

CHUNG-YING CHENG

A GENERATIVE ONTOLOGICAL UNITY OF HEART-MIND AND NATURE IN THE *FOUR BOOKS*

ABSTRACT

Traditional scholarship seems not to pay sufficient attention to the fact that *Daxue* 《大學》 has established a system of ethical and political philosophy on the basis of the idea of *xin* 心 (heart-mind) whereas the *Zhongyong* 《中庸》 has argued for the participation of the human person in the creativities of heaven and earth based on the onto-generative nature (*xing* 性) of the human person. How to explain this fact and interrelate and integrate these two systems become both a historical challenge and a theoretical issue in the understanding of the Confucian philosophy of humanity as we find in the *Lunyu* 《論語》.

I. INTRODUCTION

Historically, it is necessary to go back to Confucius to see that *xin* 心 is recognized to have the active function of making efforts and choice in order to reach a feeling state of harmonization, whereas *xing* 性 is what is given by nature and has the capacity of being developed and remodeled into patterns of habit and culture. Both are important because *xin* is required for creativities toward harmony (“*Li zhi yong heweigui* 禮之用和為貴,” “*Cong xin suo yu, er buyuju* 從心所欲, 而不逾矩,” “*Heshi shengwu* 和實生物”), whereas *xing* is required for harmonization toward creativities in nature (“*Sishi xing yan, wanwu sheng yan* 四時行焉, 萬物生焉”). In a sense *xing* is harmony resting on a given state of human existence, whereas *xin* is creativity which marks the activities of thinking and willing.

Between them there is a feeling (*qing* 情) from nature which can be said to be induced by activities of the mind. Based on this observation and subsequent analysis, this article will show that the *Daxue* focuses

CHUNG-YING CHENG, Professor, School of Philosophy, Renmin University of China; Professor, Department of Philosophy, University of Hawaii at Manoa. Specialties: Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism, hermeneutics/onto-hermeneutics, philosophy of language. E-mail: ccheng@hawaii.edu

Journal of Chinese Philosophy 40:2 (June 2013) 234–251

© 2013 *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*

on the explicit use of the heart-mind for the creative development of a hidden nature according to a vision of mind and feelings toward that nature, whereas the *Zhongyong* focuses on the manifest self-realization of nature in the contexts of heaven and earth through an implicit use of feeling and mind. The *Daxue* explicitly uses the heart-mind to reach a desirable state of harmony by a hidden appeal to nature, whereas the *Zhongyong* conspicuously holds the central nature (*zhong* 中) in order to reach harmony by an implicit appeal to the heart-mind.

From this analysis we shall see how both the *Daxue* and the *Zhongyong* address the dynamic relationship of nature and the heart-mind, each from a different perspective. Whereas the *Daxue* stresses the importance of creative activity of heart-mind for communal development, the *Zhongyong* stresses the importance of underlying source-potentiality of nature for self-realization. Each can be said to depend on the other as a premise and each shares a common vision of the full development of humanity. In light of this critical and crucial understanding, we will first explain how these different perspectives are integrated from a holistic perspective of the source-body ontology or onto-generative metaphysics (or simply generative ontology) of humanity as I have suggested.

Second, we are able to argue and show that there could exist a polemics of *xin* and *xing* in the Confucian discourse on humanity and the cosmos which leads to the separate and respective focuses on *xing* and *xin*, perhaps represented by Zengzi 曾子 and Zisi 子思 where Zengzi advocates development of the mind and heart, and Zisi wishes to go back to the source of humanity.

Third, we can consider the excavated bamboo manuscript (“*Xing zi Ming Chu*” 性自命出) as an early effort of an earlier time in trying to integrate *xing* and *xin*. This effort, however, is not successful as it makes *xing* too passive and *xin* too independent a function. The fault lies in a lack of insight into the intimate and dynamic relationship of *xing* and *xin* as a creative continuum which unfolds its capacities and functions in creative activities of harmonization through their relationship.

Fourth, we will be able to show how Mencius has reached an insight of unifying *xin* and *xing* in his famous assertion that *jinxin* 盡心 leads to *zhixing* 知性 and *zhixing* leads to *zhitian* 知天. It is clear in light of our analysis that *tian* 天 represents the ultimate ground in the unity of *xin* and *xing* to the extent that the activities of *xin* and the achievements of *xing* manifest heaven as embodied in the dynamics of mutual enhancement of both *xin* and *xing*. It is in this sense we may say that *xin*, *xing*, and *tian* form a creative triad manifesting the ultimate reality in mutuality and unity of harmony and creativity.

Fifth and finally, this onto-generative understanding should give rise to an onto-generative hermeneutics which eventually brings out a variety of the Song-Philosophy of *xin*, *xing*, and *li* 理 or *tian*.

