

Chapter 15

The Chinese Conception of the Self

Towards a Person-Making (做人) Perspective

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The indigenous approach I have adopted for the past fifteen years entails understanding the psychology of a people within their cultural/social/historical context (C. F. Yang, 1991a; 1993). The way I have done this is to construct, based on local materials and observations, a set of commonly shared meaning systems with which the people under investigation make sense of their lives and their experiences, and give out and derive meanings while interacting with each other (C. F. Yang, 1991b; 2000a; 2000b; 2001). This set of systems also helps indigenous researchers understand and interpret the behaviors manifested by that people.

In the case of Chinese culture, this approach originated and an indigenization movement flourished from a general dissatisfaction among psychologists and other social scientists over employment of the cross-cultural approach for understanding non-western peoples (Li, K. S. Yang, & Wen, 1985). One of the problems encountered by non-western psychologists in adopting the cross-cultural approach illustrates why I chose the path I report here for investigation of the Chinese conception of self.

The problem involves the use of a common framework for comparison. As Geertz (1984) poignantly pointed out, differences are differences because they are viewed from the same perspective and measured using the same yardstick. Genuine understanding of another culture requires not differentiating it from others, but examining it from a native's point of view. In cross-cultural psychology, the perspective used for comparison has, almost without exception, been western. The cultures involved in the comparisons, even if both are non-western, are often juxtaposed using a western framework. The result is that the views of non-western cultures

are often distorted to fit a comparative framework (see examples in the Chinese case in C. F. Yang, 1991c, 1996).

The indigenous approach advocates that non-local investigators put aside their past training and experience and their habitual way of thinking and understanding things in order to examine local people from the native's point of view. Local investigators need to put aside any western frameworks they adopted while receiving their social-science training in western countries, and examine their own cultures from within.

This alternative view-taking requires investigators to see and understand events and behaviors happening then and there. What is the thinking framework of the local people under study? Unfortunately, in pursuit of different thinking styles for different cultures, investigators have often returned to the cross-cultural approach. Consequently, western terminology permeates the discussions and debates even at this meta-cognitive level (see example in C. F. Yang, 2000b).

This paper has three goals: (1) to find a local thinking framework with which to develop an alternative perspective to the western one in order to discover new dimensions for future studies of the self, at least for studies of the Chinese self; (2) to explore the concept of the Chinese self at its formative stage, which was during the Pre-Qin (先秦) period in Chinese history (D. N. Zhang, 1989b; L. W. Zhang, 1989), and to use this deep-rooted conception to study the evolution of self-concept in the Chinese context and better understand the behaviors of modern Chinese people; (3) and, to suggest an alternative approach to the study of the self.

These goals are particularly worth pursuing in the case of Chinese culture for three unique reasons: (1) Scholars agree that mainstream Chinese thought about the self has not changed much since its formation in archaic times; (2) there are quite good written records preserved for such a pursuit, especially in recent years since many ancient tombs have been unearthed from which a number of books of important philosophical, social, and political thoughts have been recovered; (3) these writings mainly concern how to be a person and thus are about the self.

Before I go into the main theme, two more points need to be clarified to avoid misconceptions about the purpose of this paper. First, the purpose of this paper is not to find the ancient conception of the self and claim that modern Chinese are just copies of it. Employing a person-in-culture position, which I will elucidate shortly, I aim to find the model that modern Chinese people deal with and depart from. Understanding the archaic conception achieves only half of the goal that the indigenous approach sets. It lays out the foundation upon which the study of the modern Chinese self can begin.

The second point I would like to make clear entails answering a question often asked by readers of papers like this one. It is about whether there is only one Chinese conception of the self and whether it is too general and narrow-minded to think that there is only one model that

shapes the modern Chinese mind. This question often leads to debate concerning the usefulness of the pursuit just outlined for this paper. Many people, especially those working closely with local people in the field, cast doubt on such an effort because representative models have often failed to help understand the everyday lives of local individuals.

My answer to this question is that there has been more than one competing model, especially before and during the formative stage of the Pre-Qin period. Political struggles at the time often determined which model prevailed (A. Wang, 2000). However, in the process of forming a dominating model, competitors learned and borrowed from each other as they consolidated their own models. Once the struggles in the social and political arenas ended and one model emerged as the official one, it had to incorporate rival thoughts in order to ensure survival. The mainstream model, the Confucian one in the Chinese case, actually absorbed many other thoughts prevailing at the time. It is fairly safe to say that, at least for the Chinese case, the official model has survived several serious challenges and emerged relatively unscathed as it evolved, which may not be true in other cultures.

There is, of course, local opposition to this mainstream ideology in China, but fully understanding the local scene requires examination of the official backdrop. Therefore, the usefulness of conducting a historical search for the main root is justified, whichever position researchers take concerning the relationship between culture and the individual.

ORGANIZATION OF THIS CHAPTER

In this paper, I first introduce the age-old Chinese yin/yang (陰陽) mode of thinking with the aim of replacing the western one for the study of the self. In my illustration of this mode, special attention is paid to its differences from the modern western mode usually employed by social sciences investigators. This comparison is made to demonstrate that the futile comparison of lower levels of cognitive processes, as often studied in cross-cultural research, could be the result of differences at the meta-cognitive level.

With this new mode of thinking, I then carry out a search, inspired by Wundt's approach to the study of folk psychology as elaborated by Jahoda (1992), for the root of the Chinese conception of the person and the self. This historical adventure provides good material from which a picture of the inception of the Chinese self can be reconstructed.

Based on this sketch, I then adopt the person in culture position to establish the link between culture and individual and to develop a new perspective for the study of the self. The person in culture position examines what types of problems the people under investigation living under and beyond the conditions and constraints of their cultural heritage face and how they come to solve these problems and hence demonstrate

certain behaviors as a result. In other words, researchers can derive a set of meaning systems with which they can encode and interpret the manifest behaviors of a people.

Taking this position to study the Chinese self, I discuss the main problem with the Chinese conception of the self when applied to real-life situations, and briefly mention how a two-tier (large- and small-self) self meaning system solves this problem. With this meaning system, I suggest a new approach to the study of the Chinese self and some areas that are worth looking into.

THE YIN/YANG MODE OF THINKING

The basic Chinese mode of thinking has been discerned by many indigenous and outside scholars from various fields as being very different from the western mode used by mainstream social science and humanities (e.g., Meng & Kuang, 1993; R. B. Yang & Huang, 1996; L. W. Zhang, 1989). Many scholars characterize and call it the yin/yang mode of thinking. Adopting this mode of thinking, every phenomenon is viewed from a perspective that enables the perceiver to summarize and label it with a pair of terms, such as cold-hot, soft-hard, beautiful-ugly, etc. These terms are referential in the sense that they do not represent objects but describe states. They often seem as if they were contradictory or opposing, but they do not have to be so, as, for instance, in universe-human and country-family, both of which describe a relationship of inclusion.

The fact that yin describes a shady side of things and yang a bright side, has led many to think that these are not only logically incompatible concepts (and therefore can be called a contradiction), but also value-laden in the sense that yin denotes bad and yang good. This is not exactly the true picture; yin and yang are merely symbolic representing a relationship—any kind that makes sense to an observer.

