

1. Chinese Philosophy: A Characterization

Fallacies in Early Studies in Chinese Philosophy

Early studies in Chinese philosophy in the European languages have led to many confusions and misunderstandings concerning the true nature of Chinese philosophy. Four such confusions and misunderstandings are common in many writings on Chinese philosophy. There is, first of all, the belief that Chinese philosophy is irrational and mystical and merely to be grasped by some form of intuition. On the basis of this belief it is naturally assumed that Chinese philosophy is so radically different from Western modes of thinking that it is impossible to convey Chinese philosophy in Western terms. This assumption and its presupposed belief are fallacious and misleading, for in fact there are conspicuous traditions of naturalism and rationalism in Chinese philosophy, as well as other universal elements which should make comparisons and contrasts between Chinese philosophy and Western philosophy not only intelligible but profitable.

In direct contrast with the fallacy of the attribution of mysticism is the fallacious belief that there is nothing new and original in Chinese thinking and that everything which is contained in Chinese thought has been dealt with in the Western tradition. This latter view is characteristic of the critics of Chinese culture in early nineteenth-century Europe, just as the former view is characteristic of the admirers of Chinese culture and philosophy in twentieth-century America. Certainly this second view is not true, for a thorough understanding of Chinese philosophy will reveal many fundamental concepts of Chinese philosophy which are not to be found in the Western tradition. Even though there are of course many similarities between Chinese philosophy and some philosophical thought in the West, it must be pointed out that similarities can be profoundly significant and inspiring in philosophical inquiries. In fact, a dialogue between Chinese and Western philosophies can be conducted and developed only when similarities and differences between them are not limited to surface observa-

tions. To develop a dialogue between Chinese and Western philosophy, one has to understand first of all the languages of both traditions and be able to translate one language into another in a constructive fashion. To do this, it is evident that one has to have creative insights so that one can see the philosophical problems and solutions presented in a different tradition and then be able to conceptualize them in one's own native system.

The beneficial consequences resulting from a dialogue between Chinese philosophy and Western philosophy can be many. Among others, the most relevant would be a better understanding of one's own position. If it is one of the functions of philosophy to uncover the presuppositions of an accepted view and to explore new ways of thinking and argumentation; the dialogue in question will certainly provide new light for such discovery and exploration. No improvement in self-understanding is possible without such discovery and exploration.

Related to the second fallacy mentioned above is the general erroneous tendency toward crude generalization of many of the Marxist-oriented studies on Chinese philosophy. Crude generalizations on the nature of Chinese philosophy are reflected in the facile classification of all Chinese philosophers into idealists and materialists, objectivists and subjectivists, proletarianists and aristocratists. On the basis of these classifications pretentious value judgments are then drawn which cannot but throw a veil on the true nature of the school under examination. This approach toward the study and evaluation of Chinese philosophy is unacceptable and undesirable, as it is based on dogmatic premises which are not open to criticism. Furthermore, the classifications in use are too general and vague to capture the individual merits and demerits of specific schools or thinkers. They naturally lead to a distorted picture of Chinese philosophy rather than to a clarification of it. A lesson which one can learn from this fallacy is that one has to be critical of one's own conceptual tools of study and evaluation before one embarks on a study and evaluation of Chinese philosophy. There can be no adequate understanding of a subject, be it Chinese or any other philosophy, if there is no adequate conceptual tool for uncovering and formulating an adequate understanding. Generalizations are usually necessary for the purpose of understanding, but we should remember nevertheless that generalizations must be reached as conclusions based on a detailed study, analysis, and reconstruction, and must also be considered as instigations to further critical studies. It is with this view of generalization in mind that I shall present a general picture of Chinese philosophy as a whole.

A final fallacious view prevalent in the study of Chinese philosophy is that Chinese philosophy can be explained in terms of socio-political or

socio-economic, or even socio-psychological, conditions and features of the thinker and his times. The Marxist has of course developed a systematic method for relating philosophy to the socio-economic conditions of a time period. The undesirability of dealing with Chinese philosophy on this basis has been indicated in the discussion of the third fallacy in the study of Chinese philosophy. What I am now referring to are the non-Marxist intellectual historians who commit themselves to explaining Chinese philosophy in terms of historical events without developing any systematic methodology or theoretical justification. The result of this approach to the study of Chinese philosophy is that many significant philosophical ideas are reduced to specific historical referents and are therefore divested of their universal meanings and truth-claims. This is the fallacy of historical reduction. As with any form of reduction, it is bound to impoverish the rich content of philosophical thought in China and will mislead people to disregard the independent philosophical character of Chinese philosophers.

Before we engage ourselves in a general discussion of the over-all characteristics of Chinese philosophy, it is important to do two things: first, we should explicitly state our method of study and evaluation; secondly, we should actually apply our method to bear upon our historical review of the major trends and traditions in Chinese philosophy. The methodology which we are to adopt to characterize Chinese philosophy is one of analysis and reconstruction, which we may call briefly the method of analytical reconstruction. This method consists, first, in analyzing various basic views in Chinese philosophy in an attempt to display and reveal the intricate implications and relationships of concepts involved in these views. It will, furthermore, be directed toward making explicit the presuppositions and consequences of these views. Finally, it will lead to a systematic and critical explication of the concepts and views under analysis. It seems deplorable that in the past no such method has been applied to the study of Chinese philosophy and little attempt has even been made to state views and concepts in Chinese philosophy in clear and systematic philosophical language. A consequence of this is that Chinese philosophical ideas, couched in the classical language, gradually lose their direct appeal to the philosophical mind of modern man. This is due to a conceptual block and to the lack of linguistic criticism. In the following, our discussion of Chinese philosophy will be based on the methodology of analytic reconstruction, and will be conducted in such a way that the relevance of Chinese philosophy to modern philosophers and modern man will become manifest, and a comparison of Chinese philosophy with Western philosophy possible.

