

Lecture 3

The Emphasis in Chinese Philosophy and the Question of the Origins of the Pre-Qin Philosophers

We have already said that because of the different apertures from which each culture emerges, the resultant cultures and philosophies will be different. From its beginning, Chinese culture focused on life, and because it placed importance on life and was concerned with one's own life, it stressed virtue. The idea of virtue will only emerge when we are concerned with the question of our lives. The concern with one's own life is not the concern of biology. Biology treats life as an object, seeking to understand it as a natural phenomenon. This is scientific understanding and only came later. Ancient man had a clear and distinct idea of virtue, a "clear and distinct idea" being Descartes [1596-1650]'s phrase. However, ancient man did not necessarily have a clear idea of knowledge, for knowledge does not depend on me alone. Knowledge, which depends on experience, requires examining the object before it can slowly develop. And since the attainment of certain knowledge is very difficult, ancient man did not have a very clear idea of knowledge. The knowledge of that time was probably admixed with myth and superstition. For example, rain was explained as coming from a god of rain, thunder from a god of thunder. But even though ancient man did not have a clear idea of knowledge, he had a clear and distinct idea of virtue. Even if you maintain that ancient man was primitive—for example, that he ate his food by grabbing it with his hands, and from this point of view he was indeed primitive—yet if you look at him from the standpoint of wisdom, he was not really primitive. The reason why Confucius's words are still relevant is because of that wisdom. In some things, such as scientific knowledge or material civilization, the latecomers occupy a higher position, but that is not always true. For example, with respect to virtue and wisdom, present-day man is not necessarily superior to ancient man, and in fact is often inferior. We are not the only ones who say this; even Westerners say this. Even Russell [1872-1970], who placed the highest importance on science and modern civilization, expressed this opinion. He said that in

regard to science, our present age is naturally the standard, but in regard to questions of virtue, you should not belittle the Stoics, nor Socrates, for they had very high intelligence. Socrates [c. 469-399 BCE], who also placed great importance on virtue, once made a famous statement, saying: “Virtue is knowledge.” In placing importance on virtue, Socrates was no different from the Chinese, but he explained it in a different way. The sages of China did not say “Virtue is knowledge”, a statement that is not thorough. Therefore, even though the discussion of morality in the West started from Greece, strictly speaking it did not get a grip on the essence of morality. In the West, a real understanding of the essence of morality only began with Kant [1724-1804].

Thus, concern with our lives and concern with nature—to understand nature with the attitude of acquiring knowledge—are totally different. A concern with our lives must be approached from the standpoint of virtue. The attitude of being concerned with our lives from the standpoint of virtue is to jump out of the knowledge attitude onto a higher plane, a question that is connected to practice. For example, when Confucius pointed out *ren* [humanity, humaneness], the idea of *ren* is altogether a question of moral reason, a question pertaining to practice. Concern with life does not refer to life as it is understood by biology, nor can this idea of *ren* be understood through biology. An understanding of *ren* requires that we understand how man’s life can in practice be well adjusted and at ease, and not simply that we understand a few cells. A person who has wronged another person will feel guilt, and will feel remorse when he has misspoken; but there is no such idea as guilt in biology. That is quite clear. So when we say we are concerned with our life, we are not talking about such questions as how we were born or why our cells are so arranged. We are jumping out of the knowledge attitude onto a higher level. Not only is this not a biological understanding, but even Socrates, who placed so much importance on virtue, when he said “Virtue is knowledge,” was still defining virtue with a knowledge attitude. A knowledge attitude means understanding by means of conceptual thinking. For instance, what is justice? Socrates believed justice to be a concept, and after much rambling he said that this justice does not belong to our sensible world but to our intelligible world, and therefore we should first give it a clear definition. If we cannot define justice then we will never understand it. Someone might say, “We could draw an example from the real world, for instance, say that someone

performed an act that was very just and take that as an example.” But that kind of example would be unreliable. To understand justice we must understand the concept itself, not understand it from an example. A real-world example may work in some situations and not in others. Didn’t Socrates give such examples? For instance, what is honesty? Honesty is not telling lies, not deceiving people. Good, you say that honesty is not deceiving people. Suppose you have a child who is sick and won’t take medicine that will make him well. If you tell him it is medicine he will never take it, and so you tell him it is candy, upon which he takes it and gets well. Would you call that honesty or dishonesty? For example, what is *renai* [charity]? If you say that charity is not killing people, good, but then when you are fighting a war do you kill? That is why if you take examples from real life they will often be contradictory and not always consistent. So if you are to understand justice you cannot just look at it through examples, you must understand its definition. Then how do you set up a definition? There must be an “idea” of justice. After rambling about Socrates finally made an empty statement; he finally said that you must have an “idea” of justice. We find this really hollow, even though Socrates’s thinking is always so meticulous. Later on Plato [427-348/7 BCE] also traveled along this road. Even though Socrates stressed virtue, his attitude was inappropriate, so that the more he discussed the question the harder it became to understand it. If you didn’t explain it, I could understand it quite easily, but now that you’ve explained it, I’m all muddled.

Ever since Socrates, the West has approached virtue with this attitude, that is, it has approached it with the attitude of conceptual thinking. Although this kind of understanding appears different from the way we understand biology and physics, yet from the standpoint of conceptual thinking it is the same. This is still a knowledge attitude, an attitude that is not accepted in Chinese culture, and to understand virtue with this attitude is inappropriate. If you were to ask Confucius what justice was, he would not answer you with this attitude. Suppose you asked about *ren*. Confucius would not consider *ren* to be a concept and define it accordingly. Nor would he expound it linguistically. He would point to it in your life, and there and then direct you to *ren* based on whether your mind felt at ease. That would not be discussing *ren* with a theoretical attitude. That is why everyone could understand Confucius very easily. His words were

concrete, intimate, and sincere. For example, the *Analects* [*Lun Yu*] tells of Zai Yu asking why, when one's parents died, one had to observe a mourning period of three years. Three years was too long, couldn't it be shorter? Could we mourn for only one year? Here, whether one could or not has no scientific basis, and no logical proof. This is a question of conscience, of whether you are capable of feeling pricks of conscience. That is why Confucius asked: "If you were to eat rice and wear brocade after one year, would your mind feel at ease?" He did not give you a definition, giving a definition being Socrates's path. Zai Yu said: "I would feel at ease." Confucius then said: "Do it if you feel at ease." If you say you are at ease, that shows you have no feeling, you are numb. To be numb is to be degenerate, and if degenerate you have become a thing, no longer a person. And if a thing, why need a year? Wouldn't one month be better? Which is why when Zai Yu left the room Confucius said with a sigh: "How lacking in *ren* is Yu!" (*Analects*, 17.21). From this standpoint, you are indeed not *ren* [humane]. But conversely, if you are not at ease, would not *ren* appear? Which shows us that *ren* is not a cognitive concept, not a scientific idea. Isn't it profound? Once pointed in this direction, you will have to, if you want to understand the idea of *ren* and follow Confucius's way, cultivate how not to let your heart and mind become numb, be without feeling. Nowadays people are different. The disciplines today mostly make people have no feeling towards their lives. From what we have said, we can know that although Socrates placed importance on virtue just as Confucius did, under the different cultural backgrounds of cultures that began differently, even a great philosopher like Socrates sought to explain virtue with a knowledge attitude, with the result that he missed the mark. That is why when the West talks about virtue this is where they fall short. The contribution of Greece was not in this area but in philosophy and in science.

