由此言之，即曰「動理」，亦曰「天理實體」。理使其誠、神、心之活動義成爲客觀的，成爲「動而無動」者，此即是存有義。是故誠神心之客觀義即是理，理之主觀義即是誠神心---誠神心使理成爲主觀的，成爲具體而真實的，此即理之活動義，因此曰動理，而動亦是「動而無動」者。是故此實體是即

---

<sup>842</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingtì*, vol. I, pp. 62-65.

活動即存有，即主觀即客觀。其當機而發所顯之一切殊相即是所謂「百理」或萬理。<sup>843</sup>

Divine capability, utter sincerity and mind carry the import of activity. At the same time, they are principle, which carries the import of noumenal being-cum-reality. Principle is where this profound and incessant change [the *yi*] as the onto-cosmological grounding of human nature—which is utter sincerity, divine capability and mind—directs its spontaneous, autonomous, self-directing, self-determining activities. From this perspective, we call it “active principle” or “the onto-cosmological transcendent reality of the heavenly principle”. Principle renders objective the import of activity borne by utter sincerity, divine capability and mind and turns the activity into that which “moves without movement” [as in cosmic creation]. This is what is meant by the import of noumenal being-cum-reality. For this reason, the objective import of utter sincerity, divine capability and mind is principle and the subjective import of principle is utter sincerity, divine capability and mind. Utter sincerity, divine capability and mind render principle subjective, concrete and real. This then is what is meant by the activity of principle and so we speak of “active principle”, with activity being that which “moves without movement”. For this reason, this onto-cosmological transcendent reality is active and is at the same time the noumenal being-cum-reality and at once subjective and objective. The myriad different manifestations it triggers from incipient changes [in the cosmos] are what we called “the hundred principles” or “the ten thousand principles”.

This unity of mind and principle leads us to none other than the Lu-Wang thesis of “mind is principle”. For Mou, this unity is of the utmost importance because it reflects “the original import of pre-Qin *Ru* thought” and the understandings of Zhang Hengqu and Cheng Mingdao—that the way of heaven and human nature are one and that they are “active and are at the same time the noumenal being-cum-reality”. It was precisely on this point of unity that Mou judged the metaphysics of Cheng Yichuan and Zhu Xi to be fundamentally at variance with pre-Qin *Ru* thought and with other major Song-Ming *Ru* thinkers. Cheng Yichuan and Zhu Xi failed to identify human nature with the original

---

<sup>843</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 72-73.

mind. They thus understood principle as “merely ontological being devoid of activity” (*zhi cunyou er bu huodong* 只存有而不活動)—not “noumenal being-cum-reality” or “noumenal being” in terms of the incessant onto-cosmological transcendent reality. Such an understanding lacked the import of activity linked to utter sincerity, divine capability and mind and precluded the unity of the subjective mind and the objective principle:

至乎伊川朱子，只就「存有」義看天理。朱子雖亦知存有之百理皆可收攝于太極之一理，然太極之一理仍是「只存有而不活動」者，是即喪失明道所體悟之「天理實體」義、「於穆不已」之實體義，因而誠、神、心與理不能一，亦因而心性不能一，心理不能一，而轉成另一系統也。此是最根本之偏差。所差只在此一點，然而影響如此其鉅！<sup>844</sup>

As for Yichuan and Zhuzi, they looked at principle merely in terms of the import of “ontological being”. Even though Zhuzi also understood that the myriad principles can be subsumed under the one principle of *taiji* [the ultimate first creative principle], he still regarded this one principle of *taiji* as “merely ontological being devoid of activity”. In other words, he lost the import personally realised by Mingdao—the import of “the onto-cosmological transcendent reality of the heavenly principle”, an onto-cosmological transcendent reality that is “profound and incessant”.<sup>845</sup> Because of this, there could be no unity of utter sincerity, divine capability, mind and principle. Moreover, because there could be no unity of mind and human nature or of mind and principle, [the metaphysics of Cheng Yichuan and Zhuzi] turned into a different system. This was the most fundamental discrepancy. What was at variance hinged on only this one point, yet the effect as we have seen was immense.

Mou reiterated that the most profound effect produced by this fundamental variance was that in the metaphysics of Cheng Yichuan and Zhu Xi, both the way of heaven and human nature were bereft of the import of activity, which is essential for

---

<sup>844</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 73-74. See Mou’s elaboration on pp. 79-80 of the same source.

<sup>845</sup> Mou is referring here to the unity of the subjective and the objective as realised by Cheng Mingdao, discussed previously.

cosmic generation and transformation at the cosmic level and for moral creation at the individual level:

最大的影響便是「道體、性體」義之減殺。總天地萬物而本體宇宙論地言之之道體（實體）原本是「於穆不已」之天命實體、「為物不貳生物不測」之創生之道，而今則只成靜態的存有，至多是本體論的存有，而不能起妙運萬物之創生之用者。此是「道體」義之減殺。道體具于個體而為個體之「性」，性原本是一個個體（顯明地例證是人）之道德的才能、道德的自發自律之性能、而能起道德創造（道德行為之純亦不已）之用者，而今則只成一些靜態的存有之理、平置在那裏、而不能起道德創造之用者。此是「性體」義之減殺。<sup>846</sup>

The most profound effect is the severe diminution of the import of “the onto-cosmological grounding of the way and the onto-cosmological grounding of human nature” [in the metaphysics of Cheng Yichuan and Zhu Xi]. Covering the entirety of the myriad things between heaven and earth and onto-cosmologically speaking, the onto-cosmological grounding of the way (the onto-cosmological transcendent reality) was originally the “profound and incessant” onto-cosmological transcendent reality of the heavenly decree, the first creative principle that was “utterly sincere towards things and unfathomable in the way it produces things.”<sup>847</sup> Now, it is reduced to inactive ontological being. At the most, it is being in the context of an ontology based on the fundamental state/condition<sup>848</sup> and incapable of the cosmic creative function of bringing about the divine transformation of the myriad things. This then is the severe diminution of the import of the onto-cosmological grounding of the way. The onto-cosmological grounding of the way when possessed by individuals becomes the onto-cosmological grounding of the individuals’ nature. Originally, human nature is the moral capability or the spontaneous and autonomous innate moral capacity possessed by an individual (an obvious example is a person), which can

---

<sup>846</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingti*, vol. I, p. 81.

<sup>847</sup> The line “utterly sincere towards things and unfathomable in the way it produces things” originated from *Zhongyong* XXVI.

<sup>848</sup> This relates to *benti* 本體 (fundamental state/condition) as understood by Zhu Xi.

effect moral creation (through moral behaviour that is utterly pure).<sup>849</sup> Now, it has become just the principle of inactive ontological being<sup>850</sup>—lying there horizontally [phenomenally<sup>851</sup>] and unable to effect moral creation. This then is the severe diminution of the import of the onto-cosmological grounding of human nature.

In speaking of “moral creation”, Mou had in mind behaviour as informed by Kongzi’s golden rule and issuing from the innate goodness of one’s original mind or human nature as propounded by Mengzi—behaviour that accords with Kant’s concept of moral autonomy. In summary, Mou’s first charge against Zhu Xi was that he diverged fundamentally from pre-Qin *Ruxue* by identifying human nature with inactive principles, thus failing to affirm human being’s inner sageliness in terms of an autonomous intuitive moral mind (the original mind-cum-human nature).

Mou’s second charge against Zhu Xi was that Zhu’s views on moral cultivation, based primarily on the *Daxue*, diverged from the central moral cultivation themes taught in the other four texts of pre-Qin *Ruxue*. On Mou’s observation, Zhu’s primary reliance on the *Daxue* was quite apparent and led to his putting key emphasis on two key concepts in that text—the concept of extending knowledge and that of investigating things:

朱子是承伊川之居敬、涵養、致知、格物之義理間架以及對於中和問題之探討而確定其工夫之入路者。是則聖功之入路乃落在中庸（首章）與大學上而建立，論孟乃是其補充與輔助，或只是參照與涉及，固不以之為主幹也。<sup>852</sup>

Zhuzi determined his approach to moral cultivation using both the theoretical frame of reverence, moral nurturance, extending knowledge and investigating things, which he inherited from Yichuan, and [findings from] his own study relating to the issue of “centrality [of emotions] and harmony [of expression]”.<sup>853</sup>

---

<sup>849</sup> “Utterly pure” (used by Mou in the Kantian sense) means “without material or empirical motive and subject to no contingent grounds.” See discussion in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

<sup>850</sup> The Cheng-Zhu teaching identifies human nature (but not mind) with principle.

<sup>851</sup> “Horizontally” contrasts with “vertically” or “onto-cosmologically”. See elaboration in the next section.

<sup>852</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingtí*, vol. III, p. 46.

<sup>853</sup> I base my rendering of “*zhonghe*” 中和 on the first chapter of the *Zhongyong*.

In our words, his approach to cultivating inner sageliness was founded on the first chapter of the *Zhongyong* and the *Daxue*. The *Lunyu* and the *Mengzi* were used either to supplement or support this approach or merely for reference and added coverage. They were certainly not treated as the mainstay [of his approach to moral cultivation].

Mou's two charges against Zhu Xi were closely related. Mou maintained that Zhu Xi followed Cheng Yichuan and derived his views about moral cultivation primarily from the *Daxue* rather than the other four pre-Qin *Ru* texts because they both failed to grasp the moral mind (the original mind-cum-human nature) as depicted in these other texts—a moral mind that is active, intuitive, autonomous and identical with principle. He also asserted that the reverent mind central to Cheng Yichuan's approach to moral cultivation is bereft of the noumenal import of the original mind-cum-human nature:

。 。 。 。是則 [明道] 即工夫便是本體，即本體便是工夫。但伊川之言敬，則只是「主一之謂敬」，只是「涵養須用敬」，只是「未有 [能] 致知而不在敬者」，此則便只有工夫義，而不能直通「於穆不已」、「純亦不已」之性體心體也。（性體即心體，心體即性體，心性是一）。伊川無實體性的本心義。其言敬只是實然的心氣之經驗的凝聚，其言涵養只是涵養此敬心而已。<sup>854</sup>

....Thus, [in Cheng Mingdao's teaching,] moral effort is fundamental state/condition, and fundamental state/condition is moral effort. Yet, reverence as spoken of by Yichuan is merely along the lines of “maintaining concentration on one thing is reverence”,<sup>855</sup> “moral nurturance calls for reverence”<sup>856</sup> and “extending knowledge without reverence is not something that has ever been achieved”.<sup>857</sup> Reverence thus understood has merely the import of moral effort and cannot connect directly with the “profound and incessant” and “pure and incessant” onto-cosmological grounding of human nature-cum-original mind.

<sup>854</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingti*, vol. III, p. 45.

<sup>855</sup> Cheng Yichuan, *Er Cheng quanshu*, vol. I, *yishu* XV, p. 20.

<sup>856</sup> *Ibid.*, *yishu* XVIII, p. 6.

<sup>857</sup> *Ibid.*, *yishu* III, p. 6.

(The onto-cosmological grounding of human nature is the onto-cosmological grounding of the original mind. Human nature and the original mind are one and the same.) In Yichuan, there is no import of an original mind having the import of an onto-cosmological transcendent reality. For him, reverence is merely experiential concentration associated with the mind of psychological temperament, and moral nurturance is but the nurturing of reverence thus understood.

According to Mou, Cheng Yichuan, having established the importance of the reverent mind, went on to expound moral nurturance based on the accumulation of rightness. Though Cheng had appropriated the notion of “accumulation of rightness” from the *Mengzi*, he applied it in a different way—one that was cast in terms of “centrality [of emotions] and harmony [of expression]”—and such an application called for the extending of knowledge and investigating of things:

[伊川]由敬進而言集義。集義亦是孟子之所言。然孟子言集義是對「義襲而取」說，是以仁義內在為背景，義是由實體性的本心發。但伊川言集義，則是根據其敬心之涵養而說，是求心情之發之如理。故由集義須進而言致知格物也。<sup>858</sup>

[Cheng Yichuan] moved from reverence to the accumulation of rightness. Mengzi spoke of the accumulation of rightness also, but in terms of its contrast to “putting on a show of rightness so as to obtain the ‘flood-like *qi*’”.<sup>859</sup> He spoke of it in the context of empathetic compassion [*ren*] and rightness within, with rightness triggered from within the original mind—the original mind understood in terms of the onto-cosmological transcendent reality. Yichuan, on the other hand, spoke of the accumulation of rightness in terms of the nurturance of reverence, with the hope that thereby one’s emotional expression will be in accord with principle. This is why he had to move from the accumulation of rightness to extending knowledge and investigating things.

---

<sup>858</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingt*, vol. III, p. 45.

<sup>859</sup> See *Mengzi* 2A: 2.

On Mou's analysis, while Cheng Yichuan understood "extending knowledge" in terms of inner moral knowledge, it was inner moral knowledge as informed by the transcendent principles of things, not inner moral knowledge intuited by way of the noumenal original mind:

[伊川] 致知是致吾心氣之靈之知，格物是至于物而窮其超越的所以然之理以成其德性之知。伊川言德性之知是根據敬心而窮理，非根據實體性的本心而發誠體之明也。其所知者是物之超越之理，而心不即是理也。是則雖德性之知，亦永為認知的能所關係者，而非性體自主自決自定方向之知也。<sup>860</sup>

[According to Cheng Yichuan,] extending knowledge is extending knowledge that is associated with the enlightened understanding of the mind of psychological temperament, and investigating things is going into things and exploring thoroughly their transcendent principles in order to attain inner moral knowledge. Yichuan based his understanding of inner moral knowledge on reverence and the thorough exploring of the principles of things, not on the enlightenment issuing from the onto-cosmological grounding of utter sincerity and triggered from within the original mind—the original mind understood in terms of the onto-cosmological transcendent reality. What is known then consists of the transcendent principles of things, and mind is not principle. Thus, even though it is inner moral knowledge, it is knowledge that always entails a cognitive relation between the knower and the known—not the self-willing, self-determining and self-directing knowledge of the onto-cosmological grounding of human nature.

With regard to Zhu Xi's approach to moral cultivation, Mou's view was that it is marked by the same deficiencies identified above because Zhu was the philosophical heir to Cheng Yichuan:

伊川之思理大體為朱子所釐清而確定，而亦遵守而不悖。<sup>861</sup>

---

<sup>860</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingt*, vol. III, pp. 45-46.

<sup>861</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 46.

In the main, the reasoning of Yichuan was clarified and confirmed as well as followed faithfully by Zhuzi.

Mou characterised Zhu's system as a system of "calm nurturing" and "passive subsuming and appropriating" at the cognitive, phenomenal level:

朱子雖注遍群書，而其實只以伊川之綱維落實於大學，由此以展開其靜涵靜攝之系統，即對於那屬於「本體論的存有」之存在之理之靜的涵攝之系統。吾此處用「靜涵」一詞，乃心氣之靜的涵蓄淵淳之意；用「靜攝」一詞，乃認知的綜涵攝取之意。靜涵相應朱子本人所說之涵養，靜攝相應朱子本人所說之察識以及致知格物，格物窮理。<sup>862</sup>

Even though Zhuzi annotated numerous classics, in fact he merely adopted Yichuan's framework and applied it to his interpretation of the *Daxue*. From this basis, he developed his system of calm nurturing and passive subsuming and appropriating—that is, the system of calmly and passively nurturing, subsuming and appropriating the principles of existence of "being in the context of an ontology based on the fundamental state/condition". "Calm nurturing" here has the meaning of quietly nurturing and holding within the mind at the level of psychological temperament; "passive subsuming and appropriating" means subsuming and appropriating cognitively. The former corresponds to what Zhuzi himself calls "moral nurturance" while the latter corresponds to what he calls examining, extending knowledge and investigating things and going into things to explore thoroughly their principles.

Mou's main concern was that Zhu followed Cheng Yichuan in privileging knowledge of external things over inner moral intuition. On his view, Zhu's approach to moral cultivation is one of "cognitive appropriation" (*shunqu* 順取), with the cognitive mind going along with its general tendency to take in knowledge of external things across the phenomenal plane:

---

<sup>862</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 48.

其言致知格物只成爲散列之「順取」，而只落實於存有之理之靜攝，則亦非孔子言仁、孟子言本心之精神也。<sup>863</sup>

The way he spoke of extending knowledge and investigating things only enabled a going along [with the general tendency of the cognitive mind] to readily appropriate [knowledge] spread out across [the phenomenal plane]. In addition, he applied this only to the passive subsuming and appropriating of the principles of ontological being. It was not in accord with the spirit in which Kongzi spoke of empathetic compassion [*ren*] nor with the spirit in which Mengzi spoke of the original mind.

To bring into sharp relief the divergence between Zhu's "cognitive appropriation" approach to moral cultivation based primarily on the *Daxue* and the central moral cultivation themes taught in the other texts of pre-Qin *Ruxue*, Mou described the approach to moral cultivation as rooted in the teachings of Kongzi and implicit in the *Mengzi* and the *Zhongyong* as one involving "intuitive moral awareness" (*nijue* 逆覺). In contrast to Zhu's cognitive approach, which emphasises going with the general external orientation of the ordinary (cognitive) mind to take in knowledge of external things, the "intuitive moral awareness" approach emphasises going inward in moral introspection:

自孔子以下，皆有分解逆顯的意味，就孔子之渾淪表現而逆顯，把他的渾淪天成打開而逆覺，是孟子所謂「湯武反之也」，是中庸所謂「自明誠謂之教」。無論是孟子的「性善」，或是中庸的「天命之謂性」，皆是由逆覺以顯「性體」之爲本，這就點出道德實踐之先天的根據，亦可曰超越的根據。<sup>864</sup>

After Kongzi, conceptual elaboration and manifestation [of the onto-cosmological grounding of human nature] through "intuitive moral awareness" have both been implicit in [*Ru* moral teachings]. [These teachings point the way to] proceed inward from Kongzi's non-differentiated display [of the way of

---

<sup>863</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>864</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 118.

empathetic compassion]<sup>865</sup> to reveal by way of “intuitive moral awareness” [the onto-cosmological grounding of human nature]. To open up the undifferentiated moral realisation of Kongzi<sup>866</sup> and reveal through “intuitive moral awareness” [the onto-cosmological grounding of human nature]—this is what Mengzi taught when he said, “Tang and Wu<sup>867</sup> returned to it [their inherent moral nature]” [*Mengzi* VIIB: 33] and what the *Zhongyong* taught with the line “Going from enlightened understanding to sincerity is called teaching” [*Zhongyong* XXI]. Whether it be Mengzi’s doctrine of innate goodness or the *Zhongyong*’s teaching of “What heaven decrees is called human nature” [*Zhongyong* I], *Ru* moral teachings teach going inward through “intuitive moral awareness” in order to reveal the onto-cosmological grounding of human nature as the root [of morality]. Doing so serves to pinpoint the a priori, or what we might call “transcendent”, basis of moral praxis.

Mou’s summary assessment of the Cheng-Zhu stream of Song-Ming *Ruxue* states its heterodoxy and reflects the two charges discussed above. First, it maintains that its approach to moral cultivation—an approach that, according to Mou’s charge, is based primarily on the *Daxue* and diverges from the central moral cultivation themes taught in the other four texts of pre-Qin *Ruxue*—confounds empirical knowledge with inner moral knowledge:

吾人所以不視伊川朱子學爲儒家之正宗，爲宋明儒之大宗，即因其一、將知識問題與成德問題混雜在一起講，既于道德爲不澈，不能顯道德之本性，復于知識不得解放，不能顯知識之本性；。。。<sup>868</sup>

There are reasons why we do not regard the Cheng-Zhu stream of thought as orthodox *Ru* teachings or as the main line of Song-Ming *Ruxue*. First, it confounds issues of knowledge with issues of moral attainment. Not only is its understanding with regard to morality not thorough and so incapable of revealing

<sup>865</sup> This refers to the way Kongzi expressed the meaning of empathetic compassion through the way he lived his life—there was no differentiation between theory (his teaching) and praxis (his actual living). See discussion in Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingti*, vol. I, p. 118.

<sup>866</sup> This refers to Kongzi’s realisation of his heavenly-endowed moral nature through the practice of empathetic compassion.

<sup>867</sup> “Tang and Wu” refers to Shang Tang, the founder of the Shang, and King Wu, the founder of the Zhou.

<sup>868</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingti*, vol. I, p. 50.

the fundamental nature of morality, but its understanding with regard to knowledge also does not enable the liberation of knowledge and fails to reveal the fundamental nature of knowledge....

