

On Ma Yifu's New Confucian Thought and Its
Background

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Abstract

Ma Yifu 马一浮 (1883-1967) was a significant yet understudied twentieth century Chinese thinker, and he is generally considered to be one of the founding figures of New Confucianism who contributed to the shaping of modern Chinese philosophy. With a commitment to the Neo-Confucian philosophical tradition that came to prominence during the Song-Ming period (960-1644), Ma was also a representative of modern Chinese thinkers who responded to socio-political and cultural change by drawing on Confucian and Sinitic Buddhist ideas.

Ma's Confucian thought focuses mainly on the concepts of mind (*xin* 心), nature (*xing* 性) and the Confucian way (*dao* 道). In elaborating these concepts, like many previous Sinitic Buddhist and Neo-Confucian thinkers, Ma posited an unconditioned ontological foundation (fundamental reality/intrinsic reality, *ti* 体) so as to deal appropriately with human affairs (*renshi* 人事) informed by the Confucian way. To this end, Ma and these thinkers sought to answer a central question in Chinese philosophy: How can the unconditioned (the nature, the way) be realised if our cognitive awareness is circumscribed by the conditioned nature of human existence? In answering this question, as with many previous thinkers, Ma drew on the conceptual polarity of *ti* 体 and *yong* 用. Ma developed his understanding of the concepts of nature and mind as *ti* (which for him represented intrinsic reality), and the Confucian way as the functioning of this reality. By applying this to his interpretations of the Confucian classics, I argue that compared with former thinkers, Ma was more successful in narrowing the gap between conditioned subject and transcendent foundation. I also show how Ma contributed to justifying how the Confucian way could be normative in shaping practices in a modernising China.

This thesis is a study in the intellectual history of Confucian philosophy and modern Chinese thought. Ma's New Confucian thought was established and consolidated in the late-1930s, with its early formative process beginning in the early-1920s. More specifically, his thought developed against the background of intellectual developments in China between the mid-1890s and mid-1920s. To demonstrate how modern Chinese thinkers reacted to socio-political and cultural change by drawing on Neo-Confucian and Buddhist ideas, this thesis takes Ma Yifu as a representative case and studies several of his contemporaries based on comparative examinations with Ma's thought. It pays particular attention to Ma's adoption of influential ideas and theoretical frameworks of

Sinitic Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism. This thesis contributes both to the history of Chinese New Confucian philosophy and to our understanding of the correlation between Confucian-Buddhist intellectual resources and modern Chinese cultural conservatism.

Statement of Authorship

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. Except where reference is made in the text of the thesis, this thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma. No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis. This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

Signed: 

Dated: 28, October, 2020

Introduction

General Background

From the Song Dynasty (960–1279) to contemporary China (1949–), there is a history of Chinese thinkers attempting to develop practical theories adequate to respond to changing socio-political realities. In this history, traditional philosophical discourses of the Qing Dynasty (1636-1912) and the early twentieth century remain to be investigated. To demonstrate how modern Chinese thinkers reacted to changing situations by drawing on Neo-Confucian and Buddhist ideas, this thesis took Ma Yifu 马一浮 (1883-1967) as a representative case and studied his contemporaries based on comparative examinations with Ma's thought.

This thesis is an intellectual history of Ma Yifu's New Confucian thought. Ma was a modern Chinese thinker with a commitment to tradition. During his lifetime, China became increasingly westernised, but Ma argued that an ethical system based on the Confucian classics ought to remain normative in modern China. To that end, Ma developed his New Confucian thought by using traditional Neo-Confucian notions such as mind (*xin* 心), principle (*li* 理) and nature (*xing* 性). Ma, who had a deep knowledge of both Sinitic Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism, is one of the modern Chinese thinkers who responded to the social and moral issues of their time through drawing on ancient intellectual resources.

Before introducing the main research questions addressed in this thesis, I will first briefly introduce Ma's intellectual background, his life, his writings and related secondary literature. Neo-Confucianism was an important intellectual movement which came to prominence position during the Song-Ming period (960-1644). Influential Neo-Confucian thinkers such as Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) and Wang Yangming 王阳明 (1472-1529) had attempted to realise a transcendent ontological foundation (fundamental reality/intrinsic reality, *ti* 体 or *benti* 本体) so as to deal appropriately with human affairs (*renshi* 人事) informed by the Confucian way (*dao* 道). To this end, they sought to answer a central question in Chinese philosophy: How can the unconditioned (principle, the way) be realised if our cognitive awareness is circumscribed by the conditioned nature of human existence?¹ And how can a normative discourse based on appropriate recognition of the

¹ On the generation of this central philosophical problem, and its relevance to understanding Zhu Xi's metaphysics, see John Makeham, "Chinese Philosophy's Hybrid Identity," in

unconditioned be established? Clearly, to a great extent, answering the second question is grounded in explorations of the first question. Inspired by previous Neo-Confucian thinkers especially Zhu and Wang, as will be shown in this Introduction, Ma Yifu attempted to better answer these two questions.

By the time of the Qing dynasty, while moral values derived from Neo-Confucian discourses were still normative, abstract philosophical thought about “fundamental reality” that grounded those discourses was set aside.² During the first half of the twentieth century (1900-1945), when political and social order began to deteriorate, distinguished scholars with nationalist concerns like Zhang Taiyan 章太炎 (1869-1936), Xiong Shili 熊十力 (1885-1968) and Ma Yifu began to revive Chinese philosophical thinking, so as to improve the management of “human affairs, and the cultivation of the human mind” (*shidao renxin* 世道人心).³ While traditional intellectual resources (mainly

Why Traditional Chinese Philosophy Still Matters : The Relevance of Ancient Wisdom for the Global Age, edited by Ming Dong Gu, (Routledge, 2018), pp. 147-166; and “Monism and the Problem of the Ignorance and Badness in Chinese Buddhism and Zhu Xi’s Neo-Confucianism”, in *The Buddhist Roots of Zhu Xi’s Philosophical Thought*, edited by John Makeham, (Oxford Scholarship Online: June 2018, DOI:10.1093/oso/9780190878559.001.0001), pp. 294-341.

² The decline of Buddhist thought in the Qing Dynasty should also be regarded as a part of this trend. See Zhang Zhiqiang 张志强, *Zhu-Lu-Kong-Fo-xiandai sixiang* 朱陆·孔佛·现代思想 (Zhu Xi, Lu Xiangshan, Confucian and Buddhism, and Modern Thought), (Beijing: Zhongguo shehuikexue chubanshe, 2012.) There are historical studies of Qing Dynasty Neo-Confucianism, such as Gong Shuduo 龚书铎, et al., *Qing dai lixue shi* 清代学术史 (A History of Qing Dynasty Neo-Confucianism), (Guangzhou: Guangdong jiaoyu chubanshe, 2007), Gao Xiang 高翔, *Jindai de chushu* 近代的初曙 (The Dawn of the Modern Era), (Beijing: Gugong chubanshe, 2012); Zhang Lizhu 张丽珠, *Zhongguo zhhexueshi sanshi jiang* 中国哲学史三十讲 (Thirty Lectures on the History of Chinese Philosophy), (Taipei: Liren shuju, 2007). For the latest overview of this topic, see Cai Changlin 蔡长林 (Tsai Chang-lin), “‘Wenzhang zi ke guan fengse—wenren shuo jing yu Qingdai xueshu’ daoyan” 《文章自可观风色—文人说经与清代学术》导言 (An introduction to *The Intellectuals on Chinese Classics and the Scholarship of the Qing Dynasty*), *Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiu tongxun* 中国文哲研究通讯, 29(2), pp. 32-34.

³ According to these thinkers, dealing with human affairs and moral cultivation were closely related. For instance, Xiong said: “There is definitely no revolutionary among us who exerts effort in moral cultivation, so how will they ever set things right?” Cited and translated in Sang Yu, *Xiong Shili’s Understanding of Reality and Function, 1920–1937*, (Leiden: Brill 2020), p. 16. Also, Ma Yifu said: “Students must know that, for Confucius and Mencius, the crucial point in their discussion of government is to value virtue not power. However, as Confucius and Mencius did not attain office, despite being greatly virtuous, their way did not prevail at that time, but their words have become the model for people for all times.” See Ma, “Hengqu siju jiao” 横渠四句教 (On Zhang Zai’s Four-Sentence doctrine), *Taihe huiyu* 泰和会语 (Taihe Lectures), *Ma Yifu quanji* 马一浮全

Confucianism) seemed no longer adequate to address the forces of modernisation, these thinkers argued that Chinese people could still find resources of normativity and meaning in their own traditions, particularly Chinese Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism. After the collapse of the Qing dynasty, around the early 1920s, “anti-tradition” trends grew strongly,⁴ with modernisation proponents arguing that Neo-Confucianism was inadequate as an ethical resource for modernisation.⁵ Despite this atmosphere, Ma was dissatisfied with these trends and turned instead to Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism and Sinitic Buddhism to shape his New Confucian thought in the 1920s and 1930s.

Ma’s Life, Writings and Related Studies

Ma spent much of his life away from mainstream public life as China modernised. As indicated in “A Brief Chronicle of Ma Yifu’s Intellectual Life” (see “Appendix I): Born in a Zhejiang family with a rich Confucian tradition, both his grandfather and father belonged to the gentry class. In 1898, the year of the Hundred Days’ Reform,⁶ Ma achieved first place in the prefectural examination even though he was only sixteen years old. Between 1901 and 1905, he travelled to various cities in China and abroad, including Shanghai, St Louis in the United States and Tokyo in Japan. It was after he returned to Hangzhou in 1906 that he began a lifelong career as an independent scholar based in Hangzhou. Some members of his wife’s family⁷ helped him (Ma himself was also a

集 (Complete Works of Ma Yifu), vol 1, (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2012), pp. 4-7.

⁴ Luo Zhitian 罗志田, *Quanshi zhuanji: Jindai Zhongguo de sixiang, shehui yu xueshu* 权势转移：近代中国的思想，社会与学术 (Shifts of Power: Modern Chinese Thought, Society and Scholarship), (Beijing: Beijing Shifan Daxue chubanshe, 2014), pp. 190-197.

⁵ Huang Jinxing 黄进兴 (Huang Chin-Shing), *Cong lixue dao lunlixue: Qingmo minchu daode yishi de zhuanhua* 从理学到伦理学：清末民初道德意识的转化 (From Neo-Confucianism to Ethics: The Transformation of Moral Consciousness During the Late Qing and Early Republican Period), (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2014), pp. 143-167.

⁶ This reform indicated an important turning point in modern China’s intellectual history, as western learning rapidly developed into a dominating discourse in the public field. See Yang Guoqiang 杨国强, *Shuaishi yu xifa* 衰世与西法 (Declining Society and Western Institutions), (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2014), pp. 258-307.

⁷ This is according to memories of Tang Yansen 汤彦森, the grandson of Ma’s father-in-law Tang Shouqian 汤寿潜 (1856-1917). See Yang Jikai 杨际开, “Ma Yifu xiansheng shiji zhiyi” 马一浮先生事迹摭遗 (Collected Stories of Mr. Ma Yifu), *Hangzhou shifan xueyuan xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 杭州师范学院学报(社会科学版), 2020(5), pp. 106-109.

prolific calligrapher) in securing a livelihood as an independent scholar. Through informal lectures, correspondence and abundant literary writings, Ma attained a prestigious reputation for his knowledge of Confucian traditions among distinguished intellectuals right through to the 1940s.⁸ However, except for having delivered several lectures to students at Zhejiang University in 1938 and having taken charge of a private academy in Sichuan from 1939 to 1946, Ma kept himself at a distance from public life until his death in 1967.⁹ Given this background, the most effective way to understand Ma is to focus on his writings and the scholarly and intellectual traditions interwoven within those writings, rather than doing further research on the details of his life.¹⁰

Here I will briefly review Ma's works and relevant secondary literature. From 1910 to 1941, Ma painstakingly developed a detailed and integrated system of Confucian thought that drew strongly from Sinitic Buddhist (especially the Huayan school's) concepts and wrote his most important works, including *Taihe Yishan huiyu* 泰和宜山会

⁸ Both Zhu Kezhen 竺可桢 (1890-1974; president of Zhejiang University, 1936-1949) and Mei Guangdi 梅光迪 (1890-1945; Dean of Arts College, Zhejiang University, 1936-1949) privately expressed sincere admiration for Ma's Confucian scholarship. See Yu Wanli 虞万里, "Ma Yifu yu Zhu Kezhen" 马一浮与竺可桢 (Ma Yifu and Zhu Kezhen), in Wu Guang 吴光 ed., *Ma Yifu yanjiu* 马一浮研究 (Studies of Ma Yifu), (Zhejiang: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2008.), pp. 168-200; and Mei Guangdi, *Mei Guangdi wencun* 梅光迪文存 (Collected Writings of Mei Guangdi), (Wuhan: Huazhong Shifan Daxue chubanshe, 2011), pp. 283-284. Mei said in an English letter to his family in 1938: "Ma enjoys the highest reputation and respect among all Chinese who are acquainted with the culture and learning of old China but he is utterly unknown to the general public and to the younger generation". For a voice of dissent, see Deng Zhicheng 邓之诚 (1887-1960; an excellent scholar in the field of traditional Chinese literature and history), *Deng Zhicheng wenshi zhaji* 邓之诚文史札记 (Deng Zhicheng's Reading Notes on Literature and History), (Nanjing: Fenghuang chubanshe, 2012), p. 1136. Deng scorned Ma's literary skills and thought that Ma was merely "good at dressing up [himself in his writings]" (善于装点) (comments made in 1959).

⁹ All these descriptions are based on Ding Jinghan 丁敬涵 comp., *Ma Yifu nianpu jianbian* 马一浮年谱简编 (Short Chronological Biography of Ma Yifu), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 6, pp. 1-93.

¹⁰ Due to limited first-hand materials, in practical terms, this work is also very difficult to undertake. A popular topic concerning Ma's intellectual life is the private academy, Fuxing shuyuan (Recovering the Nature Academy), reportedly funded by the KMT government. Regarding this topic, its pedological and financial details are available in Zhang Zaijun 张在军, *Faxian Leshan: bei yiwang de kangzhan wenhua zhongxin* 发现乐山: 被遗忘的抗战文化中心 (Exploring Leshan's History: A Forgotten Cultural Centre during Sino-Japanese War), (Fuzhou: Fujian jiaoyu chubanshe, 2016), pp. 65-87. and Zhu Xueyou 朱薛友, "Liuyi zhi jiao: Ma Yifu yu Fuxing shuyuan yanjiu" 六艺之教: 马一浮与复性书院研究 (Teachings of the Six Arts: A Study of Ma Yifu and Recovering the Nature Academy), Master thesis, Zhejiang University, 2019.

语 (Conversations in Taihe and Yishan, 1938), *Guanxiang zhiyan* 观象卮言 (Goblet words on Observing the Hexagrams in the *Book of Change*, 1941) and *Fuxing shuyuan jianglu* 复性书院讲录 (Records of Lectures at the Recovering the Nature Academy, 1939-1941), which includes *Guanxiang zhiyan* as its final part.¹¹ Compared with Zhang Taiyan and Xiong Shili,¹² Ma did not have any important work completed after the 1940s, so my thesis will focus on Ma's writings in the period up till 1941.

Many of Ma's extant writings were published by his Fuxing shuyuan 复性书院 (Recovering the Nature Academy) prior to 1949. Based mainly on these documents in the Zhejiang Library, the volume *Ma Yifu ji* 马一浮集 (Ma Yifu's Collected Works) was published in 1996 and was the first comprehensive compilation of his published writings.¹³ Almost all scholarly writings about Ma published before 2013 were based on this corpus. *Ma Yifu quanji* 马一浮全集 (Complete Works of Ma Yifu) was published in 2013, and contains his unpublished writings not included in the earlier collection. The 2013 collection is far more comprehensive than *Ma Yifu ji*, containing many emendations and an abundance of materials that have not been fully explored in modern scholarship.

Liu Shuxian 刘述先 (Liu Shu-hsien, 1934-2016) introduced the term "first-generation modern New Confucians" in 2002¹⁴ to describe the shapers of a school of Chinese thought that has since assumed a prominent status in modern Chinese intellectual circles – a school that has come to be known as "New Confucianism".¹⁵ Three figures

¹¹ Ma Yifu, *Ma Yifu quanji* 马一浮全集 (Complete Works of Ma Yifu), vol. 1, (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2012). Funded by *Zhejiang wenshi guan* 浙江文史馆 (Zhejiang Research Institute of Culture and History), *quanji* was edited by a group led by Wu Guang 吴光. See Wu's foreword to *quanji*, *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol. 1, pp. 2-3.

¹² In the first two decades of the twentieth century, Zhang Taiyan had formulated his epistemology based on Yogācāra and the teachings of renowned philosophers of Chinese antiquity (*zhuzi* 诸子). Xiong Shili, who was influenced by Ma already in the 1920s, completed his *Xin weishi lun* 新唯识论 (New Treatise on the Uniqueness of Consciousness) in 1932.

¹³ Ma Yifu, *Ma Yifu ji* 马一浮集 (Ma Yifu's Collected Works), (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 1996). Based on materials archived in the Zhejiang library, this set of works was edited by Ma Yifu's relatives and Yu Wanli 虞万里.

¹⁴ Liu Shuxian, "Xiandai xin ruxue yanjiu zhi xingcha" 现代新儒学研究之省察 (Reflections on research on modern New Confucianism), *Zhongguo wenzhe yanjiu jikan* 中国文哲研究集刊, 20(2002), pp. 367-382.

¹⁵ John Makeham, "The Retrospective Creation of New Confucianism", in John Makeham edit., *New Confucianism: A Critical Examination*, (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp. 25-53.

from this generation stood out from their peers: Ma Yifu, Xiong Shili and Liang Shuming 梁漱溟 (1893-1988). Considering Ma Yifu's distinguished reputation, earlier academic publications about him are surprisingly scarce, even when considering his relatively small oeuvre. Only a few recollections and brief comments have been published.¹⁶ Apart from introducing Ma's theory of "one mind contains the Six Arts" (六艺一心论),¹⁷ Liu Mengxi's 刘梦溪 significant 2003 discussion of Ma was the first influential work on

¹⁶ Many of them could be found in the sixth volume of *Ma Yifu quanji*.

¹⁷ The "Six Arts" refers to the polite arts of the aristocracy in the Zhou Dynasty, including rites, music, archery, charioteering, composition, and arithmetic. During the fourth and third century BC, with the inclusion of the *Book of Change* and the *Spring and Autumn Annals* into the canon, "classicists had a set curriculum of *Six Classics (liujing)*—sometimes labelled the Six Arts as if to co-opt the older frame of reference—which were said to give the would-be gentleman the necessary educational attainments: the *Odes*, *Documents*, *Rites*, *Music*, *Changes*, and *Spring and Autumn Annals*." And in the mid-to-late Western Han, based on remaining classics texts (or to say, with a loss of *Music* texts), the "Five Classics" came into being as a set collection about the Six Arts: The *Odes*, *Documents*, *Rites*, *Change*, and *Spring and Autumn Annals*. See Michael Nylan, *The Five Confucian Classics*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), pp. 19-21, 31-36. Ma's "Six Arts" (*liu yi* 六艺) refers to the Confucian classics and their meaning. It must be noted that Ma himself tended to translate "yi" as "culture"; see Ma, "Yulu leibian·Liu yi pian" 语录类编·六艺篇 (Collated compilation of recorded words: section on the Six Arts), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, p. 584. For an early account of Ma's Discourse of the Six Arts, see Lu Baoqian 陆宝千, "Ma Fu zhi Liu yi lun" 马浮之六艺论 (Ma Yifu's Discourse of the Six Arts), *Jindai shi yanjiusuo jikan* 近代史研究所集刊, 1993(06), pp. 335-353.

Ma's interpretations of the "Six Arts" are, to a great extent, very different from the original meaning and forms of the "Five Classics". Ma's understanding of the Six Arts can be briefly shown in this table:

Arts-Classic Titles	Their positions in Ma's theory of the Six Arts
论语 (Analects)	A general theoretical explanation of the Six Arts
孝经 (Classic of Filial Piety)	A general explanation of praxis of a sage king, namely, ideal governance demonstrated in the Six Arts.
诗 (Book of Odes)	An Art regarding responsive interactions between a ruler and people under ideal governance.
书 (Book of Documents)	An Art regarding political activities that maintain ideal governance.
礼 (Book of Rites)	An Art regarding the harmony between these political activities and their ritual standards.
乐 (Book of Music)	This classic is entirely lost. In Ma's elucidations of the classics, he treats "rites and music" as one Art.
易 (Book of Change)	An Art regarding moral principle controlling the ideal governance.
春秋 (Spring and Autumn Annals)	An Art regarding how bad political activities violate the moral principle. Ma has no systematic interpretation of this Art.

Ma's thought published in the People's Republic of China.¹⁸ Subsequent to this, Chai Wenhua 柴文华 investigated how Ma's attitude towards Western thought and culture, and his understanding of them, changed over his lifetime.¹⁹ In 2006, Chai and Xu Yang published "Traditional Confucianism in Modern China: Ma Yifu's Ethical Thought" – a rare English-language study on Ma, which pointed out that Ma Yifu's moral philosophy "fails to deal with the problem of modern transformation of Confucian ethical Value and its content still belongs to the traditional Confucianism. So, it should be labelled as the modern neo-Confucianism in the historical sense".²⁰ Each of these works has made worthwhile contributions to our understanding of Ma's intellectual accomplishments – despite their being unable to draw from *Ma Yifu quanji*. However, these works provided only a rough outline of Ma's intellectual legacy.

More comprehensive studies of Ma's thought were completed only after 2006. Wang Danghui 王党辉 analysed Ma's views on human nature in his PhD thesis, in which he proposed that Ma, via his theories on human nature, reconciled a fundamental doctrinal difference in Neo-Confucianism, between the School of Principle and the School of Mind, and by doing so, shed light on how ordinary people can progress to attaining sagehood.²¹ Li Yongliang 李永亮 studied Buddhist influences on Ma's thought, and

¹⁸ Liu Mengxi, "Ma Yifu de xueshu jingshen he xuwen taidu" 马一浮的学术精神和学问态度 (Ma Yifu's spirit of learning and attitude towards scholarship), *Wenyi yanjiu* 文艺研究, (2003)6, pp. 60-68. Also Liu Mengxi, *Ma Yifu yu guoxue (zengding ban)* 马一浮与国学 (增订版) (Ma Yifu and National Learning, Expanded Edition), (Beijing: Shenghuo·dushu·xinzhi sanlian shudian, 2019). Ma's theory that the "one mind contains the Six Arts" is the focus of a recent book written by Liu Leheng 刘乐恒, *Ma Yifu liuyilun xinquan* 马一浮六艺论新诠 (A New Explication of Ma's Theory that "Mind Contains the Six Arts"), (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2016). Ma's "Six Arts" always refers to Confucian thought conveyed through six kinds of Confucian classics. While the *Classic of Music* was lost by the time of the Han dynasty, the Confucian classics Ma interpreted remain the conventional "Five Classics".

¹⁹ Chai Wenhua, "Lun Ma Yifu de zhong-xi wenhuaguan" 论马一浮的中西文化观 (A discussion of Ma Yifu's views on Chinese and Western cultures), *Zhongguo zhhexueshi* 中国哲学史, 2004(4), pp. 44-51.

²⁰ Chai Wenhua and Xu Yang, "Traditional Confucianism in Modern China: Ma Yifu's Ethical Thought," *Frontiers of Philosophy in China* (2006.3), pp. 366-381.

²¹ Wang Danghui, "Ma Yifu zhi xinxue lixue ronghelun" 马一浮之心学理学融合论 (Ma Yifu's theory on reconciling the School of Mind and the School of Principle), PhD thesis, Fudan University, 2006. I will briefly introduce these two schools in the following section.

revealed how his extensive readings beyond the Confucian canon shaped his core ideas.²² After 2007, considerable attention shifted to comparing Ma Yifu and other contemporary Chinese thinkers and exploring the connections between them and Ma. Gong Pengcheng 龚鹏程 pointed out that while Zhang Taiyan transplanted ideas from Confucius and the *Zhuangzi* into a Yogācāra-inspired conceptual system, Ma was inclined to use Buddhist concepts to interpret Confucianism, which followed in the mould of traditional Neo-Confucian thinkers.²³ From 2009 to 2010, Li Qingliang 李清良 published four essays that discussed Ma's influence on Xiong Shili. He started with Xiong's *Zun wen lun* 尊闻录 (Record of Venerated Teachings; self-published by Xiong in 1930), which contains Xiong's correspondence with his peers between 1924 and 1928.²⁴ This correspondence contributed directly to Ma's critiques of Xiong.²⁵ In Ma's later sayings, he further pointed out that "transformation and change as fundamental reality" (以变易为体) was a distorted (*diandao* 颠倒) understanding of intrinsic reality.²⁶ Without making full use of Ma's main work *Fuxing shuyuan jianglu*, however, Li Qingliang failed to make further progress in exploring Ma's New Confucian thought, which is different from Xiong's.

Without a concrete and thorough analysis of Ma's main writings (especially *Fuxing shuyuan jianglu*), the current secondary literature on Ma and his thought can be divided into two categories: (1) appraisals of Ma Yifu's status as an important pioneer of New Confucianism, and of his traditional scholarship; (2) Ma's achievements in integrating ideas from different philosophical (mainly Neo-Confucian) schools.²⁷

²² Li Yongliang, "Ma Yifu Ru Fo huitong sixiang yanjiu" 马一浮儒佛会通思想研究 (A study on Ma Yifu's thought on the integration of Confucianism and Buddhism), PhD thesis, Shandong University, 2012.

²³ Gong Pengcheng, "Zhang Ma helun" 章马合论 (A Combined Discussion of Zhang Taiyan and Ma Yifu), in Wu Guang ed., *Ma Yifu yanjiu*, pp. 1-30.

²⁴ See Sang Yu, *Xiong Shili's Understanding of Reality and Function, 1920-1937*, pp. 169-170.

²⁵ Li Qingliang and Xu Yangnan 许扬男, "Ma Yifu dui Xiong Shili *Zun wen lu* zhi yi yi qi yingxiang" 马一浮对熊十力《尊闻录》之异议及其影响 (Ma Yifu's objections to Xiong Shili's *Record of Venerated Teachings* and its influence), *Beijing Daxue xuebao (zhexue shehuikexue ban)* 北京大学学报 (哲学社会科学版), 46.2(2009), pp. 93-98. Ma's critiques see Ma cited in Wu Yifeng 乌以风 (1902-1989), "Wenxue siji" 问学私记 (My notes on questions to Ma Yifu about learning), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, p. 728.

²⁶ Ma cited in Wu Yifeng, "Wenxue siji", *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, p. 734.

²⁷ There is other scholarship that does not belong to either of these first two categories. Chen Rui 陈锐, for example, tends to focus on Ma's life and social networks, as opposed to his intellectual accomplishments. He has published important and comprehensive studies such as *Ma Yifu yu xiandai Zhongguo* 马一浮与现代中国 (Ma Yifu and Modern

Regarding the second category, Ma's claim "one mind contains the Six Arts"²⁸ has become a focus of researchers' attention. Liu Leheng 刘乐恒, for example, tried to comprehensively grasp Ma's New Confucian thought by taking this claim to be an ontological doctrine that underpins Ma's mind-based theoretical framework.²⁹ In forming this ontological doctrine, Ma's adoption of Huayan and Neo-Confucian ideas is a subject worthy of further investigation. Given Ma's "Theory of the Six Arts" is embodied mainly in his commentaries on the classics, his construction of "one mind contains the Six Arts" theory is based on his studies of the classics, and expressed in his *Fuxing shuyuan jianglu*.³⁰ However, Ma's interpretation of the classics remains insufficiently investigated by current scholarship.

I propose to study Ma's New Confucian thought in an order arranged by Ma himself: from the *Analects* to the *Book of Change*, from the manifestations of the "Six Arts" to the "one mind" as the fundamental reality (See Appendix III). In particular, I will seek to show how Ma's interpretation of the classics enabled him to develop important aspects of Neo-Confucian ideas associated with key figures such as Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming.

Ma's Intellectual Background: Ma and Neo-Confucian Thought

In order to understand Ma's contribution to the Confucian tradition, it is important to first understand some of the basic tenets of Neo-Confucian thought. For Neo-Confucians, it is

China), (Beijing: Zhongguo shehuikexue chubanshe, 2007), and; *Ma Yifu Ruxue sixiang yanjiu* 马一浮儒学思想研究 (A Study on Ma Yifu's Confucian Thought), (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2010).

²⁸ Ma believed that all knowledge and principles in the world could be included in the "Six Arts". The prerequisite to understanding this fact was to recognise the mind as the fundamental reality of the phenomenal world. In Ma's own words: "there is no phenomenon outside the mind, and that there is no function [in the phenomenal world] separate from the intrinsic reality [that is the mind]." (心外无事, 离体无用) Cf. Ma Yifu, "Fuxing shuyuan xuegui" 复性书院学规 (Regulations of the Recovering the Nature Academy), *Fuxing shuyuan jianglu* 复性书院讲录 (Records of Lectures at the Recovering the Nature Academy), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, pp. 90, 94, 95.

²⁹ Cf. Liu, *Ma Yifu liuyilun xinquan*, pp. 127-135.

³⁰ Deng Xinwen 邓新文 provided a brief outline of Ma's "one mind contains the Six Arts" in the context of Classical studies; see Deng Xinwen, *Ma Yifu liuyi yixin lun yanjiu* 马一浮六艺一心论研究 (A Study of Ma Yifu's "One Mind Contains the Six Arts"), (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2008), pp. 114-135.

self-evident that there is an unconditioned, morally good principle/pattern (*li* 理) that is both immanent in, and yet transcends the present world. This is a belief for which Neo-Confucians had sought to provide a theoretical foundation. These thinkers were confronted with the challenge of explaining how to identify the experiential subject's inherent ability to have knowledge of the transcendent/the unconditioned while living in the conditioned world. As will be shown in the following paragraphs, individual Neo-Confucian responses to this challenge were not entirely unproblematic. One of the main aims of Ma's philosophical project, like that of his friend Xiong Shili, was to resolve the problems identified by these former thinkers.

Due to the conditioned state of human nature, it is not a simple matter to identify the specific ability within our nature that enables us to discover transcendent principles. The pioneers of Neo-Confucian philosophy had sought to address this issue. Both Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) and Zhu's "philosophical opponent" Lu Jiuyuan 陆九渊 (1139-1193) attached methodological importance to the role of the mind (*xin* 心). They both agreed that transcendent principle is directly embodied in humans' inherent "mind of the way" (*daoxin* 道心). Therefore, if we fail to identify our inherent mind of the way, then obviously it would be impossible to discover principle, to say nothing of following principle. However, as the mind of the way is not different from the conditioned "human mind" (*renxin* 人心) and yet is not the same as the conditioned mind, how can it be distinguished? Zhu Xi claimed they are two aspects of the one mind. If the human mind is well controlled, the mind of the way would be discerned,³¹ and principle readily discerned.

Certainly, in order to identify the mind of the way, we also have to recognise another aspect of the mind: the human mind. But while the human mind always has the

³¹ In Zhu's words: "The mind's numinous awareness is but one, yet there is a difference between the mind of humans and the mind of the way because [this awareness] either issues from the selfishness of the physical body or derives from the impartiality of the [heavenly-]ordained nature. And because that whereby there is awareness differs, [the mind] is either unstable due its precariousness or difficult to discern due its subtleness.... If the two [aspects] become mixed up in one's heart/mind such that it does not know how to put them in proper order, then the precarious will grow ever more precarious and the subtle will grow ever more subtle, until finally the impartiality of heavenly principle will no longer be able to overpower the selfishness of human desires. By being meticulous in distinguishing them, one will not intermix them." Translated and cited in John Makeham, "Monism and the Problem of the Ignorance and Badness in Chinese Buddhism and Zhu Xi's Neo-Confucianism", in *The Buddhist Roots of Zhu Xi's Philosophical Thought*, ed. by Makeham, p. 330, mod.

potential to give rise to badness,³² it is also the ground of recognising the mind of the way. Due to this, the attempt at drawing a distinction tends to lead to an intensification of the tension between these two aspects, which renders the mind of the way and unconditioned principle to appear to be inaccessible to the subject. It was in response to this issue that Zhu underscored the fact that principle is contained (*baoxu* 包蓄) in the mind.³³ Wang Yangming 王阳明 also acknowledged the unity of the mind and the principle,³⁴ but compared with Zhu, Wang attempted to further narrow the gap between principle and the subject.

To narrow this gap, Wang expounded his teaching of “the extension of the inherent mind” or “fulfilling innate knowledge of the good” (*zhi liang zhi* 致良知). Like Zhu Xi, Wang’s teaching highlighted the conditionality of the subject and the need to seek within for knowledge about the unconditioned. But in Wang’s view, the conditionality of the human mind simply refers to selfish human desires; this conditionality is not due to the mind itself.³⁵ In addition to this bold idea, Wang further maintained that the very act of seeking the inherent mind is itself to act in accordance with principle: the extension of the inherent mind is the investigation of principle, and knowing principle is precisely to act in accordance with principle—they are inseparable.³⁶

³² In Zhu’s words: “Absent goodness then it is badness. However, the intrinsic reality of the mind is never not good. By the same token, it cannot be said that badness has nothing at all to do with the mind. If not for the mind, how could it come about?” *Ibid*.

³³ Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子语类 (Topically Arranged Conversations of Master Zhu), compiled by Li Jingde 黎靖德 (d.u.) in Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi quanshu*, Vol 14, p. 219.

³⁴ Wang thought that his efforts in underscoring the unity of the mind and the principle were precisely “what Master Zhu did in his late discourses” (朱子晚年之论). See Wang, *Chuanxi lu* 传习录 (Instructions for Practical Living), *Wang Yangming quanji* 王阳明全集 (Complete Works of Wang Yangming), vol 1, (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2010), pp. 49-50.

³⁵ “But to say that the mind of the way is the master and the human mind obeys it is to say that there are two minds. Principle and selfish human desires cannot coexist. How can there be principle as the master and at the same time selfish human desires to obey it?” Wang Yangming, *Instructions for Practical Living*, translated by Wing-tsit Chan, mod., (NY and London: Columbia University Press, 1963), p. 17. (今日道心为主，而人心听命，是二心也。天理人欲不并立。安有天理为主，人欲又从而听命者。), *Wang Yangming quanji*, vol 1, , p. 8.

³⁶ “The reason Emperor Shun took delight in questioning and examining was to put the mean into application and extend its refinement and singleness to the mind of the way. By the mind of the way is meant inherent mind. When has the learning of the superior man departed from practical affairs and discarded discussions? However, whenever he is engaged in practical affairs or discussion, he insists on the task of knowledge and action combined. The aim is precisely to extend the innate knowledge of his inherent

Because of such a view, the mind, which was originally a means, has become an end. Both Zhu and Wang acknowledged that one could achieve a unity of the mind and principle, but Zhu Xi placed more emphasis on the nature/principle within one's mind.³⁷ Having an affinity with Huayan and Chan Buddhism,³⁸ Wang came up with the bold statement that the mind is precisely principle (*xin ji li* 心即理). In this statement, Wang identifies the mind as principle whereas Zhu Xi had regarded the mind as providing access to principle inherent in one's nature. If Zhu Xi were still alive at that time, he may have criticised that view in Yangming's mind-based theory on the grounds that it is actually the conditioned subject rather than unconditioned principle that is perceived to be a source of normativity.³⁹ This is the birth of the subjectivist problem of Yangmingist

mind. He is unlike those who devote themselves to merely talking and hearing as though that were knowledge, and divide knowing and acting into two separate things as though they really could be itemised and take place one after the other." See Wang Yangming, *Instructions for Practical Living*, translated by Wing-tsit Chan, mod., pp.112-113. (舜之好问好察，惟以用中而致其精一于道心耳。道心者，良知之谓也。君子之学，何尝离去事为而废论说：但其从事于事为、论说者，要皆知、行合一之功，正所以致其本心之良知，而非若世之徒事口耳谈说以为知者，分知、行为两事，而果有节目先后之可言也)。

³⁷ For instance: "The nature is like the field of the mind. It fills in the emptiness in [the mind], and is nothing other than principle. The mind is the home of the divine/spirit light and is the controller of the body, and so the nature is the many principles, which are obtained from heaven and are present in the mind." Translated and cited in John Jorgensen, "The Radiant Mind", in *The Buddhist Roots of Zhu Xi's Philosophical Thought*, edited by Makeham, p. 73, mod.

³⁸ To them, "the mind is noumena and its activities qua the experienced world are phenomena". Cf. John Makeham, "Monism and the Problem of the Ignorance and Badness in Chinese Buddhism and Zhu Xi's Neo-Confucianism", in *The Buddhist Roots of Zhu Xi's Philosophical Thought*, edited by Makeham, pp. 264-265.

³⁹ This might seem to be an epistemological problem that is not very relevant to the correlation between norms and conditionality. But in Neo-Confucian context, this problem also has a strong ethical connotation. For instance, Zhu Xi was aware of the result of blurring the boundary between the "mind of the way" and the conditioned "human mind". He criticised Chan Buddhists for mistaking (conditioned) functioning as (the functioning of) unconditioned nature (*zuo 'yong shi xing* 作用是性). Zhu said: "The Buddhist words 'Functions are the nature' are like this. Paying no heed to right and wrong, the only thing they maintain is that [wearing] clothes, eating, working, breathing, seeing and hearing are the Way. Claiming that my ability to speak and to act...is divine power and marvellous function is to pay no heed to principle." (佛家所谓"作用是性", 便是如此。他都不理会是和非, 只认得那衣食作息, 视听举履, 便是道。说我这个会说话底, 会作用底, ..., 便是神通妙用, 更不问道理如何) Translated by and cited in John Jorgensen, "Radiant Mind", in John Makeham ed., *The Buddhist Roots of Zhu Xi's Philosophical Thought*, p. 98.

mind-based theory (compared with Zhu Xi's principle-based theory).⁴⁰ The "subjectivist problem" means ignorance of both the conditionality of the mind and the objectivity of principle.

When Zhu Xi attempted to bridge the gap between unconditioned principle and the human mind, he proposed the notion of "the mind of the way" as a solution. While Zhu Xi still considered principle to be fundamental reality, Wang Yangming, to further narrow this gap, focused more on "the mind of the way" as the reality of functions (our practices): mind-as-reality (*xinti* 心体). Because mind-as-reality is reality itself, in Wang's thought, "the extension of the inherent mind" thus replaced Zhu Xi's goal of "attaining principles exhaustively" (*qiong li* 穷理). However, in attempting to narrow the gap, Wang not only blurred the distinction between unconditioned principle and the mind, he even rejected the externality of principle. As such, for Confucian thinkers who acknowledged Wang's doctrine, the realisation of unconditioned principle necessarily presents a practical problem: How is the conditionality and hence subjectivity of the mind to be avoided? Subsequent thinkers felt a need to take up Yangming's insights on the importance of the subject's inherent mind. At the same time, the need for vigilance about mistaking the conditioned (the mind) for the unconditioned (principle) remained highly relevant, if subjectivism were to be avoided.⁴¹

In this context, Ma Yifu's ideas on the mind and the Six Arts present us with an innovative project on how to eliminate the subjectivist problem in a mind-based theory.

⁴⁰ Zhu and Wang respectively took principle and the mind as the fundamental reality of the phenomenal world. Zhu Xi said: "If for some reason heaven and earth with all their mountains and rivers were to disappear, there would still after all be their Principle here." Translated by and cited in Brook Ziporyn, "The Ti-Yong Model and Its Discontents: Models of Ambiguous Priority in Chinese Buddhism and Zhu Xi's Neo-Confucianism", in John Makeham ed., *The Buddhist Roots of Zhu Xi's Philosophical Thought*, p. 277, mod. For a detailed analysis of Wang Yangming's mind-based theory centring on "there is no phenomenon outside the mind (心外无物)" argument, see Geng Ning, *Rensheng diyi deng shi: Wang Yangming ji qi houxue lun "zhi liangzhi"*, pp. 285-293. I use the terms "Yangmingist" and "Yangmingism" to refer to thinkers and theories that share the basic ideas of Wang Yangming's school.

⁴¹ This kind of vigilance could be found in the thought of some of the greatest exponents of the Yangming School such as Luo Hongxian 罗洪先 (1504-1564) and Liu Zongzhou 刘宗周 (1578-1645). See Zhang Weihong 张卫红, *Luo Nian'an de shengming licheng* 罗念庵的生命历程 (The Life Course of Luo Nian'an), (Beijing: Shenghuo·dushu·xinzhishi sanlian shudian, 2009), pp. 325-348; and Chen Chang 陈畅, *Ziran yu zhengjiao: Liu Zongzhou shendu zhexue yanjiu* 自然与政教: 刘宗周慎独哲学研究 (Nature and Political Cultivation: A Study of Liu Zongzhou's Philosophy of Vigilance in Solitude), (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2016), pp. 193-231.

Just as Yangming, who regarded the “inherent mind” (*benxin* 本心) as corresponding to Zhu’s “mind of the way” (*daoxin* 道心), Ma considered the unconditioned nature (*xing* 性) as corresponding to Zhu’s “mind of the way” as well as Yangming’s “inherent mind”. By stating “The nature is the intrinsic reality of the mind, and the emotions are the function of the mind.... If [the mind] functions properly, then what is present [before you] at this very moment (*dangti* 当体) is precisely the nature”, Ma implicitly accepted Wang Yangming’s mind-based theory and the concept of “mind-as-reality” was attached to great importance in Ma’s thought.⁴² But in attempting to explain how this mind-as-reality functions properly, Ma held that it is “the way of the Six Arts” (六艺之道)⁴³ and not merely the one mind *qua* principle that we should follow.⁴⁴ As the principle of the world, according to Ma, “the way of the Six Arts” must be apprehended only by investigating Confucian classics. If one seeks to recognise the appropriate function of the mind-as-reality, one must turn to the classics and read them correctly. Ma also emphasised that this “objective” “way of the Six Arts” is not beyond one’s mind. While the nature is nothing but the intrinsic reality of the mind, both “the way of the Six Arts” and the classics are sourced in the nature. In Ma’s own words, these classics are the manifestation of the normative values contained by the nature: “The way of the Six Arts is a spontaneous outpouring of the virtues of our nature”, and “the Confucian classics are the manifestation of the virtues of the nature”.⁴⁵ Therefore, investigating the classics is also the process of fully recognising our nature and realising that the nature itself is not different from the mind-as-reality.

⁴² Ma Yifu, “Shi Zhang Dejun” 示张德钧, *Erya tai dawen xubian* 尔雅台问答续编 (The Continuation of Questions and Answers from the *Erya* Platform), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, pp. 459-460. 性即心之体, 情乃心之用...若用处不差, 当体即是性。”

⁴³ Ma defined the Confucian “way” that is a regular pattern of our cultural life as “the way of the Six Arts” (*Taihe huiyu*, *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, pp. 18-19). As shown in footnote 16, Ma’s “Six Arts” (*liu yi* 六艺) refers to the Confucian classics and their meaning. Thus, “the way of the Six Arts” here means the regular pattern which could be found in these classics.

⁴⁴ “Our nature in terms of its measure has always been extensive and vast, and in terms of its virtue has always been self-sufficient. Therefore, the way of the Six Arts is a spontaneous outpouring of the virtues of our nature. Beyond this nature the way cannot be accessed.” (吾人性量本来广大, 性德本来具足, 故六艺之道即是此性德中流出的, 性外无道也。) *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, p. 15.

⁴⁵ “Knowing this [*quanti dayong* 全体大用 (one mind’s reality in its entirety and its great functioning)], you will know that Six Classics are the manifestation of the virtues of the nature”. *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, p. 199. 知此, 则知六经所明事相总为显示性德。

Ma insisted that the way of the Six Arts is derived directly from the nature. Once the subject “recovers” his nature with its inherent virtues,⁴⁶ then the way of the Six Arts will necessarily reveal itself. And even if it has not been revealed yet, its unconditionality is non-contingent. Co-opting Zhu Xi’s terms, Ma attempted to shed light on the connection between principle (corresponding to Ma’s notion of the way of the Six Arts) and the mind of the way (corresponding to Ma’s notion of the nature/mind-as-reality). Given that Ma aimed to narrow the gap further between conditioned subject and transcendent principle by using a kind of mind-based theory – one mind contains the Six Arts – how was he able to avoid the risk of “mistaking (conditioned) functioning for (the functioning of) unconditioned nature” a concern that had also preoccupied Zhu Xi? As I have noted above, Ma’s solution was to develop his theory of the way of the Six Arts through interpreting Confucian classics as the Six Arts. He thought that the specific embodiment of the unconditioned nature could be found in the Six Arts. At the same time, this embodiment could be identified as different virtues of our unconditioned nature. This led to his moralised interpretations of the classics and idealistic⁴⁷ character of his New Confucian thought.

In terms of the idealistic character of Ma’s Confucian thought, it is worth mentioning here that this character was mainly shaped by following Buddhist ideas. First of all, a basic theoretical model of Ma’s idealised world is the “one mind two gateways” model in the *Dasheng qixin lun* 大乘起信论 (*Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith*). In this model, one’s mind has two different aspects/gateways. “The gateway of the mind

⁴⁶ In Li Ao’s 李翱 (774-836) *Fu xing Shu* 复性书 (Book on Returning to the Nature), a milestone Confucian work on human nature and moral practices, “*fu xing*” is used to mean “returning to one’s true nature” (Timothy Hugh Barrett, *Li Ao: Buddhist, Taoist, Or Neo-Confucian?*, (London: Oxford Press, 1992), p. 91). In Ma’s writings, apart from expressing the meaning of “returning to the nature” in order to emphasise that one needs to turn to the inherently good nature, *fu xing* also involves “recovering the nature” so long as the Chinese people remained mired in their myriad moral problems. The sense of “returning” focuses simply on the object of “*fu*”, whereas the sense of “recovering” focuses on overcoming obstacles to our true nature. Given that my thesis works on Ma’s attempts to show how to reveal and then “*fu*” the nature in a world threatened by human’s selfish desires (“obstacles to our true nature”), I translate “*fu*” as “to recover”.

⁴⁷ This thesis uses the terms idealism, idealistic, idealist in studying Ma’s thought. Ma’s mind-based theories might be comparable to some epistemological theories of the idealist tradition, but there remain other fundamental differences between the Sinitic Buddhist tradition and European idealism. In Chinese, the terms used here should be understood as “*lixiang de* 理想的” (it is idealistic, idealised, not realistic) but not “*guannian de* 观念的” (it is result from constructive activities of one’s mind). They should not be directly associated with idealism in European philosophy.

as suchness is the true mind. It is quiescent, unchanging, unconditioned, and it neither arises nor ceases. It is free of false conceptualizing and distinction making. The gateway of the mind as arising and ceasing is cyclic existence, in which the mind's propensity to awaken struggles against the mental and physical behaviours that arise from the mind's defilement by ignorance.”⁴⁸

Second, *sandi* 三谛 (threefold truth) idea in Tiantai master Zhiyi's 智顗 (538-597) *Miaofa lianhua jing xuanyi* 妙法莲华经玄义 (The Profound Meanings of the *Lotus Sūtra*) is widely used by Ma in explaining how political activities are not different from moral practices in the classics. *Sandi* is “a tripartite exegetical description of reality as being empty, provisional, and their mean”. In this description, “worldly truth is the affirmation of the dualistic phenomena of ordinary existence, while authentic truth is presumed to be the denial of the reality of those phenomena; both are therefore aspects of what is typically called conventional truth in the two-truth schema.”⁴⁹

Third, the “Dharma Realm subsumed within one mind” (*yixin fajie* 一心法界) idea from the Huayan school (especially from Chengguan's 澄观 (737-838) *Dafangguang Fo Huayan jing shu* 大方广佛华严经疏 (Elucidation of the *Flower Garland Sutra*) helps Ma in explaining how political activities conducted by ancient sages are exclusively functions of the sage's mind. The Huayan school states that there are four kinds of “Dharma Realm”. Through adopting the ontological concept “Dharma Realm of non-obstruction between principle and phenomena” developed by Chengguan, Ma sought to identify the inseparability of “staying in solitude” and “attending to improving the world”. Furthermore, because the moral subject has recognised this inseparability in the “Dharma Realm of non-obstruction between principle and phenomena”, “attending to improving the world” is thus deemed not to be different from controlling the mind and its functions – our moral practices.⁵⁰

In addition to these systematic Buddhist theories, Ma extensively adopted Chan Buddhist metaphors in his writings. By introducing Chan metaphors in elucidating the Confucian classics, Ma endeavored to demonstrate the truth about human nature and the

⁴⁸ “Introduction” to *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith*, edited and translated by John Jorgensen, Dan Lusthaus, John Makeham, and Mark Strange, (NY: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 25.

⁴⁹ “Sandi”, in Robert E. Buswell Jr. and Donald S. Lopez Jr. comp., *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014).

⁵⁰ See Subsection 2.1.1. of this thesis.

mind in a similar style. In short, Ma drew heavily on Buddhist ideas from these traditions in constructing his New Confucian thought with strong idealistic character.

Research Questions, Objectives and Methodologies of the Study

When judged against the historical context of related Neo-Confucian philosophical theories, Ma can be regarded as having developed an innovative theory to explain how transcendence can be immanent in the conditioned world.⁵¹ Yet, if this is the case, the tension that Ma had to deal with was even greater than that of his predecessors: How is the way of the Six Arts, which is unconditioned, embodied in ancient classics, which are historically conditioned? And, how does the way of the Six Arts, based on ancient classics, keep its normativity in the modern age? Given that Ma had attempted to argue that a moral discourse based on the Confucian Six Arts is universally normative in shaping our practices in a modernising world, the task before him would have been formidable.

In this thesis, the study of Ma's own New Confucian thought will address this first question listed above, and comparative studies of Ma's thought will address the second question. In Ma's time, in negotiating the path of China's modernisation, many thinkers with strong backgrounds in Confucian or Buddhist thought turned to the Confucian classics and Neo-Confucian writings. These thinkers include Liao Ping 廖平 (1852-1932), Kang Youwei 康有为 (1858-1927) and Zhang Taiyan who were well-known as masters of the Confucian classics, as well as Ouyang Jingwu 欧阳竟无 (1871-1943) and Xiong Shili, who were known as masters of Buddhism. Ma himself was intimately concerned with the scholarship of the Confucian classics and Neo-Confucianism, and he

⁵¹ Karl-Heinz Pol regards "immanent transcendence" as a concept used in contemporary new Confucianism, but also an idea rooted in traditional Chinese philosophy, especially Neo-Confucianism. See Karl-Heinz Pol, "Immanent Transcendence" in the Chinese Tradition: Remarks on a Chinese (and Sinological) Controversy, in Nahum Brown, William Franke, ed., *Transcendence, Immanence, and Intercultural Philosophy*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016). In addition, a notable critic of "immanent transcendence" is Feng Yaoming 冯耀明. See Feng, "*Chaoyue neizai*" de misi: cong fenxi zhexue guandian kan dangdai xin ruxue "超越内在"的迷思: 从分析哲学观点看当代新儒学 (The Myth of "Transcendent Immanence": A Perspective of Analytic Philosophy on Contemporary New Confucianism), (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2006), pp. 177-249.

left some critical comments on these thinkers. Exploring why Ma made the comments will help us to assess the theoretical significance of his thought in its historical context. In undertaking this exploration, with the help of Ma's relevant comments, we can assess the strengths and weaknesses of these thinkers' ideas. This comparative study of Ma and the figures mentioned above will also improve our understanding of the significance of these thinkers in the transformation of Confucianism within the context of China's modernisation. Based on key texts selected from their published works, this study is an attempt at making an original contribution to investigating an important dimension in the intellectual history of modern China.⁵²

This thesis adopted the methodologies of textual exegesis and intellectual history; it is divided into two Parts. Both Part I and Part II were conducted based on translations of selected texts. To clarify the historical background of Ma and these other thinkers' thought, this thesis has analysed their letters, presentations and other materials, and widely consulted historical studies of the intellectual trends in the late Qing and early Republican period China. Studying Ma's thought is the task of the first three chapters of this thesis (Part I), and the comparative study of Ma's thought is undertaken in its last two chapters (Part II). Having been informed by the comparative study, it is then possible to determine (1) whether Ma's New Confucian theoretical system has advantages over the theoretical systems developed by those other thinkers; and also (2) the role played by Ma's conservative character in defending his normative theses. Studying Ma's conservative character reveals that his New Confucian thought not only provides an original solution to theoretical problems in Neo-Confucian philosophy, but it also provides some insights into cultural conservatism in contemporary China.

⁵² Almost all main works of these scholars have been published and are available now. See Shu Dagang 舒大刚 and Yang Shiwen 杨世文 edit., *Liao Ping quanji* 廖平全集 (Complete Works of Liao Ping), (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2015). Jiang Yihua 姜义华 and Zhang Ronghua 张荣华 eds., *Kang Youwei quanji* 康有为全集 (Complete Works of Kang Youwei), (Beijing: Zhongguo Renmin Daxue chubanshe, 2007). *Zhang Taiyan quanji* 章太炎全集 (Complete Works of Zhang Taiyan), (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986-2017). Guo Qiyong 郭齐勇 edit., *Xiong Shili quanji* 熊十力全集 (Complete Works of Xiong Shili), (Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2001). *Mou Zongsan quanji* 牟宗三先生全集 (Complete Works of Mr. Mou Zongsan), (Taipei: Lianjing chuban shiye youxiangongsi, 2003). Zhao Jun 赵军 ed., *Ouyang Jingwu zhushu ji* 欧阳竟无著述集 (Collected Writings of Ouyang Jingwu), (Shanghai: Dongfang chubanshe, 2015).

The first chapter examines some of Ma's diaries, letters and lectures in chronological order, then divides Ma's career between 1903 and 1941 into four stages, to indicate the maturing process of his thought. It begins by introducing Ma Yifu's early life and his understanding of politics. This is in order to suggest possible influences on his moral temperament and the reasons for his inclination to favour idealist intellectual resources. Then it examines how Ma engaged with and then moved beyond Buddhist resources, and investigates his understanding of the nature (*xing* 性) and the mind (*xin* 心) formed during the period between the 1920s and the 1930s. This understanding, I argue, contributed to the formation of his Buddhist-Confucian approach to interpreting the Confucian classics, viz., revealing the nature. The final part of the chapter reconstructs Ma's theoretical framework that drew on the model of the "one mind two gateways" (*yi xin er men* 一心二門) in the *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith* from which Zhu Xi and many other Neo-Confucians also drew inspiration. Making full use of Ma's fragmentary sayings collected by his students, my reconstruction pays particular attention to Ma's use of Neo-Confucian terms such as mind, principle (*li* 理) and the nature. These terms support Ma's moralised (*dexinghua* 德性化) interpretations of the Confucian classics, while these moralised interpretations also made his Confucian thought especially idealistic.⁵³ The following two chapters further present this idealistic character of Ma's thought through studying his moralised interpretations.

The second and third chapters are studies of Ma's discourse of "recovering the nature" based on a textual analysis of his representative work, *Fuxing shuyuan jianglu*. A translation of its table of contents and all relevant subtitles is given in Appendix V. In Ma's interpretations of the classics, he maintained that all political activities conducted by ancient sages as recorded in the classics are exclusively functions of the sage's mind. To support this argument, Ma adopted the "Dharma Realm subsumed within one mind" (*yixin fajie* 一心法界) idea from the Huayan Buddhist school. Interpreted from the

⁵³ This term is also used in Cheng Zhongying 成中英 (Chung-ying Cheng), "Ma Yifu de 'Liuyi xintong shuo' yu rujia jingxuede zhexue yihan" 马一浮的“六艺心统说”与儒家经学的哲学意涵 (Ma Yifu's "One Mind controls the Six Arts" doctrine and the philosophical connotations of Confucian classics scholarship), in *Ma Yifu quanji*, Vol. 6, pp. 606-607.

perspective of Ma's mind-based theory, the Confucian classics are all about the functions of one's mind-as-reality (*xinti* 心體). For Ma, it is by following the instructions of the Confucian classics that one then is able to progress from self-cultivation to the establishment of political ideals. Ma can be seen to have avoided the subjectivist problems in his mind-based theory by claiming that the functions of the mind will necessarily follow a certain principle. However, his avoidance of subjectivism opened up the following problem: according to his moralised interpretations of the political activities recorded in the classics, the sage's virtue-based governance proves not to be different from a gentleman's self-governance – more concretely, a gentleman's self-cultivation. I argue that Ma's theoretical vision, evidenced by these moralistic interpretations of the classics, was too idealistic to provide any concrete guidance for public life in the real world.

The fourth and fifth chapters examine four representative thinkers related to Ma's intellectual background; discussions of Kang Youwei and Mou Zongsan 牟宗三 (1909-1995) are undertaken in Appendix VI and Appendix VII. Mainly relying on the classics and interpretations first developed in the Han Dynasty, Liao Ping attempted to develop a system of "Confucian scholarship" to accommodate the new knowledge introduced into China from foreign countries. In defending the practical relevance of Confucianism in modern China, however, Liao wrongly took the classics to be prophecies. Instead of prophecies, Kang Youwei, who was inspired by Liao's interpretations of Confucian classics, treated these classics as the propaganda of political reformation envisioned by himself. From Ma's perspective, due to their ignorance of the normative principles to be found in the classics, both Kang and Liao had failed to provide a convincing account of the Confucian classics as providing normative guidelines for people's practices in modern China. For Ma, the solution to the underlying problem of modern China lay in obtaining knowledge of our moral nature but not in prophecies about the future world. A similar concern about the connection between the classics and our moral nature could also be found in Zhang Taiyan's thought.

Different from Liao and Kang, Zhang Taiyan asserted that the classics should be treated as historical works. While historical works recorded the particular experiences of people in the past in dealing with social problems, according to Zhang, the classics are especially significant because they were the correct means of cultivating human morality and dealing with social issues. Rather than in these historical works, Zhang maintained that the basis of human praxis needs to be further sought in subject's mind. In his words,

one must take the notion of ‘self’ as a foundation for his practices. Similar to Ma, this concern led Zhang to seek theoretical support from Neo-Confucianism and the *Treatise on the Awakening Mahāyāna Faith*.

Chapter 4 investigates Ouyang Jingwu's and Zhang Taiyan's explanations of the relationship between moral praxis and its basis. With the help of Yogācāra resources, Ouyang attempted to set quiescence as the ultimate object of practice, because quiescence is not conditioned by individual experiences and the world where badness exists. To transcend the world conditioned by selfish desire of each subject, Ouyang maintained that the reality underpinning function (our practices) could not be one's mind. Instead of the mind directly controlling one's activities, Ouyang's “reality” is the ultimate object of our moral practices – the quiescence transcending the phenomenal world. In doing so, however, Ouyang sacrificed the direct connection between moral praxis and its basis. Thus, a strong idealistic tendency appears in his practical theory. This problem in Ouyang's thought is closely related to a theoretical tenet of Yogācāra doctrine: the “mind” can only be the “deluded mind” (*wangxin* 妄心). As Ma Yifu observed, if the mind is merely the deluded mind as Yogācāra thinkers insisted, our practices (function) controlled by this mind would be excluded from the “one true dharma-realm” (fundamental reality). If so, there will be an unbridgeable gap between social practices (function) and the source of normative principle (fundamental reality). Both Ouyang Jingwu and Zhang Taiyan had failed to address this gap.

Zhang attempted to coordinate “one mind two gateways” model with “deluded mind” tenet. The fourth chapter identifies the theoretical difficulties that this attempt encountered. In his theory of mind, Zhang still maintained that the mind controlling our practices is the “deluded mind” rather than the “undefiled genuine mind” which is “non-arising”. This is to say, the genuine mind itself could not directly serve as the reality underpinning function. This “deluded mind”, which controls our practices will cease to function when one reaches the real and eternal state. In Zhang's theory, because one must totally stop the activities of the deluded mind to reveal the undefiled mind that acts as “mind-as-reality” (*xinti* 心体), the undefiled mind is actually detached from the deluded mind and one's activities in the human world. Ouyang Jingwu's “quiescence-as-reality” discourse failed to provide a convincing account of the “fundamental reality” underpinning our moral practices; Zhang's theory was an alternative – but also remained unsuccessful. Rooted in the confirmation of mind-as-reality, as a rectification of the Yogācāra understanding of the mind as deluded mind, both Xiong Shili's and Ma Yifu's

New Confucian thought attempted to demonstrate the way of recognising the normative principles inherent in one's mind-as-reality. Apart from this common point, however, Xiong and Ma also developed different accounts of "fundamental reality".

As a severe critic of Zhang Taiyan, Xiong Shili tried to defend the legitimacy of Confucianism by developing his monistic philosophy drawing on both Yogācāra and Neo-Confucian resources. Chapter 5 examines Xiong's theory of "reality-function" and how, in the 1950s, he applied his philosophy to justify the direct relevance of Confucianism to socialist modernisation. In presenting "Reality" as "constant transformation", Xiong claimed that it was the internal contradiction of this Reality that made transformation possible. Compared with previous thinkers, including Zhu Xi and Ma Yifu, Xiong's theory of Reality was more flexible in demonstrating how the functions of one's inherent mind can become fully developed in a world conditioned by eliminable badness. But because Xiong regarded Confucian writings (including the classics) to contain predictions about the democratic republic, his elaborations of Confucianism suffered the same flaws as those of Liao Ping and Kang Youwei. As such, Xiong failed to demonstrate the place for Confucianism in China's modernisation. Instead of being concerned with the role of Confucianism in modernisation, Ma placed more attention on the moral principles an individual should personally accord with. Through introducing aspects of Mou Zongzan's philosophy, Appendix VII shows that Ma's understanding of Confucianism's role in modernisation was comparable to that of Xiong's student, Mou Zongsan. After reviewing the main findings of this thesis, the conclusion briefly discusses Ma's contemporary relevance.

Part I: Ma Yifu's New Confucian Thought

Chapter 1. Revealing the Nature: The Genesis of Ma Yifu's New Confucian Thought

This is because I wish to have sentient beings,
Eliminate doubts and abandon wrongly held views,
And give rise to correct Mahāyāna faith,
Leaving the buddha-lineage uninterrupted.¹

This chapter seeks to answer the question of how Ma Yifu developed his Confucian doctrines that were founded on the notion of “revealing the nature” (*xianxing* 显性). To answer this question, through examining selected materials in chronological order, this chapter reveals possible influences on his moral temperament and the reasons for his inclination to favour idealist intellectual resources. Like many Confucians of the past, including Mencius and most Neo-Confucians, Ma believed that human beings can address the problem of moral behaviour by behaving in accordance with the inherent goodness in their human nature. Differing somewhat from his Confucian predecessors, Ma attached even greater importance to “the nature” so that subsequently a sound approach to moral praxis could be developed. For Ma, “revealing the nature” is to recognise this goodness within our nature correctly, and it is a primary task that precedes “recovering the nature” (*fixing* 复性).

In order to present the formative process of Ma's philosophical thought, this chapter is divided into three sections. The first section is a description of his early intellectual life in the period between 1901 and 1916; the second shows how he intentionally absorbed ideas from Buddhism in the period 1917 to 1935; and the third section is a study of Ma's tentative plan for his “one mind contains the Six Arts” (*liuyi yixin lun* 六艺一心) theory, which is rooted in his interpretations of the Confucian Classics. Ma's philosophical thought underwent profound changes during the period 1903 to 1939, but a common

¹ *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith*, edited and translated by John Jorgensen, Dan Lusthaus, John Makeham, and Mark Strange, p. 62.

motivation can be discerned among those changes: to identify and resolve the underlying problems of this decadent world, a world in a state of moral and cultural decline. It was this pursuit that led Ma to reflect further on human nature and come up with his solution to the underlying problem: recovering the nature.

What does Ma mean by “recovering the nature”? As mentioned in the introduction, it refers to the practice of goodness through recognising our heaven-endowed good nature. This involves not merely a “return”, but a “recovery” from a decadent life world, like “recovering good health”. For Ma, because the failure to recognise this nature is the fundamental underlying problem in China, “recovering the nature” is the most straightforward solution, in which “revealing the nature” is the first necessary step. To reveal the reason why Ma developed a belief in such a nature, the concept of “the nature” needs to be related to the ideas of former Buddhist and Neo-Confucian thinkers.

In the first section of this chapter, I will analyse Ma’s critiques of the interminable political conflicts and of what he regarded as the unduly utilitarian ideas of his era. This investigation will be based on some of Ma’s diaries and letters in 1903 and 1916. In these critiques, Ma primarily gave expression to an idealistic disposition, which he had embraced throughout his life. In the second section, focusing on Ma’s writings in 1917 and 1935, I will show that it was through the influence of Buddhist philosophical ideas that Ma identified “the nature” to be the key to saving humans from their decadence and moral turpitude (*xianni* 陷溺). Moreover, the first step in addressing these social issues is to use Buddhist and Neo-Confucian approaches to recognising this heaven-endowed nature: so-called “revealing the nature”. In the last section studying Ma’s mature Confucian thought expressed in 1936 and 1939, I will investigate how Ma attempted to adopt terms, as well as methods, from Buddhist doctrinal learning (*yixue* 义学) to read the Confucian classics: reading the classics as a means to reveal the nature. In this process, Ma believed he had managed to find how the Confucian classics can reveal a pathway to recover the nature.

1.1. Ma Yifu’s early life: A Young Radical and Idealist (1903-1916)

Generally, for a young intellectual, it was difficult to live in the late Qing period without having a political opinion. Before really devoting himself to the search for the truth about our moral nature, Ma put great attention to political issues. There are some remarks extracted from Ma’s diary made in 1903:

Alas! For two thousand years, there was not a single Chinese person who knew the principles of government and the definition of a state. Even when our country was being destroyed by a succession of treacherous dictators, [the people] remained indifferent. Is it not deplorable? As the government exercised its powers to pander to foreign powers and to ensure its own preservation, it no longer cared about its people and land. And our people allowed themselves to be abandoned, as if nothing was the matter.... As I realise this, it upsets me. There are no more than one or two who are disturbed by this. The realisation of why China has become lost comes far too late.

After leaving China, my mental state has been unsteady and I have often entertained ideas that are disordered. I feel it is all the more necessary to use scientific knowledge to put my thoughts in order in a composed manner, so that I can write a book. It will be a new social contract (*xin min 'yue lun* 新民约论) for China. To become a major voice in society, I will need to clarify my ideas and lay the foundation for further writings, but I do not know when I could start this project.²

Among his contemporaries, Ma's view was very close to those of Chinese students studying in Japan at the time.³ As is well known, the latter group made a significant

² Ma Yifu, "Yifo beimi juliuji" 一佛北米居留记 (Ma Yifu's Diary Entry During His Sojourn in North America), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 5, p. 10. "嗟乎，中国自二千年来无一人知政治之原理、国家之定义。独夫民贼相继，坐此且亡国，犹漠然不知悟，岂不哀哉！夫政府有特权，用以媚外保衣食，不复知有人民土地，人民亦竟任弃之若无事。...览此意觉寥乱，无一二人，则中国之所以亡，已为晚耳。自去国后，神气时复清明，时复昏眊，往往有种种不规则之理想。念须益以科学的智识，徐当整齐之，使成一书，以为中国之新民约论，作社会上之大喊声，次第其条理以为致笔之张本，不知何日始得就也。" Dated on Monday, August 17th, 1903.

³ See "Quanli lun" 权利论 (On Rights), in *Xinhai geming qian shiniannian shilun xuanji* 辛亥革命前十年间时论选集 (Anthology of Editorial Articles during the Ten Years before the Xinhai Revolution), Vol 1, edited by Zhang Nan 张枬 and Wang Renzhi 王忍之, (Beijing: Shenghuo dushu xinzhi sanlian shudian, 1960), pp. 479-484. This anthology was originally published in a radical journal entitled *Zhishuo* 直说 (*The Voice of Zhili Province*) run by Chinese students in Japan between 1902 and 1903. Regarding the radical journals published by Chinese students in Japan during this period, see Gu Changling 谷长岭 and Ye Fengmei 叶凤美, "Xinhai geming shiqi de liu Ri xuesheng

contribution to the 1911 Xinhai Revolution. As with them, Ma thought that China faced destruction because of a weakness in the Chinese people themselves, one rooted in the long-standing lack of knowledge about politics.⁴ What made Ma's radical view exceptionally distinct from that of his peers, however, was the idealistic disposition that drew his attention to the "underlying" problem of a given society: he wanted to identify the source of good governance, and he looked deep into the human condition to find it.⁵

Three years later, when writing to his uncle, Ma expressed his dissatisfaction with shallow views about Chinese society. In that letter, we also learnt that Ma had spent a lot of time and money in collecting publications about the "underlying" problems of human society during his time abroad.⁶ Based on the same diary by Ma, Liu Leheng lists the publications that Ma had bought in America. This list spans evolutionism, liberalism, anarchism and socialism, indicating Ma's broad interests. Nevertheless, it must be noted that the foundations of Ma's knowledge of western learning were not ideal.⁷ Further, in 1907, Ma wrote a preface for a translation of the book *Political Crime* by a French judge,

qikan" 辛亥革命时期的留日学生期刊 (Journals Run by Students Studying in Japan in the Period of the Xinhai Revolution), *Xinwen Chunqiu* 新闻春秋, 2011(2), http://www.cssn.cn/xwcbx/xwcbx_xws/201402/t20140219_967236.shtml (Accessed on 2019-12-5).

⁴ During the period just before the Xinhai revolution, what intellectuals considered to be "good governance" was virtually identical with the national republican government. Here, Ma singled out a core concept of good governance: legal rights. At that time, both revolutionaries and constitutionalists were in pursuit of their political rights and their activities finally led to their confrontation with the Manchu Qing state. However, as a successful revolution resulted in a chaotic Republic, the Chinese failed to establish "Western political systems" in the "new" society as they had hoped and expected. For recent studies, see Yang Guoqiang 杨国强, "Qingmo xinzheng yu gonghe kunju (shang)" 清末新政与共和困局 (上) (The New Government in the Late Qing Dynasty and the Dilemma of Republicanism: Part I), *Xueshu yuekan* 学术月刊, 2018(1), pp. 11-29; and "Qingmo xinzheng yu gonghe kunju (xia)" 清末新政与共和困局 (下) (The New Government in the Late Qing Dynasty and the Dilemma of Republicanism: Part 2), *Xueshu yuekan*, 2018(2), pp. 5-28.

⁵ See Chen Rui 陈锐, *Ma Yifu yu xiandai Zhongguo* 马一浮与现代中国 (Ma Yifu and Modern China), (Beijing: Zhongguo shehuikexue chubanshe, 2007), pp. 93-103.

⁶ Ma Yifu, "Zhi He Zhiyi" 致何稚逸 (Ma's Letter to His Maternal Uncle He Zhiyi), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol. 2, p. 294.

⁷ Liu Leheng, *Ma Yifu liuyi lun xinqun* 马一浮六艺论新诠 (A New Explication of Ma's Theory of the Six Arts), (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2016), pp. 24-25. For Ma, the conditions and methods of studying English during his time were both unfavourable. Without adequate funding and good language teachers, Ma had tried to study Milton's *Paradise Lost* and translate Rousseau's *The Social Contract*. Evidently, however, his efforts proved fruitless. See Ma Yifu, "Yifo Beimi juliu ji", *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol. 5, pp. 3, 13.

Louis Proal (1843–1900). In this preface, Ma intentionally associated moral principle with the principle of good governance:

People who are saddened and indignant by humanity's long descent into beastly conduct might be tempted to dispose of states and governments completely and advocate a return to the natural state. Although this thesis is excessive, its sentiments cannot be denied. Could government be got rid of? If it could be, it would not be [genuine] government. To govern (*zheng* 政) is to rectify (*zheng* 正);⁸ it means to rectify what is unjust and return to the just.... Superior governance employs principle (*li* 理), inferior governance [merely] restrains desire (*yu* 欲), and in chaotic governance, desire is victorious....Therefore, in order to develop good governance, one needs to promote justice and the culture of non-desire.... As for the Machiavellians from Italy, governance and morality are clearly divided. This discourse is tantamount to allowing the abuse of authority. Is it not odd? ... If we examined their [the Americans'] motivation, how could we distinguish them from those Machiavellians?... To govern according to what is profitable is the inexorable propensity of the world today. The prospect of being able unashamedly to claim that the rule of Great Peace (*tai'ping* 太平) and the order of Great Unity (*da'tong* 大同) have been attained is bleak indeed!⁹

⁸ *Analects*, 12.7, *Lunyu zhushu* 论语注疏 (Annotations and Sub-commentaries of the *Analects*), in Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764-1849) compiled, *Shisan Jing zhushu* 十三经注疏 (Thirteen Classics with Annotations and Sub-commentaries), (Beijing: Beijing Daxue chubanshe, 1999.), p. 166. In the following pages, all my quotations of Confucian Classics are from this edition.

⁹ Ma Yifu, “Zhengjie Xu” 政诫序 (Preface to *Political Crime*), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 2, pp. 3-4. “哀愤之士，痛人类之相续而兽也。至欲划国去政，一切废除，返诸寥廓之世。此虽过论，莫得而遏焉。夫政可去乎？可去非政也。政者，正也。去其不正而返之正。...故上治任理，下治克欲，乱政欲胜。...故欲举善政，必弘至正之理，行无欲之教...乃若意大利之权谋家，倨然区政治、道德而二之，许操政者以为奸利之柄，不亦悍而可怪乎。...顾其所以行之之心，其诸比于意大利权谋家之术，有以异乎，无以异乎。...缘利以为政，斯亦今日之势既不得已尔。欲抗颜而称太平之治、大同之体，眇乎远哉!”

Not yet having undertaken any detailed study of Neo-Confucian or Buddhist writings, for Ma at this time, “principle” merely means the principle of public morality that secures good government. In this preface, Ma attached great importance to principle in politics, which indicates the convergence of his idealistic disposition and radical view: The underlying problem of the human condition can be resolved only by means of recognising principle and then following it. Admittedly, Proal’s reflection on the criminal dimension of modern politics had partly revealed the truth — morality is essential to politics.

Nevertheless, Proal’s reflection remained limited because he merely reflected on the inevitable criminal dimension of politics, rather than shedding light on the principles we should follow. It was under this conviction that, between 1907 and 1911, Ma Yifu turned to Chinese intellectual resources, and then wrote another preface for the Chinese translation of Proal’s book: “If our politicians can take the ideas of this book as references and then pursue the way for how good governance is further fulfilled, they could even burn this book.”¹⁰ In addition, Ma’s commitment to investigate “principle” based on Chinese learning (*xuewen* 学问 or *xueshu* 学术), reveals that his idealistic radicalism still played an essential role during this period of transformation.

During the period between 1907 and 1916, Ma was trying to put his early ideals into practice: to become both a Confucian master (*ruzong* 儒宗) and a literature master (*wenzong* 文宗).¹¹ The relationship between these two ideals, if expressed in Chinese terms, could be considered as the relationship between reality and its function (*ti-yong* 体

¹⁰ Yu Wenbo 于文博, “Zhengzhi zuie lun yu Ma Yifu zaoqi sixiang” 《政治罪恶论》与马一浮早期思想 (*Political Crime and the Early Thought of Ma Yifu*), *Zhejiang shehui kexue* 浙江社会科学, 2015(3), pp. 115-121. Ma said: “世之政治家苟鉴于此, 而求所以善其政之道, 则虽火是书可也.” See *Minli bao* 民立报 (Newspaper of People Rising Up), March 10th, 1912, quoted in Yu, “Zhengzhi zuie lun yu Ma Yifu zaoqi sixiang”, p.119. Proal’s *Political Crime* was introduced by people with different political stances in the 1910s. Interestingly enough, famous contemporary Confucian Jiang Qing 蒋庆 was greatly impressed by *Political Crime* in 1985. Regarding Proal’s reception among Chinese intellectuals, see Sun Hongyun 孙宏云, “Zhengzhi zuie lun de zaoqi Zhongwen yiben” 《政治罪恶论》的早期中文译本 (On Chinese Versions of *Political Crime* Introduced in Early 20th Century China), *Zhengzhi sixiang shi* 政治思想史, 2016(2), pp. 73-86.

¹¹ Ma Yifu, “Zhi He Zhiyi”, *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 2, p. 293. Ma was a critic of Chinese traditional politics and Qing government, however, this does not mean that he used to be such a critic of the whole Chinese culture. On the contrary, he aspired to be a Confucian master as early as in 1906.

用).¹² For Ma, Confucianism is the resource for pursuing the principle of good government, while literature is the means by which principle was promoted in ancient China.¹³ For this reason, literature, including various kinds of writings accessible to the general public, should be based on traditional learning, especially Confucianism. Ma singled out columnists of newspapers at that time for having failed to meet this standard, as he wrote in 1909:

Today, although columnists of newspapers view their publications as an improvement over the imperial bulletins, they are still below the standard of unofficial history, full of unrefined and vulgar words, and extreme trivia. It is why I feel pity for the columnists. And in the face of the calamities we face today, the issue to be concerned about is not that there are many petty persons in government but that there is a dearth of gentlemen (*junzi* 君子)¹⁴ in ordinary life. The concern is not related to the absence of good policies among officials but to the absence of learning in menial persons. This burning and keenly felt pain [calamities], which can be seen by all the people in the nation, can be addressed only by a great person. However, it is those hazards that lie hidden in unnoticeable places that particularly concern the minds of men of learning. When treading on hoarfrost, [one realises that] the impenetrable ice will follow. Its way is gradual. If discernment is not made early, then human desires will overrun [the world] and Heavenly principle will be abandoned. Alas, this is what I fear.

¹² *Ti-yong* is an essential philosophical model in Neo-Confucianism. Ma later further developed his understanding on the concept “fundamental/intrinsic reality” (*ben’ti* 本体) in Confucianism and Buddhism. See the next section of this chapter.

¹³ Here, Ma highlighted the European Renaissance as an exemplification of investigating ancient literature to promote principle in society. Ma Yifu, “Chongyin Yan shi *Quan Shanggu Sandai Qin Han Sanguo Liuchao wen xu*” 重印严氏全上古三代秦汉三国六朝文序 (Preface to the Reprint of Yan Kejun’s *Complete Prose of Antiquity, the Three Dynasties, Qin, Han, the Three Kingdoms, and Six Dynasties*), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 2, pp. 16-17.

¹⁴ In this thesis, I chose “gentleman/gentlemen” to translate *junzi* 君子. *Junzi* can be understood as an exemplary person from the Confucian perspective. But in Ma’s writings, he underscored that *junzi* is exemplary because of his morality. “Morally exemplary person” would be a better suitable term in some places of this thesis. I would, however, also note that, in many cases, Ma described the sage king/nobleman as a *junzi*. If we replace “gentleman” with “morally exemplary person”, this might overlook the political connotation contained in *junzi* as used in Ma’s interpretations of the classics. “Gentleman” covers both senses used by Ma.

It is a certainty that Heavenly principle (*tianli* 天理) and the human mind (*renxin* 人心) are imperishable. But [principle and the human mind] depend on being maintained by learning, otherwise how many people will end up not leading one another to descend to becoming beasts? Today, those who flaunt their writing discard the Confucian classics We do not have to wait for destruction under the foreign powers, as we have seen to that ourselves.¹⁵

In this letter, Ma explicitly asserted a connection between “learning” and “literature (newspapers)”. In his opinion, only with the aid of profound Confucian “scholarship”, could columnists manage to promote heavenly principle and steer the human mind towards this principle by means of their “literature”.

Because Ma believed that the underlying problem of China and the human world has much to do with metaphysical entities such as “heavenly principle” and the “human mind”, at least in 1910, he still maintained that compared with Confucianism, Buddhism could not provide any reliable solution. In a letter to his close friend Xie Wuliang 谢无量 (1884–1964), Ma expressed reservations regarding Buddhism as follows:

Yesterday in Shanghai, I was informed that Xi'an 希安 (Xie Dayuan 谢大沅; 1889-1959) is becoming a Buddhist monk. I was really surprised at first, but after reflecting upon it, I deemed the news false. Buddhism was not known to our ancient sages. [Perhaps] Xi'an recited Buddhist writings and became fond of them because they are able to promote benevolence. However, as to taking the Way to be the forsaking of proper human relationships (*renlun* 人伦), how could that possibly be the mind of a benevolent person? Moreover, Xi'an has you as

¹⁵ Ma Yifu, “Zhi Shao Liancun” 致邵廉存 (Ma's letter to Shao Liancun, a journalist in Shanghai), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 2, pp. 350-351. “今所以为报者，则视邸报为已进，跂野史犹未及。瘞词俚语，纤碎已极，此浮所以为报馆诸君子惜者也。且今日之祸，不思在朝之多小人，而患在野之无君子；不患上之无政，而患下之无学。祸之灼然切肤一国所共见者，得豪杰之士，犹可弭也。独其中于无形发于隐微之地者，为学术人心之大忧。履霜坚冰，驯致其道，辨之不早辨，则人欲横流，天理将废。呜呼，吾为此惧矣。夫天理终不可灭，人心终不可亡，此确然可信者。然其间必赖学术以维系之。不然者，几何不相率以渐而入于兽也？今之炫文者去经术。...不待异族之噬而吾属尽矣。”

his elder brother, how could the news be true? Although I am unintelligent, I certainly could not believe what I have heard and doubted [this news about] your brother! But what gave rise to such rumours? This should be examined carefully. As the age of the ancient sages has passed and [our] time is at risk (*bo* 剥),¹⁶ with the rites abandoned and no longer practiced, the will of the people is not focused, and therefore the world is full of troubles. People dress up in strange attires and speak foreign languages, and merely follow what is the trend. Indeed, what distinction is there between [monk's] bald pate and [the Manchu's] pigtail. So, it is obvious that the way of pursuing benevolence does not lie in this [becoming a Buddhist monk].¹⁷

What is clear here is that Ma thought that Buddhist monks abandon ethical relationships and that genuine benevolence is only achievable within those proper human relationships. In this way, like many popular trends, he asserts that acting as a Buddhist makes no contribution to improving public morality. This was also a fundamental belief shared by many Neo-Confucians in the Northern Song Dynasty (960–1127).

In the same year he wrote this letter, Ma also suggested that if newspaper columnists would take the example of the ancient historians who were thoroughly familiar with the teachings of the Confucian classics, then they would become an effective force in transforming the world.¹⁸ After the 1911 Revolution, Chinese public life was still dominated by political discourses based on ideas drawn from Western and Japanese sources. In 1914, Ma showed his resentment toward a public discourse that

¹⁶ “Bo” 剥 (Hexagram Bo), *Zhou Yi zhengyi* 周易正义 (Correct Interpretations of *the Book of Change*), (Beijing: Beijing Daxue chubanshe, 1999), p. 108. In the following pages, all my quotations of Confucian Classics are from this edition.

¹⁷ Ma Yifu, “Zhi Xie Wuliang” 致谢无量 (Ma’s letter to his close friend Xie Wuliang), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 2, p. 298. “昨过沪上，有告以希安将袭浮屠之服者，初闻绝异，退而念之，有以知其不然也。夫佛之为教，古之圣人未尝得闻，希安诵其言而悦之，为其能仁也。至于去人伦以为道，是岂仁者之心乎？矧希安以无量为之兄，宁得有是？浮即愚騃，良不敢信告者之言以疑无量兄弟。虽然，人言曷为至于斯？是不可以不察也。圣往时剥，礼废不修，民志不能定于一，天下所以多患。诡服夷言，惟俗所适；髡首辮发，亦何以异？然求仁之方，其不系于是也明矣。”

¹⁸ Ma Yifu, “Zhi Hong Yunxiang” 致洪允祥 (Ma’s letter to his friend Hong Yunxiang who liked Buddhism), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 2, p. 360.

lacked any background in traditional Chinese learning. He even considered such phenomena to be a sign of the demise of Chinese scholarship.¹⁹

Ma also opposed the objectives of the reformers. Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868–1940), the Minister of Education of the new Republic, enacted new regulations that stopped the teaching of regular courses on the Confucian classics in the Chinese education system.²⁰ According to Ma's memoirs, he was utterly disappointed by the new system that had been introduced from Japan and resigned as a secretary of the Education Ministry led by Cai in 1912.²¹ In the same year, Ma finished a draft catalogue in service of his grand project of collating classical Chinese Confucian writings (but few Neo-Confucian works were included). In the conclusion of the draft, he wrote:

¹⁹ Ma Yifu, “Zhi Wang Zhongqi” 致王钟麒 (Ma's letter to his friend Wang Zhongqi, also a journalist at that time). *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 2, p. 369. According to the completed version of this letter (*Jiayin zazhi* 甲寅杂志 (Jiayin Journal), 1914, vol 1, No. 1, (Beijing: Guojia tushuguan chubanshe, 2009), pp. 159-160), it can be known that Ma's dissatisfaction with Chinese politics and public life were mainly due to immoral politicians and the absence of decency and rational dialogue. From his perspective, all these issues were relevant to the demise of Chinese scholarship. This perspective might become fixed in the mid-1910s (I have not yet found an accurate time). On the other hand, one could not say that in becoming a supporter of Confucianism, Ma turned into a critic of the republican system of government. For Ma, obviously, following Confucian teachings did not mean that he endorsed re-establishing any kind of monarchy. What is the most ideal system of government in Ma's thought? This question remains to be studied, but it is not a task of this thesis.

²⁰ Cai believed that genuine learning (as well as the culture resulted from it) should be based on all forms of knowledge about the world rather than just the classics. See Yang Guoqiang 杨国强, “Cai Yuanpei de wenhua pingge he Minchu Zhongguo de xin wenhua 蔡元培的文化品格和民初中国的新文化”, (Cai Yuanpei's Cultural Personality and the New Culture in the Early Years of the Republic of China), *Huadong shifan Daxue xuebao (zhexue shehuikexue ban)* 华东师范大学学报 (哲学社会科学版), pp. 1-12+163.

²¹ Teng Fu 滕复, *Ma Yifu he tade dashidai* 马一浮和他的大时代 (Ma Yifu and His Grand Epoch), (Xiamen: Lujiang chubanshe, 2015), pp. 55-57. As an intellectual with a background in traditional scholarship, Ma's disappointment was not unusual at that time. In the process of introducing western political institutions into China, the controversy concerning the abolition of classical studies was a significant issue. For recent studies, see Zhu Zhen 朱贞, “Shangwu yinshuguan yu minchu jingxue tuichu xuezhi” 商务印书馆与民初经学退出学制 (The Commercial Press and Removal of Classical Studies from the Education System during the Early Republic), *Guangdong shehui kexue* 广东社会科学, 2013(4), pp. 113-120; and Zuo Songtao 左松涛, *Jindai zhongguo de sishu yu xuetang zhi zheng* 近代中国的私塾与学堂之争 (The Conflict between Private Schools and Government Schools in Modern China), (Beijing: Shenghuo dushu xinzhishi sanlian shudian, 2017), pp. 287-323.

That humans desire knowledge is due to their nature. But if knowledge is not comprehensive, then it is based on hearsay. To be limited by hearsay is not ultimate knowledge. To rely on insight to gain a sense of the Way and to extend this insight—this is due to the nature. Who knows where it will end? If one's knowledge is broad but without direction, then it is a problem to do with not being skilled at learning. If a person who is skilled at learning is shown this book, then having read it he will be able to achieve comprehensive understanding through extrapolation.²²

As early as 1912, Ma believed that ultimate knowledge could not be based on “hearsay,” which is the way that he understood the newspapers that he criticised to be operating. This is further evidenced by the letter cited above that was written in 1914, in which Ma expressed similar dissatisfaction with popular discourses derived from Western and Japanese “opinions”. But what about concrete ways of obtaining genuine learning? How can we grasp “heavenly principle” and the “human mind” by means of this learning? What is the relationship between this learning and the principles of morality and governance? To answer these questions, Ma tried to gain more profound knowledge of “human nature.” After 1917, to understand human nature, Ma gradually turned towards Buddhism, an intellectual tradition he formerly regarded as one that partly contradicts genuine benevolence. From 1917 to 1936, through the inspiration of Buddhist ideas, Ma believed he had found a satisfactory approach to genuine learning, one that could help to identify and resolve the underlying problems of this decadent world. The key to his approach involves reflections on an idealistic conception of “human nature”. This investigation is the topic of the next section of this chapter.