Then why do the Chinese, who stress virtue, not approach it with a knowledge attitude? Because the Chinese person from the very beginning was concerned about his own life. From the very start he was concerned from the standpoint of practice. For example, in the Three Dynasties of Xia [2205?-1818?B.C.E.], Shang [1766?-1154? B.C.E.], and Zhou [1122?-255 B.C.E.], although moral consciousness was not yet as clear as at the time of Confucius, even the contents of the *Book of Poetry* [*Shi Jing*] and

the *Book of History* [*Shu Jing*] show that concern about one's own virtue was first of all expressed through concern about the practice of the collective. Ancient society was a tribal one where there were many clans, with the leader of a clan heading the group. Consequently even when his action was the action of a group, as soon as his measures were incorrect, this group would disintegrate. As a result, the idea of "mandate of heaven" was born, and whichever group got the power to rule was the group that had received the mandate of heaven. For example, when the organized group led by Tang of Shang got the mandate of heaven, the Shang dynasty [1766?-1122? BCE] was established. When the group led by King Wen and King Wu got the mandate of heaven, it became the Zhou dynasty [1122?-1115? BCE]. Yao, Shun, and Xia Yu [legendary emperors of 24th and 23th centuries BCE] can all be seen as this kind of clan leader. Then which of all the various clans could receive the mandate of heaven and the power to rule? Although in the past, speaking transcendently, it was a question of the mandate of heaven, yet to receive the mandate of heaven was not just a transcendental matter. From a practical standpoint, the leader's gaze was not completely turned towards heaven but had to drop down right away, which is why we had the saying: "Heaven hears as my people hears, heaven sees as my people sees." Here the leader drops immediately from the transcendental attitude down to looking at the people. Because it was necessary to look at the people, if the people's eyes and the people's ears perceived that you had erred they would revolt and topple you. That is why you had to be vigilant and fearful and concerned about your own life. That is why you had to ask yourself if what you said and what you did were right and reasonable or not. Hence from "Heaven hears as my people hears, heaven sees as my people sees" you immediately looked at yourself, which meant that getting the mandate of heaven required more than looking at heaven; just praying to God wouldn't help. In Western religion, when people are about to fight a war, everybody prays to God. Hitler prayed to God, Roosevelt prayed to God. Who exactly is God to help? That is why if you want to win in war it is best to look at the people, see whether they will follow you, and that requires looking at yourself. That has been the attitude of the Chinese since ancient times. By the time of Confucius it was already very clear and very concrete. The Westerner on the other hand never looks at himself but always prays to God. That is the point of divergence between the East and West. Because the Chinese

people have from the beginning been concerned with the self, the “Yao Code [Yao Dian]” chapter in the *Book of History* has “Be able to illuminate stern virtue,” the “Kang Proclamation [Kang Gao]” has “Illuminate virtue, be cautious in punishment,” the “Zhao Proclamation [Zhao Gao]” has “Urgent in respecting virtue.” Although these views appear trite they in fact show concern for one’s own life. Consequently we say that the beginning of Chinese culture has placed the emphasis on life. Because of the concern for one’s own life, the idea of virtue emerged first of all, and the Chinese had a clear and distinct idea of virtue.

We shall now follow this thread to discuss Chinese philosophy. But in order to present a formal discussion, we cannot discuss it concretely in the sequence of Yao, Shun, Xia, Shang and Zhou, dynasty by dynasty. For these ancient dynasties have not left historical records on which to base our narrative. If we are discussing cultural history, we may start with them to see how Chinese culture developed. But in discussing philosophy we cannot start with them because they did not form any definite philosophical concepts. But they may serve as cultural background, and in discussing philosophy we may connect with them. Then from what point should we begin to discuss Chinese philosophy? We may say that we can begin the discussion of Chinese philosophy from the Spring and Autumn period [722-481 BCE] and from the various philosophers of the pre-Qin period [pre-255 BCE]. If we are to start from the Spring and Autumn period, then we can only start from Confucius. But this is not to say that Confucius suddenly appeared out of the blue. Before Confucius there was still a very long cultural tradition.

Before Confucius, the Zhou dynasty had already reached a high level of culture; whence Confucius venerated the Duke of Zhou [Zhou Gong] and even frequently dreamed of seeing the Duke of Zhou. Even before the Spring and Autumn period, before Confucius, a number of great figures emerged in the various states, such as Zi Chan [6th cent. BCE] of the state of Cheng and Guan Zhong of the state of Qi [1122-265 BCE]. These individuals were all the products of culture. Then why is it that we can only start from Confucius? It is because reflection on the Three Dynasties of Xia, Shang, and Zhou