Second, Mou's assessment concludes that the Cheng-Zhu moral teaching is based on moral heteronomy. This relates to Mou's charge that Cheng and Zhu diverged fundamentally from pre-Qin *Ruxue* and failed to identify the mind (the original mind-cum-human nature, innate moral consciousness or moral reason) with principle, thus resulting in the mind's being determined not by its own principles (autonomy) but by principles external to it or residing in external things in the phenomenal realm (heteronomy):

二、因其將超越之理與後天之心對列對驗，心認知地攝具理，理超越地律導心，則其成德之教固應是他律道德，亦是漸磨漸習之漸教，而在格物過程中無論是在把握「超越之理」方面或是在經驗知識之取得方面，一是皆成「成德之教」之本質的功夫，皆成他律道德之漸教之決定的因素，而實則經驗知識本是助緣者。<sup>869</sup>

Second, it [the Cheng-Zhu stream of thought] counter-poses the transcendent (a priori) principle with the a posteriori mind [the cognitive mind] and sets them up so that the two relate to each other as opposites. The mind takes in cognitively the principle; the principle guides the mind transcendentally. This means that the Cheng-Zhu teaching of moral attainment should certainly be regarded as being based on moral heteronomy. It is also a teaching of gradual attainment through gradual cultivation and gradual praxis. Moreover, in the process of "investigating things", efforts, whether it be relating to grasping "the transcendent principles" or relating to the acquisition of empirical knowledge, become not only essential efforts in [what is supposed to be] "a teaching of moral attainment" but also determining factors in the teaching of gradual attainment based on moral heteronomy, when in fact empirical knowledge was originally [just] a facilitator [in pre-Qin *Ruxue*].

## Revisiting the Historical Debate over “the Differences and Similarities between Zhu Xi and Lu Xiangshan”

Mou’s assessment of the Cheng-Zhu stream of Song-Ming *Ruxue* aimed to validate Lu Xiangshan’s charge that Zhu’s failure to identify the mind with principle and his privileging empirical knowledge over inner moral intuition amounted to “losing the source” (*duanxu zhi shi* 端緒之失) and “not apprehending the way” (*bu jiandao* 不見道).<sup>870</sup> The assessment thus reopened the historical debate over “the differences and similarities between Zhu Xi and Lu Xiangshan”. In his study of the transformation of *Ruxue* during the Southern Song (1127-1278) and of Zhu Xi’s ascendancy, Hoyt Cleveland Tillman notes Mou’s critical assessment of Zhu Xi; and, citing Qian Mu, he concludes that Zhu “had a broader view of the mind and one closer to Mencius than Mou had claimed.”<sup>871</sup> With regard to the Zhu-Lu controversy, Tillman is of the view that Zhu’s condemnation of Lu “for being contaminated by Ch’an [*Chan* 禪]”, though unreasonably strident,<sup>872</sup> was not entirely wrong in view of Lu’s “ideas about learning being simple and easy” and “disproportional emphasis on the internal (mind) over external affairs.”<sup>873</sup> In addition, Tillman defends Zhu against Lu’s charge that Zhu had failed to apprehend the way because of his excessive intellectual approach. He points to studies that show that “Chu [Zhu] was similarly aware that the classics were ultimately a means to the reader’s spiritual ends and had to be understood as an inner experience”. However, he also adds, “Chu [Zhu] went further than any earlier Confucian in intellectualizing the tradition and making [empirical] knowledge the foundation of ethics and morals.”<sup>874</sup>

Tillman observes that “[s]cholars have over the centuries discussed differences between Chu [Zhu] and Lu largely in terms of the question of whether the mind or the inner nature was equivalent to principle”.<sup>875</sup> Mou was, obviously, one of

---

<sup>869</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 50-51.

<sup>870</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Cong Lu Xiangshan dao Liu Jishan*, pp. 10, 13.

<sup>871</sup> Hoyt Cleveland Tillman, *Confucian Discourse and Chu Hsi’s Ascendancy*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992, pp. 78-79.

<sup>872</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229.

<sup>873</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 205.

<sup>874</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 228.

<sup>875</sup> *Ibid.*

these scholars. He highlighted the differences between the two thinkers' understandings of the mind and human nature from a structural perspective. On his analysis, Zhu's system of thought is essentially a system of "horizontal appropriation" (*hengshe xitong* 橫攝系統). It does not identify human nature with mind nor mind with principle, understands principle to be "merely ontological being devoid of activity" and adopts the "cognitive appropriation" approach to moral cultivation as described above.<sup>876</sup> In contrast, Mou described Lu's system of thought as a "vertical" system (*zongguan xitong* 縱貫系統).<sup>877</sup> On Mou's view, the vertical system is concerned mainly with the ultimate transcendent onto-cosmological creative principle (heaven) and its immanence in the myriad things, in particular human beings, below.<sup>878</sup> It reflects the teachings of pre-Qin *Ru* thinkers and was expounded by Zhou Lianxi, Zhang Hengqu and Cheng Mingdao in the Northern Song.<sup>879</sup> Identifying the mind with human nature and principle, the vertical system understands principle to be "the noumenal being-cum-reality that is at the same time active" and adopts the "intuitive moral awareness" approach to moral cultivation as discussed above.<sup>880</sup>

John Berthrong's remarks on Mou's structural perspective, made in a different context, might help shed light on the subject matter. Berthrong correctly observes that, for Mou, the vertical dimension is that which "makes a tradition religious as opposed to merely philosophic in the sense of technical reason."<sup>881</sup> He also explains that, on Mou's understanding, the vertical dimension "constitutes the human encounter with the divine reality, which Mou recognized as 'God' in Western religions and [with] terms such as 'Dao' or the 'Supreme Ultimate' in Confucianism."<sup>882</sup> It is important to note that the human encounter with the divine reality in the *Ru* context is not merely a relationship between the individual and the divine, as might be the case in the Christian context,

<sup>876</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingti*, vol. I, pp. 58-59.

<sup>877</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 49.

<sup>878</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, pp. 421, 431. Also, Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingti*, vol. I, p. 59. In the 1950s, Mou used the term "*liti*" 立體, which I render as "onto-cosmological", to describe what he in later years called the "vertical" system. See footnote 654.

<sup>879</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 59.

<sup>880</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 58-59.

<sup>881</sup> John Berthrong, "Love, Lust, and Sex: A Christian Perspective", *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, 24 (Annual 2004), electronic copy, p. 10 of 21.

<sup>882</sup> *Ibid.*

involving personal faith and prayers. Berthrong offers a brief clarification by stating that Mou defines “the vertical dimension of Confucian religiousness as the embodiment of creativity itself.”<sup>883</sup> I might add by way of reiteration that the *Ru* conception of the divine, on Mou’s reading, is in terms of a divine principle of flourishing that encompasses everything in the cosmos. Mou understands the *Ru* encounter of the divine reality to be an experience of spiritual oneness with the myriad things and an actualisation of the Lu-Wang metaphysical thesis of “mind is principle”, culminating in a state of unity in virtue with heaven (*tian ren he de* 天人合德).

Adopting the structural perspective discussed above, Mou attempted a balanced assessment of the differences between Zhu and Lu but made it amply clear that he deemed Zhu’s “horizontal” system onto-cosmologically, therefore fundamentally, flawed:

假定兩相對立，欲以橫攝系統代替縱貫系統，以為只此橫攝系統是正道，縱貫者為異端，非正道，則非是。假定兩相對立，以為只此縱貫系統即已足（形式上是已足），斥橫攝者為支離，為不見道，（自究竟言是如此），而不能欣賞其補充之作用與充實上之價值，則亦非是。前者是朱子之過，後者是象山之過。<sup>884</sup>

It is wrong to assume that the two are in opposition and try to replace the vertical system with the horizontal system on the belief that only the horizontal system is the orthodox way and the vertical system is heresy and unorthodox. It is also wrong to assume that the two are in opposition and—believing that the vertical system alone is sufficient (formally it is so) while failing to appreciate the supplementary role of the horizontal system and its enriching value—reject the horizontal system as fragmented and failing to apprehend the truth (from the perspective of the ultimate it is so). The former was the error committed by Zhuzi, the latter by Xiangshan.

---

<sup>883</sup> *Ibid.*, electronic copy, p. 11 of 21.

## Concluding Remarks

In summary, Mou's new *daotong* put forth a revisionist assessment of Song-Ming *Ruxue* that elevated the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind above the Cheng-Zhu stream of Song-Ming *Ruxue* and reopened the historical debate over "the differences and similarities between Zhu Xi and Lu Xiangshan". The revision was radical, as it not only stripped the Cheng-Zhu stream of Song-Ming *Ruxue* of its hitherto orthodox status but also banished it from the *Ru* genealogy headed by Kongzi. Mou's rationale was that Cheng-Zhu metaphysics departed fundamentally from the original import of pre-Qin *Ru* thought by turning the moral autonomy implicit in Mengzi's teaching into a moral heteronomy and putting the primary emphasis in moral praxis on a posteriori knowledge rather than a priori intuition. The argument was essentially a restatement in contemporary terms of Lu Xiangshan's objections against Zhu Xi's teaching.

Mou's new *daotong* in the form of a revisionist assessment of Song-Ming *Ruxue* was his single major departure from Xiong. That Zhu Xi's tripartite division of mind, human nature and emotions does not fit into Mou's "two-tiered mind" metaphysical paradigm might explain why Mou found it necessary to develop the revisionist assessment, even though Xiong had felt no need to do so. The paradigm is central to Mou's system of thought—it bolsters theoretically Mou's assertion of human beings' possession of inner sageliness and enables Mou to "perfect" Kant's moral philosophy. Keeping this in mind, perhaps one can say that Mou's new *daotong* serves his moral metaphysics by pre-empting a potential formidable challenge posed by Zhu Xi's tripartite division of mind, human nature and emotions. From another perspective, Mou's new *daotong* and his moral metaphysics appear to be mutually reinforcing. His new *daotong* basks the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind, the basis of his own moral metaphysics, in a revisionist orthodox light. His moral metaphysics, in return, supports his new *daotong* by elucidating in contemporary Kantian and *Fo* categories the teachings of thinkers in the new *daotong* genealogy.

In Chapter 2, I discussed how Mou set up an ideological hierarchy among the major strands of Chinese thought—*Ru* thought vis-a-vis *Fo* and *Dao*—and privileged *Ru* thought as the Hegelian-inflected cultural spirit of China. In this chapter, I examined his

---

<sup>884</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingt*, vol. III, p. 49.

new *daotong*, which set up an ideological hierarchy among different streams of Song-Ming *Ruxue*, stripped the Cheng-Zhu stream of its hitherto orthodox status and gave the honour to both a revisionist main line and the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind. The philosophical vigour and coherence of Mou's thought suggests that his thought is not reducible to a discourse driven by a quest for power. However, in elevating the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind—the basis of his own moral metaphysics—to revisionist orthodoxy, Mou was positioning it as the cultural spirit of China and thus presenting himself as the spokesperson of Chinese culture. The next chapter looks at how Mou's cultural nationalist discourse entered the world stage by becoming the template for a retrospectively created cultural and philosophical movement called the *Xin Rujia* movement and how the thinker set up an ideological contest between what he dichotomised as Chinese culture and Western culture.



## 8

### **Mou and the *Xin Rujia* Movement**

This chapter looks at Mou's cultural nationalist discourse in the global context through his participation in the contemporary cultural and philosophical movement retrospectively called *Xin Rujia* or *Dangdai Xin Rujia* (commonly rendered as New Confucianism or Contemporary New Confucianism). I begin with a brief account of the movement and discuss the pivotal role Mou played in it. In the remainder of the chapter I develop my critique of an important document of the movement—the 1958 Declaration. The critique aims to show that the declaration encapsulates Mou and the other joint authors' cultural nationalist aspirations for China and consists of four sections. In the first section, I discuss the authors' views regarding the proper way to pursue sinology and the emphasis they place on the unity of the emotions and reason. In the second section, I analyse the authors' essentialised understanding of Chinese culture in terms of the Song-Ming “learning of the mind and human nature” (*xinxing zhi xue* 心性之學) and highlight the importance of religion in their culturist essentialism. In the third section, I examine the authors' critiques of and proposals for Chinese and Western cultures and focus attention on the ideological contest the authors set up between the two cultures and their assertion of cultural parity. The last section looks at the authors' promotion of *Ruxue* as an ethico-spiritual resource for the formation of a harmonious and compassionate world culture. I conclude the chapter with some thoughts on the authors' post-colonial aspiration for cultural parity with the West.

#### **The *Xin Rujia* Movement**

*Xin Rujia* is a twentieth-century phenomenon. John Makeham notes that it is “a movement promoted and/or researched by prominent Chinese intellectuals based in

China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the United States of America.”<sup>885</sup> He describes the movement as “a neo-conservative philosophical movement, with religious overtones, which claims to be the legitimate transmitter and representative of orthodox Confucian values.”<sup>886</sup> He also observes that it was not until the 1970s that *Xin Ru* “had attained a degree of integration or coalescence sufficient for it to be recognised and promoted as a distinct philosophical movement or school of thought.”<sup>887</sup> Since the late 1970s, the movement has become closely associated with the global revival of interest in Kongzi and his teachings. In 1995, Arif Dirlik attributed this *Ru* revival to intellectual efforts on the part of Herman Kahn, Peter Berger and other authors to link the phenomenal economic success of the five “Confucian” societies in East Asia (Japan and the “Four Mini-Dragons” covering South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong) to their cultural heritage.<sup>888</sup> He also noted that the tremendous scholarly activity around *Ru* thought since the early 1980s resulted from “official and semi-official sponsorship” around the globe.<sup>889</sup> The sponsorship of the mainland Chinese government is noteworthy in this regard. In late 1986, the government formally recognised *Xin Ru* thought as a high-priority research item in the area of philosophy and social sciences,<sup>890</sup> and in 1990, its Ministry of Education formally recognised as a top-priority item “the experimental research into the teaching of traditional Chinese virtues” (*zhonghua minzu chuantong meide jiaoyu shiyan yanjiu* 中華民族傳統美德教育實驗研究).<sup>891</sup> Moral education and *Ru* values have since become regular discussion and research topics in the ministry’s monthly research publication entitled *Jiaoyu yanjiu* 教育研究 (Educational research).

---

<sup>885</sup> Makeham, “Introduction”, in *New Confucianism: A Critical Examination*, ed. *idem*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>886</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>887</sup> John Makeham, “The Retrospective Creation of New Confucianism” in *New Confucianism: A Critical Examination*, ed. *idem*, p. 25.

<sup>888</sup> Arif Dirlik, “Confucius in the Borderlands: Global Capitalism, and the Reinvention of Confucianism”, *Boundary 2* (Duke University Press), vol.22, no. 3 (Autumn 1995), pp. 236-237.

<sup>889</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 238.

<sup>890</sup> Makeham, “Introduction” in *New Confucianism: A Critical Examination*, ed. *idem*, pp. 5-6.

<sup>891</sup> The experimental research involved the adoption and data analysis of different methods of inculcating traditional Chinese values in students, parents and among the general population at selected sites. See Luan Chuanda 樂傳大, “Zhonghua minzu chuantong meide jiaoyu yanjiu baogao 中華民族傳統美德教育研究報告” (A Report on Research into the Teaching of Traditional Chinese Moral Values), *Jiaoyu yanjiu* 教育研究 (Educational research), 248 (September 2000), p. 26.

Hao Chang and other scholars reconstruct the *Xin Rujia* movement as a conservative trend of thought dating back to the May Fourth period.<sup>892</sup> Makeham notes that since the 1970s, scholars have retrospectively recognised Liang Shuming and Xiong Shili as the founders of the movement and the first generation *Xin Rujia* thinkers.<sup>893</sup> He observes that despite a lack of consensus, up to ten other individuals are commonly identified as second-generation *Xin Rujia* thinkers, the key ones being the three foremost disciples of Xiong Shili—Mou, Tang Junyi 唐君毅 and Xu Fuguan 徐復觀. Hao Chang also distinguishes *Xin Rujia* from earlier forms of Chinese cultural conservatism<sup>894</sup> with its identification of Chinese culture with *Ruxue*,<sup>895</sup> its vigorous defence of Song-Ming *Ru* ethico-spiritual symbolism,<sup>896</sup> and its condemnation of scientism.<sup>897</sup> He, however, overlooks the cultural nationalist undertone of the movement. Arif Dirlik, on the other hand, labels the *Ru* revival in the 1980s as a cultural nationalist assertion of newfound power (founded on economic success) against earlier “Euro-American cultural hegemony”,<sup>898</sup> though his focus is on the “chorus of ‘Asianism’” going on during this period<sup>899</sup> rather than on the *Xin Rujia* movement in Taiwan and Hong Kong. My review of the writings of Liang Shuming, Xiong Shili, Mou and Tang Junyi indicates that *Xin Rujia* in Taiwan and Hong Kong is a cultural movement and a philosophical-cum-religious movement. As a cultural movement, it displays a strong cultural nationalism that condemns scientism, asserts the primacy of *Ruxue* in Chinese culture and the worth of *Ruxue* as an ethico-spiritual resource for the promotion of a harmonious world culture. As a philosophical-cum-religious movement, it largely adopts the philosophical premises of the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind, seeks to establish the metaphysical and religious import of *Ruxue*, and attempts to reconcile *Ruxue* with Western thought.

---

<sup>892</sup> Hao Chang, “New Confucianism and the Intellectual Crisis of Contemporary China”, p. 276.

<sup>893</sup> Makeham, “Introduction” in *New Confucianism: A Critical Examination*, ed. *idem*, p. 11.

<sup>894</sup> Chang identified two main forms of Chinese cultural conservatism that pre-dated the May Fourth movement—the School of National Essence (*guocui xuepai*); and the “preservation of the faith” movement (*baojiao*) headed by Kang Youwei (1858-1927) to establish a Confucian church in China. See his “New Confucianism and the Intellectual Crisis of Contemporary China”, p. 277.

<sup>895</sup> Chang, “New Confucianism and the Intellectual Crisis of Contemporary China”, p. 277.

<sup>896</sup> *Ibid.*, p.278.

<sup>897</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 283.

<sup>898</sup> Arif Dirlik, “Chinese History and the Question of Orientalism”, *History and Theory*, 35(4) (December 1996), p. 113.

## Mou's Pivotal Role in the Movement

Although Mou was the honorary chair and keynote speaker of the first “*Dangdai Xin Rujia*” international conference, which took place in Taipei in December 1990,<sup>900</sup> he never called himself a *Xin Rujia*. When asked, shortly before the conference, what he, “as the most important philosopher of ‘*Dangdai Xin Rujia*’”, thought of the title “*Dangdai Xin Rujia*”, he gave the following response:

至於「當代新儒家」之名是否恰當，大家既明其旨，也就無所用其計較。這名字原是社會上用來稱呼我們的，我們這些朋友都沒有自稱是「當代新儒家」。宋明時代的儒家被稱為新儒家，這個時代的儒家也被稱為新儒家，隨著時代而為「新」，以後永遠這樣。<sup>901</sup>

As to whether the name “*Dangdai Xin Rujia*” is appropriate, since we all understand what it means, there is no point in bickering over it. The name was originally used by others in society to designate us; we and our friends have not self-identified as “*Dangdai Xin Rujia*”. The *Rujia* in the Song and Ming were called *Xin Rujia*. The *Rujia* in this age are also so called. It is “new” with the change of times and will always be so.

In view of the intense and unsettled debates among scholars from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s concerning which among contemporary mainland Chinese and overseas thinkers should be designated “*Xin Rujia*”,<sup>902</sup> it was wise of Mou to detach himself from the bickering.

The fact was that by this time, he had already established himself as a prominent *Ru* thinker through decades of research and writings demonstrating impressive scholarship and philosophical vigour. A large number of close disciples surrounded him. Through his teaching and his many published works, he exerted a profound influence on them as well as on Tu Weiming, the foremost proponent of the *Xin Rujia* movement in

---

<sup>899</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>900</sup> Cai Renhou, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuesi nianpu*, p. 78.

<sup>901</sup> Mou Zongsan, “*Dangdai Xin Rujia (dawen lu)*”, p. 183.

<sup>902</sup> See John Makeham’s account in the first two chapters of his edited volume entitled *New Confucianism: A Critical Examination*, ed. John Makeham.

