

A Metaphysical Perspective to the Future of Asian Philosophy



Peter Kun-yu Woo
Professor of Taiwan University

A. Introduction

Dr. Sun Yat-sen's speech, "Great Asianism" maintains that the Asian culture, especially its ethical heritage, would play a significant role in a coming world civilization.¹ Dr. Sun's political and social orientation proceeds step by step from Chinese nationalism through great Asianism, finally rests on universism.²

Nowadays, the national culture, the tribal states and the national philosophy develop uninterruptedly. In its developing stream it's easy to delay the attainment of the ultimate goal. The goal being the national cultural progress, the universism of philosophy and religion. When we speak about the intercultural affairs or the cultural interchange between the East and the West, it is necessary to point out that there is still a middle-point of an intellectual approach to bridge both polarities. There is an exception, however, the starting point of the national philosophy and the final point of the universal philosophy. This middle-point of a cultural interchange would be a coincidence

and union of all cultures today.

In view of its space and population, Asia is the greatest continent in the world. The Asian culture has had a great influence and has made significant contributions throughout world history. It would also be rational to believe that the Asian culture should play a significant role in the future. The culture would rebuild world order, on the condition that the Asian scholars are as clever as their ancestors, paying particular attention to cooperate with one another.

With the vastness in area, and the divergence of cultures, religions, philosophies and Weltanschauungs, how would the Asian countries and the Asian scholars be united together? In addition, all the Asian nations nowadays have to face a communist invasion without a new, strong and timely cooperation with all the Asian nations. It would hardly seem possible to avoid the materialistic pollution.

Asian history tells us, thanks be it to God, that once China's domestic culture had accepted and had been united with foreign ideas in order to create a new philosophical outlook. Therefore, it would be able to reconstruct the Chinese society on the edge of its cultural declination during the dynasties of Sui and Tang.³

Asia has a splendid history, especially the cultural history from the Chinese ethics, Indian religion, and many other spiritual heritages from Japan, Korea, the Phillipines, Indonesia, and Malaysia, etc.

Two thousand years ago the Indian religion influenced China. Since then, religious influence, in its union with an ethical spirit, spread over all of the Asian nations, building up the Asian cultural characteristics. The ethical sanctification and the religious redemption played a significant role in all of the Asian nations.

Four hundred years ago since Matteo Ricci (1552-1610 A.D.) brought his Christian evangelism to China, the Asian people began to come in touch with the divinely inspired religion to prepare their hearts to accept the redemption from the outside (Fremd-erlösung). Such an inspired religion was to improve on the idea of a natural religious self-redemption (Selbst-erlösung) and to guide the ideal of the ethical sanctification to its completion.

The Asian people had been spiritually elevated twice. First there

was the moral or ethical elevation of every genuine culture enabling them to become human. Secondly, there was the natural religion of the Indian heritage, enabling them to aspire towards nirvana. Now they are waiting for Christianity to help them to become divine. This two-fold elevation is significant for the fulfillment of human nature. Man is created by nature to desire perfection.

In the process of the development of the Weltanschauung, the Asian scholars are invited uninterruptedly to work hard for a spiritual unification in order to fulfill their cultural obligation to transcend their spiritual life and to reconstruct the Asian social order. Philosophy as the science of wisdom will then function as seeing, judging, creating and promoting the possibilities of this project.

About this metaphysical perspective to the future of the Asian philosophy, we divided this work into three main parts. The first part deals with the historical critique of the Asian philosophy based on the Chinese and the Indian ideas. In the second part we will discuss the essential contents of the Asian philosophy, past and present. Finally, in the third part, we are planning for a possible philosophy for Asia.

B. Asian Spiritual Heritage and Its Historical Inspection

If we look back into the Asian spiritual heritage, there are two very old civilizations confronting us, the Chinese and the Indian. Almost three thousand years ago the Chinese thinkers used their oracles to explain the meaning of life. In the Spring and Autumn Period (722-484 B.C.), both Confucius and Lao-tzu attempted to enrich human natural life by promoting it to an ethical level. Confucius concentrated his idea upon building the social and interpersonal relations in order to create the earthly peace and welfare; whereas, Lao-tzu oriented his mind to the meditative and speculative life in order to cultivate oneself to be a sage. Through both, the Confucian and the Taoist doctrine and the practice of it the Chinese became Homo Ethicus elevated from the Homo Naturalis. Since the Confucian spirit was degenerated within the legalistic stream within the Chin Dynasty (246-206 B.C.), and the Taoist doctrine was

degraded as being the superstitious religion in the Han Time (206 B.C.–220 A.D.), the Buddhist religion emerged precisely at that time and spread throughout China. Its function was preparing for the redemption of the falling culture and the ailing society. The cultural encounter of Buddhism with Confucianism and Taoism created a new era in China, thereupon, it influenced many of the Asian nations like: Korea, Japan, Vietnam, etc.

