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The Political and Social Thought of Mou Zongsan

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Abstract

The political and social thought of Mou Zongsan (1909-95), one of the most important representatives of contemporary Chinese philosophy and Confucianism, was a lifelong endeavor for him and constitutes an indispensable part of his thought. It has been overlooked for much too long a time. This article aims to serve as an introduction to this dimension of his thought and so sketches out and discusses the core aspects of Mou's political and social thought. Specifically, it focuses attention on the following six themes: (1) his critique of Marxism and, in particular, its materialistic dialectics and historical materialism dating from the early 1930s; (2) his response to various prevailing views that were informed and imbued with Marxism concerning Chinese history and society and the situation in rural China, along with his own understanding of Chinese history and society and his proposal for resolving the problems of rural China in the 1930s; (3) his comprehensive, systematic, and lifelong criticism of Communism in China; (4) his endorsement of freedom based on his contrasting analyses of the Western and Chinese liberal traditions; (5) his advocacy of a revised form of democracy in light of his penetrating observations on traditional Chinese politics combined with his reflections on Western democracy; and (6) his views on the relationship between mainland China and Taiwan and Taiwan's identity. The presentation of these six themes not only embeds them in their historical context but also explores their contemporary significance.

Keywords: Mou Zongsan, Political and Social Thought, Contemporary Chinese Philosophy, Marxism, and Confucianism

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I. Why This Topic?

The ideal life of a whole-heartedly devoted Confucian is typically described in terms of being "a sage within and a king without" (*neisheng waiwang* 內聖外王). They seek to perfect themselves morally through self-cultivation but then go on to apply their moral character by helping to implement a benevolent form of government. Neo-Confucian luminaries such as Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) are not exceptions to this ideal, as professor Yu Ying-shih 余英時 meticulously has revealed in his masterpiece on Zhu Xi and the political culture of the Song dynasty (Yu 2003, 2004). Modern and contemporary Confucians also do not confine themselves exclusively to the side of being a "sage within"; they, too, have practical political agendas and seek to implement their moral teachings by participating in formulating or at least guiding governmental policies. As one of the most seminal thinkers in the modern Confucian tradition, Mou Zongsan 牟宗三 (1909-95) has received a great deal of attention in contemporary scholarship. Nevertheless, thusfar, the attention of most academics has been focused almost exclusively on his moral philosophy, especially his moral metaphysics. The philosophical edifice that Mou constructed, including his interpretation of traditional Chinese philosophy, Daoism, Chinese Buddhism, and Confucianism, and his own constructive philosophical system, which incorporates important ideas and approaches from Western philosophy, especially Kant, into Chinese philosophy, is both impressive and important. On the other hand, the political and social concerns that were strongly and continuously expressed throughout his entire life and that clearly played a major role in motivating his philosophical reflections are an essential dimension of his larger intellectual world. His political and social concerns are critical for fully understanding Mou as not only a philosopher but as an intellectual responding to the political and social issues of his time.This article will focus on Mou's political and social thought. The structure and selected themes presented here are based on his own writings and not imposed as part of some theoretical perspective imported from outside. The topics discussed comprehensively cover the major aspects of his political and social

thought. There are, of course, other fascinating aspects of his philosophy; however, they are parts of different stories and will not be discussed in this article.

There are sporadic studies of various aspects of Mou's political philosophy—in particular in regard to his views concerning democracy[1]—to be found in the contemporary literature; almost all of these studies approach his writings from the distinct perspective of "political philosophy" and unavoidably are imbued with their *Vorurteil*, mostly various discourses of western political philosophy. But the richness of the political and social thought of Mou extends far beyond the boundary of political philosophy. To fully grasp the range and depth of Mou's political and social thought, we need to tease out the full spectrum of his views from his voluminous and varied writings and scrutinize these within their historical and intellectual setting, combining a close reading of evidential materials with careful philosophical arguments.

