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THE UNIQUE FEATURES OF HUI SHI'S THOUGHT:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN HUI SHI
AND OTHER PRE-QIN PHILOSOPHERS

INTRODUCTION

Hui Shi (370-310 B.C.?)¹ was one of the main representatives of the logician school (*ming jia*) in pre-Qin Era of China. However, the historical records concerning his life and thought in the early texts that we can find today are very inadequate.² So that it is not easy to give a deep and thorough research on his thought. Consequently, most of the studies that have been conducted so far are mainly concentrated on explaining and analyzing the meanings of his famous ten paradoxes (recorded in chapter 33 of *Zhuang Zi*), while the general features of Hui Shi's thought and its special position in pre-Qin intellectual history have not yet been fully discussed.

In this paper, I try to integrate some other records about Hui Shi scattered in the early texts with the ten paradoxes in my analysis, in order to give a more panoramic and well-rounded description of Hui Shi's thought. I would also like to consider Hui Shi and his ideas in terms of general pre-Qin intellectual background, and specially to compare it to the thoughts of some representatives of other pre-Qin schools, such as Confucianism, Taoism, Mohism, Legalism, etc., thus to point out the unique features of Hui Shi's thought.

1.

Hui Shi's doctrine that we can find today are mainly the ten para-

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doxes recorded in chapter 33 of *Zhuang Zi*, entitled “*li wu zhi yi*” which means to study and to describe the principle of materials. Liang Qichao (1873-1929) pointed out. “*Li* probably has the meaning of to analyze and count. ‘*Li wu zhi yi*’ means to analyze the general principle of mathematics and physics.”³

There has been a great deal of divergence among scholars who explain the meanings of the ten paradoxes. Some scholars interpret them from the scientific perspective, while others emphasize their philosophical and metaphysical meanings. In my opinion, there are certainly some philosophical implications in the ten paradoxes. However, the philosophical perspective here is quite different from that in the mainstream of Chinese philosophy represented by Confucianism and Taoism. “*Li wu zhi yi*” takes the “*wu*” (matter, substance, material), i.e., the natural material in the real world, as its object and the standing point of its theory. This is different from Confucianism, Taoism and Legalism, which take social, ethical and political issues as their main objects.

Hui Shi’s ideas were criticized by the author of *Zhuang Zi* chapter 33 as: “trying to give explanation to all the materials”, “being weak at morality, strong at material”, “scattered among the ten thousand materials and never feel tired”, “chasing after the ten thousand materials and never know when to turn back.”⁴ By these criticisms we get a clearer vision of the meaning of “*li wu*”. “*Li wu*” means to do general and vast research on all the materials in the real world, and to give reasonable explanations of them. This is just one of the unique features of the academic orientation of Hui Shi’s thought, which is quite different from the dominant academic orientation in ancient China represented by Confucianism and Taoism.

It was said that Hui Shi’s “books filled five cartloads”⁵, unfortunately these books have not been left to us. What were the contents of these books? Was there anyone besides or after *Zhuang Zi* who had ever seen these books? These problems have troubled scholars ever since the Eastern Jin dynasty (317-420). Once Sima Daozi (364-402) asked Xie Xuan (347-388): “In Hui Shi’s five cartloads of books, why was there not

even a single word in the realm of metaphysics?" Xi replied: "It must be that his subtler points were never transmitted."⁶ Although we question if the people in the Eastern Jin dynasty still saw those "five carts of books" or not, it is quite possible that the people in that time could see much more of Hui Shi's books than we can. The impression Sima Daozi got from Hui Shi's books was that there were no words concerning metaphysics. One reason Sima Daozi may have said this is that the academic interests of Hui Shi were not focused on metaphysics, but rather on materials. The dominant orientation in Hui Shi's thought is to "*li wu*"—research the materials, "chase after materials", "give explanation for materials". Probably there were never any other "subtler points" in Hui Shi's thought other than this.

In pre-Qin era, there is a common trend of neglecting the study of materials in the doctrines of Confucianism, Taoism and almost all the other schools except Logicians and later-Mohism. Hui Shi was criticized for being "weak at morality, strong at material". So we could also say that Confucianism, Taoism and some other schools are just the opposite: they are "weak at materials, strong at morality". This is not to say that material has never been referred to in Confucian or Taoist theories. What I want to point out here is that "material" as the objective reality, does not occupy a dominant position in these theories. It has never become the goal of their academic pursuit.