The Buddhist religion originated in India, but flourished in China as a main stream. Tibet, Thailand and many other Southern Asian nations developed as branches of Buddhism. Buddhism played a salvative function for the oriental culture. The Buddhist philosophy is a part of the oriental philosophy. It gained its well known name throughout the entire world.

The Asian philosophy, in its past, was a combination of Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism. It was a combination of Religious, Ethical and Aesthetical wisdom. The interchange between the domestic wisdom and the foreign inspirations has been going on for two thousand years. This interchange sometimes plays a salvative function. In the Sui and Tang Dynasties, the Buddhist samsara has elevated the Chinese ethical retribution of this world to that of the other world. The complementary consummatum for the Chinese ethical culture lies in the temporal orientation from Confucius on up until the historian Ssu-ma Chien (145–86 B.C.). The time was only understood as the time of this world. The people were quite ingorant about the immortality of the individual soul and life after death or the retribution of good and evil in the coming life.⁴ The Buddhist perspective widely extended the speculation of time. It introduced the idea of reincarnation, a person believes he has a past, present and future life. These three dimentional time functions allows one to realize the moral and religious retribution for every individual. The Chinese ethical theory of retribution was complemented, and the motive to do good was verified.

This is an example of the complementation between the religious culture and the moral culture as was verified in China. However, after the combination of Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism, the present Asian philosophy has a new challenge from the West. The Western

logical and metaphysical insights expanded very quickly in all of the oriental universities and institutes. In the departments of philosophy, there exists the obligatory courses like those in Europe and America. We learn the Western methodology in logic, the Western ontology in metaphysics; evermore, we learn the Western moral categories in ethics. Undoubtedly the academic system was originated from the 13th century in the Middle Ages. The Christian religion of the 13th century, practiced its indulgences and let the scholars freely discuss the doctrines of the universe in the universities. This kind of high education is now practiced throughout the world. The Asian universities are not immune to it.

Matteo Ricci brought the Christian message to Asia. Its influence in this region was certainly not so strong as the political, social, scientific, and philosophical ideas, which are also imported from the West. Man has accepted the Hebraic and Christian sabbatian system, but not the Christian faith. Man has followed all the norms of the natural sciences, but not the Christian commandments. In the field of politics, man has accepted the words of the thinkers of the Renaissance, but not those of Plato nor of Christ. Therefore, in the historical perspective the Asian thinker has to face a new challenge and has to overcome certain obstacles.

C. Asian Wisdom, Capable of Creating a New Synthetic Culture

From the above-mentioned short historical inspection, one can compare the Asia of the past with the present. One has to conclude that the Asian traditional heritage, especially its philosophy, has declined in the challenge of the Western cultural infiltration. But, if we take the optimist Weltanschauung, and the sapiential intuition of the Asian history, we perhaps can affirm that the Asian wisdom has the capability to face the Western challenge and transform it. Thereby, creating a new synthetic culture to adapt itself to the wide world. It would be similar to the experience of Confucianism and Taoism. They have digested and transformed the Indian Buddhism to build up a new philosophy in the Sui and Tang Periods.

As a universistic thinker in philosophy, I can imagine both the oriental and the occidental history of a cultural interchange and dialogue. In the West the Christian faith has adopted the Hellenistic philosophy to sustain and to rationalize its superrational religion to edify the flourished Middle Age, the Age of faith. In like manner, the Chinese moral culture has digested the Indian-Buddhist religion to strengthen the motivation of its cultural praxis-orientation. It seems to me, the essential contents of both of these cultural interchanges are exactly the same. What the Hebraic faith lacked was the rational process before one believes. And the Hellenistic philosophy serves to supplement it through a role, like the *Praeambula Fidei*. What the Chinese moral praxis-orientation needed was the doctrine of transmigration after death. The Indian wisdom made just such a contribution in the form of religious praxis.

