

Philosophical explorations of the transformative dimension in Chinese culture

PFISTER, Lauren F

Published in:
Journal of Chinese Philosophy

DOI:
[10.1111/j.1540-6253.2008.00510.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6253.2008.00510.x)
[10.1163/15406253-03504010](https://doi.org/10.1163/15406253-03504010)

Published: 01/12/2008

[Link to publication](#)

Citation for published version (APA):
PFISTER, L. F. (2008). Philosophical explorations of the transformative dimension in Chinese culture. *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 35(4), 663-682. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6253.2008.00510.x>,
<https://doi.org/10.1163/15406253-03504010>

General rights

Copyright and intellectual property rights for the publications made accessible in HKBU Scholars are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners. In addition to the restrictions prescribed by the Copyright Ordinance of Hong Kong, all users and readers must also observe the following terms of use:

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from HKBU Scholars for the purpose of private study or research
- Users cannot further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- To share publications in HKBU Scholars with others, users are welcome to freely distribute the permanent publication URLs

Professor Lauren F. Pfister / 費樂仁

Religion and Philosophy Department

Hong Kong Baptist University

224 Waterloo Road, Kowloon

Hong Kong CHINA

Office Telephone: [852] 3411-7294

e-mail: feileren@hkbu.edu.hk

LAUREN F. PFISTER

**PHILOSOPHICAL EXPLORATIONS OF THE
TRANSFORMATIVE DIMENSION IN CHINESE CULTURE**

As human beings we recognize that we and the world of living things change over time, not only in the individual dimensions of our physical growth, which we generally take to be a natural process, but also in social and cultural contexts, where languages develop, institutions are born and die, and whole cultures thrive or even disappear. Some changes are minor and reflect only readjustments within the norms and patterns of already existing entities; other changes determine whether those entities will live in a new form or die and no longer survive. It is this latter form of change that this essay will address, one which we will refer to as participating in the “transformative dimension” of

any culture.

A classical philosophical example of this transformative dimension appeared in the famous and controversial notes created to become the fifth section of the commentary to the *Great Learning* (*Daxue* 《大學》), Zhu Xi (朱熹 1120-1200). The moment of transformation occurs when persons, after much serious effort in “investigating things”, manage to achieve a penetrating breakthrough in their intellectual grasp of the nature of the world and the things in it (*yi dan huoran guantong yan* 一但豁然貫通焉).¹ The resulting enlightenment is comprehensive: “The manifest and the hidden, the subtle and the obvious qualities of all things will all be known (*zhongwu zhi biaoli jingcu wu bu dao* 眾物之表裡精粗無不到), and the mind, in its whole substance and vast operations, will be completely illuminated” (*er wuxin zhi quanti dayong wu bu ming yi* 而吾心之全體大用無不明矣).² This example of a transformative moment in the interpretive history of Southern Song Ruist culture and the intellectual life of Zhu Xi not only provides a description of how one might become a Ruist sage, but adds insight into the way a sage can ultimately reshape social and natural realities in deeply transforming ways. That this re-creative power is in fact part of the image of sageliness seen in the last seven chapters of the *Zhongyong* 《中庸》or *The State of Equilibrium and Harmony*. There the sage or *shengren* 聖人, described as the perfectly authentic one (*zhicheng zhe* 至誠者),³ is described as having extraordinary charismatic powers of transformation within the sage-self and with other living beings, serving as a “partner with Heaven and Earth”.⁴ These are all examples of how a person can catalyze changes *both* within the norms of

society and the values of personal character because they themselves have already been transformed. This metamorphic change and its broader cultural impact is referred to here as “the transformative dimension” of reality (*benti cunyou de zhuanhua weidu* 本體存有的轉化維度).

Before exploring five other different expressions of this transformative dimension in Chinese cultural settings, we should clarify in greater detail some of the accompanying features of these kind of experiences which makes understanding them both philosophically significant as well as creatively insightful in resolving various problems faced within Chinese philosophical traditions.

I. Probing the Nature of the Transformative Dimension of Reality

All transformations are born within the hidden, invisible, but nonetheless concretely experienced realities of the decisive choices which human beings make. Yet it is the case that not all transformations are successful and sustained.⁵ That is to say, there are moments of transformation that ultimately and radically alter the social networks and private values that constitute a culture at any one point in its own history, while others appear to have only a partial impact of this sort, and still others, while being initiated in a transformative manner, end up being still-born or ineffective. This suggests that beyond the personal choices that bring transformations into being, there needs to be an inter-subjective affirmation from others as well in order that a transformation can be fully realized and bring about the harvest of a newly formed social and cultural whole. From

an ontological perspective this means that, whether in the cases of personal, relational, communal, or cultural transformations, there is a metaphysical reality within which these transformations take place over time, so that the direction of these changes reflects a deeper transition that has taken place in reality.

In describing these elements of a successful and sustained transformation, then, we are indicating that there is *an inherent necessity* driving the transformation into being, and that this necessity is a felt need, a living option (in the sense of William James' use of the phrase) which is *confirmed* and consequently *chosen* by others as well because of their *inter-subjective experience* of that shared necessity for change. This is precisely where a transformative change requires more of a person and a group than any natural change, for birth, growth and death in living things may not be driven by an inter-subjectively confirmed and chosen necessity, even though these factors of life occur with a spontaneity that indicates that some other form of inherent necessity is at work. Transformations are human and social affairs, they are socio-cultural powers which stand in contrast with social norms and private desires which move people within any one particular cultural-historical setting. They carry within them a necessity for metamorphosis that provokes broad-ranging changes in the form and content of the lifestyles of those who experience their necessity, share in the burden of their call for change, and adopt creative actions that realize the new expression of culture by challenging and replacing older cultural forms and their accompanying content.

Having made these elements of the transformative dimension manifest, we should

once more underscore the fact that not all transformations are effective, realized, or sustained. These occur because the socio-historical conditions of the desired cultural metamorphosis may hinder or even obstruct the change from being fully realized. For example, a visionary person who has the roles and perceived authority to announce change may initiate a cultural transformation, but if those whom she or he counts as supporters or followers are unwilling to take the same steps, even though they have confirmed the need for the transformation, the process will be stopped due to a lack of inter-subjective convictions that prevented its realization. On the other hand, if some followers are transformed but others are not, those who adopt the new order may end up living in tension with those who have remained within the former lifestyle and its social forms, or they create a new and wider synthetic whole that incorporates the not-yet-changed elements into their larger vision for a totally transformed culture. In this sense, their transformation is perhaps only partially successful, but they are aspiring toward the greater metamorphosis that their hopes and vision still maintain for the sake of future generations.