II. Responses to and Critiques of Marxism

In the beginning of the 1930s, when Mou was still a student at Peking University, Marxism enjoyed immense popularity in China. Mou obviously could not fail to be moved by the spirit of this time, but he did not simply follow the general trend. Unlike most Chinese intellectuals who were trying to look at Chinese history from a Marxist perspective and to diagnose the structure and challenges of Chinese

[1] This does not mean that the publications on the political dimension of Mou Zongsan, at least in the Chinese-speaking world, are poor in terms of quantity. But almost all the publications in Chinese and English as well, that were made before Peng (2016) are mostly limited to his political philosophy and are rather narrowly construed. Other aspects of his political thought, let alone his social thought, have been left largely untouched. Furthermore, almost all publications on Mou's political philosophy simply focus on his concept of "self-negation of the innate knowing of the Good" (*liangzhi kanxian* 良知坎陷) and his discussion of democracy. Other aspects of Mou's political and social thought have been overlooked. For example, the only book on Mou's political philosophy published before 2016, Tang (2008) focuses exclusively on Mou's political philosophy, narrowly conceived. The few publications on Mou's political philosophy in English exclusively wrestle with the issue of democracy in Mou's thought.

society of the day by applying Marxism in a mechanical and uncritical manner, Mou criticized Marxism from the very beginning of his academic career. For example, the first article he published in 1931, when he was only 22 years old, was a defense of the kind of traditional logic initiated by Aristotle and a response to the materialistic dialectics advocated by many Chinese believers in Marxism as a "new logic" that could replace the traditional one (Mou 2003, vol. 25, 3-12).[2] The central argument of this article was that the three basic laws of formal logic, i.e. the law of identity, the law of contradiction, and the law of excluded middle, as irreducible forms of human thought, could not be overthrown by Marxist materialistic dialectics through its so-called "dialectical logic." Mou was immersed in modern logic for a long time and his achievements in this area were arguably unparalleled in the twentieth century China (Wang 2007, chaps. 1-8). It is no doubt true that his mastery of modern logic is a primary reason why his arguments not only concerning the reconstruction of Chinese philosophy but also concerning his political and social thought are so precise and forceful.[3]

Once Marxism prevailed in China in the early twentieth century, not only was materialistic dialectics worshiped as a new form of logic, but historical materialism was also applauded as a universally applicable methodology. Most Chinese intellectuals in the 1930s tried to reinterpret Chinese history by using the Marxist theory of historical materialism, dividing China's history into dedicated stages, defining the nature of each of these, and seeing the course of history as the unfolding of a predetermined trajectory with a clear and inevitable *telos*. Many of the most influential intellectuals of the time published their competing articles in the *Journal of Reading* (*Dushu zazhi* 讀書雜誌), including Guo Moruo 郭沫若 (1892-1978), Hu Qiuyuan 胡秋原

2 See the article "Is Materialistic Dialectics the Truth?" (Bianzheng fa shi zhenli ma 辯證法是真理嗎).

3 Mou's great achievements in modern logic have also been largely overlooked. Only Wang Xingguo noticed this aspect of his philosophy and went to some length to examine and analyze it. See Wang (2007). But Wang did not realize or at least make clear that the motivation of Mou's devotion to modern logic, at least initially, was to criticize Marxism in general and material dialectics in particular.

(1910-2004), Li Ji 李季 (1892-1967), Tao Xisheng 陶希聖 (1899-1988), Wang Lixi 王禮錫 (1901-39), Zhu Qihua 朱其華 (1907-45), and so on. They divided up and explained China's history in various and irreconcilable ways, but the basic theoretical framework or methodology they employed was one: historical materialism, especially the five-stage schema of historical development, which was reputedly initiated by Lenin and Stalin, not Marx or even Engels. Mou examined almost every representative point of view of this kind and refuted them one by one. His arguments were specific and detailed. But the central point of his critique was that historical materialism, as a theory based simply upon Marx's European experience and limited knowledge of ancient Indian society, could not serve as a universally valid methodology for observing and interpreting Chinese history and society. As he said, "When we study Chinese society, we must take it as a living organism, which has its own development. We cannot take the history of Western society as our standard nor can we analyze Chinese society with meanings taken from the terms of the form of Western society" (Mou 2003, 735).[4] Obviously, in Mou's view, it was invalid to divide the stages of Chinese history and define the nature of Chinese society by drawing a forced analogy to the history and nature of Western society (Peng 2016, 117-78).

Given that China remained a rural society throughout the 1930s, the issue of rural China became a laboratory to employ and test the newly imported Marxism. Aside from a few Chinese intellectuals, such as Yan Yangchu 晏陽初 and Liang Shuming 梁漱溟, who tried to practically improve the situation in rural China through education at the very beginning of this period (Zheng 2000), most Chinese scholars tried to analyze the problems of rural China and formulate prescriptions for addressing its various maladies by employing Marxism. As part of this general movement, Mou also addressed the issues facing rural China; not only did he comment upon the various Marxist schemes that were being offered in his day as solutions, but he also offered his own observations about rural China and proposed

4 The original words are:「我們研究中國社會必須把中國社會看成是一個活的有機體, 它有它自己的發展, 不能以西洋社會史為標準, 也不能以西洋的社會形態之名目的意義來解析中國社會.」

a constructive program aimed at modernizing it.