1. Harmony and Unity of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism

As is commonly known, diligence and frugality are the characteristics of Asian people. These two qualities evidently belong to another philosophical attribute, namely, praxis-orientation. Praxis is a part of moral philosophy. To do good is its categorical axiom. This practical part of philosophy developed gradually into a life-philosophy in daily life. In the Confucian family-obligation, the simple people put it into practice. The Taoist recognizes that through natural harmony the artists diminish the pains from labor and transforms the flesh to enjoy the spiritual liberty. Higher still, Buddhist wisdom reveals the mystery of pains and agony, and promises everlasting life and happiness after death.

Thus, Asian philosophy, as a whole, is very practical and concrete. Its essential part played a definite role in this praxis-oriented life-philosophy. The Asian wisdom does not appear so much as the Western spirit in demanding the 'Why to live' rather, it endeavours to answer the 'How to live'.

a) Confucian Ideal Person

In the question 'How to live?' Confucius creates his life-view centered on the terms Chun-tzu and Shen-jen. The former cultivates oneself with personal virtues, while the latter practices interpersonal love with social welfare. Confucius shows the way to perfection for 'oneself': "Illustrate the heavenly virtue! Love your fellowmen! Rest in the Highest Good!"⁵. And for the social order he illustrates: "Cultivate oneself, regulate the family, have order in the state, and promote peace under Heaven!"⁶

Although the metaphysical terms like 'tien' (Heaven), 'shangti' (Highest God) appear often in Confucian texts, the central thinking of the Confucian school lies in the praxis of virtue, like 'Yen' (interpersonal charity), 'Yi' (interpersonal justice), etc. Through the interpersonal virtuous praxis, a person is hoped to gain union with Heaven, to become a God-man on the one hand, and to enjoy social order on the other. The Confucian ideal person, ultimately, is the sage who is united with Heaven and other men through a harmonious life of interpersonal relations.

b) Taoist Ideal Person

Lao-tzu, the founder to Taoist school, creates the transcendental life-style in accordance with nature. His main purpose of philosophy is to answer the question, 'How does one live between Heaven and Earth?' His ideal person is the sage who lives immune from the secular concupiscence.

In conformity with the I-Ching, the Book of Changes, Lao-tzu explains his cosmogony with, 'Tao generates One; One generates Two; Two generates Three; Three generates Ten-thousand-things' and 'Ten-thousand-things under Heaven are generated from Yu (being); Yu is generated from Wu (non-being).'⁸ Just like meontology, Lao-tzu maintains that pure Nothingness, or German *das Nichts*, is the arche of all things. Although the relationship between Tao and Wu is obscure, the process of creation is clear enough; that was the generation—a consubstantiative generation. So ten-thousand-things are unanimous with tao, and participate with the essence of Tao.

The metaphysical foundation of the union of Heaven and man

lies in the generative process of cosmology. This theory is unheld by the Taoist school in ancient China. Thus, the Taoist scholars maintain that life-philosophy orients towards the harmonious feeling with the cosmic order. For a Taoist, nature and man are harmonious with each other without any oppositional gap. Any attempt to destroy this harmony has to be avoided in human life, even in the name of the construction of humanistic social order. Thus Taoism plans 'the small nation with few people.'⁹ Its ideal society is where 'people grow old and die without intercommunicatio.'¹⁰ Therefore, the ideal person for Taoism is one who lives harmoniously with a cosmic flux without any artificial disturbance.

c) Unity of Confucian, Taoist and Buddhist Views of Man

Thus, harmony is the central concept of Chinese philosophy for both the Confucian and the Taoist. With this harmonious spirit the Chinese culture accepted the Indian Buddhist influence and elevated itself from the ethical level to the religious level.

Buddhism, as Hinayana, plays an apathetic role to avoid pains and agonies of this world. So the believer of this school chooses the ascetic life in order to gain Nirvana. Buddhism as Mahayana, however, unites itself with the Confucian ethics. Buddhists acquire confidence to live in this world without excluding the possibility of participating in the life of the other world after death.

Through this three-in-one philosophy, that is the amalgamation of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, the option of oriental philosophy is essentially enlarged. Its scope orients not only towards this life, but also towards the other world. Human nature is thus fulfilled through this harmonious coincidence of the three philosophical theories, namely the unity of *Homo Naturalis*, *Homo Ethicus* and *Homo Religiosus*. These comprise the sphere of Truth, Goodness, Beauty and Sanctity.

