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SPECIAL THEME

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Contemporary Chinese Philosophy in the Chinese-Speaking World: An Overview

Abstract This article endeavors to provide an overview on contemporary Chinese philosophy. The focus is on contemporary Chinese philosophy in the Chinese-speaking world, particularly after the 1950s, although contemporary Chinese philosophy both in its inception in early 20th century China and in the English-speaking world are also explored. In addition to designating separate genres of contemporary Chinese philosophical interpretation and construction, including some of the major issues under discussion and debate as well as giving attention to several representative scholars, this article also teases out the historical contexts in which those issues emerged and developed, and it highlights the salient feature of contemporary Chinese philosophy in general.

Keywords Contemporary Chinese philosophy, New Confucianism, New Marxist Chinese philosophy, Chinese philosophy as a world philosophy

The development of Chinese philosophy as a modern discipline incepted in the early 20th century has always maintained a connection with the Western philosophical tradition, and it also has not been outside of the whole picture of world philosophy. A better understanding of contemporary Chinese philosophy is no doubt crucial not only for the further development of Chinese philosophy but also for the emerging construction of world philosophy. So, let me, as a philosopher and historian as well from China, try to depict the picture of contemporary Chinese philosophy and highlight its salient features.

1 Defining "Contemporary Chinese Philosophy"

When we discuss "contemporary Chinese philosophy," two points must first be clarified. One is the definition of "Chinese philosophy," and the other is that of

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"contemporary." The present discussion of contemporary Chinese philosophy focuses on the Chinese-speaking world although contemporary Chinese philosophy outside the Chinese-speaking world shall also be explored.

1.1 What Does "Chinese Philosophy" Mean?

First of all, it is necessary and useful to make a distinction between "philosophy of China" and "philosophy in China." The former refers to traditional Chinese philosophical discourses primarily including Confucianism, Daoism, and Chinese Buddhism.The latter refers to philosophies imported to China beginning in the 20th century, including various Western philosophical traditions including Marxism which became the national ideology in China after 1949. "Chinese philosophy" as defined here refers specifically to the former rather than the latter, i.e., "philosophy of China" rather than "philosophy in China."

"Chinese philosophy" as a modern discipline has from its beginning already been influenced by various traditions of Western philosophical discourse. Nonetheless, almost every type of "contemporary Chinese philosophy" can be regarded as an interpretation or reconstruction of traditional Chinese philosophy that integrates of Western philosophy, more or less, as an interpretive framework or at least as a constructing reference, but the main body of "Chinese philosophy" is still different from those imported Western philosophical discourses, whether it draws from Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Kant, Hegel, Husserl, Heidegger, Derrida, Quine, John Dewey, William James, and so on. The main substance of contemporary Chinese philosophy is still defined by Confucianism, Daoism, Chinese Buddhism and other Chinese indigenous philosophical resources.

Another point about "Chinese philosophy" as discussed here is that it mostly refers to Chinese philosophy as a modern discipline. In this sense, it is also helpful to distinguish "Chinese philosophy as a modern discipline or discourse," interpreted or constructed by modern scholars since the beginning of the 20th century, from "Chinese philosophy as an ancient tradition or legacy," preserved in those classics together with their exegesis and commentaries. No doubt there is a long tradition of Chinese philosophy represented by great minds including Kongzi 孔子, Laozi 老子, Mengzi 孟子, Zhuangzi 莊子, Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒, Zhu Xi 朱熹, Wang Yangming 王陽明, and so on. "Chinese philosophy" here, however, refers to a modern discipline that was initially established in the beginning of the 20th century that has been developed in a global context. However, the establishment and development of Chinese philosophy as a modern discipline still can and should be regarded as an interpretation and reconstruction of those great minds in Chinese history, not only by the traditional exegesis and commentary of Chinese classics but, to a large extent, by integrating ideas or

frameworks of the Western philosophical tradition as a way of interpretation and reconstruction. This involves the defining characteristic or salient feature of contemporary Chinese philosophy, which would be epitomized in the concluding sections of this paper.

Marxism and various other Western philosophies in China are "philosophy in China" rather than "philosophy of China" or "Chinese philosophy." Thus, Marxism, which has dominated the national ideology in Chinese mainland since 1949, as well as various other Western philosophical discourses, which also have, in different ways and to varying degrees, impacted the intellectual landscape, shall not be discussed here. The focus is on "Chinese philosophy" as a modern discipline as defined above.

1.2 What Does "Contemporary" Mean?

In this article, "contemporary" refers to the development of Chinese philosophy from the 1950s to the present, even though sometimes it is not easy to make a clear distinction between "modern" and "contemporary."

However, Chinese philosophy from the 1910s to the 1940s shall be briefly discussed in the following part. This is an indispensable historical stage for the evolution of Chinese philosophy as a modern discipline. It was exactly during this incipient yet fundamental period that Chinese philosophy as a modern discipline was shaped into its current form.

2 Historical Context: Three Stages, Leading Figures, and Major Orientations

The development of contemporary Chinese philosophy in the Chinese-speaking world can be divided into three stages. The period from the 1910s to the 1950s marks the stage of its formation and institutionalization; the period from the 1950s until the 1970s marks the stage of its dormancy or disruption in Chinese mainland and its simultaneous advance and systematic construction in Taiwan and Hong Kong; and the period from the 1980s to the present marks the stage of its full-fledged development and further integration into the global philosophical stage.

If 1949 is the watershed that Chinese philosophy had to be respectively developed in the mainland, Taiwan and Hong Kong, the sea change in Chinese mainland epitomized by the newly established regime, the PRC, also resulted in the transmission of Chinese philosophy abroad, especially in the English-speaking world.

2.1 The 1910s to the 1940s: Formation and Institutionalization

Chinese philosophy as a modern discipline was initiated in the beginning of the 20th century as Western scholarship, especially the Western university system, was introduced to China. When "*zhexue men* 哲學門," the discipline of philosophy,[1] was set up in 1912 at Peking University (the first modern or Westernized university established in 1898), "Chinese philosophy" replaced traditional "classics" and started being taught as a formal course. Against this historical background, books entitled, for example, "The History of Chinese Philosophy," published around this time gave rise to the first developments of contemporary Chinese philosophy. This period, from the 1910s to the 1940s, is thus usually regarded as the early formation of contemporary Chinese philosophy.

The writing and publication of such histories of Chinese philosophy symbolize the beginning of Chinese philosophy as a modern discipline. This is why a few books with the title "History of Chinese Philosophy" appeared without the ideas, methodologies, or interpretive frameworks of Western philosophy, and they were quickly shelved after the publications of "*History of Chinese Philosophy*" by Xie Wuliang 謝無量 (1884–1964) in 1916 and by Hu Shih 胡適 (1891–1962) in 1919. Both scholars consciously made use of the methodology of Western philosophy, in particular Hu Shih, who heavily borrowed from the American pragmatism of John Dewey. But the real paradigm of studying Chinese philosophy exemplified by writing a history of Chinese philosophy was not fully established until the publication of the two-volume *History of Chinese Philosophy* by Feng Youlan 馮友蘭 (1895–1990), with the first volume appearing in 1931 and the second in 1934. The reason why Feng's book provided a substantial model for writing the history of Chinese philosophy as a modern discipline lies in the fact that he employed the ideas and methodology of Western philosophy in general, and neo-realism in particular, as an interpretive framework to interpret and reconstruct the history of Chinese philosophy more successfully than all of his predecessors. It was presumably because of Feng's paradigmatic contribution to writing the history of Chinese philosophy in a modern way that Hu Shih eventually gave up his plan to complete his own *History of Chinese Philosophy*, even though his first volume was published before Feng's. Feng's two-volume *History of Chinese Philosophy* has come to dominate the teaching of Chinese philosophy in China's higher education. Even as late as the 1970's, the publication of the four-volume *New History of Chinese*

[1] "*men* 門" in Chinese has various meanings. One of them refers to a "kind" or "category," for instance, in the idiom "*fen men bie lei*" 分門別類. That's why I translate "*men*" in "*zhexue men*" as a "discipline."

