

Lecture 2

Two Kinds of Truth and the Difference in their Universality

Last time we said that because every culture has to manifest itself through an aperture, it emerges with limitations, and from here we may talk about particularity. However, although its manifestation has limitations, once it emerges as an idea, a concept, this idea and this concept will have a certain truthfulness. In other words, when it becomes a concept and an idea, it is a truth and it has universality, because all truths have universality. From the aperture, we may talk about particularity; this is an analytic proposition. From truth, we may talk about universality; this is also an analytic proposition.

However, in talking about the manifestation of a cultural system, we have been talking loosely about the universality of truth. Since truth comes in many guises, all possessing universality, we should take a closer look at whether the universality is one and the same, or whether it also comes in many modes reflecting the many modes of truths. It seems that we cannot talk about only one kind of truth, because obviously there is scientific truth as well as non-scientific truth, and even if it is scientific truth, there is the truth of empirical science such as physics and chemistry, and the truth of formal science such as mathematics. Since there are many modes of truth, then it would seem that the universality of truth cannot be of one mode. However, it does not seem to make sense to talk about the particularity of truth or the particularity of universality. It is acceptable in our ordinary language to use these terms loosely. But strictly speaking, we cannot use “particularity” here. Apparently we can only say uniqueness or individuality. This uniqueness or individuality can only refer to the diversity of truth. Truths are all universal, but accompanying diversity of truth there is also diversity of universality. That is to say that there are also differences in universality, and this is the uniqueness of universality. On this point we should first understand what things we can use universal to describe and what things we can use particular to describe. These belong to two different categories. According to Aristotle, universal can only describe a concept, all concepts having a certain universality. Then what about particular? Particular can only refer to special phenomena, namely events. Hence these two things belong to two different categories, two different

levels. This means that the adjective universal can only describe a truth, a concept, and the adjective particular can only describe special events, only describe phenomena that can be experienced or pertain to objects of perception or sensations. Since we can only talk about truths as being universal, how can we then talk about truth having uniqueness? And how can we say that universality has uniqueness?

First of all let us see what truth is. The word “truth” is one that everybody uses everyday, but one which very few people can properly understand. That is why in Western philosophy there are many ways of explaining the problem of “What is truth”. We will not go into all those different kinds of explanations here.

Everyone should first realize that truth may be broadly divided into two kinds: extensional truth and intensional truth. Extensional truth generally refers to scientific truth, such as the truth of nature, or the truth of mathematics. Mathematics is formal science, while natural science consists of material science or empirical science. But regardless of whether it is formal science or material science, as long as it is a science, its truth will be extensional truth. For example, Russell [1872-1970] in his book *An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth* mentioned that scientific knowledge must always recognize two basic principles: the principle of extensionality and the principle of atomicity, two principles that are necessary assumptions of scientific knowledge. Why do we need the principle of extensionality? Extensional knowledge can be separated from subjective attitude. The kinds of truth that are not tied to the subject and can be objectively asserted are all extensional truths. Take a tree. If you adopt an esthetic attitude and say how beautiful it is, that is not scientific knowledge, since it is tied to the subject. Adopting a scientific attitude to study the tree produces the content of botany. Botany being a science, the conclusions it draws after studying a tree can be objectively asserted and they are thus extensional truths. In regard to scientific knowledge, there is no intensional truth and there can be no intensional proposition. All the propositions in science are extensional propositions and there are no intensional propositions. The terms “extensional proposition” and “intensional proposition” were first used by Russell (see my *Logic [Lizexue]*, chapter 2, section 5).

According to Russell, all so-called intensional truths and intensional propositions are utterances tied to the subject, tied to the subjective attitude. The early Russell was a bit

more polite, using such terms as “intensional proposition.” Later on he dropped the use of “intensional proposition” and called it “propositional attitude,” saying it was not a proposition, but merely the attitude of a proposition. This attitude is a subjective attitude, tied to the subject. For example, if the existence of God has been proved, then the sentence “God exists” is a statement that can be objectively asserted, and it would be an extensional proposition. But if God’s existence has not been proved and you say “I believe God exists,” then this sentence is not an extensional proposition, it has no objectivity and no universality because it is tied to “I believe,” tied to my subjective attitude. What I believe others may not believe; what I believe today I may not believe tomorrow, which shows that this has no objectivity and no universality. Thus all statements that come under “I believe” or “I think” such as “I believe such and such” or “I think such and such” are intensional propositions. Later Russell simply called them propositional attitudes, refusing to recognize them as propositions.

We should know that this method of Russell’s was intended for discussing scientific knowledge and mathematical knowledge. All the propositions in mathematical knowledge and scientific knowledge are extensional propositions. They do not allow intensional propositions or statements that are propositional attitudes but in fact are not propositions. Later on the logical positivists more or less based their theories on this view. The logical positivists recognized only those extensional propositions with cognitive meaning. Anything without that kind of meaning was not recognized as a proposition by the logical positivists. Hence they said that statements without cognitive meaning and that could not be extensionalized could not be propositions. Strictly speaking, even the term proposition could not be used. As a result they went a step further and said that all the statements in metaphysics were not propositions and had no cognitive meaning. Up to this point, the claims of the logical positivists were not really wrong. But when the logical positivists went from saying that metaphysics had no cognitive meaning to forthwith saying that it was meaningless, their verdict was then too hasty. To say it had no cognitive meaning was to say no meaning in the sense of scientific knowledge, but not to have meaning in the sense of scientific knowledge is not necessarily to be meaningless. But the logical positivists circumscribed meaning, believing that only the kind of knowledge that could be extensionalized could have meaning. That is why they said the sentences in metaphysics

had no cognitive meaning and that having no cognitive meaning was having no meaning. If metaphysics is meaningless, then what is it talking about? The logical positivists then said that it was simply satisfying our feelings and could not be treated as knowledge. They then went a step further and said that the utterances in metaphysics are all conceptual poems. Poems serve to satisfy our feelings, so they said metaphysics is merely a conceptual poem that serves to satisfy our subjective feelings.

