Confronting Confucian Understandings of the Christian Doctrine of Salvation

---- A Systematic Theological Analysis of the Basic Problems in the Confucian-Christian dialogue

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Abstract
The aim of the present study is to analyze Confucian understandings of the Christian doctrine of salvation in order to find the basic problems in the Confucian-Christian dialogue.

I will approach the task via a systematic theological analysis of four issues in order to limit the thesis to an appropriate size. They are analyzed in three chapters as follows:

1. The Confucian concept concerning the existence of God. Here I discuss mainly the issue of assimilation of the Christian concept of “God” to the concepts of “Sovereign on High” (Shangdi 上帝) and “Heaven” (Tian 天) in Confucianism.

2. The Confucian understanding of the object of salvation and its status in Christianity.

3. The Confucian understanding of the means of salvation in Christianity.

Before beginning this analysis it is necessary to clarify the vast variety of controversies, arguments, ideas, opinions and comments expressed in the name of Confucianism; thus, clear distinctions among different schools of Confucianism are given in chapter 2. In the last chapter I will discuss the results of my research in this study by pointing out the basic problems that will appear in the analysis. The results of the present study provide conclusions in three related areas: the tacit differences in the ways of thinking between Confucians and Christians, the basic problems of the Confucian-Christian dialogue, and the affirmative elements in the dialogue.

In addition to a summary, a bibliography and an index, there are also eight appendices, where I have introduced important background information for readers to understand the present study.

Preface and Acknowledgments
Writing a dissertation is a major adventure and this is doubly so when it is my second one. Around sixteen years ago when I first got to know Christianity, I started a desire to write something on Chinese Christianity. Life has its interesting twists and turns and so before I could write a dissertation on the Christian theology, I have had the opportunity to spend over ten years in East Asian studies (especially Chu culture and Daoism). In addition to my academic life, I have experienced many sweet memories and also tears with Chinese Christians in Finland. I have dedicated my heart and energies to church life here. However this busy life has not stopped me desiring to develop a theological reflection to aid practical solutions to various tensions in the Chinese Christian life. These tensions have brought me pain, but also excitement and joy. The more I study Christian theology, the more I have become convinced of how deeply Confucianism is embedded in my spirituality, my soul and my body. Subtly and powerfully, Confucianism works inside me. “Self-transcendence”, “self-cultivation” and “to do good” have always been my native religious language. However, I am a Lutheran Christian, who stresses always sola gratia and sola fide. How can a self-cultivation-seeking-Confucian be a Lutheran Christian? Therefore, this religious dialogue is not a purely theoretical issue for me, it lives in me with tears and joy.

When I started to study Christianity in China, my initial title was “Can China accept Christianity?” My experience of church life led me later to focus on the doctrine of “salvation”. As a Lutheran Christian, theoretically I understand well that “salvation” is absolutely the work of God rather than the result of human merit. Nonetheless, it has really not been easy to grasp the relationship between justification and sanctification in real life. Confucian self-transcendence seems so natural and normal to me and for many other Chinese Christians. Justification by faith and through grace becomes so easily just a mere theory. Therefore, like so many other Chinese Christians, in practical life, I am afraid of being lazy in fulfilling my own duty, which has been endowed to me by Heaven/God. Every time when I focus on my own deeds, I realize that sola gratia is my hope. Once I have peace and certainty with salvation, I will again paradoxically try to self-cultivate. I have been longing for peace and certainty, but once they become true in my life, I will immediately doubt and try to avoid it. Such a paradoxical tension has become the basic reason for me to
choose the present title “Confronting Confucian understandings of the Christian Doctrine of Salvation”. It is my hope that through this systematical theological analysis of the issue, to discover the basic problems in the Confucian-Christian dialogue.

Writing a dissertation is just one adventure in life’s journeys, and every experience is only an individual one. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are God’s ways higher than human ways and His thoughts higher than our thoughts. During the past years, I have been privileged to meet a number of people who have contributed to this study intentionally or non-intentionally in one way or another. Some of them have challenged me in church life so much that I could not sleep before I tried to find some answers theologically. Some of them have provided me with indispensable insights. Some of them have been bravely standing together with me, and some of them have been silently praying for me. I cannot mention all their names, but I would like to thank especially the following people and institutions who have helped me to accomplish this thesis.

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Many of the materials for the present study were collected from the library of the Institute of Oriental Culture (IOC) at the University of Tokyo during my stay there from 1998 to 2000. Professor Robert Cumming Neville (Boston) has kindly sent me his publications by mail. Professor Luo Bingxiang (Ping-cheung) 罗秉祥 (Hong
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Paulos Huang Helsink, 2006
TIMING OF THE CONFUCIAN SCHOOLS AND CENTRAL PERSONS INTRODUCED IN THE CONTENTS OF THE THESIS

- Ancient Confucianism
- Confucianism of Confucius & Mencius
- Neo-Confucianism
- Cultural Nationalist Confucianism
- Modern Confucianism

Christianity

551-479 BC
Confucius

372-289 BC
Mencius

1552-1610
Matteo Ricci

1909-1995
Mou Zongsan

1934-
Liu Shuxian
1940-
Du Weiming
Liang Yangcheng

* Modern Confucianism:
  - Mencian tradition, non-Christian
  - Boston-tradition (Xun Zi-tradition), Christian
  - Conservative Christian Confucianism
  - Rationalist tradition, sympathizing Christianity
1. Introduction

1.1 Aim

Although the two terms salvation and God are not present in Confucianism itself, I aim to explore how Confucians understand the Christian doctrine of salvation. Through such a study I believe one can identify the basic problems in the Confucian-Christian dialogue, and it is these which I shall clarify and discuss in this work.

The term “Salvation” as we find it in the New and Old Testaments of the Bible derives ultimately from the Greek word "Soteria" and the Hebrew word "Yshuwah", respectively. It includes a panoply of meanings, including deliverance, protection, preservation, prosperity, safety, soundness, healing, and the ministry of angels. Etymologically, the word “salvation” more proximally appears in Middle English and in Old French, coming from the Late Latin salvation-, salvatio, from salvare (to save). Semantically, this word “salvation” can be understood from three aspects: first, it is an act of delivering someone or something from harm or from an unpleasant situation. For example, “the salvation of his party was the president’s major concern”. In Christianity it refers to redemption, i.e., deliverance from the power or penalty of sin. Secondly, it refers to the effect of salvation, i.e., preservation from harm or unpleasantness. For example, "tourism was their economic salvation"; "they turned to individualism as their salvation". Thirdly, it refers to the states of salvation: on the one hand, from which state someone or something is saved or preserved, and, on the other hand, that state to which someone or something is saved.

There are different understandings concerning salvation among Christians. In this study I will refer mainly to the Catechism of the Catholic Church and to the Augsburg Confession as representatives of major Christian understandings. In Christian terms, understanding the Gospel is a general prerequisite for understanding

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1 The thorough definition of Confucianism and Confucians in this study will be given in chapter 2.
1. Introduction

salvation, because understanding the Gospel is foundational to salvation itself as well as to any reflective understanding of it. Briefly, the Gospel--the good news--is that each person, through Jesus Christ, can be forgiven of sin, brought back into fellowship with God, and filled with God’s Spirit for newness of life. Salvation is the stock of benefits received by the person who believes in the Gospel and entrusts his or her life to Christ. In speaking about salvation among Christians, four main elements are commonly involved:

1) God is the one who saves people through Jesus Christ the Savior. This issue concerns God as savior. According to Jewish-Christian understanding, God reveals Himself through his deeds in the history of salvation, which He has done and is still doing through the history of Israel. God is, thus, according to Jewish-Christian understanding, primarily an active and personal being who chooses the nation of Israel as an object of salvation both as collective and as individual realities. For many Confucians such a historical and personal concept of God is strange. Therefore, the first important challenge for the Confucian-Christian dialogue is for both sides to find a common understanding concerning God, His nature and His works.

2) Individual persons are the objects to be saved. This is the issue concerning created humanity as the object to be saved. The question must be raised concerning whom or what God desires to save. What has made humanity the kind of being who seeks salvation? In the environment of the Old Testament the nation of Israel is the object of Yahweh’s salvation, both collectively and individually. In the context of the New Testament, however, the object of God’s salvation emphasizes individuals more than collectives (John 3:16). I will focus mainly on created humanity and its status as seeking and requiring salvation.

3 For example, for the Protestants, the “benefits” include forgiveness of sin, a totally right standing with God, heaven instead of hell upon physical death, new life (the Spirit of the life of Christ Jesus), awesome joy and contentment, and power to change bad habits. See the Augsburg Confessions: Its meaning for our day 1980, 29. Roman Catholic theology does not embrace the interpretation of salvation and justification as that presented by the Protestant Reformers.


5 The Catechism of the Catholic Church 1997, 526 reads: “1949 Called to beatitude but wounded by sin, man stands in need of salvation from God.” This Catechism is the official result of the Vatican II Council (1962-1965), where Pope and all the important Catholic Bishops were presented.
3) Human beings are in the state (or situation) *i.e.*, *status lapsae*, from which salvation is needed,⁶ and they are going to be saved for the state which God has prepared for them.⁷ This is the issue concerning that *from which* salvation is needed.⁸ For we must raise the question concerning from what situation God desires to save human beings. In the Christian tradition no one can avoid the starting point of Christian soteriology, *i.e.*, original sin and the human situation of fallenness (*status lapsae*). What is necessary for a Christian soteriology, however, is not inevitably the same as that for the Confucian side of the dialogue. The question concerning that from which man is saved is understandably important to Confucians, as they lack what they count as the “strange” doctrine of original sin.

4) The fourth issue concerns the means of saving, *i.e.*, *media salutis*, which is justification by faith and through grace (*sola gratia/sola fide*).⁹ The concept “faith”

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⁶ The word *salvation* indicates that the Christian is *saved* from something. Saved from what? In short, they are saved from death—spiritual death. More specifically, they are saved from the following: Hell, ourselves (bad habits, destructive lifestyles, sinful tendencies, and poor character qualities, self-centeredness and discontentment, performance-based acceptance), slavery to circumstances, and Satan and his evil helpers. Article II of the *Augsburg Confession* reads: “Also they teach, that since the Fall of Adam, all man begotten according to nature, are born with sin, that is, without the fear of God, without trust in God, and with concupiscence; and that this disease, or vice of origin, is truly sin, even now condemning and bringing eternal death upon those not born again through baptism and the Holy Ghost. They condemn the Pelagians and others, who deny that the vice of origin is sin, and who, to obscure the glory of Christ’s merit and benefits, argue that man can be justified before God by his own strength and reason.” See the *Augsburg Confessions: Its meaning for our day* 1980, 17.

⁷ The new state, to which the human beings are saved, has many "benefits" such as forgiveness of sin, a totally right standing with God, heaven instead of hell upon physical death, new life (the Spirit of the life of Christ Jesus), awesome joy and contentment, and power to change bad habits. Article V of the Augsburg Confession reads: “... the Gospel ... that God ... justified those who believe that they are received into favour for Christ’s sake.” See the *Augsburg Confessions: Its meaning for our day* 1980, 35. Thus, a Christian is a person who has decided to trust in Jesus Christ for a right standing before God, and to turn the reins of his or her life over to Christ. After expressing this decision in prayer, the Christian receives salvation. This new state is also called “the final goal” or “religious end”. See Heim 1995 and Heim 2001.

⁸ “The state from which salvation is needed” will be analyzed in Chapter four, when the object of salvation is studied. “The state for which God saves human beings” will be mentioned briefly but will not be studied in detail, since the concept of the spiritual destiny of man in Christianity and Confucianism are profoundly different and the exploration of such a large issue requires more space. Therefore, I will concentrate on three elements related to salvation: the Savior, the object of salvation, and the means of salvation.

⁹ *Sola gratia* means "by Divine Grace alone". That means that people cannot "earn" their way into Heaven by "Good Works" but are entirely dependent on the Generosity and Grace of God for it. This eliminated the value of "human merits" and said that God Alone could affect that outcome.

*Sola fide* asserts that, although all people have disobeyed God's commands, God declares those people obedient who place their *confidence*, their *faith*, in what God has done through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. They *account* Christ's obedience as their own, and the only meritorious, obedience. Their *assurance* is that God's work in Christ is their commendation for acceptance by God.
can be understood as an objective “gift of grace” from God which enables a person to believe the gospel and imparts a subjective “wish and decision” to believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Here the role of Jesus Christ is very important, as this role relates closely to the sacramental life of Church, including those touching

Conversely, the doctrine says that those who trust God in this way do not trust what they themselves have done (which has no worth, because of sin). The doctrine holds that it is not through personal goodness that sinners are reconciled to God. Reconciliation is only through the mercy of God himself, made effectual for forgiveness through the sacrifice of his son; thus it is only through the obedience of Christ given in substitute for the disobedience of believers, who for their sake was raised from the dead, that they have confidence that they are in fact heirs of eternal life. The doctrine of sola fide, as formulated by Martin Luther, is accepted by most Protestants, including Lutherans, Reformed and Baptists; and as ordinarily articulated by Protestants. See Article IV of the Augsburg Confession in the Augsburg Confessions: Its meaning for our day 1980, 29.

Sola fide was rejected by Catholics, who say through God's Grace, and our response to that Grace through our faith and works, we are saved. They also add a distinction between the good works, as those in Matthew 25, and the works of law. Differences remain between the two churches regarding the actual way grace justifies a person as discussed below: passively, actively, growth in sanctity, synergy, etc. In the Catholic Church it is taught that God's salvation has much to do with law and grace. “Divine help comes to him in Christ through the law that guides him and the grace that sustains him. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure (Phil. 2:12-13).” See Catechism of the Catholic Church 1997, 526. This is to say, the Roman Church does teach that people are justified by grace through faith on account of Christ. What is missing, however, is the word alone. By omitting this word the Roman Church redefines grace, faith and justification in a way that undermines and invalidates the teaching of Protestantism. See Catechism of the Catholic Church 1997, 526-550.

Joint declaration on the doctrine of justification by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Catholic Church 1997 reads: " 4.3 Justification by Faith and through Grace 25. We confess together that sinners are justified by faith in the saving action of God in Christ. By the action of the Holy Spirit in Baptism, they are granted the gift of salvation, which lays the basis for the whole Christian life. They place their trust in God's gracious promise by justifying faith, which includes hope in God and love for him. Such a faith is active in love and thus the Christian cannot and should not remain without works. But whatever in the justified precedes or follows the free gift of faith is neither the basis of justification nor merits it.”

Lutheran-Orthodox Joint Commission reads: “5.... Regarding the way in which salvation is appropriated by the believers, Lutherans, by teaching that justification and salvation are by grace alone through faith (sola gratia, sola fide), stress the absolute priority of divine grace in salvation. When they speak about saving faith they do not think of the dead faith which even the demons have (cf. James 2:19), but the faith which Abraham showed and which was reckoned to him as righteousness (cf. Gen. 15:6, Rom. 4:3,9). The Orthodox also affirm the absolute priority of divine grace. They underline that it is God's grace which enables our human will to conform to the divine will (cf. Phil 2:13) in the steps of Jesus praying, "not as I will but as You will" (Matthew 26:39), so that we may work out our salvation in fear and trembling (cf. Phil. 2:12). This is what the Orthodox mean by "synergia (synergy)" (working together) of divine grace and the human will of the believer in the appropriation of the divine life in Christ. The understanding of synergy in salvation is helped by the fact that the human will in the one person of Christ was not abolished when the human nature was united in Him with the divine nature, according to the Christological decisions of the Ecumenical Councils. While Lutherans do not use the concept of synergy, they recognize the personal responsibility of the human being in the acceptance or refusal of divine grace through faith, and in the growth of faith and obedience to God. Lutherans and Orthodox both understand good works as the fruits and manifestations of the believer's faith and not as a means of salvation.” See Salvation: Grace, Justification and Synergy, 9th Plenary of the Lutheran-Orthodox Joint Commission, Sigtuna, 7 August 1998.

This is my own definition, and I will discuss about the concept “faith” again and will also refer to Finnish theologian Tuomo Mannermaa’s study, especially in chapter 5 of this work.
individuals, such as baptism and communion. These sacramental means are again strange notions for Confucians. How does such a profound difference between these two religious traditions affect the possibilities of a successful dialogue between them? One notes, e.g., the many differences between Christian and Confucian traditions, as exemplified in Jacques Dupuis’ book.\footnote{Dupuis 2001, especially ”Chapter Twelve: Paths to salvation”, 305-329.}

The notion of a God who saves and, indeed, the entire soteriology of Christianity, is one of the main differences between Christianity and Confucianism. The whole idea of "salvation" is unknown in Confucianism but is essential in Christianity. In this study my analysis will focus on Confucian understandings of these four elements of salvation, and through such an analysis I wish to uncover the basic problems in the Confucian-Christian dialogue: how does Confucianism both enable and hinder understanding? That is to say, what elements in Confucianism prevent the transmission of Christianity in China? What Confucian elements make Christianity difficult to be accepted in China? In order to understand Christian theology, what presuppositions and conditions should Confucians have? Why are there problems in the Confucian-Christian dialogue? What are the problems? According to what perspectives do problems arise? For example, the problems may come from the Chinese emperor or the communist political side, but this is not the main issue I am going to analyze in this study.\footnote{The questions mentioned above can be understood in contrast to the history of Christian mission in India. Christian missionary work was started a long time ago in both China and India, but it has not produced much influence until the present time. Three reasons have often been suggested for the slow development of Christianity in the two countries. First, the transmission of Christianity has been limited by political factors, limiting its ability to develop by itself. Second, the cultural and religious traditions of the two countries are rich and strong, and they have become a main challenge and obstacle for the transmission of Christianity in the two countries. Third, Chinese culture (the mixture of Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, Communism and secularism) has a strong capacity to assimilate other religions and cultures with foreign backgrounds.}

The purpose of this study is to discover and to display the basic problems in the Confucian-Christian dialogue that has been practiced since the time of Matteo Ricci up to our modern times. In order to make this formal task more concrete I have chosen the Christian doctrine of salvation as the material issue upon which to focus an exploration of Confucian-Christian dialogical problems and to display the response to Christian thought by the various Confucian schools. The manner in which the task has been established and the
abundance of the source material dictates that the method by which the study will be carried out be both descriptive and so-called systematic analysis.

One may also challenge whether Confucians truly represent the whole of China. In addition to Confucianism, the strong influences of Daoism, Buddhism, and Communism have been exercised in China. Correspondingly, in addition to the doctrine of salvation, other concepts, such as those centering on Christ and the Holy Spirit, are also very important in Christian theology. Widely acknowledged, however, is that Confucianism is the dominant representative of Chinese traditional culture and that salvation is one of the main doctrines of Christianity. Therefore, I am stressing these topics as the object for my analysis in this study.

Important as well is that my analysis of the Confucian-Christian dialogue is focused on their differing beliefs rather than on practical actions or experience, because the essential task of doctrines is to reflect in a systematic, rational way a faith that grasps divine truth, a fact which is most important for understanding the Confucian-Christian dialogue. This does not mean that such practices as the pursuit of spiritual growth, prayer, and worship in the Christian context as well as worship of Heaven, ancestors, and Confucius in the Confucian context are not important, but that the more pressing issue in dialogue is to find and to analyze the doctrinal basis of these practices. Therefore, I have chosen doctrinal analysis as the task of this study.

Although most of the pages in this study are dedicated to the analysis of the issues mentioned above, this analysis itself will not be my purpose. My purpose is to discover the basic problems which are important in the Confucian-Christian dialogue, and this end will be accomplished by analyzing the Confucian understandings of the Christian doctrine of salvation. I want to clearly point out that the basic problems that will come up in this study will not be representative of the whole the Confucian-Christian dialogue, since my selected problems refer only to the four elements of salvation based on the primary sources of this study.

Theoretically my choice here is based on the definition of religion by Michael Peterson, William Hasker, Bruce Reichenbach and David Basinger, who say that “religion is constituted by a set of beliefs, actions, and experiences, both personal and corporate, organized around a concept of an Ultimate Reality.” See Reason & religious belief: an introduction to the philosophy of religion. Michael Peterson et al. 2003, 7. Thus, among beliefs, actions and experiences I have chosen the analysis of beliefs as my main task here. Between personal and corporate I have chosen to analyze
1. Introduction

1.2 Sources

Four kinds of written materials have been involved in this study. 1) The Confucian materials, which are represented by the Five Classics and the Four Books. These materials are the preconditions for understanding Confucianism and can be found in Appendices I and II at the end of this study. 2) The Christian works and especially missionary works through which the Confucians have become familiar with Christianity. 3) The Confucian responses, ideas, and arguments concerning the Christian works in the light of Confucian materials. 4) Scholars’ studies in respect to Confucian understandings.

Sources: Only certain of the Confucian explorations have been selected as sources for my systematic theological analysis in this study, namely the Confucian responses, ideas, and arguments concerning the Christian doctrine of salvation by God in the Confucian-Christian dialogue.

Literature: Confucian materials and Christian works form the background sources of this study, since Confucian discussions concerning Christianity are based on these two kinds of materials. But my prime interest focuses on the scholarly discussion of the Confucian response to the areas of Christian theology which I have selected as the pivot point of the dialogical issues between Christianity and Confucianism. They constitute the previous research on the subject of this study. All these three kinds of materials, however, are to be understood as the “literature” to which I refer.

I have, thus, clarified that I will not include all Confucian responses concerning all aspects of Christianity in this study. I have instead limited my analysis to the following sources dealing with the Confucian encounter with Christianity: a) Confucian understandings of the existence of God, especially in respect to the assimilation of the Christian God with the Chinese concepts of Sovereign on High and Heaven; b) the Confucian understanding of the object of salvation, i.e., created humanity and its status; and c) the Confucian understanding of the means of salvation. This self-limitation does not imply, however, that other aspects and sources

personal Confucians as the representatives so as to find the corporated Confucian understanding of the
are not important. Clearly, a more limited topic and focus will throw a more intense beam of light on the truly foundational issues of the Confucian-Christian dialogue than would a more comprehensive work.

Of course, readers may wonder how these three themes have been chosen for this study. Are they based on my own presuppositions? Or are they the result of my research? I would like to make it clear that the three themes above (a, b and c) are based on my preliminary analysis of the sources themselves. These sources themselves suggest the importance of the themes I have selected. This choice of themes, thus, does not involve a circular proof of my thesis, since they represent an emergent thematic appearance invoked by a phenomenological analysis of these sources, themes which disclose in a focused way the basic problems within the Confucian-Christian dialogue.

In addition, readers may also like to know whether Confucianism and Christianity differ in respect to such areas as moral teaching, the understanding of the relationship between individuals and society, and the practice and rituals of religion. Briefly speaking, they are different in these areas, but I will not focus on these issues.\(^\text{14}\) Again, the aim of my study is to focus on the analysis of religious beliefs; thus, my study has been strictly limited to the sources chosen above, and such a choice will directly decide the results of my research.

My sources have shown how Confucians from the times of Mateo Ricci (1552-1610) to the present have responded to the Christian doctrine of salvation by God\(^\text{15}\) introduced by Jesuit and Protestant missionaries. The period of over 400 years covered in this study, however, is not as rich in source material as the period might suggest. For after Ricci’s dialogue with Confucians in the 17\(^{\text{th}}\) century, the dialogue was stopped and was not begun again until the beginning of the 20\(^{\text{th}}\) century. Thus, my sources will originate from two basic time periods, the 17\(^{\text{th}}\) century and the 20\(^{\text{th}}\) century.

\(^\text{14}\) Readers can find some answers to these questions in my study; for example, when the concept of “salvation” is analyzed, one will find the differences between Confucianism and Christianity in the issue of moral teaching.

\(^\text{15}\) The Christian doctrine of salvation has already been defined above in this chapter. The concept God of Christianity will be thoroughly defined in chapter 2.
According to the theme and date, the sources of this study have been divided into three groups as follows:

The first group is the Neo-Confucian responses to Jesuit Christianity in the 16th and 17th centuries.

This group can be divided into two sections: the arguments of Chinese Christian converts, and the arguments of anti-Christian literature. These sources are mainly articles gathered from different collections. There are not many academic monographs among them.

Xu Guangqi 徐光启 (1562-1633) and Yang Tingyun 杨廷筠 (1562-1627) are the two main converts who have produced apologetic literature defending Christianity. Xu's Dazan shi 大赞诗 (The poem of great praises) is one of the primary sources of the present study. Compared to Xu and other converts, Yang was a Chinese Christian theologian, since he was interested in and focused on theological thinking. In addition, Yang produced many works on religious matters. He also collaborated on many Jesuit publications. I will also refer to his works Daiyi pian 代疑篇 (Sequel to the treatise to doubts) and Daiyi xupian 代疑续篇 (Sequel to the treatise to supplant doubts) as primary sources. In these works, Yang has explored many theological questions such as the assimilation (between God and Heaven), and the name of God.

The anti-Christian literature mainly consists of the following works:

1) The first anti-Christian writings opposing Jesuits were written between 1615 and 1618 when the Nanjing persecution took place. Fourteen of those documents were published in 1620 in the collection Nangong shudu 南宫书牍 (Filed documents from the Ministry of Rites). The writers of these works have done their best to criticize the content of Christian teaching and tried to reject Christianity.17

2) Xu Dashou's 许大受 Shengchao Zuopi 圣朝佐辟 (Assisting the holy Dynasty in the refuting [of heterodoxy]) (1623) is the most extensive text of the

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17 I will mainly refer to Standaert's translation, cf., Dudink 1995, 2-5.
Poxieji 破邪集 collection, of which it covers the entire fourth juan (Volume or booklet). In this work Xu has criticized Christianity in the light of his own Confucianism.18

3) Yuandao Pixieshuo 原道辟邪说 [PiXS] (Treatise on the origin of the way and the refutation of heterodoxy) (1636) has two juan containing 18 essays, two prefaces and one postscript. Part of it was also published in Shengcao Poxieji 圣朝破邪集 [PoXJ] (Collected documents of the sacred Dynasty for destruction of vicious doctrines), which was compiled in 1639 and was published in 1640. It contains, among other writings, official records of the persecution written by the Provincial official in 1637-1638. In this collection there are 14 essays from Nangong shudu. This work is also a critique on Christian teaching, and its main purpose is to persuade the Chinese people to reject Christianity.19

4) Pixieji [PXJ 僻邪集 (1643) is a collection of two essays and a preface. The first essay is Tianxue chuzheng 天学初征 (First questions on the Heavenly studies), which is a refutation of 22 "absurdities" found in the work Tianzhu shengxiang lueshuo 天主圣象略说 (Short explications on the sacred images) by J. D. Rocha and Xu Guangqi. The second essay is Tianxue zaizheng 天学再征 (Second questions on the Heavenly studies), which is a refutation of Ricci and S. Soerio. The content of this work is also a critique on the Christian doctrines.

5) Yang Guangxian's 杨光先 (1597-1669) Budeyi 不得已 (1665) consists of 22 essays. The writing started in 1659. It was put together and published in 1665.20 The detailed titles of these materials can also be found in some collections.21 The content is critical towards the Christian teaching, and its purpose is to lead people to reject Christianity. The critique derives from the Confucian outlook on life.

18 Part of this work has been translated in Gernet 1985, 12. Dudink dedicates 30 extremely detailed pages (94-124) to prove his point, demonstrating an exceptional familiarity with all sources; see Dudink 1993, 94-140.
19 This work was quoted and translated partially in Gernet 1985.
21 These collections are, e.g., a) WENXIAN, 1. vol.; b) XUBIAN, 3 vols.; c) SANBIAN, 6 vols. (The above three are edited by Wu Xiangxiang.) d) XJH 1996.
In addition, Neo-Confucian responses, both affirmative and negative, can also be found in missionaries’ letters and reports to their Western mission societies and colleagues. Gernet has referred to some of these sources in his work.22

The second group is the Cultural Nationalist Confucian responses to Christianity.

This group can be found in the writings of the representatives of this school of Confucianism, such as Liang Shuming 梁漱溟 (1893-1988),23 Ma Yifu 马亦夫 (1883-1967), 24 Xiong Shili 熊十力 (1883-1968),25 Zhang Junmai 张君劢 (1886-1969),26 Feng Youlan 冯友兰 (1895-1990),27 He Lin 贺麟 (1902-1992),28 Qian Mu 钱穆 (1895-1990),29 Fang Dongmei 方东美 (1899-1977), Tang Junyi 唐君毅,30 Mou Zongsan 牟中三 (1909-1995)31 and Xu Fuguan 徐复观 (1903-1982).32 These scholars and their bibliography will be introduced later in “2.3.2 The Cultural Nationalist Confucians (1920-1980)”.

22 Gernet 1985.
23 Since the 16th century the arrival of Christianity, Western culture had not changed the Neo-Confucianism of Song and Ming 明 dynasties. However, change has happened since the beginning of the 20th century. Liang Shuming 梁漱溟 was a forerunner of New Confucian Movement, and he selected from Buddhism metaphysics, Confucian cosmology and ethics, and Western ideas to form his thought. See An Yangming's article "Liang Shuming: Eastern and Western Cultures and Confucianism" in Cheng & Bunnin 2002, 147-164. Cf. also Bresciani 2001, 57-86.
26 Cf., Bresciani 2001, 143-182.
Among these scholars, Xiong Shili and Feng Youlan are especially important. Xiong Shili tried to reconstruct an idealistic New Confucianism. According to his thesis, reality is perpetual transformation, consisting of "closing" and "opening" which is the processes of unceasing production and reproduction. Xiong has definitely made an advance in New Confucianism, particularly in the identification of principle (Li 理) and material force (Qi 气). Although he has not clarified the relationship between the mind and principle, he has given idealistic New Confucianism a more solid metaphysical basis and a more dynamic character. His whole system was systematically presented in the Xin weishi lun 新唯识论 (New doctrine of Consciousness-Only) in 1944.

Feng Youlan reconstructed the new rationalistic New Confucianism. Feng said that his system is derived from, though does not follow, Neo-Confucianism of the Song and Ming dynasties. Feng’s philosophy is based on the four main metaphysical concepts, namely, principle (Li 理), material force (Qi 气), the substance of Dao 道, and the Great Whole (Taiyi 太一), which are all from the Neo-Confucianism of Song and Ming  明 dynasties. Feng frankly calls his own system a "new tradition", which to him not only represents a revival of Chinese philosophy but is also the symbol of a revival of the Chinese nation. Thus, he is not only a creator of a new system, but also the one that continues and reconstructs the orthodox tradition from Confucius through the Song Neo-Confucians to himself. Quite aside from this confident sense of destiny, his system is new in the sense that he incorporates into the traditional rationalistic New Confucianism the Western

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33 The concept Qi 气 is easier understood together with Wu 物. In the Neo-Confucian Zhang Zai’s 张载 (1020-1077) words, all things are made from the same substance, which is called material when it is collected together and is called air when it is scattered into different places (Ju ze wei wu, san ze wei qi 聚则为物,散则为气). Appendix VII: “Li and Qi”.

34 The term "Dao 道" appears around 100 hundred times in the Analects. It means literally "road" and "way". In its broad sense it refers to the total physical and moral orders of the universe. In Daoism it has a special abstract meaning, and in the Analects there are Tiandao (way of Heaven) and Rendao (way of man). The way of man is the ideal ethical, social, and political normative orders for human life which humanity in principle can follow. Dao is, however, a way that has to be interpreted and accommodated in every new context and by every new generation. Tiandao is Heaven’s way in the universe, all those aspects in human life and history over which human persons exercise no control. Hall and Ames 1987, 226-237. Schwartz 1985, 62-63. In order to understand Dao in Confucianism, one should also pay attention to De 德, which is commonly rendered as "virtue", and in the ethical sense it may also be translated as "power" or "force". It refers not only to the power to live a virtuous
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elements of realism and logic as well as the Daoist element of negative and transcendentalism.

In addition, there are two other sources: One is the manifesto by Xu Fuguan, Zhang Junmai, Tang Junyi, and Mou Zongsan. Another is the articles of Cai Renhou, who was a student of Mou Zongsan. His articles have summarized the responses of the Cultural Nationalist Confucians to Christianity. Cai has discussed six focal points, which form the main Problems of integration between Christianity and Chinese culture. Rev. Zhou Lianhua has answered one by one to Cai's six questions.

The third group is the sources of the Modern Confucian responses to Christianity. This group is mainly as follows:

1) The Mencian tradition Modern Confucian comments about Christianity are represented by Du Weiming and Liu Shuxian. Du does not consider Confucianism as a perfect and complete system, and prefers to reform and modernized Confucianism in order to fit the present era's challenge. Liu's works emphasize that Confucianism and Chinese culture should learn something from Christianity and has had profound influence on Du Weiming. Tang Yijie, a contemporary scholar in Beijing, is not considered a Modern Confucian, but, because his arguments on Christianity are quite close to those of Du and Liu, his three articles (1990, 1991a and 1991b) are referred to by me in analyzing the Mencian tradition Confucian responses to Christianity.

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35 MANIFESTO.
37 Cai is a philosopher and Cultural Nationalist Confucian in Taiwan, and Rev. Zhou is a famous evangelical pastor in Taiwan. Cf., Cai, Zhou & Liang 1985.
38 Du 1994a and Du 1994b.
40 It should be noted that the task of this study is not to study the wholeness of Du Weiming's, Liu Shuxian's and Tang Yijie's philosophy, in fact, my focus is in their responses to Christianity from the Confucian viewpoint.
2) The Xun Zi 荀子 tradition Modern Confucian responses to Christianity are represented by Robert Neville's Boston Confucianism. Neville's two works (1991, 2000) are chosen for primary sources for the present study, since Neville is the founder of Boston Confucianism, and his two books are the representative classics of the Xun Zi tradition’s Modern Confucian understanding of Christianity. It is interesting to know how Neville’s Confucian is different from the Chinese Confucians. The main difference is that Chinese Confucians (mainly Nationalist Cultural Confucians) usually reject Western philosophy and theology; but the Western Confucians such as Neville consider the possibility that Westerners can also be Confucian, *i.e.*, Confucianism and Christianity are not always in conflict. The connecting points between Chinese and Western Confucians are many. The main connecting point is that Confucianism is the basis of their worldview. However, the Chinese Confucians consider it as the whole of their worldview, and the Western Confucians consider it as only a part of their worldview.

In the present study, all those Christians, who consider Confucianism as part of their identities, are called Modern Christian Confucians. They are trying to take an inclusive approach to combine Confucianism and Christianity. 41 Nevertheless, Modern Confucian Christians are not unanimous.

Liu Xiaofeng 刘小枫 (1956-) has criticized the traditional Chinese culture and is in favor for importing Christianity into China. He is a representative of Cultural Christians (*wenhua jidutu* 文化基督徒) in mainland China, who approach Christianity through philosophy and literature. However, the main emphasis of this school is focused on the translation of Western theological works into Chinese. They
have not produced much commentary work on Christianity in respect to Confucianism.\textsuperscript{42}

Liang Yancheng 梁燕城 (1940?-) is a Lutheran evangelist, who is originally from Hong Kong and is now living in Canada. Liang has thoroughly studied Confucianism, Buddhism and Christian theology in Hong Kong, Taiwan and USA. He has an inclusive approach to Confucianism, and has tried to integrate Christianity and Confucianism.\textsuperscript{43}

He Shiming 何世明 (1911-1996) has made a detailed study on the comparison between Christianity and Confucianism.\textsuperscript{44}

Wang Cisheng 王赐生 and Xu Songshi 徐松石 (both born in the beginning of the 20th century) have also written books on the relationship between Christianity and Confucianism.\textsuperscript{45}

All five Christians mentioned above hold that there are similarities between Christianity and Confucianism, although many differences are acknowledged as well.

Yuan Zhiming 远志明 (1955-) and Nelson are evangelical representatives, who try to argue that the Christian God has already revealed Himself in Chinese classics, history and writing system. In the present study their works are also considered as part of the primary sources.\textsuperscript{46}

\textsuperscript{42} Concerning Liu Xiaofeng 刘小枫 and Cultural Christians, see Liu Xiaofeng 1990. Liu Xiaofeng 1991, “Christianity in the light of contemporary culture in Mainland China”, in Lee, Peter K.H. 1991. See also WJ (Wenhua jidutu: Xianxiang yu zhenglun 文化基督徒—现象与论争) 1997. Concerning Chinese theology, see Hanyu shenxue chuyi 汉语神学刍议 ed. by Yang Xi’nan 杨熙南 2000. One of the newest doctoral dissertations on Christianity in contemporary China is Fredrik Fällman’s Salvation and modernity—Intellectuals and faith in contemporary China, 2004: Department of Oriental Language, Stockholm University. This thesis aims at interpreting the phenomenon of Cultural Christians in contemporary Chinese society, with special focus paid to Liu Xiaofeng. However, his method is not theological but a sinological and historical one. In its introduction there is a good description of intellectuals and faith in contemporary China.

\textsuperscript{43} Cai, Zhou & Liang 1985.

\textsuperscript{44} See He Shiming 1996 (1), 1996(2), 1996 (3), 1996 (4) and 1996 (5).


\textsuperscript{46} See Yuan 1997, 1998, and 2000. Concerning Evangelical responses to Christianity in the light of Confucianism, please see also JZY (Jidujiao yu zhongguo wenhua gengxin yantaohui huibao 基督教与中国文化更新研讨会汇报). More conservative Christians' responses to Confucianism can also be found in Nelson & Broadberry 1997. This group of Christian holds that Christian God has already silently
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All these materials, despite the wide time gap that they represent, will constitute the primary sources for this work. This time gap does not, however, prevent their works being selected as primary sources, since, on the one hand, they represent different stages and schools of Confucianism, and, on the other hand, they all have focused on the key concepts of God, Sovereign on High, and Heaven in the Confucian-Christian dialogue. My consideration of the sources, however, will be limited in this work to the three issues centering on the issue of salvation by God. Not all of these works are philosophical or theological in nature, as some of them may be classed as “cultural” works.

1.3 Method

I will use systematic theological analysis as the main method in my study. I intend, i.e., the analysis of theological texts in order to explicate the structural principles of the Confucian thinkers who have been chosen as representatives of different stages of Confucianism. The task of systematic theological analysis here is to describe and to display the basic Confucian understanding of the essential Christian doctrine of salvation. It should be noted, however, that the analysis does not only affiliate the ideas but also points out and analyzes under close scrutiny the possible problems or inconsistencies contained in them. Through a process of textual analysis, phenomenological and structural description, and a logically pursued theological and philosophical analysis of concepts, I shall advance conclusions concerning the relevance of Confucianism for Christian thinking. The relevant criterion of this systematic analysis is the internal coherence and consistency of the system under examination. I will neither construct my own theology nor concentrate on Confucian understandings of salvation generally, what I am going to do is to analyze Confucian understandings of the Christian doctrine of salvation.

Moreover, the multifaceted nature of these concepts will also be subjected to a supplementary comparative approach. I will compare and analyze the theological thinking of different Christian scholars as well as that of different Confucians to revealed Himself in Chinese culture, such as in Chinese history, classics and the Chinese writing system.
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disclose their conflict or accord within their own traditions. Although the main interest of systematic analysis is not that of comparing two religious systems with each other, it is, of course, natural that when a researcher sets them side by side, he or she cannot help perceiving some similarities and differences which prevail in these two religious traditions.

This does not mean, however, that my methodology is overly ambitious, even though a systematic analysis of Confucian understanding will be turned to a comparative dialogue with Christian thought. The comparative religious analysis will express similarities and differences among different Confucians and between Christianity and Confucianism in each topic.

But is discovering and distinguishing the similarities and differences between them important for the Confucian-Christian dialogue? Generally speaking, such work is crucial for many Chinese Confucians in encountering a new religion, since appreciation of homogeneity rather than of heterogeneity has become an important feature of the Chinese way of thinking. In addition, discussions of these similarities and differences may offer some themes and directions upon which future research the Confucian-Christian dialogue can elaborate.

We must also consider the problem of presupposition views. First, God-talk is important in Christianity, since the Bible is believed as the verbal revelation of God. Secondly, religious language contains arguments, the fundamental aim of religion is other than that of presenting arguments. Religious language is the tool of prayer and worship. It also expresses feelings and values, and shapes the form of believers’ self concepts and their experiences in the world. Such expressions can happen in other ways than using spoken or written language: for example, in painting, music and dance which can also be the tools of religious expression. However, my focus is to analyze the belief expressed verbally.

The purpose of my study is to offer an objective academic analysis, but no one can claim that he has ever reached the level of absolute objectivity. As I am

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48 Wan Junren 万俊人 has discussed the issue of similarities and difference in his article "Wei he Jidujiao geng rong rongyi jinru Zhongguo wenhua 为何基督教更容易进入中国文化?" in Luo Mingjia & Huang Baoluo 2004, 103-123.
Chinese by origin and a Lutheran Evangelical Christian by faith, my presuppositions and assumptions will naturally be evidenced in the process of the study.

1.4 Previous research

Confucianism and Christianity have been studied extensively both inside and outside China, and modern Chinese scholars promote Neo-Confucianism particularly as representing Confucianism in general. Whether this state of affairs is helpful to the Confucian-Christian dialogue is an issue that concerns this work. Moreover, because the main perspective of the previous research has been comparative religious analysis, not much systematic theological analysis has yet been produced. This appalling lacuna of research, however, presents an opportunity and a challenge to pursue the work presented in this study.

*Ching Feng* is the ecumenical journal, which more than any other periodical has emphasized the relationship between Christianity and Confucianism. This journal is involved mainly by Protestants and is published by the Christian Study Center on Chinese Religion and Culture (CSCCRC), Peter K.H. Lee has been director of this center from 1974 to 1995. From 1984 onwards the relationship between Christianity and Confucianism has been becoming an important issue. Liu Shuxian and many other Modern Confucians have been among the editorial board. The Catholic parallel to the Protestants CSCCRC is *Weixin*, a Jesuit research institute located in Hong Kong. The Ricci Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History studies the history of early Christianity in China, with emphasis on the Jesuit missions of the late Ming and early Qing dynasties. This institute belongs to University of San Francisco. The Macau Ricci Institute is dedicated to fostering better mutual understanding between China and the world community. The Taipei Ricci Institute was founded by Fr. Yves Raguin and other Jesuits in 1966. Inspired by Ricci’s legacy, its goal is to undertake interdisciplinary research contributing to creative intellectual and inter-religious dialogue in the Chinese context.

49 Redse 2005, 35.
50 http://www.ricci.usfca.edu/
51 http://www.riccimac.org/
52 http://www.ricclbase.com/
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Several international Confucian-Christian conferences have been arranged. The First International Confucian-Christian Conference was held at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, on June 9-15, 1988. Du Weiming, Robert Cummings Neville and John H. Berthrong were among the participants. The meaning of transcendence and the question of the possibility of a dual faith position were important topics. The lectures of this conference are published by Peter K.H. Lee. The Second International Confucian-Christian Conference was arranged at Berkeley University, in California, on July 6-11, 1991. The term “Boston Confucianism” was coined at this conference, indicating the adaptability of Confucianism to contexts outside the East Asian. Boston Confucians such as Berthrong, Chung Chai-sik, Robert Neville, Du Weiming and the American Sinologist William Theodore de Bary were among participants. Du Weiming comments on this conference by saying: “These discussions are likely to have an impact on East Asian Christian self-identity, and are fascinating for Confucian self-identity as well.” Some of the presentations from this conference were published in Ching Feng. The Third International Confucian-Christian Conference was held in Boston, on August 25-28, 1994. “Confucian and Christian contributors to the coming civilization” was the theme, and four of key presentations were published in Ching Feng, no. 4, 1994, and more in later issues. Related to the LWF (Lutheran World Federation) program “Theological perspectives on other faiths”, “Summary report from the working group on Confucianism” was presented at a global consultation in Bangkok in 1996. Human nature, the finality of the crucified and resurrected Christ and the role of inner discipline of self-cultivation are among a list of unsettled issues in the relation between Confucianism and Christianity. In response to the first two conferences, Berthrong published a collection of his articles especially concentrated on dialogue method and challenges. Wu Mingjie’s 吴明洁 (Ming-chieh), the late president of

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the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hong Kong, has also discussed a far more
traditional Christian approach to dialogue with Confucians.\(^57\)

Later, more conferences were held on Confucian-Christian dialogue. Lai
Pinchao and Peter K.H. Lee published a collection on the Christian-Confucian
dialogue in Chinese \textit{Ruye duihua xin licheng} 耶儒对话新里程 in 2001.\(^58\) In 2002,
Lai published a collection on the Christian-Confucian dialogue on life and ethics in
Chinese \textit{Jidu zongjiao ji Rujia duitan shengming yu lunli} 基督宗教与儒家对谈生命
与伦理.\(^59\) Many publications were printed in China, He Guanghu
许志伟 and Zhao Dunhua 赵敦华 are three of many scholars.\(^60\) In 2003 a Sino-
Nordic Conference on Chinese Contextual Theology was held in Finland, several
presentations were on the Confucian-Christian dialogue. Miikka Ruokanen (Luo
Mingjia 罗明嘉) and Paulos Huang (Huang Baoluо 黄保罗) have edited a collection
to include all the presentations and responses to them. The Chinese version of the
collection is titled with \textit{Jidujiao yu zhongguo wenhua} 基督教与中国文化 ----
\textit{Guanyu zhongguo chujing shenxue de zhongguo-beiou huiyi lunwen ji} 关于中国处境
神学的中国-北欧会议论文集.\(^61\) Confucian understandings of the Christian doctrine
of salvation have sometimes been mentioned by some scholars among these
conference, but they have not really been analyzed with the method of systematic
theology.

\(^57\) Wu Ming-chieh 1990: \textit{Points of contact between Christianity and Chinese culture}. Hong Kong: Taosheng Publishing House.
\(^58\) Lai & Lee 2001: Ed. \textit{Ruye duihua xin licheng} 耶儒对话新里程. Hong Kong: Centre for the Study of
Religion and Chinese Society, Chung Chi College, Chinese University of Hong Kong.
\(^59\) Lai 2002: Ed. \textit{Jidu zongjiao ji Rujia duitan shengming yu lunli} 基督宗教与儒家对谈生命与伦理. Hong Kong: Centre for the Study of Religion and Chinese Society, Chung Chi College, Chinese University of Hong Kong.
\(^60\) He Guanghu and and Xu Zhiwei 1992: \textit{Duihua: Rushidao yu Jidujiao} 对话：儒释道与基督教. 
Shijie zongjiao bowuguan fazhan jijinhui 世界宗教博物馆发展基金会. He Guanghu and Xu Zhiwei 2001: 
\(^61\) Luo Mingjia and Huang Baoluо 2004.
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Among many scholars Fang Hao 方豪, Sebes Sebes, Bai Jin 白晋 (Joachim Bouvet), Boxer, Han Chengliang 韩承良, Luo Guang 罗光, Tang Kaijian 汤开建, and Xu Shuming 许淑明 have especially studied Matteo Ricci and other missionaries in Ming and Qing dynasties. Li Tiangang 李天刚 and many other scholars have studied the ritual controversy between Qing emperors and Vatican. Zhang Li 张力 and Liu Jiantang 刘鉴唐 have studied the conflicts between missionaries and Chinese people. Gu Weimin 顾卫民 has studied the relationship between Christianity and modern Chinese society. A list of Jesuit missionaries and

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63 Sebes 1988, “The Precursors of Ricci”.
64 Bai Jin 白晋 (France 法, Joachim Bouvet) (Tr. by Feng Zuomin 冯作民) 1977: Qing Kang Qian liangdi yu tianzhujiao chuanjiaoshi 清康乾两帝与天主教传教史. Taibei 台北: Guangqi chubanshe 光启出版社.
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their publications has been made by Fei Laizhi (Aloysius Pfister).\textsuperscript{73} Most of these studies are historical analysis, document collecting\textsuperscript{74} or comparative studies. Except the following works, which are close to my study, not many scholars have exactly studied the same topic as I am now doing with the systematic theological analysis.

In his work \textit{China and the Christian impact: A conflict of cultures} French Sinologist Jacques Gernet concluded that Chinese people will never accept pure Christianity. By the concept “pure Christianity” Gernet refers to the fact that the doctrines of Christianity have been changed by the encounter with Chinese culture. The “Christianity”, which was accepted by Chinese Confucians, differs from the “Christianity” in the Roman Catholic tradition. He came to this conclusion, because many Chinese (including Neo-Confucians and Buddhists) have strongly opposed Christianity, and because Matteo Ricci did not preach the pure Gospel to the Chinese, but, in Gernet’s opinion, introduced them with a mere synthesis of ideologies. Therefore, in this sense, the Chinese people cannot accept “pure Christianity” but only a synthesis of Christian and Confucian ideologies.\textsuperscript{75}

Jacques Gernet and other researchers, who have taken the Neo-Confucians as the representative of whole Confucianism, have made a constructive error, since they did not pay enough attention to the difference between Ancient Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism. In fact, Ancient (original) Confucianism has generated many Confucian schools more or less different from one another, and choosing only one of them as a representative is like taking the Vietnamese as a representative of all Asians. In addition, Gernet’s claim of the conflict between Christianity and Chinese culture is because he did not make a proper distinction between religion and ethics (what is above oneself, \textit{se superior}, and what is below oneself, \textit{se inferior}),\textsuperscript{76} thus he has ignored the theoretically complementary elements of Christian and Confucian

\textsuperscript{73} Fei Laizhi 费赖之 (Aloysius Pfister) (Tr. by Feng Chengjun 冯承钧) 1995: \textit{Zai hua Yesuhuishi liezhuan ji shumu 在华耶稣会士列传及书目}. Beijing 北京: Zhonghua shuju 中华书局.

\textsuperscript{74} Li Madou 利玛窦 and Jin Nige (Trigault, Nicolas) 金尼阁 (Nicolas Trigault) 2001: \textit{Li Madou zhongguo zhaji 利玛窦中国札记}. Translated by He Gaoji 何高济 and others. Beijing 北京: Zhonghua shuju 中华书局.

\textsuperscript{75} Gernet has made such a conclusion in his book, see Gernet 1985.

\textsuperscript{76} This distinction is expressed by Luther in 1525 in his \textit{De servo arbitrio}. This is similar to the distinction between \textit{coram mundo} (before the world) and \textit{coram Deo} (before God).
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ways of thinking. Such confusion occurs probably because Gernet is a sinologist rather than a Christian theologian, although many Chinese scholars consider him a Christian theologian because of his non-Chinese identity (he is French). In fact, the method of Gernet is that of comparative religion and cultural analysis. Many theological perspectives have been ignored in his research, and part of the reason is that he is not a theologian.

In his *Jidujiao yu Mingmo ruxue* (Christianity and the Confucianism in the end of Ming Dynasty), a Chinese contemporary scholar, Sun Shangyang has composed his work according to the attitudes of Chinese intellectuals to Christianity. He based his analysis on the work of Matteo Ricci and the responses of Chinese intellectuals to Ricci's Christianity in the 16th and 17th centuries: contacting, accepting, and opposing. Although he also tried to analyze the reasons behind each group's attitude to Christianity, the study resembles a description of the types of cultural encounter rather than thematic systematic analysis.

Both of the works mentioned above have offered cultural and religious analysis to the attitudes of the Neo-Confucian relationship with Christianity, but the study focused on the essential theological themes has not yet been made.

The conclusions of the above researches such as Gernet have also been challenged by other scholars. For example, in his book, *Yang Tingyun, Confucian and Christian in the Ming China: His life and thought* (Leiden & New York 1988), Nicolas Standaert has made a theological analysis of the Confucian Christian Yang Tingyun, but the theme of salvation by God has not been paid enough attention. Standaert has studied the Chinese theologian Yang Tingyun in Ming Dynasty and around Standaert in Luven University many scholars have been active in studying the missionary documents in Ming and Qing dynasties. Gianni Criveller, an Italian

77 Cf., Luo Mingjia “Chuangzao shenxue he shexue lunli de sheng ai guan 创造神学和神学伦理的圣爱观”, in Luo Mingjia & Huang Baolu 2004, 22-25.
78 Sun 1994.
79 Standaert 1998: *Yang Tingyu, Confucian and Christian in the Ming China. His life and thought*. Standaert 2001: *Handbook of Christianity in China*. Standaert is a Belgian Catholic theologian, and he has built a network for the studies concerning Christianity and China, EUCHINA@LISTSERV.CC.KULEUVEN.AC.BE Many information concerning new publications in the field can be found here.
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theologian, in his book, *Preaching Christ in late Ming China: The Jesuit’s presentation of Christ from Matteo Ricci to Giulio Aleni* (Taipei 1997), has made a theological analysis, but he has only focused on the Jesuits’ presentation of Christ. The themes of my study in this study were not so much discussed by the two scholars. In addition, the specialty here is that both of the theologians are Catholic, and so no protestant theological perspective has been involved.

Julia Ching has written a book entitled with *Confucianism and Christianity: A comparative study* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1977 & 1996), and the method of her study is the comparative religious one. In this book her concentration was on comparing the different views of the human being, of God, and of self-transcendence in Confucianism and in Christianity. She introduces her work as a work “of a comparative historian of ideas an doctrines” and “a study of Confucianism in the light of certain perspectives borrowed from Christianity”.81 She was a Catholic and was trained in sinology in the West, and Christian systematic theological analysis has never been a real tool in her studies. In the book, *Christianity and Chinese religions* (London 1993), Hans Küng and Julia Ching have studied Christianity and Chinese religions. Although Confucianism is only a part of their work, their study too is helpful for my study in exploring the relationship between Confucianism and Christianity, since they have concentrated on several key concepts, such as Heaven and *Shangdi*.82 The weakness of this work is that there is no systematic theological analysis.

Yu Jibin (Chi-ping) 余继斌 has made a comprehensive study on contextualization of the fourth commandment with regard to the Chinese concept of *Xiao* 孝 (filial piety) to a present Confucian context.83 Yang Qingqiu 杨庆球 (Jason Yeung King-kau) has written a book *Sanctification and Freedom: A comparative study on the thought of Wang Yang-ming and Christianity*. Martin Luther and

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80 In his book Gianni Criveller has studied the Jesuits’ presentation of Christ from Matteo Ricci to Giulio Aleni in late Ming China. See Criveller 1997.
81 Ching 1977, xvii.
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Kierkegaard have been chosen as representatives to compare with Wang Yangming.\(^{84}\) This study has, however, focused only on the individual theologians.

Sung-Hae Kim has studied how much the Confucian and Christian contexts share in their understanding of the human being. She correctly finds that in Christianity humanity should be understood in its relationship with the divine, while in Confucianism the individual moral person is emphasized. She noticed also that in Confucianist Heaven is the ultimate source of the ethical mandate and its focus was on personal moral cultivation. However, she did not clearly demonstrate the difference between Confucian goal of being a sage and the Christian goal of becoming a righteous man.\(^{85}\) In this study, I will analyze this issue and try to find out the difference between Confucians and Christians.

Concerning the responses of the Cultural Nationalist Confucians to Christianity there are also a couple of studies. In the book *Huitong yu zhuanhua* 汇通与转化 ---- *Jidujiao yu xin rujia de duihua* 基督教与新儒家的对话 (Syncretism and Transformation: Dialogue between Christianity and Neo-Confucianism), Liang Yancheng 梁燕城, a Confucian Christian theologian, has tried to find a compromise to solve Cultural Nationalist Confucian Cai Renhou’s negative responses to Christianity. Liang tried to confront Cai’s negative attitude with an epistemologically inclusivist approach.\(^{86}\) One may doubt whether his attempt can lead to any success, since soteriologically Liang still holds an exclusivist stand.\(^{87}\) Such an attempt leads to progress in the Confucian-Christian dialogue, and Liang’s work has been taken as one of the sources of my study in this book. The problem of Liang Yancheng’s study is that he replaces Christian theological terms with too many sinological ones, and the method of his study is also more sinological than theological.

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\(^{86}\) See footnote 41 above.

\(^{87}\) Cai, Zhou & Liang 1985.
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In the articles “Shangdi de chaoyue 上帝的超越 ---- Jian lun xin rujia dui jidujiao de piping 兼论新儒家对基督教的批评” (The transcedence of God)\(^88\) and “Shangdi de chaoyue yu linzai 上帝的超越与临在” (The transcedence and immanence of God), Luo Bingxiang 罗秉祥, a theologian in Hong Kong, has well analyzed Modern Confucian responses to the transcedence and immanence of the God of Christians by pointing out that the Confucians’ main problem is that they have misunderstood the concepts of transcedence and immanence.\(^89\) Luo was well trained theologically in the USA, and his approach is more theological than comparative of sinological and cultural elements. In fact, Luo’s study, focusing mainly on the themes of transcedence and immanence, is one of the most valuable pieces of previous research on the topic of this work. Lai Pinchao 赖品超 has studied the immanence of the transcendent God and the transcedence of immanent humanity in the Christian tradition. Lai’s study has special value when I analyze the means of salvation in chapter 5, since he has been trying to discover how transcedence and immanence are understood in the orthodox tradition of the church rather.\(^90\)

In his work: Qihe yu zhuanhua 契合与转化 (Agreement and Transformation): Jidujiao yu zhongguo wenhua gengxin zhi lu 基督教与中国文化更新之路 (The way of Chinese Cultural Regeneration), Zhuang Zukun 庄祖鲲 has listed the affirmative arguments of many mainland and overseas Modern Confucians concerning Christianity.\(^91\) The weak side of Zhuang in this work is that he employs only conservative theological perspective and has not shown his knowing of systematic theology generally.

Among many others, the representatives of contemporary Chinese scholars of religious studies are Zhuo Xinping 卓新平 (Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing), Zhao Dunhua 赵敦华 (Peking University), Yang Huilin 杨慧林, He Guanghu 何光沪 and Li Qiuling 李秋零 (Renmin University of China) and Zhang

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\(^88\) Luo 2000. He is the director of the Department of Religious studies at the Hong Kong Baptist University.
\(^89\) Luo 2001.
\(^90\) Lai 2005.
Qingxiong 张庆熊 (Fudan University). These scholars aim at academic objectivity and appreciate rationality, though they usually hold a sympathetic attitude to Christianity and recommend that China should learn something from Christianity.92 Zhuang Zukun has considered many of such scholars as the representatives of Cultural Regeneration.93 These authors consider themselves as academic rationalist scholars rather than Confucians. They are, however, different from those intellectuals of the May Fourth Movement tradition, since they emphasize, on the one hand, the limits of rationalism and of the Enlightenment tradition, and on the other hand, sincerely respect Christianity and Confucianism. I will repeatedly discuss these scholars. The theological perspective has been noticed in their studies; even so, the main approach of these scholars has still mainly been comparative cultural or religious analysis rather than systematic theological analysis.