only began with Confucius. Only with reflection and awareness did an idea emerge, resulting in the formulation of a principle. Once we have an idea, a principle, then our life can acquire a clear direction. Consequently, we can only begin our discussion with Confucius. All the same, we can connect Confucius's thought to the cultural background that preceded him. If everyone understands this, then Chinese philosophy will not be as Mr. Hu Shizhi (Hu Shih, 1891-1962) described it. Mr. Hu Shizhi described Chinese philosophy as beginning with Lao Zi [6th? cent. BCE], which is wrong. It can begin with the Spring and Autumn period [722-481 BCE] but not with Lao Zi, because Lao Zi's thought was later. Why do we say it was later? Above all, because Lao Zi's thought was a reverse side. There must be an obverse side before there can be a reverse side. It will not do to discuss the reverse side represented by Lao Zi before you understand the obverse side. Consequently there are people who say that Mr. Hu Shizhi's history of philosophy is a headless philosophy, one in which the head has been chopped off. It is a history of philosophy that cannot be connected with the cultural background of the Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties, and so is headless. That is why we can only begin with Confucius. You may take a look at the first chapter of my *Philosophy of History* [*Lishi Zhexue*] and my *Xinti yu Xingt* [Mind-Substance and Nature-Substance, or Moral Mind and Moral Nature], Synopsis section, chapters 4 and 5, to understand this further. Chapter 5 criticizes Ye Shuixin [1150-1223]. Ye Shuixin's *Records of Practising and Learning* [*Xixue Jiyan*] begins with the Three Dynasties. Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, Wen and Wu are recorded in the *Book of History*. The views of the personages recorded in the *Book of History* you could say are generally oral tradition, but even if they are oral tradition, that does not mean they are completely mythical. You cannot treat them completely as myths. Oral tradition and myths are different. For example, Nu Gua [legendary empress and creatrix fl. 28th? cent. BCE] repairing the sky is a myth. But what is recorded by the *Book of History* is not myth; we can only call them legends. Because legends have been transmitted from generation to generation, they are naturally not strictly true, but they are not completely imaginary either. The records in the *Book of History* are not nonsense. What it has recorded consists of several fundamental ideas. Take a look at the Synopsis of *Xinti Yu Xingt* [Mind-Substance and Nature-Substance] and you will know how one should understand the "root tradition of the Dao [*Dao zhi*

bentong]” of Yao, Shun, and the Three Dynasties of Xia, Shang, and Zhou. Ye Shuixin has a pretty good understanding of the “root tradition of Dao,” but he does not understand the subsequent “Confucius tradition” opened up by Confucius. He subordinated Confucius to his predecessors, making him subordinate to and a “thoroughbred’s tail” of the tradition represented by Yao, Shun, Yu [founder of Xia dyn.], Tang [founder of Shang dyn.], Wen, Wu [Wen and Wu, founders of Zhou dyn.], and Duke of Zhou [12th century BCE, son of Wen]. Moreover, he simply looked upon Confucius as an archivist who tidied up ancient documents. If Confucius was only the thoroughbred’s tail of the Three Dynasties, and only an archivist to boot, then what were the qualifications that made him revered as a sage? When the root tradition of the Three Dynasties of Xia, Shang, and Zhou reached the Spring and Autumn period, Confucius emerged and gave it a bit of a stimulus, opening up a separate, new tradition which we may call “the Confucius tradition.” These two must be separated. Admittedly the Confucius tradition inherited the root tradition of Dao [the Way] represented by the Three Dynasties of Xia, Shang, and Zhou, but it is not completely equivalent to this root tradition of Dao. Consequently such an approach as that of Ye Shuixin is unacceptable. Later on, the Confucius tradition opened up another new tradition, namely the “Zhu Zi tradition” of the Song and Ming Neo-Confucians [*lixuejia*]. Zhu Zi [1130-1200] was also a Confucian, but the Zhu Zi tradition is not equivalent to the Confucius tradition. Zhu Zi and Cheng Yichuan [1033-1108] were philosophers in the Confucian tradition who opened up a fresh path leading to another tradition. Undoubtedly Zhu Zi was a great man, but whether he could really and correctly understand the teachings of Confucius remains questionable. This is not to say that the Zhu Zi tradition is without value, for it is valuable nonetheless.

We will now begin to discuss Chinese philosophy starting with the Spring and Autumn [722-481 BCE] and Warring States [480-222 BCE] periods. Here, our first question is, "How do we look upon the various philosophers [*zhu zi*] of the pre-Qin [pre-255 BCE] period?" It is customary to use the phrase “*zhuzi baijia* [the various philosophers and the hundred schools].” This includes two terms, *zi* [philosophers], and *jia* [schools]. Both words represent plural numbers. Although there are two terms here, we normally look upon them as one thing, various philosophers equal to the hundred

schools, and the hundred schools equal to the various philosophers. But according to Mr. Xiong Shili [1885-1968], there is a difference between the two terms, he regarding them as two different things. This is one interpretation. Mr. Xiong maintains that *zhuzi* refers to the thinkers, the philosophers, and *baijia* refers to the experts with specialized knowledge that is described in the *Zhou Rites* [*Zhou Li*]. Doesn't the *Zhou Rites* have a lot of *guan* [officials], and under the *guan* aren't there many *ren* [persons]? All these *guan* and *ren* are experts possessing specialized knowledge. All the knowledge of ancient times were concentrated in the hands of the experts in the seats of government and not diffused among the people. As the ancients described it, knowledge was stored in the king's officers [offices]. Consequently Mr. Xiong says that *baijia* were the officials of the king who were specialists in charge of this or that, an interpretation that deserves our attention. On the other hand, to look upon the *zhuzi* and the *baijia* as having the same meaning needs not be ruled out. For Confucius was a *rujia* [member of the School of Scholars], and since he was called *jia* he also had specialized knowledge, namely the Six Arts of ritual, music, archery, charioteering, calligraphy, and mathematics. Let us for the moment put aside the *baijia* question and just look at the *zhuzi* [various philosophers, masters]. Then how are we to understand the term *zhuzi*?

The traditional explanation was what we have just recounted, that the various *zhuzi* came out of the king's offices. That is how it is explained in "Records of Arts and Culture" in Ban Gu [32-92 CE]'s *History of the Han Dynasty* [*Han Shu*]. As I have just said, the intellectual system called *rujia* [School of Scholars, the Confucian school], can be treated as philosophy, but since Confucius also taught the Six Arts of ritual, music, archery, charioteering, calligraphy, and mathematics, he was also a specialist. Where did the Six Arts come from? Of course they came from the government centers [*guanfu*]. But even though Confucius taught the Six Arts, the *rujia* becoming *rujia* was not only by virtue of these Six Arts. The rites in the Six Arts comprised of names, things, measures, and numbers. "What the Master speaks of elegantly are poetry, history, and the observance of ritual." [*Shi shu zhi li, zi suo ya yan* 詩書執禮，子所雅言。] But when Confucius studied ritual, he did not only study those rituals and numbers [degrees]. The *li* [ritual, rites] that Mencius [Meng Zi, 371?-289? BCE] discussed was completely philosophical talk: "Ritual is when there is deference and respect in the heart." (*Mencius*,

