

Re-examing Whole Person Cultivation:
Reconsidering The Significance of Master Kong's
"Knowing The Heavenly Decree" and
Yeshuah's "Beatitudes"

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I. *Meta-dialogic Orientations*

Unlike some involved in these Ruist(Confucian)-Christian dialogue conferences during the past ten years, I do not assume that these traditions are inherently opposed or that there have never been strands in both traditions that have already achieved syncretic or synthetic alliances.¹ Both the Ruist and Christian traditions — the former at the end of the 20th century now extremely weakened in its historical embodiment, the latter globally diversified and growing within Chinese spheres in numerous dimensions, though still very much a "minority religion" in these areas —

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¹ During the past ten years studies in Chinese and English on Ming-Qing Chinese Catholic scholars as well as the burgeoning studies of 19th and 20th century Protestant Chinese Christians has manifested a good number of historical precedents of these phenomena. Examples of the former include studies on Xu Guangqi 徐光啟 and Yang Tingyun 楊廷筠, works by Erik Zürcher and Nicolas Standaert [*Bibliography of the Jesuit Mission in China: ca. 1580 - ca. 1680* (Leiden: Centre of Non-Western Studies, Leiden University 1991)]; *Yang Tingyun, Confucian and Christian in Late Ming China: his life and thought* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1988), as well as David Mungello's *The Forgiven Christians of Hangzhou* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994). Among the recent Chinese studies are Sun Shangyang's *Jidujiao yu Mingmo faxue* (*Christianity and Ruist Learning at the End of the Ming Dynasty*) (Beijing: Dongfang Pubs., 1994).

Many more studies regarding the 20th century on these themes have been published than on 19th century figures, but an important breakthrough has come my studies of James Legge particularly as they relate to the Cantonese *juwen* scholar, Luo Zhongfan 羅仲藩 (d. c. 1850), and the Nanhai Christian scholar He Jinsan 何進善 (1817-1871, Ho Tsun-sheen, styled Futang 福堂). See articles by Lauren Pfister, "Monothestic Metaphysics in the Ming-Ch'ing Imperial Worship and Ruist Canon: the Exegetical Reflections of James Legge and Lo Chung-fan," in *Imagining Boundaries: Changing Confucian Doctrines, Texts and Practice in History* edited by Ng On-cho 吳安祖, Chow Kai-wing 周啟榮, and John B. Henderson, forthcoming from SUNY Press in Spring 1999, as well as "Reconfirming the Way: Perspectives from the Writings of Rev. Ho Tsun-sheen," *Ching Feng* 36-4 (December 1993), pp. 218-259, and "A Transmitter but not a Creator: The Creative Transmission of Protestant Biblical traditions by Ho Tsun-sheen (1817-1871)," in *Proceedings of the First International Conference on The Bible and Chinese Culture*, forthcoming from Monumenta Serica (Metzler: Steyler Verlag, 1999).

have passed through complex historical changes which cannot be reduced easily to any singular expression (unless it is vigorously justified).² John Berthrong has rightly referred to this ideologically loaded situation undergirding the dialogue as the "untidy" reality of the context of Ruist-Christian dialogue.³

Having lived in Hong Kong now for just over 11 years, worshipping with my wife in a Cantonese speaking Baptist church for this period, and now serving as a deacon in that church, I feel both a spiritual kinship and a particular intellectual affinity to this dialogue. Hong Kong has been the major cultural context of the reflective and practical dimensions of my recent spiritual development as well as my intellectual explorations related to Chinese traditions in the 19th and 20th centuries. How these traditions have addressed "humanity in community" will therefore be the main direction of this paper, extrapolating the conclusions of some gradual enlightenments and other sudden insights arising from my cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary involvements over the past decade.⁴ I intend to approach the problem within the two major traditions from their most fundamental scriptural sources — the *Lunyu (Analects)* and the *New*

² Here I assume a position which insists on the problematic dimensions of the New Ruist traditions because of their metaphysical quandaries and lack of consensus, to say nothing of the limitations of institutional involvements in broader cultural concerns, as expressed in my article, "The Different Faces of Contemporary Religious Confucianism: An Account of the Diverse Approaches of Some Major Twentieth Century Chinese Confucian Scholars," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 22:1 (March 1995), pp. 5-79. The approach to a global vision of Christian traditions, articulated in at least seven major strands, follows the brilliant review of these issues in Andrew F. Walls' article on "Christianity" in John Hinnells's *A New Handbook of Living Religions* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), pp. 55-161.

³ A description appearing in John H. Berthrong, *All Under Heaven: Transforming Paradigms in Confucian-Christian Dialogue* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), p. 6. Part of this untidy diversity has been explored in a set of four articles published as a unit in *Philosophy East and West* 48:1 (January 1998), including articles by Mary Evelyn Tucker, John Berthrong, Rodney L. Taylor, and Janine Anderson Sawada, including discussions of the religious dimensions of Ruist/Confucian traditions in China, Japan, Korea, and elsewhere.

⁴ The church mentioned above is now called the University Baptist Church, located on the campus of the Hong Kong Baptist University.

Another personal note is that I managed to be involved in the first "Confucian-Christian dialogue" in 1988, but my lengthy paper presented at that time was one which was not published then because of editorial decisions, possibly including "the constraint of space" (Peir K. H. Lee, *Confucian-Christian Encounters in Historical and Contemporary Perspective* (Lewisohn: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), vi). This is as it should have been, for at that time I was only initiating what has developed into a multiform and revisionary project of reconceiving the whole approach to this particular encounter. In this presentation I wish to portray the harvest of the past decade of my own engagements in this team.

*Testament*⁵ — on a matter of mutual enrichment related to what I refer to here as "whole person cultivation." My motivations for reconceiving these issues in a more positive and less contradictory mode is due in large part to my research into 19th century Ruist-Christian interaction and dialogue. In these realms I have become convinced that a Ruist-style of Chinese Christianity was one of the normative and regular modes of living out Catholic and Protestant Christian traditions in China well before the turn

⁵ This "book religion" approach may disappoint some religious studies colleagues and others who continue to argue for "Confucianism" as a "diffused religion" (as in C. K. Yang's study, *Religion in Chinese Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1961)), but I request patience with this approach for those disenchanted with this method in principle. I do not intend by this "fundamental return to the sources" to avoid interpretive commentarial traditions, as the balance of the paper I believe will testify on my account.

Emphasis on the *Analekts* is a major 20th century adjustment within Ruist traditions, a major reconstruction of the imperial forms of the teaching required by broad ranging critiques of the whole tradition in the post 1919 May Fourth period. Of course, it also reflects a previous and more general reorganization of Ruist canonical training initiated in the Song dynasty by Zhu Xi and rightly emphasized in John Berthrong's interpretations of the Ruist-Christian dialogue in *All Under Heaven*. On the other hand, New Testament critical studies have reshaped what a good number of Biblical scholars consider to be the pertinent texts and significant ways of studying these texts, but this more critical form of scholarship has become less and less representative of the main trends in global Christian religious developments, a factor Andrew Walls makes explains in a marvelously succinct and precise manner. This more critical approach has neither eliminated the preeminence of the New Testament itself or the "high view" most Christians retain for it. But there are other problems within the major traditions as they approach the text which are hermeneutically important, and will be addressed below.

This focus of attention is significant for interpreters in the 20th century because of the interpretive dilemmas sometimes involved in referring to earlier and alternative canonical materials in these traditions. In general, the Christian traditions employ a "progressive revelation" interpretive principle in understanding the earlier Hebrew scriptures and their relationship to the Greek New Testament, so that in the 20th century this interpretive background is seen as an advantage more than a hindrance. It is quite otherwise for the Ruist traditions, especially in relationship to religiously sensitive issues such as the various sacrifices. The "secularized" Master Kong is made to seem uninvolved and uninterested in any kind of religious rite, but this we will see is neither true to the *Analekts* description of him or to the much more detailed traditions related to these areas in the *Liji* (Book of Rites) and elsewhere. This problem was thoroughly understood by Christian missionary-sinologists such as James Legge and Ernst Faber (1839-1899). Legge prepared the lengthy documents of the *Book of Rites for the Sacred Books of the East* (vols. 27-28 in 1885), while Faber provided summary translations of relevant parts of the same text to interpret details in the *Classic of Filial Piety (Xiaojing)* in the Christian missionary journal, the *Chinese Recorder* (see Faber's "A Critique of the Chinese Notions and Practice of Filial Piety," on "The Idea of Sacrificing," *The Chinese Recorder and Missionary Journal* 11:1 (January-February 1880), pp. 1-12. Another notable missionary-scholar confirming these issues on an even broader scale was Jan Jakob Marin de Groot (1854-1921) in his *The Religious System of China: Its ancient forms, evolution, history and present aspect* (Leyden: E. J. Brill, 1892). These kind of details are hardly mentioned or rarely practised in the home life of Chinese scholars and only in the homes of a minority of common people in contemporary China, and so the traumatic confrontations of the past century need not be repeated, although the interpretive problems about what counts as the canonical rites are a very significant problem for New Ruists and others involved in these traditions.