Many other researches have been done concerning the Confucian-Christian dialogue, but almost all of them are studied from the comparative religious rather than systematic theological perspective. For example, John D. Young has written a book entitled with *Confucianism and Christianity: The first encounter* (1983, Hong Kong University Press). Yao Xinzong has written a book entitled *Confucianism and Christianity: A comparative study of Jen and Agape* (1996 & 1997, Sussex Academic Press). Yang Xinan 杨熙楠 has edited a collection of preliminary studies on Chinese theology in 2000: *Hanyu shenxue chuyi 汉语神学刍议*, the contributors in this collection have focused on how to do theology in the Chinese language, and the topic of my study here was mentioned occasionally but has not really been studied.

A new study on the similar topic is Arne Redse’s “*By Grace Alone” in context of “Self-cultivation”: An attempt at contextualizing the Lutheran doctrine of justification to Chinese contexts as influenced by New Confucianism* in 2005.94 Redse’s aim is “to examine what Western churches and theology may learn from an endeavour to contextualize the doctrine of justification in Chinese contexts. What challenges can Western missionaries bring home that may elaborate and modify the

91 Zhuang 1998.
92 Concerning these scholars, refer to Luo Mingjia & Huang Baoluo 2004.
93 Zhuang 1998.
94 Redse 2005.
understanding of the doctrine of justification in the Western churches and in Christian theology in general.”\textsuperscript{95} As a conclusion, Redse lists nine central concepts and elements, which are connected with the doctrine of justification, two most basic differences in diverging the understandings of the appropriation of salvation in the two faiths, and four other important divergences and barriers between Confucianism and Christianity. However, before he finally proceeds to contextualizing the doctrine of justification as specified in the Chinese context, Redse spent too much space in discussing the method of contextualization, the Lutheran doctrine of justification and relevant elements of New Confucianism. His survey on previous studies has, however, been helpful for me in doing the present work.

1.5 Motivation

Why am I now trying to confront Confucian understandings of the Christian doctrine of salvation? Briefly speaking, there are two main motivations: this is an important theme, and it has not been really studied from a systematic theological viewpoint. I have already introduced the previous researches on this topic, and now I am going to explain the importance of this theme. On the one hand, because of the cultural crisis and regeneration in contemporary China, this has made the encounter between Christianity and Chinese culture an important issue. On the other hand, because the Chinese who are involved have mainly had a Confucian outlook on life, Confucianism is therefore regarded as the source of most Chinese responses to Christianity.

1.5.1 Confucians as the main dialogue partner to Christians in China

The Confucian responses to Christianity are not only important for this study to explore the Chinese cultural regeneration, but they are also considered important for the Confucian-Christian dialogue. During the history of encounter between Chinese culture and Christianity, the Confucians have been the main dialogue partner to Christians. So, as far as Christianity is mentioned in connecting to China or the Chinese, the Confucian responses to Christianity cannot be ignored.

\textsuperscript{95} Redse 2005, 37.
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The influential position of Confucianism concerning the relationship between Christianity and Chinese culture is very important for constructing Chinese contextual theology,\textsuperscript{96} since theology has to reflect our times, and if it does not, it is a false theology. Confucianism is an important element of Chinese context, since Confucianism has been the dominating influence upon Chinese tradition, and it is still an important source for the value system of contemporary China. Thus, a Chinese contextual Christian theology cannot ignore dialogue with Confucianism.

Confucians have been the main dialogue partner to Christians in China, although the exact time when Christianity entered China is uncertain. What is known is that the first entrance of Christianity into China was on the easternmost outreach of the Church. One tradition attributes the first missionary work to the Apostle St. Thomas.\textsuperscript{97}

Western people were not aware of the existence of Judaism in China until 1605, when the Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci met a Chinese Jewish man Ai Tian 艾田 from Kaifeng 开封 city in He'nan 河南 province.\textsuperscript{98} Nestorians came to China in AD 635 during the Tang 唐 Dynasty (618-907) and were revived in the 12th century when the Mongolians ruled China. Jesuits missionaries Matteo Ricci and his colleagues came to China in 1583. In 1724 the Qing Emperor forbade Christianity because of a dispute on rituals between the Vatican and Qing Court.\textsuperscript{99}

\textsuperscript{96} This can be demonstrated with the models of the contextual theology of Stephen B. Bevans, who has mentioned five models: the translation model; the anthropological model; the praxis model; the synthetic model; and the transcendental model. See Bevans 1992, 310. The term “contextual theology” is a fairly new term, but the debate about gospel and culture has been a constant phenomenon for a long time. Cf., Ahonen, 2003, 29. The theologians in China have been continuously occupied with the topic of indigenization: how to reconcile the gospel with the forms of traditional culture. Cf., Kena 1993, 12: K. describes contextual theology as an ability to give the answer from the gospel in a certain situation, while indigenization suits the gospel in the forms of traditional culture. Yang Huilin 杨慧林 & Shi Xiaoli 史晓丽 2004, “Hanyu shenxue de chuji nghua jiqi wenti lingyu 汉语神学的处境化及其问题领域”, in Luo Mingjia & Huang Baoluо 2004, 219-227. See also the responses by Xiao Baorong 肖宝荣 and Thor Strandenaes, in Luo Mingjia & Huang Baoluо 2004, 227-234. One may also refer to Wang Xiaochao 1998.

\textsuperscript{97} Since 16th century there has been a legend that the disciple of Jesus, Thomas, did missionary work in India and south China. However, this has yet to be confirmed with any strong evidence.

\textsuperscript{98} The name of Ai Tian was based on the study of French scholar Paul Pelliot and Canadian bishop W. C. White. Cf., also Jiang 1982.

\textsuperscript{99} Li Tiangang 1998: Hongguo liyi zhi zheng 中国礼仪之争. In addition, Lin Jinshui 林金水 has also studied this topic, see Lin Jinshui 1993:”Ming Qing shidai shidafu yu zhongxi liyi zhi zheng 明清时代士大夫与中西礼仪之争”, in Lishi yanjiu 历史研究 1993 (1). Telike, Fuzipa 特里克, 弗茨帕 [美
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The first Protestant missionary, Robert Morrison (1782-1834), arrived in China in 1807.\(^{100}\) The Rebellion of Taiping Movement (Taiping tianguo yundong 太平天国运动 1851-1864) was a sad example of encounter between Christianity and Chinese culture, since the leader Hong Xiuquan 洪秀权 (1814-1864) had mixed Confucianism, Daoism and Chinese folk religion together with Protestant Christianity.\(^{101}\) The development of the Protestant mission was partially related to Western imperialism, a policy that contravened the will of the Chinese people. During the period from the 1910s to 1949 the relationship between Christianity and the New Cultural Movement (Xin wenhua yundong 新文化运动) resulted in a great controversy. During the reign of Communism, since 1949, Christianity was strictly controlled by atheistic Communists. The situation has been changing since the beginning of the 1980s, when China took its first steps in economic reform politics.

Before the Communists came into power in 1949, Christians had only really been involved in dialogue with Chinese Confucians through Ricci. Academic dialogue between Christianity and Chinese culture did not resume again until the beginning of the 1980s. Although many new issues appeared, most Chinese cultural representatives mainly dwelled on the topics already discussed by Matteo Ricci and the Neo-Confucians in the 16th and 17th centuries.

There has only twice been a true opportunity for a religious dialogue between Christianity and Chinese culture (one in the 16th century, and one since the 1980s). From the Chinese side the Confucians have been the most attendant party in dialogue with Christians. The influence of Confucianism is still very strong in today’s dialogue between Christianity and Chinese culture, although, since the 1980s, rationalist intellectuals have been playing a more and more important role. The dialogue is still

\(^{100}\) This site (http://www.babelstone.co.uk/Morrison/index.html) provides information relating to the Morrison Collection of Chinese Books at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS).

\(^{101}\) This site (http://www.babelstone.co.uk/Morrison/index.html) provides information relating to the Morrison Collection of Chinese Books at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS).


mainly based on the inheritance from Matteo Ricci (16\textsuperscript{th} and 17\textsuperscript{th} century dialogue between Christianity and Confucianism).

Thus, I argue that the Confucians have been the main dialogue partner to Christianity in China. Such a status of the Confucians motivates me to study further their ideas about the Christian thesis of salvation by God.

1.5.2 Contemporary cultural regeneration bringing Confucianism and Christianity to the same agenda

Here I am going to employ the statistics of Zhuang Zukun 庄祖鲲 to show how important the dialogue between Christianity and Confucianism is to the cultural regeneration in contemporary China. Zhuang is a contemporary Chinese Christian pastor in the USA. Concerning cultural regeneration (wenhua gengxin 文化更新) he has made many contacts with Chinese scholars during the past years, and his work is helpful and important for understanding the importance of the Sino-Christian dialogue in contemporary China. Zhuang conducted research in 1994 in North America concerning the "crisis feeling" in Mainland China (Zhongguo dalu 中国大陆) and Taiwan 台湾. "Crisis" is a popular term in China since the beginning of the 1980s. It refers mainly to the situation brought about by the new challenges of the world. These have brought a crisis to the Chinese people culturally, economically and spiritually. In order to solve the problems of this crisis, “cultural regeneration” has become imperative in China. Zhuang has made a survey and got the following results: more than 80% of mainland Chinese intellectuals living in the North America think that there is a crisis of faith in mainland China.\textsuperscript{102} 86% of the mainland Chinese Christian intellectuals and 61% of the non-Christians think that there is a danger of moral collapse in mainland China.\textsuperscript{103}

Concerning the solution to the crises, most of the non-Christians (64%) say, "I do not know" or "there is no solution". A small minority of the non-Christians (6%) say that Confucianism is the solution. About a quarter of the non-Christians (26%)

\textsuperscript{102} Zhuang 1995, 75.
\textsuperscript{103} Zhuang 1995, 77.
believe that Christianity is the solution. Less than 2% regard either Buddhism or Communism as the solution.\textsuperscript{104} A considerable number of Christians from mainland China living in North America (84\%) say that Christianity is the solution to the crisis of China. It should also be noted that almost all Taiwanese, 92\% of the Christian Taiwanese and 77\% of the non-Christian Taiwanese, think that there is a danger of moral collapse in Taiwan.\textsuperscript{105}

Zhuang’s statistics above must be taken only as a reference, since it was based on the field work of questionnaire that contributed to part of Zhuang’s Th.D. thesis in Trinity Theological Seminary in the USA. The method of these statistics was not well introduced, and it is difficult to make a statement about the reliability of the statistics.\textsuperscript{106}

The feeling of crisis is familiar not only in China but also in the Western world. The main issue involved in this crisis feeling is that of worldview (\textit{Weltanschauung}) rather than merely that of faith. However, the beginning of a sense of crisis in China can be traced back to the year 1840 when China lost the Opium War to Britain. Since then China has been facing a serious cultural crisis.

Chinese intellectuals\textsuperscript{107} in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw the decline of the Chinese political system, the decay of many of its central institutions, and their land invaded by foreigners. They subsequently came to believe that the Chinese civilization itself had broken down and failed its own people. They also took Confucianism as the representative of rottenness in Chinese culture. Chinese intellectuals attacked the Confucian establishment in the first decades of the 20th century, and this is represented by the tradition of the May Fourth Movement (\textit{Wusi yundong 五四运动}) of 1919, which gave the impression that the rationale for the Three Bonds\textsuperscript{108} was depicted as three forms of baggage. As a consequence

\textsuperscript{104} Zhuang 1995, 78-79.
\textsuperscript{105} Zhuang 1998, 134.
\textsuperscript{106} Concerning the details of the statistics, please see Zhuang Zukun 1995.
\textsuperscript{107} The term “Chinese intellectuals” refers to those who had received around ten years education in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. This term may have quite a lot of different meanings in the contemporary time.
\textsuperscript{108} The important Confucian ethical system was indicated in the so-called "Three Bonds" (\textit{sangang 三纲}), namely, the authority of the ruler over the minister, the father over the son, and the husband over the wife. Historically, the idea of the Three Bonds emerged in Confucian literature relatively late. In AD 75, an imperial conference was organized to settle some of the vital cosmological and ethical
Confucian ethics were condemned as despotic, autocratic, patriarchal, and male-chauvinistic. Since the 1920s, China has repeatedly witnessed and experienced waves of anti-Confucian campaigns. The anti-Confucian movement became powerfully intertwined with an emergent Chinese nationalism in the 1920s and 1930s.

The leader and main beneficiary of the nationalist and anti-Confucian movement was the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which unified China under the Communist rule in 1949. Chairman Mao and his followers were determined to supplant the Confucian legacy with a new culture as a true guide for China's modernization. Many dissatisfying activities committed in the name of Mao and Marx during the Cultural Revolution led to a great revolution against Maoist policies after the death of Mao in 1976. These very activities have nowadays been of influence in raising the status of Confucianism in China to perhaps its highest point in the 20th century.

Most traditional Chinese are occupied with ideas that are a mixture of Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism. The loss of the war to the Western world and the suffering caused by the Westerners have made the Chinese eager to learn technology and science. Although democracy and some other ideologies are appreciated by them, most Western ideologies have been rejected as part of the Western imperialism. Especially since the victory of Communism (1949) and during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), atheists rejected and damaged most the Chinese traditional worldviews.

After the gradual decline of Communism as an ideology after Mao's death, China faced a situation of ideological vacuum. The void of faith was soon to be filled by the modernization of materialism and the secularism of economic development. As of the end of the 1970s China began to emphasize economic reforms. After over issues confronting the official thinking of the Han dynasty (206 BC-AD 220). It is in the record of that conference, commonly known as Discussions in the White Tiger Hall (Baihutong 白虎通), that reference is made to the "Three Bonds". See the chapter on "Sangang liuzhi 三纲六致" ("Three Bonds and six principles") in Baihutong, chap.29. For the precise reference see No. 2 of the Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series (Index to Po Hu Tung) 1966, 7/29/11a-b.

110 Joseph Levenson of the University of California at Berkeley directly states that the decline of the Confucian tradition was an irreversible tendency in the 1950s. Cf., Levenson 1967.
twenty years’ development of economics, many people in China realized the decay and corruption of morality in the country. Nowadays the necessity of ethical and moral edification has become an issue of considerable gravity.\textsuperscript{111}

The economic modernization has undoubtedly brought many benefits to the Chinese people. It has also brought challenges to Chinese society and culture. Many people in contemporary China still identify modernism with material development. In fact, the main feature of modernism is not only the materialist development but also that of an ideological change.\textsuperscript{112} According to these standards, one may see that China is now strictly controlled by secular materialism and technological development. In certain places and areas, however, China is also experiencing post-modernism; for example, in the big cities and in academia, many post-modernist ideas are popular.

As far as the ideological aspect of modernism is concerned, China is now facing a big challenge. The search for the economically and technically most efficient means to achieve chosen ends may dominate a participant’s conduct even to the point of changing one’s goal or choosing new ones. The more technology controls the worldview of people, the more people will feel a need for spiritual faith.\textsuperscript{113} Thus, although China is now experiencing a fast pace of materialist development, the Chinese model of thinking is still pre-Modernist. Self esteem and individual activity are particularly still in a very low position, which clearly indicates that China is still at the stage of pre-modernism.

On the other hand, the gaps among different regional areas and people in China are huge. Some areas and people already are post-modernists, but many others are still considered pre-modernists. In addition, industrialization and urbanization are also big problems threatening China. The main characteristics of the contemporary Chinese culture are secularism and critical rationalism. The revival of secularism has much to do with rejecting Christianity and focusing only on the material interest of

\textsuperscript{111} Luo Mingjia 罗明嘉 & Huang Baolu 黄保罗 2004, “Qi anyan 前言”, 1-8, and Luo Mingjia’s article “Chuangzao shenxue he shenxue lunli de sheng ai guan 创造神学和神学伦理的圣爱观”, 17-28.
\textsuperscript{112} Zhao 1995, 23-31.
\textsuperscript{113} This idea was mentioned long time ago in Max Weber’s work, see MWSW 1994, ix-xi.
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this world. Critical rationalism has much to do with the Western countries replacing Christianity with humanism and focusing only on the ability of human reason.\(^{114}\)

Therefore, many Chinese scholars have been interested in discussing the regeneration of Chinese culture. This discussion is related to rethinking the tradition of Communism and the May Fourth Movement and is also related to the modernization of China. Many critiques and suggestions are introduced in order to solve the cultural crisis that threatens China. The Chinese intellectuals involved in this discussion of cultural regeneration are many, and within each group there are many different sub-groups. Some are more conservative, and others are more radical. Some are Modern Confucians, who insist in following and modernizing Confucianism.\(^{115}\) Some are academic scholars, who oppose Confucianism and insist in borrowing the whole ideological system from the West.\(^{116}\) Some are Christians, theologians and scholars of religious studies, who have discussed cultural regeneration from the viewpoint of Christianity.\(^{117}\)

Through these scholars, Christianity and Confucianism are brought to the same agenda of cultural regeneration. Thus, because of the discussion of cultural


\(^{115}\) Du Weiming, Liu Shuxian and scholars of Chinese Cultural Institute -school (Zhongguo wenhua shuyuan pai) such as Tang Yijie, a professor of Daoism in Beijing University, Pang Pu, a professor in Academy of Social Science in Beijing. Concerning this school, please see Zhuang Zukun 1998, 137-138. Li Zehou, a scholar of ideological exposure to dialectical materialism, has also been considered a member of Zhongguo wenhua shuyuan. Concerning Li please see Zhuang Zukun 1998, 137-138, one may also refer to Cheng & Bunnin 2002, 246-260.

\(^{116}\) There are many different opinions among various scholars. A Taiwanese scholar Bo Yang's *The Ugly Chinese Men* has been playing an important role in starting the discussion on the cultural crisis.

The Future School (Zouxiang weilai pai) aims to import western ideology and reject most of Chinese traditions. The representatives of this school are the scholars Jin Guantao, Liu Qingfeng, 1984, and the TV video series *Heshang* 1988.

The School introducing Western culture (Yinjie xifang wenhua pai) is even more radical in appreciating Western it. Scholars such as Gan Yang intend to employ hermeneutics to interpret Chinese culture with a very negative attitude. Concerning this school please see Zhuang Zukun 1998, 140-142.

Liu Xiaobo is an important figure who strongly criticizes Chinese traditions. He said that the sorrow of China is that of lacking God, and this sorrow produces two problems: on the one hand, the individual person can extend himself endlessly; on the other hand, one lacks the awareness of self-control. To rely too much on people is the source of the Chinese unhappiness, which appreciates human morality and human ability but ignores contracts, law, and system. It is noted that Liu Xiaobo is not a Christian, but he has suggested that Confucians accept the concept of God in Chinese culture. See Liu Xiaobo 1989a, 71; 1989b, 35; 1989c, 37.

\(^{117}\) Ruokanen and I have edited a book to collect the presentations and responses in the conference “Christianity and Chinese Culture” of 2003. The issue of cultural regeneration was an important topic in the conference, please cf., Luo Mingjia (Ruokanen) & Huang Baoluo (Paulos Huang) 2004.
regeneration, the relationship between Confucianism and Christianity has become a hot topic in contemporary China.\textsuperscript{118} This situation is one of the reasons that motivate me to study this subject that is so essential for understanding the role of the Christian-Confucian encounter in the regeneration of Chinese culture.

1.6 Structure and notational convention
In addition to the summary, bibliography and index, there are seven parts in this study: The "introduction" includes the aim, motivation, and method of the present study. The previous research and sources of the present study are also introduced. In the second chapter I have explained, in detail, the preconditions for the dialogue between Christianity and Confucianism.

As earlier in section 1.1 mentioned, the aim of this study is analyzing the Confucian understandings of the Christian doctrine of salvation in order to uncover the basic problems in the Confucian-Christian dialogue. This aim will be fulfilled through an analysis of the Confucian understanding of the four fundamental issues of the Christian doctrine of salvation. The analyses of these four elements construct the main content of chapters 3, 4 and 5.

Chapter three deals with the Confucian ideas about the God in Christianity, and the focus has been on the issues whether God exists\textsuperscript{119} and whether the Christian concept of God is equal to the Chinese concepts of Tian 天 (Heaven) or Shangdi 上帝 (Sovereign on High).

Chapter four is dedicated to the analysis of various Confucian opinions of the object of salvation and their state in Christianity. The state to which God saves human beings is not so much an issue in this study, and the concept of creation will be analyzed mainly in this chapter so as to display the existential context of the person.

In chapter five I will analyze various Confucian ideas concerning the means of salvation in Christianity: internal transcendence and external transcendence. Other

\textsuperscript{118} Cf., Luo Mingjia & Huang Baoluo 2004.
\textsuperscript{119} The term “existence” will be analyzed in the beginning of chapter 3, since it is a very complicated theological and philosophical concept.
1. Introduction

corcepts, such as that of law and grace, and the concepts of merit, justification, and sanctification\textsuperscript{120} will especially be analyzed.

In Chapter six of the present study I will try to clarify three issues: the hidden difference in the ways of thinking between Confucians and Christians, the basic problems of the Confucian-Christian dialogue, and the affirmative possibilities of the dialogue between them.

At the end of the present study there are eight appendices. Appendices I and II are the primary sources of Confucianism, \textit{i.e.}, the Five Classics and the Four Books. Appendix III is the eleven quotations of Ricci, where he shows that the term “Shangdi” appears in the Chinese classics. Appendix IV introduces the degeneration from theism into humanism. All of the other four appendices are the background materials of Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism. Appendix V introduces the nine horizons of the Nationalist Cultural Confucian Tang Junyi. Appendixes VI, VII and VIII introduce the basic ideas of Neo-Confucianism. Each of them has been mentioned when they are involved in the main text of the book.

The transliteration of the Chinese characters follows \textit{pinyin}, the system used in the People's Republic of China. This system has recently become almost universally accepted in English-language publications, either as the sole standard of Romanization or as an optional alternative to the previously common Wade-Giles system. For the sake of uniformity, this study follows this trend, giving names and terms in \textit{pinyin}. Chinese characters are usually written in simplified forms except in the quotations from the Chinese classics, where traditional Chinese characters are used, since when Chinese classics are quoted simplified Chinese characters may raise some confusion. All the English translations of quotations are made by me except when the translators are indicated separately.

\textsuperscript{120} These concepts will be defined in chapter 5 of this study.
2. The preconditions for the dialogue

Anyone pursuing a profound understanding of Confucian responses to the Christian doctrine of salvation must pay considerable attention to the basic ideas of the dialogue between Christianity and Confucianism. Many concepts and terms are involved in this study; thus, I shall describe them in this chapter. This description will certainly help readers to understand the process of this study.

In this study I am going to employ George A. Linbeck's definition of church doctrine as a tool to define the terms which refer to the main concepts in forming the basis and the context of the dialogue. He says,

Church doctrines are communally authoritative teachings regarding beliefs and practices that are considered essential to the identity or welfare of the group in question. They may be formally stated or informally operative, but in any case they indicate what constitutes faithful adherence to a community.... In any case, operative doctrines, even if not official ones, are necessary to communal identity. A religious body cannot exist as a recognizably distinctive collectivity unless it has some beliefs and/or practices by which it can be identified. 121

In this work I will refer to Lindbeck's theory of religious language, and this issue was already discussed in section 1.3 “Methods”. My focus, however, is to analyze the belief expressed verbally.122

The term "religion" was born in the Western world of experience and thought. It is difficult to find an equivalent in Chinese language that would contain the same connotation. The Neo-Confucians in the 16th century usually used the words "xue 学" (logy, study) and "jiao 教" (teaching, religion) when referring to the heritage received from their ancestors. These Chinese terms do not have a metaphysical meaning but a materialist sense; thus, they are similar to the Western term "culture".

121 Lindbeck 1984, 74.
2. The preconditions for the dialogue

The Christianity represented by Jesuit missionaries such as Matteo Ricci was such a "culture" for the 16th and 17th centuries Neo-Confucians, who called it "the study of Heaven" (tianxue 天学) or "the study of West" (xixue 西学). Many Confucians did not accept the ideas and beliefs of Christianity but rather a "mixture of Christianity and Western sciences such as astronomy, arithmetic and technology". For example, Xu Guangqi 徐光启 divided Ricci's "study" into three levels:

The highest is to cultivate self in order to serve Heaven. This resembles the concepts of today's morality and religion.

The middle is to explore material phenomena in order to find the principles of the world. This comes close to the contemporary idea of philosophy.

The lowest is technology. In the contemporary world its meaning might be found in the word "science".123

Many contemporary Chinese people are still influenced by this characterization of Christian doctrine. In the present study, the term "Christianity" has two different meanings: 1) The Christianity represented by the Jesuit Society of the 16th-17th centuries. This term includes not only Christian teaching but also Western science, technology, modernization, etc.; 2) The Christianity, in so far as the dialogue in contemporary China is concerned, of both Roman Catholic non-Jesuit groups and that of Protestant thinkers. In focusing on the Christian doctrine of salvation, my work will not explore the differences that obtain among Jesuits (and Catholics), Protestant, and Orthodox denominations in any systematic way but will be indicated within the analysis of each case.

Later in this chapter I am going to introduce an analysis of the following four issues: 1) The legacy of Matteo Ricci as applied to the Confucian-Christian dialogue. 2) A clear understanding of what Confucianism is, which will be explored first, because it is the basis of all Confucian comments and arguments concerning the Christianity. 3) The doctrines of the main Confucians who have interpreted the Christian thesis of salvation by God. Without them this study would be baseless. 4)

122 See section 1.3 above in this work.
2. The preconditions for the dialogue

The notion of how the Christian thesis of salvation is introduced into Chinese culture. This concept is the object of the commentary, which is analyzed throughout the study with the intention of achieving an evaluation of the capacity of China to accept Christianity by uncovering the basic problems in the Confucian-Christian dialogue.

The classification of Confucianism and of Confucians into different groups is an important contribution of mine in exploring the dialogue between Christianity and Confucianism, since many people talk about this issue without making a detailed definition and classification. Thus, many controversial conclusions have resulted. Some argue that Confucians are positive toward the Christian notion of salvation by God, and others say that they are negative.

2.1 The legacy of Matteo Ricci for the Confucian-Christian dialogue

Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) and his colleagues, attempted in the 16th century to accommodate themselves diplomatically to the Chinese scholarly milieu, i.e., Confucian intellectuals and court elite. Even today the dialogue between Chinese culture and Christianity is strongly influenced by Ricci’s work in the 16th century. But Ricci made some mistakes in certain ways of understanding the Chinese, for example, in not really grasping the central ideas of the various Chinese schools of thought and their historical background of his day. The most obvious example is in chapter two of his book *Tianzhu shiyi* 天主实义 (The true meaning of the Lord of Heaven), where he did not quite understand the meanings of the Daoist 无 (Non-Being, Nothing), the Buddhist 空 (Empty, Emptiness), and the Neo-Confucian

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123 Xu's "Zengding Xu Wending Gong wenji" vol. 1 "Jihe yuanben xu".
124 Ricci was an Italian Jesuit missionary, who arrived in Macau, China in 1582 and had spent many years in dialogue with Confucians in China. Luo Guang has written a book on his biography in Taiwan, see Luo Guang 1982: *Li Madou zhuang*. European (French) studies on Ricci, see Pei Huaxing (Henri, Bernard-Maitre) 1995: *Li Madou shenfu zhuang* (Le père Matthieu Ricci et la société chinoise de son temps 1552-1610). Chinese studies on Ricci, see Lin Jinshui 1996: *Li Madou yu Zhongguo*. Japanese study on Ricci, see Hirakawa 1999, *Li Madou zhuang* 利玛窦传. Concerning Ricci’s own works, see Pasquale d'Elia's *Fonti Ricciane* and Ricci 1986.
125 The four hundredth anniversary in 1983 was commemorated in the People's Republic of China. Taiwan even organized a large international Ricci symposium in 1983. An almost one thousand page Chinese - English volume with all the contributions to the symposium was published: *International
2. The preconditions for the dialogue

Taiji 太极, Li 理 and Qi 气. Ricci’s work has, however, provided Christian thought with an entrance into Chinese culture. And it was Ricci who actually started the academic dialogue between Christianity and Confucianism. Naturally Ricci acted according to the limitations of the Stoic theological trends which were fashionable in his time in Europe. As Pope John Paul II later says:

Just as the Fathers of the Church thought in regard to Christianity and Greek culture, so Matteo Ricci was rightly convinced that faith in Christ would not bring any harm to Chinese culture, but rather would enrich and perfect it.

Reading the above quotation, one perhaps cannot help but think of the maxim from Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274): “gratia naturam non tollit, sed supponit et perficit” (Grace does not destroy nature, but supports and perfects it). Matteo Ricci has successfully established a connection between Christianity and Chinese culture based on this classical Catholic understanding of the relation between God and the created realm.

In his book Ricci stressed self-cultivation, equated God with Shangdi (Sovereign on High), and used the Chinese classics to prove that some of the basic religious concepts of Catholics were already extant in ancient China. Ricci tried his very best to show both the theological and ethical compatibility of the original Confucian thought and Christianity. This theological compatibility refers mainly to how the Christian concept of God exists in Chinese ancient classics, though He was called by different names (Shangdi and Tian). The ethical compatibility refers to the relationship between God and human beings as forming the basis of human relationships. Ricci called such a relationship between God and human beings the Biggest Ethic. For Ricci, however, the later development of Confucianism made people forget these compatibilities.

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127 Discourse on 25th October 1982, during the concluding session of the International Ricci Studies Congress which was held at the University of Macerata and the Pontifical Gregorian University to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Ricci’s arrival in China.

128 God, Heaven, Hell, the Devil, Angels, Soul, Holy, Sacred, Saint are some examples of this kind.
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One of Ricci’s main achievements is that he distinguished Ancient Confucianism from Neo-Confucianism and successfully pointed out the reason why Neo-Confucians responded to Christianity negatively. Ricci’s radical separation of the original Confucian thought from its historical developmental stages (such as Mencian Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism) has resulted in his being criticized by many Chinese intellectuals from his own time to the present. The division is, however, warranted and is, in fact, one of the important bequests toward the dialogue between Christianity and Confucianism, a dialogue Ricci has influenced in many ways. The following three merits of his bequest should not be forgotten.

First, Ricci’s approach to dialogue with Confucians emphasized the mediation of natural reason and its application to philosophical thinking. This approach prevented him from plunging into preaching the necessity of a faith which alone can accept revelation. His reasonable method led many Chinese scholars to investigate Christian thought even further. The appropriateness of Ricci’s approach was indicated by its success and was evident not only in China itself but also in all the Asian countries subject to the influence of Chinese culture. This has been the case from Ricci’s days to the present time. For example, from the 1980s, after the break caused by the Cultural Revolution, contemporary Chinese intellectuals have continued the dialogue between Christianity and Confucianism (or the whole Chinese culture) on the basis of Ricci’s inheritance.

Second, “self-cultivation” is both the starting-point and the final concern of Ricci. The term “self-cultivation” refers to the important Confucian concept that human beings can become better through their own efforts, which include usually reading sages’ books, meditation, and trying their best to improve their moral levels. Chinese people in general, especially the Confucians, believe that the most important task of life is self-cultivation. Therefore, a truly superior person strives first and foremost to be self-cultivated. In his book Ricci explained clearly why the superior person, in order to achieve self-cultivation, has to worship the Lord of Heaven. This is an important theme even in contemporary China, where scholars and government are talking about the cultural regeneration and the building of ethic and morality.

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129 Ricci 1985, 47-51.
130 Ricci 1985, 51-52.
2. The preconditions for the dialogue

Ricci’s point of departure for reflecting on self-cultivation is the natural goodness of human nature emphasized by Confucianism and the present Chinese Communist government. Thus, many Chinese scholars have been able to accept his teaching on this essential issue, although he employed scholastic modes rather than Chinese tradition. Based on such an inheritance many contemporary Chinese scholars have started to emphasize the difference between the Christian self-cultivation and the Chinese self-cultivation. They are dissatisfied with the notion of the goodness of human nature, which is appreciated by Confucianism. They have also begun to investigate original sin, which is stressed by Christianity. In the field of ethical edification, Ricci has offered an important depositum for the contemporary dialogue between Christianity and Confucianism.131

Third, Ricci’s many quotations from the Chinese classics have been generally accepted and have served to show the relationship between Chinese tradition and Christianity.132 His identification between the Chinese concepts “Tian” (Heaven) and “Shangdi” (Sovereign on High) is one of his most important contributions to the dialogue between Christianity and Confucianism. Even today this is the starting-point for such dialogue.

An important limitation for Ricci’s thought, however, was the static mode of his thinking, common most of the Western systematic theologians of Ricci’s day. This static mode of thinking taught of the existence of a static world, created once and for all and limited in both space and time, and they taught also concepts which they tied in with their theory of the existence of a creator God.133 Such a theology had a great influence on Ricci too, so that he rejected other religions and had a tendency to oppose all Confucian schools except the earliest. Since the Chinese believed the world to be the product of a ceaseless evolution, limitless in extension and duration. The good thing for the dialogue was that Ricci, like other Western theologians of those times, was affected by Augustine, who affirmed that in the providence of the merciful God there can be high moral life outside of Christianity. This sort of inclusivism, allowed Ricci to recognize the values inherent in Ancient Confucianism.

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131 Wan Junren’s 万俊人 "Wei he Jidujiao geng rong rongyi jinru Zhongguo wenhua 为何基督教更容易进入中国文化?” in Luo Mingjia & Huang Baoluo 2004, 103-123.
2. The preconditions for the dialogue

From the point of view of soteriology, however, an exclusivist emphasis declares that outside of the Roman Catholic Church there is no other truth that brings salvation.

2.2 Confucianism

Confucian understanding and, thus, any commentary on the Christian doctrine of salvation, raises an issue of delicacy and requires careful specification. The term “Confucianism” refers to the principles of ethics, morals and politics as codified by Confucius. However, the very same term, "Confucianism", means totally different things for different representatives of Confucianism. Each of the different schools of Confucianism, with their own doctrines, calls their tradition "Confucianism".

One of the important features of philosophy and religion, of course, is generally that they developed by adding new interpretations to the earlier forms of the existing philosophy or religion. This feature particularly applies to Chinese philosophy and religion, since “appreciating the ancient tradition” occupies a particularly important position in them. New interpreters always try to find support from the ancients rather than to proclaim that they have found anything new, although their interpretations are totally new and are different from the ancient one. It is essential to make clear distinctions, therefore, among these different schools of Confucianism. Otherwise, the real Confucian ideas and opinions concerning the Christianity cannot be discovered. I explain in the following the different meanings of Confucianism.

Confucianism is a worldview, a social ethic, a political, and a scholarly tradition, and a way of life. Also, Confucianism is a historical phenomenon. The emergence of the Confucian tradition has close relationship with Confucius (551-479 BC), who considered himself a "transmitter" rather than a "creator" of culture. He consciously tried to reanimate the old to attain the new. The scholarly tradition envisioned by Confucius can be traced back to the sage-kings of the antiquity of the Shang 商 Dynasty (c. 1600-1100 BC) and the Zhou 周 Dynasty (1099-221 BC). This tradition is exemplified in the Five Classics (Wujing 五经), which are the first part of the Confucian primary scriptures. According to Hanfei Zi 韩非子 (d. 233 BC),

2. The preconditions for the dialogue

shortly after Confucius' death his followers split into eight distinct schools, each of which claimed to be the legitimate heir to the Confucian legacy. However, later only the traditions of Mencius (Mengzi 孟子 390-305 BC) and of Xun Zi 荀子 (298-238 BC) have been transmitted. Over the past two thousand years the Mencian tradition has occupied a dominant position as the official heir of Confucianism. Xun Zi tradition has only played a secondary role.\textsuperscript{134}

Different scholars have divided Confucianism into different schools. The Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci divided Confucianism into Ancient (authentic) Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism.\textsuperscript{135}

Du Weiming 杜维明, the director of the Harvard Yenching-Institute, divided Confucianism into three epochs of the Confucian Way. In his view, Confucius was not the founder of Confucianism in the sense that Buddha was the founder of Buddhism and Christ was the founder of Christianity. As a major ethical and spiritual tradition, Confucianism emerged in ancient China originally as a tiny stream among several currents of thought. It gradually grew in strength to become the dominant intellectual force in the period of 550 to 200 BC. In the later history Confucianism has influenced Chinese very deeply. Confucius may have initiated a cultural process known in the West as Confucianism, but he and those who followed him considered themselves part of a tradition which had its origins two millennia previously when, legend has it, the sage-kings Yao and Shun formed a moral community by their exemplary teaching. Confucius' conception of politics as a moral persuasion became a defining characteristic of East Asian political culture. Moral self-cultivation is an inseparable dimension of political leadership.\textsuperscript{136} According to Du, the Confucianism

\textsuperscript{134} Concerning Confucianism Du Weiming has made a detailed study, cf., Du 1995. Christian Confucian He Shiming has also made a series of studies, see He 1996 (1,2,3,4,5).

\textsuperscript{135} Ricci 1985, 57-98.

\textsuperscript{136} Du says, Confucianism is a way of life of East Asia. Confucianism was not an organized missionary tradition, but by the first century BC, it had spread to those East Asian countries under the influence of Chinese literate culture. Since the fifteenth century the age of Confucianism, in the centuries following the Confucian revival of Song dynasty (AD 960-1279), embraced Choson dynasty in Korea and the Late Le dynasty in Vietnam. And it has embraced Tokugawa Japan since the seventeenth century. Prior to the advent of the Western powers in East Asia in the mid-nineteenth century, the Confucian persuasion was dominant in East and Southeast Asia. The story of Confucianism does not begin with Confucius (551-479 BC). The Chinese term, rujia, which is inadequately rendered as Confucianism, literally means the "family of scholars", signifying a genealogy, a school, or a tradition of learning. See Du 1995, 146-154.
of Confucius and its development of Mencius and Xun Zi in the 3rd century BC are the first epoch of the Confucian Way. The development of Confucianism in the Song 宋, Ming 明 and Qing 清 dynasties since the 10th century, is called the second epoch of the Confucian Way.\textsuperscript{137} The development after the Westerners’ arrival in the 20th century in China is the third epoch of the Confucian Way.\textsuperscript{138}

Hall and Ames, two Western scholars, have described Du's division by another term, "waves", as follows: The first wave was Confucius as a man of Lu whose teaching spread throughout the central states to become the acknowledged state thinking in the Western Han. The second wave was the gradual spread of Confucian teachings to Korea, Japan and Southeast Asia. The third wave is the imminent impact of Confucianism as it becomes a significant factor in the evolution of Western philosophy.\textsuperscript{139}

It is important to make clear the form of Confucianism to which I refer in this study, since almost all the schools of Confucianism call themselves the authentic representative of Confucianism, although they forward different theories. Thus, in order to find out which Confucians have commented on the Christian doctrine of salvation and what particular Confucianism they have represented, I am going to divide Confucianism into five schools: Ancient Confucianism, the Confucianism of Confucius and Mencius, Neo-Confucianism, Cultural Nationalist Confucianism, and Modern Confucianism.

The notion of Ancient Confucianism refers mainly to the tradition prior to Confucius (551-479 BC). Matteo Ricci considered this as the authentic Confucianism. In that time Christianity was not born and, of course, had not yet had any encounter with China; but the Confucian tradition of those times has later become the basis of the Confucian responses to Christianity. This is the case no

\textsuperscript{137} This reemergence of Confucianism as the leading intellectual force involved both a creative response to the Buddhist and Daoist challenge and an imaginative reinterpretation of classical Confucian insights against the background of the Buddhist conquest of China and the Chinese transformation of Buddhism. Thus, when Confucians tried to learn Buddhism in order to protect Confucianism from the Buddhist challenge, the result was that these Confucians were deeply influenced by Buddhism (and Daoism); thus, the second epoch of Confucianism, which has been usually called Neo-Confucianism, became a mixture of Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism. See Du 1995, 167-183.

\textsuperscript{138} Du 1995, 214-218.

\textsuperscript{139} Hall & Ames 1987, 312.
2. The preconditions for the dialogue

matter whether they were Neo-Confucian followers, Cultural Nationalist Confucians, or Modern Confucians. The ancient tradition is mediated through the so-called Five Classics, which are texts, songs, and rituals of the ancient time. It is believed that the Five Classics were themselves constituted as such by Confucius.\(^{140}\) The Five Classics represent the ancient tradition of the Legendary Three Kings and Five Emperors,\(^{141}\) which can also be observed in the Oracle Inscriptions.\(^{142}\) They have been considered as the primary source of Ancient Confucianism.\(^{143}\)

The concept "the Confucianism of Confucius 孔子 and Mencius 孟子" refers to the tradition of thinking, which was established by Confucius in the fifth century BC and developed by Mencius in the fourth century BC. The so-called “Four Books” (\(\text{Sishu 四书}\)) are usually considered as the primary scriptures of this school of Confucianism.\(^{144}\)

It should be noted that Confucianism became a dominant thinking in China since Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (ca. 179-104 BC) in the Han 汉 Dynasty (206 BC - AD 8). Both the Five Classics and part of the Four Books were taken as its primary scriptures. But it was not until Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) in the Song Dynasty (960-1279), that the Four Books were collected together. Zhu Xi's (and his fellows') interpretation of the Five Classics and especially of the Four Books have become an inseparable part of Confucian literature. However, the interpretations of Zhu Xi and others were usually referred to as the scriptures of "Neo-Confucianism".

No encounter between Christianity and Confucianism had yet occurred at that time. The attempt of Matteo Ricci in the 16\(^{th}\)-17\(^{th}\) centuries was the first academic attempt of Christianity to get in touch with the Neo-Confucians. Later, Cultural

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\(^{140}\) It is said that Confucius edited Six Classics and employed them as textbooks to teach his disciples, but the \(\text{Book of Music (Yuejing) has been lost; thus, only Five Classics remain in transmission. However, the date and authenticity of each of these Five Classics are disputed issues.}\)

\(^{141}\) The Five Emperors refer to five legendary rulers of antiquity. There are three different sets, two of which include Yao 尧 and Shun 舜. The Three Kings are King Yu 禹 (r. 2183-2175 BC?), King Tang 汤 (r. 1751-1739 BC?), and King Wen 文 (r. 1171-1122 BC), founders of the Xia 夏 (2183-1752 BC?), Shang 商 (1751-1112 BC), and Zhou 周 (1111-249 BC) dynasties, respectively. Chan 1963, 260, note 21.

\(^{142}\) The Oracle Inscriptions are one of the earliest archaeological discoveries in the Shang dynasty (1751-1112 BC), where Chinese characters have been used.

\(^{143}\) Appendix I: “The Five Classics”.

\(^{144}\) Appendix II: “The Four Books”.

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Nationalist Confucians and Modern Confucians continued the dialogue with Christians. In the following section, I will analyze these three groups of Confucians, who have made responses concerning the Christian doctrine of salvation.

2.3 The Confucians who have mostly commented on the Christian doctrine of salvation

Confucians have interpreted many concepts and themes of Christianity, but in this study I choose only to analyze their responses to the Christian doctrine of salvation. When other themes of Christianity such as the existence of God, transcendence, and creation are studied, they are analyzed only for the sake of understanding a Confucian interpretation of the Christian doctrine of salvation. My purpose is not to make a thorough systematic analysis of every aspect of God’s existence, of transcendence, or of creation. Therefore, it is important to discern which Confucians have responded to the Christian doctrine of salvation. In the following I am going to introduce three groups of those Confucians whose interpretations are the basis of my analysis in this study.

2.3.1 The Neo-Confucians (16th-17th centuries) and the representatives in this study

In this study, the first group of Confucians WHO have expressed comments on the Christian doctrine of salvation is the "Neo-Confucians". Yang Tingyun 杨庭筠 (1557-1627) has been chosen as the representative of Neo-Confucians who had a positive dialogue with Christians. Zhong Shisheng 钟始声, Lin Qilu 林启陆 and Shi Feiyin Tongrong 释费音通容 have been chosen as the representatives of Neo-Confucians who had a negative dialogue with Christians in the 17th century.

Special attention will be paid to the Neo-Confucianism that prevailed in the Ming Dynasty in the 16th and 17th centuries, when the Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci introduced Christianity to China. Christianity had already been introduced into China before Ricci in a Nestorian form as early as the 7th century and via Catholics prior to Ricci in the 14th century. However, Matteo Ricci was first to have generated considerable serious Confucian commentary on the Christianity.
2. The preconditions for the dialogue

In the 16th century Confucians were the followers of Neo-Confucianism. Neo-Confucianism has developed in three stages: i.e., the Learning of Dao (daoxue 道学), the Learning of Principle (lixue 理学) and the Learning of Heart-mind (xinxing zhi xue 心性之学). The writings of Wang Fuzhi 王夫之 (1619-1692)

145 Neo-Confucianism is represented by Zhu Xi (1130-1200) as well as some before and after him. Neo-Confucians did not call themselves "Neo-Confucians". They considered themselves as Confucians, and the Five Classics and the Four Books were still the primary scriptures for their understanding of Confucianism. However, they gave their own interpretations to these primary scriptures, and the difference between them is profound and obvious.

The term "Neo-Confucianism" in the West refers, in fact, to the Confucianism since the 11th century of Song and Ming dynasties. In formulating their theories and method of self-cultivation, the Song Confucians settled on Mencius as the "correct" interpreter of the original Confucian vision, and for all intents and purposes banished Xun Zi 荀子 from their ranks. Thus, they took the goodness of human nature as a premise, and devoted a great deal of attention to providing a metaphysical and cosmological basis for Mencian theory. They also went into much greater detail outlining practical methods of self-cultivation -- an area in which Mencius had been rather vague. In fact, Neo-Confucianism can be considered as a product resulting from the challenge of Buddhism to Confucianism, and many Buddhist and Daoist elements together make Neo-Confucianism a totally new thinking. Therefore, it should be kept in mind that Neo-Confucianism is quite different from Ancient Confucianism and the Confucianism of Confucius and Mencius. It includes the three different sub-schools of Dao, Principle, and Heart-mind. The pioneer Confucians, who started a dialogue with Christianity, were the followers of this school of Neo-Confucianism in the 16th century.

146 The Confucian revival in the Tang 唐 dynasty (618-907) is understood in traditional historiography as the establishment of the lineage of the "Learning of the Dao" (Daoxue), which was represented by Han Yu (768-824). The development of Han Yu and other Tang dynasty scholars in Confucianism is usually called "The Learning of Dao", and is not usually considered as Neo-Confucianism, but they are certainly the background of Neo-Confucianism since the Song dynasty. Concerning Han Yu see Chan 1963, 450-459. This school was developed via Zhou Dunyi (1017-1073), Shao Yong (1011-1077), Zhang Zai (1020-1077), Cheng Hao (1032-1085) and Cheng Yi (1033-1107). Concerning Zhou see Chan 1963, 460-480 "The Neo-Confucian Metaphysics and Ethics in Chou Tun-i". Concerning Shao Yong see Chan 1963, 481-494 "The Numerical and Objective Tendencies in Shao Yung". Concerning Zhang Zai see Chan 1963, 495-517 "Chang Tsai's Philosophy of Material Force". Concerning Cheng Hao see Chan 1963, 518-543 "The Idealistic Tendency in Ch'eng Hao". Concerning Cheng Yi see Chan 1963, 544-571 "The Rationalist Tendency in Ch'eng I".

147 The "Learning of Dao" was developed by the greatest synthesizer, Zhu Xi (1130-1200), the new school "Learning of Principle" (Lixue) was born. Concerning Zhu Xi see Chan 1963, 588-653 "The Great Synthesis in Chu Hsi".

148 Zhu's interpretation of self-cultivation as necessary for apprehending the Confucian Way was seriously challenged by his contemporary Lu Xiangshan (Juuyuan) (1139-1192), and they developed an inclusive humanist vision that integrated personal self-cultivation with social ethics and moral metaphysics with a holistic philosophy of life. Although Lu Xiangshan's challenge to Zhu Xi remained a minority position for some time, his learning of the mind later became a major intellectual force in Ming China (1368-1644) and Tokugawa Japan 1860-1867). This has led to the "Learning of Heart-mind" (Xinxue) of Wang Yangming (1472-1529), who was the most influential Confucian thinker after Zhu Xi, and since Wang Neo-Confucianism developed to its third stage. Concerning Lu see Chan 1963, 572-587 "The Unity of Mind and Principle in Lu Hsiang-shan". Concerning Wang Yangming see Chan 1963, 654-691 "Dynamic Idealism in Wang Yang-ming".

149 Concerning Wang Fuzhi see Chan 1963, 692-702 "The Materialism of Wang Fu-chih".
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and Dai Zhen 戴震 (1723-1777)\textsuperscript{150} in the Qing 清 (1644-1912) Dynasty are also part of the Neo-Confucian tradition.

For the Neo-Confucians, the Five Classics, the Four Books and the writings of Neo-Confucians (such as Cheng brothers, Zhu Xi, Lu Jiuyuan 陆九渊 and Wang Yangming) all are the basic literature of Confucianism.

Neo-Confucians also considered themselves "Confucians". And even among Neo-Confucians there were very different ideas of what constituted proper Confucianism. Depending on the commentator arguments based on Confucianism could refer to Ancient Confucianism, to the Confucianism of Confucius and Mencius, or to Neo-Confucianism. Thus, different Neo-Confucians responded differently to the Christian doctrine of salvation by God.

In the 16th century, Christianity was highly appreciated by most of the contemporary Neo-Confucians, however, some of them also criticized Christianity, especially after Ricci's death. Thus, there are different groups among the Neo-Confucians. Some of them were Christian converts (Christian Neo-Confucians), some were friendly with Christianity but not Christians (Sympathizing Neo-Confucians), and some were against Christianity (Anti-Christian Neo-Confucians).

**Christian Neo-Confucians** were represented by the so-called "Three Pillars" of the Chinese Christians in late Ming Dynasty (1368-1644): Xu Guangqi 徐光启 (1562-1633), \textsuperscript{151} Li Zhizao 李之藻 (1569-1630) \textsuperscript{152} and Yang Tingyun 杨廷筠

\textsuperscript{150} Concerning Dai Zhen see Chan 1963, 709-722 "Tai Chen's Philosophy of Principle as Order". 
\textsuperscript{151} Xu was one of the earliest Catholics towards the end of Ming dynasty. He was also a scientist, and a translator. Born in Shanghai, Xu passed the national examination and became a scholar. On his way to Beijing, Xu met Matteo Ricci. In 1603, he was baptized by Jean de Rocha, and became a Christian with the Christian name Paul. Xu became a high ranking official in 1604 and studied under Ricci. On his way back to Shanghai to attend his father's funeral, Xu dropped by Nanking and urged Lazaro Cattaneo to preach in his hometown. They held church meetings in Xu's house and baptized his family members and friends. Xu set up astronomical instruments in Beijing in 1610 and established Catholic schools in 1616. In 1625, Xu resigned from his position, returned to Shanghai and wrote the "Book of Agriculture". Xu regained his position in 1628 and wrote "Book of Annals of Zong Zhen" with Li Zhizao. He also translated many books written by Ricci. 

\textsuperscript{152} Born in Hangzhou, Li was a Catholic and a scientist during the Ming dynasty. In 1598, Li became an official. He studied under Matteo Ricci and adopted western knowledge and the Catholic doctrine. In 1610, Li was baptized. On his way to his father's funeral, Li invited Lazaro Cattaneo and Nicolas Trigault, two missionaries, to preach in Hangzhou. In 1613, Li assumed a position as an official in Nanjing and worked with Xu Guangqi. Both men edited and translated numerous Christian works into Chinese. Li also helped to translate Matteo Ricci's books into Chinese.
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These scholars were Neo-Confucians, but they preferred Ancient Confucianism to the Neo-Confucianism of the Song and Ming dynasties. Yang in particular responded very positively to Christianity by referring to the Five Classics as the primary scriptures of Confucianism. Sympathetic Neo-Confucians were those who sympathized with Christianity but were not Christians, and their attitude towards Christianity was very similar to that of Christian Neo-Confucians.

Anti-Christian Neo-Confucians were critical of Christianity. They usually referred to the writings of Zhu Xi and other Neo-Confucians. For many Anti-Christian Neo-Confucians, the writings of Song and Ming Neo-Confucians also became primary sources of Confucianism. They did not distinguish between Confucian primary scriptures and the Neo-Confucian interpretations. Therefore, although Anti-Christian Neo-Confucians consistently claimed to represent Confucianism, they mainly referred to Neo-Confucianism. The main representative of this kind of Neo-Confucians are Zhong Shisheng, Lin Qilu, and Shi Feiyin Tongrong.

Interestingly both Christian and Anti-Christian Neo-Confucians considered the Confucianism of Confucius and Mencius the same as Neo-Confucianism. The Christian Neo-Confucians, however, claim to rely on the Ancient Confucian scriptures, whereas the Anti-Christian Neo-Confucians usually ignore the Ancient Confucian scriptures. Thus, although they both react to Christianity in the name of Confucianism, they have, however, totally controversial presuppositions.

My intention is to reveal the actual presuppositions lying beneath the various Confucians’ responses to the Christian doctrine of salvation by God with the hope of being at last able to find the basic problems in the Confucian-Christian dialogue.

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153 Yang was a scholar-official. He studied the Confucian classics for many years, but was also interested in Neo-Confucianism and especially Buddhism. Laureate in 1592, he held several very important posts, including that of vice-governor of Beijing. He met Matteo Ricci during the years 1602-1608, but entered the Catholic Church only in 1613, in Hangzhou, after much discussion with the Jesuits Lazzaro Cattaneo and Nicolas Trigault. For the rest of his life, until 1627, Yang was mostly engaged in activities related to Christianity, revealing a deeply devout life. He housed and protected several missionaries in his home during the persecution of Nanjing (1616-1617), wrote eight books on religious matters, and collaborated on many Jesuit publications (nine forewords and epilogues). He was Aleni’s friend and important collaborator. A result of their special relationship is Aleni’s biography of Yang Tingyun: The outstanding achievements of Yang Tingyun. Based mainly on Chinese sources Standaert has written his Ph.D. dissertation concerning Yang, please see Standaert 1988.
2. The preconditions for the dialogue

2.3.2 The Cultural Nationalist Confucians (1920-1980) and the representatives in this study

The Cultural Nationalist Confucians are those representatives of Confucianism who follow the ways of Neo-Confucianism and of the rationalism of the Enlightenment tradition. Cultural Nationalist Confucianism appears in a group of scholars at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries in China. This school of Confucianism has been called by different names. Umberto Bresciani, an Italian sinologist, has divided the movement into two generations. He did not pay much attention to discerning the main idea of each generation, so his division is mainly a chronological one.\(^{154}\)

Tang Junyi 唐君毅 (1909-1978), Mou Zongsan 牟中三 (1909-1995) and Cai Renhou 蔡仁厚, a student of Mou Zongsan, have been chosen as the representatives of the Cultural Nationalist Confucians in this study.

Among many Cultural Nationalist Confucians,\(^{155}\) Fang Dongmei 方东美 published in English *The Chinese view of life* in 1975. He was considered a pantheist, because he thought that the spirit of God permeates everything in the universe.\(^{156}\) Tang Junyi and Mou Zongsan were greatly influenced by He Lin 贺麟, who claimed that Ma Yifu 马亦夫 (1883-1967), Qian Mu 钱穆 and Feng Youlan 冯友兰 were followers of Confucianism as interpreted by Zhu Xi 朱熹, whereas the majority of the others (including himself) were followers of Wang Yangming 王阳明. While each of these Confucians in the 20th century had their own points of emphasis and their own orientation of thought, what they had in common was the absorption of Western culture and its incorporation into the traditions of Confucian culture. They were all patriots as well, out to save their country's heritage.\(^{157}\)

\(^{154}\) Umberto Bresciani has called this Confucianism "the New Confucian Movement". Bresciani 2001, 35-36.

\(^{155}\) See section 1.3 “Sources of the study” in the previous chapter of this study.

\(^{156}\) Fang Dongmei's opinion can also be found to a certain extent in that of his student, Liu Shuxian, who is considered a representative of the Modern Confucians in this study. Cf., Liu's publication list in the Bibliography. Concerning Fang see Li Chenyang's article "Fang Dongmei: Philosophy of Life, Creativity, and Inclusiveness" in Cheng & Bunnin 2002, 263-280. Cf., Bresciani 2001, 271-300. Cf. also Fang 1980.

\(^{157}\) These Confucians were already mentioned briefly in "Introduction" of this study.
2. The preconditions for the dialogue

One of the main features of this group of Confucians to Christianity is nationalism. From the Chinese viewpoint the concept of Christianity has contained a shade of Western imperialism since the 19th century, because, as Chinese people usually understand, both Catholics and Protestants came to China together with Western imperialists. Even though Christianity is not at all the same as Western imperialism, in the memory of the Chinese they are very closely related to each other. Thus, the relationship between Christianity and Chinese culture evolved into a battle between nationalism (and patriotism) and imperialism.

Since the 1910s China has repeatedly witnessed and experienced waves of anti-Confucian and anti-Christian campaigns, especially the May Fourth Movement in 1919.158 Both Chinese Confucianism and Western Christianity were attacked, and this resulted in nationalism and modernism (which include scientism, democracy, etc) becoming the dominant ideologies. The Communist Party preferred to follow the conceptions of Marxist dialectical materialism, whereas the ruling Guomindang Party clung to the ideas of Dr. Sun Yatsen's 孙中山 Three People's Principles (Nationalism, Democracy and the People's Livelihood). The two parties shared one goal. Western science and technology were to be thoroughly learned in order to overcome Western imperialism.

During this period Cultural Nationalist Confucians were not the main party involved in the discussion of the concepts of Christianity. In addition to or as the consequence of the harsh attacks on Confucian traditions and ideas, Confucianism was regarded as the cause of China’s weakness. However, a group of Cultural Nationalist Confucians started to re-interpret Confucianism, so as to face the challenges introduced by the modernism of scientism and technology and from the rationalism of the Enlightenment tradition. Engaged in this process, these Neo-Confucians mainly considered Christianity negatively.

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158 This movement was started in May 4th, 1919. Its main feature was the total opposition of Western imperialism and Chinese feudalism. Confucianism was criticized as a negative feudal heritage. Religions, including Christianity, were criticized as irrational. Science and democracy were appreciated, and the Enlightenment tradition of rationalism was emphasized. Concerning the May Fourth Movement, please see Cheng & Bunnin 2002, 3, 5, 7, 376, and 382-383. Cf., also Du 1995, 214.
Occasionally there emerged also some positive comments on Christianity. Liang Shuming 梁漱溟, Feng Youlan 冯友兰, Xiong Shili 熊十力, Tang Junyi 唐君毅, Xu Fuguan 徐复观, Fang Dongmei 方东美 and Mou Zongsan 牟中三 were the main representatives of these Cultural Nationalist Confucians. They tried to repair the damage done by the May Fourth Movement approach of criticizing Confucianism and were determined to reaffirm Confucianism.