Philosophy in Taiwan by Lao Siguang 勞思光 (Lao Sze-kwang, 1927–2012), which has been used as a textbook of Chinese philosophy in Taiwan and Hong Kong, did not succeed in replacing Feng's book. The English translation of Feng's book continues to remain the single originally Chinese-language reference composed by a Chinese scholar of the history of Chinese philosophy in the English-speaking world, although an updated alternative is very much needed.

Even as scholars continued to write their own histories of Chinese philosophy as a way to interpret Chinese philosophy as a modern discipline, there were indeed other scholars during this same period who set to compose their own philosophical constructions that they established as the modern development of traditional Chinese philosophy, especially Confucianism. Besides the two-volume *History of Chinese Philosophy* mentioned above, Feng Youlan also published six books in the 1940s, i.e., *Xin Lixue* 新理學, *Xin Shilun* 新事論, *Xin Shixun* 新世訓, *Xin Yuanren* 新原人, *Xin Yuandao* 新原道, and *Xin Zhiyan* 新知言, in the establishment of his own philosophy, which, Feng himself claimed, should be understood as a new neo-Confucianism inherited from Zhu Xi.

Comparatively, a more influential and far-reaching construction of contemporary Chinese philosophy in this period was represented by Xiong Shili 熊十力 (1885–1968), who published his *Xin Weishilun* 新唯識論 (*A New Cittamatra* or *A New Treatise on Consciousness-Only*) in two versions respectively in 1932 and 1944. The former version was written in classical Chinese while the latter, revised and expanded, was written in modern Chinese. It was Xiong who essentially started contemporary New Confucianism as a philosophical movement. With not only cultural but political and social implications and significances, this New Confucianism later culminated in the achievements of Tang Junyi 唐君毅 (1909–78) and Mou Zongsan 牟宗三 (1909–95), who were both students of Xiong's.

There were some contemporaries of Xiong and Feng who also participated in the construction of contemporary Chinese philosophy during this period. For example, Liang Shuming 梁漱溟 (1893–1988) tried to compare Chinese, Western, and Indian philosophy based upon his understanding of the general feature of these three types (Liang 1921). He Lin 賀麟 (1902–92) published a series of articles (He 1934; 1941) and a couple of books (He 1947) that illuminated the meaning and significance of the "New Philosophy of the Heart-mind 新心學" that he advocated.

On the other hand, there were also some scholars who were deeply influenced by Marxism as a methodology and worldview, if not a fashion, and who attempted to interpret traditional Chinese texts, philosophical, historical, and literary, in a framework of Marxism. This trend culminated in the period from the 1950s to the 1970s, but rapidly waned after Maoism was replaced by the reform

and opening-up policy carried out in the 1980s. Except for a few philosophers such as Feng Qi 馮契 (1915–95) and Li Zehou 李澤厚 (1930–), who will be discussed later, this approach to the interpretation and construction of Chinese philosophy was basically fruitless.

2.2 The 1950s to the 1970s: Different Destinies of Chinese Philosophy in Chinese Mainland, Taiwan, and Hong Kong

The triumph of Communism in mainland China in 1949 eliminated the promising initial developments of modern Chinese philosophy, which, at this point, resulted in its two different destinies for Chinese philosophy in the mainland and in Taiwan and Hong Kong respectively during the period from the 1950s to the 1970s.

With the establishment of the PRC, Chinese philosophy and traditional Chinese culture in general became the target of critique and was severely damaged in the mainland. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) had not only inherited the anti-traditionalism that powerfully emerged during the May Fourth Movement in 1919, but also carried it to an extreme. For instance, anything Confucian became a target of attack, or, to use an expression common in the 1960s and 1970s, "a target of proletarian dictatorship," which should be "swept into the dustbin of history." At no level of education could Confucian "classics" be taught or studied at all, and the term "classics" (i.e., canonized works) at that time could only refer to works of the Marx-Leninist and Maoist tradition. Traditional Chinese culture in the mainland as dominated by the CCP was radically uprooted from its own tradition. So, during this period, Chinese philosophy in the mainland accordingly was forced into a stage of dormancy or disruption.

By contrast, along the paths pioneered by forerunners such as Hu Shih, Feng Youlan, and Xiong Shili, Chinese philosophy advanced into a stage of flourishing and systematic development in Taiwan and Hong Kong thanks to the efforts of a few outstanding intellectuals who left the mainland for those destinations. Their self-exile was primarily due to a cultural commitment to the values of the Chinese tradition, not because of a political identity with the collapsed Kuomintang regime. Among these intellectuals, Tang Junyi and Mou Zongsan were two towering figures of Chinese philosophy and the most brilliant representatives of New Confucianism during this period. They both published numerous works on Chinese philosophy that were not simply limited to Confucianism. What they philosophically constructed deserves to be recognized as landmarks of contemporary Chinese philosophy. As a result, besides Xiong, Tang and Mou can be taken as the two most important Chinese philosophers of the 20th century.

In addition, there were a few other scholars active in Taiwan and Hong Kong such as Fang Dongmei 方東美 (Thome Fang, 1899–1977), Luo Guang 羅光 (1911–2004), and Lao Siguang, who endeavored to interpret and construct Chinese philosophy from other perspectives. Fang was also one of the intellectuals who left the mainland for Taiwan in 1949. He depicted his own philosophy as "organicism" or "comprehensive harmony," which, as he stressed, in contrast to Western dualistic, mechanical, and abstract ways of thinking, was characterized by a comprehensive, creative, and interrelated way of thinking that he thought embodied the spirit of Chinese philosophy (Fang 1981). Luo received systematic training in Catholic theology in Rome in his youth and was a Catholic cardinal and president of Fu Jen Catholic University in New Taipei. Together with other scholars with a Catholic background such as Wu Jingxiong 吳經熊 (John C. H. Wu or John Wu Ching-hsiung, 1899–1986), what Luo accomplished for Chinese philosophy could be called a Chinese neo-scholastic synthesis, which is heavily based upon the Aristotelian-Thomist tradition. The impact of Scholasticism on his understanding of Chinese texts was too strong, and as a result Luo's interpretation of Chinese philosophy, such as his nine-volume *History of Chinese Philosophy and Thought* (Luo 1975–1986), did not receive wide and serious responses in the community of contemporary Chinese philosophy in both Chinese mainland and Taiwan and Hong Kong. Both Fang and Luo were much less influential than Tang and Mou, but a few students of Fang's have played an important role in promoting Chinese philosophy in the English-speaking world. As for Lao, who long taught in Hong Kong before moving to Taiwan in his later years, it can be said that his influence might be just second to Tang and Mou, at least in Taiwan and Hong Kong. The *New History of Chinese Philosophy* that he published in the 1970s and that was used as the university textbook was probably the most influential after Feng Youlan's *History of Chinese Philosophy*.