Archetypal Ideas in the Pre-Confucian Period

Historically speaking, Chinese philosophy begins with a tradition which is not characterized by any systematic mythology or dogmatic personalistic religion, but instead by a sentiment of the consanguinity of man and nature, a sense of historicity and continuity of life in time, and finally a faith in the reality and potential perfectibility of man and this world. In the Shang and Chou times, long before Confucius was born, there were already developed archetypal ideas concerning ultimate reality and its determining authority, the potentiality of man for achieving goodness, the external limitation of man's existence and the need for establishing a relationship of unity and harmony between man and reality in well-tuned behavior patterns. There are ideas of *t'ien* (heaven), *ti* (lord on high, ancestral god of man), *hsing* (nature of man), *ming* (mandate, destiny and necessity), *te* (power, potentiality, virtue) and *li* (rites and proprieties). The ideas of *ti* and *t'ien* are specifically related to the practice of ancestral worship in ancient times: the ancestors of men were identified with ultimate reality and regarded as a perennial source of life. This view had profound philosophical significance. Later, the more personalistic notion of *ti* was replaced by the less personalistic notion of *t'ien*, as the latter represents a more general notion open to acceptance by a broader group of people. In a sense, we may regard *t'ien* as a generalized notion of *ti*, developed from the need to unify the ancestral worships of different groups of people. Thus *ti* may be regarded as the ancestor of a specific people, *t'ien* as the ancestor of all peoples. In this fashion *t'ien* becomes less personalistic than *ti*, because it is divested of the specifically personalistic characteristics of *ti*, even though *t'ien* still retains the special and moral powers of *ti*.

Apart from all this, *t'ien* is primarily a spatial notion, while *ti* is primarily a temporal notion. The development from the idea of *ti* to that of *t'ien* indicates an awareness of the physical proximity to man of the ultimate reality and supreme authority. This proximity is further indicated in the fact that *t'ien* has a close and deep concern with the well-being of people. The existence of government and ruler is made possible through the desire of heaven to raise people in happiness. Because of this concern of *t'ien*, a ruler is responsible for seeing that his people are well-nourished and well-ordered. Also because of it, the will of heaven is identified with the will of the people, so that the dissatisfaction and unrest of the people can be interpreted as a sign of heaven's withdrawing of a ruler's appointment as ruler due to his loss of virtue or goodness. The virtue and goodness in question are nothing but powers for carrying out the intentions of heaven in fulfilling the potentiality of one's life. This *te*, which in a sense is inherent

in man, and which one can cultivate so as to fulfill oneself in accordance with the will (or mandate) of heaven—this potentiality of man and his ability to cultivate this potentiality—is called the nature (*hsing*) of man. It is clear from the fact that man is closely related to heaven—the source of his life and his model for greatness—that he must have his nature cultivated to realize *te*. Furthermore, since the order of man is based on the order of nature, the principle which should preserve the order of man is a practical concern of man. It is from this concern that *li*), governing relationships among men and between men and spirits, are developed and valued as most fundamental and essential for the development of man, as well as for maintaining the well-being of society.

To conclude, the archetypal ideas of the pre-Confucian period have profound philosophical significance. They are interrelated and founded on a sentiment of the original consanguinity between man and nature, and on a sentiment of man's existence as a potential entity capable of development. Thus the existence of virtue in man is his ability to conscientiously pursue and attain, or realize, the unity of man and reality. In the following we shall see how, on this general basis, the main trends and traditions of Chinese philosophy develop and diversify.

The Tradition of Confucianism

The Confucian age begins with Confucius's explicit recognition that the external *t'ien* (heaven) has an essential link with the internal *te* (virtue, power) of man and that man should extend himself in a graded love toward other men and thus achieve the universal humanity inherent in us. We may say, therefore, that Confucianism as represented by Confucius is an awakening of man in regard to his relationships to heaven, to other men and to himself. The relationality of man is to be realized in the practice and perfection of virtues such as *jên* (love and benevolence), *yi* (or *i*) (righteousness), *li* (propriety) and *chih* (wisdom in distinguishing good from bad). *Jên* is the universality of man. *Yi* is the necessity and actual application of *jên* to a diversity of situations and relationships. *Li* is the proper way of expressing oneself in fulfilling one's *jên* by means of *yi*. If *li* is the exterior behavior pattern of a man toward another man in a situation, *yi* is the principle which confers propriety on the behavior pattern in question, and *jên* is the natural desire for fulfilling *li* in the spirit of *yi*. Thus *jên* is most fundamental for making a man a man. For it is on the basis of *jên* that a man will seek to fulfill others in order to fulfill himself, as well as to fulfill himself in order to fulfill others. It is on this basis that a man can relate to other men and become himself.

A man who sets his mind in pursuing *jên* is called a superior man (*chün-tzu*), a man who has come to the awareness of *jên* and his ability and necessity to fulfill himself by *jên*. When he succeeds in achieving the perfection of *jên*, so that he may act in total freedom and yet according to strict principles of *yi* and *li*, he is not only a *chün-tzu*, but a sage (*shen-jên*). Thus *jên* can also represent the ideal perfection of man in Confucian thinking. It is to be identified with both the totality of all virtues (*te*) and the essence of all virtues.