Although most contemporary intellectuals followed one another in using Marxism as their interpretive framework and methodology, their diagnoses of the nature of rural China split along two contrasting lines: regarding it either as capitalist or feudal. In Mou's view, however, rural China was neither capitalist nor feudal. Not bound by the constraints of Marxist dogma, Mou was able to present his own assessment and judgment about the nature of rural China and develop his own original approach to resolving its problems. One point that needs to be added here is that Mou's stress on the crucial role played by the economy in defining the nature and challenges of rural China, intriguingly, seems unconsciously influenced by Marxism in some sense.

Of particular note, Mou was the first to argue that the construction of rural China should give priority to economic improvement rather than intellectual education. In a set of articles published in 1935 (Mou 2003, vol. 26, 777-84; 801-10; 811-24),[5] Mou drew upon his rural background and experience to analyze the situation in rural China, pointing out that the most urgent and pressing issue for the vast majority of peasants living in the hinterlands of China was not education but survival. The well-known leaders of "the movement of constructing rural China" (*xiangcun jianshe yundong* 鄉村建設運動), such as Yan Yangchu and Liang Shuming, did not realize this point until 1935, when the effort no longer was able to be implemented (Peng 2016, chap. 3). In addition to these specific writings in the 1930s, which were offered as responses to and critiques of the application of Marxism to the particular problem of rural China, Mou's critical reflections on Marxism and Communism were featured in a small book called "The Critiques of the Communist International and the Chinese Communist Party 共產國際與中共批判," published in 1952.

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5 There are three articles on this topic: "The Distributive Principle of Land and Population in China" (Zhongguo tudi fenpei yu renkou fenpei zhi yuanze 中國土地分配與人口分配之原則), March 15, 1935; "A Model for Chinese Agricultural Production" (Zhonguo nongcun shengchan fangshi 中國農村生產方式), May 15, 1935; and "Economic Situation and Social Structure in Rural China" (Zhongguo nongcun jingji jumian y ushehui xingtai 中國農村經濟局面與社會形態), July 15, 1935.

In this book, Mou severely criticized the Communist understanding of "family, "country," and "great unity" by contrasting these with the corresponding Confucian conceptions (Peng 2016, chap. 4). For him, the incompatibility between the understanding of Confucianism as a form of "humanistic idealism" and Marxism underpinned by materialism in regard to these ideas was due to their fundamentally different and incompatible understandings of human nature. While a typical Confucian believes in a common human nature described by Mengzi in his vivid depiction of the "four sprouts of the heart-mind" (*siduanzhixin* 四端之心), namely, the "feeling of commiseration" (*ceyin zhixin* 惻隱之心), the "feeling of shame and dislike" (*xiuwu zhixin* 羞惡之心), the "feeling of deference and compliance" (*cirang zhixin* 辭讓之心), and the "feeling of right and wrong" (*shifei zhixin* 是非之心), a Marxist does not believe in the existence of a common human nature at all. Given the fact that the regime was taken over by the Chinese Communist Party in 1949, it is understandable that the systematic articulation of his critique of Marxism and Communism represented by this book appeared in 1952. Intriguingly, this book was unknown to readers of Mou's work, including his students and followers and therefore was not included in Mou's *Complete Works* published in 2003 in Taipei. It was discovered in 2004 by this article's author while conducting archival research at the Harvard-Yenching Institute.

III. Advocacy of Democracy and Freedom Based upon Critical Reflection

Since the early twentieth century, democracy and freedom, in addition to science, have been two targets that almost all Chinese intellectuals have pursued, even though opinions on various matters among them often diverged. In this regard, Mou was not exceptional. As a matter of fact, his critique of Marxism and Communism and his embrace of democracy and freedom should be regarded as two sides of the same coin. Also, both sides for Mou proved to be lifetime endeavors.

Until the publication by Peng (2016) on Mou's political and social thought, almost all publications on Mou's political thought, in Chinese

and in Western languages as well, have been limited to his discussion of democracy.[6] Which of Mou's observations on traditional Chinese politics served as the basis for his endorsement of democracy? Did he embrace democracy as an institution from the West without any reservations? How did he understand the relationship between democracy and Confucian core values? There are explicit articulations in Mou's own works concerning each of these questions, which, unfortunately, have largely remained untouched for too long a time.