2.3 The 1980s to the Present: Full-Fledged Development and Further Integration into the World

When the reform and opening-up policy of the CCP were widely carried out after 1978 and, particularly, the works of contemporary New Confucian scholars were introduced to the mainland, contemporary Chinese philosophy in Chinese mainland began to shake off the dominance of Maoist ideology and has been rejuvenated. Chinese philosophy was reinterpreted completely by Marxism during the 1950s to the 1970s. For instance, Feng Youlan himself once tried to rewrite the history of Chinese philosophy in the Marxist perspective in the effort to overturn his previous work that had established his reputation in the 1930s. Once that ideological constraint was removed, however, the momentum of

Chinese philosophy that had accumulated since the 1910s and had been blocked during the 1950s to the 1970s, was naturally released and began the process of rejuvination.

In the early 1980s, Marxist ideology was still haunting the mainland. A major research project supported by the Chinese government that aimed to criticize contemporary New Confucianism was established and headed by Fang Keli 方克立 (1938–), a senior Marxist in the study of Chinese philosophy. Unexpectedly, however, this project resulted in a renewed attention to contemporary New Confucianism, especially from those exiled Confucian scholars well-known in the mainland, and triggered a strong interest in understanding this most constructive and influential movement, not only philosophically but also culturally. According to the canonical version of this research project, contemporary New Confucianism was defined by three generations. The first generation included Xiong Shili, Liang Shuming, Ma Yifu 馬一浮 (1883–1967), Qian Mu 錢穆 (1895–1990), and Fang Dongmei. It was this generation that integrally initiated this modern movement. The second generation included Tang Junyi, Mou Zongsan, and Xu Fuguan 徐復觀 (1903–82), and they were the ones who constituted its central representatives. The third generation included Yu Ying-shih 余英時 (1930–), Liu Shuxian 劉述先 (1934–2016), Cheng Zhongying 成中英 (Cheng Chungying, 1935–), and Du Weiming 杜維明 (Tu Weiming, 1940–), who fully promoted the internationalization of Confucianism and Chinese philosophy as well.

Interestingly and ironically, with the change in the political and social environment in the mainland, a few members of the aforementioned research group gradually become the followers and supporters, or at least sympathizers of the contemporary New Confucians. With public circulation of the works by the New Confucians, which sometimes have to be selected and abridged due to censorship, more and more students of Chinese philosophy have begun to be persuaded and influenced by these New Confucians. What the New Confucians have done and have been doing actually played a very important, if not crucial, role in preserving Chinese philosophy from the 1950s to the 1980s for the mainland. Since Confucianism was no longer a target of critique after the 1980s, and was even praised by the authorities and consequently became more and more popular in Chinese society after 2000, some people from various and virtually unrelated intellectual backgrounds now in Chinese mainland have been trying to identify themselves as "mainland New Confucians." In my view, however, being a "Confucian," especially a "Confucian scholar," simultaneously implies two mutually supporting components: the mastery of Confucian scholarship and the sincere commitment to Confucian values; the lack of one or both simply makes the self-proclaimed "mainland New Confucian" label a counterfeit. On the other hand, the reality that has to be conceded is that the center of Chinese philosophy

in general and Confucianism in particular has indeed moved from Taiwan and Hong Kong back to the mainland, although a few students and followers of the exiled New Confucians are still playing an irreducible role in the Chinese-speaking world outside the mainland. This includes, for instance, Li Minghui 李明輝 (Lee Minghuei, 1953–) at Academia Sinica in Taiwan.

Against this background, Chinese philosophy focusing on Confucianism has taken on various faces in the mainland since the 1990s. We can designate roughly three approaches or orientations that deserve to be mentioned here, and I give further depictions of them as three philosophical genres in a later section.

The first is the tradition initiated by Feng Youlan and Zhang Dainian 張岱年 (1909–2004) active from the 1930s to the 1940s that has been further developed by Chen Lai 陳來 (1952–) and Peng Guoxiang 彭國翔 (1969–) after the 1980s. This tradition of contemporary Chinese philosophy, focusing on but not limited to Confucianism, actually incorporates two different interpretive approaches respectively originating from Peking University (PKU) and Tsinghua University from the 1920s to 1940s. Both Feng and Zhang taught at Tsinghua University before 1952, but after that time all philosophy departments throughout the mainland, except PKU's, were abolished, and, in 1952, both Feng and Zhang were dispatched to teach there. As a student of Zhang's and an assistant to Feng, Chen Lai received his PhD in 1985 and became the first scholar to earn a PhD in Chinese philosophy after the establishment of the PRC. Chen has integrated two traditions of contemporary Chinese philosophy and developed his own interpretation and construction. He taught at PKU for a long time, moved to Tsinghua University in 2009, where he now directs the Academy of Traditional Learning. In addition to his numerous publications spanning the entire Confucian tradition, he has also tried to develop a Confucian ontology of humaneness (Chen 2014), which will be discussed later.

Peng Guoxiang, supervised by Chen Lai, also obtained his PhD at PKU. He consciously inherited the way of doing Chinese philosophy from Feng, Zhang and Chen. But before undertaking his postgraduate study at PKU, he had already been deeply influenced not only by Tang Junyi and Mou Zongsan, but also from some other self-exiled Chinese historians, especially Qian Mu and Yu Ying-shih. So, besides works of historical study or Sinology, Peng's philosophical publications indicate a convergence of the two branches of contemporary New Confucianism respectively initiated by Xiong Shili and Feng Youlan (Peng 2012). Peng used to teach at Tsinghua University and PKU and now is teaching at Zhejiang University. In short, this is new development of contemporary Chinese philosophy that was originated from PKU in the mainland after the 1980s and to the present is also a "new Confucianism."

The second approach to Chinese philosophy during this recent period is represented by the integration of traditional Chinese philosophy and Western

philosophy, especially Marxism. This approach is substantially represented by Li Zehou, the most influential philosopher in Chinese mainland in the 1980s, and who remains highly relevant today. Li also graduated from PKU in the 1950s and went on to become a research fellow at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS). Marxism strongly influenced him when he was very young, even before the establishment of the PRC; the impact of Marxism on him was not a result imposed from outside. Rather, his interpretation of Chinese philosophy and his own philosophical construction as well come primarily from a standpoint of Marxism, which, after all, has strongly and deeply influenced Chinese culture from the beginning of the 20th century. It is not surprising that Marxism constitutes an indispensable and constructive element for the contemporary Chinese philosophy that Li exemplifies, although sometimes it is not easy to weigh which aspect, traditional Chinese or Marxist thought, is more fundamental to it. Unfortunately, however, a strong successor to Li's approach has not yet emerged.