²² Ma Yifu, “*Zhuzi huigui xuli*” 诸子会归序例 (The Preface to the *Compilation of Chinese Philosophical Works*), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 4, p. 371. Ma himself wrongly translated “诸子会归” as “Conduct of Chinese Philosophical Works”. “夫人知求知，其性然也；知不遍物，则闻说是资。囿闻说者，非知之至也。因见以喻道，及其至也，性焉，夫孰知所终。纪樊然而靡向，则不善学之过。善学者可与观于此书矣。观于此书，亦可以知类通达矣。”

1.2. Entering and Transcending Buddhism and Laoism: Ma's Absorption of Buddhism and His New Understanding of the Nature (1917-1935)

1.2.1. Buddhist Resources and the Formation of Ma's Theoretical Framework

Despite his negative comments on Xie Xi'an's Buddhist interests, during the period between 1908 and 1917, Ma had a number of interactions with Buddhists including Shi Yuexia 释月霞 (1858-1917), a master of the Huayan school.²³ In 1914, he started to organise a local interest group named "Prajñā Association" (*Bore Hui* 般若会). His organisation of this group reflected how Ma's attitude towards Buddhism had obviously changed from the time he wrote to Xie Xi'an's elder brother.²⁴ In 1916, Ma revealed that he was known as a "lobbyist" (*youshi* 游士, freelancing scholars-strategists lobbying statesmen). Instead of seeking to be a celebrity in society, Ma thought that his duty was to study the intellectual legacies of the former sages.²⁵ At this time, Buddhism contributed to his investigations. It was also during the period between 1914 and 1917 that, influenced by Buddhism, Ma expressly described Confucian teachings as "perfect" (*yuan* 圆) and started to study Confucian "Six Arts" in his writings.²⁶ As many researchers have pointed out, however, the critical event in the process of Ma's turn towards Buddhist learning was his encounter with Chan Master Chuquan 楚泉 (d.u.) around 1917.²⁷

According to Ma's recollection of this meeting that he penned in the 1930s:

²³ Ding Jinghan 丁敬涵 comp., *Ma Yifu xiansheng jiaowang lu* 马一浮先生交往录 (Records of Persons in Mr. Ma Yifu's Social Network), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 6, p. 206.

²⁴ See Chen Yongge 陈永革, "Qianxi Ma Yifu de Bore Hui jiqi 'zhixing foxue' quxiang" 浅析马一浮的般若会及其“知性佛学”取向 (On Ma Yifu's Prajñā Association and His Orientation towards "Intellectual Buddhism"), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 6, pp. 772-791.

²⁵ Ma Yifu, "Zhi Tao Jisheng" 致陶吉生 (Ma's letter to Tao Jisheng who worked at Chorography Institute of Zhejiang Province), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 2, pp. 393-394.

²⁶ Liu Leheng, *Ma Yifu liuyilun xinquan*, pp. 35-36. An instance (1917) can be found in Ma Yifu, "Zhi Cao Chixia" 致曹赤霞 (Ma's letter to his close friend Cao Chixia), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 2, p. 406. The term "perfect" teaching is literally "rounded" teaching. It is appropriated from the Buddhist practice of "doctrinal classification". Regarding "rounded", see King Pong Chiu, *Thomé H. Fang, Tang Junyi and Huayan Thought: A Confucian Appropriation of Buddhist Ideas in Response to Scientism in Twentieth-Century China*, (Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp. 70-72.

²⁷ Ding Jinghan comp., *Ma Yifu nianpu jianbian*, *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 6, p. 21. Before 1917, there is evidence indicating Ma's strong interest in Buddhist thought ("Zhi Xie Wuliang", *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 2, p. 297. Dated 1908). But in that letter to Xie Wuliang (1910), one could find his reservations regarding Buddhism. And according to the following

At that time, I was reading Buddhist doctrinal works and doubtful of the Chan school's teachings, while the “blow with the stick” [*banghe* 棒喝²⁸] remained unknown to me.

One day, Master Chuquan told me: “What you’ve said is absolutely right. But the explanation of the Tiantai school [that you have given] is that of Zhizhe (Zhiyi 智顗), that of the Huayan school is that of Xianshou Qingliang (Qingliang Chengguan 清凉澄观; 737-838), that of the Ci’en (Chinese Yogācāra) School is that of Xuanzang 玄奘, (602-664) and Kuiji 窥基 (632-682), that of Confucius and Mencius is that of Confucius and Mencius, that of the Cheng brothers (Cheng Hao 程颢, 1032-1085 and Cheng Yi 程颐, 1033-1107), Zhu Xi 朱熹, Lu Jiuyuan 陆九渊 (1139-1193) and Wang Yangming 王阳明 is that of that of the Cheng brothers, Zhu Xi, Lu Jiuyuan and Wang Yangming—none of these explanations is your own.” ...

When I had problems understanding parts of *Wudeng huiyuan* 五灯会元 (A Compendium of the Five Lamp Records) and asked Master Chuquan about them, he would not reply. If I inquired again, he would say: “This needs to be realised by yourself, for only then will the answer be direct. What is obtained from the mouth of others is merely hearsay. The answers that are heard from others are ultimately something that is merely heard about [from others]!”

Once I sent the Master a short note: “Yesterday I heard you preach, ‘The divine state of the ultimate truth (*diyi yi tian* 第一义天)²⁹ and the Sea of

discussion in that letter, it was Ma’s encounter with Master Chuquan (around 1917) that profoundly shaped his way of drawing on Buddhist resources. In this sense, “After 1917, to understand human nature, Ma gradually turned towards Buddhism, an intellectual tradition he formerly regarded as one that partly contradicts genuine benevolence” is an accurate statement.

²⁸ To be struck by a staff and shouted at by one’s master to bring about instant awakening.

²⁹ *Dabo niepan jing* 大般涅槃经 (*Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*), T0374_12.0470c23. In this classic, Buddha attempts to let listeners know there is such a wisdom called “the ultimate truth”. And great practitioners (Bodhisattvas) who comprehended and follow this wisdom shall reach “the state of ultimate truth”. Abiding in this state keeps practitioners free from cyclical existence.

Omniscience (*Sabore hai* 萨般若海)³⁰ appear simultaneously.’ ” Master

Chuquan responded: “The Dharma arises and ceases together with the mind. As the mind itself neither arises nor ceases, how could the Dharma be preached?

Since it is not preached in words, what could really be heard? As to the means by which the divine state of the ultimate truth and the Sea of Omniscience are revealed, please find the answer by yourself.”³¹

The point being made in this passage is that the realisation of ultimate truth is open to everybody. Master Chuquan points out that this realisation can be positively realised (i.e. “revealed”) only through one’s own efforts, and the key to that realisation lies within one’s own mind. The conversation is conducted in the manner of the Chan Buddhist encounter dialogue. I have found evidence showing that Master Chuquan’s instruction to Ma was based on his own experience of having received a “blow with the stick” from his teacher, Master Chishan 赤山 (Master Faren of Chishan 赤山法忍; 1844-1905). Both Master Chishan and Master Chuquan emphasised that “the mind” is a primary idea in recognising Dharma, ultimate truth, wisdom and principle.³² Because this mind is inherent in each person, all the Master needs to do is to lead the learner to reveal this

³⁰ *Dafang guangfo huayan jing* 大方广佛华严经 (*Avatamsaka Sūtra*), T0278_09.0718a24. In this classic, the young practitioner, Sudhana-śreṣṭhi-dāraka, received Mahāyāna instructions from a good and virtuous friend. The friend showed him the omniscient wisdom that is universally available to all beings. Therefore, this process is described as “leading practitioners into the sea of omniscience”.

³¹ Ma, “Yulu leibian-‘Shiyoun pian” 语录类编·师友篇 (Collated Compilation of Recorded Words: Section on Teachers and Friends), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, pp. 691-692. 是时吾看教而疑禅，尚未知棒喝下事。一日，楚泉为吾言：“居士所言，无不是者，但说天台教是智者的，说华严教是贤首清凉的，说慈恩教是玄奘窥基的，说孔孟是孔孟的，说程朱陆王是程朱陆王的，都不是居士自己的。”...当时看《五灯会元》有不解处，问之不答，更问则曰：“此须自悟，方为亲切，他人口中讨来，终是见闻边事耳！”吾尝致彼小简，略云：“昨闻说法，第一义天萨般若海一时显现。”楚泉答云：“心生法生，心灭法灭。心既不起，何法可宣？既无言宣，耳从何闻？义天若海，何从显现？居士自答。”

³² Yuan Yin 元音, *Fofa xiuzheng xinyao* 佛法修证心要 (Mind Essentials of Cultivation and Practice of Buddhism), (Taipei: The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, 2007), p. 33. In regard to the historical records of *banghe* approach, see Nukariya Kaiten 忽滑谷快天, *Zhongguo Chanxue sixiangshi* 中国禅学思想史 (An Intellectual History of Chinese Chan Buddhism), translated by Zhu Qianzhi 朱谦之, in *Zhu, Zhu Qianzhi wenji* 朱谦之文集 (*Collected Works of Zhu Qianzhi*), vol 10, (Xiamen: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 2002), pp. 94-97, 165-174.

mind. From a historical perspective, this method was shared by Chan Masters and some Neo-Confucian Masters.³³

According to different sources, interactions with Chan Masters exerted a profound impact on Ma's spiritual life.³⁴ Compared with most of the former Neo-Confucians, Ma's intellectual affinity with Chan Buddhists was relatively strong, shaping his appropriation of the intellectual legacies of Chinese Buddhism. Later, Ma drew inspiration from his encounter with Chuquan and applied the lesson that genuine learning is within one's nature to his interpretation of some of the more recondite aspects of the Confucian classics.³⁵ In February 1918, after having read the *Notes on the Avatamsaka Sūtra* (*Huayan zhaji* 华严札记) by one of his friends, Ma judged it to be unclear and not accurate enough in its usage of Buddhist terms. More importantly, however, is that he also went on to express his new insight into the convergence of Buddhism and Confucianism as follows:

In order to observe the convergence and interconnections [of Buddhism and Confucianism], the key is to seek the category in which they are united. If one must include Buddhism within [the framework of] Confucianism, then it should also be allowed that Confucianism be included within Buddhism. In order to distinguish what they have in common and where they differ, we need to adopt the two gateways of the root and the traces (phenomena). This is because even though traces are different and so there are particulars due to dependent arising, nevertheless the root is the same and so that to which [individuated] particulars return is a unity....The *Spring and Autumn Annals* actually combines the teachings of the *Book of Odes* and the *Book of Documents*. The *Annals* proceeds from what is apparent to arrive at the most hidden; brings order to the chaotic

³³ Qian Mu 钱穆 (1895-1990) even described Neo-Confucians as the spiritual descendants of former Chan masters (*zongmen fasi* 宗门法嗣). See Qian, "Zai lun Chanzong yu Lixue" 再论禅宗与理学 (A Reappraisal of the Relationship between Chan Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism), *Zhongguo xueshu sixiangshi luncong (si)* 中国学术思想史论丛 (四) (Collected Essays on the Intellectual History of Chinese Scholarship), (Beijing: Jiuzhou chubanshe, 2011), vol. 4, pp. 301-319.

³⁴ Xia Chengtao 夏承焘, *Tianfeng ge xueci riji* 天风阁学词日记 (Diary of Studying Poetry from the Tianfeng Pavilion), (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 1984), p. 696. Dated 1947. Wu Gen 吴艮, *Wu Lushan ji* 吴鹭山集 (Collected Works of Wu Gen), (Beijing: Xianzhuang shuju, 2013), p. 715. Dated 1972-1974.

³⁵ Ma Yifu, "Zhi Xie Wuliang", *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 2, p. 300.

and returns to the proper; and it follows the deeds and praises the mind of the [former] kings. In the words of Buddhism, the *Annals* subsumes the peripheral into the fundamental; eliminates the erroneous to reveal what is correct; elucidates the genuine within the mundane; and conducts affairs in order to realise principle. So, the meaning of the ultimate teaching and the sudden teaching [of Buddhism] can also be completely contained in this text. Yet even though this is to speak with reference to the gateway of traces and difference, because the root is within the traces, the root is the same [for both Buddhism and Confucianism], [the two Buddhist teachings] can be included [within the *Annals*]. If traces alone [are taken into account], then no sense of inclusion would be discerned. As for the [teachings of] the *Change*, ritual texts and music texts, their root is the same gateway, and so even though there are traces in the root, because the root is the same, the differences [in the traces] are eliminated....

The *Great Learning*'s notions of elucidating virtue, renewing the people and abiding in the highest good, and that there is an ordered sequence between what comes before and what comes after—these are the tenets of ritual propriety.³⁶ They [teach] that [dharma-]nature is relied upon to explain characteristics (phenomenal appearances), and that it is precisely within [dharma-]nature that characteristics can be arrived at. The *Doctrine of the Moderation*'s [concepts of] the great fundamental, the universal way, integration through the highest sincerity, and the unity of heaven and human— these are the tenets of the teaching of music.³⁷ [They teach that] characteristics (phenomenal appearances) are subsumed into the nature, and that it is precisely through the characteristics that the nature is arrived at. Thus, the *Great Learning* includes the Ultimate Teaching and the *Doctrine of the Moderation* includes the Sudden Teaching, and their combination results in the Perfect Teaching. Therefore, early Confucians highlighted both works in order to reveal the way of the sages.

Music was created by following heaven and ritual propriety was established by acting in accordance with the earth.³⁸ Only by elucidating heaven and earth can the rites and music prosper. Heaven and earth are the roots of dharma

³⁶ “Daxue” 大学 (The Great Learning), *Liji zhengyi* 礼记正义 (Correct Interpretations of the *Book of Rites*), (Beijing: Beijing Daxue chubanshe, 1999), p. 1592.

³⁷ “Zhongyong” 中庸 (The Doctrine of Moderation), *Liji zhengyi*, p.1422.

³⁸ “Yueji” 乐记 (The Record on the Subject of Music), *Liji zhengyi*, pp. 1090-1091.

characteristics (phenomena). Heaven (*qian* 乾) governs the great beginning, and represents the mind as suchness. This is the so called “dharma-gate reality, which is the overarching characteristic of the unified dharma realm”³⁹. Earth (*kun* 坤) creates to give form to things and represents the mind that arises and ceases.⁴⁰ It generates all dharmas and is able to contain all dharmas.... Heaven and earth being arrayed, [the principle of] the *Change* operates therein.⁴¹ Then, the [dharma-]nature and [dharma-]characteristics merge with one another, the extension of awareness becomes boundless. Intrinsic reality and function share one source, and there is no gap between the apparent and the subtle.⁴² Hence, the way of the sages is able to be established and the Buddha Dharma is made manifest thereby.⁴³

This letter, which represents an early and rough account of his planned book, *Liu yi lun* 六艺论 (Theory of the Six Arts), can be summarised by the following four statements:

³⁹ *Dasheng qixin lun* 大乘起信论 (*Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith*), T1666_32.0576a08.

⁴⁰ *Dasheng qixin lun*, T1666_32.0576a06.

⁴¹ “Xi ci” 系辞 (The Great Treatise), *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, p. 274.

⁴² Cf. Cheng Yi 程颐 (1033-1107), “Yizhuan xu” 易传序 (Preface to Cheng Yi’s *Commentaries on the Book of Change*), *Er Cheng ji* 二程集 (Collected Works of Two Cheng Brothers), (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), p. 689.

⁴³ Ma Yifu, “Zhi Jiang Zaitang” 致蒋再唐 (Ma’s Letter to his friend Jiang Zaitang), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 2, pp. 446-447. “今欲观其会通，要在求其统类。若定以儒摄佛，亦听以佛摄儒。须以本迹二门辨其同异。盖迹异故缘起有殊，本同故归致是一...《春秋》实兼《诗》、《书》二教，推见至隐，拨乱反正，因行事加王心。自彼教言之，即是摄末归本，破邪显正，即俗明真，举事成理也。终、顿之义亦可略摄于此。然此是迹异门。迹中有本，本同故可摄取。唯以其迹，则不见有摄义也。若《易》与礼、乐则是本同门，本中亦有迹，本同故迹泯...《大学》明德、新民、止于至善，先后有序，是礼教义：依性说相，即性之相也。《中庸》大本、达道，一于至诚，天人合言，是乐教义；会相归性，即相之性也。《大学》摄终，《中庸》兼顿，合即成圆。故先儒双提二篇以显圣道也。乐由天作，礼以地制。明于天地，然后能兴礼乐。天地者，法象之本。乾知大始，即表心真如，所谓一大总相法门体也。坤作成物，即表心生灭，出生一切法，能摄一切法也...乾坤成列而《易》行乎其中，性相交融而觉周于无际。体用一源，显微无间。故圣道可得而立，佛法由是而现。”

1. The teaching of the *Change* identifies the world as a functioning whole, while its two basic hexagrams, “Heaven” and “Earth”, represent the mind-as-reality (*xinti* 心体) as the root, that which is fundamental (*ben* 本), as well as phenomenal world where the functions appear as tracks (*ji* 迹).⁴⁴
2. “Earth” in the above passage represents the mind that arises and ceases, as it also contains (*she* 摄) all the “traces and difference” in the phenomenal world.
3. “Heaven” in the above passage represents the mind as unchanging reality. This reality influences the phenomenal world (functions) and these influences appear in accordance with normative principles. To recognise these principles is also to recognise the “characteristics” (*xiang* 相) of unchanging reality (the nature or the mind) in the phenomenal world. This category of “characteristics”, which is adopted from the *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith*,⁴⁵ then became one of the innovations Ma contributed to the Confucian tradition: the virtues of the nature.
4. In order to become appropriate functions of reality, our practices must be in accordance with the normative principles contained in the Confucian classics. The teachings of the Confucian classics aim to describe how the process of moral praxis was conducted in

⁴⁴ Kong Yingda 孔颖达 (574-648) stated: “Heaven is the name of unmoving fundamental reality ‘Qian’ is the name of the functioning of fundamental reality.” (天者定体之名，乾者体用之称。) Kong’s statement shows his emphasis on the inseparability of fundamental reality and its functions; see Gu Jiming 谷继明, *Zhou Yi zhengyi du* 周易正义读 (Comments on the *Correct Interpretations of the Book of Change*), (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2017), pp. 92-93. Compared with Kong, Ma’s understanding of Qian seems to me to be rather Buddhist. This character will be further studied later. For an explanation of the role of “one mind two gateways” model in Ma’s Confucian thought, see Liu Leheng, “The ‘Three Greats’, ‘Three Changes’ and ‘Six Arts’—Lessons Drawn from the *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith* in Ma Yifu’s New Confucian Thought”, in John Makeham ed., *The Awakening of Faith and New Confucian Philosophy* (Boston: Brill, 2021, forthcoming).

⁴⁵ “In the *Treatise*, intrinsic reality refers to the quality of something being so of itself, without relying on anything more fundamental be what it is. As one of the three Greats it refers to the One Mind and to suchness. It can be experienced only through its characteristics and its functions. With the mind as suchness, the intrinsic reality of the mind of sentient beings is realised. This intrinsic reality, also known as the One Mind, is the focus of Mahāyāna as a teaching. When suchness adapts to and accords with phenomenal reality, the functioning of the One Mind is revealed. In other words, suchness (*ti*) is realised through phenomenal arising and ceasing (*xiang, yong*).” See John Makeham, “Introduction”, in *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith*, edited and translated by John Jorgensen, Dan Lusthaus, John Makeham, and Mark Strange, p. 62.

ancient public life. Studying these classics is to discover this process and recognise the moral principle which, in his later writings, Ma referred to as “the way of the Six Arts”.

As described above, the notion of “mind” is key to observing Ma’s Buddhist-inspired account of the Confucian vision articulated in the classics. More concretely, mainly through appropriating the “one mind two gateways” model from the *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith*,⁴⁶ Ma began to approach hidden meanings embedded within the Confucian classics. Although some of his efforts during this period were immature and stalled midway, they are also indicative of Ma’s future direction in his pursuit of comprehending the classics. This development is encapsulated in the Neo-Confucian notion of grasping reality in order to realise its functions/functioning (*ming’ti da’yong* 明体达用).⁴⁷ Further, Ma never adopted the anti-Buddhism stance held by Neo-Confucians of the Song Dynasty. In a letter to his close friend and historian Ye Weiqing 叶渭清 (Zuowen 左文, 1886-1966) in 1918, Ma wrote: “Buddhist accounts of the essentials of the mind and the nature are subtle and profoundly clear. [These accounts] are consistently the same as those of the masters of Lian and Luo⁴⁸ The problem with the world today has to do with [the obsession] with ‘success and profit’; it is not the fault of Chan Buddhism”.⁴⁹

1.2.2. Buddhist Resources and Ma’s Idealistic World View

⁴⁶ Ma’s few extant drafts about the *Great Learning* and the *Change* that were composed in the 1920s evidence his early attempts to incorporate concepts from the *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith* into his interpretations on classics. See *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 4, pp. 82-84.

⁴⁷ For the genesis of this term in the Northern Song Dynasty, see Zhou Yangbo 周扬波, “Hu Yuan ‘ming ti da yong’ bian” 胡瑗“明体达用”辨 (Clarifications of Hu Yuan’s Idea of “Grasping Fundamental Reality in Order to Realise its Functions”), *Kongzi yanjiu* 孔子研究, 2013(6), pp. 49-59.

⁴⁸ “The Masters of Lian and Luo” refers to the Cheng-Zhu School represented by great Neo-Confucians Cheng Hao 程颢 (1032-1085), Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi.

⁴⁹ Ma Yifu, “Zhi Ye Zuowen” 致叶左文 (Ma’s letter to his friend Ye Zuowen, a historian with a strong Confucian stance against Buddhism), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 2, p. 375. 彼其论心性之要，微妙玄通，较之濂洛诸师，所持未始有异 ...今天下之患乃在功利，不在禅学。

During the period from 1918 to about 1926, Ma's intensive investigations of Mahāyāna Buddhism enabled him to devise a significantly different model of Confucianism. It was not, however, until he shifted his focus from "Buddhist mind" to "Confucian nature" that the basic approach to his account of the Six Arts—"revealing the nature"—began to take shape. Liu Leheng has pointed out that by 1927, Ma had determined to devote himself to the study of the Six Arts. In a letter written in 1927, Ma wrote: "Over the past year, I have never talked about [Chan Buddhism]." Therefore, we can infer that it was around 1926 that Ma re-engaged with Confucianism.⁵⁰ The key to this shift was his reflection on the concept "the nature". As noted in the first section of this chapter, Ma believed that knowledge of human nature was the only way to attain absolute knowledge or genuine learning. During the period of his engagement with Chan Buddhism, it seems that Ma had focussed exclusively on the concept of "the mind" rather than "the nature". In 1920, while defending Buddhism in a letter to his friend Ye Weiqing, Ma attached a great deal of importance to the fundamental role of the nature:

In the time of the early Confucians, [ordinary] people's natural endowments were particularly superior.⁵¹ Through stimulating [their thinking] appropriately, they could easily realise the truth of the way... [Today, however,] without recourse to excellent teachings that are in accord with principle, it is impossible for [ordinary] people to eliminate their attachment to deluded thought. With regard to the nature's being fundamental, there has been no change since ancient times. In terms of the [different] traces of [Buddhist and Confucian] teachings, even though they are close they are not identical.... At the present, the torrential debates [about Chinese culture and politics] are actually short-lived and disoriented. Many of our friends from former days have also become obsessed [with these debates], but [I am sure that] one day they will get back on to the

⁵⁰ Liu Leheng, *Ma Yifu Liuyi lun xinquan*, pp. 39-41.

⁵¹ This indigenous idea that "people living in a previous age (the time of the early Confucians) were unadorned and simple (born with superior natural endowments), and easy to transform [through learning]" (上世之人，质朴易化) can be traced to Han Dynasty. See Wang Chong 王充 (27-97) comp., Huang Hui 黄晖 (1909-1974) ed., *Lunheng jiaoshi* 论衡校释 (*Collated and Annotated Discourses in the Balance*), (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1990), p. 806.

right path.... [Now] I desire to use wisdom (*prajñā*) to “perfume” these friends, so as to clarify the essential [virtues of] the mind.⁵²

Ma’s reference in this passage to “many of our friends” might have included a reference to Chen Duxiu 陈独秀 (1879-1942), a prominent figure in the New Culture Movement, which called for the re-evaluation of traditional culture based on Western learning and following “democracy and science”. Ma shared similar concerns with followers of this movement about public morality, but his solution was different because he advocated the continued study of the Confucian classics.⁵³

Yet, how should the classics be studied given that “modern” people’s natural endowments had been affected by their preference for “success and profit”? Given that many of his peers had become obsessed with debates about how to bring about “success and profit” for China, which Ma took to be a reflection of their attachment to deluded thought, he maintained that it was necessary to introduce Buddhist accounts of the essentials of the mind and the nature into genuine scholarship, which pursued understanding of unchanging reality.⁵⁴ This reality, in Ma’s sense, was the nature. And Neo-Confucian works showed us a concise approach of concretely realising the nature. In 1926, in a letter to his old friend Hong Yunxiang, who had a keen interest in Buddhism, Ma wrote:

Chan is but a name, which could readily be set aside, but the nature is [endowed with] real virtues that must be personally realised. Your letter is full of

⁵² Ma Yifu, “Zhi Ye Zuowen”, *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 2, pp. 379-380. “先儒之时，人根犹胜，随宜逗引，易契道真...非假称理极谈，无自破其情执。若论性本，古今不曾移易丝毫；若约教迹，兄弟不能同一形貌。...今滔滔之议论，亦是暂时歧路。昔日知交，陷溺不少，然亦无往不复...故且欲以般若互熏，发明心要。”

⁵³ It should be discussed in an independent paper.

⁵⁴ Ma Yifu, “Zhi Jin Rongjing” 致金蓉镜 (Ma’s letter to Jin Rongjing, his friend who was interested in traditional scholarship), dated 1921, *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 2, p.434. Wang Zhongjiang 王中江 has recently presented Ma’s critique of the “success and profit” and western learning as an important feature of Ma’s thought. Moreover, Wang argues that Ma was strongly opposed to western instrumentalist rationality (*gongju lixing* 工具理性). It is a pity, however, that Wang did not fully analyse the philosophical structure behind that opposition. See Wang, *Ziran he ren* 自然和人 (Nature and Human), (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2018), pp. 475-495.

evaluations of the words of others but lacks the intent to seek within so as to verify personally to the utmost. This bad habit is due to the lingering habit of [obsession with] success and profit, which do not belong to the family treasures of genuine learning. If you want to free yourself from the confusion caused by mistaken views, this [bad habit] is the most urgent problem. Further, although you dislike the worthies of the Cheng-Zhu School, you simply adopt or reject their words without careful examination. In my opinion, although you have a broad and long-term interest in meditative and doctrinal schools of Buddhism, your understanding remains simplistic and rootless. How about returning to the study of the Six Classics and modelling yourself on those excellent persons of the Song—a concise and accessible way?⁵⁵

What Ma had learned from Chan Buddhism was not only the notion of mind that came to serve as a keystone in his later theoretical frameworks, but also the belief in natural human endowments and that genuine learning must be based on an inward investigation.⁵⁶ It was this belief that pushed Ma to work out a concise and accessible way of studying the Confucian classics: the Cheng-Zhu School's teachings about revealing the nature. In a previous letter, also written in 1926, Ma told Hong to empty his "mind" in order to reveal unchanging reality.⁵⁷ Despite this Buddhistic approach, in response to his friend, Ma still

⁵⁵ Ma Yifu, "Zhi Hong Yunxiang", *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 2, p. 366. "禅是闲名，大可束阁；性是实德，必须亲证。来书多裁量他人之言，而少向内体究之意，此是功利之余习，亦非实学之家珍。欲断见惑，莫先于此。又不好伊洛诸贤，亦是任情取舍，曾不一考其言。浮思，以为公于禅教二门涉猎已久，泛泛寻求，终无把鼻。曷若归而求之六经，取法宋贤，约而易入。" Dated 1926.

⁵⁶ Ma Yifu, "Zhi Jin Rongjing", dated 1924, *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 2, p.435.

⁵⁷ Ma Yifu, "Zhi Hong Yunxiang", p. 363. "I hope that you can first empty your mind, then mundane obstacles will naturally disappear. Now, because you said that your mind is stifled, I know the secular causes have not been emptied yet. Due to breaking off the continuous flow of thoughts, the mind constantly abides and thereby unchanging reality manifests before one." (愿公先空其心，自亡世碍。今云心室，知世故未遽空也。盖流注想断，心即常住，不迁之体，乃得现前。) It should be noted that "unchanging reality manifests before one" refers to Buddhist (especially Chan Buddhist) "awakening" (*wu* 悟) as Sun Shenxing 孙慎行 (1565-1636), a Cheng-Zhu School Neo-Confucian who lived in Ming Dynasty, has pointed out. Unlike Ma, Sun consciously rejected Buddhist "awakening". This indicated that Ma's thought is not the same as orthodox Cheng-Zhu School. Cf. Huang Zongxi 黄宗羲 (1610-1695) ed., *Huang Zongxi quanji* 黄宗羲全集 (Complete Works of Huang Zongxi), vol 8, (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 1992), p. 812. Wang Shihuai 王时槐 (1522-1605), a distinguished Neo-Confucian of the School of Mind, strongly criticised Chan Buddhist discourses that

identified the Confucian concept “the nature” as the “final teaching”. From the perspective of the Cheng-Zhu School, the nature is a posteriori embedded in vital stuff (*qi* 气), and vital stuff also constitutes our phenomenal world. Thus, the nature is directly concerned with moral decision making in the phenomenal world.⁵⁸ Given the importance of “the nature” in our moral actions, in his letter, Ma simultaneously highlighted that the “nature is [endowed with] real virtues” and the importance of Cheng-Zhu School’s approach to Confucian classics here. But on the other hand, as will be shown in the next section, Ma also explained the mind as tantamount to the nature under specific conditions (if the mind functions properly, then what is present before one at this very moment is the nature/reality). In elucidating the idea of “mind-as-reality”, Ma’s Confucian thought differs from the Cheng-Zhu School.

As early as 1925, Ma had highly commended the scholarly accomplishments of the Cheng-Zhu school:

Zheng Xuan 郑玄 (Kangcheng 康成, 127-200) and Kong Yingda 孔颖达 (Zhongda 仲达, 574-648) took a bucket load of earth [to construct] an academy,⁵⁹ while He Yan 何晏 (195-249) and Huang Kan 皇侃 (488-545) brought heterogenous teachings into Confucianism. In comparison, however, we know that the work of conserving traditional interpretations cannot compete with

appealed to that which was “beyond the extremity of language” (言语道断), or called for “breaking off the continuous flow of thoughts” (流注想断). See Huang Zongxi comp., *Mingru xuean* 明儒学案 (Case Studies of Confucians in Ming Dynasty), *Huang Zongxi quanji*, vol 7, p. 541. What is important in Ma’s thought is that, although he switched to a Neo-Confucian standpoint years later, he continued to emphasise the unchanging quality of the mind-as-reality because he thought the mind-as-reality could be identical to the nature-as-reality in special conditions.

⁵⁸ See Qian Mu, *Zhuzi xin xuean* 朱子新学案 (A New Case Study of Master Zhu), *Qian Binsi xiansheng quanji* 钱宾四先生全集 (The Complete Works of Mr. Qian Binsi), vol 12, (Taipei: Lianjing chuban shiye gufen youxian gongsi, 1998), p. 4. Itō Takayuki 伊东贵之, *Zhongguo jinshi de sixiang dianfan* 中国近世的思想典范 (Considering the Early Modern in the History of Chinese Thought), translated by Yang Jikai 杨际开, (Taipei: Guoli Taiwan Daxue chuban zhongxin, 2015), pp. 26-34.

⁵⁹ The expression “持簣土于瞽宗” means that Zheng’s and Kong’s interpretations were largely unable to elucidate the profound meanings of the classics. Their efforts are compared to attempting to construct a royal academy by using just a bucket load of earth.

the error of misusing “mysterious words”.⁶⁰ Without the pioneering effort of the Cheng brothers and Zhu Xi’s contributions in picking up the lost thread [in the succession of the way (*daotong* 道统)], how could the essentials of Confucianism have become clarified [after many years] once again? Zhao Qi 赵岐 (? - 201) was committed to studying *Mencius*. [His achievements] were far greater than those of He Yan, but he was not able to shed any light upon the discourse on the goodness of the nature. The accounts by Han Confucians of the nature were mostly rooted in the teachings of Xunzi, and [the accounts of] the Wei-Jin period and following ventured into Buddhism and Daoism. It was not until the rise of Zhou Dunyi and the Cheng brothers that [Confucians] began to identify with the lineage of Mencius. Because of this, the Confucian enterprise shone forth brightly. So, the claim that “[the Cheng-Zhu School] directly carried on the [Way of] Confucius and Mencius” is indisputable. Nevertheless, this is not intelligible for the people who have yet to learn of the Way Generally speaking, the fondness that Ming scholars had for superfluity and the pursuit of excess were close to the extravagances of the Buddhists and Daoists. As for scholars of the Qing Dynasty, they were arrogant in attempting to adhere [only to the techniques of] their own school and had grown accustomed to narrow perspectives, which led to the vulgarity of “erudite scholars”.⁶¹

This passage indicates another basic view of Ma: The commentaries on the classics produced by Song Dynasty Neo-Confucians, especially those by Zhu Xi, are essential to learning the Confucian classics and so constitute genuine learning. Ma accepted not only

⁶⁰ The term “mysterious words” (*xuan ’yan* 玄言) here refers to the teachings of “profound learning” (*xuan ’xue* 玄学) in medieval China. He Yan and Huang Kan were representatives of this tradition and they both made commentaries and elucidations about the *Analects* from their non-orthodox perspectives. Different from Zheng and Kong, in Ma’s view, they had depth but failed to grasp the true meaning of Confucian texts.

⁶¹ Ma Yifu, “‘*Sishu Zuanshu zhaji*’ Ba” 四书纂疏札记跋 (Postscript to the “Notes on Compiled Sub Commentaries of The Four Books in Chapter and Verse with Collected Commentaries”), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 2, p.74. “康成、仲达持策土于瞽宗，何晏、皇侃乱淄渑于异学。比而观之，则知略存古义之功，不敌滥入玄言之失。不有洛学导其先河，考亭扬其坠绪，则圣学之要曷由而明哉。赵岐致力《孟子》，远胜何晏，而于道性善之旨，不能有所发挥。盖汉儒论性多出荀卿，魏晋以下涉入佛老，至濂洛继兴，始宗孟氏，洙泗之业，因以大明。故谓直接孔孟，信为不诬，特未闻道者难与共喻耳...大抵明人好泛滥，务悬解，近二氏之奢；清人矜家法，习嫖闻，成博士之陋。”

Zhu's pedagogical method termed "cultivation" (*hanyang* 涵养),⁶² but also regarded the commentaries of the Cheng-Zhu school on the classics as essential readings. Ma sought to emulate what the Northern Song Neo-Confucians had done in terms of "genuine scholarship".

Ma's contention that the interpretation of the classics as scholarly literature (*zhushu* 著述) was essential to his notion of genuine learning. Accordingly, he held that only those writings meeting a high standard could be deemed to be "literature". In the first section of this chapter, I pointed out that, for Ma, only with a proper grounding in solid Confucian scholarship would columnists be able to compose the kind of literature that enhances mores. Therefore, Ma severely criticised what he deemed to be the "bad literature" of his time. These bad works, composed in an irresponsible manner, were driven by the desire for success and profit rather than by a concern for people's innate goodness and heavenly principle. The main sign of this trend was that intellectuals "are fond of discussing managing [the affairs of governance] and benefiting [the people]" (*hao tan jingji* 好谈经济): Such as Bao Shichen 包世臣 (1775-1855) and Wei Yuan 魏源 (1794-1857). In Ma's view, this trend effectively led to the chaotic state of Chinese public opinion. Citing the example of prominent official Zhang Zhidong 张之洞 (1837-1909), Ma claimed that he was affected by this trend of "managing and benefiting" and that Zhang's advocacy of "barbarian words" (*yiyan* 夷言) inevitably contributed to this terrible trend. Against such a background, the "right kind of scholarship" was naturally absent.⁶³

⁶² Of course, Ma's choice of Zhu's "cultivation" could not be regarded as evidence of his adopting the stance of the School of Principle; rather, he simply considered Zhu's method to be the "most secure" way of teaching beginners. See Wang Danghui 王党辉, "Ma Yifu zhi Xinxue lixue ronghe lun" 马一浮之心学理学融合论 (Ma Yifu's Theory on Reconciling the School of Mind and the School of Principle), PhD thesis, Fudan University, 2006, pp. 87-90. Wang Ruhua 王汝华, "Ma Yifu dui Zhu, Wang xueshu de hengduo yu rongshe—yi hanyang yu chashi de kaizhan wei zhou" 马一浮对朱、王学术的衡度与融摄—以涵养与察识的开展为轴 (Ma Yifu's Assessment and Integration of the Scholarship of Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming: Focusing on the Development of Ma's understanding of Cultivation and Examination), *Hanxue yanjiu jikan* 汉学研究集刊, 2010(6), pp. 156-184.

⁶³ See Ma Yifu, "Zhi Shen Jingzhong" 致沈敬仲 (Letter to his friend Shen Jingzhong), dated 1926, *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 2, pp. 566-567. See also Ma Yifu, "Huang Zhongtao dingyou Hubei xiangshi yuanmo gaiben ba" 黄仲弢丁酉湖北乡试元墨改本跋 (Postscript to Huang Zhongtao's Revisions to the Papers in the 1897 Hubei Provincial Civil Examinations), dated 1928, *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 2, p. 75. Zhang Zhidong's emphasis

During the period 1926-1935, while Ma frequently referred to “revealing the nature” in his letters to friends, it was scholarship on the Confucian classics that remained one of his main concerns. Due to various circumstances, Ma failed to finish his planned *Theory of the Six Arts* before 1936.⁶⁴ After the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war in 1937, however, he partly realised that plan in two major works: *Taihe Yishan huiyu* 泰和宜山会语 (Lectures in Taihe and Yishan; 1938) and *Fuxing shuyuan jianglu* 复性书院讲录 (Records of Lectures at the Recovering the Nature Academy; 1939-1941).⁶⁵ The *Records*, set out as commentaries and interpretations of the classics, particularly represent Ma’s assimilation of Buddhism in developing his creative reading of the Confucian Classics.

1.3. The Six Arts and Revealing the Nature: How Ma Developed His Creative Reading of the Confucian Classics as the Virtues of the Nature (1936-1939)

1.3.1. The Methods and Frameworks of Ma’s Interpretation of the Classics

After 1926, Ma identified “revealing the nature” (*xianxing* 显性) as the solution to the problem that underlies social decay and decadence, and proposed that this solution was to be achieved by studying Confucianism. China’s social and institutional plight drove Ma to compose scholarly writings about Confucian scholarship, namely, his planned *Theory of the Six Arts*:

on “putting scholarship at the service of practical needs” as well as on “foreign learning”, was originally meant to address the lack of attention to “function” in Neo-Confucian discourse on *ti* and *yong*. Evidently, for Ma, Zhang’s concern with “foreign learning” was harmful to Chinese morality, and Ma’s critiques of Zhang can be better understood in hindsight: Zhang’s New Policies (*xinzheng* 新政) greatly aided the process of China’s westernisation, which proved to have far exceeded Zhang’s own expectation. One of the best studies of this topic is Lu Yin 陆胤, *Zhengjiao cunxu yu wenjiao zhuanxing: Jindai xueshushi shang de Zhang Zhidong xuerenquan* 政教存续与文教转型: 近代学术史上的张之洞学人圈 (The Continuation of Statecraft Learning and the Transformation of Confucian Teachings: Zhang Zhidong's Scholarly Circle in the History of Modern Chinese Scholarship), (Beijing: Beijing Daxue chubanshe, 2015), pp. 70-71, 277-284. See also Joseph Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate: A Trilogy*, vol 1, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), pp. 60-78.

⁶⁴ See Liu Leheng, *Ma Yifu Liuyi un xinquan*, pp. 41-42.

⁶⁵ For Ma’s own views on these works, see Ma Yifu, “Zhi Zhang Limin” 致张立民 (Ma’s Letter to his close student Zhang Limin), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 2, p. 796. Dated 1938. See also Ma, “Yulu leibian·Rufo pian” 语录类编·儒佛篇 (Collated Compilation of Recorded Words: Section of Confucianism and Buddhism), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, p. 665.

Events need to be meaningful before they are then written down.... When writing is overly embellished, [descriptions such as] “the flow of blood was such that it floated away the shields [of the warriors]” could even be attributed to an utterly humane king.⁶⁶ When writing is close to what is true, then it is unembellished and so even filial sons and affectionate grandsons were unable to [hide the evil] of [their forefathers] King You (lit. Dark) of Zhou 周幽王 (795–771 BC) and King Li (lit. Cruel) of Zhou 周厉王 (?–828 BC).⁶⁷ When [Confucius] saw the rituals [of a state], then he understood its way of government; when he heard its music, then he knew the virtue [of its king].⁶⁸ The root of understanding such matters is in the mind. Therefore, the *Book of Documents* is the canon for transmitting the mind [shared by former sages],⁶⁹ and the *Spring and Autumn Annals* is not a book [that is merely] a compilation of historical events. So, the *Comprehensive Mirror in Aid of Governance* (*Zizhi tongjian* 资治通鉴) is simply a factual record, whereas the *Detailed Outline of the Comprehensive Mirror in Aid of Governance* (*Tongjian Gangmu* 通鉴纲目) could be appended to the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. This is because the latter work reveals the meaning of historical facts and makes visible the most hidden.... The [posthumous] names [assigned by historians] is the medium of confusion; and honours and titles are the craft to fool the people. Only by knowing [Confucius’]

⁶⁶ *Mencius*, 7B.3, *Mengzi zhushu* 孟子注疏 (*Mencius* with Annotations and Sub-commentaries), (Beijing: Beijing Daxue chubanshe, 1999), p. 381. Mencius attempted to emphasise that in reading the classics, focusing on “overly embellished” historical facts is harmful to grasping the humane spirit of the ancient kings.

⁶⁷ *Mencius*, 4A.1, *Mengzi zhushu*, p. 190. Ma means that the unvirtuous actions of the two kings should not be recorded because recording those immoral actions is ineffective in guiding readers to recognise our good human nature.

⁶⁸ *Mencius*, 2A.2, *Mengzi zhushu*, p. 79.

⁶⁹ “Dayu mo” 大禹谟 (Counsels of the Great Emperor Yu), *Shangshu zhengyi* 尚书正义 (Correct Interpretations of the *Book of Documents*), (Beijing: Beijing Daxue chubanshe, 1999), p. 93. Ma here draws on the famous sentence, “The human mind is precarious, the mind of the way is subtle” (人心惟危，道心惟微). More concretely, this “mind of the way” refers to the mind of those sages who thoroughly grasped “the way” in the *Book of Documents*, such as Emperor Yao and Emperor Shun. It is because Confucius was also such a sage who had grasped “the mind of the way” that he was able to serve as a great historian to show us this “transmission of the mind” between Emperor Yao and Emperor Shun, by compiling the *Book of Documents*.

wordless intention, can one realise the greatness of [Confucius'] rectification of names [in the *Annals of Spring and Autumn*].⁷⁰

My aim in composing this doctrine is to clarify the essentials of the way of the Six Arts, and not because I intend to revise the existing classifications of the *Seven Summaries* (*Qi lie* 七略).... In fact, before returning to the study of the Six Classics, I was a student of Buddhist doctrinal learning and Chan learning—there is no need to conceal this. Therefore, I do not blame myself for the shortcomings [of my learning] in respect of evidential scholarship.⁷¹

These passages are extracted from two of Ma's letters to Ye Weiqing, an amateur historian whom we have encountered previously. After having read Ma's draft of the *Theory of the Six Arts*, Ye swiftly expressed his dissatisfaction with the Buddhist influences he found in Ma's understanding of Confucianism. But Ma's reply in defence is even more unequivocal: "Buddhism and Confucianism share the same intrinsic reality" (cited above). Ma argued that, names and titles in historical records are simply illusory from the perspective of the unchanging nature, and that only historical records that are in accord with the nature should be regarded as "facts". In Ma's writings, he focused on revealing the truths (about the nature) that are buried in the classics rather than in historical works. This preference indicates that, for Ma, the classics are more factual than

⁷⁰ Ma Yifu, "Zhi Ye Zuowen", *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 2, pp. 382-383. "事必有义，然后文之。...过文则诬，漂杵乃施于至仁；近信则野，孝慈无救于幽厉。见礼知政，闻乐知德，明事之本在心也。故《尚书》为传心之典，《春秋》非比事之书。《通鉴》但齐于实录，而《纲目》可埒于《春秋》，为其因事显义，推见至隐。...名字为倒惑之媒，爵号乃愚民之术。要识无言之旨，始悟正名之功。" Dated 1937.

⁷¹ Ma Yifu, "Zhi Ye Zuowen", *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 2, p. 389. "吾之为是说者，将以明六艺之道要，非欲改《七略》之旧文。...浮实从义学、禅学中转身来，归而求之六经，此不须掩饰。故考据之疏，吾不以自病。" Dated 1938. Here *yixue* 义学 refers to the systematic and scholarly study of a specific doctrine of Buddhism and related classics with commentaries. Doctrinal learning is distinguished from Chan literature, which involves personal meditative experiences. The existing classifications of the *Seven Summaries*, acknowledged as an authoritative catalogue of Pre-Han writings, were made by Liu Xin 刘歆 (BCE53-CE23) and recorded in Ban Gu's 班固 (32-92) *Hanshu* 汉书 (History of the Former Han). Here, Ma meant that instead of revising traditional and authoritative classifications, he simply wanted to demonstrate his understanding of the theoretical structure of the Confucian classics.

historical works.⁷² He also maintained that beyond historical records fabricated out of selfish desires, events in historical records must be correctly grasped in accordance with normative principles (*yili* 义理).⁷³

Ma's approach takes account of the necessities of both documentary materials and spiritual experiences. On the one hand, the Confucian classics, which convey principle (*li* 理), must be read as expressions of the nature of the mind (心性的流露),⁷⁴ with Ma emphasising that "the nature is precisely principle";⁷⁵ on the other hand, "reading books" (studying the classics) is irreplaceable in the process of revealing the nature.⁷⁶ As Ma said, the thesis that "the nature is precisely principle" held by Song Confucians is more

⁷² This understanding of the classics completely contradicted to Zhang Xuecheng's 章学诚 (1738-1801). Zhang argued that the Confucian classics should be understood as historical works, and the aim of historical works is to record those specific facts about ancestors that have a practical application (*zhiyong* 致用), and that this is a relationship between the ancients and the contemporaries. By this means, Zhang believed that concerns about trivial matters could be avoided, and that historical research might thus bring about a form of scholarship that is significant (useful) to present scholars and people. See Yamaguchi Hisakazu 山口久和, *Zhang Xuecheng de zhishilun* 章学诚的知识论 (Zhang Xuecheng's Epistemology), translated by Wang Biao 王标, (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2006), pp. 169-309; Liu Wei 刘巍, *Zhongguo xueshu zhi jindai mingyun* 中国学术之近代命运 (The Modern Fate of Chinese Scholarship), (Beijing: Beijing Shifan Daxue chubanshe, 2013), pp. 3-43. In contrast, because Ma insisted on the existence of an unchanging nature that is non-temporal and ahistorical, he was not concerned with historical facts. Therefore, Ma absolutely disagreed with Zhang's thesis that "the six classics are all history" and considered historical works to be illusionary and even fictitious. See Gong Pengcheng 龚鹏程, *Tang dai sichao* 唐代思潮 (Intellectual Trends in the Tang Dynasty), (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2007), p. 209.

⁷³ It is not easy to choose one word in translating *yili* mentioned in Ma's writings. This term contains *yi* (appropriateness, rightness, or normative meanings in a broad sense) and *li* (principle). In many cases, *yili* can be understood as normative values people should follow in praxis. Through this translation (normative principle), I would like to let readers know that Ma used *yili* in highlighting that the principle in one's mind (also, the nature) is normative. Therefore, even "normative principle" seems little bit strange to a Chinese user (*yi de li*), this thesis kept it as an English translation of *yili*.

⁷⁴ Ma cited in Wu Yifeng 乌以凤 (1902-1989), "Wenxue siji" 问学私记 (My Notes on Questions to Ma Yifu about Learning), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, p. 744.

⁷⁵ Ma cited in Wu Yifeng, "Wenxue siji", *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, p. 751: "出于性、理，谓之道心；发于情、气，谓之人心。宋人性即理之说最为谛当，若阳明心即理，未免说得太易了。" (What comes from nature and principle is called the mind of the way; what is expressed in emotions and vital stuff is called the human mind. "The nature is precisely principle" held by Song Confucians is the most appropriate, as Yangming's thesis that "The mind is precisely principle" is too simplistic.)

⁷⁶ Ma cited in Wu Yifeng, "Wenxue siji", p. 740. "禅学亦有病，在不读书穷理。" (There are also problems regarding Chan learning, which lay in not reading books to attain principles exhaustively.)

comprehensive than Wang Yangming's thesis that "the mind is precisely principle", which is too simplistic. This is to say, it is the nature rather than the mind that is the objective in recognising principle. Through differentiating the thesis "the nature is precisely principle" from Chan Buddhist and Yangmingist mind-focused theories that are insufficiently comprehensive, Ma laid a key foundation for his elucidations of the Confucian classics. On the other hand, however, Ma always insisted that Confucians and Mahāyāna Buddhists shared the same recognition of "the mind-as-reality as the root, that which is fundamental, as well as phenomenal world where the functions appear as tracks" (see Subsection 1.2.1. of this chapter, p. 40). As will be shown later, he tried to include Confucian ideas of the nature and the mind within Buddhist mind-based frameworks (such as "one mind two gateways" and "Dharma Realm subsumed within one mind"). And due to this reflection on the convergence of Buddhism and Confucianism, Ma treated political deeds recorded in Confucian classics as functions of sage's mind. In many cases, the "mind" also served as the "reality" in "reality-function" model used in his elucidations of the classics. As mentioned in Introduction, the "mind-as-reality" here is not different from the nature or the principle: "If [the mind] functions properly, then what is present [before you] at this very moment is precisely the nature" (see Subsection 1.3.2. of this chapter, p. 59).

Ma declared that only by reading the classics "sceptically", could one recognise the principle/the nature behind historical facts:

Therefore, it has never been the case that the classics cannot be doubted. Doubts regarding the classics began with Mencius, but it is crucial that judgements must be in accord with normative principles. Zhao Qi said that Mencius was well-versed in the *Book of Odes* and the *Book of Documents*. While Mencius lived not long after Confucius, he selected no more than two or three sections from the chapter "Completion of War" [in the *Book of Documents*]. Mencius made the following judgement: "When one who is utterly humane campaigns against one who is utterly inhumane, how could the battle shields have 'floated on rivers of blood?'"⁷⁷ This discernment is made purely on the basis of normative principles. If viewed from the perspective of textual criticism, then this judgement would not necessarily be considered reliable. However, when making judgements on

⁷⁷ *Mencius*, 7B.3, *Mengzi zhushu*, p. 381.

the basis of normative principles, one must ensure that one's [understanding of] normative principles is proficient, then indeed one will discern clearly.⁷⁸

It was only because of his confirmation of the existence of normative principles, which in turn was based on his understanding of the moral nature, that Mencius was able to be sceptical about certain records in the classics. Apart from this kind of “confirmation” learned from Mencius, Ma also stated that he attempted to apply the interpretative techniques used by Buddhists even though the objects of his interpretation remained Confucian classics.⁷⁹ Together with the “confirmation” of the nature, Ma believed that, with the help of special interpretive techniques also used by Buddhists, readers could be guided into correctly understanding the Way of the Six Arts that is embodied in the classics.⁸⁰ Among those techniques, Ma attached great significance especially to the textual organisation of the scriptures that involves dividing them into smaller sections (*ke'fen* 科分) (also known as *ke'wen* 科文) for interpretation, as well as ranking different doctrines hierarchically in a single overarching system of classification (*panjiao* 判教). Through adopting these terms, Ma's aim was to find a perfect way to reveal the nature manifesting in the classical texts. In this way, the goal of his Confucian doctrinal learning was to “elucidate the main thesis (of each Art in the Six Arts)” (*mingzong* 明宗) based on

⁷⁸ Ma, “Yulu leibian·Liu yi pian” 语录类编·六艺篇 (Collated Compilation of Recorded Words·Section of the Six Arts), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, p. 586. “是故经未尝不可疑，疑经始于孟子，而要当以义理断之。赵岐称孟子长于《诗经》《书经》，孟子去孔子未远，而于《武成》只取二三策，断之曰：‘以至仁伐至不仁，而何其血之流杵也。’是纯从义理上辨别得来。讲考据，则不必可靠矣。但从义理上断制，须是自己义理纯熟，亦能辨得分明耳。”

⁷⁹ Reading the classics “sceptically” and then recognising the hidden meanings behind texts is also a paradigm adopted by early Neo-Confucians; see Gu Jiming 谷继明, “Yijing yu Song -Ming dao xue xingqi de guanxi” 疑经与宋明道学兴起的关系 (On Relations between Doubting Classics and the Rise of Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism), *Zhongguo shehui kexue bao* 中国社会科学报, 2018.03.27, 002; “Wanwei yu hanyong: Songdai jiejingxue de yige zhongyao fangfa” 玩味与涵泳:宋代解经学的一个重要方法 (Ruminating and Pondering: an Important Method of Classics Exegesis of Song Dynasty), *Zhongguo zhhexueshi*, 2016(3), pp. 55-61. Also, Yang Xinxun 杨新勋, *Song dai yijing yanjiu* 宋代疑经研究 (A Study of Doubting the Classics in the Song Dynasty), (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2007).

⁸⁰ Ma Yifu, “Juanxi zhai shi zixu kejie ba” 蠲戏斋诗自序科解跋 (Postscript to the Preface and Explanation of the Textual Organisation of *Juanxi Studio Poems*), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 2, pp. 84-85.

personal realisation and confirmation of the actual existence of the nature.⁸¹ Due to this realisation that is to be achieved before investigating the texts, Ma's method was distinctly different from that of the historical reconstruction of classical texts. In Ma's own words, "the Six Arts is a matter of actual principles and not obscure words."⁸² I will now turn to his *Lectures* to explore how Ma described how these actual principles are to be realised.

The *Taihe huiyu* and *Yishan huiyu* were delivered in March 1938 and February 1939, respectively.⁸³ Based on their subtitles and contents, the various sections of these two *Lectures* can be grouped as "Table of the Contents of *Two Lectures*" as Appendix II shows.⁸⁴ Through the *Lectures*, Ma explained his project as follows. China's National Learning (*guoxue* 国学)⁸⁵ is the scholarship of the Six Arts, and the prerequisite for studying the scholarship of the Six Arts consists in confirming the existence of the mind-as-reality, which contains all principles. In another letter written at this time, Ma also referred to this "imperishable" intrinsic reality as the "nature".⁸⁶ Through this self-

⁸¹ See Ma Yifu, *Fuxing shuyuan jianglu* 复性书院讲录 (Records of Lectures at the Recovering the Nature Academy), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, p. 133. "Making doctrinal classification based on the Six Arts is a matter of actual principle and not obscure words. What needs [to be done] is to directly identify the main teaching in order to avoid receiving the words yet miss their meaning." (据六艺判教乃是实理，不是玄言，务在直下明宗，不致承言失旨耳。)

⁸² For a study of the distinction between the "elucidating" approach and the historical approach, see Qiao Xiuyan 乔秀岩 (Hashimoto Hidemi 桥本秀美), *Yishuxue shuaiwang shilun* 义疏学衰亡史论 (Essays on the History of the Decline of Exegetical Scholarship), (Taipei: Wanjuan lou, 2015), pp. 171-190.

⁸³ Ding Jinghan comp., "Ma Yifu nianpu jianbian", p. 44-45.

⁸⁴ Ma Yifu, *Taihe huiyu*, *Yishan huiyu*, *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, pp. 2-80.

⁸⁵ This is a popular term in contemporary China, and also in Ma's time. Ma himself thought that National Learning was not an appropriate designation for "traditional Chinese scholarship", and was just following common usage at that time. See *Taihe huiyu*, *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, p. 7. On the phenomenon of *guoxue*, see John Makeham, "The Revival of Guoxue: Historical Antecedents and Contemporary Aspirations", *China Perspectives* 2011(1), pp. 14-21.

⁸⁶ In many cases, it is the "nature" rather than the "mind" that serves as a basic category of Ma's discourse, but sometimes, Ma subtly eliminated the analytic distinction between the intrinsic reality of the mind and the nature: "The characteristics of the mind may cease, but the intrinsic reality of the mind never ceases. The so-called reality of the mind is the nature" (心相可灭，心体不灭，心体云者，即性也。). See Ma Yifu, "Shi Zhang Dejun" 示张德钧 (Reply to Zhang Dejun), in *Erya tai dawen xubian* 尔雅台问答续编 (The Continuation of Questions and Answers from the *Erya* Platform), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, p.452.

confirmation of the sole reality,⁸⁷ genuine scholarship will necessarily lead to recognising all principles because the many principles are but one principle, which is accessible through reflection and study.⁸⁸ Because normative principles are inherent in the nature, it is these normative principles that are the foundation of the Six Arts. Only by studying and following the teachings of the Six Arts can the normative principles inherent in the nature be revealed and followed. Using vernacular Chinese terms, Ma declared that to start this course of study was the beginning of a reasonable (*heli* 合理) and normal (*zhengchang* 正常) life.⁸⁹

To further examine the coherence and significance of Ma's project, I suggest that Ma be considered as a thinker working with some self-evident presuppositions. In regard to Ma's hermeneutical approach to the classics, readers need to assume that the "self-confirmation" of the intrinsic reality of the mind is to be justified on the basis of what Buddhist logicians term "the valid cognition of direct perception" (*xianliang* 现量; *pratyakṣa-pramāṇa*).⁹⁰ First, Ma highlighted that learners should hold a belief in National Learning and its effects.⁹¹ This belief in National Learning is also a belief in the inherently endowed nature and its virtues:

This learning is not a product of being dependent upon external conditions. It is inherent in one's mind and ought not to be regarded as external to oneself.... In the light of the fourth point (the previous point), one should know that the virtues of the nature are replete. Therefore, one should seek inwards to

⁸⁷ "Self-confirmation" is more than merely self-understanding or self-recognition. See Xiong, *New Treatise on the Uniqueness of Consciousness*, translated and annotated by John Makeham, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2015), p.284. "My friend Ma Yifu says: "Here self-conviction is what the various [Sinitic] schools of Buddhism call 'self-confirmation.'" What wonderful words! How profound and far-reaching! Only with self-understanding and self-knowledge is there self-confirmation."

⁸⁸ See Ma Yifu, "Kaiding guoxue mingyi: guoxue zhe liu yi zhi xue ye" 楷定国学名义: 国学者六艺之学也 (Qualifying the Concept "Chinese Scholarship": Chinese Scholarship is Precisely the Scholarship of the Six Arts), *Taihe huiyu, Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, p. 7; Ma Yifu, *Taihe huiyu, Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, pp. 21-22.

⁸⁹ Ma Yifu, "Lun liu yi gaishe yiqie xueshu" 论六艺赅摄一切学术 (On How the Six Arts Covers All Scholarship), *Taihe huiyu, Ma Yifu quanji* vol 1, p. 14-15.

⁹⁰ "Yulu leibian·Rufo pian", *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, p. 668. For this reason, in his study of Ma's discourse of the Six Arts, Liu Leheng used Heinrich Rombach's (1923-2004) term "hermetic" to replace "hermeneutics". See Liu, *Ma Yifu liuyilun xinquan*, pp. 121-127.

⁹¹ Ma Yifu, "Yinduan" 引端 (Introduction), *Taihe huiyu, Ma Yifu quanji* vol 1, p. 3.

personally experience them to the full—do not be led by external things and become forgetful of oneself, such that one races around seeking for what is outside.⁹²

In the *Taihe Lecture*, Ma listed six kinds of virtues of the nature that match the Six Arts.⁹³ Given the Six Arts are embodiments of the nature, what is the relationship between these virtues of the nature and the nature itself? Moreover, while this learning is inherent in one's mind, what is the relationship between the mind and the Six Arts as embodiments of the nature? Mainly based on two *Lectures*, I summarise Ma's pertinent ideas into the following points:

1. To a large extent, Ma accepted Zhu Xi's model of "the mind controls/combines the nature (reality) and the emotions (functions)" as his theoretical framework. The virtues of the nature are also the qualities of the nature, recognising them is to recognise the nature.
2. In many cases, Ma implicitly identified "the mind" as the "mind of the way". In these cases, what is inherent in the mind is the nature not conditioned by external things: the unconditioned nature of a subject practising goodness.
3. Although the nature is unconditioned, the subject itself might be conditioned by external bad things and "habituated tendencies" (*xiqi* 习气) appear. The mind conditioned by these habituated tendencies is the "human mind" in Zhu Xi's sense. If the conditioned subject rather than principle is perceived to be the source of normativity, the subjectivist problem will arise.
4. To address this potential problem buried in both Confucian (Wang Yangming) and Buddhist (Chan learning) traditions, Ma placed special importance on the virtues of the nature. Furthermore, as I have noted in the introduction, Ma maintained that "the way of the Six Arts is a spontaneous outpouring of the virtues of our nature" and "Six Classics are the manifestation of virtues of the nature". Because Confucian classics as the Six Arts

⁹² Ma Yifu, "Lun zhi guoxue xian xu bianming sidian" 论治国学先须辨明四点 (On Four Prerequisites of Studying Chinese National Scholarship), *Taihe huiyu, Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, pp. 3-4: "此学不是凭借外缘的产物，是自心本具的，不可视为分外。...由明于第四点，应知性德具足，故当向内体究，不可徇物忘己，向外驰求。"

⁹³ Ma Yifu, "Lun liuyi tongshe yu yixin" 论六艺统摄于一心 (On how the Six Arts are unified and included in the one mind), *Taihe huiyu, Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, p. 15.

became concrete standards of recognising the nature and so being able accord with an objective “Principle”, reading these classics provided a means to prevent subjectivism while revealing and confirming the unconditioned nature.

For Ma, when given expression as particular virtues or qualities, the virtues of the nature can be taken to correspond to specific Arts of the Six Arts as indicated in Appendix III.⁹⁴ Given the way of the Six Arts is universal, the Six Arts also embrace other kinds of “knowledge” as Appendix IV illustrates.⁹⁵ In this process, recognising one’s own nature is to recognise the Six Arts, as well as to recognise the world. According to Ma’s description, this process of revealing the nature and following the Way of the Six Arts could be understood as two sets of “reality and function” relationships:

All of one’s speeches about rightness and principle are the teaching. Knowing the self-nature is to know the Way, and only by knowing the Way can one explain the teaching. In terms of the nature and the Way, the nature is intrinsic reality and the Way is its function; in terms of the Way and the teaching, the Way is intrinsic reality and the teaching is its function. When the Way is function, then the teaching is the function within function [of the Way] (*yongzhong zhi yong* 用中之用); and when the Way is intrinsic reality, then the nature is the intrinsic reality within the intrinsic reality [of the Way] (*tizhong zhi ti* 体中之体).⁹⁶

Ma introduced the terms “the function within function” and “the intrinsic reality within the intrinsic reality” to clarify the relationships among “the nature”, “the Way of the Six Arts” and “the teaching of the Six Arts”. As “characteristics” of the nature, each virtue of the nature correspond to a particular Art. Therefore, “the Way of the Six Arts is the

⁹⁴ Ma Yifu, “Lun liuyi tongshe yu yixin”, *Taihe huiyu, Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, pp. 15-17.

⁹⁵ Ma Yifu, “Lun xilai xueshu yi tongyu liuyi” 论西来学术亦统于六艺 (On How Western Knowledge Could also be Contained in the Six Arts), *Taihe huiyu, Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, pp. 17-20.

⁹⁶ Ma, “Yulu leibian·Sixue pian” 语录类编·四学篇 (Collated Compilation of Recorded Words: Four Kinds of Learning), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, pp. 595-596. 谈义说理都是教，知性乃是闻道，闻道乃能说教。就性道言，则性为体，道为用；就道教言，则道为体，教为用。以道为用，则教是用中之用；以道为体，则性是体中之体。

function of the nature” here reflects the importance of “the virtues of the nature”: only by first recognising these virtues and knowing the nature, can one perform the Way of the Six Arts and also show others how to do so. Thus, although Ma claimed that “the Six Arts are unified and included in the one mind”, the functions of the mind-as-reality would strictly follow the Way of the Six Arts. At the same time, in studying the teaching of the Six Arts, the mind-as-reality would never be absent.

1.3.2. Ma Yifu on Moral Practices and the Virtue-based Governance

Ma also adopted Zhang Zai’s (张载, 1020-1077) and Zhu Xi’s model of “the mind controls/combines the nature and the emotions”⁹⁷ in developing his mind-based framework. In doing so, he also drew some inspiration from the *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith*, as the passage below makes clear. Like the concept “suchness” (*zhenru* 真如; *tathatā*) in Buddhism, Ma emphasised that the nature itself is beyond conceptual discrimination and can be realised only by recognising the “awakening” aspect of the mind’s gateway of arising and ceasing.⁹⁸ The “awakening” aspect here means the state in which emotions appear in accordance with the nature. To reach this recognition was also to keep approaching the highest attainable standard of recovering the nature:

Although the referent/meaning of “one reality with two aspects” here corresponds to two meanings (awakening and non-awakening aspects) of “the gateway of arising and ceasing”, Hengqu’s (Zhang Zai) original intention [in his doctrine that “the mind combines/controls the nature and the emotions”] was to explain “one mind [opens] two gateways”⁹⁹.... (Comment: the emotions are changing (*bianyi* 变易), [while] the nature is unchanging (*buyi* 不易), and “the one mind’s combining/controlling the nature and the emotions” is simplicity (*jianyi* 简易) ...). The nature is the intrinsic reality of the mind, and the emotions

⁹⁷ See Brook Zyporyn, “The *Ti-Yong* Model and Its Discontents: Models of Ambiguous Priority in Chinese Buddhism and Zhu Xi’s Neo-Confucianism”, in John Makeham ed., *The Buddhist Roots of Zhu Xi’s Philosophical Thought*, (London: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 197.

⁹⁸ Ma Yifu, “Shi Zhang Dejun”, *Erya tai dawen xubian*, *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, p. 459.

⁹⁹ *Dasheng qixin lun*, T1666_32.0576b11-25.

are the function of the mind. Without intrinsic reality, there is no function. So, there could be no emotions without the nature. When bad emotions appear, it is due to problems to do with function. If [the mind] functions properly, then what is present [before you] at this very moment (*dangti* 当体)¹⁰⁰ is precisely the nature; why look for a “nature” in some other place?¹⁰¹

Associated with “the mind controls/combines the nature and the emotions” model, the principle of the “three aspects of the change” (*sanyi* 三易) is an essential principle informing Ma’s discourse of the Six Arts. Through applying this principle of “three aspects of the change”, in the ideal human society where the way of the Six Arts prevails, the “one mind” will ensure that normativity of the nature is omnipresent.¹⁰² According to the paragraph cited above, if the mind’s gateway of arising and ceasing is in an awakening mode, which might be described as “initial awakening” (*shijue* 始觉) or “ultimate awakening” (*jiujing jue* 究竟觉) in the *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith*,¹⁰³ the nature and the emotions are controlled properly within one mind.

In Ma’s further explanations, the mind at this very moment is identical with its intrinsic reality, namely, the nature itself. More concretely, the mind is the mind-as-reality (*xinti* 心体) at this moment. As Chapter 3 will discuss, in Ma’s interpretations of the classics, the mind-as reality was also the ontological foundation of ideal governance. Here, using relatively abstract terms, Ma mainly focused on describing the prevalence of the way of Six Arts:

¹⁰⁰ Zhiyi 智顗 (538-597), *Miaofa lianhua jing xuanyi* 妙法莲华经玄义 (The Profound Meanings of the *Lotus Sūtra*), T1716_33.0693c11.

¹⁰¹ Ma Yifu, “Shi Zhang Dejun”, *Erya tai dawen xubian*, *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, pp. 459-460. “一体二相义与生灭门二义相应，然横渠本意则是说“一心二门”也。... 又云：“情为变易，性为不易，心统性、情，则简易也...性即心之体，情乃心之用。离体无用，故离性无情。情之有不善者，乃是用上差忒也，若用处不差，当体即是性，何处更觅一性?”

¹⁰² Liu Leheng provides an informative demonstration of this principle in his *Ma Yifu liuyilun xinquan*, pp. 245-318. It will be further explored in the next chapter.

¹⁰³ *Dasheng qixin lun*, T1666_32.0576b16-17. Here, Ma’s “awakening mind” refers to the “initial awakening”. “Ultimate awakening” requires that the subject keep this mind in a constant state of awakening; this will also further explored in the next chapter.

Students should know that vital stuff (*qi* 气) is changing and principle is unchanging. Vital stuff in its entirety is principle and principle in its entirety is phenomena.... Principle is originally quiescent, and it is only when there is movement that vital stuff begins to become apparent.... These two words [vital stuff and principle] cannot be spoken of at the same time. With respect to the function, its flowing is called vital stuff. With respect to that whereby it is the [inherent] reality of flowing [vital stuff], it is called principle. Function is apparent, but [intrinsic] reality is subtle; [although they] are nominally separable, in terms of suchness they are inseparable.... All of this is explained as proceeding from what is above to what is below. The world is securely established, and from this the myriad things are formed; and in all them are where the one principle is lodged.¹⁰⁴

In this passage, the statement “Principle is originally quiescent, and it is only when there is movement that vital stuff begins to become apparent” is the essence of Ma’s theoretical thesis. In Ma’s ideal world, each action is inseparable from principle or the nature. This means all activities in this world must be in accordance with the sequence “that proceeds from what is above (principle) to what is below (phenomena, vital stuff)”.

What is principle here? The answer is the way of the Six Arts conveyed by the Confucian classics. Alluding to the *Mencius*, Ma maintained that to recover the nature is to realise and follow principle as revealed through taking sages as models. This is also why he asserted that “the Six Classics are the manifestation of the virtues of the nature”:

Reality (principle) in its entirety gives rise to function (phenomena), and function is subsumed into reality. It is only reality that can be said to be “fully realised”; and it is only function that can be said to “carry out” [the realisation of reality]. Only when principle is fully realised can function be brought to

¹⁰⁴ Ma Yifu, “Li qi — xingershang zhi yiyi” 理气 — 形而上之意义 (Pattern and the Vital Stuff — in A Metaphysical Sense), *Taihe huiyu*, *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, pp. 31-32. “学者当知气是变易，理是不易。全气是理，全理是气...理本是寂然的，及动而后始见气。...两字不能同时并说。就其流行之用而言谓之理，就其所以为流行之体而言谓之理。用显而体微，言说可分，实际不可分也。...这一串都是从上说下来，世界由此安立，万事由此形成，而皆一理之所寓也。”

completion without any deficiencies.¹⁰⁵ Seeing, listening, speaking and acting are [activities of] the vital stuff. They concern the body and its appetites and are the expression of function. Ritual is principle. It is [part of] the heavenly ordained nature and it fills the human body.¹⁰⁶ When the expression of [seeing, listening, speaking and acting] as function is not appropriate then it is not ritual. When [seeing, listening, speaking and acting] go against the nature and violate reality, then their functioning is deficient. When the expression of [seeing, listening, speaking and acting] as function is appropriate then it is ritual. When [seeing, listening, speaking and acting] are in accord with the nature and in unity with reality, then their functioning becomes complete. Therefore, when all seeing, listening, speaking and acting [conforms with] ritual, then this is “to carry out” [the realisation of reality]. If vital stuff (one’s body) is led by principle, then seeing, listening, speaking and acting will all be the flow of Heavenly principle, which is nothing other than humaneness. If [one] pursues phenomena and forgets principle, then seeing, listening, speaking and acting will all be motivated by selfish desires, and [one will] undertake inhumane [acts].¹⁰⁷

Ma set a strict standard for perfect practices: “function is brought to completion without any deficiencies”. These practices are completely regulated by principle, which has been fully realised. Because the Confucian classics, which convey the way of the Six Arts, record the practices of former sages, all these records must be taken as expressions of “the flow of heavenly principle”. This also required Ma to present those former sages’ political achievements as perfect moral practices without selfish desires.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Zhu Xi, *Mengzi zhangju* 孟子章句 (Section and Sentence Commentaries on Mencius), *Zhuzi quanshu*, vol 6, p. 439. “人之有形有色，无不各有自然之理，所谓天性也。践，如践言之践。盖众人有是形，而不能尽其理，故无以践其形；惟圣人具有是形，而又能尽其理，然后可以践其形而无歉也。”

¹⁰⁶ “Zhongni yanju” 仲尼燕居 (Confucius at Home at Ease), *Liji Zhengyi*, p. 1386 and *Mencius*, 2A.2, *Mengzi zhushu*, p. 74.

¹⁰⁷ Ma Yifu, “Shuo shi ting yan dong” 说视听言动 (On Seeing, Listening, Speaking and Acting), *Yishan huiyu*, *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, p. 59. “全体起用，摄用归体，在体上只能说“尽”，在用上始能说“践”。惟尽其理而无亏，始能全其用而无歉也。视听言动，气也，形色也，用之发也。礼者，理也，天性也，体之充也。发用而不当则为非礼，违性亏体而其用不全；发用而当则为礼，顺性合体而其用始备。故谓视听言动皆礼，为践形之事也。以理率气，则此四者皆天理之流行，莫非仁也；徇物忘理，则此四者皆私欲之冲动，而为不仁矣。”

At the end of the *Yishan huiyu*, Ma compared so-called genuine achievements and virtues with those that are not. Alluding to famous dialogue from the Chan Buddhist tradition, he used this distinction to reassert that “the [posthumous] names [assigned by historians] is the medium of confusion; and honours and titles are the craft to fool the people”:

To claim of oneself that one is good and capable is to be arrogant. To say to others that one is hard working and successful is to be boastful. In broad terms, there is no difference between them. It is due to the view of attachment to the self and other that [notions of] success and ability falsely arise.... Although heaven and earth nurture the myriad things so that they coexist without harming each other,¹⁰⁸ they never claim the credit for that. The sage [also] protects the people endlessly and is never arrogant about the virtue of nourishing the multitude.... [In contrast,] among those states since the Qin Dynasty, whether it be their imperial orders or documents presented to the court by its subjects, it was often the case that the more chaotic [a government was] the more exaggerated the praise would be [for that government]. There is no need to [examine their words by the principle of] “Once one has seen his rites, then he understands the way of the government. Once one has heard his music, then he recognises the virtue [of the king]”,¹⁰⁹ because [their faults] will be unable to be concealed when the truth or falsity of their words is examined. Where does their problem lie? Due to their arrogant and mean selfishness, as well as their narrowness and shallowness, they really thought that the merit came from themselves.... [The solution to this problem] is what the Confucians call exerting oneself to the utmost. If [one] selfishly [insists on attachment to] self and other, the doctrines [of Buddhism and Confucianism] will never be established. Only once established, will the Dharma-body’s authentic-self appear, and the merits/virtues (*gongde* 功德) of the self-nature be manifested.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ “Zhongyong”, *Liji zhengyi*, pp.1459-1460.

¹⁰⁹ *Mencius*, 2A. 2, *Mengzi zhushu*, p. 79.

¹¹⁰ Ma Yifu, “Qu jin” 去矜 (Removing Arrogance), *Yishan huiyu*, *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, pp. 73-79. “曰善曰能，是居之在己为矜；曰劳曰功，是加之于人为伐。浑言则矜、伐不别，皆因有我相、人相而妄起功能。... 天地虽并育不害，不居生物之功；圣人虽保民无疆，不矜畜众之德...自秦以后有国家者，其形于诏令文字或群下奉

Here, we can see the development of Ma's question: After a long and dark history, how could the underlying problems of this decadent world be identified and addressed? Ma's answer is "revealing the nature", and then "recovering the nature". In this passage, Ma's critique of the selfish emperors in history was influenced by the Sixth Chan Patriarch Huineng's 惠能 (638-713) appraisal of Emperor Wu of Liang 梁武帝 (464-549) regarding the merit he had gained by building temples.¹¹¹ In Huineng's view, genuine merit comes from self-cultivation, and the attempt to seek blessings (*fu* 福) through acts such as giving alms and building temples should not be regarded as genuine merit. Ma extended the scope of this critique to all the rulers in imperial China, which inevitably exacerbated the tension between Confucian ideals and political realities.

Song Neo-Confucians were critical of the politics of the Han and Tang periods on the grounds that they that stemmed from selfish human desires.¹¹² None, however, criticised the selfish desires of sovereigns, a stance that Ma criticised: "The names and the titles of powerful persons [in history] are the means of cheating and fooling the people".¹¹³ During the late Ming Dynasty, the tension between Confucian ideals and monarchical rule increased. But it would have also been similarly unimaginable for later Confucians such as Huang Zongxi 黄宗羲 (1610-1695), Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619-1692) or even Lü Liuliang 吕留良 (1629-1683) to design such an anti-monarchical political image based on the "Confucian classics", such as Ma and his contemporaries had proposed for modern China. He even claimed that because there was no virtuous emperor deserving of power and who could also meet Ma's standard of the virtuous sage,

进之文，往往愈无道愈夸耀，不待“见其礼而知其政，闻其乐而知其德”，夷考其言诚伪，自不可掩也。此其失何在？由于骄吝之私，见小识卑，彼实以功德为出于己也。...在儒家谓之尽己。私人我，诸法不成；安立，然后法身真我始显，自性功德始彰。”

¹¹¹ *Tan jing* 坛经 (*Platform Sūtra*), T2008_.48.0351c25, T2008_.48.0352a12. In the late Tang dynasty, like Master Huineng has done here, some critics also asserted that "Buddhist merits" should be manifest in a spiritual rather than a material dimension; see John Kieschnick, *The Impact of Buddhism on Chinese Material Culture*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2003), pp. 195-198.

¹¹² On the case of Zhu Xi, for example, see Zhao Jingang 赵金刚, *Zhu Xi de lishi guan* 朱熹的历史观 (Zhu Xi's Historical View), (Beijing: Shenghuo·dushu·xinzhì sanlián shudian, 2018), pp. 296-320, 362-415.

¹¹³ Ma Yifu, "Zhi Ye Zuowen", *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 2, pp. 383. "名字为倒惑之媒，爵号乃愚民之术。" Dated 1937.

Confucian political ideals were never achieved after the Qin Dynasty.¹¹⁴ In commenting on Zhang Zai's notable elucidations of Confucian ideals,¹¹⁵ Ma stated:

The mind's most perfect virtue is humaneness. The essential work of a learner is to recognise and pursue humaneness, to cherish humaneness and to detest inhumaneness. To be able to do this is called "establishing the mind of heaven and earth". Students must know that, for Confucius and Mencius, the crucial point in their discussion of government is to value virtue, not power. However, as Confucius and Mencius did not attain office despite being greatly virtuous (*you'de wu'wei* 有德无位), their way did not prevail at that time, but their words have become the model for people for all times. The reason Hengqu (Zhang Zai) used "opening up" (*kai* 开) instead of "attaining" (*zhi* 致) is that "to attain"¹¹⁶ is to realise what already exists whereas "opening up" is to look forward [to establishing Great Stability].¹¹⁷

The first sentence of this paragraph is adopted from Zhu Xi.¹¹⁸ In addition, Zhu said that "humaneness is the heavenly principle of the human mind" (仁者，人心之天理), which

¹¹⁴ Ma, "Yulu leibian·Rufo pian", *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, p. 665.

¹¹⁵ The quotations from Zhang can be found in three different records; see Liu Xuezhi 刘学智, "Zhang Zai 'wei tiandi li xin' shiyi" 张载'为天地立心'释义 (An Interpretation of Zhang Zai's 'establishing the mind of heaven and earth'), *Xibei Daxue xuebao (Zhaxue shehui kexue ban)* 西北大学学报(哲学社会科学版), 2019(3), pp. 5-9.

¹¹⁶ Zhang Zai's use of "opening up" reflected his intention to re-establish the political systems recorded in Confucian classics, and the systems he intended to reconstruct were evidently contrary to the systems that had already become established in the period of Han and Tang. See Han Xing 韩星 and Li Yawen 李雅雯, "Zhongguo shiren shiming dandang de jingdian biaoda——Zhang Zai 'wei wanshi kai taiping' xinjie 中国士人使命担当的经典表达——张载 '为万世开太平'新解" (The Classical Expression of the Commitment of the Chinese Intellectuals: A New Interpretation of 'Bringing about Peace for All Generations'), *Xibei Daxue xuebao (Zhaxue shehui kexue ban)*, 2019(3), pp. 18-22.

¹¹⁷ Ma Yifu, "Hengqu siju jiao" 横渠四句教 (On Zhang Zai's Four-Sentence Doctrine), *Taihe huiyu*, *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, pp. 4-7. "人心之全德曰仁。学者之事，莫要于识仁求仁，好仁恶不仁，能如此，乃是 '为天地立心'。学者须知孔孟之言政治，其要只在贵德而不贵力。然孔孟有德无位，其道不行于当时，而其言则可垂法于万世。故横渠不曰'致'而曰'开'者，致是实现之称，开则期待之谓。"

¹¹⁸ Li Jingde 黎靖德 (d.u.), comp., *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子语类 (Topically Arranged Conversations of Master Zhu), in Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi quanshu*, Vol 14, p. 882.

indicates that he attached similar importance to humaneness.¹¹⁹ To recognise and pursue humaneness is attainable by each ordinary person as a learner of the way of the Six Arts. This means, like Confucius and Mencius, each ordinary person can pursue “opening up the Great Stability for All Generations,” whereas a proper office is not always attainable. Ma’s explanation of Zhang Zai’s statements points to a tradition that can be traced back to the early Han Dynasty: Confucius as an “uncrowned king (*suwang* 素王)”, establishing laws for the future.¹²⁰ Because “opening up Great Stability” became a part of recovering the nature, as will be shown in the next chapter, Ma developed Zhang Zai’s idealistic idea and further intensified the tension between political realities and Confucian ideals. The next chapter will show Ma’s painstaking efforts in “moralising” all political actions in the classics through his philosophical model, which aimed at demonstrating how personal moral praxis can result in good politics.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter has sought to demonstrate that the genesis of Ma’s New Confucian thought was closely related to his dissatisfaction with political and social situation of China around the 1910s. Ma’s idealistic disposition made him believe that in order to save humans from the underlying problem of decadence and moral turpitude, they must recognise principle and then follow it. The first section examined the convergence of his idealistic disposition and radical views between 1913 and 1916, showing that he took the view that the solution to the underlying problem of of decadence and moral turpitude must be found in Confucian scholarship. This section also revealed that, inspired by this

¹¹⁹ Li Jingde comp., *Zhuzi yulei*, in Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi quanshu*, Vol 14, p. 880.

¹²⁰ Since the late Zhou dynasty, the notion of “uncrowned king” has usually been associated with the idea “possessing virtues without possessing position”. It reveals how Chinese intellectuals sought to express their political ideals under monarchical power: imagining a virtuous person who is deserving of power. In the late Qing dynasty, the most notable interpretations of the “uncrowned king” ideal and its religious character were made by Liao Ping 廖平 (1852-1932) and Kang Youwei 康有为 (1858-1927). Their views and Ma’s critique on them are discussed in chapter 4 of this thesis. Regarding the political metaphors of “the king without power” and “possessing virtues without possessing position”, see Wang Guangsong 王光松, “Zai ‘de’, ‘wei’ zhijian 在 ‘德’、‘位’ 之间” (Between “Virtue” and “Position”), (Shanghai: Huadong Shifan Daxue chubanshe, 2010), pp. 14-20, 125-140, 167-177, 193-199.

belief that “humans desire knowledge due to their nature” Ma subsequently turned to Buddhism in an attempt to gain a deeper knowledge of “human nature”.

The second section studied the formative process of Ma’s Buddhism-influenced New Confucian thought during the period between 1917 and 1935. With the help of Chan Buddhist resources, Ma noticed the significance of the mind in discovering the knowledge of “human nature”: one must reveal this mind before knowing one’s nature and the principle of the world. This led to Ma’s later investigations into the *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith* and its “one mind two gateways” model, and this model also became a necessary contribution to the formation of the mind-based framework supporting Ma’s New Confucian thought. This section then revealed: For Ma, in order to become appropriate functions of the reality, our practices must be in accordance with normative principles showed by Confucian classics. Studying these classics is to discover this process and recognise the moral principle which would be called as the way of the Six Arts in Ma’s later writings.

With analyses of Ma’s *Taihe huiyu* and *Yishan huiyu*, respectively delivered in March 1938 and February 1939, the third section demonstrated the structure and ontological framework of Ma’s theory of the Six Arts. To a large extent, Ma accepted Zhu Xi’s model of “the mind controls/combines nature (reality) and emotions (functions)” as his ontological framework. Ma emphasised that the nature itself is beyond conceptual discrimination and can be realised only by recognising the “awakening” aspect of the mind’s gateway of arising and ceasing. At the same time, the Confucian classics as the Six Arts reveal a concrete way to achieve this recognition. For Ma, reading these classics enables one to obtain genuine knowledge about solving the underlying problem of the human condition – the knowledge about revealing and recovering the nature. By treating the Six Arts as manifestations of the nature or principle, Ma managed to find a pathway to recover the nature that was open to all people: revealing the nature by studying classics.

Chapter 2. Recovering the Nature: Ma's Confucian Ideals and the Virtue-based Governance in Confucian Classics

The nature is nothing other than principle, and from Yao and Shun to the person on the street, the principle is the same.¹

This chapter will focus on Ma Yifu's main work, the *Records of Lectures at the Recovering the Nature Academy*, written in 1939 and 1941. The first section will explore Ma's theoretical suppositions in reading the Confucian classics, namely, how "one mind" contains the Six Arts. Ma's textual organisation is in accordance with his general understanding of the Six Arts, therefore, I will translate and analyse the catalogue of the *Records of Lectures* in the first section. Then, I will point out that while Ma explicitly adopted ontological concepts from Huayan Buddhism, besides the "nature" and the "principle", the "mind" played a central role in his elucidations of the Six Arts. Through these translations and analyses, this section will demonstrate how this general assessment serves as a cornerstone of Ma's moralised interpretation of the classics.

The second section will investigate how, through his "moralised interpretation", Ma managed to view political deeds recorded in the classics as the manifestations of (different virtues of) the nature/mind-as-reality. This section begins its investigation with one of Ma's fundamental beliefs: the ideal of the harmony between virtue and "worldly" power. In Ma's interpretation of the classics, he maintained that all political activities conducted by ancient sages as recorded in the classics are exclusively functions of the sage's mind. This made Ma's moralised interpretation of the classics very idealistic. Because Ma believed that "there is no so-called politics beyond the realm of morals", he claimed that all political activities (functions) are controlled by the principles (*li* 理) in the sage's mind; and virtue-based governance, as the ideal form of politics recorded in the classics, is also maintained by the sage's mind. To further explore the idealistic character

¹ *Collected Works of Two Cheng Brothers*, translated and cited in John Makeham, "Monism and the Problem of the Ignorance and Badness in Chinese Buddhism and Zhu Xi's Neo-Confucianism", in Makeham ed., *The Buddhist Roots of Zhu Xi's Philosophical Thought*, (Oxford Scholarship Online: June 2018), p. 337.

of Ma's thought, chapter three will examine the mind-based framework Ma used in explaining the virtue-based governance.

2.1. Subsuming the World into Oneself: An Overall Examination of the *Records of Lectures* and Its Theoretical Presuppositions

2.1.1. The Structure of the *Records of Lectures* and Huayan School Influences

Ma's organisation of the *Records of Lectures* was carefully put together and backed by sophisticated considerations. In addition to observing his concrete arrangement of classical texts, understanding Ma's textual organisation also requires us to have a clear understanding of the overall structure of that organisation. Therefore, I have translated the catalogue with all subtitles of the *Lectures* in Appendix V, and classify all titles into five groups as follow:²

1. Necessary tips on reading the Confucian classics as manifestations of the nature:

Opening day speech; Regulations of the Academy; Reading skills and an essential book list; An overview of the main points of the Confucian classics.