II. THE HEART-MIND IN THE *ANALECTS*

Although Zhu Xi puts the *Daxue* before the *Zhongyong* on his order of learning, the *Zhongyong* has every reason to be learned first in order to enable one to acquire the foundation for knowledge and practice. This is the approach that Zhu Xi had adopted when he compiled the anthology *Jinsilu* 《近思錄》 in 1175 CE.¹ The reason why Zhu Xi puts the *Daxue* before the *Zhongyong* is found in his observation that ancient education begins with “small learning” (*xiaoxue* 小學) of the six arts, and it is only after the age of fifteen that a young person is sent to learn and study at a local school. In this fashion the young person is exposed to fundamental principles and practical skill of self-cultivation with their goal being that of universal peace and justice. Hence we come to see a progressive order of activities and goal-recognition with regard to different goals. From this discussion we can see that there are two orders of priority in his thought, one to do with theoretical understanding, which should begin with the understanding of fundamental concepts and views in ontology, the other to do with how to educate and initiate the young. It is apparent that one should take a pedagogical route of starting from simple ideas and then developing toward more complex issues. Hence in name of these two requirements the *Daxue* was chosen to be taught first, even though, as we see, the *Zhongyong* shares some of the same moral and political views with the *Daxue* but yet is more fundamental in ontological considerations.

In this article I shall argue that the *Zhongyong* should be considered philosophically, not only theoretically, crucial and essential for understanding the *Daxue*, and similarly the *Daxue* should be equally considered philosophically, not only theoretically, crucial and essential for understanding the *Zhongyong*. The reasoning for this requires explanation in terms of both Classical Confucian and Neo-Confucian philosophy with regard to the thoughts of the heart-mind and nature (*xinxing*). Confucius spoke of *xin* six times in the *Analects*. Each use of the term indicates a function of the mind: namely the intention or wish of a person (*youxin zai* 有心哉²), the concentration or attention of a person (*wusuoyongxin* 無所用心³), desire and liking of a person (*cong xin suo yu* 從心所欲⁴), the ability to comply and control one's action (*qi xin san yue buweiren* 其心三月不違仁⁵), the power of choice (*jian zai dixin* 簡在帝心⁶), and the feeling and sentiment of a people

(*tianxia zhi min guixin yan* 天下之民歸心焉⁷). When Confucius speaks, knowing or not knowing, one must assume that it is the mind (*xin*) which knows or does not know. Therefore the cognitive function of the mind is also clearly assumed in the *Analects* as it is the common activity of the mind.

Given these seven functions of the mind, it is possible to say that Confucius and his disciples have been aware of a mind which can know, like and dislike, is capable of showing feelings or lack of, and can intend or not so intend, and which can pay attention or not pay attention to. All these major functions and their capabilities and abilities which are cognitive, emotional, volitional, and votive-imperative are covered by the term *xin*.⁸ As we may identify the same person with the same mind and the same person could use his mind in the capacity of many functions, we may no doubt consider that it is the same mind, rather than a multiple mind which is just multiple functions of the same person. It is in this sense that we can say that, even in the case of Confucius, the heart and mind are in some unity and share the same source which we may simply call the heart-mind. It would seem, however, that Confucius may not be aware of such a heart-mind or other entity which plays a role in so many different functions in making communication and sharing of ideas and emotions possible.

Confucius may not explore how this heart-mind can exercise itself in improving one's character or in corrupting one's character. If indeed we do use our heart-mind for the purpose of such self-cultivation, it may be prudent to ask whether or not it is feasible or recommendable that we should let a person make decisions regarding the improvement of his character. To this question Confucius says "Do not be afraid to correct mistakes one makes," we have to consider or develop the notion of *xing* or nature/character so that the heart-mind can improve its dispositions and hence character or nature by correcting mistakes one has committed. One sees here an intrinsic relationship between one's nature and one's heart-mind in such a way that what we have done not only reflects a trait of the heart-mind but also a trait of the disposition underlying the activity of the heart-mind. This is so that the correction of mistakes will have to be a matter of changing our disposition to act in some way so that one will act differently the next time or sees things differently because the heart-mind has contributed a correction to the disposition of the character.

In connection with the multiple functions of the heart-mind we can observe an intrinsic ordering among such functions in light of statements in the *Daxue* such as "*hao haose, wu echou* 好好色, 惡惡臭," which indicates that we may perceive something likable and then like it when or after we judge it to be worthy of being liked. Similarly, we may perceive something dislikable and then dislike it when and after

we judge it to deserve to be disliked. This generates an order of cognition which consists of giving to emotion, emotion to evaluation, and evaluation to will-action. We may take this as exhibiting a natural and spontaneous ordering among different functions of our heart-mind, but it is conceivable that such an ordering could be altered or diverted for some good reason or under some unusual condition. We may consider henceforth that our heart-mind is an onto-generative structure which leads to the conception of heart-mind as a holistic-holographic body of organic parts.