2. Central Points of Asian Philosophy and a New Philosophical Movement

Perhaps our present attention should not be so greatly immersed in the union or coincidence among Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism; instead, we should concentrate ourselves on the question of: how philosophy, which once unified the religious with the ethical, can now cope with the Western scientific culture. In Asia, as a matter of fact, science and technology gain a day by day trust of the people. Contrarily, the traditional ethics, religions, and metaphysics have to face the crisis of decline. With the increase of economic prosperity in daily life, the Asian people gradually lose their life-wisdom in exchange for the enjoyment of the profit from science and technology. The questions to be raised are: Nowadays what kind of philosophy is current? Where is the Asian philosophy going? Or more exactly, what will be the Asian philosophy? What will be the destination and the future of the Asian people? These questions are without doubt the central points of all Asian thinkers.

It has been said that human history shows that each culture goes through three stages: the theological, the philosophical and the scientific. Although this remark by Auguste Comte (1798–1857 A.D.) does not necessarily have the historical foundation nor the logical consequences, yet by the invasion of the Western scientific and technological stream, the Asian people, *nolens volens*, accept this Comtian creed. It would be worse if some philosophical standpoint has its foundation on this superstitious faith in neglecting the supernatural and metaphysical perspectives and negating the religious and ethical values.

That which creates the greatest difficulty for our Asian contemporary philosophy is communism. It has been said that the mind is an epiphenomenon producing consciousness, reflections of matter, and religion. That is what sustains the spiritual life, it is therefore, the opium of the people. Thus, Karl Marx and his followers make a controversy argument against all traditional social order in the name of loving the poor and hoping for an *avenir* (future) paradise of the

proletariat. The communist theory of struggle and hate, stand per se, against heavenly Tao and human nature. The ideology as the normative principle, in which all men stand equal and without classes, can properly harmonize with the other cultural theories like those proposed by Confucius, Plato, Christ, and Buddha. But, the practical principle that all men must go through struggle and hate, to gain progress and development, is totally wrong.

In this sense the religious movement maintains not only that the theological and religious culture is the highest stage of human history, but also that the practical principle is to love each other, in fraternal love. It is the only way to realize the ideal society.

The religious movement inspired by the Unification Church hopes the avenir (future) of a new world devotes its strength in theory, as well as, in praxis to re-create the social system, namely restoration. It begins not only with faith and hope to realize the interpersonal love to unify the people, but also with the rational sophistication to re-build a philosophical system to support its religious faith.

Just like the traditional culture of Christianity the Unification Church re-evaluates the stages of culture. It puts the religious culture as the highest one, which stands over the ethical and more over the technological culture in order to raise the spiritual life from the material control.

The religious movement together with the philosophical one, of the Unification Church tries to promote a new philosophical system to re-build the intimate order in the human heart and the social order in daily life. The Asian philosophy avenir has to face this new-born system, to learn the supernatural wisdom, to resurrect the fallen philosophy and to revive the ailing society from the challenge of positivism and communism.

D. Re-building Asian Philosophy

From the point of the philosophical system, the harmonious union of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism from the oriental philosophy, would be perfect enough. However, in front of the Western systematic philosophy, especially its methodology in epistemology, its

ontology in metaphysics, Asian philosophy seems to be too 'irrational' to be able to withstand any criticism. In facing the challenge of Positivism and Materialism, the Asian philosophy needs to re-examine and re-construct itself with its authentic historical experience in order to encounter the Western spiritual heritage with a view to re-build its own philosophical order.

Along side with the Western philosophical system, the Asian philosophy has to have its own epistemology as the entrance of wisdom, its own ontology as the essence of its philosophical contents, and its own moral philosophy that originated mostly from its own tradition. The metaphysical foundation for the moral philosophy, however, has to be reformulated in Western style to support the motivation of doing good.

The following outline would be a tentative system for an Asian philosophy avenir:

1. Epistemology

First of all, an epistemology should be grounded. From the existential point of view, just like Aristotle's words: 'All men by nature desire to know'.¹¹ We should explain it as 'All men by nature seek value'. This existential feeling creates not only all of the ethical foundations, but also shows the way of thinking. In the categorical division, values are divided into four aspects: truth, goodness, beauty and sanctity. In the seeking of truth we build up the philosophical epistemology: in the seeking of goodness, ethics; in the seeking of beauty, aesthetics; and finally, in the seeking of sanctity, religion.