When *t'ien* is regarded as related to the internal *te* of man, *t'ien* is a source of moral courage and moral wisdom in a superior man. But, on the other hand, *t'ien* in Confucius, and later in Mencius, is regarded not merely as an internal source of one's potentiality, but also as an external limitation and necessity which puts life to trial and limits life. In understanding this phase of *t'ien*, a superior man will have to accept many determined facts of life, such as death, misfortune, etc. These determinations are possible because man has his object-nature—that is, he is an object. But Confucius and Mencius recognize that besides this object-nature of man, according to which man is determined by external causes, man has a dynamic subject-nature—that is, man is a subject capable of cultivating himself in the path of virtue and therefore of determining himself in the direction of achieving the full autonomy and independence of his nature. This is how man may realize his spiritual freedom despite the external determination and limitation imposed upon him as an object. The importance of Confucius is his insistence that man can become a full subject, and that his life is meaningful because he has a subject-nature and thus the power to pursue perfection in the actual conduct of himself in a network of relationships.

Confucianism after Confucius was greatly developed in the classical period in Mencius, Hsun Tzu, and in the works of the *Great Learning* and the *Doctrine of the Mean*. Mencius explicitly forms the doctrine of the goodness of human nature as a foundation for man's capacity for self-cultivation toward perfection. He appeals to the natural sentiments of man, such as compassion, shame, modesty, reverence, and like and dislike, as the bases and beginnings of virtues such as *jên*, *yi*, *li* and *chih*. Thus it is asserted in Mencius that virtues have a natural foundation in man and that the nature of man is nothing other than the ability to pursue virtues. The goodness of human nature is therefore nothing but a fulfillment of the inherent nature-virtue in man, whereas badness is but the abandonment and deviation of one's natural sentiments and nature under circumstances which dominate man. But man cannot really lose his inherent goodness and his innate ability to know and see what he needs for the preservation of his goodness. Thus Mencius is fond of talking about 'collecting oneself in return

to goodness'. His doctrine of government by the love of people and by becoming a good example in the person of a ruler is based on this doctrine of the goodness of human nature.

Though Hsun Tzu, as a later Confucianist than Mencius, argues that human nature is bad and that man's goodness is only man-made and is not natural, he nevertheless remains a staunch Confucianist in his faith in man's ability, potential, and initial willingness to better himself. For Hsun Tzu, human nature is bad because it is seen to consist basically in desires which know no proper limitation and which mean only self-profit. But this is not the whole of Hsun Tzu's view of man's nature, for he recognized the power of the human mind or reason to be inherent in that nature too. By experience man must come to use his mind and reason for the benefit of himself and others. Thus Hsun Tzu argues for the importance of education and training in terms of *li*, which are regarded as principles for ordering and organizing human behavior and efforts in society and the State. *Li* in this sense is the creation of reason, and is the fundamental saving virtue of man.

Confucianism in later ages has received various formulations, but basically the minimal and necessary principles of self-cultivation of virtue, unity of man and heaven, and relevance of social order and political harmony for individual self-realization, are never abandoned and are universally affirmed from the Han to the Sung-Ming period. Even though Sung-Ming Confucianism (called Neo-Confucianism) was deeply involved with metaphysical speculations over the problems of *li* (principle of being and reason) and *ch'i* (vapor, substance, and material), *li* and *chi* have also been used to explain the essentially good nature of man, the potential unity between the nature of man and the nature of heaven all things in reality, and, not least of all, why man by cultivating himself can actualize what is inherent in him.

The Tradition of Taoism

Another important tradition in Chinese philosophy is Taoism. It may be suggested that Taoism represents the stage of development of the concept of *t'ien* to that of *tao* in the classical period. It is true that the term *tao* has been used in Confucian writings, but it is Taoists such as Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu who formulate an exclusive philosophy of *tao*. The concept of *tao* is altogether different from the concepts of *t'ien* and *ti* in being a completely non-personalistic concept of ultimate reality. It is more generalized in scope than *ti* and *t'ien*, because it comprehends everything in the world. There is, however, one respect in which *tao* shares something in common with the earlier concepts of *ti* and *t'ien*. *Tao* is internally related

to man just as *ti* and *t'ien* are internally related to man in Confucianism. In a sense, *tao* is regarded as the primordial being of man. In saying this we must bear in mind that *tao*, unlike *ti* or *t'ien*, is not regarded as being in a position to dispense a special favor to man or as deeply concerned with man's well-being, for *tao* is impartial to everything as it generates, comprehends, transforms and preserves all things. It is with regard to this impartiality of *tao* that all things can be regarded as being ontologically equal. In Lao Tzu this concept of ontological equality is implicit in the very notion of *tao*, while on the basis of this same concept, Chuang Tzu goes a step further in developing a new sense of the ontological equality of all things.

Things are ontologically equal, according to Chuang Tzu, because they are formed by a process of self- and mutual transformation. There is no substance to individual things nor to their individuality, for all individual things are only relatively determined in the totality of the self-and mutual transformation of things. Thus things are ontologically equal also in the sense of being both self-activating and mutually determining.