In the *Da Xue* (Great Learning), one of the most important scriptures of pre-Qin Confucianism, "investigating materials and extending knowledge" is mentioned. However, neither "investigating material" nor "extending knowledge" is the ultimate goal of Confucianism. It is only a small link leading to the ethical and political destination in Confucian thought. Consequently, issues such as the substantial objects, contents and methods of "investigating materials and extending knowledge" have never been sufficiently displayed in pre-Qin Confucianism. Even when they were occasionally mentioned, these topics were immediately tied to social ethical and emotional problems, as seen from the passage in the *Li Ji* (*Record on Ritual*) that states: "When materials come you know it,

then your likes and dislikes appear.⁷” In general, ‘material’ is not the main object in the epistemology of Confucianism, so Mencius said: “Yao and Shun were such knowledgeable men yet they did not know all the materials.⁸” In Confucianism, “knowing people” is far more important than “knowing material”. They even think that sufficient knowledge about people will spontaneously lead to sufficient knowledge about material. According to the *Zhong Yong (Great Mean)*: “If you can exhaust the nature of people you can exhaust the nature of materials.” As a result, ‘material’ seems not necessary to be treated as an independent goal of knowledge in Confucian epistemology.

‘Material’ is the object of utilization rather than that of knowledge in Confucianism. What the Confucian emphasized is the usefulness of material, as is said in the *Li ji*: “get the material and let it be used, thus to establish the people’s principle.” When Confucian philosophers mention “to know material” in their works, they usually mean “to use material”. This orientation is typically shown in Xunzi’s saying: “To regard the sky as great and admire it, is not as good as to control it and make use of it.”⁹ So if some materials are useless, then there is no need to know it.

Like Confucianism, Taoism also shows an obvious inclination to neglect material. In the Taoist opinion, “materials are not worth doing.”¹⁰ They advocate: “Do not have commerce with materials”¹¹, “forget materials”¹². They consider internal spirit much more important than external material. Zhuang Zi said: “Be cautious of what is within you, block out what is outside you, for much knowledge will do you harm.¹³” So people not only don’t have to know material, they even have to avoid knowing it. Because from the Taoist skeptical viewpoint, “External material can never be counted on”, and the knowledge about materials will never be correct, as Zhuang Zi said in *Qi wu lun*: “No material is not ‘that’, no material is not ‘this’.” “What is ‘this’ is also that, what is ‘that’ is also ‘this’”¹⁴ Therefore, pursuing knowledge about outside material can do nothing good to you but hurt your internal spirit.

“Material’ does have a position in Taoist theory, as it should be.

Taoist philosophers frequently mentioned “*Wu*” (material) in their works. However, they usually consider material as the utility for self cultivation rather than the object of knowledge. They advocate: “Following along with material and become nature”¹⁵, “Treat material as material but do not be materialized by material.”¹⁶ What does “Treat material as material” mean? Zhuang Zi said: “Those who treat material as material are not different from material.”¹⁷ That is to say ego and material mix together, heaven and human combine to be “one”. In other words, the epistemological problem of subject and object no longer exists. Therefore, according to Taoist opinion, it is not necessary to “chase after material”, or “research on material”, because the subject (ego) itself is already object (material).

In contrast with Confucianism and Taoism, Hui Shi represents quite a different academic orientation. The content of “*li wu zhi yi*”, as analyzed by some scholars, did involve certain knowledge that we should put under the catalogue of the so called natural sciences, such as physics, astronomy, geography, geometry etc. Although it is difficult to conclude Hui Shi’s general opinion in these ten paradoxes, it is easy to note what he didn’t say in them. It is quite clear that these ten “*li wu zhi yi*” don’t relate to the issues of politics, morality, social management, human nature, self-cultivation, etc., which were discussed enthusiastically by most other pre-Qin scholars.

It was said that at that time, “In the south there was an eccentric named Huang Liao, who asked why heaven and earth do not collapse and crumble, or what makes the wind and rain, the thunder and lightning. Hui Shi, undaunted, undertook to answer him, without stopping to think, he began to reply, trying to give explanation to all the materials, expounding on and on without stop in multitudes of words that never ended.”¹⁸ Confucianism, Taoism and other pre-Qin schools are never interested so much in explaining the natural phenomena of sky, earth, wind, rain, etc. Only Hui Shi had strong interests in these kinds of things, and he was untiring in his pursuit of the knowledge of nature.

Just like Hui Shi himself, his followers (other “debaters”) also took

the natural materials as the topics in their discussions.¹⁹ We could find out that their discussions were focused on material objects such as mountain, fire, horse, dog, wheel, arrow, etc. This orientation is similar to that of Hui Shi shown in "*li wu zhi yi*".

This material orientation is just one of the unique features of Hui Shi's school. Although we cannot be quite sure that these arguments of Hui Shi and his followers really have the sense of what we call "sciences" today, this unique thinking orientation is worthy the attention of those who are interested in Chinese traditional thought and culture.

2.

Some scholars divide the pre-Qin Logicians into two groups, one is called the group that "combines the similarity and diversity", the other is called the group that "separate hardness and whiteness". Hui Shi was considered the representative of the former²⁰. In other words, the leading tendency in Hui Shi's thought is to pursue assimilation, harmony, oneness, identity.