2. Explaining how the classics are the manifestations of the virtues of the nature, as well as the realisation of virtue-based politics: The Essential Points of the *Analects*; The Main Doctrines of the *Classic of Filial Piety*.

² Ma Yifu, *Fuxing shuyuan jianglu* 复性书院讲录 (The Records of Lectures at the Recovering the Nature Academy), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, pp. 84-393. In this chapter, without noting *Fuxing shuyuan jianglu* and *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1 in my footnotes, I will only specify the subtitle from which a passage is cited. In writing *Fuxing shuyuan jianglu*, Ma included a significant amount of "appended words" (*fuyu* 附语) in some subtitled sections and those appended words are relatively independent from the main texts of commentaries. In order to have a simpler style of writing, Ma placed them within the subtitled sections to avoid fragmentation and digression. For this reason, in my footnotes I will not note that certain citations are from the "appended words". Ma's method might have been influenced by Zhu Xi's style of writing commentaries to the classics. See Zhang Fuxiang 张富祥, *Song dai wenxianxue yanjiu* 宋代文献学研究 (Studies on Song Dynasty Philology), (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2006), pp. 180-185.

3. Focusing on the teachings of *Odes* and ritual texts, indicating how to recognise the way of the Six Arts as the principle of the virtue-based politics: Prolegomena to the Teaching of *Odes*; Prolegomena to the Teaching of Ritual Texts.

4. Describing the fulfilment of the way of the Six Arts in a virtue-based political world: “The Concise Meaning of the ‘Great Plan’” (in the *Book of Documents*).

5. A holistic observation of the way of the Six Arts as normative principle — on how a political world can be “subsumed” into a sage’s “mind”: Goblet words³ on Observing the Hexagrams in the *Book of Change*.

In these five parts of his *Lectures*, Ma structured his discourse of “one mind contains the Six Arts” step by step. The first and the second parts show how the Six Arts are associated with our heavenly bestowed nature. It should be noted that “filial piety”, as a manifestation of “humaneness” in daily life, is critically important in supporting this association. With filial piety having been constructed as the cornerstone of all political activities in the second part, in the third part, Ma kept exploring how virtue-based governance works. In the fourth and the fifth parts, Ma further justified how this governance is metaphysically influenced by the sage’s mind, which is the intrinsic reality of all moral characteristics/virtues.

This section will specifically examine the “association” between the nature and the classics as the Six Arts. From the perspective of the Huayan school, in 1940s, Ma wrote:

This “Pure Conduct” chapter [of the *Flower Garland Sutra*] broadly explains the characteristics or forms of conduct (*xing’xiang* 行相), and [desires] constantly to

³ Ma used “Goblet words” here to show modesty about his explanations of the *Book of Change*. For further philosophical meanings of this notion in *Zhuangzi*, see Wim De Reu, “On Goblet Words: Coexistence and Writing in the *Zhuangzi*”, in *Guoli Taiwan Daxue zhexue lunping* 国立台湾大学哲学论评, 2017.03.(53).03, pp. 77-78.

keep in mind sentient beings. In the words of the Confucians, this corresponds to [the qualities of] sincerity, honesty, earnestness and reverence, which concern the task of fully realising one's person and nature, and are not to be forsaken even when dwelling among the southern or northern barbarians.⁴ It is only because one does not know [what] is within [one's] distinctively allocated nature (*xing'fen* 性分)⁵ that one is not able to control one's mind properly. [If one] keeps selfish desires in one's mind, how could one be cautious in one's words and conduct? If one can be habituated through [studying] this [chapter], this will indeed suffice to enhance one's wholesome roots.⁶

A crucial point here lays in “what is within one's allocated nature”. In the words of the Confucians, “keeping in mind sentient beings” can be related to “the task of fully realising one's person and nature”, namely, recovering the nature, as shown in the previous chapter. Ma also said that if one realises “what is within one's distinctively allocated nature”, one will be “able to control one's mind properly”. One's distinctive nature is also “allocated” by heaven. Being able to recognise this nature enables one to control one's mind properly, to transcend selfish desires by the desire to keep in mind sentient beings. Unless there is a belief in one's capacity to reveal the nature, negative matters may mask this good nature and incline one towards either selfish desires (in terms

⁴ *Analects*, 15.6, *Lunyu zhushu*, p. 208. “Let his words be sincere and truthful and his actions honourable and careful - such conduct may be practiced among the rude tribes of the South or the North.” (言忠信，行笃敬，虽蛮貊之邦行矣。) Translated by James Legge (1815-1987). Unless noted otherwise, I have mainly adopted Legge's translations (often with slight modifications) of the Confucian classics in this chapter. For Legge's translations, see <https://ctext.org/pre-qin-and-han/ens>.

⁵ This term frequently appeared in the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* (for an instance, see *Dafang guangfo huayan jing*, T0279_10.0068b18). But according to Dr. Liu Leheng's suggestion (personal communication), Ma may have inherited Guo Xiang's 郭象 (252-312) notion of “allocated nature” used in his influential commentary on *Zhuangzi* and further redefined this term according to his own New Confucian philosophy.

⁶ Ma Yifu, “*Huayan jing* ‘Jingxing pin’ xieben ziba” 华严经净行品写本自跋 (An Afterword by the Author to the Manuscript of the “Purifying Practice” Chapter of the *Avatamsaka Sūtra*), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 2, p. 119. “此品广说诸行相，念念不忘众生。自儒者言之，乃是忠信笃敬，蛮貊不弃，践形尽性之事也。人惟不知性分内事，故不能善用其心。念念不忘己私，言行何由而谨哉。若能于此熏习，亦足增长善根。” Dated 1943.

of Confucianism) or ignorance (in terms of Buddhism).⁷ In Ma's description of what the unselfish person recognises by revealing the nature, we can find his elucidation of self-transcendence, of how one transcends the individual self through a particular realisation of the allocated nature. This elucidation, to a large degree, drew on Huayan ideas.

It was in the 1940s, influenced by the Huayan tradition, that Ma gave a specific explanation of the spiritual “oneness” between individual self and the world. In this explanation, Ma argued that before starting to act in accordance with teachings concerned with being a good Confucian gentleman, one should comprehend the inseparability between “one's single body” and the world:

Subsuming all [things] under heaven into a single person (*yishen* 一身, a single body), is like the “gateway where principle divests phenomena [of their individuated identity]” of the *Avatamsaka sūtra*,⁸ and so the sense of “solitariness” is established. This is like saying, “the entire land is nothing more than each person's own”. Making oneself respond to the whole world, is like the “gateway where phenomena disclose principle” of the *Flower Garland Sutra*,⁹ and so the sense of “concurrence” is established. This is like saying, “there is no time or place where buddhas are not manifest”.¹⁰... Students should first confirm that there is no “world” outside oneself and the world is precisely oneself. Only then can one talk about the “concurrence” [between oneself and others] and the “solitariness” [of oneself]. Only then can one attend to improving one's one person in solitude or attend to improving the whole world.¹¹ If one regards [oneself and the world] as two ends of a stake, one would never find the entry into [the truth].¹²

⁷ Ma Yifu, “Jiang *Xiaojing* dayi chugao” 讲孝经大义初稿 (The First Draft of a Lecture on the Main Idea of the *Classic of Filial Piety*), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol. 1, p. 569. Dated 1941.

⁸ Chengguan, *Dafangguang fo huayan jing shu* 大方广佛华严经疏 (Elucidation of the *Flower Garland Sutra*), T1735_.35.0514b24, T1735_.35.0514c04.

⁹ Chengguan, *Dafangguang fo huayan jing shu*, T1735_.35.0514b24.

¹⁰ *Miaofa lianhua jing* 妙法莲华经 (*The Lotus Sutra*), T0262_.09.0058a15. 十方诸国土，无刹不现身。

¹¹ *Mencius*, 7A.9, *Mengzi zhushu*, p. 355. 穷则独善其身，达则兼善天下。

¹² Ma Yifu, “Xiyan” 希言 (Uncommon Words), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 4, p. 97. 以天下摄归一身，似《华严》以理夺事门，故独义得成，犹云“尽大地只是诸人自己”也；以一身遍应天下，似《华严》事能显理门，故兼义得成，犹云“无刹不现身”也...学

In the sentence “Subsuming all [things] under heaven into a single person”, the single person corresponds with “one’s allocated nature” mentioned in the previous passage. As noted in the first chapter of this thesis, the allocated nature is mind-as-reality. Because all things under heaven have been “subsumed” into the mind, Ma tried to show that “staying in solitude” and “attending to improving the world” share the same foundation: one’s mind (single body). This passage indicates Ma’s mind-based world view influenced by the concept “Dharma Realm subsumed within one mind” (*yixin fajie* — 一心法界)¹³ of the Huayan school. The Huayan school states that there are four kinds of “Dharma Realm”. Through adopting the ontological concept “Dharma Realm of non-obstruction between principle and phenomena” (*li shi wu ai fajie* 理事无碍法界) developed by Qingliang Chengguan,¹⁴ Ma sought to identify the inseparability of “staying in solitude” and “attending to improving the world”. Furthermore, because the moral subject has recognised this inseparability in the “Dharma Realm of non-obstruction between principle

者先须决了身外无天下，天下即是身，始许说兼说独，然后能达能穷。若看作两橛，终无入头处也。

¹³ This concept was successively mentioned by both Fazang 法藏 (638-715) and Chengguan of the Huayan school. See Fazang, *Huayan jing tanxuan ji* 华严经探玄记 (The Record of Inquiring after the Profundity of the *Flower Garland Sutra*), T1733_35.0440c10; Chengguan, *Dafangguang fo huayan jing shu*, T1735_35.0908b01.

¹⁴ The ontological notion, “contemplative approaches of Dharma Realm” (*fajie guanmen* 法界观门), was first raised by Dushun 杜顺 (557-640) but Dushun did not use “Dharma Realm subsumed within one mind”, which was subsequently fully developed in Zhiyan’s 智俨 (602-668) and Chengguan’s works. See Kimura Kiyotaka 木村清孝, *Zhongguo Huayan Sixiangshi* 中国华严思想史 (The History of Huayan Thought in China), translated by Li Huiying 李惠英, (Taipei: Dongda tushu gongsi, 1996), pp. 72-74, 82-93, 199-203. According to Chengguan, there are four kinds of Dharma Realm (Cf. Chengguan, *Dafangguang fo huayan jing shu*, T1735_35.0730a02-T1735_35.0730a18), which reflect four dimensions of one world within one mind. In these four dimensions, the mutually interpenetrated states of phenomena and principle manifest in different forms. I will quote Ma’s explanations of them here: “The first is the Dharma Realm of phenomena — here realm means division because each and every distinction has a boundary The second is the Dharma Realm of principle — here realm means the nature because infinite phenomena-dharmas share the same nature. The third is the Dharma Realm of non-obstruction between principle and phenomena — it has the meanings of both the nature and division because the nature and division are non-obstructing in this realm. The fourth is the Dharma Realm of non-obstruction among phenomena because in this realm each and every bounded phenomena-dharma is seamlessly merged in accordance with the same nature, endless layer upon interconnected layer.” See Ma Yifu, “*Taiji tu shuo zhuiyan*” 太极图说赘言 (An Appendix of Redundant Words on *An Explanation of the Diagram of the Supreme Polarity*), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 4, p. 5. These texts will be further analysed in Subsection 3.3. (pp. 140-142).

and phenomena”, “attending to improving the world” would not be different from controlling the mind and its functions – our moral practices.

Although the aim of Ma’s Academy and his *Lectures* was to teach students to recover the nature, he had to acknowledge the ontological position of the “mind”, in which he introduced Buddhist ideas into his interpretation. In the “Opening Day Speech for Students of the Recovering the Nature Academy” in the *Lectures*, Ma claimed that the task of learning is to realise the nature fully (*jinxing* 尽性) by studying the Confucian classics, and the top priority in this learning process is “to arouse the aspiration” (*faxin* 发心) or “to establish the mind” (*lixin* 立心).¹⁵ To Ma, the possibility of being able to reveal and recover the nature is based on recognising the sage’s mind. By accepting the mind as the intrinsic reality of the phenomena in the world, and also of the great deeds recorded in the classics, Ma declared that “there is no phenomenon outside the mind, and that there is no function [in the phenomenal world] separate from the intrinsic reality [that is the mind] (心外无事, 离体无用).¹⁶ As will be further discussed in the following parts, Ma drew on these Huayan ideas to develop his moralised interpretation of the Confucian classics.¹⁷

2.1.2. The Central Point of the *Lectures*: Moralised Interpretations

As stated in Ma’s *Taihe Lecture*: “Vital stuff in its entirety is principle and principle in its entirety is phenomena”. Here, he further declared, “there is no phenomenon outside the

¹⁵ Ma Yifu, “Fuxing shuyuan kaijiangri shi zhusheng” 复性书院开讲日示诸生 (Opening Day Speech for Students of the Recovering the Nature Academy) and “Fuxing shuyuan xuegui” 复性书院学规 (Regulations of the Recovering the Nature Academy), pp. 85-86. In the Buddhist context, to enter the first bodhisattva level, one needs to arouse the aspiration (*bodhicitta* or *cittotpāda*) for one’s awakening and also for the awakening of all sentient beings, so that they all can attain nirvana. The Chinese term often used as an equivalent is *faxin* 发心: to arouse the aspiration (for awakening). In Ma’s context, as I will explain later, *faxin* means to arouse the aspiration for recovering the nature so that one will come to realise that “there is no phenomenon outside the mind, and that there is no function [in the phenomenal world] separate from the intrinsic reality [that is the mind]”. Also, *lixin* means to treat one’s mind as not different from the mind of a sage, and then to fully recognise it.

¹⁶ Ma Yifu, “Fuxing shuyuan xuegui”, pp. 90, 94, 95.

¹⁷ Yao Binbin 姚彬彬 gave a brief account of this influence, see Yao, *Xiandai wenhua sichao yu Zhongguo foxue de zhuanxing*, pp. 281-286.

mind”. From Ma’s perspective, a scholar must recognise this character of the mind before undertaking to study the classics. This is to say, before undertaking self-cultivation, a practitioner must recognise human’s potentials of fully recovering the nature through this cultivation, and the concept “mind-as-reality” (*xin ’ti* 心体) is introduced in explaining these potentials. It was this point that Ma drew on to develop his moralised interpretations of the classics.

As already noted, Ma’s understanding of moral praxis was closely related to the idea of “Dharma Realm subsumed within one mind” formulated by Huayan master, Chengguan. Ma may also have drawn inspiration from Huayan master, Zongmi 宗密 (780-841), a notable interpreter of the *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith*. This inspiration seems to reflect parallels between Ma’s understanding of the relationship between “revealing the nature” and “recovering the nature” and Zongmi’s understanding of the relationship between “sudden enlightenment (as an ordinary person)” and “intrinsic/original enlightenment (as a Buddha)”.¹⁸ Generally, Confucian classics that Ma interpreted are records of actual political deeds rather than the stories in Mahāyāna writings. How was Ma able to interpret these classics with the notion of “Dharma Realm subsumed within one mind”? Ma maintains that, unlike Mahāyāna and western sciences, the Six Arts can teach us the one “real principle” (*shili* 实理), which works in all kinds of knowledge systems:

So, among the works of doctrinal classification, none is as great as the “Interpretations of the Classics” [from the *Book of Rites*]. It presents both the strengths and the weakness [of a classic] concurrently, and also highlights both [teachings about] the human (practitioners) and the Dharma (what has been practiced) (*renfa shuangzhang* 人法双彰). Therefore, [one] realises that diverse opinions are only provisional deviations. When [false] boundaries and attachments are transcended, the one nature equalises the many differentiations. Who could impede this thoroughfare? Thus, the ability to include diverse discourses [into the one Way of the Six Arts] so that they point to self-nature is so-called “knowing the categories” In the doctrinal classifications of

¹⁸ Peter N. Gregory, “Sudden Enlightenment Followed by Gradual Cultivation: Tsung-mi’s Analysis of Mind”, in Gregory edit., *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987), pp. 288-298.

[Mahāyāna] doctrinal theorists, there are [such categories as] the Hīnayāna (*xiao* 小) and the Mahāyāna (*da* 大); the intermediate (*pian* 偏) and the perfect (*yuan* 圓) [teachings];¹⁹ and the expedient (*quan* 权) and the real (*shi* 实) [teachings]. As for the teaching of the Six Arts, it is free of the intermediate as well as the Hīnayāna [teachings], and affirms only the perfect and Mahāyāna teachings. It does not rely upon any provisional vehicle, but rather on the one real principle alone. It treats the shared, separate, initial and final (*tong* 通, *bie* 别, *shi* 始, *zhong* 终) [teachings] as equal and as non-dual.²⁰ It presents only strengths and weaknesses and does not rank. This is the unique characteristic of Confucian teachings, which [Mahāyāna Buddhist] doctrinal learning cannot compare with.... The division of branches of learning [in Western learning] is a matter of specialisation; therefore, it is concerned with the partial. Doctrinal classification, however, is concerned with understanding what is fundamental, therefore it is general. People today say that science was separated from philosophy to become an independent discipline. Comparing philosophy with the head tablet (*zhu* 主) of the ancestral temple, then one could say that it has categories but no unifying thought. Chinese scholarship is different from that because it unites categories into a single order.... And so, whereas the Buddhists must first realise the one true Dharma Realm before understanding that the teachings of the school of emptiness are provisional, the Confucians must first fully actualise ceaseless sincerity before understanding that the writings are inseparable from the way of the nature. [Even] Zigong 子贡 (520BC–456BC) remained a hairsbreadth (*yi'chen* 一尘) [distance from realising this]. As knowledgeable and capable as Zigong was, he built his understanding based on words. My analysis here is to inform students that the doctrinal classification based on the Six Arts is a matter of real principle and not obscure words. What is needed is to understand the

¹⁹ According to Zhiyi's doctrinal classification, the "intermediate" here refers to the expedient and partial, whereas the perfect teaching means a more complete teaching than the intermediate one. Zhiyi used the phrase "principle is free of the intermediate and the perfect" (*li jue pian yuan* 理绝偏圆) to describe the most perfect teachings conveyed by the *Lotus Sutra*. See Zhiyi, *Miaofa lianhua jing xuanyi*, T1716_.33.0681b26.

²⁰ The description "the shared and the separate teaching" can be found in Zhiyi, *Miaofa lianhua jing xuanyi*, T1716_.33.0682a08; the description "the initial and the final teachings" can be found in Fazang, *Huayan jing tanxuan ji*, T1733_.35.0115c05.

essential teaching directly, and not to lose its import by being misled by words.

21

According to Ma, the Confucian Six Arts point to one's nature without relying upon any provisional vehicle. Why did Ma underscore "provisional" here? It is because, rather than Buddhist doctrinal classification or western divisions of branches of learning, Ma thought that by using the Six Arts, all disciplines of knowledge in this world can be better classified in a manner enabling the inclusion of "diverse discourses [into the one Way of the Six Arts] so that they point to self-nature". This method of classifying is based on recognising the "one real principle", which is different from various kinds of "provisional" vehicles and provides a better approach to understanding the world. And by studying the Confucian classics properly, genuine knowledge based on "one real principle"/the nature will be found. Compared with Buddhist teachings, the Confucian classics touched the core of knowledge about one's nature in a more concise and direct manner.²² In the classics, as Ma pointed out, "the shared, separate, initial and final teachings" are treated as equal and as non-dual. As will be shown later, although the genuine knowledge in the classics was about both individual (morality) and community (politics), the starting point is to recognise that which "points to" our nature: humaneness

²¹ Ma Yifu, "Dushu fa" 读书法 (On How to Read Books) and "Qunjing dayi zongshuo" 群经大义总说 (An Overview of the Main Points of Confucian Classics), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, pp. 109-110, 130, 131, 133. 故判教之宏，莫如《经解》，得失并举，人法双彰。乃知异见纷纭，只是暂时歧路，封执若泯，则一性齐平，寥廓通涂，谁为碍塞？所以囊括群言，指归自性，此之谓知类。...彼为义学者之教判，有小有大，有偏有圆，有权有实；六艺之教则绝于偏小，唯是圆大，无假权乘，唯一实理，通别始终，等无有二，但有得失而无差分。此又儒者教相之殊胜，非义学所能及者矣...分科者，一器一官之事，故为局；判教则知本之事，故为通。如今人言科学自哲学分离而独立，比哲学于神庙之主，此谓有类而无统。中土之学不如是，以统类是一也...故在佛氏则必悟一真法界，而后知空宗之为权说；在儒者则必至至诚无息，而后知文章不离性道。子贡于此犹隔一尘。纵使多闻能如子贡，犹在言语边取，今之料简，欲使学者知据六艺判教乃是实理，不是玄言，务在直下明宗，不致承言失旨耳。

²² Although this sentence also provides as an overview of the distinction between Mahāyāna Buddhism and Confucianism in Ma's thought, we currently do not have the evidence to figure out how and when this idea shaped in his mind (we need substantial relevant diaries or letters to make it possible). It is, however, not inconceivable that Ma's concerns discussed in Subsection 1.1. may very possibly have led him to choosing the teaching of the Six Arts, which is more concise than Buddhist teachings.

and filial piety. As indicated in Ma's interpretations of the *Analects*, there is a learning sequence in studying the classics.

As early as the Han Dynasty, the *Analects* had been considered as a key to understanding the Five Classics as well as the Six Arts.²³ In the following part of the *Lectures*, Ma further correlated the different virtues of the nature with different "Arts" in which the *Analects* features as a primary work. In interpreting the *Analects*, Ma said:

There are three major [categories of] questions in the *Analects*: one is questions about humaneness; one is questions about politics; and one is questions about filial piety. All the questions and answers about humaneness concern the meaning of teachings in the *Odes*; those about politics concern the meaning of the teachings in the *Documents*; and those about filial piety concern the meaning of the teachings in the ritual texts and music texts.²⁴

Ma proposed a sequential order for these teachings, in which the *Odes* occupies the position of "elementary teaching". By re-iterating Zhu Xi's view that "the mind's most perfect virtue is humaneness," Ma highlighted that the role of the teachings in the *Odes* is to reveal our inherent humaneness, which is based on the inseparability between the world and oneself. This inseparability exists in the Dharma Realm, but what makes it possible is the capacity of one's mind: humaneness. Ma used the concept "sensitive responsiveness" (*ganying* 感应) to describe this correlation. While the "sensitive responsiveness" between the mind and inherent goodness is the starting point of functions of the principle/the nature/the mind-as-reality, one's capacity [inherent in the mind] that makes "sensing" possible is humaneness.²⁵ This capacity of the human mind, to Ma, was also the most prominent virtue one has been endowed with. Adopting the terminology of the *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith*, Ma considered humaneness to be the

²³ Zhao Qi 赵岐 (? - 201), "Mengzi tici" 孟子题辞 (An Inscription to the *Mencius*), in *Mengzi zhushu*, p. 8.

²⁴ Ma Yifu, "Shi jiao" 诗教 (Teaching of *Odes*) of "Lunyu dayi" 论语大义 (The Overall Meaning of the *Analects*), p. 134. 《论语》有三大问目：一问仁，一问政，一问孝。凡答问仁者，皆《诗》教义也；答问政者，皆《书》教义也；答问孝者，皆《礼》《乐》义也。

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.136. "此心之所以能感者便是仁。"

“overarching characteristic” (*zongxiang* 总相) of the virtues of the nature/the mind-as-reality.²⁶

In exploring “the meaning of the teachings in the *Documents*” buried hidden in the *Analects*, Ma said: “The chapter, ‘Governing with the Power of the Virtues’, is the central meaning of the teachings of the *Documents*. Virtue is the root of politics, and politics [as political activities] are traces of virtue”.²⁷ How could such a political ideal, the governance of virtue, be realised? Ma tried to answer this question in a dialogue with Han Confucian Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (179 BC-104 BC). At the end of his lectures on the *Analects*, Ma paraphrased Dong’s words to demonstrate the way of the Six Arts as the normative principle for public life:

The doctrine of pattern (*wen* 文) and substance (*zhi* 质)²⁸ is actually from the *Analects*,²⁹ while taking Heaven and Earth as models and figures is from the *Change*.³⁰ These ideas are very profound and can be discovered by deep reflection. Only by comprehending this can one talk about continuation and innovation, moderation and improvement; only then can one speak of reformation and revolution.... Those who have realised the import [of the inseparability of pattern and substance] will know that the *Spring and Autumn* is the *Change*, and likewise, the *Odes*, the *Documents*, the ritual texts and music

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Ma Yifu, “*Shu jiao*” 书教 (The Teachings of the *Documents*) of “*Lunyu dayi*”, pp. 138-139. 《论语》“为政以德”一章，是《书》教要义。德是政之本，政是德之迹。

²⁸ I adopted Michael Loewe’s translation of these two terms (pattern and substance) in Dong’s works here. For relevant explanations, see Loewe, *Dong Zhongshu: A ‘Confucian’ Heritage and the Chunqiu fanlu*, (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), pp. 275-309.

²⁹ *Analects*, 6.18, *Lunyu zhushu*, p. 78. Only when the refinements (refined pattern) and raw qualities (substances) are balanced, can one be a gentleman. (文质彬彬，然后君子。) Both “refined and raw” and “ritually embellished and unembellished” (John Makeham, *Transmitters and Creators: Chinese Commentators and Commentaries on the Analects*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003, p. 313) are suitable in translating *wen* and *zhi* in Dong’s discourses. In Dong’s political philosophy, they indicate different yet complementary characteristics of a political system. What should be achieved through political adjustments is a healthy balance between *wen* and *zhi*. According to translated passages here, however, Ma’s reception of these two notions was rooted in his “reality-function” model. This means that *wen* is characteristic of *zhi* and *zhi* is nature of *wen*. I think “pattern and substance” will work better in translating Ma’s “*wen* and *zhi*” here.

³⁰ “*Xi ci*” 系辞 (The Great Treatise), *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, p. 289. 是故法象莫大乎天地，变通莫大乎四时。

texts are also the *Change*.³¹ If [one] does not study law [the *Spring and Autumn* and the *Change*], how could one adjudicate a case? Therefore, both the *Change* and the *Spring and Autumn* are the final teachings of the sage.... [One] should understand that pattern is inseparable from substance, and the provisional is also inseparable from the permanent principle [of the Confucian classics as the Six Arts]. This is called not acting until there is a matching [of substance and pattern]. Those whose use this to adapt to changing circumstances in order to succeed, will achieve balance by corresponding with principle; and will give rise to functions in accord with intrinsic reality. This is called “emanating from within”.³² The barbarians must be transformed into the civilised Chinese (*xia* 夏), and [rule by] penal codes must eventually become [rule by] virtue. This is what is called “not stopping until there is [a true] ruler”. Those who use this in error, if at every turn their integrity remains subject to the same rule (*zhen fu yi* 贞夫一),³³ [it will eventually be called as] gathering characteristics together and subsuming them into the nature.³⁴ This is called “coming from outside”. “There

³¹ According to Ma, among the teachings of the Six Arts, the teaching of the *Change* most adequately indicate the way of the Six Arts (in this context, the inseparability of pattern and substance), whereas that of the *Spring and Autumn* is second to it. From this perspective, Ma took the teachings of the *Spring and Autumn* and the *Change* as the “law” (standard) that other teachings should follow. The significance of *Change* in Ma’s thought will be discussed in Section 3.2.

³² Dong Zhongshu, *Chunqiu fanlu yizheng* 春秋繁露义证 (Identification of the Meanings of the *Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals*), compiled and annotated by Su Yu 苏舆 (1874-1914), (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1992), p. 127. “Through these [events], the *Spring and Autumn* shows that things do not come from nowhere and treasures do not emanate with no reason. That which emanates from within will not function until there is a matching [of substance and pattern], and that which comes from outside will not stop until there is [a true] ruler”. (《春秋》以此见物不空来，宝不虚出。自内出者，无匹不行，自外至者，无主不止。) According to Su Yu’s comments, Dong here highlighted the harmonious and sensitive responsiveness between a well-behaved ruler and Heaven, in the context of conducting an ancestral sacrifice. In the *Gongyang Commentary on the Spring and Autumn*, there is a more abstract expression of this argument: “Why must the one who is King, when sacrificing to Heaven, be accompanied in spirit by his ancestors as well? Because, from inside to out, all descendants participate; from the outside in, all descendants sacrifice”. (王者必以其祖配。王者则曷为必以其祖配？自内出者无匹不行，自外至者无主不止。) Translated by Harry Miller, mod., see Miller, *The Gongyang Commentary on The Spring and Autumn Annals: A Full Translation*, (NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 148.

³³ “Xi ci”, *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, p. 296. All the movements under the Heaven are constantly subject to this one and the same rule. (天下之动，贞夫一者也。)

³⁴ Here, Ma interpreted “coming from outside” with terms adopted from the *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith*: characteristics and the intrinsic reality (the nature). The

is only one end, even though there might be a hundred schemes”³⁵ —there is no functioning until there is a matching [of substance and pattern]; “Even though the paths are diverse, they all come to the same end.”³⁶ — not stopping until there is [a true] ruler. In addition, dharmas arise according to conditions — each person is all dharmas; the Dharma Realm is ultimately unified by the one nature — all persons are the “one”. Although this meaning should be sought from the Huayan school, yet it is actually contained in the *Analects*.³⁷

In this long passage elucidating the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, Ma engaged in a dialogue with Dong’s *Luxuriant Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals*. Using the framework of “Dharma Realm subsumed within one mind”, he aimed to give a moralised explanation of political activities, such as “continuation and innovation (*yin’ge* 因革), moderation and improvement (*sunyi* 损益)” and “reformation and revolution” – activities of political decision-makers³⁸. In Ma’s interpretation, Dong’s description of the harmony (“That

“nature” represents the sage governor, and the “characteristics” represents his political deeds. Given the similarity of the descriptions of “gathering characteristics together and subsuming them into the nature” with “Subsuming all [things] under heaven into a single person” discussed in the last subsection (pp. 75-77), here Ma can be understood as trying to emphasise that all political deeds can be understood to be the sage’s moral practices (functions of the nature).

³⁵ “Xi ci”, *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, p. 304.

³⁶ *Ibid.* 天下一致而百虑，殊途而同归。

³⁷ Ma Yifu, “*Chunqiu jiao*” 春秋教 (The Teachings of *Spring and Autumn*) of “*Lunyu dayi*”, pp. 163, 165, 176. 文质之说，实本《论语》。法天象地，则本《易经》。此义甚深，善思可见。于此会得，乃可以言因革损益，乃可以言改制革命也...得其旨者，知《春秋》即《易》也，亦即《诗》《书》《礼》《乐》也。如不学法律，焉能断案？故《易》与《春秋》并为圣人末后之教...当知文不能离质，权不能离经，此谓非匹不行。用之通变者，应理而得其中，从体起用，谓之自内出。夷必变于夏，刑必终于德，此谓非主不止。用之差忒者，虽动而贞夫一，会相归性，谓之自外至。“一致而百虑”，非匹不行也；“殊涂而同归”，非主不止也。又法从缘起为出，一人一切也；法界一性为至，一切人一也。此义当求之《华严》而实具于《论语》。

³⁸ Cf. *Analects*, 2. 23, *Lunyu zhushu*, pp. 23-24. “Zizhang asked whether the state of affairs ten generations hence could be known. Confucius said, ‘The Shang based its propriety on that of the Yin, and what it added and subtracted is knowable. The Zhou has based its propriety on that of the Shang and what it added and subtracted is knowable. In this way, what continues from the Zhou, even if one hundred generations hence, is knowable.’” (子张问：十世可知也？子曰：“殷因于夏礼，所损益，可知也。周因于殷礼，所损益，可知也。其或继周者、虽百世，可知也。”) Translated by Charles Muller, <http://www.acmuller.net/con-dao/analects.html> mod.

which emanates from within will not function until there is a matching [of substance and pattern]”) achieved in political life must be understood to refer to an individual’s harmonious state in being a gentleman with well-blended qualities: the Dharma Realm is ultimately unified by the one nature—all persons are the “one”. Political affairs about “all persons” are reduced to moral problems about “the one” through a “reality-function” (*ti-yong* 体用) ontological model. And in this regard, Ma’s “gathering characteristics together and subsuming them into the nature” shows an idealistic tendency. The “nature” represents the sage governor, and the “characteristics” represents his political deeds. Just as Ma had proposed “subsuming all [things] under heaven into a single person”, here, Ma emphasised that all the political deeds can be understood to be as the sage’s moral practices, which are functions of the nature. According to Ma, it is the principle’s (the nature) controlling these practices that dominated the political world in early China.

While “the Dharma Realm is ultimately unified by the one nature”, the balance between function and reality is to be achieved in personal life rather than in political life. Put in different terms, this balance between “substance and pattern” and “the permanent and the provisional” can and must be achieved by acting in accord with principle. This reflects a difference between Ma and previous Confucian thinkers: for Ma, the principle followed by an ordinary person is not different from the principle of ideal governance. Compared with Zhu Xi and Dong Zhongshu, as discussed in Ma’s writings, the idealistic tendency of Ma’s thought is even more evident.

Both Zhu Xi and Ma Yifu approved the Confucian standpoint of Dong Zhongshu. Comparatively speaking, Ma attached greater importance to Dong’s discourses on political reform. As pointed out above, Ma’s elucidations on the teaching of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* as embodied in the *Analects* were developed from Dong’s explanations of the general spirit of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. The key to understanding Ma’s moralised modifications of Dong’s political ideas is that Ma replaced Dong’s notion of “substance”, which is identified with imperial power, with his own understanding of this notion. Given that Dong’s description of “substance” is “the intent [of the emperor] is substance” (*zhi wei zhi* 志为质), Dong had intended to lay a theoretical foundation for the political activities.³⁹ According to Ma, genuine political reform or revolution should simply be a process of recovering the nature in the sense of personal moral cultivation. This is because the “substance” or the ground of good

³⁹ Cf. *Chunqiu fanlu yizheng*, pp. 27, 70.

governance is nothing other than governance based on personal virtue. It is this moralised character that distinguishes Ma's approach to the interpretation of classics from that of earlier Confucians such as Dong and Zhu.

At the beginning of his *Lectures*, Ma showed readers his moralising approach (studying the classics by focusing on “sincerity, honesty, earnestness and reverence”) and the “Dharma Realm subsumed within one mind” framework (studying the classics by first confirming that “the world is precisely oneself”). In the next section, I will argue that Ma tried to reconstruct the ethics and morals of a “political” order he believed had been recorded in the classics, and through his moralised explanations, the ethics and morals of a monarchical order come to be transformed into the ethics and morals of the virtue-based governance controlled by the way of the Six Arts contained in one's mind-as-reality.

2.2. From the *Classic of Filial Piety* to Ritual Texts and the August Royal Ultimate: Ma's Moralised Explanations of the Classics.

2.2.1. The *Classic of Filial Piety* and the Equivalence between A Sage and An Ordinary Person

In the “Overall Meaning of the *Analects*”, Ma also stated that filial piety is the starting point for various kinds of political action. By referring to a well-known passage in *Mencius*,⁴⁰ and then citing Cheng Yi's 程颐 (1033-1107) statement that “fully realising the nature and understanding one's destiny must be based on filial piety and fraternal duty” (尽性知命必本于孝悌),⁴¹ Ma highlighted that filial piety and fraternal duty serve as the foundations for rites and music. According to him, “filial piety and fraternal duty”

⁴⁰ *Mencius*, 6B.2, *Mengzi zhushu*, p. 321. “To walk slowly, keeping behind his elders, is to perform the part of a younger. To walk quickly and precede his elders, is to violate the duty of a younger brother. Now, is it what a man cannot do – to walk slowly? It is what he does not do. The course of Yao and Shun was simply that of filial piety and fraternal duty. Wear the clothes of Yao, repeat the words of Yao, and do the actions of Yao, and you will just be a Yao.” 徐行后长者谓之弟，疾行先长者谓之不弟。夫徐行者，岂人所不能哉？所不为也。尧舜之道，孝弟而已矣。子服尧之服，诵尧之言，行尧之行，是尧而已矣。 Translated by James Legge.

⁴¹ Cheng Yi, “Mingdao xiansheng xingzhuang” 明道先生行状 (A Biography in Memorial of Mr. Mingdao), *Er Cheng ji*, p. 630. 知尽性至命，必本于孝悌。穷神知化，由通于礼乐。

not only represented the great accomplishments of sages but also are achievable by ordinary persons at all times.⁴²

As the lecture on the *Analects* was an overview of Ma's understanding of classics, following this lecture, Ma immediately turned his attention to the *Classic of Filial Piety*. In "The Main Idea of the *Classic of Filial Piety*", he argued that the importance of filial piety lies in personally experiencing our human virtues of the nature:

If one considers selfish desires to be the root of all matters, then whence does our affection for country and nation, as well as human compassion, arise? The *Classic of Filial Piety* first revealed the inborn nature that is inherent in the relationship between father and son.... Without this knowledge, then one will not know the source of the way of being in accord with the nature and that of the teaching about practising this way,⁴³ and so will fail to take all affairs and all things as phenomena to be loved, held in disdain or attacked. And being ignorant of the norms that should be conformed to, one's understanding will be based completely on nothing more than selfish desires and the escalating sequence of habituated tendencies.... The virtues of the nature are inherently replete and without an iota of fault or affliction — all that is required is a willingness to realise this oneself. Rather than elaborating on names and appearances, it would be better to ascertain directly what is fundamental. Therefore, the explanation of [the solution to selfish desires] in broad terms involves the way of the Six Arts, and in specific terms, the *Classic of Filial Piety*. The goal of the *Classic of Filial Piety* is ultimately to establish the person, and the aim of establishing the person is to continue goodness and realise the nature fully. The sage considers Heaven, Earth and the myriad things to be his person. In realising that there is nothing outside one's person, he is free of Daoist mistakes. In realising that one's person is not illusory, he is free of Buddhist mistakes. In realising that the self ought not be at the service of one's selfish desires, he is free of the influences of all kinds

⁴² Ma Yifu, "Li yue jiao" 礼乐教 (Teachings of Ritual and Music Texts) section of "*Lunyu dayi*", pp. 143, 144. As I pointed out in the introduction, generally Ma treated the teachings of the Six Arts as the teachings of the Confucian classics, namely the Five Classics; the *Book of Music* that Confucius is said to have edited is not extant. Therefore, *li yue* 礼乐 here refers to a rites and music generally, not to a specific classic.

⁴³ "Zhongyong", *Liji zhengyi*, p.1422. 天命之谓性，率性之谓道。

of vulgar and heretical thoughts. The virtue of the nature is confirmed inwardly, and [this confirmation] belongs to knowledge (but it is not perceptual knowledge). Acting in accordance with the way is to carry out, and belongs to practice. While knowledge [of the nature] is the substance of practice, practice is the proof of knowledge. The virtues of the nature are all encompassing, whereas practice is utterly focused. When engaging in practice, knowledge in its entirety is practice, yet there is no characteristic of practice to be found.⁴⁴

The root of the great accomplishments of former kings is not selfish desire, but “the inborn nature that is inherent in the relationship between father and son”, which is revealed in the *Classic of Filial Piety*. Without “revealing” this nature, one will not know how to read the Confucian classics properly or be able to practice the way of the Six Arts appropriately. Therefore, the teaching about dealing with selfish desires, “in broad terms involves the way of the Six Arts, and in specific terms, the *Classic of Filial Piety*”. Although filial piety is not strictly a virtue of the nature, from the perspective of the School of Principle, it is a direct manifestation of humaneness. The teaching about filial piety is thus the most appropriate (*zuiqie* 最切) one,⁴⁵ but this teaching is absent in the Buddhist tradition. Ma commented: “In realising that there is nothing outside one’s person, he is free of Daoist mistakes. In realising that one’s person is not illusory, he is free of Buddhist mistakes”. By emphasising the “non-illusory” character of filial piety, Ma attempted to show that it is in the Confucian classics rather than Buddhist stories that provide one with the most direct and clear guidelines for practice. At the same time, all

⁴⁴ Ma Yifu, “Xushuo” 序说 (The Introduction) of “*Xiaojing dayi*” 孝经大义 (The Main Idea of the *Classic of Filial Piety*), pp. 178-179. 苟以私欲为万事根本，则国家民族之爱，人类同情之心，又何自而生乎？《孝经》始揭父子天性。…此而不知，故于率性之道，修道之教，皆莫知其原，遂以万事万物尽为爱恶攻取之现象，而昧其当然之则，一切知解但依私欲、习气展转增上…吾人性德本自具足，本无纤毫过患，唯在当人自肯体认。与其广陈名相，不若直抉根原，故博说则有六艺，约说则有《孝经》。《孝经》之义终于立身，立身之旨在于继善成性。圣人以天地万物为一身。明身无可外，则无老氏之失；明身非是幻，则无佛氏之失；明身不可私，则一切俗学外道皆不可得而滥也。德性是内证，属知（非闻见之知）。行道是践履，属行。知为行之质，行是知之验。德性至博，而行之则至约。当其行时，全知是行，亦无行相可得。

⁴⁵ Huang Zhen 黄震 (1213-1280) summarised Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi’s relevant comments and made this judgement; Huang Zhen, *Huang shi richao* 黄氏日抄 (Diary of Mr Huang), *Huang Zhen quanji* 黄震全集 (Complete Works of Huang Zhen), vol 1, (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Daxue chubanshe, 2013), p.6.

kind of practices including political activities would be controlled by the morally good principle as the solution to self-desires. This principle is based on moral values in personal life, as cited above, “in broad terms involves the way of the Six Arts, and in specific terms, the Classic of Filial Piety”. As such, Ma’s interpretations of the great deeds recorded in the Confucian classics were inevitably moralised.

Ma’s moralised interpretation, like that of many former Neo-Confucians, was developed from Mencius’s moralised approach to understanding right actions, which includes both political and ethical actions in a broad sense. While Emperor Yao and “the unadorned king” Confucius are equally virtuous according to the *Mencius*, their virtue is also attainable by an ordinary person who practices filial piety as a son. Neo-Confucian thinkers developed new theories of attaining sagehood that were different from those of medieval “Profound Learning” thinkers. For instance, whereas Huang Kan 皇侃 (488-545) “maintained outright that the only sages are those who are born as such”,⁴⁶ Zhu Xi accepted that each person is born with the potential for attaining sagehood. Besides, Neo-Confucians believed that compared with Chan practitioners, their approach to attaining sagehood was more concrete.⁴⁷ Given this, Azuma Jūji pointed out that the Neo-Confucians explored a new approach to “becoming a sage” that was more concrete than simply “a sudden realisation”: by tracing “principles” exhaustively and recognising principle or the nature of the sage, an ordinary person could also become a sage.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ John Makeham, *Transmitters and Creators: Chinese Commentators and Commentaries on the Analects*, (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press Asia Centre, 2003), p. 249.

⁴⁷ Cf. Zhu Xi’s comment: “Accordingly, there are certainly varying depths in the extension of knowledge. How could these [varying depths in the extension of knowledge] rashly be taken to be the same [achievement] as that of Yao and Shun and to be perceived so suddenly? This is tantamount to the Buddhists’ empty talk of “being completely enlightened upon hearing [the Dharma] just once” or “directly entering the realm of the Buddha in one moment of transcendence.” This is not the true undertaking of one [who has entered the] sage’s gateway [i.e., Confucianism], which is to elucidate the good and to make one’s person sincere”. (然则所致之知固有浅深，岂遽以为与尧、舜同者，一旦忽然而见之也哉。此殆释氏一闻千悟、一超直入之虚谈，非圣门明善诚身之实务也。) Translated and cited in John Makeham, “Introduction”, in Makeham ed., *The Buddhist Roots of Zhu Xi's Philosophical Thought*, p. 8.

⁴⁸ Azuma Jūji 吾妻重二, *Zhuzi xue de xin yanjiu* 朱子学的新研究 (New Studies on Master Zhu), translated by Fu Xihong 傅锡洪 etc., (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2017), pp. 123-126. Nevertheless, Gu Jiming also reminded us to recognise “Principle” required a literati to behave in accordance with his social status.

Additionally, medieval “Profound Learning” thinkers such as Wang Bi and Guo Xiang 郭象 (252-312) insisted on the thesis of “governing numerous things with the One”. In this thesis, “numerous things” refers to ordinary persons, and the One refers to the ruler. In the Song Dynasty, the Neo-Confucian approach to “becoming a sage” contributed to the transformation from the “One” to “Principle”.⁴⁹ With this transformation, what genuinely controls the political activities was the morally good principle (the “Principle”) but not any actual ruler (the “One”). In describing the mindset of Confucian literati of the Song Dynasty, Peter Bol argued that to these literati, “the unity of politics and morality would require recognising, first, that they could be distinguished and, second, that authority over politics belonged to those who learned correctly, for they were the ones with moral knowledge”.⁵⁰

Given that the overarching characteristic of the virtues of the nature is humaneness, learning to recognise humaneness is the first step to becoming a sage. If, however, the idea of learning to recognise humaneness is associated with practising filial piety—something that ordinary people are familiar with on a daily basis—this can lead to a theoretical question: Is the filial piety of an ordinary person the same as that of an emperor? In fact, Zhu Xi addressed this problem in the context of discussing the following passage from the *Classic of Filial Piety*: “Of all the creatures in the world, the human being is the most noble. In human conduct there is nothing greater than filial piety; in filial piety there is nothing greater than venerating one’s father; in venerating one’s father there is nothing greater than treating him as a correlate to Heaven. And the Duke of Zhou was able to do this.”⁵¹ Zhu regarded this passage as a later interpolation. To him, the

⁴⁹ Gu Jiming 谷继明, “Cong zhiyi tongzhong dao liyi fenshu 从执一统众到理一分殊” (From “Governing the Numerous Things with the One” to “One Principle Different Manifestations”), *Jimei Daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 集美大学学报(哲学社会科学版), 2014(4), pp. 7-12.

⁵⁰ Peter Kees Bol, *Neo Confucianism in History*, p. 129. Furthermore, as John Makeham observed, “given Zhu’s denial that even those with the greatest potential for achieving sagehood, such as Yan Yuan, were unsuccessful, how meaningful is this goal for ordinary people?”; Makeham, *Transmitters and Creators*, p. 249. In stark contrast, in “The Main Idea of the *Classic of Filial Piety*” Ma Yifu insisted that everyone can attain the virtue of a sage by practising filial piety.

⁵¹ *Xiaojing zhengyi* 孝经正义 (Correct Interpretations of the *Classic of Filial Piety*), (Beijing: Beijing Daxue chubanshe, 1999), p. 28. 天地之性，人为贵。人之行，莫大于孝。孝莫大于严父。严父莫大于配天，则周公其人也。 Translated and cited in Henry Rosemont, Jr. and Roger T. Ames, *The Chinese Classic of Family Reverence: A Philosophical Translation of the Xiaojing*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2009), p. 110.

idea that an ordinary person could act like an emperor or the Duke of Zhou, by treating his father as a correlate of Heaven, was tantamount to evoking rebellious thoughts. So, he deemed this passage not to be from a “genuine classic.”⁵²

Huang Daozhou 黄道周 (1585-1646), a distinguished commentator on the *Classic of Filial Piety* in the Ming Dynasty, argued that the *Classic of Filial Piety* should be understood as a most effective remedy to the moral turpitude of the times. Although his exegetical approach was also as “moralised” as Zhu’s, he was explicitly aware of the political character of the work and deemed the above passage to be “genuine”.⁵³ Huang, however, did not resolve the problem Zhu Xi has noticed. Rather, Huang simply treated “showing reverential awe for one’s father” as equivalent to “showing reverential awe to heaven”. And through practising filial piety, Huang thought that “heaven” here must be equally accessible to the emperor and ordinary people.⁵⁴ With an arguably more radical understanding than that of Zhu Xi, Huang Daozhou’s commentary on the *Classic of Filial Piety* was listed as the main reference book in Ma’s “An Essential Book List for the Comprehensive Study of the Classics”.⁵⁵ Ma appreciated Huang’s clarity and comprehensive approach, although his political views were much more radical than Huang’s:

Given that the Six Arts collectively are teachings based on virtue, and that the *Classic of Filial Piety* is their root, therefore the foregoing account on “the perfect virtue and all-embracing way of conduct” is to elucidate the thesis (“the Six Arts collectively are teachings based on virtue”). Next, the account of the five kinds of filial piety is to discern the functions [of perfect virtue]⁵⁶.... [The

⁵² See Chen Bisheng 陈壁生, *Xiaojing xue shi* 孝经学史 (A History of the Scholarship of the Classic of Filial Piety), (Shanghai: Huadong shifan Daxue chubanshe, 2015), pp.279-303.

⁵³ See Tang Wenming 唐文明, “Zhuzi Xiaojing kanwu xilun 朱子《孝经刊误》析论” (An Analysis of Master Zhu’s *Corrections to the Classic of Filial Piety*), *Yunnan Daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 云南大学学报(社会科学版), 2014(2), pp. 46-47.

⁵⁴ Xu Hui 许卉, “Lun Huang Daozhou de Xiaojing xue sixiang” 论黄道周的《孝经》学思想 (On Huang Daozhou’s Studies of the *Classic of Filial Piety*), *Hebei Daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban)* 河北大学学报(哲学社会科学版), 2019(2), pp. 43-49.

⁵⁵ Ma Yifu, “Tongzhi qunjing bidu zhushu juyao” 通治群经必读诸书举要 (An Essential Book List for the Comprehensive Study of the Classics), pp. 112-113.

⁵⁶ These “five kinds of filial piety” are that of “the emperor as the son of Heaven”, “the hereditary lords”, “the ministers and high officials”, “the lower officials” and “the ordinary people”. See *The Chinese Classic of Family Reverence: A Philosophical*

situation we are born into in] all the countries under heaven is a matter of circumstantial recompense (*bao* 报) and the body [as oneself] is a matter of direct recompense [of one's previous existence]⁵⁷. In fact, because the person is also [subject to] circumstantial recompense, and the mind is [subject to] direct recompense, therefore there is another root within the root. The mind is the root of the body, the virtues are the root of the mind, and filial piety is the root of the virtues.... The filial piety of the son of the Heaven (the sovereign) is precisely the virtue of the sage, and in this respect all people's minds are the same, and it is also that which is intrinsically endowed in human nature. As for the backsliding (*tuizhuan* 退转) that is [due to the effects of] karmic activity, [even] the son of heaven will be levelled to a commoner. [On the other hand], with the accumulation of merit, a commoner can progress to become the son of the Heaven.⁵⁸

Here, Ma used the terms “direct” and “the root of” to underscore the position of filial piety in personal ethics. As a matter of personal ethics, filial piety must be considered as the most fundamental matter not only about personal practices but also in political practices concerning “all the countries under heaven”. Through practising filial piety, Ma stated, “a commoner can progress to become the son of the Heaven”.

Because Heaven ordains the political power of a sovereign, in studying the political institutions recorded in the *Classic of Filial Piety*, Ma naturally came to an explanation of the institutional form of the virtue-based governance: the Hall of Distinction (*Mingtang* 明堂, a type of building for the important sacrificial rituals and

Translation of the Xiaojing, translated by Henry Rosemont, Jr. and Roger T. Ames, pp. 106-108.

⁵⁷ The terms circumstantial recompense (*yibao* 依报) and direct recompense (*zhengbao* 正报) were frequently used in Huayan masters Fazang 法藏 and Chengguan's writings. For an instance, see Fazang, *Huyan jing tanxuan ji*, T1733_35.0427b22. In Buddhist doctrine of rebirth, the former is the world or circumstances one is born into; the latter is the person/mentality one is reborn with.

⁵⁸ Ma Yifu, “Shi wu xiao” 释五孝 (On the Five Kinds of Filial Piety) of “*Xiaojing* dayi”, pp. 192, 197. 已知六艺总为德教，而《孝经》为之本，故说“至德要道”是明宗，次说五孝是辨用...天下国家皆是依报，身是正报。克实言之，则身亦是依报，心乃是正报。故本之中又有本焉。心为身之本，德为心之本，孝又为德之本...天子之孝即圣人之德也，是人心之所同然，人性之所本具。因业有退转，则天子夷于庶人；德有积累，则庶人可进于天子。

political activities associated with this power), which links the sovereign to Heaven. Ma was particularly determined to explain all morally appropriate political actions as expressions of the virtues of human nature. In holding such an extreme view, as indicated in the previous chapter, Ma was perhaps unique among Confucians.⁵⁹ When political actions appear contrary to the virtues of the nature, Ma critiques the individuals who took those actions. In terms of the concepts of intrinsic reality (*ti* 体), characteristic (*xiang* 相), and function (*yong* 用) in the *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith*,⁶⁰ the power centre of the sovereign – the Hall of Distinction – is also a characteristic (*xiang* 相) of virtue rather than its original role in the imperial power of the Zhou dynasty.⁶¹ This

⁵⁹ Based on his metaphysical framework, Ma's claim that "an ordinary person can progress to become the son of the Heaven due to his virtue" here should not be considered as a simple restatement of the idea of the "mandate of Heaven" (*tianming* 天命), or the influential discourse of "The Transformative Cycle of the Five Phases" (*wude zhongshi shuo* 五德终始) in traditional China.

⁶⁰ "In the *Treatise*, intrinsic reality refers to the quality of something being so of itself, without relying on anything more fundamental be what it is. As one of the three Greats it refers to the One Mind and to suchness. It can be experienced only through its characteristics and its functions. With the mind as suchness, the intrinsic reality of the mind of sentient beings is realised. This intrinsic reality, also known as the One Mind, is the focus of Mahāyāna as a teaching. When suchness adapts to and accords with phenomenal reality, the functioning of the One Mind is revealed. In other words, suchness (*ti*) is realised through phenomenal arising and ceasing (*xiang, yong*)." See John Makeham, "Introduction", in *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith*, edited and translated by John Jorgensen, Dan Lusthaus, John Makeham, and Mark Strange, (NY: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 62.

⁶¹ The chapter "Governance of the Sages" says: "Of old, the Duke of Zhou performed the suburban sacrifice on the outskirts of the capital to the first ancestor of the Zhou Dynasty, Hou Ji, to treat him as a correlate of Heaven, and in the Hall of Distinction he performed the ancestral sacrifice to his father, King Wen, to treat him as a correlate of the Supreme Deity (*Shangdi*). It was for this reason that all of the nobility within the four seas came each according to his office to assist in the sacrifices. How then could there be something in the excellence of the sages that surpasses filial piety!" (昔者，周公郊祀后稷以配天，宗祀文王于明堂，以配上帝。是以四海之内，各以其职来祭。夫圣人之德，又何以加于孝乎！) Translated and cited in Henry Rosemont, Jr. and Roger T. Ames, *The Chinese Classic of Family Reverence: A Philosophical Translation of the Xiaojing*, p. 110, mod. *Ming Tang*, the "Bright Hall" or the "Hall of Distinction", was "a type of building which is a miniature model of the cosmos, a microcosm, built as a place to communicate with the supreme deity, and it serves as a symbol of the power of the state, and as a setting for the important sacrificial rituals and political activities associated with this power". And in the Han dynasty, *Ming Tang* "became a classical term. It was accepted by traditional Chinese scholars as a generic term for this type of buildings". See Hwang Ming-chorng, *Ming-tang: Cosmology Political Order and Monuments in Early China*, PhD thesis, Harvard University, 1998, pp. 7-9.

interpretation is rooted in the aforementioned method of “gathering characteristics together and subsume them into the nature”:

We already know that interconnecting the Three Generative Forces (Heaven, Earth, Humans)⁶² is to subsume functions into intrinsic reality, which is to say, it is to bring [all three] together to reveal the greatness of intrinsic reality [i.e. the virtues of the nature]. The following chapter, “Governing with Filial Piety”, again incorporates the aforementioned five kinds of filial piety and reveals the greatness of the functions of this reality. The chapter after that, “Governance of the Sages”, again incorporates the Three Generative Forces and exhibits the greatness of the characteristics of this reality. The chapter before these two, “The Three Generative Forces,” provides a general account, and these two chapters deal with the specifics. [So,] the purport of the text can be known by reading the latter two chapters and the chapter before them intratextually. The “Governance of the Sages” chapter focuses on elucidating the meaning of [the son’s treating his father as if he were] the correlate to Heaven [in ceremonies] making offerings to the Supreme Deity (*Di* 帝). [These three chapters] explain that greatness has three levels⁶³, culminating in the son’s treating his father as a correlate to Heaven. The purpose of expounding the characteristics is in order to reveal intrinsic reality This shows that Heaven’s model is contained within virtue as model; that the Human way is not separate from the way of Heaven; and that this is why the Hall of Distinction was established. The Hall of Distinction is the fundamental great model [established by] the sages. This model is that of the fundamental and great significance of teachings based on virtue. All ritual systems are gathered together and contained therein. In

⁶² “Indeed, filial piety is the constancy of the Heavenly cycles, the appropriate responsiveness (*yi*) of the Earth, and the proper conduct of the people. It is the constant workings of Heaven and the Earth that the people model themselves upon. Taking the illumination (*ming*) of Heaven as their model and making the most of the Earth’s resources, they bring the empire into accord (*shun*).” (夫孝，天之经也，地之义也，民之行也。天地之经，而民是则之。则天之明，因地之利，以顺天下。) Translated and cited in Henry Rosemont, Jr. and Roger T. Ames, *The Chinese Classic of Family Reverence: A Philosophical Translation of the Xiaojing*, p. 108, mod.

⁶³ As cited previously, “In human conduct there is nothing greater than filial piety; in filial piety there is nothing greater than venerating one’s father; in venerating one’s father there is nothing greater than treating him as a correlate to Heaven.”

explaining the significance of the Hall of Distinction, previous Confucians had mostly provided detailed accounts of institutions but provided little detail on its significance. It is difficult to provide an exhaustive account in general terms, but the key points can be understood from the foregoing.⁶⁴

In correlating filial piety with “Three Generative Forces”, Ma purports to show that practising filial piety is based on the virtue of the nature. Accordingly, practising filial piety itself is the function of the nature and practising through a “son’s treating his father as a correlate to Heaven” is the characteristic of the nature. In the *Treatise of Awakening Mahāyāna Faith*, intrinsic reality could be “experienced only through its characteristics and its functions”. In Ma’s words, the virtue of the nature could be recognised only through practising filial piety. Furthermore, while virtue here is the intrinsic reality of governance, the activities of the ruler are functions, and the Hall of Distinction acts as the characteristic of virtue. This is why Ma said, “The purpose of expounding the characteristics is in order to reveal intrinsic reality”, and to clarify the relationship between the Hall of Distinction and virtue was to provide an account of the significance of the Hall of Distinction. By treating his father as a correlate to Heaven (practising filial piety as a son) in the Hall of Distinction, the ruler laid the foundation for ideal governance. According to Ma, that foundation was the sage’s virtue, and this is why he said, “Heaven’s model is contained within virtue as model”: the basis of ideal governance is precisely the virtue of the nature. This fact is manifested in the Hall of Distinction where the sage practises filial piety towards the world he governs.

The Hall of Distinction represents the filial piety practised by the ruler. In terms of the *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith*, characteristics and function both depend on intrinsic reality. According to Ma’s elucidations of the meaning of this institute, a particular characteristic acts as a bridge between intrinsic reality and a particular function in the phenomenal world. Just as the dharma body of a Buddha (intrinsic reality) can be

⁶⁴ Ma Yifu, “Shi mingtang” 释明堂 (On the Hall of Distinction) of “*Xiaojing dayi*”, pp. 206-207, 208-209. 已知通贯三才是摄用归体，即总显体大，以下《孝治章》又摄前五孝，显此即体之用大，《圣治章》复摄三才，显此即体之相大。《三才章》为总说，此二章为别说，前后相望，文义可知。而《圣治章》特出配天飨帝义，说大有三重，极于配天，是说相，即以显体也...此显天法即寓于德法，人道不离于天道，明堂之所由立也。明堂是圣人根本大法，即德教之根本大义，一切礼制，无不统摄于此。先儒说明堂者，多详于制度而略于义，广说难尽，举此可以识其要矣。

recognised as the recompense body (characteristic) in the phenomenal world,⁶⁵ the great virtue of the sage will be recognised through the Hall of Distinction in political life. At the same time, functions of the sage's virtue are the sage's political activities, which are essentially not different from practising filial piety. As for the Hall, it represents the practise of filial piety, which is something that all ordinary people are innately endowed with the capacity to realise. In Ma's words: "in this respect all people's minds are the same, and it is also that which is intrinsically endowed in human nature". As such, on Ma's understanding, practising filial piety is a general form of acting in accordance with the Way and this form is widely suited to all kinds of sentient beings (*qunji* 群机) — just like every ordinary Buddhist can practice chanting dhāraṇī (*tuo-luo-ni* 陀罗尼; incantations).⁶⁶ To Ma, The Hall of Distinction represents "Heaven" but not the "Duke of Zhou" or other supreme authorities in the mundane world. As the hierarchical distinction between the sovereign and the ordinary person becomes dissolved in this religious dimension of filial piety, in terms of "intrinsic reality and function", the "governing activities with [five kinds of] filial piety" (function) of the sage is subtly equated with the "practising filial piety as a son" (function) of ordinary people.

2.2.2. The *Book of Rites* and the Equivalence between A King and A Gentleman

How did Ma explain this unusual "equation" of political deeds and moral practices? Practising the way of filial piety is simply a starting point for "moral governance" or governance by virtue; the development of this governance requires further investigation. I begin this by considering Ma's interpretations of the *Book of Odes* and the *Book of Rites*. In these interpretations, Ma focused on the "Kongzi xianju" 孔子闲居 (Confucius at Home at Leisure) chapter and the "Zhongni yanju" 仲尼燕居 (Confucius at Home at Ease) chapter of the *Book of Rites*. "Confucius at Home at Leisure" involves a dialogue between Confucius and his disciple Zixia 子夏 (507-420BC), which begins with the latter asking Confucius about what qualifies one to be considered a good ruler (the parent of the people). Confucius answers by stating that such a ruler is one who comprehends the

⁶⁵ See *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith*, edited and translated by John Jorgensen, Dan Lusthaus, John Makeham, and Mark Strange, p. 62.

⁶⁶ Ma Yifu, "Shi zhide yaodao" 释至德要道 (Explaining the Key Path to Perfect Virtue) of "*Xiaojing dayi*", pp. 186.

source of rites and music (political activities) and is able to achieve the “five presences” (*wuzhi* 五至) and widely practice the “three absences” (*sanwu* 三无)⁶⁷ throughout the world. The rest of the dialogue is devoted to elaborating how rites and music serve to guide human affections in a Confucian framework based on the “sensitive responsiveness” a sovereign has towards his people. Then, Ma argued, the *Odes* underscores that it is the ruler's virtue that is important and not his position:

[In the *Odes*], the so called “happy and courteous gentleman (sovereign)” refers only to the virtue of the sovereign, whereas the phrase “[he is] the parent of the people” refers to the position of the sovereign.⁶⁸ The “Great Plan” says, “The Son of Heaven is the parent of the people, and so becomes the sovereign of all under Heaven”.⁶⁹ Clearly, this is referring to the position [of the sovereign]. When Confucius answered, “[The parent of the people] must penetrate to the source of rites and music, attend to the five presences [entailing the matching of appropriate ritual practices with the sovereign’s intents] and practice the three

⁶⁷ Scott Cook, “Confucius in Excavated Warring States Manuscripts”, in Paul R. Goldin edit., *A Concise Companion to Confucius*, (NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2017), p. 38. According to Cook, “Confucius explains that the “ ‘five attainments’ entail the matching of things with intents, intents with their appropriate rituals, rituals with their appropriate musical expression, and musical expression with the sentiments of sorrow it serves to engender — sorrow and happiness ultimately giving rise to one another in turn. The vaguely worded statement suggests a typical Confucian program in which ritual and music serve to guide human affections in their inevitable reactions to things and events, keeping them in balance so as not to let the pendulum of emotions swing too far in either direction while still providing a proper outlet for natural human sentiments....As for the ‘three absences’, these are the ‘music of no sounds’ (*wu sheng zhi yue* 无声之乐), ‘ritual of no bodily deportment’ (*wu ti zhi li* 无体之礼), and ‘mourning of no apparel’ (*wu fu zhi sang* 无服之丧) – miraculous states wherein one has embodied the essence of these three practices so thoroughly that their effects ‘fill the four seas’ without ever being seen or heard”.

⁶⁸ “Kongzi xianju” 孔子闲居 (Confucius at Home at Leisure), *Liji zhengyi*, p.1392. 诗云：“岂弟君子，民之父母。何如斯可谓民之父母矣？” And “Jiong zhao” 洞酌 (Take the Water from a Distance), *Maoshi zhengyi* 毛诗正义 (Correct Interpretations of the *Book of Odes* Based on Mao’s Version), p. 1124. 岂弟君子，民之父母。 For a recent explanation of “Confucius at Home at Leisure”, see Matthias L. Richter, *The Embodied Text: Establishing Textual Identity in Early Chinese Manuscripts*, (Leiden: Brill, 2013), pp. 127-133.

⁶⁹ “Hongfan” 洪范 (The Great Plan), *Shangshu zhengyi* 尚书正义 (Correct Interpretations of the *Book of Documents*), (Beijing: Beijing Daxue chubanshe, 1999), p. 312.

absences [as miraculous manifestations of sovereign's intents]⁷⁰ he was praising only the virtue of the sovereign.... The reason the former sovereigns could be of one mind with the people and act in the way of proper governance is simply because they were attentive to that which arouses the people.... This is the sovereign's virtue of humaneness and is also the intrinsic reality of the teaching of the *Odes*.⁷¹

By introducing concepts of “the five presences” and “the three absences”, Ma sought to explain that the source of good governance, “sensitive responsiveness”, lies in “the former sovereigns being attentive to that which arouses the people”. As Scott Cook notes, these two concepts are used to describe a noble man's solemnity (*zhuang* 庄), awesomeness (*wei* 威) and trustworthiness (*xin* 信).⁷² Evidently, Ma's work here is to explore the miraculous manifestations of a noble man's nature through his “sensitive responsiveness”. For Ma, being attentive to that which arouses the people reflects the capacity for “sensitive responsiveness” that a sovereign has towards his people. He described this capacity as “the sovereign's virtue of humaneness”, the intrinsic reality of ideal governance. In this sense, Confucius “was praising only the virtue of the sovereign”

⁷⁰ For a brief account of historical background of these two terms, see Pang Pu 庞朴, “Huashuo ‘wuzhi sanwu’” 话说“五至三无” (On “Five Presences and Three Absences”), *Wenshizhe* 文史哲, 2004 (1), pp. 71-76.

⁷¹ Ma Yifu, “Zong xian jun de” 总显君德 (On the General Manifestation of the Virtue of the Sovereign) of “‘Kongzi’ xianju shiyi” 孔子闲居释义 (On Meaning of the Confucius at Home at Leisure Chapter from the *Book of Rites*) of “*Shi jiao xulun*” 诗教绪论 (Prolegomena to the Teaching of the *Odes*), pp. 226-227, 227. 今言“岂弟君子”唯是君德, “民之父母”则为君位。《洪范》曰“天子作民父母, 以为天下王”, 此明是表位; 而孔子答言“必达于礼乐之原, 以致五至而行三无”, 则唯称其德...先王之所以同民心而出治道者, 在慎其所感而已...此君德之仁, 即《诗》教之体也。

⁷² Scott Cook, “Confucius in Excavated Warring States Manuscripts”, in Paul R. Goldin edit., *A Concise Companion to Confucius*, pp. 38-39. “The idea (three absences) appears to parallel one seen often in Confucian texts of the period, such as in the opening passage of the “Biao ji” 表记 chapter of the *Li ji*, wherein Confucius describes the noble man as one who “is solemn without airs, awesome without severity, and trusted without speaking”. In ‘Min zhi fu mu’ (“Kong Zi xian ju”), however, the notion is described in the most mystical of terms, as Confucius goes on to elaborate only by citing, at Zixia's request, brief lines from the *Odes* that are each somehow thought to encapsulate one of these three states, and then finally by invoking a sequence of ‘five presences’, in which different stages of attainment in the ‘three absences’ are arcanelly described in a sequence of rhymed triplets, the groupings of which would appear to owe more to the rhyme itself than to any discernible sense of logical order.”

and not the sovereign's position as the parent of the people. More concretely, rather than the appropriate ritual practices of a sovereign, what the *Book of Odes* teaches us is more about the "sensitive responsiveness" that is closely related with the virtue of humaneness — the sovereign's intents.

The description, "the parent of the people", is from the ode, "Jiong Zhuo" 洞酌 (Take the Water from a Distance), cited in the "Confucius at Home at Leisure". This ode was written in praise of the greatness of the ruler, and belonged to the "Da Ya" 大雅 (Greater Odes of the Kingdom) section of the *Book of Odes*. If practising the way of filial piety is the starting point for acting in accordance with the way of humaneness, then studying the *Odes* is the starting point for recognising this way theoretically. Here, "theoretically" does not mean that the teaching of the *Odes* is abstract; rather it means that learning the *Odes* is to treat the Six Arts as a knowledge system based on humaneness inherent in the nature. Ma thus claimed: Performing humaneness must begin with practising filial piety, while recognising the humaneness must begin with learning the *Odes*.⁷³

Similarly, in Ma's lectures on the *Classic of Filial Piety*, we can find his emphasis on filial piety as the starting point for establishing virtue-based governance. And in expounding the *Odes*, instead of explaining the relationship between a sage's virtue (manifests as filial piety) and the ideal governance, Ma turned to the great functions of this virtue. In his elucidation of "Confucius at Home at Leisure", centring on the "five arrivals" and the "three absences", Ma explained the sage's political activities as functions of his virtue:

The word "sage" is [used to describe] the greatness of the intrinsic reality [of the virtue-based governance]; the word "king (sovereign)" is [used to describe] the greatness of functions; the word "five presences" is [used to describe] the greatness of characteristics.... The five presences culminate with the attainment of [the expression of] sorrow [through music], and with the attainment of sorrow there will be the three absences. "Absence" does not mean a vacuous emptiness; rather it is real. Quiescent, yet constantly sensitive, therefore it is called presence; sensitive, yet constantly quiescent, therefore it is called absence....

⁷³ Ma Yifu, "Xushuo" 序说 (Introduction) of "*Shi jiao xulun*", pp. 223.

Now, if it is the mind [with the characteristics of] the three absences that animates one's inner qualities, then the great functions that result from the five arisings (*wuqi* 五起)⁷⁴ [of the teaching of the *Odes*] will be expressed externally.... Those who are imbued with these virtues are the three kings.⁷⁵ The gentleman is a label for the causal stage [of the practice of self-cultivation] (*yindi* 因地),⁷⁶ whereas the “three kings” is a term for the realisation stage (*guodi* 果地).⁷⁷ In order to embrace the realisation within the cause (*yueyin gaiguo* 约因该果),⁷⁸ one should extrapolate to the ultimate point effected by the

⁷⁴ “Kongzi xianju”, *Liji zhengyi*, p.1394. “Five arisings” is a notion describing five sets of functions of “three absences”. These descriptions are also given by Confucius himself:

“Music of no sound: Things and intention are not opposed.
Rites of no embodiment: My dignified demeanor has always been steady.
Mourning of no garb: Inner empathy and sincere grief.

Music of no sound: Pervading all within the Four Quarters.
Rites of no embodiment: Daily assemble and monthly assist.
Mourning of no garb: Pure virtue uniformly bright.

Music of no sound: Extend it to future generations.
Rites of no embodiment: Pervading all within the Four Seas.
Mourning of no garb: Act as a parent to the people.

Music of no sound: Things and [intention] are attained.
Rites of no embodiment: This dignified demeanor is magnificent.
Mourning of no garb: Extend it over the Four Territories.

Music of no sound: Things and intention are satisfied.
Rites of no embodiment: Superiors and subordinates are in harmony and unified.
Mourning of no garb: Employ it to support the Myriad States.”

Translated and cited in Matthias L. Richter, *The Embodied Text*, pp. 52-54, mod.

⁷⁵ In Zheng Xuan's commentary, “three kings” refers to the Great Yu of Xia Dynasty, Emperor Tang of Shang Dynasty and King Wen of Zhou Dynasty. See “Kongzi xianju”, *Liji zhengyi*, p. 1395.

⁷⁶ *Zhong ahan jing* 中阿含经 (*Madhyamāgama*; Middle Length Āgama Sūtras), T0026_01.0647b24. The term “*yindi*”, literally “causal stage”, means the stage where a practitioner works like a farmer working in the field. The work done at this stage will become the “cause” of uncountable good dharmas in the future.

⁷⁷ *Apidamo dapiposha lun* 阿毘达磨大毘婆沙论 (*Abhidharma-mahā-vibhāṣā-sāstra*; Treatise of the Great Commentary on the Abhidharma), T1545_27.0240a19. The term “*guodi*”, literally “fruition stage”, means the stage where a practitioner has attained a specific kind of “fruition” that results from a specific kind of cultivation.

⁷⁸ Chengguan, *Dafangguang fo huayan jing suishu yanyi chao* 大方广佛华严经随疏演义钞 (Collected Explanations of Elucidation of the *Flower Garland Sutra*), T1736_36.0003b17. Chengguan comments: “Just at the time of the initial arousal of the

king's transformations [that will be brought about in the wake of the gentleman's achievements]. Hence, this is what prompted [Zixia] separately to ask about "forming a triad with Heaven and Earth" (*can yu tiandi* 参于天地)⁷⁹. The reason I speak of transformation rather than [just] accomplishments is that accomplishments refer especially to the manifest aspects of [the gentlemen's] actions, whereas transformation solely esteems the god-like quality of sensitive responsiveness, that is, instruction without the use of speech, accomplishment without effort. Much less are there any crude traces to be found. Devoid of any marks, this is what is called transformation.⁸⁰

In his interpretations on "Confucius at Home at Leisure", Ma attempted to show that the *Odes* seeks to convey the teaching of "embracing the realisation within the cause". "Cause" refers to the virtue of the sage. In the above passage, through his interpretation of the concepts of the "five presences", "three absences" and "five arisings" Ma attempts to show how political accomplishments can be understood as manifestations of the virtue of

determination for enlightenment, one achieves correct awakening. This is called embracing the realisation within the cause." (初发心时便成正觉，因该果也。) Like his successor Zongmi (see Gregory, "Sudden Enlightenment Followed by Gradual Cultivation: Tsung-mi's Analysis of Mind", in Gregory edit., *Sudden and Gradual: Approaches to Enlightenment in Chinese Thought*, pp. 297-298), Chengguan's comment is evidently relevant to the concept "inherent awakening" (*benjue* 本觉) in the *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith*. See *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith*, edited and translated by John Jorgensen, Dan Lusthaus, John Makeham, and Mark Strange, p. 72. See also Zhang Wenliang 张文良, "Chengguan yu *Dasheng qixin lun*" 澄观与《大乘起信论》 (Chengguan and the *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith*), in *Bijiao jingxue* 比较经学, 2014(3), pp. 175-180. Ma introduced this phrase (embracing the realisation within the cause) in order to highlight the non-difference between an ordinary person and a king with respect to virtue.

⁷⁹ For a full translation of Zixia's question, see Matthias L. Richter, *The Embodied Text*, p. 166. Zixia asked, "As for 'the virtue of the Three Kings forming a triad with Heaven and Earth,' I make bold to ask: What must (this virtue) be like such that it can properly be said to 'form a triad with Heaven and Earth?'"

⁸⁰ Ma Yifu, "Ming deyong" 明德用 (Explaining the Function of Virtue) and "Tan dehua" 叹德化 (Eulogising the Influences of the Virtue) of "Kongzi xianju shiyi" of "*Shi jiao xulun*", pp. 231-232, 232, 235-236, 241. 圣是体大，王是用大，五至是相大...五至极于哀至，哀至则起三无。“无”非虚无，乃是实相。寂而常感，故谓之至；感而常寂，故谓之无...今就三无心行内蕴，则有五起大用外发...具此德者，三王其人也。君子是因地之目，三王则是果地之号，约因以该果，当推其功化之极，故别起“参于天地”之问也。不言功而言化者，功犹指其业用之著，化则唯称感应之神，所谓不言之教、无功之功，更无粗迹可寻，泯然无相，斯之谓化。

a gentleman. According to Ma, in the state of being “quiescent yet constantly sensitive; sensitive yet constantly quiescent”, both the “five presences” and the “three absences” are characteristics of “sensitive responsiveness” based on the sage’s virtue of humaneness. Additionally, as indicated in Ma’s use of “to embrace the realisation within the cause”, he implicitly adopted the “inherent awakening” concept from Chengguan. In doing so, he sought to highlight the common virtue shared by a king and a gentleman. The person who possesses this virtue, according to Ma, was the sage. Although a person possesses the sage’s virtue that could be the intrinsic reality of the ideal governance which is virtue-based, it is also possible that this person is not necessarily a king but a gentleman. Given this fact, Ma tried to show that, the intrinsic reality of the sage-king’s governance is the virtue, while the king’s accomplishments were just the functions. Instead of the concrete accomplishments, therefore, the “transformation” became the better word in describing such a virtue-based governance. Ma used the terms “five presences”, “three absences” and “five arisings” in explaining the transformation of the king’s governance. And because the concrete political deeds were interpreted as the “instruction without the use of speech, accomplishment without effort”, Ma’s moralised explanations of the classics appear very idealistic.

To a large extent, Ma’s “Prolegomena to the Teaching of Ritual Texts” reiterates what had been presented in “Prolegomena to the Teaching of the *Odes*” above: the “reality-function” (*ti-yong* 体用) relationship between the virtue and the sage-king’s governance. In Ma’s interpretations, the teaching of ritual texts provides detailed elaborations on “practices” (*suoxing* 所行), while the teaching of the *Odes* focuses on “intent” (*suozhi* 所志).⁸¹ This means that the former will put more emphasis on the practical issues. This difference between Ma’s explanations of the *Odes* and of ritual texts is reflected in the different divisions of those texts, which are marked by Ma’s subtitles. There are two individual sections in his lecture on the teaching of ritual texts: “Reflections on error” (*jianguo* 简过) and “Reflections on disorder” (*jianluan* 简乱). These two sections were written to interpret Confucius’s critiques of actions that violate ritual propriety. When compared with Ma’s lectures on the teaching of the *Odes*, a subtle difference can be found: there is a greater emphasis on the normativity of the way of the Six Arts in Ma’s lecture on the teaching of ritual texts. He wrote, “when principle and

⁸¹ Ma Yifu, “Xulun” 序论 (Introduction) of “*Li jiao xulun*” 礼教绪论 (The Prolegomena of the Teaching of Ritual Texts), p. 248.

phenomena are non-dual, this is called governance” (理事不二之谓治); “when principle and phenomena mutually obstruct, this is called error” (理事相违之谓过); “when affairs have lost their principle, this is called disorder” (事失其理之谓乱). After these judgements, Ma paraphrased Mencius’ description of Emperor Shun as a son of great filial piety,⁸² and he boldly claimed that: “occupying the place of a ruler of the world is not different from living in the channelled fields [as a commoner]” (南面以临天下与在畎亩之中无以异也).⁸³

After these explorations made in the lecture of ritual texts, Ma next had to address the question of how personal virtues can give rise to political normativity:⁸⁴

Investigating the source giving rise to punishment, it is [found to be] due to contravening the virtues [as models of the sage’s governance]. “Heaven punishes those who commit crimes”;⁸⁵ they are punished because of what they have committed and not because punishment has been [subjectively] applied [by others]. The sage deals with things as things, and he does not impose his personal will on anything, therefore, [the sage] is known as [the one who] respectfully metes out Heaven’s punishment. The virtuous, however, attain virtue by themselves, and those who are punished actually punish themselves.... The Three Generative Forces are where the import of the great *Change* lies, and the five kinds of filial piety are where the significance of the *Spring and Autumn* lies.... In talking about virtue, this is what the *Change* [refers to] as realising the

⁸² Mencius, 5A.1, “Mengzi Zhushu”, pp. 242-244.

⁸³ Ma Yifu, “Xian bian yi” 显遍义 (On the Meaning of Pervasiveness [of the Teaching]), “Xian zhong yi” 显中义 (On the Meaning of Balance), “Yuan zhi” 原治 (Inquiry Concerning Governance) and “Yuan zheng” 原政 (An Inquiry Concerning Politics) in “‘Zhongni yanju’ shiyi” 仲尼燕居释义 (Explanations of the “Confucius at Home at Ease” chapter from the *Book of Rites*), pp. 259, 266, 266-267.

⁸⁴ Ma had already begun to deal with this issue when he addressed a more concrete problem in the preceding lecture on the *Classic of Filial Piety*: in a virtue-based ideal of governance, how could normativity be maintained when error and disorder occur?

⁸⁵ “Gaoyao Mo” 皋陶谟 (The Counsels of Gaoyao), *Shangshu zhengyi*, p. 108. In contravening virtues as models, one may contravene one or two certain kinds of virtues presented in the last chapter, such as humaneness (to act in an inhumane way) or appropriateness (to act in an inappropriate way). Therefore, I understand *bei de* 悖德 (contravening virtue) to mean *bei defa* 悖德法 (contravening the virtues as models).

nature fully; in talking about punishment, this is what the *Spring and Autumn* [refers to in] as rectifying names.⁸⁶

Ma's understanding of the virtue-based political normativity brought about his moralised explanations of punishment in the classics. In the ideal governance where intrinsic reality and its functions are tightly integrated, offenders "are punished because of what they have committed and not because punishment has been [subjectively] applied by others". As the maintenance of political normativity is "objective" rather than "arbitrarily arranged" by others' will, Ma thus commented: "The virtuous... attain virtue by themselves, and those who are punished actually punish themselves", and the ruler "does not impose his personal will on anything". If the *Change* talked about the virtue itself and "realising the nature fully", paraphrased from Ma's words above, the *Spring and Autumn* talked about the virtue-based political normativity. Except some parts of the "Prolegomena to the Teaching of Ritual Texts" (like what cited above), the vast majority of Ma's *Lectures* focus on the former point. In the "Concise Meaning of the 'Great Plan'", Ma further demonstrated the relationship between "realising the nature fully" and the ideal governance.

2.2.3. The "Great Plan" and the Virtue-based Governance

When a ruler acts as a sage in the classics, he personifies impartial Heavenly principle. If we take the long-rooted tradition of "original goodness" in Confucianism into consideration,⁸⁷ the goal of punishment is a kind of "rectificationism".⁸⁸ Unlike Dong

⁸⁶ Ma Yifu, "Yuan xing" 原刑 (An Inquiry Concerning the Essence of the Punishment) of "Xiaojing dayi", pp. 216, 219. 原刑之所生，由于悖德。“天讨有罪”，咸其自取，非人所加。圣人因物付物，无所措心，故谓龚行天罚。然则德者自得，刑实自刑也...三才，《大易》之旨也，五孝，《春秋》之义也...言德，则是《易》之尽性也；言刑，则是《春秋》之正名也。

⁸⁷ Mencius might be the earliest representative of this tradition. An important aspect of Mencius's claim that human nature is good is that humans have a tendency to become good if raised in an environment that is healthy for them. See Bryan Van Norden, "Mencius", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2012 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/mencius/#GoodHumanNature>>.

⁸⁸ I appropriate this term from the legal theories of German Idealism. In this great intellectual tradition, its thinkers argue that the aim of punishment is to bring the one

Zhongshu or Zhu Xi,⁸⁹ for Ma, the only foundation for the legitimacy of governance is virtue itself. In a state “governed” by a sage, all transformative influences effected by the sage rely on each ordinary person’s spontaneous actions based on the nature, such that the virtuous realise virtue by themselves, and those who are punished actually punish themselves. Given that all political activities are manifestations of the virtues of the nature of a sage, the function of a sage is to enable the nature of all things to be fully realised (*jin wu zhi zhi xing* 尽物之性), and to enable other people to realise their nature fully (*jin ren zhi xing* 尽人之性) under his governance.⁹⁰ Ma’s elucidation of governance in the “Great Plan” is an explication of this ideal governance.

The “Great Plan” chapter is an independent text from the *Book of Documents*. This text “consists of nine sections, or fields, which together were intended to provide a comprehensive guide to harmonising government administration with the cosmos, and also to attribute anomalies in the natural world to disorder in the political realm”.⁹¹ Influenced by the “Five Phases” system that came into use during the Warring States period⁹² and the “principle-vital stuff” model constructed by early Neo-Confucians,⁹³ thinkers living in the Han Dynasty and the Song Dynasty, respectively, interpreted this chapter through different approaches. By Song times, traditional correlative theory — the use of correlative frameworks to determine the causes of disasters, and the claim that such

punished back into the community, because punishment serves as the negation of the “negation of virtue”. Retribution is essentially a tool of the rectification project. See Jean-Christophe Merle, *German Idealism and the Concept of Punishment*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 187-190. Ma and many other Confucians believed that an ideal community and its order are vouchsafed by Heaven. However, when confronted with the ideas of evolutionism in the late nineteenth century, this belief was brought into crisis. See Su Jilang 苏基朗, “Youfa wutian?” 有法无天 (Law Without Heaven?), *Qinghua faxue* 清华法学, 2012(5), pp. 128-142.

⁸⁹ In the sense of “restricting the emperor’s power”, there is a development from Dong to Zhu to Ma. Like Ma, Zhu Xi also regarded the concept “August Royal Ultimate” as the core of the “Great Plan”, but Zhu’s aim was to restrict the emperor’s power rather than to replace this power by “virtue” as Ma has done in the passage cited above. See Wang Guanghui 王光辉, *Sandai ke fu* 三代可复 (The Three Dynasties Can be Recovered), (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2018.), pp. 87-94.

⁹⁰ Ma Yifu, “Shi bazheng zhi mu” 释八政之目 (Explaining the List of Eight Aspects of Governance) in “‘Hongfan’ yueyi” 洪范约义 (The Concise Meaning of the “Great Plan”), p. 291.

⁹¹ Douglas Edward Skonicki, *Cosmos, State and Society: Song Dynasty Arguments Concerning the Creation of Political Order*, PhD thesis, Harvard University, 2007, p. 39.

⁹² Wang Aihe, *Cosmology and Political Culture in Early China*, (NY: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 137-138.

⁹³ Skonicki, *Cosmos, State and Society*, pp. 637-638.

disasters were tied to political behaviour — was discarded.⁹⁴ Ma's moralised interpretation shows us an attempt to reinterpret natural disasters within his nature-based framework:

Now, the reason it can be said that the “Great Plan” is a book for realising the nature fully, and which was transmitted by Jizi 箕子,⁹⁵ is probably because the way of Emperors Shun and Yu, as well as the significance of the accounts of former kings' cultivation of virtue and practise of benevolence, are all contained therein. One must first know that the August Royal Ultimate is the external representation of the virtues of the nature;⁹⁶ only then can one know that political institutions are all Heaven's work,⁹⁷ and are not what could be created by personal wisdom. If one knows that [virtue] is inseparable from daily actions, then one knows that there is order to each of the myriad things and [this order] cannot be disturbed [even] by strong powers. If one knows that both the Emperor and Heaven are the names of the one nature, then one knows that [what is Heavenly] bestowed or conferred is different from a [merely] auspicious sign. If one knows that calamitous and propitious events are brought about by [being bestowed by one nature's] grace or by contravening [the one nature], then one will know that both good fortune and [its transforming into misfortune] on reaching its extreme are both due to one's choices.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Skonicki, *Cosmos, State and Society*, pp. 641-643.

⁹⁵ Jizi was a virtuous relative of the last king (King Zhou) of the Shang dynasty, who was punished for remonstrating with the tyrant King Zhou. In the “Great Plan,” King Wu of the Zhou Dynasty asks Jizi how heaven stabilised and cared for the people.

⁹⁶ A basic reference book for Ma's interpretations on the “Great Plan” and the notion “August Royal Ultimate” is Cai Chen's 蔡沉 (1167-1230) *Shu jizhuan* 书集传 (Collected Annotations of the *Book of Documents*), which largely reflects teachings Cai received from Zhu Xi. Cf. Cai, *Shu jizhuan*, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2018), pp. 161-172.