Since Jesus Christ let the question 'What is truth?'¹² stand alone without an answer, the truth-problem has been open to all philosophies. By nature we, human beings, are created to have the capacity to know with our sense-perception and rational judgement. The personality, however, as a comprehensive center, creates the knowledge of gathering data and concepts, and at the same time transcends to the senses and the intellect. In fact "every created being is the object of man; in other words, every created being exists for, and must be recognized by man."¹³ In epistemology, therefore, man is subject,

whereas, the world and all things within the world are objects. "A characteristic of the subject is to have selectivity and autonomy."¹⁴ That is to say, the active subject is to know the object. The object, because of possessing substance and attributes, corresponds to the subject's possibility of knowing, and can be recognized by the subject.¹⁵ In this active process of knowing, man possesses the capacity to distinguish truth and falsehood, right and wrong. This criterion of knowledge, however, is born by nature within man.¹⁶

In such an epistemology we are neither unanimous with Rationalism nor with Empiricism, but we combine both of them and maintain that, the possibility or the ability to know is innate in us, because we have the senses, the intellect and the desire to know. However, the knowledge about the substance and attributes of objects are acquired by learning. The learning principle lies in the conformity between the subject's potentiality and object's cognoscibility. This subject-object relation originates from the give-and-take principle.¹⁷

It seems to me that an epistemology *avenir* must come from the existential standpoint of our life-experience. Our life teaches us, that a human being can acquire knowledge by learning with its own senses and intellect. Man as the subject is a whole, a unity with all innate potentialities and acquires knowledge. This wholeness and unity edify a person as a subject in every epistemological process. This union is indeed a unification, in which the personal subject grows day by day with his knowledge in his spiritual and mental life. In other words, the person himself grows up in a process of unification with the subject-object relationships in the give-and-take principle. Thus, this unified person lies now not only in the epistemological field, but also in the milieu of metaphysical ontology.

2. Metaphysics

Although the purpose of knowledge is to distinguish between true and false, right and wrong, epistemology does not satisfy itself with knowing things of this world as such. Man possesses by nature the desire of transcendence. He can transcend his knowledge from the visible to the invisible, from the present to the absent, from effect to

cause. That is knowledge in the way of *analogia entis*. Since Aristotle wrote his First Philosophy, the analogical method has taken place in the field of philosophical research. Sixteen hundred years later, St. Thomas Aquinas deepened and spread this method in all directions to bridge epistemology and ontology. St. Thomas used two essential ways to relate the ideal world with the sensible world. One of them lies in the ontological order from above to below, that is participation; that is to say, the sensible world has participated in the ideal world. The other, however, lies in the epistemological order from below to above, that is analogy; it means, man is able to know things from the other world in knowing things from this world analogically. Thus, there are two ways to show the relation between the ideal world and the sensible world, between heaven and earth, between God and man. One of them is the ὁδὸς ἀνω (Hodos ano, the way upwards), which supports the epistemological knowledge of analogy. The other one, however, is the ὁδὸς κατω (Hodos kato, the way downwards), which leads to the ontological order to create the possibility of participation of this world from the other world.

In the Aristotelean-Thomistic system or the biblical belief, the following quotation is valid:

For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse.¹⁸

For the Christian philosophy this paragraph includes two orders, both of epistemological and ontological order. First, God creates all things; in other words, things participate in the existence and essence of God. Secondly, we can and should through a creature recognize God; in other words, we know God through the sensible things analogically.

A question would be raised now in the metaphysical approach: how and what can a creature participate with God? In the epistemology within the intellectual sphere we can affirm only the existence of God and some characteristics of him, like the first unmoved mover, the first uncaused cause, the supreme God, the gubenerator of this world, etc. Or

in an ontological sense, the being itself (*ipsum esse per se subsistens*). Thus, the human being also possesses some existence, some goodness, some energy of creating things and some kind of automotion.

The traditional oriental philosophy and the Unification Theory maintains that, from the visible world we are able to observe the phenomena, that are two characteristics in all existential things:

- in physics: electrons and protons
- in plants: stamens and pistils
- in animals: males and females
- in human beings: men and women.