Similarly, the third approach, pioneered by Feng Qi and emphatically advanced by Yang Guorong 楊國榮 (1957–) and his students, has also tried to interpret and construct a new Chinese philosophy by integrating Western philosophical resources outside and in addition to Marxism. Feng's work can be traced back to Jin Yuelin 金岳霖 (1895–1984), who had taught at Tsinghua before the establishment of the PRC and was well known for Western logic. But it seemed that Jin did not engage in the interpretation and construction of Chinese philosophy although he tried to develop a philosophy of his own, a kind of epistemology (Jin 1940). By contrast, both Feng and Yang paid much attention to the interpretation of traditional Chinese philosophy and made the most of the resources of the Chinese tradition to construct their own philosophical discourses. Specifically, Yang has been attempting to situate his work in the context of world philosophy. Feng taught at East China Normal University (ECNU) since 1952, and he spent the rest of his life there. Yang started his career at ECNU, where he is still teaching. Currently, most students of Yang's are working at ECNU and a few other universities in Shanghai.

In addition to these three approaches or orientations, there are various studies in Chinese philosophy in contemporary China, not only in the Confucian tradition but also in Daoism, Buddhism and other sub-traditions in Chinese history. Quite a few scholars in these areas, for example, Guo Qiyong 郭齊勇 (1947–) and his fellows at Wuhan University; Chen Shaoming 陳少明 (1958–) and Chen Lisheng 陳立勝 (1965–) at Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, and so on, have been substantially advancing the development of contemporary Chinese philosophy. But as for philosophical reflections and constructions, the above-mentioned three approaches characterize the primarily features of the landscape of Chinese philosophy since the 1980s until today.

2.4 Chinese Philosophy Outside the Chinese-Speaking World

Chinese philosophy was introduced to the West in the 17th century primarily through the translations of Chinese classics by the Jesuit missionaries. Chinese philosophy, however, as defined here was not fully established until the 20th century, particularly after the 1950s. With a flock of Chinese intellectuals moving to the West, especially the United States, Chinese philosophy as a modern discipline has also been developed in the West. Scholars of Chinese philosophy outside the Chinese-speaking world have made great contributions to the whole community of Chinese philosophy. Although Chinese philosophy in the West has been mostly taught in departments of Sinology, History, East Asian Studies, and Religion rather than in departments of Philosophy, it has gradually been legitimatized in the English-speaking world and other Western language communities as a branch of world philosophies. Since my focus here is on contemporary Chinese philosophy in the Chinese-speaking world, this part of contemporary Chinese philosophy outside the Chinese-speaking world needs be brief. Given any categorization of what these scholars have achieved, it might be better to just mention some major scholars as a brief introduction for interested audiences to find and study their works. Of course, the names mentioned here comprise only a small part of a much bigger and increasing community of philosophers.

Simply put, scholars of Chinese philosophy outside the Chinese-speaking world can be divided into two groups. The first comprise scholars of Chinese or East Asian ancestry, especially including Chinese and East Asian immigrants. Among them, Chen Rongjie 陳榮捷 (Wing-tsit Chan, 1901–94) stands as one of their most brilliant representatives. Later generations include the late Din Cheuk Lau 劉殿爵, the late Antonio Cua 柯雄文, Yu Ying-shih, the late Fu Weixun 傅偉勳 (Charles Wei-Hsun Fu), the late Qin Jiayi 秦家懿 (Julia Ching), Liu Shuxian, Cheng Zhongying, Du Weiming, Wu Guangming 吳光明 (Wu Kuangming), Xin Guanglai 信廣來 (Shun Kwong-loi), Shen Qingsong 沈清松 (Vincent Tsing-song Shen), and David Wong 黃百銳, each of whom have further enriched and promoted the study of Chinese philosophy in North America. A few younger generations in other regions, for example, Tan Sor-hoon 陳素芬 in Singapore and Karyn Lai 賴蘊慧 in Australia, are now actively and productively engaged in the international community of Chinese philosophy.

There are also some Chinese scholars who have left Chinese mainland for America since the 1980s to pursue their postgraduate study in Western philosophy. These includes scholars such as Huang Yong 黃勇, Jiang Xinyan 姜新艳, Li Chenyang 李晨陽, Liu Jilu (Jeeloo, Liu) 劉紀璐, Ni Peimin 倪培民, Shang Geling 商戈令, Xiao Yang 蕭陽, and the late Yu Jiyuan 余紀元, many of whom have turned to comparative philosophy. These representatives are scattered

across various regions including America, Hong Kong of China, and Singapore. They have gradually become fresh voices in the English-language discourses of Chinese philosophy.

The other group includes those who are not ethnically Chinese or East Asian but have devoted themselves to the teaching and research of Chinese philosophy and who have played an important role in the development of Chinese philosophy outside the Chinese-speaking world. This is a long list, for which I will only name a few. They are the late Angus C. Graham at London University, the late David Nivison at Stanford, John Makeham at Australian National University, Donald J. Munro at Michigan University, Heiner Roetz at Ruhr-Universitaet Bochum, François Jullien in Paris, Philip. J. Ivanhoe at City University of Hong Kong, Brook A. Ziporyn at University of Chicago, Bryan Van Norden at Vassar College, Franklin Perkins at University of Hawaii, Robert Neville and John Berthrong at Boston University, Roger T. Ames at University of Hawaii (retired and now at Peking University), Stephen Angle at Wesleyan University, etc. If those who teach at departments of History and East Asian Studies but have close relation with Chinese philosophy are considered, such as the late Benjamin I. Schwartz at Harvard, the late W. T. de Bary at Columbia University, Peter K. Bol and Michael Puett at Harvard, the list would be much longer.

Although both of these two groups are primarily working on Chinese philosophy in the English-speaking world,[2] their interaction with scholars in the Chinese-speaking world now is becoming more frequent. This mutual exchange is reshaping the landscape of Chinese philosophy in the global context.

3 Philosophical Reflections and Construction: Three Primary Genres

We can make a distinction between the "study of Chinese philosophy" and "philosophical reflections on and constructions of Chinese philosophy," even though these two sides are, no doubt, closely related and mutually reinforcing.

[2] Yu Ying-shih is an exception. Most of his works are written and published in Chinese even though he has taught at Michigan, Harvard, Yale, and Princeton. He is not only the winner of the Kluge Prize in 2006 but also the first winner of Tang Prize in Sinology in 2014. He is no doubt one of the most prestigious scholars and influential public intellectuals in the Chinese-speaking world. The unrivaled esteem he has received is not only because of his marvelous scholarship but also his venerated character. Also, some of the Chinese-American scholars such as Cheng Zhongying and Du Weiming started to be greatly engaged in the community of Chinese philosophy in Chinese mainland after the 1990s. Du even relocated back to China after he retired from Harvard in 2008.

Concerning the latter, there are primarily three genres of contemporary Chinese philosophy in the Chinese-speaking world.

3.1 New Confucianism

The first is "New Confucianism." As mentioned previously, New Confucianism as a philosophical movement in modern China has two branches or lineages respectively originated from Xiong Shili and Feng Youlan and developed in Taiwan, Hong Kong and the mainland.

The line of thought initiated by Xiong that fully developed in Taiwan and Hong Kong during the 1950s to the 1980s was very well represented by Tang Junyi and Mou Zongsan, whose philosophical constructions could be regarded as two of the most sophisticated and comprehensive types of contemporary Chinese philosophy.