This then leads us to the question of what is the character and disposition of a person? In the *Analects* we find that Zi Gong 子貢 says that we seldom hear that the Master speaks of [human] nature and the way of heaven, but this does not mean that Confucius may not have had the conceptions of *xing* and *tiandao* 天道 in his mind. Confucius spoke of heaven numerous times in the contexts which show how he conceived of *tian*. In reference to *xing*, Confucius only refers to it once in saying that nature is similar in all men and it is by custom that it becomes apart. However, he has spoken of people as being born straight forward (“*Ren zhi sheng ye zhi* 人之生也直”) which then implies that the nature of humans is basically good if straightness is considered good and crookedness bad. Given this implicit understanding of human nature, we may then ask the question of how we can acquire virtue and cultivate ourselves so that we can progress in virtue cultivation, as it is assumed that teaching and learning would improve one’s character and develop one’s nature via the functions of a heart-mind which learns and responds to lessons and teachings of a teacher or at the least simply to the challenges of the world at large.

This question of self-cultivation no doubt needs to be answered. But a more metaphysical question cannot be escaped, namely the questions concerning what the heart-mind is, what human nature is, and how they are related metaphysically. We need to understand how we may conceive of human identity or the human self in terms of nature and the heart-mind as well as their natural and mutual functions. We may assume that the heart-mind and nature form a unity in such a way that nature provides a ground for activity of the heart-mind, whereas the heart-mind acts in its different functions for the purpose of sustaining and improving or realizing the dispositions of nature. We call such a unity the human self (*ziji* 自己). I have argued how the conception of *ziji* can be analyzed in terms of receptive dispositions and active abilities in an inseparable unity like *yin* and *yang*, but not *ti* 體 and *yong* 用. We see in Neo-Confucianism that the Hu-Xiang School has argued for the paradigm of *ti-yong* 體用 to explain the relation of *xing* and *xin* in light of the *Zhongyong*’s view

on the *zhong-he* 中和. Zhu Xi, however, corrects this view by considering *xin* as relatively independent of *xing* which must be presupposed epistemologically if we come to know the existence of nature. Besides, *fa* 發 (activation/sprout) is only one activity of nature, where to discern, to decide, to assert, to evaluate, and to judge or rule, as we have seen, are so many activities of the heart-mind which we do not see nature as naturally giving rise to. It is not possible though that we can have both paradigms of *yin-yang* and *ti-yong* simultaneously if we take consideration of the onto-cosmological source as well as the origin and function of nature and the heart-mind. We can see that in the case of human nature and the heart-mind are intertwined and are generated in a process of evolution so that we can say given nature we have the heart-mind and given the heart-mind we have nature. Hence nature and the heart-mind are both functions from an onto-generative source, and yet the source, nature, and heart-mind form one body in some dynamic unity.

III. *XIN* AS THE HEART-MIND IN *MENCIUS*

It is interesting to observe that in chapter 7A of the *Mencius* the relation of the heart-mind and nature becomes manifest and is well articulated. The key phrase here is “to fulfill or realize (*jin* 盡) one’s heart-mind” so that one would know one’s nature. In order to see how this is possible we should again raise the question as to just what is the heart-mind and what is nature for Mencius. Suffice it to say, for Mencius *xin* is explicitly addressed in some vivid contexts of human encounters and experiences in which intentional, volitional, emotional, and cognitive dimensions become exhibited and their relations become manifest. I shall use some examples for illustration.

In chapter 1A of the *Mencius* the famous question and answer between Mencius and King Qixuan occurs which tells of King Qixuan having shown unbearable feeling toward a cow presented to him before temple sacrifice. Here Mencius takes this natural exhibition of this feeling as a matter of moral sentiment of *ren* 仁. This would be the same feeling that Mencius argues for as natural in his famous citation of the spontaneous heart of sympathy for the sudden near fall of a child into a well. Here we see that this feeling of the heart-mind is both sentimental and moral and we can say that it is a moral feeling that is exhibited by the heart-mind.

It is notable that it is Mencius who first brings in a holistic theory of mind as the heart of moral emotions which for him should be the source and foundation of moral virtue. Thus he argues that everyone has the moral feeling of sympathy and those who do not have it are

not human. By the same token he argues for the presence of feelings of shame with regard to wrong action, feelings of modesty and respect, as well as feelings of right and wrong.⁹ These are accounts of moral feelings to be distinguished from natural feelings of joy, anger, sorrow, and comfort which are mentioned in the *Zhongyong* and also recognized in Mencius's text. This distinction is first made by Mencius in his singling out of moral feelings of the four kinds mentioned above. Yet Mencius did not tell of how these natural feelings and moral feelings are to be related. It is assured that one should develop one's moral feelings so that one will not go astray in one's natural feelings and thus achieve harmony and peace in oneself and among people. This is of course one of the essential points in the *Zhongyong* attributed to Zengzi.

The second example relates to Mencius's argument for his "not moving mind" (*budongxin* 不動心) at forty.¹⁰ Mencius here speaks of a heart-mind which is either excited by desires or well controlled so that no desire will be allowed to disturb or influence its vision of an end and its will in facing a crisis. It is clear from Mencius's statement of two types of courage that not to move one's heart-mind can be a matter of having a will and a vision so that one could set one's heart-mind on the target one has envisioned. But here we see Mencius presenting a description of his own experience of *budongxin* as a matter of "holding one's will (*zhi* 志) and not violating one's *qi* 氣."¹¹ Here Mencius takes *qi* as referring to the state of our body and emotion, referring to the mind as our ability to think and know. He contrasts himself with Gaozi 告子 by objecting to Gaozi's position on not appealing to one's mind when one does not feel satisfied with someone's words and affirming Gaozi's position on not appealing to one's *qi* if one is not satisfied with one's mind. Here Mencius appears to perceive a three-party relationship among intentions of the mind, emotions of body, and expressions of emotion.