Mou's endorsement of democracy was not a conclusion based on purely theoretical speculation. Rather, it was founded upon his observations on and analysis of traditional Chinese political institutions and governance. In his view, traditional Chinese politics, at least from the Qin dynasty until the Qing dynasty, could be understood as a triatic structure constituted by the "emperor" (*jun* 君), "scholar-officials" (*shi* 士), and the "common people" (*min* 民). Within this political structure, these three constituents remained unstable and volatile. The transition from one emperor to the next was always realized by either rebellion or hereditary system, neither of which offered a sustainably secure and smooth transfer of power. While the status of scholar-officials was open to the common people with the institutionalization of civil service examination system, righteous and disobedient scholar-officials were often exiled, lost their privileges and were degraded to the status of common people, or lost their very lives. The vast majority of the oppressed common people could do nothing more than covet the emperorship from a position of despair and desperation. Mou believed that democracy offered the only and indispensable path for a politically modern China that could avoid and untie the three forces that remained deadlocked in traditional forms of governance and doomed the monarchy that dominated Chinese politics for more than two thousand years; namely, the unlimited power of the emperor, the unwarranted politi-

6 Representative works in English include Fröhlich (2010, vol. 49, 167-200) and Elstein (2012). Angle (2012) also touched upon Mou's treatment of democracy, although the purpose and main arguments of the book are not aimed at revealing what Mou himself thought but take Mou's basic idea of democracy as a starting point for the author's own philosophical construction.

cal engagement of scholar-officials, and the impossibility of political participation by the common people. His often-quoted yet also often misunderstood judgment, "*you zhidao wu zhengdao* 有治道無政道," which literally means "having a way to rule but lacking a way to govern," actually means that educated and able people can be widely recruited to work for the government while the regime itself is under the exclusive control of one family, represented by the emperor, and offers a precise summary of his observations on the structure and deadlocks that plagued traditional Chinese monarchy (Mou 2003, vol. 10).

On the other hand, Mou was clear that democracy is not perfect or ideal but is the least bad political system in human history. He argued that democracy alone is not enough to construct a humane and civilized society of caring human beings. In addition to democratic political institutions, he argued, values such as "humaneness" (*ren* 仁), "rightness" or "justice" (*yi* 義), "ritual" or "civility" (*li* 禮), "wisdom" (*zhi* 智), and "trust" (*xin* 信) that Confucianism particularly advocated could and should play an important role. This means that Mou did not embrace Western democracy without any reservations. It is not fair to criticize modern new Confucians such as Mou or others such as Tang Junyi 唐君毅 (1909-78) or Xu Fuguan 徐復觀 (1904-82) for uncritically and completely accepting and simply seeking to reproduce Western democracy in China.

> Mou's concern for democracy is not only theoretical but also practical. For example, he paid a great deal of attention to the democratic movement in the mainland after the establishment of the People's Republic of China. At every significant historical moment, for example, the student movement fighting for democracy in 1989, he offered comments and gave his advice to support such efforts and pointed out their shortcomings and challenges as well. (Peng 2016, 430-42)

In addition to democracy, the ideas of "freedom" and "liberalism" received equal attention from Mou as well. For him, freedom is also a value and institution that Chinese people should and must pursue

in their quest for modernization, and he offered a careful analysis of what this freedom entailed. Mou first made a distinction between moral freedom and political freedom. He called these two types of freedom "subjective freedom" (*zhuguan ziyou* 主觀自由) and "objective freedom" (*keguan ziyou* 客觀自由), respectively. This terminology was obviously borrowed from Hegel, but Mou's definitions of these two types of freedom are different. Indeed, his distinction and definitions are reminiscent of and, in certain respects, similar to Isaiah Berlin's concepts of "positive liberty" and "negative liberty," though it seems that Mou had no familiarity with Berlin or his analysis of freedom. Mou further argued that the spirit of freedom developed in Chinese tradition is more moral rather than political. As he said,

> Kongzi, Mengzi, and neo-Confucian scholars surely often talked about enlightenment and self-determination, which, of course, entails individuality and freedom. Butthis is primarily in the sense of morality. It is subjective freedom; therefore, it results in character building and the pursuit of sagehood. It is, however, not objective freedom; therefore, it could not establish political freedom in its modern sense.[7] (Mou 2003, vol. 28, 165)

At the same time, Mou also added that political freedom is not completely alien to the Chinese people, especially to Confucian intellectuals epitomized by Mengzi.[8] Based upon these points, Mou argued that political freedom was urgently needed for Chinese modernization.