My interpretive focus here will continue to uphold the general and high respect given to the two fundamental canonical scriptures already mentioned, the *Analekts* and the *New Testament*. Reference will be made to other supportive canonical texts only selectively, following but not necessarily repeating the more limited range of interpretations promoted in contemporary discussions of these texts.

of the 20th century.⁶ It is one of the more or less forgotten facts of a "dual citizenship" between these specific philosophical and religious traditions, one which should be readressed in the light of historical precedents and the hindrances caused by a 20th century construction of a "secularized" Ruist sage.⁷

That there have been a number of different kinds of fusions between Ruists and Christians is a historical fact that is undeniable;⁸ that there have been reinforced attempts at upholding irreconcilable differences is also a recurrent theme within the dialogue.⁹ Though some may feel one or the other is regrettable, they are nevertheless important factors to reconsider at the end of the 20th century. With all these in mind, I wish to address a new interpretive position which creatively interlinks two fundamental perspectives within these two traditions' most basic scriptures, believing this will enhance a self-conscious realization of how some dimensions within this dialogue which have been and can be further harmonized.

⁶ In a recent speech at Beijing University ("Reassessing the Contemporary Presence of a Ruist-Christian Form of Life in Chinese Christian Settings: Reflections on some new Directions in Religious Studies in China for the 21st Century," at the First International Conference on Religious Studies held on September 3-6, 1996), I have argued that students of Chinese religions in China in particular need to explore the ritual and ethical dimensions of this fusion, but have seen little done outside of my own work on James Legge and those key figures with whom he interrelated: the first modern Chinese Protestant theologian, He Jinsan (何進善, 1822-1864); the Shangdi-ist Ruist scholar of Huilai 慈來 district in Guangdong and Ho Tsun-sheon 何遜齋, styled Fatang 福堂, 1817-1871); the brilliant but unsuccessful Taiping leader, Hong Renai 洪仁玕 (1822-1864); the Shangdi-ist Ruist scholar of Huilai 慈來 district in Guangdong and commentator on the *Great Learning*, Luo Zhongfan 羅仲藩 (died c. 1850), and the Christian Ruist scholar who was both a political reformer and a troubled Christian in his later years, Wang Tao 王韜 (1828-1898). An interpretation of Wang Tao's expression in this syncretistic mode is offered in my article, "Wang Tao, James Legge, and their Response to the Modern Ruist Melancholy," to be published in *History and Culture* (Hong Kong Baptist University) in early 1999.

⁷ "Dual citizenship" in this sense is discussed in Berthrong's *All Under Heaven* (pp. 165-187) where he elaborates its syncretistic character from a perspective anchored in a pluralistic account of religious communities.

⁸ So, I would describe the Catholic Christian expressions of the 17th century Xu Guangqi as one form of Christianized Ruism, while I would take the work of the first modern Chinese Protestant theologian in the 19th century, He Jinsan (Ho Tsun-sheon), as taking up a different style — a Ruist-style Biblical Protestant expression. At the other extreme, especially if one takes seriously the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom's renditions of biblical traditions as another trend [which I believe should be done for the sake of a historical and cross-cultural thoroughness], we could conceive this expression as a more sectarian form of a radical Protestant dialectic, shifting from an anti-Ruist kind of ecstatic Protestantism, to a ideologically Ruist-style imperialistic heresy.

⁹ This is evident in the representative publications already mentioned under the names of Peter K. H. Lee and John Berthrong.

II. "Contained" versus "Concerned" Dialogues

In taking up this declared position I am self-consciously approaching this dialogue in a transformative mode, refusing to give way simply to a more discursive or secularized form of dialogue which often harbors other intentions.¹⁰ Authentically engaged dialogue has regularly, though not always, involved my own transformation, different degrees of conversion to a new position, adjustments often taken in direct response to what I hear, receive, reject, learn, address and reconsider. I respond even though I will be changed (*Respondio etsi mutabor*) — this is the singular condition of transformative dialogue concisely expressed by Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy in his own Jewish-Christian dialogue with Franz Rosenzweig and others. It is a condition I conceive as a *sine qua non* for religious dialogue in many dimensions, but particularly in the Ruist-Christian dialogue.¹¹ Believing there is a need to be more candid about the representativeness of the selective traditions we engage under the general rubric of "Confucianism," "Ruism," "New Confucians," "Christianity," "Catholicism," "Protestantism" and other important names, I continue to demand of myself a more precise awareness of my own point of view and that of those with whom I engage in dialogue, discovering that many of my own assumptions about what these terms means in others' minds and hearts are not always shared or understood. The multiformity of these preunderstandings in dialogue often defy any easy generalization; they

¹⁰ Eric J. Sharpe describes the origins of religious dialogue as having been the exclusive interest of the "liberal theological" traditions until the post-Vatican II period. In his own work he has defined four particular kinds of dialogue: discursive, human ("Buberian"), secular, and spiritual. Here I am adding a transformative category, a term reflecting the reality of human conversion to various spiritual and intellectual traditions, including the syncretic and synthetic alternatives that arise in creatively open interaction. See Eric J. Sharpe, "Dialogue of Religions," in Mircea Eliade, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 4 (Chicago: Macmillan Co., 1987), pp. 344-348. The transformative category I reconstruct from the excellent general study of conversion by Lewis R. Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

¹¹ This condition of a transformative mode in dialogue was coined by Rosenstock-Huessy in the final sections of his work *Out of Revolution, Autobiography of Western Man* (Morrow, 1938; 3rd edition, Norwich, Vermont: Argo Books Inc., 1969). This material was later selectively reorganized with other essays and published as the leading essay under the title "Farwell to Descartes" in Rosenstock-Huessy's *I am an Inquiring Thinker* (Norwich, Vermont: Argo Books Inc., 1970), pp. 1-19. His dialogue with Franz Rosenzweig was recorded in their joint publication, *Judaism despite Christianity* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969).

more regularly than not stand at odds to the glibly expressed scholarly discourses which claim to represent them.¹²

One means to overcome the communicative hindrances brought about by cross-purposes within the dialogue is to identify more carefully the kinds of interactions at work. Here the metadialogical reorientation I am asserting is most evident. One recent model I have found helpful and reflected in earlier discussions of the multiform communicative action expressed in religious dialogues is categorized by Kenneth Kramer as “extra-, inner-, intra-, and inter-religious” forms of interaction.¹³ Extra-religious dialogue involves religious traditions engaged with non-religious spheres of discussion and interaction, one which seems particularly appropriate to some Chinese scholars who conceive of the *Ru* (scholar 儒), whether traditional or contemporary, as a thinker, an intellectual, or a philosopher rather than a religious adherent. When members within the same circle or a representative figure within her/his own creative consciousness discuss particular themes to reach a new consensus or conviction, this constitutes inner-religious dialogue. Alternatively, when members within different circles of the same tradition raise up points for dialogue, which may or may not be intended to lead to consensual agreement, this would mirror an intra-religious dialogue. Inter-religious dialogue places representatives of two traditions, however vast or small, in face to face interaction, and can involve a fairly wide range of assumptions and goals held simultaneously by the participants. The approach I am taking here assumes that there are already intra-religious expressions of the Ruist-Christian dialogue being lived out in our world, and not just the generally more confrontative kinds of extra-religious or inter-religious discussions. Why the confrontative and non-transformative

¹² Because these spokespersons do not always address these realms in more explicit and direct ways does not mean they are not pursuing creative endeavors in their own right, reflecting different modes of the dialogic dynamic in Ruist-Christian interaction. Still there is a need for a “reality check” of a very certain sort in reconsidering the ranges of meaning that the dialogue reflects, and some which it needs to reconsider (as I am arguing here).