This relationship can be discussed with regard to one person or to two people who are communicating. In the latter, however, there exists the complicated situation of communication which involves the heart-mind of two people trying to understand each other's intentions, emotions, and expressions. Mencius's point is that one could hold one's will or intention without being overturned by either emotions or expressions of speech. Instead it is better to have our emotions follow our intentions or at least not let our emotions alter one's emotions into a confrontational situation. In a situation where expression is not clear it is always necessary to appeal to one's mind in order to settle one's emotions according to the will or the mind's purposeful decision on what to do. This analysis points to a perception and a conception of the heart-mind which reveals that the heart-mind is

volitional, cognitive, and emotional at the same time and that the volitional character of heart-mind suggests what is the most important function of the heart-mind and this no doubt has exercised a great deal of influence on Neo-Confucian philosophers such as Zhang Zai 張載 and Zhu Xi to the extent that they came to speak of the mind as commanding and unifying emotions and nature (*xin zhu xingqing* 心主性情 or *xin tong xingqing* 心統性情).

In this connection we see that Mencius speaks of “inspecting one’s mind” (*cunxin* 存心).¹² More specifically, Mencius holds that one should inspect one’s mind from a point of view of morality, namely the point of view of *ren* and *li* 禮 so that one can see whether one’s heart-mind conforms to the norm of *ren* and *li*. Here we see a complex function of the heart-mind as showing the presence of moral feelings as judging and requiring natural feelings. This is so as to guarantee that one’s heart-mind conforms to moral requirements which are instituted by one’s moral heart-mind. This is not to say, however, that there are two sorts of heart-mind; instead it is to indicate that the structure of the heart-mind contains a dynamic of tension between natural feelings and moral feelings, both of which are rooted in the nature of humanity, and which always seek alignment and harmony under moral feelings which rule and preside over it. It is the heart-mind’s recognition that only when moral feelings have their checks on our nature or natural feelings that we are able to be assured of goodness of our action, and consequently to reach deserved well-being.

As to the question of how natural feelings and moral feelings originate and ontologically relate, we see that for Mencius they reside in the same nature but in some way moral feelings stay on a deeper level so that it requires effort and a critical occasion to emerge. This is implied in Mencius’s story of the response to the child’s fall, his metaphor of restoration of green to a razed mountain, and his talk of the night *qi* and morning *qi* which indicates a natural source of vitality in the vast cosmos.

It is also to be noticed that for Mencius, the heart-mind, when considered as a function of liking and disliking, has the natural tendency to care for virtues. He says that “What we share in the heart-mind is *li* and *yi* 義: the sages are those who realize what we share in common before us. Hence *li* and *yi* please my heart-mind just like dishes of meat pleases my mouth.”¹³ However, we may lose our taste for meat and we may lose our ability to enjoy good sight because we lose our ability to see with our eyes. This possibility brings out Mencius’s lament on the lost heart-mind (*fangxin* 放心) which must be recovered through our own will and effort. He even suggests that “the way of learning is to recover one’s lost mind.”¹⁴ All this of course

involves the implicit idea that we could learn to preserve our moral feelings and would be able to recover them once we have lost them. This also suggests that we have a potential and latent capability for moral feelings which can always be retrieved through effort and learning from good examples. This brings out his idea of innate knowledge of goodness (*liangzhi* 良知). It is the given natural light which resides in our nature which should operate normally at all times and can be awakened where it used to be once dormant. To do this one should reduce one's desires and strengthen the initial moral feelings, again seizing the opportunity of holding on to their emergence without forgetting (*wuwan* 勿忘).

The important and crucial points around the moral mind is that, first, it is always present in some form which allows it to bring out its full capacity; and second, that we need be reminded that we have such an original mind (*benxin* 本心).¹⁵ As indicated by Mencius, this also implies that some people may lose their *benxin* under great temptation by power and material goods.

How then do we place the original heart-mind in light of the emotional and volitional functions of the heart-mind of a person? The answer is that it is to be found in the nature of the human person as it is integral to one's humanity and can even be said to form the ultimate source of humanity which rests at the very bottom or core of one's humanity. To suggest this image of bottom or core is to say that normally it is not exposed to corruption of external forces of temptation or internal desires, yet it could be so damaged that one may not experience its presence. It is conceivable that one could lose it forever and no amount of effort would be sufficient to retrieve it. For Mencius, however, hope should never be given up and he would argue for the retrieval of one's humanity from such a state. This explains how Mencius sought to persuade kings of his time to return to the way of *ren* for both their own sake and that of the people.

Mencius understood that the heart-mind was the combination of mind, emotion, will, and desire. But in connection with his distinction between the greater part and smaller part of the body of a person, he comes to explicitly point out that the function of the mind is to think,¹⁶ and that the mind is independent of one's body as to recognize what is great in one's existence as a human being, namely to recognize that we can hold virtual feelings and preserve our nature through virtuous actions.