Therefore, as the consequence of the epistemological-analogical order, and of the ontological-participations order, God—the creator of the world—must also have these two characteristics: Yin and Yang.¹⁹ On the other hand, these two characteristics stand for each other complementarily, not oppositionally. Besides, the combination or the copulation of these two characteristics has the possibility of generating a new creation. The animal copula of male and female generates a new animal. The marriage of man and woman provides a chance to give birth to a new generation. Thus, this act of a generation should be analogically used in the creation of God; and, God creates the world, means that God generates the world.

It is important to note that the concept of creation is explained as generation, and not as production, nor the "*creatio ex nihilo sui et subjecti*". In the tradition of Western thought, the creation of the world by God, the *creatio ex nihilo* has been said and propagated. The cosmos has its origin from God. God is creator of all things. And *creatio* has been defined as "*productio rei ex nihilo sui et subjecti*". Thus, God is transcendent from the sensible world and possesses a totally different essence from the world. Only the soul of man is known as the Image of God. Because the world is only a production from God, and its essence is, therefore, infinitely lower than that of God. Therefore, there exists an infinite gap between the creator and the creature. God is *ens a se*, the world is *ens ab alio*. The relation between God and his creation can only be through the participation of being, and through the perseverance of existence.

The religious movement of the Unification Church, uses the

theory of oriental metaphysics, adopting the term "creation" by putting the meaning of "generation", i.e. the emanative generation. Thus, the Unificationists understand the term "creation" not exactly like scholasticism, which extremely proposes "*creatio est productio*".²⁰ The Unificationists' idea is very near to the neo-platonism, which takes creation like emanation.²¹

The oriental mode of thinking tries to resolve the arche-problem of cosmogony in proposing the Tai-chi as the proto-type of all existence, and the process from Tai-chi to all existence is not production but rather generation:

Tai-chi generates Yin and Yang,

Yin and Yang generate ten-thousand-things.²²

Thus, "Generation" is the process of existence of all things from their proto-type. The act of generation makes sure the consubstantiation between generator and heirs. So, the two-characteristics theory of the Unification Church, as much as I understand, takes Sung Sang (Yang, positivity) and Hyung Sang (Yin, negativity)²³ as two characteristics of God. At the same time it inscribes these two characteristics to all existence throughout the world. So the consubstantiation between God and the world is quite evident. And in this sense the theory of The Unification Church seems to be pantheistic rather than theistic.

Another point that the Unificationists insist on is that instead of the Dogma of The Trinity in Christianity, it reveals the two-characteristics-theory. In the Trinity the first person, God the father creates the world, the second person, Jesus Christ redeems the world, and the third person, the Holy Spirit nourishes the world. The relationship between these three "personalities" are: God the father generates the Son, the Father and the Son produce together the Holy Spirit. In the two-characteristics-theory, its substance mediates the simultaneity between Tai-chi and ten-thousand-things. Thus, Tai-chi as the proto-type, like creator in Western thought, is by itself invisible and knowable. But the characteristics Yin and Yang are not only visible but also very concrete. They are visible in all things, just like in physics: electrons and protons, in plants: stamens and pistils, in

animals: males and females, and in human beings: men and women. This theory of the two-characteristics of Tai-chi in oriental philosophy can and must be predicated to the Christian God, thereafter, it would be very fundamental to the philosophical avenir.

This divine Tai-chi reveals himself and becomes materialized through his first incarnation into characteristics, Yin and Yang. So, *Deus absconditus* becomes *Deus revelans*, in his creation (generation or emanation) of different stages: physics, plants, animals and human beings. These four stages of existence, more or less, participate in the divine nature.

The origin of philosophy begins with the human understanding of the divine appearance in the material world and with living in the world according to livelihood, namely for existence and for continuance. Especially in the continuance, there is a bi-sexuality in every species of existence. It's through the harmonious copula that the next generation comes to light. So things participate in the infinity of Tai-chi through this generative act.