Within this account of the transformative dimension of culture there are assumptions about the very nature of culture itself, and so we need to address the nature of culture in a manner that will provide insight into this particular dimension of its expression. This is a philosophical concern because the term “culture” is used in a large variety of ways, sometimes intending to be a general concept relating to the common elements shared by a large group of people, and other times referring to something relatively special, refined,

and even elitist in character, indicating the distinctive qualities of a group of highly trained and unusual persons. In this essay I am employing the term culture in a manner that reflects more of the former direction than the latter. Put more precisely, I consider the term “culture” to refer to “the dynamic and tensed time-space unity constituted by the values and institutions by which people live”.⁶ Because our experience of culture is vitally engaged *both* in the articulation of inner values within realized external institutions *as well as* the reassertion and reconstruction of those values as institutions develop over time, culture needs to be understood as a dynamic process of articulation and realization within the understandings of our shared pasts, our projected futures, our affirmed inward identities and the external values and institutions that challenge or even threaten our existence as a cultural whole. In this sense, cultural times and spaces are located in our historical recollections, our future projections, our inward affirmations, and our external rejections; they are united through our inter-subjective attempts to articulate and justify the values which matter to us, which constitute the very heart of our cultural identities, and solidified in our communal efforts to institutionalize these values by means of networks of organizations and their accompanying technologies that sustain our chosen form of life. Notably, any culture is a complex and living entity; cultures may live and die, a fact that persons who live in the transformative dimension fully understand, while that same fact threatens those who maintain their existence on the basis of the social norms and institutions which embody authoritative positions of social power and receive acceptance by a majority of those within the culture. Precisely in this sense, then, the

transformative dimension of reality is an expression of cultural change which challenges many norms within the standardized values and institutions of that culture at one point in time, so that a new set of values and institutions might come into being, and possibly even replace the previous set of values and institutions because of its having lost its inter-subjective support and institutional legitimacy.⁷

Taking these initial presentations of the transformative dimension of reality and the nature of culture as our starting point, it will be argued here that there are at least five expressions of this transformative dimension in Chinese cultural traditions that carry a profound philosophical significance. So, though this essay does not intend to exhaust all the cultural expressions of the transformative dimension in Chinese cultural history, it is hoped that it might offer some insights that could resolve some aspects of the search for wisdom in Chinese cultural settings that have not previously been fully explained in this manner. Though the focus is on Chinese cultural expressions of this transformative dimension, we will employ a comparative philosophical method in elaborating their significance. The five expressions of the transformative dimension within Chinese culture explored here below include the following settings: ethical, cosmic, religious, political, and intercultural settings.

II. A. Personal-Relational or Ethical Transformations

In the 11th chapter (*Xianjin* 先進) of the *Analects* (*Lunyu* 論語), there is a poignant set of sayings that describes the traumatic context of the death of Master Kong's 孔子

best and most beloved student, Yan Yuan 顏淵 (given name Hui 回). Dying when his teacher was in his later years and already well recognized, he himself probably having accepted disciples, Yan Hui was the living hope which Master Kong had depended on for shaping the future cultural and political landscape of what was once the united Middle Kingdom. As a consequence, his death was a heavy blow for his aged teacher, leaving him grieving to the point of perceived ritual impropriety.⁸ What is suggestive of an expression of a transformative relationship is the fact that Master Kong makes a startling justification for his preference for an appropriate ritual form during the funeral procession: because Yan Hui treated him like a father, he would like to treat him as a son.⁹ Most commentators focus their explanations on the ritual propriety of a poor family such as that of Yan Hui having to bear the economic burden of an expensive funeral, and then explain away this comment by indicating that the actual father of Yan Hui was the one who should make that decision.¹⁰ Nevertheless, there is within this scenario a transformative element which may threaten our assumptions about the relational possibilities within a Ruist worldview. Can a teacher-student relationship become a father-son relationship? Is it possible that the virtuous development of filial piety (*xiao* 孝) could lead not only to a moral orientation, but even to a trans-valuation of a less intimate relationship, causing it to become more intimate and so transformed into another kind of relationship?

What makes answers to these kind of questions more complicated is the fact that some have assumed that Master Kong is more of a traditionalist in thought and character,

and so would in principle be opposed to such a transformation of basic ethical relationships and their ritual expression.¹¹ Stated even more trenchantly, have the five ethical relationships become so standardized and so rigorous that the roles of “intimate authority” which they establish through ritual propriety actually reinforce hierarchical structures and so become unresponsive to such transformative possibilities?¹² Have the rituals of relational bonds become unchangeable norms of ethical and social laws?¹³

In spite of these contrary interpretive tendencies, there are good justifications for taking Master Kong’s claims seriously, noting at the same time that in this case his transformative desire was unrealizable because of the lack of inter-subjective consensus that could have led to that kind of personal-relational transformation. One of the reasons why we should take seriously the transformation

of relationships from cultural formality into bonds of great intimacy within Chinese cultural settings is because the rituals that express them allow for this flexibility. All ritual action (*li* 禮) entails a sense of propriety that is guided by what is recognized to be “fitting” and “right” (*yi* 義) in any particular context of action.¹⁴ So it can be argued, if Master Kong has already experienced this father-son intimacy in his relationship with Yan Hui, he was justified in adopting a ritual stance that embodied that relational realization, but was also perceptive enough to realize that, under the cultural circumstances of his day, and due to the fact that Yan Hui’s father was still alive, he would not be able to assert that role in the context of his funeral. For that reason, he suffered as a “father-in-waiting”, knowing that his spiritual son was not being treated in a

way that would be most suitable under the circumstances.