To sum up the complex and perhaps open conception of *xin* as the heart-mind in *Mencius*, we see that the mind is given the function of thinking and knowing moral feelings, as these feelings are also emotional activities of the heart-mind. We also see that Mencius seeks to identify the heart-mind as fundamentally or originally a mind of

moral feelings which could be lost but yet is always possible to retrieve. As the mind can be aware of what it likes and needs, and it can also hold what it likes and needs, it can also hold to the will to maintain one's moral abilities and act on, protecting itself from corruption and loss. He has also argued strenuously that this moral mind as moral feeling is what we all share in common just like we share our eyes and ears and mouths. We possess a common moral sentiment of humanity which can be further cultivated providing sustenance and development.

IV. THE HEART-MIND AND NATURE

What Mencius says about the heart-mind naturally leads us to the question of why we hold to the idea of one mind or one heart-mind with many functions as opposed to talking about emotion, will, cognition, and desire as separate faculties. The reason behind this is that there is an underlying single purpose of human life which is to realize its own potential and to be satisfied in this achievement as a person. That provides the human unity and singularity, and independence of thought and direction or autonomy of humanity I conceive to be the mind: the mind is the unitary existence of humanity. At this point we would like to inquire how the mind so conceived is related to human nature *xing* as conceived by Mencius.

It is to be assumed that by the time of Mencius, philosophers had spoken of human nature in many discourses such as that recorded in the *Liji* 《禮記》 as well as other documents that have only recently been discovered, namely the Guodian 郭店 manuscripts of bamboo inscriptions. The idea of nature has generally been received as being natural, namely something given by nature or heaven. Although everything has a nature of its own, it is only human beings that come to be aware and conscious of something inherent in their existence which disposes or naturally inclines them to feel or act in one way or another. Hence nature is something to be followed. It is, however, something that may also be transformed if we need to do so, or if it is to our advantage to do so, again granted that we are capable of doing so. Any radical change or change forced on us may look undesirable, even though in contemporary times it may be for the purpose of reaching a desirable goal in which we must change our natural ways of behaving under very straining conditions, for example training astronauts for flying in outer space. In psychological therapy suitable conditions are created for inducing behavioral changes, either for personal purposes or for social and educational purposes. In most of these cases cooperative actions on the part of the patients are secured

in such a way that their mental attitudes or views must be brought to agreement so that the mind of the patient may help bring about changes by exercising internal effort and/or cooperating in providing outer effort. This being said, we can come to the Confucian view of transforming our temperaments and character by learning and cultivation via the mind and heart.

For Mencius, nature is what one learns from past behavior of a person, the so-called behavior being what is formed based on one's natural propensity. Mencius uses the term *gu* 故 which is used to denote past behavior and can also mean "because of." This suggests that nature is formed from one's inductive thinking over the generalization of experience. The word *li* 利, which denotes natural propensity, also refers to the flourishing and prosperity in the *Yizhuan*. This means that what is nature must lead to its flourishing one way or another so as it can become a pattern of behavior. Altogether we come to see nature as something empirical, open to observation, and not as something metaphysical or beyond our own experience. It is on this basis that Gaozi speaks of nature as being given birth to. The reason for this is because for Confucians, and perhaps for most of humankind, to have life or to give rise to life is a natural thing and therefore constitutes what nature is. But as we shall see, we cannot confine nature to the level of simply living, for there are different kinds of living things, and thus we should see sorts or types of living beings on the basis of what makes them different and continue to flourish. It is on this basis that Mencius comes to differ from Gaozi by holding to, what we call nature, should indeed reflect a difference of living things, and thus should be focused on in terms of their differences. Human beings' natures mark out their distinguishing differences; this is human nature. Mencius takes describing human nature and how it can be refined and perfected for a good society to be the main goal of his philosophical project. In the passage describing how we should conceive of nature which has been generally ignored in the discussion of the conception of *xing* in *Mencius* and in his debate with Gaozi, Mencius points out that "In its arguments about human nature, all the world does is to offer reasons [*gu*]. It is for reasons to make for ease of argument [*li*]." ¹⁷ What is significant from this description of nature as *gu* and *li* is that we can see how Mencius came to argue that we must act in accordance with the nature of things so as to be more successful. Mencius cites the way Yu irrigated the watercourse so that the floodwaters could be channeled toward the sea. In doing things according to their nature one could solve the problem with ease (*xing qi suo wushi* 行其所無事). This is a great test of both one's theoretical intelligence and practical intelligence. Mencius takes our knowledge of sky and stars, no matter how high and how distant, to be obtainable

from observing their pattern of movements. Zhu Xi in explaining this point refers to the formation of the calendar based on observations of the yearly winter solstice. We shall see in proper contexts how *xing* for this reason is to be contrasted with *ming* 命 in *Mencius*.¹⁸

With this insight of Mencius's into the formation of nature, can we now identify the nature of man and argue for the moral quality of goodness (*shan* 善) in the nature of man? Mencius does produce a few arguments to the effect that human nature must be considered good internally and that only in recognizing this can we come to have a foundation of virtue and morality.