However, this description is problematic. We cannot label Hui Shi's thought as only advocating assimilation. From the following analysis we will find that his leading tendency was to establish diversity. He recognized and emphasized the existence and value of diversity and variety in knowledge. In my opinion, this is just another significant feature which distinguishes Hui Shi's thought from the dominant Confucian and Taoist ideological tradition. In light of this opinion we probably could get a new understanding of the commentary "*Hui Shi duo fan*" (Hui Shi was a man of many devices), which also appeared in chapter 33 of *Zhuang Zi*.

In Hui Shi's opinion, it is quite normal for people to have different ideas and opinions when explaining and dealing with certain matters or problems. So diversity in knowledge is unavoidable. Unanimous harmony and similarity must be false. It is foolish only to see the unanimous and neglect diversity. Once Hui Shi disputed with Zhang Yi in front of the King of Wei, on the issue of whether the state of Wei should combine with

Qin and Han to attack Qi and Chu, or whether it should combine with Qi and Chu to seek cease-fire. Zhang Yi advocated attacking Qi and Chu, Hui Shi advocated cease-fire. All the other ministers spoke in favor of Zhang Yi, while nobody spoke in favor of Hui Shi. Seeing the unanimous opinions of his ministers, the King of Wei decided to accept the suggestion of Zhang Yi. Thereupon Hui Shi said to King of Wei:

“When people discuss something, even a very small thing, there are usually half people who agree with it and half people who disagree with it, let alone important things. To combine Wei with Qin and Han to attack Qi and Chu, this is a very important, very serious matter, yet all the ministers agree with it unanimously. I wonder if they agree with it just for echoing others, or agree with it for its being a wise choice. If just for echoing others, then it is not as good as to agree for its being a wise choice. If for its being a wise choice, then they should not get the same conclusion due to their variety of intelligence. So there must be half of the ministers who hide their opinions from you. The so called ‘kidnapped king’ is just the king who only knows half of his ministers.”²¹

Hui Shi’s opinion here is obvious. It is quite normal for people to have different opinions, while unanimity in opinion is abnormal. False similarity may cover true reality. If we are satisfied with what is superficially unanimous, we will not be able to make correct judgments.

The diversity in people’s minds and knowledge is the reflection of the variety and diversity in reality, which always exists under the superficial similarity. One Hui Shi said: “A madman is running towards the east, the man who chases after him is also running towards the east. They are similar in running towards the east, but different in why they are running towards the east.”²² Therefore, it is necessary to find out different motives underlying similar actions. And we should never neglect the difference between any two superficially similar matters.

Hui Shi's recognition and emphasis on diversity and variety is also shown in his attitude to the relationship between his own theory and the theories of other scholars. There is a dialogue between Hui Shi and Zhuang Zi:

Zhuang Zi said: "There are no common norms about what is right in the world, each person takes right to be what he himself thinks is right. Can I say every person in the world is as clever as Yao?" Hui Shi answered. "Yes!" Zhuang Zi asked: "And then here are Confucius, Mo, Yang and Bing, these four schools plus yours are going to be five. Whose opinion is really right?..." Hui Shi said: "Although the followers of Confucius, Mo, Yang and Bing now engage with me in debate, each of us tries to overwhelm the others with phrases and silence each other with shouts, but so far none of them can deny my arguments. What can you do with it?"²³

Both Zhuang Zi and Hui Shi saw the fact that what is right is not a question of objective common norms, people's opinions are diverse and varied. However, Zhuang Zi's opinion is that since common norms of rightness do not exist, so none of the different and diverse opinions and theories possibly contain truth. Therefore all the arguments and debates are unnecessary and meaningless. While Hui Shi's opinion is that since no one knows what is the real common norm of truth, so all the different opinions and theories possibly contain certain truth. Consequently it is necessary to let all the different schools survive simultaneously and continue their disputing and debating. From here we could further investigate the difference between Zhuang Zi's opinion of "*qi wu*" (equalize the materials) and Hui Shi's opinion of "*fan ai wan wu*" (give vast love to all the ten thousand materials). Actually Zhuang Zi did not tolerate the diversity and variety, he tried to make everything equal by means of Tao, in other words, he wanted to use the no-rightness and no-unrightness to replace or to take over all the rightness and unrightness.

Hui Shi, however, argued that all the materials should be given equal

In general Zhuang Zi's "*qi wu*" is also a substantial manifestation of the dominant thinking tradition of "pursuing harmony and unity" represented by Confucianism, Taoism and other main schools in pre-Qin era. Confucianism pursued harmony and unity by means of *Li* (rites) and "*zhong yong*" (great mean), tried to find out a "One" that runs through all their doctrines. Mo Zi advocated "*shang tong*", that means people should give up their divergent opinions and agree with their superiors, until at last they arrive at an ultimate unity with Heaven. The Legalist political position was that power should be centralized. Accordingly they stood for uniformity in ideology and culture. As for Taoists, superficially they seemed not to care about "*shi fei*" (right or wrong), but actually they tried to unify all the "*shi fei*" by means of Tao.