North America.<sup>903</sup> Mou played a pivotal role in the *Xin Rujia* movement.<sup>904</sup> He was the theoretical genius behind and the voice of the *Xin Rujia* movement up until his death in 1995. (Tang Junyi and Xu Fuguan passed away in 1978<sup>905</sup> and 1982 respectively.<sup>906</sup>) As Makeham remarks, “Mou is central to the very notion of what New Confucianism is. Indeed, one might well argue that without Mou there would be no New Confucian movement.”<sup>907</sup> Mou’s moralistic critique of modernity and “Western values” largely set the template for the movement. The modern age, in his eyes, was marked by an excessive dominance of Western values.<sup>908</sup> On the one hand, he was highly positive about Western values as expressed in the building of modern national states, the development of science, and the realisation of democracy. He firmly upheld these as values that should be adopted by China. On the other hand, he was adamant that these values had been unchecked and pushed to the extreme, resulting in excesses, imbalances and calamities to humanity. He disapproved of Western imperialism and vehemently condemned Marxism.<sup>909</sup> Moreover, he lamented that modern people have become spiritually ill in that they are oblivious to their inner source of truth, value and morality and are concerned mainly with what feels good and what is technically right rather than with what is rational and moral.<sup>910</sup> He attributed the perceived spiritual ills to the displacement of morality by science, the pre-occupation with what is external and quantifiable, and the tendency towards scientism—the use of science as the only measure of truth and value.<sup>911</sup>

In the following section, I examine a key document for the *Xin Rujia* movement—the 1958 Declaration co-signed by Mou, Tang Junyi 唐君毅 (1909-1978), Xu Fuguan 徐復觀 (1903-1982) and Zhang Junmai 張君勱 (1886-1969). The document, produced near the end of Mou’s Taiwan period, a period in which he was driven by fervent

---

<sup>903</sup> See the discussion on Tu in the section entitled “A Spiritual Legacy” in the conclusion of this thesis.

<sup>904</sup> Makeham, “The Retrospective Creation of New Confucianism”, p. 34.

<sup>905</sup> Cai Renhou, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuesi nianpu*, p. 46.

<sup>906</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>907</sup> Makeham, “Introduction” in *New Confucianism: A Critical Examination*, ed. *idem*, p. 8.

<sup>908</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Daode de lixiang zhuyi*, p. 3.

<sup>909</sup> *Ibid.*, preface, pp. 3-6.

<sup>910</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhaxue shijiu jiang*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>911</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

cultural nationalist and anti-Communist sentiments, reflects Mou's, as well as the other joint authors', cultural nationalist aspirations for China.<sup>912</sup>

## **The 1958 Declaration**

The 1958 Declaration is a significant document of the *Xin Rujia* movement not only because three of its four signatories (other than Zhang Junmai) were key second-generation *Xin Rujia* thinkers but also because many scholars in both Taiwan and mainland China regard the document as the manifesto for the movement.<sup>913</sup> Wang Bangxiong, a close disciple of Mou,<sup>914</sup> made such construal in a paper he delivered in 1982 on the development of *Xin Rujia*.<sup>915</sup> In a collection of his public speeches entitled *Shidai yu ganshou* 時代與感受 (The Times and Sensibilities), published in 1984, Mou highly commended Wang's paper<sup>916</sup> and used it as the foreword for the collection.<sup>917</sup> The 1958 Declaration was never publicised in the West and has not attracted the attention of its intended readers (Western sinologists). It was first published in Chinese in two Taiwanese journals at the beginning of 1958.<sup>918</sup> An abridged version in English was later published in an English journal on Chinese religions in Hong Kong. Following that, a longer English translation (with only a couple of sections omitted) by Zhang Junmai was published in an English journal in Taiwan and included as an appendix in the second volume of his book entitled *The Development of Neo-Confucian Thought*,

---

<sup>912</sup> The declaration represents the shared views of the joint authors. As stated at the beginning of the document, the first draft, incorporating inputs from Mou and Xu, was prepared by Tang and Zhang in the United States and edited by Mou and Xu, and the finalisation of the draft followed rounds of correspondence among the four joint authors. See Mou and others, "The 1958 Declaration" in *Dangdai Xin Rujia*, ed. Feng, p. 1.

<sup>913</sup> Jing Haifeng 景海峰, "Bianxu" 編序 (Preface to the Edition), in *Dangdai Xin Rujia*, ed. Feng, preface to the edition, pp. 10-11.

<sup>914</sup> I say Wang Bangxiong was a close disciple of Mou based on the fact that it was in the presence of him and Cai Renhou that Mou composed his last written note to his disciples in his hospital room in December 1994, four months before his death. The note, shown to both Cai and Wang, gives a summary and self-appraisal of his own intellectual accomplishments. It also urges his disciples to work hard at the task of elucidating Chinese and Western thought and reconciling the two. See Cai Renhou, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuesi nianpu*, p. 89. See discussion of the note in the conclusion of Chapter 6.

<sup>915</sup> Wang Bangxiong, "Cong Zhongguo xiandaihua guocheng zhong kan Dangdai Xin Rujia de jingshen kaizhan", pp. 5-6.

<sup>916</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Shidai yu ganshou*, preface, p. 2.

<sup>917</sup> *Ibid.*, foreword, pp. 1-26.

<sup>918</sup> Mou and others, "The 1958 Declaration", p. 1.

published in the United States in 1962.<sup>919</sup> In the declaration, the four joint authors declared what they deemed to be the proper way to pursue sinology, spelled out their basic understanding of Chinese culture, presented their critiques of Chinese and Western cultures and proposed that the two cultures learn from each other in order to bring about a harmonious and compassionate world culture.

### **(a) The Proper Way to Pursue Sinology**

Informed by Hegel's spiritual philosophy of history, the joint authors of the 1958 Declaration conceived of human history and culture as objective manifestations of the mental life and living spirit of the people making the history and living in the culture and believed that the core of a people's mental life and spirit lies in their philosophical thought. They also promoted the notion of single-rootedness as a key characteristic of Chinese culture vis-a-vis Western culture—the notion that unlike Western culture, Chinese culture originated and developed from one seminal system of thought, resembling a tree with branches growing from a single root-stem or main trunk.<sup>920</sup> This premise allowed them to argue that a proper understanding of Chinese culture calls for an examination of the main trunk—the seminal system of thought,<sup>921</sup> which they identified primarily with *Ruxue*.<sup>922</sup>

A striking feature of the 1958 Declaration is its upholding of the unity of the emotions and reason. The authors condemned the emotionless stance adopted by many Western as well as Chinese sinologists and maintained that “regarding all human affairs and objects, if basically there is no sympathy and respect, then there can be no true understanding.”<sup>923</sup> On their view, readings of Chinese culture by the Jesuits or by more recent sinologists adopting an archaeological or political perspective are distorted by

---

<sup>919</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52. See footnote 442 for the reference for the English translation by Zhang Junmai.

<sup>920</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>921</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>922</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>923</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8. It should be noted that the authors, of course, did not have in mind extreme cases of atrocity such as the Holocaust and mass purges by Pol Pot. Regarding these crimes against humanity, their statement will have to be qualified, for true understanding of the evil of Hitler or Pol Pot requires sympathy and respect not for the criminal but for the victims. Even the most enlightened and compassionate would find it hard to regard these criminals with any sympathy and respect above the mere recognition that they were human beings despite their utterly evil acts and that all human beings should be granted fair treatment and due process of the law despite their alleged crimes.

their respective driving motives.<sup>924</sup> The authors also took deep offence at contemporary Western scholars sounding the death knell for the *Ru* tradition.<sup>925</sup> According to them, one can reach a true understanding of the mental life of the Chinese people only through sympathy and respect<sup>926</sup> and a thorough understanding of China's cultural history.<sup>927</sup> "The split between the emotions and reason", deemed essential for objective study by Western scholars, was, in their eyes, not only morally wrong but also constituted "the most non-objective approach" to the study of human history and culture. This was because, on their view, an objective approach that does not admit human emotions also discards the mental life that sustains human history and culture and in so doing reduces human history and culture to dead objects.<sup>928</sup>

The unity of the emotions and reason, smacking of subjectivity and deemed suspicious at best by prevalent standards of scholarship in the West, is, on Mou's understanding, also a fundamental characteristic of Chinese culture:

中國人喜講情理或事理，是活的，所講的都在人情中；理是與情或事渾融在一起的。所講的是如此，而從能講方面說，則其理性也是渾融的，不破裂的，所以其表現是運用的表現，不講那乾枯的抽象的理性。所講的如是抽象的理性，則能講方面之理性也是支解破裂的，所以其表現也不是運用的表現。中國人講道即在眼前，當下即是。這是作用見性。<sup>929</sup>

Chinese people like to reason in terms of human circumstances or human affairs, in terms of real life. What is spoken of is related to human emotions. Reasoning is merged and united with feelings and events. Such is the way with what is being spoken of. For the speaker, his or her reasoning is also so merged and not split [from feelings]. This is why the presentation [of reason] is a functional presentation, and not in terms of reason that is dry and abstract. If what is being spoken of is in terms of abstract reason, then the speaker's reasoning is also fragmented and split—and the presentation [of reason] is not a functional

---

<sup>924</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4-6.

<sup>925</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>926</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>927</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>928</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>929</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhengdao yu zhidao*, p. 47.

presentation. Chinese people speak of the way in terms of what is right in front of their eyes, in the here and now. This is seeing the true nature in its functional manifestations.

Supporting Mou's understanding is the fact that the Chinese character *xin* 心, which I render as "mind", denotes an affective-cognitive faculty that is both mind and heart.

### **(b) Basic Understanding of Chinese Culture**

Han Chinese culturalism, which marks Mou's understanding of Chinese culture, permeates the 1958 Declaration. Arif Dirlik observes that "[t]he Euro-American assault on imperial China both provoked the emergence of Chinese nationalism and, ironically, provided it with images of the Chinese past that could be incorporated in a new national identity."<sup>930</sup> He further elaborates:

While different political strands in Chinese nationalism focused on different aspects of the past, and evaluated the historical legacy differently, metonymic reductionism has been apparent in the identification of China among liberals and conservatives with Confucianism, despotism, bureaucratism, familism, or even with particular racial characteristics, all of them traceable to orientalist representations, or to an unchanging "feudal" or "Asiatic" society, in a Marxist version of orientalism.<sup>931</sup>

The authors of the 1958 Declaration not only essentialised Chinese culture in terms of *Ruxue* but also promoted "the learning of the mind and human nature" (*xinxing zhi xue* 心性之學) "propounded by Kongzi and Mengzi and the Song-Ming *Ru*"<sup>932</sup> as the "spiritual marrow of Chinese culture" (*zhongguo wenhua zhi shensui* 中國文化之神髓).<sup>933</sup> Furthermore, they displayed Mou's ideological control by anticipating his moral metaphysics:

---

<sup>930</sup> Dirlik, "Chinese History and the Question of Orientalism," p. 106.

<sup>931</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>932</sup> Mou and others, "The 1958 Declaration", p. 20.

<sup>933</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

此心性之學中，自包含一形上學。然此形上學，乃近乎康德所謂的形上學，是為道德實踐之基礎，亦由道德實踐而證實的形上學。<sup>934</sup>

Contained in this learning of the mind and human nature is a metaphysics. However, this metaphysics is close to the metaphysics spoken of by Kant—it is the basis for moral praxis as well as a metaphysics validated by moral praxis.

The culturalist essentialism underlying the 1958 Declaration is problematic because of its homogenizing tendencies. Discussing culturalist essentialism in a different context, Dirlik describes it as “homogenizing both spatially and temporally”—spatially because “it ignores differences within individual societies”; temporally because it substitutes “a cultural essence that defies time for culture as lived experience that is subject to temporal production and reproduction.”<sup>935</sup> Being a historian—and obviously a non-Hegelian one—he regards such a “desocialized and dehistoricized conceptualization of culture” as substituting culture for history.<sup>936</sup> Indeed, it was precisely because of the dehistoricised nature of their conception of culture that the authors of the declaration were able to champion the Song-Ming “learning of the mind and human nature” as the cultural spirit of China at a time when mainland China was in the tight grips of Marxist ideology. It should be noted, however, that the authors did not really substitute culture for history. Rather, as will be seen, they looked at both culture and history through religion—a religion in the form of a Hegelian-inflected “metaphysics of spirit”.

The authors’ appeal to religion explains why they were adamant about the religious nature of *Ruxue* in the declaration:

我們希望世界人士研究中國文化，勿以[為]中國人只知重視現實的人與人間行為之外表規範，以維持社會政治之秩序，而須注意其中天人合一之思想，從事道德實踐時對道之宗教性的信仰。<sup>937</sup>

We hope that the people in the world who study Chinese culture do not think that the Chinese people emphasise only the external regulation of practical

---

<sup>934</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 19-20.

<sup>935</sup> Dirlik, “Chinese History and the Question of Orientalism,” p. 97.

<sup>936</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>937</sup> Mou and others, “The 1958 Declaration”, p. 17.

interpersonal behaviour for the maintenance of social and political order. They should instead pay attention to the notion of the unity of heaven and human beings in Chinese culture and to the religious faith in the way [of heaven] shown [by the Chinese people] in their moral praxis.

For them, the Song-Ming “learning of the mind and human nature” captures the timeless essence of China’s seminal and religious thought:

。 。 。 實則此心性之學，正為中國學術思想之核心，亦是中國思想中之所以有天人合德之說之真正理由所在。<sup>938</sup>

...the fact is that this learning of the mind and human nature is precisely the core of Chinese learning and Chinese thought. Moreover, within this learning lies the real reason why there exists in Chinese thought the doctrine of unity in virtue of heaven and human beings.

As mentioned above, this timeless essence was seen by the authors as the spiritual marrow of Chinese culture. By the logic of their “metaphysics of spirit”, although this spiritual marrow is heavily embedded in the seminal and religious thought of the Chinese people, it evolves, thereby producing culture—and history. In a talk delivered a year after the publication of the 1958 Declaration,<sup>939</sup> Mou clarified the relationship among culture, inner spirit and religion by stating that religion is the inner spirit and driving force of a culture. In other words, the religious-cum-cultural spirit of a people drives the production of their culture:

依我們的看法，一個文化不能沒有它的最基本的內在心靈。這是創造文化的動力，也是使文化有獨特性的所在。依我們的看法，這動力即是宗教，不管它是甚麼形態。依此，我們可說：文化生命之基本動力當在宗教。<sup>940</sup>

On our [referring to himself and the other joint authors of the declaration] view, a culture cannot be without its most fundamental inner spirit. This is the driving force that creates the culture, as well as that which renders the culture unique. On our view, this driving force is religion, regardless of the form it takes.

---

<sup>938</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>939</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue de tezhi*, p. 125.

<sup>940</sup> *Ibid.*

Accordingly, we can say this: the fundamental driving force of the life of a culture should lie in religion.

Mou identified the respective religions driving Western and Chinese culture as follows:

了解西方文化不能只通過科學與民主政治來了解，還要通過西方文化之基本動力---基督教來了解。了解中國文化也是同樣，即要通過作為中國文化之動力之儒教來了解。<sup>941</sup>

Understanding Western culture cannot be accomplished through an understanding of science and democracy only. It calls for an understanding of the fundamental driving force of Western culture—Protestantism—as well. It is the same with understanding Chinese culture—that is, it has to be accomplished through an understanding of *Rujiao*<sup>942</sup>, which functions as the driving force of Chinese culture.

The cultural nationalism behind the declaration's religion-based culturist essentialism is brought into sharp relief by the following remarks on religion, written by Mou around the same time the declaration was written:<sup>943</sup>

科學無國界，無種色，宗教不能無國界，無種色。宗教是一民族文化生命之最深處，最根源處之表現，亦是一文化生命之慧命之最高表現。<sup>944</sup>

Science has no national boundaries or racial colours, [but] religion cannot be without national boundaries and racial colours. Religion is the expression of the life of the culture of a nation-race at the deepest and most fundamental place. It is also the highest expression of the spiritual life of a culture.

---

<sup>941</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>942</sup> As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, Mou referred to *Ruxue* as “*Rujiao*” 儒教 when he wanted to emphasise that *Ru* as a spiritual moral philosophy fulfils the two main functions of Christianity and other religions.

<sup>943</sup> The remarks were contained in Mou's *Wushi zishu*, which he started writing in late 1956 and finished in 1957 (see Cai Renhou, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuesi nianpu*, pp. 23-24) while the drafting and editing of the 1958 Declaration took place in 1957 (see Mou and others, “The 1958 Declaration”, p. 1).

<sup>944</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Wushi zishu*, p. 107.

### (c) Critiques of and Proposals for Chinese and Western Cultures

The criticism-cum-proposal for China presented by the authors of the 1958 Declaration followed Mou's *santong* proposal:<sup>945</sup> Chinese culture had for too long subsumed its learning and political traditions under its *Ru* moral and religious tradition (*daotong*) and China's cultural reconstruction should focus on scientific<sup>946</sup> and democratic developments guided by *Ru* moral values.<sup>947</sup> For the West, the main criticism concerned what the authors perceived as the unrestrained employment of instrumental reason by Westerners and their pursuit of unremitting development and expansion at the expense of non-Western cultures.<sup>948</sup> The "forward-going" (*yi wang zhi qian* 一往直前)<sup>949</sup> instrumentalist mentality of Westerners, the authors observed, had led to an excessive stress on the intellect. The imbalance, they claimed, had resulted in a lack of caring about other peoples' suffering and a contentious, controlling<sup>950</sup> and restless approach to life,<sup>951</sup> which had thwarted the development of a world culture, envisioned by them to be marked by harmony, peace and contentment.<sup>952</sup> Given that in the technological field, there is always room for better, more advanced technology, methods, weapons and so on, they warned that the imbalance would only worsen if Western culture continued to lead humanity in an endless chase after better "instruments".<sup>953</sup> The main proposal, administered in an overflowing moral condescension, was for Westerners to learn from China's "learning of the mind and human nature" and restore balance by relaxing their grasping nature and tempering their excessive emphasis on instrumental reason with a new emphasis on the cultivation of empathetic compassion and inner wisdom.<sup>954</sup> Grasping nature, discussed previously in connection with Mou's "two-tiered" understanding of the human mind, is the nature of the cognitive tier of mind or

---

<sup>945</sup> Mou formulated his *santong* proposal in various journal articles published in the first half of the 1950s, several years before the writing of the 1958 Declaration. These articles were subsequently republished in one volume entitled *Daode de lixiang zhuyi*. See Cai Renhou, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuexi nianpu*, p. 123.

<sup>946</sup> Mou and others, "The 1958 Declaration", pp. 29-30.

<sup>947</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34.

<sup>948</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 39-41.

<sup>949</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>950</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 39-41.

<sup>951</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>952</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 47, 49.

<sup>953</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>954</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 42-51.

instrumental/theoretical reason. The other tier is the infinite mind, which Mou identified with Mengzi's original mind or human nature. In Mou's understanding, the infinite mind is the site of enlightened insight. It is where empathetic compassion (*ren*) issues from and where one abides in a spiritual oneness with the myriad things and finds contentment and inner peace.

The dichotomy between China and the West is a conspicuous feature not only of the 1958 Declaration but also of the writings of Mou's and many other *Xin Rujia* thinkers. Following Liang Shuming, Mou actually divided the existing cultures of the world into three broad systems, each with a distinct origin—the Chinese cultural system, the Indian cultural system, and the Western cultural system.<sup>955</sup> Yet, culturally his preoccupation was with China vis-a-vis the West. The authors of the 1958 Declaration paid no attention at all to Indian culture and at one point dismissed it for lacking “a consciousness of history”.<sup>956</sup> Regarding the Western parts of the world, even though many diverse cultures exist there, the authors asserted that they share the same origins—Greek for science and philosophy, Roman for law and Hebrew for religion—and put them in the same cultural system.<sup>957</sup>

The authors' dichotomy between China and the West is problematic because of its reductionistic, dualistic and antagonistic tendencies. The feature appears to be a conceptual vestige that Mou and many other Chinese intellectuals retained from the historical context of Western imperialism. Theodore Hutters notes a drastic change in the way many Chinese scholars looked at the world following the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895)<sup>958</sup> and after Yan Fu 嚴復 (1853-1921) went “to great lengths to create two distinct discursive universes demarcated as China and the West” in his seminal essays of 1895.<sup>959</sup> They suddenly abandoned “the theory of ultimate Chinese origins that had rendered the pursuit of Western learning intellectually safe for the previous generation”

---

<sup>955</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, pp. 2-3. Liang divided the world culturally into East and West and then subdivided Eastern culture into two—Chinese and Indian. The tripartite division corresponds to what he conceived as three alternative approaches to handling human desires. See Liang Shuming, *Liang Shuming quanji*, vol. I, pp. 382-383, 391.

<sup>956</sup> Mou and others, “The 1958 Declaration”, p. 22.