Mencius speaks of the *daoti* 道體 and *xiaodi* 小體 of a person. The *daoti* refers to one's moral nature which is exhibited in the four feelings of *ren*, *yi* 義, *li*, and *zhi* (智) where the *xiaoti* refers to the natural instincts and desires of a human person based on his body. As human nature in a holistic sense is formed of both the *daoti* and *xiaoti*, there is no reason to exclude food and sexual instincts from our conception of what is human nature. Yet what is insightful in *Mencius* is that he sees the necessity of subsuming *xiaoti* to the governance of *daoti*, for otherwise the person would not survive, not to say prosper and flourish. His insight is one into the grounding principle of humanity which possess an unaware purposefulness toward life, namely to live out the human life as fully and as humanly as possible. He sees that this purposefulness defines and brings out a quality in human nature which he called goodness. This goodness is what fulfills and satisfies human life and human nature. It is what preserves one's ability to deal with other people, their environment, and even oneself in a way that brings out the well-being of the individual.

As no human being can live and be happy or be perfected by himself, this goodness must comprise all forces and dispositions which would contribute to the well-being and harmony (*he* 和) of the people in their community and the world. This argument is empirical and also projective as it shows a projected vision of humanity by Mencius, and yet this vision is not groundless as he has argued that to reach some good is the fundamental drive of all living beings in the world. He regards this general need and desire to preserve and realize goodness as part of nature and that we should naturally come to see it and understand it. As we do so, we will come to wish to act it out, in doing so we will fulfill our nature and our destiny as human beings.

Mencius argued that human nature contains *ren* and *yi* and thus is originally good. This argument, however, is strongly challenged by Gaozi. Gaozi challenges him in four basic arguments: (i) Gaozi likens nature to a willow tree and *ren-yi* to a cup, and one should not identify nature with *ren-yi* just like one should not identify the willow tree with a wooden cup; (ii) Gaozi likens nature to swirling water which

can be channeled to flow to the east or flow to the west, and hence there is no distinction between good and bad in human nature just as the water does not distinguish between east and west; (3) What is to be generated is called nature and nothing more; Gaozi states that natural likings in food and sex is human nature. The loving feeling of *ren* comes from inside human nature and is not external to his nature, yet sense of rightness comes outside and is not internal to his nature.

Without going into great detail, I present Mencius's retorts as succinctly and to the point as possible. In response to Gaozi's first argument, Mencius points out that the wooden cup is made in line with the nature of the willow tree, but not in violation of its nature. This suggests that we develop human nature into *ren* and *yi*, not through harming it. We make good use of the willow tree by making the wooden cup out of it; we make good use out of human nature by developing human nature into the virtues of *ren* and *yi*. In response to the second argument, Mencius points out that water has a native tendency to flow downward, even though it could be made to flow eastward or westward; similarly, human nature has a tendency to be good even though it can be shaped one way or another, even if it can be made to stray from good it is not its innate nature. To the third argument, Mencius quizzes Gaozi as to whether what it is to be born with is considered nature; this implies that nature is like the quality of being born white. Gaozi replies by affirming the quality of white being as universal among white plumes, white jade, and white snow. From this Mencius reduces Gaozi to absurdity by asserting that the nature of dogs cannot be the nature of cows and the nature of cows cannot be the nature of human beings. One may say that Mencius wishes Gaozi to know that nature is not a simple quality like being the color white, but a general term denoting various natural things. This suggests the logic of his discernment and reasoning. To the final argument, Mencius points out that just as liking something is from within one's nature, to respect an elder also comes from one's nature even though the object of liking is as the object of respect is outside oneself. Mencius's argument, however, is considered somewhat weak as it appears to be weak for he has not quite grasped Gaozi's point. Gaozi wishes to stress that in the case of *yi* the object of one's respect makes a greater difference than the object of liking, for one must first recognize the position of the object of respect before deciding whether to give one's respect. Mencius could reply by saying that his idea of *yi* is that one must feel and decide whether to give respect, and therefore respect is inside oneself. But there is no reason why objects of respect, just like objects of liking, may not be taken into consideration. This shows that virtue can be always internal as based on our abilities and feelings, but *ren* may make no distinction between objects while *yi*

requests distinctions be made and this is just what Mencius holds to in his advancing *yi* beside *ren*. In this regard his position did not differ from Gaozi, as such the terms of *nei* and *wai* would become ambiguous.

All in all, it is clear that Mencius has gone a long way to hold that human beings have a nature that is subject to change and transformation, but left by itself, this nature has a clear tendency to exhibit and act toward good. His theory of four beginnings for four virtues also confirms his own notion of nature. We have natural feelings that are also moral feelings and we need to cultivate them lest they be diverted or lost. That is why cultivation of oneself is important and this cultivation requires efforts to follow through and hold on to one's feelings as the standard and norm as well as allowing them to be refined into practical rules for moral action. Mencius also went further than this, in holding that our feelings and tendencies toward good originated from a source which is innately good, a source he called our *benxin* 本心. It is interesting to note that he did not use the term *benxing* 本性 or original nature. The question then remains as to whether *benxin* is the same as *benxing*. The answer to this is both a yes and no, as far as I am concerned.