This inclination is also represented in the effort to pursue a kind of stable, unchangeable and unanimous relationship between *Ming* (name) and *Shi* (material). Confucius advocates rectification of names, to give one material only one proper name, in order to correct the disorder in the relation between *Ming* and *Shi*, thus to eliminate the diversity. Mo Zi's opinion is that any speech must be standard, according to "three norms". This also implies a purpose of pursuing stability in name-material relationship. A great part of content in the works of later Mohism, is aiming at the arguments of Hui Shi and Gongsun Long, in order to establish a stability on name-material relationship that Mohists think is correct. The Legalists use "*Xing ming fa shu*" (forms, names, laws, principles and skills) in politics. They demand that every person in the government system must do things (forms) in accord with their titles (names), and all their conduct must be limited in the definition of law. That is why Han Fei Zi criticized the logicians for disturbing the name-material relationship, saying that. "When the disputes about 'hardness and whiteness' and 'non-thickness' become ardent, the constitutions and laws will perish."²⁴

Hui Shi, however, does not agree to use a fixed unchangeable name-material relationship to eliminate different points of view. He thinks that people might give the same thing or same material different names,

because their knowledge about things can never be unitary and static, and there is no absolute unity in thinking. Therefore the divergence and even contradiction in name-material relationship is just normal and unavoidable. Consequently, many arguments in his ten paradoxes were intended to show a viewpoint different from ordinary common sense. For instance, "living" could be called "dying" from another viewpoint, because living and dying are just only different sections of the same process. So when we declare that someone is living, this statement can not be considered absolutely right, since we could also say that this person is dying. That is so-called "Just when he is living, he is dying". However, this argument is not intended to deny the distinction between living and dying, as Zhuang Zi tried to do. It means that people's opinions about a certain thing may vary greatly due to different viewpoints. So diversity in knowledge is unavoidable and rational. For example, "the center of the world" can never be unanimously considered as occupying a certain place and never change, it could be the "north of Yan", or "south of Yue". Similar issues such as "the sky and the earth", "mountain and pool", which is higher and which is lower; or the "connected rings" can or can not be solved, etc., were also discussed by Hui Shi in his ten paradoxes. In general, Hui Shi provides variant viewpoint and attitude towards things, thus to break through the conventionality and rigidity in knowledge.

For this reason we can not simply conclude that Hui Shi's opinion on the name-material relationship is only to "combine the similarity and diversity". Actually, Hui Shi was discussing the issue of similarity and diversity under the premise of emphasizing the existence of diversity and variety. Perhaps the number 5 of the ten paradoxes all-sidedly conveys Hui Shi's opinion on this issue. "A great similarity is different from a small similarity, this is called the lesser similarity and difference. All things are similar to and different from one another, this is called the greater similarity-and-difference."²⁵ There is similarity in difference, and difference in similarity as well; there is neither absolute similarity, nor absolute difference. What we should pay attention to is how things in the world are related to each other.

3.

Most of the pre-Qin scholars care about usefulness much more than truthfulness when they criticize or evaluate a theory or scholarship of others. In other words, the pragmatic criterion of usefulness is considered much more important than the criterion of truthfulness. This is also a very important feature of the academic tradition in ancient China.

However, Hui Shi's opinion on this issue again radically differed from those of the thinkers of Confucianism, Taoism, Legalism and the other main schools.

It is quite obvious that Hui Shi and the Logician school, who received attacks from different sides, were the isolated minority in the "contention of a hundred schools of thought" during the pre-Qin era. Although the representatives of Confucianism, Taoism, Legalism usually diverged on many issues, and never stopped disputing among themselves, they were amazingly unanimous in attacking Hui Shi and other logicians, and the reason for attacking were almost the same. That is, this kind of theory or learning is useless.

Starting from the Confucian position, Xun Zi's attack on Hui Shi and the other Debaters was the fiercest. He said:

They do not take the ancient kings as their example, do not agree with *Li* and *Yi*. Instead they like to produce odd theories and play with strange words. Their theories are quite detailed but not practically useful, quite eloquent but without usefulness, energy consuming but to no avail, and they cannot be used in politic management. Yet there is some reason in what they persist in, and their speeches seem reasonable, so it is enough to deceive the foolish mass. That is the theory of Hui Shi and Deng Xi.²⁶

In another chapter he said:

"mountain and gorge are equal, heaven and earth are together;