On the one hand, Mou stressed that political freedom, which was well-developed in the West, should be introduced and integrated into Chinese political thought and practice. On the other, he further discussed his understanding of the relationship between moral freedom and political freedom. In his view, the cleavage between these

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7 The original words are:「孔, 孟與理學家固亦常講覺悟, 講自我做主. 此當然有個性有自由. 然此乃道德意義, 是主觀自由, 故能成人格成聖賢, 而不是客觀自由, 故未能開出近代化的政治意義.」

8 In this regard, Mou and Hu Shih 胡適 (1891-1962), who was usually taken as a leading pioneer of anti-traditionalism and often criticized by Mou, are intriguingly on the same page. See Hu (1941, 136-38; 213-15). As for the liberal tradition in Chinese culture, see Bary (1983).

two types of freedom is not altogether pertinent, though the relatively independent spheres of the two should be acknowledged. For Mou, without moral freedom as a backup, political freedom alone cannot ensure a civilized society. This point resonates with the views of some modern Western philosophers such as Judith N. Shklar (1928-92).[9] It is exactly in this sense that Mou, who could be regarded as a Confucian liberal, was differentiated from the other Chinese liberalists such as Zhang Foquan 張佛泉 (1908-94), Yin Haiguang 殷海光 (1919-69), and others on the intellectual landscape of twentieth-century China.[10] Mou even raised the criticism that political freedom in the modern West deviated from its classical spirit, which was, according to his understanding, precisely rooted in the spirit of moral freedom. In this sense, similar to his attitude toward democracy, Mou did not completely or uncritically embrace political liberalism imported from the West. He was always based in the Chinese, especially Confucian, tradition and absorbed and adapted Western sources only after critical reflection. For example, he even presented his own translation and interpretation of the English word, "liberalism." In his view, more pertinent and accurate Chinese translations of liberalism would be "*kuanrong zhuyi* 寬容主義," "*kuaunren zhuyi* 寬任主義," or "*kuanren zhuyi* 寬忍主義" rather than "*ziyou zhuyi* 自由主義" (Mou 2003, vols. 23, 39-40).

Mou's understanding of freedom and liberalism from a Confucian perspective contributes not only a resource to revise political liberalism but an alternative to going beyond the simple dichotomy and demarcation between liberalism and communitarianism. If we use liberalism and communitarianism as twin perspectives from which to look at Confucianism as a form of political thought, Confucianism is somewhere in between (Peng 2009, 327-32). Mou has the same standpoint.

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9 In Shklar's discussions of liberalism, she places particular emphasis on moral tradition and personal character and her priority is to curb vices rather than advocate rights. See Shklar (1984).

10 Some scholars have noticed and pointed out that both Zhang and Yin, influenced by new Confucian scholars represented by Mou and Xu Fuguan 徐复观, revised their understanding of freedom and, to a certain degree, accepted the differentiation between political freedom and political freedom. See Xiao (2014, 387-425).

IV. On the Relationship between Mainland China and Taiwan

Mou left the mainland for Taiwan and Hong Kong in 1949 and spent the rest, i.e. more than half, of his life outside the mainland. Except for a couple of short visits to Shenzhen to take his two granddaughters from Shandong province (Mou's hometown) to Taiwan and Hong Kong, Mou never went back to mainland China. Even though he was invited quite a few times by various institutions from mainland China for conferences dedicated to exploring his thought, Mou turned them down without any hesitation. He explicitly claimed that he would go back to the mainland right away as soon as the Chinese government gave up Marxism as a national ideology. Meanwhile, he witnessed the strivings of the Taiwanese people for independence. So, understandably, the issue of the relation across the Taiwan Strait, including how to understand the identity of the Taiwanese and the democratic movement in mainland China, also constitute integral parts of the political and social thought of Mou, especially in his later years.