6A.6.7). But the ritual and music of the Six Arts were the ritual and music institutionalized by the Duke of Zhou. “Three hundred rules of ceremony, three thousand rules of demeanour.” [*Liyi sanbai weiyi sanqian*].” These required specialized study, being full of minutiae. Yet although full of minutiae, they were still based on human feelings, and although based on human nature and human feelings they were still a tedious subject to learn. For example, the various minutiae-filled rituals in the rites honoring Confucius totally baffle me. “When Confucius entered the Great Temple he asked about everything.” Even the Sage would not necessarily be versed in all the “names, things, measures, and numbers”, which was experiential knowledge and Confucius would not necessarily have understood it all. Zhu Zi, who in this respect was too rigid, thought that the Sage should understand everything. If that is true, why did Confucius have to ask? He asked out of modesty. “Though he knew it he asked, this being an example of deep respect.” (*Four Books with Collected Annotations* [*Si Shu Ji Zhu*], *Analects*, 3.1). That is why Wang Yangming [1472-1529] refuted this interpretation as making no sense. When we say the Sage is all-knowing we mean that there is nothing he does not know with respect to heavenly principles [moral law]; and to say he is all-capable is to say there is nothing he cannot do with respect to heavenly principles. As to these names, things, measures, and numbers, how can the Sage know them all? If the Sage asks about what he does not know here, this is proof of heavenly principle. Therefore the Six Arts alone do not qualify him to be a *rujia*; understanding the meaning and the principles of the Six Arts are required. Did not Confucius say: “‘The ritual, the ritual’, they say. Does it only mean jades and silks? ‘The music, the music’, they say. Does it only mean bells and drums?” (*Analects*, 12.11). Confucius used ritual and music to point out *ren* [humanity, humaneness], which is the principle behind ritual and music. But this is not to say that *ren* made up the immanent principle of ritual and music. In composing music, composers follow the principles of music, which are the immanent principles of music. When we say that *ren* is the principle of ritual and music we mean that it is the transcendent principle of ritual, of music. For ritual and music to have real meaning, they must possess *ren*. That is why “If men are not *ren*, what is the use of ritual? If men are not *ren*, what is the use of music?”

“The various masters [*zhuzi*] came out of the king’s offices” means that there is a thread by which we can trace the thinkers who taught these transcendent principles, and this thread is the king’s offices. For instance, take the theory that the Six Arts came out of the government centers. The “came out of” here refers to their historical origin and not their logical origin. Thus to say the various masters came from which and what office is association, not speaking rigorously. You cannot confuse historical origin with logical origin. That is a point Mr. Hu Shizhi did not understand. He saw this “came out of” as a logical “came out of,” and so he objected to the various masters coming out of the king’s offices. He said it did not make sense, for how could the *rujia* come out of government offices? Of course they did not, and if they did not, why do we say the *zhuzi* came out of the king’s offices? Mr. Hu asked this question because he saw “came out of” as a logical “came out of.” But this is not a logical but a historical “came out of.” So the phrase has always been a loose one and not speaking strictly. Because Mr. Hu objected to “the various masters came out of the king’s offices,” he proposed his own view. The traditional “the masters came out of the king’s offices” is a vertical view, while Mr. Hu proposed a horizontal view. And what was this view? He used sociology to explain it from the standpoint of social environment. He said that since the society of the time developed problems, the people were suffering and as a result the thought of the various masters reflected social problems, for they all wanted to save the world. In the early years of the Republic [est. 1912] this was a novel point of view. However, even though the statement “The various masters came out of the king’s offices” is a loose one, the sociological viewpoint given by Mr. Hu is also loose. Just because you have this social environment before you, does it mean it will produce a Confucius? For example, we are living in this troubled era, what Toynbee called a challenge; does that mean that everyone will have a response? What about those people who don’t have a response? And even if they do respond, what accounts for the differences in responses? Why should there be a Confucian response and a non-Confucian response? Obviously, the environment cannot directly determine the response; nor does it have a direct logical relation to the response. Consequently, if you use the sociological approach to explain the origins of the various masters, you are still speaking loosely.

Of course, the horizontal view proposed by Mr. Hu Shizhi is not totally wrong, but it is as loose as the explanation that the various masters came from the king's offices. Neither of these views has any relation to the origins of the various philosophers, in other words, no essential relation. Neither of them constitutes the essential source. To put it in Buddhist terms, we may say these two views give the *yuan*, condition, but they do not give the *yin*, cause. Even though the Buddhists explain the word *yinyuan* [cause-condition] as condition, there is a distinction between the two. That is why Buddhism speaks of four kinds of *yuan*: one is cause-condition [*yinyuan*], where the primary cause is the condition, the requirement. For example, when a seed grows into a tree, what is its cause? It should be the seed, which Buddhism calls the cause-condition. Other things like sunlight, water, nutrients, are only conditions. Besides the cause-condition, Buddhism speaks of *suoyuan yuan* [basic condition], where that on which the condition is based is the condition. There is also *cengshang yuan* [contributing condition], and also *dengwujian yuan* [uninterrupted condition], such as continuity of time, altogether four kinds of conditions. This indicates that *yin* and *yuan* are not identical. "The various masters came out of the king's offices" is not the cause of their thought, but only the condition. To adopt the sociological approach and say that the society developed problems and the people were suffering is also giving a condition. If everyone understands this point then both these views are valid. If both valid, then why do you have to use the vertical view to contradict the horizontal view, or use the horizontal view to contradict the vertical? We have to clarify these points before we can talk properly. Thus we will not accept these two views. To understand the origins of the *zhuzi*, the two views can be helpful but the principal cause does not lie here. We must go a step further and be more concrete, and more incisive. To say the *zhuzi* arose because the society developed problems, the people were suffering, is too general, too vague. So we are saying this is not totally wrong, simply not incisive enough.

The first among the *zhuzi* to appear were the Confucians [*rujia*]; next came the Mohists. Hence first to appear was the opposition between the Confucians and the Mohists. The Daoists came later, and the Legalists later still. These four schools are directly related to the question of the origin of the *zhuzi*. The School of Names philosophers [*mingjia*] were not directly involved, for they were a derivative school, an

offshoot of questions that came out of the opposition among these four schools. The Yinyang school, which left no records behind, emerged in the last years of the Warring States period, and since they were a derivative of a derivative, they are even less directly involved. Although we speak of “the various masters and the hundred schools” of the pre-Qin period, we may boil them down to these six schools, which is why Sima Tan [d.110 BCE] wrote “The Main Features of the Six Schools.” Of the six schools, Confucianism, Mohism, Daoism, and Legalism were the principal four, directly related to the origins of Chinese philosophy. Then what questions did they have that were directly, closely, related to those origins? The answer is that they were all responses to the ritual [culture] and institutions of the Zhou dynasty. Did not Confucius say: “How elegant the ritual [*wen*, culture]! I will follow the Zhou.” (*Analects*, 3.4 III). The *wen* he spoke of here was not the *wen* of *wenzhang* [writings] but meant regulations and institutions [*dianzhang zhidu*]. Codes, regulations, and institutions broadly construed were all here. What does “How elegant the ritual” mean? It means that by the time of the Zhou dynasty ritual and music [*liyue*] had become resplendently clear and complete [*mingbei*]. During the two dynasties of the Xia and Shang, ritual and music were still rough and incomplete, only becoming totally clear and complete with the Zhou. This totally clear and complete does not merely refer to the question of quantity, but of principles being distinguished and of all aspects provided for. This clear and complete does not mean clear and complete in a general sense but applies to each of the two systems. Here we will put aside music for the moment and speak about *li* [ritual]. Confucius when he said “How elegant the culture! I will follow the Zhou” was mainly speaking of rituals, that is, the rituals institutionalized by the Duke of Zhou. Why do we say that these rituals were resplendently clear and complete?