¹³ See Kenneth Paul Kramer, “Extra-, Inner-, Intra-, Inter-Religious Voices,” *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 30:2 (Winter 1993), pp. 183-212. Where he employs T. S. Eliot as his basis for constructing these modes of interactive communication, I will assume a similar cruciform approach marked out by Eugen Rosenstock-Huussy and applied in a broader range of philosophical and religious spheres in *Speech and Reality* (Norwich, Vermont: Argo Books, 1970). The interpretation of Kramer’s categories are my own.

sorts of dialogue have taken precedence in non-academic circles as well as some scholarly interactions in the 20th century is worth considering at some length, but I will not do it here.¹⁴ What is necessary to consider now is a concise synopsis of certain problematic stances within both Ruist and Christian traditions that require a corrective. I intend to argue that a transformative formulation of the dialogue at this time offers a new way to reorient many questions and a number of options in praxis within the dialogue, redirections that carry a sizeable amount of meaningful options for enriched interaction and reflective reconsiderations for more than just a few Ruist scholars and Chinese Christian believers (as well as some who fit inside these circles while not being ethnically Chinese).

The “problematic stances” distorting the Ruist-Christian intra-religious dialogue and so needing to be addressed are (1) the tendencies of antiintellectualism in a certain variety of contemporary Christian expressions and (2) the mounting of a Ruist ideological defensiveness and anti- or non-religious estrangement as the “only proper ways” to “represent” these traditions. Both stances exist independently within Christian and Ruist traditions; both resist transformative dialogue on grounds of a principled opposition which require more direct and perhaps more thorough responses. (Here we will be direct but not so thorough.) Both appear among the literate sectors of these two traditions as well, and so have documented their resistance to more open-ended and transformative options in dialogue. Both also reflect only one dimension of the more general trends in Christian and Ruist traditions, but at times threaten to silence any dialogue because of their intense opposition. Because of their inherent resistance to dialogue of any but the confrontative sort — consequently leading to a very “contained” form of dialogue which often ends up in non-transformed and unresponsive defiance in the face of more open and more compassionate partners in interaction — these stances need to be addressed as well.

¹⁴ See for details, Lauren Pfister, “Along the Road of Ruist-Christian Religious and Philosophical Dialogue: A Critical Review of John H. Berthrong’s *All Under Heaven: Transforming Paradigms in Confucian-Christian Dialogue*,” *Ching Feng*, vol. 41, no. 2 (June 1998), pp. 199-223.

By Christian anti-intellectualism I do not refer to the common Christian believer in many cultural settings including contemporary China who may well be less educated, less biblically informed, but very much moored to biblical traditions as taught by local Christian leaders.¹⁵ These kind of Christians also appear among many of our university students, but as students I find that they tend to be open to caring and compassionate teachers who express more vibrant and intellectually substantial forms of cultured Christian. Ruified Christian, and Christianized Ruist perspectives. The more stringent form of anti-intellectualism appears in the systematized spirituality of those opposed in principles to intellectual "diversions." This kind of anti-intellectualism may well have started as early as Tertullian (2nd century) and has been expressed in numerous ways including the notable 20th century Chinese Christian theologian "Watchman" Nee (倪柝聲). These forms are more evident among the Pentecostal strains within contemporary Christianity, are vulnerable to a Weberian style charismatic leadership, and so are more easily drawn into constrained communities of interpretation which are not open to other authoritative or interpretive options. Because they are expressed in cross-denominational settings, these theological

¹⁵ Some description of these attitudes and their troubles is presented in Alan Hunter and Kim-Kwong Chan's *Protestantism in Contemporary China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), but done with a methodological scepticism that is not always fair to the Chinese believers themselves. The diversity of these expressions can be tested against the various missiologies expressed by missionaries and teachers who lead them, many of which can be evaluated through new materials such as the studies in "mission legacies" initiated by Gerald Anderson in the *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* in New Haven and the wide ranging studies of contemporary Chinese Christian expressions from both missionary and layperson perspectives in Ralph Covell's works. See the relevant articles in Gerald H. Anderson, ed., *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions* (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 1998) and the Chinese sections of *Mission Legacies: Biographical Studies of Leaders of the Modern Missionary Movement* edited by Gerald H. Anderson, Robert T. Coote, Norman A. Horner, and James M. Phillips (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1994), especially but not exclusively in pp. 183-239. See among Ralph R. Covell's relevant works *Confucius, The Buddha, and Christ: A History of the Gospel in Chinese* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1986), *Mission Impossible: The Unreached Noun in China's Frontier* (Pasadena, California: Hope Pub. House, 1990), *The Liberating Gospel in China: The Christian Faith among China's Minority Peoples* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House Co., 1995), and *Pentecost of the Hills in Taiwan* (Pasadena, California: Hope Pub. House, 1998). All of these representative works offer a corrective to some of the more confrontative and less critical studies of Christian missions and indigenous developments in China published in the 1970s outside of China as well as the standard but articulate critique of Christian missions within China such as Gu Changsheng's *Chuanjiaoshi yu Xitandai Zhongguo* (Missionaries and Modern China) (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Press, 1981).

embodiments are not limited to any one specific institution within the vast expressions of Christian faith. While there are these more ecstatic expressions of anti-intellectual theologies within Christianity, there are also more or less anti-intellectual trends among some "less emotional" Christian worshippers who are more generally referred to as "evangelicals," though there is a strong resurgence of intellectually creative and informed Christian intellectuals among these groups in the second half of the 20th century, particularly in the North American and Europe.¹⁶ In China these two kind of Christian groups (the Pentecostally inclined and the "more intellectual" Evangelicals) have often been more clearly distinguished, so that some important points for dialogue between evangelical Christians and New Ruist scholars have already produced significant memorials to their interaction.

On the Ruist side there have been a number of important closures around the traditional worldview of these elitest traditions because of the Marxist critique in mainland China and the conservative response symbolized and articulated in the 1958 "Confucian Manifesto" collaboratively written and signed by Tang Junyi 唐君毅 (1909-1978), Mou Zongsan 牟宗三 (1909-1995), Xu Fuguan 徐復觀 (1903-1982), and Zhang Junmai 張君勱 (1887-1969). The more strictly contained positions of an emerging and nostalgic intelligentsia in mainland China refer to the tradition as a form of "learning" rather than a "teaching" — *Ruxue* 儒學 rather than *Rujiao* 儒教 — because they want to avoid at all costs any association with what might be progandistically vulnerable to religious critiques. Distancing themselves from the traditional worldview of "feudal" and despotic China run by hegemonial *Ru* scholars, these academic explorers in the realm of a "qualified Ruist world of thought" have willingly constructed a

¹⁶ A recent attempt to show where some of the anti-intellectual trends arise in these circles is captured in Mark A. Noll's *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1994). Noll describes and ultimately seeks to draw a contrast between the evangelical Christian community and "fundamentalist" turns within their circles which share the same historical roots but have taken a less open approach to complicated questions within the 20th century "world" (including issues of the scientific-technological matrix and more scholarly informed hermeneutics of scriptures, among other problems).

"secularised" Master Kong 孔子 ("Confucius" 孔夫子) to match their current needs.¹⁷ On the other hand, the conservative critique of this trend in 1958 and afterwards led to a reassertion of the "religiously cultivated spirit" (*zongjiao jingshen* 宗教精神) of Ruist traditions, focusing on the reformulations of Song and Ming *Ru* scholarship and its "moral" emphasis, but have not managed to consolidate a single and consistent reading of the traditions in their metaphysical accounts.¹⁸

The more restrictive account of Mou Zongsan has insisted on an intellectual confrontation with "Western religion," by which he means Christianity in spite of the much broader possibilities of reference in such a term, contrasting his reading of a Kantian form of Christian intellectual piety with a Ruist form of moral religiosity. Always critical in these discussions is the character of a montheistic God in comparison to a non-anthropomorphized "Heaven," making this the intellectual barrier which differentiates the traditions and often stifles any transformative dialogue.¹⁹ There have been some among these scholars, particularly Tang Junyi, who have explored more openly the shared values and spiritual options within Ruist, Buddhist, and Christian worldviews, leading a way

¹⁷ So, for example, Li Zehou characterized the rising interest in a "critical appraisal" of Ruist traditions carried on in the 1990s by Fang Like and others by reducing all metaphysical claims in the earlier traditions to "mere psychological phenomena." This interpretive reductionism, expressed in his volume *Hua Xia meixue* (*Hua-Xia Aesthetics*, Hong Kong: Sanlian, 1988) became a safety net of intellectual interpretive evasion which reduced the risk of these resurgent interests as being categorized as "religious" by Marxist ideologues.