If we continue the line of thought of these statements of the logical positivists, we do not necessarily arrive at error, for those are their definitions. If we take extensional truth as the norm, if there is only extensional truth and no intensional truth, then those statements of theirs are tenable. But are there only extensional truths in the world? I have already stated that there are two kinds of truth, extensional truth and intensional truth. Is this statement tenable? Can we count intensional truth as truth? This is the same as asking, "Can intensional propositions be counted as propositions?" If a proposition has to be an extensional proposition, then there would not be any so-called intensional propositions, and without intensional propositions there is no intensional truth. Can we say that there is only extensional truth and no other truth? No, we cannot say that. Besides extensional truth, we must also recognize intensional truth. And if we recognize that there is intensional truth, then how do we respond to the logical positivists' statement that all the statements in metaphysics are conceptual poems that serve to satisfy our feelings? If metaphysics is only a conceptual poem that satisfies our feelings, then it cannot be truth. But do metaphysics as well as the statements of Daoism, Buddhism, and Christianity, in fact only satisfy our personal feelings? You may say that they are not extensional truths, but you cannot say they are not truths simply because they are not extensional truths. They are all intensional truths, and this sort of truth cannot be gotten rid of by using the term "conceptual poem." First, let us not talk about conceptual poems but merely talk about poems. Say Li Shangyin's poems, Du Fu's poems, Li Taibo's poems [Li, Du, and Li are Tang dynasty (618-907) poets]. They are poems and not scientific knowledge; nonetheless, do these poems express nothing? For instance, *Hong Lou Meng* [*The Dream of the Red Chamber*] is a novel whose contents did not take place in history. We can only regard it as a literary work. But why does everyone enjoy reading *Hong Lou Meng*, and what is more, sob and weep when they read it? *Hong Lou Meng* is not historical fact, it is literature. All the same, there is a feeling of truth to it; it

can arouse a feeling of truth in you. This feeling of truth does not belong to scientific knowledge, it is not extensional truth. Then how do you account for the “truth” in this feeling of truth? This truth is what we ordinarily call the truth of life, such things as life’s sorrows and joys, separations and unions. But these truths are not discussed in science. The human being’s life is a whole. Why do you only pull out that aspect, recognizing only the truth of science and erasing the truth of this aspect? The scientific aspect is only one part of the whole of a person’s life. Why do you only treat that part as reality, and the rest as not truth?

Thus looking at it from this standpoint, poems and literature, although not scientific truth, are still not empty of content. Insofar as they have something to say, what they express has reality, a reality belonging to human life as such, human life as a whole. Looking at human life as a whole, the person lives concretely. To pull out and only emphasize scientific knowledge, which is only one part of human life, to recognize only this one part and deny the person’s life as a whole, that of course is wrong. This being the case even for poetry and literature, then are the statements of metaphysics, the statements of religion about God, the statements in Buddhism about such things as *prajna* [wisdom], deliverance [*mukti*], and essential Buddhahood [*dharmakaya*, the Dharma body]--none of them scientific truths or extensional propositions--then like the *Dream of the Red Chamber* also real and true? If even the *Dream of the Red Chamber* is real, then these that treat the person’s life as a whole are likewise real. If you only recognize scientific truth and deny these then you are committing self-denial. If you admit that these cannot be denied, then how do you account for their truth? The words of Buddhism, of Daoism, of Confucianism, of the *Analects*, *Mencius*, *The Doctrine of the Mean*, and *Yi Jing* [*Book of Changes*] are all of them neither extensional propositions nor scientific knowledge. In this respect they resemble the *Dream of the Red Chamber* and the poems of Li and Du. But are they equivalent to the poems of Li and Du or equivalent to the *Dream of the Red Chamber*? Not exactly. There is truth to the poems of Li and Du and to the *Dream of the Red Chamber*; so these [metaphysics and religion] too also have truth, but their truth is not equivalent to the truth of poetry, which is why you cannot say they are conceptual poems. This is to say that the statements of the Confucians, the Buddhists, and the Daoists are not the same as the poems of Li Taibo and Du Fu. Although both have truth, the two truths are not completely

identical; in fact, we could say they are altogether different. Then how do you account for the statements of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism, and even of Western religions? They are not extensional truths, but neither are they poems, for their truth is still different from that of poems. Since they are different, we cannot dismiss them with the term “conceptual poem;” that won’t do. Since they do have truth, we must recognize, in addition to extensional truth, such things as intensional truth, which is neither scientific knowledge nor can it be extensionalized, but which is still truth.