We should realize that although the rituals established by the Duke of Zhou were numerous, they fall into two main strands, one being *qinqin* [treating as kin kin, loving one’s kin] and one being *zunzun* [giving respect to those deserving respect]. In other words they were concerned with the gradations in the treatment of kin as kin and with the degrees of giving respect to those deserving respect. *Qinqin* applies to close members of the immediate family. To sons and daughters the closest kin are parents. To parents the closest kin are sons and daughters. Horizontally, the closest are siblings. These belong

to *qinqin*. In the rituals governing the treatment of close kin, there are distinctions of close and distant, called the gradations of *qinqin*. Going up from oneself, there are self, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, great-great-grandfather, making five generations, also called the Five Robes [*wufu*, referring to regulations on funeral garments]. Another system is *zunzun*, according respect to those deserving respect. Why should we respect him? Because he has an objective position. *Zunzun* belongs to the realm of government and it too has gradations. *Zunzun* also falls into two systems: one being king, duke, marquis, earl, viscount, baron, another being king, duke, minister, grand master, serviceman, the king meaning the Zhou emperor [*tianzi*, son of heaven]. These two both fall under *zunzun*. These two strands both started with the Zhou emperor, one system descending as king, duke [*gong*], marquis [*hou*], earl [*bo*], viscount [*zi*], baron [*nan*] the other system descending as king, duke [*gong*], minister [*qin*], grand master [*dafu*], serviceman [*shi*]. How do we distinguish the two? The hierarchy of *zunzun* consisting of king, duke, marquis, earl, viscount, baron, pertains to political power [*zhengquan*] and is heritable, with the son succeeding the father upon his death. On the other hand, the hierarchy of duke, minister, grand master, and serviceman pertains to governing power [*zhiquan*] and may not be heritable. For example, when a grand master dies, his son may not inherit his position of grand master, meaning that governing power may not be monopolized. This resembles our present Executive Yuan, where the President of the Executive Yuan [one of the five branches of the central government in Taiwan] may be replaced; our President is also not heritable, for he must be elected. At present, what may be heritable and can endure over time? The constitution. That is democracy.

That the duke, minister, grand master, and serviceman could not be inherited may be seen from a statement in the *Chunqiu Dayi* [*Exegesis of the Spring and Autumn Annals*]. The Gongyang commentary on the *Spring and Autumn Annals* has a statement that says: “Censured the heritability of the office of minister.” (See my *The Philosophy of History*, section one, chapter 2, “The Implications of Zhou Institutions [Zhou Wen]”). *Ji* meant to censure. If when a minister in a state died and his son stepped into his place as minister, the *Chunqiu Dayi* would denigrate and censure him. This is a very important concept in the *Chunqiu Dayi*. Elsewhere we say that the duke, marquis, earl, viscount, and baron constituted political power that could be inherited. Where in the *Chunqiu Dayi*

is this idea expressed? It is in the idea of “revenge” in the *Chunqiu Dayi*. *The Spring and Autumn Annals* has the phrase “big revenge” [*ta fuchou*]. Here “big” is a verb meaning “to venerate,” to exalt, vengeance. For example, the *Annals* say that Duke Xiang of the state of Qi [1122-265 BCE] avenged a nine-generation wrong. Duke Xiang of Qi was not a good man, he was a feckless king, but in the *Chunqiu* of Gongyang his taking vengeance is extolled. *Chunqiu Dayi* approved of his taking vengeance, furthermore adding: “Even if one hundred, it was good,” meaning that it would have been permissible to avenge the wrong even if it had been of one hundred generations’ duration. But this “even if one hundred” was limited to the feudal lords only, the ordinary people only being allowed to avenge wrongs of five generations’ duration. This complied with the principle of *qinqin*, for the *qinqin* principle only went as far as five generations. Permitting the feudal lords to avenge nine-generation-old wrongs, and even wrongs of one hundred generations, followed the *zunzun* principle, thus preserving their political power. It showed that one could not extinguish a person’s state or country. If you extinguished a person’s state, his descendants would for certain exact vengeance; hence extinguishing a person’s state was a great misdeed. Of course there were states whose end came about by self-extinction, through fecklessness; this also was a great evil. Confucian thought did not sanction the extinction of another’s state; nor did it sanction the extinction of another’s descendants. Extinguishing another’s descendants was an enormous act of inhumanity. That the feudal lords could exact vengeance forever, while the commoner could not exact vengeance beyond five generations is clearly distinguished in Gongyang. This was not the case in *Zuo Zhuan*. The *Zuo Zhuan* [*Zuo Commentary*] asked how could Duke Xiang of Qi exact vengeance after nine generations? It was speaking with respect to the principle of *qinqin*. But the *qinqin* principle could only be applied to society at large, not to those who represented political power. The two are distinct.

When we say that the *li* [ritual], of the Zhou dynasty was resplendently clear and complete, and “How elegant the institutions of Zhou,” it is clear that these words refer to the systems of *qinqin* and *zunzun*, a level of culture not attained by the two dynasties of the Xia and Shang. In Chinese culture the transition from the last years of the Yin [name of the latter part of the Shang dyn.] and Shang to the Zhou dynasty represented a

breakthrough juncture. For instance, the rule that persons of the same surname could not marry was only instituted in the Zhou dynasty, for the Yin-Shang still practiced endogamy. Persons of the same surname not marrying was well-advised, and not only from the standpoint of eugenics and heredity. It also had a political function. Thus the Duke of Zhou's contribution to Chinese culture was very great. It was also very great from the standpoint of humanity, of the human being as person, and of how the human person is to stand up. Mr. Wang Guowei [1877-1927] 's articles on the juncture between the Yin and Zhou dynasties are excellent, and it would be well for you to read them. That is why the Zhou ritual's being resplendently clear and complete is based on the two great features of *qinqin* and *zunzun*. Their institution was not without good reason, for following *qinqin* and *zunzun*, the “three hundred rules of propriety, the three thousand rules of demeanor” did not fall from heaven, did not issue from the earth but are founded on human nature, on human feelings. You may simplify them a bit, but every single article has a basis, and all are reasonable. This is different from the dogmas based on Western religion. These rituals are not dogmas. Religious societies have many ridiculous dogmas that are senseless. For example, Pythagoras [fl. ca. 532 BCE] of ancient Greece had a secret religious organization that prohibited members from eating beans. Totally inexplicable.