Tang was not only well versed in traditional Chinese philosophy, but also seasoned in Western and Indian philosophical traditions (Peng 2012). He was the one of the very few Chinese philosophers who paid a great deal of attention to Indian philosophy. In his *Zhexue Gailun* 哲學概論 (*An Introduction to Philosophy*) (Tang 1974), he covered almost all of the philosophical ramifications involved in the comparative study of China, India, and the West. His discussion of Indian philosophy is the most in-depth of his time in the Chinese-speaking world. The numerous works he published can be mostly divided into two types of contributions to contemporary Chinese philosophy. One, represented by his four-volume series called *Zhongguo Zhexue Yuanlun* 中國哲學原論 (*Inquiry on Chinese Philosophy*) (Tang 1966; 1968; 1973; 1975), intends to clarify the key concepts and ideas of Chinese philosophy. The other, exemplified by his magnum opus, *Shengming Cunzai yu Xinling Jingjie* 生命存在與心靈境界 (*Existences of Life and Horizons of Heart-mind*) (Tang 1977), the last book of his life, was his own philosophical construction that should be regarded as one of the newest types of Chinese philosophy of his time. The philosophy Tang deliberately constructed in this book is very sophisticated and could be understood as a comprehensive idealism, which, although obviously influenced by Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, was deeply rooted in traditional Chinese minds, especially the Confucian humanism, and widely covered not only Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism but various branches of Western philosophy and Christianity.

When alive, Tang seemed more celebrated than Mou, especially in the international academia of Chinese philosophy. Since his passing in 1978, his influence has decreased and has been replaced by Mou's, whose students and followers have been more vibrant than those of Tang's in terms of numbers and scholarly achievements. It is primarily Mou's students and followers in Taiwan

and Hong Kong who have been continually promoting contemporary New Confucianism and Chinese philosophy in general, although their originality could not keep abreast with their master.

As a like-minded and close friend of Tang, Mou was more philosophically influential and controversial. The great contributions he made to the study of Chinese philosophy were not limited to Confucianism but also deeply involved Daoism and Buddhism, although his ultimate concern and commitments were rather Confucian. His seminal and voluminous works on neo-Confucianism (Mou 1968–69; 1979), neo-Daoism (Mou 1963), and Chinese Buddhism (Mou 1977) have become landmark for later studies in Chinese philosophy. Similar to Tang, in addition to the interpretation of traditional Chinese philosophy, Mou also constructed his own philosophical edifice. He was so well versed in the Western philosophical tradition that his mastery of Western philosophy even exceeded many of his contemporaries and younger generations who specialize exclusively in Western philosophy. In fact, Mou had already been noted for his achievements in Western logic, metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics before he published his pioneering works on Chinese philosophy. For instance, he might have been the first person in China who seriously studied Russell and Whitehead's *Principle of Mathematics* and carefully read Whitehead's *Process and Reality* and even planned to translate it into Chinese in the 1930s. Furthermore, his dialogue with Kant was a lifelong endeavor and he was also the first person in China who singlehandedly translated Kant's three critiques into Chinese. It is exactly because he was so immersed in Kant and once again claimed that Kant was a bridge for connecting Chinese philosophy represented by Confucianism and Western philosophy that many observers, laymen or even experts on philosophy, took it for granted that Mou interpreted Chinese philosophy and constructed his own in a Kantian way or with a framework of Kant's idealism.

It is true that Kant was crucial for understanding what Mou has done in both interpreting and constructing Chinese philosophy. It is superficial and specious, however, to deduce that Mou's standpoint was Kantian. On the contrary, as long as the standpoint of Kant is in conflict with that of Confucianism, Mou's reaction was resolutely to revise or even criticize Kant from a Confucian point of view. For example, in his translation of and commentary to Kant's *Foundation of the Metaphysics of Morals* and *Critique of Practical Reason*, the Chinese translations of both were combined into one book called *Kangde de Daode Zhexue* 康德的道德哲學 (*Moral Philosophy of Kant*) (Mou 1982), Mou argued at great length about his understanding of moral feeling and criticized Kant's view that moral feeling should be strictly confined to empiricism. For Mou, in light of Mengzi (Mencius), moral feeling, especially the four beginnings of the human heart, is deeply rooted in humanity and could not be simply reduced to

empirical experience. Mou (1978) even called this intrinsic moral feeling the "ontological feeling." Mou's interpretation of moral feeling was surely open to discussion, but what this example indicated was that the impression that he simply employed Kant to measure Confucianism was not pertinent, if not totally wrong.

The philosophy Mou established is usually known as a "moral metaphysics," which he purposely differentiated from Kant's "metaphysics of moral." This moral metaphysics attempts to argue that the human heart-mind is a moral agent that has intellectual intuition and this conviction has commonly, if not consciously, been espoused by Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism in the Chinese tradition (Mou 1975). For Mou, the human heart-mind is not only empirical but also ontological and cosmological. Morality, then, is not only empirical either. He used the Mahayana Buddhist term, *yixin kai ermen* 一心開二門 (twofold unfolding of the unlimited and free heart-mind), to describe the two levels of the human heart-mind. Also, he even coined a term, onto-cosmology, to depict the salient feature of Chinese metaphysics. According to his moral metaphysics, epistemology could be understood to arise as the result of the self-negation of the intellectual intuition that the human heart-mind possesses. In this sense, this moral metaphysics, based upon Mou's understanding of Chinese philosophy in general and Confucianism in particular, could be seen as a revision of Kant's metaphysics of morality.

After Tang and Mou, this branch of New Confucianism in Taiwan and Hong Kong has continued to be be advocated by their followers. These are mostly students of Mou's, such as Cai Renhou 蔡仁厚 (1930–), Liu Shuxian, and Li Minghui. Cai mainly, if not completely, followed Mou's interpretation of Chinese philosophy, and his writings are relatively easy to understand and helpful for those who find it difficult to read Mou's works. Liu was a student of Fang Dongmei but was deeply influenced by Mou in terms of the interpretation of the Confucian tradition, especially of neo-Confucianism. Since Liu received his PhD in the US, however, as mentioned previously, together with those Chinese scholars who have been strenuously working in the English-speaking world, he has made great contributions to the internationalization of Chinese philosophy. Li received his PhD from Germany and has substantially advanced many aspects of Mou's thought, especially the relationship between Confucianism and the philosophy of Kant. For example, Li's doctoral dissertation compared the separate understandings of moral feeling in Confucianism and Kant (Li 1994). There are also a handful of contemporaries of Li who are attempting to go beyond Mou but, unfortunately, it seems their work is devoid of substantial scholarship and they are still are conceptually wrestling with making themselves clear and convincing.

Even though the branch of New Confucianism initiated by Feng Youlan was once terminated with the establishment of Communist China in 1949, it was

revitalized after the 1980s with the reforms and open policies of the CCP carried out in mainland China. In his late days, Feng openly conceded that his critique of Confucianism from a Marxist point of view during the 1950s to the 1970s was insincere, and he was still committed to Confucian core values including humanity, justice, civility, wisdom, and trust. But he was too old to reestablish his own New Confucian philosophy. As previously mentioned, it was Chen Lai who followed the methodology of Feng and Zhang Dainian and eventually it was he who developed this branch of New Confucian philosophy in the mainland.