In 1958 "A manifesto for the Reappraisal of Sinology and Reconstruction of Chinese Culture", written by some Cultural Nationalist Confucians, was published in Hong Kong. In this manifesto, the signatories emphasized the harmony between the "way of Heaven" (Tiandao 天道) and the "way of man" (rendao 人道) as the central legacy of Confucianism. These Confucians had a strong nationalist sense and pursued a very negative attitude towards Christianity, and such an attitude was "not always completely fair". This is because cultural nationalism strongly features a nationalist origin, and in many cases Christianity is rejected only because it has not originated from China. This has been expressed very clearly in Cai Renhou’s theory of “host-guest”.

Cultural Nationalist Confucianism can be described as follows: on the one hand, it has absorbed certain Western elements (such as rationalism) to re-construct the Confucianism. On the other hand, it has a strong nationalistic sense in preventing Confucianism from absorbing influence from Western religions. Thus, their attitude to Christianity was often defensive. In their commentary on Christianity the Cultural Nationalist Confucians usually follow the Mencian tradition. As to the secondary scriptures, some Confucians appreciate the tradition of Zhu Xi's 朱熹 Learning of principle (lixue 理学), and some prefer the tradition of Wang Yangming's 王阳明 Learning of Heart-mind (xinxue 心学). When they begin to favor the secondary scriptures, they simultaneously face the danger of losing their intention or ability to criticize these very scriptures.

159 Concerning these figures, please cf. the earlier sections on "Confucianism" and "New Confucianism" in the present chapter.
160 MANIFESTO.
161 Kung & Ching 1993, 98.
2. The preconditions for the dialogue

The dialogue between the Chinese and Westerners in the 20th century had two directions. One was the rejection of traditions in the name of complete westernization. Another was the syncretization of the Western culture, (including Christianity), by the Cultural Nationalist Confucians, based on the assumption of the superiority of Chinese culture.  

2.3.3 The Modern Confucians (1980-) and the representatives in this study

The main representatives of the Modern Confucians in this study are Liu Shuxian 刘述先 (1934-), Du Weiming 杜维明 (1940-), Liang Yancheng 梁燕城 (1940-), and

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162 Cai, Zhou & Liang 1985. Later in this study when “salvation” is analyzed this theme will be mentioned again.
163 See Cheng Zhongying 1994. Bresciani 2001, 402-409. New Confucians are aware of the great historical problem with understanding Confucianism in terms of modern life. First, they recognize that Confucianism has almost always been too closely identified with authoritarian governments. In the modern period, therefore, there has been an intense debate about how Confucians can embrace and embody human rights as part of the renewed Confucianism. Second, New Confucians also realize that they, along with every other great religious tradition, must renounce the oppressive regime of patriarchy that has so long deformed the lives of both men and women of China. The Confucianism that has been only of interest to men is now of interest to no one whatsoever. See Berthrong 2000, "A sermon: Exploring the Dao" in October 22nd in First Parish Milton, Unitarian Universalist."
164 See Liu’s publications listed in the Bibliography of this study. He is a Confucian scholar in the Institute of Chinese literature and philosophy at Academia Sinica, Taiwan. Cheng Zhongying has made a brief and clear introduction to Liu Shuxian, please see Cheng & Bunnin 2002, 359. Liu graduated from National Taiwan University and gained a Ph.D. from the University of Southern Illinois in 1966 and taught in the same Department. In 1981, he moved to Hong Kong to work in the Department of Philosophy of the Chinese University of Hong Kong as a professor and department chairman. After retirement he went to Taiwan. His research has three stages. From 1955 to 1964, he published books on literary appreciation and on semantics and truth. From 1964 to 1978, he completed his dissertation on Paul Tillich. His interest centered on the exploration of Confucian and New Confucian philosophy of religion. From 1978 to 1992, he developed a deeper concern for the future of Chinese culture and reflected on the problems of modernization in China. As a New Confucian he shares many insights with Xiong Shili and Mou Zongsan. He is considered to be a representative of the third generation of the Contemporary New Confucians as Du Weiming. Concerning Liu's ideas of Christianity, see Liu's publication list in the Bibliography of this study.
165 Du is the director of the Harvard-Yenching Institute. See Du 1994a, 1994b and 1995. See also http://www.harvard-yenching.net/ruxue.htm Cf., Bresciani 2001, Cheng & Bunnin 361, and Neville 2000, 83-103 "Tu Weiming's Confucianism”. The central concern of Du's thinking is the modernization of Confucianism. He criticizes the use of modern philosophical methodology in the study of Confucianism. See Cheng & Bunnin 2002, 361. See also Neville 2000, 218, note 1 in Chapter 5: Du was trained at Harvard University, where he now teaches philosophy and intellectual history and is the director of the Harvard Yeching Institute. Du’s intellectual project is to develop the role of the Confucian intellectual in the contemporary world. His early work in many respects is an extension of the Confucian commentary tradition. Neo-Confucian thought in action: Wang Yang-ming's youth (1472-1509) is an intellectual biography of that great thinker in which Du lays the groundwork for the claim associated with his teacher, Mou Zongsan, that the Mencian line of Confucianism comes down through Wang rather than Zhu Xi. Centrality and commonality: an essay on Confucian religiousness (1976b) is a commentary on the doctrine of the mean, advocating it as of contemporary worth and
2. The preconditions for the dialogue

Robert Neville.\(^{167}\)

In addition, I will also refer to some other respected representatives of Modern Confucianism: Cheng Zhongying 成中英 (1935-), Yu Yingshi 余英时 (1930-),\(^{168}\) Julia Ching 秦家懿 (1934-2001),\(^{169}\) David Hall, and Roger Ames.\(^{170}\)

The reason for us to call this generation "Modern Confucian" (Modern Confucianism) is that, although it derives straight from Cultural Nationalist Confucianism, its followers have been critical of certain aspects of Confucianism. The Modern Confucians are trying their best to do an objective academic analysis of Confucianism itself. The concept “objective” here means mainly that rationality is highly appreciated in the analysis. Some figures are included into this group of Modern Confucians in the present work, since they participated in the discussion of interpreting it according to the Mencian emphasis on ren (humaneness, benevolence). Du's thought has moved from interpreting the Chinese classics, especially in respect of ren, to manifesting the contributions of the Confucian intellectual in the present world conversations of ren (humaneness, humanity, benevolence) for the contemporary situation. See Du's article "Confucianism" in Our religions 1995, 141. Sensing the anomaly to Western thinking of the Confucian emphasis on ritual, Du has argued that ritual propriety (li) is the set of external forms required for ren to be expressed in human relations. Without ritual propriety or decorum, human relationship could not be established that might be quickened by ren. Du has always been convinced that the way of the sage is not merely a matter of personal self-cultivation but also of the cultivation of one's relationships. See Neville 2000, 83.

\(^{166}\) Concerning Liang, see Cai Renhou & Zhou Lianhua & Liang Yancheng 1985.

\(^{167}\) The New Confucian responses to Christianity in the 18th and 19th centuries will not be handled as main subjects in this study, since they were somewhat similar to those of the traditional New Confucians. In those years patriotism and nationalism occupied the dominant position.

\(^{168}\) Yu 1991, Yu 1992 and Yu 1996, please cf., also Bresciani 2001, 389-418. The scholars mentioned here will be introduced later in this study when their thoughts are analyzed.

\(^{169}\) Julia Ching (1934-2001) was trained in theology and history, but her interests also included Neo-Confucianism and Chinese culture. She promoted a general wave of interest in Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism through her study of Wang Yangming. She received her Ph.D. in Australia for her dissertation "To Acquire Wisdom: the Way of Wang Yang-ming". After teaching at Columbia and Yale, Ching became a professor at Victoria College, University of Toronto in 1979. Her main work has been in the comparative study of Chinese religions and Christianity. Confucianism and Christianity (1977) encouraged dialogue among world religions in the hope that each part in the exchange would learn something from the others. Ching also stressed the importance of critique of traditions and held that without critique there would be no progress. As a Catholic she critically examined Catholicism, and as a member of East Asian culture she critically examined East Asian tradition. The notion "critical subject" is important for her, a subject who has moral independence and conscience. On the basis of this notion, she favored a pluralism of religions in which each religion should respect and be open to the others. She treats Confucianism as a religion that should make itself available in dialogues among world religions. For her, Confucianism is a humanistic religion, open to the transcendent spirit of God. She even holds that Confucianism was originally a religion of prophets with belief in a personal God. She suggests that the unity of heaven and man is derived from an ancient belief in the unity of man and God. She has also interpreted the Neo-Confucian tradition as a tradition full of religious significance. See Cheng & Bunnin 2002, 360-361.

\(^{170}\) Roger Ames is a professor in Hawaii, and David Hall is a professor in Texas.
the Christian concept of God in the beginning of the 1980s. The defensive feature of
the above two groups was gradually replaced by syncretistic and academic
characteristics.

In his article "Chinese intellectuals and Christianity" Zhuo Xinping 卓新平, a
contemporary mainland Chinese scholar, has analyzed the relationship between
Chinese intellectuals and Christianity. He points out that the attitudes of Chinese
intellectuals toward Christianity vary from criticism to resistance, from compatibility
to combination, and from identification to conversion. He mentions also that the
understanding of Christianity by the Chinese intellectuals is based firstly on the
interests of the whole nation's social, cultural, and spiritual development, and
secondly on the impact of the personality of Christian believers. Finally he raises the
question of the form and the meaning of Christian existence in China. He shows
clearly that the relationship between Chinese intellectuals and Christians depends
upon efforts from both sides. 171

In this study Modern Confucian scholars are divided into two sub-groups.

The first sub-group of Modern Confucian in relation to the Christian salvation
by God is the Modern Confucians of Mencian tradition. They emphasize the
tradition of Zisi 子思, Mencius 孟子, Lu Jiuyuan 陆九渊, Zhu Xi 朱熹, Wang
Yangming 王阳明 and Mou Zongsan 牟中三, but they have no strong nationalist
sense, as the Cultural Nationalist Confucians have. Liu Shuxian 刘述先 and Du
Weiming 杜维明172 are two well-known representatives of this school. The Modern
Confucians of Mencian tradition have brought Confucianism, Christianity and the
Enlightenment, e.g., rationalism and scientism, to the same agenda for discussion.

Despite the criticism of the anti-Confucian and anti-Christian approaches
started with the May Fourth movement in 1919, a Confucianism based on the Five
Classics and Four Books as its primary scriptures, was not rejected. However, the

171 Zhuo 1997.
172 Liu Shuxian 1991, 68-81. See also Liu 1993, 67-70. The suggestion of Liu has also been
supported and elaborated by Du, see Du1994a and Du 1994b.
Modern Confucians of the Mencian tradition do not regard the Neo-Confucianism from the Song Dynasty to the 1970s as a completely perfect system.\(^\text{173}\)

The Modern Confucians are familiar with Western and Chinese cultures, and usually hold rather objective attitudes to both of them. Du said, the three dominant ideologies in the tradition of the May Fourth movement were materialism, scientism, and utilitarianism.\(^\text{174}\) The only thing about the West that Chinese intellectuals were interested in then was technological development. Christianity was ignored or totally rejected. Now, nearly a century later, Modern Confucians suggest that China learn the concepts of "transcendent God" and "original sin" from Christianity. The main reasons for such suggestions are: on the one hand, Confucian humanism has made the Chinese people lose their absolute authority in the area of values. The concept of a transcendent God can therefore offer such an authority to the Chinese people. On the other hand, Confucian optimism in human nature has made the Chinese people lose any respect for the law. Therefore, the concept of Original Sin will help the Chinese people realize the real nature of human beings and so lead them to find a way to improve their behaviours.\(^\text{175}\) Christian God is considered the external transcendence, which Neo-Confucians should learn about. Thus, Modern Confucians have enthusiastically adopted the Christian concept of God. This affirmative attitude is not only different from that of the Neo-Confucians, who were against Matteo Ricci in the Ming Dynasty, but also different from the attitude of the Cultural Nationalist Confucians such as Liang Shuming, Feng Youlan, Xiong Shili. The Modern Confucians of the Mencian tradition seek to preserve Confucianism, but are also open to Western science, democracy and capitalism.

In mainland China, the scholars of the Chinese Cultural Institute-school (\*Zhongguo wenhua shuyuan pai* 中国文化书院派) also hold a positive attitude towards Christianity, similar to that of the Modern Confucians.\(^\text{176}\) There is however a

\(^{173}\) Du 1994a.

\(^{174}\) Du 1994b.


\(^{176}\) The famous scholars of this school are Tang Yijie, Li Zehou and Pang Pu. They have Marxist theoretic background and try to criticize Chinese traditional culture from both the positive and negative sides. Confirming Confucian tradition occupies the main position in this school. See also the earlier discussion in the section of cultural crisis in the "Introduction".
difference between them and the Modern Confucians of the Mencian tradition. The modern Confucians Liu Shuxian and Du Weiming have abundantly accepted Neo-Confucian interpretations of the Song and Ming dynasties, which are overly dependent on metaphysical assumptions from Buddhism, whereas the Mainland Chinese contemporary intellectuals have been mostly influenced by the Enlightenment tradition. The Enlightenment and rationalism have been understood differently in China from the way perhaps in which they have been understood in Western countries. In China, for a very long time, even up to the present day, rationalism has been considered as the absolute standard of truth. Almost everything which can be understood by human beings, is considered as a form of truth, and all truths which cannot be founded in rationalism are usually considered as superstition. Du Weiming, Liu Shuxian and Tang Yijie are not Christians (at least

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177 Confucian studies are once again being revitalized in China; Confucius' birthplace is now a popular tourist site, and annual sacrifices are being performed to commemorate the sage's birth (September 28). Whether or not there will be a "third epoch" of the Confucian Way is also a question on the agenda for exploration. Many scholars have noted that Confucianism has profound difficulties fitting into the contemporary times, and they doubt whether it can offer overcome these difficulties. Thus, it is questionable whether Confucianism still occupies the dominant position in Chinese culture that it had until the beginning of 20th century. Cf., Liu Shuxian 1989, 12. The cultural nationalism which tries to employ Chinese traditional values, especially Confucian ideas in the construction of modern Chinese culture, generally functions as a conservative force which lacks counteroffensive power and always takes a defensive position facing the challenge of Enlightenment ideas. Therefore, there is no doubt that their anti-Christian program constitutes a dramatic part of the whole anti-Western project that is carried on by cultural nationalists. The effects that traditionalism have actually produced have been exaggerated and overestimated. This has been especially indicated in the attitude of Xiong Shili's students, such as Tang Junyi, Xu Fuguan and Mou Zongsan (including his student Cai), who have rejected Christianity in order to protect Confucianism.

178 In fact, most of the Chinese intellectuals, who are educated in colleges established according to the modern Western educational system, hold quite contradictory attitudes towards nationalism and Enlightenment. On the one hand, Enlightenment ideas could gain more legitimacy under the help of nationalism, which has a strong influence in the lower stratum of Chinese society. The nationalistic interest of the Chinese nation provided the most persuasive excuse and proper soil for the development of Enlightenment ideas. On the other hand, the supremacy of the Enlightenment ideas was never questioned, for it was the consensus of Chinese intellectuals that only Enlightenment values could guarantee the modernization of China. The profound tension between "Enlightenment" and nationalism has expressed itself in various ways in different epochs of the development of Chinese society. As a matter of fact, however, in the course of the anti-Christian movements promoted by the Chinese intellectuals, Enlightenment ideas became almost the only voice that could be heard among the intellectuals who were active on the stage of the New Culture Movement. This is particularly true after the Communists came into power. According to the Communist ideology, all religions, not only Christianity, would die out, given that the people were well civilized through education and social progress. Of course, Christianity had one more charge against it than those suffered by other religions because of its association with the capitalist and imperialist world.

Since late 1980's, both political and cultural nationalism have made efforts to revive what has been going on in various domains. But this tendency has constantly been restrained by forces from two directions. (1) the orthodox forces within the Communists which fear that the revival of cultural
not publicly confessed), although they have emphasized that much can be learned from Christianity; for example, the ideas centersing on transcendence in Christianity are highly appreciated by these scholars. Both Du and Liu are considered the main representatives of Modern Confucians. Confucianism of the Mencian Tradition plays an important role in the cultural identities of Tang Yijie and his fellow colleagues. The presuppositions of their reactions to Christianity are based on the Confucianism of the Mencian tradition, on the secondary scriptures of Confucianism, and on the rationalism of the Enlightenment tradition. Few of them have taken the Five Classics of Confucianism as the source of their presuppositions.\(^\text{180}\)

Another sub-group of Modern Confucians as distinguished on the basis of their commentary on the Christian concept of God are the Modern Confucians of the Xun Zi \(\text{荀子} (298-238 \text{ BC})\) tradition. Many members of this school are Christians,\(^\text{181}\) theologians, and scholars of religious studies.\(^\text{182}\)

Qian Mu 钱穆 (1895-1990) and his disciple Yu Yingshi 余英时 (1930-) have opposed taking the Mencian interpretation as the only correct understanding of Confucianism, since the Xun Zi tradition interpretation of Confucianism is also an important development of Confucianism.

Cheng Zhongying 成中英 (1935-) has also rejected as prejudiced the Neo-Confucian position of considering Mencius the orthodox heir to Confucius and Xun Zi as a deviant sideline. Cheng sets himself above these kinds of historical divisions nationalism would replace the domination of Marxist ideology; (2) deep-rooted Enlightenment ideas of progress which closed nearly every possible path leading back to the past. Both of these forces make a full-scale revival of cultural nationalism nearly impossible.\(^\text{179}\)

\(^{180}\) Such an approach is based on the suggestion of Robert Neville. By "an interpretive context" Neville means that both the historical setting and surrounding texts must play a role in understanding how the primary and secondary scriptures took the shape they have. Moreover, Chinese, Korean, and Japanese history cannot be completely left out of the understanding of what constitutes the "interpretive context". Thus, such a context includes texts of Daoist, Moer, Legalist and Buddhist sources. Neville, however, has not included the Five Books into the scope of Confucian primary sources, see Neville 2000, 3, 8. See also Du 1995, 155-167. The following issues were also considered by Du as the first epoch of Confucian Way: Confucianization of politics in the early Western Han (206 BC - AD 8), the Mutuality between Heaven and humanity of Dong Zhongshu (ca. 179-104 BC), and Confucian ethics in the age of Buddhism and Daoism.

\(^{181}\) We will introduce the representatives of these scholars later in the same chapter.

\(^{182}\) This is quoted in Yu Yingshi 1991, 56. This tradition begins from the Neo-Confucianism of the Song and Ming dynasties since 10th century, such as Cheng-Zhu and Wang Yangming; later it was
(he stresses that both Mencius and Xun Zi are deviant!), and avows his support for Confucianism in general. His general acceptance includes Daoism, since he often mentions both and professes that both of them together represent a more complete view of the Chinese philosophical tradition. Cheng's aim is to establish a new global world philosophy, called onto-hermeneutics, its purpose being to ascertain and define the relationship between being and method. However, the Confucianism of the Xun Zi tradition has been especially stressed by Robert Neville and John Berthrong of Boston University, who emphasize the tradition of ritual propriety. Even though both of the two scholars are Christians, they accept Confucianism. This means that many ideas of Confucianism are not in conflict with Christianity, seeing that Neville and Berthrong, from an epistemological perspective, can hold an inclusive attitude to Confucianism.

Neville and his school are called Boston Confucians. According to Neville, Boston Confucianism means two things. The first is the general project of bringing the Confucian tradition into play with the other great civilized traditions in the creation of a world civilization. The second meaning is the work of the group of Confucian thinkers gathered in and around Boston under the leadership of Du Weiming. The Confucians under the leadership of Du Weiming were divided by Neville into two camps. One is represented by Du Weiming's Harvard University school of Mencian traditional Modern Confucianism at the northern end of the Charles River in Boston. The Boston conversation has, however, spread far beyond Boston. Roger Ames and David Hall have also been considered by Neville as followed by Xiong Shili and his three disciples Tang Junyi, Xu Fuguan and Mou Zongsan. See also Yu Yingshi 1996, 70.

Neville published a book titled Boston Confucianism in 2000. He says: "I am a serious practicing Christian, indeed, the dean of a Christian theological school, as well as a Confucian", see Neville 2000, Preface, xxx. Neville is Dean and professor of Philosophy, Religion, and Theology in School of Theology at Boston University.
Berthrong is a bureaucrat and a thinker with integrity (he was a bureaucrat for the United Church of Canada for a decade); see Neville 2000, preface, xxxiv. Berthrong published an article in Chinese with the title "Boston Confucianism" in 1995. Berthrong is Associate Dean for Academic and Administrative Affairs, and Director of the Institute for Dialogue among Religious Traditions at Boston University.
Neville 2000, 1.
belonging to this Mencian tradition. The other camp is represented by Neville himself and Berthrong, and this school has been considered as belonging to the Xun Zi tradition with its emphasis on ritual propriety.\textsuperscript{189} They call for the recovery and uniquely American development of the ancient emphasis on Li as ritual propriety. The heart of the program is the defense of the thesis that American pragmatism offers a Western philosophical language for expressing the relevance of Confucian ritual theory for the modern world. By “Confucian ritual theory” Neville means the ritual regulations and laws that are emphasized in order to provide impetus for behavioral change and to enable people to accomplish this goal.\textsuperscript{190} This tradition considers the book \textit{Xunzi} a primary scripture of Confucianism.

The Modern Confucianism of Xun Zi tradition has four emphases:

1) Original sin: They have not chosen to make a radical distinction between original goodness and original sin and so between the doctrine of Mencius and that of Christianity, but they have included both into one whole system via the doctrine of Xun Zi. This is to say, the original nature is good or is neither good nor evil, and yet human social life inevitably includes evil and sinful features.

2) External ritual propriety (\textit{i.e.}, the regulations and laws for obligating people to do good): This resembles the Jewish-Christian tradition of God's commandments and laws. It is complementary to the Confucian Mencian tradition, which emphasizes self-cultivation.

3) Rationality: They oppose drawing hasty conclusions based only on intuition rather than logical analysis. This is in accordance with the Western rationalism.

4) Stressing internal transcendence: As a Christian, Neville tries to reconcile Confucianism and Christianity. In order to do this he is looking for some form of transcendence (an absolute beyond the perceptible phenomena) in Confucianism to match the transcendent Christian God.

Neville has constantly criticized the claim that the concept of transcendence does not exist in Confucianism. For example, Hall and Ames have shown that such a

\textsuperscript{189} Neville 2000, 47-50.
\textsuperscript{190} Neville 2000, 3, 6.
concept does not exist in early Confucianism. Neville, however, argues that the Neo-Confucian concept of "principle" is transcendent, since it structures all things and man. In his view this concept could then be a bridge towards Christianity, and Western people could be also Confucians.

Some Christians, theologians, and scholars of religious studies are considered to be close to this group of the Xun Zi tradition mentioned earlier in this study. For example, He Shiming (1911–1996), a Modern Confucian Christian in Hong Kong, and some theologians too, have taken also the Five Classics of Confucianism as their primary source. This group bases its view of the Christian concept of God on both the Confucianism of Xun Zi tradition and the rationalism of the Enlightenment tradition. The influence of the Xun Zi tradition is evident in the emphasis on the importance of external regulations in helping people to improve their behaviour. The influence of rationalism directs that they do not blindly follow or oppose the Mencian tradition interpretation of Confucianism. Their appreciation of the Xun Zi tradition interpretation of Confucianism is also rationally analyzed.

Neville has noticed the risk that his approach may be regarded as based on hearsay evidence. Nevertheless, he argues that Xun Zi has always been deeply honored, and his contribution consists of a theory about nature, convention, and corruption. In contrast to Mencius' consideration of human nature as good, Xun Zi stresses the selfishness of people. For Xun Zi, human beings are formed by ritual propriety, or by its distorted and perverted forms, or they fail to be formed humanly at all because of a lack of the normative and conventional forms of propriety. The term “ritual propriety” refers to the external regulations which give form to the existence of human beings and impetus or help to do good and right things. Thus, the content of the Confucian project is to amend, rectify, and inculcate the forms of ritual propriety.

From an educational standpoint, this concern with propriety is much more important than celebration of the original goodness of human nature or attention to the stern stuff of obligation, which are preoccupations of Mencius.

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191 Cf., Neville in the Bibliography.
192 Neville 2000, 6.
193 Neville 2000, 4.
All these three groups (Neo-Confucians, Cultural Nationalist Confucians and Modern Confucians) are different from Ancient Confucians. Thus, the Confucian viewpoint is not constant. While commenting on the Christian doctrine of salvation, some Confucians base their arguments on the Confucian primary sources and others refer to the secondary scriptures of Confucianism. These differences are often ignored when Confucians criticize each other.

The primary scriptures vary among different schools and streams of Confucianism. Their representatives have offered interpretations emphasizing different points, some elements suppressed and others exaggerated, so that the interpretations of the primary scriptures can be totally contradictory to one another. Thus, it is always to be recognized that the role the primary scriptures play in every particular school, derives as much from the function of the school as from the scriptures themselves.

Encountering Christian issues raises a variety of reactions in the Confucian field. For example, when it comes to the Christian concept of God, some Confucians interpret it in the light of the concepts of Heaven and Sovereign on High in the *Shujing* and *Shijing*, while others refer to the *Analects*; still others base their arguments on the secondary scriptures of later Neo-Confucian writings of, for example, Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming.

All of the Confucians claim that their view of Christianity is based on the orthodox Confucianism. The crucial thing is that the understanding of Confucianism differs from one school to the other. Also, the Confucian primary sources, upon which they build their interpretations of Confucianism, are very different. Thus, it so happens that one Confucian reaction to Christianity is sometimes contradictory to another, each claiming that he is right and is the authentic representative of orthodox Confucians.

In order to thoroughly investigate the Confucian commentaries on the Christian doctrine of salvation by God and the reasons behind them, it is necessary to be aware of the presuppositions upon which the commentary is based.
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Therefore, when Confucianism and Confucians are mentioned, we have to distinguish many different terms from one another: Ancient Confucianism, Confucianism, Neo-Confucianism, Cultural Nationalist Confucians and Modern Confucians (including Modern Confucians of the Mencian tradition and of the Xun Zi tradition).

**Ancient Confucianism** is the tradition based on the Five Classics.

**Confucianism** is the thinking and worldview based on the Five Classics and the Four Books.

**Neo-Confucianism** is Confucianism developing in the Tang, Song, Ming and Qing dynasties since the 10th to the 19th century.

**Cultural Nationalist Confucianism** is the development of Neo-Confucianism since the end of the 19th century to the 1980s. Even though this school has not yet totally disappeared, not many treat it seriously any more.

**Modern Confucianism** is the development since the 1980s.

In this study I will focus on three groups of Confucians who comment on the Christian doctrine of salvation by God.

The first group is the **Neo-Confucians** of the 16th and 17th centuries of the Ming Dynasty, which includes Christian Neo-Confucians and anti-Christian Neo-Confucians.

The second group is the **Cultural Nationalist Confucians** in the period from the beginning of the 20th century to the 1980s.

The third group is the **Modern Confucians** since the 1980s, which includes both Modern Confucians of the Mencian tradition and Modern Christian Confucians of the Xun Zi tradition.

2.4 The Christian concept of God in Chinese terms

The essential concept of my study here is the concept of God in Chinese terms, although my aim is to be critical of the Confucian understandings concerning the Christian doctrine of salvation by applying a more carefully nuanced understanding
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of the latter in respect to Confucianism. Even though *Shangdi* 上帝 (the Sovereign on High) and *Tian* 天 (Heaven) have been considered as the translations and equivalents of God, the contact point between them in the Confucian-Christian dialogue is still the concept of God. Therefore, in this section I will focus on the Christian concept of God in Chinese terms.

As indicated in the introduction above, the Christian concept of God was strongly influenced by those who introduced it originally into China, *i.e.*, the missionaries. The general knowledge of Chinese Confucians concerning the Christian concept of God is based on original Catholic and Protestant teachings. It is very important, therefore, to understand the way the missionaries have presented the Christian concept of God and how Confucians have actually understood it. It is important, because the Christian concept of God introduced into Chinese culture is an idea which has raised considerable discussion among Confucians.

Three things must be distinguished: 1) the Christian concept of God in different denominations and schools of Christianity (*e.g.*, Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox), 2) the Christian concept of God, which was introduced into Chinese culture by missionaries, 3) Confucian understanding of the newly introduced Christian concept of God.

I have no intention of offering a systematic description of the Christian concept of God in the various denominations and schools of Christianity. The aim of this chapter is to lay out the nature of the Christian concept of God that was introduced into Chinese culture, mainly through Western missionaries. The concept of God is essential in understanding the Christian doctrine of salvation, since God is the one who saves; God is the one who created human beings, the object of salvation, and who knows the true state of their existence; and God is the one who has chosen the means of salvation. Therefore, if the understanding of God is made clear, we will be able to analyze Confucian understandings (reactions) to the Christian doctrine of salvation introduced in that particular historical period of time.

Two questions need to be answered: First concerns the denomination background of the concept of God. The other concerns whether Christians can generally agree with such an understanding as an authentic and correct interpretation
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of the concept of God within Christianity as a whole. Only after these two questions
are answered can one analyze Confucian reactions to the Christian concept of God. It
is not an easy task to describe these issues and to answer these questions.

It is obvious that, although Nestorian, Catholic, and Protestant missionaries
have all introduced the Christian God to China, Nestorianism seems to have had little
contact with Confucianism. Thus, in this work I will focus only on Catholic
(especially Jesuit missionaries) and Protestant introductions, and the Catechism of the
Roman Catholic Church\textsuperscript{194} and Augsburg Confession have been employed as the
main official documents of the Christian doctrines.

The Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci was one of the first Catholic Christian
missionaries to begin dialogue with Confucians. His introduction of the Christian
God to Confucians will be the main basis for this study in analyzing Confucian
responses to the Christian God. Therefore, we may say that the Christian doctrines of
God and salvation, to which Chinese Confucians have reacted in the 16th century, are
mainly the Catholic Christianity introduced by Matteo Ricci. But the Protestant
Christian doctrines of God and salvation have also been introduced into Chinese
culture since the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. And both Cultural Nationalist Confucians and Modern
Confucians have commented generally on the Christian doctrine of salvation. Thus,
two things should be noted: on the one hand, Cultural Nationalist Confucians and
Modern Confucians have not distinguished clearly the Protestant doctrine of salvation
by God from that of the Catholics. On the other hand, they have not responded to
each aspect of the doctrine of salvation.\textsuperscript{195}

Therefore, in my analysis, as far as the concept of God is concerned, I will
focus on three Chinese terms that the Catholics and Protestants have employed when

**God is Tianzhu 天主 (the Lord of Heaven).** From the very beginning of the Roman
Catholic missionary activity in China, the missionaries have been puzzled over the

\textsuperscript{194} Although Ricci had dialogue with Confucians in the 16\textsuperscript{th} and 17\textsuperscript{th}
centuries in China, his theology was nonetheless firmly based on the Roman Catholic Catechism that is used today.

\textsuperscript{195} In my study the Christian doctrine of God is mainly based on Catechism of the Catholic Church
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name of God. They could not refer to the experience of the Nestorian monks from Syria, most probably because they did not know anything about them. When the Syrian monks translated Christian texts from Syrian into Chinese in the 7th century, they were helped by Daoist and Buddhist translators. In their writings, God is sometimes called "the venerable from Heaven", *Tianzun* 天尊, in line with Buddhist tradition, with "spirit" being understood in line with Daoist philosophy.

When Ricci came in touch with Chinese scholars, he referred to the tradition of the Classics. He had the choice between *Tian* 天 (Heaven) or *Shangdi* 上帝 (The Emperor from above, Sovereign on High). Still, many missionaries objected to the use of any of these terms for the God of the Christians. Despite the objections Ricci and other missionaries thought that these two terms were well adapted for the "name" of the Christian God. Finally they chose to use the term *Tianzhu* 天主.196

The term *Tianzhu* was suggested by a young man who wrote it in front of a painting of Christ. At least, Paul Rule has related this event as significant.197 The term itself had a long history.

At the time of Ricci, the term *Tianzhu* was used by Buddhists when referring to the Lord of certain of the heavens of Buddhist cosmology. The term could have come from the Historical Records, *Shiji* 史记, published around 100 BC. In this text, *Tianzhu* is the name of the divinity of the official religion, one of the eight divinities venerated on the *Taishan* 泰山 (Tai Mountain). Also, in another classic, *Guanzi* 管子, we find, in the section called *Neiye* 内业 the following sentence: "The supreme

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196 Names are put into Chinese syllables. For example, Jesus Christ becomes Yeh-su ch'i-li-ssu-tu, and the Trinity is represented by an attempt to put the Portuguese Padre, Filho, Espirito Santo into Chinese. The most important of the new terms, however, and one that was to become characteristic of the Catholic Church in China and to give it its Chinese name, was t'ien-chu, 'Lord of Heaven'. Its first appearance in print was in Ruggieri's translation of the Ten Commandments, Tsu-ch'uan t'ien-chu shih-ch'eng, published in late 1583 or 1584. The origin of the use of this term is ascribed in Ricci's memoirs to one of the first converts, who, during Ruggieri's absence from Chao-ch'ing in mid-1583, had been taking care of the missionaries' altar. 'When at the time of our return we went to visit him, we found that he had placed the altar in a little room in his house, and, having no other image, had written on a tablet in the middle of the wall, two huge Chinese letters that said "to the Lord of Heaven". The Jesuits, ignorant of other usages of this term in Chinese religious works, enthusiastically adopted it. Despite the objections raised by critics of the use of the term, it has remained standard Catholic usage to the present day. However, Ricci himself, as we shall see, did not scruple to use other terms, including t'ien, in his apologetic treatises, while retaining t'ien-chu as the normal name for the Christian God.
quality of Heaven is correctness, of Earth equality, of man quiescence." In this particular sentence *Tianzhu* is not a proper name, and it can be interpreted as "the supreme quality of". Later on, these two characters may have become the name of a god, as in the case of *Guanyin* 观音. *Guanyin* comes from "guanshiyin" 观世音, which means to be attentive to the voices coming from the world.

The same process occurs in the formation of names in Hebrew. For example, the name, "Jesus" in Hebrew is "Yehoshua", which means "Yahweh saves". It is difficult to know when "Tianzhu" became the name of a divinity.

Since the Confucian scholars did not give much weight to these traditions, Matteo Ricci was able to use the term for "God". He wrote his famous book *"Tianzhu shiyi"* 天主释义 to explain what he meant by "Tianzhu 天主", the "Lord of Heaven". The proper translation of the title should be "The true meaning of the term *Tianzhu*", instead of "The true meaning of the Lord of Heaven." It is from this book that we are going to explore the spiritual way that Ricci was proposing to his Chinese friends.198

Ricci's attempt to present himself in a Buddhist garb failed. He realized at that time that Buddhists were not highly appreciated by the educated people. What kind of Buddhism did Ricci actually encounter? His formation had not prepared him to understand the way of *Zen* (Chan 禅), which was popular at the time in China. On the

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198 Ricci 1985, 59-61: “I, Matteo, left my country as a young man and traveled through the whole world. I discovered that doctrines which poison men's minds had reached every corner of the world. I thought that the Chinese, since they are the people of Yao and Shun, and disciples of the Duke of Zhou and of Zhongni, must not have changed the doctrines and teachings about Heaven and must never have allowed them to be stained. But inevitably even they some times also [fell in to error]. I would like to prove this [assertion].

However, because I am only a single traveler from far away and because my spoken and written language is different from Chinese, I cannot begin either to open my mouth or to move my fingers. Furthermore, because of my foolish disposition, I am afraid that the more I try to display [the true doctrines], the less clear they appear.

I have deplored this situation for a long time, and so for more than twenty years every morning and evening I prayed to Heaven with tears. I knew that the LORD OF HEAVEN pities living spirits and forgives them. Surely the day would come when [these true doctrines] would be made known [to the Chinese] and [their erroneous doctrines] would be corrected. Finally, one day several friends told me that even if I could not speak perfectly, I could not be silent if I saw a thief, and if I cried out and a good and strong man was nearby, he would chase and attack [the thief]. Therefore, I wrote down these dialogues which I had had with some Chinese scholars, and collected them into a book.”

Yao (c. 2300 BC) and Shun (c. 2200 BC), two of the most celebrated sage-kings in ancient China. Zhou Gong (around 1100 BC), the Duke of Zhou, was a brother of Zhou Wuwang (1100 BC), first ruler of the Zhou dynasty (1121-250 BC). In Confucius time and subsequent generations of
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other hand, his scholastic and scientific formation had prepared him to enter into the
religion of the Lord of Heaven as expressed in the Chinese tradition.\textsuperscript{199}

What he wanted to tell his friends was that his religion was very much attuned
to the most ancient religious tradition of China. He wanted to show how, in ancient
China, there was a belief in a personal God. As far as I know, many scholars today
consider Ricci’s argument warranted, since many textual and archaeological
discoveries from ancient China indicate that there was a personal deity in early
China.\textsuperscript{200} Therefore, in a way Ricci was not bringing a new religion, but calling the
Chinese back to their ancient traditions, which, for him, had been distorted by the
Neo-Confucians. The Chinese Neo-Confucians had put aside the belief in a personal
God.

In his book Ricci aimed to disregard the false doctrines of Buddhism and
Daoism as well as those of Neo-Confucianism in order to clear the way for the right
doctrine of Lord of Heaven, brought from the West. This is presented in the form of a
debate between a Chinese and a Western scholar, Matteo Ricci himself. His
argumentation is centered on Heaven and its Lord, thus demonstrating his ability to
relate to Chinese thought forms in his text.\textsuperscript{201}

\textbf{God is Shangdi 上帝 (Sovereign on High).} Without knowing Nestorielist mission in
China, it was not until Matteo Ricci introduced Christianity to China in the 16th
century when Chinese Confucian intellectuals start to get familiar with the Christian
God. Thus, many missionaries were especially delighted to find in the Classics -- the
works venerated above all others among the literate elite -- the term "Sovereign on
High" (\textit{Shangdi}) as well as invocations to Heaven and expressions such as "to serve
Heaven" (\textit{shitian} 事天), "to respect" (\textit{jingtian} 敬天) or "to fear Heaven" (\textit{weitian} 畏天). Ricci and his followers were so deeply convinced of the universal nature of their
own religion, that for them, there was a strong temptation to suppose that the

\textsuperscript{199} This historical fact has been mentioned generally by different scholars, for example, in the
\textsuperscript{200} Appendix IV: "Degeneration".
\textsuperscript{201} FR, 108, note 1.
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Chinese, who had unfortunately subsequently become atheists, had at one time had some knowledge of the true God, or, as Ricci himself put it, they had been enlightened by the "light of natural reason".

Ricci was warranted in saying that there was a belief in a personal God in early China, since this belief was expressed in the Classics. The passage in which the expressions "Heaven" and "Sovereign on High" appear were carefully noted for the benefit of missionary work. Ricci himself, in the second chapter of his great polemical work, the True meaning of the Lord of Heaven, quotes eleven passages that contain the phrase "Sovereign on High". This concept did not refer to human beings, but refers only to the personal deity. Later on, philosophers put this tradition of a personal God aside.

It was his Chinese friends who recommended that he use this expression as an equivalent for "Lord of Heaven" (tianzhu), the Chinese translation of "God", adopted as early as 1583. Ricci thought that in this term he had found a way of gradually leading the Chinese to Christianity. He had accordingly declared in his work: "When one reads the ancient books, one understands that the Sovereign on High and the Lord of Heaven [of Christians] differ in name alone." Ricci also claims: “He who is called the Lord of Heaven in my humble country is He who is called Shang-ti (= Shangdi, Sovereign on High) in Chinese.”

Although Ricci assimilated the Christian God with the Chinese Shangdi, it should also be mentioned that later only Protestant Christians in China have accepted Shangdi as the term to translate the Christian God. Catholics have only been using Tianzhu.

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202 Appendix III: “The Eleven Quotations of Ricci”.
203 This phenomenon has been called the degeneration from theism into humanism. I have studied this issue of "degeneration" in my M. Th. Thesis; see Huang 2002. This issue is also to be discussed more in chapter 3 of this study, where I discuss that the concept of Sovereign on High has changed from a personal deity into an impersonal Heaven and Principle.
204 Ricci 1985, 416. The Jesuit missionaries were later to learn that the Jews of China also used the terms tian and shangdi to translate the name of Yahveh, as, for instance, on the steles in the synagogue of Kaifeng in He’nan province, which are dated 1489, 1612 and 1663. Cf. FR, 108, note 1b. Note also that the term Shangdi was used by Protestant missionaries as a translation for God, in the nineteenth century.
206 Ricci 1985, 121.
God is Shen 神 (God). In addition to Shangdi, Protestant Christians have also called God Shen in Chinese. It is important to distinguish the original meanings of Shen in the Chinese religions and its meaning as the Christian God. Confucian responses to the Christian Shen 神 (God), are strongly dependant on the original meanings of the term.

The term “Shen” has many meanings. At least three of them can be summarized as they are found in the Chinese religions as follows. 1) Shen originally refers to the Heavenly God.\(^{207}\) He is the Creator\(^{208}\) and Ruler\(^{209}\) of Heaven, Earth and of all things. 2) Shen may mean Heaven in contrast to Earth. He represents a sort of god.\(^{210}\) 3) Shen also means ghosts\(^{211}\) and the spirits of dead people.\(^{212}\) So, originally

\(^{207}\) *Hanyu da zidian* 汉语大字典 (suoyinben 缩印本) 1995, 1000. Xu Shen’s 許慎 *Shuowen jiezi* 説文解字 reads: *Shen* is Heavenly God, who brings out tens of thousand of things. (*Shen* 神, *Tianshen* 天神, *yinchu wanwu zhe ye* 引出万物者也.)

\(^{208}\) *Hanyu da zidian* 汉语大字典 (suoyinben 缩印本) 1995, 1000. Xu Kai makes notes to Xu Shen’s 宣的 definition of Shen by saying that the Lord of Heaven gives air to influence tens of thousands of things; thus, it is said that He brings out ten of thousands of things. (*Tianzhu jiangqi, yi gan wanwu, gu yan yinchu wanwu ye.* 天主降氣，以感万物，故言引出万物者也.)

\(^{209}\) *Hanyu da zidian* 汉语大字典 (suoyinben 缩印本) 1995, 1000. Xu Kai 徐鍇 makes notes to Xu Shen’s 宣的 definition of Shen by saying that the One who rules all things is called Shen. (*Wu you zhu zhi zhen yue shen* 物有主之真曰神.)

\(^{210}\) *Hanyu da zidian* 汉语大字典 (suoyinben 缩印本) 1995, 1000. *Shu* 書, *Weizi* 魏子 reads: "*Jin Yinmin nai rangqi e Shen Zhi zhi xiwansheng* 今殷民乃攘竊神祇之犧牷牲." (A later person Lu Deming in the Tang Dynasty noted this in saying that Heaven is Shen, and Earth is Zhi 天曰神，地曰祗.) *Zhouli* 周禮, *Chunguan* 春官, *Dasiyue* 大司樂 reads also: "*yi si Tian Shen* 以祀天神." (A later person, Zheng Xuan in the Han Dynasty, noted that *Tian Shen* refers to the Five Emperors, sun, moon and stars. *Tianshen*, *wei wudi ji riyue xingchen* 天神，謂五帝及日月星辰.) Thus, both Shen and Zhi are gods.

\(^{211}\) *Hanyu da zidian* 汉语大字典 (suoyinben 缩印本) 1995, 1000. Confucian *Lunyu* 論語 reads: "*Zi bu yu gui, li, luan, shen*" (*子不語鬼，力，亂，神*). And this term Shen here is usually interpreted as ghost.

\(^{212}\) *Hanyu da zidian* 汉语大字典 (suoyinben 缩印本) 1995, 1000. Zhengzitong 正字通, *Shibu* 示部 reads: "*Yanghun wei shen, yinpo wei gui; qi zhi shen zhe wei shen, qi zhi qu zhe wei gui* 阳魂謂神，陰魄謂鬼；氣之伸者為神，氣之屈者為鬼." Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 in the Han Dynasty said: "*Shengren zhi jingqi weizhi shen, xianzhi zhi jingqi wei zhi gui* 聖人之精氣謂之神，賢知之精氣謂之鬼." (The spirits of sages are called Shen, and the spirits of good people are called Gui.) Thus, Shen and Gui are two kinds of spirits of dead people. Wing-tsit Chan explained the developmental process of this term as follows: *Guishen* refers to spiritual beings, positive spiritual force and negative spiritual force. This concept should be discussed under four categories: that in the Confucian Classics; that in ancient religious sacrifices; that in latter-day religious sacrifices; and that referring to demons and gods. By the Confucian Classics is meant the Classics as interpreted by the Neo-Confucians; this is to say, guishen are positive and negative forces behind events. Thus, expansion is shen, while contraction is gui. This naturalistic and philosophical meaning should always be kept entirely distinct from the other meaning of the first three categories, namely, guishen as spiritual beings. In ancient times shen usually referred to heavenly beings but gui to spirits of deceased human beings. In latter-day sacrifices, guishen together refers to ancestors. In popular religion shen means gods (who are good) and demons (who are not always good). In Neo-Confucianism guishen may refer to all these three categories; but
the term “Shen” seems to have been a polytheistic concept referring to God, gods, or spirits. However, since the time Protestant Christians have used it, it has especially developed to refer to the Christian God and has become a monotheistic concept.

Only the first meaning of the Chinese Shen is similar to the Christian God, who is the Creator and Ruler. The other two meanings cannot be connected to the Christian God.

It must be mentioned Chinese Protestant Christians differ in their opinions concerning the term “Shen”. Some people agree to use it as far as the readers know that this Christian “Shen” (God) is not the Chinese Shen (ghosts or spirits of dead people). Others are afraid that the term “Shen” may result in confusion or making the Christian God similar to the Chinese Shen. They employ only the term “Shangdi” to mean the Christian God.213

The question can be raised, then, whether Confucians have been aware of this difference between the Chinese Shen and the Christian God when they considered the Christian God? Therefore, in analyzing Confucian responses, one has to take this difference into account.

We should keep in mind that, when Ricci and other missionaries (both the Roman Catholic and Protestant) spoke about God’s salvation with Confucians, they did not offer a theological systematic description of the doctrine. They spoke vaguely about salvation in connection to certain ideas of the nature of God.214 For example, Ricci’s attention was focused on proving the existence of God, demonstrating the moral characteristics of God, and describing the exclusiveness of God. His main point, as

213 For example, the most popular and famous Chinese translation of the Bible today among Chinese Protestant Christians is the Union Version, which was translated around 100 years ago. Within this Union Version there are two terms employed to translate the Christian God, one is “Shen”, another is “Shangdi”.

already mentioned above, was that the Christian God is the same as the Sovereign on High of the Chinese classics.215

Both the Roman Catholic and Protestant Christian doctrines of salvation are very large and complex issues; I am, therefore, constrained by the necessity of limiting my topic to the issues outlined in section 1.1 (“Aim”) and will not discuss every aspect of the Christian doctrine of salvation. In the following three chapters I will analyze how each group of Confucians (Neo-Confucians, Cultural Nationalist Confucians, and Modern Confucians) has responded to the four issues upon which I am focusing: the Saviour, the object of salvation and its status, and the mean of salvation.

It should be noted that not every group of Confucians will be analyzed with the same attention, since they have reacted by different degrees to certain subjects. Thus, I will focus only on those responses that I consider important, and the representative Confucians in each stage have been introduced above in this chapter.

215 Ricci 1985, 65-98 (Chapter 1: A discussion on the creation of heaven, earth, and all things by the Lord of Heaven, and on the way He exercises authority [over them] and sustains them); 99-132 (Chapter 2: An explanation of mistaken views concerning the Lord of Heaven current among men).
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If one wishes to know how Confucians understand the Christian doctrine of salvation, he must first find out how Confucians understand the notion of the Saviour. Does God exist? Is God the Saviour? Does He have anything to do with Chinese people? ²¹⁶

In order to answer whether God exists, many Christian missionaries in the 16th century in China focused their arguments on the assimilation between the Christian concept of God and the Chinese concept of *Shangdi* 上帝 (Sovereign on High) and *Tian* 天 (Heaven). The term “assimilation” here means that the Christian concept of God and the Chinese concepts of *Shangdi* (Sovereign on High) and *Tian* (Heaven) are same. Ricci was the first famous missionary who started to stress such assimilation. Later, many Protestant Christians followed this assimilation and adopted *Shangdi* as the official term to translate the Christian concept of God. Catholic and Protestant Christians have dealt with the issue of assimilation, often involving the following five Chinese concepts: *Shangdi* (Sovereign on High), *Tian* (Heaven), *Taiji* (the Great Ultimate), *Li* 理 (Principle) and *Dao* 道 (Way). The two concepts *Shangdi* and *Tian* are most employed when the assimilation is discussed.

²¹⁶ Generally speaking God saves human beings through Jesus Christ, who is the Saviour. In this chapter I will not discuss much about Christ but will focus on the concept of God. In chapter 5 when the means of salvation is analyzed I will focus on justification by faith in Jesus Christ. Thus, I do not mean here in this chapter that God rather than Jesus Christ is the Saviour.
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This assimilation has raised many questions among Christian missionaries and Confucians. Many Confucians have considered that if Shangdi and the God of the Roman Catholic Christians are equivalent, then there is no problem for considering the existence of God; otherwise, to them there is no God.

What does the term “exist” mean in the dialogue? It means whether there is God or not. There are many arguments for the existence of God, for example, the \textit{a priori} approach\textsuperscript{217}, the \textit{a posteriori} approach\textsuperscript{218} and the existence approach.\textsuperscript{219} There are also many arguments against the existence of God.\textsuperscript{220} While theology may take

\textsuperscript{217} The \textit{a priori} ontological approach argues from a conception of God as a being so perfect that his nonexistence is inconceivable. This made famous by St. Anselm (1033-1109) in the eleventh century and defended in another form by Descartes, holds that it would be logically contradictory to deny God's existence. St. Anselm began by defining God as "that [being] than which nothing greater can be conceived." If God existed only in the mind, He then would not be the greatest conceivable being, for we could imagine another being that is greater because it would exist both in the mind and in reality, and that being would then be God. Therefore, to imagine God as existing only in the mind but not in reality leads to a logical contradiction; this proves the existence of God both in the mind and in reality.

\textsuperscript{218} The \textit{a posteriori} approach is usually represented by St. Thomas Aquinas. In the \textit{Summa Theologica} (la, 2.3) he gives five proofs, or “five ways”, by which God's existence can be demonstrated philosophically: 1) the "unmoved mover" argument. We know that there is motion in the world; whatever is in motion is moved by another thing; this other thing also must be moved by something; to avoid an infinite regression, we must posit a "first mover," which is God. 2) The "nothing is caused by itself" argument. For example, a table is brought into being by a carpenter, who is caused by his parents. Again, we cannot go on to infinity, so there must be a first cause, which is God. 3) The cosmological argument. All physical things, even mountains, boulders, and rivers, come into being and go out of existence, no matter how long they last. Therefore, since time is infinite, there must be some time at which none of these things existed. But if there were nothing at that point in time, how could there be anything at all now, since nothing cannot cause anything? Thus, there must always have been at least one necessary thing that is eternal, which is God. 4) Objects in the world have differing degrees of qualities such as goodness. But speaking of more or less goodness makes sense only by comparison with what is the maximum goodness, which is God. 5) The teleological argument (argument from design). Things in the world move toward goals, just as the arrow does not move toward its goal except by the archer directing it. Thus, there must be an intelligent designer who directs all things to their goals, and this is God. Aquinas, la, q. 2, aa.2-3. See also Allen 1985, 137.

\textsuperscript{219} There approach asserts direct experience of God by way of personal revelation. This is not really an argument in the usual sense, however, because one does not usually argue for the existence something that can be directly experienced. Through natural theology (\textit{analogia entis}) and revelation as mediated by the Church human beings can realize that God exists but that God himself is not a being. Therefore, for Catholics, the essence of God is \textit{esse} (= to be); thus, God is \textit{existare} (= being) who gives every \textit{ens} (= a being) its \textit{esse} (= to be).

\textsuperscript{220} Arguments against God's existence have been given by philosophers, atheists, and agnostics. Some of these arguments find God's existence incompatible with observed facts; some are arguments that God does not exist because the concept of God is incoherent or confused. Others are criticisms of the proofs offered for God's existence. One of the most influential and powerful "proofs" that there is no God proceeds from "The Problem From Evil." This argument claims that the following three statements cannot all be true: (a) evil exists; (b) God is \textit{omnipotent}; and (c) God is all-loving. The argument is as follows: 1) If God can prevent evil, but doesn't, then He isn't all-loving. 2) If God
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God's existence as absolutely necessary on the basis of authority, faith, or revelation, many philosophers and some theologians have thought it possible to demonstrate by reason that there must be a God.\textsuperscript{221}

The Confucians, who have most vigorously expressed their ideas on the issue of God's existence and the assimilation between God and the Chinese concepts of Tian and Shangdi, are the Neo-Confucians, the Cultural Nationalist Confucians, and the Modern Confucians. There are both affirmative and negative opinions concerning the assimilation between the Chinese concepts of Shangdi and Tian (Heaven) and the Christian concept of God. So this question of assimilation has divided Confucians into two different groups. The whole dialogue concerning the existence of God occurred mainly between Confucians and Roman Catholics, and Protestant Christians simply repeat somewhat what Catholics said in the 16\textsuperscript{th} and 17\textsuperscript{th} centuries when they later discussed this issue with Chinese Confucians.

Both negative and affirmative comments on assimilation will be analyzed in the following.\textsuperscript{222} I will also lay out why different Confucians differ in their insights concerning this matter and concerning the existence of the Christian God.

\begin{itemize}
  \item [221] One may refer to John Hick's arguments for the existence of God, see Hick 1970. Hick arguments cover the design, teleological, cosmological, moral, and ontological arguments and rational theistic belief without proofs.
  \item [222] It should be noticed that among Neo-Confucians the Christian concept of God refers only to the Lord of Heaven, which was introduced by Ricci in the 16th century. However, for the Cultural Nationalist Confucians and Modern Confucians the Christian concept of God is usually understood in
\end{itemize}
During the development of Chinese thinking, there has been degeneration from theism to humanism, and the concept of *Shangdi* (Sovereign on High) has changed from that of a personal deity into an impersonal Heaven, a Natural Principle and a Human Nature. According to the Ancient Confucian classics in the Xia 夏 (2183-1752 BC) and Shang 商 (1751-1112 BC) dynasties *Di* 帝 (Sovereign) or *Shangdi* 上帝 (Sovereign on High) was God, who has personhood. In the Zhou 周 Dynasty (1111-249 BC) the term *Tian* 天 (Heaven) was gradually replacing the term *Shangdi* 上帝. The personhood of *Tian* was a disputed issue. After Dong Zhongshu 董仲舒 (ca. AD 179-104) in the Han 汉 dynasty (206 BC- AD 8) *Tian* was again replaced by *Tianli* 天理 (Heavenly Principle or Natural Law), through the development of Neo-Confucianism in Song 宋 Dynasty (AD 960-1279) and Ming 明 Dynasty (AD 1368-1644) the term *Tianli* was again replaced by *Li* 理 (Principle or Objective Principle) and *Xing* 性 (Human Nature or Subjective Nature). Such a change would have influenced the connotations of Confucianism, and, thus, their opinions of the Christian concept of God. A trace of the theory concerning the degeneration of theism in China can be found in a Neo-Confucian Shao Yong's 邵雍 (1011-1077) *Huangji jingshi* 皇极经史 in the Song 宋 Dynasty. Chan Wing-tsit (1901-1994), a sinologist in the USA, has studied this issue. For example, the idea, that the destiny of man or the future of a Dynasty depended upon virtue rather than upon the pleasure of some mysterious, spiritual power, marked a radical change from the Shang 商 (1751-1112 BC) to Zhou 周 (1111-249 BC) dynasties. During the Shang, a man was totally under the reign of spiritual beings. No important thing could be done without first seeking their approval. Later in the West Zhou 西周 (1066-771 BC) the dwelling places of the spirits were regulated by the rulers.
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3.1 The Neo-Confucian ideas of the assimilation

3.1.1 Affirmative responses to the assimilation

As mentioned above, the Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci introduced a personal and transcendental God. This was established by an opposition between the earth below, where man plays out his eternal destiny, and the Beyond, which is totally incommensurate with it.\textsuperscript{226} Only a few Neo-Confucians opposed the Christian concept of God when Ricci was alive in China in the 16th century.\textsuperscript{227} In fact, Ricci was very highly appreciated. Ricci and his fellows had even converted some Neo-Confucians to Christianity. Among the converts were famous highly ranking officials such as the Three Pillars (Xu Guangqi 徐光启, Li Zhizao 李之藻 and Yang Tingyun 杨廷筠).\textsuperscript{228} They did not only accept the science and technology introduced by Ricci but also his analogy between the Christian concept of God and the Chinese concepts of \textit{Shangdi} and \textit{Tian}.\textsuperscript{229}

Yang Tingyun was the one, who produced most of the theological works among the Three Pillars of Christians. The resurrection of the body, monogamy, and, especially, the whole notion of the incarnation, passion, and death of Jesus, and the Trinity were difficult questions for Yang, since these were totally strange ideas for Confucians. He gave up the natural meaning of the category Heaven in the Neo-Confucianism of the Song and Ming dynasties and considered it as the Triune God. This approach had been introduced to him by missionaries.\textsuperscript{230}

\textsuperscript{226} Ricci 1985, chapter 2.
\textsuperscript{227} The negative responses to Ricci's concept of God emerged much later than the affirmative ones. A few years after Ricci's death some began to oppose Ricci and his God. The team of opponents was very limited. Most of them were Buddhists, because Ricci had publicly attacked Buddhism in his works. Only a few Neo-Confucians joined the stream to oppose Ricci. The Chinese people opposed not only Catholic Christianity but also Western science and technology. The main reason behind this was nationalism and the desire to keep Confucianism unchanged. Huang Zhen, who opposed Ricci, described the above situation by saying: “We did not only persuade Confucians but also Buddhists to oppose [Christianity] together but most people were reluctant; once thinking about this, my eyes were full of tears.” See Huang Zhen's "Poxieji zixu" in PoXJ, vol. 3.
\textsuperscript{228} They have been mentioned earlier in this study.
\textsuperscript{229} Because the Chinese the term \textit{Tian} (Heaven) has replaced \textit{Shangdi} (Sovereign on High) since the Zhou Dynasty, \textit{Tian} is a concept in which secular and religious aspects merge. It expresses an order that is both divine and natural, both social and cosmic. It is a crossroad where the religious and the political, observational sciences and mathematics, and concepts of man and the world all meet.
\textsuperscript{230} Cf., Yang "Daiyi xupian, 12. Yang said, “Trinity is a principle which transgresses nature; even with words one cannot fully explain it, and even with metaphors one cannot completely compare it.
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In this section I will focus on Yang Tingyun’s arguments for the assimilation between the Christian God and Chinese Heaven. Concerning the Christian concept of God, Yang has two important ideas.