However, by the time of the Spring and Autumn period, the rituals of the Zhou began to lose their effectiveness. This set of codes, regulations, and institutions of the 300-year Western Zhou period, this set of ritual and music, started to develop problems in the Spring and Autumn period. I call it “the exhaustion of the Zhou culture.” When the thought of the various philosophers emerged, it was to deal with these problems. This is where the real problem lay. It was not a general so-called social problem, nor a general problem of the people suffering. It was just this “exhaustion of the Zhou institutions.” The reason why I said that the four schools Confucianism, Moism, Daoism, and Legalism were involved was because these four schools shared a common feature; that is, they were all directed at “the exhaustion of the Zhou culture.” Only by thus explaining the origin of the various masters can we be precise and incisive. It follows that we have to examine the attitudes of the four schools towards Zhou culture. Only by understanding

their attitudes can we begin to understand what caused their emergence. Only this kind of understanding can be called an essential understanding.

How did Confucius view the Zhou culture? His attitude was positive, ritual being always necessary. Whatever the period, a society will always need ritual. Confucius believed that the rituals instituted by the Duke of Zhou were in his time still useful. Of course they could be contracted or expanded with prudence but you ought not to radically overturn them. So his attitude was positive. However, it was through his re-vitalization of the Zhou rites that he came to develop what is called Confucian thought. For it was not that the Zhou rituals were without objective validity because of intrinsic flaws, but rather that they had lost effectiveness because the nobles were corrupt and degenerate and unable to carry the weight of the ritual and music. Corruption undermined their ability to uphold these rituals, and if they could not practice them, would not the Zhou rituals then become empty? Because they became empty, they became mere form, became so-called formalism. The Mohists and Daoists looked upon them as mere form and thus wanted to negate them. Confucius knew that the corruption of the nobility made the Zhou ritual empty, but he wanted to re-vitalize it. The Confucian attitude was that to make the Zhou ritual valid, it had to be first revived. And how was it to be revived? Confucius brought out the word *ren* [humane, humaneness, humanity] and hence the statement, “The ritual, the ritual’, they say. Does it only mean jades and silks? ‘The music, the music’, they say. Does it only mean bells and drums?” and “If men are not *ren*, what use is ritual? If men are not *ren*, what use is music?” and the like. So we see that ritual and music must have real meaning, must have value. You must have real life and real life lies in this *ren*. That is why the idea of *ren* is brought out to make ritual and music authentic, to give it life, to invest it with objective validity. With this, the problem emerges, and it does not lie in the ritual and music. Ritual and music can be improved a bit, that is no problem, for the Sage is neither conservative nor obdurate. Following the times, ritual may be contracted or expanded, for this was done in the Three Dynasties. “The Yin following the Xia ritual, what they subtracted or added can be known. The Zhou following the Yin ritual, what they subtracted or added can be known. As to the successors to the Zhou, even after a hundred generations, it can be known.” (*Analects* 2.23). This is subtracting and adding, on which Confucius has spoken clearly. Thus the

Confucians were not diehard conservatives “clinging to the remains, and guarding the tatters” of the Zhou ritual. The Zhou ritual was not impracticable in itself, for if you yourself had real life, it would be practicable. The most important thing was to revive men’s lives, and when the question arrived at this juncture, it became Confucian thought. That is why, from this point of view, Confucian thought opened up the path to the fountainhead of values, and set upright the moral subject. In this respect no one could surpass the Confucians. In speaking of opening up the path to the fountainhead of values, we mean by values moral values, the values of life.

The Confucian contribution to mankind came about when it began to reflect on the culture of the Three Dynasties, and when such reflection led to the idea of *ren*. With the emergence of the idea, principles also emerged, and when principles emerged they determined the direction of man’s life. Confucianism therefore is a great doctrine. I have often described this great doctrine in these words: “In opening the path to the fountainhead of values, in raising upright the moral subject, none have surpassed the Confucians.” Here is the essential meaning of why Confucians are Confucians. Hence in their teaching they do not turn outside to speak, they speak directly from here. They do not take a detour and speak from God, nor do they speak from [the Buddhist]“dependent-origination substance-empty [*yuan qi xing kong*]”. They do not go outside but speak directly from this *ren*. This indeed is greatness, ordinary but profound. For people’s mentality is always turning outward. Herein is the greatness of Confucian teaching, whereby it helps human beings rise to their feet again. That is why in discussing Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, I describe Confucianism with the words: “In opening up the path to the fountainhead of values, in raising upright the moral subject, none surpasses the Confucians.” And Daoism? “In discerning change, none can surpass the Daoists.”

Although Daoism has spoken abundantly on esoteric principles and esoteric thought, their main effect is to discern reversal, to apprehend the crux of change. The Daoists are able to see clearly the situation of the times and discern critical change, Zhang Liang [c.189 BCE] being a quintessential example. It is not that the Confucians do not understand critical change, but that they also have a fundamental spirit that does not allow them merely to move along with critical change. The Confucians cannot

merely apprehend critical change, they also have a question of right and wrong, they also have moral judgement. Without moral judgement, without right and wrong, once the situation deteriorated, would they not become opportunists? Even if not opportunists, they could flee into the deep mountains in search of seclusion. Didn't the Daoists do that? But no. That is why in past history when times deteriorated, only the Confucians were able to be fully responsible and to stay the course. In times of peril, only the Confucians were able to stand as the upright column in the rushing stream. To take refuge in seclusion is not enough. And what about the Buddhists? "In discerning karma, none can surpass the Buddhists." That is to speak in comparison with Christians. Christianity teaches sin and original sin through myths. It speaks of sin every day, but after all its teaching, people are still not always sure what sin is. Buddhism teaches karma and ignorance, pushing aside original sin step by step, which is to say "In discerning karma, none can surpass the Buddhists."