There are several important characteristics of the philosophy of *tao* which must be mentioned. First, *tao* is a totality which is basically indefinable and unnameable. A proper interpretation of this indefinability and unnameability of *tao* is that *tao* cannot be limited by any object or be finitely characterized. This means that no object and no character can stand for *tao* without creating a partial and misleading conception of *tao*. Because *tao* cannot be characterized by any finite character, it can be contrasted with things which are finitely characterizable. If things which are finitely characterizable are called 'being', then *tao* would be the opposite of being, and is in fact called by Lao Tzu the non-being, or the void (*wu*). Thus, *tao* for Lao Tzu is not a reality merely negatively conceived, but is instead something which can only be conceived as the indeterminate, as the source and origin of all things. Although 'void' is the concept conveyed by Lao Tzu to capture the virtue of *tao*, it is better to use the terms 'indeterminate' or 'ultimateless' to suggest the possibility of *tao* actually generating things and men. Indeed, Lao Tzu has specifically maintained that it is *tao* which gives rise to all finite things that are related to us in any way, and that it is the void or the indeterminate which one has to understand and to take into consideration in the understanding of *tao*.

Another point about Taoism is that *tao* is not conceived as a static or unchanging substance, but as a process of movement and change. This means that all things comprehended in *tao* are in a process of change and movement. Now there are two questions to be answered in this connection: By what operation does *tao* give rise to all things in being? How is *tao* as a process of change and movement to be described? The answer to the first

question is that *tao* gives rise to everything by way of differentiation and self-realization. There is an apparent paradox in the process of generation by *tao*, which should be resolved from a dialectical point of view.

Tao, as we have seen, is void and yet produces everything. This is so because *tao* is the principle by which the negative can become the positive, the potential can become the actual, the void can become the substantive, and the one can become the many. It is by the very negativity and potentiality of *tao* that everything positive and actual is created and preserved. But at the same time, when the potential becomes the actual, the negative becomes the positive, the void becomes the substantive, and the one becomes the many, the converse process takes place as well. *Tao* in this sense is inexhaustible, and its workings define change in terms of dialectical oppositions and complementation. This notion of *tao* is insisted upon by Taoists as representing the most fundamental wisdom of life, which, the Taoists hold, is basically experienceable in a careful reflection on life and reality.

Because *tao* is change, and change is always change from something to something else, *tao* itself is a unity of two opposites. The two opposites of *tao* are respectively called *yin* and *yang*, the feminine force (or principle) and the masculine force (or principle). In Lao Tzu it is clear that the *yin-yang* forces represent two aspects of a unity, be it an individual or the totality of *tao*. *Yin* can be identified with the negative, the potential, the subjective, and the preservative, while *yang* can be identified with the positive, the actual, the objective, and the creative. In a sense, *yin* represents *tao* as an inexhaustible source from which every form of energy or activity is derived, whereas *yang* represents *tao* as a form of activity which is ever creative, but which has a beginning and an ending and therefore remains exhaustible. When the *yang* force exhausts itself, it will fade into the *yin*, but when *yin* dominates, there is then great promise of *yang* activity. In the process of change which is constituted by the interchange of the two forces in the twofold movement of *tao*—actualization of *yin* by *yang* and potentialization of *yang* by *yin*—Lao Tzu has specifically emphasized the notion of return (*fu*). Return is return to *tao*, the indeterminate and the inexhaustible. It is an emphasis on *tao* as a *yin* force. But this is no denial of the *yang*, for one thing cannot return to *yin* except by way of exhausting the *yang* activity in the thing itself. Thus, as in explaining the cosmological principle of the generation of all things by *tao*, Lao Tzu also made explicit the cosmological principle of the destination of all things.

Lao Tzu has applied his cosmological principles of generation and destination to man, as the world of man is not separate from the world of nature. According to these principles, the well-being of man consists in his ability to follow the *tao*, and this means his ability to preserve potentiality

for action but not actually acting out this potentiality. This is so because man is a part of *tao* and part of the production of *tao*; when he exerts himself to act and exhausts himself, he will be simply tossed away as a product of the *tao*, which can be explained as frustration and exhaustion resulting from too much effort. Thus a better way to deal with life is not to exhaust oneself and to become an object. Instead one should try to potentialize the actual and remain one with the source which *tao*. To do this one must become aware of *tao* and cultivate the *tao* in the sense of imitating the action of the non-action of *tao*, so that man will become infinitely creative and free himself from domination by destructive forces. It is in this state that one's life will flow naturally and spontaneously, and everything will be preserved in a similarly natural and spontaneous way. This doctrine has been aptly described as 'doing everything by doing nothing'. Doing nothing means doing nothing specific, while doing everything means allowing everything to flow from *tao* on its own. Lao Tzu has used many images and analogies to convey the importance of preserving the potential of life and remaining effortless and natural in the conduct of life. It is not difficult to see Lao Tzu's point if we reflect on the nature and strength of such things as water, a valley, an uncarved block of wood, a child, a mother, and the female.

In regard to the movement of *tao*, and in regard to the attainment of the well-being of life, Chuang Tzu differs fundamentally from Lao Tzu. In the first place, Chuang Tzu does not stress the idea of a return to *tao* as the source and origin of everything. For him *tao* is a universal presence and the total activity of all things. It is revealed, in particular, in the relativity and relationality of all things. Chuang Tzu has put a special stress on these ideas. The relativity and relationality of things are twofold; things are relative and relational to each other, and furthermore relative and relational to the totality of things which is *tao*. They are relative and relational to each other in the sense that each thing is a 'this' and a 'that', and thus are relatively and relationally determined and defined. Things are different from one another, but are interdependent for their individuality. Thus nothing is an absolute or center of the world, because everything is an absolute and a center of the world. Things are relative and relational to *tao* in the sense that they, each of them, are part of *tao* and each of them come about by way of self- and mutual transformation. On the basis of *tao* there is no limitation to the process of self- and mutual transformation, and *tao* is itself a whole which exemplifies self- and mutual transformation. Because of this, no individuation and differentiation of things is absolute and yet there is no simple undifferentiated homogeneity.

