

DUALISM AND WHOLENESS IN A CHINESE PERSPECTIVE*

by Kwee Swan-Liat

One of the tenets of comparative philosophy is that one should not compare concepts without contexts.

A dialogue on "dualism" and "wholeness" between Chinese Confusionists and European Christians would run into misunderstandings. In the West philosophy is a search for truth rather than a search for happiness. In classical antiquity the Stoic and Epicureans turn to philosophy as a guidance for life. But in medieval Christianity philosophy became a handmaid to theology. Later the legitimate status of reason as an organon of analytic thought was restored. Even with the rise of secularist philosophy this preoccupation with logic, epistemology and methodology remains. FRANCIS BACON exposed his *Novum Organum* and RENÉ DESCARTES his *Discourse on Method*.

* Vom 23. bis 25. April 1981 fand in der Trappistenabtei in Tegelen (Niederlande) das Fünfte Internationale Kolloquium der CECC – *Catholics in Europe Concerned with China* – statt. Die fünfundzwanzig Teilnehmer aus den Niederlanden, Deutschland, Belgien, Frankreich und der Schweiz befaßten sich mit dem Thema „Dualismus und Ganzheit“ (*Dualism and Wholeness*), der Beziehung zwischen der Immanenz und Transzendenz aus chinesischer, marxistischer und christlicher Sicht. Die Referenten waren: der chinesische Philosoph Prof. Dr. KWEE SWAN-LIAT (Technische Hochschule von Eindhoven), der marxistische Philosoph Prof. Dr. REMY KWANT (Reichsuniversität von Utrecht), der neuthomistische Philosoph Prof. Dr. HERMANN BERGER (Katholische Hochschule von Tilburg) und der katholische Theologe Prof. Dr. AD WILLEMS (Katholische Universität von Nijmegen). Das Referat von Prof. KWEE „*Dualism and Wholeness in a Chinese Perspective*“ ist nachstehend abgedruckt.

Das Thema „Dualismus und Ganzheit“ kann verstanden werden als die Antwort auf die fundamentale Frage, die für den Dialog zwischen dem heutigen China und den christlichen Kirchen schon 1974 in Löwen und 1976 in Brügge von der Gruppe CECC gestellt worden ist. Mit dem Problem der Beziehung zwischen der Immanenz und der Transzendenz bei der Sinnfrage der menschlichen Existenz wird nämlich der wundeste Punkt in diesem Dialog berührt. Das monistische Gefühl der Chinesen läßt wohl Raum für eine gewisse Spannung zwischen Immanenz und Transzendenz, aber es erfährt diese nicht als eine Aufspaltung zwischen Natur und dem Übernatürlichen. Der Chinese interessiert sich mehr für das Gute als für das Wahre. Eine moralische Stellungnahme ist für ihn wichtiger als eine dogmatische. Im Christentum haben verschiedene Kultureinflüsse dazu beigetragen, daß das Verhältnis zwischen Immanenz und Transzendenz antagonistisch als Dualismus verstanden wurde. In der mystischen Tradition des Christentums ist diese Gespaltenheit beklagt worden, um daraus zur Überzeugung zu kommen, daß sie dem menschlichen Gefühl nicht entspricht. Vielleicht könnte der Weg der Mystiker, die ihre Berufung in einer integralen Sinngebung sehen, einen besseren Zugang zum Verständnis dieses chinesischen Gefühls ermöglichen als die Wege unserer westlichen Philosophie und Theologie. In Tegelen wurde durch Prof. WILLEMS besonders darauf hingewiesen. Längere Zeit wurde in Tegelen der Frage gewidmet: „Wie soll es mit der CECC weitergehen? Bei den vorausgegangenen Begegnungen hatte man schon die Erfahrung machen müssen, daß die bisher verfolgte

In the introduction to his *History of Chinese Philosophy* FUNG YU-LAN remarks that "Chinese philosophy" as far as regards methodology in the western sense holds a humble position when compared with the philosophy of the West or of India. Method (in Chinese philosophy) was not primarily for the seeking of knowledge but rather for self-cultivation; it was not for the search of truth but for the search of good. Chinese philosophy, in short, has always laid stress upon what man is (i. e. his moral qualities) rather than what he has (i. e. his intellectual and material capacities). Chinese philosophers have preferred to apply knowledge to actual conduct that would lead directly to happiness rather than to hold what they considered to be empty discussions on it. Most Chinese philosophic schools have taught the way of what is called the "Inner Sage and Outer King" (*nei sheng wai wang*). The Inner Sage is a person who has established virtue in himself; the Outer King is one who has accomplished great deeds in the world. The highest ideal for a man is at once to possess the virtue of a Sage and the accomplishment of a ruler, and to

Methode zu einseitig philosophischen und theologischen Abstraktionen führt. Man hat sich zuwenig mit den existentiellen Erfahrungen der heutigen Chinesen befaßt. Dabei hat auch die Schwierigkeit eine Rolle gespielt, an wirklich gute Informationen heranzukommen. Aber die Zeiten haben sich mittlerweile geändert. Die Grenzen haben sich geöffnet, und auch aus China kommt die Erwartung, mehr Kontakt mit dem Westen herstellen zu können. Dies wird Folgen auch für die Kirche haben.

Der Leiter des Kolloquiums, Dr. JOEP SPITZ, hielt ein Plädoyer für eine neue Verfahrensweise innerhalb der CECC. Er gab folgende Punkte zu bedenken:

- Ausgangspunkt für die Untersuchung sollte sein: das tägliche Leben in China und nicht so sehr verschiedene Gesichtspunkte, seien es auch sehr fundamentale philosophische oder theologische. Es geht um die Kenntnis des chinesischen existentiellen Empfindens. Dabei können die Ethik und die Moral gute Anknüpfungspunkte sein, z. B. auf dem Gebiet der Ethik der Wissenschaft und Technik, der Wirtschaft und Wohlfahrt und auf dem Gebiet der Erziehung.