Qi and Qin are doubled; get in from ears, let off from mouths; old women have beards; eggs have fur." These are all the difficult arguments, only Hui Shi and Deng Xi can do these. However, the gentlemen do not evaluate them highly, because they do not accord with the *Li* and *Yi*.²⁷

In Xun Zi's opinion, the theory of Hui Shi is valueless and disdained by gentlemen because it is "useless", "no avail" and cannot be used in politic management. Obviously, the criterion which Xun Zi holds to here, is totally political or moral-pragmatic. This Confucian pragmatic attitude in epistemology, is more explicitly expressed by Xun Zi in his *On Heaven*:

"Great skill consists in not doing certain things, and great wisdom consists in not deliberating over certain things. What is to be noted about heaven are its visible phenomena, which can help us to fore-tell things. What is to be noted about earth are its suitable aspects, which can be used for growing things. What is to be noted about the four seasons are their course and their distinctive characteristics, according to which we can manage our affairs. And what is to be noted about *yin* and *yang* is their revelation, on the basis of which we can regulate things."²⁸ "The record says: The classics do not talk about strange phenomena of the ten thousand things. Useless discussions and unnecessary investigations are to be cast aside and not attended to. As to the righteousness between the ruler and minister, affection between father and son, and the distinctions between husband and wife, these should be daily cultivated without losing sight of them."²⁹

So in the Confucian opinion, wisdom and intelligence should be used in the "useful" scholarship, and the most useful and important knowledge people must learn is those ethic principles between ruler and minister,

father and son, husband and wife.

Han Feizi, from the Legalist standpoint, also criticized the theory of Hui Shi as being "useless". He said: "These speeches are exquisite and difficult, but without application, so Ji, Hui, Song and Mo are all like painting subtle picture on a mini bamboo clapper."³⁰ It is necessary to point out that although Mo Zi and Hui Shi are put together here, in fact, Mo Zi is radically different from Hui Shi in his attitude on this issue. Mo Zi actually belongs to those who emphasize the social function and pragmatic value of knowledge. He judges the value of a speech by the norms of so called "three standards." If we use the "three standards" to examine the ten paradoxes of Hui Shi, obviously not a single statement in ten will be in accord with the "three standards".

In the viewpoint of Han Feizi, the theory of Hui Shi is not only without application, but also harmful to the Legalist spirit, "when the dispute about 'hardness and whiteness' and 'non-thickness' becomes ardent, the constitution and law will perish."³¹ Although the discussions about 'hardness and whiteness', 'non-thickness', etc., were not inherently related to politics, this kind of Logician's knowledge may have some enlightening function on people's wisdom. It may improve their logic and eloquence capability. And when people become clever, they will try to take advantage of the law, and thus become more and more difficult to be ruled.

We can find further criticisms saying that the theory of Hui Shi is useless. Bai Gui³² once said to the king of Wei. "Someone use the tripod big enough for containing an ox to cook a chicken. When he pours in more water the soup will be very light and can not be eaten; when he pours in less water the chicken will be scorched and yet some parts of it are still raw. Exquisite and elegant as it looks, the big tripod is totally useless. Hui Shi's speech is just like it."³² There is also another story: once, Hui Shi drafted a law for the King Hui of Wei (r. 370-319 B.C.), and the law then was disparaged by Zhai Jian³⁴. Zhai Jian compared "the law of Hui Shi" to "the agitating and passion-arousing music of Zheng and Wei," and contrasted it with the song sung by workers while

lifting heavy wood (“*ju zhong quan li zhi ge*”),³⁵ implying that the knowledge of Hui Shi was not geared to actual social circumstances.

It is very interesting that even Zhuang Zi, who usually declares that what is useless is of the greatest use, also criticized the scholarship of Hui Shi as being useless. He said: “From the viewpoint of Tao of Heaven and Earth, what Hui Shi can do is just like the labor of a mosquito or a gadfly. How can it be useful to material?” So he analogized Hui Shi’s scholarship as “trying to exhaust the echo of a sound, and to catch the shadow of a form”.³⁶ In other words, Hui Shi’s scholarship works absolutely to no avail but futile effort. Superficially, Zhuang Zi and his followers advocate the usefulness of “useless”, and seem not so pragmatic. But actually they belong to what Professor Chungying Chang said “the self-cultivational pragmatism”.³⁷

Nevertheless, what is more interesting is that Hui Shi himself also criticized the theory of others as being useless. Ironically, in Hui Shi’s opinion, the scholarship of Zhuang Zi is useless:

Hui Shi said to Zhuang Zi. “What you said is useless!” Zhuang Zi replied: “Only when someone has understood uselessness, then could you talk with him about use. The earth is vast and great, but what is used by a man is no bigger than the very place under his feet. However if you were to cut out this small place under his feet deeply to the netherworld, would he still find it useful?” Hui Zi answered: “No, it would not be useful.” Zhuang Zi said: “Then the usefulness of uselessness is quite obvious!”³⁸

Now we find that the issue of what is useful and what is useless is quite controversial among pre-Qin scholars. A certain scholarship may be considered as useful or useless by different people who use different norms in their judgment. That is why Zhuang Zi and Hui Shi considered each other as useless.