<sup>957</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>958</sup> Theodore Hutters, “The Closing of the Confucian Perspective in China” in *Rethinking Confucianism: Past and Present in China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam*, ed. Benjamin A. Elman and others, p. 464,

<sup>959</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 469.

and purposefully attempted “to set up sharp contrasts between Chinese and Western learning.”<sup>960</sup> The result was a strengthening perception of an “essential difference between China and the West.”<sup>961</sup> Hutters adds that the essential identity created by Chinese intellectuals for China served either as “a means of resistance to the intruder [the intruding West]” or “as a convenient means of classifying and containing indigenous weakness.”<sup>962</sup> He observes that China’s cultural essence became “coterminous with a new and truncated notion of ‘Confucianism’” as key political initiatives competing around the turn of the century became narrowly focused on what should be done about the traditional *Ru* ideology<sup>963</sup>—with Kang Youwei 康有為 (1858-1927) and Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873-1929) seeking to renew it while Zhang Binglin 章炳麟 (1869-1936) seeking to dismantle it.<sup>964</sup> For the May Fourth and Marxist iconoclasts, the cultural essentialisation and differentiation not only “imposed new and severe limitations on the width of the indigenous discursive ground” but also turned the narrowed ground into “the locus of all that is undesirable for the devoutly wished new social and intellectual order.”<sup>965</sup> Mou stood apart from the May Fourth and Marxist iconoclasts: he portrayed *Ruxue* as the positive essence of Chinese culture. Yet, he erred just as much as the iconoclasts in narrowing “the view of the intellectual world of traditional China”,<sup>966</sup> though his narrowed ground was the locus of all that was desirable for the cultural development of China and coterminous with a new and spiritual notion of *Ruxue* that left out the negative. The same holds true for the other authors of the 1958 Declaration. Arif Dirlik criticises key contemporary proponents of *Ruxue* located in North America (and he targets in particular Tu Weiming) for essentialising Chinese culture and portraying *Ruxue* as “a remedy for the ailments of capitalism”. On his view, they indirectly affirm global capitalism when they should be critiquing it in a thoroughgoing manner.<sup>967</sup> His criticism would apply equally to the authors of the 1958 Declaration

---

<sup>960</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>961</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 470.

<sup>962</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 473.

<sup>963</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>964</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 471.

<sup>965</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>966</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 463.

<sup>967</sup> Dirlik, “Confucius in the Borderlands”, p. 272.

The authors of the 1958 Declaration used the term “the West” to refer politically to the Western powers (represented by the United States and its allies in the twentieth century). Broadly speaking, “Western culture” refers to the cultural traditions in or originating from Europe—cultural traditions that cover the religious, scientific, philosophical, and artistic forms in Europe and North America and integrate with the technological, political, and economic forms in these continents. The authors, however, employed the term “Western culture” to serve their cultural nationalist discourse. In so doing, they reduced “Western culture” to its perceived strengths and deficiencies vis-à-vis Chinese culture. They applied a similar reduction to Chinese culture. Thus, Western culture is characterised by its scientific and technological advances and democratic forms of government (which Chinese culture lacks) and Chinese culture by its moral resources (which the authors perceived Western culture to be deficient in). To improve Chinese and Western cultures respectively, the proposal in the declaration was equally simplistic: the two cultures should learn from each other and each should develop what constitutes the perceived strength of the other. This led to the authors’ proposal for China to develop as outlined in Mou’s *santong* proposal and to their relentless moral admonitions to the West.

The 1958 Declaration’s proposal for Westerners to learn from China’s “learning of the mind and human nature” deserves further examination. Before embarking on this task, I would like to make two overall observations. First, it came to my attention that the declaration’s critique-cum-proposal for Western culture reflected rather closely the views of Bertrand Russell (1872-1970). Mou found Russell uninspiring<sup>968</sup> and rejected his realism. Yet, he expressed appreciation of some of Russell’s observations of morality,<sup>969</sup> and I suspect that the authors of the 1958 Declaration might have appropriated readings of the world and Chinese culture made by Russell during and after the First World War. Russell put a great emphasis on understanding and sympathy when he wrote during the First World War in 1915 that “without understanding and sympathy it is impossible to find a cure for the evil from which the world is suffering.”<sup>970</sup> One sees the same emphasis throughout the 1958 Declaration. In his 1922 book entitled *The*

---

<sup>968</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue de tezhi*, p. 119.

<sup>969</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 118-119. Also, Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 46.

<sup>970</sup> Bertrand Russell, *Principles of Social Reconstruction*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1916, p. 10.

*Problems of China*, as a prominent twentieth-century Western thinker, Russell gave a rare positive reading of Chinese culture: “The Chinese have discovered, and have practiced for many centuries, a way of life which, if it could be adopted by all the world, would make all the world happy. We Europeans have not. Our way of life demands strife, exploitation, restless change, discontent and destruction.”<sup>971</sup> His suggestion that the world should adopt the Chinese way of life might have bolstered the cultural nationalist aspiration of the authors of the 1958 Declaration, their claim of China’s moral superiority and their assertion that Chinese and Western cultures had much to learn from each other.

The second observation belongs to Gloria Davies. She observes a wanton indifference among present-day mainland Chinese intellectuals to “the antifoundationalism of self-reflexive inquiry”<sup>972</sup> despite a noticeable “linguistic turn in Sinophone”<sup>973</sup> critical discourse since the 1990s, a turn facilitated by the rapid influx of self-reflexive EuroAmerican formulations.”<sup>974</sup> According to her, instead of problematising claims of a reality, truth or an identified essence outside language, these intellectuals display a “habitual tendency to referee, judge, and bear moral witness to *Chinese* history (as a ‘civilization ruined first by European and then modern Chinese acts of ‘barbarism’).”<sup>975</sup> They also presume “that there is a genuine China that awaits discovery or rediscovery.”<sup>976</sup> Davies points out that the lack of self-reflexivity “does not mean that the textuality that has produced and named an enterprise such as ‘modern China’ or identified the essence of ‘Chinese thought’ is not powerful.”<sup>977</sup> In her view, the textuality “does render certain ways of speaking and writing habitual, and even dogmatic and, by dogmatic fiat, self-evident”, thereby effecting “meanings that inform and direct human actions in powerful ways.”<sup>978</sup> What I find striking in Davies’

---

<sup>971</sup> Bertrand Russell, *The Problem of China*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1922, p. 17.

<sup>972</sup> Gloria Davies, *Worrying about China: The Language of Chinese Critical Inquiry*, Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 2007, p. 40.

<sup>973</sup> Davies uses the term “Sinophone” to convey “the unifying and even transcendent effects of the written [Chinese] language in enabling an author to command authority in prose regardless of his or her ability to speak standard Chinese.” See her *Worrying about China*, p. 6.

<sup>974</sup> Davies, *Worrying about China*, p. 238.

<sup>975</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>976</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>977</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

<sup>978</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

observation is that her descriptions of the mentality of mainland Chinese intellectuals nowadays can be applied without modification to the mentality of the joint authors of the 1958 Declaration more than three decades earlier. In the act of championing “the learning of the mind and human nature” as the essence of Chinese thought and Chinese culture, the joint authors closed the gap between words and reality and rendered the learning “real”—as if it were already the living spirit of the Chinese people and in a form Westerners found visibly appealing. Such was the force of discourse—and the affirming power of the authors’ moral idealist longing.

The authors’ proposal for Westerners to learn from China’s “learning of the mind and human nature” appeared to border on wishful thinking. The authors themselves pointed out in the declaration that the moral metaphysics implicit in “the learning of the mind and human nature”—the learning of inner-sageliness—clashes with the Christian belief in a transcendent God:

但是基督教要先說人有原罪，其教徒是本上帝之意旨，而由上至下，以救人。儒家則多信人之性善，人自身可成聖，而與天合德。此是一衝突。<sup>979</sup>

Yet, Christianity must say first that human beings have the original sin. Its followers are to save others based on God’s will from above. *Rujia*, on the other hand, mostly believe in the goodness of human nature and that human beings can attain sagehood and unite with heaven in virtue. Here we have a clash [of beliefs].

In his post-1958 writings, Mou maintained that the greatest difference between Chinese and Western philosophy is that the former affirms whereas the latter negates that human beings possess what Kant called intellectual intuition—understood by Mou as the inner moral intuition or knowing of the moral mind, the site of inner sageliness. In addition, he expressed little hope for fundamental changes in what he perceived as the Western mind-set:

基督教是永遠往外轉，向上看。科學也是永遠向外看，這不待言。就是西方的哲學也是習於向外看。西方文化的特點就是如此。這頭腦一旦定住了，它是很難轉的，它成了個習慣，看任何東西都是這樣。<sup>980</sup>

---

<sup>979</sup> Mou and others, “The 1958 Declaration”, p. 48.

Christianity is always turning to the outside and looking upwards. Science, needlessly to say, is also always looking outwards. Even Western philosophy is used to looking outwards. The characteristic of Western culture is so. This mindset, once set, is very hard to change. It becomes a habit—everything is looked at this way.

If the critique-cum-proposals for Chinese and Western cultures had little chance of effecting the hoped-for changes in Western culture, they nonetheless elevated *Ru* thought above Christian thought. This elevation bolstered the authors' claim that Chinese and Western cultures had much to learn from each other. It is also the basis for their assertion of parity between the two cultures (*pingdeng hushi* 平等互視) based on complementariness—China's religious superiority vis-a-vis Western superiority in democratic and scientific developments.<sup>981</sup> As will be seen, the elevation also enabled them to privilege *Ru* thought over Christianity as the spiritual resource for the formation of a compassionate and harmonious world culture.

The authors' cultural nationalist aspiration for parity should not, however, distract attention from the fundamental difference Mou identified between prevalent Western epistemological negation of human intellectual intuition, which limits knowledge and truth to the empirical as attained through the deployment of theoretical or instrumental reason, and the affirmation of inner sageliness in Chinese thought. The difference is a key (if not the most important) theme in Mou's moral metaphysics and was an implicit premise underlying the authors' critiques-cum-proposals for the two cultures. It is fair to conclude that the 1958 Declaration did not merely follow what Gloria Davies terms "the well-established Sinophone tradition of defending China's spiritual superiority against the technological or scientific powers of the West"<sup>982</sup>—it also highlighted a key difference between prevalent Western epistemology and Chinese thought. Giving full vent to the authors' cultural nationalist intent, I compose the following two-liner to capture their critique-cum-proposal for Western culture:

---

<sup>980</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, p. 16.

<sup>981</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>982</sup> Davies, *Worrying about China*, p. 25.

一山自有一山高  
惟恐聖人非自內

Beyond each mountain naturally lies a taller one.

The only concern is that sageliness does not issue from within.

The first line features the never-ending deployment of instrumental reason in Western culture; the second valorises inner sageliness.

#### **(d) The Vision for a Harmonious and Compassionate World Culture**

As mentioned, Mou and the other authors of the 1958 Declaration conceived of culture as the expression of a people's mental life. Furthermore, they believed that the core of a people's mental life lies in their philosophical thought or learning. A world culture, therefore, requires the development of a "global learning" (*shijie xueshu* 世界學術).<sup>983</sup>

The ideal "global learning" in their eyes was one that espouses a type of bounded rationality that enables democracy and scientific development but guides and tempers both with the values of empathetic compassion and contentment.<sup>984</sup> Such bounded rationality was precisely what they proposed for China: a cultural reconstruction through democratic and scientific developments guided by *Ruxue*, especially the prime *Ru* virtue of empathetic compassion (*ren*). They, of course, appreciated that democracy and scientific development—the hallmarks of Western culture—are founded on instrumental reason. It was not instrumental reason per se but the unremitting development and unrestrained employment of instrumental reason in the West that they saw as deeply problematic. As mentioned, the authors put forward the view that Westerners' lack of both respect for and sympathetic understanding of Chinese and other non-Western cultures did not bode well for world peace. They expressed the hope that Westerners would learn from Chinese culture and cultivate the *Ru* wisdom contained in "the learning of the mind and human nature" and maintained that doing so on the part of Westerners would pave the way for the formation of a harmonious world culture. The harmonious world culture they envisioned was one in which people in general find contentment and inner peace within themselves and show genuine respect and sympathy

---

<sup>983</sup> Mou and others, "The 1958 Declaration", p. 49.

<sup>984</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 49-51.

for foreign cultures so that all cultures will thrive and coexist in peace and harmony and the entire humanity will live together as one global family (*tianxia yijia* 天下一家).<sup>985</sup> In sum, they adopted a simplistic dichotomy between China and the West and figured Chinese and Western cultures as two complementary heavyweights fostering a world culture and equal partners in an idealised peaceful and harmonious global family. In their mind, this happy vision would materialise as the logical outcome of inter-cultural respect, understanding and learning and a willingness to guide the deployment of instrumental reason with moral values.

As mentioned, the authors of the 1958 Declaration privileged *Ru* thought over Christian thought as the ethico-spiritual resource for a harmonious, compassionate world culture. On their view, *Ru* thought is superior to Christian thought not only because it promulgates inner sageliness but also, and more importantly, because it is free of the religious intolerance inherent in Christian thought:

但教義之不同處，亦可并行不悖，而各有其對人類與其文化之價值。但在養成人之天下一家之情懷上，則我們以為[與]其只賴基督教思想，不如更多賴儒家思想。此乃由以基督教為一制度的宗教，有許多宗教之組織，不易融通。基督教有天堂觀念，亦有地獄觀念；異端與不信者，是可入地獄的。則各宗派間，永不能立于平等之地位，而在自己之教會者與不在者，即分為二類，而一可上天堂，一可入地獄。如此，則基督教對人之愛雖似一無條件，仍可以有一條件，即信我的教。此處實有一極大之問題。照儒家的意思，則只要是人，同有能成聖而與天合德之性。儒家并無教會之組織，亦不必要人皆崇拜孔子，因人本皆可成聖而同于孔子。此即使儒家之教，不與一切人之宗教成為敵對。<sup>986</sup>

However, differences among religious teachings can co-exist without conflict, with each religious teaching having its worth relative to humanity and to the culture it associates with. Yet, in terms of nurturing the emotional capacity for being part of a global family, we think that rather than relying solely on Christian thought, it is better to rely more on *Ru* thought. This is because Christianity is an

---

<sup>985</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

<sup>986</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

institutionalised religion consisting of many religious organisations and does not merge readily [with other religions]. In Christianity, there is the concept of heaven as well as that of hell; and heretics and non-believers could go to hell. Thus, there can never be parity among the various churches or denominations. Instead, members of one's church and non-members fall into two separate groups—one can go to heaven, the other can go to hell. Hence, even though Christianity's love for others appears to be unconditional, it can still have one condition attached—that of converting to my religion. On this point, there is actually an immense problem. According to *Ru* thought, all human beings are capable of becoming a sage and unite with heaven in virtue. *Rujia* has no church organisation and does not require everyone to worship Kongzi. This is because all human beings can attain sagehood and be equal to Kongzi. What this means is that the [religious] teachings of *Ru* do not oppose all [other] religions.

The authors' privileging of *Ru* thought over Christian thought (or any other religious thought system for that matter), however, goes against the pluralism implicit in any world culture. In addition, even though the authors based their claim of cultural parity between China and the West on alleged *Ru* moral (religious) superiority vis-a-vis Western superiority in democratic and scientific development, they appeared to be culturally chauvinistic because, by the logic of their theory of cultural development, religious superiority breeds cultural superiority. Yet, both points are moot given that the 1958 Declaration was, to a great extent, a postcolonial discourse amid continuing Euro-American cultural dominance. The important point I want to make is that Han Chinese cultural nationalism drove the 1958 Declaration and the *Xin Rujia* movement. The following remarks by Wang Bangxiong, a close disciple of Mou in Taiwan, bring this home most clearly:

新儒家力主現代化，不必通過西方宗教的文化理念，而是通過中國文化傳統的精神理性來開出，這樣，就可以避開感情與理性在當代的糾結破裂。到今天為止，中共還在感情跟理性的破裂中。今日我們臺灣走美國化的路子，走民主憲政與自由經濟的道路，但這與百年來中國反西方的感情有

隔。所以我們要強調文化的民族主義，我們講民族主義要通過文化講，通過文化講即通過儒家講。<sup>987</sup>

*Xin Rujia* proponents assert vigorously that modernity needs not be developed out of Western religious concepts<sup>988</sup>—that it should be developed out of the spiritual rationality in China’s cultural tradition instead. This way, we can avoid the entanglement and split between [nationalist] feelings and rationality in our times.<sup>989</sup> Up until this day, Communist China has remained in the split between feelings and rationality. Today, we in Taiwan have taken the Americanised path—the path of constitutional democracy and free economy. Yet, this does not accord with the anti-West feelings of China over the last century. Therefore, we have to emphasise cultural nationalism.<sup>990</sup> To speak of nationalism through culture is to speak of it through *Rujia*.

The cultural nationalist and moral idealistic vision of the joint authors of the 1958 Declaration for a harmonious and compassionate world culture has remained just that: a vision. The fast advance of global capitalism in our times has created what Arif Dirlik called “global immiseration”<sup>991</sup>—not global commiseration as hoped for by the authors. Dirlik maintains that the global economy is in reality a “20/80 economy”, marked by “the marginalization of 80 percent of the world’s population, spread unevenly across national boundaries, who are no longer necessary to the functioning of the global economy—except as a security risk.”<sup>992</sup> On the bright side for the authors of the 1958 Declaration, a couple of scholars in the West have taken notice of the “properly

---

<sup>987</sup> Wang Bangxiong, “Cong Zhongguo xiandaihua guocheng zhong kan Dangdai Xin Rujia de jingshen kaizhan”, p. 18.

<sup>988</sup> Wang had in mind here the influential thesis of Max Weber’s (1864-1920), presented in his well-known work entitled *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904), which linked the development of capitalism to Protestant religious values.

<sup>989</sup> By “feelings”, Wang is referring to anti-West nationalist feelings among the Chinese people since the First Opium War (1839-1842). “Rationality” refers to the rational decision to learn from the West and embark on modernisation. See his “Cong Zhongguo xiandaihua guocheng zhong kan Dangdai Xin Rujia de jingshen kaizhan”, p. 16.

<sup>990</sup> See Chapter 2 of this thesis for a discussion of the intertwining of culture, descent group, race, and nation in the Han cultural nationalist thinking of Xiong Shili, Mou and many other Chinese intellectuals.

<sup>991</sup> Arif Dirlik, “Global Modernity, Spatial Reconfigurations, and Global Health: Perspectives from the People’s Republic of China”, *Boundary 2*, 33:1, 2006, p. 100.

<sup>992</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.

construed ontology”<sup>993</sup> contained in Mou’s thought<sup>994</sup> (the same ontology underlies the declaration). They share the view that Mou’s ontology would “buttress more strongly the need for engaged praxis and especially for the cultivation of an active global citizenship as a corollary of human rights.”<sup>995</sup>

## **Concluding Remarks**

In this chapter, I have suggested that the *Xin Rujia* movement is, to a considerable extent, a cultural nationalist movement and a post-colonial discourse for cultural parity between China and the West in the midst of continuing Euro-American cultural dominance. The 1958 Declaration is of great symbolic significance to the movement because it has been retrospectively construed by many scholars in Taiwan and mainland China as the “manifesto” for the movement. The document served to move the authors’ Han Chinese cultural nationalist discourse into an imagined global arena for an ideological contest between Chinese and Western cultures. The fact that a cultural nationalist discourse—which is what the 1958 Declaration is primarily—has assumed the status of a retrospectively construed “manifesto” for the *Xin Rujia* movement tells clearly that the movement is not merely about Chinese thought or *Ru* moral idealism: it is also—and to a comparable extent, on my view—about ideological control and cultural parity. In saying that the *Xin Rujia* movement is concerned with ideological control, I do not mean to discount the significance of the movement. On the contrary, I mean to convey that one does not truly appreciate the contemporary significance of the movement if one fails to recognise its ideological formation. In a 1995 study of Mou’s thought, Yan Binggang touted Mou’s thought as representing “traditional Chinese philosophy’s new mode of transforming and progressing towards the modern age”.<sup>996</sup> On his view, Mou’s thought carries great contemporary relevance because the issues it addresses are “cultural and historical issues concerning the entire Chinese nation-race”

---

<sup>993</sup> Fred Dallmayr, “On Human Rights-in-the-World: A Response to Jamie Morgan”, *Philosophy East and West* 53.4, Oct 2003, electronic on-line copy, p. 1.

<sup>994</sup> *Ibid.*, electronic on-line copy, p. 2.

<sup>995</sup> *Ibid.*, electronic on-line copy, p. 1.