II. B. Positive Personal-Cosmic Transformation

If the ethical transformation described above is difficult to accept, because it stretches us beyond our normal understanding of Ruist ethical categories, then the dramatic changes that are expected to mark out the character and function of the Ruist sage in the *Zhongyong* or *The State of Equilibrium and Harmony* would be all the more startling. There is an exaltation of the Ruist sage in the final chapters of this canonical text that qualifies the sage as having “godlike qualities” even though not “actually being divine”.¹⁵ In this light it is most revealing to take up a small but influential text written by a well-known Ruist from the Northern Song, Zhang Zai 張載(1020-1077), his short treatise entitled “The Western Inscription” (*Xi ming* 《西銘》).¹⁶ Just over 250 characters in length, and forming the initial part of the 17th and last chapter of his final work compiled by students just before his death entitled *Zheng Meng* (正蒙 *Correcting Youthful Ignorance*),¹⁷ it stretches familial relationships metaphorically in order to embrace the whole cosmos. Though criticized as upholding “feudal institutional values” because of its extension of a cosmically-based justification for imperial order,¹⁸ it also constitutes “the most vivid organismic Confucian vision of the human station in the cosmos and human society and government since the chapter *Datong* <大同> in the *Liji* 《禮記》(*The Book of Rites*)”.¹⁹

The first lines of this tractate describing a Song Ruist “antropocosmic vision”²⁰

extends the metaphors of extended family relationships into a “cosmopolis” very much like the ancient Greek Stoic vision of reality.²¹ So Zhang Zai commences, “Qian 乾 is called father and Kun 坤 is called mother. We, such minuscule things here, are intimately bound up with them. Therefore, what fills Heaven and Earth constitutes my concrete presence; what governs Heaven and Earth is my nature. The people are my siblings, and other things, my companions.”²² The inscription later adds, “Sages harmonizes their virtues [with Heaven and Earth]; worthy persons embody their excellences. All those under the heavens who are exhausted, decrepit, worn out, or ill, or who are brotherless, childless, widowers, or widowed, are my brothers who are in distress and have no one to turn to.”²³ How much this parallels the Stoic vision portrayed by the 2nd Century C.E. Roman emperor, Marcus Aurelius, can be weighed by considering the following account of his own understanding of reality. Arguing that the nature of reality is a “world-city” uniting Heaven and Earth and all beings (*κοσμοπῶλις* or *comopolis* in his own terminology), the philosophical problem was to raise one’s understanding from the state of a vulgar and ignorant person to that of a “soul that is rational, universal, and social”.²⁴

Consequently, while maintaining a cosmic awareness of the “fellowship of the universe”²⁵ where all heavenly and earthly beings were united, Aurelius was concurrently aware that philosophical understanding necessarily produced different classes of men and supported an elitist political structure. The interacting levels of reality were accessible only to the philosophically disciplined, and so required higher

ethical duties of those whose rational souls had been awakened by stoical teachings. Those who upheld this kind of "sincerity" would, in their due time, bear the fruit of philosophical peace.²⁶ This "higher Self" could be obtained only by "digging within" one's own soul by means of philosophical disciplines.²⁷ To those without these disciplines and their rewards, the world and their own lives become bound up in selfish pursuits which irresponsibly set aside the rest of reality as something impenetrably mystifying.²⁸ Where there are parallels here to Zhang Zai's understanding of a dynamic cosmic framework which activates and situates all political praxis, the role of rationality's liberating power that manages everyday life by means of creative powers drawn from "on high" through whole person cultivation is not specifically emphasized. Instead, Zhang Zai tends to emphasize moral practice over rational insight as the means to realizing one's role in this cosmopolis. In the end, both Aurelius and Zhang Zai accept that a person who cultivates this awareness of one's cosmic intimacy with all things will be able to "serve according to situations [as granted] while alive, and when one is no more, to experience peace".²⁹

The transformative dimension manifest here involves not only the "vital organismic cosmology" that stretches "intimate authority" into a cosmic embrace as extensive as one can imagine, but also a factor that is left unaddressed by all Chinese commentators I have been able to consult. Very few delve into the emotional components that imply – as both the elderly Feng Youlan 馮友蘭 and more recently, Chung-ying Cheng 成中英, insightfully assert – that Zhang Zai intended this text to invoke a clear plan for ethical

action.³⁰ There is here not only a call for an orderly society based on a clear set of hierarchical structures, but also to embrace all kinds of neighbors as those who are needing one's care and attention, extending this also into environmental protection and concern about natural resources. This is certainly transformative. At this point that one senses Zhang Zai's challenge to his contemporary society: those who are physically disabled, diseased, or bereft of normal blood family ties are to be treated as one's own kin! Yet it was and is precisely these kind of people that at various times of history were stigmatized within Chinese society in general as the victims of cruel (and even deserving) fates, who were considered unworthy of normal social interrelationship and were offered no place of dignity. So, even as Master Kong has pointed toward ethical transformations that were possible to consider but not acceptable in his own day, so Zhang Zai in his *Western Inscription* is challenging the social norms and private values of his day.³¹ In this light it seems right that Feng Youlan qualifies these claims as "super-moral" (*chao daode* 超道德), elevating them to the highest intellectual-spiritual realm that he identifies within human experience: the intellectual-spiritual realm of Heaven and Earth (*tiandi jingjie* 天地境界).³²

II. C. Sublated Personal-Cosmic or Religious Transformation

The use of the term "sublated" here is self-consciously borrowed from Hegel's concept of *Aufhebung*. In any movement of ideal change for Hegel, when a thesis and an antithesis join together in a new and advancing synthesis, they drop off whatever is

inappropriate or unjustified under the new conditions of synthesis, and bring together only what is now suitable to the new level of attainment. In this sense, there is not a simple extension of a shared value – such as the stretching of the family metaphor in the *Western Inscription* already described above to embrace the whole of the cosmos – but, rather, a more complicated set of dialectical turns that are endured in order to attain to the higher and more refined state of synthetic realization.

Take the case presented in chapter 19 of the *Daodejing*. There it reads, following the English rendering of Rhett Young and Roger Ames,³³

Spurn sagacity and repudiate erudition,
And the benefit to the people will be a hundredfold;
Spurn benevolence and repudiate righteousness,
And the people will return to [their natural] filial piety and commiseration; . . .
Manifest simplicity and embrace genuineness,
Attenuate personal considerations and abate desires.

Comments made by Chen Guying 陳鼓應 confirm that we find in these phrases “a major divergence” in Daoist and Ruist accounts of following the Dao 道.³⁴ While followers of Master Kong emphasized the role of cultivated humanness and rightness gained through the study and practice of ancient culture that would lead to wisdom and sageliness, the Old Master here repudiates them, believing that this “artificial” imposition of moral and elitist values ultimately harms the spontaneous nature of human beings. The Dao is not a human creation, but is the unspeakable origin of all things.³⁵ Here there is a cleavage in teachings regarding the Dao, resulting in very different forms of life. In this regard, early Daoist claims regarding the enlightenment accompanying its own account of

sageliness is a transformative challenge to Ruist teachings, but required that anyone who would follow its Dao would necessarily first turn away from Ruist orientations in order to attain the spontaneity of human nature based on the creative Dao which it advocated. Both intellectually and culturally, this Daoist approach involved a dialectical movement of spirit, a sublation of Ruist sageliness, wisdom, benevolence and rightness in order to attain a Dao-centered sageliness, wisdom, benevolence and rightness.