⁹⁷ “Gaoyao mo”, *Shangshu zhengyi*, p. 107.

⁹⁸ Ma Yifu, “Xulun”序论 (Introduction) of “‘Hongfan’ yueyi”, p. 270. 今谓《洪范》为尽性之书，箕子所传，盖舜、禹之道，王者修德行仁事义咸备于此。知皇极之表性德，然后知庶政皆为天工，非私智所能造作也。知日用不可或离，然后知万物各有伦序，非强力所能汨乱也。知帝天皆一性之名，则知畀锡非同符瑞。知灾祥即惠逆所兴，则知福极皆由自取。

Ma's notion of "August Royal Ultimate" means, literally, "the August [plays a pivotal role] in establishing the Ultimate pattern of his state" (皇建其有极).⁹⁹ In this passage, Ma unequivocally points out that this pattern is "the external representation of the virtues of the nature", and the process of establishing the Ultimate pattern is a process of realising the nature. Influenced by previous Neo-Confucian thinkers, Ma rejected various correlative thinking logics held among Han Confucians¹⁰⁰ and, attributed the order of the myriad things to the "August Royal Ultimate" as the virtue of the nature. In this order, "calamitous and propitious events are brought about by [being bestowed by one nature's] grace or by contravening [the one nature]". In his explanation, Ma also asserted that political institutions in this order "are not what can be created by personal wisdom" (cf. his earlier comment that "the ruler does not impose his personal will on anything") but rather "political institutions are all Heaven's work" and both good fortune and misfortune "are both due to one's choices". Behind this "de-centralised" and "de-personalised" political imagination, lies Ma's theoretical novelty which gave rise to his moralised classics interpretations: both the Emperor and Heaven are the names of the one nature, and what controls virtue-based governance is nothing other than the morally good principle that one follows in the personal life.

By treating Heaven as a name for the nature, Ma's understanding of virtue-based governance in the "Great Plan" is more moralised than that of Confucian thinkers in the Song-Ming period. Previous Confucians such as Huang Daozhou explained that in the "Great Plan", the ancient sages had successfully explored the moral characters represented by each of the Five Phases. Huang tried to incorporate useful ideas of Han Confucians into the principle-based framework of Song-Dynasty Neo-Confucianism,¹⁰¹ and Ma went even "further" than Huang. In the background of Ma's thesis that "vital stuff in its entirety is principle and principle in its entirety is phenomena", instead of different kinds of moral characters, the Five Phases are characteristics of the one principle. And

⁹⁹ "Hongfan", *Shangshu zhengyi*, p. 307. Translated by Michael Nylan, mod. See Nylan, *The Shifting Center: The Original "Great Plan" and Later Readings*, (Sankt Augustin: Institut Monumenta Serica, 1992), p. 17.

¹⁰⁰ For a brief description of these logics, see Nylan, *The Shifting Center: The Original "Great Plan" and Later Readings*, pp. 45-62.

¹⁰¹ Huang advanced this interpretation in his "'Hongfan' mingyi" 洪范明义 (Explanation of the Meaning of the "Great Plan"). Regarding the significance of Huang's work, see Zhai Kuifeng 翟奎凤 and Qiu Zhenhua 邱振华, "Yi Yi jie 'Fan', Han Song jiaorong" 以《易》解《范》，汉宋交融 (Elucidating the "Great Plan" with the *Book of Change*, the Fusion of the Han School and the Song School), *Zhou Yi yanjiu* 周易研究, 2013(6), pp. 28-37.

because “the nature is precisely principle”, the “Five Phases” are the characteristics of the process of how a sage “enables the nature of all things to be fully realised, and to enable other people to realise their nature fully”.¹⁰² More than merely knowing the relations among things in the world of vital stuff,¹⁰³ in Ma’s nature/principle-based framework, the sage governor himself exerts a ubiquitous influence in the world of vital stuff. But, according to Ma’s further elucidation of the “August Royal Ultimate”, this influence is from principle rather than the sovereign himself:

This [August Royal Ultimate] signifies the general name of the virtues of the mind, and also indicates the ultimate principle of fully realising the nature. The reason the Nine Categories (*jiuchou* 九畴) [of political activities]¹⁰⁴ are controlled by the August Royal Ultimate, which is positioned in the fifth [category], is that the first four [categories] and the last four are all concerned with “function”, all of which are the functions of the August Royal Ultimate. The intrinsic reality of the August Royal Ultimate is inherently quiescent, yet its marvellous responses are unfathomable. Its great functions flourish in abundance yet it remains humble and selfless. Apart from intrinsic reality, there is no means for function to be constituted, and so where there is function that function is not apart from intrinsic reality. Intrinsic reality and function are a single source; there is no gap between the apparent and the subtle.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, the August

¹⁰² Ma Yifu, “Biao mingshu” 标名数 (Marking Name and Number), “Bian tixing” 辨体性 (Distinguishing Intrinsic Nature) and “Jiwei ming gong” 寄味明功 (Revealing the Accomplishments by the Metaphor of Tastes) of “Bie shi wuxing” 别释五行 (Separate Explanations of the Five Phases) of “‘Hongfan’ Yueyi”, pp. 276, 279-280.

¹⁰³ This was a mainstream idea among East Han Confucians; see Nylan, *The Shifting Center: The Original “Great Plan” and Later Readings*, p. 59.

¹⁰⁴ See “Hongfan”, *Shangshu zhengyi*, p. 299. The first is called the Five Phases; the second is called the reverent practice of the five matters; the third is called earnest devotion to the eight objects of governance; the fourth is called harmonisation and use of the five periods of governance; the fifth is called establishment and use of the August Royal Ultimate; the sixth is called cultivation and use of the three virtues; the seventh is called intelligent use of the prognostication to examine doubtful issues; the eighth is called thoughtful use of various signs of prognostication; the ninth is called hortatory use of the five happiness and awing use of the six extremities. (初一曰五行，次二曰敬用五事，次三曰农用八政，次四曰协用五纪，次五曰建用皇极，次六曰义用三德，次七曰明用稽疑，次八曰念用庶徵，次九曰向用五福，威用六极。) These texts are modified from Bernhard Karlgren’s (1889-1978) translation, cited in Nylan, *The Shifting Center: The Original “Great Plan” and Later Readings*, p. 155.

¹⁰⁵ Cheng Yi, “Preface to *Yizhuan*”, *Er Cheng ji*, p. 689.

Royal Ultimate can also be said to be “function” Each gateway¹⁰⁶ of the “Great Plan” which addresses function is contained in the [fifth category of] establishing the function” [of the August Royal Ultimate]. Further, “establishing” refers to cultivating virtue and the Ultimate refers to the virtues of the nature. Even a sage cannot count on the nature [just as it is] and abandon its cultivation—[he] must reveal the nature by cultivating it. So [the “Great Plan”] says “The August Royal establishes himself as possessing the Ultimate” Principle [that is, the intrinsic reality of the August Royal Ultimate] is inherently quiescent and cannot be manifest without human [effort]. “August Royal” refers to the person who has fully realised the nature, “Ultimate” refers to the nature that is fully realised. Because the sage [who fully realises the nature] is combined with the Dharma (the nature) [which is fully realised by the person] here, this [combined name] is called the August Royal Ultimate.¹⁰⁷

Again, Ma cited Cheng Yi’s words, which he had previously mentioned in a letter written in 1918¹⁰⁸ in which Ma raised his “one mind, two gateways” conceptual framework in a preliminary form. From the perspective of the intrinsic reality of all political activities recorded in the “Great Plan”, the whole process of “The August Royal establishes himself

¹⁰⁶ Although the term “gateway” in Ma’s writings often refers to “aspect” such as in “two gateways of one mind”, the gateway here more likes to refer to “kind” or “category” (*menlei* 门类).

¹⁰⁷ Ma Yifu, “Ming jianyong zhi zhi” 明建用之旨 (Revealing the Import of Establishing the Function [of the August Royal Ultimate]) and “Fuyan” 敷言 (Eulogising the August Royal Ultimate), “Bieshi huangji” 别释皇极 (Separate Explanations of the August Royal Ultimate) in “‘Hongfan’ yueyi”, pp. 300, 301, 302, 304. 此标心德之总名，示尽性之极则也。...九畴总摄于皇极而寄位于五者，前四后四诸言“用”者，皆皇极之用也。其体本寂而妙应无方，大用繁兴而虚中无我。离体无以成用，即用而不离体，体用同源，显微无间，故皇极亦言用也。...《洪范》诸门凡言用者，皆此建用所摄。又建是修德，极是性德，虽圣人不能执性废修，必因修以显性，故曰“皇建其有极”也...理本寂然，非人不显。皇者，即是尽性之人。极者，即是所尽之性。人法合举，故曰皇极。

¹⁰⁸ Ma said: “Heaven (*qian* 乾) governs the great beginning, and represents the mind as suchness. This is the so called ‘dharma-gate reality, which is the overarching characteristic of the unified Dharma Realm’. Earth (*kun* 坤) creates to give form to things and represents the mind that arises and ceases. It generates all dharmas and is able to contain all dharmas.... Heaven and Earth being arrayed, [the principle of] the *Change* operates therein. Then, the [dharma-]nature and [dharma-]characteristics merge with one another, the extension of awareness becomes boundless. Intrinsic reality and function share one source, and there is no gap between the apparent and the subtle”. See p. 37.

as possessing the Ultimate” is nothing but cultivating one’s virtues of the nature. Also, in this cultivation or “governance” process, the August Royal must “remain humble and selfless” because his power stems from the inherently quiescent Principle/Nature/Heaven that should always be followed so as to “reveal the nature by cultivating it”. If interpreted in the light of Ma’s claim noted in an earlier passage cited above, “the gentleman is a label for the causal stage [of the practice of self-cultivation], whereas the ‘three kings’ is a term for the realisation stage”, we could say that through constructing a model of ideal governance or virtue-based governance, Ma’s intention was to reflect on what constitutes the foundations for good governance, rather than to design an actual system of government.

Even in his “Separate Explanations of the Eight Objects of Governance”, the most detailed political writing in the “Concise Meaning of the ‘Great Plan’”, Ma’s attention was still focused on the “intrinsic reality-function” relationship between virtue and governance. Due to the historical reality that the monarchy had lost its legitimacy to rule China, Ma always kept concentrating on differentiating moral governance from the political disorder that results from strong power. According to Ma, the latter disorder can be found in the politics of the Qin Dynasty and modern “[western] barbarian statesmen” (夷狄之有国者) who follow Qin’s way.¹⁰⁹

As such, Ma actually did not intent to ascribe to the “Great Plan” an ancient democratic project. Although Ma highlighted that a sovereign must remain humble and selfless in virtue-based governance, he did not remove the necessary existence of the “August Royal”. Because habituated tendencies will continuously hinder the recovery of the nature, a sage who led his people to fully realising their nature remains indispensable to virtue-based governance. In this logic, a sage will necessarily be a ruler rather than a “commoner”. Thus, Ma shed lights on the necessity of political elitism:

There is nothing that the nature does not understand—the rise of doubts is due to the obscuration by the emotions. Because emotions [arise in] the relationship between objects and self, [notions of] similarity and difference thus flourish. In

¹⁰⁹ Ma Yifu, “Xian de” 显德 (Highlighting the Virtue [of the Ruler]) and “Ming gong” 明功 (Revealing Accomplishments) in “Bie shi wushi” 别释五事 (Separate Explanations of the Five Businesses); “Shi ba zheng zhi mu” 释八政之目 (Explaining the List of the Eight Objects) in “Bei shi ba zheng” 别释八政 (Separate Explanations of the Eight Objects of the Governance) of “‘Hongfan’ Yueyi”, pp. 283-284, 290-291.

complying with the emotions of ordinary people the sages established the principle of consenting to [the judgment of] two of the three [men who interpret the divination indications of the tortoise-shell and the stalks].¹¹⁰ [This principle] makes the dissenters become willing to follow the consensus, and then the consensus-holders will not detest the dissenters. This enables each to express their emotions fully When [the diviner] applies focused sincerity [to the divination] rather than applying self-centred wisdom, his numinous clarity will then lodge in the tortoiseshell and the stalks and be made manifest. The spirit of the tortoise-shell and the stalks is precisely the spirit of the human [i.e. the diviner], thereby [it is] said that “Officers having been chosen and appointed for divining by the tortoise-shell and the stalks of the Achillea, are to be charged [on occasion] to execute their duties”.¹¹¹ It is people who are able to divine, and it is the tortoise-shell and the stalks that are objects used to divine. From this we know that the important thing is the appointment of the person [who divines] [In the principle of] consenting to [the judgment of] two of the three, all three must be virtuous and wise. If [the principle is] merely “majority rules”, regardless of whether the people involved are virtuous or not, then because the number of the stupid and good-for-nothings will always be more than [the number of] the virtuous and wise, [any divination conducted accordingly] will necessarily contravene the way and thus be harmful to political affairs.... The opinions of the gentry may not be wiser than [the opinions of] grass-cutters and fuel-gatherers; and the emotions of people with attachments (*you'zhi* 有执) are, in the end, more difficult to anticipate than are numinous things. Unless one profoundly comprehends the relationship between Heaven and humans, how could [one] manage to provide beforehand for the needs of the ordinary people and to bring things to completion!¹¹² If one stays at the level of confusion during his/her life and willingly remains being bound to [attachments], then even a sage would be without recourse. The “Prognostication to Examine Doubtful Issues” gateway (category/kind) [of activities] is an excellent expedient means. Through these prognostications, [the sage] divests those [confused people] of

¹¹⁰ “Hongfan”, *Shangshu zhengyi*, p. 314.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² “Xi ci”, *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, p. 286.

their doubts, [in order to] make them liberated by themselves, while the sage does not personally interfere with this [whole process].¹¹³

According to Ma's detailed explanations of the use of prognostication in the "Great Plan", the sage established the principle of prognostication solely to comply with the sentiments of ordinary people, while in a strict sense, the sage himself has no doubtful issues (圣人无疑也)¹¹⁴ because he has recovered the nature: "There is nothing that the nature does not understand, the rise of doubts is due to the obscuration by the emotions". How could a sage who has recovered the nature become troubled with doubts? The prognostication ordered by the sage is merely a means of removing this obscuration among ordinary people.¹¹⁵ Although Ma believed that each person could become a sage, he also accepted the fact of that "if one stays confused during one's lifetime and willingly remains being bound to attachments, then even a sage would be without recourse". Just as "the number of the stupid and good-for-nothings will always be more than the number of the virtuous and wise", the emotions that negatively affect the originally "omniscient" nature also persist in the world. In these circumstances, people's free will must be acknowledged, and the issues that people have doubts about should also be able to be resolved: the sage will make them liberated by themselves while he does not personally interfere with this. Through expedient means that accord with (*suishun* 随顺) ordinary peoples' emotions and enable their emotions to be expressed fully, a sage who manages to recover the nature can

¹¹³ Ma Yifu, "Li ren ming zhan" 立人命占 (Appointing the Officers and Ordering Divinations), "Ding san zhan cong er zhi xun" 定三占从二之训 (Establishing the Principle of Consenting to [the Judgment of] Two of the Three [Men Who Interpret the Divination Indications of the Tortoise-shell and the Stalks]) and "Bian congwei jixiong" 辨从违吉凶 (Differentiate Agreement and Objection, Auspicious and Inauspicious [Based on the Hexagrams]) of "Bie shi jiyi" 别释稽疑 (Separate Explanations of the Use of Prognostication to Examine Doubtful Issues) of "'Hongfan' yueyi", pp. 312, 313, 316, 317, 318. 盖性无不明，疑因情蔽，情存物我，同异斯兴。圣人俯顺群情，设为三占从二之训，使异者可以从同，而同者亦不恶于异，斯为各尽其情...人不自任其私智，致其精诚，其神明即寄于蓍龟而显。蓍龟之神，人之神也，故曰“择建立卜筮人，乃命卜筮”。人是能占，卜筮是所占，是知以立人为重也。...三占从二者，必三人者钧贤智也。若不问其贤否而唯舍少以从多，则世间愚不肖之数恒过于贤智，其违道而害事也必矣...由来缙绅之议，或不智于刍蕘；有执之情，终难期于神物。非深达于天人之际，曷足以前民成务哉？...终身住在惑地，自甘系缚，圣人亦无如之何。稽疑一门是善权方便，以彼夺此，使其自释，而圣人无与焉。

¹¹⁴ "Bian congwei jixiong" of "Bie shi jiyi" of "'Hongfan' yueyi", p. 316.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 317.

lead those confused persons to awaken. Ultimately, however, the existence of a sage ruler is necessary for virtue-based governance.

As noted earlier in this section, a sage is the one who respectfully metes out Heaven's punishment. This requires the sage to occupy a supreme position: the August Royal establishes himself as possessing the Ultimate. On the one hand, this is a process of self-cultivation, but, on the other hand, this indicates something more complicated than self-cultivation. Just like "meting out Heaven's punishment" calls for a sage-ruler to maintain political normativity, "choosing and appointing officers for divination" also calls for such a sage-ruler: To achieve virtue-based governance, there must be a sage to ensure that the nature of other people and all things will be fully realised. In "meting out Heaven's punishment", the sage-ruler guards against the possibility of the virtue-based government from descending into disorder. And by ensuring the nature of all people and the myriad things can be fully realised, the sage-ruler is the basis of the governance itself. Furthermore, viewed from the perspective of the "intrinsic reality-function" model, it is the nature/mind of the sage that makes the virtue-based governance possible. As such, understanding this governance must rely on realising the sage's mind-as-reality supporting this governance.

Focussing on the role of the sage-ruler, in the concluding part of the "Concise Meaning of the 'Great Plan'", Ma provides detailed explanations of how a "nature-based" governance becomes possible in his mind-based framework:

By showing how [the sage] shares the people's distresses and happiness, the concluding part of the "Great Plan" highlights the ultimate achievement in realising the nature fully. Therefore, understanding the root of why the people's fortune [transforms into misfortune] upon reaching its extreme, he then uses his own mind¹¹⁶ to instil fear into them and give them a path to follow. And so by

¹¹⁶ According to the "Dharma Realm subsumed within one mind" worldview introduced in the first section of this chapter, the sage's mind is the basis of virtue-based governance, and all political phenomena are generated from this mind. In this sense, all political activities influencing ordinary people ("giving them an [appropriate] path to follow" and "instilling fear into them [in punishment]") are generated from the sage's mind (皆此一心之所作也). In other words, Ma presented these political activities concerning "sentient beings" in the phenomenal world as being, in essence, the mental activities of a sage. This rather idiosyncratic interpretation will be further explored in the following section. See Ma Yifu, "Bieshi wufu liuji" 别释五福六极 (Separate Explanation of the

transferring his own merit to sentient beings, he gathers together the myriad things within himself.... Undoubtedly, having successfully attained the result [of recovering the nature], all his actions will be conducted with solemnity. Thus, rather than [the people] having to rely on good luck, the text speaks of him “[giving them] a path to follow”. It is because [the sage] is fearful of causes he knows to be vigilant when treading on hoarfrost, which in accordance [with the way] will become hard as ice.¹¹⁷ Hence the text speaks of “instilling fear into them”. The sage treats them (i.e. “giving them an [appropriate] path to follow” and “instilling fear into them [in punishment]”) as the origin of both punishment and virtue, and the root of governance and disorder. Longing for good luck or to obtain something by improper means will not result in happiness, nor will intentional avoidance or feigning enable one to avoid misfortune.... Buddhists say that the world is maintained by the power of the vows of various buddhas (*zhufu yuanli suo chi* 诸佛愿力所持).¹¹⁸ In terms of the “Great Plan”, it is evident that [the world is] maintained through the virtues of the sage’s twin functions of giving the people a path to follow and instilling fear into them.... If one cannot bring things to completion, then one will also be incomplete.¹¹⁹ In other words, if there were no sentient beings, then there would also be no land of Buddha. The sage treats all beings under Heaven as one family and regards all the people of China as a single person [i.e. himself]. ... Being fond of humaneness and distaining inhumaneness,¹²⁰ and being fond of goodness and disdaining wrongdoing are precisely the twin functions of giving the people a path to follow and instilling fear into them. All people have this kind of fondness and disdain, but in ordinary people they cannot become great functions. Therefore, these people must wait for a King Wen of Zhou (1152BC-1056BC) [to instruct them] before they can arouse the impulse [to be fond of humaneness

Five Happiness and the Six [Transformations into Misfortune When Fortune] Reaches its Extreme”), “‘Hongfan’ yueyi”, p. 329.

¹¹⁷ “Kun” 坤 (Hexagram Kun), *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, p. 27.

¹¹⁸ This phrase is adopted from *Avatamsaka Sutra*, see *Dafangguang fo huayan jing* 大方广佛华严经 (*Avatamsaka Sutra*), T0278_09.0398c21.

¹¹⁹ “Zhongyong”, *Liji zhengyi*, p.1450. 成己，仁也。成物，知也。

¹²⁰ *Analects*, 4.6, *Lunyu zhushu*, p. 49. 我未见好仁者，恶不仁者。

and to distain inhumaneness].¹²¹ As for the sage, he expands this mind to the fullest,¹²² and so accomplishes endless great functions.¹²³

As explained in the first section of this chapter, this “subsuming all [things] under heaven into a single person” model is rooted in the mind-based framework, “Dharma Realm subsumed within one mind”. Through this framework, here Ma further blurred the boundary between virtue-based governance and virtue-based personal life: the sage “includes” or “gathers together” all sentient beings (people) living in the phenomenal world into his “mind” and leads them to become virtuous. From this perspective, the sage’s mind is precisely the nature¹²⁴ as well as Heaven; and both the origin of punishment and virtue, the root of governance and disorder, are “functions” of his mind. And all political activities which influence ordinary people (“sentient beings”), including “giving them a path to follow” and “instilling fear into them [in punishment]”, are understood to be mental activities of the sage. These two activities correspond to “fondness” and “disdain”, respectively. These are emotions that all people can experience by “being fond of goodness and disdaining wrongdoing”, but “in ordinary people they (fondness and disdain) cannot become (result in) great functions”. In other words, it was the sage’s mind that enabled these emotions to result in great deeds.

¹²¹ Mencius, 7A.10, *Mengzi zhushu*, p. 356. 待文王而后兴者，凡民也。

¹²² Mencius, 2A.6, *Mengzi zhushu*, p. 94. A brief explanation of “developing this mind to the full” here can be found in “Mencius” by Jeffrey Richey, *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ISSN 2161-0002, <https://www.iep.utm.edu/mencius/#H7>, 2019-11-10.

¹²³ Ma Yifu, “Shi fuji zhi mu” 释福极之目 (Explanations of the Categories of “Fortune” and [Fortune’s Transformation into Misfortune] upon Reaching its Extreme) and “Shuxun” 述训 (Description of Precepts) in “Bieshi wufu liuji”, “Hongfan’ yueyi”, pp. 328, 329, 331, 336, 338. 《洪范》终篇将以示同民之忧乐，显尽性之极致。故明斯民福极之本，乃己心威向所为，所以施回向于众生，会万物为自己。…盖克果则万行庄严，非由幸致，故曰“向”；畏因则履霜知戒，驯至坚冰，故曰“威”。圣人用之以为刑德之原、治忽之本，未有觊幸苟得而可以为福，趋避矫饰而可免于患者也。…佛氏言世界是诸佛愿力所持，以《洪范》言之，则是圣人向威二用之德所持，此义甚明也。…若不能成物者，己亦无成。换言之，即若无众生，亦无佛土也。圣人以天下为一家，中国为一人。…好仁恶不仁，好善恶恶，亦即是向威二用，人皆有之。但在凡民不能成为大用，故必待文王而兴。在圣人分上，即是将此心扩充到极处，斯成无尽之大用耳。

¹²⁴ As cited in last chapter, “If [the mind] functions properly, then what is present [before you] at this very moment is precisely the nature”. Ma Yifu, “Shi Zhang Dejun”, “*Erya tai dawen xubian*”, *Ma Yifu quanji* vol 1, p. 460.

Ma then claimed that these “great functions” are “endless”. This is because the great deeds of the sage will continue inspiring the students of the Six Arts. In the process of recovering the nature, with the same heavenly ordained nature as the sage, we come to know the sage’s great deeds by learning the Six Arts. And with fully understanding (*wu* 悟) the way of the Six Arts, unconditioned by time and rank, future readers of the “Concise Meaning of the ‘Great Plan’” will also be influenced by the functions of the sage’s great deeds recorded in the “Great Plan”. By this means, the great deeds can be viewed as “endless” great functions.¹²⁵ But what will happen when a student manages to recover the nature? After this student fully understands the way of the Six Arts, will he or she become a sage with a ubiquitous influence in the world as Ma described above: “the world is maintained through the virtues of the sage’s twin functions”? Theoretically, they are both possible because Ma has accepted Chengguan’s thesis that “Just at the time of the initial arousal of the determination for enlightenment, one has achieved correct awakening”. A sage can keep being the sage while living an ordinary person’s life. But how will this sage come to engage in political realities? Or more precisely, would Ma consider himself to be a gentleman with a sage’s mind in an unethical political world, which he had denounced at a very young age? The ability to engage in political activities represents a significant challenge to Ma’s New Confucian thought and it drove Ma to address it in a deliberate way. We know Cheng Yi had reminded students that “sages base themselves on Heaven, while the Buddhists base themselves on the mind” (圣人本天, 释氏本心).¹²⁶ In this statement, Heaven means something not the same as one’s mind. Specifically, Cheng’s statement is to remind Confucian students that the mind’s functions must be controlled by principle rather than merely one’s mind; and it is the nature rather than the mind that is principle.¹²⁷ Ma had been aware of this distinction while constructing his discourse with the help of “Dharma Realm subsumed within one mind”. Ma tried to establish the “sage’s mind” as an objective standard for us. And this standard must be found in the classics, especially in the *Book of Change*. In the last part of the

¹²⁵ Ma Yifu, “Bieshi wufu liuji”, “‘Hongfan’ yueyi”, p. 338.

¹²⁶ Translated and cited in Stephen Angle, “Buddhism and Zhu Xi’s Epistemology of Discernment”, in John Makeham ed., *The Buddhist Roots of Zhu Xi’s Philosophical Thought*, p.162, mod.

¹²⁷ This discernment can be found in Ma’s own comment cited in chapter one: “What comes from nature and principle is called the mind of the way; what is expressed in emotions and vital stuff is called the human mind. ‘The nature is precisely principle’ held by Song Confucians is the most appropriate, as Yangming’s thesis that ‘The mind is precisely the principle’ is too simplistic”. Ma cited in Wu Yifeng, “Wenxue siji”, *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, p. 751.

Lectures, Ma expounded an idea that indicates Zhu Xi's influence: different from that of ordinary people, the functions of the sage's mind are completely in harmony with principle.¹²⁸

Why did Ma intentionally remind his readers that “ordinary people must wait for a King Wen of Zhou”? Did he overlook Mencius's claim that “the truly outstanding person can arouse the impulse [to be fond of humaneness and to disdain inhumaneness], even if a King Wen does not appear”¹²⁹? This must be related to Ma's awareness of the problem of subjectivism. Ma's notion that “the number of the stupid and good-for-nothings will always be more than [the number of] the virtuous and wise” was significant in shaping his New Confucian discourse. As I pointed out in the previous chapter, Wang Yangming's radical statement that “the mind is precisely principle (*xin ji li* 心即理)” may raise problems to do with subjectivism, such as the functions of one's mind not being controlled by an objective principle. According to Mizoguchi Yūzō's 沟口雄三 (1932-2010) study of Li Zhi 李贽 (1527-1602), the extreme development of Wang's teaching will necessarily contribute to intensifying the tension between individual and social ethics (*mingjiao* 名教), including political ethics.¹³⁰ By discerning the sage's mind and its functions, Ma would have rejected this radical trend represented by intellectuals such as Li Zhi. On the other hand, he showed evident interest in adopting the ideas of strong opponents of the Yangming School, such as Huang Daozhou and Guan Zhidao 管志道 (1536-1608).¹³¹ Given Ma's statement in the passage above, “only the sage can expand

¹²⁸ Cf. Zhu Xi's comment: “The sage is heaven, and [ordinary] people are unable to be like heaven. Heaven alone is without the many defects and failings of people and so it alone is able to know him [Confucius]. Heaven does not truly have a knowledge that knows. However, so long as the sage has this principle, then heaven also has this principle. Hence, what is marvellous about the sage is that he alone is in accord with it [heaven]. The Buddhists also say, ‘Only a buddha can know a buddha.’ This is precisely what is meant.” (圣人便是天，人则不能如天。惟天无人许多病败，故独能知之。天非真有知识能知，但圣人有此理，天亦有此理，故其妙处独与之契合。释氏亦云：“惟佛与佛，乃能知之。”正此意也。) Translated and cited in John Jorgensen, “Radiant Mind”, in John Makeham ed., *The Buddhist Roots of Zhu Xi's Philosophical Thought*, p.94, mod.

¹²⁹ *Mencius*, 7A.10, *Mengzi zhushu*, p. 356. 若夫豪杰之士，虽无文王犹兴。

¹³⁰ Mizoguchi Yūzō, *Zhongguo qianjindai sixiang de yanbian* 中国前近代思想的演变 (The Evolution of Early Modern Chinese Thought), translated by Suo Jieran 索介然 and Gong Ying 龚颖, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1997), pp. 54-194.

¹³¹ Ma's adoption of ideas developed by Huang Daozhou can be seen in other places in this chapter. But Ma's reception of Guan Zhidao's ideas cannot be found in his writings. (Ma merely cited Guan's words with no further elucidation. See “Shi renda yeda shida yida” 释人大业大时大义大 (Explaining the Greatness of Human – Accomplishment –

this mind to the fullest, and so accomplishes endless great functions”, clearly he did not think that every ordinary person could really “progress to become the son of the Heaven” because the mind of the sage is not easily recognised by each person.

Concluding Remarks

Focusing on Ma Yifu’s main work, *The Records of Lectures at the Recovering the Nature Academy*, this chapter has examined Ma’s moralised explanations of political deeds recorded in the Confucian classics. The first section demonstrated the theoretical presupposition that Ma introduced from the Huayan school: Dharma Realm subsumed within one mind. Under this presupposition, Ma claimed that “there is no phenomenon outside the mind”. And then, he reconstructed the concept “sensitive responsiveness” between a ruler and his people into the inseparability between one’s mind and the world. Based on this inseparability, Ma argued that political affairs about “all persons” could be reduced to moral problems about “the one” through a “reality-function” (*ti-yong*) ontological model, and all political activities of the ruler could be comprehended as moral practices of the sage. As will be shown in the next section, in Ma’s interpretations of the political deeds recorded in the classics, the idealistic tendency grew stronger.

The second section investigated Ma’s further elucidations of virtue-based governance. In order to show the development of Ma’s “virtue-based governance” ideal, this section examined Ma’s interpretations of the *Classic of Filial Piety*, the “Confucius at Home at Leisure” and “Confucius at Home at Ease” chapters of the *Book of Rites*, and the

Timeliness – Appropriateness) of “Guanxiang zhiyan” 观象卮言 (Goblet Words on Observing the Hexagrams in the *Book of Change*), p. 388.). Among the “Series of Books Published by the Recovering the Nature Academy” (Fuxing shuyuan congkan 复性书院丛刊) drafted by Ma and first published during 1940s, there are some works written by Guan Zhidao. This series of books was republished in 2019; see Zhai Kuifeng 翟奎凤 ed., “Series of Books Published by the Recovering the Nature Academy” (Fuxing shuyuan congkan 复性书院丛刊) (Yangzhou: Guangling shushe, 2019). Guan was a prominent and influential supporter of “Syncretism of the Three Teachings” (*san’jiao heyi* 三教合一) discourse, yet at the same time, he emphasised the importance of Confucian rites and remained a conservative in the area of social ethics. He thought that spiritual experiences and philosophical insights must be appropriately controlled in accordance with existing norms. Studies about Guan are relatively limited; see Wu Mengqian 吴孟谦, *Rongguan yu pipan* 融贯与批判 (Syncretism and Criticism), (Taipei: Yunchen wenhua, 2017); and Jaret Wayne Weisfogel, *A Late Ming Vision for Local Community*, (Vancouver: Society for Ming Studies, 2010).

“Great Plan” chapter of the *Book of Documents*. Influenced by the Buddhist idea of “inherent awakening”, in his mind-based framework, Ma argued that the actual principle (*shili* 实理) controlling political activities is not different from the moral principle in one’s personal life. In this way, the great deeds of a sage king were not different from the moral practices of a gentleman who has no political authority. In arguing this point, Ma further elaborated how the sage’s mind influenced all political activities under the virtue-based governance maintained by the mind-as-reality.

As discussed in this chapter, Ma’s moralised interpretations of the classics are idealistic, and these idealistic interpretations of political activities were accompanied by Ma’s usage of the “reality-function” ontological model. This chapter pointed out that sage’s mind plays a key role (the reality) in Ma’s elucidations of this ontological model. Given Ma’s acceptance of the presupposition “Dharma Realm subsumed within one mind”, this model could be considered as a mind-based framework which made Ma’s Confucian thought different from former Confucian thinkers’. Focusing on his “Goblet Words on Observing the Hexagrams in the *Book of Change*”, the next chapter will study Ma explanation of how the sage’s mind-as-reality gives rise to political deeds

Chapter 3. From the Changing to the Non-changing: Ma's Idealisation of the Virtue-based Governance in the *Records of Lectures*

If for some reason heaven and earth with all their mountains and rivers were to disappear, there would still after all be their Principle here.¹

This chapter will examine the relationship between mind-as-reality (*xinti* 心体) and the ideal governance in Ma's *Lectures* which was finished in 1941. In the last part of the *Lectures*, Ma argued that all changing phenomena are contained within the non-changing intrinsic reality of the mind. As shown in Subsections 1.3.1. and 1.3.2, this mind-as-reality is also the nature as well as the principle ("What comes from nature and principle is called the mind of the way; what is expressed in emotions and vital stuff is called the human mind. 'The nature is precisely principle' held by Song Confucians is the most appropriate"; "If [the mind] functions properly, then what is present [before you] at this very moment is precisely the nature; why look for a 'nature' in some other place?"). Under this condition, the central point of his "Goblet Words on Observing the Hexagrams in the *Book of Change*" was to explain how principle/nature/mind-as-reality (non-changing reality) controls all activities (changing phenomena), including our moral choices. This chapter will show that Ma's moralised interpretations treated political deeds as the functioning of the mind: all political deeds are "subsumed" within one's mind, and each activity is not different from one's mental activity. Ma's emphasis on morality further aggravated the tension between an ideal world based on the virtues of the nature and an actual world conditioned by badness and wrongdoing resulting from habitual tendencies. At the end of this chapter, the idealistic problem of Ma's New Confucian thought will be briefly assessed.

¹ Zhu Xi, in Li Jingde comp., *Topically Arranged Conversations of Master Zhu*; translated and cited in Brook Ziporyn, "The Ti-Yong Model and Its Discontents: Models of Ambiguous Priority in Chinese Buddhism and Zhu Xi's Neo-Confucianism", in John Makeham edit., *The Buddhist Roots of Zhu Xi's Philosophical Thought*, p. 277, mod.

3.1. The Sage's Mind as the Intrinsic Reality of the Virtue-Based Governance

In his lecture on the *Classic of Filial Piety*, Ma commented: “This indicates that politics is included in the teaching [of the Six Arts]. In today’s words, political activities are precisely morals; there is no so-called politics beyond the realm of morals”.² This is also the main idea of Ma’s moralised interpretations of the classics. In these *Lectures*, we see he believed that he had accomplished Cheng Yi’s grand ideal, “intrinsic reality and function are a single source, and there is no gap between the apparent and the subtle” (体用一源，显微无间): real-life politics (function) are thoroughly blended with principle (intrinsic reality), and the single source is “the mind”. A reader of Cheng Yi’s works responded by saying to Cheng, “perhaps you have overly divulged the secret of Heaven?” (似太露天机也?) Cheng himself also appreciated this critical response and said: “How could today’s students attain such [understanding of the mysteries of Heaven]! I just cannot help but talk about it.” (今日学者何尝及此! 某亦不得已而言焉耳。)³

What is “the secret of Heaven”? In Ma’s words, “Heaven’s model is contained within the virtues [of the nature] as models”. And if the mind in a single moment can be identical to the nature itself, the secret that will be revealed is precisely this mind—namely, the sage’s mind that gives rise to endless great functions. As shown in chapter two, Ma maintained that the *Rites* and the “Great Plan” reveal the mind of the sage who has recovered his nature. The next step in his *Lectures* is to give a clear description of

² Ma Yifu, “Shi mingtang” in “*Xiaojing dayi*”, p. 214. 此见政为教摄。以今语释之，政治即是道德，道德外无别有所谓政治。

³ Cheng Yi, “Henan Chengshi waishu” 河南程氏外书 (Miscellaneous Works of the Chungs of Henan), *Er Cheng ji*, pp. 439-440. See also Wang Yangming’s dialogue with his student: “Jiuchuan (Yangming’s student) asked, ‘When Yichuan (Cheng Yi) got to speaking about ‘intrinsic reality and function are a single source, and there is no gap between the apparent and the subtle’, his students said that he divulged the secret of Heaven. Doesn’t your doctrine of fulfilling the innate knowledge of the good, sir, also go too far in divulging the secret of Heaven?’ The Teacher said, ‘The Sage has already shown it to people. It is just that it has been hidden by later generations and I now simply bring it to light. Why speak of divulging any secret? This [innate knowledge] is everybody’s natural possession. When one realises it, it seems to be nothing extraordinary’”. (九川问曰：“伊川说到体用一原、显微无间处，门人已说是泄天机；先生‘致知’之说，莫亦泄天机太甚否？”先生曰：“圣人已指以示人，只为后人揜匿，我发明耳，何故说泄？此是人人自有的，觉来甚不打紧一般。”) Wang Yangming, *Instructions for Practical Living*, translated by Wing-tsit Chan, pp. 195-196, mod.

how the sage's mind "accomplishes endless great functions" for people in his realm. In other words, Ma needs to identify a controlling relationship between the ubiquitous functions and the sole intrinsic reality. Besides Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi's Neo-Confucian thought, Ma's "reality-function" model is also influenced by Chengguan. As will be shown, Ma believed that his metaphysical framework provides the means to avoid arbitrary or "subjective" understanding of the meaning of "intrinsic reality and function are a single source, and there is no gap between the apparent and the subtle". The next section will focus on exploring this step mainly from Ma's lectures on the *Book of Change*.

The aim of the "Concise Meaning of the 'Great Plan'" is to expound "That by which the Six Arts arise to flourish is precisely that by which the August Royal Ultimate is established" in the ideal governance where "vital stuff and principle both penetrate everywhere". In this governance, political activities must be examined as functions of the August Royal Ultimate, namely, principle (*li* 理).⁴ As shown in the previous chapter, principle, which controls political activities, is not different from principle in an individual's life. According to the "Concluding Remarks" of the "Concise Meaning of the 'Great Plan'", "principle is active within [vital stuff]" means that being a good ruler and appropriately appointing officials should be regarded as nothing other than different aspects of an individual's self-cultivation.⁵ The sage is different from his "subjects" because he must appropriately control power in his realm, yet he is not different from his people because all his "political deeds" are not different from the moral practices of a "gentleman" who holds no political authority ("The gentleman is a label for the causal

⁴ Ma Yifu, "Shi fuji zhi mu" of "Bieshi wufu liuji" of "'Hongfan' yueyi", pp. 334, 335. "Students should know that the Nine Categories of the Great Plan also include the Six Arts. The transmission [of the Nine Categories] from Emperor Shun to Emperor Yu, and the questions and answers [about the Nine Categories] between Jizi and King Wu of Zhou, concern nothing other than what they had [each] realised within their own self-nature....That by which the Six Arts arises to flourish is precisely that by which the August Royal Ultimate is established. The Five Phases are vital stuff, and the August Royal Ultimate is principle. The vital stuff and principle both penetrate everywhere. Only when principle is active within vital stuff does function start to take form". (学者当知《洪范》九畴亦可总摄六艺。夫舜、禹之授受，箕、武之问答，皆道其所证之性分内事而已。...六艺之所由兴，即皇极之所由建也。五行者，气也。皇极者，理也。气无乎不遍，理亦无乎不遍，理行乎气中而用始形。)

⁵ Ma Yifu, "'Hongfan' yueyi", pp. 339-340.

stage [of the practice of self-cultivation], whereas the “three kings” is a term for the realisation stage”): this is to be “not one yet not different” (*buyi buyi* 不一不异).⁶

Drawing on the *Avatamsaka sūtra*, Ma provided a holistic observation of the operation of sage’s mind that maintains his governance:

The thought-moment is sensing, and the sign [in divination] is responding.⁷ The arising of favourable or unfavourable signs⁸ is the function of this thought-moment. The five matters⁹ correspond to the mind, [while] the five signs correspond to vital stuff. [The arising of] both favourable and unfavourable signs lies solely with the one mind (the thought-moment, sensing) and [the arising of]

⁶ This distinction between the sage and the ordinary person is also the distinction between “awakening” and “non-awakening” discussed at the beginning of *Dasheng qixin lun*, see T1666_32.0576b10 - T1666_32.0576c04. See also Chengguan’s comment, cited earlier: “Just at the time of the initial arousal of the determination for enlightenment, one has actually achieved the correct awakening. This is called embracing the Realisation within the cause.”

⁷ This statement is based on Ma’s understanding of “sensitive responsiveness”, see subsection 2.1.2.

⁸ “Hongfan”, *Shangshu zhengyi*, pp. 318-321. “They are rain; sunshine; heat; cold; wind; and seasonableness. When the five come all complete, and each is in its proper order, even the various plants will be abundantly luxuriant. Should any one of them be either excessively abundant, or excessively deficient, there is evil. There are favourable signs: — namely, of gravity, which is emblemed by seasonable rain; of orderliness, emblemed by seasonable sunshine; of wisdom, emblemed by seasonable heat; of deliberation, emblemed by seasonable cold; and of sageness, emblemed by seasonable wind. There are also the unfavourable signs: — namely, of wildness, emblemed by constant rain; of assumption, emblemed by constant sunshine; of indolence, emblemed by constant heat; of haste, emblemed by constant cold; and of stupidity, emblemed by constant wind.” (曰雨，曰暘，曰燠，曰寒，曰風。曰時。五者來備，各以其叙，庶草蕃庑。一極備，凶；一極無，凶。曰休徵：曰肅、時雨若；曰乂，時暘若；曰晰，時燠若；曰謀，時寒若；曰聖，時風若。曰咎徵：曰狂，恒雨若；曰僭，恒暘若；曰豫，恒燠若；曰急，恒寒若；曰蒙，恒風若。) Michael Nylan’s translations with modified terms (verifications/signs), Nylan, *The Shifting Center: The Original “Great Plan” and Later Readings*, pp. 170-172.

⁹ “Hongfan”, *Shangshu zhengyi*, p. 303. “The first is called demeanour; the second, speech; the third, seeing; the fourth, hearing; and the fifth, thinking. The virtue of the demeanour is called respectfulness; of speech, accordance with reason; of seeing, clearness; of hearing, distinctness; and of thinking, perspicaciousness. Respectfulness becomes manifest in gravity; accordance with reason, in orderliness; the clearness, in wisdom; the distinctness, in deliberation; and the perspicaciousness, in sageness.” (一曰貌，二曰言，三曰視，四曰聽，五曰思。貌曰恭，言曰從，視曰明，聽曰聰，思曰睿。恭作肅，從作乂，明作哲，聰作謀，睿作聖。) Translated by Michael Nylan, *ibid.*, pp. 157-158, mod.

the five signs-as-vital stuff follows it. Because vital stuff is given rise to by the thought-moment, it is called “the function of the thought-moment” [The reason] “sign” is used instead of “vital stuff”, however, is to show that the signs are responses to the five matters [which result from the thought-moment]. This means that the vital stuff of the Heaven and the Earth is precisely the vital stuff of one’s self If the five matters attain the [appropriate] principle (*qili* 其理), the signs will be opportune, and therefore auspicious; if the five matters lose the [appropriate] principle, the signs will be inopportune, and therefore inauspicious. In all cases, these references to “auspicious” and “inauspicious” are also like Buddhist explanations of good destiny/rebirth (*shanqu* 善趣) and bad destiny/rebirth (*e’qu* 恶趣): they are always given rise to by one’s mind and not by something arriving from outside The term “ceaseless” (*wuxi* 无息) refers to the intrinsic reality (mind) that is ceaseless; this means that some effort is required [in keeping one’s mind bright]. If not, it would not be necessary to speak of “lasting” (*jiu* 久).¹⁰ In the case of the ordinary person, thought-moment after thought-moment arise and cease incessantly, how could there be “cessation”? Yet, what is ceaseless for a sage is the brightness of his inherent mind, while what is ceaseless for an ordinary person is simply his deluded mind. The sage’s mind is pure, therefore, the functioning of the virtuous characteristics [of his mind] is ceaseless. As for the ordinary person, it is simply that the defilements and afflictions [of his deluded mind] are incessant.... The Buddhists say: “If one desires to know all the buddhas of the past, present and future, then one must understand the nature of the Dharma Realm, and that everything arises through the creation of the mind alone”.¹¹ These words are very true indeed. They (Buddhists) stipulate the notion of the “ten Dharma Realms” and [claim

¹⁰ Paraphrase of “Zhongyong”, *Liji zhengyi*, pp.1450-1451. “Therefore, absolute sincerity is ceaseless. Being ceaseless, it is lasting. Being lasting, it is evident. Being evident, it is infinite. Being infinite, it is extensive and deep. Being extensive and deep, it is high and brilliant. It is because it is extensive and deep that it contains all things. It is because it is high and brilliant that it overshadows all things. It is because it is infinite and lasting that it can complete all things.” (故至诚无息。不息则久，久则征，征则悠远，悠远则博厚，博厚则高明。博厚，所以载物也；高明，所以覆物也；悠久，所以成物也。) See “The Doctrine of the Mean”, in *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, edited and translated by Wing-tsit Chan, (NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), p. 109.

¹¹ *Dafangguang fo huayan jing*, T0279_10.0102b01. Ma intentionally replaced “contemplation (*guan* 观)” with “understanding (*zhi* 知)” in his citation.

that] all differentiations about the defiled and the pure are created by the one mind. This is like my previous statement that favourable and unfavourable signs are the function of a single thought-moment. If one is not respectful then this is insolence, and what is not auspicious is unfavourable. These are also the two ends of a thought-moment as well as the twin functions of one reality (mind) (*yiti er'yong*—一体二用)¹² It simply depends on how one uses this [thought-moment]. To be concise, the five matters are no more than speech and conduct. It is like [what is stated in *Change*]: “A gentleman’s speech proceeds to influence the people, and his conduct proceeds to influence far away”.¹³ The auspicious and inauspicious, and that which is contrary and that which complies [to one’s wishes], are all signs [arising from a thought-moment].¹⁴

Ma began the long passage above by discussing [five] signs (rain; sunshine; heat; cold; wind; and seasonableness) of the governance and [five] matters (demeanour, speech, seeing, hearing, and thinking) as activities of a ruler. The signs are manifestations of good/bad governance, and they all depend on how well the ruler governs. Ma argued that, correlations between the signs and the matters must be comprehended in a mind-based model: “one must understand the nature of the Dharma Realm, and that everything arises through the creation of the mind alone”. Given “all differentiations about the defiled and the pure are created by the one mind”, instead of as being understood as political actions,

¹² This phrase was also used by Chengguan. Cf. Chengguan, *Dafangguang fo huayan jing suishuyanyi chao*, T1736_36.0270a26 - T1736_36.0270b01.

¹³ A paraphrase of “Xi ci”, Cf. *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, p. 276.

¹⁴ Ma Yifu, “Wuzheng zhi mu” 五征之目 (The List of the Five Signs), “Xian shiheng” 显时恒 (Revealing the Seasonable and the Constant) and “Pan xiujiu” 判休咎 (Identifying the Favourable and the Unfavourable) of “Bieshi shuzheng” 别释庶征 (Specific Explanations of the Various Signs in Divination) of “Hongfan’ yueyi”, pp. 321, 323, 323, 325, 326. 念即是感，征即是应，其为休咎，皆此一念之用也。五事是心，五征是气，休咎全在一心而五气随之，气即念之所作，故曰“念用”也。...然不曰气而曰征者，明其为五事之应，是天地之气即己之气也...五事得其理，则五征以时，故吉；五事失其理，则五征不时，故凶。凡言吉凶者，亦如佛氏之言善趣恶趣，皆自心所作，非自外至者也...无息是本体不息，尚有功夫在，不然则不须说久也。常人念念起灭不停，亦何尝有息？但圣人是本心之明不息，常人则是妄心不息；圣人是此心清静，德相功用不息，常人则是烦恼尘劳不息耳。...佛氏云“若人欲了知，三世一切佛，当知法界性，一切唯心造”，此却甚谛。彼立十法界，染净差别总为一心所造，犹此言休咎是一念所成也。不敬即怠，非休即咎，此亦是一念之两端，亦是一体二用也，在人所以用之如何耳。五事约而言之，不过言行。如言出加民，行发及远，吉凶违应即征也。

the matters are interpreted as thought-moments of the mind, namely, one's mental activities. As manifestations of good/bad political activities, the signs are also explained as the vital stuff that "is given rise to by the thought-moment", in other words, the responses of the thought-moments of a ruler's mind. More concretely, it is a ruler's mental activities that cause favourable and unfavourable results. In this sense, "a ruler governs his subjects through political activities" was explained as a process of sensitive responsiveness between the "five matters" (one's mental activities) and "five signs" (what is brought about by the former) and which are not outside one's mind. The virtue-based governance with favourable signs is results from the thought-moments of the mind of a sage.

According to Ma, the mind of a sage is distinguished from that of a non-sage by "virtuous characteristics". These characteristics are also the virtues of the nature that match the Six Arts. In following the way of the Six Arts, the sage's thought-moments give rise to great functions in the ideal world maintained by his mind. In this world, according to Ma, the thought-moments of "being fond of humaneness and disdaining inhumaneness, and being fond of goodness and disdaining wrongdoing" give the people a path to follow and instil fear into them. Thereby, "the sage expands this mind to the fullest, and so accomplishes endless great functions". What are the "endless great functions" in this ideal world? More concretely, how would Ma explain the effectiveness of a sage's political activities ("A gentleman's speech proceeds to influence the people, and his conduct proceeds to influence far away") in the ideal world maintained by his mind? Ma attempted to answer this question in his lecture on the *Book of Change*.

Compared with his lecture on the *Classic of Filial Piety*, in a more idealised approach, Ma's lecture on *Change* further presented how ideal governance can be based on the brightness of the sage's mind. With a greater emphasis on "Dharma Realm subsumed within one mind", this lecture aimed to simplify his "one mind contains the Six Arts" thesis using a new formulation: "one mind with three kinds of change".¹⁵ As Ma argued in many places in his writings, while the three kinds of change can also correspond to the "Three Greats" in the *Treatise*,¹⁶ the sage's mind controls all changing

¹⁵ Ma commented that the notion of "change" in the "three kinds of change" (*sanyi* 三易) has a broader sense than English word "change". See Ma, "Yulu leibian·Zhuzi pian" 语录类编·诸子篇 (Collated Compilation of Recorded Words: Section of Different Schools of Thought), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, p. 599.

¹⁶ Liu Leheng, "The 'Three Greats', 'Three Changes' and 'Six Arts'—Lessons Drawn from the *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith* in Ma Yifu's New Confucian Thought", in

phenomena. Given that the *Book of Change* is a classic based on divination,¹⁷ according to Ma, phenomena controlled by the mind-as-reality were also represented as phenomenal changes expressed through the hexagrams (*gua* 卦) and their lines (*yao* 爻).¹⁸

How should the power relationship between sage and people be correctly expressed in “non-political” language? To deal with this problem, Ma’s “Goblet Words

John Makeham ed., *The Awakening of Faith and New Confucian Philosophy* (forthcoming), provides a simple table representing Ma’s understanding of the three kinds of change:

non-change 不易	its intrinsic reality is great 体大	the gateway of the mind as suchness 心真如门	the intrinsic reality of the Six Arts in its wholeness 六艺之为全体
change 变易	its characteristics are great 相大	the gateway of the mind as arising and ceasing 心生灭门	the Six Arts arising as function from intrinsic reality 六艺之为从体起用
simplicity 简易	its function is great 用大	the non-duality of the two gateways 二门不二	the Six Arts as great functioning, and as the practice of self-cultivation 六艺之为大用、六艺之为工夫

¹⁷ For a brief account of this background, see Edward L. Shaughnessy, “Preface”, *Unearthing the Changes: Recently Discovered Manuscripts of the Yi Jing (I Ching) and Related Texts*, (NY: Columbia University Press, 2014), p. xiii. “Early accounts of the text’s history hold that the basic text originated in the performance of divination—the attempt to determine the future—one of the predominant aspects of religious life in ancient China; both the earliest attested uses of the text and the enigmatic images contained in it do seem to reflect this origin. However, by no later than the Warring States period (5th c.–221 b.c.), the *Changes* was regarded as one of the *Six Classics* and understood as a repository of wisdom about the nature of the universe. Over the following two millennia, this understanding came to be ever more elaborated, with the great Neo-Confucian scholars of the Song dynasty (960–1278), in particular, finding in it a guide to living an ethical life.”

¹⁸ According to Shaughnessy, the text of the *Book of Change* is “organised around sixty-four graphs or ‘pictures’ (*guahua* 卦画), each of which is composed of six lines, either solid (—) or broken (--); these have come to be known in the West as hexagrams (*gua* 卦). Each of these sixty-four hexagrams is supplied with a name and seven brief texts: a ‘hexagram statement’ (*guaci* 卦辞) understood to represent the entire hexagram, and “line statements” (*yaoci* 爻辞) for each of the six lines. The hexagram statement is usually quite formulaic, often including little more than the hexagram name and one or more injunctions for (or against) certain actions”. See Shaughnessy, “Preface”, *Unearthing the Changes*, p. xv.

on Observing the Hexagrams in the *Book of Change*” tries to shed light on the distinctiveness of a sage’s “mind”. As Cheng Yi pointed out, “Where there is principle there is vital stuff; where there is vital stuff there are numbers (i.e. the number of stalks used in divination). That which activates the spirit-like agencies is the numbers. The numbers are the function of vital stuff” (有理则有气, 有气则有数。行鬼神者, 数也。数, 气之用也。); and “After there is principle there are the phenomenal images (hexagrams); after there are the images there are the numbers” (夫有理而后有象, 有象而后有数。).¹⁹ Cheng’s point here was that in order to recognise the principle controlling phenomena, “numbers” and hexagrams must be introduced as indications of this “control”. And according to Ma, who held the worldview “Dharma Realm subsumed within one mind”, hexagrams and numbers in the *Change* provide readers with a holistic field of vision across the entire range of the ideal governance “subsumed” within the sage’s mind. He maintained that it is through the hexagrams that the sage’s mind, which is behind changing functions, can be fully recognised by students of the Six Arts:

When one understands that the *Change* “embraces the way of [the myriad things] under Heaven”,²⁰ then one knows that the Six Arts embrace the way of [the myriad things] under the Heaven: “Everything issues from this Dharma Realm, everything returns to this Dharma Realm”.²¹ Thus [I] say that, the teachings of the Six Arts end with the teaching of *Change*.... When they (myriad things under Heaven) are brought together as the trigrams Qian and Kun, then the virtuous characteristics of Heaven and the Earth can be fully understood; limiting them to the trigrams of the Six Offspring²² (*liu’zi* 六子, the six trigrams that are the “offspring” of the Qian and Kun trigrams), then the dispositions of

¹⁹ Cheng Yi, “Henan Chengshi cuiyan” 河南程氏粹言 (Selected Words of the Chengs of Henan) and “Da Yangshi shu” 答杨时书 (Cheng Yi’s Reply to his Distinguished Student Yang Shi), *Er Cheng ji*, pp. 1030, 615.

²⁰ “Xi ci”, *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, p. 286.

²¹ Chengguan, *Dafangguang fo huayanjing shu*, T1735_35.0504b01. See also Zhendi 真谛 (Paramārtha; 499-569), *She Dasheng lun shi* 摄大乘论释 (Explanations of the *Mahāyānasamgraha*), T1595_31.0254a26.

²² “The six children (offspring) trigrams. This usually refers to the trigrams Zhen ䷲, Xun ䷴, Kan ䷜, Li ䷲, Gen ䷳, and Dui ䷹, but may also indicate the six ‘pure hexagrams’ (hexagrams that are composed of two identical trigrams,) by the same names”. See Bent Nielsen, *A Companion to Yi jing Numerology and Cosmology*, (NY: Routledge, 2003), p. 164.

the myriad things can be appropriately categorised (*lei* 类)....[Just as] the Six Offspring complete the myriad things by emulating the functions of Qian and Kun, [so too] people must emulate the functions of the Six Offspring to accord with Qian and Kun, in order to “fully realise the nature and arrive at what is ordained by Heaven”.²³ The purpose in observing the images lies in this.... The inherent/fundamental image of the mind is the Supreme Polarity (*tai'ji* 太极). When the mind is quiescent, there is nothing but the one principle, in which no image/trigram can be apprehended. It is only after movement begins that [the Supreme Polarity] is divided into Yin and Yang,²⁴ which are named as “vital stuff” – and principle operates therein. Therefore, it is said, “the successive movement of Yin and Yang [vital stuff] constitutes what is called the way”²⁵.... When [the mind's] movement is in accord with principle, then [the successive movement of] Yin and Yang, the firm [*yang* lines] and the yielding [*yin* lines] will both be auspicious. When [the mind's] movement fails to be in accord with principle, then [the successive movement of] Yin and Yang, the firm [*yang* lines] and the yielding [*yin* lines] will be inauspicious.... Your true mind can illuminate the myriad conditions but is not subject to conditionally-arisen existence: “[The mind's] spiritual light shines alone, utterly free from being

²³ “Shuo gua” 说卦 (Explanations of the Hexagrams), *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, pp. 323-325.

²⁴ Yin and Yang are two modes of vital stuff in the phenomenal world and are represented as a broken line and an unbroken line, respectively. Neo-Confucian thinker, Zhou Dunyi 周敦颐 (1017-1073), was a pioneer in explaining the “Supreme Polarity” (a concept found in the “Xi ci” commentary to the Book of Change) as the ontological foundation of the phenomenal world. Cf. Zhou's *Taiji tu shuo* 太极图说 (An Explanation of the Diagram of the Supreme Polarity): “The most formless of all is yet the Supreme Polarity of all! The motion of Supreme Polarity generates Yang. When this motion reaches its ultimate it pivots into stillness, and this stillness generates Yin.” (无极而太极。太极动而生阳，动极而静，静而生阴。) Ma also adopted Zhu Xi's comments here; see Zhu, “*Taiji tu shuo jie*” 太极图说解 (Elucidations of *An Explanation of the Diagram of the Supreme Polarity*): “He (Zhou) does not mean that outside of the Supreme Polarity there is something else which is the least formless of all. The motion and stillness of the Supreme Polarity is the flow of the Heavenly Mandate. This is what the *Book of Change* describes when it says, ‘the successive movement of the Yin and Yang [vital stuff] constitutes what is called the way’.” (非太极之外，复有无极也。太极之有动静，是天命之流行也，所谓“一阴一阳之谓道”。) Cited and translated in Brook Ziporyn, “The Ti-Yong Model and Its Discontents: Models of Ambiguous Priority in Chinese Buddhism and Zhu Xi's Neo-Confucianism”, in John Makeham ed., *The Buddhist Roots of Zhu Xi's Philosophical Thought*, pp. 241, 242, mod.

²⁵ “Xi ci”, *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, pp. 268-270.

conditioned by [one's] cognitive faculties.”²⁶ [It does] not come to be as a result of conditioned arising; it does not cease to be when free from conditions. Impermanent dharmas appear within the mind as clearly as a bright mirror. [It] illuminates the things as they come and remains existing after they leave; this is called non-changing. Without this non-changing mind, there would be no changing things. Analogously speaking, if there is no mirror, there can be no image. From this we know that the changing is not constant, and the non-changing is not eliminated. Neither constant nor eliminated—the notion of simplicity is clear.... Therefore, in “exalting virtue and enlarging the enterprise”,²⁷ words and deeds are of utmost importance.... Once words have been uttered and deeds have taken place, even if it was within a room,²⁸ they actually pervade the Dharma Realm, and [persist there] without loss and without decay.²⁹

This long series of passages draw on four successive sections of the “Goblet Words on Observing the Hexagrams in the *Book of Change*” in which Ma explained his views on the *Book of Change* as a classic about recovering the nature. These passages explain a notion we have met in the “Concise Meaning of the ‘Great Plan’”: the “mind-based” world (Dharma Realm), which supports virtue-based governance, where the mind refers

²⁶ *Jingde chuandeng lu* 景德传灯录 (Record of the Transmission of the Lamplight Compiled during the Jingde Era), T2076_51.0268a21.

²⁷ “Xi ci”, *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, pp. 273-274.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 276.

²⁹ Ma Yifu, “Xushuo” 序说 (Introduction), “Benxiang” 本相 (The Original Characteristics), “Yuan jixiong, shi deye” 原吉凶释德业 (An Inquiry Concerning Fortune and Misfortune; Explaining Virtue and Accomplishments) and “Shen yanxing” 审言行 (Examining Speech and Conduct) of “Guanxiang zhiyan”, pp. 342, 346, 349, 349, 351, 356, 360. 知《易》“冒天下之道”，即知六艺冒天下之道，“无不从此法界流，无不还归此法界”。故谓六艺之教终于《易》也...统之以乾坤，而天地之德可通也；约之以六子，而万物之情可类也。...六子效乾坤之用以成万物，人必效六子之用以合乾坤，方可“尽性至命”。所以观象，其义在此。...心本象太极，当其寂然，唯是一理，无象可得。动而后分阴阳，斯命之曰气，而理即行乎其中，故曰“一阴一阳之谓道”...动而得其理，则阴阳、刚柔皆吉；失其理，则阴阳、刚柔皆凶。...汝真心能照诸缘，不从缘有，灵光独耀，迥脱根尘，缘起不生，缘离不灭，诸无常法于中显现，犹如明镜，物来即照，物去仍存，是名不易。离此不易之心，亦无一切变易之物。喻如无镜，象亦不生。是知变易故非常，不易故非断，非常非断，简易明矣。...所以“崇德广业”者，必以言行为重也...凡言行既出，虽在一室，实周遍法界，不失不坏。

to the mind of a sage. This world, as indicated above, was imaged by the eight basic trigrams of the *Book of Change* (“trigrams Qian and Kun” and “trigrams of the Six Offspring”). The purpose of observing these images, Ma said that, was learning to emulate their “functions”. The functions here are spirits (*shen* 神) of these trigrams, and “to emulate the functions” means to behave in accordance with these spirits one learns from observing the different trigrams.³⁰ Also, this means to behave morally in specific circumstances represented by these trigrams: “fully realise the nature and arrive at what is ordained by Heaven”. The sage is the one who manages to achieve this, and his mind is utterly free from being conditioned by human cognitive faculties.

Then, Ma explained how the true mind of the sage should be. The passage prior to “Your true mind can illuminate the myriad conditions” restates the relationship between principle and vital stuff (in which vital stuff must accord with principle). While Zhou Dunyi started to elucidate the ontological meaning of the Supreme Polarity among Neo-Confucian thinkers, Zhu Xi drew on Zhou’s elucidations but believed the supreme polarity was a reference to principle and not to something material or physical.³¹ Here, Ma’s understanding of the Supreme Polarity is rather different from that of Zhu. For Ma, the Supreme Polarity, as fundamental reality, could be comprehended as an image of the mind (“the inherent/fundamental image of the mind is the Supreme Polarity”).³² As noted in the Introduction to this thesis, Zhu Xi, Wang Yangming and Ma Yifu all acknowledged that one can achieve a unity of the mind and principle, but Zhu Xi placed more emphasis on the nature/principle within one’s mind. Ma, who revered Zhu Xi as an intellectual model, tried to accept Zhu Xi’s principle-based ontological discourse within his own

³⁰ Ma Yifu, “Yuan jixiong, shi deye” of “Guanxiang zhiyan”, p. 349.

³¹ “Zhu Xi drew on Zhou Dunyi’s work but disagreed that the supreme polarity could be categorised in terms of form and *qi* (vapor/energy/force 气) and also rejected the idea that there was nothing before the supreme ‘polarity.’ Zhu Xi believed the supreme polarity was a reference to *li* and not to something material or physical.” See Zhang Liwen 张立文, “Zhu Xi’s Metaphysics”, translated by Andrew Lambert, in David Jones and He Jinli edit., *Returning to Zhu Xi: Emerging Patterns within the Supreme Polarity*, (NY: SUNY Press, 2016), p.31, mod.

³² There must be a correlation between Ma’s claim and Zhu Xi’s significant statement “no mind but one hexagram” (无心涵有象). Zhu’s statement means: If one is in a state that in which all mental activity had ceased, his mind still includes the hexagram (namely, Supreme Polarity). Cf. Wang Feng 王风, *Zhu Xi Yixue sanlun* 朱熹易学散论 (Papers on Zhu Xi’s Studies of the Book of Change), (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2017), pp. 170-171, 181-183.

mind-based framework,³³ which was more similar to Wang Yangming's: "Without this non-changing mind, there would be no changing things". Ma agreed with Zhu Xi's emphasis on the nature and principle, but Yangming's mind-based theory made him modify Zhu's view of the Supreme Polarity. This modification indicates such a shift: From Zhu's principle-based theory to Wang's mind-based theory.

This modification (the Supreme Polarity is precisely the mind-as-reality itself) is significant: In the virtue-based governance, it is the sage's mind that gives rise to changing functions (political activities), and all political activities are thus "images" in the "bright mirror". To explain how the mind gives rise to these images, Ma paraphrased Zhou Dunyi's words: "It is only after movement begins that [Supreme Polarity] is divided into Yin and Yang". Here, each line (Yin/Yang) in a hexagram represents a thought-moment, the images in one's mind. Observing these images that manifest within one's mind, according to Ma, one will know the principle he/she should follow: "people must emulate the functions of the Six Offspring to accord with Qian and Kun, in order to 'fully realise the nature and arrive at what is ordained by Heaven'". Through the modification of Zhu Xi's principle-based framework and the adoption of the "mind-mirror" analogy, Ma presented an idealised image of the sage's governance. In this idealised image, a sage's virtue-based governance is more like a series of self-cultivations than a political process.³⁴

While the virtue-based governance maintained by the sage's thought-moments can be observed by observing hexagrams, following the "mind-mirror" analogy, Ma claimed that his notion of simplicity is revealed: "neither constant nor eliminated – the notion of simplicity is clear". In other words, the essence of observing hexagrams is also to recognise the Buddhist "Middle Path": the intrinsic reality of the world is neither

³³ In discussing the relationship between the mind and the Supreme Polarity, Ma restated his mind-based framework: there is nothing outside the mind (*xinwai wushi* 心外无物). Ma Yifu, "Yuan jixiong, shi deye" of "Guanxiang zhiyan", p. 349.

³⁴ Due to this non-political character of the virtue-based governance described in the *Lectures*, as already noted, it is difficult to say if Ma was a critic of a certain kind of system of government. We know that Ma was dissatisfied with the Chinese monarchy (from the Qin Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty) and various kinds of political activities in the 1910s, but without additional evidence of his vision of concrete political and institutional systems needed in modern China, we have no idea if Ma's political view is "conservative" or "classical". There is, nevertheless, the idea that "virtue-based governance conducted by a sage king is not different from self-governance of a gentleman" that runs through Ma's *Lectures* (especially in his elucidations of the "Great Plan" and the *Change*). However, a detailed examination of that thread should be the subject of a separate paper.

changing (nihilism) nor non-changing (eternalism).³⁵ How should “simplicity” be understood here? Ma explained, “Therefore, in ‘exalting virtue and enlarging the enterprise’ words and deeds are of utmost importance.... Once words have been uttered and deeds have taken place, even if it was within a single room, they actually pervade the Dharma Realm, and [persist there] without loss and without decay”. Briefly, “simplicity” means non-complex, and the complexity of the political activities will be “simplified” as hexagrams in the *Book of Change*. Thus, the cited sentence indicates that: The political world with unpredictable problems is not different from the Dharma Realm controlled by the principle, and this Dharma Realm is “a room” where the virtue-based governance exists. Compared with achieving any accomplishment in the public world, to achieve self-governance in a room is not a complicated thing. Even when isolated in a room, the sage’s self-governance does not deviate from the virtue-based governance recorded in the classics. Here, the tension between principle and habitual tendencies, moral ideals and political realities has driven Ma to a paradoxical situation because according to his theory, the easiest way for a sage to maintain the brightness of the inherent mind is to stay away from politics. In this situation, the idealistic idea that “the sage is not different from an ordinary person without political authority” reappears in the virtue-based governance maintained by the sage’s mind.

3.2. The Development of Idealistic Character in Ma’s Mind-based Framework

The principle that operates in this virtue-based governance maintained by the sage’s mind manifests in a simple manner: “the successive movement of Yin and Yang [vital stuff] constitutes what is called the way”. Furthermore, Ma claimed that humans should learn to “control the Yin by the Yang, honour the great and despise the petty, and only then can unequal [i.e. unbalanced, conflicting] things be balanced.”³⁶ In aiming to achieve this

³⁵ The Buddha “calls his teachings a ‘middle path’ between two extreme views, and it is this claim concerning the causal origins of suffering that he identifies as the key to avoiding those extremes. The extremes are eternalism, the view that persons are eternal, and annihilationism, the view that persons go utterly out of existence (usually understood to mean at death, though a term still shorter than one lifetime is not ruled out)”. Mark Siderits, “Buddha”, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2012 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/buddha/>>.

³⁶ Ma Yifu, “Bian xiao da” 辨小大 (Differentiating the Great and the Petty), “Guanxiang zhiyan,” p. 363. 以阳统阴，贵大贱小，然后不齐者乃可得而齐也。

balance, however, entrenched selfish desires and habitual tendencies, “family” (*jiashi* 家室) and “politics” (*zhengzhi* 政治) will inevitably hinder “recovery of the nature”.

Moreover, Ma audaciously claimed that, compared with “we Confucians” (*wuru* 吾儒), there are more virtuous men among the Buddhists (佛氏得人为盛).³⁷ If so, how should the gentleman, as a sage without political authority, appropriately behave in the world? Ma explained:

The *Change* controls [the teachings of ritual and music texts by means of the hexagrams] Qian and Kun³⁸, and [personal] speech and conduct by [the hexagrams] Xian and Heng.³⁹ Hence, the significance of the *Odes*, the

³⁷ Ma Yifu, “Yulu leibian·Ru-Fo pian”, *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, p. 663.

³⁸ In the *Book of Change*, each Qian Hexagram has a “Gua ci” 卦辞 (An explanatory judgment of a hexagram) appended to it. The “Gua ci” of the Qian Hexagram is “Fundamentality, Prevalence, Fitness, Constancy” (元亨利贞). In the “Commentary on the Words of the Text” (*Wen yan* 文言) based on this “Gua ci”, the relation between “the teachings of ritual and music texts” and the Qian Hexagram can be found. See “Qian”, *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, p.12. “‘Fundamentality’ (*yuan* 元) is the leader of goodness [*shan* 善]. ‘Prevalence’ (*heng* 亨) is the coincidence of beauty [*jia* 嘉]. ‘Fitness’ (*li* 利) is coalescence with righteousness [*yi* 义]. ‘Constancy’ (*zhen* 贞) is the very trunk of human affairs. The noble man embodies benevolence [*ren* 仁] sufficient to be a leader of men, and the coincidence of beauty in him is sufficient to make men live in accordance with propriety/rites [*li* 礼]. He engenders fitness in people sufficient to keep them in harmony with righteousness, and his constancy is firm enough to serve as the trunk for human affairs. The noble man is someone who practices these four virtues.” (元者善之长也，亨者嘉之会也，利者义之和也，贞者事之干也。君子体仁足以长人，嘉会足以合礼，利物足以和义，贞固足以干事。君子行此四德者。) Translated by Richard John Lynn, see Lynn, *The Classic of Changes, A New Translation of the I Ching as Interpreted by Wang Bi*, (NY: Columbia University Press, 2004), p. 130.

³⁹ How the *Change* controls “[personal] speech and conduct by [the hexagrams] Xian (Reciprocity) and Heng (Perseverance)” can be known from “Commentary on the Judgements” (*Tuan ci* 彖辞) of Hexagrams Xian and Heng. See “Xian”, *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, pp. 139-140. “Reciprocity is a matter of stimulation. Here the soft and yielding [Dui (Joy), here representing the Youngest Daughter] is above, and the hard and strong [Gen (Restraint), representing the Youngest Son] is below.1 The two kinds of material force [*qi* 气] stimulate and respond and so join together...It is by the sage stimulating the hearts and minds of men that the entire world finds peace. If we observe how things are stimulated, the innate tendencies [*qing* 情] of Heaven and Earth and all the myriad things can be seen.” (咸，感也。柔上而刚下，二气感应以相与...圣人感人心而天下和平。观其所感，而天地万物之情可见矣。) Lynn, p.329.

As for “Heng”, *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, pp. 143-144 states: “Perseverance means ‘long lasting.’ Here the hard and strong [the Zhen (Quake) trigram] is above, and the soft and yielding [the Sun (Compliance) trigram] is below. Here Thunder and Wind work together. Here

Documents, and ritual and music texts, is found in *Change*. “If one actually were to sum up the chances for survival or destruction and good fortune or bad in this way, one could, even without stirring, understand what they will be!”⁴⁰ Hence the meaning of the *Spring and Autumn* is located therein.... Therefore, comparing the *Odes*, the *Documents*, ritual and music texts, and the *Spring and Autumn* with the *Change*, it is still the teachings of the *Change* that are the greatest... What these teachings reveal is subsumed in one principle, and to attain (*de* 得) this principle is called virtue (*de* 德)⁴¹.... Therefore, “The great virtue of

action [i.e., the Zhen trigram] takes place in terms of Sun [Compliance], and the hard [*yang* 阳] and soft [*yin* 阴] lines are all in resonance, so Perseverance is had... The sun and the moon have found their places in Heaven and so can shine forever. The four seasons change one into the other and so can occur forever. The sage stays forever within the course of the Dao and so brings about the perfection of the entire world. If we observe how things manage to persevere, the innate tendencies [*qing* 情] of Heaven and Earth and all the myriad things can be seen.” (恒，久也。刚上而柔下，雷风相与，巽而动。刚柔皆应，恒...日月得天而能久照，四时变化而能久成，圣人久於其道而天下化成。观其所恒，而天地万物之情可见矣。) Lynn, pp. 335-336.

For Ma, these two Hexagrams corresponds to the teaching of the *Odes* (sensitive responsiveness to stimulus) and the teaching of *Documents* (to bring about the perfection of the entire world, to enable the nature of all things to be fully realised), respectively.

⁴⁰ “Xi ci”, *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, p. 317. This describes the significance of the middle line when observing hexagrams. In each hexagram, its middle line indicates whether the character of this hexagram is good or bad. For Ma, this middle line also reflects the thought-moment one has in a specific case. The context of this is: “As for complicated matters, the calculation of the virtues and the determination of the rights and wrongs involved could not be complete without the middle lines. Ah! If one actually were to sum up the chances for survival or destruction and good fortune or bad in this way, he could, even without stirring, understand what they will be! One who has such understanding has but to look at the hexagram Judgments to have his thought cover more than half of what is involved!” (若夫杂物撰德，辩是与非，则非其中爻不备。噫！亦要存亡吉凶，则居可知矣。知者观其彖辞，则思过半矣。) Lynn, p. 91-92.

See also Wang Bi’s 王弼 (226-249) explanatory comments to the paragraph cited above: “The Judgments focus on the unifying principles that establish the images and discuss the concepts connected with the middle lines. It is by means of their tight grip that they preserve wide-ranging meanings, and it is by means of their simplicity that they bring together all the different aspects of things.” (夫彖者，举立象之统，论中爻之义，约以存博，简以兼众，杂物撰德，而一以贯之。) Lynn, p. 92.

Ma’s aim here is to emphasise that the teaching of the *Change* involves the teaching of the *Spring and Autumn*. The teaching of the *Spring and Autumn* is precisely about the “chances for survival or destruction and good fortune or bad” in the world, and the teaching of the *Change* is about “preserving wide-ranging meanings” of these chances through the interpretation of hexagrams.

⁴¹ “Yueji” 乐记 (Record of Music), *Liji zhengyi*, p. 1081. “He who has apprehended both ritual and music may be pronounced to be a possessor of virtue. Virtue means attainment (in one’s self).” (礼乐皆得，谓之有德。德者得也。) Translated by James Legge, mod.

Heaven and Earth is the giving and maintenance of life. What is most precious to a sage is [to attain the appropriate] position”,⁴² and “when principle is grasped [the sage] becomes established in the middle position [between Heaven and Earth]”.⁴³ If virtue is lost then position is lost.... It is only after “Yin and Yang have combined their virtues”⁴⁴ that great deeds can be accomplished. [If] Yin does not follow Yang, and the vital stuff does not accord with principle, [the accomplishment] will be petty! Therefore, [speech] that supports Yang and suppresses Yin, honours the great and despises the petty, merely reveals the teachings [of the *Change*]; how could such speech be understood to be valuing Heaven and despising Earth? ... “Six (referring to “--”, the Yin line) in the second [position]” and “Nine (referring to “—”, the Yang line) in the fifth [position]” both refer to the middle and correct state (*zhongzheng* 中正)⁴⁵,

⁴² “Xi ci”, *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, p. 297. According to Kong Yingda’s commentary, “appropriate position” refers to the position that enables a sage to expand or enhance his functions (*guangyong* 广用). Because Ma thought that the great function of a sage is to “expand this mind to the fullest”, as we will see later, Ma further moralised the notion of “function”.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 260. According to Kong Yingda’s commentary, “a hexagram becomes established” means that each hexagram is established (*chengli* 成立) by its principle. For Ma, however, observing a specific hexagram is to observe how the principle controlling phenomena manifests through this hexagram and how to behave morally. The sage thereby establishes himself between Heaven and Earth.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 311. This means that for a sage, in giving rise to the great functions, the Yin and Yang lines must be arranged in an appropriate order, and there will appear a hexagram indicating good fortune where the middle line is properly posited. In Ma’s idealistic thought, the lines here correspond to thought-moments, and a hexagram indicating good fortune represents the great deeds that have resulted from the sage’s well-arranged thought-moments.

The context of this sentence is: “Qian is a purely Yang thing, and Kun is a purely Yin thing. The hard and the soft exist as hexagrams only after Yin and Yang have combined their virtues, for it is in this way that the numbers of Heaven and Earth become embodied in them and so perfectly realise their numinous, bright virtues.” (乾，阳物也。坤，阴物也。阴阳合德，而刚柔有体，以体天地之撰，以通神明之德。). Translated by Richard Lynn, mod, see Lynn, p. 86.

⁴⁵ See Bent Nielsen, *A Companion to Yi jing Numerology and Cosmology*, p. 338. “(A line) being central and correct. This refers to a yin line being in no. 2, which is its correct position, or a yang line being in no. 5 which is its correct position.” Both “Six” and “Nine” are unstable and dynamic lines that will eventually transform into another line. The numbers “Six” and “Nine” are related to the number of stalks used in divination. For a brief explanation of this problem, see John Minford, “How to Consult the *I Ching*”, in *I ching = Yijing: the Essential Translation of the Ancient Chinese Oracle and Book of Wisdom*, translated and annotated by John Minford, (NY: Viking Penguin, 2014). “The response, arrived at through one or other of the Divination methods described below, is presented as a six-fold combination of Yin and Yang Lines. Each Line is characterised

[whereas] “Nine in the second” and “Six in the fifth” refers merely to the middle (*zhong* 中)⁴⁶ but not the correct (*zheng* 正)⁴⁷. As for “Six in the third” and “Nine in the fourth”, [their hexagrams] just indicate that their positions are inappropriate.⁴⁸

Cheng Yi’s statement, “Where there is principle there is vital stuff; where there is vital stuff there are numbers” (i.e. the number of stalks used in divination) is key to understanding Ma’s words here. In the sentence “It is only after movement begins that [Supreme Polarity] is divided into Yin and Yang”, “Supreme Polarity” and “Yin and Yang” respectively corresponded to “principle” and “vital stuff” in Cheng’s statement. (For Ma, “principle” is also the nature/ [intrinsic reality] of the mind.) Given that “vital stuff is given rise to by the thought-moment”, we can infer that “movement” in that sentence refers to the one’s initial thought-moment. This is to say, the movement of vital stuff here is nothing but movement of one’s mind. After vital stuff has been given rise to,

as either Changing (6 or 9) or Unchanging (7 or 8). When a reading gives Changing Lines, those Lines take on a great significance, since they represent the dynamic forces at work in the evolution from one Hexagram to another.”

⁴⁶ See Nielsen, *A Companion to Yi jing Numerology and Cosmology*, p. 48. “This means that a line is in the central position of one of the constituent trigrams of a hexagram, i.e. in positions 2 or 5.” Here, this reflects the idea that one (the sage) is not situated in a most favourable position.

⁴⁷ Nielsen, *A Companion to Yi jing Numerology and Cosmology*, p. 48, mod.: “To attain the matching [positions]. This refers to an exposition of the hexagrams based on the positions of yin (broken) and yang (solid) lines. The yin lines are considered to be in correct position in lines 2, 4, and 6 counted from the bottom up, and the yang lines are in correct positions in lines 1, 3, and 5. Thus hexagram Ji ji 既济 (䷾) is the epitome of correct positions whereas hexagram Wei ji 未济 (䷿) has no lines in correct positions. This is also known as ‘attain the correct [position]’ (*dezhen* 得正), ‘matching positions’ (*dangwei* 当位), ‘the correct positions’ (*zhengwei* 正位), or ‘attain the positions’ (*dewei* 得位).”

⁴⁸ Ma Yifu, “Shi jiaoda lida” 释教大理大 (Explaining the Greatness of Teaching and Principle) and “Shi deda weida” 释德大位大 (Explaining the Greatness of Virtue and Position), “Guanxiang zhiyan”, pp. 371, 371, 377, 380, 383, 383. 《易》以《乾》《坤》统礼乐，以《咸》《恒》统言行，则《诗》、《书》、礼、乐之旨在焉。“亦要存亡吉凶，则居可知矣”，则《春秋》之义在焉。...故以《诗》、《书》、礼、乐、《春秋》望《易》，则又以《易》教为至大也。...教之所显该摄于一理，得此理者名之为德。...故“天地之大德曰生，圣人之大宝曰位”，“理得而成位乎其中”，失德则失位。...盖必阴阳合德而后成大。阴不从阳，气不顺理，则小矣。所以扶阳抑阴、贵大贱小皆示教之言耳，岂曰贵天而贱地哉！...六二、九五乃并言中正，九二、六五则只言中，不言正。若六三、九四俱言位不当。

it will appear as characteristics of Yin and Yang. Moreover, Yin and Yang movements can be further imaged as lines “Six” (referring to “--”, the Yin line) or “Nine” (referring to “—”, the Yang line) cited in the above passage. While hexagram Qian (Heaven) and hexagram Kun (Earth) are respectively purely Yang and purely Yin, other things in Heaven and Earth are blended and not purely Yin nor purely Yang. Also influenced by the “one mind two gateways” model of the *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith*, this generation process from Supreme Polarity to Yin and Yang could be shown in the following diagram:

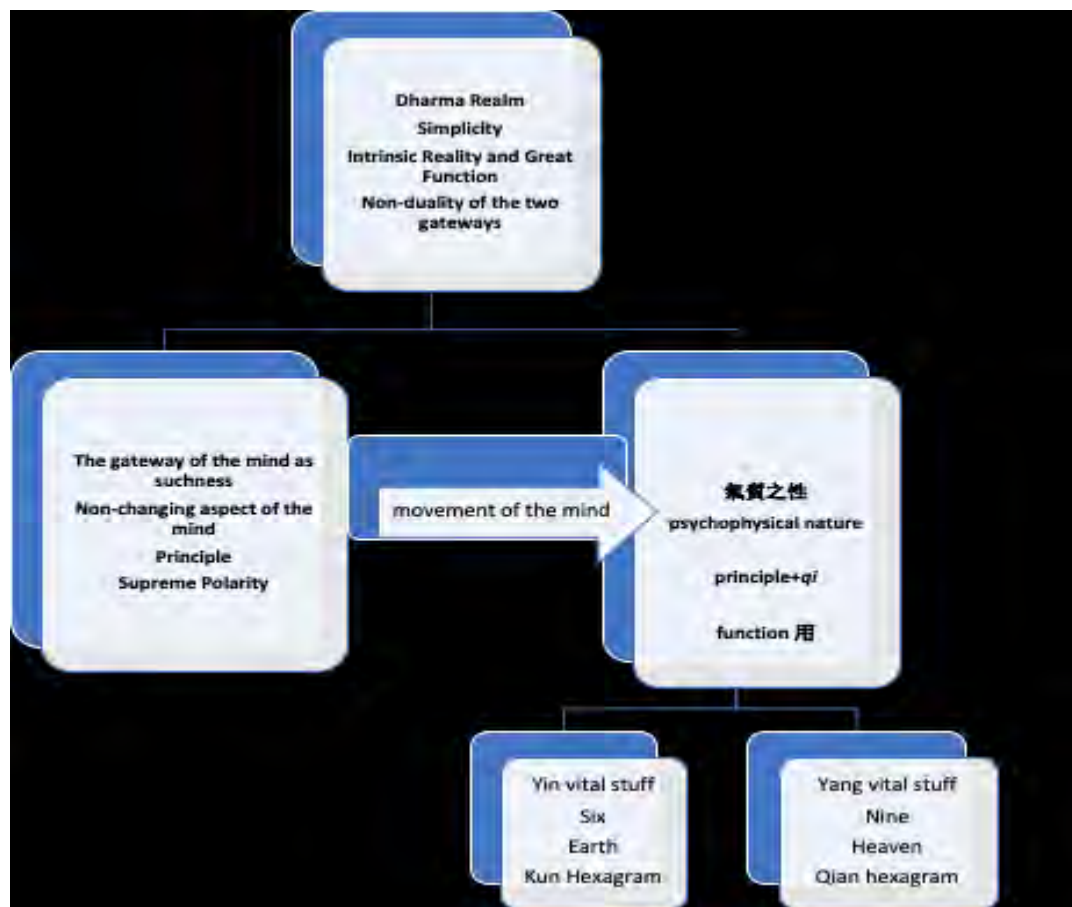


Diagram of the Generation Process from the Supreme Polarity to Heaven and Earth⁴⁹

⁴⁹ This diagram is modified from “Figure 5.3” and “Figure 5.4” in John Makeham, “Monism and the Problem of the Ignorance and Badness in Chinese Buddhism and Zhu Xi’s Neo-Confucianism”, in Makeham edit., *The Buddhist Roots of Zhu Xi’s Philosophical Thought*, p. 324. The “psychophysical nature” here is the term frequently used by Zhu Xi. For Ma, it will be “vital stuff”.

The idealistic tendency of Ma's Confucian thought has been developed to a high point in the "Goblet Words". For Ma, in one's mind-as-bright mirror, all changing phenomena in the Dharma Realm could be imaged in the 64 hexagrams consisting of Yin and Yang lines. In the teaching of the *Change*, the teachings of the Six Arts are "subsumed in one principle", and the key to maintaining the virtue-based governance revealed in former teachings is to attain the principle: "To attain this principle is called virtue". How to attain this principle subsuming the teachings of the Six Arts? The answer is: To observe the changes manifest in the lines of the hexagrams, and then to reach a balance between Yin and Yang. Here, the principle of the ideal governance is explained as the principle that maintains one's vital stuff (Yin and Yang) in a balanced state. If the virtue-based governance is the result of Ma's moralised interpretations of political deeds recorded in Confucian classics, a further idealised explanation of this governance is the result of the "Goblet Words". In Ma's abstract explanation, only after "Yin and Yang have combined their virtues" can great functions arise. Rather than maintaining a sensitive responsiveness between a ruler and ordinary people (discussed in former classics interpretations), from the perspective of the *Book of Change*, the task of the ideal governance is to keep an appropriate balance between Yin and Yang thought-moments. Then, like the former sages have done, one who observes the hexagrams will hold an appropriate position in the world (the Dharma Realm).