Chen Lai is well known for his studies of neo-Confucianism (Chen 1988; 1991; 2004). His voluminous publications include numerous monographs and articles on classical Confucianism and modern Confucianism. In part by way of inheriting the legacy of Feng and Zhang, the philosophy Chen attempts to construct is represented by his recently published *Renxue Benti Lun* 仁學本體論 (*Ontology of Humaneness*, Chen 2014). His elaborations on the idea of humaneness in the Confucian tradition construe it as an ontological and cosmological concept, which, according to Chen, should be understood as the central foundation of Confucian philosophy. Furthermore, Chen also has presented thoughtful responses to Li Zehou and other contemporary Chinese philosophers. Chen many times announced that his aim is to develop a New Confucian philosophy, namely, an ontology of humanness, by interpreting and reconstructing the discourses of *ren* (humaneness) in the Confucian tradition, and his ontology of humaneness represents a major philosophical construction New Confucian philosophy in contemporary China.

Peng Guoxiang has consciously inherited the ways of studying and constructing Chinese philosophy from the two contemporary Confucian genealogies discussed previously. One of the major projects that he has been pursuing in terms of philosophical inquiry is the further integration of contemporary Chinese philosophy, especially Confucianism, into a global context. He has been engaged in the debate on the methodology of the interpretation and construction of Chinese philosophy as a modern discipline (Peng 2009). His reflections on this issue clearly indicate an endeavor of synthesis and incorporation. His publications on Confucianism have instantiated ways of interpreting and constructing Chinese philosophy from a comparative perspective in a context of world philosophy. What differentiates his genre from other approaches that also try to integrate Chinese philosophy into a global philosophical discourse is that his axiological standpoint is based on a Confucianism conceived as an everlasting dynamic process open to new elements rather than a static structure confined to the past.

As a matter of fact, if the distinction between "Confucian scholars" and "scholars of Confucianism" is significant and helpful, all these figures of contemporary New Confucianism I just mentioned are not simply philosophers

of Confucianism, but Confucian philosophers. Although their projects differ from one another, "New Confucian" as a title, no matter demonized or deified, is an acknowledgement of both the growing substantial scholarship on Confucianism and a truly devoted Confucian commitment. Anyone who lacks one of both cannot be worthy of this title.

3.2 New Marxist Chinese Philosophy

It is necessary to make a distinction between "Chinese Marxism" and "Marxist Chinese philosophy." As defined here, the former does not belong to the latter, but contemporary Chinese philosophy includes Marxist Chinese philosophy since Marxism was introduced to China more than a century ago and it has heavily shaped all aspects of contemporary China. What differentiates Marxist Chinese philosophy from Chinese Marxism is that, for the former, the resources of "Chinese philosophy" play an important or crucial role in the new construction of contemporary Chinese philosophy, while Marxism could still be the standpoint or cornerstone of this philosophical construction. Of course, besides Marxism, other elements of the Western philosophical tradition, more or less, would be integrated into this new Marxist Chinese philosophy.

Contemporary new Marxist Chinese philosophy is primarily instantiated in the philosophical discourse developed by Li Zehou. As mentioned previously, Li is one of the few philosophers in contemporary mainland China who was truly baptized by Marxism as a social philosophy, and the philosophy he has developed is called "historical ontology" (Li 2002). The tenets of this philosophy were summarized by Li himself as consisting of four principles: (1) the transcendental or a priori form of human experience is originally derived from the empirical experience of human beings; (2) human reason is not a priori but shaped in the process of history; (3) the ontological substance of human beings is essentially derived from the accumulation of human psychological experience; (4) it is feeling rather than reason that constitutes the foundation of human experience.

Apparently, like Mou Zongsan, Li's philosophy seems also to be a response to Kant and Li indeed published a book on Kant's critical philosophy (Li 1979). Compared with Mou's, however, Li's standpoint is more Marxist than Confucian. On the other hand, Li (1980) probably was the first scholar who gave a positive evaluation to Kongzi in the early 1980s in the mainland after decades of extreme anti-traditionalism. His emphasis on the priority of feeling to reason also originated from the impact of Chinese philosophy. He has particularly advocated the position that social existence, especially material life, has played in the construction of human consciousness; this position is obviously from Marxism. But the resources of traditional Chinese philosophy, not only of Confucianism,

have also played an indispensably constructive role in Li's philosophical discourse, and it is this point that differentiates Li from merely being a Chinese Marxist.

3.3 An Endeavor towards Constructing Chinese Philosophy as a World Philosophy

The genre of the philosophical construction developed by Feng Qi is similar to that of Li Zehou. In a sense, Feng could also be regarded as a Marxist. His unremitting philosophical reflections on "wisdom" from the 1940s into the 1990s culminated in his *Zhihui Sanshu* 智慧三書 (*Three Treatises on Wisdom*).[3] In addition, he has also published two books respectively on the ancient history of Chinese philosophy (Feng 1977) and the modern history of Chinese philosophy (Feng 1997). What he has repeatedly stressed is "to transform theory into virtue." This tenet of his philosophy should be understood as a revision or rectification of Marxism from a perspective of Chinese philosophy, especially of the Confucian tradition. Of course, other resources in the Western philosophical tradition in addition to Marxism have also been integrated into his philosophy. It seems he has already triggered the ambition and paved the way to build a Chinese philosophy as a world philosophy by incorporating various philosophical elements from other philosophies around the world.

Yang Guorong, a former student of Feng, has further and substantially advanced this approach to the construction of contemporary Chinese philosophy as a world philosophy. Yang's knowledge of the Western philosophical tradition in general and of its contemporary development in particular is more comprehensive than his teacher. Although he is still relatively younger, Yang has been quite productive. His own philosophy, also represented by three recently published books (Yang 2011), widely involves various contemporary Western philosophical discourses and universally philosophical issues. Yang calls the philosophy that he has attempted to construct a "concrete metaphysics" that intends to avoid the "oblivion of wisdom" and the "abstraction of wisdom" (Yang & Dai 2015), and it is difficult to classified it into an exclusive tradition, Chinese, Western, or Marxist. The resources of Chinese philosophy, especially Confucianism, Western philosophy, and Marxism, have been almost equally

[3] These three treatises include: (1) *Renshi Shijie yu Renshi Ziji* 認識世界與認識自己 (*To Know the World and to Know Yourself*); (2) *Luoji Siwei de Bianzhengfa* 邏輯思維的辯證法 (*Dialectics of Logical Thinking*); and (3)*Ren de Ziyou yu Zhenshanmei* 人的自由與真善美 (*The Freedom of Human and Truth, Goodness, and the Beauty*).The ten-volume *Complete Works of Feng Qi* has already been published.

integrated into his philosophical construction as a concrete metaphysics. For that matter, it seems either Confucianism or Marxism could hardly be considered the axiological anchorage of Yang's own philosophy. It is exactly in this regard that his endeavor is differentiated from the two other genres: New Confucianism and New Marxist Chinese philosophy. But in the final analysis, the way of thinking that underpins Yang's concrete metaphysics still has its origin of Confucianism. In this regard, it rivals the Confucian metaphysics of Mou Zongsan and Chen Lai.

Yang has taught many brilliant students, most of who now teach in Shanghai. Among them, Yu Zhenhua 郁振華 (1966–) is representative of the later generation, who received a more rigorous training in Western philosophy. Besides the doctorate of Chinese philosophy supervised by Yang, Yu received a second doctorate of Western philosophy in Norway. It seems he has not only inherited the tradition from Feng to Yang, but has also stepped further into the Western philosophical tradition. If his first book based upon his PhD dissertation still focused on Chinese philosophy (Yu 2000), his second and the latest book is a work of epistemology that is almost entirely immersed in the Western philosophical tradition (Yu 2004).