Another case of this sort arises in Chan Buddhism, challenging a claim made by Feng Youlan about the relationship between Chan and Ruist ethics. After describing how Chan sages gained enlightenment regarding the nature of the Buddha, Feng explained that their teachings guided them to then make a further adjustment, which was to return to live out “the ordinary things of daily life”. Having already indicated why the Chan sage would experience a different level of engagement while doing everyday things, precisely because she or he would bear “no attachment to anything”, Feng claimed that in following Chan’s “wonderful Dao” the Chan sage would be serving her or his family and state in the same way which any Ruist scholar would do.³⁶ Here Feng appears to misunderstand the sublated dimension of the Chan sage’s transformative experience: that person would not do such things because they are a duty, but because they are simply there to be done. A Ruist scholar would do so because of a conviction that filial duties required him to respond appropriately to both elderly family members and his ruler, but a Chan sage, living in non-attachment, would sense none of these constraints.

II. D. Dialectical Cultural or Political Transformation

Without a doubt, revolutions as a particular form of bellicose destruction of past institutions has indelibly shaped the contemporary Chinese scene, but since the revision of the PRC constitution accepted on March 14, 2004, with its establishment of the right for private ownership and its support for human rights, it appears that the original ideals of the Maoist-Marxist revolution have been superseded.³⁷ As a consequence, there is a philosophical interest in the dialectics of political and cultural transitions that occur during and after modern revolutions, for revolutionary war accompanied by subsequent adjustments occurring in any cultural and historical setting is actually another kind of transformative moment that leaves an obvious impact, but also in all cases does not realize the full scale of its grand purposes and ideals set out by the revolutionaries who initiated it.

When viewed from the broader angle of shared experiences across the continents and linking various historical and cultural periods, the transformative experience of revolution may bind together modern European, North American, and Chinese cultures in some previously unforeseen ways. What appears most significant here is that the earlier modern revolutions in Europe (England in 1688, France in the 1790s, the 19th century Marxist revolutions, and the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917) all failed, even as the Chinese Revolution of 1949 is failing.³⁸ None of them were able to create the ideal world which they intended to achieve through their own revolutionary means, but all of

them changed their age in ways that are culturally significant, and deserve further understanding. The situation is complicated enough that we need to address a number of factors that are clearly different in these various modern settings. For example, we need is to give some significant justifications and explanations for revealing why, after having passed through major revolutions, our cultures have continued to produce and spin-off *different kinds* of political and cultural life, including varying accounts of human rationality in and of itself. But let us reconsider these matters only after we have given a more thorough account of the nature of revolutions and their cultural significance.

One major theorist of “Western revolutions” was the German polymath, an ethnically Jewish and intellectually Christian social philosopher, Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy (1888-1973). Among his works dealing with the concept of revolution were two massive volumes, one completed in 1938 under the title, *Out of Revolution: Autobiography of Western Man*,³⁹ and another written in German first in 1931 and then revised in 1951, entitled *Die Europäischen Revolutionen (The European Revolutions)*.⁴⁰ Having created his own influences in both Harvard University and Dartmouth College after leaving a Nazi-dominated Germany in the early 1930s, Rosenstock-Huessy sought to resolve several mysteries about these European revolutions before China went through its own. After his death in 1973, a former colleague at Harvard and long-time admirer, George Allen Morgan, summed up insights gleaned from Rosenstock-Huessy’s long-term interests and writings about revolution. Here below eight of his fourteen main claims regarding the nature of revolutions will be summarized.

These will be applied to aspects of the 1949 revolutionary Chinese situation, which Rosenstock-Huessy did not comment on because he had no means to study it in any thorough manner.⁴¹

What should be emphasized from the outset is that these claims were not meant to advocate a historicist determinism related to each and every revolution, so that there was no variety or no possibility of other nuances in these nationalized revolutionary experiences. On the contrary, what Rosenstock-Huessy sought to reveal were common patterns of human experiences stemming from within different national revolutions, and so by means of these insights could both capture shared dimensions of revolutionary experiences in terms of these patterns, while also indicating why their later self-reflective enlightenments would necessarily be different.

First of all, each revolution breaks out in the most backward country within a particular international setting which has been galvanized historically by some form of revolutionary ideology. This simple fact must be seen as ironic from a Marxist point of view, since it was not anticipated by Marx, who argued instead that revolution should first occur among the working classes within the most advanced capitalist settings.

Second, each revolution follows a pattern of development that proceeds in the following manner: provoked by a point of “cultural pressure” created by otherwise unresolvable tensions among the people within a nation, it moves through further stages of upheaval and arrogance, ending in a stage of humiliation. This is to say, the ideals motivating each revolution always fail to be realized, but reach a point of cultural

transformation that both embodies its impact and rejects its extremism.

Thirdly, every revolution occurs during a period when a great cultural *Angst* takes over a nation, constituted by “the fearful sense that the old order has given up the ghost”. This anxiety is directly related to the particular history of that country and people, and so is a rejection which shapes the preferred form of rationality and enlightenment that the revolutionaries desire to instill within the new world they sought to realize.

As a consequence, each revolution seeks a different kind of freedom, a freedom “*from* something old and *for* the creation of a new order.” There is therefore a “dialectic of revolutions whereby the oppressed in one stage are liberated in the next”.

Rosenstock-Huessy goes on to claim that each revolution exports its particular contribution to revolutionized forms of life “most effectively during its period of humiliation, not during the initial upheaval”. So, for example, one sees new forms of “soft power” that highlights distinctive cultural contributions which China’s newly emerging capitalists prepare for international markets, yet all of these developments could only begin to be realized within the PRC during the post-Mao period.

Furthermore, all revolutions make claims that their revolutionary program is designed to change the whole of humanity, but in the end they “take root in a particular country and [so] shape the national character of that country”. This is why a different kind of rationality will tend to predominate along with its special form of enlightenment in various countries which have experienced revolutions in different periods of world history. One would consequently expect to find postmodern deconstructionism

predominating in contemporary France, while a democratic pragmatism would still weigh heavily in academic circles within the United States of America, and a concern for a higher harmony reached through the dialectics of theory and practice within the post-Mao years in the PRC.