Let us move on to Mohism. What was Mo Zi's attitude toward Zhou ritual? Mo Zi's attitude toward Zhou ritual was one of negation. Mo Zi's teaching viewed Zhou ritual from the standpoint of utilitarianism. He was therefore in favor of rejecting Confucianism, rejecting music, in favor of frugal burials, and so forth. Thus Xun Zi [fl. 298-238 BCE] criticized Mo Zi [c. 479-381 BCE] with the words "He elevates utility, exhorts frugality, and belittles gradations and degrees." (*Mo Zi*, "Rejection of the Twelve Masters" chapter). To elevate utility means that Mo Zi looked upon utility as of the highest importance; to exhort frugality and despise gradations and degrees means that he regarded frugality as of the greatest importance, belittling the gradations of *qinqin* and the degrees of *zunzun*. Mo Zi's thought was very shallow, with no understanding of the gradations of *qinqin* and degrees in *zunzun*. The rank-distinctions of *qinqin* and *zunzun* are the ranks of values, which should be preserved. They are not the classes that the Communists talk about. These are ranks. Ranks and classes are not the same. For example, in the military there are such ranks as lieutenants and colonels. In schools there are professors, associate professors, lecturers, teaching assistants, all of them ranks, not classes. But when the Communist Party talks about struggle, it confounds classes with ranks, saying that professors, associate professors and lecturers are the ruling class and students are the class being ruled. They even go so far as to apply it to their family,

saying parents are the ruling class and children the class being ruled. All rubbish. The gradations of *qinqin* and of *zunzun* are ranks, are value concepts, determined by a person's talent, morals, and the closeness or distance in filial duty. These are not classes. Mo Zi did not understand these gradations in *qinqin* or degrees in *zunzun*, as a result of which he descended into a simple and roughhewn utilitarianism. He regarded the Zhou ritual as being convoluted and wasteful; hence he did not want to take Zhou as a model, but rather wanted to hold as models the Xia and Xia Yu [founder of the Xia dyn.]. That is why Mr. Tang Junyi [1909-78] once said that Mo Zi was sub-humanist, sub meaning not reaching, not arriving, at the necessity of humanist values; and therefore from the standpoint of utilitarianism he rejected humanism. In speaking of culture, we cannot adopt utilitarianism completely, for if we were to view culture completely from the standpoint of whether something is useful or not, the results would be awful. For then many things in our life would have to be removed.

Now let us take a look at Daoism. What was the Daoist attitude toward Zhou ritual? The Daoists also negated the Zhou ritual, but not from the standpoint of utilitarianism. Behind Daoist thought there was a fundamental insight, namely freedom and being at ease [*ziyou zizai*]. That is why it looked upon Zhou ritual as empty ritual, as formalism. Consequently, it regarded all of Zhou ritual as something external. The Confucians did not regard Zhou ritual as external, and hence they said: "The three hundred rules of ceremony, the three thousand rules of demeanour, did not descend from heaven, did not issue from the earth," but is based on human nature, human feelings. In this case they are not completely external but have roots in human nature. But this point could not be seen by Daoism. It only saw Zhou ritual as hollow ritual, as external, and hence fetters and shackles to our life, preventing us from being free and at ease. At the back of Daoism's fundamental spirit is a search for a lofty freedom and ease. Its freedom is not license, not the freedom appearing in the world today. Rather, it is a high-level cultivation. Hence Daoism talks about roaming, the equalization of things, and non-dependence. Because he saw Zhou ritual as hollow ritual, as external, Lao Zi said: "Therefore, after you lose Dao, you get virtue, after you lose virtue, you get humaneness [*ren*]; after you lose humaneness, you get duty [*yi*]; after you lose duty, you get ritual [*li*]. Ritual is the slighting of loyalty and trust, and the head of rebellion." (*Lao Zi*, chapter 38).

Zhuang Zi [c.369-c.286 BCE] even more conspicuously looked upon Zhou ritual as external and hollow ritual. He made several elegant statements on this. In the "Tianzi Fang [Sir Square Field]" chapter he says: "The people of the Central Kingdom are enlightened on ritual and propriety and uncouth in understanding the human heart and mind. Formerly, the people who saw me were, in entering and retiring, here completely proper, there completely decorous; in moving with dignity, they were here like a dragon, there like a tiger." To him the people of China were utterly proper when it came to ritual and decorum, but towards the human heart and mind they lacked understanding. This human heart and mind is not the moral mind and nature discussed by Confucianism but refers to the freedom and ease of the mind [*xinjing*]. Zhuang Zi maintained that the lives of these people were by no means free, their spirits not liberated, and they were unable to be free and at ease. This was how he looked at the Zhou ritual, in a way different from Mo Zi, even though the Daoists likewise adopted a negative attitude towards Zhou ritual. Mr. Tang Junyi has said that Daoism is supra-humanist. While Moism is sub-humanist, Daoism exceeds and stands above humanism, transcending humanism and opening up a new vision.

Finally, let us look at Legalism. How does Legalism regard Zhou ritual? Legalism also holds a negative attitude toward Zhou ritual. But it does not negate it in the same way as Mo Zi; nor does it open up another vision like Daoism. The Legalist attitude is very pragmatic. It has a thoroughly political perspective, making judgements from the perspective of success. Confucianism turned the Zhou ritual around to *ren*, establishing a noble doctrine, opening up the fountainhead of values. However, it was unable to solve the problems of the day, which is why people described Confucianism as quixotic. Nor did people heed those teachings of Mencius during his time. For the purpose of solving the problems of the time, the most practical and practicable was Legalism. Mo Zi's preachings didn't work; Daoism's preachings didn't work. What Legalism focused on were contemporary problems. At a time when the structure of society and politics was undergoing transition, the Legalists followed this structural transition and pressed forward, conforming their actions to this transitional trend. The structural transition in politics and in society we speak of here is not a generalization, but can be described in concrete terms. You can't just make general statements such as society developing

problems, the people suffering. If so, what kind of a society was the aristocratic society of the time? The political structure was feudalist. The economic structure was that of the well-field system. These had to be liberated, a task undertaken by Legalism. Legalism followed the contemporary trend of societal structure undergoing transition to complete this structural transition. This was moving with the trend to achieve its philosophy. Because Confucianism, Mohism, and Daoism did not achieve their philosophy by moving with the trend, their contributions could only be in the spiritual life. Towards the politics and economics of their day they made hardly any contribution.