In his attempt to distinguish the yin/yang mode of thinking from the western one, Choi (2000) argued that this Chinese mode, which on the surface resembles dialectical thinking, actually is fundamentally different from its western counterpart. The main terms of reference for the latter include concepts, substances, logical opposites, categories, dialectics, and compromises, which are all constituents of the philosophical thinking of essentialism and dualism.

Choi stated that the yin/yang mode of thinking is basically non-essentialist, and thus pays little attention and places little importance on concepts and concept formation. Therefore, whether yin and yang are opposites derived from formal logic is not relevant here. Yin and yang are not two objects relating to each other on the basis that they have internal qualities or reducible elements that are clearly definable so that they can be distinguished from one another.

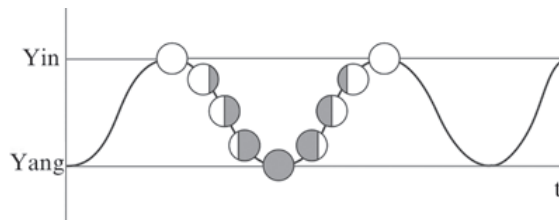


Figure 1. Yin/Yang Mode of Thinking

To Chinese philosophers, yin and yang are not objects; rather, they are terms or labels describing two possible states or statuses of events or situations that are developing along a time dimension. They do not mean anything when they are presented alone, but when they are put together, they represent a relationship of “one can be transformed to become the other,” not that “one interacts with or influences the other”. Figure 1 illustrates this unique dynamic relationship. Choi said that the relationship is like slow wavy movements that consist of ebbs and flows and that one state gradually transforms into the other state.

The crucial characteristic that connects movement between the two states is not the logical contradiction inherited in them, but the mobilizing force, and often comes from an actor whose actions direct the movements towards either of the two end-states represented by the two terms. So, yin and yang, even though they literally mean shadiness and brightness, are actually generic terms representing any relationship discerned to be the result of an actor’s action. This mode of thinking can be considered an actor-centered perspective. (See Figure 2 for an illustration of this perspective.)

Since yin and yang are two possible end states or statuses involving a particular actor in a particular event or situation, the foci of attention of an investigation are naturally on: (1) detecting the possible actions taken by an actor that dominate (2) the underlying relationship or movement, and (3) finding the best action that achieves the most desirable result between the two end states. This mode of thinking can be considered an action-making perspective: finding the best action in a given event or situation.

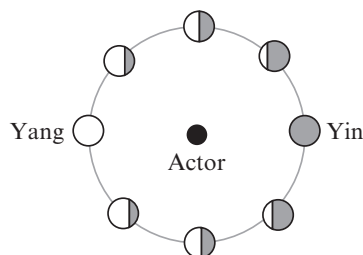


Figure 2. Actor-Centered Yin Yang Thinking Mode

After introducing this meta-cognitive framework, and before we discuss social-cognitive concerns regarding what the best action is and what action achieves the most desirable result, I need first to elaborate the historical roots from which this actor-centered and action-making mode of thinking came. This root lies in the way Chinese people conceive of the person and the self.

THE HISTORICAL ROOT OF THE CHINESE SELF

In my historical account of the origin and development of the Chinese self, I focused on the periods before the Qin dynasty (before 221 BC). Many Chinese historians take the view that many of the key terms that are still in use today were originated and formulated in those periods (e.g., Ding & Wu, 1993; Jiao, 1991), including the Huang Di (黃帝) period (Before 3000 BC), the Yin-Zhou Transition (殷周之交) period (around 1066 BC), the Spring/Autumn (春秋) period (770 – 476 BC) and the Warring States (戰國) period (475 – 221 BC).

Wo (我) as Autonomous and Powerful

The original meaning of *wo* (我), meaning *I* or *me*, is one's consciousness of oneself as a physically separate identity. Calling that awareness *I* or *me* was probably the source of the idea of the self.

Historically speaking, although there have been many Chinese characters denoting *I* and *me*, the main character that represents all of them and that modern Chinese people still use daily, is *wo*. *Wo* was first discovered on unearthed relics, like bone oracles and bronze wares, no later than around 3000 BCE at the period when Huang Di (黃帝) first defeated Chi You (蚩尤) and reigned China.

Wo is a pictograph that depicts a bronze weapon resembling a spear with an ornament hanging on the side (see Figure 3). Because pictographs are usually a reflection of the conscious image of the character, Jiao (1991) postulated that the idea of *wo* first came up into consciousness with people involved in a war. As the Huang Di/Chi You War was the first recorded war in Chinese history, this speculation sounds reasonable.

Jiao further stated that the *wo* inscribed on bone oracles and bronze wares often did not appear alone, but with another two characters



Figure 3. Evolution of the pictograph *wo* from left to right

meaning *I, alone* (我一人). Since a weapon with ornaments was probably owned or held by persons with power, Jiao asserted that *wo*, the character itself, originally may not have been used to refer to a single person, but to a class of persons who had power and were the masters of a country, an army, or a small community. This conclusion gains support from the fact that the oracles or wares were used mainly on ceremonial occasions and concerned the activities of emperors and kings.

Considering that only this group of people in the archaic times had the power to own land and slaves, which may have given them the feeling that they were their own masters and could do whatever they pleased, that the sense of being a separate entity started from these people should come as no surprise. According to Hori (1986), Chinese rulers allowed their citizens to own lands as early as the Spring-Autumn period (770–476 BC). Hori also stated that, no later than the Warring States period (475–221 BC), the rulers implemented the Even-Land Policy (井田或均田制度), which allowed eight families to own private lands surrounding a piece of public land (forming a territorial structure similar to the frame used to play the game of tic-tac-toe with the public land in the middle.) This distinction between private-owned land (私田) and public-owned land (公田) allowed ordinary people to have a sense of what belonged to them, the private, and what belongs to everyone, the public. The character *wo* became a symbol for anybody who had a sense of control and mastery as a separate entity.

THE CONCEPTION OF PERSON

Affirming the Embodied Person

R. B. Yang (2000) stated that the conception of *wo* in archaic China is hinted at through the mythological existence and descriptions of a type of person called *wu* (巫). According to the accounts of scholars from the Spring-Autumn Period, *wu* depicts a person who could be in two states of consciousness interchangeably: the embodied and the disembodied. In the latter state, the person was able to leave the body, sometimes with the help of mythical animals, to converse with mythical figures including the souls of deceased acquaintances.

R. B. Yang suspected that although according to these records, only very few people had the privilege of being a *wu*, the idea of a person having the possibility of disembodiment dominated the Chinese conception of person at the time and even now. Since these records were written in later times when Confucian ideology had already become the dominant ideology, R. B. Yang speculated that people during the Yin/Zhou Transition Period and even earlier, not just *wu*, often felt that they actually left their bodies behind with the help of alcohol. Meanwhile, people of

that time also believed that souls could harm them once they left their familiar surroundings. Consequently, the person, as a separate entity, might have been conceived of as relatively weak and unstable at the time.

Historical records credited to Zhuan Xu (顓頊), the grandson of Huang Di, for putting an end to the idea of reaching souls in heaven and earth through disembodiment. Since then, the soul had been considered firmly grounded in the body. But R. B. Yang postulated that the practice of *wu* based on the belief that a person could become disembodied probably remained prevalent and was sometimes even done on a massive scale until the Xi Zhou (西周) Dynasty when new political, social, and religious orders were firmly established.