¹⁸ As discussed in my paper, "The Different Faces of Contemporary Religious Confucianism: An Account of the Diverse Approaches of Some Major Twentieth Century Chinese Confucian Scholars," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 22.1 (March 1995), pp. 5-79.

¹⁹ Study of the nature of Heaven and God in the two major traditions continues and has developed in new ways. . . . A more broadly ranged discussion of cross-cultural metaphysics by Li Du set the stage for a more direct extra-religious and inter-religious dialogue; this was his *Zhongguo zhengxue sixiang zhong de tiantao* (*Heavenly Way and Lord on High in the Philosophical Expressions of China and the West*, Taipei: Lianjing Press, 1977). Following this trend, the Catholic scholar Fu Peiyong has made responding to these issues a very substantial part of his own intellectual effort, developments taken on the question of transcendence in religious experiences as a major category for further exploration. Tu Wei-ming's own deliberate reaffirmation that the traditions of the *Zhongyong* (*中庸*) or *State of Equilibrium and Harmony* do confirm a "dialogue with the transcendent" as well as other dimensions of personal cultivation do reframe this debate and its significance (in the fifth chapter on "Confucian Religiosity" in his book, *Centrality and Commonality: An Essay on Confucian Religiousness* (Albany, New York: SUNY Press, 1989).

Further reconsiderations from the Christian side in understanding the montheistic metaphysics of the Ruist canon and their significance in early Chinese Catholic theology was investigated by Nicholas Standant in his significant dissertation, "The Fascinating God: A Discussion on the Name of God by a 17th Century Chinese Student of Theology," Ph.D. dissertation, Fudan Catholic University, Taipei, Taiwan, 1994.

toward a more engaging and transformative "Daological" (*daoli lun* 道體論) approach to Christian teachings. By this term a special relationship within the intra-religious dialogue of Ruist-Christian expressions is affirmed: here the humanely oriented Dao of Ruist traditions along with its scholarly expositions becomes a philosophical grounding for articulating a Chinese Christian form of life and faith.

This Daological bridge between traditions was declared directly in 1985 within the dialogue between Zai Ren-hou 蔡仁厚, representing the "Contemporary" or "New Ruists" of the more *Mou Zongsan* style of thought, and Chou Lian-hua 周聯華 with Leung Yin-sing 梁燕城, representing Chinese Evangelical Christians.²⁰ Though there was much of the contrastive modes of engagement within this three point discussion, Leung raised the possibility of employing a Dao-centered metaphysics to reconceive or at least reformulate a creatively Chinese approach to Christian theology that is still being explored in a few other realms, but has not yet been fully embraced. This creative option was stifled in part because their dialogue in the mid-1980s reached no new commonly recognized level of heightened harmony in dialogue, and partly because of the contrastive insistence taken up by a "secularised" version of Ruist philosophy.

It is time to readdress this contrastive way of thinking with an even more constructive approach, seeking to formulate a groundwork for a transformative method and a creative new harmony of worldviews. Under these conditions the 21st century Ruist-Christian dialogue can become mutually engaging in a new manner and more positively reaffirming of past precedents. My own way of referring to these new directions is intra-religious dialogue is through the rubric of Ruified Christianity and Christianized Ruist philosophy.

²⁰ Cf. Zai Ren-hou, Chou Lian-hua & Leung Yin-sing, *Huifeng yu zhuanhua: Jidujiao yu xin Ruifeng de dihua* (*Intimate Communication and Transformation: A Dialogue between Christianity and the New Ruists*, Taipei: Universal Light Pub., 1985). Leung raised the issue of a Daological approach and develops it in regard to Christological and cross-cultural developments in the final three chapters of the volume (pp. 275-350).

III. Reexamining Whole Person Cultivation

Here I want to explore a cross-fertilization of traditions which has already occurred in Catholic and Protestant Chinese communities in social form and requires some self-conscious rethinking. This suggests that a philosophical foundation in Ruist classical teachings and their interpretations provided not only for a monotheistic category of ontology (referred to as "Father," "Great Father-Mother," "Heaven" or *tian* and "Lord on High" (*shangdi*) besides other more denominational terminology)²¹ — but also could provide for a form of self-cultivation/ sanctification consistent and creatively synthesized between the two traditions. This later form of development was not worked out by Catholic Ruists or by 19th Protestant theologians in China, but by the *shangdi*-ist Ruist scholar, Luo Zhongfan 羅仲藩 (d. c. 1850), a second-ranking (*juren* 舉人) Cantonese commentator of the *Great Learning*.²²

1. The Texts

In this intra-religious dialogue on "whole person cultivation" I will be referring to one particular passage in the *Lunyu* and another in the *Gospel of Matthew* as the basis and point of departure for the reexamination. Although it would be easier to take up the more commonly emphasized pas-

²¹ These theological terms are noted in works by Mungello, Standert, and the classical Ruist references reaffirmed strongly in Matteo Ricci's *Tianzhu shiyi* (*The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*). The later emphasis by some 19th century Protestants in employing the term *shangdi* for the biblical concept of "God" in translation was one aspect of the debate over the "Term Question" (the alternative being *shen* and its related theological vocabulary) and consciously linked up with the "classical *shangdi*" idea in the Ruist canon. This was argued openly by He Jinshan in his brief note in English on this issue published in James Legge's *Letters on the Rendering of the Name God in the Chinese Language* (Hongkong: Hongkong Register Office, 1850), p. 73, and was assumed in his Chinese writings which offered a *Preface to the New Testament* (*Xinyue qianshu jieshi* xu, 1855) and a *Commentary on the Ten Commandments* (*Shijie jieshi*, 1854). His arguments were influential in prodding Legge into his own lengthy essays in English on this subject, which are discussed at greater length in my own forthcoming book, *Disputant: James Legge and the Scottish Encounter with China*.

²² This document was discovered in a portion of James Legge's personal library now held in the New York Public Library, and is entitled *Shengjing* (*Sacred Scripture*, the same term employed now for the Christian Bible), and subtitled *Jieshi ji Daxue guben zhubian* (*Interpretations and Debates on the Old Text of the Great Learning in the Collected Writings of [the Master who] Seeks to Enlighten the Age*). The first edition appeared in 1850, and a second edition was published in 1859. We will refer to it here simply as *Daxue guben zhubian* and will make all references to the 1839 edition.

sage on Ruist self-cultivation in the "classical" section of the *Great Learning* as the basis for this reconstruction,²³ this other passage in the *Lunyu* has recently been emphasized as another kind of self-cultivating model, the autobiographical description of Master Kong's life.²⁴ The Master said:

At fifteen, I set my heart-mind on learning;
at thirty, I stood firm;
at forty, I had no doubts;
at fifty, I knew the decrees of Heaven;
at sixty, my ear was attuned;
at seventy, I followed what my heart-mind desired without
overstepping the mark.

The biblical passage is the famous section at the beginning of Sermon on the Mount:²⁵

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;
Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted;
Blessed are the meek,
or they will inherit the earth;
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled;

²³ This is within the section referred to by Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) as the "classical" section written by Master Kong. Both the "old" version in the *Liji* (*Book of Rites*, chapter 39) and the "new" version following the reorganization of the text subsequent to the "classical" portion by Zhu Xi contain this section in the very first portion of the text. The whole passage suggests that there is a strict development from the beginning to the end, but this was debated by Ruist scholars opposed to the Zhu Xi rendering. For both texts in Chinese and English, see CCI, pp. 356-359 (following Zhu Xi's emendations) and the *Sacred Books of the East* (SBE), Vol. 28 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1885), pp. 411-412.

²⁴ *Lunyu zhezi suoyin* (*A Concordance to the Lunyu*), D. C. Lau, ed., Hong Kong: Commercial Press, (Hong Kong) Ltd., 1995), p. 3. The English text is a mixed translation relying mostly on the renderings of Legge and Lau.

This passage was employed as the framework for the interpretive work by David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, *Thinking Through Confucius* (Albany, New York: SUNY Press, 1987) and is now available in a Chinese version, *Kongzi zhexue shuyi* (Nanjing: Jiangsu People's Press, 1996).

²⁵ Matthew 5: 3-12 in the New International Version.

Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy;
Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God;
Blessed are the peacemakers;
for they will be called sons of God;
Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

In what follows I intend to offer a mutually intersecting interpretation of a transformative approach to Ruist self-cultivation and a more processural rendering of Christian sanctification which has come to me through my own living and thinking about Ruist-Christian dialogue. Believing that its religious and philosophical implications are significant for anyone engaged in either "separate" tradition and offer new insights for those in the dialogue at whatever level (intellectual engagement, social involvement, spiritual embodiment), I present these interpretive options here for the consideration of all, wishing that it would stimulate a new self-conscious dimension in a too often unexpressed and vital area of a Ruist-Christian self cultivation.

2. Master Kong's Stages of Life

Whether or not the autobiographical statement of Master Kong was meant to become a prototype for personal growth is an important interpretive question. Some, such as Zhu Xi 朱熹, understood the study taken up by the young Kong at age fifteen to be the "Great Learning" (*da xue* 大學) or adult learning which he linked up with the classical passage in the book by that same name.²⁶ In this manner Master Kong's autobiographical statement becomes a paradigm for personal growth.

²⁶ See Zhu Xi's *Lunyu jiyao* 論語集要, *jihan* 卷, p. 9-9v. Legge complains that later Ruists struggled with this passage, arguing that Master Kong must have been "concealing his sagehood and putting himself on the level of common men." (CC1, p. 146) The 20th century commentator Yang Shuda 楊樹達 (*Lunyu shizheng* 論語疏證, Shanghai Guji Pub. 1986) shows this tendency when writing in 1942, pointing out how at age 15 the young Kong must have not only "had his heart-mind set on learning" but had it "set on the Dao" *zhi yudao* 志于道 (p. 41). By this means he reconciled this statement with suggestions in other passages in the *Lunyu* (4:9 and 7:6) that the cultivated person has their will set on the Dao.

Non-Chinese interpreters have been unwilling to accept this interpretation with substantial hermeneutic justification.²⁷ A more significant problem, however, is the question of the general direction of the personal development described in the passage: is it an image of consistent and accumulative growth, a progressive picture? Or is it an image of transformation, of a creative reconstitution and maturation in self-cultivation? This second interpretive option arises from an interest in conversion, especially as it relates to a "turning" associated with an awareness of transcendent realms. This interest can take on a specific Christian concern and become a motive for reexamining the general interpretation of Master Kong's life.

If the passage is read as an existential testimony of the Chinese sage, the second interpretive alternative becomes attractive.²⁸ In spite of the modern construction of a "secular" Master Kong which is often presented without question in contemporary academic circles — one who is this worldly, displaying no religious sentiment, uninterested in spiritual matters, and dependent only upon himself for personal development²⁹ — there are good reasons from within the *Lunyu* to question this characterization. Rather than see the personal growth of the Chinese sage as a "natural progression in sageliness," a step-by-step movement from principles in studying books to grasping comprehensively the patterns of the universe (as in Zhu Xi), the *Lunyu* presents other interpretive options. Master Kong does speak of his own studies as "starting from below and getting through to what is up above"³⁰ (*xia xue er shang da*, cf. *Lunyu* 14:35), but what was it that

²⁷ So Legge regards the elevation of this passage into a "stimulating example" to be a later fabrication, not consistent with the understanding of "the sage's immediate disciples" (CC1, p. 146, right column notes). Similarly, Halls and Ames consider the passage to be descriptive of genuine growth and not a paradigm to be followed (*Thinking Through Confucius*, p. 307).

²⁸ I believe that many of these ideas were first expressed by Leung Yiu-sing in a graduate seminar at the University of Hawaii in the early 1980s, and their significance has grown with me over the subsequent years. What is presented here is my own account of these issues based on the reflections stimulated by Leung.

²⁹ Most recently I heard this account succinctly and articulately stated by Prof. Zhang Longxi in his inaugural lecture at the City University of Hong Kong on December 3, 1998.

³⁰ Following D. C. Lau (trans.), *Confucius: The Analects* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1983), pp. 142-143. Note the self-conscious interpretation here which makes the passage read as if the movement is a progressive one.

drove him from a stage of "having no doubts" at 40 years of age to "knowing the decree of Heaven" when he was 50? One notable experience in the Chinese sage's middle age was the death of his excellent student, Yan Hui 顏回,³¹ one that brought about extensive grief and some remarkable expressions of spiritual anxiety (in the Tillichian sense of an existential anxiety, see *Lunyu* 11: 7-11).³² According to traditional accounts, this favorite disciple of Master Kong died at the age of 32, having been a student under the Chinese sage since his youth. This would suggest that the crisis came upon Master Kong as a teacher just before he had reached his 50s.³³ If we follow the traditional order of the texts of the *Lunyu* here, we find a middle aged man who is grieving deeply over the loss of his student, angered by the insensitivities of other students because of their inappropriate arrangements for the subsequent funeral, and experiencing a profound spiritual crisis. There is a sense here that a community of scholars working out a new scheme for a greater political community faced a new level of community-in-profound-humanness in this singular event, even in spite of its dissatisfactions. There more normal engagements were transformed by the trauma of a colleague's death, reaching a level of empathy that could be (if they were willing that it be so) extended to others outside of their normal circles. This constitutes the level of human experience and empathetic

³¹ Styled Zi Yuan 子淵 and often known as Yan Yuan 顏淵. He stood in relation to Master Kong as the disciple John did to Yeshuah ("Jesus"), having Many natural affinities to his teacher even though he was much younger.

³² Although other factors and experiences of Master Kong could also be mentioned in this discussion, this one momentous event will be highlighted here. Tillich in *The Courage To Be* (New York: Harper and Row, 1958) spoke of spiritual anxiety as the normal response to the loss of meaning in life (chapter 2).

³³ See Legge's account of Yan Yuan's life following traditional commentators in CCI, prolegomena, pp. 112-113. I am aware of a more traditional chronology that places the death of Yan Hui in the 69th year (the 70th sui) of Master Kong's life, but am willing to question it on this textual basis. See the chronology of Master Kong (Kongzi nianpu 孔子年譜) prepared by Zhong Zhaocheng 鍾肇鵬 for *The Grand Phrase Dictionary on Master Kong* (Kongzi da cidian) edited by Zhang Dainian (Shanghai: Cishu Publishers, 1993), pp. 1055-1069, esp. p. 1068. A much more skeptical and radical interpretation of Yan Hui's death is as a mere myth, one which was a "thematic transfer from the fact of the early death" of Master Kong's son. This is presented in E. Bruce Brooks and A. Taeko Brooks, *The Original Analects: Saying of Confucius and his Successors* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), p. 293.

awareness intended by the phrase, "community-in-profound-humanness."

Taking the solemn cry "Alas! Heaven has bereft me!" (*yitian sangyu* 瞻天喪予, 11:8) not merely as a rhetorical gesture of hyperbolic grief but as a genuine expression of agony in the presence of a sovereign Heaven,³⁴ the existential weight of "knowing the decree of Heaven" at age 50 takes on transformative significance. Certainly Master Kong was disconcerted because the hopes he had for his political project rested in part on Yan Hui's outstanding abilities. Grieving for him as a son, he was offended by those who refused him the privilege of acting like a father in the funeral (11:10). It is in this context that the questions raised by Ji Lu 季路 about "serving the spirits" and learning about "death" arise. Ji Lu was one of those restless followers who never mastered his own willfulness,³⁵ and so Master Kong urged him to serve humans and to deal with life first of all rather than these other matters (11:11). This was not intended as a general principle denying any interest in dealing with spirits or death (as it so often is rendered), but a specific directive to a mediocre student. Otherwise, would Master Kong refuse a virtuous person the right to sacrifice to their deceased parents? Certainly this kind of filial concern was considered a proper

³⁴ Both D. C. Lau and Arthur Waley render the statement as presented here (Lau, pp. 98-99; Waley in *The Analects of Confucius* (1938), pp. 154-155, but see his doubts in the footnote). Legge and Eno both prefer an even starker rendering: "Heaven is destroying me!" "T'ien destroys me!" Yet it is Eno who resists taking this statement as a truthful charge against Heaven, in spite of its existential depth, because it stands against his otherwise consistent interpretation of a "secularized" Master Kong. See Robert Eno, *The Confucian Creation of Heaven: Philosophy and the Defense of Ritual Mystery* (Albany, New York: SUNY Press, 1990), pp. 93-94.

Eno presents in English the most systematic interpretation in recent years which argues for the "secularized" Master Kong. It is consequently most significant that he finds it difficult to mold this single statement of the *Lunyu* into his interpretive grid, so that it stands as a hermeneutic obstacle to his whole project. Our transformative interpretation of Master Kong's whole person cultivation stands against Eno's slighting of the Chinese sage's grief and spiritual anxiety in the presence of a believable and transcendent Heaven.