<sup>996</sup> Yan Binggang 顏炳罡, *Zhenghe yu chongzhu: dangdai da Ru Mou Zongsan xiansheng sixiang yanjiu* 整合與重鑄：當代大儒牟宗三先生思想研究 (Integration and Remoulding: A Study of the Thought of The Great Confucian Mou Zongsan), Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1995, p. 1.

and confronting every Chinese scholar in the twentieth century.<sup>997</sup> Again, chief among the issues Yan had in mind are issues concerning how Chinese culture should develop given the severe challenges posed by Western culture in modern times and the relationship between science and *Ru* humanism.<sup>998</sup>

Gloria Davies describes contemporary Chinese intellectuals as engaging in the ancient Chinese intellectual praxis of “patriotic worrying,”<sup>999</sup> (the same description applies to Mou and many other Chinese intellectuals before them, I might add). She depicts this “patriotic worrying” as an unfolding of “an autochthonous ethos”<sup>1000</sup>—a “crisis mentality” (*youhuan yishi* 憂患意識)<sup>1001</sup> that was instilled first by Mengzi,<sup>1002</sup> transmitted subsequently by *Ru* thinkers during adverse political times and has come to acquire “a modern patriotic inflection” in “a modern world of technologically superior and aggressive foreign nations.”<sup>1003</sup> Entailed in this mentality, she tells us, is “the moral obligation of first identifying and then solving perceived Chinese problems (*Zhongguo wenti* [中國問題]), whether social, political, cultural, historical, or economic, in relation to the unified public cause of achieving China’s national perfection [previously the perfection of all under heaven (*tianxia* 天下)<sup>1004</sup>].”<sup>1005</sup> The “patriotic worrying” of Mou and the other joint authors of the 1958 Declaration led to their proclamation in print of cultural parity between China and the West on the basis of complementariness. It appears that Chinese intellectuals will carry on their praxis of “patriotic worrying” and their cultural nationalist discourse until they have decolonised their mind and their country has achieved cultural parity with the West in fact.

---

<sup>997</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>998</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>999</sup> Davies, *Worrying about China*, p. 1.

<sup>1000</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>1001</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>1002</sup> Mengzi taught that people thrive in worrying and adverse times (presumably by staying alert to problems and sharpening their survival skills) and perish in times of ease and comfort (*Mengzi* VI B: 15).

<sup>1003</sup> Davies, *Worrying about China*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>1004</sup> “All under heaven” refers to “the geopolitical sphere of China” in imperial times. See Davies, *Worrying about China*, p. 19.

<sup>1005</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.



## Conclusion

The twentieth century was extraordinarily tumultuous in China, and Mou was no ordinary thinker. My study has shown that Mou is rightly regarded by many as the theoretical genius behind the *Xin Rujia* movement and that his moral metaphysics is marked by philosophical vigour and impressive breadth and depth. Mou's moral metaphysics and cultural nationalist discourse are entwined. I might even say that his cultural nationalism and moral metaphysics fulfilled each other. His love for China and Chinese culture and his deep concern, sorrow and anguish over the threatened displacement of Chinese culture by Western culture and Marxism fuelled his effort to assert the worth of Chinese culture by recasting and elucidating the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind as a contemporary moral metaphysics using Kantian terminology and Mahāyāna Buddhist paradigms. In turn, his moral metaphysics imparted philosophical and theoretical vigour to his cultural nationalism. The latter is most evident in his doctrine of “self-negation of innate moral consciousness”, which he used to support his *santong* argument that science and democracy are compatible with *Ruxue*. Yu Yingshi 余英時, retired Professor of Chinese History at Princeton University, upholds the view of the Chinese historian Qian Mu 錢穆 (1895-1990) that only a concrete and broad historical approach—which Yu contrasts with the abstract philosophical approach of *Xin Rujia* thinkers<sup>1006</sup>—yields a holistic understanding of the ongoing *Ru* tradition in China.<sup>1007</sup> Mou's moral metaphysics is based on the teaching of Mengzi as expounded by the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind and is not entirely abstract. Nonetheless, Yu is not wrong in suggesting that the *Xin Rujia* perspective does not represent a holistic understanding of the ongoing *Ru* tradition. Assessed in terms of its internal philosophical

---

<sup>1006</sup> Yu Yingshi, *Xiandai Ruxue lun* 現代儒學論 (Essays on Contemporary Confucianism), Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1998, p. 200.

premises and paradigms, Mou's thought is rigorously logical and coherent. Supporters embrace and acclaim it; distracters, however, find fault with it, sometimes harshly. The following sections conclude this study with a critical review of the reception of Mou's thought. The discussion will be along five main themes—two positive assessments and three major criticisms—brought up by his critics. The two positive assessments are that Mou's thought represents a philosophical and Chinese cultural nationalist triumph and that it is a spiritual legacy. The three major criticisms are that it departs from the spirit of classical *Ru* thought, that it lacks practical relevance for China's development and that it is at its heart a moralist discourse of power. Since Western scholars have yet to publish in-depth studies of the systems of thought of Mou and other *Xin Rujia* thinkers, most of the well-known critics of Mou's thought are ethnic Chinese: they either live in or have migrated from mainland China, Taiwan or Hong Kong. Among the supportive critics, the influential ones are Liu Shuxian 劉述先, Tu Weiming 杜維明 and Lee Ming-huei (Li Minghui) 李明輝. The major distracters are Lin Anwu 林安梧, Zheng Jiadong 鄭家棟, Li Zehou 李澤厚 and Yu Yingshi. Since this is a Western study of Mou's thought, I also include comments by three major Western scholars who have engaged with Mou's thought: John Berthrong, Roger T. Ames and Arif Dirlik.

### **A Philosophical and Cultural Nationalist Triumph**

Mou lived through most of the twentieth century, first in mainland China and then in Taiwan and Hong Kong after the Communist takeover of the mainland. To a great extent, Mou as well as his mentor Xiong Shili can be seen as a tormented soul mirroring the tumultuous political and cultural realities of China and the spiritual and cultural crisis experienced by Chinese intellectuals in the twentieth century. They saw—and some still see—the world through lenses coloured by Western and Japanese imperialism and China's political and military humiliations during China's "century of humiliation", which started with the First Opium War with Britain in 1839 and ended with Japan's surrender at the end of the Second World War.<sup>1008</sup> Tu Weiming 杜維明 remarks that

---

<sup>1007</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 183-184, 189.

<sup>1008</sup> Orville Schell, "China: Humiliation & the Olympics", *The New York Review of Books*, volume 55, number 12 (August 14, 2008), on-line copy, pp. 3-4 of 10 pages.

“saving the nation” has become a mission of “great historical significance” for Chinese intellectuals because of “their collective memory” of “the cumulative injustice and humiliation that China, as a civilisation-state, has endured in modern times.”<sup>1009</sup> Qian Mu wrote in his memoir in the late 1970s that “the issue regarding the comparative merits and deficiencies of Chinese and Western cultures has surrounded the entire Chinese population for the last century. My own life has also been so surrounded.”<sup>1010</sup> To Mou, Xiong was an inspiring cultural giant asserting the worth and glory of Chinese culture; so was Mou in the eyes of his own disciples. Supporters and disciples, almost all of whom are ethnic Chinese, have embraced Mou’s 1958 Declaration and his *santong* proposal serving China’s cultural reconstruction not because of their practical relevance to China or the world. They have done so because the imagination of *Ru* thought as a potent cultural force for China and a global spiritual philosophy rivalling *Fo* and Christianity boosts their cultural nationalist pride and reinforces wounded Chinese cultural identity.

Equipped with a sharp intellectual that grasped firmly the fundamental differences between what he dichotomised as Chinese metaphysics and Western metaphysics, Mou sought to assert the worth of *Ruxue* against the rising dominance of Western thought. Zheng Jiadong 鄭家棟, one of a handful of mainland Chinese scholars specialising in the study of *Xin Rujia* thought, hails Mou as the Chinese Kant (*Zhongguo zhexueshi shang de Kangde* 中國哲學史上的康德<sup>1011</sup>). Roger T. Ames observes correctly that Mou attempted “to promote a ‘new Confucianism’ fortified by the prestige and rigor of Kant,”<sup>1012</sup> but his view that Mou was “at the same time resisting the cultural imperialism entailed by taking Kant on his own terms” calls for qualification.<sup>1013</sup> If Mou was proud of being the “Chinese Kant”, he did not stop at that. While Kant stopped in awe at “the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me”<sup>1014</sup> and upheld an epistemology that limits knowledge to objects of the phenomenal world, Mou was not so

<sup>1009</sup> Tu Wei-Ming, *Way, Learning, and Politics*, p. 172.

<sup>1010</sup> Qian Mu 錢穆, *Bashi yi shuangqin shiyou zayi hekan* 八十憶雙親師友雜憶合刊 (A Combined Publication of *Remembering my Parents at Eighty* and *Miscellaneous Recollections of Teachers and Friends*), Taipei: Dongda tushu, 1983, p. 34.

<sup>1011</sup> Zheng Jiadong, *Mou Zongsan*, p. 233.

<sup>1012</sup> Ames, “New Confucianism: A Native Response to Western Philosophy”, p. 94.

<sup>1013</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1014</sup> Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, p. 269.

content. Mou imparted theoretical strength to the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind by recasting it in Kantian categories and Mahāyāna *Fo* paradigms. He also extended Kant's epistemology to admit knowledge of noumena so that there is finally a meeting of minds, on the high ground of inner sageliness, between Kant's moral philosophy thus extended and his own moral metaphysical reading of the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind. Mou's moral metaphysics thus established a bridging between Chinese and Western philosophy. The bridging, however, is very narrow and constricted. This is because of his reduction of Chinese philosophy to *Ruxue* and of *Ruxue* to his moral metaphysical reading of the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind. Furthermore, the bridging seems rather theoretical and presumptuous, for despite the continuing expansion of scholarly interest and activity in *Ruxue* in mainland China,<sup>1015</sup> *Ruxue* is far from being a living force in that country. Nonetheless, Mou earnestly believed that his thought system delivered a fuller understanding of the human mind and of human knowledge than that of Kant. To him and his disciples, his moral metaphysics represents a "perfection" of Kant's moral philosophy and his thought a triumph of *Ruxue* translated as a triumph of Chinese culture.

Observers who do not delve into Lu-Wang metaphysics or share the Han Chinese cultural nationalist aspirations of Mou's disciples obviously remain untouched by the ethos of Mou and his disciples. Arif Dirlik appreciates the cultural nationalist import of the *Xin Rujia* movement, and putting aside the philosophical significance of the movement, he views it primarily as "a manifestation in East Asia of a global postcolonial discourse".<sup>1016</sup> *Xin Rujia* intellectuals, he observes, are "[u]naware that their attachment to Confucian values might be out of emotional nostalgia or, if so aware, unmindful of it."<sup>1017</sup> I concluded in the previous chapter that the 1958 Declaration was primarily a post-colonial cultural nationalist discourse for ideological control and cultural parity. This is not to say that the *Xin Rujia* movement is merely a post-colonial cultural nationalist movement. My presentation of Mou's thought as a moral metaphysics should have made it clear that it is to a comparable extent also a philosophical movement to revive *Ru* thought, and Lu-Wang metaphysics in particular.

---

<sup>1015</sup> John Makeham, *Lost Soul: "Confucianism" in Contemporary Chinese Academic Discourse*, Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press (Harvard-Yenching Institute), 2008, pp. 61-62.

<sup>1016</sup> Dirlik, "Confucius in the Borderlands", p. 230.

## A Spiritual Legacy

Many scholars hold Mou in esteem and see Mou's thought as a spiritual legacy. As noted in the previous chapter, even though the cultural nationalist aspiration of the joint authors of the 1958 Declaration for a harmonious and compassionate world culture has produced little impact globally, scholars in the West have begun to appreciate that Mou's ontology could enrich the ongoing debate on global citizenship and human rights. More importantly, two of the most prominent "third generation" *Xin Rujia*—Liu Shuxian 劉述先 and Tu Weiming 杜維明—have actively promoted *Ruxue* as a spiritual resource for living in the contemporary world and for the formation of a universal spiritual world creed. It is in their work relating to global ethics and *Ru* ethico-spirituality that one sees most clearly Mou's legacy in action. Liu, a research fellow in the Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy within the Academia Sinica, teaches in Taiwan and has been an active contributor to and propagator of *Xin Ruxue* for the last two decades.<sup>1018</sup> Tu is the best known of the North American *Xin Rujia*. He is Professor of Chinese History and Philosophy and of Confucian Studies at Harvard University<sup>1019</sup> and was the director of the prestigious Harvard-Yenching Institute from 1996 to mid-2008.<sup>1020</sup> Hailed as a "da Ru" 大儒 (great *Ru*) by some,<sup>1021</sup> he is adamant that *Ru* self-cultivation "requires a total commitment no less intensive than the bearing of the cross"<sup>1022</sup> and has written and lectured extensively on *Ruxue*. Tu has been involved in the promotion of and research into *Xin Ruxue* since the mid-1970s, when *Xin Ruxue* first appeared as a topic of scholarly interest in the West with the publication of *The Limits of Change: Essays on Conservative Alternatives in Republican China*, edited by Charlotte

---

<sup>1017</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 234.

<sup>1018</sup> See Liu Shuxian's *Rujia sixiang yihan zhi xiandai chanshi lunji* 儒家思想意涵之現代闡釋論集 (Essays on the Contemporary Interpretation of Confucian Thought), Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan, Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiusuo choubichu, 2000. Part I of the book addresses specific Confucian philosophical and developmental issues. Part II discusses (a) Liu's involvement in the UNESCO Universal Ethics Project and his thoughts on how a creed of universal ethics should evolve, and (b) some of the ways in which he has brought Confucian thought to bear upon issues encountered in contemporary society.

<sup>1019</sup> Refer to the short biography of Tu at [www.harvard.edu/cas/biography.php?personId=246](http://www.harvard.edu/cas/biography.php?personId=246) accessed November 11, 2009.

<sup>1020</sup> Tu ended his directorship at the Harvard-Yenching Institute in mid-2008. See [www.harvard-yenching.org/updates\\_events.php](http://www.harvard-yenching.org/updates_events.php), accessed December 4, 2008.

<sup>1021</sup> Jiang Xun 江迅, "Hunan kai jiang: xun qian nian chuantong 湖南開講：尋千年傳統 (Opening Talks in Hunan: In Search of a Thousand-year old Tradition)," *Yazhou Zhoukan* 亞洲週刊 (The International Chinese Newsweekly), April 3, 2000 issue, p. 58.

Furth.<sup>1023</sup> He is devoted to the task of “interpreting Confucian ethics as a spiritual resource for [tackling ecological, world peace and other issues confronting] the emerging global community.”<sup>1024</sup> Moreover, in support of a *Ru*-based development model for East Asia, he argues that *Ru* ethic provides the indigenous resources for the successful modernisation of industrial East Asia<sup>1025</sup> and, contrary to the entrenched Weberian view, is at least compatible with if not also conducive to capitalism.<sup>1026</sup> Tu was probably a student of Mou during his undergraduate studies in Taiwan.<sup>1027</sup> He subscribes generally to Mou’s division of *Ruxue* into three epochs in terms of development—Pre-Qin *Ruxue* as the first epoch, Song-Ming *Ruxue* the second, and *Xin Rujia* the third.<sup>1028</sup> Even though he seldom engages directly with Mou’s or Kant’s thought in his writings, his ethico-spiritual reading of *Ruxue* reflects Mou’s moral metaphysics.<sup>1029</sup>

Other champions of *Ru* spirituality and supporters of Mou include Lee Ming-huei 李明輝 and John Berthrong. Lee, a disciple of Mou based in the Academia Sinica, specialises in Kantian philosophy and *Ru* thought and their reconciliation. In terms of philosophical orientation, he is the *Xin Rujia* scholar who has followed Mou’s footsteps most closely. He has also been the most ardent and articulate defender of Mou. Marked by a firm grasp of the complexity of issues involved and a calm and clear writing style, many of his writings aim to dispel criticisms of Mou’s thought by pointing out and

---

<sup>1022</sup> Tu Wei-ming, *Centrality and Commonality*, p. 21.

<sup>1023</sup> Section IV of the book (pp. 213-302) is devoted to New Confucianism under the heading “The New Confucianism of the Post May Fourth Era”.

<sup>1024</sup> Refer to the short biography of Tu at <http://icg.harvard.edu/~mr40/bio.html>, site accessed on February 20, 2002. See also Tu’s article “the Ecological Turn in New Confucian Humanism: Implications for China and the World”, *Daedalus* 130.4 (Fall 2001), pp. 243-264.

<sup>1025</sup> Tu Wei-ming, “Introduction”, in *Confucian Traditions in East Asian Modernity: Moral Education and Economic Culture in Japan and the Four Mini-Dragons*, ed. idem, Cambridge, Mass.: The American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1996, p. 6.

<sup>1026</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>1027</sup> Tu graduated with a degree in Chinese Studies from Tunghai University in Taiwan in 1961 according to the curriculum vitae of Tu at <http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~wtu/cv.html>, accessed on February 20, 2002. Mou taught at the same university from the autumn of 1956 through early 1960 (see Cai Renhou, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuexi nianpu*, pp. 21-26). Tu referred to Mou as “the teacher who enlightened me” (*qimeng enshi* 啓蒙恩師) (see Tu’s *Rujia chuantong de xiandai zhuanhua* 儒家傳統的現代轉化 (The Modern Transformation of the Confucian Tradition), Beijing: Zhongguo guangbo dianshi chubanshe, 1992, p. 597).

<sup>1028</sup> Tu Wei-Ming, *Way, Learning, and Politics*, pp. 141, 147-149.

correcting what he regards as the critic's philosophical misconceptions or inadequate understanding of Mou's point of view or of *Ru* or Kantian thought.<sup>1030</sup> Following Mou and like Tu,<sup>1031</sup> he essentialises *Ruxue* in terms of empathetic compassion (*ren*):

The essential element of *Ruxue* ought to be founded on the spiritual value contained in the word “*ren*” [empathetic compassion]. This spiritual value is independent of particular institutions and thus has a transcendent nature.<sup>1032</sup>

The *Ru* spirituality promoted by Lee thus continues to be the kind of “desocialized and dehistoricized spirituality” decried by Arif Dirlik.<sup>1033</sup>

John Berthrong is a leading proponent of inter-religious dialogue, who takes seriously Robert Neville's argument that “the *Ru* tradition, broadly conceived, is now portable” in the sense that it can thrive in “the philosophical discourse of the late modern West.”<sup>1034</sup> Unlike Gloria Davis, Berthrong interprets “*youhuan yishi*” 憂患意識 positively—in Mou's terms as “concern consciousness”, expressed as an empathetic concern that virtue and proper flourishing are not extended to the needy and the myriad things in the world. He gives Mou credit for having the insight not only to root *Ru* moral sensitivity in “concern consciousness” but also to use this consciousness to distinguish *Ru* thought from other religions.<sup>1035</sup> Mou is not advocating *Ru* thought as a religion in the usual, dogmatic sense. Rather, his moral metaphysics aims to reconstruct and elucidate the metaphysical worldview behind *Ru* thought and present it as a viable alternative to *Fo* and Christianity. Berthrong announced enthusiastically that Mou “has become part of Christian history” and “a resource for the renewal of Christian theology” because of his significant influence on the younger generation of “Chinese and Korean

---

<sup>1029</sup> This is evident in Tu's *Centrality and Commonality*, which he dedicated to Mou and in which he acknowledged that he had borrowed the term “moral metaphysics” from Mou (see page 4 of the original preface and footnote 9 on p. 124 of the book).

<sup>1030</sup> See examples in Lee Ming-huei, *Rujia yu Kangde* 儒家與康德 (Confucianism and Kant), Taipei: Lianjing chuban shiye gongsi, 1990, preface iii-iv, p. 11.

<sup>1031</sup> See Tu's discussion of the transcendent nature of *ren* in his *Way, Learning, and Politics*, p. 3.

<sup>1032</sup> Lee Ming-huei, *Dangdai Ruxue de ziwo zhuanhua*, p. 10.

<sup>1033</sup> Dirlik decries the *Ru* spirituality promoted by Tu Weiming as “desocialized and dehistoricized”. See Dirlik, “Confucius in the Borderlands”, p. 259.

<sup>1034</sup> John Berthrong, “Boston Confucianism: The Third Wave of Global Confucianism”, *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 40.1-2 (Winter-Spring 2003), p. 11 of electronic copy (21 pages).

<sup>1035</sup> John H. and Evelyn Nagai Berthrong, *Confucianism: A Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2000, p. 26. See Mou's discussion in this regard in his *Zhongguo zhaxue de tezhi*, pp. 17-19.

theologians”.<sup>1036</sup> Mou obviously did not wish to be a resource for the renewal of Christian theology, but cross-fertilisation among *Ru* and other systems of spiritual or religious thought will continue to be an inevitable outcome of increased dialogue among them.

Having covered the two key positive assessments of Mou’s thought, I now turn to the three major criticisms directed at it.