How do we explain this intensional truth? First, we are going to explain intensional according to Russell’s definition. First of all, this intensional truth is inseparable from subjective attitude. For instance, the novel *Dream of the Red Chamber* is a truth expressed out of the subjective emotional life of its author Cao Xueqin [1715?-1763?]. The statements of religions, as well as of Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism, are statements expressed out of subjective truth, inseparable from the subject. In regard to these statements, we talk about intensional truths, and once we talk about intensional truths they are no longer merely subjective attitudes. Hence while you may begin by saying they are inseparable from subjective attitude, when you go a step further you should say they are inseparable from subjectivity. The subjectivity of the writer consists of his feelings. But the statements of religion, and even of Confucius’s and Mencius’s teachings, cannot be regarded as a writer’s feelings since they are also reason. For instance, when Confucius discussed *ren* [humanity, humaneness] this *ren* is obviously not the feelings expressed in a poem. Even if we say it satisfies our feelings, it is different from the way a poem satisfies our feelings. The feelings satisfied by these two are also different, and this difference must be distinguished and faced squarely. That which poetry and literature satisfy we call feelings. These kinds of feelings, according to Kant, are sensible feelings, belonging to sensibility. But even though you may say the *ren* of Confucius or even the teachings of Daoism and of Buddhism satisfy our feelings, these feelings do not belong to sensibility, for they contain reason. Of course, this reason is not the reason expressed in the study of science, logic, or mathematics; nonetheless it is also reason. That is why in former times men called it Dao [the Way]; Dao is reason and not feelings. This reason, for example *ren*, is feeling and is also reason. Therefore it won’t do for the logical positivists to say it is merely a conceptual poem, that it only satisfies

our feelings. For the people who say this are inadvertently making scientific truth the only criterion, an attitude that is wrong. Inadvertently they are making one outstanding aspect of human-life-as-a-whole the whole truth and, taking this one aspect, turn around and deny the person's life as a whole. But is indeed only this one aspect of our human life real? And the rest not real? If everything outside of that which has cognitive meaning is unreal, then are you everyday not living in an empty illusion? Is your scientist suspended in a vacuum tube? The scientist too has a human life, has to have a family, has to marry, but there is no marriage, no love, in science.

Therefore, besides extensional truth, we have to recognize such a thing as intensional truth, which is tied to the subject. But although tied to the subject, as truth it must have a certain universality. By "a certain" I mean "a corresponding," namely a universality that is appropriate to, corresponds to, the meaning of intensional. This "a certain" does not have its ordinary meaning. Ordinarily when we say "a certain" it expresses a certain modesty, a certain reserve. But the "a certain" I use here is full and without reserve. "A certain" means corresponding to this intensional and having its universality. This is like extensional truth corresponding to the extensional and having universality. The universality of intensional truth refers to its correspondence with the intensional. In both kinds of truth we may speak of universality. The feelings of an individual person has universality, as for example when Du Fu wrote a poem, no one else could replace the subjective feelings that he had at that moment, and no one else could express them. But when in the midst of these personal feelings he wrote a poem, the truth expressed by the poem possessed a certain universality, namely intensional universality. Everyone reading this poem can feel a resonance, and this is where we see its universality. That is why when a poet composes a poem, his special feelings at that moment are unique; only because of them can he write the poem. Moreover, he may have the feelings today and not have them tomorrow. But when this poem is composed, it is an objective manifestation that we can understand and resonate with through the medium of language. Thus it has truth and this truth has intensional universality. This being the case of poetry, how much more so will the statements of Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism, including Confucius, Mencius, the *Doctrine of the Mean* and the *Yi Jing* have universality? But although they have even more universality, such universality is still intensional universality, not extensional universality, not science. If we look at it from this

standpoint, many people nowadays are simply talking nonsense. They insist on discussing Chinese philosophy as if it were science, as if by discussing it as science they would be insured. That is misguided. Besides, it is precisely that that ruins these Chinese teachings, because since they do not belong to science in the first place, why do you draw such silly comparisons? For example, some people say that the *Yi Jing* contains the theory of relativity. In fact, where do you find the theory of relativity in the *Yi Jing*? That is making absurd comparisons, showing that you neither understand relativity nor the *Yi Jing*.

If we understand that there are two kinds of truths, intensional and extensional, then we cannot accept the logical positivists' dichotomy of language. To express truth we must use language. Since the logical positivists restrict truth to one kind, they have divided language into two, one being scientific language, and everything else being emotive language. Hence they say that the statements of metaphysics are also emotive language, serving merely to satisfy our subjective feelings. This dichotomy is unacceptable. That is why Mr. Tang Junyi [1909-78] proposed the idea that if we look at what we actually express using language, there should be a trichotomy. One kind is the language of science. The language of literature is emotive language. As for the statements of the Daoists and Confucians, they are still knowledge, the subject discussed being Dao. Dao is not emotion, Dao is reason. But as I have already explained, it is not the reason evinced in science or mathematics. Since it is reason, the language expressing this kind of reason is not the emotive language of literature nor is it scientific language. Hence Mr. Tang Junyi proposed calling this kind of language heuristic language. Therefore we cannot regard this kind of heuristic language in the same way as the logical positivists. The trouble with the logical positivists is that because they dislike such things as metaphysics, morality, and religion, they have dichotomized language, explaining all these things as emotive language. In fact, morality and religion are the most important things in the spiritual part of man's life. How can we dispose of them as feelings? You may personally dislike them, but you cannot because of your personal dislike objectively deny them. That is where the logical positivists are pernicious, that is where they are illogical.