From the point of view of *tao*, an individual is both *tao* and not *tao*. It is *tao* because it is an exemplification of the self-transformation of *tao*; it is

not *tao* because it is not the totality. This principle of self- and mutual transformation, as we have indicated earlier, establishes the fundamental equality of things. It applies, furthermore, to the life of man. On recognizing the relativity and relationality of things, man could detach himself from any specific perspective of things and thus open his mind to all the possible perspectives and possibilities which are manifested in things. This attitude will lead him to a natural and spontaneous life, even when facing hardships and disasters. Chuang Tzu does not regard this attitude as one of recession and passivity, but rather as a natural positive result of understanding *tao*. To positively understand *tao* is to become *tao* and to adopt the perspective of *tao*, and thus to realize the centrality of everything. In this manner one will become creative, in the sense that one is open to all possibilities of becoming, and free, in the sense that one will not be attached to any single fixed position. We might suggest that the Taoism of Chuang Tzu has made freedom and creativity the goal of man's life, besides naturalness and spontaneity.

The Tradition of Chinese Buddhism

A third important tradition in Chinese philosophy is Chinese Buddhism. We must distinguish Chinese Buddhism from Buddhism in China. The latter is an Indian importation, but the former is the product of the native intelligence of the Chinese in the later stages of the development of Buddhism in China. An interesting fact, often overlooked in the discussion of Chinese Buddhism, is that there are two schools of Chinese Buddhism which have corresponding Indian predecessors, whereas there are two other schools of Chinese Buddhism which do not have corresponding Indian predecessors and which can be regarded as having developed or evolved from the two other schools, transcending them in significance and profundity. The first two schools of Chinese Buddhism are the Madhymika and Yogacara, and the second two, the T'ien-t'ai and Hua-yen. We shall first discuss briefly how the two later schools overshadow the two earlier ones by advancing concepts which are typical of Chinese Buddhism, and then how these two schools can be considered to combine theoretically to lead to a novel position which has exercised a powerful influence in later ages, especially on the Ch'an Buddhism of Hui-neng and the other Ch'an masters after him.

In Madhymika, the essential idea is that one has to go beyond both affirmation of this and the affirmation of not-this in order to reach the state of non-attachment and transcendence characteristic of Buddhist wisdom. But this logic of the denial of the four terms (this, that, this and that, neither this nor that), when applied to ontology, will entail a concept of constant and infinite detachment and negation. This process, however, is

difficult to reconcile with the actual experience of order and stability in which man finds himself. T'ien-t'ai was apparently developed from a concern with this type of problem, namely, a concern with the problem of man's relationship with this world.

In the T'ien-t'ai literature the negative attitude of constantly transcending this and that is combined with a positive attitude toward seeing the meaningfulness of affirming this and that. The proposition that this world is nothingness and thus to be denounced is supplemented with the proposition that nothingness is this world, and thus to be accepted in this world. The upshot of this, as far as the T'ien-t'ai Buddhist thinker is concerned, is that to denounce the world is to accept the world and that to accept the world is to denounce it, for one can denounce what is denounceable of the world and one can accept what is acceptable of the world. The world is thus seen as both denounceable and acceptable, both affirmable and negatable. It is thus held that truth is twofold and yet remains one unity. Now we must ask how this is possible. The answer is very simple, for the world is seen from a dialectical point of view, and therefore is seen as a dynamic unity of two opposing and yet complementing polarities. One may note that classical Chinese philosophy provided a model for this dialectical thinking in Taoism and the *Book of Changes*.

The course of the theoretical development from the Yogacara school to the Hua-yen school seems to follow a similar pattern. In the original teaching of Yogacara the whole world is regarded as a projection of the ideational activity of a trans-this-worldly mind or potential consciousness called *alaya*. The assumption of this all-powerful mind or consciousness goes together with the assumption of the ideational attachment of this mind, which accounts for the existence of the world. In other words, the world is regarded as a concomitant reality resulting from the activity of mind. Thus the cycle of life and death will not cease if the ideational activity of mind continues and persists. One of the ultimate goals of the Yogacara doctrine is to show ways of terminating the activities of life and death by terminating the activities of mind, and to show ways of withholding the reality of the world by withholding the reality of mind. Now this view is again incompatible with the human experience of the goodness of life, as well as that of the continuity of the world's existence. Perhaps it is because of a need to resolve this incompatibility that the school of Hua-yen comes to advance the doctrine that the world can be seen in a manifold of ways and that wisdom and true salvation consist in actually seeing the world in a manifold of ways.

Thus, according to Tu Shun, the first master of the Hua-yen school, the world is simultaneously a unity of every principle with every particular, a

unity of every principle with every principle, a harmony of particulars, and finally a unity of every particular with every particular. All this means that the world is infinitely rich and real at the same time, and that mind should open its eyes to this rich and real world which is not bound by the attachment of ideation. By further holding that all is in one and one is in all, it is clear that the Hua-yen school must regard mind as a principle and as a particular which is present in all other principles and all other particulars, and vice versa. This principle of ontological interdependence and interrelationship thus serves to restore reality to both mind and world by restoring the primordial unity of the two. This principle has also the implication that the subjective and the objective must be interdependent in a reality of infinite harmony, so that both necessarily contribute to a knowledge of the real. The possibility of this thinking again has to be understood in the light of the dialectical point of view developed in Taoism and the *Book of Changes*.