According to the *Book of Change*, this balance must be achieved in a hierarchical order: "As Heaven is high and noble and Earth is low and humble, so it is that Qian [Pure Yang, Hexagram 1] and Kun [Pure Yin, Hexagram 2] are defined. The high and the low being thereby set out, the exalted and the mean have their places accordingly"⁵⁰. But in explaining this order, Ma insisted that it is not a traditional hierarchical one because different positions shared the same virtue.⁵¹ In his words, when both the Nine line

⁵⁰ "Xi ci", *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, p. 257. 天尊地卑，乾坤定矣。卑高以陈，贵贱位矣。 Translated by Richard Lynn, see Lynn, *The Classic of Changes, A New Translation of the I Ching as Interpreted by Wang Bi*, p. 47.

⁵¹ Although Ma's interpretation of the equality between Yin and Yang was a novelty in the Confucian tradition, as early as the Han Dynasty, there appeared a similar discourse about mutual dependence between the superior and the inferior in a hierarchical system: "In the ruler-subject and father-son relationships, just as a loop that has no end, they act as roots to each other." 君臣父子转相为本，如循环无端。 See Zhang Fengqian 张丰乾, "Junchen fuzi zhi jian de ren yu yi — Yi Shuo Yuan weili" 君臣父子之间的仁与义——以《说苑》为例 (Benevolence and Righteousness between the Ruler and Subject, Father and Son: The *Shuo yuan* as a Case in Point), in *Sixiang yu wenhua (Di shiba ji)* 思想与文化 (第十八辑), edited by Yang Guorong 杨国荣, (Shanghai: Huadong

(referring to “—”, the Yang line) and the Six line (referring to “--”, the Yin line) are situated in an appropriate position this reflects the balanced state of one’s vital stuff, rather than mere political position. Therefore, “Six in the second [position]” (“without working at it, nothing he does here fails to be fitting”, 不习无不利),⁵² which represents a virtuous person, is not different from “Nine in the fifth [position]” (“a great man takes charge”, 大人造也),⁵³ which often represents a powerful emperor. Moreover, the “Six in the fifth”, even if it symbolises a person with great deeds⁵⁴, it is no more appropriate than the “Six in the second”, which represents a person who behaves appropriately. In short, for Ma, the true significance of appropriate position was more about self-cultivation rather than political life.

Ma’s interpretations of the role played by hexagrams indicates that he tried to find non-changing value in the context of an ever-changing political world. In following parts of his “Goblet Words”, Ma further explained that when viewed in this idealistic perspective based on the non-changing value, position can be grasped as a name of the virtue whose significance lies beyond all political deeds:

[Political] position is a name corresponding to the traces [of political deeds], and the person [who occupies that position] is the title of [one who has] verified [virtue] Generally speaking, while names such as King, Duke, Ruler and Lord refer to both virtue and position, those such as Great Man and Gentleman mainly refer to virtue. Verifying this virtue [that a Gentleman should have] is called completely fulfilling the nature; it is also called completely accomplishing position, and also called completely accomplishing ability.... The attainment of intrinsic reality is called virtue, and its manifestation as function is called activity (*ye* 业). [One’s] position is the name that matches one’s virtue, while [one’s] activity depends on one’s person to be manifest.... Position is the means by which one also illuminates timeliness, and by highlighting activity one

Shifan Daxue chubanshe, 2016), pp. 250-265. As a Confucian thinker living in post-monarchical China, Ma’s view is more radical than “mutual dependence” in the traditional context.

⁵² “Kun”, *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, p. 28. Lynn, p. 147.

⁵³ “Qian”, *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, p. 11. Lynn, p. 137.

⁵⁴ “Kun”, *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, p. 32. Lynn, p. 149. “Excellence abides within him, emanating through his four limbs and expressed in his deeds—the very acme of excellence” (美在其中而畅于四支，发于事业，美之至也).

affirms what is appropriate. Because position is great, timeliness is great. And because activity is great, appropriateness is great.... The sage views ascending to a noble position to be the same as living in the fields [as an ordinary person]. He [worships his deceased ancestors as if they were] correlates of Heaven [or as he was] sacrificing to the Di ancestor; and in nourishing the wise and the virtuous [subjects],⁵⁵ and nourishing all people, [he treats as] being the same as the way of [everyday] eating and drinking. He views [the time when] all people under Heaven came under his [rule] to be the same as [the time when he lived amid] trees and stones in the mountains.⁵⁶ The person who has comprehended this can become a Duke of Zhou or a Confucius. [Only then] can one begin to discuss “timeliness” and “appropriateness” with him.⁵⁷

This passage can be understood to be an extension of Ma’s ideas expressed in “Prolegomena to the Teaching of the *Odes*”: A king could be not different from a gentleman. And as we have seen in “The Main Idea of the *Classic of Filial Piety*”, the difference between “the son of heaven” and “an ordinary person” can be attributed to changing “karmic activity”. To a virtuous person, an “activity” that occurs at an appropriate “time” is a manifestation of “appropriateness”: “by highlighting activity one affirms what is appropriate”. Among “activity”, “appropriateness”, “timeliness” and “person”, the most fundamental one is the “person” who holds a certain position that makes the former three become “great”. And once the person has verified the virtue of the nature, regardless of the changing position a person situates, he/she will become a sage.

⁵⁵ “Ding” 鼎 (Hexagram Ding), *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, pp. 205-206.

⁵⁶ Mencius, 7A.16, *Mengzi zhushu*, p. 360. When Shun lived deep in the mountains, he dwelt among the trees and rocks, and romped with the deer and boar, he differed little from other people of the wilds. But once he heard one impressive talk, and saw one act of kindness, it was like trying to hold back a vast river—nothing could restrain him. (舜之居深山之中，与木石居，与鹿豕游，其所以异于深山之野人者几希。及其闻一善言，见一善行，若决江河，沛然莫之能御也。) Translated by A. Charles Muller, <http://www.acmuller.net/con-dao/mencius.html>.

⁵⁷ Ma Yifu, “Shi deda weida” and “Shi renda yeda shida yida”, “Guanxiang zhiyan”, pp. 383, 383, 384, 385, 388. 位乃应迹之称，人则实证之号...大抵王公君后固兼德位而言，大人君子唯是以德为主。实证此德谓之成性，亦谓之成位，亦谓之成能。...得于体谓之德，见于用谓之业。位者，称德为名。业者，依人而见。...寄位亦以明时，著业乃以存义。位大故时大，业大故义大也。...圣人视履尊位与畎亩同，视配天享帝、养圣贤、养万民与饮食之道同，视天下之人归之与深山木石同。会得此者可以为周公，亦可以为孔子，始可与言时、义。

The virtue verified here is not conditioned by changing situations. However, political deeds or activities, as functions of virtue, will be conditioned by a gentleman's position. A sage can become a person with power by timeliness and appropriateness, and his "position" as a ruler and his "activities" as political deeds will be recorded in the classics. In this sense, the notion of "timeliness" is introduced to describe the contingency of an ideal governance.⁵⁸ This is because, if a virtuous gentleman fails to become a king or a monarch, he cannot finish great political deeds such as those recorded in the classics. Instead of becoming Duke of Zhou, he could only become a sage like Confucius. And while "Six in the second" is not different from "Nine in the fifth", in Ma's interpretation, the *Book of Change* teaches us that one becomes a sage through knowing one's position and behaving appropriately.

After discussing the importance of timeliness and appropriateness, Ma once again cited *Mencius*: "ascending to a noble position is the same as living in the fields [as an ordinary person]". While living as a gentleman such as Confucius rather than a sage ruler such as the Duke of Zhou, the sage can attend solely to governing himself. He does not need to deal with issues concerning his subjects but rather can focus on the "habituated tendencies" of his daily life. Ma's moralised explanations of the classics are thus consistent with the mind monism of "Goblet Words": all political activities are "reflected" in the "bright mirror", they are also one's thought-moments. And in this mind monism framework, the sage's mind is precisely the foundation of virtue-based governance:

God-like responsiveness alone has no fixed method. Only by taking all implements as the way [of *Change*] can [the way of *Change*'s] functions be fully actualised, and its god-like [character] be fully developed.⁵⁹ In the eyes of an ordinary person, it (the way) is petty; [but] in the eyes of a sage, it is great. An ordinary person utilises it daily without knowing it, [whereas] a sage's utilisation of it is god-like.⁶⁰ And while the ordinary person's utilisation of it would not be enough to benefit the entire world, the sage's utilisation of it would be.... Only

⁵⁸ Ma Yifu declared that the idea of converging the *Lotus Sutra* and the *Spring and Autumn* was his innovation. It seems that "timeliness" should be a key to this convergence, however, this remains to be further explored. See Ma cited in Wu Yifeng, "Wenxue siji", *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, pp. 772-773.

⁵⁹ "Xi ci", *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, p. 291.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 268-270.

after understanding transformation can one become the master of implements, such that one can control them and not be led by them. Only after fully realising the unfathomable [character of the way of *Change*], can one become the “pivot of the way” (*daoshu* 道枢).⁶¹ [The sage] locates the “centre of the ring” (*huanzhong* 环中) [of the way], with which he is able to respond endlessly⁶².... The reason [the sage] composed the *Change* and deigned to leave this teaching was only because he wanted people to recognise the mind. Without knowing the principles of the nature and the mandate (*xingming zhi li* 性命之理)⁶³, the intrinsic reality of the mind would not manifest, and one’s daily activities would simply follow habituated tendencies, and would be completely without freedom (*ziyou fen* 自由分)⁶⁴. This is called “losing one’s inherent mind”⁶⁵.... If there is a shred of “attachment to the existence of an inherently existent self” (*renjian* 人见) or “attachment to the inherent existence of dharmas” (*fajian* 法见), such views are called “a thief”. If such views are not hunted down and eliminated, misfortunes will arise for people.⁶⁶ Therefore, [the *Change*] says: “It instils a sense of fearful caution about things from beginning to end, and its essential purpose is to permit people to be without blame”.⁶⁷ The final teaching (of the Six Arts) has been completely revealed in this part, and one can cease to speak.⁶⁸

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 304.

⁶² Both *daoshu* and *huanzhong* are adopted from *Zhuangzi*, see *Zhuangzi jiaquan* 庄子校注 (Revised and annotated *Zhuangzi*), vol 1, compiled by Wang Shumin 王叔岷 (1914-2008), (Taibei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan, lishi yuyan yanjiusuo, 1988), p. 58-59.

⁶³ “Shuo gua”, *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, p. 326.

⁶⁴ *Jingde chuandeng lu*, T2076_51.0250c04.

⁶⁵ *Mencius*, 6A.10, *Mengzi zhushu*, p. 309.

⁶⁶ *Jingde chuandeng lu*, T2076_51.0262c23.

⁶⁷ “Xi ci”, *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, p. 319. Translated by Richard Lynn, see Lynn, p. 93.

⁶⁸ Ma Yifu, “Shi dao da qi da” 释道大器大 (Explaining the Greatness of Way and Implements [in Phenomenal World]), “Guanxiang zhiyan”, pp. 390, 392, 393. 唯神应无方，斯举器是道，乃可以致用，乃可以尽神。凡民见之则小，圣人见之则大；凡民用之则不知，圣人用之则神；凡民用之不足以利天下，圣人用之乃足以利天下。...知化而后能为器长，宰物而不随于物。穷神而后能为道枢。得其环中，以应无穷...所以作《易》垂教，只是要人识得此心耳。若不知性命之理，则此心之体不显，寻常日用只是随顺习气，全无自由分，是谓失其本心。...有纤毫人见、法见即名为贼，此见若不剿绝，为人即祸生矣。是故曰“惧以终始，其要无咎”也。末后之教于此揭尽，可以息言矣。

After interpreting political deeds in the classics as ethical standards for daily behaviours, Ma's *Lectures* ended by praising the governance of the sage and emphasising the indispensable need for vigilance on the part of a good ruler. Divided into four parts, the first part of the above passage simply restates the “not one yet not different” relationship between the sage and the ordinary person. In the second and the third parts, Ma transplanted the notions of “centre of the ring” and “distinctive nature” (*xingfen* 性分) from Daoist and Buddhist traditions to describe how a sage/sovereign can control things by controlling his mind and also his thought-moments. Afterwards, at the end of his *Lectures*, Ma showed readers that the final teaching of the Six Arts he would like to reveal is no more than keeping “a sense of fearful caution about things from beginning to end” in order to preserve one's inherent mind. However, as Ma incorporated a complex political world into his “Dharma Realm subsumed within one mind” system, the gap between his New Confucian thought and social realities is stark.

3.3. The Idealistic Problem of Ma's New Confucian Thought

Recovering the nature is a central point of Ma's discourse of the Six Arts. As we have seen in the first chapter, Ma accepted Zhu Xi's model of “the mind controls/combines the nature (reality) and the emotions (functions)” as his theoretical framework, and he further explained that “The so-called reality of the mind is the nature”. It is by further explaining this “reality” in terms of “Dharma Realm subsumed within one mind” that distinguishes Ma's New Confucian thought different from that of Song and Ming Neo-Confucians. While this “reality of the mind” is utterly excluded from “conditioned arising”, functions/political activities are categorised as changing “conditioned arisings”. The problem with this categorisation lies in Ma's view that habituated tendencies are illusory. Liu Leheng has commented that Ma “mainly emphasised ‘refuting attachments and contemplating emptiness’” in his Confucian-Buddhist convergence, and “this led him to favour using the Buddhist-inflected notion of ‘removing habituated tendencies’ to subsume the Confucian self-cultivation practice of ‘transforming the psychophysical’”.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Cf. Liu, “The ‘Three Greats’, ‘Three Changes’ and ‘Six Arts’—Lessons Drawn from the *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith* in Ma Yifu's New Confucian Thought”, in John Makeham ed., *The Awakening of Faith and New Confucian Philosophy* (forthcoming). Here, Liu also commented: “Ma's doctrine of Confucian-Buddhist integration, which is founded on the notions of ‘seeing the nature’ and ‘the virtues of the nature,’ mainly

Given that the complexities of the political world would be simplified in the process of “recognising non-changing principle through observing changing phenomena”, due to “a sense of fearful caution about things”, various kinds of political activities might also be “hunted down and eliminated” on the grounds of their potentially serving as the origins of “habituated tendencies”. In this logic, with “Subsuming all [things] under heaven into a single person [oneself]”, Ma’s Buddhist-inflected New Confucian thought reveals a retreat from public life in modern China.

Yet, was it the case that Ma’s Buddhist-inflected also idealistic Confucian thought actually contributed something to Confucianism in modern China? An example from another religio-philosophical tradition may help to shed some light on this. The distinguished intellectual historian of Confucian thought, Zhang Hao 张灏, introduced the notion of “dark consciousness” (*youan yishi* 幽暗意识) from Reinhold Niebuhr’s modern theology to highlight the awareness of the “radical evil” in our nature. Zhang argued that it is this awareness that acts as a critical part of the theoretical foundation of “modern democracy” in the West. Confucian thought, he maintains, has paid insufficient attention to the radical evil in human nature, and at the same time lacks an account of transcendent goodness. Zhang found that, although this “dark consciousness” can also be discovered in Confucian thought, awareness of it is not strong enough to restrict the power of the ruler.⁷⁰ However, if replacing “radical evil” and “transcendence” with “habituated tendencies” and “mind-as-reality”, Ma Yifu’s “hybrid” New Confucian project has strengthened awareness of the “dark consciousness” that exists in the Confucian tradition. Ma’s emphasis on the unconditioned reality (the nature/mind-as-reality/principle) indicated the genetic signature inherited from Sinitic Buddhism and Zhu Xi’s Neo-Confucian thought.⁷¹ In Ma’s integration of Confucian and Buddhist ideas, he always emphasised the inseparability of the unconditioned and the conditioned. And through this

emphasised ‘refuting attachments and contemplating emptiness’ (*po zhi guan kong* 破执观空) to carry out this integration, but he was unable self-consciously to face up to the differences in the basic orientations of Confucianism and Buddhism. This led him to favour using the Buddhist-inflected notion of ‘removing habituated tendencies’ to subsume the Confucian self-cultivation practice of ‘transforming the psychophysical’ (*bianhua qizhi* 变化气质).”

⁷⁰ Zhang Hao 张灏, *Youan yishi yu minzhu chuantong* 幽暗意识与民主传统 (Dark Consciousness and Democratic Tradition), (Beijing: Xinxing chubanshe, 2006), pp. 31, 44-73.

⁷¹ John Makeham, “Chinese Philosophy’s Hybrid Identity”, in Ming Dong Gu ed., *Why Traditional Chinese Philosophy Still Matters: The Relevance of Ancient Wisdom for the Global Age*, (NY and Oxford : Routledge, 2018), p. 163.

inseparability, Ma established a new foundation that ensures the vitality of the Confucian tradition in a changing modern China: with the self-confirmation of the unchanging mind-as-reality (nature),⁷² one can develop thought-moments into activities not different from the great political deeds recorded in the Confucian classics.

This inseparability makes his New Confucian thought different from that of Master Chengguan, from whom Ma had learned a lot. Being faced with Chengguan's question regarding the Confucian notion of "Supreme Polarity" that unites the unconditioned and the conditioned, Ma defended his New Confucian position with a clear-cut attitude. He considered Zhou's ground-breaking work "Taiji tu shuo" 太极图说 (An Explanation of the Diagram of the Supreme Polarity) to be an appropriate and profound interpretation of the spirit of the *Avataṃsaka sūtra*:

Students should keep this in his mind: the actual principle (*shili* 实理) is omnipresent; it does not exist independently from the mind. This is what is meant by, "That which fully embraces all existents is nothing else but the one mind." The *Avataṃsaka sūtra* takes "the dependent arising of the Dharma Realm [is] inconceivable" (*fajie yuanqi busiyi* 法界缘起不思议)⁷³ as its tenet. It also just so happens that this tenet corresponds with the notion that this real principle is not independent of the one mind. The Supreme Polarity is precisely the Dharma Realm, and Yin and Yang are conditioned arising. The [mutual] arising of Yin and Yang expresses the meaning of manifestation [mentioned in the *Avataṃsaka sūtra*]⁷⁴. Because "ceaseless production and reproduction is called 'Change'",⁷⁵ [the notion of Supreme Polarity] is neither eliminated nor constant. Masters of Buddhist doctrinal learning judge this notion as either a "mistakenly understood cause" (*xieyin* 邪因) [of the world] or "being without cause" (*wuyin* 无因), which is like one who knows about two "fives" but does not know

⁷² Ma Yifu, "Zhi Ye Zuowen", *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 2, p. 379. In 1920, Ma said: "With regard to the nature's being fundamental, there has been no change since ancient times." See p. 40.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, T1735_35.0522a22.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, T1735_35.0504c15.

⁷⁵ "Xi ci", *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, p. 271.

“ten”.⁷⁶ (Comment: Qingliang [Chengguan] judged the “Supreme Polarity-Yin and Yang” [idea in the *Book of Change*] to be a mistakenly understood cause. If it can be established that Supreme Polarity has an existence independent from the mind, then it would indeed be a mistakenly understood cause. However, the fundamental meaning of Change is not so! [Chengguan] had failed to understand that both Yin and Yang, and movement and stillness are precisely “conditioned arising”. Therefore, [he wrongly] said, “If it were held that ‘everything’ is empty and self-so, then that would be [the mistaken view of] ‘being without a cause’”. [He also said] “If it were said that emptiness and self-suchness concurrently arise (*dengsheng* 等生) and that this must be because they do so eternally” [Chengguan] did not know that this [the concurrent arising of Yin and Yang] is precisely an explanation of “dependent arising”.⁷⁷) In addition, there are the four Dharma Realms. The first is the Dharma Realm of phenomena. This realm is distinguished by separation, as differences have boundaries. The second is the Dharma Realm of principle; “realm” means the nature, because the infinite phenomena share the same nature. The third is the Dharma Realm of non-obstruction between the principle and phenomena. This realm contains the meaning of distinctive self-natures because the distinctive self-natures of all things are non-obstructing in this realm. The fourth is the Dharma Realm of non-obstruction among phenomena, because in this realm, all bounded phenomena seamlessly merge in accordance with the same nature, [arising] manifoldly and

⁷⁶ This is Ma’s critique on Master Chengguan’s comment on the “Supreme Polarity” idea. In the following comments, Ma explained why Chengguan misunderstood the meaning of the “Supreme Polarity”.

⁷⁷ Chengguan, *Dafangguangfo huayan jing shu*, T1735_35.0521b09-T1735_35.0521b13. “Taking Supreme Polarity as the cause [of the myriad things] is [the mistaken view of] mistakenly understood cause. If it were said that ‘the successive movement of Yin and Yang [vital stuff] constitutes what is called the way’, this would be to hold that the transformation of Yin and Yang is what gives rise to the myriad things, which is also [the mistaken view of] mistakenly understood cause. If it were held that ‘everything’ is empty and self-so, then that would be [the mistaken view of] being without a cause. Both [the mistaken view of] being without a cause and [the mistaken view of] mistakenly understood cause constitute major errors. If it were said that that emptiness and self-suchness concurrently arise (*deng’sheng* 等生) and that this must be because they do so eternally, then this would be to fail to understand that the Three Realms (*saṃsāra*) arise from my mind.” (太极为因即是邪因。若谓一阴一阳之谓道，即计阴阳变易能生万物，亦是邪因。若计一为虚无自然，则亦无因。然无因、邪因，乃成大过，谓自然虚空等生，应常生故，以不知三界由乎我心。)

endlessly.⁷⁸ The teaching that is revealed in the *Change* is like this, and what is shown in “An Explanation of the Diagram of the Supreme Polarity” belongs to the latter two Dharma Realms.⁷⁹

The core concern of this passage is Ma’s critique of Chengguan’s misunderstanding of the Supreme Polarity and Yin and Yang. According to Ma, because Chengguan did not comprehend the correct meaning of “the successive movement of Yin and Yang [vital stuff] constitutes what is called the way”, he wrongly judged Supreme Polarity to be either a transcendent existent independent from the mind (and hence a “mistakenly understood cause”) or a kind of uncaused spontaneous emptiness (and hence “being without a cause”). In Ma’s mind-based ontological framework, Buddhist “conditioned arising” also has a bearing on the Confucian thesis that “ceaseless production and reproduction is called ‘Change’”. Just as Chengguan had claimed that “all bounded phenomena seamlessly merge in accordance with the same nature,” so too for Ma, the Confucian world of “ceaseless production and reproduction” is inherent in the mind and the sage’s mind can give rise to great functions. And this is where the concept “inherent awakening” had a significant impact on Ma. At the moment a gentleman recovers the nature, although he remains an ordinary person and not a ruler, the way of the Six Arts is fully realised. In this sense, the Buddhist notion “inherent awakening” could “empower” a Confucian gentleman: this gentleman could then grasp the moral principle controlling the world within his mind.

As noted in the final part of the previous section of this chapter, by expounding the sage’s mind, one of Ma’s aims was to avoid the subjectivism of the mind-based theory: the ignorance of the objective principle. To this end, Ma stressed one’s awareness

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, T1735_35.0730a02-T1735_35.0730a18.

⁷⁹ Ma Yifu, “*Taiji tu shuo zhuiyan*”, *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 4, pp. 5-6. 学者须知，此实理者无乎不在，不是离心而别有。所谓总该万有，不出一心。在《华严》以法界缘起不思议为宗。恰与此相应。太极即法界，阴阳即缘起。生阴生阳，乃显现义。生生为易，故非断非常。义学家判此为邪因无因，乃知二五而不知十也。（清凉判太极阴阳为邪因。若心外有太极可立，则谓之邪因可也。奈《易》之本义不如此，又不悟阴阳、动静即是缘起，故谓若计一为虚无自然，则成无因。谓自然虚空等生，则应常生不待缘。不知此乃正说缘起也。）又法界有四种义：一、事法界，界是分义，——差别有分齐故。二、理法界，界是性义，无尽事法同一性故。三、理事无碍法界，具性分义，性分无碍故。四、事事无碍法界，一切分齐事法，——如性融通，重重无尽故。《易》教所显如此，《太极图说》所示，正属后二义也。

of the “habituated tendencies” which was also Buddhist-inflected. And this strong awareness of the “habituated tendencies” resulted in the conservativeness of Ma’s thought. The gateways of the mind as suchness and the mind that arises and ceases are mutually dependent, and so analogously the nature and the emotions are also mutually dependent. Therefore, we could even say that in terms of Ma’s theoretical framework, the arising of habituated tendencies in the emotional world cannot be really eliminated: even the Buddha did not eliminate evil nature! (如来不断性恶).⁸⁰ Why not? Because the emotions that make the functions (good actions) possible also make evil ineliminable in our practices. Ma thus obscurely ended his *Lectures* by citing the *Book of Change*: “It instils a sense of fearful caution about things from beginning to end, and its essential purpose is to permit people to be without blame”.⁸¹ In a place where “human desires will overrun [the world] and Heavenly principle will be abandoned” as recognised by the young Ma (p. 27), the teaching of the Six Arts seems especially weak in a political world full of ineliminable evil.

While ineliminable habituated tendencies continuously hinder the recovery of the nature and the accomplishment of ideal governance, recovering the nature is like fighting with a demon who never dies. Although Ma repeatedly argued that the morally perfect sage could subsume the myriad things into his mind, the *Lectures* still end with the advice to keep a sense of fearful caution about habituated tendencies, rather than attempt to achieve accomplishments in public life. To a Confucian, choosing to “live in the fields” as a lifelong commitment might also seem to endorse a retreatist agenda, one ironically justified by the words of Confucius. On the one hand, Confucius said that “I can’t form associations with the birds and beasts. So, if I don’t associate with people, then who will I associate with?”⁸² On the other hand, Confucius also claimed that “The Way is not practised. I shall go ride a raft on the ocean.”⁸³ In a modernising China where Confucianism gradually faded out of the public life, this commitment and Ma’s thought are worthy of being further examined.

⁸⁰ Chengguan, *Dafangguang fo huayan jing shu*, T1735_35.0658c14.

⁸¹ “Xi ci”, *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, p. 319.

⁸² *Analects*, 18.6, *Lunyu zhushu*, p. 250. Translated by A. Charles Muller. “鸟兽不可与同群，吾非斯人之徒与而谁与？” <http://www.acmuller.net/con-dao/mencius.html>.

⁸³ *Analects*, 5.7, *Lunyu zhushu*, p. 57. Translated by A. Charles Muller. “道不行，乘桴浮于海。”

Concluding Remarks

This chapter demonstrated that through expounding the *Book of Change*, Ma provided a holistic view of the operation of the sage's governance maintained by the sage's mind. Ma argued that in this classic about divination, the changing hexagrams (results of divination) correspond to one's changing thought-moments, like images reflected in the mind as a mirror. Because all activities can be understood as hexagrams "reflected" in this "bright mirror", they are also one's thought-moments. The first section showed that while changes in political activities represented by the images of lines and hexagrams, in Ma's interpretations, changes in the political world with its unpredictable problems are thus "simplified" into one's inner world where normative principle always functions. In Ma's logic, even when isolated in a small room, a gentleman's self-governance is not different from the virtue-based governance recorded in the classics.

In this context, Ma's emphasis on morality further heightened the tension between an ideal world and an actual world. The second section pointed out that, given there was no permanent settlement of the conflict between normative values and realities conditioned by badness, virtual-based governance was difficult to substantiate in practice. In Ma's interpretations of the *Book of Change*, bizarrely, the functions of the sage's mind were limited to personal conduct and speech: a gentleman's self-governance. Due to this reason, Ma's *Lectures* ended with an admonishment to maintain a fearful caution about badness, rather than attempt to achieve accomplishments in public life. The last section then revealed that because the emotions that make the functions (good actions) possible also make evil ineliminable in our practices, the idealistic character made Ma's New Confucian project appeared especially weak in a political world full of ineliminable evil.

Part II: Comparative Studies of Ma's Thought: On the Background of Ma's New Confucian Thought

Chapter 4. Ma's Thought Compared with Thought of Contemporary Confucian and Buddhist Thinkers

I hope gentlemen of future generations will get rid of their sectarian prejudices and sincerely recite the words of former Confucians in order to benefit themselves and the world. —— Chen Li, “Preface to the *General Meaning of Han Confucianism*”¹

Ma Yifu's New Confucian thought was intimately concerned with both scholarship on the Confucian classics (*jingxue* 经学) as well as Neo-Confucianism. He was particularly concerned with the following question: What is the appropriate theoretical framework to understand how the Confucian classics can serve as normative guidelines in socio-political practices in modern China? This chapter will investigate three thinkers intimately connected with Ma's intellectual background by investigating Ma's assessments of their thought. Liao Ping 廖平 (1852-1932) and Zhang Taiyan 章太炎 (1869-1936) were influential Confucian classics scholars in the early twentieth century, Ma was not satisfied with their “classics-view” (“classics as prophecies” and “classics as historical works”). At this time, Ouyang Jingwu 欧阳竟无 (1871-1943) and Zhang Taiyan were notable Buddhistic thinkers who tried to interpret Confucian works through their Buddhistic theories. Ma held a different view on one of the key ideas in their theories: the mind could only be the deluded mind (*wangxin* 妄心) and should be abandoned. In carefully observing the weak points of these three thinkers' thought, this chapter seeks to highlight Ma's explanations of “what the Confucian classics are”, “what the relationship between the classics and the praxis is” and “what the correlation between

¹ Translated by Yu Yihong. 窃冀后之君子祛门户之偏见、诵先儒之遗言，有益于身、有益于世。——陈澧 (1810-1882) 《汉儒通义·序》

praxis (*yong*) and its theoretical basis (*ti*) is”, which are less problematic than the other thinkers’ explanations.

Starting with Ma’s critique of Zhang Xuecheng’s 章学诚 (1738-1801) claim that “the Six Classics are historical works”, the first of the chapter’s two sections will show why Ma deemed the adoption of a mind-based framework² to interpret the Confucian classics as “the Six Arts” to be the correct exegetical approach. This section will study the thought of two Confucian classics scholars: Liao Ping and Zhang Taiyan, in Sub-sections 4.1.1. and 4.1.2. respectively. A central problem they addressed was how to justify the relevance of the Confucian classics to China’s modernisation. Liao’s solution was to treat the classics as already containing all the knowledge newly introduced into China. Therefore, he viewed the classics as prophecies and endeavoured to incorporate that knowledge (such as knowledge about global geography he had learned) into a system named “Confucian scholarship”. Liao believed that the classics, like prophecies, were written for a future ideal world; hence, the study of these Confucian texts is the means to obtain the kind of knowledge that a modernising China needed. This drove Liao frequently to revise his interpretations of the classics in order to keep up with his growing acquaintance with western learning. According to Ma’s comment, Liao’s interpretations developed to become unreasonable fabrications. Having no bearing on normative principle, Ma maintained that these fabrications had negative impacts on intellectuals such as Kang Youwei 康有为(1858-1927), who is discussed in Appendix VI.

As a supporter of the view that the “Six Classics are historical works” rather than prophecies or knowledge about principle (*li* 理), Zhang Taiyan espoused reading the classics as historical works. However, he also thought that the concept of “self” was indispensable as the moral basis for applying historical knowledge. In order to justify this claim, he turned to the “one mind two gateways” model that Ma also adopted in his thought, which will be discussed later. Whereas Liao’s “classics as prophecies” was unable secure Confucianism’s relevance in modern China, Zhang’s “classics as historical works” pushed him to work out a theoretical foundation for moral normativity that could

² If the functions of the mind are not hindered by one’s bad desires, there will be no distinction or duality between mind and things. In Ma’s words, “there is no phenomenon outside the mind, and there is no function [in the phenomenal world] separate from the intrinsic reality [that is the mind].” See Sub-section 2.1.2 of Chapter 2. In this sense, “mind monism framework” here can collectively refer to “Dharma-realms subsumed into one mind”, “one mind two gateways” and also “mind controls the nature and the emotions” mentioned in Ma’s writings.

support a more convincing way of reading the classics as guidebooks for human practices. In investigating this foundation, Zhang came closer to the “one mind two gateways” model, a model that also shaped the theoretical framework that Ma used to expound the normative principles (*yili* 义理) he identified in the classics.

In Ma’s case we found that a mind-based framework is required in supporting his moralised understanding of the classics. Ma turned to Buddhist and Neo-Confucian resources and developed his idealistic thought based on “mind-as-reality” (*xinti* 心体). The second section will again investigate Zhang Taiyan, but this time together with Ouyang Jingwu, as two scholars with backgrounds in Buddhist scholarship. Influenced by the Yogācāra idea of the “deluded mind”, both Ouyang and Zhang met difficulties in constructing a theory supporting moral praxis in the human world. Ouyang was a consistent critic of the idea of “inherent awakening” and related mind-based theories that had profoundly inspired many important thinkers such as Chengguan, Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming. In his new elaboration of the “Balance as the Norm” chapter in the *Book of Rites* and also in other writings, Ouyang argued that only with the belief of being able to reach transcendent “*nirvāṇa*” can one appropriately understand the Confucian classics and undertake moral praxis. The gap between our praxis and its transcendent object made Ouyang’s project too idealistic. To justify that the “deluded mind” is indispensable to moral praxis, Zhang Taiyan turned to the “one mind two gateways” model and to Yangmingist ideas negated by Ouyang.

The second sub-section of this section, 4.2.2, will examine Zhang’s syncretic theory of the mind in which he tried to coordinate Buddhist and Neo-Confucian ideas. This sub-section will demonstrate that, also curtailed by the Yogācāra idea of the “deluded mind”, Zhang did not genuinely bridge the gap between praxis and its theoretical basis. And therefore, during his late years, Zhang failed to adequately justify the moral foundation of his “six classics are historical works” thesis. Centring on “mind-as-reality” rather than the “deluded mind”, Ma’s “one mind contains the Six Arts” discourse was better able to explain the relationship between praxis and its basis. In his discourse, the Confucian classics could be understood to be direct manifestations of our moral nature. Compared with Liao, Zhang and Ouyang, Ma was better able to explain how the Confucian classics can serve as normative guidelines in one’s practices in a rapidly changing world.

4.1.1. The Six Arts I: Liao Ping on the Confucian Classics as Prophecies

In terms of intellectual history, Liao Ping and Zhang Taiyan belonged to the generation before Ma. Their main intellectual activities occurred during the period between the mid-1890s and mid-1920s, the late Qing and early Republican period (*Qingmo Minchu* 清末民初).³ At the same time, many of their basic concerns and significant disagreements tended to centre on the relationship between the Confucian classics and the cultural life of modern China. Both of their discourses met with Ma Yifu's criticisms. Ma's views were derived from his position regarding the "unchanging" character of the Six Arts: he maintained that the classics are manifestations of principle rather than descriptions of political institutions (whether in actual history or those designed for the future generations). Compared with Kang and Zhang, Liao was relatively unknown, yet Ma still paid special attention to Liao's ideas, which can be associated with those of Zhang Xuecheng, a thinker holding a different historical point of view from that of Ma. Ma wrote:

Talented people have studied under Mr. Liao and have learned much from his commentaries on the Confucian classics. Mr. Liao is skilled at explaining political institutions, but it is regrettable that few of [his commentaries] come near to being outstanding. Using the normative principles [revealed by] former Confucians as the yardstick, it seems that his views cannot be completely followed....

The New Text and Old Text (*jingu wen* 今古文)⁴ classical scholars of the Qing Dynasty each set up factions. Most of [their ideas] inevitably are borne out

³ Generally, due to the increasing demand for western knowledge in order to make China rich and powerful, the authority of Confucianism became significantly weakened during this period, which started with the Sino-Japanese War and ended with the May Fourth Movement. See Yang Guoqiang 杨国强, *Wan Qing de shiren yu shixiang* 晚清的士人与世相 (The Literati and their World in the Late Qing), (Beijing: Shenghuo dushu xinzhi sanlian shudian, 2008), pp. 146-235. Luo Zhitian 罗志田, *Quanshi zhuan: Jindai Zhongguo de sixiang, shehui yu xueshu* 权势转移: 近代中国的思想, 社会与学术 (Shifts of Power: Modern Chinese Thought, Society and Scholarship), (Beijing: Beijing Shifan Daxue chubanshe, 2014), pp. 180-200.

⁴ In the Eastern Han Dynasty (25 – 220 CE), these two opposing schools held different ideas about the composition of the Confucian classics and related issues. While scholars

of competitiveness and bias. Although their writings are abundant, [those writings] often contradict normative principles. Mr. Liao is the last [of this group] and he is skilled at explaining institutions (*zhidu* 制度)⁵. Yet, his view that the Six Classics can be considered as works written for posterity renders them almost the same as prophecies; thus how are the Six Classics different from the apocrypha (*chenwei* 讖纬)⁶? Perhaps Mr. Liao has been misled by the Gongyang School, which said, “[the classics were] written for the Han Dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE)”⁷. As for Zhang Shizhai 章实斋 (i.e. Zhang Xuecheng 章学

during the Qing Dynasty endeavoured to reconstruct ancient commentaries on the classics, related disputes were revived in a different form. Yan Ruoqu's 阎若璩 (1636-1704) *Shangshu guwen shuzheng* 尚书古文疏证 (Elucidation and Verification of the Old Text *Book of Documents*) is one of the earliest indications of this trend. And “for a period of more than fifty years, beginning in the 1890s and ending in the 1940s, the debate on the correct transmission of the Chinese classics was one of the most controversial (and politically relevant) topics among Chinese intellectuals”. See Hans van Ess, “The Old Text/New Text Controversy: Has the 20th Century Got It Wrong?”, *T'oung Pao*, Second Series, Vol. 80, Fasc. 1/3 (1994), pp. 146-147.

⁵ According to Liao, the controversies of the New Text school and the Old Text school were based on differences between the “Royal Regulations” (*wangzhi* 王制) chapter of the *Book of Rites* and the *Rites of Zhou*. Briefly, the former envisaged political and ritual institutions recorded in these works as guides for the future (the New Text school) and the latter merely recorded those institutions existing in the past (the Old Text school). See Liao Ping, “Jin gu xue kao”, in Meng Mo 蒙默 and Meng Huaijin 蒙怀敬 ed., *Liao Ping Juan* 廖平卷 (Volume of Liao Ping's Selected Works), (Beijing: Zhongguo Renmin Daxue chubanshe, 2015), pp. 1-47. Dated 1886.

⁶ “Around the first century CE, a corpus of texts appeared under the generic names *chen* 讖, *wei* 纬, or as a binome, *chenwei* 讖纬. *Chen*, a word seldom used before the Han dynasty, indicates prophecies, either in words or images. *Wei* derives its semantic meaning from weaving. In weaving, a warp sets up the frame into which the weft is woven. Thus, ‘warp,’ or *jing* 经, is borrowed to designate the classics because of its connotations of ‘foundation’ and ‘constancy.’ Following this metaphor, the name ‘weft,’ or *wei* 纬, accordingly claims to explicate, supplement, or elaborate the classics.... Apocrypha contain several main themes: astrology, explanation and elaboration of the Five Classics, anecdotes of the ancient sages, and prophecies especially regarding the rise of the ruling Liu family.” See Zhao Lu, “Representations of Confucius in Apocrypha of the First Century CE”, in Paul R. Goldin ed., *A Concise Companion to Confucius*, p. 76.

⁷ The phrase “written for the Han Dynasty” (*wei Han zhi zuo* 为汉制作) cannot be found in then Gongyang School's commentaries on the *Spring and Autumn*, but this concept (that Confucius had written something to guide the Han Dynasty) was popular among Confucians during the Han Dynasty. Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (192-104 BCE) is particularly notable. Both Dong and the Gongyang School played important roles in the late Qing scholars' rediscovery of the New Text School, (Wang Guanghui, *Sandai ke fu*, pp. 28-93), and so it is reasonable that Ma associated this slogan with the “Gongyang School” of the late Qing and with Liao Ping's stance on the New Text School. One of the biggest commonalities among these New Texts School thinkers in the late Qing

诚; 1738-1801), who thought that all the Six Classics are political canons of the former kings, and that Confucius' work of editing and transmitting the ancient classics had usurped the official powers [of the historiographers],⁸ his fault is the same as Liao's. In summary, the Six Classics reveal [the principle of] appropriateness in historical facts; thus, the study of the classics should focus solely on [their disclosure of] appropriateness and discovering what is in accordance with appropriateness.⁹

period is that they tended to comprehend history as a system of symbols, which guarantees an interpreter's liberty to explain the laws governing the development of history. Through special approaches usually related to adopting concepts from the Gongyang School's commentaries and the works of Han Confucians, those symbols were retrospectively identified in the classics and other ancient writings. See Ding Yajie 丁亚杰, "Xu"序 (Preface), in Ding, *Wan Qing jingxue shi lunji* 晚清经学史论集 (Collected Papers on the History of Classics Scholarship in the Late Qing Period), (Taipei: Wenjin chubanshe, 2008), pp. 2-4.

⁸ Zhang Xuecheng, "Yi jiao" 易教 (The Teaching of *Change*), *Wenshi tongyi xinbian xinzhushu* 文史通义新编新注 (Newly Edited *On Literature and History* With New Annotations), edited and annotated by Cang Xiuliang 仓修良, (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2005), p. 1. The relationship between the classics and official powers can also be found in Zhang Xuecheng's writings. In stating that Confucius usurped official powers, Zhang's target was the "Confucian scholars" who paid honour to Confucius. See Zhang, "Yuan dao" 原道 (An Inquiry on the Way), *Wenshi tongyi xinbian xinzhushu*, p. 100. "Confucius assimilated the way of the Duke of Zhou and made his teachings shine forth for all time. However, in doing this, Confucius never devised theories of his own. He made clear the Six Classics and preserved the old statutes of the Duke Zhou.... It was not that Confucius exalted the former kings in order to humbly cultivate his own character, and therefore did not create anything of his own. Basically, there was nothing that Confucius could have created. Having virtue but lacking position, Confucius had no authority to create political systems.... Governing and teaching were not two things; the roles of official and teacher were united. How dare there be people who used empty words to maintain their own personal theories! Scholars have paid honor to Confucius in a way that seems to appropriate him as the founding teacher of their own particular group. In doing this they reveal that they actually do not understand Confucius." (夫子尽周公之道而明其教于万世，夫子未尝自为说也。表章六籍，存周公之旧典...非夫子推尊先王，意存谦牧而不自作也，夫子本无可作也。有德无位，即无制作之权...治教无二，官师合一，岂有空言以存其私说哉！儒家者流尊奉孔子，若将私为儒者之宗师，则亦不知孔子矣。) Translated by Philip J. Ivanhoe, see Ivanhoe, *On Ethics and History: Essays and Letters of Zhang Xuecheng*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), pp. 34-35, mod.

⁹ Ma Yifu, "Da Chijun" 答池君 (A Reply to Mr. Chi), *Ma Yifu Quanjì*, vol 1, pp. 411-412. 贤者尝师廖君，习闻其经说甚富。廖君善言制度，惜乎稍近恢奇。若以先儒义理准之，似未可以尽从也。

清代经学家今古文各立门户，多不免以胜心私见出之，著述虽多，往往乖于义理。廖君最后出，善言制度，然以六经为俟后之书，几同预言，则经文与讖纬何别。无乃为公羊家“为汉制作”一语所误乎？若章实斋以六经皆先王政典，则孔子删述

Because the above reply was included specifically in the *Erya tai dawen* this indicates its importance in Ma's mind. Ma politely acknowledged Liao's classic scholarship and then gave a critique that focused on Liao's shortcomings in comprehending Confucian normative principles. The key point of Ma's critique of Liao lies in "explaining institutions", as I will explain in more detail in the next paragraph. As already mentioned, Ma insisted that the political institutions in the classics should be understood as manifestations of the virtues of the nature rather than as embodiments of political power. Liao was also opposed to "historicising" the classics because he thought that as normative guidelines, Confucian classics should not be limited by historical conditions. Zhang Xuecheng's central argument that "the Six Classics are all historical works" (*Liu Jing jie shi* 六经皆史) was negated by Liao on the grounds that "the Six Classics are knowledge about the future rather than records of the past.... (The classics have) provided China and the world an ultimate standard of goodness and beauty".¹⁰ Liao's explanation that "institutions" were designed for future generations is similar to Ma's important argument in his *Taihe Lecture*: "to extend is to realise what already exists, whereas opening up is to look forward to establishing [Great Stability]"(致是实现之称，开则期待之谓)¹¹. Perhaps this is why Ma explicitly commended Liao's writings as "thoughtful and insightful" (有思想，有眼光) compared with the other classics specialists from the Qing Dynasty.¹²

Why, then, did Ma comment that Liao's fault was the same as Zhang Xuecheng's view that "the Six Classics are all historical works"? It is because Liao did not identify the relationship between normative principles and historical facts in the classics. As such, the institutions created by Confucius (as understood by Liao) were not different from the institutions created by Duke of Zhou (as understood by Zhang Xuecheng); neither of these understandings was related to "normative principle" of the classics. Although Liao seemed to share with Ma similar beliefs about the Confucian classics and the age of Great Stability, the details of their beliefs are nevertheless different. As Ma pointed out, Liao's

之业为侵官，其蔽一也。总之，六经皆因事显义，治经当以义为主，求其当于义而已。

¹⁰ Liao Ping, "Zun Kong pian" 尊孔篇 (On respecting Confucius), in Meng Mo and Meng Huaijin, ed., *Liao Ping juan*, pp. 545-546. 六经者非述古，乃知来...为中外立一至美至善之标准。Dated 1909.

¹¹ Ma Yifu, "Hengqu siju jiao", p. 7.

¹² Ma Yifu, "Yulu leibian·Shiyou pian", p. 693.

understanding of the classics was affected by wrongly presupposing that “[the classics were] written for the Han Dynasty”. Liao declared that the Confucian classics were written for the future, but Ma believed that Liao had still neglected to note the fact that as manifestations of the nature, the contents of the classics should not be limited to any concrete political institution. To Ma, Liao’s main problem was his failure to recognise the supra-historical character of the Confucian classics:

[My book] *Discourse on the Six Arts* will use the Six Arts to unify and contain all ancient and modern scholarship.... The history division (*shi bu* 史部) is originally a branch of the classics. Most historical works of later periods are not worthy of such a classification, except for the *Detailed Outline of the Comprehensive Mirror in Aid of Governance*, which was composed with this meaning (the history division is originally a branch of the classics) in mind. Zhang Xuecheng’s comment, “the Six Classics are historical works”, is actually no more than an inverted view (*diandao jian* 颠倒见).... The writings of the modern scholar, Liao Jiping 廖季平 (Liao Ping), are strongly reminiscent of an attempt at doctrinal classification. Liao begins by classifying [the classics as] New Text and Old Text, in which the *Rites of Zhou* is considered to be Old Text and the “Royal Regulations” (*wangzhi* 王制) chapter [of the *Book of Rites*] is considered to be New Text. Thus, [in existing classics, these two kinds of system] are not in full conformity [with each other]. It is like Zheng Xuan’s 郑玄 (127-200) explanation of the ritual institutions in the classics: when a point that contradicts his own account appears, he would classify it as belonging to the regulations of the Shang Dynasty (1600–1046 BCE) [rather than of Zhou Dynasty]. Sometimes, Zheng also explained the *Rites of Zhou* by associating it with the regulations of the Han Dynasty. Liao’s approach is similar to this. Following on from this, when Liao speaks of the minor and the great, [he] identifies passages in the classics that mention the minor and the great, such as “Great Unity” (*datong* 大同), “Minor Stability” (*xiaokang* 小康),¹³ and then arranges and compares them. His point is that that which belongs to the minor is not necessarily bad. Finally, when Liao speaks of the classifications of heaven

¹³ “Li yun” 礼运 (Cycles of the Rites), *Liji zhengyi*, pp. 658-661.

and human,¹⁴ he considers all the passages from the *Book of Odes* to belong to the category of heaven. According to him, “[She] is my joy” (*liaole wo yun* 聊乐我云) means “[She] is my soul’s joy” (*liaole wo hun* 聊乐我魂)¹⁵; such an interpretation is outlandish and unreasonable.¹⁶ Although Liao is proficient in classical texts and highly talented, he is ignorant of the normative principles, and he does not study Buddhist texts. He “has his face to the wall and indulges in his imagination” (*xiangbi* 向/乡壁虚造);¹⁷ and assumes and makes judgements subjectively. [Liao’s erroneous views] further influenced Kang Youwei, who badly misled others.¹⁸

In the first two sections of this passage, Ma presents his understanding of historical works and classics. As shown in Appendix IV, Ma maintains that the knowledge contained in

¹⁴ In his later years, Liao argued that according to Confucius, humans will evolve towards immortal (celestial/heavenly) beings and the “human emperor” (*rendi* 人帝) will evolve towards the “heavenly emperor” (*tianhuang* 天皇). For a brief introduction to Liao’s discourse of “heaven and human”, see Liu Jhih-Ching (Liu Zhiqing) 刘芝庆, *Jingshi yu anshen* 经世与安身 (Statecraft and Self-cultivation), (Taipei: Wanjuan lou, 2017), pp. 277-286.

¹⁵ “Chu qi dongmen” 出其东门 (Out of the East Door), *Mao Shi zhengyi* 毛诗正义 (Correct Interpretations of the *Book of Odes* Based on Mao’s Teachings), (Beijing: Beijing Daxue chubanshe, 1999), pp. 317-318. According to commentaries, the original text of “聊乐我云” ought to be “聊乐我员”, both “yun 云” and “yuan 员” are the same modal particle and they are interchangeable.

¹⁶ Liao described the development of his own thought as having undergone “four changes” (*sibian* 四变); see Liao, “Si yi guan jingxue sibian ji zixu” 四益馆经学四变记自序 (The Preface to A Record of the Four Changes House Master’s Four Evolvments in Classics Scholarship), in Shu Dagang 舒大刚 and Yang Shiwen 杨世文 eds., *Liao Ping quanji* 廖平全集 (Complete Works of Liao Ping), vol 2, (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2015), p. 884. Dated 1906. Ma’s comments might be based on this text.

¹⁷ Xu Shen 许慎 (58-147), “Xu” 序 (Preface), *Shuowen jiezi* 说文解字 (Explaining Graphs and Analysing Characters), <https://ctext.org/shuo-wen-jie-zi/xu/zhs>.

¹⁸ Ma Yifu, “Yulu leibian: Liu yi pian”, *Ma Yifu Quanji*, vol 1, pp. 572-574. 《六艺论》当以六艺统摄古今一切学术。…史部本为经之支流，后世史书多不足以语此，惟《纲目》为有此义。章实斋所云“六经皆史”，实颠倒见耳。…近人廖季平所为书，颇有判教意味。初分今古，以为《周礼》古文，《王制》今文，故不尽符合。比如郑氏说礼，有违异处，则以属之殷制，或以汉制说《周官》，廖氏伎俩亦无以异。继而讲小大，举经中言小大处，如“大同”、“小康”之类，一一排而比之，其意以为小者不必是恶也。最后讲天人，以为《诗经》所言，全是天事，以“聊乐我云”为“聊乐我魂”。其言乃荒诞不可究诘。廖氏虽经文熟，天资高，而不知义理，不读佛书，向壁虚造，臆说武断，流而为康有为，误人不浅。

Chinese historical works, western social sciences and the humanities are all included in the teaching of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. And as one of the teachings of the Six Arts, the teaching of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* is knowledge about normative principles and also our nature. Thus, whereas Ma commended Zhu Xi's *Detailed Outline of the Comprehensive Mirror in Aid of Governance* for praising the good and exposing wrong-doing, he judged Zhang Xuecheng's influential thesis to be an inverted view. From Ma's perspective, because Zhang took the contents of the classics as political works that are value-free, he was unable to reveal the nature and therefore remained ignorant of genuine knowledge. For Ma, Liao's classical scholarship was the result of an overactive imagination; and he had failed to confirm the intrinsic reality of the mind. Therefore, given that Liao "is ignorant of the normative principles, and does not study Buddhist texts", in Ma's judgement, Liao did not move beyond Zhang's thesis that "the Six Classics are historical works".

Ma believed that "as long as the human mind, [which is imbued with good nature] is not dead, the Six Classics would keep on existing"¹⁹ For Ma, knowledge about our good nature was knowledge of the normative principles (*yili* 义理) inherently in one's mind, and this kind of knowledge must be clearly differentiated from mere knowledge about historical facts.²⁰ Zhang Xuecheng's thesis that "the Six Classics are historical works" and Zhang Taiyan's claim that "Confucius is [merely] an excellent historian" (孔子，古良史也)，²¹ both present the classics as simply being historical records that do not provide normative guidance for posterity. Viewed from Ma's perspective, Liao's understanding of the classics was less problematic because he knew that "the classics are not historical works".²² However, because Liao treated the Confucian classics as prophecies about political institutions designed for posterity, he still missed the crucial

¹⁹ Ma, cited in Wu Yifeng, "Wenxue siji", p. 753. 人心一日不亡，六经便一日存在。

²⁰ *Ibid.*,

²¹ Ma's direct comments on Zhang Taiyan can be found in Ma, "Yulu leibian: Shixue pian" 语录类编·史学篇 (Collated Compilation of Recorded Words: Section on History), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, p.606. Zhang's first made this claim in 1906 and he continued to hold it over his lifetime. An important recent reflection on the influences of this argument is provided by Chen Bisheng 陈壁生, "Zhang Taiyan de xin Jingxue 章太炎的新经学" (The New Classical Scholarship of Zhang Taiyan), in Chen, *Jingxue de wajie 经学的瓦解* (The Collapse of Classics Scholarship), (Shanghai: Huadong Shifan Daxue chubanshe, 2014), pp. 10-51.

²² Liao Ping, "Zunkong pian", in Meng Mo and Meng Huaijin ed., *Liao Ping Juan*, pp. 545-546. Dated 1909.

role of the mind, and remained ignorant of the “normative principles” as understood by Ma.

In the following part, to shed light on Ma’s claims about Liao’s ignorance and its negative influence on Kang Youwei, both Liao’s and Kang’s discourses on Confucian scholarship will be discussed. Joseph Levenson (1920-1969) considered Liao and his works to be “out of main line of history”, because as China underwent modernisation in the twentieth century, Liao’s scholarship on the classics became more and more marginalised.²³ Ironically, over the past thirty years, as China has continued its path of modernisation and development, Liao’s works have been collated and published.²⁴ In the last ten years, some younger scholars have started to investigate the coherence and historical significance of Liao’s system based on the Confucian classics.²⁵ Based on these materials and studies, Liao’s idiosyncratic logic has become more apparent to researchers.

Although Liao spent most of his life living and writing in Sichuan province,²⁶ the aim of all his intellectual efforts was still “universal” in tone: to subsume all things in the world into his system of Confucian scholarship (*kongxue* 孔学). An instance that demonstrates his universalist tendency is found in Liao’s article, “Doctrine of the Great Unity” (*datong xueshuo* 大同学说).

²³ Joseph R. Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate: A Trilogy*, vol 3, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), p. 15.

²⁴ There are three significant collections of Liao’s works: Li Yaoxian 李耀仙 ed., *Liao Ping xuanji* 廖平选集 (Collected Works of Liao Ping), (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 1998); Shu Dagang and Yang Shiwen ed., *Liao Ping quanji*; and Meng Mo 蒙默 and Meng Huaijin 蒙怀敬 ed., *Liao Ping juan*. In this chapter, quotations of Liao are from the latter two publications.

²⁵ Xiang Ke 向珂, *Liao Ping yu jingxue gailiang* 廖平与经学改良 (Liao Ping and the Reformation of Classics Scholarship), PhD Thesis, Wuhan University, 2013. Cui Hailiang 崔海亮, *Liao Ping jingu xue yanjiu* 廖平今古学研究 (A Study of Liao Ping’s New Text and Old Text Classics Scholarship), (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 2014). Wei Caiying 魏采莹 (Wei Tsai-ying), *Jingdian zhixu de chonggou* 经典秩序的重构 (The Reconstruction of the Sequence of the Classics), (Taipei: Lianjing chuban gongsi, 2018).

²⁶ Liao’s journeys around China in his early life should also be taken into consideration, as they provided incentives for Liao’s “second” transformation; see Li Xiaoyu 李晓宇, *Zunjing yigu quxin: Sichuan shengcheng Zunjing Shuyuan ji qi xueshu shanbian yanjiu* 尊经·疑古·趋新: 四川省城尊经书院及其学术嬗变研究 (Reverence, Suspicion and Innovation: Zunjing Academy and its Academic Evolution), Sichuan University, PhD Thesis, 2009, pp. 140-143. On Liao’s six changes over the course of his life, see Bai Yudong 柏毓东, “Liu bian ji” 六变记 (A Record of Liao Ping’s Six Changes), in *Liao Ping quanji*, vol 2, pp. 984-989.

Today, in speaking about [China's] reform and self-empowerment, the first task is the enlightenment of the literati. Before the literati can be enlightened, the import of the sage's teaching of "Great Unity" must be clarified. Confucian teachings that have been transmitted from the past are a minor part of "Modest Prosperity" (*xiaokang* 小康)²⁷.... The masses are all the people of the "Great Unity", and it is one's duty (*fennei* 分内) to examine all the political affairs and scholarship in the world...; adopt the strengths of other people to confirm the meaning of our classics; and develop that which lies hidden in the old [i.e. the classics] and extend it to the entire globe.... In [the implementation of ritual practices] one should begin from the "Royal Regulations" [in the *Book of Rites*], extending through to the *Rites of Zhou*; [one should also] begin from China, extending through to the foreign states.... Verifying the minor to extrapolate to the great is no more than a matter of expanding the scope — there is certainly nothing difficult about it.... Since the unification of China, the different [cultural] traces (*xing ji* 形迹) of the south and the north have comingled and become homogenised;²⁸ they can no longer be so clearly demarcated as in previous times. Given a few more thousand years, who knows if China and other

²⁷ Great Unity and the Modest Prosperity are concepts discussed in "Li yun 礼运" (Cycles of the Rites) chapter of the *Book of Rites*. The former term refers to the state where "everything under heaven is shared" (*tianxia wei gong* 天下为公) and "people did not treat only their own parents as their parents, or only their children as their children" (人不独亲其亲、子其子). The latter term refers to the state where "Everything under heaven is the property of individual families. [People] treat only their parents as their parents, and only their children as their children" (天下为家，各亲其亲，各子其子). Translated by Michael D.K Ing, "Ritual and the Vulnerability of a Prosperous World: A Reading of the 'Liyun' 礼运", in Alexis McLeod, ed., *The Bloomsbury Research Handbook of Early Chinese Ethics and Political Philosophy*, (NY: Bloomsbury, 2019), pp. 87-88, mod.

²⁸ In Liao's words: during the period Northern and Southern dynasties (386-589), according to Yan Zhitui's 颜之推 (531-591) book *Family instructions of Master Yan* (*Yanshi jiaxun* 颜氏家训), different states in southern and northern China had different cultures, spoke languages and had different customs. Cf. Yan, *Yanshi jiaxun jijie* 颜氏家训集解 (Collected Annotations on *Family instructions of Master Yan*), annotated by Wang Liqi 王利器 (1912-1998), (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2018), pp. 638-640. However, different cultural traces comingled and became homogenised after the unification achieved in Sui Dynasty (581-619). See Liao Ping, "Datong xueshuo", in Meng Mo and Meng Huaijin ed., *Liao Ping juan*, p. 555. Originally published in *Zhongguo xuebao* 中国学报, 1913, No. 8.

nations will not unify, just as northern and southern China were unified after a long separation?²⁹

Here, Liao argues that the wisdom provided by the Confucian classics is infinite. Using appropriate methods such as “verifying the minor to extrapolate to the great”, ensures that valid knowledge from the classics can be obtained even though they are written long ago. For Liao, the critical point is to confirm that the sage composed these classics for the future age of “Great Unity” world rather than the future age of “Modest Prosperity”. Only those classics which provide knowledge and institutions for the age of “Great Unity” will be appropriate for a modernising China. The premise of Liao’s argument is that the validity of the classics is self-evident.

This passage reflects the second phase in the development of Liao’s thought: to clarify the teaching of the “Great Unity” in the classics, so as to “enlighten the literati”.³⁰ This quotation is from a journal article originally published in 1913. Liao’s aim in writing this article can be compared with the claim Ma Yifu made in 1909, that the newspapers ought to be treated as publications about genuine learning so as to influence gentlemen in society.³¹ The central part of Liao’s article was excerpted in one of Ma’s drafts, showing Ma’s concern with Liao’s “Great Unity” argument.³² Undoubtedly, as foreigners and Chinese share in one intrinsic reality, Ma would have agreed with Liao’s ideal of unification of China and other nations “after a long separation”. But from Ma’s perspective, this unification could not be found in Liao’s “outlandish and unreasonable”

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 549-555. 故当今欲言变法自强，首在开士智，欲开士智，必先明圣人大同之宗旨。旧所传之儒说，为小康之小者。…众生皆大同之人民，所有海内外政治学术，皆我分内所当考究…取人之所长，以证我之经义，发旧有之所伏，以推之全球…当由《王制》以推《周礼》，由中国以推外国。…验小推大，不过扩充，固无所难…自中国一统以后，南北混化其形迹，不能如当时之分划之严密，中外再数千年，安知不如中国南北之分久远遂化一统。

³⁰ This aim might be connected with Liang Qichao’s 1898 call to “achieve the enlightenment of the commoners, the gentlemen and the officials” (开民智，开绅智，开官智). See Liang, “Lun Hunan yangban zhi shi” 论湖南应办之事 (On What to Do in the Reformation of Hunan Province), in Tang Zhijun 汤志钧 ed., *Liang Qichao quanji* 梁启超全集 (Complete Works of Liang Qichao), vol 1, (Beijing: Zhongguo Renmin Daxue chubanshe, 2018), pp. 433-437.

³¹ Ma Yifu, “Zhi Shao Liancun”, pp. 350-351. This letter has been translated and analysed in Section 1.1. of Chapter 1.

³² See *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 4, pp. 434-436. Date of composition unknown. It is apparent that Ma only excerpted those parts of Liao’s works that he considered significant here.

interpretation of the classics. In observing Liao's recommendation to "adopt the strengths of other people to confirm the meaning of our classics", we will further reveal how Liao's interpretation is flawed.

Liao said that "Given a few more thousand years, who knows if China and other nations will not unify, just as northern and southern China were unified after a long separation?" In the age of "Great Unity", the manners and customs of different nations would become comingled and homogenised, and this is why knowledge of the Confucian classics will remain valid in the modern world. But what will this knowledge be? For Liao, the word "strengths of other people" represents the western knowledge which should be learned and could be integrated into Confucian scholarship ("adopt the strengths of other people to confirm the meaning of our classics"). And the consequence of this integration was that Liao's Confucian scholarship became a hybrid of classical texts and new terms of western learning. Then, the terms Liao appropriated from the classics became the disguise of the western learning he would like to explain. For instance, Liao brazenly declared in public that the phrase "*fa yu zhi yan* 法语之言" (normative words) in the *Analects* is, in fact, a reference to the French language (*Falanxi yu* 法兰西语); he did so to justify the claim that Confucius had knowledge of France.³³ Just as Levenson had done, Chinese Marxist historian Liu Danian 刘大年 (1915-1999) commented that this implausible explanation indicates that "Confucianism has come to a dead-end in its attempts to grasp a modernising China".³⁴

Nevertheless, both Levenson's and Liu Danian's judgements were made from the perspective of modernisation. They were in agreement that Liao should not have taken the classics as containing sagely prophecies about the new knowledge he encountered in a

³³ This is described by Liao's academic opponent, Zhang Taiyan; see Zhang, "Shi guoxuehui zhusheng" 示国学会诸生 (To Students of the National Learning Society), *Zhang Taiyan quanji shuxin ji* 章太炎全集 书信集 (Complete Works of Zhang Taiyan: Letters), (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2017), (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1986), p. 742.

³⁴ Liu's comments are based on Zhang Taiyan's words cited above. See Liu Danian, "Ping jindai jingxue" 评近代经学 (Critiquing Modern Classics Scholarship), in *Ming Qing luncong*, 1999(0), pp. 40-41. One of the most famous supporters of Neo-Confucianism in the early twentieth century, Feng Youlan 冯友兰 (1895-1990), also regarded Liao as representative of the dead end of the "Classics Period (*jingxue shidai* 经学时代)" of Chinese philosophy. See Feng, *Zhongguo zhixue shi (xia)* 中国哲学史 (下) (History of Chinese Philosophy, Part 2), in Feng, *San song Tang quanji* 三松堂全集 (Complete Works from the Hall of Three Pine Trees) vol 3, (Zhengzhou: Henan renmin chubanshe, 2001), p. 435.

modernising China. Although Liao's Confucian scholarship was absurd from their perspective, we can see his desire to accommodate modernisation. Liao's new interpretation on the Five Phases is a good example for analysing his attempt at such accommodation:

China's discourse of the Five Phases has been widely criticised by western chemists. [Those people] do not know that the Five Phases can be found in the "Great Plan", which was especially written as a classic by Confucius, and the Five Phases serve as symbolic marks of the Five Zones. (The Nine Divisions of the Great Plan are precisely the nine great continents [of the world], and the Five Phases bind the Nine Continents into Five Zones.) Wood, metal, water, fire, and earth correspond to East, West, South, North and Centre; and to Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. [Five Phases] are used to distinguish Zones and to fix their positions, and must not be talked about as elements.... [Confucians] in the Qin and Han periods misunderstood this meaning. Some of them [wrongly] considered them to be the water virtue, the earth virtue and the fire virtue [associated with particular dynasties]. All of them reduced global unity to China's [unity]. [Just like] the procrustean bed, [their ideas] are implausible and far-fetched.... [The Five Phases] are [expressions of] the Way and not vessels [in the realm of form]. If the Five Phases are understood in terms of matter, is this not like an attempt to view the heavens through a narrow pipe or measure the volume of the sea by scooping it out with a clam shell!³⁵

Liao, like Ma, focused on the significance of the Five Phases in his discussion of the "Great Plan" of the *Book of Documents*, but he offered a different interpretation. Dismissing the knowledge of "western chemists", Liao argued that the "Five Phases"

³⁵ Liao Ping, "Shujing Zhouli huangdi jiangyu tubiao" 书经周礼皇帝疆域图表 (The Diagrams of Emperor's Territories in the *Book of Documents* and the *Rites of Zhou*), in *Liao Ping quanji*, vol 4, pp. 390-392. 中国五行之说，颇为泰西化学家所诟病。不知五行见于《洪范》，孔子特著为经，以为五方之符记。（小字：《范》之九畴即为大九州，五行约九畴为五方。）所谓木金水火土，犹东西南北中、春夏秋冬季，以之辨方正位，绝不以原质论也。...秦汉误会此旨，或以为水德、土德、火德，皆以全球大统之说缩小于中国一隅，足大履小，勉强附会。...道而非器，若以物质概之，岂非管窥蠡测之见乎！Dated 1910s.

referred to the Five Zones of the world. This is because Liao recognised that if the concept “Five Phases” is used to refer to “Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, and Water” in their traditional sense, this concept will be rejected by people who have accepted the views of western chemists. Accordingly, Liao had to find a way to reconcile the views of western chemists and those of the Chinese sage. He thus argued that concepts in the classics are not in contradiction with new knowledge. The teachings of the Chinese sages are still relevant if the Five Phases are understood to be symbolic markers of the Five Zones of the world. In the period before the Chinese people had a concept of the “earth” (*diqu* 地球), Confucian scholars did not know the true meanings of the sage’s prophecies (the Five Phases as symbolic marks of the Five Zones of the world), and they falsely used the Five Phases to explain natural phenomena as calamitous and propitious portents (*zaiyi* 灾异).³⁶ Therefore, according to Liao, the Five Phases had been inappropriately correlated related with the five elements (“Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, and Water”), and their true role as symbolic markers had been missed. In a rapidly changing China, his system of classics scholarship seems, to use his own words, “implausible and far-fetched”.

In contrast, from Ma’s perspective, using his mind monism framework to examine the Five Phases enables any critique from western chemists to be dismissed, because their critique is simply the consequence of their failure to “reveal the nature”. Ma said, “Buddhists talk about four great elements (*sida* 四大), all of which are vital stuff. We Confucians match the Five Phases with humaneness, appropriateness, ritual, wisdom and good faith; principle thus operates therein.”³⁷ As we have seen in his interpretations of the “Great Plan”, Ma confirmed that the Five Phases concept could be justified in a worldview based on his mind-based theory while vital stuff is the manifestation of the nature/principle.³⁸ Therefore, questions raised by western chemists about the validity of

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 351-352. The original expression of “In the period when Chinese did not know the truth about the earth” is 地球未出以前 ([in the period] when the [idea of] earth did not appear [among Chinese]). What Liao meant was that Chinese ancients did not have a clear recognition of our earth. And only after western learning including the new idea of “the earth” (*diqu* 地球) had been introduced into China, could the true meanings of the classics (prophecies made by Confucius) be revealed among the Chinese people.

³⁷ Ma, “Yulu leibian·Ru-Fo pian”, p. 660. 佛氏言四大，全是气。吾儒言五行，以配仁、义、礼、智、信，便有理行乎其中。

³⁸ “The Five Phases are vital stuff, and the August Royal Ultimate is principle. The vital stuff and principle both penetrate everywhere. Only when principle is active within vital stuff does function start to take form”, the August Royal Ultimate here represents the mind. See Ma, “Shi fuji zhi mu” of “Bieshi wufu liuji” of “‘Hongfan’ yueyi”, p. 335.

Five Phases were simply due to their ignorance of the “nature” behind “phenomena”.³⁹ If Liao’s approach of justifying Confucianism’s relevance in modern China is to explain the classics as prophecies, Ma’s project (classics as manifestations of the nature) was less unconventional: rather than inexhaustible knowledge about the external world, the classics provide us with knowledge about our moral nature, a nature that cannot be changed by modernisation. At the same time, according to Ma’s comment, evidence of Liao’s negative impacts on Chinese intellectuals could be further found in the case of Kang Youwei (see Appendix VI).

4.1.2. The Six Arts II: Zhang Taiyan on the Confucian Classics as Historical Works and His Philosophy

Zhang Taiyan had deemed that Kang’s proposal to “introduce reform to existing political institutions in the name of ancient classics” not only distorted the meaning of the classical texts but also tended to lead the Chinese people towards historical nihilism: contriving historical facts and distorting the classics in the service of promoting certain ideas.⁴⁰ Instead of prescience (*qianzhi* 前知) or prophecies, the knowledge of a sage must depend on things (*jie yu wu* 藉于物) as evidence for what might be used in practice.⁴¹ Zhang called his scholarly approach as both historical and “sociological”.⁴² As part of the nation’s history, Zhang considered the Confucian classics to be precious records of past socio-political activities.⁴³ In these historical records, according to Zhang, ancient

³⁹ Ma Yifu, “Bie shi wuxing” 别释五行 (Specific Explanations of Five Phases) of “‘Hongfan’ Yueyi”, p. 281. See Sub-section 2.2.3. of Chapter 2.

⁴⁰ Liu Wei, *Zhongguo xueshu zhi jindai mingyun*, pp. 147-154.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 144-145.

⁴² See Zhang, *Zhang Taiyan quanji yiwen ji* 章太炎全集 译文集 (Complete Works of Zhang Taiyan: Translations), (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2015), p. 45. In Zhang’s terms, these two approaches are “*kaoji huanggu* 考迹皇古” (studying the traces of historical things) and “*xixin cangmi* 先心藏密” (clarifying one’s thoughts and dwelling in seclusion, or remaining secluded in order to calmly recognise social tendencies). Dated 1902. Having introduced Japanese sociology to China, Zhang was also regarded as a pioneer of China’s native sociology in the early twentieth century. See Sun Benwen 孙本文 (1891-1979), *Dangdai Zhongguo shehuixue* 当代中国社会学 (Sociology in Contemporary China), (Chongqing: Shengli chubanshe, 1948), pp. 10-12.

⁴³ Zhang, “Ding shizhi 订实知” (Arguing for Evidenced-based Knowledge), *Zhang Taiyan quanji Qiushu chukeben* 章太炎全集 诂书初刻本 (Complete Works of Zhang Taiyan:

emperors were experienced politicians rather than virtuous sages. So-called sages were simply experienced men who were good at coordinating the desires (*yu* 欲) of ordinary people—their aim was not to establish a legacy of normative principles.⁴⁴

In Zhang's view, rites were not manifestations of Heavenly principle, but institutions designed to coordinate the desires of ordinary people.⁴⁵ According to Zhang, readers of history must know that even the sages are not immune from the influences of personal motives:

Laozi began his career as an official historiographer, therefore he focused on emphasising the importance of validation. Previously, people had viewed ancient emperors and kings as sages, whereas Laozi was able to see through [their actions and uncover] their personal motives (selfishness)⁴⁶. Previously, people had viewed the myriad things as if they had a unifying system⁴⁷; Laozi saw that

First Edition of A Book of Urgency), (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2014), p. 34. Dated 1900.

⁴⁴ Zhang, *Zhang Taiyan quanji yanjiang ji* 章太炎全集 演讲集 (Complete Works of Zhang Taiyan: Speeches), (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2015), p. 157. Dated 1911. This farewell presentation made in Japan explained the meaning of Zhang's interpretation of *Zhuangzi*. I will frequently cite this presentation in the following parts.

⁴⁵ Zhang's argument about "coordinating desires" was also rooted in a tradition that can be traced to Dai Zhen 戴震 and his student Ling Tingkan 凌廷堪 (1757-1809), which was also fiercely opposed by Ma Yifu. Cf. Ma, "Zhi Yuan Yuzun 致袁谕尊" (Ma's Letter to his student Yuan Yuzun), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 2, p. 903. Dated 1939. For analyses of Dai and Ling's thought, see Zhang Shouan 张寿安, *Shiba shiji lixue kaozheng de sixiang huoli* 十八世纪礼学考证的思想活力 (The Intellectual Dynamic of the Historical Empiricism of Ritual Scholarship in the 18th Century), (Beijing: Beijing Daxue chubanshe, 2005), pp. 113-143, 244-269. See also Zhang Zhiqiang 张志强, *Zhu-Lu-Kong-Fo-xiandai sixiang*, pp. 27-31.

⁴⁶ Zhang's interpretation of *Laozi* was that Laozi sought to reveal the personal motives of a ruler, and that Laozi maintained that the ruler must exercise self-restraint in being a good ruler (a sage). For example, *Daode jing* 道德经 (Classic of the Way and Virtue), *zhang* 7, "Therefore the sage puts his own person last, and yet it is found in the foremost place; he treats his person as if it were foreign to him, and yet that person is preserved. Is it not because he has no personal and private ends, that therefore his personal motives are realised?" (是以圣人后其身而身先, 外其身而身存。非以其无私耶? 故能成其私。) Translated by James Legge, mod., see <https://ctext.org/dao-de-jing/ens>.

⁴⁷ Zhang's point is that there is no principle, way, or system that unifies and governs the myriad things. See *Daode jing*, *zhang* 34: "All-pervading is the Great Way! It may be found on the left hand and on the right. All things depend on it for their production, which it gives to them, not one refusing obedience to it. When its work is accomplished, it does not claim the name of having done it. It clothes all things as with a garment, and makes

there is no such system. Only with the appearance of Zhuangzi's "On the Equalization of Things" did people realise that everything is truly equal. It is by following this way that each of the myriad things of the world can be at ease.⁴⁸

Here, Zhang Taiyan considered Laozi as a thinker who can provide a correct historical perspective on understanding ancient sages and their political deeds. That there is no "unifying system" means the particularity of each individual cannot be eliminated in such a system. Indeed, the personal motives of a sage and an ordinary person are equal.⁴⁹ Given the particularity of each person cannot be removed in this world, how could true equality be achieved? This difficulty drove Zhang to study Zhuangzi's "On the Equalization of Things" to further explore the meaning of "equality" among people. And these elaborations were the foundations of his understandings of history and the world.

In his elaborations, Zhang insisted that "purging names and forms"⁵⁰ was required in thinking and scholarship. "Names and forms" are names and conceptions of real things; they are what we use in describing the impermanent world. If they hinder one from obtaining accurate knowledge of the factual world, according to Zhang, one should take a critical look at their origins. This meant that one should remove conceptual concealments of past and present facts ("purging names and forms"):

no assumption of being their lord; - it may be named in the smallest things. All things return (to their root and disappear), and do not know that it is it which presides over their doing so; it may be named in the greatest things. Hence the sage is able (in the same way) to accomplish his great achievements. It is through his not making himself great that he can accomplish them." (大道泛兮，其可左右。万物恃之而生而不辞，功成不名有。衣养万物而不为主，常无欲，可名于小；万物归焉，而不为主，可名为大。以其终不自为大，故能成其大。) Translated by James Legge, mod.

⁴⁸ Zhang Taiyan, *Zhang Taiyan quanji yanjiang ji*, p. 83. 老子是史官出身，所以专讲质验。以前看古来的帝王都是圣人，老子看得穿他有私心；以前看万物都有个统系，老子看得万物没有统系。及到庄子《齐物论》出来，真是件件看成平等。照这个法子做去，就世界万物各得自在。Dated 1910.

⁴⁹ See Zhang Zhiqiang, *Zhu-Lu-Kong-Fo-xiandai sixiang*, pp. 105-107.

⁵⁰ Zhang's use of "names and forms", as he claimed, followed Wuxing's 无性 (Asvabhāva, 450–530) *She Dasheng lun shi* 摄大乘论释 (Explanation of *Mahāyānasamgraha*), T1598_31.0401c09-c10. Cf. Zhang Taiyan, *Qiwulun shi* 齐物论释 (An Interpretation of "On the Equalization of Things"), *Zhang Taiyan quanji* 章太炎全集 (Complete Works of Zhang Taiyan), vol 6, (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2014), p. 10. Dated 1910.

It is manifestly clear that [Mohist] impartial concern (*jian'ai* 兼爱)⁵¹ is harsher than [Confucian] humaneness and appropriateness, and that humaneness and appropriateness are crueler than laws. The wish to equalize the unequal is a vulgar attachment of inferior persons; “unequal yet equal” is a profound discourse of the wise. Unless one has purged [one’s dependence on] names and forms, how could it be possible to affirm this!⁵²

This comment is taken from one of Zhang’s *Zhuangzi* interpretations, which articulates his critique of traditional Confucian values in both political and philosophical terms. Zhang rejected the “wish to equalize the unequal” as a vulgar attachment. The use of the term “attachment” was related to Zhang’s Buddhist learning; in the above passage it refers to purging attachment to concepts such as impartial concern as well as humaneness and appropriateness. With the help of the Yogācāra ideas,⁵³ especially the “Eight Consciousnesses” (*bashi* 八识) theory based on *Cheng weishi lun* 成唯识论 (Demonstration of Nothing but Consciousness),⁵⁴ Zhang developed his philosophy of the

⁵¹ “The ethical guideline for which the Mohists are most well-known is *jian ai*, sometimes translated as ‘universal love’ but probably better rendered as “inclusive care.” *Jian* (together, jointly) in this context has the connotation of including everyone in society together within a whole. Like the English ‘care’, *ai* (love, care) is ambiguous, since it may refer to a range of attitudes from strong affection to detached concern. In Mohist texts the word typically seems to refer to a dispassionate concern about the welfare of its object.” See Chris Fraser, “Mohism”, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/mohism/#inclusive>>.

⁵² Zhang Taiyan, *Qiwulun shi*, p. 5. 兼爱酷于仁义，仁义憊于法律，较然明矣。齐其不齐，下士之鄙执；不齐而齐，上哲之玄谈。自非涤除名相，其孰能与于此！

⁵³ “Yogācāra is one of the two most influential philosophical systems of Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism, along with Madhyamaka... After the Tang Dynasty, the term [*faxiang* 法相] was used to denote the famous pilgrim and monk Xuanzang’s Yogācāra School, but it soon became a mildly derogatory expression used by its opponents... As the name implies, Yogācāra focuses on meditative practice, as well as epistemology and logic. Competing traditions of Yogācāra thought were first introduced into China during the sixth century, with the Weishi School rising to preeminence in the seventh century. By the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368), however, key commentaries of this school had ceased being transmitted in China, and it was not until the end of the nineteenth century that a number of them were reintroduced into China from Japan, where their transmission had been uninterrupted.” See John Makeham, “Introduction”, in John Makeham ed., *Transforming Consciousness: Yogācāra Thought in Modern China*, published by Oxford Scholarship Online: April 2014, DOI: 0.1093/acprof:oso/9780199358120.001.0001, p. 3.

⁵⁴ This book provided a framework describing how the phenomenal world arises through the functions of human consciousness, and how to overcome our attachment to externality by observing the by-products of our consciousness. According to Dan

real equality in the 1910s and formed his critical attitude towards Neo-Confucianism. As Viren Murthy has pointed out, Zhang tried to show that “to name something as equalization would already fix and reify it”.⁵⁵ Because this equalization shatters the identity of a person, it is inherently unequal. While this reification based on misusing names results from one’s attachments to the existence of externals (*fawo* 法我) and self (*renwo* 人我),⁵⁶ through continuous effort to purge names and forms, “everyone can break free of the reifying tendencies of consciousness”.⁵⁷ Associating Laozi’s historical perspective with Buddhist philosophical ideas, Zhang argued that a sage who was good at coordinating people’s desires should keep himself away from preconceptions (*chengjian* 成见) within such concepts as humaneness and appropriateness. He took “humaneness” and “appropriateness” to be names and forms that will strengthen these reifying tendencies.⁵⁸ For Zhang, drawing on Lao-Zhuang thought and Buddhist thought was the best expedient means of solving China’s problem; because concepts such as humaneness

Lusthaus, “Yogācāra enjoys arguing away the existence of externals, primarily because epistemologically realism is difficult if not impossible to establish unequivocally. Since the more Yogācāra undermined the security of their opponents’ epistemological grounding, the more insistent, agitated and vociferous their opponents became, it grew more and more obvious that what drives the realist to posit and validate externality is a deep inner anxiety, a psychic need, and not the dry detached attitude with which they would like to pretend. Revealing these inner *āsravas* is the whole point of the Yogācāra analysis...The *āsravas*... are deeply seated propensities that drive one to pursue and cling to pleasure, further existence, ignorance, and pernicious views and theories. They are the propensities that, due to ignorance and wrong views, compel us to desire and to become attached”. See Lusthaus, *Buddhist Phenomenology: A Philosophical Investigation of Yogācāra Buddhism and the Ch'eng Wei-shih Lun*, (London and NY: Routledge, 2006), pp. 488, 126.

⁵⁵ Viren Murthy, “Equality as Reification Zhang Taiyan’s Yogācāra Reading of *Zhuangzi* in the Context of Global Modernity”, in John Makeham ed., *Transforming Consciousness: Yogācāra Thought in Modern China*, published by Oxford Scholarship Online: April 2014, DOI: 0.1093/acprof:oso/9780199358120.001.0001, p. 141.

⁵⁶ Zhang Taiyan, *Zhang Taiyan quanji yanjiang ji*, pp. 151-153. “A hallmark of Mahāyāna is the claim that not only persons lack selfhood (*ren wu wo* 人無我; *pudgala-nairātmya*), but dharmas are also devoid of self (*fa wu wo* 法無我; *dharma-nairātmya*). Non-Mahāyāna Buddhists sometimes argued for non-self (*anātman*) by reducing a person to the dharmas that constitute that person, such as the aggregates.” See Footnote 164 of the *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith*, edited and translated by John Jorgensen, Dan Lusthaus, John Makeham, and Mark Strange, p. 109. Mahāyāna, by contrast, went on to insist dharmas also lack selfhood.

⁵⁷ Viren Murthy, “Equality as Reification Zhang Taiyan’s Yogācāra Reading of *Zhuangzi* in the Context of Global Modernity”, in John Makeham ed., *Transforming Consciousness: Yogācāra Thought in Modern China*, p. 140.

⁵⁸ Zhang Taiyan, *Zhang Taiyan quanji yanjiang ji*, p. 157. Dated 1911.

and appropriateness served to provide ambitious individuals with excuses to satisfy their desires, they needed to be purged.⁵⁹

Whereas Yogācāra masters showed us how to overcome our attachment to externality by observing the by-products of our consciousness, for Zhang, Lao-Zhuang thought taught us “this way that each of the myriad things of the world can be at ease”. By observing the functions of our consciousness with the help of Yogācāra doctrines, and also by understanding historical facts by drawing on Lao-Zhuang’s point of view, Zhang maintained that real equality is desirable for each person.⁶⁰ In Zhang’s theory, if each person manages to overcome his or her attachment to external things and the self, real equality would be achieved in the world. Also, with further recognition of external things and the self, one would become closer to being genuinely equal.

In this process, Zhang regarded Mahāyāna Buddhism to be best “vehicle” to obtain correct cognition:

Buddhist teaching claims that Mahā-yāna (great vehicle), Pratyekabuddha-yāna (vehicle of the self-awakened ones) and Śrāvaka-yāna (vehicle of the hearers of Buddhist teaching) are the three Buddhist vehicles [to enlightenment], whereas Deva-yāna (vehicle of the celestials) and Maṇuṣya-yāna (human vehicle) are common to non-Buddhists and secular persons; making five vehicles in total.⁶¹ The various religions we see today are mostly Deva-yāna. Protestantism and Catholicism consider all human beings to be God’s creation. By believing in God and obeying the commandments [Christians maintain that believers] can ascend to heaven and wait upon God, but they themselves can never become God. Yet if they were to blaspheme, then they would be sent down to hell and can never be delivered from it. This does not constitute being equal. Slightly more advanced [than this] is Hindu Vedānta that establishes Brahman as the foundation, which is not so different from [the Christian] God. According to the

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

⁶⁰ Ishii Tsuyoshi, *Qiwu de zhexue* 齐物的哲学 (The Philosophy of the Equalization of Things), (Shanghai: Huadong Shifan Daxue chubanshe, 2016), pp. 31-37.

⁶¹ Zhang modified the meaning of the “five vehicles” (originally vehicle of Buddhas, vehicle of Bodhisattvas, vehicle of the hearers of Buddha’s teachings, vehicle of the self-awakened ones, vehicle of the celestials). Cf. *Dasheng ru lengqie jing* 大乘入楞伽经 (*Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*; Sutra on the Buddha’s Entering the Country of Lanka), T0672_16.0607a28-T0672_16.0607a29.

provisional teaching of this religion, both the sentient realm and the material realm are issued from Brahman⁶², such that there is no need for believers to convert or repent. Comparing this with the foregoing religions, the truth of equality is more obvious [in Vedānta]. But [Vedānta] still claims that there is retribution in the world, which is still rigid and incoherent. More advanced [than this] is Indian Sāṃkhya that establishes *ātman* rather than Brahman as fundamental. In Chinese translation, *ātman* is *shenwo* 神我 (spirit-cum-*ātman*). Yet *shenwo* is deluded by sorrow, joy and darkness, and cannot see itself—it becomes attached to the sentient and natural realms. When it abandons delusion and seeks awakening, then *shenwo* appears of its own accord, and that there never was the chaos of the sentient and natural realms. This [Sāṃkhya] discourse is closer to knowing what is fundamental than the discourse on Brahman, but ultimately one is still not free from attachment to the existence of the self.⁶³ Given that “self” is a name that is in contrast to “other”, the opposition between the other and the self has not reached equality yet.⁶⁴

⁶² *Cheng weishi lun* 成唯识论 (Demonstration of Nothing but Consciousness), compiled and translated by Xuan Zang, T1585_31.0003b07-14. The work is mainly “a translation by Xuanzang of Dharmapāla’s (Hufa 护法, sixth century) commentary on the *Weishi sanshi song* 唯识三十颂 (Thirty Verses on Consciousness-only), by Vasubandhu (Shiqin 世亲, d.u.), but it also includes edited translations of other masters’ works on the same verses.” See Dan Lusthaus and Charles Muller, “Discourse on the Theory of Consciousness-only 成唯识论”, *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=成唯識論>.