First, Yang believed that the Jesuit concept of God originally existed in the ancient Chinese tradition and was called Tian (Heaven) in Chinese.²³¹

As mentioned above, Ricci assimilated the Christian concept of God with the Chinese concept of Shangdi. However, when Ricci met with Neo-Confucians in the 16th century, Shangdi did not feature often in their discussions. Tian had already replaced it. For Ricci, the word Tian was another name of Shangdi and was simply a metaphor to refer to God, his angels, paradise and its elect.²³² Therefore, based on Ricci’s assimilation between the Christian concept of God and the Chinese concept of Shangdi, Yang Tingyun assimilated the Christian concept of God with the Confucian concept of Tian.²³³

How did Yang devise the assimilation between the Christian concept of God and the Chinese concept of Tian? Did he accept Christianity without a clear understanding of its main ideas, or was he a Christian only in appearance? These questions easily come to mind, since Yang was a Neo-Confucian scholar and, at the same time, a sympathizer of Buddhism. For him it should not have been easy to acknowledge the Lord of Heaven as the one and only Lord. Both Buddhism (especially in the dominant Chan teaching) and the late Ming Neo-Confucianism (particularly in the school of Wang Yangming) considered one's own heart or mind as the source of truth and moral values. In these schools the heart is a symbol of a

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²³¹ See Yang Tingyun's "Ke Xi xuefan xu." Yang said, “Confucians take Heaven as their root, thus, they know Heaven, serve Heaven, fear Heaven and honour Heaven, and this is the doctrine of the previous sages of China. This was as clear as the light of sun and of stars in the classics of Poems and Historical Documents. However, since the Qin Dynasty, the honour to Heaven began to be damaged. Since the Han Dynasty, the honour to Heaven began to degenerate. During the past 1600 years, no one knew the study of Heaven any more.”

²³² Ricci 1985, chapter 2.

²³³ See Yang Tingyun's "Ke Xi xuefan xu."
human’s interior side. The distinction between the interior and external sides is not so clear in Neo-Confucianism. 234

The missionaries insisted exclusively on God, i.e., the Lord of Heaven, as the external source, the ground of moral values. They told the Confucians that moral correctness and wrongness do not exist in the nature of human beings but in the revelation of God. Because of this controversy, one may wonder whether Yang had understood the Christian concept of God correctly, or whether he was just a shallow Christian, or whether he was a deep Christian without theological training.

Yang’s assimilation of the Christian God and the Confucian Tian is reasonable. He based his arguments for the assimilation on Ancient Confucianism rather than on Neo-Confucianism. This is to say that, for Yang, Tian and Shangdi are the same, and each of them should be understood as a monotheistic personal Deity in Ancient Confucianism.

This is exactly the basis of Ricci’s argumentation and that of his fellow missionaries, who reached their conclusion by distinguishing Ancient Confucianism from Neo-Confucianism. 235 It is true that Ricci usually used the concept Shangdi rather than Tian as the equivalent to the God of Christians. However, for those Chinese Confucians who followed Ricci, God was called Shangdi (Sovereign on High) in Ancient China and Tian (Heaven) in the Neo-Confucian context. 236 Yang Tingyun was a Neo-Confucian Christian convert. Thus, his assimilation between the Christian concept of God and the Confucian concept of Tian is understandable.

For Yang Tingyun, Tian can be differentiated from the Christian concept of God in name alone. He also believed that Ricci’s Christianity was clearer and more detailed than Confucianism, as the shortcoming of Confucianism was its vague

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234 This issue will be discussed later in details later in this study when the transcendence and immanence are to be studied.

235 Cf., Gernet 1985, 29. For example, Father Noel, a missionary in the 16th century China distinguished between the ‘authentic Confucianism’ (zhengru) of Antiquity 235 and the ‘common Confucianism’ (suru) of contemporary times. Gernet says that these are nothing but empty words.

236 See Ricci 1985, 121. Cf. also Gernet 1985, 26. For Ricci, the predominated idea was that of a ‘natural religion’ together with a practical desire to be effective. The existence of a single, creator God and of a paradise and a hell as well as the distinction between soul and body were truths that could be demonstrated by reason. It was therefore not at all surprising to him to find at least a trace of these ideas in ancient Chinese tradition.
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definition and description of the category Tian (Heaven).237 Yang said that all the ancient classics only ask people to respect and to fear Heaven, to know Heaven, but do not tell precisely what Heaven is.238 The importance on Yang’s comment should be emphasized, because the term Tian has very many meanings,239 and the Neo-Confucians did not usually make detailed distinctions among them when commenting on the assimilation between the Christian concept of God and the Chinese concept of Heaven. For most Neo-Confucians Heaven is not a personal deity any more but has been changed into an impersonal principle.240 However, Yang Tingyun differs from most of his contemporary Neo-Confucians in referring to Ancient Confucianism rather than to Neo-Confucianism. Many misunderstandings have occurred for lack of noting this distinction.

Yang, then, followed Ricci's approach of referring to the Chinese classics as the basis for his understanding the notion of the Christian God. We have shown above that Ricci listed eleven occurrences of the term "Shangdi 上帝" or "Di 帝"

237 Yang "Dayi xupian, 11. Yang says, "[Ricci's Christianity] does not only fit the ideas of Confucius concerning knowing life and death, fearing Heaven and reaching Heaven, but is also clearer and more detailed than the latter."
238 Yang "Dayi xupian", 12.
239 Some Neo-Confucians could not find justification for dissociating the visible sky from Heaven considered as the principle of universal order. For example, according to the Song and Ming Neo-Confucianism there is not an independent spiritual world, which is different from the world where people live. An anonymous Neo-Confucian author against Christianity denounced the missionaries' assimilation of their Lord of Heaven to the Tian of the Confucian classics. In such a way he tried to prove that God does not exist. He explained that Heaven has three senses and manifests itself simultaneously as: “1) The immense, luminous, blue sky; 2) Heaven as the source of retribution for good and evil.’ They only know this one. Furthermore, for us, this Heaven simply has an organizational power like that of a sovereign who rules the world. It is a gross error on their part to speak of creation. 3) Heaven as the permanent source of the universe, a source which combines the principle of order (li) and universal energy (qi), and also substance and activity (ti and yong), and which is spontaneous action and reaction.” From this division of Heaven into three meanings we can find three points as follows: 1) Heaven is a material sky, which is different from earth; 2) Heaven rules the world but does not create the world; 3) Heaven is the principle of the world, and it has neither personality nor personal feelings such as to like or to dislike, to reward or to punish. Feng Youlan has distinguished five different meanings for the term Heaven: 1) The physical sky, which is contradictory to earth. 2) The ruling Heaven, also called Huangtian shangdi, who is the God with personality. 3) The destiny Heaven, which decides Human beings' destinies; for example, Mencius says: ‘If it is successful, it is because of Heaven’. 4) The natural Heaven, Xunzi. Tianyun has discussed such a Heaven. 5) The principle of Heaven, which is the highest principle of the universe; for example, Zhongrong says: "The destiny of Heaven is called nature." The Heaven appearing in Shijing, Zuo zhuan and Guoyu is mainly the ruling Heaven except certain cases of physical sky. And the Heaven in Confucius' Analects is also the ruling Heaven. See Feng 1939.
240 See Appendix IV: “Degeneration”.

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(Sovereign on High) in the Chinese classics. 241 Thus, those Neo-Confucians who affirm the assimilation between the Christian concept of God and the Chinese concept of Heaven have focused on the meaning of Heaven in the ancient Classics rather than on that of the Neo-Confucian works. For them, what the Song and Ming Neo-Confucians said about Tian (Heaven) is not so important. Most important is: What does "Tian" (Heaven) mean, for example, in the Five Classics such as the Poems (Shijing 诗经) 242 and the Historical documents (Shujing 书经)? 243 What does “Tian” mean in the Four Books such as Confucius' Analects? 244

241 See also Appendix III: “Eleven quotations of Ricci”.

242 Nikkilä has made a detailed study of the concept of Heaven in Shijing, according to which, Heaven created both the natural world and the people in it with their bodies and moral regulations. Heaven maintains the world and its people and uses its counterpart, the king, to feed the people. When people cultivate virtue and make sacrifice to God and their ancestors, Heaven, God and the spirits act favorably. Heaven favors the king, lord, and prince, by blessing, giving happiness, long life, and an appointment to rule, descendants, wealth, material growth and success. Nikkilä continues that Heaven is also unfavorable, terrifying, treating with harshness the people and the whole country collectively, including the innocent. Heaven brings death, famine, causes the people to flee the country and induces bad officials to create disorder. See Nikkilä 1982, 204-205. See also Appendix I “The Five Classics”.

243 Nikkilä has summarized the Heaven according to Shujing as follows: in the Zhou thought, Heaven is an autonomous, independent, supremely functioning entity, the ultimate initiator of things and principles, desiring a harmonious and happy coexistence for the people in all their social relations and for the entire universe as well. In the pattern of oscillation, the positive ideal was regarded as being worth preserving, worth continuing. Zhou people had worked out a method of anticipating and forestalling the negative trend. Through this they understood Heavenly punishments as educative, as a process whereby Heaven taught the government to improve its administration. Zhou people also conceived of the idea of a Heavenly democracy in which the opinion of the people is consistent with the opinion of Heaven, the process of correction being implemented in accordance with this opinion. And the ceaseless communication with heaven through prayer and oracles, the maintenance of unity between immanence and transcendence also seemed to contribute to the positive trend. See Nikkilä 1982, 203-204.

244 Nikkilä says: "There are 16 references to heaven in the Analects, two of "Son of Heaven" (Tianzi 天子), one of "Way of Heaven" (Tiandao 天道), four of "The Mandate of Heaven" (Tianming 天命), altogether 23 cases. The 16 references to Heaven fall into several categories of which the largest describes the mutual relationship between Confucius and heaven. These relationships include the positive and negative attitudes of Heaven towards Confucius, and secondly his communication with Heaven." See Nikkilä 1992, 22. Thus, Confucius' Heaven is an autonomous functioning subject which maintains the whole of the natural world. Confucius did not talk about Heaven so much, but he felt strongly that his identity was based on Heaven, in the sense that Heaven recognizes him and has given him the mission to preach his doctrines to those in authority. Thus, the thinking of Confucius about Heaven is a theological one. See Nikkilä 1992, 197. However, there is a difference between Confucian thought and the traditional thinking, Confucius has left a space for intellectual agnosticism and has freed ethics from the bondage of Heaven's educative punishments, which was the main thinking of Zhou Dynasty. Thus, this freedom makes human being possible to think for himself and to become an intellectual ethical autonomous agent. See Nikkilä 1992, 195. In Confucius' personal intellectual growth, after reaching the knowledge of Mandate of heaven, he developed moral freedom towards becoming an intellectual ethical autonomous agent. See Nikkilä 1992, 197. See also Appendix II “The Four Books”.
Yang’s assimilation of the Christian concept of God and the Confucian concept of *Tian* can also be understood from his insight into the concepts of *Li* (Principle) and *Tianli* (Heavenly Principle). Following Ricci, Yang Tingyun argued that human nature was originally given by God (the Lord of Heaven). Following such an interpretation, Yang Tingyun employed the Neo-Confucian concept of *Li* (Principle) to explain human nature. For Yang, *Li* was given by God to nourish human nature, and he said,

> The spirit (or soul), which the Lord of Heaven has given to human beings, was originally a clear thing, and all principles clearly exist. Thus, humanity, righteousness, ritual propriety and wisdom have been called "nature". Since the Lord of Heaven has given me, thus, I have it. The bright virtue of the Bible is, in fact, the consciousness of Confucian.

Hereby the Confucian concepts of humanity, righteousness, ritual propriety and wisdom were considered by Yang as principles, which exist within human nature, since they were given by Heaven (= God). One of Yang's purposes is possibly to seek the objective source of human nature, so as to prove the credibility and universality of human morality.

Yang Tingyun has employed the Christian concept of God to replace the concept *Li* (Principle) of Cheng-Zhu 程朱. For Yang, God is the objective source of the heavenly principle of humanity and of his capacity to act morally. The concept of God is also important for Yang in the light of morality, since common Neo-Confucians appreciate self-cultivation, and Yang emphasizes that God is the power

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245 Cf., Ricci 1985, chapters 3 and 4, in which he discusses fallen human nature. This was originally written in Latin in 415 by Augustine, who identified the consequences of the fall upon human nature. Originally created without any fault, it is now contaminated by sin, and can only be redeemed through grace. Cf., Augustine 913, 235.8-236.6. For example, *Zhongyong*, one of the Four Books, reads: “What Heaven (*Tian*, nature) imparts to man is called human nature. To follow our nature is called the Way (Dao). Cultivating the Way is called education. The Way cannot be separated from us for a moment.” See the translation of *Zhongyong* in Chan 1963, 98.


248 ”Cheng-Zhu” refers to Cheng Yi, Cheng Hao and Zhu Xi, who are the representatives of the Principle Learning (*lixue*), the realistic wing of Neo-Confucianism.
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for human beings to practice morality. This emphasis upon objectivity is derived from the traditional meaning of the concept of Principle. In the Book of Rites, which is one of the Five Books of Confucian primary scriptures, the term Tianli (Heavenly Principle) means the Principle endowed in man by Heaven and does not have the connotation of universal truth or natural law.249

Later, within Neo-Confucianism, the Heavenly Principle and human desires were separated from each other. The “Heavenly Principle” represents the truth and the good, and “human desires” represents inhuman lustful desires, which are in conflict with truth and the good. Zhang Zai 张载 (1020-1077) was the first Confucian to have made a clear distinction between the Heavenly Principle and human desires.250 This sharp distinction was maintained through the Song 宋 (960-1279) and Ming 明 (1368-1644) Neo-Confucians to the Qing 清 (1644-1912) Dynasty.

Following the same tradition, Zhu Xi (1130-1200) considered Heaven as the external objective source of human nature and the Heavenly Principle as the objective authority. Zhu built his Neo-Confucian doctrine of morality on this tradition. Zhu also considered the human ability of realizing good and evil as a consciousness received from Heaven.

It is clear that the concept of "Heaven", which is a personal deity, was gradually replaced by the "Heavenly Principle", which is the external impersonal objectivity and source for all principles in human beings and all things. Such a change makes Neo-Confucianism less theistic and more atheistic. The presupposition of Yang Tingyun's belief in God and his arguments for the assimilation of the Christian God and the Chinese Heaven can, thus, find its trace from Zhang Zai's theory that Tian (Heaven) is the giver of Li (Principle).

I have no intention of commenting on whether Yang’s assimilation of the Christian God and the Confucian Tian is correct or not. Nevertheless, Yang’s position is comprehensible for two reasons: on the one hand, Tian was considered a

249 See "Record of Music" in the translation by James Legge, Li Ki, ch. 17, 96.
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replacement of Shangdi, the personal Deity in Ancient Confucianism; and, on the other hand, Tian was considered as the giver of Principle.

Of course, one may also criticize Yang by following Ricci’s appreciation of Ancient Confucianism more than Neo-Confucianism, and thus argue that it is existentially impossible to separate Neo-Confucianism from the Confucian tradition.251

In point of truth, however, one may find that, although Neo-Confucianism cannot be separated from the ancient Confucian tradition, it is possible to separate Ancient Confucianism from Neo-Confucianism. This is because the latter is the development of the former, and the former is the basis of the latter. Confucianism is represented by the Five Classics and the Four Books, and Neo-Confucianism is represented by the commentaries of the Song and Ming Dynasties.252 In any case, the distinction between Ancient Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism is clear.

Secondly, Yang Tingyun 杨庭筠 called God "Great Father-Mother" (Da fumu 大父母). The origin of this expression is connected with Chinese cosmology, based on the concept of yang 阳 (male element) and yin 阴 (female element). Yang developed the Christian interpretation of this typical Chinese expression.253 This expression has not appeared clearly in Western theology, but it is very important in the construction of a Chinese contextual theology, since human relationships are very highly emphasized in Confucianism. To consider God as parents and to consider Jesus Christ as an older brother can make it easier for Confucians to understand Christianity.254 Yang explained the meaning of the expression in terms of relationship in both Confucianism and Christianity:

251 Examples can be found in Gernet 1985, 29 and Kung & Ching 1993, 81.
252 Some writings of Yuan and Qing Dynasties have also been considered as Neo-Confucian, but they were written later than the time of Matteo Ricci. Thus, Ricci's understanding of Ancient Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism has nothing to do with them.
253 Cf., Standaert 1988, chapter 1 "Yang Tingyun's thought: A) Heaven."
254 As mentioned earlier, during the Taiping Rebellion (1851-1864), the leader of the movement Hong Xiuquan 洪秀全 called himself the younger brother of Jesus Christ. Such an approach has helped him very much in attracting people to follow him. This has been considered as heresy by both Catholic and Protestant Christianity, but it was an interesting and failed attempt of contextual theology.
Isn't His grace immense? Therefore, Confucianism considers Him Great Father-Mother and the Western countries consider Him the One True Master [Lord] (yi zhen zhu 一真主). 255

To regard the universe as one's own Father and Mother implies that all human beings should be regarded as brothers and sisters. The term also refers to the relationship between a parent and a child, which reflects the relationship between God and humankind. Yang says,

The Lord of Heaven rears men as fathers and mothers rear their children. 256

The same relationship expresses the important notion of the closeness of God. Yang says,

Now, men regard the Lord of Heaven as the most venerated and the highest [and therefore] far from them instead of as close as a parent. They do not know He is among men ... Therefore, one can say that He is the Great Father-Mother who is venerated but also close, and nobody is far from him.257

By developing this idea, Yang Tingyun was able to overcome his own personal difficulties in accepting the closeness of God to humanity, which was achieved through the mystery of the incarnation. It also helped him overcome the difficulty many Chinese had in accepting the notion of God as a person.

The term "Great Father-Mother" has valid Christological implications: Jesus is the supreme expression of the Great Father-Mother's closeness to human kind. Jesus himself can be considered, in such a context, as the first of many brothers.

The concept and the role of the first or eldest brother are very important in Chinese culture and mentality. This connotation of the eldest brother has been very helpful in making Jesus more understandable and more personal to the Chinese.

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There are several biblical references to Jesus as the first-born, especially in Paul's interpretation of Christ as the first-born of all creation and as the eldest of many brothers. (Col. 1:15; Rom. 8:29). Therefore, the concept of God as Great Father-Mother could have had an important role in the contextualization of Christianity in China.

There had been for a long time an awareness of the problem of whether it was necessary to create Chinese Christian theology, but few theological instruments have given satisfactory answers. Yang and other converts had the intellectual and moral ability to overcome these difficulties. The use of the term Dafumu (Great Father-Mother) is only an example of the way that converts have started something similar to the contextualization process. The main authors of such a process can perhaps only be indigenous Christians. Only they can unite in harmonious synthesis the "genius" of their people with the Good News of the Gospel.

Another advantage of the expression “Great Father-Mother” is its gender-balance outlook. As far as Feminist Theology is concerned, probably one of the thorniest challenges of contemporary theology is the problem of inclusive language and the identification of God with the masculine-authoritarian figure of the father. In the Bible we have several passages that portray God as mother. Jesus called God "Father", using the expression abba, which has intimate and tender connotations and is not authoritarian at all. From time to time through in the history of Christian spirituality, God has been presented as mother, although the image has never become main-stream. In contemporary theology the feminist agenda is important and sensitive. A generalized use of this term would certainly help to build a less patriarchal image of God. Unfortunately, the lack of a biblical term for "Great Father-Mother", has been one of the factors that prevented Chinese Christians from developing an original and contextual interpretation of God and Christ.

Many Neo-Confucians have challenged such assimilation of the Christian concept of God and the Chinese concepts of Shangdi and Tian by asking whether the Christian

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concept of God was known to the ancient Chinese, and, if it is the same as the
Chinese concepts of Heaven and Sovereign on High why has such a tradition been
degenerated or even totally lost later in Chinese history? Missionaries and many
Chinese Christians believed that there were two reasons for its disappearance:

The first reason relates to the transmitting of the classics. Missionaries often
resorted to the theory that part of the ancient Chinese tradition was totally lost in the
Burning of the Books, ordered by the first of the Qin 秦 emperors in 213 BC. One of
the writings that were totally destroyed, was the part of the old tradition that set out
the thesis of an all-powerful creator God, the existence of heaven and hell, and the
immortality of the soul. The teaching of the missionaries fortunately made it possible
to complete what had been lost in the classical traditions of China. This was, in fact,
the thesis put forward by Ricci in his book *the True meaning of the Lord of Heaven*,
where he explains to a Chinese intellectual why the Classics make no mention of
paradise and hell.260 Even though the above reference has not been proven either
right or wrong, it has intrigued many Chinese people.

The second reason relates to the accusation of Buddhist idolatry. Missionaries
say that Buddhism transformed the doctrine of the ancients, introducing superstition
and atheism into China. Thus, in the late Ming Dynasty in the 16th and 17th
centuries, the ancient tradition of worshipping the Heavenly God was degenerated,
and Neo-Confucianism, which is a mixture of classical Confucianism, Daoism and
Buddhism, came to occupy the dominant position.261 There were indeed substantial
differences between Ancient Confucianism and the Buddhist-influenced
philosophical Neo-Confucianism since the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Ancient

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260 Ricci 1985, Chapter 2. The Chinese Saints were not able to transmit their doctrine in its entirety.
Or perhaps, alternatively, not all their pronouncements were noted down. Or, perhaps they were, but
the recorded notes were subsequently lost. Or else, men of later generations, in their stupidity and not
believing in those things, destroyed them. Then, again, one should take into account the fact that such
documents are liable to deteriorate. Cf., Gernet 1985, 28.

261 Ricci 1985, Chapter 2. That is why the "modern interpreters", or the Neo-Confucian philosophers
of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, who had propagated a materialistic interpretation, had betrayed
the very spirit of the Classics. It was, indeed, just possible to explain that the allusions to Heaven in
the ancient texts referred to an all-powerful, creator God, despite the fact that the texts never
mentioned him at all. The commentaries of the Song period rendered such an interpretation quite
impossible. The early missionaries therefore attacked the commentaries and took the course of
stressing the literal meaning of the Classics. See Gernet 1985, 28.
Confucianism, before the Buddhist influence, possessed a concept of \textit{Shangdi} (Sovereign on High) analogous to the Christian idea of God. The ancient personal God was replaced by the concept \textit{Tian} (Heaven) in the Zhou Dynasty, and Heaven was reduced to an \textit{a priori} Principle (paired with earth) in Neo-Confucianism.\footnote{Cf., Ricci 1985, Chapter 2.}

The above two reasons have, in fact, touched on the theory of degeneration from theism to humanism, which is to say that there has been the concept of a personal God in ancient China: this God was called \textit{Shangdi} in Ancient Confucianism and \textit{Tian} in Neo-Confucianism. Finally, the old tradition of the Classics gradually degenerated from theism via deism or pantheism to the contemporary atheism. As \textit{the Book of rites (Liji 礼记)} says:

\begin{quote}
The people of Yin (Shang) honor spiritual beings, serve them, and put them ahead of ceremonies ... The people of Zhou honor ceremonies and highly value the conferring of favors. They serve the spiritual beings and respect them, but keep them at distance. They remain near to man and loyal to him.\footnote{See Book of Rites: "Record of Example", part. 2. See Legge 1885 (Li Ki ) vol. 1, 342.}
\end{quote}

For missionaries such as Ricci and Christian Confucian Chinese converts such as Yang Tingyun, the Christian concept of God and the Confucian concepts of Heaven and the Sovereign on High are homogeneous. Therefore, the mission of Christian missionaries is to help the Chinese people rediscover their own knowledge of God which has been forgotten in history. This homogeneousness is suggested mainly in that both the Christian concept of God and the Chinese concepts of the Sovereign on High and of Heaven in ancient time are personal deities. Many sinological scholars have noticed the feature of degeneration from theism to humanism in Chinese tradition.\footnote{See the beginning of this chapter 3 and Appendix IV: “Degeneration”.

Yang Tingyun's view on history after creation is understood to be thoroughly Chinese. He believed in the role of the Holy Emperors like Fu Xi 伏犧 and Shengnong 神农 in ordering the world. He also believed in the exemplary
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government of Yao 尧, Shun 舜 and Yu 禹 and the considerable influence of the
sages, the kings Wen 文 and Wu 武, the Duke of Zhou 周公, Confucius and Mencius.
Like many of his contemporaries he emphasized the harmonious period of peace and
good government during the Three dynasties (Xia 夏 21st-16th century BC, Shang 商
16th-11th century BC and Zhou 周 11th-841 BC).265 Yang has his own opinion
concerning the evolution of the world and the transmission of the Dao 道 (Way)
(daotong 道统) after the period of the Three Dynasties. He says,

Only the Universe has the complete true and correct principle, it is constant and cannot be
destroyed. But besides this, time after time, falsehood resembling the truth was able to disorder it. During the Three Dynasties, the transmission of the Way (daotong) was on a high
level: the kings [of the Shang Dynasty] resembled the [First] Rulers, and the kings [of the
Zhou Dynasty] resembled the emperors [of the Shang Dynasty], this was the correct resemblance. But when tyranny arrived, it became false.

After the Three Dynasties, the transmission of the Way was on a low level: at the
time of the Zhou Dynasty it was destroyed; Yang [Zhu] and Mo [Di] resembled the Confucians. From the Qin and Han Dynasties onwards, Buddhists and Taoists [Daoists]
resembled Yang Zhu and Mo Di.

After the Buddhists and Taoists [Daoists], some monks spread all over posing as magicians. They made amulets, held ceremonies of repentance, and practiced asceticism.
They resembled Buddhists and Taoists [Daoists], but they were even worse ...266

Generally, Yang's idea about the transmission of "Orthodoxy" is similar to the one
held by Han Yu 韩愈 (768-824), who suggested a return to the source of Confucian
Truth against the continuous dominance of Daoism and Buddhism. In his famous
Yundao 原道 (Inquiry on the Way) he says,

What is the Way? I reply that what I call the Way is not what the Taoists [Daoists] and
Buddhists call the Way. The Way was successively transmitted through [the Emperors] Yao,

265 Yang's preface to Ricci's Tongwen suanzhi, 23 V, 2903, 2-4.
266 Yang's Daiyi xupian, B, 11a-11b, 1. This translation is cited from Standaert 1984, 127-128.
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Shun, Yu, Tang, [the kings] Wen and Wu, the Duke of Zhou, Confucius, and Mencius. But after Mencius died, it was no longer transmitted.267

Neo-Confucian Master Zhu Xi’s (1130-1200) understanding of the transmission of "Orthodoxy" was congruent with Han Yu’s ideas. He considered that after Mencius the transmission of "Orthodoxy" was no longer transmitted with the result that heterodoxy and heresies appeared in the world. Zhu Xi did not consider Han Yu as a successor of the transmission of "Orthodoxy", since he thought that the Way of the sages was rediscovered by the brothers Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi, two famous Neo-Confucians in the 11th century.268

Yang believed that also the transmission of the Way followed the sequel introduced by Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472-1529), who identified his teaching of zhi liangzhi 致良知 (to acquire wisdom) with the "Orthodox" Confucian doctrine that was first discovered by the earliest sages, lost with Mencius, and was introduced again centuries later by Lu Jiuyuan 陆九渊 (1139-1192).269 Following such a tradition, in rejecting Buddhism and other teachings considered to be wrong, Yang Tingyun says,

Our generation, in reading the books of saints and sages, recognizes the events of past and present, and they become somewhat clear in our mind. We want to seek learning, but why don't we take the learning from the Three Dynasties as a basis? And we want to establish the human character, but why don't we take the human character from the Three Dynasties as instruction? 270

The idea of an original period of harmony defined by the Three Dynasties, bears some resemblance the original paradise in Genesis. The resemblance is that the Three Dynasties of ancient China are described as the Golden Age, and the Garden of Eden was paradise. However, both of them have been lost, and the appreciation of the lost

267 Cf., de Bary 1964, 379.
268 Cf., de Bary 1981, 2.
269 Ching 1976, 121.
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good time has brought ancient China and the Genesis account closer to each other. In seventeenth century theology, history was essentially considered a process of progressive revelation.271

Yang Tingyun showed a clear understanding of complex doctrinal concepts, such as the three different natures of revelation: "natural teaching (xingjiao 性教)", revealed to everyone; "written teaching (shujiao 书教)", revealed through Moses; and "teaching by grace (enjiao 恩教)", revealed through Jesus Christ. This scheme was certainly important for a correct formulation of the problem of evangelization in China. The question of the central role of Christ had to be faced as Christ was from a foreign country and was unknown to the ancient Chinese sages. Therefore Yang believed there was continuity between "natural teaching" and "teaching by grace". Christ's Incarnation was related to God's revelation in history, which had begun with Chinese sages such as Yao, Shun, Yu, the Duke of Zhou and Confucius. Yang considered the ancient Chinese sages as part of the "natural revelation".272 The theme of natural revelation is very important for the Confucian-Christian dialogue. The seeking of the similarities between Christianity and Confucianism is based on the presupposition that there is natural revelation in the world. This is the theoretical basis of the dialogue.

3.1.2 Negative responses to the assimilation

Matteo Ricci and those Confucians who were somewhat affirmative to the assimilation of the Christian concept of God and the Chinese concept of Heaven preferred the more biblical personal God-concept of ancient China to the non-personal Principle (Li 理) or the Great Ultimate (Taiji 太极).273 Some Neo-Confucians argued, however, that there had never been a concept of a transcendent personal deity in China; thus, the Christian concept of God cannot be accepted as an

270 Yang, Daiyi xupian, A, 25a-25b, 1. This translation is cited from Standaert 1984 (1988), 129.
272 www.hsstudyc.org.hk/tripod-7.htm
273 Ricci was faced, however, opposition later from both sides. Roman Catholics criticized Ricci, complaining that the name of Jesus is not often mentioned. And as we have shown above, the Chinese
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equivalent of the Chinese concept of Shangdi. For them, the Christian concept of God and the Confucian concept of Shangdi were heterogeneous. Such an argument against the assimilation of the Christian concept of God and the Chinese concept of Tian was popular among those Neo-Confucians in the 16th-17th centuries, who referred to the Neo-Confucianism of the Song and Ming dynasties rather than to Ancient Confucianism as the authentic Confucianism. This way of thinking is still popular among the Cultural Nationalist Confucians even until the present.

In what follows I am proposing to analyze critical Neo-Confucian responses to the assimilation of the Christian concept of God and the Chinese concept of Heaven from two perspectives.

1) The Confucian notion of the unity of Heaven and humanity acts as the main hindrance to any Confucian acceptance of assimilation.

The distinction between the Creator and his creation is essential to Christians. For some Neo-Confucians, however, human beings and Heaven are of the same substance, obviating any need for a “creator” God. The a priori Principle (Li 理) has replaced the ancient personal God in interpreting the concept of Heaven (Tian), since the relationship between the concepts of substance (ti 体) and activity (yong 用) is fundamental to the Neo-Confucian way of thinking. The general understanding of truth for Neo-Confucians involves the understanding that, the concepts “substance” and “activity” mean that all things are of same substance, and the difference between them being only due to their different activities. Thus, the notion of an external God, who created all things, is difficult for Neo-Confucians to accept.

Some missionaries in the 16th and 17th centuries in China also noticed the Chinese tendency to deny any opposition between: self and the world; mind and...

criticized Ricci by claiming that he had wrongly reinterpreted Confucian texts for his own purposes. Cf., Kung & Ching 1993, 236-239.
274 For example, Yang Guangxian (1597-1669), a Neo-Confucian in the Ming dynasty, said, in the Chinese understanding there is no meaning outside the world, and body and spirit cannot be separated. The Dao appears only through its manifestations and in the alternation and complement of the yin and yang. PXL, 1121-1124.
275 The critical reactions of Cultural Nationalist Confucians will be studied later in this study.
276 Cf., Gernet 1985, 198-199.
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body; and the divine and the cosmic.\(^{277}\) This tendency is similar to that of Monism, which denies manifoldness as being real, holding that the apparently many are phases, or phenomena, and are in reality only an aspect of the one. Dualistic philosophy distinguishes between body and soul, matter and spirit, subject and object, matter and force. A monistic system, denying these distinctions, reduces one term of the antithesis to the other, or merges both into a higher unity. Other missionaries, represented by Longobardo, went much further and denied that the Chinese had any knowledge of God. For them, Chinese secret philosophy is pure materialism; that is, the Chinese have never known any spiritual substance distinct from matter. They have only supposed the existence of one material substance that manifests in different degrees.\(^ {278}\) This opinion was followed by the Catholic Fathers Sabatino de Ursis and Antonio de Gouvea.\(^ {279}\)

In order to indicate how and why some Neo-Confucians have responded negatively to the assimilation of the Christian concept of God and the Chinese concepts of Heaven and Sovereign on High, I will now concentrate on three critical views in the light of the issue concerning the unity of Heaven and humanity.

Zhong Shisheng 钟始声, a Neo-Confucian in the 17th century, did not accept the approach of seeking the original nature of human beings extra-cosmically. He argued that human beings have an original spiritual nature, which has neither a beginning nor an end, and is neither born nor dies. "Nature" is said to have come from "Heaven", and "nature" is the origin of all other things. It has also been called a mandate (or endowment). Zhong says, the "Heaven" spoken of in *Daxue* 大学 "The

\(^{277}\) For example, Father Adam Schall von Bell explains that “the God of Christians, in opposition to even the most elevated Chinese concepts, is in his substance radically different from Heaven, Earth and the Ten Thousand beings ... he does not proceed from the Taiji [the cosmic origin], nor does he derive from the yin and yang, but, on the contrary, the Taiji and the yin and yang, too, were created by him; he created everything and there is nothing that does not obey his rule.”

\(^{278}\) Longobardo 1701, 58. Some have also referred to the concept of *guishen* to show the unity between spirit and material in Confucianism. In truth, this notion is only based on the tradition of the Neo-Confucianism of the Song and Ming dynasties. Cf. section 2.3.3 of this study.

\(^{279}\) Longobardo 1701, Foreword. Longobordo quoted a Chinese doctor by saying: “The spirit is in no way distinct from substance but is the same substance considered in the form of action and government.... [The "Sovereign on High" is simply] the operative virtue of Heaven.” See Longobardo 1701, 86, 79. “Substance and spirit are not two things, but the same considered from the point of two modalities.” See Longobardo 1701, 72.
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endowment of Heaven is called nature", is not God.\textsuperscript{280} Therefore, Zhong believes, Roman Catholic missionaries were wrong in insisting that human nature was given by God, since only visible materials can be given by the one who gives. Since mind and nature are invisible, it stands to reason that human nature cannot be given by any external other; therefore, Heaven is not considered as the origin of Principle.\textsuperscript{281}

Zhong clearly based his arguments on the presupposition that Heaven and human beings are of the same substance (*i.e.*, homogeneous); thus, there is no essential difference between visible and invisible things. The distinction between them lies only in that they have different manifestations, but their substance remains the same. In such a way, Zhong cannot accept the original nature of human beings as existing through God, who is essentially other than them. It is obvious that Zhong Shisheng held a monistic perspective, and this understanding suffers from the weakness that both visible and invisible things can then be given by an external giver who is other than them.

Another Neo-Confucian in the 17th century, Lin Qilu 林启陆, rejected the assimilation of the Christian concept of God and the Chinese concept of Heaven, although he believed that Heaven is the ruler and Principle of the universe. He did not deny the existence of the ruler of the universe but thought that such a ruler is not a personal God. Lin mentioned that, in history, many Confucian masters taught people to be afraid of the Heavenly mandate, since Heaven is the Principle and the ruler. Heaven has given birth to human beings, and Heaven has given Principles for human beings to follow. If one can follow the Principle of Heaven and obey the rule, he will be able to administrate everything in the universe. Lin called this principle the Lord of Heaven in Confucianism,\textsuperscript{282} and such a "Lord of Heaven" in Confucianism would neither possess personality nor transcendence.\textsuperscript{283}

It seems that Lin had interpreted Heaven as a *prior* Principle. He did not investigate, however, how people might get the power to obey the rules. In fact, one of the main emphases of Christianity is that human beings do not have the power to

\textsuperscript{280} PXJ, vol. 8.
\textsuperscript{281} PXJ, vol. 8.
\textsuperscript{282} Lin Qilu's "Zhuyi lunlue" in *PoXJ*, vol. 6.
do that right which they know. Therefore, it is not enough to have rules or principles. What people need is to have the power and ability to fulfill and to obey them. Therefore in such a case, the external God is needed, since He can help people in these issues; thus, the weakness of Lin’s argument is obvious.

The third view is that of Shi Feiyin Tongrong, a Chinese Buddhist in the 17th century. He criticized Ricci’s approach of seeking truth extracosmically, since Ricci said that no one would be satisfied with himself without seeking external power. For the Neo-Confucians, who opposed Ricci's approach, human nature exists within human beings originally, and was not given externally. Tongrong said that Ricci did not know that what everyone originally has is called the original mind (original nature or the Great Dao). For Tongrong, in fact, all things are in order and are based on the nature of human beings.

Such critics speak from both Buddhist and Confucian viewpoints. The main feature of the critique is to reject any reliance upon an external other (God) and insist instead on discovering the original nature of the human mind. Once one has done his best to follow his mind and nature, he will be able to become a sage. Thus, the main point of Shi Feiyin Tongrong can be summarized as follows: all moral capacity already exists in human nature, and there is no need for a personal God to give His moral order to human nature. Human beings can by their own power become sages by achieving internal wisdom and exercise external control, becoming rulers of the world. The difference is clear here between “internal” and “external”, and, thus, between God and human beings in this view. The essence of a conflict between them is derived from the Neo-Confucian rejection of the external deity of otherness, since Heaven and human beings are actually of the same substance and should not be considered as essentially different.
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Therefore, the main reason for the above three Neo-Confucians’ rejection of the assimilation of the Christian concept of God and the Chinese concept of Heaven results from their monistic understandings of the concept of Shangdi, since the personal deity Shangdi was first replaced by the disputed Tian (Heaven)\(^{290}\) and then by the impersonal Li 理 (Principle or Law) or Tianli 天理 (Heavenly Principle or the Natural Law).

Li was a term that originally referred to the veins in jade, and then came to mean "pattern". It was first used philosophically by Wang Bi 王弼 (226-249), one of the earliest authoritative commentators on the Book of change and the Laozi, to mean the order or regularities found in nature.\(^{291}\) The Cheng brothers (Cheng Hao 程颢 1032-1085, Cheng Yi 程颐 1033-1107) used Li in yet a broader sense to mean the ultimate ordering principles of the cosmos, including both the natural order and the moral order. Furthermore, they said that human nature (xing 性) is a manifestation of this ultimate Principle, and for Cheng Yi human nature is the same as the Principle. Everyone's nature is obscured in some way, however, and, as a consequence, one cannot follow the Way. What obscures the inherently good nature is one's physical endowment of qi 氣 (air, breath, material force), which results in different people having different inborn talents and capacities.\(^{292}\)

Thus, till the time of the Cheng brothers, the term Tianli 天理 (Principle of Heaven) stood for the Natural Law. For example, Cheng Hao transformed Mencius' category of Ren 仁 (humanity or love)\(^{293}\) into a metaphysical Principle (Li 理) describing the character of what Heaven imparts. Cheng Hao considered the same

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289 This has much to do with the concept of “transcendence”, and I will discuss this issue later.
290 The above mentioned plural meanings of the concept Heaven show that some people consider it as a personal Deity, and others consider it as an impersonal rule or power. Since the Zhou Dynasty Tian replaced gradually Shangdi. See Chan’s discussion of humanism and degeneration of theism in Appendix IV in this study.
291 See the original translation of the text in Chan 1963, 314-334. The issue of Li will be discussed again in section 5.1.1, where I make it clear that the Confucian Li acts as the mediator between Heaven and humanity as Logos being the mediator between God and humanity.
292 See the translation of Cheng Yi’s text in Chan 1963, 544-570.
293 Confucius made Ren 仁 the main theme and the term appears 105 time in the Analects. It has been rendered as "human-heartedness", "humanity", "humaneness", "goodness", "benevolence", "compassion", "love". It covers much the same semantic field as the Christian concept of love (agape). Redse 2005, 216-217.
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Heaven-endowed mind that Mencius called the Four Beginnings as the ordering Principle that Heaven puts into everything.294

Cheng Yi was more concerned than Hao with the ongoing character of nature and human affairs. He developed an extensive doctrine of "production and reproduction". He distinguished between Principle (Li 理) and material force (Qi 氣) so that Principle was the source of ordering and material force was the actual world as ordered and as in constant need of continued ordering.295

This is a new development compared to the term in the Book of rites. Although some Neo-Confucians, as I mentioned above, have referred to Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) in considering Heaven as the origin of Principle and to affirm God as the external origin of Principle. In Zhu's rendition Principle and material force become two elementary principles, one never without the other but neither to be reduced to the other. Material force is always with us, and we always have qi-things to order. The primary concern is to act in accordance with Principle.296

294 See the translation of Cheng's speech in Chan 1963, 523: "The man of jen [ren] forms one body with all things without any differentiation. Righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and faithfulness are all expressions of jen [ren] with sincerity and seriousness ... Nothing can be equal to this Way (Tao [Dao], that is), jen [ren]). It is so vast that nothing can adequately explain it. All operations of the universe are our operations."

295 "The concept of Principle is found in ancient Chinese philosophy, in Neo-Daoism, and in Buddhism, but the Neo-Confucian Cheng brothers, Cheng Hao (1032-1085) and Cheng Yi (1033-1107), were the first to build their philosophy primarily on it. For Cheng Hao Principle is the Principle of Nature (Tianli, Principle of Heaven). For both of the brothers, Principle is self-evident and self-sufficient, extending everywhere and governing all things. It cannot be augmented or diminished. It is many but it is essentially one, for all specific principles are but Principle. It is possessed by all people and all things. Man and all things form one body because all of them share this Principle. In short, it is one and all. It is identical with the mind and it is identical with nature. All things exist because of it and can be understood through it. It is universal truth, universal order, and universal law. Most important of all, it is a universal process of creation and production. It is dynamic and vital. For the brothers, Principle means both natural principles and moral principles, and both general principles and specific principles. Chan correctly points out that the two brothers were not concerned much with abstract reality, since they were primarily interested in the meaning of Principle for man. Therefore, Neo-Confucianism of Zhou Dunyi's abstract Great Ultimate has been changed by the brothers to a different direction, the Neo-Confucian speculation on cosmology has been turned to concentrate on the problems of Principle and human nature, and Neo-Confucianism has been finally become a School of Nature and Principle (Xing-li xue)." See Chan Wing-tsit 1963, 519. Concerning the Cheng brothers' discussions on the term Principle of Nature (Tianli), see the translations by Chan 1963, 522.

296 Zhu Xi has also characterized Principle as ren, love or what in the human sphere is humanity. Chan says, “Up to the time of Zhu Xi (1130-1200), Neo-Confucianism was characterized by six major concepts advocated by the different philosophers, namely, the Great Ultimate (Taiji), Principle (li), material force (qi), the nature (xing), the investigation of things (jing), and humanity (ren). It is the principle of things to be actualized, and actualization requires principle as its substance and material"
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In fact, the main feature of Cheng-Zhu’s 程朱 theory of Principle is *a priori* in character. For the school of Cheng-Zhu, Heaven is identified with the Principle of Heaven. This is a very important development, since Heaven is not any more a personal deity but an impersonal *a priori* principle. Thus, some Neo-Confucians can also employ Cheng-Zhu’s Neo-Confucianism as a piece of evidence to reject the existence of any external transcendence, such as the Christian concept of God. Therefore, a later Neo-Confucian Wei Yuan 魏源 (1794-1857) in the Qing Dynasty said, there is no reason to suppose an external power to the world and no eternal being apart from becoming. Xu Dashou 许大受, a Neo-Confucian in the 17th century who opposed the Christian concept of God, said that the universe owes its order entirely to the separation and combinations of the *yin* and the *yang*. So there are neither immutable realities nor any Lord of Heaven as conceived by the missionaries.

Neo-Confucian negative responses to the assimilation of the Christian concept of God and the Chinese concept of Heaven resulted, then, from their monistic idea that all things are of the same substance. Even though a personal deity called the Sovereign on High is found in Ancient Confucianism, this concept later gradually degenerated from a theistic to a humanistic concept. During the development process...
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from Ancient Confucianism to Neo-Confucianism, the personal Sovereign on High was first replaced by Heaven, whose personality was disputed, and was finally replaced by the impersonal a priori principle, which does not have personality. Therefore, the God of Christians, who is a personal deity, could not be accepted by the Neo-Confucians, who did not believe in a personal deity.

2) Neo-Confucians were dubious about the assimilation of the Christian concept of God and the Chinese concept of Heaven (or Sovereign on High).

Neo-Confucians considered missionaries and their followers in China as favoring a kind of syncretism in which Christian contributions were reinterpreted in traditional Chinese terms. 

The critics were mainly focused on two issues: Christian preaching methods and the Christian concept of God.

Concerning the Missionaries’ methods of preaching Christianity in China, some people argued that, in his attempt to assimilate the Christian concept of God with the Chinese concept of Shangdi, Ricci did not mention the figure of Jesus Christ until the end of his book. Even here Jesus' passion and resurrection are not mentioned either. Ricci very seldom talked about the Trinity and Jesus Christ. In this way Jesuit Missionaries deliberately concealed the truth about Christ and strategically compromised with Confucianism. They tried to hide the difference between the Christian concept of God and the Chinese concept of Shangdi, since they had realized that the heterogeneousness of different cultural traditions could not be syncretized.

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299 ZP, 25a.
300 Longobardo and Navarette have similarly accused Yang Tingyun; Cf., Standaert 1988, 307. Cf., Gernet 1985, 33. In fact, this accusation is incredible; for example, Yang Tingyun's three religious writings are devoted to attacks precisely on syncretism. Yang's three anti-Buddhist writings are: 1) Tianshi mingbian. 2) Daiyi pian. 3) Xiaoluan bu bingming shuo. In the last work, Yang treats the basic differences between heterodox sects (the owl) and Christianity (the phoenix) in fourteen points. See citations in Standaert 1988, 203-205. Cf., also Criveller 1997, 372-373, note 31.
301 This critic was raised by another missionary, Longobardo's Treatise. Standaert has discussed this issue, see Standaert 1988, 183-209. A modern scholar Gernet said also that the seventeenth-century Chinese Christians never made any allusion to Jesus in their writings, limiting themselves to paying homage to the Sovereign on High, or Shangdi. See Gernet 1985, 233. This opinion is also shared by other scholars such as Teng, Fairbank, and Zürcher. See Teng & Fairbank 1963, ch. II, b, "The early Jesuit influence in China". Their position was mentioned, cf., Zürcher 1985 and Zürcher 1990. Wan
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A Neo-Confucian Huang Zhen 黄贞 (16th-17th centuries), for example, criticized this confusion, brought about by the missionaries, as it confused the difference between the Christian concept of a creator God, who is distinct from his creation, and the Chinese concept of Heaven, which is immanent order. For Huang Zhen, Heaven is reflected in man himself, being his innate spirit and the moral sense that is inherent in every individual.302

Such a criticism is not in accordance with the historical evidence, since some Christian Neo-Confucians in the 16th and 17th centuries knew the teaching of Christianity. For example, Yang Tingyun offered a full exposition of the Christian doctrine of the incarnation and a long and complete account of the life, crucifixion, resurrection, and other mysteries of Christ.303 Based on Xu Guangqi's Poem of great praises and the Diary of oral exhortations by other converts one can also, in fact, find that Chinese converts were familiar with the doctrine of Christology.304

The claim of misinterpreting Christianity among the Chinese is not convincing either.305 For example, Yang Tingyun was criticized to have not interpreted Christianity correctly, since he considered the incarnation of Christ as one of many possibilities.306 However, this criticism of Yang Tingyun is not warranted, since it derives from Yang Tingyun’s ideas being wrongly linked to those of Ye Xianggao 叶向高, who was a sympathizer with the missionaries in the 17th century but was not a Christian. It is true that Yang Tingyun accepted that the Chinese sages...

Junren has also discussed the issues of homogeneity and heterogeneity in his presentation, refer to Luo Mingjia & Huang Baolu 2004, 103-123.

302 Zumru jijing, PXJ, III, 14a-15b.
304 Cf., Criveller 1997, 301-352, 353-355, 365. Criveller says that the anti-Christian opposition was not generated by who would have first accepted Christianity and then refused it. On the contrary, the opposition from some Confucians was there right from the beginning. At the same time, right from the beginning, some Traditional Neo-Confucians (a small minority) accepted Christianity, fully conscious of the significance and of the implications of such an anti-conformist choice. Cf., Gernet 1985, 40-47, 57; and Cummins 1993, 54-59 (on Ricci), 76-77, 111-112 (on Aleni), 100 (on the converts), 140-141 (on Schall). Cf., also Criveller 1997, 402-403.
306 Longobardo criticized Yang by saying, “In the same place he says, that Confucius’ doctrine is perfect in all respects, and the very same with God’s, which is an inference naturally deduced from the two points we spoke of last, viz. That all wise men are spirits incarnate, and all spirits are the very self-same substance, and therefore have the same wisdom, power, etc.” This is quoted from Standaert 1988, 199-200.
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had a place in the natural revelation, but his view is different from that of Ye Xianggao. Yang was clearly aware that Jesus Christ was different from the Chinese sages, since He is God and the Savior of human beings. However, Ye collocates Christ and Chinese sages such as Yao, Shun and Confucius on the same level.

Yang Tingyun and other Chinese converts cannot be called Christians only by appearance. It is important to note that among Neo-Confucians there were both positive and negative responses to the assimilation of the Christian concept of God and the Chinese concepts of Shangdi (Sovereign on High) and Tian (Heaven). The affirmative arguments are mainly based on two ideas: 1) Tian as the replacement of the ancient personal Deity Shangdi and 2) Zhang Zai's understanding of Tianli (Heavenly Principle) that Heaven is the giver of Principle. The negative arguments are mainly based on the monistic idea of the Neo-Confucian, Cheng-Zhu School that there is no division between material and spiritual worlds, which are of the same substance.

It was Ancient Confucianism that led people to affirmed their assimilation, since there are considerable similarities between Christianity and Ancient Confucianism. It was Neo-Confucianism that led people to reject the assimilation, since there are many differences between Christianity and Neo-Confucianism.

3.2 Cultural Nationalist Confucian ideas of the assimilation

Cultural Nationalist Confucians have extensively discussed the assimilation of particular Christian and Chinese concepts. For example, the unity between Heaven and humanity (Tianren heyi 天人合一) was stressed not only by those Neo-Confucians in the 16th and 17th centuries, but also by the Cultural Nationalist Confucians, such as Tang Junyi 唐君毅 (1909-1978). The Cultural Nationalist

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307 Concerning this Standaert said, “For Yang Tingyun, Jesus Christ, who was born to redeem sin, was a revelation of Grace by the Master [Lord] of Heaven, in succession of the earlier transmitters of the Orthodoxy, such as other prophets in the West, and Yao, Shun, the Duke of Zhou and Confucius in the East.” See Standaert 1988, 201.

308 Cf., Criveller 1997, 368. Please see also Yang Tingyun's Daiyi xupian (Treatise to supplant doubts), quoted and translated by Standaert 1988, 129-130.

309 This concept does not only mean that Heaven and humanity are related and united, but, in fact, means that they are monistically identical. This issue will be analyzed in more detail later.
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Confucians made an effort to revive the genuine spirit of Confucianism, but this effort was damaged by the May Fourth movement tradition in 1919.

In 1958 "A manifesto for the reappraisal of sinology and reconstruction of Chinese culture" was published in Hong Kong. In this manifesto, the signatories emphasized the harmony between the "way of Heaven" (*Tiandao* 天道) and the "way of man" (*rendao* 人道) as the central legacy of Confucianism.\(^{310}\) The Cultural Nationalist Confucians challenged Western sinologists to pay closer attention to Confucian spirituality as the core of Chinese culture. This core of Chinese thought exists especially in what was called the 'conformity of Heaven and man in virtue', which is the traditional doctrine of *xing* 性 (nature). They said that if people realized that this doctrine is the core of Chinese culture, then they must not allow the misunderstanding that Chinese culture limits itself to external relations between people, with neither inner spiritual life nor religious or metaphysical sentiment.\(^{311}\)

The attitude which Cultural Nationalist Confucians have towards the idea of assimilation of the Christian concept of God and the Chinese concepts of *Shangdi* and *Tian* was particularly indicated in an article of Cai Renhou 蔡仁厚, who was a student of Mou Zongsan 牟中三. Even though the issue of Heaven and God was not much discussed in this article,\(^{312}\) it became evident that these Cultural Nationalist Confucians are monists and deny the distinction between God and the world. They reject the existence of God because of the Confucian doctrine of the unity between Heaven and humanity. According to their ideas, Confucians argue that the Christian concept of God and the Confucian concepts of Heaven and the Sovereign on High are heterogeneous.\(^{313}\)

\(^{310}\) MANIFESTO.

\(^{311}\) Chang [Zhang], Carsun 1963, vol. 2, 461, 464. The attitude of these Neo-Confucians to the Christian God was negative, and Christianity was treated as a foreign threat to Confucianism and Chinese culture. Hans Kung has commented on the attitude towards Christianity in this manifesto as "not always completely fair". See Kung & Ching 1993, 98.

\(^{312}\) Cai, Zhou & Liang 1985, the section of "Guanyu zongjiao huitong de wenti" (The problems concerning the integration of religions).

\(^{313}\) See more discussions in this topic Chapter 4 of this study, where the issues of Transcendence and Immanence will be explored.
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I will present Tang Junyi 唐君毅 as an example of the Cultural Nationalist Confucian in this section. Tang did not accept the Christian concept of God, but believed in a concept of “heart-mind” (xinxing 心性). By this term Tang means a metaphysical reality which is immanent in everything of the universe; via immanence cosmic unity is achieved. This metaphysical reality is a union of the minds of individual persons which transcends the people themselves. For Tang Tian is the metaphysical reality of heart-mind rather than a personal God as in Ancient Confucianism; thus, he did not accept the assimilation of the Christian concept of God and the Chinese concept of Heaven.

Tang establishes the heart-mind as a transcendent and infinite metaphysical reality based on ontological and moral arguments. In his cosmological and teleological arguments concerning God's existence, Tang believes that it is wrong to attempt to go beyond the existence of empirical things. He also claims that empirical things are contingent and, thus, not necessary. While Tang first uses the term “heart-mind” and then he speaks about “God’s existence”, it is clear that, for him, the two terms refer to the same thing, though it is “the perfect thing” rather than “God”. Clearly Tang is pantheist, and Luo Bingxiang has made a study on him.

In contrast to Tang, one may argue that ontologically a perfect being (God) must include all attributes, and existence is an attribute; thus, God must exist. Tang argues that, if one negates the imperfection of an existent being, one ends up with an

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314 Tang Junyi 1977 (vol. 24, II), page 61 reads: "In our mutual moral conducts and moral lives, we have direct feeling (zhigan) of the existence of the moral minds and moral personalities of others ... From our mutual direct feelings of the existence of each other's moral minds and personalities, there comes the expansion and enhancement of our moral minds and personalities. From this we can see that a person's moral mind and personality do not just belong to that person, but also belong to others. Originally, this mind does 'belong to oneself'. Yet when it expresses itself before others, when it is directly felt by others, then it also belongs to others ... With regard to the reality of this unified spirit which results from mutual incorporation and mutual feelings, [we can] describe it as an Absolute Self, and Absolute Spiritual Reality."

Page 64 reads: "At those moments, each person subjectively has the feeling of sharing one mind with the multitudes. And objectively speaking, it can also be said that there is one mind genuinely existing among the multitudes. Simultaneously people can be conscious of the actions of this one mind existing between heaven and earth ... Here we should not say that the one mind belongs separately to individual persons, or to us, or to heaven and earth ... For when we are facing heaven and earth, heaven and earth make us transcend our respective limitations, resulting in the manifestation and existence of this one mind."

315 Luo 2005a, 369-370.
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existent being with all attributes, that is, a perfection being.\textsuperscript{316} Does this supposition of infinite qualification establish a proof of the existence of a perfect being?

Tang has also employed ethical-religious experience in order to prove the existence of the infinite and perfect being.\textsuperscript{317} He says that our moral experience actually reveals its objective existence.\textsuperscript{318}

Tang has made important contributions to the modernization of Confucianism, since his philosophical ideas are basically a modernized version of the idealistic wing of Neo-Confucianism represented by Lu Xiangshan and Wang Yangming.\textsuperscript{319} Many of Tang's insights may not have broken much new ground, but, he has placed his ideas in the context of dialogue with Western philosophy, Christianity, and Buddhism. Tang did depart, however, from Neo-Confucianism in one important respect. In Neo-Confucianism the Principle (\textit{Li}) or the Way (\textit{Dao}) of "production and reproduction" is a metaphysical reality, but for Tang the prime metaphysical reality is the transcendent "heart-mind".\textsuperscript{320} Neo-Confucian \textit{Li} or \textit{Dao} does not necessarily indicate any sense of progress, but Tang's transcendence does connote progress.\textsuperscript{321}

\textsuperscript{316} Tang Junyi 1977 (vol. 24, I), 28.
\textsuperscript{317} “In the beginning, people only believe in the spiritual existence of those they respect and love. This original affirmation stems from the emotions of their moral minds. Since this affirmation stems from the emotions, they will not bear to think that these spiritual beings are left lonely, without companionship and unattacked. As these spiritual beings do not have the obstacles of possessing material forms as people and things in the world do, their transcendent mind should be able mutually to shed light on each other and form one body, hence forming an absolute spiritual existence ... Doubling the reality of this absolute spiritual existence and that of the spiritual beings whom we respect and love is to counter the moral minds.” Tang Junyi 1977 (vol. 24, II), 10.
\textsuperscript{318} “In our moral lives, so long as there are real common emotions and feelings between others and ourselves, and so long as we can genuinely reflect, we can see that our moral minds and those of others are united to form a spiritual existence”. Tang Junyi 1977 (vol. 24, II), 62.
\textsuperscript{319} Concerning Lu Xianshang, see Chan 1963, 572-587. “Impatient with the earlier advocacy of meditative quiet-sitting to gain clarity and contact with the inner expression of the principle in one's inmost heart, what he called "innate knowledge", in the actions of ordinary and extraordinary life”, see Chan 1963, chapter 23. Cf., Neville 2000, 156. Wang Yangming emphasized the transcendence of Principle even more than the Song Neo-Confucians. The Cheng-Zhu school has emphasized the goodness of principle, or \textit{ren}. Wang holds a different view and says: "In the original substance of the mind there is no distinction between good and evil. When the will becomes active, however, such distinction exists. The faculty of innate knowledge is knowledge of good and evil. The investigation of things is to do good and remove evil." This translation is cited from Chan 1963, 686-687. Concerning Wang Yangming, see Chan 1963, 654-691. The Principle (\textit{li}) Learning of Zhu Xi has been considered the realistic wing of Neo-Confucianism; see the discussion above in the same chapter and the Introduction of this study.
\textsuperscript{320} In this respect, Wang Yangming had an obvious influence on Tang. The idea of a genuine self, the claim that evil is a result of indulgence that can be overcome by thinking, and the doctrine of a
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Tang Junyi's ontological and moral arguments for the existence of an infinite reality seem inconsistent. His ontological argument begins with an existent being, negates its imperfections by supplementing it with all the attributes it lacked for perfection, and arrives at a perfect being. Such an argument rests on the presupposition that we can achieve the concept of a perfect being by supplementing perfect qualities for an imperfect being, which seems to imply again the possibility of conceiving perfection, a circumstance which the process of qualification was intended to avoid.