Next we come to the development of Ch'an Buddhism in Chinese philosophy. As we have indicated, and to express it from the viewpoint of analytical reconstruction, Ch'an Buddhism can best be described as the final and finest product of the tradition of Chinese Buddhism preceding it. This means that Ch'an has the best of the T'ien-t'ai tradition on understanding the problem of nothingness (*kung*, *sunyata*), and the best of the Hua-yen tradition on understanding the problem of mind (*hsin* or consciousness) . . . In the above we have explained the fundamental points of these two schools. From this explanation one can readily see that the T'ien-t'ai school has developed an ontology of nothingness which nevertheless confers meaningfulness on the existence and reality of this world and preserves the phenomenological reality of mind, whereas the Hua-yen school has developed a phenomenology of mind or consciousness which recognizes and affirms the ontological reality of the world. Both have indicated a possibility of unifying ontology and phenomenology in regard to the reality of this world and of the mind of man. They point to the same direction, even though they begin from the different points of view of their respective background philosophies.

This possibility of unifying ontology with phenomenology with regard to the reality of the world and man, that is, of unifying the ontological reality of the world and the phenomenological activity of mind, is actually and explicitly realized by the teachings and practice of Ch'an Buddhism. For according to the teachings and practices of Ch'an, when one sees the true nature and the original mind of oneself, one will realize ultimate reality and becomes enlightened, in the sense of ceasing to be bound by attachment, prejudice, and illusion of any kind. This of course does not mean that one loses one's mind or denies the existence of the world. On the

contrary, it is important to keep one's mind and to affirm the existence of the world in order for a Ch'an Buddhist to achieve enlightenment. For it is only by holding to one's mind and affirming the existence of the world that one will be free from the bondage of one's mind and of the world. To use the Buddhist idiom, there is *nirvana* (freedom) in one's actual life, and there is actual life in *nirvana*.

The above dialectical combination is not only realized in an act of enlightenment, it is also embodied in the practical performance of one's life. Or, to put it another way, the act of enlightenment is not, and cannot be, separate from the actual living of one's life. Even language cannot be considered intelligible in its own terms apart from living contexts. In fact, for the Ch'an Buddhist, use of language represents many aspects of reality and results from the interaction of all possibilities in reality. Thus language and its uses have many functions apart from that of stating, arguing, or making a verbal point. While language can normally make a point by stating a point, it can be used to make a point by not stating a point, or by verbally denying that point which it is making. The complex ways in which Ch'an masters use language to express enlightenment or to awaken enlightenment deserves careful analysis and explication. Such an analysis and explication will not only be significant for revealing the simple and yet profound character of Ch'an thinking, but will testify to the potential nature of language and its use. In fact, for the Ch'an masters, use of language is not the only way to induce or express enlightenment; many other ways, such as various physical bodily actions, can be the inspiration.

What is important to note in connection with this is that every action of man has an ontological meaning which is phenomenologically transparent and a phenomenological meaning which is ontologically hidden. The insight of Ch'an is to reveal the hidden and to assimilate the transparent in the simple ways of creative living and self-awareness. There is really nothing mystical or irrational in it, as sometimes claimed by outsiders who have only a superficial grasp of the spirit of Ch'an Buddhism and its historical background. What is relevant here is the natural wish to preserve the world but without confining the meaning of the world to one level of categorial understanding, which is also a message conveyed in both Taoism and the *Book of Changes*.

Man, being essentially an embodiment of *tao* or Buddha-nature, has every reason to claim an ability to realize and achieve *tao* and/or Buddha-nature in his conscious active life. The ontological relationship between knowing and doing or acting should easily lead to the doctrine of instantaneous enlightenment in Ch'an Buddhism. The instantaneousness of enlightenment is a dynamic unification of the objective with the subjective, that is, of the known object with the knowing subject.

Marxism in Contemporary China

Finally we come to the position of Marxism as a representative school of thought in contemporary China. Since China entered the twentieth century there has been a constant search among Chinese intellectuals for an enduring philosophy which will accommodate and adjust the Chinese mind, life, and culture to the needs of the modern world as shaped by Western science, religion, and technology with all its merits and drawbacks. In the turmoil of political, economic, and social upheavals in China, there was little time for analysis and evaluation of the past and for planning, construction, and anticipating the future. There was, in addition, little time for synthesizing the past with the present, the West with the East. There was time only for growing discontent with the past and for rejecting it in favor of something which could become an agent of practical change and transformation. This should suffice to explain the rise of Marxism in China in the early twenties and the general failure of the Chinese intellectuals to make the transition from the past to the future a smooth one.

Clearly, Chinese Marxism is a breakaway from traditional Chinese philosophy as we have discussed it under Confucianism, Taoism, and Chinese Buddhism. Yet it shares with the traditional views its pragmatic orientation toward social and political actions. With the rise of Marxism in contemporary China, the reconciliation of Marxist principles with past philosophical traditions becomes a theoretical-ideological problem as well as a cultural-realistic problem. Though we cannot probe here the problem of intellectual continuity in contemporary Chinese thinking, one thing is increasingly clear—Chinese Marxists have made sporadic yet systematic efforts to interpret or re-interpret Confucianism, Taoism, and Chinese Buddhism in terms of the Marxist ideology, and to evaluate them accordingly. In doing this, however, they have also exposed themselves to doctrines of the past which are bound to renew their influences on current thinking. In other words, in the present context, the language and mentality of earlier doctrines in Chinese philosophy will continue to function and interact with the language and mentality of Marxism. What will ensue from this type of interaction is something which is difficult to predict. Perhaps with a reassertion of what is best in the past, the significance of Chinese philosophy for the modern world will be gradually recognized. Chinese Marxism, therefore, at the present stage represents a test and trial of the true potential of Chinese philosophy to meet the needs of man.