Situating the Person in Society

We can safely say that the Yin-Zhou Transition Period was the most crucial period in Chinese social history (Ding & Wu, 1993). During this period, people were trained to engage in institutionalized collective activities, namely, *li* (禮) and *yue* (樂). *Li* is a set of role expectations that guide people's behaviors and *yue*, literally meaning music, is the vehicle used to arouse pleasant emotions to help people internalize and practice *li*. The Zhou (周) people who came from a remote western state, conquered and ruled the Yin (殷) people who resided in the center part of China at the time. The fact that they could overturn the Yin, indicates that the latter state was politically and socially in chaos. The new rulers had to establish everything anew not only to restore order, but also to assure their reign.

Claiming that they had the support of heaven, the Zhou rulers established *li* and *yue* as messages from heaven in order to stabilize and tame the Yin people. Positioning the Yin in a web of interconnected roles and encouraging them to participate in activities that gave them a sense of order and collectivity, presumably affirmed the importance and the strength of the person as an individual. However, this strength came from the tie between person and heaven, and between the person and society, not from the individuated self. During this period, people no longer needed to get help from spirits in heaven and earth to master the environment. According to historical writings from later periods about this period, this solution aimed at restoring social disorder worked very well and allowed the Xi Zhou (西周) rulers to rule the country for about 300 years.

Based on characters inscribed on the unearthed relics, some terms that described psychological states, like *de* (德), a feeling of accomplishment from practicing *li* and *yue*, and *jiang* (敬), a sense of fearfulness, humbleness, prudence, and alarm, began to appear at this time. The former is an internalization of *li* and *yue* and the latter a humble sentiment that allows the person to see room for improvement. Both seem to have served the function of consolidating individuals into persons with subjectivity and

autonomy (Meng, 1993). Even more important, the person is conceived of as tied to society and as needing to be improved constantly.

Jiao (1991) pointed out that even as early as in the Spring-Autumn period of Chinese history many characters used *wo* as a definition or explanation, which indicates that these characters all conveyed the same meaning as *wo* and that *wo* was the generic term referring to one's physical self (施身自謂). These characters, such as 印、吾、台、予、朕、身、甫、余、言 were used on different occasions by people with different statuses, and of different genders. This fact clearly indicates that the different *wos* were considered differently depending on the social status of the person in society and the social occasion which required different *li*. One interesting example Jiao gave was the character, *zheng*, 朕. It was originally used by commoners, but later became the *I* reserved specially for emperors or empresses. This change happened after the Qin (秦) Dynasty united China and made it an autocratic state. After that, anyone other than the ruler, who called him/herself *zheng* would be put to death. This example demonstrates that a person is meaningful only as a member of society.

The Body/Mind Transformation

During this Yin/Zhou Transition Period, literature referred to people who had *de* and *jiang* as people with an air of *wei yi* (威儀), roughly translated as authority and integrity. This connection between internal cultivation and physical appearance precipitated the predominant Chinese conception of a close and dynamic relationship between body and mind.

Later when Confucius came into the picture during the Spring-Autumn period he further expanded the notion by saying that a person's moral cultivation (*li* and *yue*) was, in three dedicated ways, related to bodily changes and changes surrounding him via the presence of *qi* (氣, air): (1) inside a person's body, (2) on the person's appearance, and, (3) surrounding the person (R. B. Yang, 2000).

Becoming a Jun Zi (君子) or Xiao Ren (小人)

Confucius lived in the late Spring-Autumn Period after *li* and *yue* which had helped the Zhou Dynasty rule the country for three centuries, had shown signs of deterioration. Although he was a Yin offspring, he saw the value of the Zhou Dynasty's *li* and *yue* prescription in keeping up social order and keeping social calamity away. How to achieve order and harmony in a society preoccupied Confucius' school of thought and he believed that the rescue could only come from individuals living in that society (Cheung, 1989). In Confucian teachings, people were indispensable vehicles for achieving societal goals, valued in their ability to cultivate themselves and to take responsibility for maintaining social order and harmony.

With this belief, Confucius created a *ru* (儒) model, called *jun zi* (君子, literally meaning *gentleman*), for his young followers to emulate. *Jun zi* was originally used to denote noblemen who ruled the states of the pre-Confucian Zhou Dynasty. The commoners under their rule were called *xiao ren* (小人, meaning *little people*). Gentlemen, the ruling class, were urged to observe a different set of rules of conduct from their subjects, the little people. Although the class undertone was not totally eradicated, Confucius took the symbolic meanings of these two terms and distinguished *jun zi* from *xiao ren* primarily based on the degree of self-cultivation. The difference between the two lies in the principle they adopted to guide their interactions with others. Gentlemen practiced the principle of *yi* (義, righteousness) and small men the principle of *li* (利, self-interest).

The terms no longer represent two classes of people, but refer to two possible models any person can emulate. The person, therefore, is conceived of in Confucian ideology as capable of cultivating himself or herself, as long as he or she chooses to do so, of becoming a moral being, and of having the virtue of *ren* (仁, benevolence). The way to become such a person, is to restrain oneself from behaving on impulse and to always practice *li* (克己復禮 in Chinese). The former implies that the person needs to overcome personal weaknesses and the latter emphasizes loving other people as one loves oneself, assuring social harmony and stability.

This gentleman/little people pair constituted the Confucian conception of person and a major part of the discussion recorded in the Confucian classics. The idea of achieving social order through self-cultivation not only further affirmed the importance of the person but also placed great faith on a person's ability to spread benefits to other people, and possibly to the rest of the world. This *ru* model was later revised by Mencius (孟子) and Xun Zi (荀子) during the late Warring States period, and went through several major modifications and reinterpretations when it faced challenges from other philosophical and religious schools. However, its status as the main conception of a person adopted by most of the rulers and their officials after the Han (漢) Dynasty remains largely unchanged to this day.

Due to the importance of the gentleman/little people pair, the *yi* (righteousness)/*li* (self-interest) relationship has been a major topic of debate for the past 2500 years. Even today modern Chinese people enter into this debate frequently and with a great passion. Zhang (1989a) contended that the debate on this relationship hinged mainly on the *gong* (公, public)/*si* (私, private) relationship which I will discuss later. Zhang concurred with Confucian scholars in the Sung (宋) Dynasty like Ju Xi (朱熹), that the *yi/li* pair was the most important subject for any Confucian scholar to study.

From External to Internal

In recently unearthed relics from Guo Dian (郭店) some hand-copied books written on bamboo pieces were found. They were authored by

Confucius' disciple Zi Si (子思) during the early Warring States period (Gao, 2001). Zi Si's and Mencius' later work combined to form one of the major schools that followed and consolidated Confucianism. The Si-Meng School (思孟學派), which emphasizes the internal cultivation of a person, became mainstream among Confucian scholars for thousands of years to come.