This heuristic language is like the words of *The Great Learning*, "The Dao of the Great Learning is to illuminate luminous virtue." [*The Great Learning*, "Text of Confucius", i.] It is also like the Buddhists explaining ignorance, and going from ignorance to

illumination [enlightenment]. It expresses the enlightenment in our life, enabling our life to become illumined. This illumination is not science, nor is it literature. Literature precisely does not illumine, but in fact fogs our mind, which is why Plato [427-348/7 BCE] disliked literature. His utopia did not have any literati. All morality and religion fall within the sphere of this “illumination.” This illumination does not merely serve to satisfy our feelings, nor is it science. How can the logical positivists dispatch it simply with the phrase “conceptual poem?” “Illumination [enlightenment],” an immense subject of study; is not a problem of feelings. What our present age lacks is precisely this illumination; what it lacks is a heuristic language. It only has a scientific language, and outside of that it only has the reverse, an emotive language. But merely to have an emotive language can only enable the person to crash about and hurtle along, ending in raving blindness. Nor can technology resolve anything. People of the present day put emphasis on technology, outside of which there is only the feelings. As a result the person is completely exposed in the present age. If the feelings continue to be thus exposed, the person will become an animal, which will be ruinous. Once an animal, he will no longer have the ability to feel guilt, and without that he will be depraved. Only the human being is able to feel guilt. The present-day person does not have the ability to feel guilt; he only has technical problems. He has converted all morality into technical problems, no longer concerned about moral right or wrong, but only concerned about technical true or false, correct or incorrect. The present-day person uses all kinds of excuses, all kinds of so-called scientific terms, to get rid of the concept of guilt and to convert all concepts of right and wrong, good and bad, into technical true or false. If I made a mistake in the technical task of installing an electric bulb, you certainly wouldn’t be able to say that I sinned. God has no sense of guilt, neither do animals, but the person cannot be without a sense of guilt. If we treat the person in his status as a person, then the person without a sense of guilt would be a mass of depravity, and that is a serious problem of the present day.

I have just used Russell’s terminology to bring up intensional truth. If there is intensional truth then there is intensional universality. Up until now we have used the term intensional to describe the content within and extensional to describe that which extends outside. We may now use two other terms to express this; that is to say, intensional may be translated as “intensive” and “extensional” as “extensive”. Thus intensional truth may be

called intensive truth and extensional truth may be called extensive truth. “Intensional” and “extensional” are terms borrowed directly from logic. We have turned them into these other terms, which have the same meaning and are even more expressive. Extensive truth pertains to mathematical quantities and physical quantities, while intensive truth does not entail those quantities. It pertains to the person’s life, for it is in life that we can talk about intensity. Intensity pertains to life, to the subject, and only the subject of life can evince intensity. It cannot be separated from the subject. Morality and religion must reside in the subject before they can be expressed. We cannot treat this subject as an object of so-called objective study. Nowadays people use such sciences as psychology, anthropology, and sociology to study the person. This is scientific understanding. It studies the person purely as an object, just as one studies the atom or the electron. Once you do this, the person becomes matter, and the person’s status disappears. If you use the scientific attitude to study the person, the person becomes an external object, and the meaning of the subject disappears. But morality also studies the person, and you could say that morality also treats the person as an object of study, that I am making a moral study of the person. But in morally studying the person, the meaning of the person as a subject is not lost; hence he can regain the person’s status as a person. We may say that in the first steps of moral study, the person is treated as an object. But as it progresses from a beginning moral study to studying the person existentially—to borrow a term from existentialism—the subject that you are studying will never become an object. If you should objectify it, then that is no longer it, and it will turn up again, for it will keep turning up. When it cannot be objectified, when it keeps turning up, then that is the real subject. This is where morality and religion always keep returning to. Once you objectify it, the meaning of the subject disappears, and the illumination that issues from the subject disappears. Originally the subject has illumination, but once you objectify this subject, the meaning of that illumination disappears, that is to say, the illumination that is capable of expressing values, and judging right and wrong. When this happens, where is the subject’s illumination expressed? It is expressed in your study using the scientific attitude. To use the scientific attitude to study it, you have to make use of the operation of the will, you have to make use of thought. This thought is none other than enlightenment [*ming*明], and this enlightenment is the enlightenment, understanding, of science. At this juncture, the true enlightenment of the subject becomes this kind of understanding, so-called discursive

understanding, which is used to achieve scientific knowledge. The meaning of the true illumination within the subject which can express values and judge right and wrong will disappear, turning into the reason of science and mathematics; and that is not illumination.

That is why this illumination must enable the subject to regain the position of the subject, in other words, enable the person to be treated as person, not as matter. Only when it is not treated as matter can the subject be restored. Only when the subject is restored can the illumination issuing from the subject be made manifest. This will not be the discursive understanding expressed when we study science but that which is expressed when we distinguish right and wrong, good and bad, and make value judgements. This then is what truly issues from the subject. In what terms did the Chinese philosophers of the past speak of this kind of illumination? Wang Yangming [1472-1528] called it *liangzhi* [good knowing; one's moral capacity], the illumination that truly issues from the subject. And the subject expressed by this *liangzhi* can never be objectified, cannot be treated as an object. If you treat the objectified subject as an object you will never be able to see *liangzhi*. The illumination known as *liangzhi* can only manifest itself when you do not turn yourself into the object, but return existentially to yourself, when the subject is restored as subject and not pushed out to become an object, when the person is restored as person, when the person is regarded as person.