³⁵ Known as Zhong You 仲由, styled as Zi Lu 子路, with the honorific Ji Lu 季路, this disciple of Master Kong was about seven years younger than his teacher and was known for his martial skills and courageous bearing. The parallel to the disciple Peter in the New Testament seems natural, but their personal histories ended very differently. Ji Lu later served under the house of Wei 衛 and was killed in a battle protecting his lord. Noted briefly in D. C. Lau, *Confucius: The Analects* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1979), p. 247 (under Tzu-lu), a fuller account of his life and death are provided in CCI, prolegomena, pp. 86-87, 114-115.

interest in death, especially as expressed within a community-in-profound-humanness. It was in fact an essential aspect of filial duty to parents (*xiao* 孝) which he himself advocated (*Lunyu* 2:5), and certainly a matter taken up in the records of ritual propriety in other classical Ruist texts in very great detail.³⁶

These reflections then lead us to the controversial status of the term *tian*. Is the being mentioned in these contexts a spiritual being addressed by Master Kong, or is this passage and other texts in the *Lunyu* which include the term only using it in a rhetorical manner without any ontic significance? The fact that Master Kong addresses Heaven more than once in this vein, and that he participates in sacrifices to spirits and even in exorcistic rites of villagers in the famous 10th chapter (*Xiangdang*)³⁷ of the *Lunyu*, militate against this completely “secularised” image of the Chinese sage. This is not to suggest that Master Kong was as religious as Master Mo (Mozi 墨子) or a promoter of a religious cult, but it does intend to underscore that he was involved in and took up a selective belief in the religious worldview expressed in his time in pre-imperial China. In the words of the late Kuang Yanning (d. 1997), “On the one hand, [Master Kong] continued support for the traditional concepts, accepting and reverencing the supreme spiritual position of Heaven. On the other hand, he also vigorously promoted progressive thinking, elevating the place and value of human beings.”³⁸ The problem is not an either-or dilemma, but a matter of both-and: Master Kong certainly emphasized the human Dao, but did not do so without any meaningful reference to a transcendent Heaven. It is perfectly justified to see these references to *tian* as indicative

³⁶ Here again the extensive treatises on these matters by Ernst Faber in the *Chinese Recorder* are worth reviewing, since they reflect the concerns expressed in the authoritative texts of Ruist traditions as they were dealt with at the end of the Qing period. The serialized articles appear under the title “A Critique of the Chinese Notions and Practice of Filial Piety” in the *Chinese Recorder* for 1878 in 9:5, pp. 329-343; and 9:6, pp. 401-419; and for 1879 in 10:1, pp. 1-16; 10:2, pp. 83-96; 10:3, pp. 163-174; 10:4, pp. 243-253; 10:5, pp. 323-329; 10:6, pp. 416-428; and for 1880, 11:1, pp. 1-12. A contemporary commentary to the *Classic of Filial Piety (Xiaojing)* is now being worked out in English by Gao Wangzhi 高望之, which should add weight to the importance of this particular area of concern in post-traditional Chinese societies.

³⁷ These passages (the sacrifices in 10: 8, 13, 15, and his participation in the exorcistic rite in 10:10) are located in CC1, pp. 233, 234, 235.

³⁸ See Kuang Yanning, *Kong-zi ping-shuan* (A Critical Biography of Master Kong) (Jinan: Jifu Press 1983), p. 211. For his complete argument about Master Kong’s religious beliefs and conception of destiny (ming) 命, and see the fuller context from pp. 210-217.

of a transformative moment in Master Kong’s career, and as a philosophically profound issue for whole person cultivation.

These existential reflections on Master Kong’s personal pilgrimage lead us to reconsider the meaning of his studies “starting from below” and “reaching to what is up above” (14:35). In fact, this same descriptive statement appears in the context of another agonizing moment when Master Kong feels himself in the presence of Heaven.³⁹ Being “known by Heaven” offered a solace to Master Kong that no earthly ruler, especially those who has rejected his teachings, could provide. If then it is the case that at the age of 50 Master Kong was transformed by a new understanding of the limits Heaven required of him and of those around him, then there is strong justification for reconstructing a model of “whole person cultivation” which includes a vision of humanity in the presence of the Divine.

It was exactly this kind of understanding that motivated the 19th century Ruist commentator Luo Zhongfan. In his commentary on the *Great Learning* he cited often various phrases from the *Book of Historical Documents* (*Shangshu* or *Shujing* 《尚書》 or 《書經》) describing how the “august Lord on High” (*huang shangdi* 皇上帝) “descends into the hearts” of the people (*jiangzhong* 降衷),⁴⁰ and from this develops a distinctive claim regarding the transformation of the human senses. When *shangdi* — who is “formless” (*wuxing* 無形) and “is the *Dao*” — descends into the heart, one’s eyes can intuit the invisible, and one’s ears can become attuned to the soundless realm and so commune with the Deity.⁴¹ These comments he presented in the context of taking self cultivation as the

³⁹ Lau renders the full passage as follows (pp. 142-143). “The Master said, ‘There is no one who understands me.’

Tzu-kung said, ‘How is it that there is no one who understands you?’ The Master said, ‘I do not complain against Heaven, nor do I blame Man. In my studies, I start from below and get through to what is up above. If I am understood at all, it is, perhaps, by Heaven.’”

Walley offers a rather different rendering, rejecting the existential claim at the end and having the Master respond, (p. 189) “I do not accuse Heaven, nor do I lay the blame on men. But the studies of men here below are felt on high, and perhaps after all I am known, not here, but in Heaven!”

⁴⁰ A citation of the *Shujing* as found in CC3, p. 185, which Legge renders in a fashion typical of the Scottish realist philosophy he studied, “God has conferred even on the inferior people a moral sense,” avoiding the sense of the indwelling imagery of the passage. Many more details regarding Luo Zhongfan’s argument and his theology are provided in my article, “Monotheistic Metaphysics in the Ming-Ching Imperial Worship and Ruist Canon.”

⁴¹ *Daxue guben zhuhuan*, p. 7v.

foundation (*yi xiushen wei ben*). Since it can occur in all people, from the emperor down to the commonest peasant, there is a new sense of an expansive humanity — a humane community of those revitalized by the presence of the Lord on High — that can be underscored by the “old text” of the *Great Learning* which speaks of “caring for the people” (*qimin 親民*). In this way, a whole person cultivation may include every benevolent ruler whose humane form of government is nurtured by the transformative guidance of the august Lord on High and so can be expressed within a community-in-profound-humanness.

Historically speaking, there was already in the 19th century a theologically systematized Ruist monotheism which integrated these *shangdi*-ist motifs with the dynamics of self-cultivation and humane rulership.⁴² This position represented and worked out by Luo Zhongfan took the approach of a Wang Yangming style of intuitive epistemology, augmented it with a *shangdi*-centered dynamic cosmology, and then integrated it with the basic themes of self-cultivation and humane rulership. The remaining historical problem is a significant one: there is no evidence that this ever was taken as a serious option within the actual ruling echelons of the Qing dynasty. A further dilemma in the realization of this unusual vision was that this transformative awareness activated in and by the presence of *shangdi* can be lost, so that the consequent status of any human being before the ruler and Heaven becomes questionable.⁴³ These problems mirror other significant “failures” of the “Confucian project” noted by the otherwise very positive approach of Halls’ and Ames’ *Thinking Through Confucius*.⁴⁴

⁴² I have been personally intrigued by the putative fact that no such thoroughly reconstructed theological position was developed earlier by Catholic Christian scholars in the 16th and 17th century, but in spite of some initial searches have so far have been unable to locate any of this sort of synthetically worked out interpretive works within the Ruist canon of those centuries.

⁴³ *Daxue guben zhibian*, p. 33v.

⁴⁴ In the first portion of their final chapter Halls and Ames candidly speak about the “failings of Confucius” and enumerate three major problems evident from the subsequent history of various traditions of Ruist hegemonies. First of all, it tends to enforce “provincialism” and “parochialism,” next, its vulnerability to “self righteousness,” and finally, the elitist restriction of education to only a privileged view, reducing “the masses” to “an amorphous body of subhumanity largely excluded from the possibilities of personal fulfillment.” These are very serious charges which call for revisionary thinking within the Ruist-Christian dialogue. See *Thinking Through Confucius*, pp. 307-313 in *passim*.