But Tang's argument could also be interpreted to mean that we are able to think only about the additional attributes needed to supplement the concept of an existing imperfect being, so that we might be able to transform it into a concept of an all-perfect being. The main problem with Tang's moral argument is that it relies on his idealism, which overlooks the distinction between a mere idea and real existence. In order to understand Tang's notion of the existence of God, we may refer to my discussion in the beginning of this chapter.

Tang believes not only that heart-mind is the prime metaphysical reality but also believes in the supremacy of Confucianism to Christianity and Buddhism. He has identified a total of nine horizons (jingjie 境界) as the main content of his Confucianism. By the term “horizon” Tang seems to refer to the content level of Confucianism. They refer to: (1) individuals (things or persons); (2) classes to which individuals belong; (3) cause-effect relationships among individuals; (4) mutual perceptions by subjective minds; (5) concepts and pure meaning; (6) practicing morality; (7) unifying with a single deity; (8) realizing the illusion of the world and self; and (9) fulfilling human nature, which is the embodiment of Heavenly virtue.

universal moral metaphysical reality that accounts for cosmic unity all have affinities to Wang's own views. See Wang Yangming's writings, which English translation can be found in Chan 1963, 654-691. Cf. also Sin Yee Chan's article in Cheng & Bunnin 2002, 308.

323 For example, the a priori approach of ontological and moral arguments indicate that God should exist both in mind and in reality.
324 See Appendix V: “Nine Horizons of Tang Junyi’s Confucianism”.

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The first three horizons deal with the objective world as perceived by the heart-mind. The next three horizons are the product of the heart-mind reflecting upon itself. The final three horizons are the most important, because they constitute the different ways in which the heart-mind unifies the subjective and the objective. The last three Tang called the trans-subjective-objective horizons. Tang considered the last three horizons as representing, respectively, Christianity, Buddhism, and Confucianism. These three horizons all point to the same absolute metaphysical reality, but they give different names to this “reality”. The three horizons, as the representatives of the three religions, however, differ in the directions that they recommend people to follow in order to achieve unity with this metaphysical reality.

Tang thought that Confucianism is superior to Christianity and Buddhism for three reasons. First, the other two religions require people to look beyond the present life and world. Christianity focuses on a transcendent God, and Buddhism believes that the world is an illusion. Tang says these different emphases will lead people to overlook the present for the sake of the future, and people will tend to employ a utilitarian mode of thinking to serve their interest in union with the infinite metaphysical reality.

Second, Buddhism is appropriate only for those who are so attached to the world that they require enlightenment about the illusion of the world, and Christianity is appropriate for those who are so dependent on others that they need help from an all-powerful God. These two religions are medicines only for the "sick".

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325 Tang understands the human heart-mind as the key to understanding the world. The heart-mind knows the world through a function of feeling-penetration, which includes cognition, emotion and willing. In its ideal operation, we will respond to an object or a situation in correct ways and achieve an integration of reason and emotion. In knowing another human being, feeling-penetration is a kind of empathic response. Tang argues that through exercising this feeling-penetration one can achieve a vision or cognition of horizon (jing), which is a Buddhist concept for an object to which the mind is directed and implies a unification of the subjective understanding and the objective situation. Sin Yee Chan has compared Tang's horizon to the Kantian account of perception, according to which perception is also a product of the mind's unification of sensory data by means of categories supplied by the mind. See Cheng & Bunnin 2002, 308.

326 See Appendix V: “Nine Horizons of Tang Junyi’s Confucianism”.

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Third, Confucianism encompasses Buddhism and Christianity, but they do not encompass Confucianism. Confucianism can regard Jesus and Sakyamuni as sages, but Buddhism and Christianity will not see Confucius as enlightened or as divine.327

Tang’s claim for the superiority of Confucianism is related to religious thinking in many cases.328 But this thinking suffers from some critical faults. First, Confucianism faces the same problem of requiring the same sort of utilitarian mode of thinking as do Buddhism and Christianity. For the affirmation of the value of the present life and the world does not mean that Confucian ideals are not directed to the future. Indeed, Tang himself believes that one should engage in moral cultivation and exhaust the resources of one's own nature before one can fully participate in the Heavenly virtue of transcendence.

Secondly, the Confucian belief in the goodness of human nature can still admit a general unwholeness pertaining to humanity by ascribing this unwholeness to external factors. Confucianism itself, then, must take into account the “sick”. Thus, one cannot say that Christianity and Buddhism are inferior to Confucianism based on the idea that they provide little more than penance for the "sick".

Finally, Tang’s claim that Confucianism alone encompasses the other two religions can be challenged. If Jesus and Sakyamuni are recognized in Confucianism, they are in any case not recognized in the way in which they are understood in the context of their own religions. Similarly, Christians and Buddhists can recognize Confucius quite apart from his real meaning for Confucians. Indeed, outside the proper religious context of meaning, even God would not be identified as the omnipotent, omni-benevolent, and omniscient Creator that He is in Christianity. Therefore, Christians need not accept the position which Confucians have given to Jesus.329

3.3 Modern Confucian ideas of the assimilation

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Modern Confucians have focused on other questions than the assimilation of the Christian concept of God and the Chinese concept of Heaven. For Modern Confucians such as Yao Xinzong, Du Weiming and Cheng Zhongying, the Ultimate Reality Taiji 太極 is same to Tian 天 (Heaven), Dao 道 or Tiandao 天道 (Heavenly Dao), Qi 氣 (Air), Li 礼 (Principle) or Tianli 天理 (Heavenly Principle), and Ming 命 (Destiny) or Tianming 天命 (Mandate of Heaven). Heaven does not itself exist independently of the created reality, although Heaven is the creative source of the universe and all things, since everything is interconnected and mutually dependent between Heaven and the world. Creation is not a creatio ex nihilo, but is a continuous transformative process – without beginning or end – out of Qi 氣 (Air) directed by Li 礼 (Principle) or Tiandao (Heavenlydao), and yin 阴 and yang 阳 are the basic polar motivating forces or actions of Qi. Du Weiming has emphasized three important issues concerning the ontology and eschatology of Confucianism: 1) Instead of creatio ex nihilo by God the Creator, Confucianism holds an ontology that the world is a continuous transformation of that which is already there. 2) Different from the Christian understanding of the world is depended upon God the Creator, Confucianism holds an ontology that everything is interconnected and mutual dependent. 3) Instead of a cyclic eschatology or from a beginning to an end, Confucianism holds that the cosmos is forever expanding and the great transformation is unceasing.

Some Modern Confucian Christians, however, have followed the path marked out by the Neo-Confucians who affirmed the Christian concept of God. He Shiming 何世明 (1911-1996), for example, a Modern Confucian Christian in Hong Kong, has continued the tradition of referring to Ancient Confucianism by arguing for the similarity between the Christian concept of God and the Chinese concepts of Shangdi

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329 When the superiority of Confucianism and Christianity is discussed one may refer to Mark Heim’s assertion that different religions usually have different religious goals. See Heim 1995, and Heim 2001.
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and *Tian*. It should be noted that He Shiming did not consider that the Chinese concepts of *Shangdi* and *Tian* are synonyms for the Christian concept of God. He only admits that there are many similarities between them.335 This statement is different from that of Ricci, who argued that the two concepts differ in name alone.

The tradition of Ricci, however, which equalizes the Christian concept of God with the Chinese concept of *Shangdi* and limits the differences between them to their names alone, is followed by many contemporary Confucian Evangelical and Fundamentalist Christians.336

Why is it so important for Christian missionary work to find similarities between Christianity and Confucianism? For Ricci, finding similarities can help people understand new ways of thinking. Some theologians of the Christian tradition, however, emphasize also the ultimate incomprehensibility of church doctrines. Tertullian and Augustine, for example, stressed that one must believe in what transcends one’s senses to achieve Christian faith. Nonetheless, finding similarities not only helps Confucians understand new ways of thinking but also helps them to be confident within their own tradition. For they appreciate the ancient tradition more than the thought of contemporary times. Once Confucians discern some similarities to Christianity or any other religion, they will easily draw the conclusion that Christianity and the other religions which share these similarities are not in conflict with Confucianism. Thus, Confucianism itself is correct and acceptable in that it, too, is compatible with them. This reasoning has become an obvious feature of Chinese thinking.

Yuan Zhiming 远志明 (1955-), for example, whom I consider a Modern Confucian Christian, argues that the God of the Christians has revealed Himself to the ancient Chinese in the Five Classics.337 His arguments are so radical that he even identifies God as *Dao*, and Jesus Christ (or Logos) as *Lao Zi*, the Daoist founder of the 6th century BC.338

335 He 1996 (1), 31-36, 40-44. Concerning He Shiming's opinion, one may also refer to Zhuo, 2003.  
336 For example, Yuan 1997, Yuan 1998 and Yuan 2000.  
338 Yuan has made a TV series "Chinese Confession", which has been highly appreciated by overseas Chinese evangelical churches. I have studied Yuan's arguments in detail; see Huang 2002. Some
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Yuan Zhiming has indeed continued to promulgate the historical theory of degeneration from theism to humanism. Its main point is that the Golden Age of human beings does not lie in the future but rather in returning to the thinking of ancient times.\(^{339}\) Based on this viewpoint of historical degeneration, Yuan divides China's history into four stages: the Reverent Period from the dawn of Chinese history to 771 BC; the Wisdom Period from 771 BC to 221 BC; the Humanistic Period from 221 BC to the late Ming Dynasty in the 17th century; and the Returning Period from the 17th century to the present time.\(^{340}\)

The main message Yuan gives his readers is that the God of the Christians has shown Himself in the history of China in the form of the Dao, which is usually translated as the "Way" in English. The four historical stages of China have been closely connected with the presence and absence of God: 1) the Prevailing of the Great Dao in the Ancient Reverent Period; 2) the degeneration of Theism and the growth of Humanism in the Wisdom Period (Two things happened in this period: one is that the Dao became a replacement of God and the other is that the Dao was lost); and 3) the appearance of Natural Atheism in the Humanistic Period; 4) China presently is in the Returning Period, and the Chinese people should consider the sinful origin of their sufferings and return to God, as explained by Christians.\(^{341}\)

The myth of the Golden Age is a worldwide one and can be found in many cultural traditions. The term “Golden Age” refers to a mode of utopian existence described in a variety of Greek, Roman, and later Western Christian texts. It describes a mode of life that is freed from the vicissitudes of everyday life and is characterized by peace and plenty, with nature spontaneously producing food and

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missionaries have argued that some basic stories in Genesis have been hidden in the Chinese writing system; Cf., Nelson & Broadberry 1997. Concerning Evangelical responses to Christianity in the light of Confucianism, see also *JZY* (*Jidujiao yu zhongguo wenhua gengxin yantaohui huibao* 基督教与中国文化更新研讨会汇报) in the primary sources. These ideas about the Christian God have not yet gained interest with academic scholars.

\(^{339}\) Yuan 1998, 3-8.

\(^{340}\) Yuan 1998, 3-4.

\(^{341}\) Yuan 1998, 6-8.
man living in close relationship to the gods. In its broadest sense, the term has been extended by some scholars to include any mythical, paradisiacal time of origins.\textsuperscript{342}

Yuan does not mention any other traditions in discussing the lost Golden Age, and he seems to show his readers that the lost Golden Age is a special point of convergence connecting Chinese and Hebrew traditions. It is true that Yuan does not say that this contact point exists only between the Chinese and Hebrew people, but he does stress that this connection proves the presence of the Christians’ God in the history of China.\textsuperscript{343}

If what Yuan argues is true, we have to admit that the presence of the Christians’ God can be found in every tradition that possesses the myth of some kind of lost Golden Age. Thus, Yuan wishes to prove that a trace of the Christians’ God can be found in every cultural tradition.

Three types of Golden Age mythology can be found in a number of possible cross-cultural comparisons, indicating its persistence and its differing functions: the Golden Age is referred to in relation to myths of origins, to millenarian activities, and to royal ideologies. Indeed, most myths posit a sharp duality between "then" and "now", and evaluations of this previous state vary: it may be better, or worse, or simply different from the present.\textsuperscript{344}

Yuan's theory of the Golden Age also possesses the duality of then and now, but he interprets the "then" to be better than the "now". "Then” there was harmony, love, and people followed God’s will, but now there is disorder, fighting, and rebellion against God’s will. Yuan's analysis of the relationship between the "then" and the "now" seems warranted and acceptable for most scholars and most Chinese people. If Yuan had paid attention to the different traditions of the Golden Age and to the worldwide distribution of the Golden Age myth, his work would be more appreciated. His ignorance of the worldwide existence of the Golden Age myths is a weakness in his study.

\textsuperscript{342} See Smith's “Golden Age” in Eliade 1987, vol. 6, 69.
\textsuperscript{343} Yuan 1997a, 59-60 and 1998, 5-11. It should be noticed that Yuan replaces the terms Christian God, Jehovah God, and Father quite freely. The reader can also refer to the earlier discussion in the Introduction.
\textsuperscript{344} Smith’s “Golden age” in Eliade 1987, vol. 6, 71.
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It is interesting that Yuan points out the degeneration from theism to humanism in the history of China. This is, in fact, the implicit theme in the Greek tradition of Golden Age. Plato (*Statesman* 269-274) had fully developed the theme of degeneration and related it to notions of historical periodicity, recurrence, and world cycles.345

We cannot know from a study of Yuan’s work whether he was aware of Plato's writings. In any case, Yuan clearly divides China's history into four stages according the notion of degeneration from theism to humanism. But the problem with his work is that, even if Yuan's opinion is close to the truth, he does not succeed very well in presenting it. He does not offer enough information about the method by which he divides China's history into the four stages he describes.

Yuan has ended up with a circular argument. He starts by making the point that, according to the presence or absence of the Dao, China's history can be divided into four stages. Then he develops this concept to make the point that the four stages of China's history have proven the presence or absence of the Dao in China's history.346

How Confucians understand the evolution of the world, especially the *Daotong* (the Transmission of the Way), has direct influence on their response to the notion of God’s existence and its assimilation to the Chinese concept of Heaven or *Shangdi*. The *Daotong* has become their presupposition of understanding Confucian concepts such as Heaven (*Tian*), Sovereign on High (*Shangdi*), Principle (*li*) and Heart-mind (*xin xing* 心性). Confucians have different opinions concerning the transmission of the Way. Neo-Confucians understand the transmission as starting from the Three Dynasties through Confucius and ending after Mencius.347 Cultural Nationalist Confucians such as Xiong Shili 熊十力, Tang Junyi 唐君毅 and Mou Zongsan 卞中三, consider the notion of heart-mind as the standard of the Transmission of the

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345 Cf., Smith’s “Golden age” in Eliade 1987, vol. 6, 69. See also Appendix IV “Degeneration” in the present study.
346 Concerning this topic, the present author has written a Master’s Degree thesis; Cf., Huang 2002, 19-52.
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Way. The Modern Confucian Yu Yingshi 余英时 considers the whole of Chinese culture as the standard of the transmission of the Way.

Almost all the different schools of Confucianism claim to represent authentic Confucianism. This is so even though some of them build their argument on the basis of the Five Classics, some on the Four Books, and others again on the Secondary Scriptures of Neo-Confucianism. This foundation of the claim on a variety of sources has resulted in contradictory responses to Christian concepts.

It is obvious that Jesuit missionaries and their Confucian followers emphasized the assimilation of the Christian concept of God and the Chinese concepts of *Shangdi* (Sovereign on High) and *Tian* (Heaven). They considered the God of Christians as the Unknown God, whom Chinese looked for.

Confucians have different opinions concerning the existence of God. Those Confucians, who have affirmatively reacted to the assimilation between the Christian God and the Chinese concepts of *Tian* or *Shangdi*, accept generally the argument for the existence of God. Those Confucians, who have negatively reacted to the assimilation, reject the arguments for the existence of God.

Through the *a priori* ontological argument and moral argument the Neo-Confucian Yang Tingyun employs the Neo-Confucian concept *Li* (Principle) to explain human nature, and considers God as the giver of *Li* and human nature. Such an interpretation fits well with the Neo-Confucian idea that *Li* (Natural Principle and the Objective Principle in the world) and *Xing* (human nature and the Subjective Principle in human beings) are two different forms of the same principle, which was imparted by Heaven.

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347 Neo-Confucian Yang Tingyun’s opinion concerning this has been discussed above in section 3.1.1.
349 This is also the opinion of Yu's teacher Qian Mu. See Yu 1991, 56-70.
350 As Apostle Paul said in Acts 17:22.
351 The moral argument presupposes an objective moral law behind human behaviors. Immanuel Kant rejected not only the ontological argument but the teleological and cosmological arguments as well, based on his theory that reason is too limited to know anything beyond human experience. However, he did argue that religion could be established as presupposed by the workings of morality in the human mind ("practical reason"). God's existence is a necessary presupposition of there being any moral judgments that are objective, that go beyond mere relativistic moral preferences; such judgments require standards external to any human mind—that is, they presume God's mind. *Reason and religious belief* 2003, 98-100.
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The Neo-Confucian Yang Tingyun’s designation of God as the Great Father-Mother (Da fumu) is not only connected with Chinese cosmology but also in accordance with Christian cosmology, and it is thus easy for Yang to accept God’s existence and as the Creator of human beings and the world. Yang’s argument belongs to the *a posteriori* approach, which deduces evidence for God’s existence from the world, from the observable, empirical universe, and this approach insists that God is necessary to explain certain features of the cosmos. This approach was represented by Thomas Aquinas. Anselm tried to show that God’s nature is such that from the essence of God (from what God is) we may conclude *that* God exists. Aquinas asserted that the proposition “God exists” is not self-evident to us because we cannot grasp the divine essence. So the ontological argument, an argument from the being or essence of God to the existence of God, is impossible. Thus, in the *Summa Theologica* (Ia, 2.3) Aquinas gives five proofs of the existence of God, or “five ways” as he calls them. Ricci and Roman Catholic missionaries who dialogued with Confucians in the 16th and 17th centuries were strongly influenced by Thomas Aquinas.

For those Confucians, who negatively respond to the assimilation between the Christian God and the Chinese concepts of Tian and Shangdi, the world is self-existent, and there is no substantial difference between human beings and Heaven. The existence of God is, thus, not necessary. For example, the Neo-Confucians Zhong Shisheng, Lin Qiku and Shi Feiyin Tongrong all are monists, who hold to the opinion that all things are of the same substance. Because of this monistic reasoning, Cultural Nationalist Confucians Tang Junyi, Mou Zongsan and Cai renhou rejected also the existence of God. That is even though Tang establishes the heart-mind as a transcendent and infinite metaphysical reality, it is still not God. That is because he thinks that it is wrong to attempt to go beyond the existence of empirical things. For these Confucians, Heaven is not understood as a personal deity with whom the human beings can establish a person-to-person relationship because of the degeneratin from theism to atheism. Heaven is not totally transcendent, either. This raises the challenging question to Confucians of how the power of Heaven and its Mandate as
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an absolute ethical standard, can be secured and trusted. Modern Christian Confucians such as Du Weiming, Cheng Zhongying and Yao Xinzong hold a monistic ontology, and those such as He Shiming and Yuan Zhiming affirm, however, the existence of God and agree that the Christian God has revealed Himself in the history of China.

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4. Confucian ideas of the object of salvation in Christianity: created humanity and its status

Christian soteriology is strongly built on the difference between Creator and the creation, and the authority of God as the Savior is based on his being the Creator of human beings. The distinction between God the Creator and created humanity is, however, a Western tradition and is strange for many Confucians. Such an issue deeply influences the Confucian-Christian dialogue in a problematic way.

In this chapter I am going to analyze the Confucian understanding of the object of salvation, i.e., humanity and its status of existence, which concerns mainly ontology, anthropology and the religious goals. The Confucian understanding of the Christian doctrine of creation will be analyzed mainly according to the thesis that the object of salvation is human beings who are created by God and who are an important part of the whole creation. Through such an analysis of creation I wish to discover how the Confucian ontology and anthropology influence the discussion of salvation in the Confucian-Christian dialogue. In the second part of this chapter I will explore the status of human beings in order to explain why human beings need to be saved and what is the religious goal of this salvation.

4.1 Human beings as part of creation

In order to analyze what attitude Confucians have assumed in respect to the theological concept of creation, it is necessary first to consider the conceptual content of creation in Christian theology. In addition, we must explore the concept of creation that was introduced into China by Western missionaries. I will then focus on the main aspects of the doctrine of creation as commented upon by Confucians.
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The doctrine of creation, for example, according to Catholic Church, asserts that the world was made out of nothing by God. Within such a theological doctrine of creation the following points are important: 1) Reality exists as distinct from God. 2) This reality is not self-existent (ontologically or epistemologically) but rather exists by dependence on the antecedent the reality of God. 3) God created the world out of nothing (creatio ex nihilo). 4) God sustains the world. 5) The world moves towards its destination (telos) according to the purpose of God.

Such a doctrine of creation was foundational for Western cosmology until the seventeenth century. Roman Catholic Christianity, introduced by Matteo Ricci to China in the 16th century, belongs to this theological tradition. Later Protestant missionaries also introduced Christianity according to their own traditions. Till 1949 when the People’s Republic of China was established, there were already over one hundred Christian denominations in China. Later, in the beginning of the 1950s, Western missionaries were forced to leave China, and most Christians were organized into one church. In this study I will not analyze each denomination but will focus on the five points mentioned above, since they are the important issues in the encounter between Christianity and Confucianism.

The history of the doctrine of creation in the modern era is largely the breakdown of this framework. In the following I will scrutinize Neo-Confucian responses to creation in the light of these five points of the classical theological

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353 Catechisms of the Catholic Church 1997, 85-86 reads: “II. CREATION - WORK OF THE HOLY TRINITY 290 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth": three things are affirmed in these first words of Scripture: the eternal God gave a beginning to all that exists outside of himself; he alone is Creator (the verb "create" - Hebrew bara - always has God for its subject). The totality of what exists (expressed by the formula "the heavens and the earth") depends on the One who gives it being.” See also items 291-292.

354 Catechisms of the Catholic Church 1997, 87 reads: ” 296 We believe that God needs no pre-existent thing or any help in order to create, nor is creation any sort of necessary emanation from the divine substance. God creates freely "out of nothing": If God had drawn the world from pre-existent matter, what would be so extraordinary in that? A human artisan makes from a given material whatever he wants, while God shows his power by starting from nothing to make all he wants.” See also items 297 and 298.

355 Catechisms of the Catholic Church 1997, 89 reads: “God upholds and sustains creation”, see item 301.

356 Catechisms of the Catholic Church 1997, 89 reads: ” 302 Creation has its own goodness and proper perfection, but it did not spring forth complete from the hands of the Creator. The universe was created "in a state of journeying" (in statu viae) toward an ultimate perfection yet to be attained, to which God has destined it. We call "divine providence" the dispositions by which God guides his creation toward this perfection: By his providence God protects and governs all things which he has made, "reaching mightily from one end of the earth to the other, and ordering all things well". For "all are open and laid bare to his eyes", even those things which are yet to come into existence through the free action of creatures.”

357 Cf., Webster 1993, 94-95.
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Confucianism has challenged the classical Christian doctrine of creation. In the following analysis I will try to lay out what these challenges are in the Confucian-Christian dialogue and will also offer some suggestions concerning how to deal with them.

4.1.1 Neo-Confucian arguments

There are two issues worth noticing when examining Neo-Confucian argumentation about the Christian doctrine of creation. The first issue is whether reality is self-existent (ontologically or epistemologically) or not. This question touches the essence of the classical Christian theological doctrine of creation. Through an exploration on this issue I hope to show whether Neo-Confucians consider the real world as created by a creator or as self-subsistent. The second issue is whether a reality distinct from God exists or not. This issue will help readers understand whether Neo-Confucians accept the distinction between God, the creator, and the reality of the world, where human beings are considered as a part of it.

1) Some Neo-Confucians have defended the Christian missionaries’ teaching that God is self-existent.

The challenges are mainly six in the context of western philosophy and theology. 1) The beginning of the breakdown can be traced to the theology in the pre-Enlightenment centuries and especially to the Enlightenment. 2) Later, Darwin’s evolution in the 19th century challenged the classic doctrine of creation in two ways: on the one hand, evolution’s emphasis upon the randomness of the evolutionary process appeared to undermine the purposive character of creation. On the other hand, it stresses that the natural order is best explained not by teleological categories but by the advantages given to certain species by particular biological developments which appeared to promote a cruelly competitive understanding of the natural order. 3) For Deistic theologians such as Isaac Newton, purely immanent explanations of the creation is combined with an understanding of God in which the divine mind produces a regulated natural order functioning according to its own laws. This is to say, the “author” God does not involve Himself in creation after he created the world. 4) The skeptic David Hume attacked such a deism, but the pantheist Benedict Spinoza envisaged no substantial difference between God and nature; thus, two important classical theological points are missed in the doctrine of creation: an absolute act of origination, and the distinction between God and the creation. 5) Some modern theologians such as F.D.E. Schleiermacher sought to lay emphasis on the notion of human contingency as a way of reasserting the Christian doctrine of creation (in anthropological rather than cosmological form). 6) A newest critique of the creation is related to the ecological crisis, since abuse of the natural order can be rooted in the Judaeo-Christian tradition according to which the human creature is granted the role of subduing the earth; in fact, from the classical perspective, nature is not mere raw material for human beings, and human dominion over nature is always exercised in a...
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One famous Chinese Christian at the end of Ming Dynasty, Yang Tingyun, for example, agreed with the missionaries’ view that nothing can exist by itself, everything in the world was created by its creator, and all exists in virtue of the antecedent reality of God.\(^{359}\) Yang says,

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\text{The Western study [Ricci’s Christianity] considers all things as originated from Heaven. There is the only one Master [Lord] for Heaven, and the Master [Lord] is the only one who should be honored. This is the clear and correct theory, which fits the Chinese classics very well.}^{360}\]

One of the main reasons which led Confucians to such positive reactions was the foundation of the missionaries’ argument, which was the *analogia entis* of Thomas Aquinas. Reason, according to this theory, could discover some things about God by analogies drawn from observation of nature. In order to explain the doctrine of creation, for example, Ricci employed the Five Causes-theory of Aquinas and argued that God is the supreme, efficient, and final cause of the world as we experience it.\(^{361}\) Therefore, the Lord of Heaven is the cause of everything, the author of everything, and exists before everything.\(^{362}\) Matteo Ricci himself mentioned Chinese Neo-Confucian positive reactions to such arguments in a private letter, saying: "The Chinese appreciate the detailed analogy [of ours] very much."\(^{363}\) In fact, Li Zhizao 李之藻, another famous Chinese Christian in the 16-17th centuries, tried to introduce this kind of analogy into Chinese thinking by translating the missionaries' works.\(^{364}\)

Only a few Neo-Confucians took an affirmative stand on the idea of creation, however, and most people could not accept such a theory. One of the main complaints of the critics concerned the notion that the Creator God in Christian

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\(^{359}\) Matteo Ricci and other missionaries have heavily stressed that nothing can create itself, every work implies a worker. The order and perfection of the world and all its beings are the proof of the existence of a creator God. For example, Ricci says: "Houses do not build themselves, they are constructed by builders. Thus, Heaven and Earth cannot have made themselves spontaneously." Ricci 1985, 384.

\(^{360}\) Yang "Dayi xupian", 45.

\(^{361}\) Ricci 1985, 390.

\(^{362}\) Ricci 1985, 384.

thought has a conscious will, a notion communicated by the missionaries in transmitting their view of God as the creator of the world. Such a creator God was unacceptable to many Neo-Confucians, because they associated this God with a characterization of him as a craftsman. Xu Dashou, a Neo-Confucian in the 17th century, for example, rather childishly transposes to the domain of the cosmos and universal order a line of argument suggested by the activities of a human builder. Xu says:

> How is it possible to go so far as to denigrate Heaven to the point of likening it to a workman and, quite without basis, attribute to him the creation of man and woman?... Their books also say that Heaven, Earth, and the heavenly spirits were all created from nothing by the Lord of Heaven in six days and six nights. So their Lord of Heaven is certainly inferior to the original virtue of Heaven (qianyuan 乾元), which acts faster than the eye can detect, since he was exhausted after six days and six nights.

Xu Dashou mixed the concept of the creator with the concept of the builder. The Neo-Confucians, thus, reject the idea of a conscious, organizing will at the origin of the world. They also reject the idea that the world is created by a personal God, who not only creates but also sustains it. The Neo-Confucians are monists, and for them the world is of spontaneous organization and natural dynamism. All things, no matter whether Heaven, human beings, or any other visible or invisible thing, are only different manifestations of one and the same substance. Therefore, Xu Dashou could not accept Heaven as creator, since such a thesis would make Heaven a craftsman, according to Xu’s Monism.

Based on a somewhat similar presupposition Huang Wendao, another Neo-Confucian, wrote:

> I have read the books of these foreigners. Their essential idea is that [of the existence] of a Master of Heaven. Their principal rule consists in overcoming the seven [deadly sins]. They consider that prayer consists in repentance and asking for good fortune and that the ultimate

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364 Mingli tan was one of such translations. See Li Zhizao's work, which was referred to in Sun 1994, 71.
365 Longobardo 1701, 20.
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destines are paradise or hell. [Laozi's] Daodejing says: "There is one thing which formed itself out of chaos and which in the beginning gave birth to Heaven and Earth. I do not know what its name is, so being able to do otherwise, I call it the Dao." But our Confucianism judges that concept to be still too mysterious and not really to correspond to what the Dao is. A fortiori nor does [the idea of these people correspond to it] for they add, over and above Heaven, a master who is represented by statues, who is endowed with a will and takes action and now hides in the highest and purest regions of Heaven, now descends into the world of men, now is condemned as a criminal and reviled, and now comes back to life and ascends into Heaven.367

Hereby the Dao of Daoist Lao Zi was referred to as having given birth to Heaven and Earth, and Huang Wendao could not accept the view that over and above Heaven there is still a master who has a will.

This presupposition of Neo-Confucians is contradictory to the ideas of the missionaries in the 16th and 17th centuries; for Christian missionaries, nothing can exist by itself, and everything in the world is created by its creator. Based on such an understanding of creation, it is impossible for Neo-Confucians to accept that human beings need to be saved by God, since human beings, as a part of reality, are self-existent rather than created by God. This leads us to explore another question.

2) Neo-Confucians have also thought about the question whether a reality distinct from God exists or not.

In other words, is there a distinction between God and the reality of the world where human beings live? This question concerns the birth of the universe. Neo-Confucians have explained the birth, motion, and development of the universe through theories of yin, yang and Taiji (the Great Ultimate, or the original mass of energy in fusion). For example, Chen Houguang 陈候光, a Neo-Confucian in the 17th century, said that even without God he could answer the question concerning how the universe was born, since for him, the darkest secret of Confucianism is that all the universe was born from Taiji,368 which is the ruler of the motion of yin and yang energies (qi

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366 PXJ, 6.
367 Pixie jie in PXJ, V, 19a-20b. This translation is cited from Gernet 1985, 210-211.
368 Chen's "Bianxue chuyan" in PoXJ, vol. 5.
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气) and is in charge of the fusion between them. Taiji is the wellspring of everything in the universe.\(^{369}\)

What is the Taiji? Ricci considers it as nothing but an empty principle. One may ask, how could [an empty principle] have created Heaven, Earth, and the Ten Thousand Beings?\(^{370}\) Ricci said,

If they finally came to realize that the Taiji is the first, substantial, intelligent and infinite principle, we should agree to call it God and none other.\(^{371}\)

However, Neo-Confucians are of the opinion that Ricci did not understand the meaning of Taiji correctly. According to some Neo-Confucians, all of Ricci's citations of the term "Sovereign on High" stem from an amalgamation or vague resemblance. He does not actually know what Heaven and the Sovereign on High really are. One Neo-Confucian asked,

How could he know what the Taiji is? The Taiji is the source of all principles of order. But one cannot speak merely of principles of order: it is also the origin of the universal energy. But one cannot speak merely of universal energy: if one goes right back in time, it has no beginning yet can cause the beginning of beings. If one goes forward in time, it has no end but can cause the beginning of beings. Ricci is blinkered and judges everything by his own yardstick, saying: "It is impossible for a principle which is in the void not to fall", and "in the beginning, how could it give birth to being without being set in motion?"\(^{372}\)

The Barbarians say: "Your Taiji is nothing but a couple of characters, li [the principle of organization] and qi [the uncreated universal energy]. It is not intelligent. So it cannot direct the ten thousand transformations." My reply would be that the yi [the change], which produces the infinite combinations of the yin and the yang, is a natural power (benxing) of perfect intelligence. Without reflection, without intention, in absolute calm, without agitation, it reacts and its effects are communicated. But this intelligence does not really direct the ten

\(^{369}\) "The yin and the yang fuse [in cosmic space] and the Ten Thousand Beings are born through a process of transformation. You ask who is in charge of all this? Even the spirits and the Saints were unable to find a name for it. That is why they were obligated to call it Taiji [the cosmic origin, the Great Ultimate]." Bianxue chuyan in PXJ, v, 6a-7a. This translation is cited from Gernet 1985, 210.

\(^{370}\) "Bianxue chuyan" in PXJ, v, 6a-7a. This translation is cited from Gernet 1985, 210.

\(^{371}\) This speech can be found in a letter from Ricci, and this letter is presented in the Casanatense Library in Rome, ms. no. 2136. This translation is cited from Gernet 1985, 27 and 211.
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thousand transformations; if there was some being directing them, those transformations would all be good and fortunate, whereas they sometimes turn out to be bad and bitter.\textsuperscript{373}

As I mentioned earlier in the section on the “Legacy of Matteo Ricci” in chapter 2 of the present study, sometimes Ricci did not grasp the central idea of the concept of \textit{Taiji} and was not able to interpret it satisfactorily. The Neo-Confucian concepts of \textit{Taiji}, \textit{Li} and \textit{qi} can be extended to explain the relationship between the Ultimate Reality and the people and things within the universe.\textsuperscript{374} The Neo-Confucian ontology of \textit{Taiji} is quite distinct from the Christian doctrine of creation. The theory of \textit{Taiji} was later developed by Zhu Xi (1130-1200) and became an important doctrine of Neo-Confucianism,\textsuperscript{375} but it was first introduced by the Neo-Confucian metaphysician Zhou Dunyi (1017-1073).\textsuperscript{376} Ricci has focused on the interpretation of Zhou Dunyi by saying:

\begin{quote}
I have seen the diagram [of Zhou Dunyi] on the "Cosmic origin without an origin" (\textit{Wuji er taiji}): it is just a collection of strange symbols chosen at random.\textsuperscript{377}
\end{quote}

In such a way, Ricci tried to refute this concept of the Great Ultimate. He also said:

\begin{quote}
I have heard it said that the people of worth of Antiquity respected the Lord of Heaven, not the \textit{Taiji}. If this \textit{Taiji} was the ancestor of the Ten Thousand Beings, why did the ancient Saints never mention it?\textsuperscript{378}
\end{quote}

Ricci was not right in this,\textsuperscript{379} since in the Chinese classic \textit{Book of changes} (the \textit{Yijing}) it is mentioned:

\begin{quote}
Bianxue chu\textsuperscript{372} yan in PXJ, v, 6a-7a. This translation is cited from Gernet 1985, 210.
\textsuperscript{373} ZP, 14a.
\textsuperscript{374} Lancashire and Peter Hu have even considered the three concepts as resembling the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit when they evaluated Ricci’s idea. Cf., Ricci 1985, 47-48.
\textsuperscript{375} See Appendix VI: “Taiji”.
\textsuperscript{376} See Appendix VI: “Taiji”.
\textsuperscript{377} Ricci 1985, 405.
\textsuperscript{378} Ricci 1985, 404.
\textsuperscript{379} Neo-Confucian Xu Dashou (living in the 17\textsuperscript{th} century) disagreed with Ricci and called him and his fellows as Barbarians being born blind, see ZP, 14a-b.
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"The Taiji gave birth to the two principles [the yin and the yang], which produced the four symbols,\(^{380}\) which gave birth to the eight trigrams,\(^{381}\) which gave birth to the Ten Thousand Being."

Thus, concerning the concept Taiji there is a misunderstanding between Ricci and Neo-Confucians. Having set out the missionaries' teaching on creation, Neo-Confucian Yang Guangxian 杨光先 (1597-1669) says,

Even to such lengths do they go with their extravagant and baseless claims! Heaven is the product of the combination of the two primordial energies, the yin and yang. It is not true that it was created. Confucius said: 'Why should Heaven speak? The four seasons follow upon their course and all beings are born.'\(^{382}\) If Heaven had been created by a Lord of Heaven it would be no more than brute and insensible matter. How could it give birth to the Ten Thousand Beings? However divine (shen) their Lord of Heaven may be, he is in reality a form of energy (qi) produced by the two primordial energies. Does it make any sense at all to say that he was able to create the two primordial energies which give birth to all things?\(^{383}\)

Yang thus argues that the spirits and gods are simply a more refined and subtle form of the universal energy which, through the intermediary of its two opposed and complementary modalities, the yin and yang, is at the origin of all things in the world.\(^{384}\) This is the typical monism which emphasizes the one fundamental substance of reality, and all things in the world are considered to be different manifestations of one and the same substance.

Here again, the monist ontology and the difference between transcendence and immanence appear.\(^{385}\) Those Neo-Confucians, who took an affirmative attitude toward Christianity, emphasized the meaning of transcendence (\textit{i.e.}, personal deity) in the Ancient Confucian primary scriptures, thus agreeing with Ricci. In the doctrines of Neo-Confucians who opposed to Christianity, however, the concept of the transcendence of a metaphysical personal deity was replaced by a notion of the

\(^{380}\) Namely, the combinations 00, 01, 10 and 11.
\(^{381}\) The combinations 000, 001, 010, 011, 100, 101, 110 and 111.
\(^{382}\) Lunyu XVII, 17. Liang Yancheng calls Chinese Heaven "Silent Heaven" based on Confucius' such words; but for Liang, this does not prove that Heaven is not the Creator.
\(^{383}\) PXL, 1106.
\(^{384}\) Cf., Gernet 1985, 204.
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Immanence of Heavenly Principle, which is *a priori* without personality and is immanent in human beings. This idea replaced that of the ancient Heaven and Sovereign on High. Thus, the idea of creation cannot be accepted by the Neo-Confucian, who thinks that there is no reality distinct from God.

In addition, one has also to remember that Ricci was highly influenced by the Greek tradition through Thomas Aquinas. The differences between the philosophical ideas of Ancient Greece and those of China are remarkable. According to Aristotle, it is normal for all things to be at rest, whereas in the Chinese thinking, the primary assumption is universal dynamism.

The *Taiji*, the Great Ultimate, contains within itself the principles of organization that are at the origin of the universe and its beings. The Chinese ideas are of a dynamic nature, the cosmic origin (*Taiji*) is not an abstract concept, and the principle of organization (*li*) is not the equivalent of the Platonic *eidos*. For Ricci and his followers, *Taiji* was a personal God, at times angry, occasionally merciful; a God who created the world, governs it, and intervenes in the smallest details of individual existence; a God who has a history, because of becoming incarnate in a particular place at a particular time.

This idea runs counter, however, to the Neo-Confucian idea of an impersonal Heaven which is one together with the order of nature and its infinite power of production. For the Neo-Confucians there is something divine in the very functioning of the universe, but this divinity is immanent in the world. There is no being or truth that transcends it.

Xu Dashou contrasts "Christian personal, external creation starting from the uncreated" with "the Chinese concept of a continuous creation-transformation" that is "an impartial and spontaneous non-created creation". The disagreement between Neo-Confucians and the missionaries in the 16th and 17th centuries did not stem

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385 See chapter 4 in this study.
386 See Appendix VII: “Li and Qi”. The idea of Neo-Confucianism can be summarized as follows: 1) The universe was the product of an omnipresent, uncreated primordial energy. 2) All the beings in the world were, as the universe itself was, the products of natural and spontaneous mechanisms. Cf. Gernet 1985, 208.
387 ZP 14a.
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solely from the fact that the latter preached about a creator God while the former imagined the universe to be regulated by an immanent principle of order manifesting itself at even the most elementary level. It was also occasioned by their radically different cosmological concepts. The missionaries taught of the existence of a static world, created once and for all and limited in both space and time, and they taught also concepts which they tied in with their theory of the existence of a creator God. The Chinese, on the other hand, believed the world to be the product of a ceaseless evolution, limitless in extension and duration.\textsuperscript{388}

Neo-Confucians have different understandings of the Christian theses concerning whether reality is self-existent (ontologically or epistemologically) and whether a reality distinct from God exists. The main reasons behind them constitutes the conflict between Christian theist and Neo-Confucian monist ontology, and the contradiction between Christian static and Neo-Confucian dynamic understandings of the world.

4.1.2 Cultural Nationalist Confucian arguments

Cultural Nationalist Confucians have approached the Christian doctrine of creation taking the stance that there is no creator. In this section I will take Xiong Shili 熊十力 (1883-1968) as the representative of this orientation.

1) There is no creator.

Disputing the idea of a creator in Christianity has gained support from later Confucians. For example, Xiong Shili, one of the main figures of the Cultural Nationalist Confucians, has been recognized as having built an ontology for the New Confucian Movement. Xiong criticized the concept of “creator” as being self-contradictory. He says,

The idea that there is no author is a living idea. (“Author” resembles “creator”. In Hinduism there is the idea of an author, but Buddhism does not accept it. Chinese thought such as Confucianism and Daoism do not admit the existence of an author either.) If there is an author, it should be determined whether his nature is corrupt or good. If the original nature of

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an author is good, he will absolutely not do corrupt things. If his original nature is corrupt, he will absolutely not do good things.

However, among all things in the world, some are good, and others are corrupt. Who is the author? In addition, if there is an author, it should be made clear whether he has an eternal principle or a temporal principle? If it is a temporal principle, he should not be called an author, since, together with all the things which he has made, he is also the result of the temporal principle. If it is an eternal principle, he should have not created at all, since his body [substance] is eternal; thus, there is no creation; if there is creation, the principle is not no longer eternal, and it will fall into the fault mentioned earlier that a temporal principle should not have been called an author. If there is an author who created everything, even this author cannot exist by himself, and there should have another higher author.

Thus, each author has to rely on another higher author, and this will fall into the fault of the logical limitless. In addition, if an author has created everything, he should have predestinated a mode, and he needs also a tool [to work]. If so, the author will stupidly follow a certain form in creating. Considering all these elements together from different aspects, it is clear that the idea of an author cannot be tenable. Since change does not result from the work of an author, it is therefore living and is not limited by anything.389

In the above quotation one may find that Xiong Shili has rejected the idea of a creator, and argues that Chinese thought such as Confucianism and Daoism do not admit the existence of a creator either. This argument cannot remain unchallenged. According to the Daoist classic Laozi, for example, the idea of creation and a creator is very clear.390 Based on the above quotation of Xiong, four arguments can be found to support his thesis that there is no creator. In what follows I will focus on these four arguments and will occasionally refer to the Laozi, because Daoism is an important part of Neo-Confucianism and Xiong Shili’s thought. Sometimes Christian theological views seem to be defended, but this is not the main purpose of my analysis. What I intend to say is that certain questions and problems raised by Xiong have also been noted in Christian theology. Once this fact is kept in mind, a better understanding of Xiong can be reached.

1) Xiong says that the nature of a creator is contradictory to that of the world, since the creator should not have created a thing which is contradictory to his nature.

389 Xiong 1985, 352.
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If the creator is good, why are there so many corrupt things in the world? If the creator is corrupt, why are there so many good things in the world?

This argument of Xiong concerns, in fact, the problem of evil. Many thinkers have asked, if the creator is absolutely good and righteous, like God of Christians, why then is there evil in the world? It is clear that the origin of evil is a difficult theme in Christianity, but this difficulty does not necessarily need to become an obstacle for accepting the idea of creator.

It seems to be inconsistent between the problem of evil and God: on the one hand, the theist affirms that an omnipotent, omniscient, perfectly God exists, on the other hands, evil exists in the world. For example, concerning the inconsistency between certain theistic claims about God and evil, J. L. Mackie (1917-1981) writes that “here it can be shown, not that religious beliefs lack rational support, but that they are positively irrational, that the several parts of the essential theological doctrine are inconsistent with one another.” The logical problem of evil is, however, not necessarily against God’s existence. Theistic philosopher Alvin Plantinga (b. 1932) tries to rebute the charge of inconsistency. He argues that God is omnipotent and it was not within his power to create a world containing moral good but no moral evil. This claim means that it is possible that God would create a world of free creatures who choose to do evil. This is to say, it is possible for God to exist and for evil to exist.

To Plantinga’s above explanation, one may query as Mackie did, “Why could [God] not have made men such that they always freely choose the good?” Peterson, Hasker, Reichenbach and Basinger say that many theists and atheists can accept “the standard definition of omnipotence as the power to bring about any state of affairs the description of which is not logically self-contradictory.

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391 For example, Yuan Zhiming, a Chinese evangelist in USA has tried to answer this question with the help of the Chinese classics. Cf., Yuan 1997a, 201. See Zhang Qingxiong 张庆熊 2004, “Jidujiao he Rujia lun ‘zui’ yu ‘e’ 基督教和儒家论 ‘罪’ 与 ‘恶’”, in Luo Mingjia & Huang Baolu 2004, 29-42.

392 Reason and religious belief 2003, 130.


395 Mackie 1955, ”Evil and omnipotence”, in Mind 64 (1955), 209.
This definition is quite naturally taken to mean that there are no nonlogical limits to what an omnipotent being can do.\textsuperscript{396}

One of the answers to this challenge can also be traced to the Church Father Irenaeus, who stated that, because of God’s love He gave human beings freedom, and, thus, evil exists as the precondition for human beings to practice their freedom.\textsuperscript{397} God did not create human beings as automatons, but as individuals who are capable of responding freely to God. Unless a real choice is available between good and evil, the biblical injunctions to 'choose the good' are meaningless. Criticism has arisen here, however, because it appears that dignity is being given to evil in allocating it a positive role within the purposes of God. This approach seems merely to encourage acquiescence to the presence of evil in the world without giving any moral direction or stimulus for resisting and overcoming it.\textsuperscript{398}

After analyzing the logical problem of evil, Peterson, Hasker, Reichenbach and Basinger mention the evidential problem of evil as a challenge to theists to square their belief in God with the facts of evil in the world. Since “their allegation is not that theism is internally inconsistent but that it is implausible.”\textsuperscript{399} Then, they have been able to sharpen the distinction between two types of response, defense and theodicy. The former aims at establishing that a given formulation of the argument from evil affairs; the latter offers an account or explanation of why God allows

\textsuperscript{396} Reason and religious belief 2003, 132.
\textsuperscript{397} See Huang, Paulos 2002, 84-86. Referring to Irenaeus I have tried to answer the question therein when I studied Yuan Zhiming's understanding of evil: If God is omnipotence and love, why has he permitted Adam and Eve to fall into sin? Can God create human beings who do not sin? (See Yuan 1997a, 109.) Yuan takes the relationship between the authority of God and the freedom of Human beings to answer these questions. Yuan says God has authority to order Human beings to do anything, but God has given freedom to them, and this is the love of God. Human beings are free to do anything because of this freedom. They might have enjoyed true freedom within God, but they committed sin and became slaves of sin. The basic sin of Human beings is that they would like to become God-like. For in Jn. 8:32-34 Jesus says to Jews who had believed in him: "Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." They answered him, 'We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?' Jesus replied, 'I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin." Separated from God people cannot find true freedom, and without Dao there is no true freedom, either. See Yuan 1997, 110-115.
\textsuperscript{398} This issue can also be related to the question whether the world moves towards its destination (telos) according to the purpose of God or not, since bad things in the world often challenge people’s faith in the good purpose of God.
\textsuperscript{399} Reason and religious belief 2003, 133.
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suffering and evil. Then, they mention two themes in theodicy\(^{400}\) and three important global theodicies.\(^{401}\) It is clear that the problem is difficult for theism, but it cannot refute the existence of God. Xiong’s challenge is neither new nor strange for Christians. “Interestingly, there is a common assumption underlying both the antitheistic arguments from evil and theistic responses: God (who is omnipotent, omniscient, and wholly good) would not allow any evil unless it is necessary to a greater good.”\(^{402}\)

2) Xiong's second argument is that it is difficult to understand according to what kind of principle the creator has created the world. If it is the temporal principle, the creator, together with all the things which He has made, is also the result of the temporal principle; thus, He cannot be a real creator any more. If it is an eternal principle, His body [substance] will be eternal; thus, there is no creation; if there is creation, the principle is not any more eternal, and a temporal principle cannot be called a creator.

Xiong’s critique of the creator can be understood through a new interpretation of the \textit{Laozi} 42:1: "The Dao produced One; One produced Two; Two produced Three; Three produced All things." Many scholars have understood this passage according to dialectical materialism\(^{403}\) or \textit{Yin-yang} theory.\(^{404}\) It can be, in fact, interpreted in many ways: "One" as the essence of the Dao, "Two" as the name of the Dao, and "Three" as the image of the Dao. The relationship among these three terms has been discussed in many chapters of the \textit{Laozi},\(^{405}\) and for the present author it is

\(^{400}\) One approach that has some uptake among some religious believers is that evil is punishment for wrongdoing. Another type of them in theodicy is the \textit{ultimate harmony} solution, which may be split into two distinct positions: The first is the all is well with the world from God’s perspective orientation and the second is that all will be well in the long run orientation. The first approach, the \textit{all-well-from-God’s-perspective} position, can be supported by either that God is omniscience or that God’s moral perfection. The second approach that the all’s-well-that-ends-well-strategy does not claim that every evil is presently connected with greater goods. Instead this approach affirms that all evils will eventually result in greater goods, either in temporal life or in the afterlife. \textit{Reason and religious belief} 2003, 137-143.

\(^{401}\) Three of these theodicies have become very important in the literature on evil and deserve closer examination: \textit{Augustinian theodicy}, \textit{Irenaean theodicy}, and \textit{process theodicy}. \textit{Reason and religious belief} 2003, 144-148.

\(^{402}\) \textit{Reason and religious belief} 2003, 148.

\(^{403}\) Cf. Ren Jiyu 任继愈 1992, 49.


\(^{405}\) The \textit{Laozi} reads: “The Dao that can be trodden is not the enduring and unchanging Dao. The name that can be named is not the enduring and unchanging name. (Conceived of as) having no name, it is
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very similar to the Trinity of Christianity. The Father is the essence of God, since no one has seen Him, and He still is the source of the Godhead. The Son is the image of God, and this is the biblical symbol describing the relationship between the Father and the Son (Philippians 2:5-11). The Holy Spirit is the name of God, and this symbol can be understood in the sense that in church history God has been experienced basically through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit helps people to accept Jesus Christ and to understand the Bible. Thus, the Holy Spirit is like the name of God. We get a clue concerning how the world was created by comparing Gen. 1:1-3 and chapter 25 of the Laozi.  

The above statement is only an observation, and it needs more analysis in order to persuade readers; but it indicates that the existence of a mode or principle of creating does not deny the existence of a creator. With the help of Christian terminology, creation becomes comprehensible, since the Father is causa efficiens, the Son is causa formalis, and the Holy Spirit is causa finalis.

3) Xiong's third argument is that it is impossible to answer who or what the final creator is. If the world is created, it is difficult to understand who is the creator of the creator, i.e., who at last created the world. Logically this question constitutes

the Originator of heaven and earth; (conceived of as) having a name, it is the Mother of all things." (1:1-2)

"The Dao is (like) the emptiness of a vessel; and in our employment of it we must be on our guard against all fullness. How deep and unfathomable it is, as if it were the Honoured Ancestor of all things! We should blunt our sharp points, and unravel the complications of things; we should attempt our brightness, and bring ourselves into agreement with the obscurity of others. How pure and still the Dao is, as if it would ever so continue! I do not know whose son it is. It might appear to have been before God." (4)

"The valley spirit dies not, aye the same; The female mystery thus do we name. Its gate, from which at first they issued forth, Is called the root from which grew heaven and earth. Long and unbroken does its power remain, Used gently, and without the touch of pain." (6)

"It is better to leave a vessel unfilled, than to attempt to carry it when it is full. If you keep feeling a point that has been sharpened, the point cannot long preserve its sharpness. When gold and jade fill the hall, their possessor cannot keep them safe. When wealth and honors lead to arrogance, this brings its evil on itself. When the work is done, and one's name is becoming distinguished, to withdraw into obscurity is the way of Heaven." (9).

Yuan says that chapters 14, 21, 25, 32, 41 and 42 of the Laozi also discuss the relationship among the essence, name and image of the Dao.

406  The Laozi 25:1-3 reads: "There was something undefined and complete, coming into existence before Heaven and Earth. How still it was and formless, standing alone, and undergoing no change, reaching everywhere and in no danger (of being exhausted)! It may be regarded as the Mother of all things. I do not know its name, and I give it the designation of the Dao. Making an effort to give it a name I call it The Great." See Huang 2002, 76-77, and Yuan 1997, 94-95.

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an infinite regress.\textsuperscript{408} From another perspective, this argument concerns the question of whether the creator can be a \textit{noumenon}, or a Being-in-itself. Usually \textit{noumenon} is considered as the object, itself inaccessible to experience, to which a phenomenon is referred as the basis or cause of a sensory experience. The God of the Christians has \textit{personality} according to the Scripture. This understanding is found in the assertion that “He is”. His very name "I am" (Ex. 3:14) indicates that He is a living God. Scripture does not argue for His existence; it simply affirms it or, more often, merely assumes it. Heb. 11:6 says that anyone who "comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He regards those who earnestly seek Him." Thus, existence is considered the most basic aspect of God's nature. Therefore, there is no need for a creator behind the creator.\textsuperscript{409}

The Dao of Lao Zi can be connected with Aristotle's First Cause or Prime Mover, which is also called the Unmoved Mover. For Aristotle the universe had no beginning. It has always existed, so it exists and will continue to exist.\textsuperscript{410}

As we mentioned earlier in the present chapter, according to the Roman Catholic theological doctrine of creation, a created reality distinct from God exists. This reality is not self-existent but dependent on God. Thus, although the First Cause of Aristotle is the most excellent and exalted being in the universe, it is indeed just that, a being which is in the universe. Its existence is inferred from the motions we observe on earth and in the heavens.

4) Xiong's fourth argument is that the creator has to rely on a mode and tools in creating. This argument concerns, in fact, the basis of creation. And this argument is somewhat similar to Xiong’s second argument concerning the principle of creation. Mode, tool, and source can all be considered as the basis of creation.

\textsuperscript{408} Neo-Confucians have also studied this issue; see \textit{Bianxue chuyan} in PXJ, v, 6a-7a. Cf., also Gernet 1985, 210. Ricci also says, "Take the principle of a cart. Why does it not give birth to a cart?" and a lot of other crude nonsense which any sensible man would deem ridiculous. If one returned to Ricci the same kind of arguments on the subject of his Lord of Heaven, what explanation would he give? Therefore, traditional Neo-Confucians do not need an external spiritual world to solve the problems of birth, motion, development, and principle; and all these questions can be solved within the one united world of Confucianism. The Neo-Confucian challengers also asked: If one returned to Ricci the same kind of argument on the subject of his Lord of Heaven, what explanation would he give? This is a question which keeps the Chinese affirming its own ontology.

\textsuperscript{409} Cf., Erikson 1998, 297.

\textsuperscript{410} Cf., Yuan 1997, 71. Cf., also Allen 1985, 1.
One may focus on two terms "Being" (or, existence of something) (you 有) and "Non-being" (Non-existence or Nothing) (wu 无), which have often been used by Lao Zi and stressed by Neo-Confucians.\textsuperscript{411} About these two terms, Lao Zi says that all things under the sky have their originator (52:1), but (they are grasped as) having no names and Non-being is the originator of heaven and earth (1:2). This refers to the idea that everything comes from a being, but no one knows what this being is; thus, Lao Zi calls it “Non-being”.

Materialism regards matter and its motion as constituting the universe and all phenomena, including those of mind, as due to material agencies. Pantheism regards God as the transcendent reality of which the material universe and man are only manifestations. It also involves a denial of God's personality and expresses a tendency to identify God and nature.

According to Lao Zi:

All things under heaven sprang from it as existing (and named);
that existence sprang from it as non-existent (and not named) (40:2).

This statement reminds people of the words in the Bible.\textsuperscript{412} "Being" (Existence or Something) (you) and "Non-Being" (Non-existence or Nothing) (wu) are two different expressions of the same thing, which Lao Zi expressed using the words:

… under these two aspects.\textsuperscript{413}

It is really the same; but as development takes place, it receives the different names.
Together we call them Mystery.
Where the Mystery is the deepest is the gate of all that is subtle and wonderful" (1:4).\textsuperscript{414}

\textsuperscript{411} Yuan 1997, 97-99.
\textsuperscript{412} Heb. 11:3 reads: "By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible." Psalm 33:9 reads: "For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm", and this statement has been recorded in Gen. 1:3-27.
\textsuperscript{413} "Having no name" and "having a name", "Being" and "non-Being", or "Existence" and "Non-existence".
\textsuperscript{414} Yuan 1997, 98.
"Nothing" (Non-being) is, in fact, an important concept in Christian theology\textsuperscript{415} and Jewish mystical tradition.\textsuperscript{416} In fact, in this respect many similarities can be found between Daoism and the classical Christian doctrine of creatio ex nihilo (creation out of nothing). In the classical theological doctrine of creation, creatio ex nihilo is one of the five main points. Thus, there is no need for any “mode and tools”, and their supposed requirement cannot be taken as evidence supporting Xiong’s argument that there is no creator.