According to Mencius's conception of nature, there is a quality that distinguished itself as the mark of being human. This quality is the unique factor that separates humans from the rest, regardless of whether we are aware of it in our own minds and in so far as we can observe this natural tendency. In this sense we can speak of the original nature or *benxing*. On the other hand, Mencius asks more from our conception of human nature, namely that we are aware of our natural tendency toward good even though we may ignore it or forget it from time to time. But this awareness can always return to us. From this, the implication of Mencius is that this moral awareness of good is given to us in our nature and thus we are able to respond to a situation with our knowledge of what is good. This knowledge he called *liangzhi* 良知 which Win-tsit Chan translated as "innate knowledge of the good."¹⁹ In this sense we must come to the conclusion that insofar as our *liangzhi* is concerned, our nature can be said to be not only originally good but that this original goodness is always operative in us and enables us to seek good in our actions. Hence the *benxin* can be identified with our *liangzhi* which we can experience and be aware of. There is an underlying unity of mind and nature in this insofar as *liangzhi* is both a part of our nature and a part of our mind. *Liangzhi* can be said to be our natural goodness becoming known to itself. Both Lu Xiangshan 陸象山 and Wang Yangming 王陽明 in their thesis *xing ji li* have come to seize on this thesis and come to argue that insofar as human beings are good in their origin and since

benxin is *benxing*, thus to speak of *benxin* is sufficient to cover matters of human nature.

This all gives rise to the question of how we come to know our *benxin* or to recover our lost *benxin*. To this Mou Zongshan has suggested something called *nijue tizheng* 逆覺體證 (experience by reverse perception). This seems to suggest we can reflect on our nature so that we can get to the point of knowing our *benxin*. But the fact is that for Mencius our *benxin* is already exhibited in our awareness and experiences of the emergence of our moral four feelings. Thus insofar as we can speak of the source of these moral feelings, we can talk of the origins of good or original nature which contains the cause for becoming aware or self-conscious in our perception. In other words, there is no extra way of witnessing our *benxin* other than this and we need not make our *benxin* as something separable from our natural feelings of morality.

With this clarification we can now see how heart-mind is related to our nature in the Mencius theory of knowing nature by fulfilling mind. To fulfill mind (*jinxin* 盡心) is to become aware that we have a nature which is observable from our experience of human behavior; we also observe that every living thing has a goal of flourishing and self-fulfillment. Hence our mind affirms our nature to be such that our nature must include our ability to understand and awareness of the functions and activities of our mind. We come to see that (i) our mind, knowing our nature, can follow our nature in seeking good; (ii) our mind will bring out the needs of our nature for development; (iii) our mind can perceive goals and ends for satisfying our nature; (iv) our mind can be seen as displaying our nature and is not separable from our nature, yet relatively independent, in being able to perceive of things of the world and thus relating our nature to the world. It is by exploring the source of our mind activities and by realizing the goals and ends of our feelings and aspirations that we become aware of what to seek; (v) our mind listens to the demands of our nature and is capable of forming relations and norms of action so that our nature is realized. Hence not only have we come to know nature by knowing the functions and activities of mind which are rooted in nature, but we have also come to fulfill our nature *jinxing* 盡性 as it is argued in the *Zhongyong*. On the basis of our knowing and fulfilling our nature it is natural again that we come to know the heaven as the ultimate reality which provides our basis for knowing and our nature for seeking what is good.

With this sense of knowing nature and knowing heaven as a consequence, we come to the conclusion that *xin* and *xing* are identical (*xin ji xing* 心即性). I would hold that *xin* can be said to be nature but we cannot say that nature is always *xin*, for there are many qualities of

nature that we cannot identify with *xin*. Nature is natural, spontaneous, and always something which is given; while mind is active, self-aware, and can bring out action with efforts and will. Mind can fulfill nature by knowing nature, but nature cannot fulfill heart-mind for heart-mind has to fulfill itself on the basis of nature. Nature provides the basis for but is not a substitute for mind. Hence we must conceive that mind and nature have two different statuses and two different functions. They share in their providing the ground for *liangzhi* and they also share a common origin which makes each and both possible. Thus I consider the thesis of *xinxing tong yuan* 心性同源 (the same source of the heart-mind and nature) rather than *xinxing tong yi* 心性同一 (the sameness of the heart-mind and nature). *Xin* 心 and *xing* 性 not only share their origin but are complementary and supplementary to each other so that the whole human person can complete and refine himself or herself in a world of changes.