Then, what is the difference between Hui Shi and other pre-Qin

scholars on the issue of what kind of knowledge is useful? In my view, the unique point of Hui Shi is that he had a tendency to combine together the aspect demonstrating truthfulness and the aspect of usefulness in knowledge. We can see clearly the epistemological difference between Hui Shi and Zhuang Zi in their famous debate on the dam of the Hao river:

Zhuang Zi and Hui Zi strolled about and came to the dam of the Hao river. Zhuang Zi said: "Swimming flexibly and leisurely, that's what fish enjoy!" Hui Zi said: "You are not a fish, how do you know what fish enjoy?" Zhuang Zi said: "You are not me, so how do you know that I don't know what fish enjoy?" Hui Zi said: "I am not you, so I certainly do not know you; you are certainly not a fish, so it's quite clear that you do not know what fish enjoy. That's all!" Zhuang Zi said: "Let's trace back to the beginning: when you asked me 'How do you know what fish enjoy?' you had already known me when you asked the question. So I know it by standing here by the Hao."³⁹

What Zhuang Zi said, "That's what fish enjoy", is a kind of instinctive judgment which contains some what artistic sensation. This judgment, if it may be considered as a kind of knowledge, is valuable and useful only because it can satisfy people's psychological pleasure need, when one wants to transfer one's own feeling to some natural objects under a certain circumstance, not on account of whether it truthfully expresses a reality or not. However, Hui Shi persists in a kind of nearly scientific experimental attitude towards this issue: Since people are not fish, they neither have experience nor can experiment to confirm the fact of what fish enjoy. Therefore, this judgment is of no truthfulness, and consequently meaningless and useless.

The thinking orientations of these two thinkers on the dam of Hao are quite different. One of them indulged himself in the aesthetic and artistic sensation, in which the nature and man, object and subject are

totally in harmony. While the other one adhered to the spirit of "*li wu*", and seriously probed into the issue of whether people's knowledge about object material is truthful or not.

It is recorded in chapter one of Zhuang Zi that Hui Shi once criticized Zhuang Zi's speech as "great but useless". He compared it to a big odd tree, "its main trunk was overswollen and can not be measured by ruler and rope, its little branches were crooked and don't meet with any standard."⁴⁰ We could see that what Hui Shi pursued, might be a kind of knowledge that can be measured by ruler, and meet with the standard. That is to say, the truthfulness and correctness of the knowledge should be provable, verifiable. Only this kind of knowledge would be considered by Hui Shi as useful.

However, the other schools seemed never to have dealt seriously with the issue of the truthfulness of knowledge. There is no relation between what they considered useful and the truthfulness. This feature not only appeared in Zhuang Zi, as mentioned above, but also in Xun Zi and Han Feizi. Hardly any criticism they made to Hui Shi and other debaters referred to the problem whether these arguments were truthful or untruthful. What they did was only accuse these arguments of not meeting with the *Li* and *Yi*, or of having no application. In other words, the truthfulness and correctness of the scholarship or arguments of Hui Shi were of no importance, as viewed by Xun Zi and Han Feizi. Even if they were true and correct, yet it is not necessary to let them exist, because they were useless. Beginning from Zi Chan, who treated Deng Xi unfairly⁴¹, the Legalists always treated logicians and debaters as the foes of Legalism, and tried to suppress them. They never saw that the challenge from Logicians such as Deng Xi, who always tried to find the defects in law in order to take advantage of it, may also have a function to improve the law itself. The reason here is that the Legalists of pre-Qin times cared for the authority and practicability of their law much more than the reasonableness and truthfulness of it. The thought of Legalism in ancient China never developed into any kind of real scientific theory of law, because it had over-developed in its authority and skillfulness, and

left its reasonableness and truthfulness undeveloped.

While attaching importance to the truthfulness and correctness of knowledge, Hui Shi did not neglect the usefulness of it. He was once the Prime Minister of the state of Wei, and was an active figure on the political platform of his time. It is impossible that Hui Shi never related his academic thought with his political practice.

We know that once Hui Shi made a law for the King Hui of Wei. It was said that when the law was completed, almost everyone praised it saying that it was perfect and good. The only one who overruled this law was Zhai Jian. The reason for Zhai Jian to overrule it was that this law was "not applicable", instead of being "not good"⁴². It is a pity that this law has not been preserved to today; we have no way of knowing why Zhai Jian judged it to be not applicable yet admitted that it was good. Perhaps Hui Shi had tried to incorporate a spirit of logic into the political theory in his law. However this tentative try met with resistance and failed. So eventually the Legalism combined with the ruling technique of Lao Zi, and become the "Huang-Lao school". Politics was developed into a kind of mysterious skill, while the scientific and reasonable theory was not established.