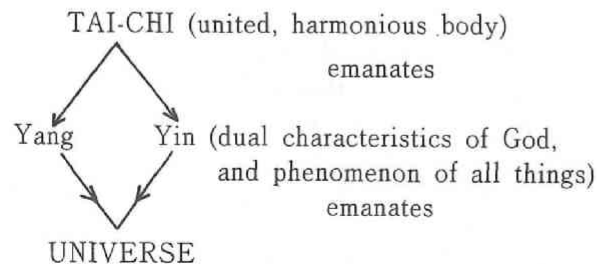
The duration of the world and human beings, therefore, lies in that generative action, and the total series of existence are constituted from generative action or emanative generation, directly or indirectly from Tai-chi, the proto-type of all existence.

The metaphysics avenir for Asia should be complementary between East and West. Its cosmology begins with the following cosmogony:²⁴

Deus absconditus

Deus revelans

in nature



In these metaphysical insights, ontology will not be seen as static but dynamic with an infinite possibility of generation or emanation. The world is therefore, full of potentiality for creative generation.

3. Ethics

If we take epistemology as the entrance of philosophy, and metaphysics as the essential contents of philosophy, then ethics should be taken as the exit of philosophy. On the other hand, both epistemology and metaphysics seem to be theoretical; ethics, however, is practical.

Nevertheless, the oriental philosophy in its tradition has the praxis-orientation. To do good and to avoid evil is very common for all Asian nations. Nobody would like to deny it.

Unlike the Western mode of thinking in ethics, in which the intellectual enquiry has been needed, the oriental praxis-orientation develops itself more with the detail of moral virtues, without much intellectual reflection on the metaphysical foundation. People do not need to know why they are doing things.

The teaching of both Confucius and Buddha emphasizes moral obligations. The central point of this teaching is that morality maintains itself primarily in the practice, not in the theory. Confucius himself insisted many times in his ordinary teachings that he rejected preter-natural beings, as the following quotations testify:

The subjects on which the Master did not talk, were — extraordinary things, feats of strength, and spiritual beings.²⁵

The Master's personal life displays his principles. Ordinary descriptions of them may be heard. His discourses about man's nature, and the Tao of Heaven, cannot be heard.²⁶

One of Confucius' disciple Tzu-lu asked about serving the spirits of the dead. The Master said,

"While you are not able to serve men, how can you serve their

spirits?"

Tzu-lu added:

"I venture to ask about death?"

He answered:

"While you do not know life, how can you know about death?"²⁷

The above-mentioned texts have frequently been used by the so-called Neo-Confucianists to support the anthropocentric theory or even the atheistic or anti-theistic world-view.²⁸

The following words of Buddha also emphasize the practical aspects of thinking. He said:

The spokes of the wheel are the rules of pure conduct; justice is the uniformity of their length; wisdom is the tire; modesty and thoughtfulness are the hub in which the immovable axle of truth is fixed.

He who recognizes the existence of suffering, its cause, its remedy, and its cessation has fathomed the four noble truths. He will walk in the right path.

Right views will be the torch to light his way. Right aspirations will be his guide. Right speech will be his dwelling-place on the road. His gate will be straight, for it is the right behavior. His refreshments will be the right way of earning his livelihood. Right efforts will be his steps: right thoughts his breath; and right contemplation will give him the peace that follows in his footprints."

Now, this, O Bhikkhus, is the noble truth concerning suffering:

.....

By the practice of loving kindness I have attained liberation of heart, and thus I am assured that I shall never return in renewed births. I have even now attained Nirvana.²⁹

Thus, the praxis-orientation is obvious.

Both the Chinese and the Indian philosophy focus their attention on anthropocentrism and seem to lack the metaphysical foundation for transcendental insights. From the viewpoint of religious salvation, both Chinese ethics and the Indian religious exertion highlight self-redemption, not redemption from the outside.

The Chinese philosophy from the Sung and Ming periods on, emphasizes the complementary contents of the Chinese ethical ideals and the Indian religious spirits. However, both philosophical traditions concentrate on the immanent aspect. They find the metaphysical foundation in the innermost part of the human being. Thereupon, the human being should be transformed to the absolute. The transformation of man into the divine is the anthropocentric viewpoint in the strictest sense. Still worse, this anthropocentrism neglects the existence of a transcendental divine being, who is the creator of all things. From the metaphysical point of view, this negation makes the human being lose his existential foundation within the ontological order.

Man has to do good only because of one's dignity and loyalty. That is the fundamental moral criterion of the anthropocentric theory. However, according to the causal principle, a human being is not *causa sui*, nor self-sufficient, especially in the ontological order. The philosophical foundation of anthropocentric ethics is therefore in vain.