From this transformative perspective it is therefore possible not only to conceive of a more open form of complete person cultivation from the teachings of the *Lunyu*, but also to follow this basic principle in constructing, perhaps in a different manner than Luo Zhongfan in the mid-19th century, a philosophical grounding for a transformative model of whole person cultivation in connection with the creative Daoological powers of the Lord on High. That it was promoted among certain Ruist thinkers before the 20th century is now a certainty. The evident failures of this particular approach provoke questions of its feasibility and revisionary significance for the future. What remains is a significant question: does this offer a suitable format for readdressing a Ruist-Christian synthesis for the 21st century?

3. Yeshuah's Beatitudes

Although many books of discipline were developed by Christian monastic orders within the first five centuries of the Christian era, it has been strongly affirmed that Yeshuah, the Jewish prophet whose name was later Latinized as Jesus,⁴⁵ was not a monk and did not live with the assumption that all his followers must become recluses. When the formulaic teachings of the Beatitudes are reconsidered in the light of the concern for whole person cultivation promoted in Ruist traditions, including their encounters and failures within politically changing environments, some enriched interpretive alternatives emerge and offer some poignant options for a transformative intra-religious dialogue in Ruist-Christian circles. The sense of community-in-profound-humanness that results from this transformative process of whole person cultivation will become all the more evident through a reconceptualization of the Beatitudes as a whole. The whole person cultivation potential of the eight-fold beatitude or “makarism”⁴⁶ has been submerged and camouflaged by debates over the

⁴⁵ In both Hebrew and Greek, the English name rendered as “Jesus” is the same name as “Yeshuah.” Here I prefer to use the Hebrew transliteration of the name.

⁴⁶ A technical literary term used to describe the blessings offered by the introduction of the term “fortunate are” or “blessed are.” See a thorough discussion of these literary forms in the pre-Christian period and the New Testament text in Robert Guelich’s *A Foundation for Understanding the Sermon on the Mount* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1982), pp. 63-67; see also W.D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, volume 1 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark Ltd., 1988), pp. 431-442.

redaction of the passage, some claiming that there are two sets of four beatitudes and others that there are two sets of three with the first and last performing the special literary function of an "inclusion."⁴⁷ Though recent scholarly reflections note the themes of righteousness paralleled in the 4th and 8th beatitudes and the repetition of the indicative statement, "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" in the first and last beatitudes, little more is stated about the beatitudes' internal structure and overall significance. The literary form of the *inclusio* (in Greek) suggests to some interpreters that not only is there the formal link between the first and last beatitudes, but also that "the promises in beatitudes 2-7 are all different ways of saying the same thing, namely, 'theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'"⁴⁸

Many centuries earlier the insightful Augustine of Hippo (354-430) recognized that there was more than a mere repetition of themes in the first and last beatitudes. Preferring to read the last as the completion and perfection of the first, he united the two and suggested that there was a circular completion of a seven-fold sanctification, a cultivating process which turned back upon itself through the successive steps of the beatitudes.⁴⁹ This philosophical insight of a processual connection of personal sanctifying development should not be lost in the battles over redaction history. In fact, there is another interpretive option

available which reinforces the processual cultivation in the presence of Deity while strengthening the parallels between the two sets of four beatitudes.

Drawing on Augustine's insight that the first and last beatitudes are related as the commencement and completion of a perfecting process, it is justifiable to note the original Greek text — unlike other translations in Chinese, English, and most European languages — provides a grammatical basis for emphasizing this beginning-end interpretive rendering of the phrase "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The key term is the single Greek word, "theirs," which in the same spelling can take on different genitive forces.⁵⁰ Under this interpretive flexibility and with the hermeneutic concern to reveal the processual and transformative connections within the beatitudes as a whole, we can render the indicative statement at the end of the first beatitude as "for the kingdom of heaven arises from them" (that is, it arises from those who are impoverished in spirit⁵¹); the "same" statement at the end of the eighth beatitude becomes "for the kingdom of heaven is constituted by them" (that is, by those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness). In the light of this new interpretive insight, a fuller transformative parallelism can be worked out between the two sets of four beatitudes.⁵²

⁴⁷ The debate and some representative figures within the interpretive battles are mentioned in Georg Strecker, *The Sermon on the Mount: An Exegetical Commentary*, trans. O. C. Dean (Nashville: Abingdon Press and Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1988), pp. 29-30. Strecker mounts his attack on the two sets of four beatitudes based on comparative redaction studies of a similar passage ("the Sermon on the Plain") in Luke 6 and subsequently seeking to reconstruct a preceding Q and other documents that account for the differences in the text as presented in Matthew. Another study which takes this approach in a fresh manner is M. Dima in Hamm, s.j., *The Beatitudes in Context: What Luke and Matthew Mean!* (Wilmington: Michael Glazier, 1990).

⁴⁸ Davies and Allison, *The Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, Volume 1, p. 460. An interpretation employing this concept as the basis for extrapolating the significance of the beatitudes is D. A. Carson's *The Sermon on the Mount: An Evangelical Exposition of Matthew 5-7* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990), pp. 16-29.

⁴⁹ Augustine comments, "[T]here are seven maxims which constitute perfection, for the eighth starts anew, as it were, from the very beginning; it clarifies and approves what is already complete. Thus, all the other grades of perfection are accomplished through these seven." In order to illustrate the "stages" or "grades" of perfection (what we would refer to here as transformative whole person cultivation), Augustine discusses how these "maxims" of the beatitudes reveal the stages one passes through in "study of the divine Scriptures." See *Sermon Augustine: Commentary on the Lord's Sermon on the Mount with Seventeen Related Sermons*, trans. Denis J. Kavanaugh, o.s.a. (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1977), pp. 25-26.

⁵⁰ These are the "genitive of origin and relationship" and the "partitive" genitive, described in F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Greek Literature*, trans. Robert W. Funk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 89-90.

⁵¹ The Chinese rendering in the Union translation (*Hehe ben*) is misleading here. The terms used to render or literally "impoverished in spirit" is the high sounding phrase *xuixin de ren*. To a Chinese person with Buddhist and/or Daoist background, this sounds like an enlightened being rather than a person who is utterly humbled in spiritual need. Fortunately, the modern Chinese version of this same text reads *cheyu ren zhi jingying ren fa de ren*, providing a more accurate and less ambivalent sense to the passage. See 中文譯本聖經 (Modern Chinese Translation of the Bible) second edition (Hong Kong: United Bible Society, 1979).

⁵² According to Strecker, a German commentator named Schlatter summarizes the two strophes of four beatitudes in the following manner: in the first strophe (5:3-6) Yeschiah "addressed the 'burden that humanity bears'" while in the second strophe (5:7-10) he refers "to the way that people act." The summary is helpful, but I believe the second description can be strengthened to refer to "transformed people" or "regenerated persons." Unfortunately, I have not been able to review Schlatter's work to understand more fully the meaning of this phrase. Cf. A. Schlatter, *Der Evangelist Matthäus*, 4th edition, 1957. Cited in Strecker, *The Sermon on the Mount*, p. 30.

It is interesting that Guelich also prefers dividing the beatitudes into two strophes of four markisms, and though he recognizes the special relationship between the first and last beatitudes and even an echo of righteousness within both the fourth and eighth, he does not anticipate the more systematic parallels which follow. See Guelich, *A Foundation for Understanding the Sermon on the Mount*, p. 93.