- Die CECC sollte sich ökumenisch stärker öffnen, sowohl in ihrer internationalen als auch in der nationalen Zusammensetzung.

- Bei den Zusammenkünften sollten mehr Chinesen teilnehmen, damit tatsächlich von einem wirklichen Dialog die Rede sein könne.

- Es sollte eine Kerngruppe gebildet werden, die nationale Gruppen durch Aufzeigen bestimmter Probleme begleitet und die als Hauptaufgabe hat, die zweijährigen internationalen Zusammenkünfte vorzubereiten.

- Das Hauptgewicht der Untersuchung sollte auf den Einfluß gerichtet sein, den das heutige China auf Christen ausüben könnte, die eine kritische Bestandsaufnahme versuchen; diese Fragestellung ist vorläufig sicher ergiebiger als die Frage, was die Kirchen China zu bieten haben. Eine gewisse Bescheidenheit nach Jahrhunderten sicher gutgemeinter, aber falsch verstandener Missionsarbeit ist sicher angemessen. Darüber hinaus ist die kritische Fragestellung aus dem säkularisierten Zusammenleben für die Kirchen sicher notwendig, damit diese einen besseren Blick bekommen können für ihre eigene Funktion.

Diese Kerngruppe ist inzwischen gebildet worden und wird in Kürze mit ihrer Arbeit beginnen. Für die CECC bietet sich hier die Möglichkeit, erneut und mit viel Inspiration einen weiteren Schritt in ihrer wichtigen Arbeit zu tun. — Joep Spitz

become what is called a Sage-king, or what PLATO would term the philosopher-king".¹

In the fifth century B. C. we find reference being made to the discourse of Confucius on "human nature and the ways of Heaven" (*Lun Yü* V, 12). It is within this context that we have to look for interpretations of such concepts as "dualism" and "wholeness".

TYPES OF DUALISM

The idea of dualism versus monism is traditional in Western philosophy but alien to the Chinese mind. There are continuous controversies between dualists and monists in Western metaphysics and epistemology, concerning matter-and-mind, materialism-idealism, realism-idealism. Dualism implies antagonism, e. g. good and evil, virtue and vice, light and dark, heaven and hell. Antagonistic dualism is most explicit in Manichaeism.

To the Chinese "one", "two" and "many" are only abstractions in the conception and explanation of reality. Reality is conceived as a "pluralistic universe". The phenomenal world is denoted as *wan wu*, the "ten thousand things". The transphenomenal approach to reality stresses the Oneness or Wholeness. Both conceptions are in mutual agreement. There is no opposition of dualism against monism. Oneness is a fundamentally different concept from monism.

In this model of the Universe dualism is only a variety of pluralism. Dualism occurs when we look at two opposite positions or extremes within a continuum. The two positions are mutually connected. They constitute a polarity. Polar dualism is different from antagonistic dualism. Male and female, light and dark, warm and cold, north and south, east and west, young and old, classic and modern as polar dualisms emphasize the equal value of each part of the pair. One pole does not occur without the other pole. Sometimes only the opposites exist, sometimes between the contrasting extremes there are intermediate positions and varieties.

This positional type of dualism is the most common in Chinese philosophy. It gives rise to various possible stands and attitudes, e. g. universalism, relativism, equilibrium, simplicity, equality. Positional dualism is no dualism in the strict sense but rather a variety of pluralism. We have real dualism when the two realms inter-connected by the dualistic relation are different in character and quality. Even in these cases of real dualism the two opposite realms are two poles having contrary qualities rather than antagonistic contrasts. These two poles have no separate existence. Dualism in Chinese thought refers to interacting and coexisting polarities. So dualism is by no means incompatible with Oneness or Wholeness. Oneness is even a presupposition of dualism. In Chinese natural religion and philosophy this Oneness or Wholeness may be denoted as Universism.²

Transcriptions of Chinese words are given in pinyin.

¹ FUNG YU-LAN, *A history of Chinese philosophy*. Translated by Derk Bodde. Vol. 1. 2nd ed. London 1952, p. 1-2.

² J. J. M. DE GROOT, *Universism*, Berlin 1918.

There are at least four types of polar dualisms in Chinese thought.

1. Natural events and human affairs are interrelated. Natural calamities like earthquakes are harbingers of social catastrophes. Good conduct of life and regulation of social affairs result in harmony in Nature and a peaceful society. Harmony and Peace (*he ping*) are true aims of human actions.

2. *Yang* and *Yin* are constructive principles of both natural processes and cultural evolution and interaction. *Yang* and *yin* are the dual polarizations of the Oneness of *Dao*, the Way of Heaven-and-Earth, the Great Stream of Total Becoming. Out of the mutual interactions of *yang* and *yin* the Five Constituents (*wu xing*) Water, Earth, Wood, Fire and Metal arise, and the Five Constituents give rise to the ten thousand things (*wan wu*).

3. Life is seen as a path from origin to destiny. Each person is born with a specific nature, a set of gifts and talents. These gifts and potentialities constitute a personal task, a commission, a heavenly mandate. "Nature" (*xing*) as given potentialities is to be actualized during one's lifetime. Each person has a threefold relationship towards him- or herself, his or her own "inner nature", towards society and fellow human beings, and towards "Heaven-and-Earth" or "outer nature". One's gifts and talents constitute a particular and personal mandate (*ming*), a personal destiny in life. The existential dualism of *xing* and *ming* exerts a moral integration of one's life and contributes to one's personal wholeness.