But we human beings always have rational activity, intellectual activity. They issue from the subject and become the understanding that accomplishes scientific knowledge, the understanding that was examined by Locke [1632-1704], Leibniz [1646-1716], Hume [1711-1776], and Kant [1724-1804]. There was no *liangzhi* in that understanding, so Locke, Leibniz and Hume did not discover this point. Only Kant was a bit more polite. Besides discussing this understanding, he also discussed practical reason. He could, through practical reason, bring out the subject, and treat the person as person. Thus Kant always said you must treat the person as end, not as means. To treat the person as end is to restore the person the subject; only then can illumination present itself. Hence at this juncture Kant did not talk about theoretical reason but instead wanted to talk about practical reason. In Chinese terms, this practical reason is none other than *liangzhi*. Confucius's *ren* [humanity, humaneness] also belongs to practical reason. Herein lies intensional truth, intensive truth, here in the subject. This is what I have often

called “the great learning of the subject,” which is the same as “the great learning of life.” This is the life Jesus talked about in “I am the life, I am the truth, I am the Way.” It is also what Confucius [551-479 BCE] talked about in “The person lives because he is upright. If losing his uprightness he yet lives, he is spared merely by good fortune.” (*Analects* 6.19). The “lives” in this statement is not the life referred to in biology. You will never be able to explain the life of Jesus’s “I am the life” if you study it by the methods of biology.

Let us now look at where intensional truth and extensional truth differ. Both are truths and both express universality. Where exactly is the difference? We may say that extensional universality is abstract universality, while intensional universality is concrete universality. We may use these two terms to separate them. Ordinarily when we talk about a concept, that is to say a concept within the sphere of scientific knowledge, it will always have universality. The universality of a concept is always abstract. Ever since Aristotle, universality has always been mentioned as being connected to the abstract. So as soon as something is described as being universal, it is also abstract. As soon as something is described as being concrete, it is a particular thing, namely a concrete particular. Starting from Aristotle [c.384-322 BCE], the emphasis has always been on the concept. Aristotle’s teacher Plato [427-348/7 BCE] discussed the Idea. According to Plato’s analysis, an Idea belongs to the intelligible world. Plato’s Idea represented the ideal, he being a person with very lofty moral impulses. But when it came to Aristotle, he explained Plato’s Idea as concept. To him concepts belonged to the understanding. Ideas, however, belonged to a higher level, to reason, and this was how it was regarded in Kant’s scheme. So in Kant’s view, Aristotle had explained away the Idea of his teacher Plato until it had disappeared, for he had explained them into concept. In Aristotle these concepts are called categories, categories serving to accomplish knowledge, to understand the object. According to Aristotle, in order to understand an object, we have to do so by means of ten categories, all of which serve to cognize the object and to accomplish knowledge. Because he focused on the concept, he could only understand that the universality of the concept was abstract. As soon as he talked about the particular, it was about the concrete, about particular phenomena. That was his dichotomy. We may say that Aristotle was still spinning within the sphere of extensional

truth. The thought that is expressed within this sphere is what Heidegger called representative thought, for it is through these concepts, these categories, that you are able to represent the various aspects of an object, represent the universal attributes, universal characteristics of this object. According to Heidegger [1889-1976], this kind of thought cannot enter into the inner sanctum of ontology. Ever since Aristotle, Western philosophy has been spinning within the sphere of this representative thought, and after spinning around and about, the result is the popping out of the logical positivists. And the result is that only science is accorded recognition as the criterion for truth. That is why Heidegger wanted to take a step backward from this representative thought and discuss original thought, which is another of Heidegger's terms. Actually his original thought is basically just illumination. He was stepping backwards towards illumination, hoping to grasp that illumination. This then no longer belongs to extensional truth but immediately opens up the sphere of intensional truth. Within this sphere, the universality we are talking about is then concrete universality. Being universal, this concrete universality is a truth. It is not an event. Originally we say that the concrete refers to an event; only an event can be said to be concrete. But when we talk about concrete universality, concrete does not describe an event, nor an occurrence, nor a happening. because intensional truth is not an event. For example, we say that Confucius talked about *ren* [humanity, humaneness]. This *ren* is not an event. It is a truth, a truth in human life. Since it is a truth, it has universality. But as to concrete, it is also concrete. This concrete is a gradual extension, a new term. Originally the concrete refers to a particular event. But the concrete we are talking about now does not refer to an event. For instance when we talk about God, we cannot say that God is abstract. God is concrete. Although God is concrete, and we use concrete to describe Him, we cannot say God is an event. God is not an event but He is concrete.

We say that the universality of intensional truth is concrete universality. Concrete universality is a term coined by Hegel [1770-1831]. Historically in the West, starting from Aristotle, universality always refers to the abstract universal, and there is no such thing as the concrete universal.

What is a concrete universal? This is something very difficult for Westerners to understand, but very easy for the Chinese. For example, when Confucius talked about

ren, *ren* is a universal principle, but you cannot say that *ren* is an abstract concept. *Ren* does not belong together with the so-called concepts of science, mathematics, and logic. According to Confucius, *ren* can be concretely manifested in the real human life that is before our eyes. That is why Mencius said that *ren* is simply “compassion [*ceyin zhi xin*”]; it is concrete. But although concrete, it is not an event. It has universality. Under these circumstances, such universality is what Hegel called a concrete universal. This term of Hegel’s is very significant. In Western philosophy, Hegel’s philosophy extends beyond the Aristotelian tradition, which is why the orthodox philosophers of the Western tradition that has come down from Aristotle all loathe Hegel. Thus strictly speaking Hegel is not a philosopher in the orthodox tradition of Western philosophy. Who are the orthodox philosophers of Western philosophy? Plato is one, so is Aristotle. In recent times, Leibniz is one, so is Kant, so is Russell. These are orthodox Western philosophers. Actually the problems discussed by Hegel are not representative thought, nor conceptual analysis. What he discussed was concrete philosophy, whereas what Western philosophy has emphasized has been abstract analysis. What is concrete philosophy? For example, discussion of morality, religion, art, and history all belong to concrete philosophy. Hegel always discussed these things; his philosophy includes the philosophy of art, the philosophy of religion, and the philosophy of history. This is where he extended beyond the sphere of orthodox Western philosophy. And it is very easy for Chinese people to understand the sort of things he discussed. People dislike Hegel because he did not express himself in a felicitous manner. We are not going to adopt his way of expression, but as to the truths he discussed, we will often refer to them. The problems that Hegel touched were, strictly speaking, no longer within the orthodox tradition of Western philosophy.