Revolutions create distinctive institutions which continue to nurse the post-revolutionary character of a nation until it becomes effete “after several centuries of one-sided repetition”. Among these institutions are the creation of new “holidays” which “symbolize the respective revolutions”, and a “new political language” which captures the energizing spirit of its revolutionary ideals. Afterwards, it requires “enrichment” by subsequent revolutions which “regenerate the stagnant older ones”.

Finally, each revolution “has its own eschatology and leaves the preceding one behind”. Mao’s revolution started with a new vision of a world that could uphold the rights of farmer-peasants, and not those of the oppressed workers in the cities, as in the case of the earlier Russian revolution. This would also explain why there were needs to address hopes of the agrarian populace by land reforms and communes, making it so that each person would have something to eat and a place to live, even though the truly communistic society would not ever be achieved.⁴²

From this summary of eight key ideas revealing Rosenstock-Huessy’s understanding of the international and cultural significance of revolutions in general, there are at least two issues that can now be clarified in a more direct manner. First of all, the linking up of the different histories of Euro-American and Chinese revolutions as a single and

continuous history of a particular kind of modern transformative experience reveals patterns of life shared by all nations and peoples who have undergone revolutions. This combined history records the rise and fall of a dialectical cultural transition, one both culturally transformative in character and yet following patterns that regularly corrected the extremes which revolutionary ideals fueled but always failed to realize. Second, a reconceptualization of revolution as an expression of the transformative dimension of reality helps to explain why there would be different forms of rationality and various ideals embedded in post-revolutionary nations and international contexts, because the particular cultural-historical setting and the different ways the revolutions were achieved appeal to different ultimate values.

It is these values that stimulated a new intellectual search for understanding, one that relied on a more or less liberated consciousness, but not one that could ever serve as a universal standard for all peoples in all settings at all times. In this sense, Kant's universal claims for "transcendental philosophy" would have to be reconsidered in Europe and historicized by Marxist revolutionaries in Russia, and may only retain its place in those parts of institutions of higher learning that would tend to overlook the historical diversities of cultural forms and worldviews. On the other hand, the anti-religious and explicitly anti-Christian elements of the European Marxist revolutionary rhetoric can be seen as having worked out a desire for a secular form of salvation, one which was imbedded into Chinese citizens minds through massive propagandistic campaigns, and so on the basis of a dialectical understanding of

post-revolutionary cultural developments may be part of a larger explanation of why a revitalization of Chinese Christian spirituality and the rapid growth of indigenous Protestant groups in late 20th and early 21st century China became possible. This is to say, for the first time in modern Chinese history a single form of political ideology was dominant within all sectors of Chinese society – that of Maoist-Marxist thought – and so created a vast desire for the ideals of a secular revolution; during the so-called “Great Cultural Revolution”, when all normal life was being distorted through ideological extremism, the expansive desires for salvation remained, and shifted toward answers offered in their original metaphysically-oriented religious context.⁴³

II. E. Inter-cultural Transformation

How could we begin to understand the nature of 21st century Chinese philosophical discussions without including the cross-cultural impact of Russian and other European Marxist traditions on Chinese Communist thinkers? Similarly, how would we be able to probe deeply into the synthetic achievement of the philosophical system of the Song Ruist scholar, Zhu Xi, without considering the intra-cultural influences of Daoist cosmology and the inter-cultural significance of certain Chinese Buddhist concepts, particularly the concept of pattern-principle (*li* 理)? Intriguingly, in both of these major cases, the impact on subsequent generations of Chinese persons was wide and long-lasting, but also not without their troubles. Nevertheless, we have tendencies to place our philosophical categories and the history of their development into much neater

and compact conceptual frameworks, so that the transformative dimension realized through inter-cultural syntheses is sometimes left unaddressed. So, for example, while Antonio S. Cua's 柯英雄 compilation of articles to form the *Encyclopedia of Chinese Philosophy* is certainly an academic and philosophical milestone, and though it includes one article on "Comparative Philosophy" and another on "Marxism in China", there is little to indicate the cross-cultural currents that shape other major traditions, such as those of the Song Ruists mentioned above.⁴⁴

Though we do not intend to elaborate much further on the importance of this area of transformation for the study of Chinese culture, it is worthwhile to point out that certain trends within Chinese philosophical circles, especially since the mid-1990s, should provoke our interest in understanding the growing significance on inter-cultural transformations within the studies of 21st century Chinese philosophy itself. For example, a recent review essay on the development of philosophical hermeneutics within Chinese contexts has indicated the transformative capacity of this relatively new philosophical area of expertise to have on future developments in wide ranges of Chinese philosophical research.⁴⁵ Not only is there a readdressing of traditional forms of textual hermeneutics in Ruist, Daoist, and Buddhist canonical literature, but there is in addition a new orientation promoted under the rubric of "ontohermeneutics" that creatively engages and answers some major cross-cultural philosophical questions by means of reference to both Chinese and non-Chinese philosophical texts and orientations.

Another area of recent development that is receiving some broad interest is the

reassertion of a religious dimension with Ruist traditions by Chinese philosophers and others within “cultural China”.⁴⁶ These discussions are not only stimulating new studies in Chinese philosophies of religion, but also raising interests created by inter-religious dialogues (Ruist-Christian, Ruist-Buddhist, and others) that even assert, following the creative reflections of Boston Confucians, that there could be room for a “multiple religious identity”.⁴⁷ This creative assertion has arisen because of intercultural transformations at work within philosophical and religious circles, and overcomes the artificially separated “ideal religious traditions” which have often been assumed within academic circles, sometimes appealing to the sociological framework articulated by Max Weber.⁴⁸ Here, as in so many other cases where cultural transformations are at work, the standard academic norms of philosophical discourse do not indicate the actual dynamic nature of situations which allow for these developments; inter-cultural transformations are already at work within our inter-subjective speech-life long before we become self-conscious of their existential poignancy and their cultural importance.

III. Conclusion

The purpose of this article has been to highlight a dynamic realm of cultural experience that is described in a number of Chinese classical, pre-modern, and contemporary situations and texts. The transformative dimension in Chinese culture has been shown to be a realm of cultural reality in which the social norms and private desires of persons are changed due to necessities that emerge within the dynamic and tensed

conditions of any one culture at a particular time. In this sense, we have argued that the recognition of the qualities and powers of the transformative dimension of reality is a key to explaining a number of interpretive problems within Chinese cultural settings, underscoring its value in providing insight into some inter-subjective experiences in Chinese culture that at times are overlooked or misunderstood. While attempting to offer a systematic account of what constitutes the transformative dimension of culture in general, we have also noted that, in spite of the necessities that normally provoke the realization of transformations by various means, it is not always the case that every transformative choice or act is successful. Conditions for their success and sustenance have been identified and explained, and five illustrations indicating how an understanding of the transformative dimension in Chinese cultural settings reveal certain philosophical problems which may not have been addressed or fully understood previously.

HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

Hong Kong, PRC

ENDNOTES

¹ Chinese and English versions of this part of the *Great Learning (Daxue)* are found in James Legge, *The Chinese Classics* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960), Vol. 1, 365-366.

² See Daniel K. Gardner, *Chu Hsi and the Ta-hsueh: Neo-Confucian Reflection on the Confucian Canon* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1986), 56-59,

105, 144 respectively.

³ Legge initially translated this phrase from chapter 32 of *The State of Equilibrium and Harmony* as “the individual possessed of the most entire sincerity” in 1861 (*Chinese Classics*, Vol. 1, 429), but in his later edition of *The Book of Rites* renders it as “he who is entirely perfect” (*Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. 28, 327). Andrew Plaks has rendered the phrase as “those who have attained the highest degree of integral wholeness”, and Ames and Hall fill the same phrase with other imagery, “those in the world of utmost creativity”. See Andrew Plaks, trns., *Ta Hsüeh and Chung Yung (The Highest Order of Cultivation and On the Practice of the Mean)* (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 53; also Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall, *Focusing the Familiar: A Translation and Philosophical Interpretation of the Zhongyong* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2001), 113. Ames and Hall justify this unusual rendering by citing as a precedent a passage from the *Mengzi* 4 A: 12, but in that passage, the same term *cheng* 誠 is never rendered as “creativity” by any other translator of the text (including Legge, “sincerity”, and D.C. Lau, “being true”, in his *Mencius: A Bilingual Edition* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 2003), 160-161).

⁴ In chapter 23 of *The State of Equilibrium and Harmony* the sage is described as one who “able to give the full development” (*neng jin* 能盡) to things, and so ultimately participates in the “transforming and nurturing powers of Heaven and Earth” (*zan tiandi zhi huayu* 贊天地之化育). See Legge, *Chinese Classics*, Vol. 1, 416.

⁵ My thoughts on these matters have been sharpened through dialogue with my teacher, Prof. Chung-ying Cheng, as well as in conversations on this topic with my colleagues, Dr. William Ng Yau-nang 吳有能 and Dr. Ellen Zhang Ying 張穎.

⁶ This is my distillation of seminal ideas related to a vision of reality from a chapter entitled “The Cross as Reality” in Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy’s volume, *The Christian Future or The Modern Mind Outrun* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 166-176.

⁷ In another context I dealt with a tripartite vision of reality rooted in cultural expressions, which is a fuller vision of the place of the transformative dimension within a comprehensive cultural vision of reality. There I distinguish what could be called a “three world theory of reality” which consisted of playful, serious, and creative/transformative worlds. It appears in the final pages of the following article, and is further elaborated in a chart attached to this article: “Reconsidering Metaethical and Ethical Dimensions of Play and Sport from a Comparative Philosophical Perspective”, *Orientierung* (Bonn University) 2/2005 (December 2005): 1-22.

⁸ The relevant passages appear in *Analects (Lunyu)* 11: 7-10 (Legge) or 11: 8-11 (most 20th century renderings, which will be used here below as the standard enumeration). The claim that Master Kong was displaying “excessive grief” (*tong* 慟) is made explicit in 11:10. Exactly which year Yan Yuan died is not agreed upon. *The Grand Dictionary of Master Kong (Kongzi da cidian 孔子大辭典)* edited by Zhang Dainian 張岱年(1993) places the date in 481 B.C.E., when Master Kong was 70 years old (434); to the contrary, *The Grand Dictionary of Chinese Philosophy (Zhongguo zhexue da cidian 中國哲學大辭典)* edited by Fang Keli 方克立 (1994) sets it in 490 B.C.E., or when he was about 60 years old (735).

⁹ *Analects* 11: 11.

¹⁰ See for example the commentaries summarized beneath the English translations of

these passages in Chichung Huang**, trns. and comm., *The Analects of Confucius* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 118-119, as well as Edward Slingerland, trns., *Confucius: Analects with Selections from Traditional Commentaries* (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co., Inc., 2003), 114-115.

¹¹ This problem of interpretation in modern European accounts of Master Kong's teachings has been summarized in the title of the book by Werner Lühmann, *Konfuzius: Aufgeklärter Philosoph oder reaktionärer Moralapostle? (Master Kōng: An Enlightened Philosopher or Reactionary Apostle of Morality?)* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2003). This diversity of interpretations leads to confusion also within English language interpretations of Master Kong's teachings. See Kelly James Clark, "Three Kind of Confucian Scholarship", *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 2006 Supplement: 109-133, especially 111-116.

¹² So Tao Jiang 蔣濤 argues on the basis of research produced by Thomas Kasulis that cultures based on "intimate authority" tend toward supporting totalitarian structures. See the full argument in Tao Jiang, "Intimate Authority: The Rule of Ritual in Classical Confucian Political Discourse" in Peter D. Hershock and Roger T. Ames, eds., *Confucian Cultures of Authority* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2006), 21-47, the citation relying on Kasulis' assessment occurring on 36.

¹³ In this vein, Tao Jiang goes on to claim that in spite of the fact that ancient Ruist and Legalist traditions were opposed to each other, rule by law was ultimately "Confucianized" ("Intimate Authority", 37-42). In a volume attempting to address this problem from a larger diachronic perspective Yu Ronggen 俞榮根 straightforwardly asserts that the Ruist "law" (*fa* 法, which also suggests "imitation", "example" or "rule")

is constituted by “ethical laws” (*lunli fa* 倫理法). This claim manifests how the ethical norms can become so rigid as to resist any attempt at transcending or transforming them.

Consult Yu Ronggen, *Rujia fa sixiang tonglun* (儒家法思想通論 *A Comprehensive Account of Ruist Ideas about Law*) (Xining: Guangxi People’s Press, 1998), 131-154.

This is a revised edition of 1992 first edition.