What is the nature of the transformative interpretation of Yeshuah's beatitudes? Rather than presenting the eight-fold beatitudes as a circular repetition of perfecting forces, suggesting only repetition and no sense of development, it offers another alternative.⁵³ It places the first strophe of four makarisms as the beginning of a downward slope, ending in the last state of "hungering and thirsting for righteousness," and then starts a rising growth in regenerative activity from "showing mercy" to the high point of "suffering for the sake of righteousness," indicating the full character of those to whom the kingdom of heaven belongs. Instead of a circle, we have a V-shaped model, described in more traditional theological terms relating to sanctification as a *via negativa* followed by a *via affirmativa*. This descent-ascent model of whole person cultivation reveals another intriguing dimension of transformative movement: there are parallels between the needy states and the regenerative actions. The "impooverished in spirit" become those who "show mercy;" the "mournful," those who become "pure in heart;" the "meek," those who become "peacemakers;" and those "hungering and thirsting for righteousness," people who are in the end willing to "suffer for the sake of righteousness" which they are given. Hidden at the turning point of the V-shaped cultivation model is the transformative moment, one at which the supplicant becomes a supplier through be transformed from a life of recognized needs to a life which places "the kingdom of God and his righteousness" as the first priority (see Matthew 6:25-34).⁵⁴

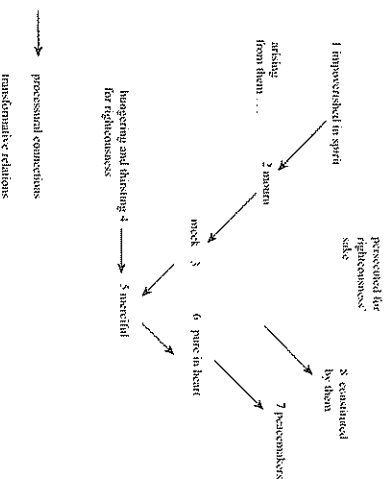
This transformative interpretation of the Beatitudes, provoked into awareness by the self-cultivating models of early Ruist texts and teachings, adds a mutually enriching element to the intra-religious Ruist-Christian dialogue. Spirituality humility accompanies personal growth as a counter to the temptations of self-righteousness. Its meeker attitudes adds credence to the rule for humane government, but also transforms the parochial tendencies to remain moored in past cultured

norms through seeking for a transcendent righteousness — an openness which enlivens the cultural norms and allows for a prophetic criticism wherever it is required. Then, as in the case of Master Kong's "knowing the decree of Heaven," a person and community can be humanely open to others in a community-in-profound-humanness, retaining a willingness to learn, critical wisdom in assessment, and sympathy in suffering. In the beatitudes of Yeshuah, this openness is generated by a merciful "Heavenly Father" who prompts mercy in the face of the needy, purity of heart in the context of impure conditions, the constructive will for peacemaking in the face of enmity, and the ultimate commitment to suffer for righteousness' sake in the face of destructive evils. There is a heroic dimension to this whole person cultivation which mirrors the values of Ruist philosophical traditions and enhances them through the transformative relationship with the Daological "Heavenly Father."

IV. *Toward the 21st Century of Ruist-Christian Dialogue*

There is a need to reconceive the relationship between Ruist and Christian traditions for the 21st century, allowing for a recognizable "intra-religious" dialogue that has continued to take shape in spite of

⁵³ The outline of this transformative structure of the whole beatitudes then appears as follows:



⁵⁴ The concept of an initial state of need leading to a final state of perfection also suggests a simple linear progression which I sense is not representative because of its missing the transformative linkages between the parallel strophes (as presented in what follows).

its being neglected by some circles. There is a way of perceiving the contradictory modes of discourse — the discussions which pit one value in this tradition against a similar value in that tradition, for example — as a misrepresentation of the larger picture of the dynamic of Ruist-Christian dialogue. In recent years this has become more clear to me by means of drawing cross-cultural analogies between the ancient Chinese and ancient Roman imperial settings. This has been enhanced by my own discovery that many of the Roman Stoic philosophical terms have been employed in translating the Ruist scriptures, a factor bound up in the Sino-Scottish philosophical encounter of the 19th century.⁵⁵ The hermeneutic lessons drawn from this factor of Sino-Latin comparative philosophical foundations are more than one, but among them is also an intriguing option for conceiving humanity in community.

Rather than perceive the Ruist and Christian traditions as inherently opposed in cosmological and metaphysical formulations, can we not reconstruct their relationship along lines that show complementarity and preserve their distinctiveness? For example, there were certain periods in Christian history where Greek and Roman philosophies offered a new intellectual grounding for the values and transformative richness of Yeshuah's monotheistic worldview. In this light, I have imagined Master Kong as someone like the imperial stoic philosopher, Marcus Aurelius, offering an elite view of culture which has openness to the more demophilic⁵⁶ interests of the Jewish prophet without denying any of its insights into political life. Here the seemingly contradictory mode of discourse can be resolved in a sythetically aligned organismic whole, allowing for the transformative potential of both positions to interact in mutually constructive manners. From a Chinese point of view, I have imagined the "uncrowned king of Lu,"

Master Kong, willingly engaging an attractive Jewish "Yen Hui" in the person of Yeshuah, and even grieving over his untimely death at a young age.

The historical parallels can be carried to a new level by comparing the Stoic imagery of the community-in-universe and the putative possibilities of an extended and educated humane community in the Ruist traditions. Marcus Aurelius spoke of the cosmopolis, the orderly universe metaphorically portrayed as a city-state, in order to provide a foundation for his broader ethics of unimpassioned impartiality.⁵⁷ This may prove to be a more apt parallel to the Ruist worldview than the anthropocosmic metaphysics promoted by Tu Wei-ming (and relying on Gabriel Marcel's categorizations of religious worldviews), particularly because it includes the elitist assumptions inherent in both Roman and Chinese political philosophies. The suggestiveness of the comparison also reveals the historical limitations of both views of community: for Aurelius there was the stifling problem of fatalistic tendencies in the face of the growing diversity within the Roman community, and for the followers of Master Kong, a question of choosing either isolated wholeness or a more universal openness, perhaps in the style of the Song scholar Zhang Zai (張載) who shared with the stoical Roman imperial predecessor a monistic view of the universe as well as an ethics that attempted to stretch to universalized principles.

Though these creative alignments may seem too far-fetched for some, I believe they portray a grain of hermeneutic insight due precisely to the transformative models of whole person cultivation which we have explored in this paper. Put in another light, I have learned to see these two great axial figures as solo voices in a symphony of interpretive traditions, but take them consequently as virtuosos in

⁵⁵ I have written about this in a paper for the 20th World Congress of Philosophy, and have enlarged it now as part of my larger work on James Legge (*Dutybound: James Legge and the Scottish Encounter with China*, forthcoming). A smaller version of the paper is available on the Internet offerings provided by the World Congress in Boston, and is entitled "The Past and Present Significance of the 19th Century Evaluation of Ruist Traditions by Scottish 'Commonsense' Realism."

⁵⁶ This is my own coining for the Ruist phrase *mubben*.

⁵⁷ See the brief discussion of this point in the introductory essay by Maxwell Stanforth in his translation of Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* (London: Penguin Books, 1964). Aurelius stated the idea in the following manner: "the world is as it were one city." Oddly, this idea, drawn initially from the Cynics and then systematized in Stoic philosophy, has not merited notice in F. E. Peters' *Greek Philosophical Terms: A Historical Lexicon* (New York: New York University Press, 1967), even though Aurelius wrote in Greek.

the midst of everyday life, continually worthy of reconsideration and reexamination. Both have had their charisma tarnished by unthoughtful followers and inimical detractors; both faced extermination campaigns during their own lives and afterwards their followers did suffer at times; both have been cursed by "modernists" and condemned by revolutionaries, but have endured in varying degrees because of their remarkably insightful views on life.

In my own Ruist-Christian way I have learned to appreciate, as James Legge claimed in 1886,³⁸ Master Kong as one of my own intellectual masters, while knowing Yeshuah in new and revealing ways as a philosophical master and my spiritual lord. The mutual enrichment has been encouraging to me, in spite of a number of pitfalls I have encountered in the process of dialogue. So I sincerely wish it could be productive of some more positive trends in Ruist-Christian dialogue in the 21st century.

Confucianism and Bonhoeffer on Individualism and Community:

From the Perspective of the Way of Humanization

Andres S. K. TANG

I.

In the Confucian tradition, there are two ways of humanization, which, following Confucius, can be represented by Mencius and Xun Zi. According to Mencius, the ground of humanization lies in one's immanent yet transcendental heart (or mind, *xin*). And Xun Zi considers that rites (*li*) should be the mediating ground for humanization. These two can be further understood as the philosophy of subjectivity and the philosophy of inter-subjectivity, respectively. However, how can the former avoid slipping into subjectivism and the later dissolving the subject in the community? This tension in Confucianism must be resolved in favor of a kind of humanization that can both preserve the subject itself and its relation to the other subjects. It is in this sense that this paper proposes the theology of sociality of Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945), a modern German theologian, as a reference for solving this problem.

IIa.

The tension between the individual and community exists already in Confucius' speaking of benevolence (*ren*) and rites. Confucius' consciousness of subjectivity is strong enough for him to say "Is benevolence really far away? No sooner do I desire it than it is here" (*Analects*, Book VII); yet, he often talks of benevolence along with the rites, such as: "To return to the observance of the rites through overcoming the self constitutes benevolence" (*Analects*, Book XII).

³⁸ Written in sermon notes dealing with Christian missions and presented in 1886. These notes are now kept in the archives of the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies of the University of London.

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