Let us go back and talk about this concrete universality. As we have just said, when Confucius talked about *ren* he was not talking abstractly. Because *ren* is something that manifests itself in our actual life, Confucius there and then pointed out *ren* in real life. Filial piety is also a manifestation of *ren* and has universality, except that filial piety is manifested in the special relationship towards parents. Although the situation itself may be particular, that which is expressed is reason and universal truth. Moreover, the expression of filial piety can be infinite and boundless, manifesting itself in a concrete

intensity, manifesting itself in various degrees, within a dynamic, elastic mode. Once manifested, it is not manifested forever; once accomplished, not accomplished forever. Hence it is concrete, certainly not abstract. Such concrete universality is totally different from abstract universality. Scientific truth does not manifest itself elastically in an intensive process. Once manifested, it is forever manifested, once accomplished, forever accomplished. If after an experiment you have proved it to be so, then it is so. Take for example mathematical truth. Once it is proved, it is proved; there is no other trick here, no discounting. For instance, two plus two equals four, everyone knows that. There is no subjectivity here; in other words, no so-called elasticity. Concrete universality, however, has elasticity because it is concrete. This “concrete” refers to its being elastic. We can say of this kind of truth that it has universality and also that it has particularity. This particularity does not describe an event, since truth is not an event. Under these conditions it is called a concrete universal. This is the kind of truth the Chinese of the past loved to talk about, and could most easily evince, except that they did not have this terminology. If you explained all this terminology to Wang Yangming or to Master Zhizhe [Zhiyi, 538-597] of Buddhism, they would have gotten it right away, for that was exactly what they were speaking about, the concrete universal.

Let me give an example: Consider the Contemplation of Emptiness, the Contemplation of the Provisional and the Contemplation of the Middle Way, all of which are discussed in the *Zhongguan lun* [Treatise on the Contemplation of the Middle, Skt. *Mulamādyamaka-karika*]. If you only contemplate the world as emptiness - the Hinayana only views the world as emptiness but does not “open up the-world-as-provisional” [*jia*, false; mere appearances or phenomena]--then emptiness as you understand it is merely in an abstract state, for emptiness represents universality. Buddhism called universality “equality” and did not use the term universality. Equal means universal, being the same everywhere. Emptiness represents universality, for whatever the dharma [phenomenal entity], its nature or substance is empty. However, there are differences in dharmas. This thing is different from that thing; hence dharmas are particular. Nevertheless, the substance of dharma itself is always empty. The contemplation of the-world-as-emptiness obtains the equality of all dharmas, namely universality. Hinayana only contemplates the-world-as-emptiness and is unable to open

up the-world-as-provisional. In Hinayana Buddhism one's life is channeled into this emptiness, poured into this emptiness and cannot get out—that is Hinayana. In such a life, the emptiness stops in the abstract state, and this is called the abstract universal. The universality of emptiness is then abstract.

The bodhisattva is different from the Hinayana, for from emptiness the bodhisattva throws open the Provisional. After contemplation of Emptiness, he opens up the-world-as-Provisional, in other words he advances from the universality of contemplating the-world-as-emptiness to the particular. The Provisional is always particular. The Provisional refers to the dharmas of Provisional Names [False Names, things of the empirical world]. It was only when we come to the Way of the bodhisattva that this Provisional can be firmly grasped. All phenomena, according to Buddhism, consist of provisional names, illusion-like, delusion-like, which are the particular. Thus the bodhisattva has concrete knowledge of particular dharmas. One cannot accomplish the Way of the bodhisattva without having concrete knowledge. But if this bodhisattva comes to a stop at this concrete knowledge, then that would be a debacle, that would not do. Hence he must advance further and use the Buddha-eye to see the Middle Way, for the Buddha-eye contemplates the Middle [*zhong*中]. This doctrine of the Middle Way does not mean that outside of Emptiness and the Provisional there is another thing called Middle. If this were so, this Middle would turn into something abstract and would not be what the Buddha-eye sees. The Buddha-eye contemplating the Middle understands the universality of Emptiness on the basis of the Provisional, understands the universal on the basis of the particular, and furthermore at the same time understands the Provisional on the basis of the universality of Emptiness, in other words, “Emptiness and the Provisional perfectly fused” [*kongjia yuanrong*]. Only then is it called the Middle Way. Thus the Buddha-eye views universality as the universality that has been concretized by means of particular dharmas. Buddha sees the particular as the particular that has been universalized. This cannot be separated. That is why this has been called imponderable. Actually, however, it holds no mystery once you understand that this is the way it is. That particular is a particular that has been universalized, namely, made empty. Therefore strictly speaking, according to the teaching of Buddhism, this universalized particular is the authentic particular, is the authentic concrete particular. For this is what

the Buddha-eye sees. Granted this, then in Buddha's eyes, that concrete particular which we normally talk about, which is the antithesis of the abstract universal, is not concrete. In the Buddha-eye this particular of yours is the one that is abstract, "abstract" here meaning "dismembered and sundered." Moreover, the universal that the Buddha-eye sees is not the universal of the abstract concept that we normally talk about. It is the concretized universal. And this brings us to a different realm.