In addition to the philosophical reflections and constructions discussed above, relative to the flourishing of contemporary New Confucianism, there are also some voices that are trying to set their own fashions. For example, the so-called contemporary New Daoism has been advocated by a few scholars. However, only once more substantial establishments have been achieved, in terms of not only acknowledged scholarship but seminal philosophical reflections and constructions, could these voices go beyond mere slogans.

4 Issues Focused in Contemporary Chinese Philosophy

As for those specific studies in the different stages of Chinese philosophical tradition, for instance, in Classical Confucianism, Neo-Confucianism, contemporary New Confucianism, Daoism, neo-Daoism, and Chinese Buddhism, there are so many scholars and fruitful products which cannot be completely scrutinized here. Fortunately, there are relevant resources available elsewhere. In the following part, only a few major issues in contemporary Chinese philosophy will be examined.

4.1 Debates on Immanent Transcendence in Chinese Philosophy

There is one feature in particular of Chinese philosophy that is found in Confucianism, Daoism, and Chinese Buddhism that has generated much debate

among contemporary scholars that has come to be recognized in the expression of "immanent transcendence." This term is used to epitomize and depict the fundamental and exceptional, if not unique, characteristic feature of Chinese philosophy. It originated in the writings of Mou Zongsan (1974) and Tang Junyi (1974) and was gradually accepted by many scholars such as Tang Yijie 湯一介 (1927–2014) (Tang 1991) in the mainland.

Since both "immanence" and "transcendence" are concepts originally from the Western philosophical tradition, it is understandable that scholars of both Chinese and Western philosophy launched the debate on "immanent transcendence." Roger Ames and David Hall first questioned the usage and validity of "immanent transcendence." For them, immanence and transcendence are two mutually exclusive concepts, and the expression is simply an oxymoron (Ames and Hall 1987).

The critique of Ames and Hall about "immanent transcendence" has garnered responses from a number of Chinese scholars who defend the expression, and the arguments of Li Minghui were the most influential. He not only carefully analyzed the layers of the meaning of "immanent transcendence" in the works of his predecessors (especially Mou), but also argued that the notion was not completely alien to Western philosophical tradition (Li 1994a). This justification resonated among Western scholars, and both Robert Neville (2000) and John Berthrong (1996) endorsed the validity of using it " to depict this characteristic of Chinese philosophy; Berthrong is quoted as saying that Ames and Hall "overstate the case."

Next to the various understandings of "immanence" and "transcendence" in and of themselves, the debate on "immanent transcendence" also involves issues of translation from one language into another. Specifically, the meaning or implication of "*neizai chaoyue* 內在超越, " the accepted Chinese translation of "immanent transcendence," is not completely equal to the original English expression. The question that Ames and Hall raise about "immanent transcendence" is meaningful in the English context of the Western philosophical tradition. Interestingly, it was Yu Ying-shih in the West who first realized the possible problems with the expression. Presumably to avoid controversy, he deliberately used the phrase "inward transcendence" 內向超越 (*neixiang chaoyue*) in his recently published work to replace "immanent transcendence" that he had previously been using (Yu 2014). Regardless, the Chinese phrase "*neizai chaoyue*" does not necessarily entail the problem that Ames and Hall questioned in the Chinese context, and most scholars of Chinese philosophy, at least in the Chinese-speaking world, continue to use it to epitomize this essential feature of Chinese philosophy.

This debate on "immanent transcendence" has received much attention among scholars of Chinese philosophy. It actually involves a deeper issue of doing

Chinese philosophy, namely, how to reconcile and integrate Chinese philosophy and Western philosophy. Relevant reflections on the methodology of doing contemporary Chinese philosophy constitute an important and irreducible issue in the field of contemporary Chinese philosophy.

4.2 Debates on the Methodology of Doing Chinese Philosophy

Since the time that Chinese philosophy was first established as a modern discipline and taught in Chinese universities, there have been sporadic discussions concerning how to do modern Chinese philosophy, how to analyze and interpret specific issues in the Chinese philosophical tradition, and how to undertake novel constructions of contemporary Chinese philosophy in the modern world. Examples can be found in the evaluation of Feng Youlan's *History of Chinese Philosophy* by Chen Yike 陳寅恪 (1890–1969) and Jin Yuelin in the 1930s, and , in Mou Zongsan's and Lao Siguang's critiques of the same book. Nevertheless, debates concerning these and other such methodological issues did not come to the fore until the 1990s and the early 21th century.

With the collapse of Marxism after the 1980s, it is only natural to reconsider the question of how to do Chinese philosophy, given that all textbooks and research works on Chinese philosophy during the period from the 1950s to the 1980s in mainland China were dominated by dogmatic Marxism as an interpretively theoretical framework, the reflection on and critique of this way of doing Chinese philosophy, therefore, was initially triggered by the debate on the methodology of studying Chinese philosophy.

Initially, reflections and debates on the issue were directed to Western philosophy as an interpretive framework in general, not at Marxism. Presumably any direct critiques of Marxism would entail political risk, given Marxism's position as a national ideology, and debates on the interpretation and construction of Chinese philosophy within the fabric and agendas of Western philosophy could implicitly be involved in the reflection on the abuse of Marxism. In any case, Marxism, which is after all still a twig of the whole Western philosophical family tree, was and continues to be no doubt meaningful and significant. But this debate went so far that some scholars even asserted that Chinese philosophy should be purified and any element of Western philosophy should accordingly be thoroughly eliminated. This seemingly philosophical assertion was underpinned by a cultural nationalism usually advocated by scholars who either lacked overseas academic experience or who had frustrated overseas educational experiences.

By contrast, a few leading scholars of Chinese philosophy including Chen Lai, Peng Guoxiang, and Yang Guorong, argued that this extreme that tried to instill a

cleavage between Chinese and Western philosophy and to indigenously purify Chinese philosophy was undesirable and even virtually impossible for the development of contemporary Chinese philosophy. Peng Guoxiang, for example, avowedly pointed out that establishing the identity and autonomy of Chinese philosophy could not be achieved by isolating Chinese philosophical inquiry from the Western philosophical world. If used properly, the Western philosophical tradition should be a resource rather than a burden for the enrichment and development of contemporary Chinese philosophy. In an age of cultural symbiosis, in Peng's view, the entanglement of different concepts from originally different philosophical traditions would not obliterate the individuality and particularity of any single philosophy; rather, the convergence of concepts and experience requires constant revision to improve upon philosophical assumptions, which are often taken for granted as universal in their respective traditions. The more resources one philosophical tradition (or one civilization) could absorb from other traditions, the more promising and flourishing the future of this tradition would be.

4.3 New Light on Chinese Philosophy in Its Classical Period: On the Implications and Significance of Newly Excavated Texts

One of the most well-known startling turn of events in contemporary Chinese philosophy is the continuous emergence of newly excavated texts that provide new representations of ancient and early Chinese philosophical traditions. Beginning from the 1970s, these new archeological findings have challenged the given pictures of the ancient Chinese intellectual world. What the newly excavated texts demonstrate is so extensive that their study requires interdisciplinary collaboration and many international circles for the study of these new materials has been formed. All of this directly impacts the understanding of Chinese philosophy and constitutes an integral part of contemporary Chinese philosophy.