4. Buddhism has stimulated metaphysical speculations in China. In the eleventh century a synthesis was achieved indicated as Neo-Confucianism. Neo-confucian metaphysics was dualistic in character. The two basic principles are called *li* and *qi*. *Li* is translated as "norm" or "reason", or in contemporary terminology "structure". *Li* is that by which a particular thing or person is that thing or that person, its "normative reason" or "identity principle". *Qi* is translated as "matter-and-energy". *Qi* is that by which any thing and any person exist, its "existence principle". *Li-qi* dualism also implies wholeness.

These four types of polar dualisms have been characteristic of Chinese thought and Chinese civilization during several millennia before the confrontation of China with the West. In a certain sense this confrontation between China and the West was a confrontation also of two types of thinking, of polar unitary thinking and antagonistic thinking. The antagonistic and contradictory character of both Christianity and the industrial military civilization of the West was a challenge to the Chinese way of life and thought. The syncretistic faculties of the Chinese mind have enabled the leading philosophers and politicians to absorb Christianity into a new synthesis like their predecessors assimilated Buddhism a few centuries earlier.

POSITIONAL DUALISM AND WHOLENESS

When speaking of positional dualism we emphasize two contrasting unequal positions within a whole, such as society or the human world at large. We compare high and low, the mighty and the unprivileged mass, the

rich and the poor, progression and regression, the oppressive and the submissive. The formulation of dualism as a viewpoint is at the same time the expression of a philosophical and ethical standpoint. Positing a contrast involves a relativation.

What are the possible stands and attitudes towards positional dualism? In classical Chinese philosophy various schools propagated contending doctrines. These schools themselves were representative for various social positions at that time.

The Confucianists advocated a Doctrine of the Mean (*zhong yong*). Wise men should obtain and maintain dominant central positions and actively regulate social affairs. Confucius himself probably was a descendant of the lower nobility. Against the background of the general decline of the feudal system in China, Confucius anticipated an important role of the noble man or superior man (*jun-zi*) instead of the nobleman. The nobleman disposed of a dominant social position by birth. The noble man had to acquire this position by inner development through a process of intellectual and moral education. Confucius (*Kong-qiū*) became China's first professional teacher (*kong-zi* or Master Kong). What he taught were human and social virtues (*de*), faculties of inner nobility. His later disciple MENG-ZI (Mencius) elaborated this teaching of virtues and mentioned four in particular: humanheartedness (*ren*), righteousness (*yi*), sense of decorum and decency (*li*), and wisdom (*zhi*).

The conspicuous absence of such virtues like courage, bravery, valour, boldness, prowess, chivalry was characteristic of the non-military spirit of the Confucian teachings. The character *ren* is composed of *ren* (= man) and *er* (= two). *Ren* as the primary Confucian virtue can be denoted as man-to-man-ness, a basic faculty responsible for optimal human relations and a humane society. According to MENG-ZI every man (and woman) is endowed with this virtue in potentiality. Man's spontaneous actions are based on *ren*.

MENCIUS states: "All men have a mind which cannot bear to see the sufferings of others . . . If today men suddenly see a child about to fall into a well, they will without exception experience a feeling of alarm and distress. This will not be as a way whereby to gain the favour of the child's parents, nor whereby they may seek the praise of their neighbours and friends, nor that they are so because they dislike the reputation of being unvirtuous. From this case we may perceive that he who lacks the feeling of commiseration is not a man; that he who lacks a feeling of shame and dislike is not a man; that he who lacks a feeling of modesty and of yielding is not a man; and that he who lacks a sense of right and wrong is not a man. The feeling of commiseration is the beginning of humanheartedness (*ren*): The feeling of shame and dislike is the beginning of righteousness (*yi*). The feeling of modesty and yielding is the beginning of propriety and decency (*li*). The sense of right and wrong is the beginning of wisdom (*zhi*). Man has these four beginnings or potentialities just as he has his four limbs. When having these four potentialities he says of himself that he is incapable of developing them, he is injuring himself. And when he says of his sovereign that he is incapable, he is injuring his sovereign. Since all men have these four potentialities in

themselves, let them know how to give them their full development and completion, and the result will be like fire that begins to burn, or of a spring which has begun to find vent. Let them have their complete development, and they will suffice to protect within the four seas." (MENG-ZI IIa, 6).

Complete development of one's inner potentialities or beginnings will lead to wholeness, to integral and superior man (*jun-zi*). The superior man acts in harmony with his inner nature and with outer Nature (Heaven-and Earth). When he commands a superior position in society he will impart wholeness also to society. This is in accordance to the Heavenly mandate (*tian-ming*).

According to Master Meng human nature is inherently and potentially good. Education only provides favourable opportunities to develop these potentialities. XUN-ZI, leader of a rival Confucianist school, however, had a different opinion. According to him man's original nature is bad or at least deficient. Education, and particularly moral education, is essential and indispensable. Man should be cultivated and civilized. XUN-ZI is not optimistic about attaining personal and social wholeness. Civilization is a difficult and gradual process of development requiring statesmanship and political wisdom.

Master XUNN's ideas are parallel to those of the Legalist School (*fa-jia*), who propagated to regulate social affairs by laws and positive rules and measures. The convergent actions of confucianists and legalists resulted in the institution of bureaucratic government since the early Han dynasty in the 2nd century B. C. Officials were recruited from well to-do families, mostly landowners. They obtained a confucianist education, a training in confucianist learning and philosophy. Since the Tang dynasty aspirants for official careers have to pass an examination system. For more than two millennia China has been ruled by scholars and philosophers.

Contrary to those of the confucianists and legalists are the opinions and attitudes of the daoists (*dao-jia*). Nature and Culture are opposites, and in the daoist's view nature is superior. Knowledge and learning are detrimental to men's happiness and quality of life. Good rulers keep the heads of their subjects empty and make their bellies full. People should refrain from deliberate action (*wu wei*) and not interfere in the course of Nature.