Four Characteristics of Chinese Philosophy

In light of our discussion we can now formulate four distinctive characteristics of Chinese philosophy. Our problem is not to evaluate Chinese

philosophy, but to describe it in the most relevant terms. This description and characterization of Chinese philosophy can be regarded as a conclusion based on a comprehensive reflection on the nature of Chinese philosophy. It may also be regarded as a result of our reconstructive analysis of the important traditions in Chinese philosophy. They are formulated here to represent only the major, not all, the characteristics of Chinese philosophy. They are sufficient, however, to provide a basis for further inquiry into the nature and significance of Chinese philosophy, and to capture and manifest both the dialectic and problematic of Chinese philosophy as a whole.

Chinese Philosophy as Intrinsic Humanism

Although there can be many versions of humanism, humanisms can be conveniently divided into the extrinsic and the intrinsic. Most humanistic thinking in the West is extrinsic, whereas the humanism in Chinese philosophy is intrinsic. In Greek as well as Renaissance philosophy the existence of man and his power of reason are given a unique place in the scheme of things. But with the background of a transcendental religion (be it Orphic or Christian) and a speculative metaphysics (be it Platonic or Thomist) which distinguishes between the natural and the supernatural, man and God, the subjective and the objective, mind (or soul or spirit) and body in an absolute sense, the affirmation of the value of man tends to be made at the expense of the value of that which is contrasted with man, be it the natural or the supernatural. That is, the affirmation of the value of man entails either a denunciation or a neutralization of the value of that which is contrasted with man or the value of man.

Thus, as a consequence of Renaissance humanism, the Western mind is guided by an interest in the exaltation of man toward exploring, utilizing, and controlling nature as an inanimate object and as a means for achieving human power, thus contributing directly to the development of modern science. But when science has grown to a respectable stature, humanism is regarded as too subjective and limited in dealing with nature and thus, dispensable in virtue of truly scientific interests. This is so because in the light of scientific achievement, not only has nature been deprived of human meaningfulness and considered value-neutral, but human beings are themselves treated as objects of scientific investigation, subject to a methodology which regards value purely as an invention of man. This is the unavoidable result of a humanism which begins with the extrinsic assumption that man and nature are different and therefore in opposition.

The modern revolt against this scientific mentality in existentialism is no less extrinsic, for it stresses the absolute subjectivity of man as a human-

istic principle to the exclusion of objective and physical nature. This leads to a depth-psychology of man which is no less frustrating and humiliating.

The philosophical assumption that nature is intrinsic to the existence of man and man intrinsic to the existence of nature, is the foundation of Chinese humanism. Here there is no such absolute bifurcation between the objective and the subjective, mind and body, man and God. The reason for this is not, of course, that the bifurcation has failed to be made, but that it should not be made from the viewpoint of Chinese philosophy. In all the major traditions and schools of Chinese philosophy it is considered important that man and nature or reality should be seen as forming a unity and harmony, just as man himself is a unity and harmony of mind and body. There is, furthermore, no separation of the natural from the supernatural, if indeed we can regard the pre-Chin conceptions of *ti* (lord on high), *t'ien* (heaven), and *tao* (the way) as supernatural conceptions at all. Body and mind mutually determine and define each other to constitute the existence of man, who interacts with everything else in the world, to grow and develop into an ideal perfection which has both anthropological and cosmological significance. Perhaps because there is no fundamental division between mind (or soul) and body in man, the fundamental category relating to the existence of man and to the value of his existence is 'life' (*sheng*), which applies to nature as well as to the creative activity of *tao* or heaven.

Chinese Philosophy as Concrete Rationalism

Rationalism is the belief that truth can be obtained by man through use of his reason. In fact, the rationalistic tradition in Western philosophy has distinguished truths of reason from truths of fact. Truths of reason are truths known independently of experience and therefore *a priori*, whereas truths of fact are founded on sense experience and therefore *a posteriori*. Now, this conception of truths of reason is related to two basic suppositions in rationalistic philosophy: first, reason is innate in man and man will naturally come to understand the truths of reason through rational reflection, since these truths are inherent in reason; and secondly, truths of reason are considered more certain and noble than truths of fact and are therefore considered paradigms of human knowledge. Logic, mathematics and even theoretical physics are taken as examples of truths of reason in Western rationalism. Even in ethics and metaphysics truths of reason have been the focus of attention, and only relatively recently has rationalism in the above sense been subject to severe criticism and doubt.

It is clear that the most significant characteristic of Western rationalism is the belief that man's rational faculty of abstraction and deduction is able to establish abstract and universal principles of knowledge. As the

faculty of reason is fundamentally discrete from experience, so truths of reason are fundamentally discrete from truths of fact or experience. Western rationalism may therefore be called a rationalism of abstract reason, or of reason in its abstract use.

Chinese philosophy, on the other hand, is rationalistic not in an abstract, but in a concrete sense. The Chinese philosopher recognizes man as a rational being who is endowed with a rational faculty for knowing truths. This derives from the belief that man is in unity with nature and that nature in its development culminates in man as a being full of creative potential. That man may naturally come to know reality, or the way, is just a step in the development of the creative potential of man. Reality, in the sense of heaven or the Way, as man sees it, is a rational order displayed in concrete things which can be seen and understood by man in his inquiries. Since there is no original demarcation between the objective and the subjective, the subjective in man naturally corresponds to the objective in nature. This may be regarded as a metaphysical article of faith, but it has the virtue of ruling out epistemological puzzles about knowledge of the external world and other minds. Hence there are no doctrines of solipsism and scepticism in Chinese philosophy.