While it is an exaggeration to say that the entire history of Chinese philosophy will be rewritten because of these newly unearthed materials, these archeological findings have indeed much shed new light on the classical period of Chinese philosophy. Before these new texts were unearthed, resources for the innovative study of classical Confucianism and Daoism, roughly before the end of Western Han dynasty (206 B. C.–A.D.24), were known and somewhat limited. For example, it was recorded that Confucianism after Kongzi split into eight schools, but the big picture of these eight schools was murky. How did Confucianism after Kongzi develop until Mengzi became its second towering figure in the Warring Sates period? Fortunately, many of the excavated Confucian texts inscribed on bamboo slips, such as the two versions of *Xing Zi Ming Chu* 性自命

出, the *Zigao* 子羔, and the *Zhonggong* 仲弓, to name but a few, have become widely used resources for Confucianism after Kongzi and before Mengzi. Furthermore, quite a few of these texts, such as the *Kongzi Shilun* 孔子詩論 (*Kongzi on Poetry*) are records about Kongzi himself entirely separate from the *Analects*, and they provide firsthand materials for understanding longtime overlooked aspects of his life. The same situation is also true for Daoism, and many of these excavated texts also fruitfully enrich our understanding of Daoist cosmology and cosmogony in its incipient period, as with the *Taiyi Sheng Shui* 太一生水.

In short, the implications and significance of these newly excavated texts are far-reaching. A more sophisticated picture of the world of philosophy in ancient China, which constitutes an integral part of the contemporary study of Chinese philosophy, is gradually being painted by scholars in several separate fields. For example, based upon while not limited to the endeavors and products of experts in paleography, Chen Lai proposed a more coherent and convincing interpretation of *wuxing* 五行 and its relevant thought, which have previously been riddles with ambiguity and controversy in the study of classical Confucianism (Chen 2009). As well, the newly unearthed texts that Yu Ying-shih used to great advantage provided subsidiary support for his seminal contribution to the study of the origin of ancient Chinese thought (Yu 2014).

4.4 New Advances in the Study of Neo-Confucianism

"Neo-Confucianism" refers to the Confucianism from the Song to Ming dynasties. Both *lixue* 理學 (learning of principle), narrowly defined by Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200) and his forerunners including Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033–1107), and *xinxue* 心學 ("learning of heart-mind") particularly developed by Lu Xiangshan 陸象山 (1139–93) and Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472–1529) both belong to "Neo-Confucianism."

Before the 1990s, the study of Neo-Confucianism had focused on those forefront figures such as Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi, Zhu Xi, Lu Xiangshan, and Wang Yangming. Other seemingly secondary figures in the Neo-Confucian tradition have not received enough attention, but this situation has been dramatically changed. Represented by works of Peng Guoxiang (2003; 2005), Qian Ming 錢明 (2003), and Wu Zhen 吳震 (2003; 2005) in the early 21st century, a burgeoning group of scholars have followed their lead, and the study of Wang Yangming and his students has been booming in the Chinese-speaking world (Peng 2003).[4]

[4] The study of Wang Yangming's learning as a school that includes students of his from later generations is an interdisciplinary area. Scholarly approaches to it are not only philosophical but also from the field of intellectual history, cultural history, and social history.

Similarly, the study of the students of Zhu Xi has also been recently rejuvenated. Many books, for example by Zhang Jiacao (2004), on the first generation of Zhu Xi's student such as Chen Chun 陳淳 (1159–1223) have been published. Moreover, under the leadership of Chen Lai, a research team focusing on Zhu Xi's followers has also been established recently. A few younger scholars are working on this area and more products are expected.

These new advances in the study of Neo-Confucianism are actually also buttressed by the collation and sometime new discovery of the works of other Neo-Confucian figures. For example, the huge collation of ancient books supported by the CCP and numerous local libraries, particularly the *Siku Quanshu* 四庫全書 series that includes the *Siku Cunmu Congshu* 四庫存目叢書, provides most of the complete works of those followers of Wang Yangming in the late Ming dynasty. Before these projects were completed in the late 1990s, it was very difficult to obtain complete works by those seemingly secondary Neo-Confucian scholars. Another example is the two versions of the *Lixue Lu* 理學錄 respectively by Huang Zongxi 黃宗羲 (1610–95) and Jiang Xizhe 姜希轍 (?–1698). The *Lixue Lu* by Huang had always been regarded as a lost book, and the *Lixue Lu* by Jiang had been totally unknown, but with the discovery of these two works the landscape of the Neo-Confucianism of the Ming dynasty can now be further revisited and reconsidered (see Peng 2013, 2015)[5].

5 Defining the Characteristics of Contemporary Chinese Philosophy

After this overview of contemporary Chinese philosophy that has examined its major historical developments, its representative figures, its primary genres, and some of its important issues and debates, in this concluding section, I make a brief summary of several of its defining characteristics.

As mentioned above, the distinction between contemporary Chinese philosophy and traditional Chinese philosophy lies in the fact that the former, no matter the interpretation of traditional Chinese philosophy or the philosophical construction based upon the standpoint of traditional Chinese philosophy, is a modern discipline that took shape as a result of the introduction of Western philosophy. From its outset, the formation and development of contemporary Chinese philosophy (and the entire Chinese humanities as well) could not avoid

[5] Peng's two monographs on the newly discovered two versions of the L*ixue Lu* were respectively published in 2009 and 2011. Both were included in his special collection published in 2013 (Taipei) and 2015 (Beijing).

confronting its relationship with Western philosophy (and the entire Western humanities as well).

If we reconsider once again the three major genres of contemporary Chinese philosophical interpretation and construction, together with the grounds shared among them, we can see that they each and altogether, although in varying degrees, have integrated the available resources of the Western philosophical tradition. It is almost impossible to find the exception in which no elements from the Western philosophical tradition was adopted.

In exactly this regard, contemporary Chinese philosophy as a modern discipline should be regarded as a kind of comparative philosophy. This is a defining characteristic and the most salient feature of contemporary Chinese philosophy since the 20th century.

There are two radical trends, mostly seen in the mainland, concerning the way of doing Chinese philosophy since the 1950s that are closely related to this defining characteristic of contemporary Chinese philosophy. One is the attempt to completely westernize the traditional Chinese philosophical tradition. The typical model of this extreme is the "Marxistization" of traditional Chinese philosophy that was active in the period from the 1950s to the 1980s. The other is trying to thoroughly clear away any element or shake off any impact of Western philosophy, a trend that was first seen in the 1990s. This last trend, unfortunately, together with the so-called revival of Confucianism and traditional Chinese learning, has become more popular after 2000 among conservatives, if not pseudo-conservatives, in the mainland.[6] In fact, reflections and examinations of the damage to Chinese philosophy caused by the abuse of dogmatic Marxism as a universal and authoritative interpretive framework does not necessarily lead to the way that unrealistically tries to purify Chinese philosophy by eliminating all ingredients of Western philosophy. These two trends are nothing but extremes detrimental to the real enrichment and flourishing of Chinese philosophy as a living tradition. Again, I would like to say that, if properly treated, the Western philosophical tradition provides resources rather than burdens for the advancement of contemporary Chinese philosophy and Chinese culture as well.

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[6] For reflections on the revival of Confucianism, see Peng (2015b).

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