Daoists extol the Oneness and Wholeness of Nature. *Dao* is the One and all embracing Totality, the Way of Heaven-and-Earth, the Great Stream of endless becoming. It is difficult to envisage *Dao*. Hence, the reluctance to speak of it. It is equally difficult to attain or maintain wholeness. Nevertheless, every living being is embedded in *Dao* and strives after wholeness. To follow Nature is to keep low, just like water seeking the lowest places to stay. In later times daoism recruits its adherents from the same social layers as confucianism, but these followers drop out from society and civilization and withdraw into the solitary wildness of natural scenes. Daoism inspires poets and natural mysticists.

The most eloquent spokesman of daoism was ZHUANG-ZI or ZHUANG-ZHOU, a contemporary of MENG-ZI. *Dao* is the all-embracing first principle through which the universe has come into being. *Dao* has reality and evidence, but no

action and form. It may be transmitted but cannot be received. It may be attained to but cannot be seen. It exists by and through itself. It existed prior to Heaven and Earth, and indeed for all eternity. It causes the gods to be divine, and the world to be produced. It is above the zenith, but it is not high. It is below the nadir, but it is not low. It is prior to Heaven and Earth, but it is not ancient. It is older than the most ancient, but it is not old . . . The action of *Dao* is spontaneous. Human skill is bound up with human affairs; human affairs are bound up with what is right; what is right is bound up with Power (*de*); *De* is bound up with *Dao*; and *Doo* is bound up with Nature (*Tian*). Nature means what is spontaneous. To act by means of non-activity (*wu-wei*) is what is called Nature."

ZHUANG-ZI's attitude is one of unbounded relativism. Tranquility of mind is attained through a process of forgetting or effacement, first of worldly things, then of the external world as a whole, and then of one's own existence, until one reaches a sudden mystical enlightenment in which one sees the unity of all things. When this unity is perceived, the distinctions between past and recent, life and death, are obliterated, and one reaches eternity. Thus we can see that it is by forgetting life that one may attain to immortality, a goal which would be impossible if the distinction between existence and non-existence were not first obliterated. Thus we reach a state of pure experience, a state in which the individual is one with the universe. The less knowledge one has of things, distinctions, and of right and wrong, the more pure is the experience. What the Zhuang-zi calls "the fact of the mind" and "sitting in forgetfulness" are designations for this state of pure experience. "Maintain the unity of your will. Do not listen with the ears, but with the mind. Do not listen with the mind, but with the spirit. The function of the ears ends with hearing; that of the mind with symbols or ideas. But the spirit is an emptiness ready to receive all things. *Dao* abides in emptiness; the emptiness is the Fast of Mind. Through cultivation of one's own nature (*xing*), one returns to the Power. Having returned to the Power, one becomes identified with the Beginning, Being thus identified, there comes emptiness. With this emptiness, there comes vastness, Being like this, one reaches a union with the universe (and attains Wholeness)."

This method of quiescence and effacement is akin to Buddhist forms of meditation, which would be introduced into China several centuries later. In Buddhism also enlightenment is attained through a pure experience of emptiness and vastness.

Another school flourishing in classical China was Mohism, issuing from the teachings of MO-DI or MO-ZI. Master Mo probably was a man of humble origin or even a former slave. His attitude towards society and man's destiny differs greatly from that of the Confucianists. Instead of praising humanheartedness and the social virtues of the Superior Man, he propagated universal love and the brotherhood of all men. He was diametrically opposed to the official and ruling class of his day. In his ascetism he lived a life similar that of a common labourer. His concern is for the underprivileged in society. Stories indicate that the Mohists were an organized body, capable of concerted action. MO-ZI

practised frugality, universal love, utilitarianism and welded them into a unified philosophy, social organization and practical action. Everything that can bring wealth and populousness to a country is beneficial. Everything that does not directly further these two ends must be discarded. The adherents of Mohism exalt frugality and oppose all form of extravagance. Mo-zi is very explicit in his condemnation of war. The incessant fighting of people and states among themselves is caused by the fact that men do not love one another. Instead of "graded love", with distinctions of filial piety, fraternity, conjugal fidelity, loyalty to the ruler, he propagated universal love (*jian-ai*). Oneness or Wholeness has to be attained through this universal love.

We see how different stands and attitudes can be mapped out in the case of positional dualism in society and how different philosophical schools formulated doctrines to transcend these dualisms towards wholeness. XUN-zi and the Legalist school were less explicit in regard to wholeness. The Confucian school emphasize the role of the Superior Man, who strives for inner perfection and seeks a middle position from which society can be positively regulated. ZHUANG-zi rejects active human interventions. He propagates oneness with nature. Wholeness can be attained through the pure experience of emptiness. The Mohists are protagonists of utilitarianism and universal love. They organized people from the lower strata of society. Wholeness will be achieved through benefits to the people. In 20 century MAO ZE-DONG was influenced by ideas of Mohism, which he combined with Marxist principles adopted from the West.

POLAR DUALISM AND WHOLENESS

Positional dualism is a variety of pluralism and allows various stands from high through middle to low. The middle position in particular is interesting because it reflects a viewpoint rather than a standpoint. We have seen now the Confucianists claim this middle position for the Superior Man, whose standpoint is within the higher strata of society, but who prefers to view the whole from the centre. The triumph of Confucianism as a state philosophy in Imperial China enables its adherents to occupy dominant positions in the state bureaucracy. Holding high their ideal of the superior man (*jun-zi*), they proclaim at the same time a Doctrine of the Mean (*Zhong-yong*). The superior man in a central position both serves the Emperor and regulates the affairs of the people. With this stand in positional dualism he combines a practical attitude towards polar dualism. The emphasis on the Mean permeates Chinese civilization as a whole. Chinese see their country as the Middle Kingdom (*Zhong-guo*), with a highly civilization in the centre interacting with a plurality of peoples and civilizations in the periphery.