Our attempt to build up an ethical system lies primarily in the ontological foundation, which maintains that the human being, according to all his aspects, is "*ens ab alio*". He is dependent on a transcendental God. Divine essence and God's will ground the ethical criteria. God is love. His two characteristics, Yin and Yang, demand the personal love of each other. There is, therefore, the marriage of love between husband and wife, between all pairs, that possess two characteristics. God is love. His will demands the interpersonal love even to his enemies.

Since all men are originated and generated from God, the equality of human relations, therefore, takes place. The personal equality between man and man, the social equality between nation and nation creates a trans-national, trans-tribal universalism. That will be

the paradise in this world, the Kingdom of God to come upon the world.

Notes:

1. 'Great Asianism' (大亞州主義) was a speech of Dr. Sun Yat-sen (孫中山) held on November 28, 1924 in Japan. Cf. Dr. Sun Yat-sen's *Opera Omnia*, Central Committee, Kuomintang, Taipei, 1973, Vol. II, p. 763-771.
2. Dr. Sun Yat-sen's political and social orientation proceeds from 民族主義, through 大亞州主義, rest in 世界大同.
3. Dynasties Sui (隋, 598-618 A.D.) and Tang (唐, 618-907 A.D.).
4. The Chinese ancient historian Ssu-ma Chien (司馬遷) following the Weltanschauung from *Shu-ching* (書經, *The Book of History*) believed that the retribution for good and evil must take place in this life. Thus, he complained very heartily when he wrote the history about Po-I, who was a sage suffering under pain and agony. Cf. *Shih Chi* (*Historical Records*), Vol. 61, ch.1.
5. *Ta Hsueh* (大學, *The Great Learning*), Text of Confucius, Vers 1: 明明德, 親民, 止於至善.
6. *Ibid.*, Vers 4: 修身, 齊家, 治國, 平天下.
7. Lao-tzu's *Tao-te ching* (老子道德經) ch. 42: 道生一, 一生二, 二生三, 三生萬物. 8. *Ibid.*, ch. 40: 天下萬物生於有, 有生於無.
9. *Ibid.*, ch. 80: 小國萬民.
10. *Ibid.* 民至老死, 木相往來.
11. Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, Bk. I, ch. 1.
12. *New Testament*, Jn. XVIII, 38.
13. San-Hun Lee, *Explaining Unification Thought*, Unification Thought Institute, New York, 1973, p. 143.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 144.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 146.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*, p. 170.
18. *New Testament*, Rom. I, 20.
19. Although in the *Explaining Unification Thought*, p. 17, Dr. Sang Hun Lee does not make the identity between Sung Sang and Hyung Sang to Yin (陰) and Yang (陽), in the Chinese translation *Divine Principle* (原理講論), p. 36, however, the translator clearly uses the two Chinese characters, 'Yin' and 'Yang' for Sung Sang and Hyung Sang.
20. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1.q.45, a.4.
21. Cf. St. Augustine, *Confessions* Bk. V, II, even by St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 1. q. 45, intr.: 'Deinde quaeritur de modo emanationis rerum a primo principio, qui dicitur creatio.'
22. Cf. *I Ching* (易經, *The Book of Changes*), Appendix 1.
23. Cf. Note 19.
24. *Unification Thought*, Unification Thought Institute, New York, 1973, p. 121-123.
25. *Lun Yu* (論語, *Confucian Analects*), VII, 20: 子木語怪力亂神
26. *Ibid.*, V, 12: 夫子三文章, 可得而聞也, 夫子三言性 天道, 不可得而聞也
27. *Ibid.* XI, 11: 季路問事鬼神, 子曰: 未能事人, 焉解事鬼, 敢問死, 曰, 未知生, 焉知死.
28. It is well-known and very widely advertised in the Chinese academic circles, that the representatives of the Sin-ya (新亞) (New Asia College) School of Neo-Confucianism (新儒家) such as Tang Chun-yi (唐君毅), Mou Tsung-san (牟宗三), Lau Ssu-kwong (勞思光), etc., interpret the Confucian theory as strictly anthropocentric.
29. Buddha's *Sermon at Benares*, in Lin Yutang (林語堂), *The Wisdom of China and India*, Random House Inc., New York, N.Y., Jan. 1978, p. 361-362.