### **Departure from the Spirit of Classical *Ruxue***

The first major criticism of Mou’s thought focuses on its departure from the spirit of classical *Ruxue*. Because of its preoccupation with metaphysics and close engagement with Kant, Mou’s writings can appear far removed from practical human living and sometimes assumes Kant’s rather rational and formalistic style. While this contributes to the reconciliation between *Ru* thought and Kantian thought, it does render Mou’s thought less supple and less of a living force than classical *Ruxue*. Di Zhicheng 翟志成, a researcher of the history of Chinese thought, scathingly describes the “so-called *Xin Rujia* moral metaphysical system”<sup>1037</sup> as “a conceptual game” at “the highest point of the ivory tower”<sup>1038</sup> Lin Anwu 林安梧, a Taiwanese scholar and an active contributor to the internal critique of *Xin Rujia*, attempts a balanced assessment in this regard. On the one hand, Lin thinks that the intellectual approach of seminal *Xin Rujia* thinkers not only provides a needed theoretical and philosophical grounding for, and a contemporary reconstruction of, Song-Ming *Ruxue* but also helps to elucidate China’s moral tradition. He praises Mou for his efforts in this regard, in particular Mou’s doctrine of “self-negation of innate moral consciousness”. In addition, he gives Mou and other *Xin Rujia* thinkers credit for having reinvigorated and reasserted China’s cultural spirit and enabled the Chinese people to overcome the “crisis of meaning” that had resulted from iconoclastic attacks on tradition since the May Fourth Movement (1919).<sup>1039</sup> On the

---

<sup>1036</sup> Berthrong, “Love, Lust, and Sex”, electronic copy, p. 11 of 21.

<sup>1037</sup> Di Zhicheng, *Dangdai Xin Ruxue shilun* 當代新儒學史論 (Critical Essays on the History of Contemporary New Confucianism), Taipei: Yunchen wenhua, 1993, preface, p. vii.

<sup>1038</sup> *Ibid.*, preface, p. viii.

<sup>1039</sup> Lin Anwu, *Ruxue geming lun*, p. 22.

other hand, he maintains that Mou's moral metaphysics goes against the true spirit of *Ruxue*. Applying an ironic twist to Mou's controversial *biezi wei zong* 別子爲宗 (establishing a collateral line as the main line) charge against Zhu Xi, Lin created an uproar shortly after Mou's death with his remark that Mou himself established the greatest collateral line in contemporary *Ruxue* with his highly intellectual onto-cosmological reconstruction of the Lu-Wang Learning of the Mind.<sup>1040</sup> Furthermore, Lin faults *Xin Rujia* for failing to formulate a *Ru* praxis that is fundamentally different from that practised under "old *Ruxue*" (the *Ruxue* that preceded *Xin Rujia*).<sup>1041</sup>

In contrasting Mou with Kant, Lin notes that "if we come to an integrated understanding of Mou's thought, we will definitely find that Mou's emphasises are on the resonance of actual living with the spirit of *Ru* teachings and on the feeling of spiritual oneness with the myriad things at an existential level."<sup>1042</sup> Indeed, one is able to note from just a casual survey of Mou's writings that Mou often reminds his readers that the only way to realise *Ru* moral truth is through the actual practice of empathetic compassion as a way of life and, most importantly, in the form of self-watchfulness, which involves a conscientious effort to reflect inward on one's thoughts and behaviour and to correct any deviation from moral principles.<sup>1043</sup> Mou believes that self-watchfulness ensues from one's innate moral consciousness; on his view, the utmost importance of this moral practice explains the *Ru* emphasis on subjectivity.<sup>1044</sup> The form of moral praxis advocated by Mou, however, is vastly inadequate on Lin's view. Lin maintains that in restricting *Ru* moral praxis to insightful contemplation at the individual level, *Xin Rujia*, Mou included, have perpetuated a major weakness of "old *Ruxue*".<sup>1045</sup> Positioning himself as the successor-cum-critic of Mou,<sup>1046</sup> Lin rightly advocates a shift of focus from theoretical reconstruction, the hallmark of Mou's moral metaphysics, to interactive participation in the living world.<sup>1047</sup> He even coined the term "*hou Xin Ruxue*" 後新儒學 (post-*Xin Ruxue*) to highlight the shift of emphasis from the

---

<sup>1040</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 258-259.

<sup>1041</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>1042</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>1043</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu xingt*, vol. I, p. 1 of preface, p. 273.

<sup>1044</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhaxue shijiu jiang*, pp. 77-78, 80-81.

<sup>1045</sup> Lin Anwu, *Ruxue geming lun*, p. 40.

<sup>1046</sup> *Ibid.*, preface, p. iv.

<sup>1047</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

metaphysical to the practical and to promote his stream of *Xin Ruxue* based on this new focus in what he calls the “post-Mou Zongsan era” (*hou Mou Zongsan shidai* 後牟宗三時代) or “post-*Xin Ruxue* era” (*hou Xin Ruxue shidai* 後新儒學時代).<sup>1048</sup>

Zheng Jiadong praises Mou’s unparalleled contribution to the construction of *Ruxue* as an objective intellectual discipline.<sup>1049</sup> Following Lin, he describes Mou as a defender-cum-betrayer of the *Ru* tradition. He reasons that Mou is a defender of the *Ru* tradition because “he holds the spirit and teachings of *Ru* thought in high esteem”, and a betrayer of the *Ru* tradition because he “unrelentingly led *Ruxue* down a path that turns it into rational, intellectual knowledge.”<sup>1050</sup> Some of Mou’s disciples objected to the “defender-cum-betrayer” label. Fang Yingxian 方穎嫻 defends Mou’s intellectual approach on two grounds. First, the contemporary standard of scholarship and the conceptual mentality of modern people call for Mou’s intellectual, theoretical approach. Second, to expound a contemporary *Ru* philosophical system that would point the way for the healthy development of Chinese culture, Mou needed to change existing misconceptions about the significance of *Ru* thought, and to do that effectively, he had to take a conceptual approach.<sup>1051</sup> While conceding Fang’s points, Zheng insists that the *Ruxue* that has undergone the needed intellectualisation by Mou “is no longer the *Ruxue* in the original sense”<sup>1052</sup>

The *Ruxue* in the original sense, Zheng points out, is “practical” (*shijian de* 實踐的) and “based on inner experience” (*tiren de* 體認的).<sup>1053</sup> He maintains that what was expounded by Mou (as well as by Xiong and other *Xin Rujia*) “was no longer something that can be readily experienced in and applied to practical living” (已不再是某種可以在現實生活中隨處體認、加以落實的東西).<sup>1054</sup> His overall assessment of “Mou the

---

<sup>1048</sup> *Ibid.*, preface, p. i-ii.

<sup>1049</sup> Zheng Jiadong, *Mou Zongsan*, p. 230.

<sup>1050</sup> *Ibid.* p. 228.

<sup>1051</sup> Fang Yingxian, “Shengming de lixing yu lixing de shengming—Mou Zongsan xiansheng zhexue xitong de yiyi 生命的理性與理性的生命---牟宗三先生哲學系統的意義” (The Rationality of Life and the Rational Life: The Significance of the Philosophical System of Mou Zongsan) in *Mou Zongsan xiansheng yu Zhongguo zhexue zhi chongjian* 牟宗三先生與中國哲學之重建 (Mou Zongsan and the Reconstruction of Chinese Philosophy), ed. Lee Ming-huei, Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, 1996, pp. 18-19.

<sup>1052</sup> Zheng Jiadong, *Mou Zongsan*, author’s footnote 8 on p. 228.

<sup>1053</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229.

<sup>1054</sup> Zheng Jiadong, “Gudu, shuli, xuanzhi—Mou Zongsan yu dangdai Rujia de jingyu”, p. 171.

person and his writings” is that they “epitomise the mode of existence of *Ruxue* in modern times”: a conceptual existence within academia, with little historical and practical impact.<sup>1055</sup> Zheng suggests not only that a wide gap existed between “delicate philosophical construction and praxis”<sup>1056</sup> in Mou’s writings but also that Mou the person did not engage in moral praxis. Supporting the suggestion is Zheng’s claim that Mou “admired Kongzi, but not the historical Kongzi but a Kongzi that functions as a kind of pure thought form and a spiritual symbol”.<sup>1057</sup> Zheng also highlights Mou’s intellectual arrogance and unhappy disposition,<sup>1058</sup> which I discuss below, as if they were convincing signs that Mou indeed neglected moral cultivation as suggested by innuendos.<sup>1059</sup>

I find Zheng’s suggestion problematic. According to Zheng, Mou created “little historical impact” because Maoism brought an end to *Rujia* as an active force in the making of history in mainland China.<sup>1060</sup> Yet, Mou left mainland China prior to the Communist takeover and since then lived and taught in Taiwan and Hong Kong, where *Ruxue* and traditional *Ru* values actually thrived. Mou certainly did not bring about or participate in a political revolution, but he surely created a significant historical impact in the academic and intellectual scene by the sheer fact that he was one of the most important and influential thinkers in the *Xin Rujia* movement. A central theme underlying the system of thought of Mou as well as that of Xiong is inner sageliness, which is closely associated with inner morality through the closely linked concepts of the moral mind, innate human nature, empathetic compassion and the feeling of spiritual oneness with the myriad things. Mou as well as Xiong placed great emphasis on one’s capability to access and realise one’s inner sageliness through mind-purifying practices involving moral introspection and meditation. Even though Mou was far from being a perfect moral being and the kind of moral practice he advocated was, as noted by Lin, too confined to insightful contemplation at the individual level and too metaphysical, I do not think we have sufficient ground to suggest, as Zheng does, that Mou did not

---

<sup>1055</sup> Zheng Jiadong, *Mou Zongsan*, pp. 3-4, 7.

<sup>1056</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 235.

<sup>1057</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>1058</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 7, 12-13. Also, Zheng Jiadong, “Gudu, shuli, xuanzhi—Mou Zongsan yu dangdai Rujia de jingyu”, p. 173.

<sup>1059</sup> Zheng Jiadong, “Gudu, shuli, xuanzhi—Mou Zongsan yu dangdai Rujia de jingyu”, p. 171.

<sup>1060</sup> Zheng Jiadong, *Mou Zongsan*, pp. 11-12.

engage in moral praxis. Moral praxis does not mean moral perfection, and given Mou's cultural nationalist agitation, it is reasonable to believe that Mou would be arrogant and unhappy in spite of moral cultivation efforts.

It is important to note also that intellectual understanding (as reflected in Mou's construction of *Ruxue* as an objective intellectual discipline) and praxis (in terms of personal moral cultivation) are compatible. In most human undertakings, moral practice included, intellectual understanding and praxis often aid and deepen each other and can certainly go hand in hand. The Australian philosopher Raimond Gaita believes that "the love of truth is an obligation fundamental to an intellectual or academic vocation—which is one reason why we (often, though not always) tend to think that the abandonment of such a vocation is either a sign that the person did not have one, no matter how brilliant her accomplishments may have been, or that it is a kind of infidelity."<sup>1061</sup> Mou taught philosophy and published his philosophical writings for over fifty years. He had an accomplished career in philosophy, but philosophy for him was a vocation rather than a profession. He was certainly a dedicated seeker and lover of truth and his *santong* proposal for China's cultural reconstruction reflects his strong belief that *Ruxue* as reconstructed by him matters profoundly outside academia. He respected deeply moral philosophers who attempt to embody their philosophy in their way of life,<sup>1062</sup> and his writings indicate that he aspired to be among them.<sup>1063</sup> Nonetheless, there is no denying that Mou's thought is primarily metaphysical and highly abstract, which is in contrast to the common conception among many scholars and thinkers that *Ruxue* is a way of life rather than a teaching or a philosophy.

Liang Shuming grouped many of the sayings in the *Lunyu* to show a composite picture of the way of life practised by Kongzi and his beloved disciple, Yan Hui.<sup>1064</sup> He observed that "[f]rom Kongzi to the Song-Ming [*Ru* thinkers], the path that yielded the most benefits, such as [that taken by] Cheng Mingdao and Wang Yangming, was definitely not that of telling others the many ideas one had come up with. What they transmitted to others was merely their [respective ways of] living. It is, of course, wrong

---

<sup>1061</sup> Raimond Gaita, *A Common Humanity*, p. 197.

<sup>1062</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue de tezhi*, pp. 118-119.

<sup>1063</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang*, pp. 78-79.

<sup>1064</sup> Liang Shuming, *Liang Shuming Jiang Kong-Meng*, pp. 19-26.

to say that by living we mean thought or philosophy. What we call thought or philosophy is but the by-product of living.”<sup>1065</sup> Mou acknowledged that true learning moves from the abstract and intellectual to the existential, and needless to say, the existential completion he had in mind was moral completion. He pointed out that the only way to resonate in spirit with sagely figures like Kongzi is by means of authentic feelings. Indeed, in his writings, *Wushi zishu* in particular, his compassion for humanity, as well as his sadness, grief and crossness regarding the turn of political and cultural events in China, was evident. Yet, if *Ruxue* is truly a way of life, it should involve actual practice in addition to true feelings. From the account of his pupils, Mou was an engaging teacher dedicated to the promulgation and transmission of *Ruxue*.<sup>1066</sup> Yet, his elucidation of empathetic compassion was based primarily on the sayings of Kongzi, Mengzi and the Song-Ming *Ru* thinkers, and although he never wavered from the thesis that true understanding and knowledge of morality comes only from subjective moral effort and practice in day-to-day living, there is little in his writings that describes this subjective process.

Mou’s mentor Xiong Shili admitted to having achieved little in changing his own temperament.<sup>1067</sup> Did Mou complete himself at the end of his journey? I suspect that he did not. Liang Shuming highlighted the happy contentment that marked the *Lunyu* and remarked that “happiness is most important in Kongzi’s teachings.”<sup>1068</sup> Mou’s writings are marked by lucidity of thought, philosophical vigour and crossness at the turn of political and cultural events in contemporary China. The one thing that is definitely missing is happy contentment. Mou remarked that pride was his defence; and it is a known fact that both he and Xiong shared a kind of intellectual arrogance and spiritual elitism, expressed as an overt contempt for intellectuals subscribing to the iconoclastic ideology of the May Fourth Movement (1919) and for thinkers or scholars deemed uninitiated in the moral metaphysical truth they saw embedded in *Ruxue*. Such intellectual arrogance is in full display in Mou’s *Wushi zishu*. The thinkers and scholars whom he loathed or dismissed as philosophically superficial or inadequate included famous names such as Feng Youlan, Hu Shi, Wang Guowei 王國維 (1877-1927), Liang

---

<sup>1065</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>1066</sup> Yan Binggang, *Mou Zongsan xueshu sixiang pingzhuan*, pp. 218-219.

<sup>1067</sup> Xiong Shili, *Shili yuyao chuxu*, p. 29.

Qichao and Dai Zhen 戴震 (1723-1777).<sup>1069</sup> Does this mean that Mou was a hypocrite? I would not think so. After all, Mou held himself up as a moral leader and not a sage and one expects moral completion or perfection only from a sage. Moral actualisation in the *Ru* context is an endless path. As Xiong lamented, “It is not easy to be a human being, and difficult indeed to pursue learning” (*zuoren buyi, weixue shinan* 作人不易，為學實難).<sup>1070</sup>

### **Lack of Practical Relevancy to China’s Development**

The second major criticism of Mou’s thought is that it lacks contemporary relevance for China. Han Qiang 韓強, a mainland Chinese researcher of *Xin Rujia* thought, thinks that a major deficiency in Mou’s *santong* proposal is its failure to provide any workable agenda for facilitating the scientific and democratic construction of mainland China.<sup>1071</sup> I hold a different view in this regard. Mainland China is a country with a huge population, a large territory and a recent history of great political and economic turmoil. It is travelling on uncharted land—developing a capitalistic market system within a Communist regime. The country has been preoccupied with reforms on all fronts, but many reforms remain plagued by poor leadership, lack of expertise, mismanagement and corruption. China’s future development is a great undertaking fraught with difficulties and challenges. Progress will come only as a result of dedication on the part of political leaders and persistence through trial and error. Mou understood philosophy to be that which furnishes the direction or wisdom for cultural development.<sup>1072</sup> He further explained that this direction or wisdom cannot solve concrete and particular problems. To solve particular problems, be it political, social or otherwise, requires specialised knowledge and expertise (*xuetong*) in the pertinent areas.<sup>1073</sup> He conceded that

---

<sup>1068</sup> Liang Shuming, *Liang Shuming jiang Kong-Meng*, p. 21.

<sup>1069</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Wushi zishu*, pp. 26, 49-50, 88, 93.

<sup>1070</sup> Xiong Shili, *Dujing shiyao*, preface, p. 7.

<sup>1071</sup> Han Qiang, “Mou Zongsan xinxing lilun shuping” 牟宗三心性理論述評” (A Descriptive Critique of Mou Zongsan’s Theory of Mind and Human Nature), in *Xiandai Xin Ruxue yanjiu lunji* 現代新儒家研究論集 (Essays in Contemporary New Confucian Studies), ed. Fang Keli 方克立 and Li Jinqian, 李錦全, vol. 2, Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1991, p. 284.

<sup>1072</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongxi zhexue zhi huitong shisi jiang*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>1073</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 30-32.

historically *Ru* thinkers have not been good at solving practical problems. His explanation and defence was that the grand principles put forth by *Ru* thinkers constitute “only the necessary condition (*biyao tiaojian* 必要條件), not the sufficient condition (*chongfen tiaojian* 充分條件). Being sufficient or not is in terms of solving the particular problem at the time, which calls for a practical method. Merely producing principles is not enough.”<sup>1074</sup>

As pointed out by Lee Ming-huei, what renders *Xin Rujia* new is Mou’s doctrine of “self-negation of innate moral consciousness” and the deployment of the doctrine to explain the dialectic between inner sageliness (innate moral consciousness) and new outer kingliness (democratic and scientific development) in Mou’s *santong* proposal.<sup>1075</sup> Mou aimed for his *santong* proposal to provide a direction, not a working plan, for China’s cultural reconstruction. As a philosopher living outside mainland China and with the Chinese Communist Party monopolising political power on the mainland, Mou could not have possibly come up with a realistic working plan for China’s modernisation. Development does not happen philosophically. A blueprint for China’s continuing development has to be based on objective, realistic assessments of relevant conditions and key factors within China—such as existing power dynamics within the CPC, infrastructures, and the living standard and aspiration of the people. One of Mou’s main goals was to correct the thinking among many Chinese intellectuals—Han Qiang being one of them—that *Ru* values are incompatible with the scientific and democratic construction of China.<sup>1076</sup>

Li Zehou 李澤厚, an influential mainland Chinese thinker who maintains a basic Marxist materialist stance, appreciates that *Xin Rujia* thinkers, including Mou, put heavy emphasis on *Ru* moralism. He criticises *Xin Rujia* thought for failing to provide an in-depth picture as to how *Ru* moralism might produce modernity and deal with science, democracy, and individualism—the hallmarks of Western modernity.<sup>1077</sup> Sylvia Chan noted that “Li was the most influential thinker in China in the 1980s and continues to be

---

<sup>1074</sup> Mou Zongsan, *Zhongguo zhaxue shijiu jiang*, p. 178.

<sup>1075</sup> Lee Ming-huei, *Dangdai Ruxue de ziwo zhuanhua*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>1076</sup> Han Qiang, “Mou Zongsan xinxing lilun shuping”, p. 284.

<sup>1077</sup> Li Zehou, *Zhongguo xiandai sixiang shilun* 中國現代思想史論 (An Interpretive History of Contemporary Chinese Thought), revised ed., Taipei: Fengyun shidai chuban gongsi, 1990, p. 386.

read widely in mainland China and Taiwan today.”<sup>1078</sup> She regarded Li as a “New Confucian” because “[h]is ethics and aesthetics are both concerned with inner sageliness.”<sup>1079</sup> This is despite her observations that “[a]t the ontological level, however, Li’s philosophy has little to do with Confucianism, being derived from Marxist materialism. His theory of the cultural-psychological formation is clearly at odds with the Neo-Confucian/New Confucian view that the moral mind is the authentic state of being” and that “he has never quite resolved the inevitable tension between Confucianism and his Marxism, and indeed between his liberalism and Marxism.”<sup>1080</sup> Li’s dubious qualification as a *Xin Rujia* aside, the question he raises concerning the relationship between *Ru* moralism and democracy and individualism is an important one and warrants deliberation by those serious about Mou’s *santong* proposal. How, for example, might the implementation of the *daotong* component of Mou’s *santong* proposal—which conceivably would entail the universal teaching of *Ru* thought in school and the inculcation of *Ru* values in the younger generation<sup>1081</sup>—impinge upon freedom of religion in a truly democratic China as envisioned by Mou? In order to uphold the freedom to choose one’s basic values and belief system, Mou’s *santong* proposal might need to be modified to include all three main streams of Chinese thought—*Ru*, Mou’s moral metaphysics included, *Fo*, and *Dao*—in the school curriculum. Students will benefit from comparing and contrasting *Ru* with *Fo* or *Dao*. As long as all three streams are included and ethnic minority students have the option to not attend, freedom of religion should not be an issue. One might also wonder what it means practically to guide democratic and scientific developments with empathetic compassion and other relevant *Ru* values. The main issue is not that dissension will inevitably arise, but how to handle dissension without violating the separation of church and state fundamental to political freedom.