Polar dualisms are constituents of common beliefs. As such they play an important role in structuring the thoughts and regulating the actions of the Chinese people. It is man himself who is a pivot between poles and keeps the whole in a dynamic equilibrium. So the belief in polar dualism and the conception of man's central position within the universe at large contribute

towards a practice of personal conduct and collective social order directed towards the attainment of Wholeness.

The Chinese speak of Heaven (*Tian*) in various contexts and connotations. In popular religions Heaven is the abode of the Gods. In a metaphysical sense Heaven corresponds to what in the West is called Nature, the realm of the "natural" and "original", as opposed to Culture, the realm of man-made artificialities. But to Chinese philosophers Nature and Culture are intrinsically related. They form a polar dualism with man in an intermediary position. To Confucianist scholars therefore Heaven is also the realm of the Supreme, transcending Man and Earth. Heaven confers a mandate (*ming*), to man to keep harmony and order within the earthly and social realm, the All-under-Heaven (*tian-xia*). Man's consciousness of the heavenly mandate (*tian-ming*) is both intellectual knowledge of "natural laws" and ethical conscience of "heavenly laws". Hence Confucianism is both a philosophy and a religion of the ruling elites in Imperial China and also a State cult influencing the thoughts and behaviour of the Chinese people. Confucianist writings abound with descriptions of polar dualism and, as a corollary, with prescriptions for individual life and social behaviour.

The Spring and Autumn Annals (*chun-qiū*), reputedly composed by Confucius himself, is a very brief year-by-year record of historical events in the State of Lu, where Confucius was born, from 722 till 481 B. C. These historical events in the world of man are set against a background of natural events, to be seen as portents, visitations and prodigies reminding men, the rulers in particular, of the intrinsic relationship between human deeds and natural happenings. Confucius believed that the only way to restore order would be so to arrange affairs that the Emperor would continue to be Emperor, the nobles to be nobles, the ministers to be ministers, and the common people common people. That is, the actual must in each case be made to correspond to the name. Words and names express concepts and meanings. Concepts refer to what is conceived and acknowledges as truth. According to Confucius "To govern (*zheng*) is to rectify or correct (*zheng*)". So the "rectification of names" is to become conscious of the fundamental meanings and principles expressed in words and concepts. In a government through nobility, the mass of the people are uneducated, and hence the ruler's personal conduct inevitably has a great shaping influence upon that of the common man. The acts of the superior man should proceed from a inner sense of decorum and propriety, an intellectual and moral insight into the origins and principles, laws and obligations of the heavenly mandate. What is called *li* is at the same time the inner sense of propriety and the outward structure of ceremonial behaviour. Rules and ceremonies regulate human relations and result in harmony and peace (*he-ping*) in the All-under-Heaven.

The Chinese as agriculturists are wont to observe nature, to obey the dictates of nature, to accomodate human affairs to the course of the seasons, and to follow closely the signs and warnings of natural events. Rural life is embedded in the ecological structure and regularities of the natural surround-

ings. There is an intimate relationship between the network of rural life with its kinships, festivals, ceremonies and the network of natural conditions of climate, seasons, fertility and austerity.³ Man is accustomed to observe the regularities of natural events and to give heed to irregularities, natural calamities like earthquakes, droughts and floods as portents of social catastrophes like rebellions, wars and political atrocities.

The doctrine of naturalistic dualism was elaborated by DONG ZHONG-SHU, the Confucianist philosopher and statesman who, in the second century B. C., succeeded to promote Confucianism into a state cult. He wrote a commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals: the Copious Dew of the Spring and Autumn Annals (*chun-qiū fan-lu*). DONG ZHONG-SHU firmly believes that an intimate relationship exists between Heaven and Man. Therefore, so he argues, the occurrence of unharmonious and abnormal events in the human world inevitably stirs Heaven to manifest corresponding abnormal phenomena in the natural world.

"According to a rough classification when things in Heaven and Earth undergo abnormal changes, these are called 'prodigies'; lesser ones are called 'visitations'. Visitations always appear first and are then followed by prodigies. Visitations are the reprimands of Heaven. Prodigies are its warnings. If man, being thus reprimanded, still fails to understand, he is then made to feel awe through warnings. Strange prodigies appear in order to strike man with terror. And if, being thus terrified, he still does not understand the cause for his fear, only then do misfortunes and calamities overtake him. From this may be seen the goodness of Heaven's purpose and its unwillingness to bring ruin upon man" (Chap. 30).

This concept of the interrelationship between man and the physical universe constitutes a practical system of regulating social and political affairs by "rectification". Human history is thus included within the process of natural becoming under the guidance of the Heavenly Mandate. This concept of Heaven and Nature is fundamentally different from the Western idea of physics and the natural sciences, based on objective and empirical investigation of natural phenomena, and applied in technology through which man is able to dominate and utilize nature. The contrast between the polar dualism of Man and Nature in China and the antagonistic dualism in the West is obvious.

Another type of natural dualism is found in the *Dao-de-jing* the Classic of the Way and its Power, and the *Yi-jing*, the Classic of Change. Based on these two classics a method of prognostication and divination has been developed.

³ MARCEL GRANET has aptly described the naturalistic origins of Chinese rural society and folk religion in his books:

Fêtes et chansons anciennes de la Chine, Paris 1919, 2e éd. 1929.

La religion des Chinois, Paris 1922, 2e éd. 1951.

Danses et légendes de la Chine ancienne, Paris 1926.

La civilisation chinoise. La vie publique et la vie privée, Paris 1929.

La pensée chinoise, Paris 1934.

Études sur la religion et la société de la Chine ancienne, Paris 1938.