¹⁴ This is argued persuasively by Antonio S. Cua in his article on “Li: Rites or Propriety” in Antonio S. Cua, ed., *Encyclopedia of Chinese Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 370-385, especially 374-375. This flexibility in ritual orientation is elaborated in David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, *Thinking Through Confucius* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1987), 85-110, and described briefly in reference to appropriate passages in the *Analects* by A. C. Graham in his *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China* (Chicago: Open Court, 1998, sixth printing), 10-13 and 255-261, referring to the teachings of Master Kong and those of Master Xun 荀子 respectively.

¹⁵ Quoted from Nicholas F. Gier, *Spiritual Titanism: Indian, Chinese and Western Perspectives* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000), 183. In this boldly iconoclastic book, Gier challenges those who want to deify Master Kong and Daoist immortals, arguing somewhat ironically in the final pages that “China’s sages are definitely not Titans”, that is, those who are self-sufficient, egoistic, rebels against society and nature, claiming “knowledge of things that they cannot possibly know”. In contrast, China’s sages, both Ruist and Daoist, are according to Gier “corporate personalities; they claim to know little; they blend in and harmonize; they find joy in nature; and they preserve their childlike hearts” (236). Ironically it seems that the vast majority of Daoist religious persons have apparently misread these texts in exactly the manner that Gier would prefer them not to

take them, for they assert that these are indeed gods worthy of their veneration and worship.

¹⁶ Two English language versions of the work are available in renderings made by Derk Bodde and Wing-Tsit Chan 陳榮捷, the former in his English translation of Fung Yu-lan's (Feng Youlan) second volume of *A History of Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), 493-495, the latter in *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 497-498. Chan mentions that there are several renderings in other European languages as well.

¹⁷ The Chinese original of both the *Zheng meng* and the *Western Inscription* appear as part of Zhang Zai, *Zhang Zai ji* 張載集 (*Collected Works of Zhang Zai*), ed. Zhang Xishen 章錫琛 (Beijing: Chinese Bookstore, 1978, republished in 2006), 3-66, the *Western Inscription* appearing at 62-63. A German rendering of the whole 17 chapter work has been rendered and commented on by Michael Friedrich, Michael Lackner, and Friedrich Reimann, *Rechtes Auflichten = Cheng-meng / Chang Tsai* (Hamberg: F. Meiner Verlag, 1996). Feng Youlan argues that this piece must have had an independent existence and then was later incorporated into the larger work by students just before Zhang Zai's death. Chung-ying Cheng names the original piece as "Rectifying Stubbornness" (*Ding wan* 訂頑). See Feng Youlan, *Zhongguo zhexue shi xinbian, diwu ce* 中國哲學新編, 第五冊 (*New History of Chinese Philosophy: Volume 5*) (Beijing: People's Press, 1995), 136. Also Chung-ying Cheng, "Zhang Zai (Chang Tsai)" in Antonio S. Cua, ed., *Encyclopedia of Chinese Philosophy*, 864-869, here at 868.

¹⁸ This is the major criticism in the section on "The ethical and moral ideas within the

Western Inscription” (“*Ximing zhong de lunli daode sixiang*” 西銘中的倫理道德思想) in the massive work written by Shi Xun 石訓 and seven other scholars, *Zhongguo Songdai zhexue* 中國宋代哲學 (*China’s Sòng Dynasty Philosophy*) (Zhengzhou: Henan People’s Press, 1992), 305-310. Feng Youlan comes to a similar conclusion, admitting that it would have been extremely difficult for Zhang to overcome this dimension of his “feudal social” conditions. See Feng Youlan, *Zhongguo zhexue shi xinbian: diwu ce* (*New History of Chinese Philosophy, Volume 5*), 151.

¹⁹ Quoting Chung-ying Cheng, “Zhang Zai (Chang Tsai)”: 868. Here the reference to “the chapter *Datong*” is referring to the first section of the chapter of the “Evolution of the Rites” (*Liyun* 禮運), the seventh book in the standard version of *The Book of Rites*.

²⁰ This is the phrase adopted by Tu Wei-ming 杜維明 and now employed as the interpretive basis for the recent account of “Confucian spirituality” that he and Mary Evelyn Tucker have promoted in *Confucian Spirituality: Volume One* (New York: Crossroad Pub. Co., 2003), 20.

²¹ See the general concept described in the context of elaborations of persons as “citizens of the universe” (κοσμοπολίτης [kosmopolitēs]) in Malcolm Schofield, *The Stoic Idea of the City* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999). As will be seen in the following, I will develop this comparative philosophical thesis from another specific Stoic text by Marcus Aurelius.

²² Translation by this author.

²³ Translation following precedents found in Derk Bodde’s and Wing-tsit Chan’s renderings, with some slight differences.

²⁴ The stoical cosmopolis is, in the words of Maxwell Staniforth, "a civic community in which the divine and the human dwell together in a common citizenship". Personal life and death are subsumed under the higher concerns of the "world-city" and the providence that ordains what humans have no means to change (see *Meditations* 12:36).

Nevertheless, one can seek to control one's mind through rational and sympathetic exercises of the "soul", and so attain the heights of a "rational, universal and social" vision of life (*Meditations* 6:14). All references here and below come from Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, trns. Maxwell Staniforth (London: Penguin Books, 1964). The gloss on cosmopolis above appears in the translator's introduction, p. 18. A brief explanatory note for the Greek terminology should be offered. Although he was a Roman *par excellence*, like others of his own noble heritage, Aurelius was trained philosophically by Greek teachers, and so wrote his notes "To Himself" (later given the arbitrary title, *Meditations*) in the Greek language. In this he was different from Cicero, a pre-imperial Roman politician and philosopher, who wrote similarly instructive treatises in Latin while relying on Greek precedents.

²⁵ *Meditations* 11:20.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 9:10; 11:15.

²⁷ *Ibid.*,7:59; 8:48.

²⁸ So Aurelius sums up certain ethical trends in his own day: "The man of ambition thinks to find his good in the operations of others; the man of pleasure in his own sensations; but the man of understanding in his own actions" (*Meditations* 6:51).

²⁹ Translation by this author.

³⁰ Affirmations of these insights occur in Feng Youlan, *Zhongguo zhexue shi xinbian*,

diwu ce (*New History of Chinese Philosophy, Volume 5*), 148, and Chung-ying Cheng, “Zhang Zai (Chang Tsai)”, 869.

³¹ Significantly, this seems to indicate something other than the idealized Chinese sages whom Nicholas Gier claims only seek to “blend in and harmonize” (see *Spiritual Titanism*, 236). Perhaps they do not strictly “stand as solitary rebels against society and nature”, but they were certainly able and willing to challenge various social norms that were inhumane or resisting the Dao.