As for the relationship between the mainland and Taiwan, Mou insisted that Taiwan should be understood as the reservoir of Chinese tradition and that the Republic of China rather than the People's Republic China should be taken as the legitimate representative of the Chinese people. In this sense, Mou supported Taiwan's political independence as the continuation of the Republic of China and the representative and reservoir of traditional Chinese culture. For example, in a lecture delivered at New Asia Institute in Hong Kong in 1981, Mou explicitly pointed out that "abandoning the four basic principles to which the Chinese Communist Party adheres should be the precondition for peace talks between mainland China and Taiwan" (Mou 2003, vol. 23, 122-23).[11]

By the same token, Mou expressed his worry about and dissent concerning the increasing local striving for the independence of Taiwan, which, in his view, is an inadvisable and harmful attempt that leads Taiwan to deviate from its proper cultural matrix. In Mou's view, without its Chinese heritage, Taiwan, existing simply as a small and

11 The original text is:「現在大陸要和臺灣和談, 要真能達到和平, 那也得先放棄那四個原則.」

independent island nation, is far from being the center with which members of the Chinese diaspora can identify and could not play an important role in the world. As he pointedly said,

> If Taiwan is not able to realize this cultural direction (inheriting the tradition of Chinese culture), is not able to, politically, move toward democracy, and is not able to assume responsibility for the mainland, for example, if it wants to be independent and self-established, it would be alright if its independence eventually leads to self-establishment, but if it becomes independent without establishing itself that would be tragic. How can it establish itself? On one level, Taiwan should connect itself with Chinese culture and history and the orthodox regime of Republic of China in order to hold on to its position; on another, Taiwan should be aware that the billion people living in the mainland are an integral part of the Chinese nation, they all long for the unification of China as a nation-state. If Taiwan is unable to connect itself with history or with the great mass of people on the mainland, its independence would be "isolation." It would only amount to a lonely type of independence in which [as Chen Zi'ang[12] said] "Unable to look back to the ancients, unable to look forward to those to come; Reflecting on the distance between heaven and earth, isolated and lonely, tears fall." This is not self-establishment but unrooted floating about. If one cannot establish oneself, hoping that another country will come and carry one along is something that cannot be relied upon.[13] (Mou 2003, vol. 24, 366-67)

Simply put, for Mou, Taiwan should politically adhere to its independence as the continuation of the Republic of China. This provides the foundation for claiming that the People's Republic of China must truly abandon Marxism and Maoism as its national ideology as the precondition for the unity of the mainland and Taiwan. On the other

12 Chen Zi'ang 陳子昂 (656/661–702) was a poet of the Tang dynasty.

13 The original Chinese text is:「假定臺灣不能認清這個文化方向, 政治不走向民主憲政, 對中國大陸不肯有所承擔, 譬如說, 想要獨立、自決,『獨立』如果真能『獨』而『立得住』, 倒還可說; 但到『獨』而不能『立得住』的時候, 則很悲慘. 怎樣才能『立得住』呢？縱貫地說, 要和文化掛鉤, 要和歷史掛鉤, 要繼承中華民國的正朔, 以穩住自己的立場. 橫的方面, 要知道全中國十億人口都屬於中華民族, 都要求統一. 若既不和歷史掛鉤, 又不和中國大陸廣大群眾掛鉤, 則『獨』是『獨』了, 但只能一『前不見古人, 後不見來者, 念天地之悠悠, 獨悵然而涕下』的孤獨的『獨』, 這就不是『立』, 而是飄零. 自己立不住, 寄望他國來保駕, 都是靠不住的.」

hand, Mou also stressed that Taiwan should culturally identify with its Chinese legacy and that only by sticking to Chinese culture and an improved form of democracy could Taiwan play a central role for the Chinese community in the world.

V. Concluding Remarks

In sum, philosophically, Mou's lifelong endeavor was to develop Chinese philosophy by pursuing a continuous dialogue with the Western philosophical tradition, especially Kant. Politically, the central idea to which Mou also was devoted throughout his entire life is, on the one hand, to fight Marxism and Communism in order to uphold the core values of the Chinese tradition in general and of Confucianism in particular and, on the other, to integrate Confucianism and political liberalism. For Mou, Confucian ideals, which are compatible with values such as democracy and freedom, are alien to what Communism and Marxism fundamentally advocate; the pursuit of modern China should accordingly be carried out through the integration of Confucian and Western core values, i. e. humaneness, justice, civility, wisdom, trust, and democracy, freedom, and human rights. Of course, these two sides, the philosophical and political, are mutually integrated and reinforce one another. In this sense, although a modern philosopher, Mou is still a traditional Confucian intellectual whose action and life were identical with his knowledge and faith. Also, the way to integrate Confucianism and political liberalism—once called "the third force" in the 1940s-1950s (Zhang 1952)—suggested by Mou and a few of his like-minded contemporaries, such as Tang Junyi 唐君毅, Xu Fuguang 徐復觀, and, especially, Zhang Junmai 張君勱 (Carsun Chang, 1887-1969), is still relevant and instructive to today's China.

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