The manner in which God acts as creator has indeed been the subject of intense discussion within the Christian tradition. Several models of the manner in which God is to be thought of as creating the world, are often mentioned by theologians: 1) Emanation: The image that dominates this approach is that of light or heat radiating from sun, or from a source such as fire. This image of creation (hinted at the Nicean Creed’s phrase "light from light") suggests that the creation of the world can be regarded as an overflowing of the creative energy of God. There is thus a natural or organic connection between God and the creation. The weakness of this model is: the image of a sun radiating light, or a fire radiating heat, implies an involuntary emanation rather than a conscious decision to create. The Christian tradition has consistently emphasized that the act of creation rests upon a prior decision from God. Further, this model suggests an impersonal nature of God. 2) Construction: to portray God as a master builder, deliberately constructing the world (Ps. 127:1) is powerful, since it conveys the ideas of purpose, planning, and a deliberate intention to create. This image draws attention to both the creator and the creation, and it brings out the skill of the creator and allows the beauty and ordering of the resulting creation to be appreciated, both for what it is in it and for its testimony to the creativity and care of its creator. The deficiency of this model relates to its requirement of pre-existent matter, since the act of creation is understood as giving shape and form to something which is already there -- an idea which is in

\textsuperscript{415} Erikson 1998, 394-397. He discusses the theme "Creation out of Nothing". Cf., also Li Qiuling 2004.
\textsuperscript{416} Kushner has placed "nothing" a very important role in Jewish mystical tradition, and he included "My help will come from Nothing", "Every moment God sustains all creation!", "God is God and there is nothing else", "Upper unity, lower unity", "Something from Nothing", and "Attaining the level of Nothingness" under the title of "Nothing", see Kushner 2001, 17-34.
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serious tension with the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*. This will be discussed in detail later in the section "Creation and creativity in Boston Confucianism". 3) Artistic expression: to compare creation to a work of art, which is beautiful in itself and it is expressing the personality of its creator. This model has, however, both weaknesses of the above two models. The creator is an impersonal God, and pre-existent matter provides the stuff of which creation is made.\textsuperscript{417}

Contrasting with the argument that the Dao is Creator according to one of these three models mentioned above is the better notion that the Dao fits well the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*. Lao Zi stresses often that the world is created from nothing; but, similar to the Emanation model, the Dao seems to have the weakness of making the Creator impersonal. In any case, these models can probably offer some hints for answering Xiong's question.

Based on his four arguments, Xiong Shili concludes that there is no Creator. My analysis has shown, however, that his four arguments have not offered adequate support for his thesis. Thus, his conclusion seems logically untenable.

2) *Taiji* produced myriad existing beings

In order to find out why the Neo-Confucian Xiong considers within his own system that there is no Creator one may ask how the world begins if there is no Creator. In this respect he is a loyal Neo-Confucian, since he considers *Taiji* (the Great Ultimate) a complex and dynamic reality which is consequently capable of evolving into the alternation of *yin* and *yang* and to produce the myriad of existing beings.\textsuperscript{418}

For Xiong the world is in motion and change is living and not limited by anything.\textsuperscript{419} Why has he understood the world as being in constant motion? Why is change living and not limited by anything? Xiong Shili has employed the Neo-

\textsuperscript{417} Huang 2002, 105-116. McGrath has mentioned these three models, see McGrath 1997, 272-273.

\textsuperscript{418} Xiong 1985, 352: “Above has been mentioned that change does not result from the work of an author; if there is no author, how can there be change? It is not initiated from Nothing [or Non-Being], since Nothing [or Non-Being] cannot give birth to Something [or Being].”

\textsuperscript{419} Xiong 1985, 352: “It should be remembered that although there is no author, the principle has its own function, which is also called Eternal Change. Through this Eternal Change the Great Activity became popular, and this is called change.”
Confucian doctrine of *ti-yong* (体用, substance-function)\(^{420}\) to answer these questions as follows:

It should also be remembered, it is in the light of activity that we say that Substance [Original Body] can change. (Activity can also be called function.) Since Original Body (= Substance) can become the activities of all different things; thus, there is no so-called reason without activity. In the light of the fact that substance can have activity we think that it is "*neng*" (to be able, ability). Thus, "*neng*" is an adjective. I am afraid that someone may misunderstand and think that substance is the activity which is alienated from all different things or from all actions and that it has the ... to create all things. If "*neng*" is understood in such a way, it will be a wrong insight. In fact, substance should not be considered as the personal God of religionists, and it should not be considered either that human beings seem to have ability to create everything. Its original ability is, on the one hand, not able to [do anything], and, on the other hand, nothing can be done [by it]. It can become the activities of all things and all actions; thus, it can be said that nothing cannot be done by it. It is not alienated from the activities of all things or from all actions so as to become a creator; thus, it is said that it can do nothing. Therefore, it is said that it can change.\(^{421}\)

Such an argument of substance-function resembles monistic pantheism, which denies the difference between God and the created reality described in classic theology. Of course, Xiong did not directly employ the term “monistic pantheism”, but he similarly challenged the classical Christian doctrine of creation concerning the distinction between God and his created reality. For him all different things in the world are only the manifestation and function of the same substance, and this is the essence of monism.

For Xiong, the totality of cosmic reality is a concrete one. It is made up of a basic substance, the *substratum* of the myriad of visible things and of the visible

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\(^{420}\) Zhu Xi utilized the *ti-yong* concept more than any other Neo-Confucians. *Ti-yong* is not just a pedagogical tool, but is also an expression of the immanent transcendence inherent in the relationship of *Li* to *Qi*. Zhu expressed almost all of these concepts when he said, "Heaven, Earth, and the myriad of things all come from one *Li*. This *Li* is coherent and not absurd. Profoundly illuminating its source, one is therefore able to make Heaven and man become one, unite the inner and outer, and cause no separation between *ti* and *yong*. This is what is called ’exhausting one’s nature’" (*Zhuzi yulei*, http://210.69.170.100/index.htm (*Zhuzi yulei*) 2), Chapter 37, page 50: 天地万物, 共由一理, 其理顺而不妄, 深明其源, 乃能一天人, 合内外, 体用无间矣, 此之谓尽性。) See Michael Ing”Zhu Xi’s Ti-yong: Context and interpretation” in www.confucianstudies.com.

\(^{421}\) Xiong 1985, 314.
things themselves, which are the manifestations and the operations of the substance. Xiong calls it original substance, or the fabric of the universe. He has found a mention of it already in the Book of changes, where it is called the Great Ultimate (Taiji). Thus, substance for Xiong can be summarized as follows: 1) omniscient, all-powerful, the moving principle of all becoming, supremely good and pure; 2) absolute, without relation, without contradiction, without causal connection; 3) mysterious and invisible, that is, without concrete appearance (without spatial dimension); eternal, without a beginning and end (without a temporal dimension); 4) perfect, complete in itself, without defects, without deficiency, indivisible; 5) eternally in motion, in transformation, its functions changing, the myriad of manifestations; 6) but as substance, it never loses its absoluteness, purity, goodness, and immobility.

Xiong's ontology takes the substance-function relationship as its center. Substance means the original fabric of the universe, and function is the universal operation of substance. Substance manifests itself through its operations. This is also to say that the original substance of the universe manifests itself through phenomena; being manifests itself through becoming. Since becoming is change, then cosmic reality is unceasing becoming, unceasing change and transformation. Therefore, since becoming is an unceasing function of being, becoming is nothing else but being. There is not a reality distinct from God, becoming and being are not two separate realities, and substance is at the same time impermanent and permanent. According to Xiong’s ontology, then, a reality distinct from God does not exist, since the world is one, and all differences are only the manifestations of functions of the same substance. In this aspect, different from classic Christian theology, Xiong has his own monistic understanding concerning the created human beings. It is, therefore, difficult for Christians to develop a dialogue with Xiong.

4.1.3 Modern Confucian arguments

1) Modern Christian Confucian arguments

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422 Cf., Bresciani 2001, 126.
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Among Modern Confucians, Modern Christian Confucians have defended all five points of the classic Christian doctrine of creation; but the most discussed topic is the existence of a creator in the Chinese traditions. The sources, from which they have acquired information upon which to base their conclusions, are mainly the Five Classics of pre-Confucian times (before 479 BC). Occasionally later materials are also employed.

He Shiming 何世明 (1909-1991) was one of those who clearly argued that Heaven is the creator of all things including human beings. His arguments are mainly based on quotations from the Five Classics. For example, from Yi jing . Qiangua, Shi jing . Tiuanzuo, and Shi jing . Zhengmin, he is of the opinion that Shangdi or Tian is the creator of all things.

In a different way from He Shiming, Yuan Zhiming considered the Dao as the creator. Yuan noticed that there is no such a term “creation” or “to create” in the book of Laozi, but he has employed several terms, which Lao Zi used to describe the Dao to prove that the Dao is the creator. These terms are “mother”,

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423 They are: a reality distinct from God exists; this reality is not axiomatic (ontologically or epistemologically), but rather is by virtue of the antecedent reality of God; God created the world out of nothing (creatio ex nihilo); God sustains the world; and the world moves towards its destination (telos) in the purpose of God.
424 Qian hanshu. Dong Zhongshu zhuan was also referred to, cf., He Shiming 1996 (2), 15-16.
425 "Vast is the 'great and originating (power)' indicated by Qian! All things owe to it their beginning: - it contains all the meaning belonging to (the name) Heaven."
426 "Heaven made a lofty hill for former kings to till."
427 "Heaven who made mankind endowed him with body and mind". This passage can also be translated as: "Heaven, in producing mankind, gave them their various faculties and relations with their specific laws."
428 The Neo-Confucians in the 16th and 17th centuries also discussed this topic. This argument can also be supported by Sinological research; for example, Nikkilä 1982, 204-205: According to Shijing Tian created both the natural world and the people in it with their bodies and moral regulations, 206 reads: "Both [Shujing and Shijing] share the view that there was a beginning to everything, a kind of starting point, and that a kind of creation had taken place. In Shu Ching [Shijing], the kings were the authors of this creative activity, whereas according to Shih Ching [Shijing] Heaven was the author of creation."
429 Yuan 1997, 91-116. See also Huang 2002, 75-88. Since Daoism is also an important part of Neo-Confucianism, and such a fact has also influenced Modern Confucianism, I am hereby also discussing Yuan Zhiming’s ideas on the relationship between Christianity and the Daoist classic Laozi.
430 Yuan 1997, 92.
431 In the book of Laozi the Dao has been called "mother of all things" (1:2), "mother of heaven and earth" (25:3), "mother of those under heavens" (52:1), "returning to hold its mother" (52:3), and Lao Zi says that the only difference between him and other people is that he values the nursing-mother (i.e., the Dao)" (20:7).
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“ancestor”,

“female vagina” and “root”. Yuan mentions also that in the Bible God has been called “mother”, and Lao Zi also calls the Dao “father”. Although God is usually called Father by Christians, it is called Mother in the Laozi. Yuan traces this difference to cultural customs, but he does not offer detailed evidence to show how cultural customs have led to such a difference. In the end of his argument, Yuan quotes Acts 17:26 to say that all people are created by God, and the Dao has created every one of us.

In order to show how the world was created, Yuan makes a contrast between chapter 25 of the Laozi and Genesis 1:1-3 by pointing out six issues as follows: 1) The time “before heaven and earth” in the Laozi is “the beginning” when “God created heavens and earth” in Genesis. 2) The “something undefined and complete” in the Laozi is “God”, who was in the beginning of Genesis, and this God was also called Logos, which has been translated as “Word” in English and “Dao” in Chinese (John 1:1-2). 3) Lao Zi’s description of the Dao “how still it was and formless” is the same as the description “a formless void and darkness” in Genesis. 4) The description of the Dao as “standing alone, undergoing no change, reaching everywhere” is the same as the description of how “the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters”. 5) Lao Zi says that the Dao “may be regarded as the mother of all things” and confesses that he does not know its name. The author of Genesis goes on to tell about the process of God’s creation. 6) Concerning the process of creation, Yuan compares the verb “to create” in Genesis and “to give birth” in the Laozi, since these two terms may lead people to believe that Genesis and the Laozi are different in respect to creation. Yuan says the Bible also employs the verb “to give birth” to describe God’s

432 The Laozi 4:1 reads: "The Dao is (like) the emptiness of a vessel; and in our employment of it we must be on our guard against all fullness. How deep and unfathomable it is, as if it were the honoured ancestor of all things!"

433 The Laozi 6:1 reads: "The valley spirit dies not, aye the same; The female vagina thus do we name."

434 The Laozi 6:2 reads: "The gate of female vagina, from which at first they issued forth, is called the root from which grew heaven and earth."

435 Psalm 131:2 reads: "But I have stilled and quieted my soul; like a weaned child with its mother, like a weaned child is my soul within me."

436 The Laozi 21:4 reads: "Its name does not pass away, and to be called the father of everyone."

437 Yuan 1997, 93. I mentioned earlier, Yang Tingyun called God as the Great Father-Mother. Cf., Standaert 1988, chapter 1 "Yang Tingyun's thought: A) Heaven."

438 Yuan 1997, 93.
creative work, *e.g.*, Acts 17:28-29. He considers the different usage of these two terms as a cultural difference, which does not result in any theological difference.\footnote{Yuan 1997, 94-95.}

Yuan interprets 42:1 of the *Laozi* via an understanding of the Trinity in Christianity.\footnote{Yuan 1997, 97.} Concerning the source of creation, Lao Zi says that all things under heaven have their originator (52:1), (conceived of as) having no name and *wu* is the originator of heaven and earth (1:2). Yuan employs the Big Bang theory to argue that the universe began from a single point, which is a mystery that science cannot yet explain. He thinks that Lao Zi has explained this mysterious point already over two thousand years ago by saying: “All things under heaven sprang from it as existing (and named); that existence sprang from it as non-existent (and not named) (40:2). At the end of his argument Yuan agrees with Lao Zi that *you* and *wu* are two different expressions referring to the same thing, which has been expressed by Lao Zi in the following words: “Under these two aspects,\footnote{“Having no name” and “having a name”, “Being” and “Non-Being”, or “Existence” and “Non-Existence”.} it is really same; but as development takes place, it receives the different names. Together we call them Mystery. Where the Mystery is the deepest is the gate of all that is subtle and wonderful” (1:4).\footnote{Yuan 1997a, 98.} In fact, it is an important general doctrine of Christianity that God created the world out of nothing (*creatio ex nihilo*), and Yuan has not produced much of a contrast to this point.

Concerning creation Yuan has pointed out four things: 1) The Dao has created the universe and is called as the mother of all things; 2) The Dao gives birth to all things; 3) One, Two, and Three are the essence, name and image of the Dao; and 4) *you* and *wu* are the same mystery from which the universe was born.

2) **Boston Confucian arguments**

The Boston Confucian stance to the Christian doctrine of creation can be found in Robert Neville’s understanding of creation and creativity in Confucianism. Neville says in the West there are two different understandings concerning God the creator. One is theism, according to which it is assumed that God is an independent entity
creating the world out of nothing. Another is mysticism, which supposes that God is not an entity but the formless abyss out of which the world is created.\footnote{Neville 1991, 73.}

According to Neville the possible reason \textit{creatio ex nihilo} never struck a spark in Chinese religious philosophy is that it seems to require the concept of a transcendent creator. Unlike the Western tradition’s stress on the transcendence of the creator of all being, the Chinese tradition emphasizes the immanence of the vertical dimension within process. Never in China did the idea of \textit{creatio ex nihilo} develop in ways comparable to its theistic use in Europe.\footnote{Neville 1991, 55-56.}

On the one hand, Neville says the Chinese tradition has had no taste for anything determinately transcendent of the world. Neville admits the existence of transcendence in China, but he understands transcendence as “defining the self". Neville argues, in fact, that in the Chinese tradition the world is not considered as a product of an external creative act. Concerning Neville's viewpoint on transcendence, one should bear in mind that his conclusion is arrived at on the basis of the Four Books, which are the Confucian primary scriptures of the post-Confucian tradition. This tradition is different from that of the later Neo-Confucian.

On the other hand, in pre-Confucian times (before 479 BC) there was widespread belief in gods and goddesses, similar to the ancient Mesopotamian religions, where the king was viewed as a mirror-surgeon for a male heavenly ruling deity. But the imperial god of heaven was not consistently ontologized into a transcendent world creator who nevertheless remained a part of the world. This religious thinking finally developed into the more neutral notion of a cooperative divine principle with Earth, as in the \textit{Yijing} (\textit{Book of changes}) hexagrams. Therefore, in the tradition after Confucius, there has been a deep appreciation of the immanent definition of things, \textit{i.e.} the definition of things in terms of their relations with one another, often dynamically interpreted as interactions of \textit{yin} and \textit{yang}.\footnote{Neville 1991, 73.}

Neville has noted the difference between pre- and post-Confucian times in respect to the understanding of God as the creator. He has referred to Julia Ching's opinion that the transcendent sense of \textit{Shangdi} (Sovereign on High) was never...
entirely lost in Chinese religions, not even after the so-called secular humanism of Confucius.\footnote{Neville 1991, 174. Kung & Ching 1989, 61-91. This point was heavily stressed to its fullest extent by the Modern Christian Confucians as mentioned above.} He has also criticized Hall and Ames, because they understand transcendence as a principle of explanation. Even based on the definition of Hall and Ames themselves, Neville claims their arguments cannot be warranted, since the Dao, Heaven and Earth, can be understood as transcendent.

What Neville tries to say is: the concepts "transcendence" and "immanence" can mean many different things, and the immanence of Hall and Ames relates only to one of many connotations of the term. One cannot simply say that there is no "transcendence" in Confucianism.\footnote{Neville 1991, 73; Neville 2000, 150, 149. Hall & Ames 1987, 12-13.} However, Neville admits:

If what transcends is determinate being, like a god, then the main burden of Chinese thought is immanent whereas the theistic, though not the mystical nor Neo-Platonism, strains of Western thought are transcendent versus immanent definitions of things, however.\footnote{Neville 1991, 73.}

In order to find an answer to the question whether there is an idea of a creator in China; Neville argues that, according to the category of ontological creativity, all definitions of things are immanent in the sense of being harmonies of relational conditional features and integral essential ones. No definition of a thing makes relational reference to a transcendent creator, and all things together are dependent on ontological creation for their very being, although what they are depends on their immanent context.

Summarizing Neville's understanding of creation and creativity in Confucianism, one may find that for him both the category of ontological creativity and the categories of the primary cosmology are illustrated by the Chinese philosophic-religious tradition. They are illustrated there perhaps even more clearly than in the Western traditions.\footnote{Neville 1991, 83.} Creativity is not an act making something out of nothing, as in the Western Hebrew-Platonic tradition.\footnote{Neville 1991, 54.} Ontological creativity is the original \textit{creatio ex nihilo}. This is found in the insights of Lao Zi and several others,
but not in those of Confucius, and only barely in those of Zhu Xi. The issue here is not so much a metaphysical disagreement but a practical one: the Daoists prefer to return to the ontological depths by finding quietude and tranquility, and the Confucians tend to return to ontological depths by a special stance in the midst of action.\textsuperscript{451}

Thus, Boston Confucians have taken an affirmative attitude toward the Christian doctrine of creation. Nevertheless, they have tried their best to understand the similarities and differences between Confucianism and Christianity on this issue.

3) Mencian tradition Modern Confucian arguments

Du Weiming 杜维明 (1940-) has been an important figure among the Mencian tradition Modern Confucians.\textsuperscript{452} He wants to defend Confucianism as a religion rather than as a philosophy. However, the modern Confucianism represented by Du obviously is something between a social philosophy and a religion. On the one hand, for Du human beings should seek harmony with nature and mutuality with Heaven on earth. On the other hand, concerning creation, Du says that human beings are Heaven's partners and indeed co-creators. Human beings are embedded in their human nature. Heaven is certainly omnipresent, may even be omniscient, but is most likely not omnipotent. It needs human beings’ active participation to realize its own truth.

Why is Heaven not omnipotent? What does Du mean by calling human beings co-creators of Heaven? Du has defined Confucian spirituality by focusing on its fundamental concern, learning to be human. This focus is not on the human in contrast with nature or with Heaven but on the human as seeking harmony with nature and mutuality with Heaven. Du says that through an ever-expanding network of relationships encompassing the family, community, nation, world, and beyond, a Confucian seeks to realize humanity in its all-embracing fullness. This process of inclusion helps deepen our self-knowledge simultaneously with a ceaseless effort to

\textsuperscript{451} Neville says that his own sense is: “the Confucians agree with the Taoists [Daoist] that authentic life requires returning to and recovering the depths of nature, and they variously disagree among themselves only with regard to how far down those depths reach.” See Neville 1991, 79.

\textsuperscript{452} Refer to section 2.3.3 in this study.
make our body healthy, our mind-and-heart alert, our soul pure, and our spirit brilliant. Self-cultivation is an end in itself and its primary purpose is self-realization.

Therefore, for Du, Confucians believe in the creative transformation of our human condition as a communal act and as a dialogical response to Heaven. This involves the integration of four dimensions of humanity: self, community, nature, and Heaven. The idea of human beings as Heaven's co-creator means the following four things:

1) Self as creative transformation: the Confucian insistence on learning for the sake of the self is predicated on the conviction that self-cultivation is an end in itself rather than a means to an end. Self-transformation, the result of self-cultivation, signifies a process of self-realization. Authentic self-transformation involves tapping spiritual resources from the cumulative symbolic tradition (culture), the sympathetic resonance of society, the vital energy of nature, and the creative power of Heaven.

2) Community as a necessary vehicle for human flourishing: Du considers it a distinctive feature of the Confucian spiritual orientation that the human community is an integral part of our quest for self-realization. The significance of others for our self-cultivation is evident, since we rarely cultivate ourselves in isolation. It is through constant human interaction that we gradually learn to appreciate our selfhood as a transformative process.

Du has furthermore quoted from Daxue 大學 (the Great learning, Chapter 1) to indicate this viewpoint:

The ancients who wished to illuminate the "brilliant virtue" of all under Heaven first governed their states. Wishing to govern their states, they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their personal lives. Wishing to cultivate their personal lives, they first rectified their hearts and minds. Wishing to rectify their hearts and minds, they first authenticated their intentions. Wishing to authenticate their intentions, they first refined their knowledge. The refinement of knowledge lay in the study of things. For only when things are studied is knowledge refined; only when knowledge is refined are intentions authentic; only when intentions are authentic are hearts and minds rectified; only when hearts and minds are rectified are personal lives cultivated; only when

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453 See Du's article "Confucianism" in Our religions 1995, 141-142.
454 See Du's article "Confucianism" in Our religions 1995, 142-143.
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Thus, the assumption is that the more we broaden ourselves to involve others, the more we are capable of deepening our self-awareness. Our persistence in deepening our self-awareness is the basis for our fruitful interaction with an ever-expanding network of human-relatedness. \(^{456}\)

3) Nature as the proper home for our form of life: Du says that Confucians find nature a hospitable environment for our existence. This sense of nature as home empowers the Confucians to find ultimate meaning in ordinary human existence, to cultivate a regularized, balanced, and harmonious life-style, and to regard what many other religions refer to as "secular", as "sacred". \(^{457}\)

4) Heaven as the source of ultimate self-transformation: The Christian God can be “wholly other” or “totally different” (from human beings) in many ways. Du says that such an idea is absent in Confucian symbolism, and also that Heaven is not transcendent. However, for the Chinese Heaven is still understood as a source for moral creativity, for meaning of life. \(^{458}\)

In this sense, all major Confucian thinkers are profoundly religious. This religiosity, however, is different from that of the Christian Confucian way of being religious, for it involves reverence for life, commitment to work, and dedication to ultimate self-transformation based on a calling which presupposes that Heaven is omniscient and omnipresent, if not omnipotent.

One needs not appropriate the Way of Heaven by departing from where we are here and now. That is because the Way of Heaven is right here, near at hand, and inseparable from our ordinary daily existence. What we do in the confines of our home is not only anthropologically but also cosmologically significant. Du says, if we properly nurture our ways, we will never be estranged from the Way of

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\(^{455}\) This translation is cited from Du's article "Confucianism" in Our religions 1995, 143-144.

\(^{456}\) See Du's article "Confucianism" in Our religions 1995, 143-144.

\(^{457}\) See Du's article "Confucianism" in Our religions 1995, 144-145.

\(^{458}\) See Du's article "Confucianism" in Our religions 1995, 145-146.
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Heaven. Indeed, as we learn to appreciate the richness of ordinary daily existence, we understand that the great mystery of life is inherent in our common experience of life. This is as if the secret code of the Way of Heaven is embedded in the way of humanity.

However, human internal organic connectedness with the transcendent through our own personal experience makes us aware of our inadequacy as well as of our strengths. This is so, because we are charged with the awesome responsibility of realizing Heaven's Way through our humble human endeavors. Thus, the deepest meaning of humanity lies in its authentic manifestation as the guardian of nature and the co-creator of the cosmos. Du refers to the doctrine of the Mean by saying:

It is humbly possible to assist in the transforming and nourishing process of Heaven and Earth; it is authentically human to form a trinity with Heaven and Earth; and it is our categorical imperative to respond to Heaven's calling to serve as the guardian of nature and the co-creator of the cosmos.

Du Weiming’s understanding of human beings as co-creators of the cosmos is an important development in the Confucian tradition. This is clearly influenced by process theology, according to which God is not omnipotent, and the universe is characterized by process and change carried out by the agents of free will. Self-determination characterizes everything in the universe, not just human beings. God cannot force anything to happen, but rather only influence the exercise of this universal free will by offering possibilities. This idea has also been pursued by

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459 See Du's article "Confucianism" in Our religions 1995, 146.
460 Chapter 22 reads: "Only those who are absolutely sincere can fully develop their nature. If they can fully develop their nature, they can fully develop their nature. If they can develop the nature of others, they can then fully develop the nature of things. If they can fully develop the nature of things, they can then assist in the transforming and nourishing process of Heaven and Earth. If they can assist in the transforming and nourishing process of Heaven and Earth, they can thus form a trinity with Heaven and Earth." This translation is cited from Chan 1963, 107-108, and singular pronouns ("he") have been replaced by the plural ("they") in this translation.
461 See Du's article "Confucianism" in Our religions 1995, 145-146.
462 Process theology (also known as Neoclassical theology) is a school of thought influenced by the metaphysical process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead (1861 - 1947). The original ideas of process theology were developed by Charles Hartshorne (1897-2000), and were later expounded upon by John B. Cobb and David Ray Griffin. John B. Cobb, Jr. (born February 9, 1925), an American United Methodist theologian, played a crucial role in the development of process theology. He
many other scholars of the Mencian tradition. For example, Roger Ames, a Modern Confucian scholar in Hawaii, says,

Classical Confucianism is at once a-theistic, and profoundly religious. It is a religion without a God; a human-centered religion that affirms the cumulative human experience itself. There are several profound differences between this kind of religiousness and that of the Abrahamic traditions that have largely defined the meaning of religion in the Western cultural experience. In my lecture, I will argue that, unlike the 'worship' model which defers to the ultimate meaning of some temporally prior, independent, external agency, Confucian religious experience is itself a product of the flourishing community, where the quality of the religious life is a direct consequence of the quality of communal living. Religion is not the root of effective living, it is its flower. Confucianism celebrates the way in which the process of human growth and extension is shaped by, and contributes to, the meaning of the totality. The Human being is co-creator with the natural processes.463

"Classical Confucianism" hereby refers mainly to the Confucianism of Confucius himself excluding the earlier tradition prior to Confucius. Both Du and Ames hold the viewpoint of process philosophy/theology, its foundational premise being that everything in the world is in flux and that entities are constantly in a process towards becoming something. Process theology challenges the traditional view of God often presented in Christianity. The traditional belief is that God is perfect, static, and that human activity tends not to influence God or change Him in any way. Furthermore, God is generally considered to be transcendent to the world.464

integrated Alfred North Whitehead's metaphysics into Christianity, and applied it to issues of social justice. See [http://www.answers.com/topic/john-b-cobb](http://www.answers.com/topic/john-b-cobb). See also Grenz s. & Olsen R. 1993, where the authors have made a good introduction to Process theology.

463 This is the abstract of Ames' lecture "Chinese religiousness: A new look at Godless Confucianism" in [http://organizations.oneonta.edu/ames.html](http://organizations.oneonta.edu/ames.html)

464 The main concepts of process theology include:

God is not omnipotent in the sense of being coercive. The divine has the power of persuasion rather than of force. Process theologians have often seen the classical doctrine of omnipotence as involving coercion (arguably mistakenly), and themselves claim something more restricted than the classical doctrine.

Reality is not made up of material substances that endure through time, but serially-ordered events, which are experiential in nature.

The universe is characterized by process and change carried out by agents of free will. Self-determination characterizes everything in the universe, not just human beings. God cannot force anything to happen, but rather only influence the exercise of this universal free will by offering possibilities.
4. Confucian ideas of the object of salvation in Christianity: created humanity and its status

In the Confucian-Christian dialogue, the root of all dialogical difficulties is the issue of anthropology. Du, in distinction from his teacher Mou Zongsan, avoids the monistic expressions of oneness and identity between God and human beings.\(^{465}\) Du is nevertheless a monist, and he ascribes divine attributes to human beings,\(^{466}\) since, in respect to ontology, selfhood and our original nature are endowed by Heaven. It is therefore divine in its all-embracing fullness.\(^{467}\) Du’s understanding seems similar to the notion of the imago Dei of Christianity, but in reality, however, the Christian and Confucian notions are totally and essentially distinct in two ways: On the one hand, in Christianity God is the Creator and human beings are created by God, but in Confucianism human beings were not created by Heaven. On the other hand, in Mou’s understanding Heaven and human beings are not only united but constitute the oneness and identity of reality as such, but in Christianity the ontological reality of man consists in being created in the image (\textit{Genesis} 1: 26-27).

God contains the universe but is not identical with it (panentheism).
Because God contains a changing universe, God is changeable (that is to say, God is affected by the actions that take place in the universe) over the course of time. However, the abstract elements of God (goodness, wisdom, etc.) remain eternally solid.
Some process theologians believe that people do not experience a subjective (or personal) immortality, but they do have an objective immortality in that their experiences live on forever in God, who contains all that was. Others believe that people do have subjective experience after bodily death.
Dipolar theism, or the idea that our idea of a perfect God cannot be limited to a particular set of characteristics, because perfection can be embodied in opposite characteristics; For instance, for God to be perfect, he cannot have absolute control over all beings, because then he would not be as good as a being who moved by persuasion, rather than brute force. Thus, for God to be perfect, he must be both powerful and leave other beings some power to resist his persuasion.


\(^{465}\) In \textit{Yuanshanlun} the starting point of Mou Zongsan’s exposition of Confucian Heaven-human relationship is a famous passage from Mencius (VII.A.1): "Mencius said: ‘For a man to give full realization to his heart (xin 心) is for him to understand his own nature (xing 性), and a man who knows his own nature will know Heaven. By retaining his heart and nurturing his nature he is serving Heaven.’ “ (Tr. by D.C. Lau). See also Luo 2005a, 370.

\(^{466}\) Du says, “Confucian religiosity is expressed through the \textit{infinite potential} and the \textit{inexhaustible strength} of each human being for self-transcendence … Yet as soon as we are willing to learn ourselves, we have an \textit{inexhaustible supply of inner resources} for self-transformation. …The temptation to reify \textit{hsin} (xin 心) is mitigated by a strong preference for understanding it as an \textit{infinite being} and as continuous creativity. \textit{Hsin} (Xin 心) manifests itself through a \textit{ceaseless} process of \textit{internal illumination}. It constantly transcends itself by fundamentally transforming the particular forms that crystallize its existence. No finite form, no matter how spectacular, can fully realize its \textit{inexhaustible possibilities}.”

\(^{467}\) Du 1985, 125.
and likeness (Genesis 1:26) of God. There is a “likeness” but not an ontological unity. Only in an eschatological sense, through justification and sanctification, do we finally “become participants of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4). The identity and oneness between Heaven (God) and humanity in Confucianism is very different from that of a human participation in the divine nature. The former is monistic view, and the latter, asserting an ontological distinction between God and man, is accepted generally among Christians. For the Confucian monists a developmental process is possible, since, qualitatively, human beings and Heaven are same; but for traditional Christians God and human beings are qualitatively different, even though human beings were created in the image and likeness of God. Process theology has, thus, not been accepted among all Christians. In the Confucian-Christian dialogue, one should notice that Process Theology is only one school of theology rather than being generally representative of Christianity.

Briefly speaking, the relationship between Confucian Heaven and human beings is monistic Oneness and identity, however, the relationship between the Christian God and human beings can be summarized as “neither One nor Two.” This is to say, ontologically, God and human beings are not One, since human beings were created by God; but human beings were created in the image of God (imago Dei), and the essence or substance of human beings exists in their relationship with God. Therefore, in reality God and human beings are not Two, either, since although Original Sin separated human beings from God, the relationship between them has not been lost. God sent his only Son Jesus Christ as incarnate man to save human beings from sin (provide a means for reunion between man and God), and the Holy

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468 This is to say, human beings cannot become Christ substantially or ontologically, as Su Yuantai (So Yuen Tai) says in his article, “Ren keyi cheng shen 人可以成神? ---- Jidu zongjiao yiyi xia de chengshen guan 基督宗教意义下的成圣观” (Can human become God? On Christian deification): “Martin Luther points out that the believer can only be clothed with the righteousness of Christ, but not become self-righteous; righteousness is imputed, not imparted, to us by faith. However the doctrine of deification, which means becoming god, has been existed as the destination of salvation in Christ for a long time in the patristic period and the Orthodox church. This essay attempts to introduce such an oblivious doctrine and to indicate that it might not be contrary to the justification by those Reformers.” See page 229. In the latter part of his article, Su analyzed the integration of "all beings possess the Buddha Nature originally" from the Chinese Mahayana philosophy to Christian anthropology and soteriology by Xu Songshi and Zhang Chunyi. Su’s conclusion is that although all Christians will become gods show a large similarity with the doctrine of deification, owing to the confusion of the
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Spirit was sent to lead human beings after Jesus Christ completed the work of salvation.\textsuperscript{469} This is a very important reflection, which can explain many things in the Confucian-Christian dialogue. I will often refer to it in chapter 5.

4.2 The status of human beings

This title concerns human nature, and the Jesuit missionary Ricci starts first the discussion of human nature with Confucians, and Ricci was strongly influenced by Aquinas, for whom human nature means above all the soul and its various capacities.\textsuperscript{470} The original meaning of nature (\textit{natura}) is birth or generation.\textsuperscript{471} From a logical point of view, \textit{natura} ought to mean the inner principle or form of generation. But human understanding always begins with what is most visible. So \textit{natura} was first used to refer to the action of generation and only later applied to the inner principle. This is a key principle of Aquinas’ methodology: in understanding the soul, one works one’s way inward from the external action to the internal capacity that explains the action and eventually to the nature of soul itself. Human beings have no direct access to the soul, not even to our own soul.\textsuperscript{472}

Concerning human nature, Neo-Confucians have taken \textit{a priori} Principle (\textit{Li} 理) as the replacement of the ancient personal God (Heaven, Sovereign on High). One of the Four Books, \textit{Zhongyong} 中庸 (the \textit{Mean}) reads:

\begin{quote}
What Heaven (\textit{Tian}, nature) imparts to man is called human nature. To follow our nature is called the Way (Dao). Cultivating the Way is called education. The Way cannot be alienated from us for a moment.\textsuperscript{473}
\end{quote}

This quotation resembles the Christian anthropology, in which \textit{imago Dei} is considered as one of the essential of human beings. One should, however, notice that even human beings have \textit{imago Dei} in their nature; according to Christianity human

\textsuperscript{469} See Luo 2005, 4.
\textsuperscript{470} Pasnau 2002, 1.
\textsuperscript{471} Lewis & Short 1879, “Natura”.
\textsuperscript{472} Pasnau 2002, 9.
\textsuperscript{473} See the translation of \textit{Zhongyong} in Chan 1963, 98.
beings are different from God, since they were created by God. Such anthropology is quite different from Confucian anthropology, which is monistic, and for Confucians human beings and Heaven are of same substance.\footnote{I will discuss this issue in more details in the latter part ("Transcendence as self-definition") of section 5.1.3.}

\subsection{Neo-Confucian arguments}
In the Cheng-Zhu school (Cheng-Zhu xuepai 程朱学派) all things have been produced from the same substance, viz., material force, and everything in the world is a combination of two inseparable elements, \textit{i.e.}, \textit{Li} 理 (Principle) and \textit{Qi} 气 (air, material force). All things in the world share the same whole principle, which was absolute good, and, thus, everything was innately good by nature. Through the principle, everything was endowed with virtues such as \textit{ren} 仁 (humanity, benevolence), \textit{yi} 义 (righteousness),\footnote{\textit{Yi} is one of the main virtues in Confucianism, which is usually translated as "righteousness", "justice", "rightness", "reasoned judgment". It is contrasted with love for profit. This term has also been employed by Chinese Christians to refer to "justification", however, such a meaning cannot be found in Confucianism.} \textit{li} 礼 (ritual propriety),\footnote{The term \textit{li} 礼 is commonly rendered as "rites", "ritual", "ceremonials", "propriety" or "conventions". It is different \textit{Li} 理 (Principle).} \textit{zhi} 智 (wisdom)\footnote{The term \textit{zhi} 智 means knowledge (\textit{zhi} 知) and wisdom (\textit{zhi} 智). This is an important virtue for Confucians to reach sagehood.} and \textit{xin} 信 (faith).\footnote{This term is usually translated as "faithfulness", "credibility", "living up to one’s word", or "making one’s words come true". This is also an important virtue for Confucians to reach sagehood.} No matter to what degree of clarity, all things received the same principle, and thus shared the same nature (\textit{Xing} 性). The difference between human beings and other beings or things is merely a matter of a difference in the endowment of material force. While animals, for instance, have a turbid material force, human beings receive material force in its highest excellence and clarity in which the goodness of principle can be fully completed if they follow the nature. Cheng Hao 程颢 (1032-1085), a main figure of the Neo-Confucianism in the Song Dynasty, had said: "The man of worth considers Heaven, Earth and the Ten Thousand Beings as a single and unique substance" (\textit{tiandi wanwu yiti} 天地万物一体),\footnote{Concerning Cheng Hao's work, see Chan's translation in Chan 1963, 523-543.} and this was an axiom that was often cited by the Neo-Confucians, who were against Ricci and his
fellows in the 17th century. In opposition to Christian missionaries' preaching of salvation, for example, Gao Panlong 高攀龙, a famous Neo-Confucian in the 17th century, emphasized the restoration of nature. This notion is similar to the theology of Thomas Aquinas, and Matteo Ricci had noticed the influence of the belief in restoring nature (restitutio status lapsae) in the 16th century by saying:

The nature must have originally virtue, without virtue how can good come to be born? The so-called gentlemen, in fact, restore their original [nature].

Ricci employs a theory to solve the problem whether the origin of human nature was good or evil. He supposes that human nature includes different parts, and some of which will result in evil, and other of which will lead to goodness. Thus, man should struggle between flesh and soul in order to restrict the flesh, which is representative of human nature in order to save the soul. Ricci's exposition of human nature is based on the scholastic theory which originated in Aristotle's *De anima* and *Parva naturalia*. Every natural thing in the world is seen as a combination of form and matter. Soul is the form of a living thing, which enables a thing to change from one status to another. Aristotle discerned three hierarchical levels of the soul: the vegetative soul of plants, the sensitive soul of animals, and the rational soul of human beings. These souls Ricci translated as shenghun 神魂, juehun 觉魂 and linghun 灵魂 respectively. The rational soul of man was seen as the highest one, which not only possessed the ability of growing and moving but was also considered capable of memorizing, reasoning and willing. The rational soul was seen as an immortal substance which transcended and controlled the physical body. It would be rewarded or punished after death, according to its behavior in life. Through the rational soul, human beings were distinguished from animals and the myriad things of the world and were able to bear moral responsibility.
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There is a difference between the Neo-Confucian restoration of nature and
Ricci's understanding of restoration. The difference between the two can be
described as a difference between three souls and one nature. The Jesuit missionaries
wanted to clearly distinguish between human beings and other beings, because only
the first possessed an eternal soul, which continued to exist after death. This soul
could be rewarded in Heaven or punished in hell for moral actions during life. For
Ricci human nature has three stages; the integral nature possessed before the Fall,
fallen nature as the result of Adam's unhappy legacy, and redeemed nature as the one
renewed by grace in Christ. Therefore, redeemed nature is not achieved by human
merit but the grace of God. This idea was further developed by Ricci's successors,
such as Aleni, who advanced the opinion that "following one's nature" could only be
applied to the nature possessed before it was spoiled. The present nature is fallen;
thus, one should speak of "overcoming one's nature" (kexing 克性) instead of
"following one's nature" (shuaixing 率性), since "overcoming one's fallen nature" is
the only way to reach the perfection of the Dao.483

Some Neo-Confucians have difficulties to understand Ricci's theology and
have criticized Ricci's theory that sin is human nature.484 On the one hand, Ricci
stressed that human deeds are influencing their salvation, since God has given
humans the ability to reason and act. Hereby Ricci followed the theology of Thomas
Aquinas, who distinguished the image of God from the likeness of God, and in so
doing they stressed that original sin has damaged but has not totally destroyed the
human ability to do good.485 On the other hand, Ricci stressed also the essential role
of God in salvation, since original sin has destroyed the human ability to do good,
and human beings no longer have the ability (or freedom of will) to choose to believe
in and to follow God; thus, without God's grace human beings have no hope to be
saved.486 In fact, the theology of Ricci introduced above is standard Catholic

soul, and daoqi as prime matter, from which all physical things were created. He intended to serve the
unity of Li (the Principle) and qi (material force) in the metaphysics of Confucianism in terms of these
two different concepts in Scholasticist philosophy. See Longobardo, 1701.
483 See Ai Ruluo's (Giulio Aleni) Xingxue cushu (Introduction to the study of human nature). Cf. also
Pang Diwo's (Diego De Pantoja) 1965, Qike (The seven items which should be overcome).
484 Xu Dashou’s "Pixie. Pi Liexing" in PoXJ, vol. 5.
485 Ricci 1985, 358.
486 Ricci 1985, 446, 448.
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theology, but Xu Dashou 许大受 thinks that there is confusion within it, and Neo-Confucians have reacted to this confusion differently.487

A Neo-Confucian in the 17th century, Huang Zichen 黄紫辰, opposed Ricci because of his understanding of human nature. In order to fit the theory of Zhu Xi to the idea of a conflict between human desire and Heavenly Principle, Ricci portrays the divine nature as overcoming human nature and, thus, emphasizes that, in Zhu Xi’s sense, the original nature overcomes the human fallen nature. Huang opposed such a doctrine of original sin. For Huang, human nature is that nature which originally existed in man. Its content is the Heavenly Principle, or, the social moral rules which are the expression of human nature as goodness. Huang Zichen says that evil was born from a later social custom. Thus, the original nature of man was good and should not be restricted.488 Indeed, Huang Zichen proposes to uncover and develop the original goodness of human nature. What should be overcome is not human nature itself but its bad habits and the contamination (xiran 习染) which surrounds and stains it.489 Human nature is nothing but the principle; therefore, it is always good. How could it be evil? This was the question which another Neo-Confucian, Ye Xianggao 叶向高 (1559-1627), asked Aleni. After being pressed, Aleni finally gave three reasons for the presence of evil in the world: original sin, the xueqi 血气 (blood and breath) of parents, and the customs of the environment. This explanation confirmed the opinion that evil came from a human nature which was originally good but later was spoiled by original sin, and this was the reason why everyone should overcome his nature. A third Neo-Confucian, Xu Dashou, inquired during the 17th century into the same question, for in the Neo-Confucian perspective evil is not a concrete substance but rather a way of referring to a lack of goodness. Whenever an action deviates from the Zhongyong 中庸 (the Mean), it is called e 恶 (evil). All things are combinations of the principle and material force. Nature is good, but it is enclosed with a material endowment as a jewel silted in dirty water. Therefore,

487 Cf. Sun 1994, 88-89. Cf., also the distinction between “the things below human beings” (coram homo) and “the things above human beings” (coram Dei), the preface written by Ruokanen and me, in Luo Mingjia & Huang Baolu 2004.
488 Zichen Huang’s "Pixieji" in PoXJ, vol. 5.
489 Cf. Citation in Sun 1994, 247-248.
everyone should transform his material force as he would clean the silt enclosing a jewel, through education and cultivation of the Way, *i.e.*, following the right way and finding one’s own.\(^{490}\)

### 4.2.2 Cultural Nationalist- and Modern Confucian arguments

In the words of Xiong Shili 熊十力, human nature is substance, and human beings can neither hear it nor have words or thoughts capable of describing or explaining it. In fact, substance cannot be the object of human knowledge. The possible process of knowing is able to reach only the functions, which are the manifestations of substance.\(^{491}\)

This argument is similar to the general Christian ideas that the created reality is dependent upon God the Creator, and epistemologically the created man cannot totally comprehend God the Creator by themselves, because God is infinite and human beings are limited. Human beings know God only through the revelation of God either in nature, in Holy Scripture, or in Christ. The difference lies in that Xiong does not ask people to turn to God in order to know substance. He said that the original substance can be grasped only through the moral self, accessible only through the interior experience of human nature: it is an intuitive discovery of an ethical-mystical kind within the reach of any human being, yet completely spontaneous. Since this substance exists also within human hearts, people can realize it through meditation. Therefore, although Xiong affirms an apparent distinction among human beings in the sense of function, he nonetheless as a monist considers that they are essentially the same, since substance exists also in human hearts.

From Xiong's view, Western philosophy has made mistakes by trying to grasp the original substance through knowledge instead of through direct internal experience. Knowledge itself is just one function, and in the knowing process one makes contact only with things. But the original substance is not a thing. Therefore, it is not possible to attain it through a cognitive process. Thus, Xiong criticizes the religion of the West for placing a Creator Being outside and above cosmic substance.

\(^{490}\) Cf., ZP in PoXJ.

\(^{491}\) Xiong 1985, 247.
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To clarify his ideas on this matter, he frequently uses the comparison of the sea and the waves, adopted also by Zhu Xi and already common in Buddhist teachings:

As the great water mass of the sea presents itself like a multitude of waves, so it is with substance. The single waves are direct manifestations of the great water mass of the sea. Let us take into consideration several particular waves: wave A has as its substance all the great water mass of the sea; wave B, wave C, and wave D too, and so on. By consequence, if we take the point of view of the sea water, the mass manifests itself in the various waves; the mass does not exist free and independent outside of and beyond the single waves. If we take the point of view of the waves, each wave embraces the great water mass of the sea as its body. Each wave should not be considered a small single entity. In reality, each wave is a direct manifestation of the great mass that is the sea. How amazing! Through this comparison it is possible to perceive how the Whole is able to manifest itself in each part, and how each single part belongs to the Whole. This is a sublime mystery indeed!\(^{492}\)

Thus, similar to the moon reflecting simultaneously on many different lakes, the single thing is the Whole, and the Whole is present in the single thing. Xiong stresses repeatedly this profound, undeniable, inseparable unity, yet identity, between substance and function. He thinks of it as his own discovery. He criticizes Western philosophy, which has not been able to harmonize phenomenon and *noumenon*, by keeping them completely separate.

Xiong’s argument above indicates that essentially he is a monist and he considers the immanent to be one and the same substance as the basis of various manifestations. He not only denies the existence of a reality distinct from God but also denies the transcendent Creator, since substance is not transcendent but immanent in the world. Substance manifests itself as various materials, which are its functions. Visible things are functions and are manifestations of the original substance. Substance and function are one. This monistic understanding is very different from the Christian doctrine of creation.\(^{493}\)

\(^{492}\) Xiong 1985, 247-248.

\(^{493}\) The Boston Confucian stance toward the Christian doctrine of creation was discussed earlier in this study.
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The Cultural Nationalist Confucian Cai Renhou 蔡仁厚 suggests a continuation of this tradition and that the essence of it is self-cultivation.\textsuperscript{494} This has been called by the Modern Confucian Du Weiming 杜维明 as the way of sage,\textsuperscript{495} and has been called by Neo-Confucians the restoration of human nature (fuxing 复性).

The basis of restoring nature can be found in the Cheng-Zhu school, which stresses that human nature was originally good; but the original goodness was actualized as the concrete human nature in the sphere of energy forces, and human nature in reality is not the same original nature anymore. Therefore, it is necessary to get rid of human nature (mind), which is the mixture of the original mind and physical nature, so as to restore the original nature.\textsuperscript{496}

\textsuperscript{494}The Neo-Confucian Zhu Xi proposes also the task of self-cultivation, see Chan 1963, 605. This proposal has the double effort of maintaining an attitude (jing) toward one's own inner nature and its capacity for goodness as well as the investigation of knowledge and the extension of things. In other words, Zhu envisages a certain moral and spiritual attentiveness over oneself which is accompanied and strengthened by the development of knowledge, both about oneself and about the world. Cf., Kung & Ching 1993, 79-80. Zhu's rival thinker Lu Jiu yuan (1139-93) and Wang Yangming (1472-1529) criticized Zhu by pointing out that it necessarily makes intellectuals of sages, but Zhu's approach implies also the inaccessibility of sagehood to all those who are deprived of the possibilities of intellectual development. Lu and Wang prefer to emphasize the potential for greatness in each and every human being, and "the power of the human mind and heart to choose good" (liangzhi) and to perfect itself by the practice of virtues; they see intellectual pursuit as a useful but not necessary component of cultivation. They prefer the dynamism of moral action as the expression of the whole personality, oriented to the highest good. Cf., Chan 1973, 654-691. Kung & Ching 1993, 80.

\textsuperscript{495}Du Weiming puts the point about self-cultivation in the following words: "Yet despite the tension and conflict within the Neo-Confucian tradition, it seems that there is an agreement among virtually all of the Neo-Confucians: man is a moral being who through self-effort extends his human sensitivity to all the beings of the universe so as to realize himself in the midst of the world and as an integral part of it, in the sense that his self-perfection necessarily embodies the perfection of the universe as a whole". See Du 1979, 79. See also Du's article "Confucianism" in Our Religions 1993, 139-228. Cf., also Neville 2000, 83-106.

\textsuperscript{496}Zhu Xi says: "Righteousness and principle exist originally in the human body and heart, but they have been lost and people do not know that they have to restore them." "The people who study should totally get rid of human desire and restore wholly the Principle of Heaven, and only this can be study." See Zhuzi yulei, vol. 13. Cf. also Sun 1994, 87-88. Zhu Xi emphasizes that principle (li) and material force (qi) work always together because of the direction of the mind of the universe, which is the universe itself. In man this mind becomes, on the one hand, the moral mind, which is the principle of his original nature, and on the other hand, the human mind, which is the principle of original nature mixed with physical endowment and human desires. The principle of a thing or man is his very nature, real and concrete. Original mind is principle in itself, unmoved, and perfectly good, while physical nature, on the other hand, is principle mixed with material force; it is the aroused state, involving both good and evil. The two natures are always interfused, one the substance and the other, function. As substance, it is the nature, as function, it is the feelings. See Zhuzi leiyu, sections 38-70 (The nature of man and things, The nature of man and The Nature of things compared, Physical nature), the English translation of these sections can be found in Chan 1973, 614-626.
One is reminded here of Plato’s educational program of the *Republic*, which establishes a long process of education that conveys the talented to remembrance (*anamnesis*) of their true being and truth of reality. Thus did the talented become philosopher-kings by age 35. True humanity is achieved by becoming conformed to the Form of the Good, thus melding humanity with the transcendent world of the Forms.497

One may find that the doctrine of the goodness of human nature is not the starting-point of the thinking of Confucius and Mencius but rather the presupposition of their concept that "all can become Yao and Shun", *i.e.*, the saints. For example, Mencius believes that only through the affirmation of the goodness of human nature can one confirm the capacity to do good. The goodness of human nature is a good defined ontologically rather than by action; the being and act are not the same. Moreover, the intrinsic goodness of human nature is not susceptible to proof but functions as a presupposition. Mencius tried to prove the goodness of human nature by reference to conscientiousness, but such a strategy is problematic. His approach implies that Confucianism places the goodness of human nature within the individual's subjective intention (heart) rather than in objective reality. And Mencius does emphasize the potentiality over the actuality of man’s goodness, thus founding it on an idealized or, subjective plane. Consequently, we cannot, in his terms, prove the goodness of human nature as an objective reality, because the argument that the good is a subjective intention cannot be proven invalid. The goodness of human nature is, thus, based on the potential to do good (an inner intention) and not on the description of acts that manifest this intention. Therefore, this doctrine does not contradict the doctrine of sin in Christianity.

What is the real tension, then, between human nature and the good? Confucianism proposes that one can become a good person as long as one has the determination of doing good.498 Therefore, the real difference lies in the goals, which again decide the different means of salvation in Confucianism and

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497 Plato 1991, Book IV.
498 Cf., Liang Jialin 1994. Cf., also Zhao Dunhua’s article concerning the goodness of nature and Original Sin, in Luo Mingjia & Huang Baoluo 2004, 3-17.
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Christianity.  

Whether human beings have been created by God or have monistic existence are the two issues focused in this chapter.

In Christianity, it is clear that human beings are part of the creation that has been created by God. Such a theistic creation can find support from the Ancient Confucians classics. Jesuit missionaries such as Matteo Ricci and many other scholars have produced plenty of publications on this topic. Neo-, Cultural Nationalist- and Modern Confucians are, however, ontological monists, stressing the unity (in fact, the oneness and identity) between Heaven and humanity. Monism asserts one fundamental substance of reality, all things in the world being different manifestations of the one substance. So that even though Confucian human nature is similar to the Christian imago Dei, Confucianism still holds to a monistic anthropology. In Christianity the distinction between God and human beings does not disappear due to the imago Dei.

Another issue discussed in this chapter is the status of human beings, and this issue includes the nature, limit and ability of human beings and the final goals of human beings in Confucianism and Christianity.

The nature, limit and ability of human beings have been closely related to the Confucian term “human nature”, the Christian terms “imago Dei” and “sin”. In Confucianism, the nature of humanity has been generally understood as a substantial reality, which was imparted by Heaven. This implies that Li (Principle), Tianming (Mandate of Heaven) and Dao reside in the nature of human beings. Therefore, human nature and Heaven are monistic identical: an Oneness. As Yao Xinzong says, “In different ways, Heaven, the Way of Heaven, principle, nature and heart/mind are regarded as being essentially the same …” Therefore, they believe human beings possess infinite potential to self-transcend. This does not only affirm the original

499 Mark Heim stresses that different religions usually have different religious goals, and his ideas may be helpful for understanding the difference between Confucian and Christian destinations of salvation. See Heim 1995, and Heim 2001.


501 Yao Xinzong 2000, 148-149.
goodness and divinity of human nature, but also imply a faith in the human power to
develop in self-cultivation in order to reach the goal of sagehood. Mencius claimed
that human nature is originally endowed with the beginnings of virtues as
potentialities for goodness. Xun Zi held that human nature is originally evil and can
only achieve goodness as guided by the teachings of the old sages and the discipline
of ritual propriety. However, both of them believed in the possible perfectability of
the human beings.\textsuperscript{502} Confucians recognizes also human weakness and failures,\textsuperscript{503} for
example, Du Weiming has recognized a gap between what one is and what one ought
to be, and he says, “The general diagnosis and prognosis the the Confucian offers is
deceptively simple: we are not what we ought ot be but what we ought to be is
inherent in the structure of what we are.”\textsuperscript{504} Such a claim is quite different from
Christianity, since through a contrast between Confucian human nature and the
Christian \textit{imago Dei} one will find the difference between them. Confucian human
nature seems to be same to “what one ought to be”, which “is inherent in the structure
of what we are”. According to Christianity, however, “the structure of what we are”
has been destroyed by “sin”, which is a strange concept for most Confucians. Some
Modern Confucians have considered blindness (\textit{bi} 被)\textsuperscript{505} as the essential origin and
reason of and for human weakness and failures, and Du Weiming has listed selfish
desires,\textsuperscript{506} bad habits\textsuperscript{507} and the lack of inner strength.\textsuperscript{508} The origin of the weakness
and the reason for the failures have not been fully answered in Confucianism, many
Modern Confucians admit this.\textsuperscript{509} In Christianity, personal perfectability does not

\textsuperscript{502} Du Weiming 1993, 99: "The idea that human nature is good in a transcendent sense underlies
virtually all traditions of Neo-Confucian thought." As I have introduced earlier in chapter 1 and 2 in
this study, Boston Confucianism has been characterized by emphasizing the meaning of Xun Zi
tradition.
\textsuperscript{503} Du Weiming 1985, 128.
\textsuperscript{504} Du Weiming 1989, 98.
\textsuperscript{505} Redse has discussed this concept well. Redse 2005, 278. \textit{Bi} means literally a screen, shelter, or
cover. It was originally a concept of obscurity and blindness of the mind-heart mentioned by Xunzi, its
opposite is the clarity of the mind. Xun Zi considers such a blindness as an original shortcoming of
human nature, but Mencius described its as a loss, partial or complete, of the mind-heart, or rather the
\textsuperscript{506} Du Weiming 1979, 74-75.
\textsuperscript{507} Du Weiming 1979, 153.
\textsuperscript{508} Du Weiming 1989, 53.
\textsuperscript{509} Yao Xinzong 2000, 160 says: evil (\textit{恶}) is not a metaphysical concept. "It is simply a moral concept,
designating a kind of moral situation in which the moral and physical activities of a human being are
conducted in a wrong way." Du Weiming 1989, 100 says: "In the Confucian perspective, human
have the similar place as in Confucianism, although it is closely related with the doctrines of Original Sin and *imago Dei*.