Because Legalism sought to accomplish the structural transition by moving along with the changing times, their first step was to strike at the nobility. Consequently the Legalists had to clash with the nobles, engaging in a life and death struggle. However, once they did this, those who were emperors rejoiced, and so they all employed the Legalists. There was Li Ke [fl.5th cent.B], who became prime minister of Wei [403-241 BCE]; later Wu Qi [fl.5th cent. BCE] was prime minister of Chu [740-330 BCE], Shang Yang [died 338 BCE] was prime minister of Qin [897-221 BCE]. Thus employed, they all clashed with the nobility. To strike at the nobility, it was necessary to abolish the feudal system and to turn the land granted to the nobles into commanderies and prefectures [*jun xian*], political units subordinate to the national government. This was a step of progress, namely the abolition of the feudal system and the establishment of commanderies and prefectures. Commanderies and prefectures were objective political units whereas the fiefs of the nobles were not, the fiefs belonging to the nobles as private individuals. Then there was the removal of the well-field system. Only when the well-field system was abolished could the farmer obtain private ownership. This is where private ownership began. Once he had private ownership, then the farmer could enjoy freedom, and only then could he be an independent being not belonging to the noble. All these steps represented progress. This then was the work of the Legalists: striking at the nobility, abolition of the feudal system and establishment of commanderies and prefectures, and the abolition of the well-field system, these three measures. In the *Philosophy of History* I have recounted it in detail, and it would be well for you to look into it. This was the sort of work Shang Yang did in the state of Qin, the result of which he was sacrificed. Wu Qi in the state of Chu was also sacrificed. When Li Ke was in the

state of Wei, it was just the beginning of Legalism, and besides he did not do much and did not engage in too big a clash with the nobility, so he was spared. These were all able men, all with a strong sense of reality and by no means quixotic scholars. Li Ke was a student of Zi Xia [a disciple of Confucius], Wu Qi a student of Zeng Zi [a late follower of Confucius]. Both came out of the Confucian school, but in the end both became Legalists. Legalists like them were not bad men; they were practical men of action. At a time when the structure of society was undergoing transition they grasped the opportunity to accomplish this transition. Moving with the times, they were able to succeed, at the sacrifice of their own lives. Legalists of this kind were not evil men. Shang Yang was the model of a Legalist; Li Ke and Wu Qi were a prelude to the Legalists. The common phrase “Guan, Shang, Shen, Han” links Guan Zhong with Shang Yang, making Guan also a Legalist, which is not true. Guan Zhong cannot be considered a Legalist; he was a great statesman. When we speak of the great statesmen of Chinese history, Guan Zhong was the first of them. He was one of those rare figures of history, supremely intelligent, supremely wise, and possessed of great political acumen. That is why in the two hundred years of the Spring and Autumn period, Duke Huan of Qi's dominance over the empire was unequalled, for it was through the counsels of Guan Zhong that he became overlord of the Five Hegemons. We can only look upon Guan Zhong as a statesman, not a Legalist.

If we say that Legalists like Li Ke, Wu Qi, and Shang Yang were not bad men, then which Legalists and at what point became bad? Legalists became bad during the period from Shen Buhai [d. 337 BCE] to Han Fei [281-233 BCE]. We can't really say that discussing law is bad, can we, for without objective law there can be no real governance, and therefore law cannot be regarded as evil. Even the Sage cannot object to law, except that he rarely discussed it. This may be because during his time he did not notice this problem; but if you were to point it out to him, even the Sage could not object to law. But when Shen Buhai started to talk about *shu* artfulness [technique], then it became a problem. When it came to Han Fei, he merged the law of Shang Yang with the artfulness of Shen Buhai, adding his own thought, and this is where it got bad. This kind of Legalism, which is abhorrent, is precisely the Legalism venerated by the present-day [1978] Communists.

Why do we say that with the addition of artfulness [*shu*] it became bad? We said that law in itself is not something bad; this we all recognize. But it depends on what principles, on what spirit you base that law. This Legalism was based on the artfulness that was taught by Shen Buhai. And where did the artfulness of Shen Buhai come from? It came from the Daoists. When Legalism united with Daoism, Daoism changed in nature, while Legalism got bad. Law is objective, proclaimed from the government palace, publicized to society. Where then is this artfulness to be used? At the locus of the emperor. This is a secret den, a place I call the Kremlin. Residing at the place of the emperor, artfulness cannot be made public. It is a fundamental dynamic force hidden behind the operation of the law. And this artfulness is none other than being “unfathomable in reward and punishment, unfathomable in pleasure and displeasure,” that is, being inscrutable in pleasure and displeasure. Because the use of this artfulness also required great cultivation, Daoism had to be dragged in. Later on all those great emperors understood this sort of thing, the one who evinced it most clearly being Emperor Yong Zheng [reigned 1723-36] of the Qing dynasty. But Yong Zheng was not a student of Daoism; he was a student of Chan [Zen] Buddhism, which made it even worse, for that also ruined Chan Buddhism. From the perspective of his own personal subjective cultivation, Yong Zheng reached an admirable understanding of Chan Buddhism. But when he used that understanding to rule the great empire, it resulted in the sort of thing that Li Si [fl.221-213 BCE] and Han Fei practiced, a regime that was cold, sinister, and cruel. This is where Legalism turned bad. When Legalism reached Shen Buhai, Han Fei, Li Si and the emperor Shih Huang [r.221-209 BCE] of the Qin, it became a great evil. Li Si said to the emperor Shi Huang [First Emperor] of Qin: “Make law the teaching, make the functionary the teacher.” This was a great evil; never before had anyone dared utter such words. This was trashing the human being. He did not look upon the human being as a person; he merely looked upon the people as tools for farming or for war. As a result, the Qin dynasty promptly collapsed [209 BCE]. After that no one dared openly declare that they would employ Legalist thought, although they might furtively steal a little bit for use. But no one dared publicly uphold Legalism as his doctrine. When the Communist Party appeared, they did not say they were employing Legalism. Instead they used a new terminology, things like Marxism, Communism, and so on, which

actually mean the same. Doesn't Communism also use law as their teaching? They use Marxism, historical materialism, dialectical materialism, class struggle, and so on as their doctrine. They also use the functionary as teacher, the functionary in this case being the cadre.

We said earlier that Legalism emerged to complete the structural transition that was taking place at the time, resulting in the striking down of government by the nobility and the establishment of an autocratic monarchy. This was a great advance in the history of China. Hence the political structure advanced from its beginnings as government by the nobility to rule by an autocratic monarchy. The autocratic monarchy lasted more than two thousand years, bringing us now to democratic rule. As I see it democratic rule is the ultimate form. Political structure does not have many structural transformations, merely these three. With those two having passed away, only democracy has the ability to endure and only it has universality.

Transcribed by Po-cheng Chen 陳博政

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