Although these books were written using the characters prevalent in a particular locality, Chu (楚), many of the terms used and the style in which they were written reflected not only their deep commitment to the Si-Meng School of teaching in that subculture, but also the conception of person of that school. In these books, many terms depicting the main teachings of Confucianism, and which modern Chinese people still use to denote the same meanings, were written in two versions. One was almost the same as the modern version (shown in the upper row of Figure 4), and the other was formed of compound characters: a radical plus another character. All of these compound words had a *xin* (心, literally meaning heart) as the radical (shown in the lower row of Figure 4). The pictograph *xin* resembles a heart, which is considered to be the most important organ. Because it takes charge of thinking and emoting it is often translated as *heart-mind* rather than just heart. That there were two versions for each of these characters, one with a heart and the other without, indicates that no later than just prior to when the Qin Dynasty united China, philosophers and scholars made the distinction between external teaching and learning and internalized psychological states.

The most revealing and interesting finding to psychologists from the uncovered Guo Dian relics is that the Confucian terms convey a general conception of a person as well as the process by which the person can approach the final goal of self-cultivation, i.e., sagehood. For instance, the second character from the left in the upper row of Figure 4, *ren* (仁, benevolence) consists of two parts: 身 and 心 with the latter as a radical. The two parts together literally mean *body* and *heart-body* and mind united. The third character, *yi* (義, conscience) is a combination of 我 and 心, meaning *I* and *heart-heart* coming from oneself. The fifth, *de* (德, morality) with 直 and 心, means *direct* and *heart-directly* coming from the heart. And the sixth, *zhi* (智, intellect) with 知 and 心, means *knowledge* and *heart-knowledge* in the mind.

Figure 4. Moral Words (upper) with Their Internalized Counterparts (lower)

The character *de* (德), direct from the heart, indicates that humans are born good and moral in nature. To be a person, one needs to set up a goal or model to strive for through self-cultivation. The model can be a morally perfect sage or a common person; it is up to the individual to decide what to become. All one needs to do to reach the goal is to cultivate oneself from the bottom of one's heart. However, one's heart first has to be filled with knowledge (*zhi*, 智) and kindness (*ren*, 仁), which is a harmonious and benevolent state where body and heart (feeling and mind) unite. While *yi* (義) is the internalized thoughts and feelings that come from practicing *li* (禮, propriety), *wo* (我, I) guards the practice of those rituals in everyday life.

From Intention to Action

Many of these compound characters with heart (心, *xin*) as their radical, also had a corresponding version that replaced *xin* (心) with *thuo* (走), literally meaning walking or practicing. Examples are given in the lower row of Figure 5. The upper row shows their simplified counterparts. The process of self-cultivation does not stop at the distinction between external teaching and learning and internalized moral motivation, but extends to internalized intention and everyday practice (self-realization). The *de* (德) used later and up to the present, has another radical, *chi* (直), which has the same meaning as *thuo*, added onto the earlier version, 直心. It reaffirms the earlier observation that the conception of *de* later evolved as a self-realization or an externalization of internal virtue that directly comes from nature.

The Relationship of Tian (天, Heaven) and Ren (人, Human)

In the writings of Zhong Yong (中庸), the only analects on Confucian teachings that touched upon the metaphysical *tian* (天, the universe), a whole/part relationship was prescribed to exist between *tian* and *ren* (人). The universe was construed as ever-changing but following some cosmic order. The person, on the one hand, was an organic part of the universal; human nature corresponds with that of the universe. On the other hand, the person is a spiritual being situated at the center of the universe with the capacity to include the universe in the internal world through the process

悞 忍 忘 患 惠
送 訓 忙 邊 徧 德

Figure 5. Internalized Version (upper) and Behavioral Version (lower) of Some Words

of self-cultivation by which that person realizes morality or human nature (Tu, 1994). By doing so, the person and the universe become homogenized.

Summary

A historical review of the development of the conception of personhood during the formative Confucian/Mencius Era and sometime after, and an exploration of the yin/yang mode of thinking has allowed examination of the development and the relationships of several pairs of terms. From these relationships, a general picture of how ancient Chinese intellectuals envisioned the person and people's relationship with heaven and fellow citizens, society, and the world has been derived.

The person is construed as the center of the universe. People are not valued for what they are, but for what they can become. The person is born good and moral, but this nature is obscured by impulses and desires coming from association with undesirable people and imperfect environments. One can cultivate oneself to perfection (to become a sage) by exercising self-restraint and practicing rituals. The most important message is that people are their own master in deciding what kind of a person they want to become.

The gentlemen/little people pair gives a spectrum of moral possibilities from which a person can choose, as does the person/society pair. People can choose to keep to themselves or to unite with society and the environment through moral cultivation. Similarly, a person can choose to become a spiritual sage (內聖) or to participate in making the world a harmonious place for everyone by serving the country or society with moral teachings (外王). Even when one chooses to perfect oneself for oneself, the internal/external pair and the intention/action pair reveal that self-cultivation is a process that involves both deliberation and practice.

Finally, the body/heart (mind/feeling) pair inherited in the term *ren* (benevolence), sees the ideal of the person as an embodied actor who homogenizes bodily behavior and mind/feeling when dealing with fellow beings and/or serving society. One is gathering a formidable force, called *qi* (氣) inside that reflects on physical appearance and surrounds one while one continues with internal cultivating and the homogenizing.

All in all, the mainstream (Confucian) conception of person is not only individual-centered, but also action-oriented. It places great emphasis on the action of the person and the person's ability to improve on personal actions as a means to unite harmoniously with society. With this conception of the person, it is only natural that Chinese philosophers have spent much time on the individual and the self. The main ancient Chinese philosophical writings can be said to be inward-oriented, placing major emphasis on subjectivity and autonomy (Meng, 1993; Yu, 1993). They can be seen as schools devoted to the study of the psychology of the self.

However, a close examination of the conception of the self quickly reveals that the self as envisioned by Chinese scholars was not quite the same as that envisioned in western conceptions.

THE CONCEPTION OF *Ji* (己), THE SELF

If one examines ancient Chinese texts, one will find discussions of all terms and issues that are normally included in any modern books Chinese or western, of the same nature, except one: the self. Nor can one find much discussion of the self in relation to another term representing a yin-yang type of relationship, as one finds in so many other Chinese discussions of ideas and thoughts. (A few exceptions are elucidated below.) However, if one reads these texts, one finds the word *Ji* (己), the self, everywhere. In these texts, the individual was so much the center of everything that most discussions were about what *Ji* (己), the self, was supposed to do or to improve. The few pairs of yin-yang relationships involving the self that were discussed in these texts were usually from the vantage point of the actor. The self was not viewed as an object to be studied and written about, but as an action-taker whose deliberation on “what to do” to become a worthy person was the main focus of attention.

The Meaning of *Ji* (己)

The character, *ji*, which came into existence later than *wo*, originally meant a centrally located house or place where consciousness and knowledge resided. According to a Han (漢) dictionary, *Shuo Wen Jie Zi* (說文解字), edited and interpreted by a Confucian scholar in the Qing (清) Dynasty, it is where *li* (理, principle or regularity) resides and it has to be understood with the term *ren* (人, person). It states that an individual speaks of *ji* to distinguish himself or herself from others and to describe a positional relationship between the self and others. The former is situated inside and in the middle, and the latter are on the outside and peripheral. However, the pictograph itself resembles something that bends forwards and backwards in order “to conceal or to conform” (See the left-most character in Figure 6). As in “human being”, it resembles a person hunching his back and sticking out his stomach for the same reasons. This image depicts that the self is flexible and thus cultivatable or malleable.