The doctrine of *imago Dei* can be understood in many ways. The substantial aspect of the *imago Dei* has been more emphasized in Roman Catholic theology.\(^{510}\) This substantial understanding of *imago Dei* is similar to the Confucian monist idea that human nature substantially was imparted by Heaven or God.\(^{511}\) Such a substantial understanding of *imago Dei* leads to the conclusion that even in the fallen state human beings can still realize the knowledge about God, since the *imago Dei* as a substantial part which cannot be lost and has never been lost.\(^{512}\) The Catholic theologian Rahner says, “The history of salvation and grace has its roots in the essence of man which has been divinized by God’s self-communication.”\(^{513}\) It seems that the Catholic theologians and Confucians have a consensus on the ability and limit of human beings, and on the potential in human beings to be fulfilled and realized. So they understand that Original Sin did not lose totally humanity's good nature or *imago Dei*.\(^{514}\)

For Protestants, it is, however, difficult to agree with the ability of human self-transcendence. For example, connecting the problem of evil and self-transcendence together, Reinbold Niebuhr’s anthropological thought indicates, “the very ability of man to self-transcend is what causes [existential] anxiety, which in turn leads to evil done by man. This evil results [from] the self-transcending human misery comes from the absence of humanity and not the presence of an active evil force.” Du Weiming admits that Confucian explanations of evil "may not serve as an ultimate or adequate explanation of evil or badness in the world."\(^{176}\)

\(^{510}\) Lidums has studied the so-called substantial approach of Karl Rahner and points out that the notion of man being created in the image of God as a part of man’s very essence (substance) is undoubtedly very strongly presented in Rahner’s theological system. Lidums 2004, 46-74.

\(^{511}\) Of course, according to the substantial approach of *imago Dei* human beings and God are not monistic identical although *imago Dei* is a substantial nature in human beings. In this sense, it is different from Confucianism.

\(^{512}\) Lidums 2004, 104.

\(^{513}\) Rahner 178, 411.

\(^{514}\) The difference between Confucians and Catholic theologians is also obvious. The former emphasize that all potential have already been imparted by Heaven, thus, human beings can self-transcend. The latter emphasize the grace of God and the role of Jesus Christ, and stress the cooperation between human response and the divine grace. According to *Joint declaration on the doctrine of justification* by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Catholic Church 1997, cooperation itself between God and human beings is the grace of God. In this sense, Catholics and Lutherans (including most Protestants) do not have difference on the doctrine of justification by faith and through grace. In fact, in the Latin tradition of Christian church, grace has always been stressed.
person being inclined to ‘transmute his partial and finite self and his partial and finite values into the infinite good’”\textsuperscript{515} The \textit{imago Dei} means mainly a relationship between God and human beings, for example, Bray argues that the image of God is “an ontological reality in … human beings”, while at the same time maintaining that this ontological reality materializes and becomes observable in the realm of relationships. According to Bray, when man fell into sin, there was no ontological change in man, yet his relationship to God was fundamentally altered from obedience to disobedience\textsuperscript{516}.

Now more and more theologians argue that it is necessary to replace the traditional ontological definition of \textit{imago Dei} by a relational one, and Brunner is one of these theologians\textsuperscript{517}. The relational approach involves man’s relationship both to God, other human beings, and creation, and is in a state of continuous change and progressive development.\textsuperscript{518} The relationship in which the image of God is operational and observable is the defining human “I-Thou” relationship to God, in which all human beings stand, regardless of their beliefs\textsuperscript{519}.

Such an relational interpretation of \textit{imago Dei} leads to our realizing the teleological\textsuperscript{520} aspect of the image of God in human beings. Questions related to the teleological aspect of \textit{imago Dei} deal primarily with the human destiny and try to answer what it is that human beings are destined for as beings created in the image of their Creator\textsuperscript{521}. Lidums has reached five basic conclusions, which are accepted both in Eastern (Patristic) Orthodoxy and Protestant theology: 1) When discussing the

\textsuperscript{517} Brunner 1943, 127.
\textsuperscript{518} Lidums 2004, 129. It should be noticed that the relational aspect of \textit{imago Dei} differs from Process Theology, which was analyzed earlier in the end of section 4.1.3 when Du Weiming’s arguments on human beings as part of creation was studied.
\textsuperscript{519} There have been attempts in recent scholarship to reconcile the seeming contradiction between ontology and relationships, which Brunner claims exists in the case of \textit{imago Dei}. See Lidums 2004, 118. Luo Bingxiang prefers also relational to substantialistic, prefers ontology of being-with or ontology of communion to ontology of being. Luo interprets the relation with God as essence of \textit{imago Dei} in human beings. Luo 2005a, 3-7.
\textsuperscript{520} From the Greek noun \textit{Telen}. In Biblical Greek and other early Christian literature this word mainly refers to the end, goal, termination, cessation, close, and conclusion. In the context of this discussion it will be used in the sense of “the final goal toward which men and things are striving, of the outcome or destiny which awaits them in accordance with their nature.” Arndt & Gingrich 1957, 818-819.
\textsuperscript{521} Lidums 2004, 75.
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_imago Dei_, it is really immaterial to focus on what, if anything was lost as a result of the fall. 2) Image of God really is the “red thread” that holds together the doctrines of creation, redemption, and glorification of man. 3) Image of God in man cannot be lost and has not been lost. There really is no difference whether we speak about _imago Dei_ as the “indefinite obligation” (Gehlen), “divine creative intension”, fundamental “openness to the world” (Pannenberg), or as the “self-perpetuating drive to deification” (Lossky). The image of God in man as an integral part of man’s design, and the reality of being a human has not been lost. 4) The phenomenon and doctrine of _imago Dei_ is of strongly teleological nature. Whether we say that the chief end of man is to “behold the uncreated light” (Vlachos), or that _imago_ is “the human destination to communion with God” (Pannenberg), we are saying that the image of God is the vehicle which draws man into intimate relationship with his Creator, and that this process, while it begins here, will continue throughout eternity. The goal of this process is to help man self-transcend and to become progressively complete and whole as God initially intended it. The chief end of this process is man’s full redemption and glorification (deification), so he/she can immediately live eternally in God’s presence. 5) The ability of self-transcendence in man designed in God’s image is an indispensable component of the human makeup, and as such it plays a key role in the process of _theōsis_. The orthodox tradition speaks about two senses of human self-transcendence: our being able to transcend our natural power, and our being able to grow by moving closer to God by understanding how God transcends all.\textsuperscript{522}

After I have discussed about _imago Dei_, human nature, sin and ability/limit of human beings, in the light of these conclusions, I find that the religious goals of Confucianism and Christianity are very different although they seem to be similar in many cases, especially in ethics.

Confucianism can be called an eager, self-searching, and sincere faith, but with very vague and uncertain hopes.\textsuperscript{523} The ultimate goals of Confucianism can be

\textsuperscript{522} Lidums 2004, 104-105.

\textsuperscript{523} Redse 2005, 410.
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summarized as five\footnote{Redse has discussed this issue well, Redse 2005, 279-288, 324-327.} as follows: 1) Internal sageliness (neisheng \textit{内圣}) is the perfected virtuousness, which is the individual personal goal meant to be attained in one’s lifetime. This goal includes a “belief in the perfectability of human nature is basically a hope for what we can really become and a faith in what we originally are – in our prelapsarian state, as it were.”\footnote{Du Weiming 1993, 45.} The essence of internal sageliness is to “manifest bright virtue” (ming mingde 明明德).\footnote{This is one of the important term from \textit{Daxue 大学}, \textit{Kongjing 孔经} in \textit{Sishu} 1992, 2. “What the Great Learning teaches, is to illustrate illustrious virtue. 大学之道在明明德”.} This implies perfection of all virtues including the wisdom of understanding reality in a unity with it.\footnote{Chung-ying Cheng 1991, 49, 467.} Being a sage includes that one fully knows one’s human nature. Internal sageliness of virtues leads to external kingliness and cannot be realized without it. 2) External kingliness (waiwang \textit{外王}) aims still at a personal sagehood, and it is the perfected merits in human relationships. The essence of this goal is to be concretized in the perfection of ritual propriety (li 礼) in the five basic relationships and whatever other relationships.

For most Confucians, it is very important “how to unify the inner virtue (neisheng \textit{内圣}, internal sageliness) and the external merits (waiwang \textit{外王}, external kingliness).”\footnote{Yao Xinzhong 2000, 252.} As Cheng Chung-ying (Zhongying) affirms, the achieving of an inner transformation of one’s nature is logically prior to the outward actualization of it in actions and social life.\footnote{Cheng 1991, 287.} 3) The monistic Oneness between Heaven and humanity (\textit{Tianren heyi 天人合一}) is the representative expression of the relationship among humanity, Heaven and Earth, and this is the goal of society at large. Different from Christian unity with God through Christ, the Confucian tradition “searches for eternal meaning primarily in present life and activity. The life of the individual person is not understood as eternal, but as continuing with an eternal meaning in the collective life of the family and the humanity, and in the succession of the cultural tradition to which one has contributed. If sagehood is achieved, the person is defined in some kind of oneness with an impersonal Heaven. This favours a belief in some kind of a
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depersonalized continuation of one’s human nature and mind-heart after death.  
4) a state of creative and perfect equilibrium (zhong 中) and harmony (he 和) all are essential goals of Confucianism.  
5) And the process of self-cutivation can be understood as a goal in itself. For example, Du Weiming says, ”in the Neo-Confucian tradition the 'becoming process’ is not just 'functional,’ or merely a means to an end; it is also 'substantial’ in the sense that the 'becoming’ is an end, or even an ultimate end in itself.”

In theological terms, the goal of Confucians is that man should achieve the potential within them that is already given as essential within the ontological structure they share with reality itself so as to achieve the oneness or identity between Heaven and human beings. Confucians intend to transcend human natural power. For them, man should seek his potential true humanity; thus, contrary to traditional Christian theological understandings of the status of humanity, Confucians generally hold a position similar to that of process theology, which emphasizes a process of becoming where persons respond to each moment by making real choices. In this context of making choices we have to acknowledge that every moment of our existence is bi-polar, i.e., every moment is affected by what has happened in the past and by what could potentially happen in the future. The past constitutes the 'physical' pole (it has concrete physical existence); and the future, not yet realized, exists still in the realm of possibility, which is the 'mental' pole (an imaginative projection into the future). The movement from a concrescence state via new possibilities to a new concrescence defines process by which human beings achieve true humanity.

In Christian terms “salvation” can be viewed as having three distinguishable aspects. It is first of all justification through grace and by faith in

530 Redse 2005, 324-325.
532 Learning to be human in self-cultivation is in itself the goal. Du Weiming 1979, 8. Du Weimh 1995, 141.
533 Here the term “traditional Christian theological understandings” means mainly the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Augsburg Confession.
534 See 4.1.3, where process theology was analyzed when Du Weiming was studied as a representative of Modern Confucians.
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God, who, from the objective side, counts us as righteous when we enter into the faith that Christ offers us: a new relationship with God through the cross.\footnote{Article IV of the Augsburg Confession. See The Augsburg Confessions: Its meaning for our day 1980, 29.} Secondly, this faith and its relationship with God sets human beings apart from the natural tendencies of the world for holy living. Finally, salvation is, from the human subjective side, the sanctification process of the person in which real transformation of the person toward Christ likeness occurs. Only in this third aspect, human beings are able to grow by moving closer to God by understanding how God transcends all. Under the guiding of the Holy Spirit, this process requires the real presence of Jesus Christ in the person as a new potential engine for our movement toward a new ontological structure of Christian spiritual life.\footnote{Article IV of the Augsburg Confession. See The Augsburg Confessions: Its meaning for our day 1980, 29.}

In the following I am going to analyze Confucian understandings of the means of salvation.
4. Confucian ideas of the object of salvation in Christianity: created humanity and its status

5. Confucian ideas of the means of salvation in Christianity

Apart from exploring issues such as the role of the Savior, the object of salvation, and the status from which and to which human beings are saved, it seems that there is no consensus between Christianity and Confucianism on the goals and means of salvation. The lack of consensus on the goals derives from the different ontologies of the two sides. In the previous chapter I have concluded that Confucians hold a monistic ontology and the relationship between the Christian God and human beings is “neither One nor Two”. Therefore, Confucians and Christians have different goals, the former believes in the monistic identity and unity between Heaven (God) and human beings, and the latter believes that human beings may become participants of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). This difference is not only the starting point of their respective ontologies and the goals of “salvation” but determines as well the respective means of “salvation”.

The following is an analysis of Confucian ideas about the means of salvation in Christianity. As far as means of salvation in Christianity are concerned, it is very significant to find whether there is a mediator for Heaven and human beings in the Chinese tradition, since the role of Jesus Christ as the only way to salvation in Christian tradition is so important. According to the Judaeo-Christian tradition only Jesus Christ, who is both divine and human, can fill the gap between God and human beings in order to reunite them together. Everyone who believes in Jesus Christ can be saved. This doctrine cannot, however, be found in Confucianism. This doctrinal difference becomes the main reason that, in the Confucian-Christian dialogue, the

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537 See the end of section 4.1 in this work.
538 See the end of section 4.2 in this work.
539 Incarnation of Logos, Trinity and Pneumatology are also important in understanding the transcendence and immanence of the Christian God. In section 5.2, in order to analyze Confucian
Christian understanding of salvation is very difficult for Confucians to understand. In section 5.1.1 I will indicate, *Li* 理 (the Natural Law) is similar to the Christian concept of “God the Son”, who reveals the Source. Through this mediator human reason can understand something of the Source, its mystery, and its relationship to all creation.

One of the most important concepts in analyzing the means of salvation is “transcendence”, since Chinese Confucians consider “internal transcendence” (*neizai chaoyue* 内在超越) as the Confucian means of reaching its religious goal and “external transcendence” (*waizai chaoyue* 外在超越) as the Christian means of salvation.\textsuperscript{540}

The definition of the term “transcendence”, however, is not yet clear. Thus, before being able to look for an answer to the question of transcendence, the term "transcendence" must be more clearly defined. The term "transcendence" has many meanings and, thus, has generated confusion and misunderstanding. I will first introduce a definition for the term “transcendence” typical for the Western philosophical tradition. The definition will serve as the standard and tool in my analysis of Confucian responses to the Christian means of salvation.

**Definition of “transcendence”:** The term “transcendence” comes from the Latin verb “*transcendere*”, which means “to transcend, to go beyond some point or limit, to surpass, to exceed”.\textsuperscript{541} In philosophical language this word may have two sorts of meanings: the static meaning and the dynamic meaning. In its static (ontological) sense, “transcendence” means “to lie beyond some fundamental limit”.\textsuperscript{542} In other words it means an object-lying-beyond-the-limits of the finite, of
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knowledge, of the subject, or of that which falls within the power of knowledge, etc. It refers, thus, to what is non-empirical, lying beyond perception and knowledge. In its dynamic sense, however, to transcend means “to go actively beyond some limit”.

**Definitions of immanence (immanent) and immanentism:** Immanence can be defined as the opposite of transcendence, referring to indwelling the real world, remaining inside and internal. One can distinguish two meanings of “immanentism”. On the one hand, as a principle of explanation, immanentism is the view that any event or phenomenon within the world is explicable in terms of other events within the world. It excludes any direct agency in the affairs of this world by God or any other alleged supernatural powers. Nature and history are all of a piece and must be studied in the light of inner-worldly forces. On the other hand, immanentism can also be understood as a view of God which stresses his immanence or indwelling in the world at the expense of his transcendence.

**Definitions of “separate” and “separated”:** In this latter sense of “immanent”, they refer to “God’s immanence”, taken as “God’s indwelling the world”. This definition implies that God and the world are not wholly ontologically separated, though they are separate in that they can be distinguished as bearing a difference in respect to each other. To be “separated” implies the previous situation in which God and humanity were once ontologically integral in respect to each other but are no longer so. Forming an original unity, they are now two distinct beings bound in eternal relation. To say that they are “separate”, however, means that they were two distinct beings from the very beginning and, thus, constitute two orders of being in which one is alienated from the other. In my understanding, however, God and humanity were originally different yet were not alienated. Therefore, though God

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544 Concerning the definition of “Immanentism”, see Macquarrie’s (1983b) “Immanentism” in WD, 287. Of course, the concepts of transcendence and immanence may also be defined from other aspects; for example, Kant has his own ideas about transcendence, envisioning it as what lies beyond all possible experience and the limits of knowledge. See Zhang Junmai’s transcendent intuitive forms in Zhang Junmai 1936 and Cheng & Bunnin 2002, 58-63.
545 Influenced by the Greek ontology of being, in certain Christian theologies God and human beings seem to be in a dualistic relation. Others, influenced by Biblical theology and the book *I and Thou* of Martin Buber (1878-1965), see Buber 1991, the relationship between God and human beings is interpreted more from the view of an ontology of being-with, an ontology of communion. Thus, no form of monism and immanentism, which considers God and human beings as the same ontologically,
and humanity were separate from the very beginning of creation, man was ontologically in full union and participation with God in the qualities of divine life, such as righteousness, holiness, truth, love, eternality, and immortality. It was original sin that alienated man from God. Only when the alienation produced by sin enters the picture can we refer to the “separation” of man and God. This separation did not last for ever, however, since, through Jesus Christ the Savior, God and human beings become united again. In this sense the Christian God certainly cannot be considered as non-immanent. Indeed, the understanding of God as love involves an appreciation of his provision and protection for mankind, a care manifested even after the fall. God never stopped loving them.  Therefore, the relationship between the Christian God and human beings is “neither One nor Two”.  

The reason that I have chosen the above definitions to act as my tool for analyzing the Confucian arguments concerning the means of salvation is that Confucians have often used the term without a clear definition, and I believe that, based on the sources of my analysis, my definitions can best fit the Confucian arguments. In what follows, therefore, I shall uncover what this term “transcendence” means when it is used by Confucians. Then, employing my definitions of the concepts “transcendence”, “immanence”, “separate”, and “separated”, I will analyze some Confucian arguments concerning the Christian means by which God saves.

In their attempt to understand the notion of the Christian means of salvation, Confucians have expressed their opinions concerning particularly the following questions: 1) Is there a concept of transcendence in Confucianism? 2) Are the Christian God and the Confucian Heaven transcendent? 3) Is internal transcendence is acceptable in Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox dogmatics. Nor is any kind of pantheism, which considers God and things as ontologically the same. Luo 2005b, 3-8. Tang Junyi says that his idea concerning Heaven and human beings is same as the Western pantheism, see Tang 1953, 338.  

546 *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1997, 101-117, where “man” and “The Fall” have been explained.  

547 One may refer to the end of section 4.1 in this work. Modern Confucian Liu Shuxian criticized Mou Zongsan because the latter overemphasized that Heaven and human beings are not two and totally ignores that Heaven and human beings are not One, either. See Liu Shuxian 1978, 757-758. Luo Bingxiang mentions that Liu is correct in this point, but concerning the transcendence of the Christian God Liu demonstrates many misunderstandings, see Luo 2001, 243-277. See Luo 2005, 4.
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superior to external transcendence, where the words “superior to” mean “better in discovering and expressing the truth”. This question aims at discovering whether Confucians should accept or reject the Christian doctrine of salvation. If the Confucian concept of internal transcendence is closer to the truth than that of Christian external transcendence, Christianity cannot gain the approval of Confucians; if it isn’t, then Confucians could possibly appreciate or even accept the Christian understanding of God’s transcendence and the Christian doctrine of salvation. It needs to be noticed that the incarnation of Logos will be often referred to in this chapter, but it has not been listed as an independent section, since it is so important that the whole doctrine of salvation in Christianity is built upon it.

The following three sections will display my analysis of these issues as outlined above.

5.1 The existence of transcendence in Confucianism

The concept of transcendence is very important for Confucians, since both philosophically and morally it is in some sense essential to Confucianism. How to define this term and how to determine whether such a concept actually exists in Confucianism, however, are not simple issues. Some scholars confirm the existence of "transcendence" in Confucianism, and others oppose such arguments. The former group understands a Confucian sense of transcendence as similar to that of Christianity, so that they might persuade China to accept the Christian concept of God. The latter group has the very opposite view, arguing that China cannot accept “transcendence” that implies the existence of the Christian God. Essentially, then, transcendence is a necessary presupposition for Confucians in order to accept the

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548 It should be noted that Confucian scholars have sometimes used different terms in their arguments. For example, rather than employing the terms "immanent" (immanence) and "transcendent" (transcendence), Mou Zongsan, Cai Renhou and Liang Yancheng employed the terms "alienation" (separation, separated) and "tact" (union, unity, unification). Cf. the works of these authors in the Bibliography.

549 For example, Jin Yuelin (1895-1984), a philosopher influenced by Western thought, who appreciates Confucianism very much, does not attribute the existence of things or the emergence of actualities to the activity of any transcendent reason, to the will of a transcendent God, or to the fulfillment of a transcendent purpose. Since Dao is coextensive with the universe, there cannot be anything transcendent to Dao or to its unfolding. If there were, it would be something that is a part of Dao or that functions in the unfolding of Dao and it would be transcendent only to some of things in
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Christian concept of God. Transcendence is such an important aspect of God’s nature that, without it, no one can believe in the Christian God. If transcendence exists as a viable concept in Confucianism, Confucians need only extend it to grasp the concept of a transcendent, Christian God, opening them to an understanding of the Christian thesis of salvation by God as well.

In this section, I intend to clarify what seems to be an appearance of transcendence in Confucianism based on my definition of the terms “transcendence” and “immanence”.

5.1.1 Neo-Confucian arguments

Matteo Ricci denied the existence of transcendence in Neo-Confucianism. He did not consider the Neo-Confucian Taiji 太极 and Li 理 (Principle) as the Source of all things, but he argued that the Lord of Heaven is the Source of all things. Many Neo-Confucians could not accept such an opinion. For example, for Zhong Shishen 钟始声, a Neo-Confucian in the 17th century, there is no spiritual world different from the material world. This position constitutes a big difference between Neo-Confucians and Catholics as represented by Ricci, and it is responsible for the Neo-Confucian rejection of the Christian God. The notion of something transcendent beyond the world in which human beings live was, for Neo-Confucians, strange beyond acceptance.

Neither can Neo-Confucians accept Ricci’s interpretation of the nature of the Lord of Heaven and that of Principle. Ricci says that the nature of the Lord of Heaven is most perfect, most complete, and supremely serene. It cannot be fathomed by the minds of men, nor can it be compared with anything. The nature of the Lord of

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550 Ricci 1985, 107: “the Supreme Ultimate cannot be the reality which produced heaven and earth.”
551 Ricci 1985, 111: “When we come to the Supreme Ultimate we find that it is only explained in terms of principle. It cannot therefore be the source of heaven, earth, and all things because principle also falls into the category of accidents. Since it is not substance how can it establish other things?: … principle is dependent and cannot be the source of things, … whether in the human mind or in things,…” 115: “Because principle does not have intelligence and consciousness, it cannot produce intelligence and consciousness.”
552 Ricci 1985, 105: “At the beginning, when not a single thing was in existence, there had of necessity to be a Lord of Heaven to serve as the source of all things.”
Heaven has never shared in all aspects of phenomena; yet, His perfect virtue embraces the principles of all things and harbors the natures of all things.\

For Neo-Confucians, *Taiji* (Supreme Ultimate) and *Li* (Principle) have the features that Ricci gives to the Lord of Heaven. However, for Ricci, Principle is totally different from the Lord of Heaven, since it falls into the category of accident and cannot stand and exist on its own. Principle cannot exercise control over all things as does the Lord of Heaven, says Ricci:

> If you say that principle embraces the intelligence of all things and produces all things, then you are talking about the Lord of Heaven and not about principle or the Supreme Ultimate.

Indeed, the Neo-Confucianism of the Song-Ming dynasties harbored a common belief in a transcendence that surpasses all that exists. For example, a Neo-Confucian in the 16th-17th centuries, Chen Houguang, argues that the Supreme Ultimate produces Principle, which is the ruler of the dynamism of *yin* and *yang*.

According to the Qing Dynasty's critiques of Gu Yanwu 顾炎武 (1613-1682) and Dai Zhen 戴震 (1723-1777), both the Cheng-Zhu 程朱 and Lu-Wang 陆王 scholars regarded the ultimate Principle (*Li*) as something transcending the world. Ricci gave, however, these features such as most perfect, most complete, and supremely serene to the Lord of Heaven rather than to *Taiji* or *Li*.

One may ask, if the Lord of Heaven has the features associated with *Taiji* and *Li*, would this appearance of congruence lead to the conclusion that the Lord of Heaven is similar to *Taiji* and *Li*? Both Ricci and traditional Neo-Confucians have expressed their denial of such a conclusion.

Although Ricci did not consider the Lord of Heaven similar to the *Taiji* and *Li*...
of Neo-Confucianism, he did assimilate the Lord of Heaven to the Chinese Shangdi.\textsuperscript{559} Shangdi later became equal to Tian (Heaven) in China, and Heaven was again gradually reduced from a theistic deity into an impersonal power. Thus, concerning his affirmation of assimilation Ricci gained some support from Neo-Confucians, while many others did not accept it.\textsuperscript{560}

Zhong Shisheng,\textsuperscript{561} a Chinese Neo-Confucian in the 17\textsuperscript{th} century, rejected Ricci’s assimilation between Chinese Heaven and the Lord of Heaven. Although many Neo-Confucians agreed that Heaven can govern the world, they neither thought that Heaven has personality nor that it transcends the world and human rationality.\textsuperscript{562}

Previously, in chapter three, I pointed out that concept of the ancient Chinese Heaven degenerated from a personal deity to an impersonal principle in the Neo-Confucianism of the Song and Ming dynasties. Thus, Zhong Shisheng was correct in saying that the Chinese Heaven is different from the Christian Lord of Heaven, since the primary sources and the basis of their arguments were the interpretations of Neo-Confucians such as Zhu Xi 朱熹 and his followers rather than those of Confucius or the Five Classics of Ancient Confucianism.\textsuperscript{563}

In addition to the above mentioned difference between Ancient Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism, the conflict between Neo-Confucians and Ricci was also due to Ricci’s misunderstanding of Neo-Confucianism. It is generally known today that Neo-Confucianism was a mixture of Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism. It seems that Ricci was not fully aware of the central ideas or the historical background of the various Chinese schools of his time in the 16\textsuperscript{th}-17\textsuperscript{th} centuries, when Neo-Confucianism was popular.

Ricci seems to have misunderstood the Daoist wu 无 (Nothingness), the Buddhist Kong 空 (Emptiness), and the Neo-Confucian Taiji 太极 (The Ultimate Absoluteness), Li 理 (Principle) and Qi 气 (Air). The Wu of Daoism and the Kong of Chinese Mahayana Buddhism refer to absolute, Ultimate Reality itself, which has no

\textsuperscript{559} Ricci 1985, 121: “He who is called the Lord of Heaven in my humble country is He who is Shang-ti (Sovereign on High) in Chinese.”

\textsuperscript{560} See Appendix IV “Reduced” here refers to the aforementioned “Degeneration” in this study.

\textsuperscript{561} Zhong Shisheng “Tianxue zaizheng” in XUBIAN (2), 942.

\textsuperscript{562} Ibid, 929-930.

\textsuperscript{563} See Appendix IV “Degeneration” in this study.
beginning and no end, which has no visible appearance, and which is the Source of
the Universe. Ricci, however, took them as accidental and dependent properties of
reality which cannot stand on their own and which exists only as subject to other
things.  

In fact, the Neo-Confucian concepts of Taiji, Li, and Qi sound quite similar to
certain ideas in the Christian tradition of negative theology, such as the negative
approach (via negativa) to God in scholastic philosophy and theology, which is the
Western counterpart to the tradition of Eastern Christianity. The Neo-Confucian
concepts of Taiji, Li, and Qi seem quite foreign to Christian theology. The Daoist Wu
and the Buddhist Kong can also be used to describe the Lord of all things.

Therefore, if one takes the static definition of “transcendence”, i.e., as an
objective-lying-beyond-the-limits, as the standard by which to judge the correctness
of the Neo-Confucian commentary on Ricci’s ideas, one has to admit that such
transcendence does pertain to the Ancient Confucian Shangdi and Tian but not in the
Neo-Confucian Taiji and Li 理. Such an affirmation, of course, neither guarantees
that Shangdi and Tian are equal to the Lord of Heaven, nor does it imply that Taiji is
not the Source of all things.

From an ontological viewpoint one may discern that Shangdi, Tian, and Taiji
may all act as the Source (without personality) of all things and as well that Shangdi
or Tian may be considered as “Creator” (having personality) of all things in Ancient
Confucianism; but the Neo-Confucian Taiji cannot be said to be the “Creator” of all
things. Although the Taiji is the Source of all things, the birth of all things is,
however, not accomplished through “creating” but through “producing”. “Producing”
implies that the source of the world has no personality, and that the producer and the
world are of the same substance. “Creating” implies that the creator of the world has
personality, and that the creator and the world are of different substances. This
statement defines the essential difference between “creating the world” and
“producing the world”, and it throws into relief the difference between Taiji and
Shangdi (or Tian). The former is a monistic theory, and the latter is an affirmation of
theism.

Ricci 1985, 109. See also section 2.1 of the present study.
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Within the context of this noted difference, these concepts involve essential distinctions within the notion of transcendence, as the transcendence of Shangdi (or Tian) cannot be the same as that of Taiji. When Shangdi (or Tian) is considered as the source of all things in the world in its act of giving birth and creating, the creator here is quite similar to the Christian God. When Taiji is considered as the source of all things in the world, the producer and the world are of the same substance, bearing no distinction between the world and the producer. Therefore, the producer Taiji differs from the creator God.

These considerations show that it is difficult to say whether the concept of “transcendence” exists in Neo-Confucianism. The main problem for achieving clarity here is that one is not sure whether in Neo-Confucianism Taiji is an objective-lying-beyond-the-limits (of the finite, of knowledge, of the subject, of that which falls within the power of knowledge, and so on). This problem arises because, on the one hand, for Neo-Confucians there is no transcendent world that differs from the material world.65 The monistic unity between Heaven and humanity is an essential doctrine of Neo-Confucianism, so the distinction between Heaven and humanity is adamantly denied. But, on the other hand, Taiji is the source of all things, so that there is no substantial distinction between the two realms, which are both of the same substance.

Of course, the Neo-Confucian Taiji, Li, and Qi can also be understood in relation to the Christian Trinity, since these three concepts can be extended to explain the relationship between Ultimate Reality (Taiji), mankind, and things within the universe. They serve to express three substantial modes of Ultimate Reality itself.

Taiji might be considered similar to the Christian notion of “God the Father”, who cannot be understood directly and who enters into relationships with mankind and the rest of creation through a mediator.

Li is similar to the Christian concept of Logos (“God the Son”), who reveals the Source. Through this mediator human reason can understand something of the Source, its mystery, and its relationship to all creation. Dao may also refer to

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Li in Neo-Confucianism, but as a philosophical concept Dao usually appears in Daoism.

Qi, provided it is freed from its material associations, is somewhat similar to the Holy Spirit, the creative, transforming power of God at work in creation which leads all things back to their Source.566

Thus, on the one hand, Taiji (or Heaven) is an objective-lying-beyond-the-limits. On the other hand, Taiji (or Heaven) is inhabited by everything in the world (including human beings).567 Based on such an idea, Neo-Confucians regard the Christian God as transcendent and consider the Chinese Heaven as both transcendent and immanent.568 According to my definition of transcendence in section 4.1, such a conclusion is problematic, since if Taiji, as the Producer of all things in the world and the world itself are the same in substance, can such a Taiji be considered any longer as “transcendent”? The answer is “No”, as further discussion will clarify. The Christian God is not absolutely transcendent anymore after the incarnation of Logos, since the grace of God has come to human beings in Jesus Christ. The incarnation does not mean, however, that God is totally immanent in the world. Georg Pöhlmann Horst has called this understanding lat condescendere.569

5.1.2 Cultural Nationalist Confucian arguments

As the definition of “transcendence” at the beginning of this chapter indicates, “transcendence” in its dynamic sense means “actively to go beyond some limit”. A person can transcend the limitations of his or her past, e.g., or transcend one moral stage for another. Cultural Nationalist Confucians such as Mou Zongsan and many others have used the term "transcendence" in this sense.570 The following analysis of the role this definition plays for them will clarify the Cultural Nationalist Confucian responses to the question whether “transcendence” is an active and meaningful

567 Gernet and Sun Shangyang have mentioned this distinction between Christianity (Catholic) and Neo-Confucianism, but Gernet was too pessimistic to take Neo-Confucianism as the representative of whole Chinese culture. See the works of them in the Bibliography of this study.
569 Horst 1974, 81-82.
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A discussion concerning the meaning of the phrase "to go beyond some limit" has been raised by the contemporary Cultural Nationalist Confucian Cai Renhou in his dialogue with Rev. Zhou Lianhua. Cai is a professor of Confucianism in Taiwan who argues that Christians only do what Jesus commands them to do. The mission commanded by Christ has not been pursued by active self initiative but rather by passive obedience to the command. Thus, Christians often say that they are doing things "in the name of Christ". It is obvious for Cai that the collective body of Christians is by no means the same as Christ himself. Cai says that Zhou has been successful in explaining in what sense a Christian can become a "christ", but he has not sufficiently clarified the difference between the concept of people becoming sages, such as Yao and Shun, and the concept of people becoming a christ. The syntax of these two linguistically expressed concepts appears similar, but meanings differ in these affirmations: "everyone can become Yao and Shun", "everyone can become Buddha", "everyone can become a True person", and "everyone can become a christ."

What Cai is doing here is, in fact, asserting the dynamic sense of transcendence (to actively go beyond some limits). His assertion can be taken in the sense of a movement beyond specifiable borders, such as when cultures identify the worldliness of the world and, thus, in identifying it, transcend it. For transcendence can be viewed as precisely what one finds when one transcends borders: the transcendent Christian God, e.g., is essentially what moves beyond the world of the determinably real. Transcendence may also be viewed, however, from the perspective in which one thinks the world as such, thus thinking “nothing” beyond it yet being beyond it in thinking it. Here arise the Buddhist notions of emptiness and the Buddha-mind. In these cases, transcendence means a place or perspective beyond the border.

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570 Cf. also Neville 2000, 150.
571 Cai, Zhou & Liang 1985, 137.
573 It should be noticed that "to become a christ" is different from "to become Christ". In Christianity, the former rather than the latter is mentioned, and in this study we are discussing only the issue of "becoming a christ".
Cai, as a Cultural Nationalist Confucian, then, implies that one can transcend the border between humanity and Heaven to become a sage such as Yao, Shun or Buddha, such a process or movement being an act of this second or, “internal” form of transcendence. Cai’s position is typical of the Cultural Nationalist Confucians and demonstrates that a dynamic form of transcendence is the basis of their ethical form of sanctification. For them, sages extend existentially into the transcendent realm, an accomplishment anyone may achieve through self-cultivation. Cai did not clearly define the term “transcendent realm”, and it would seem to refer to my own static sense of the term. But if this supposition was true, and the monism of Neo- and Cultural Nationalist Confucians is consistently affirmed, the static sense of transcendence as I have defined it cannot find a place in Confucianism at all.

Perhaps obvious at this point is that the essence of transcendence as “to go beyond a limit” does not have a meaning that is grounded in an ontology of the real or in the existential structure of man. It touches, in fact, on the means of salvation affected by an exercise of God’s power that is external to man as well as the means by which one becomes a sage by moral cultivation. The nature of God, of course, has much to do with the means of salvation, for God decides what those means are.

According to the Confucian Cai Renhou, the major difference between Christianity and Confucianism is that, while Confucianism upholds the goodness of humanity and the path of cultivation through self-effort or self-power, Christianity maintains the evil nature of humanity and the path of salvation through other-power, i.e., Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{575}

In analyzing Cai’s paradigm of the Confucian-Christian dialogue, Lai Pinchao says that the question of human nature is related not only to the comparable issue of

\textsuperscript{575} After affirming such a distinction, Lai Pinchao suggests establishing a new paradigm in the Confucian-Christian dialogue by taking the globe rather than China as the context for dialogue. First, the recent process of globalization/glocalization challenges the validity of every cultural tradition, including Confucianism. It is doubtful whether Confucianism can represent the mainstream of contemporary Chinese culture any longer. Secondly, this kind of Confucian-Christian dialogue tends to indulge itself in a dialogue concentrating on the issues confined to the religious realm, especially the doctrinal or philosophical differences among religions, overlooking the urgent need of the contemporary world, including the ecological issues. Referring to publications of the fourth (Lai & Lee, Peter K.H.2001) and fifth (Lai 2002) Confucian-Christian dialogue conferences, Lai says that the paradigm of indigenization has been broken, and the aim of dialogue is no longer the missionary goal of evangelizing the Chinese through the Confucianization of Christian theology but the mutual enrichment of the two traditions for the betterment of human civilization. See Lai 2004, 202-215.
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whether all human beings share Christ-nature or can become Christ but also to that of self-power and other-power. Again, when the problem of human nature is discussed, both the Augustinian doctrine of original sin and the Eastern orthodox doctrine of imago Dei (image of God) and theosis (deification) should be remembered. Lai mentioned also Gregory of Nyssa’s soteriological concept that salvation is not achieved by other-power or self-power alone but is a result of the synergy (synergia), i.e., working together, between the divine and the human. Therefore, Lai rejects the demarcation between self-power and other-power by referring to “ecological” view of life that forbids a concept of an isolated self. For example, no Confucian individual can make the decision to be a Confucian or a noble person (junzi 君子) by moral cultivation on his own without being inspired by the moral example and instruction of others.

It is true, as I mentioned earlier in chapter 4, that Confucianism does not deny the ‘divine’ or ‘transcendent’ origin of the moral character of human nature from ‘Heaven’. I agree with what Lai says, “In Christian terminology, Confucianism does not reject the idea that human beings are bearers of the imago Dei or created in the image of God.”

It is, however, difficult to distinguish Lai’s arguments from a semi-Pelagian or a semi-Augustinian theory. Lai considers the so-called Confucian self-power as being unable to act independently or in separation from Heaven, since the capacity to become a sage through self-power is based on the presupposition of the original goodness of humanity, which is endowed by Heaven. Lai says, “Borrowing Buddhist terminology, when talking about self-effort, Confucianism tends to concentrate on the inner reason (neiyin 内因) at the expense of the external condition (waiyuan 外缘) and thus becomes rather one-sided.” What Lai did not continue to say may be:

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576 I have discussed this issue in section 1.1, and the details concerning this theory can be found in Salvation: Grace, Justification and Synergy, 9th Plenary of the Lutheran-Orthodox Joint Commission, Sigtuna, 7 August 1998.
577 Lai 2004, 210-212.
578 Zhongyong affirms that what Heaven imparts to human beings is called human nature and the purpose of human life is to cultivate this human nature and to extend its moral character to its full extent. See Chan 1963, 95-114.
579 Lai 2004, 212. It needs to be noted that Confucians usually do not consider that human beings were "created".
“Christianity tends to concentrate on the external condition at the expense of the inner reason and, thus, also becomes one-sided.” If my interpretation of Lai is correct, he risks falling into a mode of dialectical thinking. Concerning this, Lai has said, “The affirmation of the role played by human beings in the process of salvation or deification is by no means a rejection or negation of divine grace because in the final analysis, human effort originates from the grace of God (Harrison 1992, 211-49, esp. 230-31, 248-49).” This clarification helps a lot, however, what he follows to say raises difficulties for me to accept.

Lai says, “Based on a rereading of the Chalcedonian formula, it is quite possible to develop a Christological doctrine of human goodness, affirming that every human being can become Christ.” Hereby Lai overlooks the distinction between the Confucian original goodness of human nature and the man’s image/likeness of God in Christianity. The former is monist, which considers Heaven and human beings as oneness or identity. The latter considers human beings different from God though closely related to Him in so far as they were created in His image. Facing Cai Renhou’s question “Can all human beings become Christ?”, one must deny such a goal as characterizing the aim of Christian life and faith;” as Lai said above, since the goal of Christian salvation is that we “may become participant in divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4) rather than that of becoming Christ. Here we are distinguishing between becoming “christlike” and becoming “Christ”.

5.1.3 Modern Boston Confucian arguments

Modern Boston Confucians have an affirmative attitude towards the idea of transcendence in Confucianism. They understand the concept “transcendence” in two ways: as a principle of explanation and as self-definition.

Transcendence as a principle of explanation

David Hall and Roger Ames, two representatives of Modern Confucianism of the Mencian tradition in the USA, have denied that the concept of transcendence plays a

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581 Lai 2004, 211.
582 Lai 2004, 211.
role in the personal thought of Confucius and, in contrast, asserted immanence as the uniquely Confucian idea. While Hall and Ames do not deny that Neo-Confucianism introduced many transcendent elements into Confucianism, they think that these elements are not Chinese by origin. To clarify this position, we must explore their own definition of "transcendence". They explain this term as follows,

Strict Transcendence may be understood as follows: a principle, A, is transcendent with respect to that, B, which it serves as principle if the meaning or import of B cannot be fully analyzed and explained without recourse to A, but the reverse is not true.

Such an understanding of “transcendence” is quite different from my own definition where transcendence in its static sense is an objective-lying-beyond-the-limits. Indeed, other Modern Boston Confucians have rejected definition of Hall and Ames.

The Boston Confucian representative of the Xun Zi tradition of ritual propriety, Robert Neville, for example, has criticized Hall and Ames because of their denial of the dynamic sense of transcendence found in Ancient Confucianism. Neville points out that the term "transcendence" can mean many things. But he considers the "transcendence" of Hall and Ames as a principle of explanation: One thing transcends another if it is required for understanding the other, when the other is not required for understanding it. He notes that Hall and Ames have illustrated their meaning of "transcendence" by the Christian Creator God, the Platonic forms, the Aristotelian unmoved mover of Greek philosophy, the atoms of classical materialism that compose the world but are unaffected themselves by that composition, and by existentialist notions of originating will. If one examines Neville’s critique more closely, one finds that it presupposes a dynamic sense of transcendence that corresponds to my own definition, i.e., “to exceed, to surpass, to go beyond a certain

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583 This was mentioned in the end of section 4.1 above, one may refer to.
584 Hall & Ames 1987, 12-13: “Perhaps the most far-reaching of the uncommon assumptions underlying a coherent explication of the thinking of Confucius is that which precludes the existence of any transcendent being or Principle. This is the presumption of radical immanence... [A]ttempts to articulate his doctrines by recourse to transcendentals beings or principles have caused significant interpretive distortions. Employing the contrast between "transcendental" and "immanent" modes of thought will assist us materially in demonstrating the inappropriateness of these sorts of transcendental interpretations”.
Thus, Neville thinks that Ames and Hall are wrong, Chinese thought (including Confucianism) includes the idea of transcendence in the sense of a dynamic surpassing by one thing of another. Neville, therefore, points out that, even based on the definition of Hall and Ames themselves, Confucianism includes the concept of “transcendence”. In his view fundamental Confucian concepts such as Heaven, Earth, and Dao indicate a transcendent mode of being, since they are grasped through their dynamic action as founding principles of the process-cosmos, as neatly described even by Hall and Ames. Indeed, Neville says, the Chinese thematic structure for the theory of creatio ex nihilo, is the ti-yong (substance-function) construction, as articulated explicitly by Wang Bi 王弼 (226-249). Thus, Confucius' notions of Heaven, Earth, and Dao enable our understanding of all things in creation but come to light themselves only as manifested through their functions within phenomena. They cannot be themselves explained by the phenomena of reality, nor can they explain one another.

In view of these considerations, one may conclude that Neville’s notion of transcendence refers to what lies beyond some fundamental limit. One needs to ask, however, whether Heaven, Earth, and Dao all transcend the world. According to Neville, the answers affirmatively, but what is it that transcends all of the things of the world? Are these three fundamental principles all on the same level, or does Dao transcend Heaven and/or Earth?

Modern Confucians have not offered a clear answer to these questions. They simply affirm that the concept of “transcendence” plays a role in Confucianism as a principle of explanation. In the light of my definition of “transcendence”, either in its static sense or in its dynamic sense, a clear difference obtains between Modern

\[586\] Neville 2000, 150, 149.
\[587\] See Hall & Ames 1998, especially chapter 9. See also Neville 2000, 149.
\[589\] Neville says also that the strict definition of Transcendence by Hall and Ames is a little ambiguous, since for Hall and Ames, a transcendent principle can itself be wholly explained without recourse to what it transcends. The transcendent principle cannot be explained in itself in all the examples, such as God, and it is explanatory only in its functions. See Neville 2000, 149-150. The Cultural Nationalist Confucian Xiong Shili has clearly explained the theory of ti-yong 体用, showing that its essence is grasped only in terms of a monism which denies the essential distinction between heaven and humanity. See my earlier analysis in section 4.2 “The status of human beings”.
Boston Confucian positions and mine. This distinction should be kept in mind when one deals with the question whether a concept of transcendence functions within Confucianism.

Neville seems to be consistent within the framework of his own logic, though his definition of transcendence as a principle of explanation eventuates in triviality: if one thing transcends another, the former is transcendent. Heaven, Dao, and Earth are all transcendent, since they transcend many other things. But Neville never tells us what (or who) transcends the world and the other principles and which is transcended by nothing. As a Christian, however, Neville should assert that the Christian God is the one who transcends all other things; and this transcendence of God corresponds to the one introduced by my definition, *i.e.*, an objective-lying-beyond-the-limits. But Neville does not achieve an affirmation of God within Confucianism, because he focuses on exercising his criticism of Ames and Hall in terms of his concept of transcendence as a principle of explanation. And it is this notion of transcendence that I reject.

**Transcendence as self-definition**

Neville also argues as a Modern Boston Confucian that Confucianism employs the term “transcendence” in reference to “defining the self”. *I.e.*, the grasp of one’s self in the context of an encounter with one’s own depths invokes a sense of transcendence that is linked essentially to the transcendental source of the world.\(^{590}\) He asserts that East Asians become individuals through the creation of relationships that involve ever more concrete and meaningful levels of speech, behavior, and ritual in the social context. The position of people in the social context may differentiate them concretely physically, socially, in skills and accomplishments, etc., but the center of the person is same in everyone. By the term “center” Neville means the very essence of every human being, *i.e.*, the nature, which makes a person a human being. Neville calls this center "the transcendent point". And according to such a definition, Neville argues that transcendence applies to both Ancient Confucianism and Neo-

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590\ Neville 2000, 152. The understanding of Boston Confucianism can also compare with that of Kant.
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Confucianism. From Paul Tillich we may also find the similar transcendence idea of self-transcending.

Neville quotes from the Mean (Zhongyong), which is one of the Four Books of the Confucian primary scriptures, to express transcendence as a still-point of equilibrium in our readiness for response at the center of the self. Thus, when the self is sincere appropriate actions flow back to the things with which one interacts.

Moreover, Neville quotes from the famous Four Beginnings of Mencius, which seeks to clarify this “center of the self” through the illustration of seeing a child about to fall into a well. He refers to the Four Beginnings as the transcendent center of the self, since it is from Heaven and is the gift of Heaven given to man. These notions of “the equilibrium as a still-point of readiness to respond to ten thousands things” and “the Four Beginnings” are important in Confucianism, as they touch on the issue concerning the basis of morality.

It is generally understood today that certain religious elements can indeed be

591 Neville 2000, 154, 152.
592 Tillich 1963a, 86-98.
593 Neville 2000, 152. “Before the feelings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, and joy are aroused it is called equilibrium (chung [zhong], centrality, mean). When these feelings are aroused and each and all attain due measure and degree, it is called harmony. Equilibrium is the great foundation of the world, and harmony its universal path. When equilibrium and harmony are realized to the highest degree, Heaven and Earth will attain their proper order and all things will flourish.” This translation of Zhongyong is cited from Chan 1963, 98.
594 It is useful to refer to Paul Tillich here to understand self transcendence. For Tillich, ecstasy in life’s structures is another way of understanding "self-transcendence." Self-transcendence is the human drive to connect with the divine and the infinite. Ecstasy is a religious drive of human beings to ground life to the divine Spirit as an expression of an ultimate concern. It is the task of an existentialist analysis to show the unity of human structure and ecstasy as the work of the divine Spirit. According to Tillich, God works through the communities and churches that manifest the New Being of Jesus as the Christ. Tillich claims that the finite is potentially an element in the divine life. There is a mutual immanence of the divine Spirit and human spirit. The presence of the divine Spirit is the presence of the New Being in Jesus as the Christ. The divine Spirit is the spiritual presence of Christ in us and also the spiritual presence of God in us. See Tillich 1957 II, 292.
595 “Now, when men suddenly see a child about to fall into a well, they all have a feeling of alarm and distress, not to gain friendship with the child's parents, nor to seek the praise of their neighbours and friends, nor because they dislike the reputation [of lack of humanity if they did not rescue the child.] From such a case, we see that a man without the feeling of commiseration is not a man; a man without the feeling of shame and dislike is not a man; a man without the feeling of deference and compliance is not a man; and a man without the feeling of right and wrong is not a man. The feeling of commiseration is the beginning of humanity; the feeling of shame and dislike is the beginning of righteousness; the feeling of deference and compliance is the beginning of propriety; and the feeling of right and wrong is the beginning of wisdom. Men have these Four Beginnings just as they have their four limbs. (Mencius 2A:6)” This translation is cited from Chan 1963, 65.
596 Neville 2000, 154. See also the first statement of the Doctrine of the Mean: "What Heaven (Tian, Nature) imparts to man is called human nature." See the translation in Chan 1963, 98.
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found in Confucianism, and its capacity to form the basis of ethical action is an example of its religious character. From whence are the ideas of good and of right? What is the basis of human moral feeling? Where do these ideas come from? They are called the Four Beginnings in Confucianism, but in the Christian terms they arise from man’s reality as “imago Dei”, since the essence of human beings is their personal relationship with God. Human beings have therefore moral feelings, and seek the good and the right. The basis of morality comes from God, who transcends the fundamental limits of our ordinary existence, and, thus, calls us to a humanity that participates in that transcendence. Without such transcendence as the basis of morality, no ethical rules can be binding or aimed effectively at the good of human beings. God has, indeed, always been considered as the empowerment for human moral action in the Christian faith. But no such externally transcendent empowerment for moral cultivation can be found in Neo-Confucianism, and Confucianism fallen under criticism for precisely this fact. The problem that arises in the theological view, of course, is that the basis of the binding force of morality and the good deed itself are two different things, and it is not clear how they are related.

Neville mentions Xun Zi, pointing out differences and similarities between him and Mencius. Xun Zi differed from Mencius in believing that the Four Beginnings would not automatically develop if left unobstructed. For Xun Zi ritual and other conventional behaviors need positively to be taught for the Heaven-given nature to find a properly human expression, a human Dao. Neville says, however, that Xun Zi agreed with the basic motif that the center of all nature, including human nature, is the Heavenly Dao of proper ordering. And this notion is the central feature of Confucianism.

The above discussion indicates that “the center of all nature (including human nature)” in Confucianism is similar to the “imago Dei” in Christianity, since both of them are from Heaven or God. However, Confucianism and Christianity differ on the

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597 Miikka Ruokanen and I have mentioned this issue in an article, please see Luo Mingjia & Huang 2004, "Preface", 1-8. The moral argument was espoused by Immanuel Kant in the context of a postulational metaphysic and more recently in the popular writings of C.S. Lewis (1898-1963). The presupposition is that our moral discussion and behaviors need an objective moral law. Kant 1956, 128-136. Lewis 1943, 34. Reason and religious belief 2003, 98-102.

598 Neville 2000, 154. Cf. also the discussion of Xun Zi, which translation can be found in Chan 1963, 116-135.
issue concerning to what extent such a “Center of the self” or “imago Dei” has been harmed by original sin. In any case, clearly the Confucian “Heavenly Dao” is what is called “readiness”, which is in itself a form of transcendence. This transcendence is integral to the existential structure of man and is similar to the imago Dei of Christianity. On this point Confucianism shares many similarities with Christianity. The imago Dei, however, is not called “transcendence” in Christianity, either in the static or in the dynamic sense, but is nonetheless clearly derived from God, who is transcendent. Thus, the imago Dei can be considered a transcendent property of man, and, similarly, the Confucian “Four Beginnings” in man can, with some exploration of issues, also be considered “transcendent”. Therefore, it is important to instigate a dialogue concerning the connection between the Four Beginnings and the imago Dei.

In chapter 2 I made it clear that, until the time of the Cheng brothers (11th century), the term Tianli 天理 (Heavenly Principle) stood for the Natural Law. Mencius and Xun Zi 荀子, however, were concerned to develop the Four Beginnings into a basis for moral life, while the Cheng brothers were interested in the ongoing production and reproduction of things as essential to a notion of one's destiny. For Zhu Xi principle and material force have become two elementary principles, and a priori has become the main character of the Cheng-Zhu School, with Heaven being identified with the Principle of Heaven.

Neville argues that Christianity has adopted its main rhetoric from

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599 Therefore, the term “Heavenly Dao” (Tiandao 天道) becomes gradually the same as “Heavenly Principle” (Tianli 天理) and “Heaven” (Tian 天), and even the same as Dao 道 and Li 理.

600 Concerning details, see Appendix VIII. “Two wings of Neo-Confucianism”. A Modern Confucian, He Lin (1902-1992), has tried to reconcile Western idealism, especially certain ideas of Kant and Hegel, into Confucianism, especially Song-Ming Confucianism; and within the later, his reconciliation of the Cheng-Zhu School (or the School of Principle) [Cheng Hao (1032-1085), Cheng Yi (1033-1107, and Zhu Xi (1130-1200)] and the Lu-Wang School. (or School of Mind or of Heart-Mind) [Lu Xiangshan (1139-1193) and Wang Yangming (1472-1528)]. He Lin has divided "Mind" into two meanings, one psychological, the other logical. By "mind in the logical sense" He Lin means one which is close to what Kant meant by a priori principles. See He Lin 1990, 131. For He Lin, to construe mind in a Kantian way was just to say that mind is the totality of a priori principles. Inasmuch as the term a priori principles has its Chinese equivalent in the term li, it turns out that the idealism that He Lin took over from Kant was already roughly encapsulated in the Chinese philosophical epigram "mind is principles" (xin ji li). As He puts it, "mind in the logical sense is the same as Li (principles); thence the saying 'mind is principles'". See He Lin 1990, 131. Concerning He Lin's reconciliation of the Cheng-Zhu and Lu-Wang Schools, see Ci Jiwei's article "He Lin's signification of idealism", in Cheng & Bunnin 2002, 190-196.
personalized images, and so God is communicated primarily through the image of a person. Confucianism does not define itself in the language of personification in respect to Shangdi but in the rhetoric of Confucius, which has de-personalized Heaven, Earth, and the Dao. The Christian tradition asserts that man is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27), and the most important aspect of God that bears upon humanity is the imago Dei. Neville agrees with this understanding when he says that, just as in the doctrine of human nature as imparted by Heaven in The Mean, what is definitive and normative for human nature in Christianity is the divine image within it, according to which it is created. He goes on to argue that human nature is defined by its (dependent, created) relation to the transcendent in both Christianity and Confucianism.  

One can note, then, that Neville has quoted at length from the Four Books in support of his argument that the Four Beginnings of Mencius constitute a Confucian understanding of transcendence and that human nature is given by an external Heaven. Neville has not discussed in detail whether Heaven has any elements of personality except in referring briefly to "the rhetoric of Confucius which de-personalized Heaven, Earth and the Dao". It is clear that if transcendence is understood as “defining the self”, then such a concept does indeed play a role in Confucianism. Such an understanding of transcendence is also in accordance with my static sense of transcendence. The difference is that in Christianity the Holy Spirit dwells within Christians and empowers them to do good according to how God prompts them through the Spirit. Confucianism, however, provides no context for such a “prompting”, for the capacity to follow the good already lies within the inner structure of man. Therefore, “the center of the self” in Confucianism is similar to the “imago Dei” in Christianity, though obvious distinctions still apply. Confucians are generally monists and deny the distinction between Heaven and humanity, while Christians are theists and affirm the distinction between God and human beings.

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601 Neville 2000, 159-160, 161-165. One of the primary ways in which Christians have discussed the Transcendence of God is in terms of the idea of creation.
602 Concerning the meaning of "Heaven" in the Confucian Analects, Shujing and Shijing. I have referred to the Sinological study of Pertti Nikkilä, see Nikkilä 1982, "The term Tian used in Shujing" see 78-114; "The term Tian used in Shijing" see 153-174. "The term Tian used in the Confucian Analects" see Nikkilä 1992, 20-49; see also 164-169 concerning Confucian Heaven, the distinction of Characteristics of Tian in the Analects, Tian of Confucius and of Shujing, Tian of Confucius and of Shijing, Tian of Confucius and of Laozi, and Tian of Confucius and of Mozi.
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5.1.4 Modern Christian Confucian arguments

In this section I analyze the Modern Christian Confucians’ reactions to “transcendence” in its static sense, i.e., as an objective-lying-beyond-the-limits of the world.

Modern Christian Confucians have had a positive attitude towards the idea that the Christian God is a transcendent reality. This affirmation becomes evident through a comparison between the Chinese Heaven and the Christian God. They have interpreted the Chinese Heaven as a personal transcendent deity, which has been considered as the contact point in dialogue between the Chinese Heaven and the Christian God.

He Shiming 何世明 (1911-1996), a Modern Confucian Christian in Hong Kong, argues by quoting from Yijing 易经. Shuogua 说卦 that in ancient China the idea of a transcendent Heavenly Father was inherent to Chinese religion. He correctly notes that Heaven is conceived as a personal deity, a fact that finds support in Sinological research. Pertti Nikkilä, a Finnish contemporary sinologist, for example, has studied the meaning of “Heaven” in Shijing 诗经 and Shujing 书经, according to which one important personal feature of Heaven is that human beings can communicate with Heaven. Nikkilä has also studied the meaning of "Heaven" in Confucius' Analects.

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603 The quotation from Yijing. Shuogua by He Shiming 1996 (2), 21 is: "Qian is (the symbol of) heaven, and hence has the appellation of father... Qian suggests the idea of heaven; of a circle; of a ruler; of a father."

604 According to the oracle bone inscription dated to around 3000 years ago and the classics prior to Confucius, the Chinese used to believe in a transcendent God called Shangdi (Sovereign on High), which was designated as Tian and occasionally Shen (god, a spirit) in the West Zhou dynasty (1066-771 BC).

605 Nikkilä says: "According to Shu Ching [Shujing], the king has a deep feeling of dependence on Heaven. Heaven can be influenced by prayer, and Heaven's message can be read, not only in the oracle, but also in natural phenomena." See Nikkilä 1982, 201. Nikkilä says also: "Shu Ching [Shujing] also mentions the communication between Heaven and man. This occurs in prayer and in oracles. Two kinds of prayer are mentioned: emergency prayer and ethical prayer. The first kind was restored to by wise men under the tyrannical rule of Yin [Shang]; the second kind is a prayer with virtue, whose object is to obtain the mandate. Prayer and oracle formed a two way communication between the Human being and Heaven." See Nikkilä 1982, 203.