³² Consult Feng Youlan, *Zhongguo zhexue shi xinbian, diwu ce* (*New History of Chinese Philosophy, Volume 5*), 137-138.

³³ Ch’en Ku-ying (Chen Guying), *Lao Tzu: Text, Notes, and Comments*, trns. Rhett Y. W. Young and Roger T. Ames ([Taipei]: Chinese Materials Center, 1981), 120.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 122.

³⁵ As in *Daodejing*, chaps. 1, 4, 42.

³⁶ Quoted from Fung Yu-lan (Feng Youlan), *Selected Philosophical Writings of Fung Yu-lan* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1991), 482-483 *in passim*. A recent Chinese rendering of this text is found in Feng Youlan, *Zhongguo zhexue jian shi* 中國哲學簡史, trns. Zhao Fusan 趙復三 (Hong Kong: Three Links Bookstore, 2005), 262.

³⁷ According to the English version of the PRC constitution, chapter two deals with “the Fundamental Rights and Duties of Citizens” and a phrase has been amended in Article 33 which declares “the state respects and guarantees human rights”. Private property rights have been upheld in general, reshaping much of the hopes and realities of the new middle class within the PRC. Here is a link to the English version of the current constitution, with amendments added as of March 14, 2004, as found in the link to the Wikipedia

article on “Constitutions”:

<http://www.npc.gov.cn/zgrdw/english/constitution/constToDetail.jsp?id=full&pages=0>

³⁸ In this regard, the “American Revolution” stands apart because it was actually an anti-colonial war that took up certain revolutionary rhetoric, and so it might be considered a “semi-revolution” rather than a full-fledged one. Its proclamations of “unalienable rights” was restricted primarily for European immigrants at that time, and did not include slaves brought over from the African continent or North American Indian tribes, issues that needed to be resolved later by further political and cultural developments (such as the Civil Rights Movement in the 1950s and 1960s) which appealed to those constitutional rights for all citizens of the United States of American and yet were not automatically granted until after much that was traumatic had occurred.

³⁹ A new edition of this older work has been published under the same name, accompanied by an introduction by one of the author’s students, now a retired professor from Harvard Law School, Harold J. Berman. See Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, *Out of Revolution: Autobiography of Western Man* (Providence and Oxford: Berg Pub., Inc., 1993).

⁴⁰ The first version, published in Jena by Eugen Diederichs in 1931, was subtitled “Volkscharakter und Staatsbildung” (“The Character of Peoples and the Formation of States”), while the second version published twenty years later was slightly longer and took the title, *Die Europäischen Revolutionen und der Charakter der Nationen (The European Revolutions and the Character of the Nations)* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1951).

⁴¹ Selectively cited from George Allen Morgen, *Speech and Society: The Christian*

Linguistic Social Philosophy of Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1987), 63-65. Since Rosenstock-Huessy wrote his initial versions of these volumes in the 1930s, they preceded the Maoist-Marxist revolution by at least a decade; his second edition of the German version was being completed just as the second Chinese revolution was taking place. As far as I know, there is no later work that he produced that dealt at any length with the 1949 Chinese revolution.

⁴² These contributions of the 1949 Chinese Communist Revolution were highlighted for me in the philosophical account of Mao Zedong's 毛澤東 thought in Feng Youlan's seventh and last volume of his final work in the history of Chinese philosophy. See Feng Youlan, *Zhongguo xiandai zhexue shi* 中國現代哲學史 (*A History of Contemporary Chinese Philosophy*) (Hong Kong: Chinese Bookstore, 1992), 144-178, but for discussion relevant to these matters, see especially 166-171.

⁴³ These claims have been worked out in much greater detail in the latter half of the author's article entitled "Brothers in the Spirit", presented in Jari Grosse-Ruyken, Marc Hermann, Christian Schwermann, eds., *Geflügelte Texte. Studien zur chinesischen Literatur und Lebenswelt und ihrer Rezeption in Ost und West. Festschrift für Wolfgang Kubin* (Nettetal: Steyler Verlag, 2007), 55-82.

⁴⁴ See articles by Shu-hsien Liu 劉述先 and Hoyt Tillman which deal with Zhu Xi's philosophical development and those who struggled with him or followed his lead, without any mention of either the Daoist or Buddhist influences involved in these discussions. Found in Antonio S. Cua, *Encyclopedia of Chinese Philosophy*, Shu-hsien Liu, "Zhu Xi (Chu Hsi)", 895-902, and Hoyt Tillman, "Zhu Xi (Chu Hsi): Rivals and Followers", 903-910.

⁴⁵ For a full range of discussions, see the 2006 Supplement to the *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* entitled *Hermeneutical Thinking in Chinese Philosophy*, and also the March 2007 issue of the same journal (34:1) devoted to “Modern and Contemporary Chinese Hermeneutics”. Both were edited by this author. In the introductory essay to the 2006 Supplement a substantial discussion of the history of Chinese studies in philosophical hermeneutics and the subsequent development of a multifaceted renewal of interests in hermeneutic questions is described and explored. See Lauren F. Pfister, “Hermeneutics: Philosophical Understanding and Basic Orientations”, *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 2006 Supplement: 3-23, esp. 3-11.

⁴⁶ One major milestone in this regard in the Anglophone world was the publication of the two volume set on *Confucian Spirituality* edited by Tu Weiming and Mary Evelyn Tucker (New York: Crossroad Pub., 2003-2004). An indication of the intensity and character of these public discussions in mainland China since the early 1980s has been documented in Ren Jiyu’s 任繼愈 edited volume, *Rujiao wenti zhenglun ji* 儒教問題爭論集 (*Collected Essays on Debates over Questions about Ruist [Religious] Teachings*) (Beijing: Religious Culture Press, 2000).

⁴⁷ Discussed in Robert Cummings Neville, *Boston Confucianism: Portable Tradition in the Late-Modern World* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2000), especially at 193-209.

⁴⁸ I have raised the question about how Weber’s general understanding of religious traditions cannot account for the synthetic realizations achieved in “Ruified Christian” expressions found in 19th and 20th century Chinese contexts in a recent article. See the final pages of the following article: Lauren F. Pfister, “Protestant Ethics among Chinese Missionaries, Problems of Indigenization, and the Spirit of Academic

Professionalization”, *Journal of Classical Sociology* 2:1 (March 2005): 93-114.