The main body of the *Yi-jing* is formed by the 64 hexagrams and their explications. A hexagram is a configuration of six unbroken (*yang*) or broken (*yin*) lines. Each hexagram is a combination of two trigrams, configurations of three yin-yang lines. There are eight possible trigrams and sixty four hexagrams, which together constitute a complete system. Sixty four is a convenient number, finite and yet big enough to represent all possible situations in human life. Those who want to consult the *yi-jing* as an oracle have to follow an elaborate procedure to determine which particular hexagram represents their problem situation at the moment. The text under this heading in the *yi-jing* explains the structural characteristics of the situation and the issuing opportunities or dangers.

The basic philosophy underlying these practices of prognostication and divination is typical of the Chinese concept of polar dualism and wholeness. *Yin* and *Yang* are the two mutually opposed manifestations of *Dao*. *Dao*, one of the most important terms in Chinese philosophy, has a primary meaning of "road" or "way". Beginning with this primary meaning, it assumed already in ancient times a metaphorical significance, as "the Way of man", that is, human morality, conduct or truth. During this time its meaning was always restricted to human affairs, whereas when we come to the *Dao-de-jing*, we find the word *dao* being given a metaphysical meaning. That is to say, the assumption is made that for the universe to have come into being, there must exist an all-embracing first principle, which is called *Dao*.

"*Dao* is that whereby all things are so, and with which all principles agree. Principles are the markings of actualized things. *Dao* is that whereby all things are potentially. Therefore it is said that *Dao* is what imparts principles. When things have their principles, the one thing cannot be the other. All things have their own characteristic principle, whereas *Dao* brings the principles of all things into single agreement." Each thing, that is, has its own individual principle, but the first all-embracing principle whereby all things are produced is *Dao*. What *Dao* accomplishes is not done purposefully, but is simply spontaneously so. "*Dao* never does, yet through it all things are done."

Being and Non-being have both issued from *Dao*, and thus are two aspects of *Dao*. "*Dao* is Oneness. Oneness produced duality. Duality evolved into the five phases, and the five phases evolved into the tenthousand things. The ten thousand things are imbued by the duality of *yin* and *yang*. It is on the blending of the breaths of the *yin* and the *yang* that their total harmony depends." (*Dao-de-jing* 42)

Yin and *Yang* constitute the basic polar dualism of dark and light, quiescence and movement, female and male, moon and sun. Philosophers of the Yin-Yang-school developed a system of cosmology with elaborate descriptions of constituent subsystems based on the workings and correlation of *yin* and *yang*. "Things in the universe are ever changing according to an endless cycle. Between Heaven and Earth nothing goes away that does not return. When there is an end, there is beginning. Such is the movement of Heaven. Its way is one of return and repetition. When the sun has reached its meridian height, it begins to decline. When the moon has become full, it

begins to wane. Heaven and Earth are now full, now empty, according to the flow and ebb of the seasons. When the sun goes, the moon comes. When the moon goes, the sun comes. The sun and the moon thus take the place of one another in producing light. When the cold goes, the warmth comes, and when the warm goes, the cold comes. Cold and warmth take the place of one another, and so the year is rounded out. That which goes contracts, and that which comes expands. It is by the influence, one upon other, of this contraction and expansion, that what is beneficial is produced. This 'return' or constant round of the sun and moon and all other things in the universe constitute a great universal law, according to which things change. Because of this principle, everything that reaches a certain peak, must then revert to its opposite."

This principle of rise and fall is one taken from the *Dao-de-jing* and is illustrated in the arrangement of the sixty four hexagrams of the *Yi-jing*. Based on the dual aspects of *yin* and *yang* all the cosmological subsystems are the Five constituent phases: Water, Earth, Wood, Fire and Metal, the Five compass points: North, East, South, West and Centre, the Four seasons, the Five notes of the Chinese musical scale, the Twelve months, the Twelve pitch-pipes, the Ten heavenly stems, the Twelve earthly branches, and various other numerical categories. Extensive correlations are made of the Five Phases (*wu xing*) with the Five directions, the Five primary colours, the five tastes, the five notes, the five main organs of the human body, etc. Whole lists of prescriptions and regulations ensue which must be carefully observed and obeyed. Personal health and individual behaviour, social relations and ceremonies, political laws and institutions are mutually correlated and embedded within a cosmological framework. Even macrobiotics, with its elaborate prescriptions for food, health care, hygiene and self-discipline, which by way of Japan has reached the present West, is derived from the ancient practice of the Yin-Yang-school.

Naturalistic, metaphysical, cosmological dualisms are also reflected in the polar dualism of man's personal life. Life is directed by two poles: the original or inner nature and the ultimate or final destiny. Human nature is denoted by the character *xing* composed of *xin* (heart or mind) and *sheng* (birth). Man's inner nature is thus conceived as his heart or mind at birth, his potentialities, his talents and gifts, his inner possibilities. Man's nature is what he truly is, his innermost identity and personality. This personality however is only given in potential at birth. It has to be actualized during life, by following a destiny (*ming*). *Ming* is not different from *xing*. One's destiny is the same as one's nature, but then being understood as a task of life. So the realization of one's gifts and talents is exactly what one is committed to. Hence each person has a unique task of life, to develop his own nature and potentialities. How these potentialities should be realized, however, is controversial. Opinions differ on the role of education.

Now personal self-development does not necessarily imply individualism. The emphasis on individualism in the West after the Renaissance is rather exceptional in the history of civilizations. Individualism is a product of

urbanism. The growth of metropolitan centres has led to such extreme forms of individualism like careerism, egotripping narcissism and widespread loneliness in our time. In China the bonds of local communities have been much stronger. Chinese civilization has retained its agrarian character until the twentieth century. At the same time this civilization has reached an advanced stage of social development by integrating local communities into a universal commonwealth. Social organization involves common religious beliefs or ideologies. In this respect the Confucianist tradition has contributed to a sense of wholeness. Religion and philosophy have played a role in integrating the families, the social and economic groups, and through the operation of the Heavenly Mandate in maintaining the cultural unity of Imperial China.