Originally we could only say that the particular is concrete and the universal is abstract. But after one or two spins we have arrived at this level. From the vantage point of this level, that "particular" of yours is strictly speaking not really concrete; on the contrary, it is the particular of the dismembered and sundered. The dismembered and sundered is none other than the abstract. According to Buddhism, this is consciousness. The particular in consciousness is abstract, is attachment. That which accomplishes scientific knowledge, be it sensibility or understanding, all belongs to consciousness. But the particular the Buddha-eye sees is the particular of wisdom. Consciousness and wisdom are the antithesis of each other. Buddhism speaks of converting consciousness into wisdom. This wisdom is not the rational activity that we commonly speak of, is not the ordinary meaning of the word. It is the wisdom that is the antithesis of consciousness. The particular seen by the Buddha-eye is the particular seen in wisdom. Emptiness is also the emptiness seen in wisdom. Hence the Buddha-eye contemplates the Middle Path. According to Buddhism, Buddha possesses *yiqie zhong zhi* 一切種智 [wisdom of all kinds, i.e., perfect knowledge of universality and particularity, illuminating Emptiness and the Provisional, and their synthesis in the Middle Way], while Hinayana has only *yiqie zhi* 一切智 [Skt. *sarvajña*, all-wisdom]. *Yiqie zhi* can only comprehend that all dharmas are empty; that no matter what the dharma, it is empty. Emptiness understood in this way is not enough, for it is an abstract Emptiness. The bodhisattva has *dao zhong zhi* 道種智, by which he contemplates the Provisional, that is to say, he has knowledge of the particular. One is contemplation of Emptiness, of True Suchness [Skt. *bhutatathata*, the ultimately real]. One is contemplation of dharmas of Provisional Names. When we come to the Buddha, he can synthesize the two, perfectly dissolve and fuse the two. When this perfect fusing occurs, the meaning of the two (the particular of the Provisional

and the universal of the Empty) changes, is transformed. In this transformation, we call that which is universal a concrete universal and that which is particular a universal particular. This is a dialectical development.

This kind of truth—namely the concrete universal and the universal particular—is infinite and inexhaustible. Take the Confucian *ren*. The manifestation of this *ren* is infinite and inexhaustible. The principle of *ren* cannot be explained by itself abstractly, just as Emptiness cannot be explained by itself apart from the dharmas of Provisional Names for the two have to go together. With respect to the manifestation of *ren*, it must be manifested according to different circumstances, such as towards parents, towards friends, towards brother, and so on, and under these circumstances in a process that is elastic. The term elastic is useful here. When filial piety is manifested in an elastic process, it is like a performance of music. There is rhythm in a musical performance; elasticity represents that rhythm. It is like the quivering of the rare flower when it blooms for an instant. Something elastic will quiver in this way. The *tanhua* blooms for but an hour or two, but when it blooms, all its radiance issues forth, and during this time it quivers and trembles. The elasticity of this life is immense. Intensional truth likewise is manifested in such an elastic process. It cannot be arrested, cannot be deadened by definition. That is why in this case we can say it has universality as well as particularity. This particularity, which refers to intensional truth itself, is not the particularity of the aperture that we spoke of in the first lecture. Intensional truth has the particularity of concrete universality, something that extensional truth cannot have.

Regardless of extensional truth or intensional truth, once it is manifested it has commonality. For instance, in the past Westerners have generally performed well with respect to extensional truth. Their culture emphasizes knowledge, studying the object, studying nature, from which they developed science. They began in this direction, this being an aperture. But although this aperture is particular, once you express truth through this aperture, this truth will have commonality, will have universality. You are right, you produced science, but science is neutral; there is no so-called English science or Chinese science. That is why everyone can study technology, for it has universality. This kind of universality belongs to extensional truth. It is the same with intensional truth. For example, the cultural tradition of China places emphasis on intensional truth. It first

expressed itself in this area, also through an aperture. But once this intensional truth is expressed, it also has universality and commonality, just as extensional truth. Regardless of the fact that Westerners have never placed much emphasis on this aspect--not that they have totally ignored it, but their discussion of it has not been thorough enough, good enough--once this intensional truth is manifested, even if you Westerners have not manifested it before, once your life touches this problem, you will have to manifest it in this way, for no other way is possible. Therefore, granting the universality of extensional truth is colorless, it can be learned by everyone, as in the case of science, logic, mathematics, even if it was not discovered by us. But even intensional truth is the same. Once it is manifested it will have commonality, universality. Although Westerners in the past did not manifest these things, or rather let us say that they did not manifest them well enough, once they are in touch with this problem, they will express it in the same way. We cannot say that there is a Chinese Confucianism and a Western Confucianism, nor can we say that there is a Chinese Buddhism and an Indian Buddhism. It is all one Confucianism, one Buddhism. Chinese Buddhism and Indian Buddhism are all one Buddhism. Their difference does not lie in the difference between their intensional truths, but in their surface tracks. We cannot presume that those intensional truths are different just because their surface tracks are different. It is wrong to say that there are two Buddhisms, Chinese and Indian. There is only one Buddhism. (See the Introduction to my *Buddha-Nature and Prajñā* [*Foxing yu Bore*]).