⁶³ In his other writings, Zhang often mentioned *Jin qishi lun* 金七十论 (*Suvarṇasaptati*; On the Golden Seventy Verses) in discussing the Sāṃkhya school. His knowledge about this school might be from Kuiji’s 窥基 (632-682) commentaries on *Cheng weishi lun*. See Kuiji, *Cheng weishi lun shuji* 成唯识论述记 (Commentary on *Demonstration of Nothing but Consciousness*), T1830_43.0252b03-T1830_43.0252b26. John Jorgensen noted that Zhang began to study this non-Buddhist school in 1906 when he was in Japan, where Sāṃkhya and Vaiśeṣika literatures were well-preserved. See Jorgensen, “Indra’s Network Zhang Taiyan’s Sino-Japanese Personal Networks and the Rise of Yogācāra in Modern China”, in John Makeham ed., *Transforming Consciousness: Yogācāra Thought in Modern China*, pp. 76-86.

⁶⁴ Zhang Taiyan, *Zhang Taiyan quanji yanjiang ji*, p. 235. 佛法自称有大乘、缘觉乘、声闻乘三者，而天乘、人乘，通于外道俗士，合为五乘。今所见各家宗教，大抵皆天乘也。基督，天主二教以为人皆上帝所生，信仰上帝，遵行戒法，死后可以升侍上帝之旁，而终不能成为上帝；若加毁谤，便堕地狱，亦永无超脱之时，此未为平等也。稍进则印度吠坛多教，立梵天王为本，亦与上帝不甚差殊，而此教权说，以情界器界皆出梵天王，不须归化，是说较之前者二教，平等之真渐露。而终谓世界有报，说尚沾滞。又进则印度数论，不立梵天而立阿德摩为本。阿德摩者，译言神我，而神我为忧喜暗所迷，不能自见，而情器界以著，舍迷就悟，

Here Zhang reviewed three kinds of religion. Of the three, Christianity is the most unequal, due to the attachment to an external God. Vedānta was “more equal” than Christianity because Brahman remains simply the principle of the world, and people are not required intentionally to obey Brahman. However, as this principle is also universal in giving rise to “karmic retributions”, due to Zhang’s preference for “self power” (*zili* 自力) in learning,⁶⁵ he thought that the “karmic retributions” principle was “rigid and incoherent” when compared with the Sāṃkhya school’s basic idea, *shenwo*. For Zhang, an external God or principle (“karmic retributions”) are both products of one’s consciousness and it is this consciousness that serves as the most fundamental aspect of the world experienced by us. Given that the Sāṃkhya school’s doctrine is closer to this Yogācāra world view, Zhang argued if the Sāṃkhya school were to have abandoned the attachment to self, it would have been no different from Mahāyāna in representing ultimate equality.⁶⁶ To realise this ultimate equality was the aim of Zhang’s philosophy in supporting China’s political revolution and social transformation.⁶⁷ After the mid-1910s, Zhang gradually modified his philosophy as he reflected on the deterioration of public morality.

Indeed, as early as 1910, Zhang had acknowledged that, while not as valid as Buddhism in revealing the meaning of true equality, doctrines of monotheistic religions, Vedānta and Neo-Confucianism are acceptable in specific circumstances.⁶⁸ As a “human vehicle” teaching, Confucianism hopes that people will do good (*wang ren wei shan* 望人为善).⁶⁹ Zhang further argued that, even though the Sāṃkhya school will lead to solipsism due to the “attachment to the existence of the self”, for non-Buddhists and secular persons it is still a relatively equal doctrine. In Zhang’s other essential works made after 1915, such as the *Dao Han weiyan* 葑汉微言 (Zhang Taiyan’s Subtle Words), he began comparing some Neo-Confucians to followers of Vedānta (school of the

则神我自现，本无情界器界之纷纭也。是说较诸建立梵天者更为知本，亦终不免执着有我，我之为名，与彼相对，彼我对待，则犹未为平等也。Dated 1916.

⁶⁵ Zhang Taiyan, “Guojia lun” 国家论 (On the State), *Zhang Taiyan quanji Taiyan wenlu chubian* 章太炎全集 太炎文录初编 (Complete Works of Zhang Taiyan: Taiyan’s Prose - First Collection), (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2014), p. 488. Dated 1907.

⁶⁶ Zhang Taiyan, *Zhang Taiyan quanji yanjiang ji*, p. 278. Dated 1918.

⁶⁷ Viren Murthy, *The Political Philosophy of Zhang Taiyan*, (Leiden: Brill, 2010), p. 167.

⁶⁸ Zhang Taiyan, *Zhang Taiyan quanji yanjiang ji*, p. 105. Dated 1910.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 246. Dated 1917.

principle) or Sāṃkhya (school of the mind).⁷⁰ Just as the Sāṃkhya school was a relatively equal doctrine for non-Buddhists and secular persons, because the Buddhist precepts were suitable only for Indian society, which was much less complex than China's,⁷¹ Confucianism remained the more appropriate teaching for Chinese society.

Drawing on key terms from Buddhist resources, *Dao Han weiyan* raised an important thesis: given the “delusion regarding the self” (*wochi* 我痴) was inevitable in human practices, human activities (*renfa* 人法) have to be controlled by one's deluded mind (*wangxin* 妄心).⁷² Through a mind-based theory, which will be discussed later, Zhang attempted to justify the desire to benefit nations and humanity and then to examine Confucian writings established on this desire.⁷³ During the 1920s, the deteriorating moral and intellectual conditions in China naturally led Zhang to produce more conservative discourses by acknowledging Neo-Confucianism as the introductory (*rushou* 入手) part of studying philosophy.⁷⁴ In this later phase, Zhang regarded Confucian teachings—although not ultimate (*jiujing* 究竟) when assessed from the Buddhist point of view—as still the best means to cultivate human morality given China's particular circumstances.⁷⁵ As the most fundamental ones among historical works,⁷⁶ the Confucian classics recorded practical teachings about moral virtues:

⁷⁰ See Yu Yihong, “Zhang Taiyan houqi sixiang er ti 章太炎后期思想二题” (Two Topics in Zhang Taiyan's Later Thought), *Shi Shu Hua* 诗书画, 24(2017), p. 160. Text also available at: https://www.academia.edu/33288779/Two_Topics_in_Zhang_Taiyans_late_Thought_%E8%A9%A9%E6%9B%B8%E7%95%AB_%E7%AC%AC24%E6%9C%9F_2017.pdf.

⁷¹ Zhang Taiyan, *Zhang Taiyan quanji yanjiang ji*, pp. 350-351. Dated 1922.

⁷² Zhang Taiyan, *Zhang Taiyan quanji Dao Han weiyan* 章太炎全集 葑汉微言 (Complete Works of Zhang Taiyan: Zhang Taiyan's Subtle Words), (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2015), p. 17-18. Dated 1916.

⁷³ Zhang Taiyan, *Zhang Taiyan quanji Dao Han weiyan*, p. 41.

⁷⁴ Zhang Taiyan, *Zhang Taiyan quanji yanjiang ji*, pp. 350-351.

⁷⁵ Wang Rui 王锐, “Zhang Taiyan wannian dui ‘xiuji zhiren’ zhixue de chanshi” 章太炎晚年对“修己治人”之学的阐释 (Zhang Taiyan's Elucidations of the Scholarship on “Cultivating Self and Managing Others” in His Later Years), in Huang Kewu (Huang Ko-wu) 黄克武 ed., *Sixiang shi* 思想史 6, (Taipei: Lianjing chuban gongsi, 2016), pp. 113-128.

⁷⁶ Zhang Taiyan, *Zhang Taiyan quanji yanjiang ji*, p. 488. Dated 1933.

Your letter says that the true purport of Confucius' teachings has not been totally revealed, a matter that you considered to be the fault of Han Learning and Song Learning scholars.⁷⁷ The moral virtues in a general sense are no more than the five fundamental virtues (humaneness, appropriateness, ritual, wisdom and trustworthiness); in differentiated subject-object relationships, they are none other than the Five Relationships (ruler-subject, father-son, elder-younger, husband-wife, friend-friend)⁷⁸ ...[and] that which can be used to educate all beings is none other than the *Classic of Filial Piety*, the "Great Learning" and the "Conducts of Confucians" [from the *Book of Rites*]. These three works all belong to the human vehicle. They are free from clinging to Heaven above and also are free of assertions about the existence of self. Although [the problem of] "inborn attachment to the self" (*jusheng wozhi* 俱生我执) cannot be avoided, it is not the case that "attachment to the self by discrimination" (*fenbie wozhi* 分别我执) exists [in these books].⁷⁹ If we practice according to the above, humankind might be saved.... I have also written on middle antiquity Confucianism and Song Ming Neo-Confucianism—after which I reflected that [such] lofty talk is unhelpful. Today, I don't worry about not being able to write books, but I do worry about not able to put it into practice. [Thus,] I seek to practice diligently to become human, and not to produce empty speeches on becoming a sage.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ In this letter, Han and Song schools refers to the scholars who focused on historical criticism and the scholars who focused on normative principles, respectively. This distinction was gradually formed in the mid-Qing Dynasty. Cf. Zhang Xun 张循, *Daoshu jiang wei tianxia lie* 道术将为天下裂 (The Art of the Way Will Be Split Everywhere), (Beijing: Guangxi Shifan Daxue chubanshe, 2017).

⁷⁸ One of the earliest expressions of "Five Relationships" can be found in *Mengzi*. Cf. *Mencius*, 3A.4, *Mengzi zhushu*, p. 146. The concept "five fundamental virtues" is first presented in Ban Gu 班固 (32-92) comp., *Baihu tong* 白虎通 (Discussions of the White Tiger Hall); *Baihu tong*, compiled in Liu Qingsong 刘青松, *Baihu tong yili shengxun yanjiu* 白虎通义理声训研究 (Research on Confucian Phonetic Glosses in *Baihu tong*), (Beijing: Shangwu yinshu guan, 2018), pp. 270-271.

⁷⁹ *Cheng weishi lun*, T1585_.31.0002a09-T1585_.31.0002a26.

⁸⁰ Zhang Taiyan, "Yu Ouyang Jingwu" 与欧阳竟无 (Reply to Ouyang Jingwu), *Zhang Taiyan quanji shuxin ji*, pp. 873-837. 来示谓孔子真恚未尽揭橥，为汉学、宋学诸君之过。夫普通道德，不过五常；对境各别，不过五伦...可以徧教羣生者，不过《孝经》《大学》《儒行》三书而已。此三书纯属人乘，既不攀援上天，亦不自立有我。俱生我执，虽不能无。分别我执，所未尝有。以此实行，人类庶其可救...鄙人于中古儒学及宋明理学家言曾亦有所论著，既而思之，高论亦无所益。

At this time, Zhang still insisted that “the Six Classics are historical works”. While studying historical works was so as to gain experience to better deal with social affairs (*yingshi* 应世), Zhang further noted that self-cultivation (*xiuji* 修己) should be the priority in learning to deal with social affairs. The guidelines for self-cultivation can be found in the classics.⁸¹ The above reply was written in 1935 as a response to Ouyang Jingwu’s 欧阳竟无 (1871-1943) new commentary on the “Balance as the Norm” chapter of the *Book of Rites*. As a prominent scholar in Sinitic Yogācāra scholarship, Ouyang had just completed his new commentary in the same year and asked Zhang for his comments. As will be shown in the following section, Ouyang’s commentary challenged the interpretations made by previous Confucians such as Zhu Xi. But in this reply, Zhang Taiyan told Ouyang that these theoretical works might be “lofty talk” but not what people really needed at that time – plain teachings about moral virtues. According to *Cheng weishi lun*, the attachment to the self by discrimination is attachment to the self on the basis of the discriminating function of the sixth consciousness (*yishi* 意识; *manovijñāna*). Zhang said that in practising diligently to become human, a person educated by books that are purely about the “human vehicle” can be freed from this attachment. In contrast to Ma’s discourse of the Six Arts, Zhang believed that what the Confucian classics could provide for a corrupt China were plain teachings about moral virtues rather than profound teachings about “the nature”.

In contrast to Liao Ping and Kang Youwi, Zhang Taiyan supported the view that the classics are historical works that provide precious records of past socio-political activities, and he advocated reading the classics as instructive historical works for the practical benefit of the Chinese people. Yet, even when one follows the teachings of these works “inborn attachment to self” remains. How did Zhang propose to deal with this? During his lifetime, Zhang insisted on upholding one particular idea regarding practice: “In order to be radically independent, it is necessary to become a part of a group, and any group must be established on the independence [of each member]” (大独必群，群必以独成).⁸² This independence could be understood to be the independence of a nation in the

今日不患不能著书，而患不能力行。但求力行以成人，不在空言于作圣。Dated 1936.

⁸¹ Zhang Taiyan, *Zhang Taiyan quanji yanjiang ji*, p. 591. Dated 1935.

⁸² Zhang Taiyan, “Ming du 明独” (Clarifying Independence), *Zhang Taiyan quanji Qiushu chu ke ben* 章太炎全集 诂书初刻本 (Complete Works of Zhang Taiyan: First

modernising world or the independence of an individual Chinese person living in a westernising/modernising China. In a nutshell, because Zhang was trying to articulate a revolutionary philosophy to deal with universal problems of oppressed nations (such as India and China) and their people, his philosophical and nationalistic discourses formed after the 1911 revolution were aimed at highlighting the dynamics of self-cultivation (*xiuji* 修己) and social praxis (*yingshi* 应世). In his words, it was necessary to rely on the existence of a “self” in cultivating human morality.⁸³ And as aforementioned, the “delusion regarding the self” was inevitable in human practices.

In Zhang’s late years, Buddhist learning still played an important role even in his interpretations of the Confucian classics.⁸⁴ Simultaneously inspired by Yogācāra writings and the *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith*, Zhang met difficulties in acknowledging the mind as the fundamental reality that guides our practices. It was the Yogācāra ideas Zhang learned that hindered him from doing so. As Ma Yifu pointed out, Yogācāra thinkers were ignorant of the fact that the mind and its functions can be included within the “one true dharma-realm”. These thinkers rejected the notion of mind-as-reality; for them the mind is merely the deluded mind.⁸⁵ To different extents, both Ouyang Jingwu and Zhang Taiyan accepted this Yogācāra prerequisite in reflecting on the “mind”. Pursuing a stronger theoretical basis of our practices, Zhang acknowledged the “one mind two gateways” model in his re-examinations of Confucian writings. Influenced by the Yogācāra idea of “deluded mind” (*wangxin* 妄心), however, his hybrid (Buddhist-Confucian) theory was incoherent and remained to be improved. In different ways, Xiong Shili and Ma Yifu did this job in their New Confucian thought. Centring on Ouyang’s and Zhang Taiyan’s different views of the “mind”, the next section will investigate the weak point of their relevant discussions.

Edition of A Book of Urgency), (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2014), p. 53. For an analysis of Zhang’s insights into independence, see Cai Zhidong 蔡志栋, *Zhang Taiyan houqi zhexue sixiang yanjiu* 章太炎后期哲学思想研究 (A Study of Zhang Taiyan’s Late Philosophical Thoughts), (Shanghai: Shanghai shehui kexueyuan chubanshe, 2013), pp. 220-226.

⁸³ Zhang Taiyan, *Zhang Taiyan quanji yanjiang ji*, pp. 415-416. Zhang said in a presentation: “We should take the notion of ‘self’ as a foundation for our practices in dealing with social affairs.” 把我字做个靠背，应用于人事。Dated 1929.

⁸⁴ Zhang Taiyan, *Zhang Taiyan quanji yanjiang ji*, pp. 438. Dated 1932.

⁸⁵ Ma Yifu, “Shi dao da qi da”, pp. 390-391.

4.2.1. One Mind I: Ouyang Jingwu on the Relationship between Reality and Function

Sub-sections of this section, 4.2.1 and 4.2.2, examine two scholars with backgrounds in Buddhist scholarship and their different understandings of the concept “mind”: Ouyang Jingwu and Zhang Taiyan. This sub-section, 4.2.1, will examine how and why Ouyang negated the “one mind two gateways” framework and the “awakened nature [of the mind]” (*xingjue* 性觉) idea behind it. The next sub-section, 4.2.2, will examine why Zhang Taiyan selectively adopted the “one mind two gateways” framework to justify the determinative role of “self” in practice. These two sub-sections provide insight into the background of Ma’s adoption of the “one mind two gateways” framework in his “one mind contains the Six Arts” discourse.

Ouyang’s views posed a philosophical challenge to the traditional “mind view” held by many Sinitic Buddhist and Neo-Confucians, including Chengguan, Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming. The core of this challenge was the question of whether the human mind can be recognised as Buddha nature, the basis of correct activities. As a result of identifying those Mahāyāna classics that support the idea of the “awakened nature [of the mind]” to be forgeries penned by Chinese scholars, Ouyang and some of his disciples dislodged suchness (Buddha nature) from the model of “intrinsic reality and its functions” by elucidating the idea of the “quiescent nature [of the mind]” (*xingjue* 性寂) and rejecting the notion of the “awakened nature [of the mind]”.⁸⁶ For Ouyang, unconditioned reality (*ti*) does not inhere in one’s mind, which is unavoidably conditioned. He argued that reality (*ti*) is not “the inherent reality of the mind” but the object to be cognitively grasped by the apprehending subject. He claimed that according to genuine Buddhist teachings, this ultimate object must be an unconditioned dharma (*wuwei fa* 无为法): *nirvāṇa* or suchness.⁸⁷ On the one hand, he intentionally differentiated unconditioned reality (*wuwei zhi ti* 无为之体) from conditioned function (*youwei zhi yong* 有为之用) based on the doctrines of Yogācāra school (which are based mainly on *Cheng weishi lun*):

⁸⁶ For Ouyang, suchness cannot serve as a direct cause, but only as a secondary or auxiliary cause; only a conditioned cause can serve as a direct cause to human practices which are also conditioned. Eyal Aviv, “Ouyang Jingwu: From Yogācāra Scholasticism to Soteriology 1”, in John Makeham ed., *Transforming Consciousness: Yogācāra Thought in Modern China*, p. 315.

⁸⁷ Ouyang Jingwu, “Weishi jueze tan” 唯识抉择谈 (Talks on the Resolutions of Nothing but Consciousness), in Zhao Jun ed., *Ouyang Jingwu zhushu ji*, p. 383. Dated 1922.

“*Nirvāṇa* is reality, awakening [*bodhi*] is function...When function [=awakening] is correct, reality will be manifest; once the cognisor is purified, the cognitive object will be suchness”.⁸⁸ On the other hand, in order to explain how this unconditioned reality can exert a normative impact on our practices, which are necessarily conditioned by different factors in the world, Ouyang separated the contaminated (*youlou* 有漏) part of conditioned dharmas from correct function, with only the former needing to be eliminated.⁸⁹ Correct function, according to Ouyang, is “the arousal of the mind’s intention to achieve enlightenment”, *fa puti xin* 发菩提心).⁹⁰

Although the mind of a subject is indispensable to the conduct of correct practices, for Ouyang, the reality or the object of those practices must be transcendent or supra-subjective. This enabled Ouyang to give a multi-layered “reality and function” model (see below) that has some features in common with what Ma presented in his writings. Although their approaches differed, both attempted to eliminate subjectivism as a result of mistaking the conditioned (the human mind) for the unconditioned (principle). Ma came up with “the way of the Six Arts” as the intermediate concept between the nature (intrinsic reality) and the teaching of the Six Arts (function).⁹¹ Ouyang, who was more thorough in differentiating reality and function, severed the direct connection between them in his “subject and object” model. This determination led to him understanding the “reality and function” model as a multi-layered one:⁹²

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 383. 涅槃是体,菩提是用。...用当而体现,能缘净而所缘即真。

⁸⁹ Cheng Gongrang 程恭让, *Jueze yu zhenwei zhijian* 抉择于真伪之间 (Distinguishing the Genuine and the False), (Shanghai: Huadong Shifan Daxue chubanshe, 2000), pp. 276-277.

⁹⁰ Ouyang Jingwu, “Weishi jueze tan”, p. 383.

⁹¹ Ma, “Yulu leibian·Sixue pian”, pp. 595. “In terms of the nature and the Way, the nature is intrinsic reality and the way is function; in terms of the Way and the teaching, the Way is intrinsic reality and the teaching is function.” (就性道言, 则性为体, 道为用; 就道教言, 则道为体, 教为用。)

⁹² There are different expressions of Ouyang’s multi-layered “reality and function” model in different cases. This table is created based on “Ouyang Jingwu xiansheng yanjiang”, recorded by Nie Ougeng 聂耦耕 and edited by Lü Cheng 吕澂, p. 4. Dated 1922. Terms translated and cited in Sang Yu, *Xiong Shili’s Understanding of Reality and Function, 1920-1937*, pp. 116-117, mod.

The one true dharma-realm	Reality within reality (<i>tizhong zhi ti</i> 体中之体)
Suchness revealed through eradicating the two attachments to the existence of a real self and the existence of real dharmas	Function within reality (<i>tizhong zhi yong</i> 体中之用)
The seeds which lie dormant and concealed in the storehouse consciousness	Reality within function (<i>yongzhong zhi ti</i> 用中之体)
Manifest activity arising in dependence on seeds	Function within function (<i>yongzhong zhi yong</i> 用中之用)

With different forms of expression, Ouyang upheld the multi-layered “reality and function” discourse over the course of his life. What is common to his various formulations is that what determines one’s practices (functions) is not the reality (*ti*) that is the ultimate object of our practices. That reality, in Ouyang’s multi-layered model, must transcend the phenomenal world and one’s experiences, which are inevitably conditioned. Therefore, that reality (Reality within reality) was different from what directly controls our practices (Reality within function). Ouyang had his reason to set up such a division between reality and function. With a belief of the existence of a transcendent reality, Ouyang noted, our practices in pursuit of this genuine reality must be “restless” (*buke xie* 不可歇). In his later writings,⁹³ Ouyang provides more details about these categories. “Reality within reality” is inherently nirvanic (*benxing niepan* 本性涅槃). “Function within reality” is the state of liberation (*jietuo* 解脱) achieved by the person who has realized *nirvāṇa* without remainder (*wuyu niepan* 无余涅槃). “Reality within function” is the object that will be achieved only after all sentient beings are liberated (*wuzhu niepan* 无住涅槃, *nirvāṇa* of no abiding)⁹⁴ and “function within

⁹³ Ouyang Jingwu, “Weishi jueze tan”, p. 383.

⁹⁴ Zhang Zhiqiang, *Zhu-Lu-Kong-Fo-xiandai sixiang*, pp. 31-34.

function” refers to all practices determined by correct wisdom (*zhengzhi wanxing* 正智万行).⁹⁵ The inherent nature of the world or the one true dharma-realm, as ultimate reality (*bijing zhi ti* 毕竟之体),⁹⁶ is differentiated from the reality of correct practices. Unlike for Ma, Ouyang’s “reality” must transcend the world including each subject, and therefore reality must be the quiescence itself and not one’s mind.

In an ambitious essay published in 1941, Ouyang argued that “when function is rooted in non-function [quiescence], then function is unfathomable” and that this was the essence (*gansui* 肝髓, a word that was adopted from Buddhism) of Confucianism.⁹⁷ The word “quiescence” seems similar to “inherently quiescent” in Ma’s statement that “The intrinsic reality of the August Royal Ultimate is inherently quiescent, yet its marvellous responses are unfathomable” (其体本寂而妙应无方), but in fact they are fundamentally different. Admittedly, Ma used “quiescent” to describe the intrinsic reality of the ideal governance, but Ma’s point was to underscore the unchanging character of the mind-as-reality: It cannot not be moved or changed by changing phenomena. Unlike Ma, Ouyang did not think that there was such a mind-as-reality. Further, Ouyang would certainly have rejected the “quiescent yet constantly sensitive” idea in Ma’s interpretation of the sage’s mind. For Ouyang, only a quiescent reality enables normative principle to be free from a person’s bad desires:

As reality, quiescence is an immutable principle. Quiescence is not nothing; tranquillity and quiescence are *nirvāṇa*. The light of a lamp may be extinguished but the lamp body remains.⁹⁸ [When laundering,] while the dirt is removed, the clothes remain.⁹⁹ When afflictions have been purged, undivided suchness is clear

⁹⁵ Ouyang Jingwu, “*Dasheng miyan jing xu*” 《大乘密严经》叙 (Preface to *The Sutra of Secret Adornment*), in Zhao Jun ed., *Ouyang Jingwu zhushu ji*, p. 258. Dated 1936.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 258.

⁹⁷ Ouyang Jingwu, “Kong, Fo gailun zhi gailun” 孔佛概论之概论 (An Introduction to the General Ideas of Confucianism and Buddhism), in Zhao Jun ed., *Ouyang Jingwu zhushu ji*, p. 495. 用根于不用，其用乃神。孔家肝髓，实在乎此。

⁹⁸ *Dabanniepan jing*, T0374_12.0390a17-T0374_12.0390a25.

⁹⁹ This analogy frequently appears in *Zengyi ahan jing* 增一阿含经 (*Ekōttarāgama-sūtra*; Increased by One Āgama Sūtras). For an instance, see *Zengyi ahan jing*, T0125_02.0589b18-T0125_02.0589b22.

and pure. This is what by “when human desires have been thoroughly eliminated, Heavenly principle [manifests] pure and complete”.¹⁰⁰

This passage shows Ouyang’s critical response to Zhu Xi’s commentary on the *Analects*. After explaining the concept “quiescence” with two Buddhist analogies, Ouyang modified Zhu Xi’s “selfish desires should be thoroughly eliminated” into “human desires should be thoroughly eliminated” – just as the non-illuminating lamp body is different from the lamp that is lit, and cleaned clothes are different from dirty clothes. Because the state before being purified and the state after having been purified will be distinctively different, as Ouyang had argued in “Weishi jueze tan”, the “one mind” thesis of the *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith* is self-contradictory. If ignorance and suchness are entirely incompatible, how could the nature of the mind remain pristine while the mind is defiled?¹⁰¹ According to Ouyang, the “one mind two gateways” model of the *Treatise* represented a failure to have identified the unconditioned object that transcends all conditioned things, and ought to be rejected as a false understanding of reality. Ma’s “one mind contains the Six Arts” is also naturally untenable from Ouyang’s perspective. But according to Ma’s critique, the Yogācāra school was merely an “initial teaching” and not a “perfect teaching” in Chengguan’s sense.¹⁰² Ouyang’s understanding of the “mind” makes it impossible to recognise the mind-as-reality – even if the cognisor is purified in keeping with Yogācāra doctrine, the mind remains a deluded mind. As such, the direct correspondence between practices (functions) and the mind-as-reality (Ma’s reality) has been replaced by a great gap between practices (functions) and the object (Ouyang’s reality).

¹⁰⁰ This expression is modified from Zhu Xi’s “Once selfish desires have been thoroughly eliminated, Heavenly principle will flow” (私欲净尽，天理流行). See Zhu Xi, *Lunyu jizhu* 论语集注 (Collected Annotations on *Analects*), in *Zhuzi quanshu*, p. 168. Ouyang Jingwu, “Kong Fo gailun zhi gailun”, *Ouyang Jingwu zhushu ji*, pp. 494-495. 寂之为本体，无可移易之理也。寂非无物也，寂灭寂静即是涅槃，灯灭炉存，垢尽衣存，烦恼灭除一真清静，所谓人欲净尽天理纯全是也。

¹⁰¹ Ouyang Jingwu, “Weishi jueze tan”, p. 385. *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith*, edited and translated by John Jorgensen, Dan Lusthaus, John Makeham, and Mark Strange, p. 86. “The mind has always been intrinsically pristine, yet there is ignorance. When defiled by ignorance, there is the defiled mind. Yet, although there is the defiled mind, [the nature of the mind] is constantly unchanging.” 是心从本已来自性清静，而有无明。为无明所染，有其染心。虽有染心而常恒不变。

¹⁰² “Shi dao da qi da”, “Guanxiang zhiyan”, pp. 390-391.

From Ouyang's perspective, this gap must be kept. If quiescent reality ceases to be quiescent, such as in Cheng Yi's statement that "intrinsic reality and function are a single source, and there is no gap between the apparent and the subtle" (cited above), unconditioned reality becomes confused with conditioned function, leading to the defilement and corruption of the normative standard of practices. Given "reality within function" is the object that will only be achieved after all people are liberated, these standards are in the service of China's public good. In order to highlight this point, in his new commentary on the "Balance as the Norm", Ouyang implicitly criticized Neo-Confucian master Zhu Xi. In China during the 1940s, a topical issue in public discourse was how "traitors of the Han race" (*Han jian* 汉奸) hindered resistance to the Japanese army.¹⁰³ Ouyang claimed that it was "the balance of hypocritical village worthies" (*xiangyuan zhongyong* 乡愿中庸) that resulted in so many traitors, while the genuine way of balance in the "Balance as the Norm" had been long forgotten.¹⁰⁴ In reflecting on this problem, Ouyang believed that without knowing the spirit of quiescence shared by Confucianism and Buddhism, Neo-Confucians rejected a quiescent fundamental reality, and thereby they had limited their understanding of the genuine source of normativity, which is not conditioned by the present world.¹⁰⁵ Ouyang called for "hypocritical

¹⁰³ Huang Xingtao 黄兴涛, *Chongsu Zhonghua: Jindai Zhongguo "Zhonghua minzu" gainian yanjiu* 重塑中华：近代中国「中华民族」观念研究 (Reshaping Zhonghua: A Study of the Concept "Zhonghua Nation" in Modern China), (Hong Kong: Sanlian shudian youxian gongsi, 2017), pp. 338-342.

¹⁰⁴ Ouyang Jingwu, "Ba Zhongyong zhuan ji zhuyou" 跋中庸传寄诸友 (Ouyang's Postscript to the *Commentary of the Balance as the Norm* in His Letter to Friends), *Ouyang Jingwu zhushu ji*, p. 461. Dated 1941. I have translated the title "Zhongyong" based on how Ouyang understood the term. For "hypocritical village worthies", see *Analects* 17.13 and *Mencius*, 7B.37, *Mengzi zhushu*, p. 406. *Mencius*, 7B.37:

Wan Zhang said, "The whole town calls them 'acceptable men'—there is no place where they can go where they will not be regarded as 'acceptable men.' Why did Confucius call them 'thieves of virtue'?"

Mencius answered: "If you want to blame them for something, there is nothing in particular that you can blame them for. If you want to correct them, there is nothing in particular that you can correct them for. They follow the current customs and consent to the vices of the age. They seem to abide in loyalty and honesty, and their actions seem pure. Everyone follows them and because people follow them, people become incapable of entering the Way of Yao and Shun. Thus, they are called 'thieves of virtue.'"

(万章曰：“一乡皆称原人焉、无所往而不为原人。孔子以为德之贼，何哉？”曰：“非之无举也，刺之无刺也。同乎流俗，合乎污世。居之似忠信、行之似廉洁。众皆悦之，自以为是，而不可与入尧、舜之道，故曰德之贼也。”) Translated by A. Charles Muller, see <http://www.acmuller.net/con-dao/mencius.html#div-13>.

¹⁰⁵ Ouyang Jingwu, "Da Chen Zhenru" 答陈真如 (Reply to Chen Mingshu 陈铭枢, 1889-1965), *Ouyang Jingwu zhushu ji*, pp. 441-442. Dated 1939.

balance” to be replaced by “ardent and prudent balance”¹⁰⁶ (*kuangjuan zhongyong* 狂狷中庸):

“One’s bodily form is [naturally] endowed by Heaven”.¹⁰⁷ While bodily form is also the place where defiled seeds co-reside with pure seeds,¹⁰⁸ [humans] should not follow [the inclinations of defiled seeds]. The teaching is for abandoning the defiled and obtaining the pure¹⁰⁹; it is to take the pure as the basis and to induce pure seeds....[By choosing] ardent and prudent balance, the demarcation between rightness and profit is strict¹¹⁰, and the way to derive beneficial resources will be broad. [As for] the balance of hypocritical village worthies, what is actually rightness and what is actually profit become confused, and the way to derive beneficial resources will be blocked. [The balance of hypocritical

¹⁰⁶ The description “ardent and prudent” here refers to genuine and upright balance, which is different from the balance of hypocritical village worthies. Ouyang made this description based on passages in the *Analects* and *Mencius*. See *Lunyu zhushu*, p. 179. *Analects*, 13.21:

“Since I can’t get men who act according to the balanced way, I must find the ardent and the prudent. The ardent go after things, the prudent restrain themselves from doing certain things.”

(不得中行而与之，必也狂狷乎。狂者进取，狷者有所不为也。) Translated by A. Charles Muller; mod. <http://www.acmuller.net/con-dao/analects.html#div-14>.

And *Mengzi zhushu*, p. 405. *Mencius*, 7B.36:

“The ardent will go and get what they want. The prudent can limit themselves. Of course Confucius wanted students who could follow the balanced way, but not necessarily being able to find such people, he had to think of his next option.”

(狂者进取，狷者有所不为也。孔子岂不欲中道哉。不可必得，故思其次也。) Translated by A. Charles Muller, mod., <http://www.acmuller.net/con-dao/mencius.html#div-13>.

¹⁰⁷ *Mencius*, 7A.38, *Mengzi zhushu*, p. 373. Cf. Zhu Xi, *Mengzi zhangju*, *Zhuzi quanshu*, vol 6, p. 439. Zhu Xi’s commentary was cited and supported by Ma, see Sub-section 1.3.2 of Chapter 1.

¹⁰⁸ In standard Yogācāra doctrine, the storehouse consciousness is understood to store both pure (*qingjing* 清淨) and impure (*zaran* 杂染) seeds (*bīja*) – just as the memory stores good and bad memories. These seeds retain the impressions of past experiences and “perfume” new experiences on the basis of that previous conditioning. Here, Ouyang used “one’s bodily form” (*xingse* 形色, see *Mencius*, 7A.37, *Mengzi zhushu*, p. 373) to replace the storehouse consciousness in expressing this doctrine.

¹⁰⁹ This phrase is based on Kuiji’s “eliminating defilement and obtaining the purified” (*duanran qujing* 断染取淨). Cf. Kuiji, *Cheng weishi lun shuji*, T1830_43.0238b16.

¹¹⁰ The demarcation between rightness and profit can be traced to Confucius: “A noble man understands rightness, while an inferior man understands profit” (君子喻于义，小人喻于利). See *Analects*, 4.16. *Lunyu zhushu*, p. 51.

village worthies] may seem to be rightness but it is actually that of profit, which is a different approach....The sayings of [these hypocrites], such as “being neither excessive nor falling short (*wuguo buji* 无过不及)¹¹¹ is called balance”, is actually confusing and vague, which leads to a dead end; and “the ordinary is what is called balance”, is to go along with the popular, and there is nothing of purity to be extracted.¹¹²

Drawing extensively on Yogācāra terms, Ouyang once again challenged Zhu Xi who was widely considered as an authoritative interpreter of the Confucian classics. Instead of controlling the needs of the human body and its appetites, such as Ma’s “when all seeing, listening, speaking and acting [conforms with] ritual, then this is ‘to carry out’ [the realisation of reality]”¹¹³, Ouyang reminded his readers that if the demarcation between purified seeds and defilements is blurred in this process, genuine fundamental reality will never be realised. Zhu Xi’s interpretations of “Zhongyong”, according to Ouyang, failed to discern that both defiled seeds and pure seeds co-reside in the bodily form. Due to this, there would be no objective normative standard in Zhu’s notion that “being neither excessive nor falling short is called balance”; rather, “balance” here exemplifies the balance of hypocritical village worthies. Clearly, Ouyang would also have objected to Ma’s notion of “carrying out the realisation of reality by conforming with ritual”.

Ouyang had attempted to show that one can reach “quiescence” by recognising genuine balance in Confucian teachings. For him, this entails consistently inducing pure seeds and removing defilements. To recognise genuine balance, Ouyang claimed that “one must firmly discern quiescence before studying ‘Zhongyong’”. This quiescence-as-

¹¹¹ Zhu Xi, *Zhongyong zhangju* 中庸章句 (The Section and Sentence Commentaries on “Balance as the Norm”), *Zhuzi quanshu*, vol 6, pp. 32-33. Zhu Xi’s understanding of the term “zhongyong” was also different from that of Ma; see John Makeham, “Yang Zhu’s Role in the Construction of Zhu Xi’s *Daotong*”, forthcoming.

¹¹² Ouyang Jingwu, “*Zhongyong zhuan xuyan*” 中庸传绪言 (Preface to *Commentary of the Balance as the Norm*), *Ouyang Jingwu zhushu ji*, p. 468. 形色天性也，然是杂染种寄居清静种之场，而不可随也。教之为舍染取净，依于清静而引发其种也。...狂狷中庸，义利之界严，取资之路宽；乡愿中庸，义利之实乱，取资之径封。似义实利，别为一途。...其曰无过不及之谓中，则迷离恍惚，无地可蹈也；其曰平常之谓庸，随俗浮沉，无粹可拔也。 Dated 1940.

¹¹³ Ma Yifu, “Shuo shi ting yan dong”, p. 59. Cited in the Sub-section 1.3.2 of Chapter 1.

reality (*ji bentu* 寂本体), according to him, had been revealed in Buddhist resources.¹¹⁴

More concretely, Ouyang's soteriological vision was grounded in a belief that the Buddhist notion of "argument based on the holy scriptures" (*shengyan liang* 圣言量) is a legitimate premise for pursuing genuine learning.¹¹⁵ In terms of Ouyang's interpretation, this is a belief in the "quiescence" that is like "*nirvāṇa*" and which transcends the mundane world (also one's bodily form and one's mind) in which defiled seeds co-reside with purified seeds.

The problem here is whether the normative principles in the human world should be based on a strong belief in Buddhist holy scriptures. While this might not be a problem for religious practitioners, Ouyang's Buddhistic elaboration of Confucianism is actually not a religious discourse designed for all people, but a philosophical discourse designed for converting intellectuals who seek to understand "what it means to be a human being". In Ouyang's writings, in this world, only Buddhism and Confucianism are tenable teachings; they show humans the genuine way of correct practice. And for Ouyang, the only tenable teachings are those that accord with his own metaphysical framework.¹¹⁶ In Ouyang's prescription, seeds, rather than the mind, became the new ontological foundation of the phenomenal world, "where defiled seeds co-reside with pure seeds". The definition of a subject's innate goodness thus underwent a great change due to the replacement of the ready-made yet "unrevealed" inherently good nature with the possibility of becoming good (purified seeds). As such, Mencius' teaching about exploring our innate goodness just entails the possibility of becoming good rather than the notion of an already fully formed "innate goodness".¹¹⁷ And because this notion no longer

¹¹⁴ Ouyang Jingwu, "Zhongyong zhuan xuyan", *Ouyang Jingwu zhushu ji*, p. 467. 故欲研《中庸》，须先认寂。He also maintained that former Confucians such as Han Yu 韩愈 (768-824) had misunderstood the true meaning of quiescence.

¹¹⁵ Ouyang Jingwu, "Kong, Fo gailun zhi gailun", p. 493.

¹¹⁶ Cheng Gongrang, *Jueze yu zhenwei zhijian*, pp. 195-196.

¹¹⁷ Following Ouyang's writings, his distinguished student Wang Enyang 王恩洋 (1897-1964) further claimed that Xunzi 荀子 (313-238 BCE)--who had asserted that "human nature is evil and what is good in people is their artifice (*wei* 伪)"--was also a supporter of "innate goodness" like Mencius. This is because, given that artifice itself could also be explained as "abandoning defilement and obtaining the purified", then this too is good. Wang Enyang 王恩洋, *Xunzi xuean* 荀子学案 (A Case Study of Xunzi), *Wang Enyang quanji* 王恩洋全集 (Complete Works of Wang Enyang), vol 8, (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 2001), pp. 725-731. For Xunzi's argument on the nature and its intellectual background, see Paul R. Goldin, "Xunzi", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2018 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2018/entries/xunzi/>>.

existed in Ouyang's framework, the distinction between reality and function cannot be blurred. Compared with Ma Yifu and also Zhu Xi, Ouyang was more thorough in eliminating the subjectivist risk found in Chan Buddhism and other schools: taking the conditioned mind rather than principle as the source of normativity, and then mistaking each action controlled by one's mind to be appropriate function of the nature.¹¹⁸ However, the idealistic problem in Ouyang's thought is even more pronounced than it is in Ma's: compared with the nature or the mind in Ma's New Confucianism, "*nirvāṇa*" is far removed from the living world. Accordingly, Ouyang's assertion that "when function is rooted in non-function [quiescence], then function is unfathomable" would have been even more challenging to practice. This might be why Zhang Taiyan, as already noted, regarded Ouyang's new commentary of the "Balance as the Norm" as lofty talk about becoming a sage but not a concrete guidance on becoming human.

The idealistic problem in Ouyang's thought is closely related to two theoretical tenets of Yogācāra doctrine: the "mind" can only be the deluded mind; and "the bodily form is also the place where defiled seeds co-reside with pure seeds". Influenced by these tenets, Ouyang rejected the mind or the nature as the basis of correct practice. Ouyang's rejection of the mind as the basis of correct practice, represented a theoretical challenge to the views of earlier Sinitic Buddhists and Neo-Confucians who considered the mind as the basis of correct practice. The weak point of Ouyang's "quiescence-as-reality" theory, however, also undermined that challenge. As Ma Yifu had argued, if the mind is merely the deluded mind, our practices (function) controlled by this mind would be excluded from "one true dharma-realm" (the fundamental reality). If so, there will be an unbridgeable gap between social practices (function) and the source of normative principle (the fundamental reality).

Different from Ouyang, Zhang Taiyan turned to the "one mind two gateways" model as well as the Neo-Confucian ideas that were negated by Ouyang, and paid greater attention to the idea that the "mind" can underpin moral awareness. Zhang Taiyan always considered Yogācāra theories as part of the basis of the ideal practical philosophy. But

¹¹⁸ This is also what Zhu Xi pointed out: "The Buddhist words 'Functions are the nature' are like this. Paying no heed to right and wrong, the only thing they maintain is that [wearing] clothes, eating, working, breathing, seeing and hearing are the Way. Claiming that my ability to speak and to act...is divine power and marvellous function is to pay no heed to principle." (佛家所谓"作用是性", 便是如此。他都不理会是和是非, 只认得那衣食作息, 视听举履, 便是道。说我这个会说话底, 会作用底, ..., 便是神通妙用, 更不问道理如何。) Translated and cited in John Jorgensen, "Radiant Mind", in John Makeham ed., *The Buddhist Roots of Zhu Xi's Philosophical Thought*, p. 98.

motivated by a strong concern for philosophical theory to have a practical relevance, Zhang took a different attitude towards the Neo-Confucianism that Ouyang negated. Given this difference, Zhang Taiyan could be regarded as an “intermediary” between Ouyang and New Confucian thinkers such as Ma Yifu and Xiong Shili.¹¹⁹ Studying Zhang’s thought and its theoretical deficiencies can help us better understand how Ma’s mind-based theory was less problematic than that of his contemporaries.

4.2.2. One Mind II: Zhang Taiyan on the Mind and Neo-Confucianism

Inspired by Sinitic Yogācāra Buddhism and the *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith*, Zhang considered the mind as the basis of correct practices, and also stressed the significance of Neo-Confucianism, especially the school of the mind. As introduced previously, Zhang often stated that some Neo-Confucians shared the same spiritual experiences as thinkers of Vedānta or Sāṃkhya. According to Zhang, even though those thinkers were attached to the existence of a self, they would have been the easiest to convert to Mahāyāna Buddhist systems.¹²⁰ With a positive attitude towards the intellectual legacies of Neo-Confucianism, Zhang Taiyan used the notion of “undefiled mind” in constructing his late philosophy. Compared with Ouyang, this inclination made Zhang more like New Confucian thinkers including Ma Yifu and Xiong Shili. However, the Yogācāra idea of the “deluded mind” hindered Zhang from further comprehending Neo-Confucianism as New Confucians did.

As a supporter of Yogācāra doctrines, Zhang thought that the “mind” recognised by many Neo-Confucians was the “deluded mind”. In his own words, Neo-Confucians have only revealed the existence of the storehouse consciousness but not the mind-as-

¹¹⁹ The notion of “moral awareness” used here is comparable to the notion of “moral self”, which is closely related to the notion of “original heart mind” in Mou Zongsan’s philosophy. Based on Mou’s philosophy, Jana S. Rošker took “moral self” as one of the keys to understanding modern New Confucianism. See Rošker, *The Rebirth of the Moral Self: The Second Generation of Modern Confucians and their Modernization Discourses*, (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2015), pp. 71-73, 7-8. Through my investigations into Ma Yifu and Zhang Taiyan’s thought, which are not studied in Rošker’s book, one can find intellectual similarities between different generations of Chinese Confucian thinkers. In fact, Mou and his mentor Xiong Shili had affinities with Zhang’s mind-based theory. I will discuss this topic in another paper.

¹²⁰ Zhang Taiyan, *Zhang Taiyan quanji Dao Han weiyan*, p. 12. 转数论则入大乘矣。 Dated 1914.

reality. To elaborate on this issue, Zhang chose Yang Jian 杨简 (1141-1226; also known as Yang Cihu 杨慈湖), who is usually considered to have been a pioneering thinker of the school of the mind, as an example:

Yesterday I obtained a copy of a Ming edition of *Posthumous Works of Cihu* (*Cihu Yishu* 慈湖遗书). Judging by his discussions, he was capable of affirming [the existence of] the mind. Therefore, the phrase, “the spirit of the mind is called sageliness,”¹²¹ from the *Anthology of the Masters of the Kong Family* (*Kong congzi* 孔丛子) is mentioned in every chapter [of Yang’s *Works*]. That which Ming Confucians refer to as “establishing a tenet” (*li zongzhi* 立宗旨), actually began [with Yang’s *Works*]¹²².... According to his own account, [Yang’s confirmation of the existence of the mind] also began with meditative insights about himself. [Yang said,] “when I was young, I applied myself strenuously to this. Suddenly, the myriad things, myriad affairs and myriad principles in the world and I became a clear, undifferentiated unity in which there no longer was any division between phenomena and principle, no longer any severance.”¹²³ These words accurately reveal a glimpse into how the storehouse consciousness contains all seeds, constantly turning over like a raging current,¹²⁴ yet [Yang] failed to personally experience the undefiled genuine mind.¹²⁵ The majority of Yangmingists from the Ming Dynasty were also the same.¹²⁶

¹²¹ *Kong congzi jiaoshi* 孔丛子校释 (Collated *Kong congzi* with Annotations), collated by Fu Yashu 傅亚庶, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2011), p. 96.

¹²² One of the early thinkers who described this commonality was Hu Han 胡瀚 (1381-1452); see Huang Zongxi comp., *Mingru xue'an*, *Huang Zongxi quanji*, vol. 7, p. 376.

¹²³ See Yang Jian, *Ruzang jinghua bian ersanqi Cihu Yishu* 儒藏精华编二三七 慈湖遗书 (The Essentials of Confucian Scriptures Vol 237: Complete Posthumous Works of Cihu), (Beijing: Beijing Daxue chubanshe, 2014), p. 908.

¹²⁴ *Cheng weishi lun*, T1585_31.0007c15-T1585_31.0007c19.

¹²⁵ This term might be a variation of “the undefiled mind” (*wugou xin* 无垢心) concept discussed in other Yogācāra works. For an instance, see *Jiujing yisheng baoxing lun* 究竟一乘宝性论 (*Ratnagotravibhāga*), T1611_31.0814a15-T1611_31.0814a23.

¹²⁶ Zhang Taiyan, “Yu Wu Chengshi” 与吴承仕 (Zhang’s Letter to his disciple Wu Chengshi, 1884-1939), *Zhang Taiyan quanji shuxin ji*, pp. 407-408. 昨得明刻《慈湖遗书》，观其论议，能信心矣，故于《孔丛》所称“心之精神是谓圣”一语，无一篇不道及。盖明儒所谓立宗旨者，实始于此。...然观其自叙，则仍由反观得入：

This letter indicates a basic view Zhang held in his *Zhang Taiyan's Subtle Words*, and *Dao Han changyan* 荊漢昌言 (Zhang Taiyan's Unrestrained Words), edited later. He thought that experience of the “undifferentiated unity” described by Yang Jian referred to the constant turning over of the storehouse consciousness. In the latter work, citing a similar experience of Yangmingist thinker Luo Hongxian 罗洪先 (1504-1564),¹²⁷ Zhang pointed out that what is revealed by both Sāṃkhya and school of mind thinkers, i.e., the existence of *shenwo*, is actually the constant turning over of the storehouse consciousness. In his words here, they all revealed “how the storehouse consciousness contains all seeds, constantly turning over like a raging current”.

It seems that from Zhang's perspective, both Sāṃkhya thinkers and Yang Cihu had roughly recognised this truth, but the point of recognising the “undefiled genuine mind” without attachment to the existence of a self was still beyond their understanding. Unlike Ouyang's displacement of the mind-as-reality with pure seeds, Zhang chose to turn to the former concept in developing his philosophy. He considered undefiled genuine mind as the intrinsic reality of our practices.

The existence of such an undefiled mind in Zhang's account, however, presents another potential problem. If the pure, undefiled mind also controls the storehouse consciousness, which contains defiled seeds, could one's attachment to the self be avoidable? In Zhang's later years, due to his own meditative experiences, he grew more inclined to assert the necessity of establishing a “self” rather than pursuing the undefiled mind without attachment to the self. And for Zhang, both Neo-Confucianism and Confucian classics (as China's history) are deserving of commendation.¹²⁸ This was why Zhang, a well-trained scholar in textual criticism, also boldly attempted to find a philosophical genealogy from the *Anthology of the Masters of the Kong Family* to the

“少时用此功力，忽见我与天地万物万事万理澄然一片，更无象与理之分，更无间断。”此正窥见藏识含藏一切种子恒转如瀑流者，而终不能证见无垢真心。明世王学亦多如是。Dated 1917.

¹²⁷ Zhang Taiyan, *Zhang Taiyan quanji Dao Han changyan* 章太炎全集 荊漢昌言 (Complete Works of Zhang Taiyan: Zhang Taiyan's Unrestrained Words), (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2015), pp. 91-92. Dated 1926.

¹²⁸ Zhang Taiyan, “Yu Xu Zhongsun” 与徐仲荪 (Letter to Xu Zhongsun), *Zhang Taiyan quanji shuxin ji*, pp. 1134-1135. Dated 1927.

writings of Yang Jian (who was remarkably influential in Zhang's late thought.)¹²⁹ This attempt also pushed him closer to the Neo-Confucian thinkers as well as the *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith*.

In 1931, about fifteen years after his assessment of Yang Cihu, in a letter to his disciple, Huang Kan 黄侃 (1886-1935), Zhang provided a concise explanation of how to grasp the relationship between Neo-Confucianism and good socio-political morality. This letter was especially published five years later in an important journal established by Zhang himself—*Zhi yan* 制言 (Composing Discourses)—the same year when Zhang died. Zhang wrote:

[In reading] Neo-Confucian writings, one should focus on those that are less fragmented. Mingdao 明道 (Cheng Hao 程颢), Shangcai 上蔡 (Xie Liangzuo 谢良佐, 1050-1103), Xiangshan 象山 (Lu Jiuyuan), Cihu 慈湖, Baisha 白沙 (Chen Xianzhang 陈献章, 1428-1500) and Yangming, each has his own particular accomplishment and is free from the problem of fragmentation. Many talented Yangmingists were from Jiangxi province, [among whom] I particularly appreciate Wang Tangnan 王塘南 (Wang Shihuai 王时槐; 1522-1605). His saying, “[the hexagram] Qian is the intrinsic reality of awareness (*zhiti* 知体), and [the hexagram] Kun is the faculty of mentation (*yigen* 意根; the seventh consciousness),”¹³⁰ had never been seen [in the writings of other thinkers] before. [However,] he suffered from attachment to physiological functions, and was not able to become liberated from bondage. His insights were also the source of his ailments. Generally, excellent Neo-Confucians all tended towards the vehicle of the celestials. People say that Neo-Confucianism is Chan, and is essentially merely what the Buddhists refer to as the four kinds of mediation (*si*

¹²⁹ For Zhang's philosophical investigations into the concept “mind”, see Yu Yihong “Han Song chuanxin” 汉宋传心 (Transmission of the Mind from Han and Song), *Shi Shu Hua*, 26(2017), pp. 2-13. https://www.academia.edu/35524625/Transmission_of_the_Mind_from_Han_and_Song_A_Study_of_the_Han-School_Scholars_Interpretation_of_Neo-Confucianism_in_Late_Qing_Dynasty-%E8%A9%A9%E6%9B%B8%E7%95%AB%E7%AC%AC26%E6%9C%9F.

¹³⁰ Wang Shihuai 王时槐, *Wang Shihuai ji* 王时槐集 (Collected Writings of Wang Shihuai), (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2015), p. 506.

chan 四禅)¹³¹ and the eight kinds of *samādhi* states (*ba ding* 八定)¹³² that are shared with non-Buddhists. Only Yang Cihu and Lin Zichun 林子春 (Lin Zhiqi 林之奇, 1112-1176)¹³³ transcended that description of Neo-Confucianism to some extent. But if one were then to say that Neo-Confucianism could be discarded for this reason, and that one can exclusively follow Buddhism, that is also not right. Buddhist texts have little to say about norms of the human world, and [their] five precepts and ten good deeds¹³⁴ are not nearly as detailed as Confucian texts.¹³⁵

In this passage, Zhang provides a broad sweeping comparison of the spiritual experiences of Neo-Confucianism and Buddhism. Yangmingist thinker Wang Shihuai and his saying “Qian is the intrinsic reality of awareness, and Kun is the faculty of mentation” were commended in Zhang’s writings several times. Although Yangmingists have fully recognised the activities of the storehouse consciousness (physiological functions), from a Buddhist perspective, Zhang noted that they did treat these “physiological functions” correctly. Zhang claimed that following the physiological functions is to follow the storehouse consciousness constant turning over (*hengzhuan* 恒转) (continuous arising, *shengsheng* 生生), and actually needs to be abandoned (*shequ* 舍去) in order to reach the

¹³¹ *Dabanniepan jing*, T0374_12.0567b21.

¹³² *Dabanniepan jing houfen* 大般涅槃经后分 (The Latter Part of *Mahāyāna Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*), T0377_12.0900c25-T0377_12.0900c26.

¹³³ In *Dao Han weiyan*, Zhang commended Lin Zhiqi in the same way as here; see *Zhang Taiyan quanji Dao Han weiyan*, p. 80. I have not found an example where Lin Zhiqi is called Lin Zichun. This might be a mis-transcription made in the compilation of Zhang’s book.

¹³⁴ The five precepts are promises to abstain from killing living beings, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and intoxication. And the ten good deeds include not to kill; not to steal; to avoid sexual misconduct; not to lie; abstention from slanderous speech; abstention from harsh speech; abstention from idle talk; non-greed; non-hatred; right views. Both of them are oft mentioned in early Buddhist *āgamas*. See *Chang ahan jing* 长阿含经 (*Dīrgha Āgama*; The Collection of Long Discourses), T0001_01.0059c12-T0001_01.0059c13.

¹³⁵ Zhang Taiyan, *Zhang Taiyan quanji shuxin ji*, p. 293. 理学需取其少支离者，明道、上蔡、象山、慈湖、白沙、阳明，各有独至，皆无支离之病。王门高材，多在江西。仆尤喜王塘南。其言“乾为知体，坤为意根”，自来绝未有见及此者。苦于执着生机，不能脱离缠缚，是其见到之处正其受病之处也。大抵理学高者，皆走入天乘。世人谓理学是禅，要只佛家所谓四禅、八定，通于外道者。唯杨慈湖、林子春，庶几超出耳。然因是谓理学可废，佛法可以专遵，则又不然。人世纪纲，佛书言之甚略；五戒、十善，不如儒书详备多矣。 Dated 1931.

non-arising (*wusheng* 无生) state.¹³⁶ Failing to abandon the constant turning over of the storehouse consciousness is why Zhang thought that the insights of the Yanmingists were also the source of their ailments. Like Ouyang Jingwu, Zhang's understanding of Yangmingism was also influenced by Yogācāra Buddhism.¹³⁷ But in Zhang's late thought, that which brought about the Yangmingists' attachment to physiological functions not only kept them away from the ultimate truth but also provided them with strong dynamics in moral practices.¹³⁸ Why did he think so? In Zhang's own words, as discussed previously: These practices, as human activities, are controlled by one's deluded mind.¹³⁹ According to him, this deluded mind necessarily entailed one's inborn attachment to self as well as attachment to physiological functions. But in dealing with social affairs including "moral practices" here, this mind cannot be absent. This recognition led Zhang to comment: "If one were then to say that Neo-Confucianism could be discarded for this reason and that one can exclusively follow Buddhism, that is also not right". Zhang maintained that Neo-Confucianism did not provide us with knowledge about the ultimate truth like Buddhism did, but for him, the value of Neo-Confucianism or Confucianism itself, was that it offered knowledge about norms of the human world. Reading Confucian texts with the guide provided by these good Neo-Confucian thinkers is thus also justified, and the inborn attachment to the existence of self becomes no less problematic in cultivating human morality.

As demonstrated in Sub-section 4.1.2, while "the Six Classics are historical works", Zhang also thought that the Confucian classics record plain teachings about moral virtues, which are indispensable to how a person applies historical knowledge. Given "inborn attachment to the self" cannot be avoided by following these classics, Zhang turned to the *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith* to justify this attachment. Ishii Tsuyoshi has

¹³⁶ Zhang Taiyan, *Zhang Taiyan quanji meipi ji* 章太炎全集 眉批集 (Complete Works of Zhang Taiyan: Collection of Headnotes), (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2017), p. 300.

¹³⁷ Zhang believed that "quiescence" (in Zhang's words, "non-arising") should constitute a standard in evaluating Neo-Confucian doctrines. Applying this standard to Yangmingist thought, in Zhang's early thought, innate goodness was once judged defective because it would necessarily result in selfishness and weakness. Before the 1911 revolution, Zhang regarded the concept *shenwo* (and also Yangmingist "innate goodness") as a source of self-deception and harmful comprise. See Zhang, "Bo shenwo xianzheng lun" 驳神我宪政说 (Refutation of Constitutionalism based on *Shenwo*), *Zhang Taiyan quanji Taiyan wenlu chubian*, pp. 324-331.

¹³⁸ See Yu Yihong, "Zhang Taiyan houqi sixiang er ti", *Shi Shu Hua*, 24(2017), p. 159.

¹³⁹ Zhang Taiyan, *Zhang Taiyan quanji Dao Han weiyan*, p. 17.

pointed out that in Zhang's works, as early as those completed between 1908 and 1911, Zhang adopted the concept of "accommodation" (*suishun* 随顺) from the *Treatise* to defend his nationalistic ideals.¹⁴⁰ As late as in the late 1910s, he directly applied the *Treatise*'s notion of the "inherently awakening" mind in structuring his theory of mind.¹⁴¹ In *Dao Han changyan*, Zhang further declared that "Qian refers to the storehouse consciousness, which conditionally gives rise to the myriad dharmas" (乾即阿赖耶识, 为万法缘起) and "Kun refers to the faculty of mentation, which posits to the storehouse consciousness as the self" (坤即意根, 执阿赖耶识为我).¹⁴² Also in this book, "the faculty of mentation" is also the mentation consciousness (seventh consciousness) which serves as the root of selfish desires.¹⁴³ How then does one deal with this root and the inevitable selfish desires? Based on the terms Zhang adopted from the *Treatise*, he maintained that if one "awakens to the fact that as the mind [appears to] arise initially, it has no characteristic of initial [arising]" (觉心初起而心无初相) and also to the fact that "the mind constantly endures" (心常住),¹⁴⁴ then the storehouse consciousness will undergo a fundamental transformation (*zhuan yi* 转依) into the real and eternal (*zhenchang* 真常) state.¹⁴⁵ Zhang claimed that these facts about one's mind had been shown in the *Book of Change*, however, great Confucian thinkers such as Wang Shihuai failed to recognise them.¹⁴⁶ According to *Dao Han weiyan*, *Dao Han changyan* and other writings,

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Ishii Tsuyoshi, "'Suishun' de zhuti shijian: *Dasheng qixin lun* yu Zhang Taiyan de 'qiwu zhexue'" "随顺"的主体实践: 《大乘起信论》与章太炎的"齐物哲学" (The Subjective Practice of Accommodation: *The Awakening of Mahāyāna Faith* and Zhang Taiyan's Philosophy Regarding the Equality of Things), in Gong Jun 龚隽 ed., *Hanyu Foxue pinglun* 汉语佛学评论, 6(2018), pp. 50-56.

¹⁴¹ Zhang Taiyan, *Zhang Taiyan quanji Dao Han weiyan*, p. 1.

¹⁴² Zhang Taiyan, *Zhang Taiyan quanji Dao Han changyan*, p. 75.

¹⁴³ Charles Muller, "Eight Consciousnesses 八识", *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?q=%E5%85%AB%E8%AD%98>.

¹⁴⁴ Zhang Taiyan, *Zhang Taiyan quanji Dao Han changyan*, p. 75.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 76. For the *Treatise* texts Zhang cited, see *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith*, edited and translated by John Jorgensen, Dan Lusthaus, John Makeham, and Mark Strange, p. 74. "As for those who have completed the bodhisattva levels, fully accomplished skillful means, and accorded with [suchness] in a single thought-moment, because they are far removed from subtle thought moments, they awaken to the fact that as the mind [appears to] arise initially, it has no characteristic of initial [arising]. They manage to see the nature of the mind, which is that the mind constantly endures. This is called 'final awakening'." (如菩萨地尽, 满足方便, 一念相应。觉心初起, 心无初相。以远离微细念故得见心性, 心即常住, 名究竟觉。)

the basic relationship among the terms Zhang used in his hybrid theory can be illustrated in the table following:

Table: Different Expressions of the Mind in Zhang Taiyan's Late Thought

Knowledge sources	The <i>Book of Change</i>	Yangmingist writings		Yogācāra writings	The <i>Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith</i>
心 One mind Undefined mind [-as-reality]	乾 Hexagram Qian	良知 Mind [with innate knowledge of the good]	知体 Intrinsic reality of awareness	阿赖耶识 Storehouse consciousness	真如门 Gateway of the mind as suchness
	坤 Hexagram Kun	意 Conation	意根 Faculty of mentation	末那识 Mentation consciousness	生灭门 Gateway of the mind as arising and ceasing

On the one hand, Zhang's mind theory was established on the basis of the "one mind two gateways" model. On the other hand, the Yogācāra idea of "deluded mind" made him construct another "mind" that is independent from "one mind two gateways" model: the "undefiled mind" that appears after both Qian (storehouse consciousness) and Kun (mentation consciousness) cease to function.¹⁴⁷ As such, "Hexagram Qian, Mind [with innate knowledge of the good], Intrinsic reality of awareness, Storehouse Consciousness

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, Zhang Taiyan *quanji Dao Han changyan*, p. 75.

and Gateway of the mind as suchness” refer to the “deluded mind” itself. Because one must enter into society and then take on activities, “Hexagram Kun, Conation, Faculty of mentation, Mentation consciousness and Gateway of the mind as arising and ceasing” refer to another aspect of the same deluded mind that controls these activities. In addition, the mind one has in the state of final awakening (undefiled mind), as Zhang had stressed, is the same mind one has before being awakened (deluded mind).¹⁴⁸ To find a firm basis for good actions, in his mind theory, Zhang Taiyan tried to differentiate the “undefiled mind” from the “deluded mind”. In this process, he blended “deluded mind” tenet with “one mind two gateways” model.

The *Treatise on the Awakening Mahāyāna Faith* helped Zhang bridge the gap between practice (function, *yong*) and reality (*ti*), and Yogācāra concepts were used to describe the undefiled (non-arising) character of this reality. That aspect of the mind with the undefiled (non-arising) character, can “accommodate” the desires of other sentient beings. Once “both Qian (storehouse consciousness) and Kun (mentation consciousness) cease to function”, there will be no preconceptions in one’s mind, and the truth of real equality in *Zhuangzi* will be revealed: As already noted, this was the ideal state in which to study historical works.¹⁴⁹ In this sense, Zhang’s theory of the mind was in service of his “Six Classics are historical works” thesis. Furthermore, if one maintains this undefiled mind in reading historical works and applying historical knowledge, inborn attachment to self will not hinder the “myriad things of the world being able to be at ease”. But at the same time, the conflict between the *Treatise on the Awakening Mahāyāna Faith* and Yogācāra ideas made Zhang’s argument theoretically incoherent. After “both Qian (storehouse consciousness) and Kun (mentation consciousness) cease to function”, one’s deluded mind also thoroughly ceases to function. If so, at that time, how could one practise in the human society? In other words, as social practices must be controlled by the deluded mind, how could one keep the undefiled mind non-arising while living in the human world? During Zhang’s late years, he did not resolve the incoherent problems in his mind theory. Perhaps due to these unresolved problems, in the aforementioned letter to Ouyang, Zhang stated: “I have also written on middle antiquity Confucianism and Song Ming Neo-Confucianism—after which I reflected that [such] lofty talk is unhelpful.”

Zhang’s critics argued that his theory of the mind merely confirmed that he had conflated the intrinsic reality of the mind and the storehouse consciousness, meaning that

¹⁴⁸ Zhang Taiyan, *Zhang Taiyan quanji Dao Han weiyan*, p. 1.

¹⁴⁹ Zhang Taiyan, *Zhang Taiyan quanji Dao Han changyan*, p. 76.

the defiled mind cannot be differentiated from the undefiled mind. In 1921-1922, Zhang's debate with Ouyang Jingwu's disciple, Lü Cheng 吕澂 (1896-1989), exposed this vital issue of Zhang's combination of concepts drawn from the *Treatise* and Yogācāra ideas. While writing about Yangmingism, Zhang had stated: "by suppressing and stopping the thinking consciousness, the storehouse consciousness will naturally manifest (伏断意识, 藏识自现)."¹⁵⁰ In Zhang's mind-based framework, through further stopping the storehouse consciousness (*Qian* 乾), one could then directly realise (*qinzheng* 亲证) that the undefiled mind was transformed from the storehouse consciousness.

Lü was not satisfied with Zhang's claim. First, because the function of the thinking consciousness (sixth consciousness) cannot be really suppressed and stopped except when one's human body (*Shijian zhi shen* 世间之身) ceases to function (sleeping or dead), Zhang's claim about "suppressing and stopping the thinking consciousness" pointed to an impossible mission.¹⁵¹ Second, because Zhang insisted that the intrinsic reality of the mind was the undefiled mind which is "beyond one's conceptual perceptions" (非意想所能到), his argument based on a self-proclaimed "experimental method" (*shiyān* 实验) was confusing: how could one, according to this method, experience something "beyond one's conceptual perceptions"?¹⁵²

In Zhang's syncretic theory of the mind, it was not terminological issues that were his greatest weakness. Lü's critique of "suppressing and stopping the thinking consciousness" touched upon another vital question: as our living is always accompanied by the activities of the thinking consciousness, how could we achieve "accommodation" in the world by "suppressing and stopping the thinking consciousness"? As noted above, Zhang even believed that the storehouse consciousness should be "abandoned" so as to reach the "non-arising" state of the mind! Zhang's ambivalence between Buddhist "non-arising" and Confucian "ceaseless arising" revealed the following contradiction: on the one hand, Zhang found that the inborn attachment to self was the basis of correct practice; on the other hand, Zhang was vigilant about the selfish desires originating from self-consciousness (the operations of the thinking consciousness, the faculty of mentation and

¹⁵⁰ Yao Binbin 姚彬彬 comp., "1921-1922 nian Zhang Taiyan, Lü Cheng, Li Jinxi lunxue shujian kaoshi" 1921-1922 年章太炎、吕澂、黎锦熙论学书简考释 (Compilation and Studies of Zhang Taiyan, Lü Cheng and Li Jinxi's Letters about Academic Discussions in 1921-1922), *Foxue yanjiu* 佛学研究, 23(2014), pp. 327.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 328.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 331.

the storehouse consciousness), and he attempted to abandon that basis. During his later life, Zhang remained reluctant to further develop his theory of mind to justify the inborn attachment to self. From Ma Yifu's perspective, Zhang's plight reflected an inherent theoretical problem in Yogācāra. According to Ma's comment previously cited: The "mind" in Yogācāra Buddhism is always a deluded one rather than the mind-as-reality.¹⁵³

Influenced by tenet of the "deluded mind" in Yogācāra doctrine, Zhang Taiyan thought that the mind controlling our activities could only be the deluded mind but not "the mind as suchness" (the undefiled mind in his words). This recognition indicated the biggest weak point of Zhang's thought. One must totally stop the activities of the deluded mind to reveal the undefiled mind that acts as "mind-as-reality". In Zhang's theory, this undefiled mind was actually detached from the deluded mind and one's activities in the human world. This weak point also led to Zhang's unsuccessful integration of Yogācāra ideas and the "one mind two gateways" model. Ouyang Jingwu's "quiescence-as-reality" discourse failed to show us a convincing account of the "fundamental reality" of our moral practices; Zhang's theory was an alternative – but also remained unsuccessful.

By justifying Neo-Confucian (especially Yangmingist) understandings of the mind, Zhang's theory sought to bridge the gap between human activities and their moral basis. However, the "deluded mind" tenet kept hindering him in genuinely bridging this gap. One could not rely on the mind while simultaneously making this mind cease to operate in order to reveal an "undefiled mind". From Ma Yifu's perspective, because Yogācāra thinkers rejected the idea that the mind and its functions can be included within "one true dharma-realm",¹⁵⁴ the "quiescence" they pursued became unavoidably dissociated from the human world produced by the deluded mind. This is why Ouyang and Zhang failed to come up with a convincing theory to explain how Confucianism can guide the practices of the Chinese people. Compared with Liao Ping's "classics as prophecies" and Zhang Taiyan's "classics as historical works", Ma Yifu's "one mind contains the Six Arts" focused on showing that the classics provided the Chinese people with knowledge of our moral nature. This enabled Ma to provide a stronger defence of Confucianism's relevance in a rapidly changing world. And in doing so, through adopting the "one mind two gateways" model, Ma was able to give his idealistic interpretations of Confucian classics. Compared with Ouyang Jingwu and Zhang Taiyan who were both

¹⁵³ "Shi dao da qi da", "Guanxiang zhiyan", *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, p. 390.

¹⁵⁴ Ma Yifu, "Shi dao da qi da", "Guanxiang zhiyan", *Fuxing shuyuan jianglu*, *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, pp. 390-391.

influenced by the tenet of the “deluded mind”, Ma better demonstrate the tight integration of our praxis and its basis.

Concluding Remarks

The first two sub-sections of this chapter, 4.1.1. and 4.1.2., investigated Liao Ping’s and Zhang Taiyan’s understandings of the Confucian classics. In their day, they were renowned masters of Confucian classics scholarship. Ma Yifu, however, criticised them for “not knowing the normative principles contained in the classics”. And due to this weak point, in different ways, they failed to justify Confucianism’s relevance in a rapidly changing society.

As presented in Sub-section 4.1.1., Liao considered the classics to be prophecies so that he could continue to make new knowledge from the west relevant to his “Confucian scholarship” based on the classics. He claimed that the veracity of the knowledge in the classics should not be conditioned by historical situations: the classics recorded the principles of the world. Through a case study of Liao’s new interpretations that treated the “Five Phases” as “symbolic marks of the Five Zones of the world”, this sub-section showed that, in order to find a way to reconcile the views of western chemists and those of the Chinese sage who composed the classics, Liao frequently had to change his interpretations of the classics in order to explain the newly appearing western knowledge he learned, thus undermining his attempt to prove that the classics provide knowledge about timeless principles of the world. Ma’s critique of Liao’s ignorance of normative principles in studying the classics, combined with Ma’s brief and severe comments on Kang Youwei who was influenced by Liao, can be understood as Ma’s reflection on the zeitgeist of his age. This zeitgeist manifested in Liao’s and Kang’s versions of Confucianism, which failed to promote an ongoing role for normative principles in modernisation. It was against this background, driven by his strong moral sense, that Ma turned to develop a new framework in order to recognise the principles contained in the classics. This framework, which held that the normative principles are in our mind, posited a close tie between one’s practices and the classics.

Sub-section 4.1.2. discussed Zhang Taiyan’s advocacy of the theory that “the Six Classics are all historical works”. Through applying a theory emphasising the importance of validation in reading classics as concrete guidebooks of practices in modern China,

Zhang Taiyan tried to reject all universalist and metaphysical preconceptions. Unlike Ma, Zhang insisted that the classics provide readers with historical knowledge but not knowledge about any kind of principle (*li*). Zhang, however, still insisted on the ongoing need for a concept of “self” in applying historical knowledge to deal with social issues. Why? This is because it was necessary to rely on the existence of a “self” in cultivating human morality before dealing with social issues. Rather than in historical works, Zhang maintained that the basis of moral praxis needs to be sought in one’s own mind. Similar to Ma, this led him to seek theoretical support from Yangmingism and the *Treatise on the Awakening Mahāyāna Faith*. But as discussed in 4.2.2, Zhang’s project was not successful. A key contributor to Zhang’s failure was the role he attributed to the “deluded mind”.

Ouyang Jingwu and Zhang Taiyan’s explanations of the relationship between moral praxis and its basis were not convincing. And although they also tried to establish a close tie between the classics and one’s practices, compared with Ma, their efforts were not successful. Sub-sections 4.2.1. and 4.2.2. of this chapter examined their relevant discourses and observed their weak points.

With the help of Yogācāra resources, Ouyang attempted to replace the mind-as-reality in the “reality-function” ontological model (which includes both “one mind two gateways” and “mind controls the nature and the emotions”) with quiescence as the ultimate object of practice, which is not conditioned by individual experiences and the world where badness exists. In this new theory of “reality-function”, quiescence, as fundamental reality, cannot serve as a direct cause, but only as a secondary or auxiliary cause of social practices, which are conditioned. To transcend the world conditioned by selfish desire, Ouyang maintained that the reality of functions (our practices) cannot be one’s mind. In doing so, however, Ouyang sacrificed the direct connection between the source of normativity and our practices. Through a case study of Ouyang’s new commentary on the “Balance as the Norm” chapter in the *Book of Rites*, Sub-section 4.2.1. demonstrated that for Ouyang, it is only with the belief that transcendent “*nirvāṇa*” can be reached—rather than confirmation of the existence of the mind-as-reality—that one can manage to undertake good actions in the living world. Because Ouyang had severed the direct connection between reality and the function, his new theory of “quiescence-as-reality” was in trouble. Without the acknowledgment that mind-as-reality directly guides our practices, how can the connection between normative principle and one’s practices be secured? After all, it would be difficult to provide a practical theory for humans on a

supermundane foundation such as the concept transcendent “*nirvāṇa*”. This problem was grounded in what Ma had been aware of: if the mind is merely the deluded mind, our practices (function) controlled by this mind would be excluded from “one true dharma-realm” (the fundamental reality). As such, there will be an unbridgeable gap between social practices (function) and the source of normative principle (the fundamental reality). Although Zhang Taiyan attempted to address this problem, limited by the idea of the deluded mind, he did not bridge the gap as later New Confucian thinkers did.

Sub-section 4.2.2. examined Zhang Taiyan’s syncretic theory of the mind. In his reflection on the indispensable reliance on “self” in our everyday practices, Zhang Taiyan turned to the “one mind two gateways” model. Zhang, however, was not aware that the Buddhist “non-arising” and “no-self” ideal would hinder him in further affirming that our practices are indeed functions of mind-as-reality. In his theory of mind, Zhang still considered the mind controlling our practices to be the “deluded mind” rather than the “undefiled mind” which is “non-arising”. This is to say, the “undefiled mind” could not act as the reality of functions. At the same time, what controls our practices is the “deluded mind” that will cease to function while one reaches the real and eternal state. Due to this, Zhang did not justify his understanding of the positive role of the mind controlling our practices that he had expected to achieve. Like Ouyang, Zhang failed to bridge the gap between praxis and the source of normative principle. This failure meant that the moral basis of learning historical knowledge to deal with social affairs remained absent. Compared with them, Ma’s “one mind contains the Six Arts” discourse was less problematic in elaborating the direct relationship between one’s mind and the classics as normative guidelines (the Six Arts contained in one’s mind) in social practices (function).

Besides a few critical comments, Ma Yifu made no systematic critique of Zhang Taiyan and his ignorance of the distinction between Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism. But Xiong Shili, who shared a similar but different understanding of “intrinsic reality” with Ma, did criticise Zhang’s syncretic theory of mind (especially Zhang’s misunderstanding of Yangmingism) in a more detailed way. Through an analysis of Xiong Shili’s critique of Zhang Taiyan’s conflation of Buddhist and Confucian ideas, the following chapter will show how Xiong Shili succeeded Zhang in integrating Buddhist ideas into a Confucian theory, and how his New Confucian thought underscored the significance of Ma’s thought indicating an alternative way of conserving the core values of Confucianism in modern China.

“As a sage sees it, it is of course always possible that something could be done in the world [to improve the situation]. But if the power afforded by his position and circumstances does not suffice for him to act, he, too, will be unable to have an effect.”¹

To better explain the non-duality of reality and function, both Ma Yifu and Xiong Shili were critical of Yogācāra ideas. For Ma, it was the rigid differentiation of the conditioned and the unconditioned that hindered Yogācāra thinkers from acknowledging mind-as-reality and its functions (human activities) as part of “one true dharma-realm”.² Xiong also objected to the disjunction between the conditioned and the unconditioned as presented in Yogācāra. Although he was initially inspired by the Yogācāra tradition and Ouyang Jingwu's thought, Xiong developed a different understanding of reality and function and was more positive about the non-duality of the two by drawing on the “one mind two gateways” model and Yangmingist ideas such as the “inherent mind” (*benxin* 本心).³ Along with his intensive communications with Ma, in the late 1920s Xiong also composed his representative work, *New Treatise on the Uniqueness of Consciousness*.

Ma Yifu highly commended Xiong's understanding of fundamental reality (*benti* 本体) expressed in this book.⁴ As we known, Ma made a concrete contribution to Xiong's composition of this book – especially the “Ming Xin 明心” (explaining the mind I&II) chapters. In particular, Ma's view that we should “observe constancy (reality) in transformation (function)” (变中见常) had inspired Xiong's idea the function is not

¹ Zhu Xi, in Li Jingde comp., *Topically Arranged Conversations of Master Zhu*; Translated by Justin Tiwald, in Philip J. Ivanhoe ed., *Zhu Xi: Selected Writings*, (NY: Oxford University Press, 2019), p. 66.

² Ma Yifu, “Shi dao da qi da”, “Guanxiang zhiyan”, *Fuxing shuyuan jianglu, Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, p. 390.

³ Sang Yu, *Xiong Shili's Understanding of Reality and Function, 1920-1937*, pp. 173-174.

⁴ Ma Yifu, “Foreword”, in Xiong Shili, *New Treatise on the Uniqueness of Consciousness*, translated and annotated by John Makeham, p. 12. “The terms he uses are complex yet precise; his writing is nuanced, yet the meaning is able to be clearly expressed. Because Master Xiong has perceived the flow of Fundamental Reality, everything [he expresses] comes straight from within—ebullient and irrepressible.”

different from reality ontologically.⁵ Moreover, both Ma and Xiong agreed that the mind controlling our activities could be regarded as fundamental reality. This similarity is particularly evident in Xiong's detailed critique of Zhang Taiyan's misunderstanding of the mind. In spite of this, Ma's emphasis on the idea of "eliminating habituated tendencies" and Xiong's stress on the concept of "elucidating transformation" led to them having different understandings of reality, and to their different interpretations of Confucianism. In his forewords to the *Abridged and Definitive Edition of New Treatise on the Uniqueness of Consciousness*, Xiong said that his philosophical thought "would not develop to another stage" (无复进境), and that his remaining task was to elucidate the theoretical structure (*tiaoli* 条理) of the "Great Peace and Great Unity" (*taiping datong* 太平大同) ideal of Confucianism.⁶ In 1957 and 1959, Xiong finished *Tiyong lun* 体用论 (On Reality and Function) and *Ming xin pian* 明心篇 (Explaining the Mind) (the latter is the last two chapters of the former work, but published as a separate book) as a recomposition of, as well as substitute for, the *Abridged and Definitive Edition of New Treatise on the Uniqueness of Consciousness*.⁷ In these books and other writings formed in the post-1950 period, Xiong's philosophy of transformation and his Confucian discourses underpinned by this philosophy came to the mature stage. This chapter will centre on Xiong Shili's elaborations of Confucianism in the post-1950 period, which fully reflect the difference between Xiong's and Ma's thought.

In these elaborations, Xiong Shili devoted himself to building a monistic onto-cosmology that was more flexible in explaining a rapidly changing China. Through critical engagement with previous thinkers and his contemporaries, Xiong constructed his philosophy of transformation and new elaborations of the Confucian classics, which he considered as necessary intellectual resources for Communist China. The first section of

⁵ Sang Yu, *Xiong Shili's Understanding of Reality and Function, 1920-1937*, pp. 196-199; Li Qingliang, "Lun Ma Yifu dui Xiong Shili *Xin weishi lun zhi yingxiang*" 论马一浮对熊十力《新唯识论》之影响 (Ma Yifu's Influences on Xiong Shili's *New Consciousness-only Doctrine*), *Taiwan dongya wenming yanjiu xuekan* 台湾东亚文明研究学刊, 2010(6), pp. 201-232.

⁶ Xiong Shili, *Xin Weishilun shanding ben* 新唯识论删定本 (Abridged and Definitive Edition of *New Treatise on the Uniqueness of Consciousness*), *Xiong Shili quanji* 熊十力全集 (Complete Works of Xiong Shili), Vol 6, (Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2001), pp. 4, 21. Dated 1953 and 1952.

⁷ Xiong Shili, *Tiyong lun* 体用论 (On Reality and Function), in *Tiyong lun: wai yizhong* 体用论：外一种 (On Reality and Function: With An Appendix "Explaining the Mind Chapter"), (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2019), pp. 6-7. Published 1958.

this chapter, based on Xiong Shili's critique of Zhang Taiyan and his late works, will analyse Xiong's understanding of a Reality that contains internal contradictions. With this understanding, aiming at demonstrating how good actions are possible, Xiong's theory was also more flexible and convincing in explaining the actual world that is necessarily conditioned by badness.

The second section will investigate how Xiong explained that the classics reveal how the way of transformation should be followed by both ancient and modern Chinese people. In accord with the modernisation trend, Xiong's conclusion is also bold: the hierarchical order in the monarchical period must be eliminated in an ideal world predicted in the classics. Xiong's elaborations, however, were unconvincing and questioned by his friends. This section will also argue that Ma's idealistic New Confucian thought provided another alternative in understanding Confucianism's place in China's modernisation. By introducing Xiong's student Mou Zongsan's New Confucian thought, the Appendix VII will construct a bridge between Ma and Mou, and discuss the significance of the kind of "spiritual Confucianism" (*xinxing Ruxue* 心性儒学, more literally, Confucianism focusing on mind and nature) they represent.

5.1. Xiong Shili on Reality

5.1.1. Xiong's Critique of Zhang Taiyan and His Understanding of Reality

Ouyang claimed that the "intrinsic reality and its function" model shared by the "awakened nature [of the mind]" theorists in Sinitic Buddhism (such as Master Chengguan) and Neo-Confucianism (such as Zhu Xi) had to be replaced by a "subject-object" model on the basis of Yogācāra doctrine.⁸ His philosophical position, however, was unavoidably idealistic because of his view that individual practices (functions) have to follow a standard (*nirvāṇa*) that transcends the living world. Deeming the "inborn attachment to the existence of self" as being necessary to carry out good practices, Zhang Taiyan attempted to use the "one mind two gateways" model to reinforce the link

⁸ "For Ouyang, unconditioned reality does not inhere in one's mind, which is unavoidably conditioned. He argued that this reality is not 'the inherent reality of the mind' but the object to be cognitively grasped by the apprehending subject. He claimed that according to genuine Buddhist teachings, this ultimate object must be an unconditioned dharma, *nirvāṇa* and suchness." See Cheng Gongrang, *Jueze yu zhenwei zhijian*, pp. 173-177.

between one's mind and one's practices. Zhang, however, failed to show how the classics can be used to justify the necessary "inborn attachment to self". Ma's "one mind contains the Six Arts" was able to resolve this problem and thereby, transcended the "Six Classics are historical works" thesis. As discussed in Chapter 3, however, Ma's emphasis on morality further heightened the tension between an ideal world based on the virtues of the nature and an actual world conditioned by badness. To overcome the problems found in Ouyang's and Zhang's thought,⁹ the connection between the ideal world and the actual world needed to be theoretically strengthened. Against this background, Xiong Shili developed his monistic onto-cosmology, which mitigated this tension. The term "monistic" here refers to the idea that the myriad things in the cosmos are nothing but the transformation of Reality (*shiti* 实体). The myriad things are the productive functioning (*gongyong* 功用) of Reality (*benti* 体); Reality and function (*yong* 用) are non-dual (*bu er* 不二).¹⁰ This philosophical position made Xiong's view of science, one of the central topics in China's modernisation, very different from Ma Yifu and Zhang Taiyan's. In a letter regarding the painstaking composition of his book, *Yuan Ru* 原儒 (To the Origins of the Ru),¹¹ Xiong said:

Old Clarity ("Zhan Weng 湛翁", Ma Yifu's alias) simply did not approve of science – most old people are like that and so was Zhang Taiyan in his later

⁹ In the following analysis, I will focus on Xiong's critique of Zhang Taiyan. For Xiong's rejection of Ouyang's understanding of the "reality", see Sang Yu, *Xiong Shili's Understanding of Reality and Function, 1920-1937*, pp. 172-176. For Xiong's communications with Ma during their lives, see Wang Ruhua 王汝华, *Xiandai Rujia sansheng (shang)* 现代儒家三圣(上) (Three Sages of Modern Neo-Confucianism, Part One), (Taipei: Xiuwei xinxi keji, 2012), pp. 25-30.

¹⁰ Xiong Shili, *Tiyong lun*, in *Tiyong lun: wai yizhong*, p. 4. I capitalise "Reality" in order to highlight Xiong's usage of "Reality" to refer to *shiti* 实体 (true reality) and *benti* 本体 (ontological reality).

¹¹ In a letter written in 1962, Xiong said that his writings before 1956 cannot reflect his latest efforts exploring Confucianism. Undoubtedly, *Dujing shiyao* 读经示要 (Essential Instructions on the Reading of the Classics), written in 1945, should be carefully dealt with in a monograph regarding Xiong's political philosophy and its transformation, but *Yuanru* would be more suitable here in examining Xiong's ideas formed in his late years. For Xiong's comments on his earlier writings, see "Zhi Tang Zhizhong zhuan Tang Junyi, Mou Zongsan" 致唐至中转唐君毅, 牟宗三 (Xiong's letter to Tang Zhizhong to pass on to Tang Junyi and Mou Zongsan), *Xiong Shili lunxue shuzha*, pp. 265. Tang Junyi (1909-1978) and Mou Zongsan (1909-1995) were Xiong's pupils. Tang Zhizhong was Tang Junyi's younger sister. Both Tang and Mou were then based in Hong Kong.

years. Moreover, Ma has always disliked the *Officers of Zhou* (the *Rites of Zhou*). Regarding these matters, they can think what they like.¹²

In this comment, Xiong compared his old friend Ma to a person he had severely criticised – Zhang Taiyan, who also “did not approve of science”. Both Xiong’s and Ma’s New Confucian thought was rooted in the self-confirmation of the intrinsic reality of the mind, and they both held that the normative principles we follow in this world are also contained in this reality. Although they shared the same belief in the self-confirmation of reality (see Sub-section 1.3.1. of Chapter 1), their divergence on the matter of science indicates their different attitudes towards the interactions between human and the world. Generally, in Xiong’s late philosophy, the specific character of Reality was “constant transformation”, and one’s mind could be the Ruler within this transformation. Influenced by this philosophy, while both human and the world were part of the Reality, Xiong was inclined to stress the positiveness of the interactions driven by the transforming character of this Reality.