As in the case of social and economic groups beyond the kinship system, religion played a prominent part in the life and organization of the traditional Chinese community. Outstanding in the local life of different parts of China were communal events such as temple fairs, mass religious observances during public crises, and collective celebrations of festive occasions; no community in China was without one or more collective representations in the form of patron gods, the cults of which served as centres for communal religious life. These mass observations were among the few types of community-wide activities that developed in the otherwise family-centered social life of the Chinese people.

Traditional Chinese government was never purely secular, but instead there was always an intimate interplay between religious and political forces. From the twelfth century on, large-scale organised voluntary religion wielding independent political influence retreated into the background, and the reassertion of the Confucian state provided an opportunity for certain classical religious elements to develop once more their function within the framework of the political institution. This function lay mainly in giving religious sanction to the ethicopolitical order of the state. It was in this direction that religion developed its political role in harmony with the Confucian principles which insisted upon secular control of political power. Of central importance was the idea of the Mandate of Heaven, the symbol of legitimacy claimed by every dynamic power and widely accepted by the common people.

The grand imperial sacrifice of Heaven, which struck the Jesuit missionaries in the 16th and 17th centuries as the most impressive institution in the Middle Kingdom, was continued with all its traditional solemnity and splendour throughout the entire Qing-period (1644–1911).⁴

Since the idea of the mandate or commission (*ming*) is not restricted to the Emperor or Son-of-Heaven, but also directs each personal life as a polar dualism of *xing* and *ming*, origin and destiny, inner nature and outer realization, it endows a dimension of wholeness to human communities.

⁴ C. K. YANG, *Religion in Chinese Society*. A study of contemporary social functions of religion and some of their historical factors, Berkeley 1961

Individuals are integrated into a whole in a double sense: into the physical universe or Nature (*Tian*) as the origin and foundation of man's own inner nature (*xing*), and into the whole of mankind, whose historical commission is to fulfil the Heavenly Mandate.

CONFRONTATION OF CHINA WITH THE WEST

The confrontation with the West meant a formidable challenge to the Chinese. It aggravated the positional dualisms between the centre and the periphery, between the sociocultural elite and the agrarian masses, and between the secular ethicopolitical tradition and the various religions. Most of all it involves a confrontation of the Chinese approach to polar dualism against the more aggressive antagonistic dualisms of the West.

The syncretistic tendency of the Chinese mind acted upon Christianity just as it did with former imported religions: it assimilated useful elements, incorporated some teachings and practices, and tried to control the religious institutions. The Jesuits were allowed to organize services in the capital, to develop missionary activities and even to maintain intimate contacts with official families and the court. The Jesuits, on their part, praised the magnanimity of the Chinese emperor and the refined civilization of the Chinese. Their letters and scholarly reports roused the attention of philosophers like LEIBNIZ. Their flattered image of Chinese society was in contrast with later reports from military and commercial circles. The Chinese, on their part, had the same contradictory experiences in their contacts with different representatives of Western civilization. Their tolerant and rather different attitude in the beginning was soon followed by alternating feelings of aversion and bewilderment or admiration and envy. Not religion but political philosophy proved to be a formidable challenge. The Chinese concepts of wholeness in the spiritual and religious sense were sufficiently sound, but their ideas of social and cultural wholeness failed when tested by historical evidence.

During two millennia Chinese culture could maintain a relatively stable position in a continuous contact and interchange with other civilizations and a commonwealth of ethnic pluralism. In a certain sense Chinese culture is a universe in itself. The foundations of this structure were laid during the turbulent period from the fifth till the second century B. C. Teachings from the "Hundred Schools" were amalgamated into an ethicopolitical doctrine which was promoted into a state cult under the earlier Han dynasty. The positional dualism of this state cult with various popular religions is upset when the claim of universality of the state ideology is contested. Philosophers and scholars responsible for order and stability of the Chinese cultural system have to solve the dilemma of either restoring the inner strength of the central, mainly Confucianist doctrine, or completely exchange it for a radically new ideology. Both attempts were made in various proposals, ranging from conservative restoration to revolutionary radicalism.⁵

⁵ KUO HENG-YÜ, *China und die Barbaren*, Pfullingen 1967. WOLFGANG FRANKE, *Das Jahrhundert der chinesischen Revolution. 1851-1949*, München 1958.

In commentaries on the Spring and Autumn Annals (*chun-qiū*), written by Confucianist scholars during the Han dynasty, we find reference to the doctrine of the Three Ages (*Shan-shi*): the Age of Disorder (*shuāi-luān*), the Age of Approaching Peace (*sheng-píng*), and the Age of Universal Peace (*tai-píng*). The Spring and Autumn Annals, being records of the state of LU – the birthplace of Confucius – during a period of troubles, described the past in order to illumine the future, and depicted changes in human history with the aim of revealing principles. Based on these principles institutions were developed enacting the transition from the Age of Disorder towards the Age of Emergent Peace. Confucianist philosophers at the time were less explicit in regard to the third Age of Universal Peace. It was only when another age of Decay and Disorder was ushered by the confrontation of China with the West during the nineteenth century that philosophers and politicians felt the need to re-examine and re-assess the past, from the Age of Universal Peace. Curiously enough it is by resort to the old doctrine of the Three Ages that Chinese scholars, facing the aggressive expansion of the “outside barbarians”, tried to build up a theory of self-strengthening. Only by proceeding still farther with their own development they could proclaim their own strength.

A direct reference to “universal peace” was claimed by the revolutionary mass movement which swept over large parts of southern and middle China from 1851 till 1864 and brought the Manchu dynasty almost to a downfall. Numerous peasant rebellions were recorded in Chinese history and the influence of secret sects and religious cults on such rebellious outbursts is wellknown. Their importance and extension were surpassed by the Taiping revolution, which is perhaps the most extensive rebellious movement in world history. More than hundred million inhabitants were involved and more than twenty million people were killed. The revolution was inspired by a neo-religious social ideology. Its leader HONG XIU-CHUAN (1814–1864) used certain aspects of Christian doctrine in setting up his personal theocracy. He saw himself as a younger brother of Jesus Christ with a mandate of God the Father to slay the demons of the Earth. In 1851 he proclaimed himself Heavenly King (*Tian-wang*) over a Heavenly Country of Universal Peace (*Tai-píng Tian-guo*).