The hypothesis above still needs further explanation and proof. Nevertheless, we do find Hui Shi, who emphasized the truthfulness of knowledge, was a unique thinker in the pre-Qin era of China. Although the preserved records of his thought are extremely limited, when we put Hui Shi's thought in the background of the dominant intelligent cultural trend of ancient China, we will find that it is exceptional and precious, and merits more attention.

Conclusion

From the analysis above, we may reach the following conclusion: the epistemological object and academic orientation in Hui Shi's scholarship emphasized "li wu", or "chase after the materials", namely, emphasized the study and research for the natural of objective knowledge

outside the social, political or ethical fields. As to thinking method, Hui Shi shows a tendency of tolerating and advocating diversity and variety, and intentionally pursuing new and unusual ideas. This tendency sharply contrasts with the that of the dominant Confucian-Taoist tradition which usually tends to pursue unanimous unity. On the issue of judging the value of knowledge, Hui Shi's opinion embodies a scientific spirit which emphasized the truthfulness of knowledge. This opinion is also different from those of most other pre-Qin scholars who judge the value of knowledge by the norms of secular application based on the political or ethical need.

All these have revealed the unique features of Hui Shi's scholarship. Mr. Wing-tsit Chan pointed out that "the Logicians represent the only tendency in ancient China toward intellectualism for its own sake"⁴³. The three unique features mentioned above are just the substantial manifestation of the "intellectualism for its own sake" tendency.

However, although there were some debaters who echoed Hui Shi's ideas in the Warring States Period, Hui Shi and his theory was attacked by the contemporary elite representing Confucianism, Taoism, Legalism and other schools. As a result his scholarship has not been able to get a further development in the later period, and these specific features embodied in his theory gradually became submerged by the main trend of the academic tradition in ancient China. This main tradition put stress on the social, political or ethical problems as their object and neglect the research on the natural scientific theory, emphasized harmony and unity while neglecting the diversity and variety; emphasized political and moralistic application while neglecting reasonability and truthfulness. And this probably is a lamentable event in the intellectual history of ancient China.

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NOTES

1. The dates of Hui Shi's birth and death are problematical. Here I adopt the argument of Chien Mu. cf. *Xian qin zhu zi xi nian kao bian*.
2. *Zhuang zi: Zhuang zi ji shi*, edited Guo Qing-fan, Zhong hua shu ju, 1961, vol. 4, ch. 33, p. 1102.
3. Liang Zi-chao's commentary recited from Chen Gu-ying's *Zhuang zi Jing zhu Jing yi*. Taipei, Shang wu ying shu guan, 1975, p. 969.
4. *Zhuang zi*: ch. 33, p. 1112.
5. *Ibid.* ch. 33, p. 1102.
6. *Shi shuo xin yu*, SBBY, Zhong hua shu ju, Taipei, vol. 2, p. 20b. cf. tr. by Richard B. Mather 1976, p. 122.
7. *Li ji (yue ji): Shi san jing zhu shu*, vol. 37, p. 10a. (vol. 5, p. 6661/2a)
8. *Meng zi*, 7A/4b.
9. *Xun zi: Xun zi ji jie*, edited Wang Xian-qian, Shi jie Shu ju, Taipei, 1951, ch. 17, p. 211.
10. *Zhuang zi*, ch. 11, p. 389.
11. *Ibid.* ch. 15, p. 542.
12. *Ibid.* ch. 12, p. 428.
13. *Ibid.* ch. 11, p. 381.
14. *Ibid.* ch. 2, p. 66.
15. *Ibid.* ch. 7 p. 294.
16. *Ibid.* ch. 20, p. 668.
17. *Ibid.* ch. 22, p. 752.
18. *Ibid.* ch. 33, p. 1112.
19. cf. *Zhuang zi* ch. 33, p. 1105-1106, & *Xun zi* ch. 3, p. 23-24.
20. Feng You-lan: *A New Edition of the History of Chinese Philosophy*, Beijing, 1962, p. 311-313.
21. cf. *Zhan guo ce* (Wei 1): SBBY, Zhong hua shu ju, vol. 22/7b.
also *Han Fei-zi. Han Fei-zi ji shi*, edited Chen Qi-you, Zhong hua Shu ju, Peking 1959, Ch. 30, p. 530-531.
22. *Han Fei-zi*, Chapter 22, p. 446.
23. cf. *Zhuang zi*: ch. 24, p. 838-840. "Mo" indicates Mo Di (Mo zi, 480-390 B.C.), the founder of Mohism. "Yang" indicates Yang Zhu (395 - 335 B.C.), who advocated "each one for himself". "Bing" is the polite name of

Gongsun Long (320-350 B.C.), another representative of the logician school during the Warring States period.