---

<sup>1078</sup> Sylvia Chan, “Li Zehou and New Confucianism”, in *New Confucianism: A Critical Examination*, ed. John Makeham, p.125.

<sup>1079</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123.

<sup>1080</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1081</sup> One might argue that the inculcation of *Ru* values in the younger generation in China is already happening. At the start of class each morning in China’s primary schools, children chant lines aimed at inculcating in them the virtue of filial piety. See *Redefining the Chinese Family: China’s Staggering Economic Growth Has Overshadowed a More Subtle Shift in China’s Society*, on-line video report by Maureen Fan, produced by the Washington Post Company (New York and London), 2007, video segment on the elderly. Daniel Bell also reports that “my son, in primary school [in mainland China], was graded

## A Moralistic Discourse of Power

The last major criticism of Mou's thought is damning: it accuses Mou of raging a moralistic discourse of power under the pretext of reviving Chinese culture and promoting *Ru* moral metaphysics as a global spiritual resource. Yu Yingshi's condemnation was the harshest in this regard. He objects vehemently to the *Xin Rujia*'s theory of *daotong* (genealogical transmission of the way)<sup>1082</sup> and decries Mou's *santong* proposal as a form of disguised elitism.<sup>1083</sup> He charges that *Xin Rujia* thinkers promote their theory of *daotong* to support their claim that they themselves are the only ones capable of transmitting the *Ru* moral and religious way. He fears that such a claim combined with the *santong* proposal's stipulation that science and democracy must be developed out of *daotong* (the *Ru* moral and religious tradition) means that *Xin Rujia* thinkers are putting themselves on top of a pyramidal hierarchy to direct China's development.<sup>1084</sup> He cites and regards with contempt Xiong Shili's arrogant madness.<sup>1085</sup> Furthermore, he asserts that *Xin Rujia* thinkers in general exhibit a moral superiority,<sup>1086</sup> which, in his analysis, is a psychological reaction to scientism.<sup>1087</sup>

Is Mou's *santong* proposal a moralistic elitist discourse of power? It is moralistic in that it allows *Ru* moral teachings to guide or direct all aspects of human living. Lee Ming-huei's defence of Mou is that moralism permeates the entire *Ru* tradition and not just *Xin Rujia*. On his view, the moralism in Mou's *santong* proposal is of a weak form because the two traditions to be developed under the guidance of *daotong*—the separate traditions of scientific learning and democracy—are to be independent traditions enjoying autonomy in their respective functional areas.<sup>1088</sup> The advantage of Mou's *santong* proposal, according to Lee, is that it allows the development of science and democracy while avoiding the pitfalls of ethical relativism.<sup>1089</sup> He did not spell out the

---

according to how well he showed filial piety to parents". See his book entitled *China's New Confucianism: Politics and Everyday Life in a Changing Society*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008, p. 10.

<sup>1082</sup> Yu Yingshi, *Xiandai Ruxue lun*, pp. 201-211.

<sup>1083</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 217.

<sup>1084</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1085</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 197-198.

<sup>1086</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 219-221.

<sup>1087</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 221-222.

<sup>1088</sup> Lee Ming-huei, *Dangdai Ruxue de ziwo zhuanhua*, pp. 157-158.

<sup>1089</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

pitfalls of ethical relativism. An obvious pitfall that comes to mind is that the universality of paramount *Ru* values like empathetic compassion cannot hold in a system that embraces ethical relativism.

Cultural nationalism is a discourse of power and it drove Mou's *santong* proposal. Yet, even though I noted Mou's ideological control when he declared back in 1949 that in the third epoch of *Ruxue*, thinkers were to play the central "go-between" role, presumably between the way and the people, Mou's *santong* proposal is not in itself elitist. Yu's fear that Mou was raging a moralist elitist discourse of power stems from flawed reasoning. As pointed out previously, the term "*daotong*" carries two different but related meanings; and Yu confounds the two. Mou's *santong* proposal uses "*daotong*" in the first sense to refer to the *Ru* moral and religious tradition based on the learning of inner sageliness and the directing role of *Ru* values. His new *daotong* discourse, on the other hand, uses the term in the second sense to refer to the genealogical transmission of the learning of this tradition through particular *Ru* thinkers, with *Xin Rujia* thinkers being the presumed contemporary heirs. By sliding from the first sense of *daotong* to the second sense, Yu makes the wrong accusation that *Xin Rujia* thinkers put themselves in charge of China's development, when in fact, the *santong* proposal proposes that empathetic compassion and other relevant *Ru* values—not *Xin Rujia* thinkers—direct China's democratic and scientific development. Lee Ming-huei rebukes Yu's accusation in detail with the clarification that *Xin Rujia* thinkers "belonging to the genealogical line of Xiong regard the constant way of the entire nation-race as *daotong* [in the first sense]".<sup>1090</sup> They do not see *daotong* [in the first sense] as "belonging exclusively to a minority of sagely and virtuous figures" even though they subscribe to the notion of *daotong* in the second genealogical sense, which is that "a minority of sagely and virtuous figures in particular are able to self-consciously expand and make manifest" the constant way.<sup>1091</sup> In spite of Lee's rebuke, however, Yu's charge of "disguised elitism", though not justified when applied to Mou's *santong* proposal, serves to highlight the fact that the genealogical sense of *daotong* does figure quite visibly in Mou's thought and has the potential of being deployed for ideological purposes. As pointed out by John Makeham, "Mou's conception of *xin xing*

---

<sup>1090</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 157.

<sup>1091</sup> *Ibid.*

*zhi xue* [the Song-Ming “learning of the mind and human nature”] requires the enlightened awareness and understanding of sage-like figures such as Xiong Shili in order for that learning to be recovered and reconstructed.”<sup>1092</sup> Mou seemed to poise the Chinese nation-race between elitist enlightenment accompanied by the spectre of ideological control of the masses by a few and the tragic loss of China’s spiritual marrow accompanied by egalitarian un-enlightenment. In view of China’s political development in the twentieth century, it is understandable that intellectuals like Yu are wary of the former option.

With regard to Yu’s charge of arrogant madness, Xiong did appear arrogant and mad in some of his writings.<sup>1093</sup> This is unfortunate but should not be used to discredit the entirety of *Xin Rujia* teachings. A driving teacher might commit the offence of drunk driving, but the behaviour should not be used to discredit driving manuals written by himself when he is sober or by other driving teachers. I agree with Yu that *Xin Rujia* thinkers react to scientism and noted above that Mou and Xiong shared a kind of intellectual arrogance and spiritual elitism. My view is that such intellectual arrogance and spiritual elitism, especially in the case of Mou, are fuelled by cultural nationalist and moral idealist sentiments and are better understood as reactions to the May Fourth iconoclastic ideology and prevailing scientism than as forms of elitist moral superiority. Overall, Mou and Xiong’s condemnation of scientism appears to me to be considered and rational rather than emotional. Like them, I think that it is a grave misconception that science and the accompanying material affluence and economic freedom have rendered moral values largely irrelevant to modern living. The great physicist Albert Einstein (1879-1955) attested to the limit of science:

...the scientific method can teach us nothing else beyond how facts are related to, and conditioned by, each other. ...Yet it is equally clear that knowledge of what *is* does not open the door directly to what *should be*. One can have the clearest and most complete knowledge of what *is*, and yet not be able to

---

<sup>1092</sup> Makeham, *Lost Soul*, p. 166.

<sup>1093</sup> As noted in Yu, *Xiandai Ruxue lun*, p. 198, 209, 218.

deduct from that what should be the *goal* of our human aspirations. ...Here we face, therefore, the limits of the purely rational conception of our existence.<sup>1094</sup>

In summary, the reception of Mou's thought is mixed, with supporters and distracters calling attention to two key merits and three weaknesses as discussed above. Having examined the inner workings of Mou's moral metaphysics and his critique of Kant's moral thought, I have to conclude that Mou left behind a brilliant intellectual legacy of amazing breadth and analytical depth that is of great value to students of *Ruxue* and to those interested in human consciousness or in a *Ru* critique of Kant's moral philosophy. Yet, something remains unfinished. More than a decade has passed since Mou's death and, as Gloria Davies observes, Chinese intellectuals have continued to wallow in "patriotic worrying". The global revival of *Ruxue* has gathered momentum in mainland China since Mou's death. The establishment of more than 250 Confucius Institutes within universities worldwide since 2004, under an initiative of the Chinese government to promote the teaching of the Chinese language, shows that the government now associates Chinese culture centrally with the teaching of Kongzi.<sup>1095</sup> The popularity within China of Yu Dan's 于丹 2006 book on the *Lunyu* attests to the upward momentum of the revival. The strength of the revival does not mean, however, that Mou's thought has become popular in the mainland. Both Yu Dan and Mou champion cultural nationalism, but Mou's *santong* proposal calls for democratic development while Yu Dan's promotion of harmony, contentment and faith in the ruler<sup>1096</sup> appears to support what Rowan Callick calls "the China model",<sup>1097</sup> a model successfully adopted by the dictatorial Chinese Communist Party to create economic freedom while maintaining political repression. Thus, while Mou's moral metaphysics has been

---

<sup>1094</sup> Albert Einstein, "Science and Religion" in *Quantum Questions: Mystical Writings of the World's Greatest Physicists*, ed. Ken Wilber, Boston: Shambhala, 1984, pp. 107-108.

<sup>1095</sup> Ling Zhu, "Li Changchun Attends Ceremony for Establishment of Confucian Institute in Bulgaria", on GOV.cn (the Chinese Government's official web portal), June 10, 2006, at [http://english.gov.cn/2006-06/10/content\\_305744.htm](http://english.gov.cn/2006-06/10/content_305744.htm), accessed October 31, 2006. Also, "Olympics Boosts Chinese Language Promotion", September 30, 2008 at [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-9/30/content\\_10135004\\_1.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-9/30/content_10135004_1.htm), accessed on November 10, 2008.

<sup>1096</sup> Yu Dan, *Yu Dan Lunyu xinde* 于丹論語心得 (Insights from Yu Dan's Reading of the *Analects*), Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006, pp. 9-10, 43, 87.

<sup>1097</sup> Rowan Callick, "The China Model: Economic Freedom Plus Political Repression", *The American* (Washington D.C.), 1.7 (Nov-Dec 2007), p. 36.

instrumental in the transformation of *Ruxue* into a spiritual praxis in modern times, there is much work left for *Xin Ruji*a advocates serious about reviving the *Ru* tradition as a living culture in China as envisioned by Mou. The tradition is and will remain anachronistic until the Chinese people transform the long-standing patriarchal, autocratic mindset nourished by it. Is it not about time Chinese intellectuals imagine the co-existence of harmony and political freedom?



## Works Cited

- Ames, Roger T. "New Confucianism: A Native Response to Western Philosophy." In *Chinese Political Culture: 1989-2000*, ed. Shiping Hua. Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2001.
- Beiser, Frederick. *Hegel*. New York and London: Routledge, 2005.
- Bell, Daniel A. *China's New Confucianism: Politics and Everyday Life in a Changing Society*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008.
- Berthrong, John. "Boston Confucianism: The Third Wave of Global Confucianism." *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, 40.1-2 (Winter-Spring 2003), electronic copy (21 pages).
- . "Love, Lust, and Sex: A Christian Perspective." *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, 24 (Annual 2004), electronic copy (21 pages).
- Berthrong, John H., and Evelyn Nagai Berthrong. *Confucianism: A Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2000.
- Bianco, Lucien. *Origins of the Chinese Revolution 1915-1949*, trans. Muriel Bell. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1971.
- Billioud, Sébastien. "Mou Zongsan's Problem with the Heideggerian Interpretation of Kant." *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 33(2) (June 2006), pp. 225-247.
- Bol, Peter K. *Neo-Confucianism in History*. Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Asia Center, 2008.
- Cai Renhou 蔡仁厚. "Bianyin shuoming" 編印說明 (Statement on Compilation and Publication." In Mou Zongsan 牟宗三, *Renwen jiangxi lu* 人文講習錄 (Transcribed Talks Given at the Humanities Study Club), compl. Cai Renhou. Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1996.
- . *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuesi nianpu* 牟宗三先生學思年譜 (A Chronology of Mou Zongsan's Academic Career). Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1996.
- . *Xiong Shili xiansheng xuexing nianbiao* 熊十力先生學行年表 (A Chronology of Xiong Shili's Academic Career). 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1991.
- Callick, Rowan. "The China Model: Economic Freedom Plus Political Repression". *The American* (Washington D.C.), 1.7 (Nov-Dec 2007), pp. 36-38, 40-42, 44, 96-98, 100-104.
- Chan, Sylvia. "Li Zehou and New Confucianism." In *New Confucianism: A Critical Examination* (q.v.), ed. John Makeham.

- Chang, Carsun, Tang Chun-i, Mou Tsung-san, and Hsu Fo-kuan, 'A Manifesto for a Re-appraisal of Sinology and Reconstruction of Chinese Culture.' In Carsun Chang, *The Development of Neo-Confucian Thought*, vol. II. New York: Bookman Associates, 1962.
- Chang, Hao. "New Confucianism and the Intellectual Crisis of Contemporary China." In *The Limits of Change: Essays on Conservative Alternatives in Republican China*, ed. Charlotte Furth. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1976.
- Cheng, Chung-ying. *New Dimensions of Confucian and Neo-Confucian Philosophy*. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1991.
- Cheng Mingdao 程明道 and Cheng Yichuan 程伊川. *Er Cheng quanshu* 二程全書 (The Complete Collection of the Works of the Two Chengs), vols. 1 and 2. Zhonghua shuju edition based on the Song edition (*zhenfang songban yin* 珍傲宋版印). Zhonghua shuju, year of publication unknown.
- Cousins, Ewert. "Preface to the Series". In *Confucian Spirituality*, ed. Tu Weiming and Mary Evelyn Tucker, vol. 1. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2003.
- Dallmayr, Fred. "On Human Rights-in-the-World: A Response to Jamie Morgan." *Philosophy East and West* 53.4, Oct 2003, electronic copy (4 pages).
- Davies, Gloria. *Worrying about China: The Language of Chinese Critical Inquiry*. Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 2007.
- de Bary, Wm. Theodore, Wing-tsit Chan, and Burton Watson, compl. and trans. *Sources of Chinese Tradition*. New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1960.
- Di Zhicheng 翟志成. *Dangdai Xin Ruxue shilun* 當代新儒學史論 (Critical Essays on the History of Contemporary New Confucianism). Taipei: Yunchen wenhua, 1993.
- Dikötter, Frank. "Culture, 'Race' and Nation: The Formation of National Identity in Twentieth Century China." *Journal of International Affairs*, Winter 1996, 49, no. 2, pp. 590-605.
- Dirlik, Arif. "Chinese History and the Question of Orientalism." *History and Theory*, 35(4) (December 1996), pp. 96-118.
- . "Confucius in the Borderlands: Global Capitalism, and the Reinvention of Confucianism." *Boundary 2* (Duke University Press), vol. 22, no. 3 (Autumn 1995), pp. 229-273.
- . "Global Modernity, Spatial Reconfigurations, and Global Health: Perspectives from the People's Republic of China." *Boundary 2*, 33:1, 2006, pp. 99-122.
- Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒. Quoted in "Dong Zhongshu zhuan" 董仲舒傳 (Biography of Dong Zhongshu). In Ban Gu 班固, *Han Shu buzhu* 漢書補註 (The Annotated Book of Han), annot. Wang Xianqian 王先謙, vol. VI. Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1959.
- Duara, Prasenjit. "De-Constructing the Chinese Nation." In *Chinese Nationalism* (q.v.), ed. Jonathan Unger.
- East Asian Research Center. "Foreword." In *Reflections on the May Fourth Movement: A Symposium*, ed. Benjamin I. Schwartz. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972.
- Ebrey, Patricia Buckley. *The Cambridge Illustrated History of China*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Einstein, Albert. "Science and Religion." In *Quantum Questions: Mystical Writings of the World's Greatest Physicists*, ed. Ken Wilber. Boston: Shambhala, 1984.

Elman, Benjamin A. "Rethinking 'Confucianism' and 'Neo-Confucianism' in Modern Chinese History." In *Rethinking Confucianism: Past and Present in China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam* (q.v.), ed. *idem* and others.

———. "'Universal Science' Versus 'Chinese Science': The Changing Identity of Natural Studies in China, 1850-1930." *Historiography East & West*, 2003, 1: 1, pp. 70-116.

Elman, Benjamin A., John B. Duncan, and Herman Ooms, eds. *Rethinking Confucianism: Past and Present in China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam*. Los Angeles: University of California, 2002.

Fan, Maureen. *Redefining the Chinese Family: China's Staggering Economic Growth Has Overshadowed a More Subtle Shift in China's Society*. On-line video report produced by the Washington Post Company (New York and London), 2007, video segment on the elderly.

Fang Yingxian 方穎嫻. "Shengming de lixing yu lixing de shengming—Mou Zongsan xiansheng zhexue xitong de yiyi" 生命的理性與理性的生命---牟宗三先生哲學系統的意義 (The Rationality of Life and the Rational Life: The Significance of the Philosophical System of Mou Zongsan). In *Mou Zongsan xiansheng yu Zhongguo zhexue zhi chongjian* 牟宗三先生與中國哲學之重建 (Mou Zongsan and the Reconstruction of Chinese Philosophy), ed. Lee Ming-huei 李明輝. Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, 1996.

Feng Zucheng 封祖盛, ed. *Dangdai Xin Rujia* 當代新儒家 (Contemporary New Confucianism). Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 1989.

Findlay, J. N. "Foreword." In Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit* (q.v.).

———. *Hegel: A Re-Examination*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1958.

Foundation for the Study of Chinese Philosophy and Culture (FSCPC) website. At [www.fscpc.org/mouzongsan/mou.asp](http://www.fscpc.org/mouzongsan/mou.asp), accessed December 18, 2008.

Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, trans. Colin Gordon and others. New York: Pantheon books, 1980.

Fung Yu-Lan (Feng Youlan). *A Short History of Chinese Philosophy*, ed. Derk Bodde. New York: The Free Press, 1948.

Gaita, Raimond. *A Common Humanity: Thinking about Love & Truth & Justice*. Melbourne: The Text Publishing Company, 1999.

Gregory, Peter N. "The Vitality of Buddhism in the Sung." In *Buddhism in the Sung*, ed. *idem* and Daniel A. Getz, Jr. National City, California: Kuroda Institute for the Study of Buddhism and Human Values, in association with the University of Hawaii Press (Honolulu), 1999.

Guyer, Paul. "Editor's Introduction." In Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (q.v.).

Guyer, Paul, and Allen W. Wood. "Introduction." In Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (q.v.).

Hall, David L., and Roger T. Ames. *Thinking Through Confucius*. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1987.

Han Qiang. 韓強. “Mou Zongsan xinxing lilun shuping 牟宗三心性理論述評” (A Descriptive Critique of Mou Zongsan’s Theory of Mind and Human Nature). In *Xiandai Xin Ruxue yanjiu lunji* 現代新儒家研究論集 (Essays in Contemporary New Confucian Studies), ed. Fang Keli 方克立 and Li Jinquan 李錦全, vol. 2. Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1991.

Han Yu 韓愈. *Han Changli ji* 韓昌黎集 (Collected Writings of Han Yu). Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1958.

———. “Song Wang xiucai xu 送王秀才序” (Preface presented to Master Wang). In *idem*, *Han Changli ji* (q.v.).

———. “Yuandao 原道” (The Original Way). In *idem*, *Han Changli ji* (q.v.).

Harvard-Yenching Institute. Updates at [www.harvard-yenching.org/updates\\_events.php](http://www.harvard-yenching.org/updates_events.php), accessed December 4, 2008.

Harvey, Peter. *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. *Hegel’s Logic (Part One of The Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences (1830))*, trans. William Wallace. London: Oxford University Press, 1975.

———. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1977.

———. *The Philosophy of History*, trans. Sibree. New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1956.

Hu Weixi 胡偉希. *Chuantong yu renwen: dui gangtai Xin Rujia de kaocha* 傳統與人文—對港臺新儒家的考察 (Tradition and Human Culture: An Investigation into the New Confucians of Taiwan and Hong Kong). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992.

Huters, Theodore. “The Closing of the Confucian Perspective in China.” In *Rethinking Confucianism: Past and Present in China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam* (q.v.), ed. Benjamin A. Elman and others.

Jensen, Lionel M. *Manufacturing Confucianism: Chinese Traditions & Universal Civilization*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997.

Jiang Xun 江迅. “Hunan kai jiang: xun qian nian chuantong” 湖南開講：尋千年傳統 (Opening Talks in Hunan: In Search of a Thousand-Year Old Tradition). *Yazhou Zhoukan* 亞洲週刊 (The international Chinese Newsweekly), April 3, 2000 issue, pp. 58-59.