V. CONCLUSION

With Mencius's theory of *xin-xing* clarified and elaborated, we are ready to undertake the task of showing how this theory of *xin-xing* enables us to relate the *Daxue* and the *Zhongyong* as two separate treatises on the human person. This is extremely important as we see that the *Daxue* deals with *xin* in a single sentence while making a dubious reference to *xing*²⁰ whereas the *Zhongyong* deals with *xing* without ever referring to *xin*. It is peculiar both historically and theoretically. I argue that this shows that these two documents and their discourses are both pre-Mencius and represent two trains of thought from Confucius, which historically are regarded as originating respectively from Zengzi and Zisi. Now with *Mencius* clearly explained, we see that we are able to propose three theses with regard to the status and philosophy of the *Daxue* and the *Zhongyong*:

1. Why the *Daxue* and the *Zhongyong* must come before *Mencius* and in doing so provide resources and issues for Mencius to rely on while dealing with the complex issues of mind and nature.
2. Why Mencius can be said to have used issues raised by the *Daxue* and the *Zhongyong* so that he could develop his philosophy of unity of *xing* and *xin*.
3. How this unity of *xin* and *xing* provides a key to not only better understand the *Daxue* and the *Zhongyong* but will act as a mediator in bringing two separate views together in a unity of *xin* and *xing*: *xin ji li* and *xing ji li*.
4. How this theory of *xin-xing* altogether suggests a generative ontology of *xin* and *xing*.

5. How *xing* can be regarded as a matter of harmony based on creativity and how *xin* can be read as a matter of creativity toward harmony. How together they form an onto-generative metaphysics or generative ontology of *xin* and *xing*, or harmony and creativity.
6. This explanation also brings a unity to all the *Four Books* in a process of meaningful development: the *Analects* provided the initial experience and reflection on *xin* and *yang*; the *Daxue* and the *Zhongyong* became differentiated discourses on the primary understanding in Confucius; and Mencius then absorbed both and formed his theory of *xin* and *xing*.
7. How the Neo-Confucian philosophers are further able to bring out their views and ideals based on their understanding of *xin* and *xing*.
8. How the controversy between Cheng-Zhu and Lu-Wang could be resolved in light of a new understanding of the underlying unity of *xin-xing-li* in the integrative philosophy of Mencius based on the *Daxue* and the *Zhongyong* and rooted in Confucius.

REMIN UNIVERSITY OF CHINA
P. R. China
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT MANOA
Honolulu, Hawaii

ENDNOTES

The first draft of this article was presented at the International Symposium on the Confucian *Four Books* (*Sishu Guoji Xueshu Yantao Hui* 《四書》國際四書學術研討會) held at the School of Chinese Classics, Renmin University of China, Beijing, on April 28–29, 2013. I give my warm appreciation to Professor Liang Tao who organized the above conference. For the present draft, I thank Xinzhong Yao, Shirley Chan, and Linyu Gu for their generous time on copyediting.

1. He has worried whether to make the first chapter of the *Jinsilu* the first chapter, but eventually he decided scholars should know *daoti* and that they would come to know it more closely after reading later chapters.
2. *Lunyu* 《論語》, 14: 39.
3. *Ibid.*, 17: 2.
4. *Ibid.*, 2: 4.
5. *Ibid.*, 6: 7.
6. *Ibid.*, 20: 1.
7. *Ibid.*
8. I use “capability” to indicate an actually shown ability as we experience in ourselves and in our communication with others. Martha Nussbaum has developed the capability theory as a basis for rights, but I distinguish between capability and ability as competence and performance and require competence as a matter of support for performance. See Martha Nussbaum, *Quality of Life* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1993) and *Sex & Social Justice* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

9. *The Mencius*, 2A: 6.
10. *Ibid.*, 2A: 2.
11. Here Zhao Qi 趙啓 explains *zhi* 志 as the concerns of one's heart-mind and *qi* as what fills one's body so that we are capable of feeling joy and anger. In contrast, Zhu Xi takes *zhi* to be what the heart-mind pursues and to be the command of *qi* where *qi* is what fills up one's body.
12. *The Mencius*, 4A: 28 where Zhao Qi interprets *cun* 存 as *cha* 察 or inspecting.
13. *Ibid.*, 6A: 7.
14. *Ibid.*, 6A: 11.
15. *Ibid.*, 6A: 10. This term could be better expressed as the "rooted mind."
16. *Ibid.*, 6A: 15.
17. *Ibid.*, 4B: 26. D. C. Lau, trans., *Mencius* (London: Penguin Classics, 1970), 93.
18. See what Mencius says about the contrast between *xing* and *ming* in 7B: 24. This shows that for Mencius *xing* has two aspects: the necessary or determinate and the creative or indeterminate. We need to expand our nature and obey our destiny. This is what the heart-mind needs to know and to act on.
19. See his *Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, the chapter on Wang Yangming (Wing-tsit Chan, comp., *Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 659–91.
20. In the third sentence of the last section of the *Daxue* we read “好人之所惡，惡人之所好，是謂拂人之性，菑必逮乎身。” This merely reveals how *xin* or the heart-mind has to have *xing* as a base or source. Yet with Section 7 in the *Daxue*, the text clearly speaks of *xin* as capable of liking and disliking and thus states: “(心) 有所好樂，則不得其正。心不得其正，則災難終必至。” Hence the *Daxue* does not need to refer to *xing* or nature.