The *Ji* (己) / *Yi* (已) Relationship

In the same dictionary, *ji* also is said to share the same root as another character *Yi* (已), which means “past, done, used, practiced or executed”. They share the same pictograph resembling a snake, which become uncoiled in the summer, but coiled in the winter. (See the two next to the left-most character in Figure 6). *Ji* resembles a moving snake that does not

Figure 6. Characters Related to *Self*

coil itself to the fullest; *yi* resembles one that coils more fully symbolizing something that has already been completed. The dictionary explains that the difference between *ji* and *yi* is that the former represents ideas or intentions whereas the latter solidity or reality. When one's ideas and intentions become solid and firm, one will take an action and make it a reality. This explanation clearly discloses that *ji* is a psychological counterpart of the physical *wo*. However, it does not refer to an entity, but a state of mind or a stage of a person when ideas or intentions have not been materialized into actions. So, it can be paired with outer behavior (externalized action) to represent a relationship: the latter is the reality of the former.

As stated earlier, in Confucian teachings the person is a vehicle and the self is a team player. The conception of person demands that the self keep the person hollow and humble, always finding room for improvement, and that the self is also the person's enemy when it becomes inflexible and insistent on acting according to raw impulses.

This conception of the self is further supported by the fact that the character for "fear, forbidden and dislike", is *ji* (忌), which is a compound character consisting a *ji* (己), the self, and a *xin* (心), the heart (see the right-most character in Figure 6). This compound word shows that the conception of the self is a complex one. As an isolated and close state, it is what the person needs to fear, to control, and to overcome. An open and inclusive state makes the person a social, natural, and moral being (Liu, 2000). As an open and inclusive state, its meaning can only be fully understood from writings concerning its relationship with another term, *ren* (人), human being.

Human Being (Ren, 人) / Self (Ji, 己)

Adopting the yin/yang mode of thinking, the term, *ji* becomes meaningful only when it is associated with another term, *ren* (人). According to Jiao (1991), *ren* (人) has four meanings: human being (人類), the public (眾人), a group of people based on ethnicity, or locality (族, 中國人), others except oneself (他人). When one speaks of the *ren/ji* relationship, one is referring to a relationship between human beings and the self, which is a whole/part relationship.

In this whole/part relationship, human beings, including oneself, are considered to be born good and moral, as are all things in nature. However, they are also all different in the sense that people choose their

own ways to realize their natures and each finds different ways to serve society. The relationship between *ren* and *ji* is an organic one in that all individuals are fundamentally the same, although they live their lives differently and contribute to the world differently. The similarity resides in that together they made the world function smoothly as a whole. In Chinese, this is described as “harmonious but not the same” (和而不同).

Group (*Cun*, 群) / Self (*Ji*, 己) Relationship

The same whole/part conception applies to the relationship between group and individual as well. Yu (1993), in a paper discussing the group/self relationship from a historical perspective, stated that both individualistic and collectivistic positions concerning the group/self relationship were brought up by pre-Qin scholars. For instance, Legalists’ definitely emphasized the supremacy of the group, whereas mainstream Confucian scholars’ did not emphasize either. Later, the evolution of Confucianism demonstrated oscillations between emphasizing group order and individual freedom.

In another article, Yu (1976) took a social/political perspective and enumerated that after the unification of China during the Qin dynasty, most of the emperors adopted the Legalist conception regarding how to run a country; i.e., totalitarianism. However, the Confucian influence was ever-present. Emperors often socialized their subjects with a modified version of Confucianism within which a lot of Legalistic ideas were incorporated. The modified Confucian ideology dispatched a *min gui* (民貴, people first) message to the emperors and their officials but downplayed individual citizens’ right to overturn an emperor.

Due to this social/political development, Confucian scholars were no longer permitted by their totalitarian rulers to achieve self-realization externally through participating in the political arena. They gradually turned inward to become experts on self-cultivation adapting themselves to the external environment. This self-psychology entails how one can include others, society, and the universe in one’s mind and action, regardless of what the real world is. The process of self-cultivation becomes a learning process for the self (de Bary, 1991).

Summary

The self is not construed as a solid thing, or even a concept, but a term paired with other collective terms to represent many whole/part relationships. The most important aspect of the self from this perspective is that the self is always at the center, as shown in Figure 7, and is surrounded by other people connected to one. The self-cultivation process involves the perforation of the boundary of the individuated self to include others, starting from those who are closest, such as family members. The process

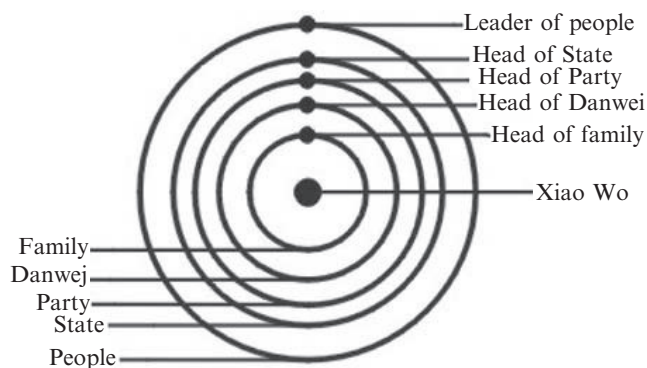


Figure 7. The Relationship between *Xiao wo* and the Different Levels of *Da wo*

can also be seen as an inclusive expansion of the self rather than a conquering expansion (F. Y. Wang, 2002).

The self is also seen as a process of action-taking by which the person improves relationships with the surroundings. The self-cultivation process makes the self an actor who uses observation, insight, and knowledge to link personal action with possible consequences that change the status of surrounding relationships. To achieve the goal of self-perfection, a person needs carefully to choose actions that can homogenize all these relationships. Through this process, people make themselves a participating member of the universe and live naturally and smoothly in their proper place. From this conception, it is clear that the self-cultivation process is a person-making process. The self creates a person as construed by the people of a particular culture.

THE PERSON-MAKING PERSPECTIVE OF THE SELF

The preceding discussion justifies a new way of looking at the self. I called this new way the person-making perspective because I think that, at least in the Chinese case, it is in the way one tries to become an all-around moral person that one sees the significance of the self.

This new perspective requires a new framework and relying on a culturally prescribed dimension of what is considered meaningful to the self and way of going about becoming a person who makes the self meaningful. Next, I use the Chinese case to illustrate the usefulness of this new perspective.

The Center in Yin/Yang Cosmology

The impetus in the yin/yang universe is the person, who is the observer and the actor. That is to say, the actor carefully discerns the various yin/yang

relationships as the effects of personal actions in a given event or situation and acts in the best way possible to achieve the most desirable results.

Since yin and yang are related by the course of action taken by an actor, the pair actually represents many other possible states in between with different graduations of yin and yang, as shown in Figure 2. All of them represent the end-states the actor's different actions may lead to when dealing with a given situation. An acute observer/actor can not only detect the connection between possible actions and various possible states summarized by yin and yang, but also the minute progressive changes from one end-state to the other as the result of the choice of action. Based on this kind of observation and knowledge, a competent actor can then choose among these action options to arrive at the consequence that is considered most desirable for a given situation.