Jing Haifeng 景海峰. “Bianxu” 編序 (Preface to the Edition). In *Dangdai Xin Rujia* (q.v.), ed. Feng Zucheng.

Jingkong 淨空. *Jingang Jing jiangyi jieyao* 金剛經講義節要 (An Abridged Exposition of the Diamond Sutra). Taipei: Huazang fojiao tushuguan, 1995.

Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. Paul Guyer, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

———. *Critique of Practical Reason*. In *idem*, *Practical Philosophy* (q.v.).

———. *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

———. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. trans. and ed. Mary Gregor. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

———. *The Metaphysics of Morals*. In idem, *Practical Philosophy* (q.v.).

———. *Practical Philosophy*, trans. and ed. Mary J. Gregor. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Kantor, Hans-Rudolf. "Ontological Indeterminacy and its Soteriological Relevance: An Assessment of Mou Zongsan's (1909-1995) Interpretation of Zhiyi's (538-597) Tiantai Buddhism". *Philosophy East & West*, vol. 56, no. 1, January 2006, pp. 16-68.

Ku Hung-Ming, *The Spirit of the Chinese People*. Beijing: Waiyu jiaoxue yu yanjiu chubanshe, 1998.

Lee Ming-huei 李明輝. *Dangdai Ruxue de ziwo zhuanhua* 當代儒學的自我轉化 (The Self-Transformation of Contemporary Confucianism). Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 2001.

———. *Rujia yu Kangde* 儒家與康德 (Confucianism and Kant). Taipei: Lianjing chuban shiye gongsi, 1990.

———. "Wang Yangming's 王陽明 Philosophy and Modern Theories of Democracy: A Reconstructive Interpretation." *Dao*, 2008(7) (published online July 24, 2008), pp. 283-294.

*Lengyanjing yidu jianzhu* 楞嚴經易讀簡註 (The *Lengyanjing* (annotated)). Hong Kong: Hongda yinshua sheji gongsi, 1993.

Li Zehou 李澤厚. *Zhongguo xiandai sixiang shilun* 中國現代思想史論 (An Interpretive History of Contemporary Chinese Thought). Revised ed. Taipei: Fengyun shidai chuban gongsi, 1990.

Liang Qichao 梁啟超. "Travel Impressions of Europe." In *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, compl. and trans. Wm. Theodore de Bary, Wing-tsit Chan, and Burton Watson. New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1960.

Liang Shuming 梁漱溟. *Liang Shuming jiang Kong-Meng* 梁漱溟講孔孟 (Talks on the Teachings of Confucius and Mencius by Liang Shuming), compl. Li Yuanting and Yan Binghua. Beijing: Zhongguo heping chubanshe, 1993.

———. *Liang Shuming quanji* 梁漱溟全集 (The Complete Collection of the Works of Liang Shuming), vol. I. Shandong, China: Shandong renmin chubanshe, 1989.

*Liji* 禮記 (the *Rites Records*). *Shisan jing zhushu* edition. Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1985.

Lin Anwu 林安梧. *Ruxue geming lun: Hou Xin Rujia zhaxue de wenti xiangdu* 儒學革命論：後新儒家哲學的問題向度 (Discussions on Confucian Revolution: The Orientation of Problematics in New Confucian Philosophy). Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1998.

———. "Xiong Shili xiansheng de guhuai hongyi ji qi Yuan Ru de yili guimu" 熊十力先生的孤懷弘詣及其《原儒》的義理規模 (The Solitary Aspiration and Great Attainment of Xiong Shili and the Scope of Key Principles in his *Yuan Ru*). In Xiong Shili, *Yuan Ru* (q.v.).

Lin Zhenguó 林鎮國. “Zhongguo Fojiao xingshangxue de xushuo xingtai: Xin Rujia lun Fojia tiyong yi” 中國佛教形上學的虛說形態：新儒家論佛家體用義 (The Mode of Empty Designation in Chinese Buddhist Metaphysics: New Confucian Discussions about the Meaning of Fundamental State/Condition and Function). In *Rujia sixiang zai xiandai dongya: Zhongguo dalu yu Taiwan pian* 儒家思想在現代東亞：中國大陸與臺灣篇 (Confucian Thought in Contemporary East Asia: Papers on Mainland China and Taiwan), ed. Liu Shuxian 劉述先. Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan, Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiusuo choubelichu, 2000.

Ling Zhu, “Li Changchun Attends Ceremony for Establishment of Confucian Institute in Bulgaria” on GOV.cn (the Chinese Government’s official web portal), June 10, 2006, at [http://english.gov.cn/2006-06/10/content\\_305744.htm](http://english.gov.cn/2006-06/10/content_305744.htm), accessed October 31, 2006.

Liu Shuxian 劉述先. *Rujia sixiang yihan zhi xiandai Chanshi lunji* 儒家思想意涵之現代闡釋論集 (Essays on the Contemporary Interpretation of Confucian Thought), Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan, Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiusuo choubelichu, 2000.

Lu Jiuyuan 陸九淵 (Lu Xiangshan 陸象山). *Lu Xiangshan quanji* 陸象山全集 (The Complete Collection of the Works of Lu Xiangshan). Beijing: Zhongguo shudian, 1992.

Luan Chuanda 樂傳大. “Zhonghua minzu chuantong meide jiaoyu yanjiu baogao” 中華民族傳統美德教育研究報告 (A Report on Research into the Teaching of Traditional Chinese Moral Values). *Jiaoyu yanjiu* 教育研究 (Educational research), 248 (September 2000), pp. 26-30, 70.

*Macquarie Concise Dictionary*, revised 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., New South Wales: Macquarie University, 2004.

Makeham, John. “Introduction.” In *New Confucianism: A Critical Examination* (q.v.), ed. *idem*.

———. *Lost Soul: “Confucianism” in Contemporary Chinese Academic Discourse*. Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press (Harvard-Yenching Institute), 2008.

———. “The New *Daotong*.” In *New Confucianism: A Critical Examination* (q.v.), ed. *idem*.

———. “The Retrospective Creation of New Confucianism.” In *New Confucianism: A Critical Examination* (q.v.), ed. *idem*.

Makeham, John, ed. *New Confucianism: A Critical Examination*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

Mote, Frederick W. *Intellectual Foundations of China*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1989.

Mou Zongsan 牟宗三. *Caixing yu xuanli* 才性與玄理 (Material Human Nature and the “Profound Thought” [of the Wei-Jin Period]). Revised ed. Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1993.

———. *Cong Lu Xiangshan dao Liu Jishan* 從陸象山到劉戡山 (From Lu Xiangshan to Liu Jishan). 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 2000 (year of reprint, year of publication not given).

———. “Dangdai Xin Rujia (dawen lu)” 當代新儒家（答問錄） (Contemporary New Confucians (an interview with Mou Zongsan), interview conducted by Wu Ming 吳明. In

- Jimo de Xin Rujia* 寂寞的新儒家 (The Lonely New Confucians), ed. Zhou Boyu 周博裕. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Taipei: Ehu chubanshe, 1996.
- . *Daode de lixiang zhuyi* 道德的理想主義 (Moral Idealism). Revised ed. Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1992.
- . “Daodexue lun liangxin” 道德學論良心 “Discussion of Conscience in Kant’s Doctrine of Virtue”. In *Kangde de daode zhexue* 康德的道德哲學 (Chinese Translation of Kant’s moral philosophy) (q.v.), trans. idem., appendix II.
- . *Foxing yu bore* 佛性與般若 (Buddha Nature and Wisdom), vols. I-II. Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1992.
- . *Lishi zhexue* 歷史哲學 (The Philosophy of History). Expanded ed. Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1962.
- . *Lize xue* 理則學 (The Study of Logic). Taipei: Guoli bianyiguan, 1971.
- . *Mou Zongsan xiansheng quanji* 牟宗三先生全集 (The Complete Collection of the Works of Mou Zongsan), vols. 24, 25, 26, 27. Taipei: Lianhe baoxi wenhua jijin hui, 2003.
- . *Renshi xin zhi pipan* 認識心之批判 (Critique of the Cognitive Mind), vol. I and II. Revised ed. Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1990.
- . *Renwen jiangxi lu* 人文講習錄 (Transcribed Talks Given at the Humanities Study Club), compl. Cai Renhou. Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1996.
- . “Shangque” 商榷 (Summary Discussion). In *Kangde panduanli zhi pipan* 康德判斷力之批判 (Chinese Translation of Kant’s *Critique of the Power of Judgment*) (q.v.), trans. idem. vol. I.
- . *Shengming de xuewen* 生命的學問 (the Learning of Life). Taipei: Sanmin shuju, 1970.
- . *Shidai yu ganshou* 時代與感受 (The Times and Sensibilities). 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Taipei: Ehu chubanshe, 1995.
- . *Wushi zishu* 五十自述 (An Autobiography at Fifty). 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Taipei: Ehu chubanshe, 1993.
- . *Xianxiang yu wu zishen* 現象與物自身 (Phenomena and Noumena). Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1990.
- . *Xinti yu xingtǐ* 心體與性體 (Onto-cosmological Grounding of the Mind and of Human Nature), vols. I-III. Taipei: Zhengzhong shuju, 1968, 1969.
- . “Xiong Shili xiansheng zhuinian hui jianghua” 熊十力先生追念會講話 (Talk Given at the Commemorative Gathering for Xiong Shili). In Xiong Shili, *Dujing shiyao* (q.v.).
- . “Yizhe zhi yan” 譯者之言 (Translator’s Foreword). In *Kangde chuncui lixing zhi pipan* 康德純粹理性之批判 (Chinese Translation of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*) (q.v.), trans. idem., vol. I.
- . “Yizhe zhi yan” 譯者之言 (Translator’s Foreword). In *Kangde de daode zhexue* 康德的道德哲學 (Chinese Translation of Kant’s moral philosophy) (q.v.), trans. idem.

———. “Yizhe zhi yan” 譯者之言 (Translator’s Foreword). In *Kangde panduanli zhi pipan* 康德判斷力之批判 (Chinese Translation of Kant’s *Critique of the Power of Judgment*) (q.v.), trans. idem, vol. I.

———. *Yuanshan lun* 圓善論 (A Treatise on the Highest Good). Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1985.

———. *Zhengdao yu zhidao* 政道與治道 (Rulership and Governance). Expanded ed. Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1991.

———. *Zhi de zhijue yu Zhongguo zhexue* 智的直覺與中國哲學 (Intellectual Intuition and Chinese Philosophy). Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1971.

———. *Zhongguo zhexue de tezhi* 中國哲學的特質 (The Characteristics of Chinese Philosophy). 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1974.

———. *Zhongguo zhexue shijiu jiang* 中國哲學十九講 (Nineteen Lectures on Chinese Philosophy). Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1983.

———. *Zhongxi zhexue zhi huitong shisi jiang* 中西哲學之會通十四講 (Fourteen Lectures on the Reconciliation of Chinese Philosophy with Western Philosophy), Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1990.

Mou Zongsan 牟宗三, Zhang Junmai 張君勱, Xu Fuguan 徐復觀 and Tang Junyi 唐君毅. “Wei Zhongguo wenhua jinggao shijie renshi xuanyan 為中國文化敬告世界人士宣言” (Declaration on Behalf of Chinese Culture Respectfully Announced to the People of the World). In *Dangdai Xin Rujia* (q.v.), ed. Feng Zucheng.

Mou Zongsan 牟宗三, trans. *Kangde chuncui lixing zhi pipan* 康德純粹理性之批判 (Chinese Translation of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*), vol. I. Revised ed. Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1986-1988.

———. *Kangde de daode zhexue* 康德的道德哲學 (Chinese Translation of Kant’s moral philosophy). Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1982.

———. *Kangde panduanli zhi pipan* 康德判斷力之批判 (Chinese Translation of Kant’s *Critique of the Power of Judgment*), vol. I. Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1992.

Ng Yu-kwan. “Xiong Shili’s Metaphysical Theory about the Non-Separation of Substance and Function.” In *New Confucianism: A Critical Examination* (q.v.), ed. John Makeham.

Nylan, Michael. *The Five “Confucian” Classics*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001.

“Olympics Boosts Chinese Language Promotion”, September 30, 2008. At [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-9/30/content\\_10135004\\_1.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-9/30/content_10135004_1.htm), accessed on November 10, 2008.

Peng Guoxiang 彭國翔. *Liangzhi xue de zhankai: Wang Longxi yu zhongwan Ming de Yangming xue* 良知學的展開：王龍谿與中晚明的陽明學 (The Unfolding of the Learning of Innate Moral Consciousness: Wang Longxi and the Learning of Wang Yangming in the mid-late Ming). Beijing: Sanlian shudian, 2005.

Price, R. F., ed. *The Anti-Confucius Campaign in China*. Victoria, Australia: La Trobe University, 1977.

Qian Mu 錢穆. *Bashi yi shuangqin shiyou zayi hekan* 八十憶雙親師友雜憶合刊 (A Combined Publication of *Remembering my Parents at Eighty* and *Miscellaneous Recollections of Teachers and Friends*). Taipei: Dongda tushu, 1983.

———. *Song-Ming Lixue gaishu* 宋明理學概述 (A Brief Account of Song-Ming Ruxue). Taipei: Lantai chubanshe, 2001.

———. *Zhongguo xueshu tongyi* 中國學術通義 (A Primer of Chinese Learning and Scholarship). Expanded ed. Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1982.

Russell, Bertrand. *Principles of Social Reconstruction*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1916.

———. *The Problem of China*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1922.

Schell, Orville. "China: Humiliation & the Olympics." *The New York Review of Books*, volume 55, number 12 (August 14, 2008), on-line copy of 10 pages.

*Shangshu* 尚書 (The *Shujing*). In *Xishu wujing (xiandai ban)* 四書五經·現代版 (The Four Books and Five Classics (a contemporary edition)), ed. Yan Binggang 顏炳罡. Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe, 1996.

Shaughnessy, Edward L. "I Ching 易經." In *Early Chinese Texts: A Bibliographical Guide*, ed. Michael Loewe. Berkeley, California: the Society for the Study of Early China and the Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, 1993.

Sibree, J. "Translator's Introduction." In Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History* (q.v.).

Singer, Peter. "All Animals are Equal." In *Applied Ethics*, ed. *idem*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

Solomon, Robert C. *A Passion for Justice: Emotions and the Origins of the Social Contract*. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1995.

Song Zhiming 宋志明. "Xiong Shili" 熊十力 (Xiong Shili). In *Zhongguo xiandai zhexue renwu pingchuan* 中國現代哲學人物評傳 (Biographical and Critical Accounts of Contemporary Chinese Philosophical Figures), ed. Li Zhenxia 李振霞 and Fu Yunlong 傅雲龍, vol. II. Beijing: Zhonggong zhongyang dangjiao chubanshe, 1991.

Sullivan, Roger J. *Immanuel Kant's Moral Theory*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Sun Zhongshan 孫中山 (Sun Yat-sen). *Sanmin zhuyi* 三民主義 (the Three Principles of the People). 18<sup>th</sup> ed. Taipei: Sanmin shuju, 1996.

Tillman, Hoyt Cleveland. *Confucian Discourse and Chu Hsi's Ascendancy*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1992.

———. "Reflections on Classifying 'Confucian' Lineages: Reinventions of Tradition in Song China." In *Rethinking Confucianism: Past and Present in China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam* (q.v.), ed. Benjamin A. Elman and others.

Tu Wei-ming (Tu Weiming 杜維明). *Centrality and Commonality: An Essay on Confucian Religiousness*. Revised ed. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1989.

———. Curriculum vitae of Tu. At <http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~wtu/cv.html>, accessed on February 20, 2002.

———. “The Ecological Turn in New Confucian Humanism: Implications for China and the World.” *Daedalus* 130.4 (Fall 2001), pp. 243-264.

———. “Introduction.” In *Confucian Traditions in East Asian Modernity: Moral Education and Economic Culture in Japan and the Four Mini-Dragons*, ed. *idem*. Cambridge, Mass.: The American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1996.

———. *Rujia chuantong de xiandai zhuanhua* 儒家傳統的現代轉化 (The Modern Transformation of the Confucian Tradition). Beijing: Zhongguo guangbo dianshi chubanshe, 1992.

———. Short biography of Tu. At [www.harvard.edu/biography.php?personId=246](http://www.harvard.edu/biography.php?personId=246), accessed November 11, 2009.

———. Short biography of Tu. At <http://icg.harvard.edu/~mr40/bio.html>, accessed on February 20, 2002.

———. *Way, Learning, and Politics: Essays on the Confucian Intellectual*. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1993.

Unger, Jonathan, ed. *Chinese Nationalism*. New York and London: M. E. Sharpe, 1996.

Wang Bangxiong 王邦雄. “Cong Zhongguo xiandaihua guocheng zhong kan Dangdai Xin Rujia de jingshen kaizhan” 從中國現代化過程中看當代新儒家的精神開展 (Looking at the Ethico-Spiritual Development of Contemporary New Confucianism in the Course of China’s Modernisation). In Mou Zongsan, *Shidai yu ganshou* (q.v.).

Wang Yangming 王陽明. *Wang Yangming quanji* 王陽明全集 (The Complete Collection of the Works of Wang Yangming). Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1992.

Wilson, Thomas A. *Genealogy of the Way: The Construction and Uses of the Confucian Tradition in Late Imperial China*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1995.

Xiong Shili 熊十力. *Dujing shiyao* 讀經示要 (A Guide to the Study of Confucian Classics), vol. I. Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1999.

———. *Dujing shiyao* 讀經示要 (A Guide to the Study of Confucian Classics), vol. II. Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1984.

———. *Lun liujing* 論六經 (Discussions on the Six *Ru* Classics). Revised ed. Taipei: Wenhai xueshu sixiang yanjiu fazhan wenjiao jijin hui, 1998.

———. *Shili yuyao* 十力語要 (Selected Letters and Talks of Xiong Shili). Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1989.

———. *Shili yuyao chuxu* 十力語要初續 (The First Sequel to Selected Letters and Talks of Xiong Shili). Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1990.

———. *Xin Weishi lun* 新唯識論 (The New Consciousness-Only Treatise), vols. I and II. Vernacular version, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 2000.

———. *Yuan Ru* 原儒 (Original Confucianism). 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1997.

———. *Zhongguo lishi jianghua* 中國歷史講話 (A Talk on Chinese History). Taipei: Mingwen shuju, 1984.

Xu, Guangqiu. "Anti-Western Nationalism in China, 1989-99." *World Affairs*, 163.4 (Spring 2001), on-line copy of 16 pages.

Yan Binggang 顏炳罡. *Mou Zongsan xueshu sixiang pingzhuan* 牟宗三學術思想評傳 (A Critique of Mou Zongsan's Thought). Beijing: Beijing tushuguan chubanshe, 1998.

———. *Zhenghe yu chongzhu: dangdai da Ru Mou Zongsan xiansheng sixiang yanjiu* 整合與重鑄：當代大儒牟宗三先生思想研究 (Integration and Remoulding: A Study of the Thought of The Great Confucian Mou Zongsan). Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1995.

Yin-Yang symbol. Image taken from [www.taoism.about.com/.../Yin-Yang-Symbol.-.jj.htm](http://www.taoism.about.com/.../Yin-Yang-Symbol.-.jj.htm), accessed on August 9, 2009.

Yinshun 印順. *Dasheng qixin lun jiangji* 大乘起信論講記 (Talk on The Treatise on the Awakening of Faith in the Mahāyāna), transcribed by Yanpei and Xuming. Revised ed. Taipei: Zhengwen chubanshe, 1992.

Yu Dan 于丹. *Yu Dan Lunyu xinde* 于丹論語心得 (Insights from Yu Dan's Reading of the *Analects*). Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2006.

Yu Yingshi 余英時. *Xiandai Ruxue lun* 現代儒學論 (Essays on Contemporary Confucianism). Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1998.

Zhang Zai 張載 (Zhang Hengqu 張橫渠). *Zhangzi quanshu* 張子全書 (*The Complete Collection of the Writings of Zhangzi*). Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1935.

Zheng Jiadong 鄭家棟. *Mou Zongsan* 牟宗三. Taipei: Dongda tushu, 2000.

———. "Gudu, shuli, xuanzhi—Mou Zongsan yu dangdai Rujia de jingyu" 孤獨、疏離、懸置 --- 牟宗三與當代儒家的境遇 (Solitariness, Alienation, and Being Placed in Suspension: Mou Zongsan and the Circumstances of Contemporary *Rujia*). In *Rujia sixiang de xiandai quanshi* 儒家思想的現代詮釋 (Modern Interpretations of *Rujia* Thought), ed. Lee Ming-huei 李明輝. Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan, Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiusuo choubelchu, 1997.

*Zhouyi* 周易 (the *Book of Changes*). *Shisan jing zhushu* edition. Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1985.

*Zhuangzi* 莊子, annot. Guo Xiang 郭象. Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1983.