After the 1950s, as China’s modernisation led by the Communist Party was quickly advancing, Ma slightly modified his negative comments on science and technology in his poems.¹³ Compared with Ma’s conservative attitude towards Confucianism’s position in China’s modernisation process, Xiong’s attitude was much more positive. His socialist interpretations of Confucianism, in which he expressed a desire to integrate the needs of modernisation into Confucianism, were severely criticised by both Ma and Liang Shuming.¹⁴ Xiong’s positive attitude towards modernisation was closely related to his philosophy, and this set him apart from Zhang Taiyan, Ouyang

¹² Xiong Shili, “Zhi Liu Jingchuang” 致刘静窗 (Xiong’s Letter to his young friend Liu Jingchuang), *Xiong Shili quanji*, Vol 8, p. 731. 湛翁只是不赞成科学，老人鲜不如此，章太炎晚年亦然，他又素不喜《周官》，此亦任之可耳。 Liu Jingchuang was the father of New Confucian thinker Liu Shu-hsien 刘述先 (1934-2016). On the basis of existing literature, it is difficult to determine why Ma “always disliked” the *Rites of Zhou*.

¹³ Chen Rui, *Ma Yifu yu xiandai Zhongguo*, pp. 284-290.

¹⁴ Ma Yifu, “Zhi Liang Shuming” 致梁漱溟 (To Liang Shuming), *Ma Yifu Quanji*, vol. 2, p. 650. Dated 1962. Liang Shuming, “Du Xiong zhu geshu shuhou” 读熊著各书后 (Postscripts after Reading Xiong Shili’s Works), in *Liang Shuming quanji* 梁漱溟全集 (Complete Works of Liang Shuming), vol 7, (Jinan: Shandong renmin chubanshe, 1993), pp. 734-785. Dated 1961.

Jingwu and Ma. As a point of entry into Xiong's philosophy, let us turn to one of the most representative comments he made on Zhang Taiyan in 1934:

Now, Mr Zhang takes "[the mind with] innate knowledge of the good" as the self-verifying aspect [of cognition]¹⁵ and so this means that the "innate knowledge of the good" cannot be taken as an external cognitive object. When we respond to affairs and things, [our] functions of distinguishing right and wrong simply belong to the [subjectively] perceiving aspect and are definitely not the self-verifying aspect. In other words, they should not be "innate knowledge of the good". Why? If the "innate knowledge of the good" is the self-verifying aspect, it will be taken as inner cognitive object or the fourth (the re-verifying aspect) [of cognition]—this is because it is not something that can be taken as an external cognitive object.¹⁶ Also, because this (the self-verifying aspect) is a direct perception without any deliberation and discrimination, how could Zhang describe it (the self-verifying aspect) as [capable of] knowing right and wrong? ... Zhang's fundamental confusion lies in this. While I do not expect that he could realise [his mistake], young people ought not be misled by him. That "the storehouse consciousness constantly turns over like a raging current" is simply a continuation of habitual tendencies. [Zhang] compares this to what we Confucians call "flow"; his fault is greater than mistaking a thief to be his

¹⁵ Zhang's comments cited here are from the same letter where he discussed Yang Jian as quoted above; see Zhang Taiyan, "Yu Wu Chengshi", pp. 408-409. Dated 1917. Similar views were later expressed in Zhang's *Dao Han weiyao* and *Dao Han Changyan* which Xiong might have read during 1920s.

¹⁶ Xiong pointed out that Zhang had misunderstood the "self-verifying aspect" (*zizheng fen* 自证分). According to Yogācāra Buddhism, "when the cognitive mental functioning is activated, the mind itself is divided, depending upon the particular function, into four aspects, and based on this, that which we know as cognitive function is established. Namely, the mind is divided into the parts of: that which is seen (objective part), that which sees (subjective part); the confirmation of that seeing (self-aware part, self-witnessing aspect); and, the acknowledgment of that confirmation (reconfirming self-aware part, re-witnessing aspect)." See Dan Lusthaus and Charles Muller, "Four Parts 四分", *Digital Dictionary of Buddhism*, [http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?56.xml+id\(%27b56db-5206%27\)](http://www.buddhism-dict.net/cgi-bin/xpr-ddb.pl?56.xml+id(%27b56db-5206%27)). Here, the "self-verifying aspect" must be clearly differentiated from the "perceiving part/aspect" (*jian fen* 见分). While Zhang considered "innate knowledge of the good" as the "self-verifying aspect", he simply severed the correlation between "innate knowledge" and the external world, in which case one becomes incapable of knowing right and wrong in the world. Cf. *Cheng weishi lun*, T1585_31.0010b02 - T1585_31.0010b26.

child, and his sin is sufficiently grievous to fall into *Niraya* (*Nili* 泥犁; hell).

What Confucians call “flow” is the true agency of ceaseless production and reproduction. If [“flow”] is mistaken for the defiled dharmas of the storehouse consciousness, and that they must be stopped and can be stopped, then one will fall into the erroneous views of nihilism and emptiness...Confucians recognise the Ruler within the flow. This refers to discerning the Ruler in the regularity of the vigorous flow.¹⁷ That which moves ceaselessly is its vigor. Because everywhere it is the reality of the myriad things such that each thing is as it should be, we see that they have regularity and cannot be thrown into disorder. If one verifies it with the mind, it is precisely in its incessant flow and endless responsiveness—and yet there is nothing that not in accord with principle and there are no erratic mental disturbances—that I recognise the Ruler. It is not the case that there is some other thing that is the Ruler....With this understanding of the Ruler and naming it “conation” (*yi* 意), is the genuine insight of Wang Yian 王一庵 (Wang Dong 王栋, 1502-1581). How could Zhang compare [the Ruler] to the defiled mind (*kliṣṭa-manas*)! If this misunderstanding is not corrected, then [one’s] seeds in [the heavenly endowed] nature will be cut-off.... As for students who, in exercising their thoughts, encounter obstacles that lead to incomprehension, that is not so serious. But once they are mired in confusion [about the meaning of terms], then it would affect them negatively their entire life. How could one not be vigilant!¹⁸

¹⁷ Cf. Xiong, *Xin weishi lun* 新唯识论 (New Treatise on the Uniqueness of Consciousness; 1932 edition), *Xiong Shili quanji*, vol. 2, p. 70.

¹⁸ Xiong Shili, “Da Xie Shilin” 答谢石麟 (Reply to Xie Shilin), *Xiong Shili quanji*, vol 8, pp. 93-95. See also Xiong, *Shili yuyao* 十力语要 (Selected Letters and Talks of Xiong Shili), *Xiong Shili quanji*, vol. 4, pp. 89-91. 今章氏乃指良知为自证分，则是良知不得外缘。吾人于应接事物时，对于是非之分辨作用，应只是见分。决定不是自证分。易言之，即应不是良知。何以故？良知即自证分，是乃内缘见及第四，不得外缘事物故。又唯是现量，无有筹度分别故，如何说它知是知非？...章氏根本迷谬在此。殆无望其能悟。但后生不可为其惑耳。赖耶恒转如暴流，祇是习气流转。以此拟之吾儒所谓流行，其过不止认贼作子，其罪实当堕入泥犁。儒者所谓流行，是生生不息真机。若视此为赖耶染法而为应断且可断者，则堕断见与空见...儒家于流行中识主宰，即于流行之健而有则处见主宰义。运而不息者，其健也。遍为万物实体，而物各如其所如者，乃见其有则而不可乱也。验之吾心，流行不息，应感万端，而莫不当理，无有狂惑者，即此识得主宰。非别有物为之主宰也...依此主宰义，而名之为意。是一庵真实见地。而章氏奈何以染污末那拟之耶！此而不辨，则是断绝性种...夫学子用思，窒塞不通者，无伤也。一涉混乱，便误终身。

Like Lü Cheng, Xiong asked if the mind with “innate knowledge of the good” is the self-verifying aspect, which cannot be obtained through the perception of external objects,¹⁹ then how could one distinguish right and wrong independent of the perception of external objects? With different understandings of the mind with “innate knowledge of the good”, Xiong and Zhang’s divergence could be exposed in their different attitudes towards Yangmingist Wang Dong’s notable thesis : “Conation is not that which is given expression by the mind.”²⁰ There is, however, definitely a ruler that comes from within the mind’s numinous [part], and is called conation”.²¹ Thus, Wang stated, “In terms of the Ruler of one’s body, it (intrinsic reality) is called the mind; in terms of the Ruler of one’s mind, it is called conation”. Focusing on Wang’s argument, Xiong made a severe, even emotional critique of Zhang’s negative comments on Wang Dong. Xiong’s main dissatisfaction towards Zhang, however, was Zhang’s negative attitude towards “the attachment to self”. As we have seen in previous discussions, Zhang acknowledged the practical relevance of Neo-Confucianism and the inborn attachment to self in the

可不戒欤！Dated 1934. In a newspaper article published in 1935, Mou Zongsan advocated Xiong’s critique of Zhang (especially Zhang’s confusion about the meaning of terms); see “Du ‘Da Xie Shilin’” 读<答谢石麟> (Upon Reading “A Reply to Xie Shilin”), *Mou Zongsan xiansheng quanji* 牟宗三先生全集 (The Complete Works of Mou Zongsan), vol 25, Taibei: Lianjing chuban shiye youxian gongsi, 2003, pp. 507-510.

¹⁹ Xiong’s close friend Liang Shuming also found Zhang to be confused here. See Liang Shuming, *Weishi shuyi* 唯识述义 (An Outline of Yogācāra), *Liang Shuming quanji* 梁漱溟全集 (Complete Works of Liang Shuming), vol 1, (Jinan: Shandong renmin chubanshe, 2005), p. 289. Dated 1920.

²⁰ Here, both Zhang and Xiong were talking about Wang Dong’s claim about the “inseparability of the mind and conation”. Wang said: “In terms of the Ruler of one’s body, it (intrinsic reality) is called the mind; in terms of the Ruler of one’s mind, it is called conation.” (自身之主宰而言，谓之心，自心之主宰而言，谓之意). Cf. Huang Zongxi comp., *Ming Ru xuean*, *Huang Zongxi quanji*, vol 7, pp. 855-857. “Conation” here is not the same as “mentation” in the Yogācāra “faculty of mentation”, but it is “an original everlasting capacity and tendency or conation of the mind”. Although late Yangmingists (not Wang Yangming himself) also used *yigen* 意根 (the root of conation) in describing our mental activities, their philosophical background was different from that of Yogācāra thinkers. See Iso Kern, “The ‘Wirkungsgeschichte’ of Wang Yangming’s ‘Teaching in Four Propositions’ up to Liu Zongzhou and Huang Zongxi”, in Raji C. Steineck, Ralph Weber, Robert Gassmann, Elena Lange ed., *Concepts of Philosophy in Asia and the Islamic world: Vol. 1: China and Japan*, (Leiden: Brill, 2018), pp.291, 299-301.

²¹ Huang Zongxi, ed., *Ming Ru xuean*, *Huang Zongxi quanji*, vol 7, p. 856. 意非心之所发，自心虚灵之中，确然有主者，名之曰意耳。

Confucian classics, while at the same time, he insisted that Neo-Confucian thinkers would have been troubled by the attachment to self. In Zhang's pursuit of the undefiled mind, as noted above, this attachment is harmful and must be abandoned. At the same time, for Zhang, because the ideal state of mind is "non-arising", then conation, as an activity of mind, is also considered as defiled. Therefore, Zhang mistook Yangmingist "flow" as the defiled dharmas of the storehouse consciousness. From Xiong's perspective, "flow" is the real agency of ceaseless production and reproduction, and if this production were to be stopped, "then [one's] seeds in [the heavenly endowed] good nature will be cut-off"!

Admittedly, Zhang also appreciated Wang Dong's revelation of conation within our mind as the ruler in our practices. Nevertheless, because of his fear of subjective dogmatism, one that can be found in his *Qiwu lun shi*, Zhang continued to have reservations about Wang Dong's acknowledgement of the Ruler – for him, Wang failed to abandon attachment to the view of self (*bushe wojian* 不舍我见).²² Due to the same conservative attitude, as well as influences he received from Yogācāra Buddhism, Zhang treated the flow of productive power as the generation of defilements. However, Xiong treated this flow as the functioning of Reality, "ceaseless production and reproduction", that is not in any way "defiled".²³ In comparison, Xiong's critique of Zhang is similar to Xiong's views of Dharmapāla: they both failed to recognise the flow of productive power, production and reproduction, as the foundation of our practices,²⁴ thus underscoring Xiong's critical attitude to the Yogācāra knowledge he had learned at Ouyang Jingwu's China Institute of Inner Learning (*Zhina Neixue Yuan* 支那内学院). As shown in Sub-section 4.2.2. of the last chapter, although Zhang had also attempted to integrated Yogācāra knowledge into his syncretic theory of the mind, his efforts were unsuccessful because he insisted that what controls our practices was the "deluded mind" but not the "mind-as-reality". This recognition hindered him in further affirming that our practices are indeed functions of mind-as-reality. Having also been drawn on the notion of an

²² Zhang Taiyan, "Yu Wu Chengshi", *Zhang Taiyan quanji shuxin ji*, p. 409.

²³ Xiong, *New Treatise on the Uniqueness of Consciousness*, translated and annotated by John Makeham, p. 133, mod.: "Having refuted Dharmapāla's presumptions, I must articulate my own explanation. What I mean by productive power is fundamentally different in purport from that of Dharmapāla. This is because I take productive power to be the great flow of the universe's ceaseless production and reproduction."

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 136, 138. "Having traced Dharmapāla's fundamental error, it can be seen to lie in his conflation of habituated tendencies with productive power.... Productive power is a heavenly matter; habituated tendencies are a human capacity. To mix up the human with the heavenly is to be obscured by form-and-vital-stuff and be ignorant of the original condition of human life."

“awakened mind” found in the *Treatise on the Awakening Mahāyāna Faith* and in Yangmingism, Xiong and Ma’s mind-based frameworks could be understood as a development of aspects of Zhang’s thought.

Although Xiong characterised ceaseless flow as the agency of intrinsic reality rather than a “by-product” of the storehouse consciousness as misconceived by Dharmapāla and Zhang Taiyan, in the 1930s and 1940s Xiong still characterised the existence of the phenomenal world (*xianjie* 现界) as a product of the attachments of false discrimination.²⁵ Just as Ma had denied that habitual tendencies are part of the functioning of the intrinsic reality of the mind, Xiong’s characterisation of the phenomenal world showed his intention to differentiate bad things (the products of attachment to false discrimination) from the functioning of Reality. However, in Xiong’s strictly monistic metaphysical system, the sources of the defiled, the false and other kinds of badness still needed to be addressed. Driven by his desire to further narrow the gap between phenomena and reality, Xiong sought to address this in his later writings. In the words of Xiong’s friend, Zhong Tai (钟泰; 1888-1979), people of the new republic belonged to “a time of purging old and bad habituations, establishing new and good habituations”.²⁶ Xiong’s book *Explaining the Mind* (published in 1959) was written in such a historical context. Xiong appreciated Zhong Tai’s observation that Chinese people were at “a time of purging old and bad habituations”, but in his preface of this book, Xiong came up with a statement slightly different from Zhong’s: “Transforming the bad habituations of former defilements and creating new good habituations, so as to maximally expand the good beginnings of inherent mind”.²⁷ Xiong thought that according

²⁵ Xiong, *New Treatise on the Uniqueness of Consciousness*, translated and annotated by John Makeham, pp. 124-126. “Productive power is Reality and is not causes as condition. Dharmapāla presumed the existence of ‘the realm of manifest activity’. On the basis of this, he further presumed that there are hidden productive powers constituting the basis of the phenomenal world called causes as condition. This is a great mistake. He divided cause and effect, the hidden and the revealed into two layers. In the case of subject and object, that which is real and has causal function and its characteristics are divided into two things.... I regard the self-nature of the phenomenal world to be inherently empty. It exists only because of the attachments of false discrimination. If one discerns that the phenomenal world in fact does not exist, then one knows that there is no means for causes as condition to be established.”

²⁶ Zhong’s words cited in Xiong Shili, *Ming xin pian*, in *Tiyong lun: wai yizhong*, pp. 133-134. 革去旧的恶习，创生新的善习。

²⁷ Xiong Shili, *Ming xin pian*, in *Tiyong lun: wai yizhong*, pp. 134. 转化旧染之恶习，创生新的善习，以弘大本心之善端。

to the Confucian psychology (儒家心理学),²⁸ our bad habituations should be transformed rather than simply purged. His attitude towards the bad habituations was different from Ma's rejection of habitual tendencies. According to Xiong's communication with another friend, his reflection on the long-forgotten topic of "defilements accrued through habituation" (*xiran* 习染) dealt with the following question: how to establish new good habituations within the existing conditions of ongoing bad habituations acquired through former defilement?²⁹ In this book, Xiong explored the sources of badness and also the dynamics for taking good actions:

The numinous and the vital stuff (mind and phenomena) with which people are endowed at birth serve to become their independent bodies (author's note: what is called, "minor body"), and so through their own efforts, they are then able to do all manner of good and bad actions.³⁰

Although human nature is good, Xiong noted, people are still able to "turn their back on their nature to follow the blind movements of their bodies and abandon themselves to wrongdoing".³¹ Does this mean that it is the body that is the origin of badness? Xiong would not have agreed. Although bodily form limits the inherent mind (*benxin* 本心), Xiong thought that the human body is the most appropriate instrument (*liqi* 利器) to make the mind manifest.³² Therefore, although the bodily form is a host for "defilements accrued through habituation" and other bad things, the human body is also what enables good actions to be carried out – if it is well-controlled by the mind:

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Xiong Shili, "Yu Wang Mengsun xiansheng shu" 与王孟孙先生书 (Xiong's letter to his friend Wang Mengsun), *Xiong Shili quanji*, vol 7, p. 328. Dated 1959.

³⁰ Xiong Shili, *Ming Xin Pian*, in *Tiyong lun: wai yizhong*, p. 132. Translated by John Makeham, see Makeham, "Xiong Shili on the Nature, the Mind and the Origin of Badness as Evidenced in *Ming Xin Pian* 明心篇 (Explaining the Mind)", *Frontiers of Philosophy in China*, 2018, 13(1), p. 5, mod. 人生而含灵禀气，已成独立体，（小字：所谓小体。）便能以自力造作一切善行与不善行。

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 292. Translated by John Makeham, "Xiong Shili on the Nature, the Mind and the Origin of Badness as Evidenced in *Ming Xin Pian* 明心篇 (Explaining the Mind)", p. 8, mod. 亦可以违背本性，而顺从躯体的盲动，用纵其恶。

³² *Ibid.*, p. 183.

Buddhists and Daoists regard the body merely as something bad, which is a big mistake.... The body is both the storehouse and the tool of the mind. (Author's note: The flow and expression of the mind is by means of the body as its tool.) The body bears the mind, whereas the mind is fully endowed with production and reproduction, robustness and vigour, illuminating clarity and countless attributes (*de* 德)³³. How great it is that is borne by the body!³⁴

Elsewhere in *Ming xin pian*, Xiong set “inherent nature” (*benxing* 本性), “nature as the Ruler of bodily form” (*xing yi shuaixing* 性以帅形)³⁵ and “inherent mind” as sources of the absolute good. In these discourses, humans are bestowed with bodily form and the nature, which are the two different characteristics of Reality.³⁶ As early as in *Tiyong lun* 体用论 (On Reality and Function), which was published one year before the *Ming xin pian*, he also claimed that mind and body are different aspects of the sole Reality.³⁷ How to understand this difference between the nature and body, on the one hand, and mind and body, on the other hand? (For Xiong, the relationship between the nature and the mind is one of mutual identity and non-duality.³⁸) Both pairs reflect the internal contradiction contained in Reality: “Fundamental Reality (*benti*) cannot possess only a bright nature and lack a dark nature. (... Bright refers to the mental; dark refers to the material). Thus, Fundamental Reality in and of itself contains an internal contradiction, otherwise it would be incapable of changing into function.”³⁹ The aforementioned “two different

³³ Ma Yifu's understanding of the term “*de*” was different from Xiong's here. In his writings, “*de*” of one's mind is always a specific virtue in “the virtue of the nature/mind-as-reality”. As Appendix III indicated, the number of Ma's “virtue” was limited. Compared with Ma, Xiong thought that the attributes of the mind could be countless.

³⁴ Xiong Shili, *Ming Xin Pian*, in *Tiyong lun: wai yizhong*, p. 185. 佛老对于身躯只作坏东西看，此大错误。...身者，心之藏也，心之具也。（小字：...心的流行发现即以身为其工具。）身载心，而心则备具生生、刚健、炤明乃至无量德，身之所负荷大哉！

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 235-236.

³⁷ Xiong Shili, *Tiyong lun*, in *Tiyong lun: wai yizhong*, p. 87.

³⁸ On this point, see Makeham, “Xiong Shili on the Nature, the Mind and the Origin of Badness as Evidenced in *Ming Xin Pian* 明心篇 (Explaining the Mind)”, p. 18 and also n. 18.

³⁹ Xiong Shili, *Ming Xin Pian*, in *Tiyong lun: wai yizhong*, p. 246. Translated by John Makeham, see Makeham, “Xiong Shili on the Nature, the Mind and the Origin of

characteristics” are the bright and the dark: the mental (nature/mind) and the material (body).⁴⁰

This contradiction provides the animating condition for good and bad to be realised in the interaction between the nature/mind and physical form.⁴¹ In studying this internal contradiction, Xiong tried to figure out the origin of the badness that contradicts goodness. Why did he study this problem? In his words, it was in order to “resolve the contradictions [in our life, one must] figure out where this contradiction lies”. More concretely, it was to resolve the contradiction between our good nature and the evils that continuously exist in our world requires us to figure out the origin of the badness.⁴² For Xiong, If one neglected this problem and just held views such as “a sense of fearful caution about things” as Ma has suggested, a firm theoretical basis of good actions would also be absent.

5.1.2. Xiong’s Understanding of Reality and His Practical Philosophy

Compared with Zhu Xi, Zhang Taiyan and Ma Yifu, Xiong’s philosophy is more flexible in explaining the actual world where “the defiled co-resides with the pure” – in Ouyang’s words. Xiong was inspired by Ouyang in forming his understanding of goodness and habituations.⁴³ As Ouyang and Wang Enyang had argued, the idea of an innate yet “unrevealed” mind (the “awakened mind” idea) should be replaced by the possibility of becoming good, Xiong also insisted that our good nature required constant development in our lifetime. The concept of the “mind” also played an important role in Xiong’s late

Badness as Evidenced in *Ming Xin Pian* 明心篇 (Explaining the Mind)”, *Frontiers of Philosophy in China*, 2018, 13(1), p. 16. 善恶矛盾之所在本不难寻。本体不能只有阳明的性质，而无阴暗的性质。(小字：...阳明者，心灵也。阴暗者，物质也。) 故本体法尔有内在的矛盾。否则无可变动成用。

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

⁴¹ John Makeham, “Xiong Shili on the Nature, the Mind and the Origin of Badness as Evidenced in *Ming Xin Pian* 明心篇 (Explaining the Mind)”, 13(1), p. 16.

⁴² Xiong Shili, *Ming Xin Pian*, in *Tiyong lun: wai yizhong*, p. 238. 化除矛盾，必知矛盾所在。

⁴³ Xiong’s understanding of the nature was also influenced by Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619-1692) and his elucidations of habituation in shaping human nature. In Xiong’s early period, “it was Wang Fuzhi’s philosophy that solved his problem and led to his realisation that the ontological and the phenomenal are non-dual”. See Sang Yu, *Xiong Shili’s Understanding of Reality and Function, 1920-1937*, pp. 55-57.

thought. To develop one's good nature, one should develop one's inherent mind as the functioning of Reality, the nature.⁴⁴ As Xiong related in the preface of *Ming xin pian*: “Transform the bad habituations of former defilements and create new good habituations, so as to maximally expand the good beginnings of inherent mind”.⁴⁵ Both “defilements accrued through habituation” and the “minor body” (bodily form) are concepts that historically have negative associations. Xiong, however, emphasized the positive role they can play in moral praxis. The former arises in our pursuit of material things. In his critique on Buddhist and Daoist teachings, Xiong said:

Confucius honoured knowledge and so advocated learning concerned with the investigation of things.⁴⁶ (Author's note: For details see “An Inquiry into Outer Kingliness” chapter in *Yuan Ru*.) According to Buddhist and Daoist teachings, the pursuit of and attachment to material things, and the creation of various discriminations of things, are all great delusions and great error. The defilements these kinds of great delusion and great fallacy have formed, must be thoroughly purged. This is the main idea of both Buddhism and Daoism. When I evaluate this according to Confucius's way, Buddhism and Daoism truly are at fault. In terms of life, if the pursuit of and attachment to things is motivated by a sense of fairness rather than private ownership, it cannot yet be called delusion or error. It is only those who were overly avaricious in the old society's⁴⁷ regime of private ownership that are genuinely guilty.... That defilements accrued through habituation can contribute to cognition is an evident fact and cannot be denied. If it were the case that in its encounter with things the mind did not accrue defilements through habituation, and all the experiences in one's past disappeared instantly, then knowledge will not be possible.... Awakening to the

⁴⁴ John Makeham, “Xiong Shili on the Nature, the Mind and the Origin of Badness as Evidenced in *Ming Xin Pian* 明心篇 (Explaining the Mind)”, pp. 13-14. For Xiong, “The relationship between Reality (the nature) and mind is a *ti-yong* relationship; it is also one of non-duality and mutual identity.”

⁴⁵ Xiong Shili, *Ming xin pian*, in *Tiyong lun: wai yizhong*, p. 134.

⁴⁶ “Daxue”, *Liji zhengyi*, p. 1592.

⁴⁷ The term “*jiu shehui* 旧社会” or “*jiu Zhongguo* 旧中国” refers to Chinese society before the establishment of the PRC in 1949.

way means that knowledge does not become separated from the way; not awakening to the way, knowledge is merely knowledge.⁴⁸

This quotation ends with a paraphrase of Wang Yangming's explanation⁴⁹ of the relationship between "knowledge from hearing and seeing" and "innate knowledge of the good".⁵⁰ Through this paraphrase, Xiong tried to show readers that knowledge is inseparable from our habituations that is transformable. This inseparability was partly neglected in Buddhist and Daoist thought, and this led to their ignorance of the fact that "Awakening to the way means that knowledge does not become separated from the way". According to *Tiyong lun*, the shortcoming of Buddhists is that it because they wanted to remove habituated tendencies (*xiqi* 习气) this had the effect of "obstructing [the flow of] of production and reproduction and transformation and retransformation [of the Reality]" (*e'ni shenghua* 遏逆生化).⁵¹

From Xiong's perspective, the Buddhist's supramundane ideal pushes us to try to eliminate defilements (bad things). But at the same time, this may also cause us to neglect the positive significance of habituation in the formation of human knowledge, and thus all kinds of habituation might be treated as "defilements" to be abandoned. Xiong thus

⁴⁸ Xiong Shili, *Ming xin pian, Tiyong lun: wai yizhong*, pp. 214-216. 孔子尊知，故倡导格物之学。（小字：详在《原儒·原外王》篇）由二氏之道，追求物质、执着物质及于物作种种分别者，皆是大迷惑、大谬误。由此类大迷大谬所成之习染，不可不去净尽。此二氏之旨也。余衡以孔子之道，二氏诚有过失在。就生活而言，求物、执物，而出于大公，不为私有，未可云迷谬，唯在旧社会私有制之下贪得过分者乃真罪恶耳...习染之有助于智，此乃事实昭然，不容否认也。假若心之经历于物无有习染，人生过去一切经验皆随时消失，则知识将不得有...悟道，即知识亦不离道；不悟道，则知识只是知识。

⁴⁹ This is based on Wang Yangming's view: "Innate knowledge does not come from hearing and seeing, and yet all seeing and hearing are functions of innate knowledge. Therefore, innate knowledge is not impeded by seeing and hearing. Nor is it separated from seeing and hearing." See Wang, *Instructions for Practical Living*, translated by Wing-tsit Chan, pp. 150, mod. (良知不由见闻而有，而见闻莫非良知之用；故良知不滞于见闻，而亦不离于见闻) *Wang Yangming quanji* 王阳明全集 (Complete Works of Wang Yangming), vol 1, (Hangzhou: Zhejiang guji chubanshe, 2010), p. 77.

⁵⁰ For Xiong, like Wang Yangming, philosophical wisdom (the way) and scientific knowledge are not different yet not the same. Ady Van den Stock has explored Xiong's attitude towards practices in our empirical world from the perspective of the difference between philosophical wisdom and scientific knowledge; see Ady Van den Stock, *The Horizon of Modernity: Subjectivity and Social Structure in New Confucian Philosophy*, (Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp. 221-234.

⁵¹ Xiong Shili, *Tiyong lun*, p. 50.

commented above: “If it were the case that in its encounter with things the mind did not accrue defilements through habituation, and all the experiences in one’s past disappeared instantly, then knowledge will not be possible”. Unlike the “defilements accrued through habituation” that are inherent in emotions and desires (情意方面之习染), the defilements inherent in knowledge (知见方面之习染) should not be eliminated, as Buddhists and Daoists did in their anti-knowledge (*fanzhi* 反知) discourses.⁵² At the same time, the above reference to Buddhism and Daoism also includes thinkers who have made negative assessments of “defilements accrued through habituation” inherent in the human world. According to Xiong, while these thinkers have noticed the problems that result from our attachment to material things, especially in the new society, their views should be corrected in accordance with Confucius’s way. Zhang Taiyan and Ma Yifu belonged to that group thinkers, and their attitudes towards science were also incorrect.

Xiong would have agreed with one of Ouyang’s basic tenets: “[humans] should not follow [the inclinations of defiled seeds]. The teaching is for abandoning the defiled and obtaining the pure.” He would not, however, have accepted Ouyang’s claim that fundamental reality must be quiescent. As early as in 1943, Xiong had stated that “I believe that ‘the nature [of the mind] is awakened’ and ‘the nature [of the mind] is quiescent’ are inseparable”.⁵³ In Xiong’s late thought formed after the 1950s, as shown in the passage above, he continued to move further away from Buddhism. Xiong pointed out that Mahāyāna Buddhism aimed to “liberate sentient beings (*dutuo zhongsheng* 度脱众生)”, and he thus characterised Buddhism negatively as “teachings that renounce the mundane world” (*chushi* 出世).⁵⁴ Criticising Buddhism and Daoism was, however, not Xiong’s ultimate goal in reflecting on Reality and function. In the new society, his priority was to elucidate Confucius’s way of investigation of material things. Confronted with the development of natural sciences, Xiong endeavoured to defend the value of China’s ancient scholarship (*guxue* 古学).⁵⁵

⁵² Xiong Shili, *Ming xin pian*, pp. 213-214.

⁵³ See Lin Chen-kuo, “*Qixin lun* yu xiandai dongya zhutixing zhexue——Yi Neixue yuan yu Xin Rujia de zhenglun wei zhongxin de kaocha”, pp. 14-16; Xiong Shili, “Zhi Lü Cheng” 致吕澂 (Xiong’s letter to Lü Cheng), in *Xiong Shili quanji*, vol 8, pp. 426. Dated 1943.

⁵⁴ Xiong Shili, *Yuan Ru* 原儒 (To the Origins of the Ru), *Xiong Shili quanji*, vol 6, p. 438.

⁵⁵ Xiong Shili, *Ming xin pian*, in *Tiyong lun: wai yizhong*, p. 134.

In his writings of the late 1950s, Xiong argued that China's traditional intellectual resources, even though imbued with badness, nevertheless remained irreplaceable in China's modernisation. He saw his new interpretations of Confucianism as activating an outdated yet necessary knowledge in the service of China's modernisation. However, although the long-awaited peace and unification that Xiong had hoped for was achieved in mainland China,⁵⁶ the future of his academic ideal remained uncertain – the needs of modernisation having removed any role for Confucianism and China's traditions.

This section has shown that in their reflections on theoretical issues centring on the “reality and function” model, Ouyang Jingwu, Zhang Taiyan and Xiong Shili all gave different explanations of the source of normative values. Severely critiquing the *Treatise on the Awakening Mahāyāna Faith* and Zhu Xi, Ouyang argued that our innate goodness just entails the possibility of becoming good rather than the notion of an already fully formed “innate goodness”. And because this notion no longer existed in Ouyang's framework, which was mainly based on Sinitic Yogācāra Buddhism, the distinction between function and reality was strictly demarcated and not blurred. The shortcoming of Ouyang's theory was, in Xiong's words, his attempt to establish a normative theory to guide praxis on a supermundane basis: only by believing that transcendent “*nirvāṇa*” can be realised, instead of confirming the existence of the intrinsic reality of the mind, is it possible to act morally in the living world. From the perspective of thinkers who drew on ideas from the *Treatise* in forming their theoretical frameworks, due to this shortcoming, Ouyang's theory was not satisfactory. One of them was Zhang Taiyan, who always insisted, “the Six Classics are historical works”. With the help of both Yogācāra resources and the *Treatise*, Zhang tried to further justify the inborn attachment to self in studying and applying historical knowledge, which was discussed in Sub-section 4.2.2. of Chapter 4. However, on the one hand, Zhang was vigilant about selfish desires originating from the self-consciousness; on the other hand, Zhang found that the inborn attachment to self was the basis of correct practice. Thus, Zhang did not justify the positive role of “self” as he expected. Compared with Zhang, Ma Yifu and Xiong Shili were more successful in integrating Buddhist ideas into their Confucian discourse. The next section will argue that, with his theory of the non-duality of Reality and function, Xiong came up with a new understanding of human nature: realising our good nature requires constant development in our life. This understanding enabled him to give a positive account of

⁵⁶ Xiong Shili: “Yingxiong zao shishi” 英雄造时势 (Heroes Bring Forth the Trend of Events), *Xiong Shili quanji*, vol 8, pp. 73-76. Dated 1934.

Confucianism's practical relevance in the new society. This next section will also explore the significance of Ma's thought as a conservative alternative compared with Xiong.

5.2. Xiong Shili on the Relationship between Confucianism and Socialist Modernisation

5.2.1. Xiong on the Relevance of Confucianism in the New Society

In his engagement with previous thinkers and his contemporaries, Xiong came up with his theory of Reality (*benti* 本体), which encapsulated the rapidly changing world in which human practices appear, and this theory can be called an “ontology” (*benti lun* 本体论).⁵⁷ An essential doctrine of this ontology is that, while Reality has unchanging qualities in the context of changing transformation, Reality must be “able to transform” (*nengbian* 能变). Furthermore, Reality must be “constant transformation” (*hengzhuan* 恒转) as manifest in its “great functions”. By what principle could this transformation manage to happen (成功此变)? In his *Tiyong lun*, Xiong thought that it is nothing but the principle of “mutually opposing and mutually completing” (相反相成): “only by virtue of the two opposites becoming harmonized is the development of the whole thus brought to completion (两相反而成乎和, 所以完成其全体之发展)”.⁵⁸ This principle played a crucial role in Xiong's new accounts of the Confucian classics.

In these accounts, Xiong considered the classics to be necessary intellectual resources for China's modernisation led by the Communist Party. Like Liao Ping and Kang Youwei, Xiong had to confront the great challenge of how to incorporate new factors (including Marxist terms and later, socialist democracy) within his philosophical system. As Xiong stated in *Ming xin pian*, “knowledge itself is not separated from the way”.⁵⁹ The way here is the principle of transformation. Xiong argued that the knowledge contained in the classics has direct relevance to socialist modernisation. In his 1956 publication, *Yuan Ru*, Xiong declared that China's ancients had invented “dialectics” (*bianzheng fa* 辩证法) well before westerners:

⁵⁷ Xiong Shili, *Tiyong lun*, in *Tiyong lun: wai yizhong*, p. 12.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

⁵⁹ Xiong Shili, *Tiyong lun: wai yizhong*, p. 216. “Awakening to the way means that knowledge does not become separated from the way; if unawakened, then knowledge simply remains knowledge”. See Sub-section 5.1.2 of this chapter.

Among all the countries on the planet with advanced cultures, China was the earliest to have invented dialectics. Emperor Fuxi 伏羲 (n.d.; also known as Xi Huang 羲皇) drew trigrams during the primeval ancient period;⁶⁰ how miraculous! The term for dialectics, “*bian* 辩 (discern)-*zheng* 证 (verify)”, did not originate in foreign places. The *Expanded Compilation and Explanation of Characters* states, “to discern (*bian* 辩) is to transform/alter (*bian* 变)”⁶¹; and the “Words of Text” of the Kun Hexagram in the *Book of Change* also state, “it should still have been discerned/alterd but was not altered/discerned early enough”.⁶² In Xun Shuang’s 荀爽 (128-190) edition [of the *Book of Change*], the character for “discern” is written as the character “transform/alter”.⁶³ That the ancients considered these two characters as interchangeable is most interesting. Discernment inherently involves opposition, which eventually must return to harmony and agreement. The way of transformation in the cosmos is also like this.... Confucius said, “It is people who make the Way great; it is not the Way that makes people great.”⁶⁴ He denied that there is a sole supreme way of the gods that transcends us as well as the myriad things. This view has rendered it no longer possible for us to be governed by appealing to the gods any more. At that point, the spirit of philosophy became thoroughly detached from religion, and the way of humans became one with the way of heaven, such that one can no longer seek the way of heaven beyond the human.... [Even] those who

⁶⁰ Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962), p. 4244. Different books titled “History of Chinese Philosophy” (*Zhongguo zhexue shi* 中国哲学史), such as the works of Chen Fuchen 陈黻宸 (1859-1917) and Xie Wuliang 谢无量 (1884-1964), had taken Fuxi as the first figure in the development of Chinese philosophy. And just like Xiong, their historiographic arrangement was influenced by Ming Neo-Confucian works. See Chen, *Zhongguo zhexue shi* 中国哲学史 (History of Chinese Philosophy), *Chen Fuchen ji* 陈黻宸集 (Collected Works of Chen Fuchen), (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995), p. 426. Published as teaching materials in Peking University, 1916. Xie, *Zhongguo zhexue shi* 中国哲学史 (History of Chinese Philosophy), *Xie Wuliang wenji* 谢无量文集 (Collected Works of Xie Wuliang), vol 2, (Beijing: Zhongguo Renmin Daxue chubanshe, 2011), p. 3. Published in 1916.

⁶¹ Wang Niansun 王念孙, *Guangya shuzheng* 广雅疏证 (Annotations of the *Expanded Examples of Refined Usage*), (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1993), p. 171.

⁶² “Kun”, *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, p. 31.

⁶³ Information about Xun Shuang’s edition of the *Book of Change* can be found in *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, see *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, p. 31, footnote 2.

⁶⁴ *Analects*, 15.28, *Lunyu zhushu*, p. 216.

support the view that human nature is innately bad and that bad actions are justifiable, would still return to the fundament of affirming good and rejecting bad. Accordingly, because we are courageous in rejecting bad it becomes increasingly apparent that the development of our inherent capacity for good is unstoppable. Good and bad are in opposition yet they mutually complete each other, thus I say, “Good rules over bad.” In the foregoing I have provided some instances of the various great cosmic and human problems. We have seen that the dialectical method is universally applicable.⁶⁵

This passage focusses on the concept “dialectics”. Here, Xiong creatively combined three topics into his discourse: his philosophy of transformation (change), Confucian classics and western “dialectics”.⁶⁶ He argued that the *Book of Change* shows that the meaning of “dialectics” had been discussed in ancient China. What is the meaning? It was the “mutually opposing and mutually completing” principle of transformation or Reality: “Discernment inherently involves opposition, which eventually must return to harmony and agreement”. With the help of his philosophy of transformation, Xiong once again raised his argument that “good and bad are in opposition yet they mutually complete each other”. In the above passage, Xiong considered this relationship between goodness and badness as a “dialectical” one which had been realised in ancient China. Further, he also thought that this was “the way of transformation in the cosmos” that he himself had realised. According to Xiong, what Confucius had revealed is that this way of transformation is also the way of humans. Whereas the object of practice in Ouyang’s

⁶⁵ Xiong Shili, *Yuan Ru*, pp. 318-323. 大地上凡有高深文化之国，其发明辩证法最早者莫有如中国。羲皇画卦在洪古期，岂不奇哉！辩证一辞并非始于外方。《广雅》“辩，变也”，《易·坤卦·文言》“犹辩之不早辩”也。苟本辩作变，古以辩字与变字互通，最有深意。辩本有对，而必归和同。宇宙间变化之道亦犹是。...孔子曰：“人能弘道，非道弘人。”其否认有超越吾人与天地万物而独尊之神道，使神道不复能统治吾人。哲学精神，至此完全脱去宗教尽净，遂令人道天道融合为一，不可于人之外觅天也。...凡言性恶者无有肯许恶行为人生之当然，仍归本于为善去恶，是则因去恶之勇而益见吾人固有善根之发展不容已。善恶适以反而相成，故曰：善统治恶。上来就宇宙人生诸大问题略为举隅，可见辩证法是无往而不在。

⁶⁶ A similar exploration into “dialectics” in Chinese *Book of Change* scholarship can be found in Yan Lingfeng’s 严灵峰 (1903-1999) essay, “Yijian yuanli he bianzhengfa” 易简原理和辩证法 (The Principle of Change/Simple and Dialectics), in Yan, *Wuqiubei zhai Yixue lunji* 无求备斋易学论集 (Yan’s Collected Papers Regarding *Change*), (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1995), pp. 171-201. Dated 1952. Yan was a traditional scholar who was very familiar with Marxism–Leninism.

thought was to attain *nirvāṇa* beyond the human world, for Xiong, this object must be located in the new republic. And this insight, according to Xiong, was also one that Confucius himself had experienced.

Unlike Ouyang Jingwu's theory, which is based on one's belief in the "one true dharma realm", Xiong's metaphysics is grounded in the confirmation of the human capacity to rule transformation. The claim cited above, "the way of humans became one with the way of heaven, such that one can no longer seek the way of heaven beyond the human", is more similar to Zhang Taiyan's advocacy of the Confucian classics as the "human vehicle"⁶⁷. But at the same time, Xiong's understanding of the classics was different from Zhang's notion that the "Six Classics are historical works". Living in a time when China's "long-awaited peace and unification" had been achieved, Xiong had the ambition to justify that the classics have direct relevance to socialist modernisation. His account of "dialectics" was only part of that ambition.

In his 1956 article, "On 'Let a Hundred Schools of Thought Contend'", which was published in the leading journal *Zhexue yanjiu* 哲学研究 (Philosophical Research), Xiong cited Mao Zedong's 毛泽东 (1893-1976) famous policy, "Let a hundred flowers bloom; let a hundred schools of thought contend" (百花齐放, 百家争鸣) given in a presentation⁶⁸ and advocated the "critical inheritance" (*pipan jieshou* 批判接受) approach to Chinese traditions. In this article, Xiong especially noted that the premise of "critical inheritance" was not to contradict socialism.⁶⁹ In the process of "critically inheriting" his own older writings during the 1950s, Xiong referred to the following passage on two separate occasions: "It is difficult to describe how magnificent transformation is! I will briefly call attention to five senses.... The third sense is that it is

⁶⁷ Perhaps this is also why Xiong Shili said that Zhang Taiyan "occasionally has some good sayings" (时有善言). See Xiong Shili, "Xiong yiweng xiansheng yu" 熊逸翁先生语 (Senior Xiong's Words, recorded by Wang Peide 王培德 and Li Xiaochun 李笑春), *Xiong Shili quanji*, vol 8, pp. 390.

⁶⁸ Mao Zedong's presentation was conveyed and publicised by Lu Dingyi 陆定一 (1906-1996), the head of the CPC (Communist Party of China) Central Propaganda Department, in the *People's Daily*, an official newspaper of the CPC Central Committee. See Lu, "Baihua qifang, baijia zhengming" 百花齐放, 百家争鸣 (Let a Hundred Flowers Bloom, and a Hundred Schools Contend), in *Renmin ribao* 人民日报 (*People's Daily*), 1956.06.13, the second edition, <http://www.laoziliao.net/rmrb/1956-06-13-2#142287> (accessed 2020-6-8). Dated 1956.

⁶⁹ Xiong Shili, "Tan baijia zhengming" 谈百家争鸣 (On "let a hundred schools of thought contend"), *Xiong Shili quanji*, vol 8, pp. 369-371. Dated 1956.

perfect. Great Transformation flows everywhere – there is nowhere it extends to where it is not perfect. Let me use words as an analogy: the word ‘person’ necessarily includes all people and excludes all non-people; otherwise the word could not be established.”⁷⁰ For Xiong, all people living in the new society were capable of following this way and contributing to this transformation equally:

The “Ritual Vessels” (Li qi 礼器) chapter [of the *Book of Rites*] says,
“Regarding the rites, timeliness is the greatest consideration”.⁷¹ This is the common norm in instituting rites. Due to [the political capacities] of people who happened to live in the age of chaos⁷², there was the hierarchy of upper and lower, honorable and base, noble and common.... By the time of the age of approaching peace, people's wisdom had already awoken, and they were profoundly aware of how [the division between] the ruling class and the oppressed class is the causes of disaster and needs to be eliminated; they therefore had no choice but to destroy the so-called “order” of the age of chaos. Thus, Xunzi’s thesis about “the upper and lower exchange their positions”⁷³ and Mencius’s thesis about “the common people are the noble”⁷⁴ are both accurate predictions [of the future world]. If the world enters the age of great peace,

⁷⁰ Xiong Shili, *Xin Weishilun shanding ben, Xiong Shili quanji*, vol 6, p. 98. Dated 1953. See also Xiong, *Tiyong lun: wai yizhong*, pp. 29-30. 大哉变也，微妙难言！略彰五义。...三、圆满义。大化周流，无往而不圆满。试以文字为喻，如一“人”字必含一切人，简一切非人。否则此字不立。 Of particular note is that the last sentence was a revised version of the following sentence in the 1932 edition of Xiong’s *New Treatise*: “the word ‘person’ necessarily includes all people as well as non-people”. (Xiong, *New Treatise on the Uniqueness of Consciousness*, translated and annotated by John Makeham, p. 115) It is unclear why Xiong removed “non-people” in his revision.

⁷¹ “Li qi”, *Liji zhengyi*, p. 719.

⁷² The term “*ju luan*” was first introduced by the famous *Spring and Autumn Annals* commentator He Xiu 何休 (129-182), and the term “*ju luan shi*” can be found in Xu Yan’s 徐彦 (d.u.) elucidations. See He, “Xu” 序 (Preface), *Chunqiu Gongyang zhuan zhushu* 春秋公羊传注疏 (Annotations and Sub-commentaries on the *Gongyang Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals*), (Beijing: Beijing Daxue chubanshe, 1999), p. 4. Kang Youwei was the most influential writer to use this term in modern China. As already noted in Appendix VI, Kang’s “Theory of Three Ages Culminating in Great Unity” (including the age of chaos, the age of approaching peace and the age of great peace) was based on the Gongyang school’s resources.

⁷³ *Xunzi jijie* 荀子集解 (Collected Explanations of the *Xunzi*), collated by Wang Xianqian 王先谦 (1842-1917), (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1988), p. 257.

⁷⁴ *Mencius*, 7B.13, *Mengzi zhengyi*, p. 387.

people will make substantial progress in developing their capacities. As both their wisdom and morality will be excellent, [this is what] the *Classic of Spring and Autumn* (*Spring and Autumn Annals*) referred to as “everybody under heaven being able to behave as an officer-gentleman.”⁷⁵ At that time, such situations are what the Image [to the Qian hexagram in] the *Book of Change* called “a host of dragons without a leader”.⁷⁶ Because all people are equal without exception it is called “great peace [and harmony]”.⁷⁷

In this passage, monarchical China is classified as belonging to “the age of chaos”. As with Liao Ping, Xiong took the *Spring and Autumn Annals* as a prophetic text written by Confucius, in which a future democracy is foreseen. According to Xiong’s understanding of the new terms, “ruling class” and “oppressed class”, Xunzi and Mencius were also prophetic thinkers in the Confucian tradition because they had realised that these two “classes” would finally be eliminated by ordinary people. Was Xiong aware of the resemblance between his New Confucian views and Kang Youwei’s “Theory of Three Ages Culminating in Great Unity”? Did Xiong draw any distinction between his discourse and Kang’s?

5.2.2. The Plight of Xiong’s New Elucidations of Confucianism

Xiong keenly sought to differentiate his Confucian thought from that of Kang Youwei. He severely criticised Kang’s understanding of the “Three Ages”: “In Kang’s explanations of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, he vaguely refers to the name ‘Three Ages’ without inquiring into its meaning. All his books are merely the works of a

⁷⁵ This passage can be found only in Dong Zhongshu’s *Chunqiu fanlu*; see *Chunqiu fanlu yizheng*, p. 164. Dong’s original words are, “everybody under heaven is able to behave as an officer-gentleman and has few faults.” (天下之人，人有士君子之行而少过矣。)

⁷⁶ “Qian”, *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, p. 7.

⁷⁷ Xiong Shili, *Yuan Ru*, p. 338. 《礼器篇》曰“礼，时为大”，此制礼之公则也。群品方在据乱世，故有上下尊卑贵贱之序。…及至升平世，民智已开，深知统治阶级与剥削阶级之为祸胎，欲破除之，不得不灭裂据乱世之所谓序。而荀卿“上下易位”与孟子“民贵”之论，自是悬记不爽。若乃世进太平，群品大进，民智民德俱优，《春秋经》所谓天下之人人，皆有士君子之行。于斯时也，则是大易所谓“群龙无首”之象。全人类莫不平等，故曰太平。

scribe”.⁷⁸ So, what is the “meaning” of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* that Xiong had in mind and which Kang had failed to inquire about? In Xiong’s words, this meaning or purport was that the hierarchical order of the age of chaos must be eliminated in the kind of ideal world predicted in the classics.

In accordance with this “meaning”, Xiong was also critical of previous Confucians who had submissively obeyed the ruling classes and rulers. One of those Confucians was Dong Zhongshu. Xiong adopted passages that Dong attributed to the *Spring and Autumn Annals* but firmly rejected Dong’s understanding of the basic idea in this classic: “Three Ages”.⁷⁹ In Xiong’s words, Dong knew that Confucius has explicitly endorsed “demoting the son of Heaven” (贬天子), but Dong still supported the monarchical system. This self-contradiction indicated that Dong intentionally neglected the genuine meaning of the idea of the “Three Ages” – all political systems must be transformed at the right time (随时改造).⁸⁰ Compared with this revolutionary teaching about abolishing the monarchy, Dong’s false interpretations of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* better served the interests of elites of the Han regime. The genuine Confucian teaching about democratic revolution, according to Xiong, had remained unknown, as no Confucian (including Mencius and Xunzi who made predictions as cited before) had recognised it:

Even if a ruler is virtuous, because one person rules all the people under heaven, it ultimately would not be good governance. Moreover, since not every generation gives rise to a virtuous ruler, the system of monarchy is ultimately a source of great chaos; therefore, the system needs to be corrected.... It is only when political power is controlled by the common people that a revolution is successful. Neither Mencius nor Xunzi could fully comprehend the meaning of “changing the chaotic order” in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. Thus, Confucius’ way of outer kingliness had no one to continue it.... And the [teaching of] abolishing the monarchy in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*—i.e. abolishing the chaotic system of ruling the greatest number of people by means

⁷⁸ Xiong Shili, *Yuan Ru*, p. 396. 近人康有为说《春秋》，虚揭三世名目而不求其义，其所为诸书皆抄胥之业。

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 426-427.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 427-428.

of the smallest number—a teaching that was expansive and profound in significance, was misrepresented by Kang Youwei.⁸¹

Both Mencius and Xunzi had correctly predicted the coming of the democratic “age of approaching peace” in their writings, but they did not directly negate the system of the monarchy as Xiong did here. Xiong maintained that the principle of majority rule had already been revealed in the *Spring and Autumn*: “abolishing the chaotic system of ruling the greatest number of people by means of the smallest number”. Influenced by the revolutionary experiences of his earlier years (1906-1918),⁸² Xiong’s acknowledgment of the radical abolition of the monarchy made his thesis distinctively different from Kang’s political gradualism that retains a role for the monarch.

From Xiong’s point of view, the most glaring issue in Kang Youwei’s writings was that Kang claimed that the order of the age of growing peace should be a constitutional monarchy, which means that the monarchy remains necessary before the coming of the age of great peace.⁸³ Furthermore, we could say that, in Xiong’s understanding, the reason that both Mencius and Xunzi (and later Kang) had failed to fully comprehend Confucius was their ignorance of transformation, which aims for absolute equality. This ignorance, according to Xiong, was also ignorance of the truth that every person is equally equipped with the capacity to become the Ruler of transformation. And compared with Ma Yifu’s vigilance about habitual tendencies (and also, success and profit) and Ma’s disbelief in most people’s virtues,⁸⁴ Xiong was forthright in affirming this capacity. Therefore, one of the primary claims in his articulation of the political philosophy of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* was that “the accomplishments of heaven depend upon humans”:

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 430-431. 君虽贤，以一人统治天下庶民，终不可为治。且贤君不世出，而君主制度究是大乱之所从出也，故必改乱制。政权操之庶民，方是革命成功耳。孟子、荀卿皆不能深悟《春秋》改乱制之义。孔子外王之道，遂无人继述。...《春秋》废除君主制度，即推翻最少数人统治天下最大多数人之乱制，其义蕴广大宏深，却被康氏胡乱说去。

⁸² Sang Yu, *Xiong Shili’s Understanding of Reality and Function, 1920-1937*, pp. 13-16.

⁸³ Xiong Shili, *Yuan Ru*, pp. 430-431.

⁸⁴ Ma said: “If [the principle is], merely ‘majority rules’, regardless of whether the people involved are virtuous or not, then because the number of the stupid and good-for-nothings will always be more than [the number of] the virtuous and wise, [any divination conducted accordingly] will necessarily contravene the way and thus be harmful to political affairs”. See Sub-section 2.2.2. of Chapter 2.

I advocate that the myriad things and each and every human should develop our respective potentials within the fundamental reality in each of us through our own effort.... As the myriad things evolved into human beings, their inner lives became rich and creative, and their wisdom, virtue, strength matured in all their varieties. Thereupon, humans established, tailored and completed heaven and earth, assisting and supplementing the great enterprise of the myriad things.⁸⁵ And [those who follow] the way of humans broaden the great deeds of their fundamental reality to the point of near completion. Thus, it is said that the accomplishments of heaven depend upon humans⁸⁶.

In this passage, the original text of the sentence Xiong cites is “the monarch fashions and completes the way of heaven and earth” (后以财成天地之道). Like many other places in his later writings, the omission of the “monarch” implies Xiong’s democratised interpretations of the classics. Benefiting from his previous research on Yogācāra Buddhism, as noted in the last section of this chapter, the innate good nature in Xiong’s sense is that the nature requires constant development in our life. Here, Xiong chose the term “potentials” that remain to be fully developed through effort, to express this idea. This constant development, like the idea of the “Three Ages”, reflected the revolutionary spirit of the original Confucian teaching which was almost lost after the Warring States period (5th BCE –221 BCE).⁸⁷ In other words, there was no former Confucian thinker (including the masters in Song and Ming periods)⁸⁸ who genuinely understand what the ideal world (“humans established, tailored and completed heaven and earth, assisting and

⁸⁵ “Tai” 泰 (Hexagram Tai), *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, p. 66.

⁸⁶ Xiong Shili, *Ming xin pian*, p. 245. 余主张万物与吾人各各以自力发展其本体之潜能。...万物进化至于人，则其内部生活丰富、创新，与智、德、力种种发育，遂乃建立裁成天地、辅相万物之大业，人道扩大其本体之伟绩，庶几近于完成，故曰天待人而成也。 In the *Book of Change*, we find expressions such as “what accomplishes the way of the world (the successive movement of Yin and Yang) is precisely the nature” (成之者性也). See “Xi ci”, *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, p. 271. It is, however, quite likely that Xiong drew upon Wang Fuzhi and his notion of “assisting Heaven” (*xiang tian* 相天). Cf. Wang, *Shi guangzhuan* 诗广传 (An Extended Interpretation of the Book of Odes), *Chuanshan quanshu* 船山全书 (The Complete Works of Chuanshan), vol 3, (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1996), pp. 446-447.

⁸⁷ Xiong Shili, *Ming xin pian*, p. 249.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 251.

supplementing the great enterprise of the myriad things”) predicted by Confucius is. As shown in this chapter, Xiong incorporated Marxist (dialectics) and democratic (political power controlled by the ordinary people) factors into this ideal world. Given that Ma Yifu always considered Neo-Confucian interpretations of the classics to be authentic (*zhengzong* 正宗),⁸⁹ what might he have thought about Xiong’s New Confucian thought developed in the new republic?

The opinions of their common friend Liang Shuming may help us here. According to Liang, similar to Kang Youwei, Xiong’s theoretical ambitions effectively rendered his New Confucian thought into groundless talk:

The book *Yuan Ru* constantly takes such notions as “eliminate private ownership of property”, “equalise hierarchical classes”, “radically abolish government”, as if they are simple to accomplish...and that everything can happen just as one would like. This has led me to wonder whether Mr. Xiong fully appreciates the idea that “a society must go through the phases of private ownership of property and class in its social development...”

A truly regrettable and grave problem is that Mr. Xiong did not fully follow through with his recognition of fundamental reality. He did not strive to follow the initial inklings he had realised in his learning about fundamental reality, but departed from the right path and insisted on studying so-called ontology and cosmology to show off his talents. Hence, [in his mind,] neither knowledge of innate goodness nor humaneness are Reality [in his sense]—he probably also thought that the mind is not Reality, because the mind cannot include material things, does not have sufficient complexity and is incapable of effecting change...

The *Book of Great Unity* by Kang Youwei belongs to the same category [as Xiong’s works]. If the author had admitted beforehand that the work is only a kind of intellectual game, then one would not have felt the need to criticise it.

⁸⁹ Ma, “Yulu leibian·Liu yi pian”, *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, p. 575.

But instead he arrogantly asserted its greatness, which then arouses one to be scornful.⁹⁰

In the first paragraph cited above, Liang challenged Xiong's understanding of Marxist concepts. He also commended the initial inklings about the fundamental reality that Xiong had realised in his earlier works, especially focusing on the concept "inherent mind" (*benxin* 本心),⁹¹ but laments that Xiong's late philosophy departed from that original insight.

Another key aspect of Liang's criticisms lies in his insight regarding the gap between an all-inclusive "reality" and genuine societal development. With a philosophical framework that was absent in Kang Youwei's writings, Xiong demonstrated that revolution could be theoretically justified with the help of the Confucian classics. And just like Kang and Liao, Xiong endeavoured to keep pace with developments in the intellectual world, which weakened the theoretical coherence of his system to the point of becoming destroyed by the complexity of China's transformation. In this sense, Xiong and his later writings were confronted by the same plight that Liao and Kang had met: the original meaning of Confucianism became far-fetched as the interpreter explained it arbitrarily. According to a letter Xiong sent to Liang Shuming in 1950, the *Rites of Zhou* contained historical evidence of democratic rule (*minzhi* 民治) in ancient China.⁹² With few supportive comments from his friends, this tendency towards subjectivist

⁹⁰ Liang Shuming, "Du Xiong zhu geshu shuhou" 读熊著各书书后 (A Postscript made after reading Several Books of Xiong Shili), *Liang Shuming quanji*, vol 7, pp. 743, 781, 786. Dated 1961. The last sentence was added to the main texts in 1965. 《原儒》一书中前后不断地把“消灭私有制”、“荡平阶级”、“根本废除统治”等等的话说得那样轻易...一切随心所欲。令人不能无疑于熊先生是否深切认识了“私有制和阶级为社会发展所必经过”的那句话。...真可痛惜的大问题，乃是熊先生睹体承当之不终。他不循着既得端倪勉励此学，舍正路而不由，偏好搞什么本体论、宇宙论，自逞其才。由是而良知非本体，仁亦非本体，——大约心亦非本体，因心包不得物，不够复杂，不能成变化。...康有为著的《大同书》正同此一例。假如先自承认是一种思想游戏，倒还不必加以菲薄；却是自己矜夸其伟大，那便令人齿冷。

⁹¹ Liang Shuming, "Xiong zhu xuancui" 熊著选粹 (Selections of Xiong Shili's Works), *Liang Shuming quanji*, vol 7, p. 714.

⁹² Xiong Shili, "Zhi Wang Xingxian" 致梁漱溟 (Letter to Liang Shuming), *Xiong Shili lunxue shuzha* 熊十力论学书札 (Scholarly Letters of Xiong Shili), (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2019), pp. 148-149. Dated 1950.

interpretation grew stronger during Xiong's late years.⁹³ In 1962, like Liao Ping (who was even more radical), Xiong Shili asserted that after the Warring States period no scholar could reveal the original meaning of Confucianism (475-221 BCE).⁹⁴ Xiong's intention of correlating Confucianism with the socialist modernisation made his explanations of the classics just as far-fetched as Liao's. Xiong also complained that his last published book (1961), *Qian kun yan* 乾坤衍 (Elucidations of the Hexagrams Qian and Kun), met few positive responses even among close friends.⁹⁵ The coming of the Cultural Revolution brought Xiong's struggle to a definitive end. In the period after 1967, Xiong painfully stated that "Chinese culture has died".⁹⁶ Theoretically and practically, his attempts to defend the ongoing practical relevance of Confucianism in the new society were not successful.

Ma Yifu also reveals another alternative to understanding Confucianism's role in socialist modernisation. In his letter to Liang in 1962, Ma Yifu agreed with Liang's criticisms and said: "The failings of Xiong's writings are precisely that he has fallen [into the trap of] the two attachments (to the existence of the self and to things) and the two graspings (grasper and what is grasped); he busied himself with argumentation and neglected personal conduct and practice".⁹⁷ With a clear awareness of Confucianism's limited role in the new society, Ma insisted that the appropriate interpretation of the Confucian classics must be in the service of personal conduct and practice. In a personal

⁹³ The *Rites of Zhou* was assessed negatively by Xiong's friends Ma Yifu and Meng Wentong 蒙文通 (1894-1964). For Ma's views about the *Rites of Zhou*, see Sub-section 5.1.1. of this chapter. Meng Wentong thought that political systems recorded in the *Rites of Zhou* were "unequal", and Xiong's appraisal of this book just reflected that his historical knowledge was limited; see Meng Mo 蒙默, *Meng Wentong xiansheng xuexing jianpu* 蒙文通先生学行简谱 (A Simple Chronicle of Mr. Meng Wentong's Scholarship and Deeds), *Meng Wentong quanji zhenwei bieji* 蒙文通全集 甄微别集 (The Complete Works of Meng Wentong: A Personal Collection of Meng Wentong's Papers), (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 2015), pp. 257-258. Dated 1942.

⁹⁴ Xiong Shili, "Zhi Wang Xingxian" 致王星贤 (Letter to Wang Xingxian, also Ma Yifu's student), *Xiong Shili lunxue shuzha*, p. 269.

⁹⁵ Xiong Shili, "Zhi Tang Zhizhong zhuan Tang Junyi, Mou Zongsan", *Xiong Shili lunxue shuzha*, pp. 266-267.

⁹⁶ Guo Qiyong 郭齐勇, *Tiandi jian yige dushuren—Xiong Shili zhuan* 天地间一个读书人——熊十力传 (A Scholar Poised between Heaven and Earth: A Biography of Xiong Shili), (Shanghai: Shanghai wenyi chubanshe, 1994), p. 140.

⁹⁷ Ma Yifu, "Zhi Liang Shuming" 致梁漱溟 (Letter to Liang Shuming), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 2, p. 650. 熊著之失，正堕二执二取，骛于辩说而忽于躬行。

letter to a friend in 1958, Ma accepted the priority of industrialization and scientific techniques, and then described a possible position for Confucianism in the new republic:

I personally think that the ultimate goal of Marxism–Leninism lies in the thesis of state extinction, which sounds wonderful, and even the “Cycles of Ritual” chapter [of the *Book of Rites*] could not surpass it. What Confucians hope for is to have each thing attain its appropriate place; they share the same end [with Marxism–Leninism]. If a communist society can be realised, then what is the use of having Confucianism with its claim of “Qi, by one change, could become the state of Lu. Lu, by one change, could reach the Way”?⁹⁸ Perhaps Confucianism could be placed in the same university department as Greek philosophy; we would not stop it from being a research subject for specialists, but it is evidently not relevant to contemporary matters. If [the ideal of] a clear Yellow River (*heqing* 河清)⁹⁹ could be realised through effort, then this must be by the power of machines and not by means of theory. A Confucian takes up public office when appreciated, retreats when he is not needed,¹⁰⁰ neither of which increases or decreases [his joy]—if this were true, then it is utterly clear that they would not have served any particular class. The way is shared by all under heaven; it is not be privately owned by a family. Even if Confucianism were to be eliminated [in New China], there would be no regrets. “If the Way prevailed throughout the world, then I would not have to try to change it”.¹⁰¹ If those in office today can stimulate human minds in this Way and lead to world peace, then those are not empty words. It would then be a happier matter than a clear Yellow River.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ *Analects*, 6.24, *Lunyu zhushu*, p. 80.

⁹⁹ “Clarifying the Yellow River” is an image of the sage’s good governance. An early example of the phrase can be found in the *Zuozhuan*; see *Zuozhuan zhengyi* 左传正义 (Correct Interpretations of Zuo’s Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals), (Beijing: Beijing Daxue chubanshe, 1999), p. 857.

¹⁰⁰ *Analects*, 7.11, *Lunyu zhushu*, p. 87.

¹⁰¹ *Analects*, 18.6, *Lunyu zhushu*, p. 250.

¹⁰² Ma Yifu, “Zhi Shen Yinmo” 致沈尹默 (Letter to Shen Yinmo [a celebrated poet and calligrapher in the new republic]), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 2, p. 650. 窃谓马列之最终目的，在国家消亡论。其言甚美。《礼运》无以过之。儒者所祈向，在使万物各得其所，其致一也。果使共产主义社会实现，则齐变至鲁，鲁变至道，儒术亦何所用之？或与希腊哲学同科，不废专家研讨，然非今日之事明矣。若夫河清可以力致，此机械之效，固非理论可期。儒者用舍行藏，无所加损，其不为某一阶级服务至明。道者天下所共，非由一家所得而私。儒术虽废，亦何所憾？“天下有道，丘不与

Ma intentionally adapted his writings in the new republic; but unlike Xiong, he kept a necessary tension between governance and his New-Confucian thought. “A Clear Yellow River” was typically used as an image of great governance. In Mao’s time, this ancient ideal was revived in an atmosphere of socialist modernisation.¹⁰³ Unlike Xiong, Ma did not make a strong attempt to explain how his New Confucian theory was relevant to scientific achievements. He pointed out that the Confucian ideal could not achieve what must be achieved by the power of machines. For Ma, the political engagement of Confucians in the new society was not necessary. On the one hand, if China’s leaders could manage to make “the Way prevailed throughout the world”, what Confucians hope for would be realised. Neither “Confucianism” nor “Confucians” were longer required in this ideal new society (“Even if Confucianism were to be eliminated [in New China], there would be no regrets”). On the other hand, if Confucian theory proved not to be useful in realising the ideal new society, a Confucian should also accept this and consciously retreat. For Ma, according to the circumstances, to be a Confucian means to choose virtue over position.¹⁰⁴

For Xiong, Ma’s pessimistic thesis that “Even if Confucianism were to be eliminated [in New China], there would be no regrets” was unacceptable. In Xiong’s letter to their common friend Zhong Tai 钟泰, Xiong fiercely defended his *Yuan Ru*: if he did not elaborate profound meanings such as the “Three Ages”, and avoided talking about science as Ma had done, Confucianism would inevitably be abandoned in the new republic.¹⁰⁵ From Ma’s perspective, a possible reply to Xiong’s anxiety is revealed in

易。”使今之持世者，用是道感人心而天下和平，决非虚语，又比河清为可喜矣。 Dated 1958.

¹⁰³ Zhao Cheng 赵诚, *Huang Wanli de changhe gulu* 黄万里的长河孤旅 (Huang Wanli’s Solitary Journey along the Yellow River), (Xian: Shanxi renmin chubanshe, 2013), pp. 70-72.

¹⁰⁴ Ma said: “Generally speaking, while names such as King, Duke, Ruler and Lord refer to both virtue and position, those such as Great Man and Gentleman mainly refer to virtue. Verifying this virtue [that a Gentleman should have] is called completely fulfilling the nature; it is also called completely accomplishing position, and also called completely accomplishing ability.... The attainment of intrinsic reality is called virtue, and its manifestation as function is called activity. [One’s] position is the name that matches one’s virtue, while [one’s] activity depends on one’s person to be manifest.... The sage views ascending to a noble position to be the same as living in the fields [as an ordinary person].” See p. 133.

¹⁰⁵ Xiong Shili, “Zhi Zhong Tai” 致钟泰 (Letter to Zhong Tai), *Xiong Shili lunxue shuzha*, p. 230. Dated 1957.

Ma's critique of the claim that "the Six Classics are historical works": "as long as the human mind is not dead, the Six Classics will keep existing". What supported these two different attitudes were their theoretical differences. By arguing that the nature required constant development, Xiong intended to connect Confucianism with the constantly changing world. Although holding a similar view that "reality and function are non-dual", Ma, however, tended to stress the unchanging character of the mind-as-reality/nature.¹⁰⁶ This emphasis intensified the tension between the ideal world maintained by the sage's mind and the actual world conditioned by eliminable badness. Therefore, different from Xiong's proactive New Confucian theory, Ma prioritised caution about moral badness over achieving accomplishments in public life. The coming of the Cultural Revolution brought Xiong's struggle to a definitive end. Ma, however, delivered a farewell statement with an optimistic mentality: all floating bubbles will cease and return to the sea, blooming flowers fill the branches.¹⁰⁷ In a rapidly changing China, while Xiong's project did not succeed in defending Confucianism as he had hoped, Ma's idealistic thought indicated an alternative to conserving the label of "Confucianism". For Ma, although one is not able to control what one can achieve in different public circumstances, one still has the choice of taking good actions within the private sphere. For Ma, this was what his New Confucian thought, his discourses expounding our innate good nature and its functions, could teach people in modern China.

Mainly based on Xiong's *Yuan Ru*, focusing on his discourses on the correlation between Confucianism and the socialist republic, this section examined Xiong's new elucidations of Confucianism, revealing how Xiong intentionally correlated the Confucian classics with socialist modernisation by uncovering how concepts such as "dialectics" and "democracy" lie hidden in the classics. Based on this finding, this section pointed out that Xiong's enthusiasm for correlating Confucianism with socialist modernisation made his elucidations of the classics just as far-fetched as the interpretations of Liao Ping and Kang Youwei. With a different understanding of intrinsic reality from Xiong's "Reality", Ma Yifu expressed a more "pessimistic" attitude towards the relationship between Confucianism and China's modernisation. As Xiong's project was unsuccessful in defending Confucianism both in theory and in practice, this section tried to argue, Ma's New Confucian thought indicated an alternative way of conserving

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Liu Leheng, *Ma Yifu liuyi lun xinquan*, pp. 309-318.

¹⁰⁷ Ma Yifu, "Ni gaobie zhu qinyou" 拟告别诸亲友 (A Draft Farewell to Relatives and Friends), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 3, p. 617. 沔灭全归海，花开正满枝。Dated 1967.

the core values of Confucianism in modern China. In Appendix VII, by introducing Xiong Shili's student Mou Zongsan's New Confucian thought, the historical significance of Ma's New Confucian thought will be further explained.

Concluding Remarks

This chapter discussed Xiong Shili's philosophical and political thought. Compared with previous philosophers (including Zhu Xi and Ma Yifu) who had also drawn upon the "reality-function" ontological model, Xiong innovatively explained intrinsic reality as Reality containing contradictory natures. Because this internal contradiction animated Reality's "constant transformation" and one's mind could be the Ruler within this transformation, Xiong strengthened the interactions between reality and function theoretically. By laying a theoretical foundation for the continuous interactions between humans and rapidly changing realities, compared with previous thinkers, Xiong's practical philosophy was more positive. With this philosophy, Xiong endeavoured to justify a continuing role for Confucianism in the new society and modernisation led by CPC. In applying his philosophy to explain how the Confucian classics bear directly on socialist modernisation, Xiong's philosophy enabled him to incorporate Marxist (dialectics) and democratic (political power controlled by the ordinary people) factors into the ideal world predicted in the classics. Because Xiong regarded Confucian writings (including the classics) to contain predictions about the new society, however, his elaborations of Confucianism suffered the same flaws as those of Liao Ping and Kang Youwei. As such, Xiong failed to demonstrate the place for Confucianism in socialist modernisation. In contrast, Ma Yifu showed a more prudent approach to positing a continuing role for Confucianism: Confucians should put "personal conduct and practice" prior to any practical application of Confucianism.

[Buddhist monks] know that production and reproduction are due to [things] being innately endowed to transform; and in seeking the source, monks do not follow transformation. — Huiyuan, *Treatise on a Śramaṇa Not Having to Bow to the Ruler*¹

This thesis has been a historical study of New Confucian thought. In particular, it has investigated the generation, development, theoretical structure and the fundamental propositions of Ma Yifu's New Confucian thought, centring on the notions of “nature” and “mind”. Ma's idealistic character drove him to find a normative theory to deal with what he regarded as China's socio-political and moral decadence during the period between the mid-1890s and mid-1920s, the late Qing and early Republican period. Integrating intellectual resources from Sinitic Mahāyāna Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism, Ma developed his New Confucian thought under the central tenet of “one mind contains the Six Arts”. Through his interpretations of the classics, Ma elaborated this tenet and other fundamental propositions such as “there is no phenomenon outside the mind” (心外无事) and “without the non-changing mind, there would be no changing things” (离此不易之心，亦无一切变易之物). As a study in intellectual history, this thesis contributes to the fields of Chinese Confucian philosophy (especially from sixth to twentieth century) and modern Chinese intellectual history (especially about Confucian and Buddhist ideas).

From the Song Dynasty to twentieth-century China, there is a history of pursuing practical theories adequate to responding to changing socio-political situations. In this history, traditional philosophical discourses of the Qing Dynasty (1636–1912) and the early twentieth century remain to be investigated. More concretely, how modern Chinese thinkers reacted to changing socio-political situations and theoretical novelties in their writings remain insufficiently investigated by current scholarship. To demonstrate how modern Chinese thinkers reacted to changing situations by drawing on Neo-Confucian and Buddhist ideas, this thesis took Ma Yifu as a representative case and studied four of

¹ Translated by Yu Yihong. 知生生由于禀化，不顺化以求宗。——慧远 (344-416) 《沙门不敬王者论》

his contemporaries based on comparative examinations with Ma's thought: Liao Ping 廖平 (1852–1932), Zhang Taiyan 章太炎 (1869–1936), Ouyang Jingwu 欧阳竟无 (1871–1943) and Xiong Shili 熊十力 (1885–1968). These two kinds of investigations were undertaken in Part I and Part II of this thesis respectively.

This thesis adopted the methodologies of textual exegesis and intellectual history. The analysis in Part I and Part II was based on translations of selected texts. To clarify the historical background of Ma and these other thinkers' writing, this thesis has analysed their letters, presentations and other materials, and widely consulted historical studies of intellectual trends in the late Qing and early Republican period China. In addition, it has highlighted and investigated important ideas such as “mind-as-reality” (*xinti* 心体) and “deluded mind” (*wangxin* 妄心) used by earlier thinkers such as Chengguan and Zhu Xi, and also by Ma and his four contemporaries. Through investigating Ma's New Confucian thought and these connections with other thinkers, the thesis has demonstrated Ma's elaborations on aspects of the Neo-Confucian philosophical tradition and also his theoretical contributions to modern China's cultural conservative thought. Inspired by Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming, Ma's mind-based theory further explained the relationship between human praxis and the source of normative values. By providing a less compromised theoretical framework to understand the Confucian classics as normative guidelines in socio-political practices, Ma's New Confucian thought makes a stronger case for conserving the core values of Confucianism in modern China, than that of his contemporaries.

Mainly based on Ma's letters, recorded sayings and lectures made between 1903 and 1939, the first chapter studied the genesis of Ma's New Confucian thought. Strongly dissatisfied with the political and social situation in China in the early twentieth century, while attempting to find a remedy to address these situations, Ma's idealistic character drove him to seek a deeper understanding of "human nature".² After the mid-1910s, this idealism contributed to Ma's investigations into Sinitic Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism. In these investigations, besides Chan Buddhism and the Huayan school, Ma was especially attracted to the *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith* and its "one mind two gateways" model,³ which had been an important resource for many Chinese thinkers such as Neo-Confucian master Zhu Xi, who also had a significant impact on Ma's thought. In the formation of Ma's thought, the "one mind two gateways" became a cornerstone of the theoretical framework that he used in interpreting the Confucian classics.

Ma's understanding of the Confucian classics can be generalised as the thesis that "one mind contains the Six Arts". Acknowledging that there is an unconditioned, morally good principle (*li* 理) that is both immanent in, and yet transcends the present world, Ma's discourse tried to narrow the gap between that principle and the intrinsic conditionality of the subject. This indicated Ma's interest in issues that had been widely discussed by Neo-Confucian thinkers.⁴ For Ma, the classics or the "Six Arts" (*liuyi* 六艺) as manifestations of fundamental reality (*benti* 本体), include all knowledge and principles in the world. The prerequisite for studying the Six Arts and attaining that knowledge is personal

² Ma said: "That humans desire knowledge is due to their nature. But if knowledge is not comprehensive, then it is based on hearsay. To be limited by hearsay is not ultimate knowledge. To rely on insight to gain a sense of the Way and to extend this insight—this is done by virtue of the nature." See p. 30.

³ Ma said: "In order to observe the convergence and interconnections [of Buddhism and Confucianism], the key is to seek the category in which they are united. If one must include Buddhism within [the framework of] Confucianism, then it should also be allowed that Confucianism be included within Buddhism. In order to distinguish what they have in common and where they differ, we need to adopt the two gateways of the fundamental and the traces (phenomena)." See p. 35.

⁴ Ma said: "What manifests from nature and principle is called the mind of the way; what manifests in emotions and vital stuff is called the human mind. 'The nature is precisely principle' held by Song Confucians is the most appropriate, because Yangming's discourse of 'The mind is precisely the principle' is too simplistic." See p. 109.

realisation of the actual existence of the nature/mind-as-reality (*xing* 性/*xinti* 心体) where normative principles are lodged.⁵ Due to this special realisation prior to investigating the texts, Ma's method was distinctly different from that of a mere historical reconstruction of the classical texts. Studying the classics became investigating the normative principles in the mind-as-reality.⁶ The ultimate aim of this investigation was to make our activities accord with our nature. These activities, in Ma's words, could be called "functions".⁷ And this investigation could be called "recovering the nature". Ma agreed with Zhu Xi's idea that the one who fully realises principle (尽其理) and carries out the functions is a sage. At the same time, Ma also noted that these functions were moral practices rather than the political deeds of a person with political authority.⁸ By studying the classics, each ordinary person would find the concrete way⁹ of "recovering the nature" and then be able to act morally like a sage.

Why did Ma take reading the classics as a "concrete way"? This is because the classics are the guidebooks, the objective standards of "recovering the nature". Although the nature is unconditioned, the subject itself might be conditioned by "habituated tendencies" (*xiqi* 习气) that hinder recovery of the nature. Rather than "mind-as-reality"

⁵ Ma said: "Making doctrinal classification based on the Six Arts is a matter of actual principle and not obscure words. What needs [to be done] is to directly identify the main teaching in order to avoid receiving the words yet miss their meaning." See p. 51.

⁶ Ma said: "This learning is not a product of being dependent upon external conditions. It is inherent in one's mind and ought not to be regarded as external to oneself.... In the light of the fourth point (the previous point), one should know that these virtues are originally endowed within the nature. Therefore, one should seek inwards to personally experience them to the full—do not be led by external things and become forgetful of oneself, such that one races around seeking for what is outside." See p. 53.

⁷ Ma said: "Ritual is principle. It is [part of] the heavenly ordained nature and it fills the human body. When the expression of [seeing, listening, speaking and acting] as function is not appropriate then it is not ritual. When [seeing, listening, speaking and acting] go against the nature and violate reality, then their functioning is deficient. When the expression of [seeing, listening, speaking and acting] as function is appropriate then it is ritual. When [seeing, listening, speaking and acting] are in accord with the nature and in unity with reality, then their functioning becomes complete." See p. 58.

⁸ Ma said: "The mind's most perfect virtue is humaneness. The essential work of a learner is to recognise and pursue humaneness, to cherish humaneness and to detest inhumaneness. To be able to do this is called "establishing the mind of heaven and earth". Students must know that, for Confucius and Mencius, the crucial point in their discussion of government is to value virtue, not power. However, as Confucius and Mencius did not attain office despite being greatly virtuous, their way did not prevail at that time." See p. 61.

⁹ Ma said: "There are also problems regarding Chan learning, which lay in not reading books to attain principles exhaustively." See p. 49.

or “mind of the way” (*daoxin* 道心), the mind conditioned by these habituated tendencies is the “human mind” (*renxin* 人心) as Neo-Confucian master Zhu Xi had already claimed. If the conditioned subject rather than principle is perceived to be the source of normativity, the problem of subjectivism¹⁰ will arise, leading one to mistake the “human mind” as “mind-as-reality”. To address this potential problem buried in both Neo-Confucian (Yangmingist) and Buddhist (Chan learning) traditions, Ma placed particular importance on the virtues of the nature and the Six Arts corresponding to these virtues. Because the Six Arts serve as concrete standards for recognising the nature, reading the classics as the Six Arts provided each person with an objective “principle” by means of which to recover the nature. In this way, the functions of one’s mind (our activities) must accord with the way of the Six Arts revealed in the classics, thus enabling the problem of subjectivism to be avoided. At the same time, because Confucian classics are the guidebooks and sages are the models in “recovering the nature”, Ma needed to explain how the activities of sages are in accordance with principle. Ma deemed these activities to be moral practices rather than political deeds. This recognition resulted in Ma’s moralised explanations of the classics.

Ma’s representative work, the *Records of Lectures at the Recovering the Nature Academy*, is such a moralised interpretation. Revolving around this work, the second and the third chapters studied Ma’s moralised explanations of political deeds recorded in the classics. In his interpretations of the *Book of Rites*, Ma chose Confucius’ descriptions of a sage-king’s political achievements as a study case. He stated that in the words of Confucius, these political achievements were revealed as the transformative effects of “sensitive responsiveness” (*ganying* 感应).¹¹ Then, Ma tried to argue that all political deeds recorded in the classics are inevitably linked to “sensitive responsiveness”. By identifying the mind as the intrinsic reality of phenomena in the world and “sensitive responsiveness” as its functions, in his interpretations of the *Book of Change*, Ma reconstructed the notion of “sensitive responsiveness” between a ruler and his people into the thought-moments (sensing) and signs (responding) that appear in a gentleman’s

¹⁰ Ignorance of both the conditionality of the mind and the objectivity of principle.

¹¹ Ma said: “The reason I speak of transformation rather than [just] accomplishments is that accomplishments refer especially to the manifest aspects of [the gentlemen’s] actions, whereas transformation solely esteems the god-like quality of sensitive responsiveness, that is, instruction without the use of speech, accomplishment without effort. Much less are there any crude traces to be found. Devoid of any marks, this is what is called transformation.” See p. 94.

mind.¹² As such, Ma argued, the principle that controlled the sage's activities (thought-moments) should also be the same principle observed in the political world: ideal governance is maintained through the function of the sage's mind.

In this mind-based framework supporting ideal governance, because a gentleman and a sage both verify the same virtues of the nature, the moral practices of the gentleman who has no political position are not different from the great political deeds of the sage.¹³ And because the moral principles controlling political activities are not different from the moral principles in personal life, instead of specific programmes for achieving great deeds in the political world like a sage, Ma treated the teachings of the Six Arts as facilitating a gentleman's self-governance by controlling the mind. Ma also insisted on the need to keep a sense of fearful caution about "habituated tendencies", which cannot be eliminated in everyday life.¹⁴ Although Ma repeatedly argued that the morally perfect sage could

¹² Ma said: "The thought-moment is sensing, and the sign [in divination] is responding. The arising of favourable or unfavourable signs is the function of this thought-moment. The five matters [of political activities] correspond to the mind, [while] the five signs correspond to vital stuff. [The arising of] both favourable and unfavourable signs lies solely with the one mind (the thought-moment, sensing) and [the arising of] the five [kinds of] vital stuff (the sign, responding) follows it. Because vital stuff is given rise to by the thought-moment, it is called 'the function of the thought-moment' The term 'ceaseless' refers to the intrinsic reality (mind) that is ceaseless; this means that some effort is required [in keeping one's mind bright]. If not, it would not be necessary to speak of "lasting". In the case of the ordinary person, thought-moment after thought-moment arise and cease incessantly, how could there be 'cessation'? Yet, what is ceaseless for a sage is the brightness of his inherent mind, while what is ceaseless for an ordinary person is simply his deluded mind. The sage's mind is pure, therefore, the functioning of the virtuous characteristics [of his mind] is ceaseless. As for the ordinary person, it is simply that the defilements and afflictions [of his deluded mind] are incessant." See p. 117.

¹³ Ma said: "[Political] position is a name corresponding to the traces [of political deeds], and the person [who occupies that position] is the title of [one who has] verified [virtue] Generally speaking, while names such as King, Duke, Ruler and Lord refer to both virtue and position, those such as Great Man and Gentleman mainly refer to virtue. Verifying this virtue [that a Gentleman should have] is called completely fulfilling the nature; it is also called completely accomplishing position, and also called completely accomplishing ability.... The attainment of intrinsic reality is called virtue, and its manifestation as function is called activity. [One's] position is the name that matches one's virtue, while [one's] activity depends on one's person to be manifest.... The sage views ascending to a noble position to be the same as living in the fields [as an ordinary person]." See p. 133.

¹⁴ Ma said: "The reason [the sage] composed the *Change* and deigned to leave this teaching was only because he wanted people to recognise the mind. Without knowing the principles of the nature and the mandate, the intrinsic reality of the mind would not manifest, and one's daily activities would simply follow habituated tendencies, and would be completely without freedom. This is called 'losing one's inherent mind'" See p. 136.

subsume the myriad things into his mind, the *Lectures* still end with the advice to keep a sense of fearful caution about habituated tendencies, rather than attempt to achieve accomplishments in public life. Due to this strong moral idealism, Ma's New Confucian thought centring on “one mind contains the Six Arts” appears especially weak in a political world with ineliminable badness.

Generally, Ma's emphasis on morality brought about a tension between an ideal world based on the virtues of the nature and an actual world conditioned by badness. This tension resulted in a problematic moral idealism. By identifying the way of the Six Arts as embodying morally good principles that are both immanent in, and yet transcend the human world, Ma made the mind's functions strictly follow the objective standards indicated in the Confucian classics (the Six Arts), thereby providing a means to overcome the problem of subjectivism that hinders the recovery of the nature. Combining Zhu Xi's “the mind controls/combines the nature (reality) and the emotions (functions)” model with Buddhist ideas from the *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith* and Chengguan's writings, Ma Yifu attached great importance to the mind as intrinsic reality and sensitive responsiveness as the mind's functions, which in turn can be developed as the great functions (*dayong* 大用) of the mind of sage ruler. According to Ma's interpretation, “the great functions” means that a sage is able to exert a ubiquitous influence on the world. However, the great functions of the mind are also strictly limited to the realm that is based on the virtues as manifestations of principle, namely, the realm governed by personal moral standards. This made Ma's “one mind contains the Six Arts” discourse too idealistic and brought about a strong tension between moral subject and public life, which is essentially non-moral.

The fourth and fifth chapters are comparative studies of Ma and four of his contemporaries. Having provided a detailed examination of the weak points in the thought of Liao Ping, Zhang Taiyan and Ouyang Jingwu, Chapter 4 focused on Ma's explanations of "what the Confucian classics are", "what the relationship between the classics and praxis is" and "what the connection between the praxis (*yong*) and its theoretical basis (*ti*) is". I argued that these explanations are less problematic than the other thinkers' explanations. Chapter 5 examined Ma's friend Xiong Shili's New Confucian thought, especially Xiong's unsuccessful project of correlating the Confucian classics with socialist modernisation in which Xiong had attempted to uncover how concepts such as "dialectics" and "democracy" lie hidden in the classics. This chapter argued that compared with Xiong, Ma's thought provided an alternative understanding to how Confucianism might have a place in the changing socio-political situations.