24. *Han Fei-zi*, ch. 41, p. 899.
25. *Zhuang zi*, ch. 33, p. 1102.
26. *Xun zi*: ch. 6, p. 59. Deng Xi (545-501 B.C.), a scholar of the Zheng state in Spring-autumn time. He is considered a pioneer of the Logician school.
27. *Ibid.* ch. 3, p. 23-24.
28. *Ibid.* ch. 17, p. 207.
29. *Ibid.* p. 211.
30. *Han Fei-zi*: ch. 32, p. 612. "Ji" indicates Gongsun Long, cf. the note by Shao Zeng hua in *Han Fei zi Jin zhu Jin yi*, Taipei, 1990, p. 522. "Song" indicates Song Jian (360-290 B.C.), he taught a doctrine of passivity, frugality and few desires.
31. *Han Fei-zi*: ch. 41. p. 899.
32. Bai Gui (375-290 B.C.), a minister of the state of Wei during the Warring States period.
33. *Lu shi chun qiu (Ying yian)*: SBCK, Shang wu ying shu guan, 18/166.
34. Zhai Jian: a politician of the state Wei during the Warring States period.
35. cf. *Lu shi chun qiu*, SBBY, vol. 18, p. 11, and *Huai nan zi*, SBBY, vol. 12, p. 2.
36. *Zhuang zi*: ch. 33, p. 1112.
37. Chung-ying Cheng: *New Dimensions of Confucian Philosophy*, State University of New York Press, 1991, p. 84.
38. *Zhuang zi*: ch. 26, p. 936.
39. *Ibid.* ch. 17, p. 606-607.
40. *Ibid.* ch.
41. cf. *Lu shi chun qiu*, SBBY, vol. 18, p. 8-9, and *Lie zi*, SBBY, vol. 6, p. 6. Zi Chan, his name was Gongsun Qiao, Zi Chan was his polite name. He was a famous politician in Spring-autumn time, and had been the governor of state Zheng for more than 40 years. It was said that during that Zi Chan's ruling period, Deng Xi always created difficulties, and was eventually killed by Zi Chan.
42. cf. *Lu shi chun qiu*, SBBY, vol. 18, p. 11, and *Huai nan zi*, SBBY, vol. 12, p. 2.
43. Wing-tsit Chan: *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, Princeton University Press, 1970, p. 232.

CHINESE GLOSSARY

<i>Bai Gui</i>	白圭
<i>Bing</i>	秉
<i>Chungying Cheng (Cheng Zhongying)</i>	成中英
<i>Chu</i>	楚
<i>Da Xue</i>	大學
<i>Deng Xi</i>	鄧析
<i>fan ai wan wu</i>	泛愛萬物
<i>Feng You-lan</i>	馮友蘭
<i>Gongsun Long</i>	公孫龍
<i>Han</i>	韓
<i>Han Fei-zi</i>	韓非子
<i>Hao</i>	濠
<i>Huang Lao</i>	黃老
<i>Huang Liao</i>	黃繚
<i>Hui</i>	惠
<i>Hui Shi</i>	惠施
<i>Hui Shi duo fan</i>	惠施多方
<i>Ji</i>	季
<i>Jin</i>	晉
<i>ju zhong quan li zhi ge</i>	舉重勸力之歌
<i>Keqian Xu (Xu Keqian)</i>	徐克謙
<i>li</i>	禮
<i>Li ji</i>	禮記

<i>li wu</i>	歷物
<i>li wu zhi yi</i>	歷物之意
<i>Liang Qi-chao</i>	梁啟超
<i>ming</i>	名
<i>ming jia</i>	名家
<i>Mo</i>	墨
<i>Qi</i>	齊
<i>qi wu</i>	齊物
<i>Qi Wu Lun</i>	齊物論
<i>Qin</i>	秦
<i>shang tong</i>	尚同
<i>shi</i>	是
<i>shi fei</i>	是非
<i>Shun</i>	舜
<i>Sima daozi</i>	司馬道子
<i>Song</i>	宋
<i>Wei</i>	魏
<i>Wei</i>	衛
<i>Wing-tsit Chan (Chan Wing-tsit)</i>	陳榮捷
<i>wu</i>	物
<i>Xie Xuan</i>	謝玄
<i>xing ming fa shu</i>	形名法術
<i>Xun Zi</i>	荀子
<i>Yan</i>	燕
<i>Yang</i>	楊

<i>Yao</i>	堯
<i>Yue</i>	越
<i>Zhang Yi</i>	張儀
<i>Zhai Jian</i>	翟煎
<i>Zheng</i>	鄭
<i>Zhong Yong</i>	中庸
<i>Zhuang Zi</i>	莊子
<i>Zi Chan</i>	子產