The *Zhong Yong* (中庸) Principle—A Way to Person-Making

What is the most appropriate action in a given event/situation? It depends on what kind of person one wants to become. It is related to one's person-making goal.

Person-making in the Chinese context refers to the process by which one returns to human nature, which is good and moral. It is the process of becoming through self-cultivation. The self-cultivation program of Confucian thought took shape mainly after Confucius' death and was recorded in two books entitled *Da Xue* (大學) and *Zhong Yong*. In these books, the proper route for self-cultivation was clearly prescribed: *xiu shen* (修身, cultivating oneself), *qi jia* (齊家, raising a good family), *zhi guo* (治國, running the country), *ping tian xia* (平天下, achieving world peace). On this route, the self is not a static object, but an evolving and expanding entity. Its final state is a unity of "the world and the self" and "heaven and person."

The *Zhong Yong* book, which many scholars consider to contain the quintessence of the Chinese spirit (e.g., Chan, 1963), deals with the cultural directive concerning what is the most appropriate action for the actor to take in dealing with a given situation. It outlined the principle that: (1) the most desirable decision goal is always to maintain inner and outer (interpersonal) harmony; (2) the most appropriate action leading to such a state always lies in-between those actions that lead to the two end-states dispatching a yin and yang relationship discerned by the observer/actor; and (3) one has to strike a balance among all the optimal actions each of which is the best action for a particular pair of end-state relationships (Cheung, et al, 2001; Yang & Chiu, 1997).

In-between does not necessary mean a compromise or the mathematical average. It means that the optimal course of action varies with the situation, with the people involved, and with time (Creel, 1987). What is considered optimal in a given situation involving a given group of people at a given

time, may not be the same as that for another situation involving a different group of people at another time.

In addition, several crucial factors influencing the self's person-making process are related to the actor's personal experience and the level of self-cultivation already acquired. The quality and accuracy of the actor's perception regarding what action will lead to what consequence in a given context, depends very much on: (1) the person's knowledge and experience; (2) the skill in carrying out the chosen action; and, most important of all, (3) the actor's progress in his pursuit of moral perfection.

A NEW APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING THE SELF

With this new person-making perspective, I propose that students of the self adopt a new approach for investigation. The approach entails deviating from existing approaches in the following seven aspects.

First of all, researchers have to give up construing the self as an abstract object or agent that always tries to exert influence or control over personal behavior and environment. They also need to give up the notion that a few key selves, past, present, or future, form the core of a person.

Second, the *self* is not a cause of a person's behavior. The action a person takes in a given situation *is* the self of that person, no matter what motives are behind the action. There are as many expressed selves as social situations.

Third, the self is not an object so it does not have motivational properties like self-consistency, self-enhancement, self-deception, etc. The self is the result of a person's strife for consistency, enhancement, and deception, all of which are strategic actions that may be employed to engage in person-making.

Fourth, the self is viewed as the center of a bundle of relationships that link a person's action with the environment and beyond. The self is a cobweb connected to many other people, each of whom is also a web. The cobweb is a dynamic field in which the person, as an action-taker pursuing everyday life and adjusting to the environment, has to think and do things affecting not only the self, but also those people linked to the web. Many actions may result in reshaping the web and all other webs associated with it. A person's deliberation and choice of action reflect that person's self.

Fifth, the process of person-making, i.e., the process of becoming the person in his natural and proper place in the society and the universe (安身立命, in Chinese), should therefore be the focus of attention in the study of the self. It involves the examination of the attempt to maintain harmonious relationships with the rest of the world through self-growth. The Confucian prescriptions for self-growth involve exercise of self-restraint and practice of moral teachings.

Sixth, researchers' main concern should be to understand how an actor derives what the most appropriate action in a given situation that leads to the desired goal of inner and outer harmony. The actor pays attention to relationships represented by various pairs of end-states and to the deliberation of decisions about how to act most appropriately in that given context. In his study of the Chinese political culture, Pye (1968), made the poignant observation that the Chinese know perfectly *what* to do; the problem always lies on the issue of *how*. His remark echoes the point made here.

Finally, sharing of observations and perceptions of the actor allows the researchers to derive the meanings of the actions taken by the former and thus to understand them properly.

UNDERSTANDING THE CHINESE SELF

Although adopting this new approach to the understanding of the Chinese self requires examination of an actor in a concrete, social, holistic, contextual, distributed, fluid, practical, and action-oriented manner due to the unique conceptions of the person and the self of a particular culture, it is still worth setting out some general guidelines with which researchers can achieve a better understanding of the Chinese self. The guidelines elucidated below are derived from the person-in-culture view described at the beginning of this paper. This view entails imagining what people living in a Chinese culture who are inculcated with the described conception of the person and self may do to run their lives. Taking this view, special attention is paid to the problems they share and the solutions they come up with to cope with these problems. These programs and solutions constitute the meaning system with which one can arrive at a general comprehension of the Chinese self.

What Preoccupies the Chinese Self?

Three pairs of relationships seem to preoccupy the Chinese mind in everyday interactions. All of them are derivatives of the Chinese people's shared conceptions of the person and self and all of them have moral implications.

The *Da Wo* (大我) / *Xiao Wo* (小我) Conception

In the Chinese conception, the individual is not valued in the same way as in modern western cultures. A person's value lies not in the fact of being an individual, but in the ability to develop human's innate social nature, i.e., to love other people and to live with them harmoniously (Bodde, 1953).

One means provided by the Confucian school of thought to realize this value is to have the person gradually relinquish the private and individuated self (called *xiao wo*, 小我, literally meaning the small self) and to embrace a larger collectivity to which one belongs as the operating self (called *da wo* 大我, the large self). The *operating self* refers the collectivity one identifies with and represents in a given situation. As shown in Figure 7, the person is encouraged to start off by including family members into the large self (loving and serving one's family), then gradually friends and associates, and then the community, the country, and finally the world.

By cultivating oneself through this route, one gradually sets the boundary of the individuated self to include all others. The ideal end state of the developing self was sagehood in which one was united with heaven and earth, which is represented in the middle of Figure 8 by the largest solid-line circle. The other smaller solid-line circles included in Figure 8 stand for other possible statuses of the self at various stages of self-inclusion or moral development. However, all of these solid circles encompass the small individuated self (the shaded area in the center of every solid-line circle).

Note here that the individuated small self is at the center of these concentric circles and that collectivities not only encompass it, but also include people belonging to the collectivity smaller in size and closer to the small self. In other words, these encompassing collectivities do not just overlap one another, they actually hold a whole/part relationship. Thus, the large selves do not represent the social groups to which a person belongs, rather they refer to the operating selves available to a person to choose from in dealing with a given event/situation. The more one's moral cultivation has advanced, the more large selves are available from which one can choose as an operating self for a given situation.