The movement aimed not only at driving out the Manchus, as the founders of the Ming dynasty had driven out the Mongols, but also at setting up a kind of communistic and theocratic state. They failed to reach this goal for many reasons, among them the united opposition of the privileged classes, led by the Confucian scholar-official ZENG GUO-FAN, the help given the imperial forces by the Western powers after 1860, and perhaps the most important, the Taipings’ own lack of competent leaders and adequate methods. While the rebel movement in many ways harked back to China’s past, it is interesting to note its reforming zeal, which in favourable circumstances might conceivably have developed a program of modernization for China. Even in the midst of constant warfare, the rebels tried or intended to secure an equal distribution of the land, to simplify the Chinese

language, to enforce monogamy among the common people, and to prohibit prostitution, footbinding, the sale of slaves, opium smoking, adultery, witchcraft, and gambling. It took a further century of deepening Chinese revolution to realize such ideals of "universal peace".

The repression of the Taiping movement meant a period of conservative restoration, culminating towards the end of the century in the abortive Reform Movement of the Confucianist scholar-official KANG YOU-WEI (1858–1927) and his associates in 1898. He persuaded the young emperor GUANG-XU to proclaim an ambitious reform program from above and to restore the sway of Confucianist ethicopolitical principles. On June 11, 1898, the emperor issued his first reform decree, recognizing the need of change, soon followed by scores of other decrees, without studying the political and social scene to see whether the new reforms could be effective. These decrees dealt with important scientific studies, the adoption of Western military drill, the improvement of agriculture and education, the abolition of the eight-legged essay in the official examinations, the promulgation of a public budget, the dismissal of conservative officials, and the abolition of senecure positions. They evoked strong opposition, from officials entrenched in lucrative posts and from students whose chief training was in the eight-legged essay. The conservatives urged the Empress Dowager to suppress the reforms. On September 21, 1898, the emperor was imprisoned, and after a hundred days the reform movement was abolished. KANG fled abroad where he spent his later years writing books and expounding his ideas how China could have entered its Age of Universal Peace. His main work *Da tong shu* (the Book of the Great Whole), conceived in 1884, was written in exile. Along the traditional line of Confucianism China did not reach the Great Whole.⁶

The failure of the Reform Movement brought the ultimate end of Confucianism and the downfall of the Manchu dynasty. The Boxer uprising and the subsequent military actions of the Western powers debilitated the Chinese government. On September 1, 1905, the examination system based on Confucianist learning was abolished. Students who wish to acquire practical knowledge for official careers should go abroad. Indeed, increasing numbers of students went to Europe, the United States and Japan, and after their return helped to infuse Chinese culture with foreign ideas. The overthrow of the Manchus was a relatively simple affair. Uprisings in October 1911 forced the last emperor to abdicate in 1912. Much more difficult was the program for SUN YAT-SEN and his Nationalist party to modernize China along the principles of Western parliamentary democracy. At least two generations of students, philosophers, politicians, educators, reformers were involved in a nation-wide search for new guidelines for re-establishing Chinese society and civilization. More than two decades of civil war and resistance against the Japanese invasion had to pass before China could be reunited under a radically new government of People's Democracy.

⁶ S. Y. TENG & J. K. FAIRBANK, *China's response to the West. A documentary survey 1839–1923*. Cambridge Mass. 1954.

Before China can embark upon a program of industrialization the creative forces of the agrarian masses have to be set free. Elements from western ideologies were selectively imported and assimilated. The criteria for selection were dictated by the structure of the traditional ethicopolitical framework. In last instance it was "Marxism" which fits best into the conception of a universal purpose. Marxist dualism, though antagonistic (class struggle), proved appropriate to the Chinese situation. It is easily associated to the age-old antagonism between the agrarian masses and the traditional rulers. Marxism provides a modern interpretation of a historical mandate of agrarian liberation movements. This historical mandate replaces the Heavenly mandate and keeps the general framework intact. The bearers of this new mandate are organized within a proletarian vanguard party.

When MAO ZE-DONG proclaimed the Chinese People's Republic on the rostrum of the *Tian-an-men*, the Gate of Heavenly Peace, on October 1, 1949, he fulfilled a historical mission. The Chinese people could resume its steady progress of selfdevelopment consistent with its age-old destination. From now on Chinese history becomes confluent with planetary history. The purpose of Chinese history is gradually integrated within the materialist and historical aims of the world at large.

Maoism is not merely a continuation of Marxism-Leninism-Stalinism, it is also a blend with purely Chinese traditions from Mohism and the idealism of the Taiping revolution. Revolutions are characteristic for a period of transition. China has to catch up arrears in development. For the end of the twentieth century the Chinese leaders have launched big scale modernization programs. Coupled with this process of accelerated development is the task of reassessment of China's own cultural heritage and reinterpretation of its historical mandate.

Within Chinese society and civilization Christianity is one of many imported ideologies and as such accepted within a "pluralistic universe". Within the world at large Christianity represents a tradition, which is equally conscious of a sense of mission and "heavenly mandate" as the Chinese tradition has had through the ages. Since the world is involved in a planetary crisis, posing a fundamental challenge to all people striving for a life of integrity and wholeness, Christians and Chinese may contribute their share in a dialogue regarding the renewed interpretation of a Heavenly Mandate for the whole of Mankind. In this dialogue different types of dualism are involved, leading to a mutually enriched perspective of Wholeness.