Likewise with the *ren* of Confucianism. Suppose you say that you have not had contact with the *ren* of Confucianism, nor with the “nature” [*xing*] of the problem of human nature discussed by Confucians since Confucius and Mencius, and therefore, from the standpoint of present Western philosophy, you cannot understand the meaning of the “nature” discussed by Mencius. That is because you have taken the nature discussed by Mencius in its ordinary meaning of human nature. This nature in its ordinary sense is not necessarily good. But the nature [*xing*] Mencius spoke of, the nature of *ren*-nature [*renxing*] Confucians spoke of, was a very unique problem, a problem not found in Western philosophy, for it is not the human nature that Westerners or we commonly speak of. The human nature the Westerners speak of is the natural state of the person, and when they speak of nature, it is in the sense of the opposite of supernature.

Supernature is God, everything beneath being created, and everything created by God being nature. In the human person's life there is human nature, and of course in this human nature there is good and bad, so how can it be definitely good? But that nature [*xing*] that Mencius spoke of, that Confucianism, which developed in the Song and Ming dynasties into Song-Ming Confucianism, spoke of, that nature is not the natural state of the person. That was a very unique problem. If you have not had contact with the problem, if you understand that nature in its ordinary meaning of "human nature," then you would not possibly understand the nature that Mencius talked about. But once you have had contact with the *ren* that Confucius talked about, with the problem of *xing* [nature] that Mencius and the Song-Ming Confucians talked about, then you will also speak of it as they do. This *ren* and *xing* also have universality because only when there is universality is there mutual communication. Only with universality can cultures communicate with one another. If there were no universality but only particularity, then communication would be impossible. Particularity would be closed up; how could you communicate with something closed up? But human beings do communicate, and only because of the universality of culture. How can you communicate if there is only the particular reality before your eyes? That is why when people lamented that East is East and West is West, the words came from the fact that they had descended into the particularity of the physical, and had not advanced into the universality of truth. Once you understand this, you will see that cultures can communicate, and can adjust to one another. To give an example, in the West there is greater emphasis on extensional truth, but once your attention is caught by intensional truth, then you will be able to use intensional truth to adjust and re-order your culture and attitude to life. This adjustment is not the adjustment of your extensional truths themselves. Once extensional truths become truths, they are so and cannot be changed. Adjustment means adjusting your entire culture and attitude to life, so that you realize that extensional truth is only one part of life, that there is also intensional truth. Likewise the Chinese culture. Chinese culture in the past two, three thousand years was expressed predominantly in the area of intensional truths; everybody was talking in this domain. Its whole energy revolved around this aspect, Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism all spinning around in this domain, with the result that extensional truth--science-- had no way of emerging. Admittedly,

England's Joseph Needham wrote that great set of volumes on Chinese science. All the same, Chinese science did not develop into modern science. We didn't do well in logic or mathematics either. They have universality so we can learn them too, Westerners not the only ones who can learn those subjects. In fact, the Chinese have a great capacity for learning those subjects; there are lots of bright Chinese. It isn't that we cannot learn them, for aren't there Chinese who have also won the Nobel Prize? In regard to extensional truth, the Chinese have felt that we have been weak in that area in the past, and so ever since the May Fourth Movement [1919] we have placed emphasis on that problem. Even though we have just said that the Chinese have considerable aptitude for science, we should also add that the pursuit of learning, the pursuit of truth, the discovery of truth, the dedication to truth, is not entirely dependent on being bright. Brightness alone did not produce Newton or Einstein, or the great mathematicians. Here it also depends on whether there is an extensional mentality. Only when you have an extensional mentality can science take root. If we do not have an extensional mentality, then science will never be able to come in, democratic governance will also never be able to come in. To learn science is relatively easy, to learn democracy far more difficult.

Which is to say that if you want to learn Western culture, learn science, learn democracy, it is not only a question of intelligence, nor only a question of learning. It is that you have to fundamentally make some changes in your mentality. For thousands of years the mentality of the Chinese was to place all the emphasis on intensional truth. But the basic mentality that achieves success in science, success in democratic governance, is an extensional mentality. This is not a question of whether one is bright or whether one studies or not, it is a question of a difference in mentality. This difference is due to the influence of culture. That is why once we know that it is not enough just to have intensional truth, and that we must open up this extensional truth, then we have to reflect thoroughly upon the fundamental spirit behind extensional truth, and this requires patient effort. It is the same with Western culture, which now leads the world. It is not aware that its culture is flawed, and even if aware, it is not seriously concerned. But once it realizes that it is not enough to talk about extensional truth only, then it will look at the intensional truths of Eastern culture squarely in the face and admit that they too have their value. But the people of the West have not yet arrived at this stage; they cannot yet

confront this problem. Not being able to face it and admit that this intensional truth is also a problem, they are not able to treat it as a valid problem for objective scholarly study. The Westerners of today study the learning of China as archaeology, as the study of the past, as part of Asian Studies. Although there are Westerners who study such things as Lao Zi and Chan [Zen] Buddhism, how much Lao Zi can you understand under these circumstances? How much Chan Buddhism can you understand? To really understand Lao Zi and Chan Buddhism, you have to look squarely at this intensional truth and admit that this is a problem, and that this problem has to be connected to your life and to your philosophy and religion. That is the only way. Only when you face it squarely and admit the value of this problem, admit that it is a branch of learning [*xuewen*], only then will you respect this branch of learning. The Westerners of today [1978] have not yet reached this stage, which also calls for patient effort.

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