In addition, a person's self-cultivation requires placing the large selves in front of small self when interacting with others in family, social,

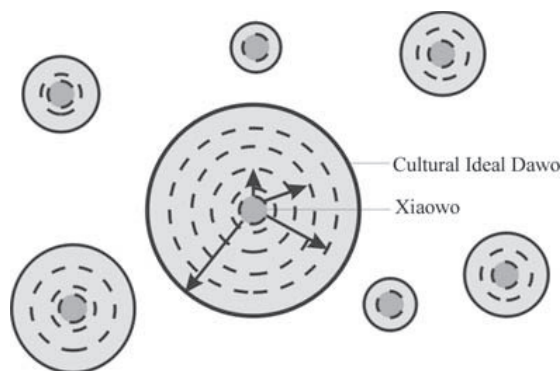


Figure 8. Different Levels of Moral Self Development (shown by different sizes of solid circles)

and political activities. When these goals conflict, the person needs to sacrifice the goal of the small self in order to accomplish those of the operating large self. When this sacrifice no longer represents a struggle, but is performed willingly, the actor is considered to have advanced in self-cultivation. Before then, people are constantly involved in and occupied with struggle and self-debate concerning how to choose between the large self and the small self, and among the large selves.

Public (*gong*, 公) / Private (*si*, 私)

Japanese scholar Mizoguchi (1994) compared the differences between the Japanese and the Chinese conceptions of the relationship between *gong* (公, public) and *si* (私, private) and gave a good historical account of the transformation of the Chinese conception. He stated that the Japanese *gong*, a word originally borrowed from the Chinese, refers strictly to a collective entity or the head or symbol representing such an entity. What is owned by oneself and one's family is called *si*. For the Japanese, both concepts are therefore territorial concepts that are mutually exclusive, value-neutral, and in no way opposing to each other in meaning.

However, he found that, as early as in the late Warring States Period, in China, *gong* had developed the meaning *for all and for everyone* in a collective entity, as in *a world for all* (*tian xia wei gong*, 天下為公); whereas *si*, for the private self, was more like *private property* (*si chan*, 私產). Consequently, the public and the private relationship became a whole/part relationship. One possible explanation is that the Confucian conception of the self had already taken shape then and the concentric circles had become the prevailing conception of the self.

Furthermore, at this time, both of these terms started to carry evaluative meanings. Anything associated with *gong* was deemed trustworthy and moral (like *gong ping*, 公平, fairness); anything with *si* was thought to be treacherous and amoral (like *si xin*, 私心, hidden agenda). This value imposition is a natural consequence of the transformation of meanings, which not only erased the territorial boundaries between the public and the private, but also made one contain the other. The conception of the self as a developing entity almost requires the private to be subservient to the public.

When a person was said to be working for the public (*wei gong*, 為公), or for a larger collectivity other than the individuated self, that person was expected to work solely for the collective entity. The person was supposed to work for the benefit of everyone in that entity without thinking about personal interests as the larger entity was owned by all and by thinking of the benefits of all one's own benefit was included. If the person did as expected, that person was said to be good and moral. However, if the person treated the collective entity as if it were personal property and did things for personal benefit, that person was considered *for oneself*

only (*wei si*, 為私) and as amoral and bad. The way *gong* and *si* were used in *wei gong* and *wei si* demonstrates that the meanings of *gong* and *si* were more motivational than territorial.

The main distinction between working for the public and for private interests lies in whom one has in mind while working for a collective entity. This distinction, of course, is often very difficult to make by watching the expressed action of a person. It becomes even more difficult when a moral tone has been added making everyone want to show effort for public benefit. Before a person has been morally cultivated to the point of total selflessness, personal needs and desires must be addressed from time to time.

The person had to resort to either fulfilling those needs indirectly (through the help of others) or disguising them by pretending (C. F. Yang, 2000a; 2000b), especially for those who hold public positions and who on many public occasions have to declare that they work for a well-defined large self (the country or the community). The need to use such solutions is even stronger than for ordinary citizens since *for the public* has to be shown to people at all times. In the end, it becomes extremely difficult to tell which people are really for the public and which people are actually working for the private self. A set of attributional procedures are therefore developed to help solve the problem (C. F. Yang, 2000a).

Even in modern Chinese societies, there remains a plethora of phrases denoting how people handle this problematic issue of public vs. private: *Da gong wu si* (大公無私, being fair to all without self-serving biases), *ying gong wang si* (因公忘私, going all the way for the public and forgetting the self totally), *jia gong ji si* (假公濟私, seek self-interests in the name of public interests), *gong bao si chou* (公報私仇, revenge for private grudges with official excuses). This transformation of meanings of the public and the private and their operation in group/self interactions have led the Chinese to become very concerned about and constantly troubled by issues of sincerity, loyalty, and trust (C. F. Yang, 2000a).

Gentleman (*Jun zi*, 君子) / Hypocrite (*Xiang yuan*, 鄉愿)

The standards set to become a Confucian gentleman were apparently too high for common people to emulate even at the time Confucius was alive. Confucius knew most could not attain the standard and made many remarks about it. A lot of people exaggerated the rituals (*li*, 禮) prescribed for gentleman without actually internalizing them; i.e., without affiliating them with corresponding inner feelings (expressions of *ren*, 仁, benevolence). On several occasions recorded in *Lun Yu* (論語, Confucius Analects), Confucius showed his disgust for such insincere people. "The full observance of the rules of propriety in serving one's prince is accounted by people to be flattery." "Fine words and an insinuating appearance are seldom associated with true virtue."

The most hash words coming from him were: “*Xiang yuan* (鄉愿) are the thieves of virtue.” *Xiang yuan* refers to people who live as if they were loyal and sincere, and behave as if they were honest and austere. Both characters in the word, *xiang yuan*, are compound characters containing the radical, *xin* (心) indicating they have to do with what is on a person’s mind. *Xiang yuan* were considered hypocritical thieves because they confused and took advantage of others by pretending they were gentlemen, and therefore was deemed worse than those who claimed they were *xiao ren* (小人, commoners) in the first place.

There were many reasons for people however to want to falsely speak and act like gentlemen throughout Chinese history: (1) honor—many wanted to be labeled as learned gentlemen and as members of the desirable and respected ruling elite class; (2) instrumental value—speaking and acting like a gentleman often led to a good reputation and a better job; (3) habit—the tradition of practicing rituals prior to developing corresponding feelings and sentiments is ingrained in education, and breeds habits of feigned compliance.

The Study of Person-Making (做人)

Based on these problems preoccupying the Chinese mind, the direction of study of the self as a person-making process can be mapped out. In every event/situation, one is always faced with at least an operating *da wo*, large self, and a *xiao wo*, small self, each energizing and guiding one to act out a prescribed action. At times, there is no conflict between the actions prescribed for the large self and the small self, especially as one’s self-cultivation, and thus self-expansion, progresses. At other times, there is a conflict between the two that requires the person to make a decision about what to do and how to act. The decision making and the resultant action taken form the person-making process. One’s resolution of the conflict in a harmonious fashion makes the self grow to become a better person. In the Chinese case, a better person is one that approaches a moral and social being.

The person-making and the resulting action are not the same as *the self as process* discussed in western literature. The self is not the process by which one controls or influences a person’s behavior. It is the meaning contained in the person’s deliberation during the person-making process and the meanings of the action taken that reveal the person’s self. These meanings often require a set of cultural meaning systems to decode.

In the study of the Chinese self, three aspects, at least, of the self need to be more closely examined. One is the conflict resolution process of the large self and the small self, especially their relationship with the development of a person’s moral self; i.e., with the degree to which the person approaches the culturally ideal self. It is worthwhile for researchers to adopt the yin/yang mode of thinking and study how the *zhong yong* principle is used to solve this type of conflict.