There are three fundamental senses in which we may define the concrete use of concrete reason in Chinese philosophy. In the first place, man has to open his eyes to reality and observe activities and patterns of things. It is on the basis of empirical observation and experience at large that the philosophy of change, in terms of interchange of *yin* and *yang*, is developed in the *Book of Changes*. Furthermore, one can see from the use of language in the Classics that the terms for ultimate reality, such as *t'ien* and *tao*, are not general and abstract terms capable of logical definition, but terms with a universal yet concrete content, to be understood by means of direct and diverse experience.

Similarly in ethics, we see that in Confucianism ideas of virtue are closely related to the experience of basic sentiments. If we compare Mencius's doctrine of immediate feelings as the beginnings of virtues with Kant's doctrine of the categorical imperative, we can readily see that sentiments of virtue are concrete realizations of experience in concrete situations, whereas commands of the categorical imperative are abstract deductions of reason. Thus, whereas there is no practical problem of applying Confucian virtues, applying the Kantian categorical imperative to concrete situations does present a difficult problem. But on the other hand, whereas Kantian ethics has a deductive structure and a rational justification, there is comparatively little systematic organization for the moral insights in the Confucian writings. Even though Mencius speaks of man's innate knowledge of good-

ness (the so-called *liang-chih*), *liang-chih* is not taken to be a faculty which enables man to arrive at moral injunctions, but an ability to distinguish between good and bad in concrete situations. Thus concrete reason in Confucian philosophy does not straightforwardly correspond to Kantian practical reason, nor for that matter, does Confucian abstract reason correspond straightforwardly to Kantian pure reason, for concrete reason, as typified in Chinese philosophy, not only deals with practical problems but guarantees the ultimate connection of reason with practice. This leads to the second sense of concrete rationalism.

Chinese philosophy is generally oriented toward action and practice in society and government, and aims at the reform and perfection of man and the world. It stresses, furthermore, that theory must be applied to practice or be considered merely empty words. In the extreme case of Wang Yang-ming, theory and practice are considered two ends of the same thing. This means that theoretical understanding must entail practical doing, and in practical doing of any kind one will acquire knowledge and wisdom of oneself and the world. In light of this characteristic of Chinese philosophy, which we shall discuss more below, concrete rationalism simply means that one has to attain moral perfection through a process of self-cultivation and of concrete realization of knowledge in practice. In practice, this process is not merely a rational activity of reason, for it manifests reasonableness in life and in the attainment of an ideal of perfection. Indeed, contrasting the ideal of pure rationality in abstract reason with that of natural reasonableness in concrete reason is a way of accentuating the characteristic of Chinese philosophy under discussion.

Finally, the third sense of concrete reason in Chinese philosophy is that it is primarily directed toward moral and political goals. Even ontological and cosmological speculations are not without moral and political significance. *Li* (principle, reason), in Neo-Confucianism for example, is a concretely rational ideal and idea. *Li* is not something divorced from man's basic life-experience in relation to himself, other men, and things; it is taken to be the basis for achieving social harmony and administering political order.

Perhaps it is the lack of any differentiation between the abstract principles of rationality and concrete instances of reasonableness in Chinese thinking that has prevented the abstract cultivation of such pure sciences as logic and mathematics, and explains why Chinese thinkers do not consider philosophy itself a deductive rational activity but a synthetic moral achievement capable of influencing the actions of men.

Chinese Philosophy as Organic Naturalism

Naturalism is an important feature of Chinese philosophy, since the Chinese world-view is basically this-worldly rather than other-worldly. In

fact, as noted earlier, the dichotomy between man and God, the natural and the supernatural, does not exist in Chinese philosophy. There are, consequently, no arguments between transcendentalism and immanentism in Chinese philosophy. Every form of reality is considered a process of change and development in nature. As we have seen in the case of Taoism, the potentiality for change and transformation is in the nature of things, which means that individual things do not have static substances, and are not unrelated to one another as individual entities, but mutually determine and define one another in a dynamic process of change within the context of organic relationships.

Organic naturalism in Chinese philosophy is perhaps better described in consideration of the relation between the objective and the subjective, and between the physical and the mental. Chinese philosophers consider these in terms of natural correspondence, interdependence, and complementation, in which life and understanding can be achieved and preserved. In fact, the relationships in question might even be thought of, from a general viewpoint, as continuities, for there is no real break between physical and mental, objective and subjective. Ontologically and cosmologically speaking, the objective and the subjective, and the physical and the mental are transparent to *tao* as the ultimate reality and therefore parts of a total dynamic process.

The organic relationships between man and society and State constitute further evidence for organic naturalism in Chinese philosophy. In Confucianism, man is a relational being who depends upon other men for the cultivation and perfection of himself. In Taoist, and even in Chinese Buddhistic doctrines, man is relational to all things, but has to interact with and participate in the activities of *tao* in order to be good and perfect. He is not simply to identify himself with *tao*. In this context of organic relationships among men and between man and things, harmony and harmonization are the key words, and harmony and harmonization are possible only if there are organic relationships of unity in variety. Chinese philosophy provides a serious elaboration of such relationships as a basis upon which 'goodness' can be conceived as essentially the ability to achieve and preserve harmony.

Chinese Philosophy as the Pragmatism of Self-Cultivation

As has been generally indicated, Chinese philosophy has been concerned from the very beginning with the practical question of advancing the well-being of the individual and the order and harmony of society and State. The moral ideas of Confucius and other Confucian thinkers clearly manifest this mentality. Even in the Taoist philosophy of Lao Tzu there is a concern for the best form of government. The principle of doing every-