Section 4.1, "Six Arts", pointed out the shortcomings of Liao Ping's and Zhang Taiyan's understanding of the Confucian classics and the significance of Ma's thought assessed from the perspective of classics scholarship. Liao had attempted to elucidate the classics as prophetic works that were relevant to modern China.¹⁵ In arguing for this relevance, through his new interpretations of the classics, Liao claimed that the knowledge in the classics was about the universal way (*dao* 道) rather than specific matters (*shi* 事).¹⁶ However, he never clearly explained what this universal way is and simply urged "adopting the strengths of other people to confirm the meaning of our classics" while maintaining that the classics contain prophecies. Liao's interpretations stimulated the growth of the problem of falsifying truths that culminated in Kang Youwei's belief that one can contrive historical facts and distort the classics in the service of promoting one's own ideas. Compared with Liao's approach of justifying Confucianism's relevance in modern China by interpreting the classics as containing

¹⁵ Liao said: "It is one's duty to examine all the political affairs and scholarship in the world...; adopt the strengths of other people to confirm the meaning of our classics; and develop that which lies hidden in the old [i.e. the classics] and extend it to the entire globe." See p. 155.

¹⁶ Liao said: "[The Five Phases] are [expressions of] the Way and not vessels [in the realm of form]. If the Five Phases are understood in terms of matter, is this not like an attempt to view the heavens through a narrow pipe or measure the volume of the sea by scooping it out with a clam shell!" See p. 158.

prophecies, Ma's project (classics as manifestations of the nature) was less unconventional. Rather than inexhaustible knowledge about the external world, the classics provide us with knowledge about our moral nature, a nature that cannot be changed by external socio-political conditions.

Contra Liao Ping, Zhang Taiyan maintained that the knowledge provided by the classics is historically specific rather than embodying (universal) principles.¹⁷ On the other hand, however, he also insisted that learning and applying knowledge still required one to find the source of normativity in the mind.¹⁸ Because Liao's "classics as prophecies" did not secure Confucianism's relevance in modern China, Zhang's "classics as historical works" also required him to work out a theoretical foundation for moral normativity that could support a more convincing way of reading the classics as guidebooks for ethical praxis. This concern pushed Zhang closer to the "one mind two gateways" model, a model that later also shaped the theoretical framework that Ma used to expound the normative principles he identified in the classics. The deficiencies in Liao's thought accentuated Ma's explanations of "what the Confucian classics are": rather than knowledge about the rapidly changing external world, for Ma the teachings of the classics (the Six Arts) are manifestations of our moral nature. Compared with Liao, Ma's explanations were less problematic in answering "what the relationship between the classics and the praxis is" and "what the correlation between the praxis (*yong*) and its theoretical basis (*ti*) is". As both Ma and Zhang's interpretations of the classics entailed their accounts of the "mind".

The second section of the fourth chapter, titled "One Mind", dealt with Ouyang Jingwu's and Zhang Taiyan's accounts of the "mind" and the relationship between reality (*ti* 体) and function (*yong* 用). Because the "one mind two gateways" framework is also a kind of "reality (the mind as suchness) and function (the mind that arises and ceases)" model adopted by Ma,¹⁹ this section also examined the background of Ma's adoption of

¹⁷ Zhang said: "Laozi began his career as an official historiographer, therefore he focused on emphasising the importance of validation. Previously, people had viewed ancient emperors and kings as sages, while Laozi was able to see through [their actions and uncover] their personal motives (selfishness). Previously, people had viewed the myriad things as if they had a unifying system; Laozi saw that there is no such system." See pp. 161-162.

¹⁸ Zhang said: "We should take the notion of 'self' as foundational for our practices in dealing with social affairs." See p. 171.

¹⁹ Ma said: "Heaven and earth are the roots of dharma characteristics (phenomena). Heaven governs the great beginning and represents the mind as suchness. This is the so called 'dharma-gate reality, which is the overarching characteristic of the unified dharma realm'.

the “one mind two gateways” in his “one mind contains the Six Arts” discourse. In arguing that the source of normativity cannot be conditioned by individual experiences and the world where badness exists, Ouyang asserted that the nature of the mind could not remain pristine so long as the mind is subject to ongoing defilement by ignorance in the course of our lives. This assertion targeted the *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith* and its “one mind” thesis: because a person’s mind will inevitably be conditioned by badness, one should not take this inherently defiled mind as the intrinsic reality of good actions (functions). Thus, Ouyang rejected the *Treatise*’s “one mind two gateways” model.²⁰ In his new explanation of the “reality-function” model, Ouyang replaced the mind-as-reality with transcendent *nirvāṇa*. For him, only with a belief in this *nirvāṇa* can one act morally.²¹ Compared with Ma Yifu, Ouyang’s framework eliminated the subjectivist risk of taking the conditioned mind rather than principle as the source of normativity. However, the price of this elimination was too high. In Ouyang’s theory, even though there is no direct connection between the purified *nirvāṇa*-as-reality and the living world that remains to be purified, the practitioner must maintain a belief in this *nirvāṇa*. The problem here is that the normative principles in the human world rely on a strong belief in the existence of a supermundane goal. As such, as Zhang Taiyan had already criticised, Ouyang’s theory was too idealistic. It was a theory of becoming a sage (“when human desires have been thoroughly eliminated, Heavenly principle [manifests] pure and complete”) rather than becoming human in the actual world.²²

Earth creates to give form to things and represents the mind that arises and ceases. It generates all dharmas and is able to contain all dharmas.... Heaven and earth being arrayed, [the principle of] the *Change* operates therein. Then, the [dharma-]nature and [dharma-]characteristics merge with one another, the extension of awareness becomes boundless. Intrinsic reality and function share one source, and there is no gap between the apparent and the subtle.” See p. 37.

²⁰ The *Treatise* said: “The mind has always been intrinsically pristine, yet there is ignorance. When defiled by ignorance, there is the defiled mind. Yet, although there is the defiled mind, [the nature of the mind] is constantly unchanging.” See p. 177.

²¹ Ouyang said: “As reality, quiescence is an immutable principle. Quiescence is not nothing; tranquillity and quiescence are *nirvāṇa*. The light of a lamp may be extinguished but the lamp body remains. [When laundering,] while the dirt is removed, the clothes remain. When afflictions have been purged, undivided suchness is clear and pure. This is what by ‘when human desires have been thoroughly eliminated, Heavenly principle [manifests] pure and complete’.” See pp. 176-177.

²² Zhang Taiyan said: “Today, I don’t worry about not being able to write books, but I worry about not able to put it into practice. [Thus,] I seek to practice diligently to become human, and not to produce empty speeches on becoming a sage.” See p. 170.

The idealistic problem in Ouyang's thought is closely related to a theoretical tenet of Yogācāra doctrine: the "mind" can only be the "deluded mind" (*wangxin* 妄心). Due to this tenet, Ouyang rejected the mind or the nature as the basis for correct practice. Ouyang's rejection of the mind as the basis for good actions, represented a theoretical challenge to the views of earlier Sinitic Buddhists and Neo-Confucians who considered the mind as such a basis. Motivated by a strong concern for philosophical theory to have a practical relevance, Zhang took a different attitude towards the intellectual resources that Ouyang rejected. Subsection 4.2.2. demonstrated that Zhang blended Yogācāra ideas with the "one mind two gateways" model in order to find a firm basis for morally good actions. Zhang tried to combine Yogācāra ideas, the "one mind two gateways" model, and Neo-Confucian ideas about "mind" into his synthetic theory of acknowledging the determinative role of the "deluded mind" in our practices. He believed that some Neo-Confucian thinkers had recognised this mind in their spiritual experiences,²³ and that his task was to perfect their understanding of the mind with the help of Buddhist resources, thereby revealing the "undefiled mind" supporting our practices.²⁴ By adopting the "one mind two gateways" model to achieve this task, however, Zhang's theory turned out to be flawed. The undefiled mind and the "deluded mind" controlling practices cannot coexist in his framework because recognising the former requires us to abandon the physiological functions of our consciousness. As with Ouyang, Zhang's new theory of "mind" also failed to secure a direct connection between social affairs and normative standards. This problem was grounded in what Ma had been aware of: if the mind is merely the deluded mind, our practices (function) controlled by this mind would be excluded from "one true

²³ Zhang Taiyan said: "[Yang said,] 'when I was young, I applied myself strenuously to this. Suddenly, the myriad things, myriad affairs and myriad principles in the world and I became a clear, undifferentiated unity in which there no longer was any division between phenomena and principle, no longer any severance.' These words accurately reveal a glimpse into how the storehouse consciousness contains all seeds, constantly churning like a raging current, yet [Yang] failed to personally experience the undefiled genuine mind. The majority of Yangmingists from the Ming Dynasty were also the same." See p. 184.

²⁴ Zhang Taiyan said: "[In reading] Neo-Confucian writings, one should focus on those which are less incoherent. Mingdao, Shangcai, Xiangshan, Cihu, Baisha and Yangming, each has his own particular accomplishment and is free from the problem of incoherence. Many talented Yangmingists were from Jiangxi province, [among whom] I particularly appreciate Wang Tangnan. His saying, '[the hexagram] Qian is embodied knowledge, and [the hexagram] Kun is the faculty of mentation,' had never been seen [in the writings of other thinkers] before. [However,] he suffered from attachment to physiological functions, and was not able to become liberated from bondage. His insights were also the source of his ailments." See p. 186.

dharmarealm” (fundamental reality). If so, there will be an unbridgeable gap between social practices (function) and the source of normative principle (the fundamental reality). Although Zhang Taiyan attempted to address this problem through the model of “one mind two gateways”, limited by the idea of the deluded mind, his mind theory was flawed. This Yogācāra notion of the deluded mind also hindered Zhang from properly understanding Neo-Confucianism.

As with Ma, Xiong Shili also objected to the disjunction between the conditioned and the unconditioned as presented in Yogācāra. Although he was initially inspired by the Yogācāra tradition and Ouyang Jingwu’s thought, Xiong developed a different understanding of reality and its functions and was more positive about the non-duality of the two by drawing on the “one mind two gateways” model and Yangmingist ideas such as the “inherent mind” (*benxin* 本心). By focussing on justifying the determinative role of the mind-as-reality in ethical praxis, Xiong Shili’s and Ma Yifu’s New Confucian thought avoided Ouyang’s and Zhang’s shortcomings. Starting with Xiong’s critique of Zhang’s philosophy, Chapter 5 examined Xiong Shili’s onto-cosmology of Reality as “constant transformation” and also discussed Xiong’s new elucidations of Confucianism. Xiong severely criticised Zhang’s flawed account of the determinative role of “self” (mind) in our practices in which there is a conflation of the correct functions of the mind and the defilements (*ranwu* 染污), which need to be abandoned.²⁵ Besides criticising Zhang’s conflation, in his representative work, *New Treatise on the Uniqueness of Consciousness*, Xiong also showed his dissatisfaction with similar shortcomings he found in the Yogācāra tradition that he learned from his mentor Ouyang Jingwu.²⁶ Rooted in this confirmation of the mind-as-reality, as a rectification of Yogācāra understanding of the mind as deluded mind (*wangxin* 妄心), both Xiong and Ma attempted to show the way of recognising

²⁵ Xiong said: “Zhang’s fundamental confusion lies in this. While I do not expect that he could realise [his mistake], young people ought not be misled by him. That ‘the storehouse consciousness constantly turns over like a raging current’ is simply a continuation of habitual tendencies. [Zhang] compares this to what we Confucians call ‘flow’; his fault is greater than mistaking a thief to be his child, and his sin is sufficiently grievous to fall into Niraya. What Confucians call ‘flow’ is the true agency of ceaseless production and reproduction. If [‘flow’] is mistaken for the defiled dharmas of the storehouse consciousness, and that they must be stopped and can be stopped, then one will fall into the erroneous views of nihilism and emptiness” See p. 202.

²⁶ Xiong said: “Having traced Dharmapāla’s fundamental error, it can be seen to lie in his conflation of habituated tendencies with productive power.... Productive power is a heavenly matter; habituated tendencies are a human capacity. To mix up the human with the heavenly is to be obscured by form-and-vital-stuff and be ignorant of the original condition of human life.” See p. 205.

normative principles inherent in one's mind-as-reality.²⁷ In particular, Ma's view that we should "observe constancy (reality) in transformation (function)" had inspired Xiong's idea that function is not different from reality ontologically. And in the modernisation process, with interesting theoretical differences, they showed us different alternatives of conserving Confucianism in China.

One of the biggest differences between Xiong's characterisation of Reality and Ma's characterisation of the nature/mind-as-reality lies in Xiong's emphasis on the internal contradiction contained in Reality. Compared to Ma, Xiong's onto-cosmology is more flexible in explaining the actual world where badness exists.²⁸ In applying his philosophy to social and political concerns, Xiong tried to explain how the Confucian classics bear direct relevance to socialist modernisation. Nevertheless, given that Xiong maintained that the classics had predicted the development of democracy,²⁹ although he would hardly have acknowledged this, certain of his elaborations of Confucianism were very close to Liao Ping's and Kang Youwei's subjectivist interpretations: one can contrive historical facts and distort the classics in service of promoting one's own ideas.³⁰ Not only

²⁷ Xiong said: "My friend Ma Yifu says: 'Here self-conviction is what the various [Sinitic] schools of Buddhism call self-confirmation.' What wonderful words! How profound and far-reaching! Only with self-understanding and self-knowledge is there self-confirmation." See p. 52.

²⁸ Xiong said: "In terms of life, if the pursuit of and attachment to things is motivated by a sense of fairness rather than private ownership, it cannot yet be called delusion or error. It is only those who were overly avaricious in the old society's regime of private ownership that are genuinely guilty.... That defilements accrued through habituation can contribute to cognition is an evident fact and cannot be denied. If it were the case in its encounter with things the mind did not accrue defilements through habituation, and all the experiences in one's past disappear instantly, then knowledge will not be possible.... Awakening to the way means that knowledge does not become separated from the way; if unawakened, then knowledge simply remains knowledge." See p. 210.

²⁹ Xiong said: "If the world enters the age of great peace, people will make substantial progress in developing their capacities. As both their wisdom and morality will be excellent, [this is what] the *Classic of Spring and Autumn* (*Spring and Autumn Annals*) referred to as 'everybody under heaven being able to behave as an officer-gentleman.' At that time, such situations are what the Image [to the Qian hexagram in] the *Book of Change* called 'a host of dragons without a head'. Because all people are equal without exception it is called 'great peace [and harmony]'. See p. 218.

³⁰ Liang Shuming said: "The book *Yuan Ru* always takes many notions, such as "eliminate private ownership of property", "equalise hierarchical classes", "radically abolish government", as if they are simple to accomplish...and that everything can happen as one would like.... The *Book of Great Unity* by Kang Youwei belongs to the same category [as Xiong's works]. If the author had admitted beforehand that the work is only a kind of intellectual game, then one would not have felt the need to criticise it. But instead he arrogantly asserted its greatness, which then arouses in one to feel scorn." See p. 223.

did Xiong's new elaborations fail to find any acceptance in the new society of 1950s China, moreover, both theoretically and practically, he failed to achieve his goal of justifying the direct relevance of Confucianism in China's modernisation. Subsection 5.2. demonstrated how Xiong intentionally connected the Confucian classics with socialist modernisation by uncovering how concepts such as "dialectics" and "democracy" lie hidden in the classics. Based on these findings, this section pointed out that Xiong's enthusiasm for connecting Confucianism with socialist modernisation made his elucidations of the classics just as far-fetched as the interpretations of Liao Ping and Kang Youwei. As Xiong's project was not successful in defending Confucianism both in theory and in practice, this section argued that compared with Xiong, Ma Yifu was more prudent in understanding the relationship between China's modernisation and Confucianism. Ma's New Confucian thought also indicated an alternative way of conserving the core values of Confucianism in modern China. Appendix VII argued that, Xiong Shili's student Mou Zongsan chose this alternative.

After the Cultural Revolution erupted in 1966, in a hostile “anti-tradition” atmosphere, over the following two years, both Ma and Xiong passed away. They had no opportunity of further debating the role of Confucianism in the new society. But as shown in the Appendix VII, Xiong’s student Mou Zongsan can help us to imagine a possible dialogue between them. Given Xiong’s philosophical project did not succeed in conserving Confucianism in the new society, Ma and Mou’s Confucian ideal of prioritising “personal conduct and practice” and one’s “inner life” can be seen to be an alternative for a supporter of Confucianism. Because Mou’s Confucian thought was fiercely discussed in contemporary debates on the role of Confucianism in China today, even though Ma Yifu has not been directly linked to contemporary debates, Mou can be considered as a bridge between Ma Yifu and contemporary discussants who criticised spiritual Confucianism.

Like Xiong Shili, contemporary Confucian supporters have proactively embraced the challenge of justifying the positive role of Confucianism in a state led by a revolutionary party. Tang Wenming 唐文明, one of the representative thinkers among them, has claimed that one’s “mature innate goodness” should be closely related to actual ethical experiences rather than resorting to a utopian ideal lacking a concrete sense of ethical order. As a perceptive critic of modern New Confucianism and the May Fourth Movement, Tang challenged the presupposition in western democracy that “the formation of individual autonomy is a standard of modernisation”,³¹ arguing that contemporary China’s thinkers with Confucian concerns believe that in order to achieve the political and ethical ideals of Confucianism it is necessary to explore a socio-political system that is not same as western democracy. This has been a basic concern of contemporary “mainland Confucianism”.

This concern can be traced to Jiang Qing 蒋庆 and his “political Confucianism”. Against “spiritual Confucianism” Jiang argued that Mou has mis-assessed Confucianism because Mou considered “democracy and science” to be “the sole standard or the

³¹ Tang Wenming, “Wutuobangzhuyi yu gujin Ruxue——Ping Zhang Hao de Zhongguo sixiangshi yanjiu” 乌托邦主义与古今儒学——评张灏的中国思想史研究 (Utopianism and “Ancient and Modern Confucianism”—Reviewing Zhang Hao’s Studies of Chinese Intellectual History), *Dushu* 读书, 2019(8), pp. 60-61.

direction of Chinese culture” (中国文化发展的唯一标准和方向).³² In other words, Jiang Qing believed that “the merit and value of Confucianist ideas can and should be judged on their own terms, and do not require a normative criterion, such as liberal democracy or revolutionary communism, foreign to the tradition.”³³ As Ady Van den Stock has noted, Jiang argued that Mou Zongsan and Tang Junyi’s 唐君毅 (1909–1978) New Confucian thought showed a “forced withdrawal of Confucian philosophy into the safe but claustrophobic confines of individual human subjectivity”. This withdrawal made Confucian ideals irrelevant to the socio-political structures of China.³⁴ But how could Jiang make his Confucian ideal relevant to the socio-political structures? In a modern state with a socialist ideology, to proactively justify the position of the political Confucianism would be difficult. Here, the basic concern of mainland Confucianism gave rise to another topic: how to influence political leaders in order to promote Confucianism in modern China.

This concern can be found in Ding Yun’s 丁耘 writings. As another prominent scholar in the mainland Confucian group, Ding has attached special importance to Liang Shuming’s discourse in the 1920s and 1930s of transforming traditional families throughout China’s rural regions into new collectives, which could be considered as the preparation for socialist revolution led by communists rather than the ideal of “democracy and science”.³⁵ According to Ding, however, the top priority for revitalising Confucianism today is not exploring how New Confucian thought can help prepare for socialist revolution, but rather to influence the leader of this revolution. Because of this,

³² Jiang Qing, *Zhengzhi Ruxue* 政治儒学 (Political Confucianism), (Beijing: Shenghuo dushu xinzhi sanlian shudian, 2003), pp. 92-93.

³³ Ady Van den Stock, *The Horizon of Modernity: Subjectivity and Social Structure in New Confucian Philosophy*, pp. 55-56.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 56. “Jiang argues that the former current, best represented by thinkers such as Mou Zongsan 牟宗三 (1909–1995) and Tang Junyi 唐君毅 (1909–1978) who fled the mainland for Taiwan and Hong Kong shortly before the establishment of the People’s Republic in 1949, has made Confucian ideals irrelevant to everyday life and to the socio-political structures by which human existence is determined and in which it is situated. The exaggerated focus he claims these philosophers laid on metaphysical and existential problems resulted in a forced withdrawal of Confucian philosophy into the safe but claustrophobic confines of individual human subjectivity.”

³⁵ Ding Yun, *Rujia yu qimeng* 儒家与启蒙 (Confucianism and Enlightenment), (Beijing: Shenghuo dushu xinzhi sanlian shudian, 2011), pp. 108-119. Liang explicitly conceived of “rural reconstruction” as an alternative to (not a preparation for) the communist revolution, thus Ding’s assessment of Liang’s “reconstruction” here is in the service of a certain teleology.

Ding said that he especially developed Jiang's understanding of political Confucianism into another stage: paying particular attention to "the issue of monarchic rulership in a republic" (共和国中的君主功能问题), as well as "the tradition of princely education" (人君教育之传统).³⁶ Here, Ding's argument comes close to what Xiong Shili and Xu Fuguan 徐复观 (1904-1982) had advocated under Mao's and Jiang's respective governance of the mainland and Taiwan.³⁷ As Peng Tao 彭涛 pointed out, the rise of political Confucianism during the period between the 1990s and 2015 indicated that nationalistic cultural tradition and revolutionary tradition have been tending towards ambiguous cooperation under a new consensus based on acknowledging China's new authoritarianism, which is less "revolutionary".³⁸

At the same time, just like the writings of Xiong Shili and Xu Fuguan made no difference to Mao's and Jiang's way of governing people, today's advocates of political Confucianism are faced with a formidable challenge in influencing political leaders. Given that Jiang Qing's kind of political Confucianism has failed to achieve its ideal in mainland China, as a representative of spiritual Confucianism, Ma Yifu's New Confucian thought might still serve as an alternative for today's Confucian supporters in conserving their tradition.³⁹ But by which way would this alternative work? It must be related to a kind of optimism that challenges could be tackled through one's efforts put in an ethical

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 73-74.

³⁷ See Yu Yihong, "Hongdao yu huxue" 弘道与护学 (Promoting the Way of Politics and Defending the Confucian Learning), in *E'hu xuezhì* 鹅湖学志, 62(2019), pp. 104-108.

³⁸ Peng Tao 彭涛, *Ruhua Gongchandang?* 儒化共产党? (A Confucianised Communist Party?), (Taipei: Kaixue wenhua, 2016), pp. 94-106. In this background, Jiang Qing's political Confucianism also brings to mind Xiong Shili's reinterpretation of the Confucian political tradition. As Ady Van den Stock, *The Horizon of Modernity: Subjectivity and Social Structure in New Confucian Philosophy*, p. 55 notes: "Interesting parallels could be drawn between Jiang Qing's approach, and that of Xiong Shili 熊十力, who is generally considered to be the father of New Confucianism in its spiritual guise."

³⁹ Ma's significance as an "alternative" was recently revealed by Deng Zhifeng 邓志峰 (also known as Deng Bingyuan 邓秉元); see Deng Bingyuan, "Jinian Ma Yifu xiansheng" 纪念马一浮先生 (In Memorial of Mr. Ma Yifu), in Deng, *Xinwenhua yundong bainianji* 新文化运动百年祭 (Essays for the Centennial of New Culture Movement), (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2019), pp. 160-166. In other studies, revolving around the "normative principle" idea Ma has stressed, Deng reviewed important debates in Confucianism. For an instance, see Deng, "Si Meng wuxing shuo xinlun" 思孟五行说新论 (New Studies of the Five Phases Theory of Zisi and Mencius), *Xueshu yanjiu* 学术研究, 2018(8), pp. 116-117.

manner. Ma's "one mind contains the Six Arts" theory, like Xiong Shili, represents such an attempt: "To find Reality by returning to the mind bestows power on humans because it shows that they are able to save themselves through their own efforts".⁴⁰ This attempt shared by these New Confucian thinkers, as part of the legacy of classical Asian thought indicating "an incorrigible optimism about human beings",⁴¹ may inspire future Chinese reflecting on one's moral consciousness and its constructive role in our activities.

⁴⁰ Sang Yu, *Xiong Shili's Understanding of Reality and Function, 1920–1937*, p. 226.

⁴¹ Douglas L. Berger, *Encounters of Mind: Luminosity and Personhood in Indian and Chinese Thought*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2015), p. 10.

Appendices:

I. A Brief Chronological Biography of Ma Yifu's Intellectual Life¹

1883, born in Chengdu 成都 to Ma Tingpei 马廷培 (1844-1901) and He Dingzhu 何定珠 (?-1893). Birth name Ma Futian 马福田. Before Futian's birth, both Ma Tingpei and his father (Futian's grandfather) had held public office in the Sichuan area. The Ma family kept living in Chengdu until moving back to Shaoxing 绍兴, Zhejiang (their hometown) in 1889. Two years later, the New Confucian thinker Xiong Shili 熊十力 (1885-1968) was born in Huanggang 黄冈, Hubei.

1886, 3 years old. According to Ma's recollections of childhood life, as early as in 4-year-old (Chinese reckoning), he had expressed an interest in Buddhist life. In 1886, Liao Ping 廖平 (1852-1932) finished his early representative work *Jin gu xue kao* 今古学考 (Investigations on the New Text school and the Old Text school). Five years later (1891), influenced by Liao, Kang Youwei 康有为 (1858-1927) published his influential book *Xinxue weijing kao* 新学伪经考 (Critique of Forged Confucian Classics Advocating the Founding of the Xin Regime).

1893, 10 years old. Ma's mother, He Dingzhu, passed away after suffering from the deaths of her young daughters (Ma's elder sisters). In this year, New Confucian thinker Liang Shuming 梁漱溟 (1893-1988) was born in Beijing.

1898, 15 years old. Ma was very smart; both his teacher and father felt that they were incapable of teaching him, and so they decided to let Ma learn the classics and composition by himself. This year, Ma gained first place in the prefectural examination (the basic level in the three-level imperial examination) of Shaoxing. In the same year, the Hundred Days' Reform was launched, and Yan Fu 严复 (1853-1921) published his influential translation of Thomas Huxley's (1825-1895) *Evolution and Ethics* under the

¹ This brief chronological biography is based on the materials used in the thesis and the *Ma Yifu nianpu jianbian* 马一浮年谱简编 (Short Chronological Biography of Ma Yifu) compiled by Ma's relative Ding Jinghan 丁敬涵 in 2010.

title *Tianyan lun* 天演论 (On Evolution). The zeitgeist of pursuing “success and profit” grew much stronger after this year, which was negatively assessed by Ma.

1901, 18 years old. Ma’s father, Ma Tingpei, passed away after suffering a stroke. In this year, Ma paid a visit to Shanghai, made some new friends and started to study foreign learning in preparing newspaper articles with friends.

1902, 19 years old. Affected by the sudden death of his wife Tang Yi 汤仪 (1882-1902), Ma became more pessimistic. He never married again. In this year, to learn new knowledge, Ma planned to visit Japan and United States. In the same year, Kang Youwei’s student Liang Qichao 梁启超 (1873-1929) began to publish a series of articles “Xinmin shuo” 新民说 (On the New Citizen). From Ma’s point of view, Liang’s works strengthened the zeitgeist mentioned above.

1903, 20 years old. Through serving as a clerk in China’s delegation to the St. Louis World’s Fair, Ma came to St. Louis for a one-year stay. As Ma became increasingly disappointed with socio-political decadence in China, to find a solution to this problem, Ma focused on learning English and western knowledge (especially philosophical and political knowledge).

1904, 21 years old. Ma visited Japan on his way back to China. After this, Ma spent most of his life in Hangzhou. In this year, New Confucian thinker Xu Fuguan 徐复观 (1904-1982) was born in Huanggang, Hubei.

1906, 23 years old. Ma resided in Hangzhou, and made painstaking efforts in investigating Chinese learning. In this year, Liao Ping formed his later understanding of the Confucian classics, while Zhang Taiyan 章太炎 (1869-1936) strongly promoted the idea that the “Six Classics are historical works” and revolutionary philosophy in Japan.

1909, 26 years old. In his letter to a journalist, Ma explicitly asserted a connection between “learning” and “literature (newspapers)”. In his opinion, only with the aid of Confucianism could columnists manage to promote morality and steer the human mind towards becoming moral by means of their “literature”. In this year, New Confucian thinkers Tang Junyi 唐君毅 (1909-1978) and Mou Zongsan 牟宗三 (1909-1995) were born (in Yibin 宜宾, Sichuan and Qixia 栖霞, Shandong, respectively).

1911, 28 years old. After the Xinhai Revolution erupted, Ma Yifu served as a clerk for his father-in-law Tang Shouqian 汤寿潜 (1856-1917), who acted as the civil administrator of Zhejiang province.

1912, 29 years old. Ma was hired as secretary of Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培 (1868-1940), who served as the provisional Republican Minister of Education. However, Ma was disappointed with the new system that had been introduced from Japan and quickly resigned. This is the only public position Ma occupied before the establishment of People's Republic of China. In this year, Ma finished a draft of his grand project to collate the works of the entire tradition of Chinese learning.

1917, 34 years old. Ma declined Cai Yuanpei's invitation to teach at Peking University. Due to Tang Shouqian's death, Ma started to withdraw from public life this year. A critical event in the process of Ma's turn towards Buddhist learning happened in this year: his encounter with Chan Master Chuquan 楚泉 (d.u.). In the same year, Ma's old friend Chen Duxiu 陈独秀 (1879-1942) rapidly became an opinion leader who promoted strong anti-traditionalism.

1918, 35 years old. According to his letter to a student of Buddhism, Ma's New Confucian thought based on the "one mind two gateways" framework adopted from the *Treatise on Awakening Mahāyāna Faith* had been basically formed. In this year, Xiong Shili published his first book *Xinshu* 心书 (Book of Mind).

1921, 38 years old. The first meeting between Ma and Liang Shuming. They became friends. In 1920, with the recommendation of Liang Shuming, Xiong Shili had turned to Ouyang Jingwu to study Buddhism. In 1922, Ouyang gave his influential series of lectures published under the title, *Weishi jueze tan* 唯识抉择谈 (Talks on the Resolutions of Nothing but Consciousness).

1925, 42 years old. Ma wrote "*Sishu Zuanshu zhaji ba*" 四书纂疏札记跋 (Postscript to the *Notes on Compiled Sub-Commentaries on The Four Books in Chapter and Verse with Collected Commentaries*). This postscript indicated one of his basic views: The commentaries on the classics produced by Song Dynasty Neo-Confucians, especially those by Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200), are essential to learning Confucian classics and so constitute genuine learning. In the following year (1926), Zhang Taiyan finished *Dao Han changyan* 荻汉昌言 (Zhang Taiyan's Unrestrained Words). This work and the

earlier published (1917) *Dao Han weiyan* 蕘汉微言 (Zhang Taiyan's Subtle Words) represented Zhang's late thought.

1929, 46 years old. After Xiong Shili sent Ma the draft of his representative book, *Xin weishi lun* 新唯识论 (New Treatise on the Uniqueness of Consciousness), they became close friends. Three years later (1932), Ma wrote a preface for Xiong's published book. As Ma and Xiong shared similar views on the "mind-as-reality", this insight helped them in responding to the theoretical problems that appeared in Zhang Taiyan and Ouyang Jingwu's thought.

1936, 53 years old. Zhu Kezhen 竺可桢 (1890-1974), the president of Zhejiang University, invited Ma Yifu to conduct seminars there. Ma accepted his invitation and undertook to draft a plan for the seminars. In the same year, Zhang Taiyan passed away.

1937, 54 years old. Because of the Japanese invasion, Ma Yifu left Hangzhou. According to a letter to his close friend Ye Weiqing 叶渭清 (1886-1966), Ma had the intention to compose *Liu yi lun* 六艺论 (Theory of the Six Arts), which would be different from a historical account of the classics.

1938, 55 years old. Ma Yifu gave several lectures for students and teachers of Zhejiang University. These lectures were published as *Taihe Yishan huiyu* 泰和宜山会语 (Lectures in Taihe and Yishan), which represented Ma's mature conception of Confucianism as well as Chinese learning.

1939, 56 years old. Funded by the National Government of the Republic of China, Ma founded the Recovering the Nature Academy at Leshan 乐山, Sichuan. In this year, Ma began to write *Fuxing shuyuan jianglu* 复性书院讲录 (Record of Lectures at the Recovering the Nature Academy) and *Erya tai dawen* 尔雅台答问 (Questions and Answers from the *Erya* Platform).

1941, 58 years old. Ma Yifu finished *Fuxing shuyuan jianglu* based on his lectures given in the Academy. This book became Ma's representative work. In the same year, Ouyang Jingwu finished his new commentary on the "Balance as the Norm" chapter in the *Book of Rites*.

1943, 60 years old. Ma stopped teaching in the Academy. *Erya tai dawen xubian* 尔雅台问答续编 (The Continuation of Questions and Answers from the *Erya* Platform) published. Ouyang Jingwu also passed away in this year.

1946, 63 years old. Ma returned to Hangzhou from Sichuan, and spent the rest of his life in Hangzhou. Although he still served as a board member of the Academy, he advocated that, rather than education, the Academy should focus on publishing Confucian literature for future generations of Chinese people.

1949, 66 years old. The Academy was reorganised into a library. This year Ma published his book of poems. He attached great importance to these poems where he fully expressed himself. This year, Mao Zedong 毛泽东 (1893-1976) proclaimed the founding of the People's Republic of China. Xu Fuguan, Tang Junyi and Mou Zongsan all left mainland China.

1953, 70 years old. In the new republic, Ma was required to serve as honorary president of the Zhejiang Research Institute of Culture and History. This year, with the help of a senior official Dong Biwu 董必武 (1886-1975), Xiong Shili published a new edition of *Xin weishi lun*.

1955, 72 years old. Ma began to serve as member of the Standing Committee of Zhejiang Political Consultative Conference. In this and the following years, Xiong Shili finished and published *Yuan Ru* 原儒 arguing Confucianism's relevance in the new society.

1958, 75 years old. Ma served as a representative in the Zhejiang People's Congress. He was also required to publish some poems in newspapers. According to a letter he wrote to a friend, however, Ma insisted that Confucianism would not serve any particular class (including the proletariat). In this and the following year (1958-1959), Xiong Shili published his *Tiyong lun* 体用论 (On Reality and Function) and then *Ming Xin Pian* 明心篇 (Explaining the Mind).

1967, 84 years old. After one year of bitter suffering in the Cultural Revolution, Ma passed away in Hangzhou. In the following year (1968), also heavily affected by the Revolution, Xiong Shili passed away in Shanghai.

II. Table of the Contents of *Two Lectures*:

1. The prerequisite for approaching genuine scholarship:

Introduction (引端, *Taihe*); On the four prerequisites for Chinese scholarship (论治国学先须辨明四点, *Taihe*); Zhang Zai's Four-Sentence Doctrine (横渠四句教, *Taihe*); On faithfulness, truthfulness, steadfastness and reverence (说忠信笃敬, *Yishan*); On scholarship: first explain the significance of scholarship, then clarify the import of questions and answers (释学问: 先释学问之义 后明问答之旨, *Yishan*).

2. On Practice:

On differentiating the gentleman and the petty person (君子小人之辨, *Taihe*);

Discussions and interpretations of the "Discourse on The Learning That Yanhui Was Fond Of" (颜子所好何学论释义, *Yishan*).

3. On the general concept of the Six Arts:

Qualifying the concept of "Chinese Learning": National Learning is the scholarship of the Six Arts (楷定国学名义: 国学者六艺之学也, *Taihe*); On how the Six Arts includes all kinds of scholarship (论六艺赅摄一切学术, *Taihe*); On how the Six Arts are unified and included in the one mind (论六艺统摄于一心, *Taihe*); On how Western knowledge could also be contained in the Six Arts (论西来学术亦统于六艺, *Taihe*); Holding up the Six Arts to elucidate [what is meant by] 'interconnecting system and proper categories' is precisely to begin bringing order to things. (今举六艺以明统类, 乃正是始条理之事, *Taihe*).

4. On the terms of the Discourse of the Six Arts:

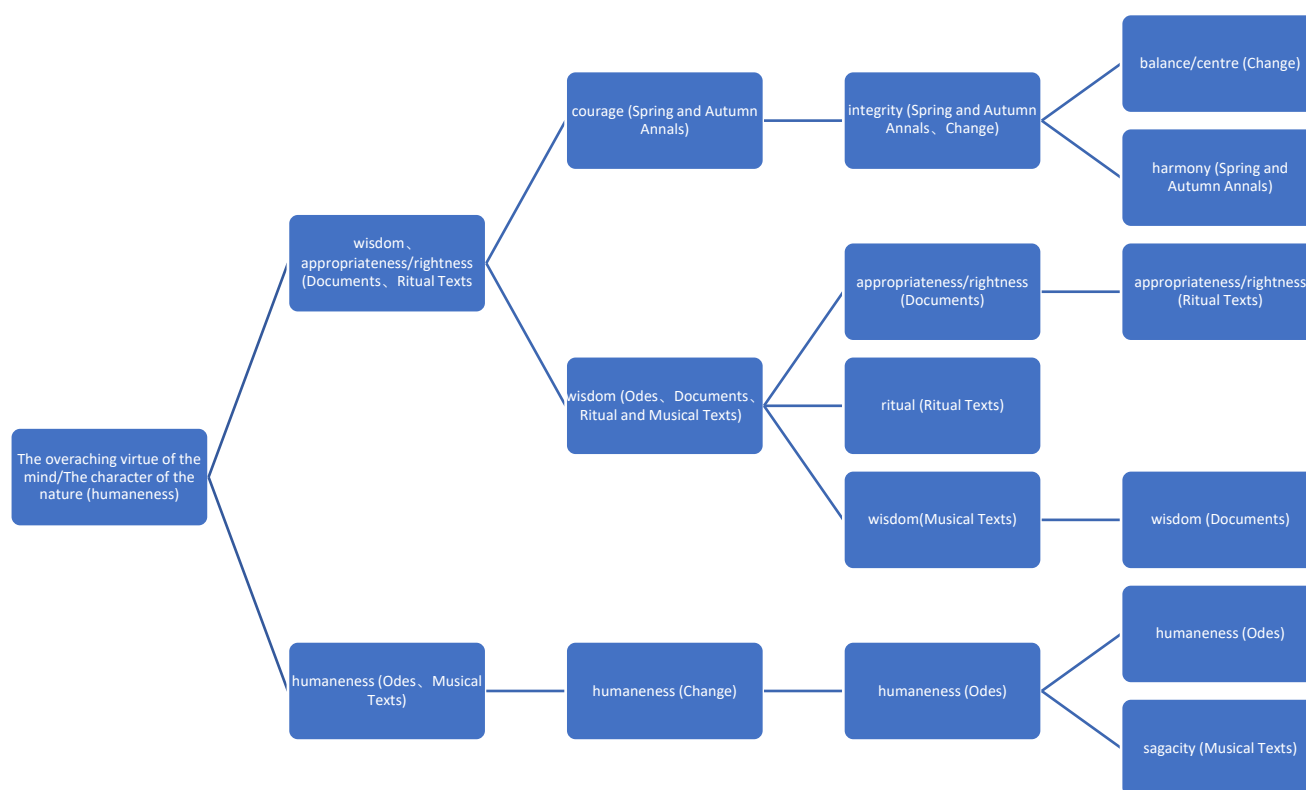
Pattern and vital stuff — in a metaphysical sense (理气 — 形而上之意义：义理名相一, *Taihe*);² Wisdom and ability (知能：义理名相二, *Taihe*); On seeing, listening, speaking and acting (说视听言动：续义理名相一, *Yishan*); On maintaining reverence and understanding words (居敬与知言：续义理名相二, *Yishan*); Self-cultivation, extending knowledge, calming and discernment (*śamatha vipaśyanā*) (涵养致知与止观：续义理名相三, *Yishan*); On calming (说止：续义理名相四, *Yishan*); Removing arrogance part I (去矜上：续义理名相五, *Yishan*); Removing arrogance part II (去矜下：续义理名相六, *Yishan*).

5. A practical example:

Interpretations of the first and the last chapters of the *Analects* (论语首末两章义, *Taihe*).

² In this thesis, “phenomena” and “vital stuff” are interchangeable in translating *qi* 气, depending on context.

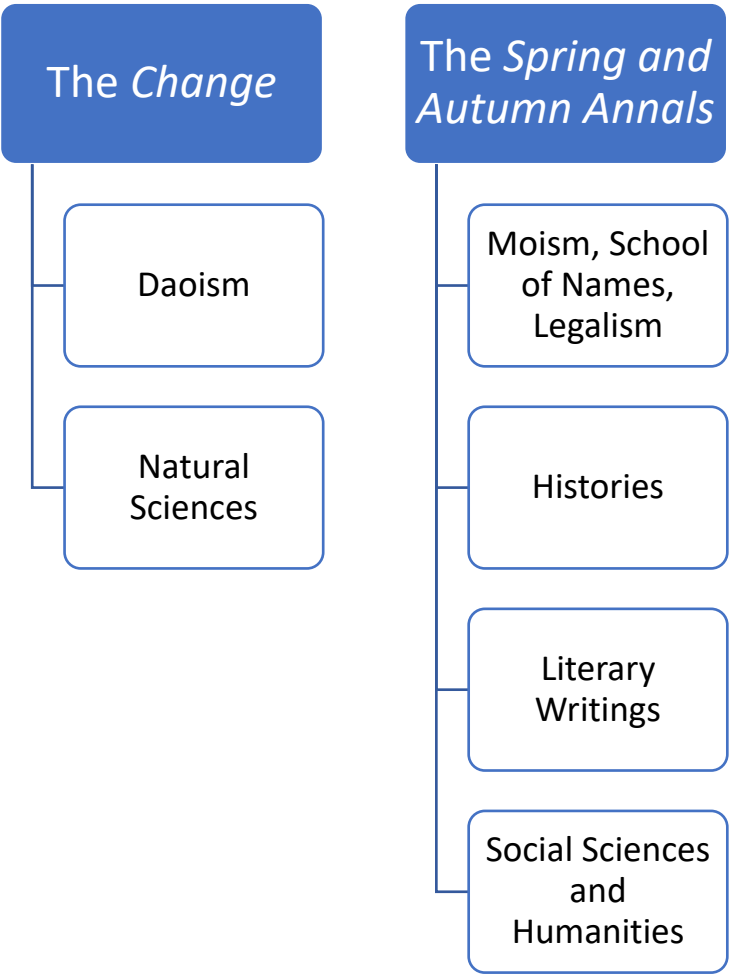
III. Diagram 1-The Relationship between “virtue(s) of the nature” and “Six Arts”³



³ Yu Wenbo constructed the following table to show the relationship between the Six Arts and the Six Virtues:

	One Virtue	Two Virtues	Three Virtues	Four Virtues	Five Virtues	Six Virtues
Odes	humaneness	humaneness	wisdom	humaneness	humaneness	humaneness
Documents	humaneness	Wisdom, appropriateness/rightness	wisdom	appropriateness/rightness	appropriateness/rightness	wisdom
Ritual texts	humaneness	Wisdom, appropriateness/rightness	wisdom	ritual	ritual	Appropriateness/rightness
Musical texts	humaneness	humaneness	wisdom	wisdom	wisdom	sagacity

IV. Diagram 2-The Relationship between the “Six Arts” and other (Chinese and Western) Categories of Knowledge



Change	humaneness		humaneness		integrity	mean
Spring and Autumn Annals	humaneness		courage		integrity	harmony

See Yu, *Ma Yifu jingxue sixiang yanjiu* 马一浮经学思想研究 (The Research on Ma Yifu’s Explanations of the Confucian Classics), PhD thesis, Beijing University, 2016, pp. 69-70.

V. Catalogue (with Classifications) of the *Lectures*

1. Necessary tips on reading the Confucian classics as manifestations of the nature:

1.1. Opening Day Speech For Students of the Recovering the Nature Academy 复性书院
开讲日示诸生

1.2. Regulations of the Recovering the Nature Academy 复性书院学规

1.3. On How to Read Books 读书法

1.4. An Essential Book List for the Comprehensive Study of the Classics 通治群经必读
诸书举要

1.5. An Overview of the Main Points in the Confucian Classics 群经大义总说:

1.5.1. The Distinction between Doctrinal Classification and Disciplinary Division 判教
与分科之别

1.5.2. The Distinction between Obscure Words and Real Principle 玄言与实理之别

2. Explaining how the classics are the manifestations of the virtues of the nature, as well as the realisation of virtue-based politics:

2.1. The Overall Meaning of the *Analects* 论语大义:

2.1.1. Teaching of the *Odes* 诗教

2.1.2. Teaching of the *Documents* 书教

2.1.3. Teachings of ritual texts and music texts 礼乐教

2.1.4. Teaching of the *Change* 易教

2.1.5. Teaching of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* 春秋教

2.2. The Main Idea of the *Classic of Filial Piety* 孝经大义:

2.2.1. Introduction 序说

2.2.2. A Brief Assessment of Doubtful Issues Concerning the New Text and Old Text
略辨今古文疑义

2.2.3. Explaining the Key Path to Perfect Virtue 释至德要道

2.2.4. On the Five Kinds of Filial Piety 释五孝

2.2.5. On Three Generative Forces 释三才

2.2.6. On the Hall of Distinction 释明堂

2.2.7. An Inquiry Concerning the Essence of Punishment 原刑

3. Focusing on the teachings of the *Odes* and ritual texts, indicating how to recognise the way of the Six Arts as the principle of the virtue-based politics:

3.1. Prolegomena to the Teaching of the *Odes* 诗教绪论:

3.1.1. Introduction 序说

3.1.2. On the Meaning of the “Confucius at Home at Leisure” chapter from the *Book of Rites* 孔子闲居释义:

3.1.2.1. On the General Manifestation of the Virtue of the Ruler 总显君德

3.1.2.2. Presenting Separate Characteristics of Virtue 别示德相

3.1.2.3. Explaining the Function of Virtue 明德用

3.1.2.4. Eulogising the Transformative Influences of Virtue 叹德化

3.2. Prolegomena to the Teachings of Ritual Texts 礼教绪论:

3.2.1. Introduction 序论

3.2.2. Explanations of the “Confucius at Home at Ease Chapter” from the *Book of Rites* 仲尼燕居释义:

3.2.2.1. On the Meaning of Pervasiveness [of the Teaching] 显遍义

3.2.2.2. On the Meaning of Balance 显中义

3.2.2.3. Inquiry Concerning Governance I 原治

3.2.2.4. Inquiry Concerning Governance II 原治之余

3.2.2.5. Reflections on Error 简过

3.2.2.6. An Inquiry Concerning Politics 原政

3.2.2.7. Reflections on Disorder 简乱

4. Describing the fulfilment of the way of the Six Arts in a virtue-based political world:

4.1. The Concise Meaning of the “Great Plan” chapter from the *Book of Documents* 洪范 约义:

4.1.1. Introduction 序说

4.1.2. On the Preface Part of the “Great Plan” 序分

4.1.3. An Overview of the Nine Categories 总叙九畴:

4.1.3.1. Separate Explanations of the Five Phases 别释五行:

4.1.3.1.1. Marking Their Name and Number 标名数

- 4.1.3.1.2. Distinguishing Their Intrinsic Nature 辨体性
- 4.1.3.1.3. Revealing the Accomplishments by the Metaphor of Tastes 寄味明功
- 4.1.3.2. Separate Explanations of the Five Personal Matters 别释五事:
 - 4.1.3.2.1. Marking Their Name 标名
 - 4.1.3.2.2. Highlighting Virtue [of the Governor] 显德
 - 4.1.3.2.3. Revealing Accomplishments 明功
- 4.1.3.3. Separate Explanations of the Eight Objects of Governance 别释八政:
 - 4.1.3.3.1. Explaining the List of the Eight Objects 释八政之目
- 4.1.3.4. Separate Explanations of the Five Periods of Governance 别释五纪:
 - 4.1.3.4.1. Explaining the List of the Five Periods 释五纪之目
 - 4.1.3.4.2. Description of Precepts 述训
- 4.1.3.5. Separate Explanations of the August Royal Ultimate 别释皇极:
 - 4.1.3.5.1. Revealing the Import of Establishing the Function [of the August Royal Ultimate] 明建用之旨
 - 4.1.3.5.2. Eulogising the August Royal Ultimate 敷言
- 4.1.3.6. Separate Explanations of the Three Virtues 别释三德:
 - 4.1.3.6.1. Explaining the List of Three Virtues 释三德之目
- 4.1.3.7. Separate Explanations of the Use of Prognostication to Examine Doubtful Issues 别释稽疑:
 - 4.1.3.7.1. Appointing Officers and Ordering Divinations 立人命占
 - 4.1.3.7.2. List of the Hexagrams from Divining by the Tortoise-shell and the Stalks of the Achillea 出卜筮之目

4.1.3.7.3. Establishing the Principle of Consenting to [the Judgment of] Two of the Three [Men Who Interpret the Divination Indications of the Tortoise-shell and the Stalks] 定三占从二之训

4.1.3.7.4. Differentiating Agreement and Objection, Auspicious and Inauspicious [Based on the Hexagrams] 辨从违吉凶

4.1.3.8. Specific Explanations of the Various Signs in Divination 别释庶徵:

4.1.3.8.1. List of the Five Signs 五徵之目

4.1.3.8.2. Revealing the Seasonable and the Constant 显时恒

4.1.3.8.3. Identifying the Favourable and the Unfavourable 判休咎

4.1.3.9. Specific Explanations of the Five Good Fortunes and the Six Extremes of Misfortune 别释五福六极:

4.1.3.9.1. Explanations of the Categories of “Good Fortune” and [Good Fortune’s Transformation into Misfortune] upon Reaching its Extreme 释福极之目

4.1.3.9.2. Description of Precepts 述训

5. A holistic observation of the way of the Six Arts as normative principle—on how a political world can be “subsumed” into a sage’s “mind”:

5.1. Goblet Words on Observing the Hexagrams in the *Book of Change* 观象卮言:

5.1.1. Introduction 序说

5.1.2. Explaining the Import [of the *Change*] – the Origin of the Hexagrams – the Original Characteristics 约旨 卦始 本相

5.1.3. An Inquiry Concerning Good Fortune and the Misfortune – Explaining Virtue and Activity 原吉凶 释德业

5.1.4. Examining Speech and Conduct 审言行

5.1.5. Differentiating the Great and the Petty 辨小大

5.1.6. Explaining the Greatness of Teaching and Principle 释教大理大

5.1.7. Explaining the Greatness of Virtue and Position 释德大位大

5.1.8. Explaining the Greatness of Human – Activity – Timeliness – Appropriateness
释人大业大时大义大

5.1.9. Explaining the Greatness of Way and Implements [in Phenomenal World] 释道
大器大

VI. Kang Youwei and His Confucian Thought

A brief examination of Kang's basic points will reveal why Ma had commented: "[Liao's erroneous views] further influenced Kang Youwei, who badly misled others". Different from Liao, Kang's basic approach to understanding the classics was closer to that of Zhang Xuecheng: the Six Classics are essentially canonical political works directly linked to the valid implement of political projects.⁴ After meeting with Liao in 1889, Kang turned to the New Text School and rapidly became a leading figure.⁵ Partly similar to Liao, Kang largely relied on hints that he discovered in different interpretations of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* in order to construct his innovative Confucian discourses.⁶ By developing a realist approach influenced by Zhang Xuecheng, Wei Yuan 魏源 (1794-1857) and Gong Zizhen 龚自珍 (1792-1841),⁷ and despite intentionally adopting Liao's argument that "Confucius was the creator of the classics rather than a transmitter of culture", Kang's understandings of Confucianism was significantly different from that of

⁴ Kang Youwei, "*Jiaoxue tongyi* 教学通义" (The Comprehensive Meaning of Education), in *Kang Youwei quanji* 康有为全集 (Complete Works of Kang Youwei), vol 1, (Beijing: Zhongguo Renmin Daxue chubanshe, 2007), p. 38.

⁵ It was widely considered that Kang directly copied Liao's works after their meeting. This view has been proved to be wrong according to Wu Yangxiang's 吴仰湘 latest research; see Wu, "Chonglun Kang Youwei, Liao Ping 'xueshu gongan'" 重论康有为、廖平“学术公案” (Re-examining the Case between Kang Youwei and Liao Ping), *Zhongguo shehui kexue* 中国社会科学, 2020(4): 202-203.

⁶ For a recent study, see Chen Bisheng, "Wan Qing de jingxue geming—yi Kang Youwei *Chunqiu* xue wei li 晚清的经学革命——以康有为春秋学为例" (Revolution in the Classics Scholarship in the Late Qing Period—The Case of Kang Youwei's Scholarship on the *Spring and Autumn Annals*), *Zhexue dongtai* 哲学动态, 2017(12), pp. 34-41.

⁷ See Yu Yihong, "Lun wan Qing Ruzhe zongjiao xin zhi zhong de jijin tezhi zhi fazhan" 论晚清儒者宗教新知中的激进特质之发展 (On the Development of Radical Characteristics among Confucians Concerning New Knowledge about Religion in the Late Qing Dynasty), in Deng Bingyuan 邓秉元 ed., *Xin Jingxue* 新经学 (New Classics Scholarship), 5(2020), pp. 139-164. Ma also severely criticised Gong Zizhen and Wei Yuan; see Ma Yifu, "Zhi Shen Jingzhong" 致沈敬仲 (Ma's Letter to his Friend Shen Wujian 沈无倦), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 2, pp. 566-567. Dated 1926.

Liao.⁸ Kang showed an unbridled tendency in utilising⁹ the classics to justify his own reform agenda. One of Kang's most notable claims, that the *Spring and Autumn* had been composed to "introduce reform to existing political institutions in the name of ancient classics" (*tuogu gaizhi* 托古改制), was especially criticised in Ma's reply to students.¹⁰ In another work finished in 1886, Kang intentionally equated the sage's virtue with his historical accomplishments. He asserted that buying foreign machines to save people from the floods is precisely to follow the teachings of the *Book of Documents*—as the great Shun and Yu altered watercourses by using tools that were available to them in ancient times.¹¹ Because the effects of "Confucian scholarship" (for Kang, this includes, but is not limited to, the study of the Confucian classics, Confucian teachings and Confucian religion) in Kang's view must be assessed by standards based on current realities, the classics are not simply prophecies of Great Unity in the future but propaganda for today's political activities. This view is consistent with Ma's critique of Gong Zizhen and Weiyuan.

From a historical perspective, Mao Haijian has shown how Kang Youwei frequently modified his evolutionary discourse of "Three Ages Culminating in Great

⁸ Liu Wei 刘巍 has given a detailed and convincing analysis of interactions between Liao and Kang, as well as their commonalities and differences. See Liu, "Chongfang Liao Ping, Kang Youwei xueshu jiaoshe gongan" 重访廖平、康有为学术交涉公案 (Re-examining the Case of Academic Disputes between Liao Ping and Kang Youwei), *Qilu xuekan* 齐鲁学刊, 2019(4), pp. 34-64.

⁹ Due to this, conservative scholars such as Gong Daogeng 龚道耕 (1876-1941) did not regard Kang Youwei's Confucian writings as "scholarship". Gong said: "Kang Youwei co-opted [Liao's] discourses to talk about reformation and to strive for profit and position.... Kang's disciples, such as Liang Qichao, misappropriated the simplistic and insignificant ideas [of Liao], made denunciations and commendations whenever it suited... and they also called themselves the New Texts School!" (有为假其说以谈变法,希利禄...其弟子梁启超辈,剽窃肤末,随时抑扬...而亦自名今文!) See Gong, *Jingxue tonglun* 经学通论 (A Comprehensive Account of Classics Scholarship), in Li Dongmei 李冬梅 ed., *Gong Daogeng Ruxue lunji* 龚道耕儒学论集 (Gong Daogeng's Collected Treatises on Confucianism), (Chengdu: Sichuan Daxue chubanshe, 2010), p.35, dated 1929. Another contemporary of Liao in Sichuan, Lin Sijin 林思进, held a similar idea that Liao's teachings had been misappropriated ("Somebody stole the preface to Liao's discourses, [and due to them,] the way [of classics scholarship] grew more distorted!" 或窃其序,道乃弥乖!). See Lin Sijin, "Liuyi shi xiang Zan 六译师像赞" (An Ode to the Portrait of the Six Changes Master), *Qingji tang ji* 清寂堂集 (Anthology of the Master of Qingji Hall), (Chengdu: Bashu shushe, 1989), p. 611.

¹⁰ Ma Yifu, "Yulu leibian·Sixue pian", *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, p. 591.

¹¹ Kang, *Mingong pian* 民功篇 (Chapter on Success in Ruling the People), in *Kang Youwei quanji*, vol 1, p. 81-82.

Unity” (*datong san shi* 大同三世) in accordance with changing political situations.¹² Like Liao, although Kang claimed that his discourse was grounded in the true meanings of the Confucian classics, what these true meanings were just depended on what new terms Kang sought to explain. This issue can be traced to Zhang Zhidong’s 张之洞 (1837-1909) “Chinese substance and Western functions”; which, in Levenson’s words, evidenced that the considerations of the factual needs of westernization had started to displace considerations of a system that embodied Confucian values.¹³ This tendency could also be considered a source of Ma’s dissatisfaction regarding Zhang Zhidong, a view that was expressed in Ma’s early years. In this sense, Ma’s pursuit of “revealing the nature” and his emphasis on “normative principles” served as a critical reflection on the zeitgeist of his age as manifested in Liao and Kang’s versions of Confucianism. Due to their ignorance of normative principles, however, both Kang and Liao failed to give a convincing account of the Confucian classics as required guidance for people’s practices in modern China. As shown in Section 1.1., from Ma’s perspective, the solution to the underlying problem of modern China was to obtain knowledge of human nature, not Liao and Kang’s versions of Confucianism. Therefore, these notable scholars (Zhang Zhidong, Kang and Liao) should be blamed for the moral decadence that had resulted from false scholarship/learning.¹⁴

¹² Mao Haijian, “Wuxu shiqi Kang Youwei ‘Datong Sanshi Shuo’ de zai queren 戊戌时期康有为大同三世说思想的再确认” (A Re-exploration of Kang Youwei’s “Theory of Three Ages Culminating in Great Unity” During the Reform of 1898), *Shehui kexue zhanxian*, 2019(1), pp. 115-117. “Three Ages Culminating in Great Unity” was Kang’s invention based on the Gongyang school’s resources. In applying this theory in explaining history, Kang described three ages that human society must undergo in an evolutionary process: the age of chaos (*juluan shi* 据乱世), the age of approaching peace (*shengping shi* 升平世) and the age of great peace (*taiping shi* 太平世).

¹³ Joseph Levenson, “‘History’ and ‘Value’: Tensions of Intellectual Choice in Modern China”, in *Studies in Chinese Thought*, edited by Arthur F. Wright, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), p. 155.

¹⁴ In Ma’s words: “It is a certainty that Heavenly principle and human mind are imperishable. But [principle and human mind] depend on being maintained by learning, otherwise how many people will end up not leading one another to descend to becoming beasts?” Ma Yifu, “Zhi Shao Liancun”, *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 2, p. 351.

VII. Mou Zongsan's Spiritual Confucianism and Its Significance

Influenced by his mentor Xiong Shili, in his book finished prior to leaving the Chinese mainland in 1949,¹⁵ Mou maintained that because the cognitive mind is limited to sensible experience and cannot reach the unconditioned, and because it also cannot serve as the ultimate creative source for the myriad things, the unconditioned and ultimate creative source must be sought outside of the cognitive mind. To Mou, this source is the transcendent mind or the moral mind. This mind, which is comparable to the inherent mind/mind-as-reality in Xiong's and Ma's thought, must "negate itself and turns into the cognitive mind" in order to construct our knowledge system.¹⁶ This is to say, the transcendent and unconditioned mind negates itself and turns into the conditioned mind directly related to sensible experience (cognitive mind).¹⁷ Mou believed that through self-negation, knowledge of modern science and democracy can be "developed" (*kaichu* 开出) in China, which is a country with strong monarchical traditions.¹⁸ According to Mou's explanations made in 1980, like Xiong Shili, Mou's philosophical project was also closed

¹⁵ Cf. Mou Zongsan, *Renshi xin zhi pipan* 认识心之批判 (Critique of the Cognitive Mind), revised ed., Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju, 1990, vol II, pp. 244–245 and vol. I, p. 16. "When I was arriving at the cognitive subject through an analysis and clarification of logic, and according in depth with Kant's spirit and approach, I was spending time with Teacher Xiong at his place day and night.... I was under Mr. Xiong's tutelage for more than a decade. Learning and cultivating my mind under his influence, I came to understand that the cultural life of the Chinese nation-race is all-encompassing, free from conceptual fixity, penetrating and clear, and that the learning of inner sageliness is great, centred and orthodox." Translated and cited in N. Serina Chan, *The Thought of Mou Zongsan*, (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 12-13.

¹⁶ Cf. Mou, *Renshi xin zhi pipan*, vol I, p. 16. Translated and cited in N. Serina Chan, *The Thought of Mou Zongsan*, pp. 13-14.

¹⁷ Ady Van den Stock has given a description of "self-negation", see *The Horizon of Modernity: Subjectivity and Social Structure in New Confucian Philosophy*, p. 322. "In order to allow for a cognitively accessible world of phenomenal objects to appear, the immediate apprehension of directly and immediately manifest noumenal 'e-jects' has to negate itself and suspend the immediacy of its apprehension."

¹⁸ Mou Zongsan, *Xianxiang yu wuzishen* 现象与物自身 (Phenomena and Things-in-Themselves), Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1975, 121–4. Translated and cited in Sylvia Chan, "Li Zehou and New Confucianism", in John Makeham ed., *New Confucianism: A Critical Examination*, p. 119. Different from Chan and Yu Ying-shih, I choose self-negation rather than self-diremption in translating *kanxian*.

related to his nationalistic concerns over China's modernisation.¹⁹ Nevertheless, Mou's thought was by no means the same as Xiong's.

Different from Xiong, Mou was critical of the modernisation led by the communist authorities. In his understanding, this modernisation was not the positive transformation enabling human subjectivity to change the world, but the "degenerate transformation by things" (堕落的物化) without rational restraint.²⁰ The term "being transformed by things" was used by Xiong Shili as early as in his 1932 *New Treatise*.²¹ In his *Tiyong lun*, once again, Xiong defined "not being transformed by things" (*bu wuhua* 不物化) as "not being transformed into material things".²² Xiong emphasised that the inherent mind (*benxin* 本心) should proactively control (not be transformed) the bodily form and material things.²³ Mou would have agreed with Xiong about this, but he would not have accepted that, in the new society governed by CPC (Communist Party of China), "[those who follow] the way of humans broaden the great deeds of their fundamental reality to the point of near completion" (p. 221). For Mou, however, without rational restraint, "human subjectivity" would be harmed in the new society. Why did Mou think that rational restraint was lost in the new society? This is due to Mou's observations about the activities of CPC during the period between the 1940s and the 1970s. Influenced by Hegel (1770-1831), as will be shown, Mou used the concept "self-negation" to underscore this restraint.

To ensure the basic rights of each individual citizen, Mou sought to find a theoretical way of preserving a pre-socialist ideal, namely, the value placed on democracy and science during the May Fourth Movement.²⁴ Due to this, Mou did not espouse state

¹⁹ Mou Zongsan, *Shidai yu ganshou* 时代与感受 (Times and Sensibilities), translated and cited in N. Serina Chan, *The Thought of Mou Zongsan*, p. 115, mod. Dated 1980.

²⁰ Mou, "Pi gongchanzhuyizhe de 'Shijian lun'" 辟共产主义者的「实践论」 (Refutation of the Communist Treatise on Practice), *Mou Zongsan xiansheng quanji*, Taipei: Lianjing chuban shiye youxiangongsi, 2003, vol 9, pp. 120–121. Translated and cited in Ady Van den Stock, *The Horizon of Modernity: Subjectivity and Social Structure in New Confucian Philosophy*, pp. 139–140, mod.

²¹ Xiong, *New Treatise on the Uniqueness of Consciousness*, translated and annotated by John Makeham, p. 185.

²² Xiong Shili, *Tiyong lun*, p. 15.

²³ Xiong Shili, *Ming xin pian*, p. 183.

²⁴ Many researchers have mentioned this background; see N. Serina Chan, *The Thought of Mou Zongsan*, p. 4; Sébastien Billioud, *Thinking Through Confucian Modernity*, (Leiden: Brill, 2012), p. 8; and Ady Van den Stock, *The Horizon of Modernity: Subjectivity and Social Structure in New Confucian Philosophy*, p. 21.

nationalism “based on the strictly enforced requirement that members of the state contribute to the maintenance and strength of the state”.²⁵ N. Serina Chan has correctly pointed out that besides the impacts from Xiong Shili, Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* also had an impact on Mou.²⁶ Given, however, that Mou’s “moral self” was not the same as Hegel’s Spirit, the functions of the moral mind were not the same as the dialectical movement of the Spirit.²⁷ While Mou did not completely appropriate Hegelian terms such as “sublating” in structuring his philosophical discourse, a noteworthy factor in Mou’s adoption of Hegelian thought was his critical reflection on violent revolution. Absorbing the comments Hegel made about the reign of Terror following the French Revolution, Mou denounced the political ideals of communisms for rudely violating individual citizen’s rights in the name of the “public interest”.²⁸ It is against this background that Mou’s “self-negation” and Hegel’s “sublating” can be considered to be analogues because both are reflections on the interaction between individual’s freedom and revolutionary movements at their times.²⁹

Hegel’s critical reflection on freedom, as Rebecca Comay points out, was a philosophical reflection on the violent French Revolution,³⁰ in which he attempted to explain the revolution as part of the movement of the Spirit. Mou, on the contrary, rejected revolution in toto. He considered the socialist revolution to be a radical error in history, the proper course of which should be determined by human reason. He argued that, rather than the moral mind, the communist ideal of equality was essentially grounded in individual self-love, which would lead to a severe violation of the individual’s rights. This was because, while this “universal freedom” grounded in individual self-love justified public (all people’s) interest as the most basic principle of a state, one’s freedom

²⁵ N. Serina Chan, *The Thought of Mou Zongsan*, pp. 73-74.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 99-102, 106-113.

²⁷ Jana Rošker, “Mou Zongsan’s Negation of the Moral Self”, pp. 7-12. See https://www.academia.edu/19719258/MOU_ZONGSAN_S_NEGATION_OF_THE_MORAL_SELF_A_NEW_DIALECTICAL_MODEL.

²⁸ Ady Van den Stock, *The Horizon of Modernity: Subjectivity and Social Structure in New Confucian Philosophy*, pp. 119-120.

²⁹ Cf. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 357, 361, 369. For an analysis of Mou’s relevant writings on political freedom in a Hegelian language, see Peng Guoxiang 彭国翔, *Zhizhe de xianshi guanhuai* 智者的现世关怀 (This-worldly Concern of the Wise: The Political and Social Thought of Mou Zongsan (1909-1995), (Taipei: Lianjing, 2016), pp. 344-360.

³⁰ Rebecca Comay, *Mourning Sickness: Hegel and the French Revolution*, (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2010), pp. 81-85.

will be destroyed in the name of this public interest. The Communist revolution that was happening in China mainland was such a tragedy.³¹

Because the communist revolution was a result of the lack of reason, equipped with necessary rational restraint, a person with a sound and moral mind will necessarily respect other people's rights and liberties.³² In this sense, Confucian understandings of morality could lay a spiritual foundation of modern liberalism.³³ But how to obtain these understandings? This concerns the point raised before: knowledge of modern democracy can be “developed” through “self-negation” of the transcendent/moral mind. Mou emphasised that neither Zhu Xi nor Wang Yangming had fully clarified the relationship between the formation of objective knowledge and the moral mind that determines one's daily practices.³⁴ The crucial problem that remained to be investigated, in Mou's words, was “extending knowledge” (*zhizhi* 致知).³⁵ In his elucidations of “extending knowledge of innate goodness” (*zhi liangzhi* 致良知), Mou said:

That which is judged by the Heavenly principle of innate goodness is one's conduct in life ... however, we also have a cosmos of knowledge. The whole cosmos can be subsumed into my cosmos of knowledge. Yet, for this to happen it must rely upon learning so that externally it can be known what the myriad things are; this is not something that innate goodness's judgement of conduct can judge Therefore, each “action to extend [the mind with] innate goodness” itself has a dual character: one is the system of conduct that is determined and judged by the Heavenly mind and Heavenly principle; the other is the knowledge system formed by the distinguishing mind, which arises when the

³¹ Mou Zongsan, *Shidai yu ganshou xubian* 时代与感受续编 (The Continuation of Times and Sensibilities), *Mou Zongsan xiansheng quanji* 牟宗三先生全集 (Complete Works of Mr. Mou Zongsan), vol 24, (Taipei: Lianjing chuban shiye youxiangongsi, 2003), pp. 482-483. Mou specially translated Kant's (1724-1804) *Religion within the Bounds of Bare Reason* in order to show that Rousseau's (1772-1778) self-love (*Amour-propre*) should not be regarded as a source of goodness; see Mou Zongsan, *Yuanshan lun* 圆善论 (A Treatise on the Perfect Goodness), *Mou Zongsan xiansheng quanji*, vol. 22, pp. 111-116.

³² Mou Zongsan, *Shidai yu ganshou*, pp. 35-37.

³³ Cf. Peng Guoxiang, *Zhizhe de xianshi guanhuai*, pp. 361-368.

³⁴ Xiong Shili held a similar view; see Xiong, *Ming xin pian*, p. 212.

³⁵ Mou Zongsan, *Cong Lu Xiangshan dao Liu Jishan* 从陆象山到刘蕺山 (From Lu Xiangshan to Liu Jishan), *Mou Zongsan xiansheng quanji*, vol 8, pp. 209-213. Dated 1979.

Heavenly mind itself decides to negate itself. In each act of “extending innate goodness” these two systems consolidate as one. For instance, there is a system of the conduct that comes before “serving parents” and this system itself constitutes another knowledge system. This is because if one is going to engage in “serving parents”, one must know what serving parents is and how to serve parents.³⁶

In developing Wang Yanming’s notion of “extending knowledge of innate goodness”,³⁷ Mou Zongsan found a view similar to Xiong’s account of the inseparability of knowledge and the way: each “action to extend [the mind with] innate goodness” was itself determined by both the moral mind and cognitive mind.³⁸ Xiong placed more emphasis on one’s potential for realising the way by acquiring knowledge, whereas Mou highlighted the difference between “the system of the conduct that is determined and judged by the Heavenly mind” (the way) and “the system of knowledge” (knowledge) into which the whole external cosmos can be subsumed. Compared with Xiong, who maintained that Reality is constant transformation in order to stress the potential to be realised by extending innate goodness, Mou was more inclined to stress the premise of that realisation: “one must know what serving parents is and how to serve parents”, that is, one first has to gain knowledge of how to extend innate goodness in living world, and only then can innate goodness be extended. In other words, a rational individual should learn to comply with social conventions before he/she try to “extend innate goodness”.

In Mou Zongsan’s “double ontology” (*liangceng cunyou lun* 两层存有论),³⁹ for a rational person, the knowledge system determined by the cognitive mind is also

³⁶ Mou Zongsan, *Cong Lu Xiangshan dao Liu Jishan*, pp.174, 205-208. 良知之天理所断制者生活行为也...然而吾人亦复有知识之宇宙。全宇宙亦可摄入吾之知识宇宙中。然此必待学问而外知的万物之何所是，非良知之断制行为者之所能断制也...是以每一致良知行为自身有一双重性：一是天心天理所决定断制之行为系统，一是天心自己决定坎陷其自己所转化之了别心所成之知识系统。此两者在每一致良知之行为中是凝一的。譬如“事亲”前为一行为系统，而其自身亦复为一知识系统。盖既要从事“事亲”这件事，则必须知道什么是事亲、如何去事亲。

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 213.

³⁸ Xiong said: “Awakening to the way means that knowledge does not become separated from the way; if unawoken, then knowledge simply remains knowledge.” See p. 210.

³⁹ Mou’s words cited in Cai Renhou 蔡仁厚 (1930-2019) comp., *Mou Zongsan xiansheng xuesi nianpu* 牟宗三先生学思年谱 (A Chronology of Mou Zongsan's Academic Career), *Mou Zongsan xiansheng Quanji*, vol 32, p. 87. Dated 1992.

indispensable in “extending innate goodness”. As shown in Subsection 5.1.2. (pp. 207-208), Xiong reminded his readers that “the body bears the mind” and “the flow and expression of the mind is by means of the body as its tool”. The bodily form is indispensable to expanding the good beginnings of one’s inherent mind. Thus, this knowledge system in Mou’s late thought is comparable to the bodily form in Xiong’s thought in the 1950 – both are indispensable to our practices in the living world. By making the continuing interaction between the mind and the bodily form possible (“nature as the Ruler of bodily form”), Xiong managed to provide a theoretical justification for the claim that one’s mind can be the ruler of transformation. In Mou’s philosophy, however, the knowledge system that appears after “self-negation” cannot be determined by the moral mind. This is to say, the moral mind cannot directly give rise to the functions conditioned by that knowledge system. Because of the rupture between the cognitive mind and the moral mind, this “self-negation” was not like a connecting concept between the moral mind (the intrinsic reality) and functions, but more like a divider between them. Thus, Mou replicated Ma’s plight: there is a non-eliminable rupture between intrinsic reality that is without any taint of actual badness and various kinds of functions grounded in changing realities, which are inevitably entangled with badness. With this problem in his theoretical framework left unresolved, Mou’s New Confucian thought remained a very idealised account of public affairs.

As Tang Wenming and Lin Chen-kuo have criticised, both in the moral (“serving parents”) and political (democracy and science) sense, one’s conduct in public life is based on the same foundation, which Mou’s described as: “the knowledge system formed by the distinguishing mind, which arises when the Heavenly mind itself decides to negate itself”.⁴⁰ At the same time, however, the Heavenly mind itself stays independent and isolated from public life.⁴¹ Like Ma’s explanation of the virtue-based governance

⁴⁰ Mou Zongsan, *Cong Lu Xiangshan dao Liu Jishan*, p. 208.

⁴¹ Tang’s criticism of Mou is that “the moral values that science and democracy embody can only be instrumental” (科学与民主就其所具有的道德价值而言只能是工具性的). See Tang Wenming, *Yinmi de dianfu: Mou Zongsan, Kangde yu yuanshi Rujia* 隐秘的颠覆：牟宗三，康德与原始儒家 (Secret subversion: Mou Zongsan, Kant and Original Confucianism), (Beijing: Shenghuo·dushu·xinzhì sanlian shudian, 2012), pp. 293-295. Lin’s criticism of the metaphysical presupposition of Mou’s political discourse is that “given that communication is not needed under solipsism, it is only natural that the acknowledgement of diversity is easily overlooked” (在独我论下，沟通既然不需要，自然就容易忽略差异的承认). See Lin Zhenguo (Chen-kuo), “*Qixin lun yu xiandai dongya zhutixing zhexue*——Yi Neixue yuan yu Xin Rujia de zhenglun wei zhongxin de kaocha”, p. 22.

maintained by the sage's mind, Mou idealised political deeds in the real world. Mou's philosophical efforts culminated in *A Treatise on the Perfect Goodness*, in which he presents an account of how a sage conducts himself and achieves perfect goodness. This work reveals that Mou had still not resolved the idealistic problem that resulted in a gap between real public life and the cultivation of individual's moral character. In describing perfect goodness and "the ultimate human achievement" (*renji* 人极) in that work, Mou said:

Considered separately, the root of moral knowing (心知) initiates all things, and this is called "heaven shelters". Through the sage's practices, all things are subsumed in the way of the sage and thus are manifested in the way of the sage (the sage's mind is in tune with things and rectifies things, until finally it universally nourishes all existents such that they produce and reproduce ceaselessly – these are the traces of the sage's accomplishments and transformations). [These] traces have always been perfectly interfused; this is called "the earth sustains" (...). However, since [the sage] is quiescent and devoid of marks and his traces have always been perfect the distinction between "heaven shelters" and "the earth sustains" is also eliminated.

...What people accomplish in praxis is dependent upon their capacities and the constraints of their specific circumstances, which result in various kinds of gradations; yet, the teachings established by sages and worthies bring to completion both beginners and advanced.⁴² When they arrive at the position of sageliness and the divine, then the perfect teaching is completed. When the perfect teaching is completed then perfect goodness is illuminated. Those who are perfectly sagely manifest perfect goodness to all under heaven. The aforementioned shows the fundamental principle of the ultimate human achievements. Our philosophical reflection shall end here.⁴³

⁴² "Xi ci", *Zhou Yi zhengyi*, p. 328.

⁴³ Mou Zongsan, *Yuanshan lun*, pp. 314, 324. 分别言之，心知之本创始万物，此曰天覆。在圣人之实践中，万物摄于圣人之道而即在圣人之道中呈现(圣人之心顺物正物最后遍润一切存在而使之生生不息即是圣人功化之迹)，迹本圆融，此曰地载。...然既是冥寂无相而迹本圆，则天覆地载之分别亦化矣...人之实践之造诣，随根器之不同以及种种特殊境况之限制，而有各种等级之差别，然而圣贤立教则

Through self-negation, the mind or the subject himself comes to be in tune with the knowledge cosmos. The knowledge cosmos thus becomes a cosmos within the practitioner's mind, which Ma Yifu described as, "transformation solely esteems the god-like quality of sensitive responsiveness, that is, instruction without the use of speech, accomplishment without effort. Much less are there any crude traces to be found. Devoid of any marks, this is what is called transformation" (p. 94). Somewhat different from Ma, Mou noted that the ceaseless production and reproduction of things are "the traces of the sage's accomplishments and transformations". With further acknowledgement of people's "capacities and specific circumstances", as well as "various kinds of gradations" in this world, compared with Ma, Mou paid more attention to the different manifestations of "Perfect Goodness". As presented by Ma Yifu, all things in this cosmos that lie within the sage's mind are influenced by the sage's moral practices, the normative standard of all "traces". This harmony between the sage's traces and other traces corresponds to Mou's "the earth sustains". In this sense, the "reality-function" relationship between perfect goodness and the perfect teaching (or perfect sageliness in Mou's *Treatise*) is expressed as the connection between personal ethics and public politics. As noted above, however, the relationship between reality and function in Mou's theory is ruptured. Perfect personal morality (perfect goodness) may contribute to good politics as determined by western democratic values, but it could not determine anything other than personal conduct. This theoretical limitation reminds us of Ma's description of the sage's self-governance: "In 'exalting virtue and enlarging the enterprise', words and deeds are of utmost importance.... Once words have been uttered and deeds have taken place, even if it was within a room, they actually pervade the Dharma Realm, and persist there without loss and without decay." (Section 3.1.) For Mou and Ma, the function of the moral mind was intentionally placed within the personal domain.

Mou's conception of perfect sageliness is also similar to Ma's image of the ideal governance of a sage with recovered nature. Rather than equating a gentleman without a noble position with a sage king, Mou's emphasis lay in subtly differentiating the perfect teaching and perfect sageliness: moral practices and political activities in a mundane world must be differentiated. "The ultimate human achievement", according to Mou, was to achieve modernisation (science and democracy) based on knowledge. He claimed that

成始而成终矣。至圣神位，则圆教成。圆教成则圆善明。圆圣者体现圆善于天下者也。此为人极之极则矣。哲学思考至此而止。Dated 1985.

“The ultimate human achievement” was not as difficult to achieve as Wang Fuzhi had claimed because Chinese people are “rational beings” (*lixing de cunzai* 理性的存在) capable of achieving modernisation like westerners. According to Mou, to achieve modernisation was an easy task that concerned the external world, whereas the crucial problem concerned one’s inner life (*neibu shengming* 内部生命).⁴⁴ As “the fundamental principle of the ultimate human achievements”, Mou thought that his theory of “Perfect Goodness” provided the Chinese people with the solution to the problem concerned one’s inner life. This reminds us of Ma’s emphasis on “personal conduct and practice”.

Having witnessed Xiong’s failure to justify the positive role of Confucianism in the new society and the modernisation led by the socialist authorities, Mou had a clear awareness of the limitations of Confucianism in modern China. Due to this, the perfect goodness required of an individual (to become a moral person), rather than the perfect sageliness required of a state or a society (to achieve virtue-based governance), became the core spirit of Mou’s late philosophy. By limiting the functions of Confucianism to personal ethics, Mou managed to keep the contents of Confucianism independent of any concrete requirement for modernisation. Just as Ma had done, Mou’s theory of “Perfect Goodness” sought to show that while one’s praxis might be “dependent upon one’s capacities and the constraints of one’s specific circumstances”, one has the choice of acting morally within the private sphere.

Just as the Yangmingists of the Ming Dynasty, so too Mou and Ma remained outside the political arena. Consider the following account provided by Ma:

⁴⁴ Mou Zongsan, *Mou Zongsan xiansheng wanqi wenji* 牟宗三先生晚期文集 (Late Writings of Mr. Mou Zongsan), *Mou Zongsan xiansheng quanji*, vol 27, pp. 443-444. Dated 1992. Xiong Shili also discussed “the ultimate human achievement” in his *Ming Xin pian*: “In human life it is essential to preserve and to give free play to the clear incipience of inherent mind, constantly creating new good habituations so as to transform the bad habituations of former defilements. Only then can the good beginnings of inherent mind be maximally expanded, becoming greater day by day. This is the means by which the human path is realised and the ultimate human achievement is established.” Cited and translated in John Makeham, “Xiong Shili on the Nature, the Mind and the Origin of Badness as Evidenced in *Ming Xin Pian* 明心篇 (Explaining the Mind)”, *Frontiers of Philosophy in China*, 2018, 13(1), p. 13.

A book written by Geng Tiantai 耿天台 (Geng Dingxiang 耿定向; 1524-1597) said that⁴⁵ when Wang Longxi 王龙溪 (Wang Ji 王畿; 1498-1583) returned from the capital and went to meet with Wang Xinzhai 王心斋 (Wang Gen 王艮; 1483-1541) many disciples of each were in attendance. Xinzhai himself stood waiting outside the main gate and instructed his disciples to greet them ahead of their arrival. [Upon arrival], they bowed and gestured for each other to lead the way before entering. Shortly after, they hiked up a mountain together with their disciples. They visited scenic places, sang and chanted, each person did what he liked. Upon their return, Xinzhai hosted a feast in honour of Longxi. The guest and the host toasted each other, with their disciples listening in, discussed the deeds of emperors, kings and hegemonies. Then, there was a sudden outburst from outside the gate. Someone was sent to investigate, and they found that it was the sedan chair bearers, who were then instructed to stop. Longxi thus said: “Today, the temperament of emperors, kings and hegemonies was on full display.” The disciples were unable to understand. [Longxi] explained: “[Enjoying] the happiness of visiting scenic places, losing oneself in enchantment; are they not the deeds of the Two Emperors? Bowing and exchanging toasts and behaving in accordance with the rites--are these not the deeds of the Three Kings?⁴⁶ Glaring at each other, verbally abusing one another, and facing-off one another with raised arms--are these not the deeds of a monarch who employs hegemonic means⁴⁷?” Those who heard this gladly agreed.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ This meeting in Nanjing, which happened in 1536, was first recorded in a chronological biography appended to *Wang Xinzhai xiansheng quanji* 王心斋先生全集 (Wang Gen's Complete Works). The editor of the chronological biography was Wang Gen's disciple, Zhang Feng 张峰 (d.u.), not Geng Dingxiang. Cited in Wu Zhen 吴震, *Ming dai zhishijie jiangxue huodong xinian: 1522-1602* 明代知识界讲学活动系年: 1522-1602 (Annals of Lecturing Activities among Intellectuals in the Ming Dynasty: 1522-1602), (Shanghai: Xuelin chubanshe, 2003), pp. 73-74. Perhaps Ma knew about this meeting through Geng's book because the details of Zhang Feng's record differ somewhat from those provided in this quotation, but I have not found the record in Geng's works yet.

⁴⁶ “Two Emperors” refers to Yao 尧 and Shun 舜; “Three Kings” refers to Yu 禹 of Xia Dynasty, Tang 汤 of Shang Dynasty and the kings of Zhou Dynasty. See Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, p. 3541.

⁴⁷ This term was used to describe the way of governance in the Han Dynasty; see Ban Gu, *Hanshu*, p. 277.

⁴⁸ Ma Yifu, “Yulu leibian·Zhengshi pian” 语录类编·政事篇 (Collated Compilation of Recorded Words: Section on Political Affairs), *Ma Yifu quanji*, vol 1, p. 672. 耿天台所为书中, 记王龙溪归自都门, 往晤王心斋, 两家弟子侍从颇多。心斋自候于大门

This is a vivid picture of a meeting of two famous Yangmingists. In his insightful remarks, Wang Ji showed that the temperament of political deeds (the temperament of emperors, kings and hegemons) could also be observed in daily life. More concretely, for Wang, what one could find in the activities of “teachers, disciples and sedan chair bearers” was what could be found in the classics about the deeds of “emperors, kings and hegemons”. In the original record of this event, Wang Gen made an explanatory response to Wang Ji’s remarks: “[The differences between] the Two Emperors, Three Kings and Five Hegemons depends on nothing more than the sensitive responsiveness between our mind and the outside world”⁴⁹. Given that Ma also took “sensitive responsiveness” as the source of good governance, if we were to summarise the significance of this meeting in Ma’s words, it would be that “there is no politics beyond the realm of morality”. We could say that Ma’s and Mou’s idealised understanding of politics is consistent with the Yangmingist tradition: free from being limited by various kinds of gradations in the world, every ordinary person is able to enjoy the same “true joy” in recognising his/her moral mind.⁵⁰

In Ma’s and Mou’s New Confucian thought, this spiritual tradition became reactivated in modern China. As will be shown in the conclusion, the long-standing tension between the complexity of the political world and a normative yet idealistic system will keep causing debates. Today, Mou and the whole tradition of so-called

之外，遣弟子迎之，揖让而入。旋同登山，弟子从焉，登临歌啸，各适其适。既而归，心斋设筵相款，宾主酬酢，纵论帝王杂霸之事，弟子听焉。俄而门外喧嚷，遣人视之，则舆夫也，喻而止之。龙溪因言“皇王霸者之气象，今日尽见之矣。”弟子未喻。申之曰：“登临之乐，陶然相忘，非二帝之事乎？揖让酬酢，进退以礼，非三王之事乎？怒目恶声，攘臂相向，非杂霸之事乎？”闻者悦服。

⁴⁹ Cited in Wu Zhen, *Mingdai zhishijie jiangxue huodong xinian: 1522-1602*, p. 74. 羲皇、三代、五伯亦随吾心之所感应而已。

⁵⁰ Wang Yangming said: “Even an ordinary person, if he is willing to learn so as to enable his mind to become completely identified with the Heavenly principle, can also become a sage. In the same way, although a one-ounce piece of gold, when compared with a 10,000 pound piece, is greatly different in quantity, it is not deficient in perfection in quality and need not be ashamed.” Cited and translated in Wing-tsit Chan trans., *Instructions for Practical Living*, (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1963), pp. 60-61, mod. For an analysis, see David S. Nivison, “Moral Decision in Wang Yang-ming: The Problem of Chinese ‘Existentialism’”, *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 23, No. 1/2, *Proceedings of East-West Philosophers' Conference on Wang Yang-ming* (Jan. - Apr., 1973), pp. 129-134.

spiritual Confucianism that he was a part of face ever-increasing challenges,⁵¹ partly resulting from a rising China: how could their idealistic teaching contribute to proactively reviving Confucianism in a fast-moving China which has given more space for traditional culture?

⁵¹ The conceptual distinction between spiritual Confucianism and political Confucianism is traceable to Mou and Tang Junyi 唐君毅 (1909-1978) themselves; see Ady Van den Stock, *The Horizon of Modernity: Subjectivity and Social Structure in New Confucian Philosophy*, pp. 100-103.

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