The other area that is worth in-depth scrutiny is the social comparison process by which one learns about how well one does in the pursuit of the model self, *jun zi* (gentleman). As this Chinese model self is forever unreachable in real life, one's continuation of this pursuit as a cultural imperative becomes virtually standardless. One has to resort to real-life exemplars for comparison or to simply outperforming oneself. One's targets for social comparison are therefore not the abstract unreachable ideal self, but the human beings around one: past cultural role models or heroes and heroines, and oneself, the past or present. The aim of the comparison is always to surpass the target. The implications of this kind of social comparison on the social psychology of the Chinese people are complex but an interesting topic deserving further investigation.

Finally, the self-esteem derived from this kind of social comparison comes not from just that of any dimension or attribute, but mainly from the large self/small self resolution. A recent example illustrates this point. In 2001, a general who served a pivotal role in the history of modern China during the Sino-Japanese War, Zhang Xue Liang (張學良) died at the age of 101. Due to his significance, many of the newspapers in Hong Kong commemorated him in their editorials. The last few sentences in the editorial of the Ming Bao (明報), a newspaper read mostly by Hong Kong intellectuals represented the public sentiment:

Zhang sacrificed his own freedom to help rekindle the determination to fight the Japanese, the big goal at the time for the country. From his personal perspective, he was mistreated by his country and its people. However, from a larger and collectivistic perspective, his words and actions helped save the country and its people, and set up an everlasting example for his countrymen to emulate. (October 16, 2001)

For a Chinese person, I think that no one would expect to get a better evaluation than that General Zhang received; i.e., as one who sacrifices small self for the larger self. One's self-esteem is built on the hope that after one's death one would receive similar words to those Zhang received. For the Chinese, history is recorded for future generations to emulate and surpass. One's self-regard, a better term than self-esteem, is derived from other's evaluations of oneself based on a shared cultural model of the person. The self and self-regard, however, do not motivate one to become a better person as some western theories claim (e.g., Sedikides & Strube, 1995). Rather, it is the goal (to become a better person) one sets for oneself that motivates him/her to choose to do good and moral deeds, thereby approaching the culturally ideal person.

Bridging with Western Self Psychology

Although I advocate studying the Chinese self using an indigenous approach, I do not think that there is an unbridgeable gap between what

is obtained using indigenous and cross-cultural approaches or from indigenous and western studies. The influx of modern western ideology of individualism and its conception of the self as individuated and autonomous entity casts a long shadow on the Chinese mind in modern societies. The influence of my own western training must be quite obvious in this paper. Research on "becoming" (e.g., Allport, 1955; Rogers, 1961), the relational self (e.g., Andersen & Chen, 2002; Curtis, 1991), person/situation interaction in social psychology and personality theories (e.g., Mischel & Shoda, 1995), interactional psychology (e.g., Pervin & Lewis, 1978), action theory (e.g., Eckensberger, 1995; 2001), self-regulation (e.g., Carver & Scheier, 1990; Miller & Brown, 1991; Brown, 1998) and self-control (e.g., Logue, 1995), social comparison and self-evaluation (e.g., Festinger, 1954; Suls & Mullen, 1982; Wood, 1989), and self-presentation (e.g., Leary, 1995) can provide opportunities for dialogue after indigenous psychologists further refine these ideas.

The psychologies developed in western countries have introduced psychology and helped train many Chinese psychologists in the past. What I hope to see in the future is that indigenous psychological research can enrich mainstream western psychology in return. What I outlined here allows me to see this possibility in areas like group identity and identification, self-evaluation and self-regard, self-deliberation before presentation, and the development of moral self. A further elaboration of these research possibilities definitely requires more discussion.

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GLOSSARY

- Chi You* (蚩尤)
Even-Land Policy
 (井田或均田制度)
Guo Dian (郭店)
 Han Dynasty (漢朝)
 Huang Di (黃帝)
 Ju Xi (朱熹)
 Lun Yu (論語)
 Mencius (孟子)
 Person-Making (做人)
 Pre-Qin (先秦時期) – before 221 BCE
 Private-owned lands (私田)
 Public-owned lands (公田)
 Qing Dynasty (清朝)
 Spring-Autumn Period
 (春秋時期) – 770 BCE – 476 BCE
 Sung Dynasty (宋朝)
 Warring States Period (戰國時期)
 – 475 BCE – 221 BCE
 Xi Zhou (西周) Dynasty
 Xunzi (荀子)
 Yin-Zhou Transition (殷周之交)
 – around 1066 BCE
 Yi Zhuan (易傳)
 Zhong Yong (中庸)
 Zhuan Xu (顓頊)
 Zi Si (子思)
 內聖 – to keep to himself aiming to become a sage
 外王 – to participate in making the world a harmonious place for everyone by serving the country or society with moral teachings
 段玉裁 – a Confucian scholar
chi (彳) – to do and to practice
cun (群) – the group
da gong wu si (大公無私) – being fair to all without self-serving biases
da wo (大我) – literally meaning the large self
de (德) – a feeling of accomplishment from practicing li and yue, morality
gong (公) – public
gong bao si chou (公報私仇) – revenge for private grudges with official excuses
gong ping (公平) – fairness
ji (己) – the self
ji (忌) – a character for fear, forbidden and dislike
jia gong ji si (假公濟私) – seek self-interests in the name of public interests
jiang (敬) – a sense of fear, humbleness, prudence, and alarm, a humble sentiment that allows the person to see rooms for improvement
jun zi (君子) – noblemen who ruled the states in pre-Confucian Zhou Dynasty
li (禮) – a set of role expectations that guide people's behaviors, propriety
li (利) – self-interest
li (理) – principles, regularities
min gui (民貴) – significance of people

ping tian zia (平天下) – make world peace

qi (氣) – air, formidable force

qi jia (齊家) – raise a family

ren (仁) – benevolence

ren (人) – human being

ru (儒) – Confucian model

si (私) – private

si chan (私產) – private property

Si-Meng School (思孟學派) – emphasizes the internal cultivation of a person, became the mainstream among Confucian scholars for thousands of years

si xien (私心) – hidden agenda

tian (天) – the universe

tian xa wai gong (天下為公) – a world for all

thuo (是) – walking/practicing

wei yi (威儀) – authority and integrity

wei gong (為公) – for the public or a larger collectivity other than oneself

wei si (為私) – for oneself

wo (我) – meaning I or me

wu (巫) – a person who could be in two states of consciousness interchangeably, able to leave

the body to converse with mythical figures

xiang yuan (鄉愿) – people who live as if they were loyal and sincere, and behaved as if they were honest and austere

xiao ren (小人) – the commoners under junzi rule

xiao wo (小我) – literally meaning the small self

xin (心) – literarily meaning heart

xiu shen (修身) – self cultivation

yang (陽) – the bright side, denoted good

yi (義) – righteousness, conscience

yi (已) – means done, used, practiced or executed

yin (陰) – the shady side, denoted bad

ying gong wang si (因公忘私) – going all the way for the public and forgetting the self totally

yue (樂) – literarily meaning music

zhe kuo (治國) – run the country

zheng (朕) – a *wo* preserved specially for emperors or empresses

zhi (智) – intellect, knowledge