606 Cf. Nikkilä 1982, "The term Tian used in Shujing" see 78-114; "The term Tian used in Shijing" see 153-174.

"The term Tian used in the Confucian Analects" see Nikkilä 1992, 20-49; see also 164-169 concerning Confucian Heaven, the distinction of Characteristics of Tian in the Analects, Tian of Confucius and of
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The early notion of the personhood of Heaven and his communication with human beings can be supported by archaeological discoveries. According to the Oracle bone inscriptions, the Shang kings had essentially a two-way channel of communication with their ancestors and Di帝 (the Sovereign or Lord). Through an elaborate system of sacrificial offerings, mainly to their ancestors, they attempted to maintain good relations with their counterparts above. Through the practice of divination, employing oracle bones such as those discovered around Anyang 安阳, now located in today's He'nan 河南 Province in China, they determined whether their sacrifices had been well-received, whether their plans would succeed, whether any misfortunes were caused by any ancestors, and what kinds of offerings would be needed to make things right again. Through this system of communication with the gods and the ancestors the Shang 商 kings acted as the crucial bridge between Heaven and Earth: it was their responsibility to maintain harmonious relations with Di and the ancestors, so that they in turn would bestow good fortune on the Kings, his family, and the state. The welfare of the state and its people depended on this relationship. The affairs of state were, therefore, necessarily religious, and the religious practices of sacrifice and divination had inherently political implications. The most frequent topics for divination included: sacrifices, military campaigns, hunting expeditions, excursions, the coming day, night, or ten-day week, the weather, agriculture, sickness, childbirth, dreams, and settlement building, etc.

The idea of Heaven as a personal deity began to fade into the background, however, as Chinese culture went through a process of rationalization during the time of the East Zhou 东周 (770-256 BC). But even today the concept of the "Heavenly Father" is still very common in Chinese folk religions.

In contrast to those Neo-Confucians of the 16th and 17th centuries who followed Ricci, the Modern Christian Confucians have discerned that, although the Chinese Heaven and the Christian God are similar in many respects, they also differ

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Shujing, Tian of Confucius and of Shijing, Tian of Confucius and of Laozi, and Tian of Confucius and of Mozi.

607 They are the earliest archaeological discovery, where Chinese writing system was found.
608 See Keightley 1978, 33-35.
609 See Appendix IV: "Degeneration".
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in many other aspects. One may ask, for example, whether Heaven can be the object of prayer as a transcendent static object-lying-beyond-the-limits. A negative response can be found in Confucius' attitude towards prayer, since Confucius understood prayer as connected to both monotheism and polytheism.

He Shiming outlines the following important features of Confucian prayer: First, the ancient Chinese worshipped both the Sovereign on High and many other spirits. Second, the Sovereign or Heaven was worshipped together with the ancestors. In addition, it was only the Emperor, the so-called Son of Heaven, who had the right to sacrifice to Heaven, which meant that the Son of Heaven gradually came to occupy the position of Heaven.

In considering the issue whether the concept of transcendence in its static sense indeed appears in Confucianism, these elements should not be ignored. As far as I can see, Modern Christian Confucians have correctly stressed the existence of transcendence in its static sense (the-object-lying-beyond-the-limits) in Ancient Confucianism. Such a claim is similar to that of Matteo Ricci in the 16th-17th centuries; though in other respects the views of Ricci and Modern Christian Confucians do not converge. Modern Christian Confucians, however, do not accept

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611 Nikkilä says that there is no one other than Heaven to pray to be actually a form of monotheism, and that there are several kinds of spirits toward which the expiation rites can be directed is a form of polytheism. He explains that this paradoxical acceptance of both monotheism and polytheism is resolved by considering Heaven as the supreme monotheistic God, whereas, the many kinds of spirits under this Heaven could as well be affected by prayers. See Nikkilä 1992, 30.
612 The reference to Shujing. Yushu — in He Shiming 1996 (2), 22 indicates that when Yao abdicated and handed over the crown to Shun, not only was sacrifice performed for the Sovereign on High, but also cold, heat, sun, moon, star, the natural phenomenon of dryness, mountain and river, and various other spirits also received sacrificed.
613 The reference to Shujing. Jiaotesheng in He Shiming 1996 (2), 22-23 says that all things are based on Heaven, and Human beings stem from their ancestors; thus, ancestors should also be worshipped together with the Sovereign on High. Another quotation from Xiaojing. Shengzhi indicates the same custom.
614 There are two quotations from Liji. Liyun and Quli xia in He Shiming 1996 (2), 23-24 which suggest the special right of the Son of Heaven in worshipping Heaven.
615 He Shiming 1996 (2), 24. In fact, the religion of the Shang aristocracy centered on the king and his relationship with his departed ancestors. In a Heavenly realm that paralleled the earthly royal court, these ancestors served under a god called Di (Sovereign, Lord) or Shangdi (Sovereign on High, High Lord or Lord Above). There were also lesser gods who personified the powers of mountains, rivers, and other natural features. Di had power to control or influence natural and human phenomena, such as the weather, the success of crops, the success of royal hunting expeditions and military campaigns, and the health of the king, over which the king's ancestors also had power. The ancestors could also intercede on behalf of the king with Di himself (it is most likely that Di was considered as being male), a position that made the ancestors extremely important in Shang theology and government.
Ricci’s argument that the Christian God is equal to the Chinese Shangdi (or Tian). What they say is that transcendence was not a strange concept for the ancient Chinese.

In addition to these arguments for and against transcendence in the Confucian tradition, another interpretation of the concept of transcendence can also be understood as the capacity of consciousness to objectify itself and step back to look at itself. This notion of transcendence has popular roots in Kant, developed further in Hegel (1770-1831), and holds currency among contemporary Thomist theologians such as Karl Rahner, who has offered his notion of self-consciousness as the transcendence of moral will and life. He has taken them to testify to the transcendent God, who is the ultimate explanatory context of all potentially knowable things.

Except for Zhang Junmai (1886-1973), a Chinese contemporary philosopher who has been influenced by Kant, not many Confucians have discussed this sense of "transcendence" in China. Zhang Junmai advances a pluralistic epistemology, meaning that, on the one hand, sensations are not representations of external things, but, on the other hand, eternal order exists independently of us, even though we may have no knowledge at all.

For Zhang, internal order is another element of cognition, and he has divided internal order into two categories: a priori cognitive forms (transcendent intuitive forms) and a priori logical forms (logical postulates). Zhang considers a priori cognitive forms, or, transcendent intuitive forms, as the third element of cognition.

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616 Immanuel Kant's Antinomies, from the Critique of Pure Reason, are contradictions that he believed follow necessarily from our attempts to conceive the nature of transcendent reality. Kant thought that certain of his Antinomies (God and Freedom) could be resolved as "Postulates of Practical Reason." Here the view is that the Antinomies cannot be resolved and that attempts to conceive the transcendent will always produce irresolvable contradictions. This does not mean that there is no transcendent or that attempts to conceive the transcendent are meaningless. They are, just as Kant said, necessitated by reason itself. It does mean, however, that the transcendent defeats rational representation. See Kant 1999, Critique of Pure Reason. Cambridge University Press.


619 Neville 2000, 150.

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which forms the ground for the possibility of cognition.\textsuperscript{621}

Thus, there are three kinds of transcendent intuitive forms: space, time, and the subject-object relation. For Zhang space is nothing but the form of all appearance for our external sense,\textsuperscript{622} time is nothing but the form of all appearance of our inner sense,\textsuperscript{623} and in cognition the relation between known and the knower is internal and such that the two are inseparable.\textsuperscript{624} Zhang has, in fact, developed his ideas from those of Kant. I will not discuss Kant’s concept of transcendence itself, but only note that Zhang’s argument has not raised much attention among Confucians in China, and little has been said about the transcendence of God in this sense. In the discussion of the Confucian responses to the transcendent nature of the Christian God, such a notion of transcendence has not played an important role.

What has thus far been said indicates that transcendence has been an important theme in the Confucian commentaries on the thesis of salvation by God.

It can be generally concluded that the Ancient Confucian primary scriptures, such as the Five Classics, relay a concept of transcendence as a static object-lying-beyond-the-limits which bears similarity to the Christian God, especially during the Shang Dynasty before Confucius. This idea of transcendence as a personal deity gradually degenerated over time from theism to humanism in Confucianism.\textsuperscript{625} However, a modern Chinese contextual theology can be built on the basis of the personal deity Sovereign on High and Heaven, and the two concepts appear very frequently in ancient Confucian classics.

In Neo-Confucianism Taiji, Li, Dao, and Heaven all seem to have much to do with transcendence, but it is difficult to define clearly what “transcendence” is. Cultural Nationalist Confucianism in particular speaks of transcendence mainly in its dynamic sense in reference to transcending (= going beyond) one moral stages to higher moral stages. Modern Christian Confucians affirm again the similarities between Christian transcendence and that of Ancient Confucianism, but they have

\textsuperscript{621} This can be compared with Kant.
\textsuperscript{622} Zhang Junmai 1936, 69.
\textsuperscript{623} Zhang Junmai 1936, 72.
\textsuperscript{624} Zhang Junmai 1936, 80.
\textsuperscript{625} See Appendix IV: “Degeneration”.

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also recognized various differences; and on this point they have not completely followed Matteo Ricci.

5.2 Transcendence of the Christian God and that of the Chinese Heaven

I have thus far analyzed the issue whether a concept of transcendence plays a role in Confucianism. I now focus on the comparison between the transcendence of the Christian God and that of the Chinese Heaven. The main issue here is whether we can consider the Confucian Heaven as *transcendent* and the Christian God as *immanent*. Why ask such a question and to whom is it problematic? This is a very important question both to those who wish to establish a Chinese contextual theology on the basis of Confucianism and to those who wish to reject Christianity via a strong Confucian stand. This question necessitates investigation into two statements found in the Confucian commentaries: 1) The Chinese Heaven is understood in terms of internal transcendence. 2) The Christian God is understood in terms of external transcendence.

As early as the 16th and 17th centuries, some Neo-Confucians already considered Confucian Heaven as transcendent when they commented on the Christian God introduced by Roman Catholic missionaries such as Matteo Ricci.626 For the Cultural Nationalist Confucians, Mou Zongsan 卜中三 and Tang Junyi 唐君毅, it posed no problem to refer to the Christian God as transcendent. They came to the conclusion that the Christian God is transcendent but not immanent and that Confucian Heaven is both transcendent and immanent.627 Modern Confucians such as Liu Shuxian 刘述先 and Du Weiming 杜维明 also support the argument that the Confucian Heaven is transcendent.628 This issue has become an important topic since 1980 in China.

Cultural Nationalist Confucians have understood “internal transcendence” as “both transcendent and immanent”, and have considered “external transcendence”

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626 Gernet has studied this issue in details, see Gernet 1985.
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only as transcendent and not immanent. This is very difficult to understand how the Chinese Heaven can be “both transcendent and immanent”. Through the following analysis I hope to find an answer to two questions: 1) Is the Chinese Heaven internal transcendence? 2) Is the Christian God external transcendence? Clearly such an opinion concerning external transcendence and internal transcendence has been supported and developed by various scholars. Yu Yingshi and Tang Yijie, for example, accept the distinction between external transcendence and internal transcendence. After studying the encounter between Christianity and Confucianism in the 16th and 17th centuries, Gernet and Sun Shangyang have also reached similar conclusions in dividing external transcendence from internal transcendence. All these scholars argue that Christianity emphasizes transcendence, but Confucianism stresses immanence. Some Western scholars of Confucianism, such as David Hall and Roger Ames, also take immanence as the defining characteristic of Confucianism.

Are they correct in doing so? In this section, I seek to answer this question by analyzing Confucian responses to both of these two issues. In doing so, I will employ the definitions I established at the beginning of this chapter as a tool to analyze the Confucian understandings by comparing the concept of Chinese Heaven as internal transcendence (i.e., as both transcendent and immanent) with the concept of the Christian God as external transcendence (i.e., as only transcendent and not immanent).

629 It was Tang Junyi, who was among the first Confucians, considered the Christian God as external transcendence, i.e., only transcendent but not immanent, and it was Tang who considered the Confucian Heaven as internal transcendence, i.e., as both transcendent and immanent. See Tang 1953, 320, 329-338.
630 Yu Yingshi 1992. Tang Yijie 1991c. Concerning these two people, see my introduction to Confucianism and Confucians. In fact, Matteo Ricci already used the terms and considered Christian "external transcendence" superior to Confucian "internal transcendence".
631 See Gernet 1985. This literature is an important secondary source for the present study. Gernet has argued through the whole of his book the idea that China cannot accept really Christianity. Even if one converted to Christianity, the faith that he receives is in fact a mixture of Chinese thinking and Christianity. The reason for this situation lies in the difference between Western and Chinese history.
632 See Sun Shangyang 1994. Sun has also held a similar opinion as Gernet, and they both trace the different ways of thinking between the Westerners and Chinese to the philosophy of ancient Greece.
634 Concerning the definition of “transcendental”, one may refer to Burrell’s “Transcendentals” in WD 1983, 577-578. Aristotle taught that predicates such as “one”, “being”, “good”, and “true” (“beautiful” is sometimes added to the list as well, for analogous reasons), are transcendental, as their use transcends the limits of the categories.
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5.2.1 Neo- and Cultural Nationalist Confucian arguments: The Chinese Heaven as internal transcendence.

The theory of internal transcendence is not directly derived from Confucian ideas of Christianity, but is developed from the Neo-Confucian theory of unity between Heaven and humanity in *Zhongyong*. The book reads: "What Heaven imparts to man is called human nature. To follow our nature is called the Way (Dao). Cultivating the Way is called education." Zhu Xi (1130-1200), the main figure of Neo-Confucianism, remarks on this passage by saying:

First, it shows clearly that the origin of the Way is traced to Heaven and is unchangeable, while its concrete substance is complete in ourselves and may not be departed from. Next, it speaks of the essentials of preserving, nourishing, and examining the mind. Finally, it speaks of the meritorious achievements and transforming influence of the sage and the spirit man in their highest degree.

However, this theory of unity between Heaven and humanity was best explained by Mencius (371-289? BC). Mencius says that there are Four Beginnings imparted by Heaven to man:

The feeling of commiseration is the principle of humanity. The feeling of shame and dislike is the principle of righteousness. The feeling of modesty and complaisance is the principle of propriety. The feeling of approving and disapproving is the principle of knowledge. (Mencius 3:6)

In the Part A of *Jinxin* (13A:15) Mencius reads:

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635 Its author is Zisi (492-431 BC), the grandson of Confucius, and this book has become one of the Four Books.

636 See Chan 1963, 98. He Shiming also says in 1996 (1), 34-35: Heaven has been conferred on the nature of Human beings; once a person follows his nature, he follows thus the path of Heaven. Through such a way, He says, the Heaven of morality is gradually becoming the intrinsic Heaven. The distinction between Heaven and man is disappeared step by step.
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The ability possessed by men without having been acquired by learning is intuitive ability, and the knowledge possessed by them without the exercise of thought is their intuitive knowledge.

Thus, 13A:1 reads:

He who has exhausted all his mental constitution knows his nature. Knowing his nature, he knows Heaven. To preserve one's mental constitution, and nourish one's nature, is the way to serve Heaven.

Thus, Mencius has understood the unity between Heaven and humanity as

All things are already complete in us. There is no greater delight than to be conscious of sincerity on self-examination. If one acts with a vigorous effort at the law of reciprocity, when he seeks for the realization of perfect virtue, nothing can be closer than his approximation to it. (Mencius 13:4)

The unity between Heaven and humanity was developed to the highest level by the Cheng brothers in 11th-12th centuries. For Cheng Yi 程颐 (1033-1107) the heart of one person is the heart of Heaven and earth, and the principle of one thing is the principle of all things.\(^637\) For Cheng’s elder brother Cheng Hao 程颢 (1032-1085), benevolent people are the same to all the world.\(^638\) Lu Jiuyuan 陆九渊 (1139-1193) says, mind is principle, and there is no difference between mind and principle; his motto "My mind is the universe, and the universe is my mind" has become very famous.\(^639\)

Therefore, from Zisi 子思, Mencius 孟子 to the Cheng brothers and Lu Jiuyuan the unity between Heaven and humanity has become an established doctrine. Heaven is principle, principle is mind, mind is in human beings, and there is no distinction between the inside and outside of human beings. Thus, it is understandable why the Neo-Confucians in the late Ming Dynasty could not accept the Christian God introduced by Matteo Ricci, since for the Neo-Confucians at that

\(^{637}\) See Chan 1963, 544-5547. "The rationalistic tendency in Cheng' I [Cheng Yi]. This quotation is similar to Indian Upanisadi’s Great sentence “atman on brahman”.

\(^{638}\) See Chan 1963, 518-522 "The idealistic tendency in Ch'eng Hao [Cheng Hao]".

\(^{639}\) See Chan 1963, 572-574 "The unity of mind and principle in Lu Hsiang-shan [Lu Xiangshan (Jiuyuan)]".
time there is only one world which unites both human beings and all that is outside them. Deep in Neo-Confucian thinking is no necessity for God. Therefore, apart from some Neo-Confucians who converted to Christianity, many other Neo-Confucians could not accept the Christian notion of external transcendence (i.e., a personal God).

As loyal followers of Neo-Confucianism,\(^640\) Cultural Nationalist Confucians have followed the viewpoint that Heaven and human beings are of same substance. This means that they not only claim an unity between Heaven and humanity, but they also argue that they are of same substance.

For Tang Junyi 唐君毅, for example, one of the main Cultural Nationalist Confucians, the essence of religion is a faith in “transcendence”, which is the Absolute Existence of Spiritual Life and the Metaphysical Transcendent Absolute Spirit of the Universal Objective Universe, which is the Absolute Life of Universe.\(^641\)

Tang says that such transcendence is God for westerners and Heaven to the Chinese.\(^642\) However, God is different from Heaven, although they both are transcendent. As far as the Chinese Heaven is concerned, Cultural Nationalist Confucians have called it internal transcendence, which means that Chinese Heaven is both transcendent and immanent (i.e., Heaven and human beings are of the same substance).\(^643\)

Moreover, Mou Songzan 牟中三, another Cultural Nationalist Confucian, says that the essence of God is the infinite wisdom heart, which both transcends the world and indwells in the world.\(^644\) From the subjective viewpoint Heaven is called the “nature of people”, which is immanent in human beings. From the objective viewpoint Heaven is called “Heavenly Dao”, which transcends human beings.\(^645\)

Are these arguments correct?

Tang Junyi 唐君毅 considered Heaven to be ontologically no different from

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\(^{641}\) Tang 1953, 320, 329.

\(^{642}\) Tang 1953, 331-332.

\(^{643}\) Tang 1953, 320, 329-338.

\(^{644}\) Mou 1985, 243-244, 255.

\(^{645}\) Mou 1963, 20, 95.
human beings in terms of substance, since Heaven indwells inside “me”.\textsuperscript{646} This indwelling is generally understood as unity between Heaven and humanity. Tang called this unity between God and humanity the one,\textsuperscript{647} \textit{i.e.}, Heaven and human beings are of same substance.\textsuperscript{648}

Based on the above definitions “transcendence” and “transcendental” of mine, these Confucians’ Heaven cannot be ontologically transcendent. Militating against such a notion of ontological transcendence is what we must recognize as the qualitative difference between God and human beings: God is \textit{a se} and \textit{non ab alio}, but human beings are \textit{ab alio}.\textsuperscript{649} This is to say, God is not dependent upon human beings and the creation, but the latter is dependent upon God, and this state of dependence constitutes the ontological distinction between them.\textsuperscript{650} Therefore, if transcendence is understood in its static sense, according to my earlier definition as the-object-lying-beyond-the-limits, then the Confucian Chinese Heaven is not transcendent ontologically, since the Chinese Heaven and human beings are of same substance and Heaven does not transcend the world but constitutes and indwells it.\textsuperscript{651}

Epistemologically Tang emphasized that, in respect to epistemology, Heaven is known through the meditation of one’s own heart and nature, since “I” and all others are born from Heaven. Thus, we know Heaven through our own nature, since the “my own” benevolent heart and nature both transcend me and indwell “me”.\textsuperscript{652} According to this definition, this form of transcendence is, in epistemological terms, God’s incomprehensibility, which might seem to be equivalent to the comprehensive unknowable that pertains to some types of mysticism; but it might also be interpreted as a more limited form of unknowing and, combined with a doctrine of revelation, allow for the assertion that it is the believer in Christ who is truly aware of God’s

\textsuperscript{646} Tang 1953, 332.  
\textsuperscript{647} Tang 1953, 334.  
\textsuperscript{648} Cheng Mingdao, later Neo-Confucian in the Song dynasty, corrected Zhang Zai’s ”unity between heaven and humanity, arguing that, they are of one and the same substance. See Cheng & Cheng 1973. Cultural Nationalist Confucian Mou Zongsan holds also to an ontology that describes Heaven and Human beings as of the same substance, Heaven indwells Human beings, see Mou 1985, 139-141.  
\textsuperscript{650} Cf., Luo 2001, 255.  
\textsuperscript{651} Mou 1985, 139-141.  
\textsuperscript{652} Tang Junyi 1953, 330.
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incomprehensibility.⁶⁵³

This mode of incomprehensibility is, indeed, not only an important element in the history of Roman and Orthodox Catholicism, but it is found as an epistemological caveat in Protestantism as well. According to Lutheran theology, for example, God is Deus absconditus; i.e., God hides Himself even when He reveals Himself to human beings. His necessary hiddenness (Deus revelatus atque absconditus)⁶⁵⁴ indicates his epistemological transcendence of all who would know Him.⁶⁵⁵

For Cultural Nationalist Confucians, however, Heaven can be comprehended by observing the principle of the world and by meditating on the heart and on the nature of human beings.⁶⁵⁶ Therefore, the Confucian Chinese Heaven is not transcendent epistemologically in the same sense in which Christians call their God transcendent.

Based on the above analysis Chinese Heaven is immanent in the following senses:

First, Heaven is immanent in the sense that Heaven indwells the world. Mou Zongsan and Tang Junyi, for example, assert that the transcendance of the Confucian Heaven is immanent in the hearts of human beings and in their nature.⁶⁵⁷ Thus, Heaven and the world (including human beings) are not “separated” from each other. And one can in this sense better understand the Modern Boston Confucian “transcendence as defining the self” as well as the Christian imago Dei.

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⁶⁵⁴ Macquarrie’s “Deus Absconditus” in WD 1983, 155. Tang argues that Heaven in itself is an absolute, universal, and objective metaphysical reality, but Heaven also expresses itself in me and is confined to human subjectivity. Thus, Heaven is simultaneously objective and subjective, both transcends and is beyond us and dwells and is within us. According to John Mcquarrie’s definition to “immanentism” Luo Bingxiang considers Tang Junyi as immanentism, since Tang’s view of Heaven is “a view of God which stresses his immanence or indwelling in the world at the expense of his transcendance…The symbol of depth rather than height has been applied to God, suggesting that he is the inner principle that expresses itself in the world process rather than an external power separate an independent from the world”. Macquarrie 1983b, 287. Thus, Luo says, “If we replace the word ‘God’ with the word ‘Heaven’ in this account by Macquarrie, I think this account will be a fair summary of Tang’s explanation of the Confucian Heaven.” See Luo 2005a, 369.
⁶⁵⁶ Mou has once quoted from Mencius saying that one who does his best to know his heart knows his own nature; and one who knows his nature, will comprehend what Heaven is. Cf., Mou 1985, 139-141.
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Secondly, Heaven and human beings are of the same substance. This means that they are ontologically the same and that there is no real distinction between Heaven and humanity. To the Cultural Nationalist Confucians Tang and Mou this idea means that Heaven is immanent, which means here that the substance of Heaven and human beings are identical. But this view leads to pantheism, which means here that all are gods and God is in all. Indeed, the Cultural Nationalist Fang Dongmei 方东美 (Thome H. Fang, 1899-1977) has termed this immanence pantheism. His position is based on the doctrine or belief that God is not personal but that all laws, forces, manifestations, etc., of the self-existing universe are God; in other words, it is the belief that God is everything and everything is God.

On the one hand, no doubt, these thinkers share some similarities. Comparing, for example, Fang's view of God with that of the three main monotheistic religious traditions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam), one can note that they share a very strong emphasis on the transcendence of God, evidently grounded in their scriptures and later philosophically clarified by the assimilation of certain categories of Greek philosophy, such as the opposition between the infinite (God) and the finite (all other beings).

On the other hand, from a Western point of view, some positions seem somewhat different from one another and need to be clarified. For the West advances different views of God, such as deism, theism and pantheism. Deism is the belief in a transcendent God who has created the world but who, as a Sovereign Being above the world (and, as in the case of Aristotle, uncaring of the world) no longer turns His attention to it. Theism is the same belief, but highly enriched by notions originating from God's revelation: the God of theism is personal, caring, and saving. Pantheism is the belief that the world is the body of God and that God is the world, all things

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658 In the Neo-Confucian Zhang Zai’s 张载 (1020-1077) words, all things are made from the same substance, which is called material when it is collected together and is called air when it is scattered into different places (Ju ze wei wu, san ze wei qi 聚则为物, 散则为气). Appendix VII: “Li and Qi”.
659 He defines the Supreme Being, or God, which is set at the top of his hierarchy, as Deus Altissimus (God the highest), meaning that God is above everyone and everything and ruling everyone and everything. He defines God as Mysteriously Mysterious Mystery to indicate that God is unfathomable and that there are no words to describe Him (or Her). This can be called negative-theology, which acknowledges that God is utterly unknowable, and that it is possible only to describe what God is not (via negativa). Finally, he defines God as Deus Absconditus (hidden God), to mean that God is
existing in Him.

Fang’s disciple Zhang Zhengdong has interpreted Fang’s spiritual and God-permeated view of the universe as pantheism. In any case, I think that a pure immanentism can end only in pantheism or atheism. Many contemporary theologians believe that the traditional stress on divine transcendence needs to be considerably modified in the direction of a greater recognition of immanence, and they have advocated various forms of pantheism.

Thirdly, in its dynamic sense, Confucians emphasize “actively going beyond some limit”. Thus, to transcend means to partake consciously in that which is beyond the subject.

Fourth, in its static sense, as earlier I mentioned, in Ancient Confucianism Heaven was transcendent, and Heaven and human beings were not of same substance. I have also mentioned that in the Ancient Confucian primary scriptures, such as the Five Classics, there appears the concept of transcendence as a static personal-deity-lying-beyond-the-limits, which is similar to the Christian God, especially in the form the concept took during the Shang Dynasty.

This concept of personal deity, however, later gradually degenerated in a transition from theism to atheism in the development of Confucianism. By the 11\textsuperscript{th} century, Heaven and human beings were considered to be of the same substance, and since then Heaven has no longer been considered transcendent. It had evolved into quite a different concept, more akin to an \textit{a priori} principle, especially in the thought of such scholars as the Neo-Confucians Zhang Zai 张载 and Cheng Hao. Zhang put forward the idea of "the unity between Heaven and humanity" and Cheng Hao developed it to "the Same One between Heaven and humanity", \textit{i.e.}, Heaven and

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immanent (hidden) inside every being, be it human or not, secretly and mysteriously helping each being to grow and to elevate itself. Cf., Fang 1980.

660 Zhang Zhendong 1989, 206-207: “In the highest sphere of the cosmos there is a spiritual energy; this energy pervades every Human being, living being, or thing in all corners of the universe. It is thanks to this energy that the world can grow and ascend, thanks to this energy that the life value of humans can find their satisfaction, and humans can be uplifted and reach the position of divinity... This energy from above pervades the world lying below, and there is no place where it has not infiltrated. This energy makes the whole natural world mystified and spiritualized. Therefore, every single sphere of the cosmos contains a sacred value.”

661 Maquarrie’s “Immanetism” in WD 1983, 287.


663 See the beginning of Chapter 3 and Appendix IV: “Degeneration” in this study.
human beings are of the same substance. Cultural Nationalist Confucianism has taken this as the authoritative thinking of Confucianism. 664

These Confucians say that Heaven is transcendent neither in the sense that Heaven and human beings are of different substances nor in the sense that Heaven and human beings are separated from each other. This assertion is problematic, however, since in Neo-Confucianism and Cultural Nationalist Confucianism, Heaven and human beings are one and of same substance, and they were not originally separate and two. 665

In addition, the Boston Confucians consider transcendence as a principle of explanation, thus, Neo-Confucian Taiji, Li and Qi, and the Cultural Nationalists’ Heaven, Dao, and Earth can be said to be transcendent in this sense.

Most Confucians (except Boston and Christian Confucians) consider Heaven as internal transcendence, but such a thesis cannot be warranted. Since according to the static sense of transcendence defined in the beginning of this chapter, most Confucians are monists and pantheists. All things in the world are different manifestations of the same Principle, and the difference among things exists only how a thing is formed by different forms of material: Wu 物 (material) is the visible material, and Qi 气 (Air) is the invisible material. Tian 天 (Heaven) is Li 理 (Principle), and Li (Principle) is Xing 性 (human nature), and they are two sides of the same coin. Existing in the nature and the world it is called “the Objective Principle”, and it is called “the Subjective human nature” when it exists in humanity. This is obvious monistic view of point. Li exists forever everywhere and never disappears, thus, this understanding is very similar to pantheism.

5.2.2 Cultural Nationalist and Modern Confucian arguments: The Christian God as external transcendence.

Cultural Nationalist and Modern Confucians have regarded the Christian God as

664 Zhang Zai said that Heaven and Human beings are united together as one (tianren he yi), but Cheng Mingdao said that Heaven and Human beings are one (tianren tong yi) and there is no distinction between them (tuan ren bu er). Cf. Zhang Zai 1978, 65, 183; and Cheng Hao & Cheng Yi 1973. See also Luo 2001, 247-248.

665 Luo has also argued that Cultural Nationalist Confucian Heaven is not transcendent. See Luo 2001, 253-260.
external transcendence, which means that, for them, the Christian God is transcendent but not immanent. For no one doubts that He is transcendent, the nature of his transcendence must be clarified. In this section I will focus on this issue by analyzing the Cultural Nationalist Confucian arguments whether the Christian God is immanent or not, since such arguments give good reason, on the contrary, to define the Christian God as external transcendence.

The arguments of the Cultural Nationalist Confucians Mou Zongsan牟中三 and Cai Renhou蔡仁厚

In order to prove their conception of God, the Cultural Nationalist Confucians argue that the Christian God is not “tactful”. They interpreted the term "tact" to mean a keen sense of what should be said or done in order to avoid offending others. It is a skill in dealing with difficult situations, and it is a capacity to discern what is appropriate.

Within a tactful religion there is no distinction between "subject", (i.e., human mind) and "object" (i.e., the world). Good and evil are only different perspectives, and essentially they are the same. Based on this concept of the tactful, the Christian God has been described by Cultural Nationalist Confucians as separate from human beings. Thus, Christianity is not tactful, since God cannot exercise tact in His relations with that from which He is separate. God cannot reach the highest level of relationship to the world that should pertain to religion. The Confucians suggest that the concept of God as external should be transformed into an infinite heart which exists inside the nature of human beings; and through such a transformation everyone could be enabled to reach the top level of the stages of moral development. Actually, in my opinion, Cai’s argument is closely related to the issue of religious pluralism, since Cultural Nationalist Confucians say that we should respect and not offend any religion.

Based on the understanding that “immanent” refers to the same substance between Heaven and human beings, Cultural Nationalist Confucians argue that the

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666 Tang 1953, 336, 338.
Christian God is not immanent but is alienated from human beings. Cultural Nationalist Confucian Mou Zongsan employed the incarnation of the Logos and the Trinity as examples to explain the reasons behind the alienation between God and human beings in Christianity. Incarnation is defined the event wherein the Logos (God) becomes human, and it does not pertain to the notion of the human achievement of becoming God through moral cultivation.  

The life of Jesus Christ manifested God to human beings; the goodness of Jesus derived from God, and the divinity of Jesus Christ was not developed from his humanity. Thus, for Mou, the Christian God and human beings are alienated from each other. Mou says that while there was the manifestation of goodness in Jesus, this goodness has not been shared by human beings. The goodness was shown in three forms: God the Father (in-Himself), Jesus Christ the Son (for-Himself), and the Holy Spirit (in-and-for Himself).  

Let us focus on the problems of Mou’s argument.

Chen Jiafu 陈家富 has noted the contradiction in Mou's arguments between his notion of the incarnation and that of the Trinity. On the one hand, the incarnation indicates that the infinite has been shown in the finite; but on the other hand, the whole thrust of the incarnation is that God comes into flesh rather than that humanity achieves Godhood; thus, the life of Jesus has not shown the infinite heart-mind because of his taking as a human form but because the incarnation has shown that God has become flesh.

Such an approach of Mou seems to have been influenced by Hegel's theory of the Trinity. Mou himself has suggested this, and has considered Father, Son and Holy Spirit as three stages of the Christian God. Mou's three stages of God were

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668 Mou 1975, 453.
669 Mou 1963, 66.
671 Chen 2002, 234.
673 Mou 1963, 452. Here it is necessary to notice that, according to Christian tradition, Jesus Christ is both God and man, and His divine and human natures can neither be alienated nor confused. Mou did not mention this when he talked about Christology and the incarnation.
674 Cf., also Chen Jiafu 2002, 234-239.
675 Mou 1989, 118.
676 Mou 1963, 67: "The first stage is called "Holy Father Stage". The Holy Father is God Himself, who is the highest existence; of course, He is self-existent... Hegel has called this "God in itself"... "In
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based on Hegel's logic of self-existence-alienation-reunion, the hyphenated order of which shows both the process\textsuperscript{677} and the establishment of relationship\textsuperscript{678} determinative of God. Mou has considered the Christian God as alienated and non-immanent.

If one keeps in mind that Hegel’s interpretation of the Trinity is based on his concept of Marxist historical dialectical process, Mou will be better understood in reference to Hegel and Mou’s interpretation is not correct. Indeed some controversies have arisen concerning Mou’s argument when he quotes Hegel: on the one hand, Mou has employed Hegel's philosophy to approach an understanding of the Christian God; but, on the other hand, Mou still employs the transcendence of God as the starting point to interpret Hegel's concept of Trinity. Thus, Mou, as a result, rejected the feature of God as living and relating to the world.\textsuperscript{679} Chen Jiafu has doubted Mou’s idea by referring to Tillich, but Chen did not point out how one can affirm that human beings can become identity or oneness with Heaven through their own effort. The latter idea is in fact the essence of Mou in the Confucian-Christian dialogue.

Therefore, if “immanent” refers to the idea that God and human beings are of same substance, as some Confucians argue, I then agree that the Christian God is not immanent. However, if “immanent” refers to the idea that God and human beings are not separated but are of a different substance, I have to confess that the Christian God is immanent.

Mou grounds, in fact, his religious epistemology on an ontology that the nature of human heart-mind reveals the nature of Heaven because they are of one and the same nature. Heaven is heart-mind objectively speaking, and heart-mind is Heaven subjectively speaking, and they are two aspects of one and the same

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\textsuperscript{677} According to Hegel God is not an unchanging self-existing entity. Within God Himself there is an eternal process of motion. God is an other-being, which is alienated from itself through its expression. This other-being at last returns to itself and becomes a Living God. See Chen 2002 236.

\textsuperscript{678} Cf., Chen 2002, 236-237.

\textsuperscript{679} Cf. also Chen 2002, 237, 239. Concerning Mou's opinion that the Christian God is not tactful, in addition to employing Hegel's philosophy, one may also see Chen Jiafu’s reference to Paul Tillich's
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being/substance (tong yi benti 同一本体). The language of the “union of Heaven and human beings” in classical Confucian text is also a matter of expediency (“union” seems to suggest a prior separation and distinction), and it means, in fact, “the oneness or identity of Heaven and human beings”.\textsuperscript{680} Such a complete oneness or identity of Heaven and human beings is not explicit in Confucius and Mencius but was developed in the Neo-Confucianism of the Song and Ming dynasties.\textsuperscript{681} In this understanding, there is “identification” of the objective ultimate reality and the substance within human beings, thus, Heaven and “Xing 性” (the nature of human beings) are the objective and subjective aspects of one and the same metaphysical reality.\textsuperscript{682} To use the words of Rudolf Otto in his Mysticism East and West, which is a comparative analysis of the mystics of Echart and Shankara, such an immanentist ontology for anthropology claims not only Deo unitum esse (to be united with God) but unum esse cum Deo (to be one with God), to be indeed the One itself, the unio as complete and Absolut identity.\textsuperscript{683}

Mou’s idea of the Christian God as non-immanent falls into too many difficulties to be tenable. I have above defined “immanent” as “God’s immanence” or as “God indwelling the world”. This definition, in fact, emphasizes that God and the world are not separated even though they are separate. In this sense the Christian God cannot be considered as non-immanent, either.\textsuperscript{684}

The importance of this issue is that we have to notice the different meanings of the concept “immanence” for the Cultural Nationalist Mou and Christian theologians. It is true that traditionally the Christian God has been considered as transcendent, with His immanence playing a much smaller theological role. However, the situation is presently changing.\textsuperscript{685}

\textsuperscript{680} Mou 1985, 134, 139-140, 141.
\textsuperscript{681} Mou 1969, 17, 21-29.
\textsuperscript{682} Mou 1963, 32-39, 95, 99.
\textsuperscript{684} One may refer to my definitions to “transcendence, immanence, separate” and “separated” in the beginning of this chapter. One may refer to Henry 1997, 88-93, 206; also Marsh 1994, 20-24.
\textsuperscript{685} In fact, it is a new trend in modern theology to emphasize the immanence of the Christian God. Traditionally the Christian God is primarily a transcendent God, but much modern theology has sought to give more emphasis to divine immanence. The symbol of depth rather than height has been applied
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In order to criticize Confucian ideas concerning the immanence of the Christian God, it is helpful to refer to Lai Pinchao’s study.  

First, Lai emphasizes that we should not rely only upon certain theologians such as Barth or Tillich in discussing about the transcendence and immanence of God. On the contrary, we should rely on the generally accepted Christian heritage of the Apostles’ Creed, the Nicean Creed, the Chalcedon Creed and the Athanasian Creed. Only though such an approach can one find the real representative doctrines of Christianity concerning God. 

Secondly, referring to Ephesians 4:6, Lai points out three relationships between God and human beings: 1) God is above all; 2) God is through all; and 3) God is in all. Through an understanding of the Trinity, the Incarnation, and Pneumatology Lai denies that the Christian God is transcendent but not immanent. 

Connecting theories in these three areas with the biblical quotation above, Lai says, God as the Father is “above all” and no one has ever seen Him (John 1:18); God as the incarnate son of God is “through all” (John 1:14); and God as Holy Spirit is “in all”. Thirdly, referring to the ancient Church Fathers, Lai says, in addition to omniscientia, omnipotentia, omnisapientia and omnisufficientia, God is also ubiquitas and omnipraesentia. Referring to Lutheran theology, Lai says, the human nature of Jesus Christ is omnipraesentia generalis; and, even in status humiliationis after the incarnation of the Logos, His human nature is still omnipraesentia intimasive partialis.

The arguments of the Modern Confucians Liu Shuxian 刘述先 and Du Weiming 杜维明

Du says, “We can define the Confucian way of being religious as ultimate self-transformation as a communal act and as a faithful dialogical response to the

to God, suggesting that he is the inner principle that expresses itself in the world-process rather than an external power separate and independent from the world. Cf., Maquarrie’s (1983b) “Immanetism” in WD, 287.

Lai 2005, 43-89.
Lai 2005, 43-47, 64.
Lai 2005, 64-65.
Lai 2005, 55.

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transcendent." There are two essential points in Du’s understanding of Confucian transcendence. On the one hand, the Confucian faith in the perfectibility of human nature through self-effort is, strictly speaking, a faith in self-transcendence. On the other hand, such a faith rests on an ontological assertion: “Ontologically, selfhood, our original nature, is endowed by Heaven. It is therefore divine in its all-embracing fullness. Selfhood, in this sense, is both immanent and transcendental.”

Du Weiming tones down the pantheistic or pantheistic heritage from his teacher Mou Zongsan, and Du avoids the phrase “the oneness or identity of Heaven and human beings”, and he speaks of “the mutuality of Heaven and man”. It is, however, problematic that like Liu Shuxian Du Weiming does not consider the Christian God as immanent, because, in their opinion, God is separated and alienated from human beings. They often quote Karl Barth's "The Wholly Other" as evidence to support their argument. Liu interprets "Wholly Other" as "the Absolute Other Existence" (juedui de tazai 绝对的他在), which is alienated and separated from human beings. Du Weiming interprets it as "the Totally Other One" (quanran de tazhe 全然的他者). Claiming that the Christian God is not immanent, i.e., alienated from human beings. This notion is based on such an interpretation of "the Wholly Other" and is, therefore, quite a weak argument.

On the one hand, Barth's "Wholly Other" does not refer to God as separated from human beings, but to God as separate, i.e., totally different from human beings; and in this sense God is transcendent. The background of Barth’s theory of "the Wholly Other" was the German abuse of the name of God in order to forward through war their imperialist ambitions. Because of this, Barth insisted that theology should get rid of its philosophic anthropocentrism so as not to become culturally a captive of

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692 Du 1989, 94.
693 Du 1989, 97.
694 Du 1985, 125. Luo Bingxiang has made a clear summary on Du, Luo 2005a, 373-375.
695 Du 1985, 132, 137.
698 In the words of Luo God is different from Human beings in six ways: ontological transcendence, qualitative transcendence, epistemological transcendence, linguistic transcendence, moral transcendence, and social cultural transcendence. See Luo 2001, 253-260
culture, since German liberal theologians and Kulturprotestantismus overemphasized the continuity between God and human beings. Another background may be Barth’s theologia naturalis (natural theology), since he tends to emphasize the theology of biblical revelation by criticizing natural theology. Thus, Barth suggested another basis of "the Wholly Other" to stress the discontinuity between God and human beings.

Such an opinion as that of Barth was radically critical of Germanic philosophical theology, and it was a somewhat unusual position. Cultural Nationalist Confucians and some Modern Confucians such as Liu Shuxian and Du Weiming have ignored this important point, though, and have mistaken Barth's "Wholly Other" as a standard doctrine of Christianity.

On the other hand, while difference between God and human beings implies that they are separate, this separation does not include the meaning that God is separated from human beings in the sense that they are radically disconnected beings. We mentioned above that by "the Wholly Other" Barth did not mean that God is separated from human beings in this sense but that their difference is mere separation between two modes of being which are nevertheless in communication. Finite and sinful human beings, however, cannot grasp and comprehend totally the infinite God.

The term “Wholly Other” first appears in modern theology in the works of Rudolf Otto, who first employed it in the fifth chapter of his book, where he mentioned that the common element of religious feeling of dependency (the sense of having been created) and mysterium tremendum et fascinans (a profound sense of awe and mystery in the face of creation). The “thateron, anyad, alienum” is wholly beyond our common understanding and comprehension; its Wholly Otherness gives rise to a sense of mystery and awe and disabling any conceptual grasp or pragmatic response. This sense of connection with the Wholly Other implies a difference which is nevertheless overcome by a degree of communication in which an empty and mysterious awareness surpasses any no communicative separateness between God and man.

700 Barth 1982, 264.
Barth’s position was exceptional among theologians, his thinking running counter, for example, to classical and Catholic theology in which the relationship, unity and continuity between God and humanity are very much emphasized. It is to this latter form of theology that we must go to seek the meaning of the relationship between God and man.

While the transcendence of the Christian God, therefore, implies a radical discontinuity with humanity, the Trinity and Incarnation are indications of His close relationship with man, for He has entered the world and become a human being.  

The argument of the Modern Christian Confucian Liang Yancheng 梁燕城

Some Modern Christian Confucians have argued as well that the Christian God is immanent in man rather than “Wholly Other”. Liang Yancheng argues for example, that the Christian God is both immanent and tactful. Liang’s argument can be compared with the Christian theological doctrine of kenosis, which (as does Liang) emphasizes that the Christian God is not separated from human beings in that the Trinitarian God empties Himself to take the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. On this point, the Christian God can be understood as immanent in human beings, since He has, in fact, become a human being.

First, by suggesting a daology Liang argues that the Christian God is immanent. Liang suggests a de-hellenization of Western Christian theology and that we understand Christianity from a Chinese viewpoint. He argues that immanence is an important feature of the Christian God and establishes his argument with the help

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704 We have analyzed above Mou Zongsan’s reactions concerning the Trinity and the Incarnation.
705 Concerning this issue, Liang will be analyzed much more deeply than were Mou Zongsan and Du Weiming, since Liang is a Christian Confucian, who has concentrated on Chinese contextual theology. In respect to systematic theology, Liang is much more worthy of being studied.
706 Liang Yancheng is a Canadian Lutheran Evangelical preacher from Hong Kong, who identifies himself as an evangelical Christian scholar. He is well acquainted with Confucianism and Buddhism, and has been the student of the Cultural Nationalist Confucians Tang Junyi and Mou Zongsan. In this study he is considered a Modern Christian Confucian. See Cai, Zhou & Liang 1985, 227-307.
707 Cf., Philippians 2:5-11. "Kenosis" is a Greek term taken from Phil. 2:7, where Christ is spoken of as having "emptied himself" and taken human form. Discussion has abounded about this very crucial passage (2:6 - 11), and various interpretations of it are current today. Kenotic theology focuses on the person of Christ and is at the theoretical level a relatively new way in the history of reflection on the person of Christ of conceiving the incarnation. Some see kenotic theology as the most recent advance in Christology; others see it as a blind alley.
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of the Confucian notions of the Heavenly Principle and the Chinese Heaven.⁷⁰⁸

For Liang, it was Greek Philosophy and the Latin Theological tradition which made Cultural Nationalist Confucians misunderstand the Christian God as non-immanent. He says that Western theology has foisted the Greek concept of "Being" and "Substance" onto the Christian God so that the opposition between God and human beings, between “This World” and the “Future World” has been overstressed. Unity and syncretism are appreciated in Confucianism and in Chinese culture generally; thus, the contradiction between Western theology and Chinese thought is a sore thumb on a surgeon’s hand.⁷⁰⁹ Certainly, the Confucian sympathy for syncretism obviates the value of Barthian thinking concerning the “Wholly Other”.

In order to strengthen his argument that the Christian God is immanent, Liang proposes the concept of the “daological God”. Liang says, "Dao" is the highest concept in Chinese thought. But the main concept of western ontology is "Being", which is the grounds of all that has being and does not contain the meaning of "nothingness" and "becoming; on the contrary, it indicates a "standing out" from "Nothingness" and a solidarity of being that is "Unchanging".

The Dao, however, bears the sense of "All", "Nothingness" and "Transformation", since it is originally their way. The concept "Dao" means much more than "Being" does.⁷¹⁰ Liang interprets "Dao" as "the motion of heart and the way of this motion". The Dao is different from Being. In order to understand the Dao, one has to examine first his own heart. This approach is inner-directed and is different from the approach of investigating the objective world outside oneself. Thus, the Dao can be united with "Heart" and "Life",⁷¹¹ but Being is usually related to concepts of substance that pertain to the “outside” world.⁷¹²

Liang has claimed that the Christian God can be viewed as the daological God from two perspectives. On the one hand, the Christian God is immanent as the Chinese Dao and Heaven are immanent; but, on the other hand, the concept of God does contradict neither the Chinese Heaven nor the Heavenly Principle. By the term

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“immanent” Liang seems to mean that the Christian God and human beings are not alienated and separated from each other. He says that God is immanent, since He is communicable (for one can pray to Him). Thus, the daological God is a God who objectifies himself as one who experiences, feels and chooses to reveal himself actively to human beings. He is totally communicable rather than totally incommunicable.713

Liang’s critical view of the limitations of Barth’s “Wholly Other” seems justified in the light of his view of God as daological. And his criticism is confirmed in the modern theological trend of emphasizing the immanence of the Christian God. 714

This trend is exemplified in the work of the Italian scholar Criveller, who has considered in his analysis of the late Ming Chinese Neo-Confucian understanding of Christianity the idea of incarnation as a proof that immanence is not a strange concept in Christianity. Thus, for him the question of transcendence and immanence should not be considered as a decisive element for whether Confucians can accept the Christian concept of God. 715

The problem in Liang’s above argument is, in my opinion, that he did not clearly define the term “immanent”. By this term if he means that God and human beings are closely related to each other, Christians will agree with it. Confucians, however, will not be satisfied with such a conclusion, since for them Heaven and human beings are monistic identity and oneness. Liang’s arguments indicate that Liang is not a monist, what he has tried was to avoid or to reduce the conflict between Christian theism and Confucian monism without speaking out frankly the difference between them.

Secondly, by emphasizing the “original nature” Liang argues that the Christian God is immanent. Both Confucianism and Christianity stress that the “original nature” (“imago Dei” or “Heaven inhabited in human beings”) is derived from God or Heaven. In order to integrate the Christian God with the Chinese Heaven and to show that God is immanent, Liang first accepts the concept of “original

714 See Maquarrie’s (1983b)”Immanetism” in WD, 287.
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nature” suggested by the Cultural Nationalist Confucian, Cai.\textsuperscript{716} Then he stresses that God cares about human beings and is the source of all human ethics and relations; thus, all human beings share the divine nature of God. Liang, thus, considers the “original nature” as one of the most important issues in understanding God and man, and this emphasis outlines a concept similar to the "imago Dei" in Christianity.\textsuperscript{717}

Liang, however, has approached his argument more Sinologically\textsuperscript{718} than theologically, as typically do Western theologians. Therefore, in my opinion, in order to stress that the Christian God is immanent, Liang can legitimately emphasize that the “original nature” ("imago Dei" or “Heaven inhabited in human beings”) is derived from God and that God is closely related to human beings.

Liang attempts to integrate Confucianism and Christianity. On the one hand, the Confucian concept of “original nature” can be integrated with the Christian imago Dei. This means that the Confucian “original nature” is given by Heaven in the same way as that human beings, in the Christian understanding, are created in the image of God. On this point, Confucianism and Christianity are conceptually related and compatible. On the other hand, the dynamic sense of transcendence as “to go beyond a limit” in Confucianism can also find support among Christians. Catholics, for example, usually emphasize the meritorious deeds of Christians, such as acts of supererogation, as a transcendence of the sinful human condition, although in its essence the grace of Christ is the key element in human salvation.\textsuperscript{719} For me, the problem of Liang here seems that he did not realize the anthropological difference between Christian imago Dei and Confucian monist identity and oneness between God/Heaven and human beings.\textsuperscript{720}

Liang says, prior to coming to believe in God, people generally have their own Way (Dao) of life, but the impact of the revelation of Jesus Christ in faith enables them to recognize the faults in their previous ways of life. Thus, while they can appreciate what was good in these ways of life, they will integrate these good

\textsuperscript{716} Cai, Zhou & Liang 1985, 20–21.
\textsuperscript{717} Neville has mentioned this issue, and we have discussed it already in this same chapter in speaking about his consideration of “Transcendence as defining the self”.
\textsuperscript{718} By the term “sinological” I mean that Liang has employed many Chinese rather than Christian theological terms in his article, and such an approach can help the Chinese understand him.
\textsuperscript{719} We will discuss this issue in more detail in Chapter 5 when we deal with the topic of Salvation.
\textsuperscript{720} I have made this clear in the end of section 4.1.
aspects of their former lives into a new one that is revealed in Jesus Christ, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. This is why Christians are concerned with both “this world” and “the next”. Liang says that the daological God is most tactful, since every Way of life can be understood in the light of the daological God; but, of course, every Way of life has its own limit, which should be recognized as such.\textsuperscript{721} This is an inclusivist perspective.

Liang has an inclusive approach in his understanding of God. While he maintains the uniqueness of Christianity, he has also opened a possibility for God's revelation in Confucianism. However, soteriologically Liang is exclusive. He says that the daological God is the final source of all feelings, all interpersonal relationships, the goal of all the various ways, and the Way itself. This is the Logos, the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Thus, although Liang is inclusivist in respect to revelation and agrees that Confucianism contains also the silent revelation of Heaven (or the Heavenly Principle), he considers this revelation different from the concrete revelation of Heaven (or that of the Heavenly Principle), \textit{i.e.}, the Christian revelation. Soteriologically, Liang believes that only Jesus Christ can save human beings.

In any case, Liang's integration between the Christian God and the daological God is an attempt to improve dialogue between Christianity and Confucianism. On the one hand, the Greek “Being” will be replaced by the Chinese Heavenly Principle (the Dao of Heaven); but, on the other hand, a personal feature will be integrated into the Confucian Heavenly Principle, and the central emphasis of biblical revelation will be maintained.\textsuperscript{722}

Liang's daological approach is in fact an inclusive one. It has both strong and weak aspects of inclusivism. Open-minded Christians will probably appreciate Liang’s attempt to maintain dialogue with Confucianism. Liang's attempt can also be considered a continuation of the Modern Confucian Du Weiming's \textit{杜维明} hope to reform Confucianism so as to face the new challenges of the era. Confucians will, however, possibly oppose Liang’s ideas because of his exclusive attitude concerning salvation.

The key issue here is the mediator between God/Heaven and human beings.

\textsuperscript{721} Cai, Zhou & Liang 1985, 290-291.
For Christians Jesus Christ, the incarnation of Logos, who is both human and divine, is the only one, who can reunite human beings with God to become participants of the divine nature. For Confucians, *Li* (the objective Natural Law) or *Xing* (the subjective human nature) is the mediator, through which a human being can realize his/her potential in the process of self-cultivation. Because Liang did not speak out such a difference frankly, in the Confucian-Christian dialogue, he falls into the difficulties of espistemological inclusivism and of soteriological exclusivism.

The Confucian Heaven and human beings are monistic identity, which has destroyed the substantial difference between them, thus, the term ”transcendence” has lost the similar meaning as it has in Christianity. The Christian God is transcendent, and there is always a difference between Creator and the Creation, but this should not be called as ”external transcendence” as many Confucians do, since God and human beings are not totally alienated or separated from each other. Thus, the relationship between the Confucian Heaven and human beings is the monistic Oneness, and the relationship between the Christian God and human beings is neither One nor Two. From Church Fathers in ancient time to Reformers in the middle age, the metaphors of salty water, red hot iron and yeast dough have been employed to describe the relationship between God and humanity. Among them salt and water, fire and iron, and yeast and dough can be mixed together to such an extent that they seem to be one, however, substantially they are never confused with each other, and the difference between them always exists.

5.3 Superiority of the internal transcendence to the external transcendence

I have discussed in section 5.2 whether the Christian God and the Chinese Heaven can be regarded in terms of the categories of external transcendence and internal transcendence, respectively. I now focus on the question whether internal transcendence is superior to external transcendence. The essence of this discussion is concerns the means of salvation.

Two important matters stand out in this section: 1) The argument of the

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Cultural Nationalist Confucian Mou Zongsan is that the transcendence of Heaven is immanent (= dwelling) in human beings. "Transcendence" here seems to be used in its static sense, and it is similar to Neville’s “defining the Self” or the Christian *imago Dei*. Cai Renhou 蔡仁厚 has followed this line. The Modern Confucian Liu Shuxian 刘述先 divided transcendence into two sorts, the external and the internal. He has also criticized certain aspects of the Confucian notion of internal transcendence and appreciated certain aspects of the Christian external transcendence.

5.3.1 The arguments of Cultural Nationalist Confucians

Cultural Nationalist Confucians Mou Zongsan and Cai Renhou have been chosen as the representatives of those who consider internal transcendence (Chinese Heaven) superior to external transcendence (Christian God).

The argument of Mou Zhongsan

Based on the Confucian monistic hypothesis that Heaven and human beings are of same substance and the Christian doctrine that God and human beings are ontologically separate from each other, Cultural Nationalist Confucian Mou Zongsan regards the transcendence of the Christian God as a weakness.

Mou Zongsan considers that "the external transcendence of the Christian God" belongs to a low-level primary religion, and "the internal transcendence" of the Confucian Heaven is the result of the development of low-level religions. To divide religions into different levels was once a popular exercise for some scholars. Nowadays in comparative religious studies no religion is regarded as “higher” than another, or as developing of from another “lower” religion. On this point, Mou was clearly old fashioned.

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723 Mou 1985, 340.
726 Liu Shuxian and Tang Junyi have also discussed this issue; see Liu Shuxian 1989, 261. Cf., also Tang Junyi 1953, 330.
727 Mou 1963, 39.
728 Mou 1963, 38, 96.
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For Mou, it is the weakness of the Christian God, who is "alienated" from human beings. Since in Christianity human beings are finite and cannot become infinite, human beings cannot be united with God through self-cultivation.\(^{729}\)

Why is Christian transcendence a weakness? Mou takes "tact" (\(\text{yuanying}  圆盈\)) as the highest standard of a religion, and this term is in conflict with the concept "alienated" (\(\text{liying}  离盈\)).\(^{730}\) The standard of Mou, which makes a religion tactful or alienated, determines whether a human moral subject is affirmed. Mou thinks the concept of infinite heart-mind functions in Christianity too, but this idea has been identified as the personal God. He says, God is "infinite heart-mind" when He becomes immanent, and a "personal God" when He is externalized.\(^{731}\) Thus, He thinks that one of the main features of the Christian God is His alienation from human beings. This leads to a radical separation between God and human beings, which cannot be overcome by human beings.\(^{732}\) While it is impossible for human beings in Christianity to become sages, it is possible in Confucianism. Thus, the Chinese Heaven is superior to the Christian God.\(^{733}\)

Mou’s understanding is clearly monistic, since Heaven and human beings are of the same substance. Mou proposes an approach in which one seeks sanctification rather than justification by faith in Christian terms. In Confucianism, sanctification and perfection are achieved through self-cultivation. The concept "salvation" is not a common term in Confucianism, but "sanctification" (or "perfection") is an important issue for the Confucians.\(^{734}\) Among most Protestants sanctification is usually understood as a work of God's grace, where God has chosen, before the foundation of the world, those whom He will save the elect, who are brought to perfection in time.

\(^{729}\) Mou 1975, 453.

\(^{730}\) I have already mentioned the concept "tact" above in section 4.1.2 dealing with Cultural Nationalist Mou Zongsan’s idea that Christian God is external transcendence.

\(^{731}\) Mou 1975, 453. By the same standard Mou has considered Neo-Confucians such as Zhou Dunyi, Zhang Zai, Cheng Mingdao, Lu Jiuyuan and Wang Yangming tactful, but Cheng Yichuan and Zhu Xi as half tactful, since the latter two Neo-Confucians did not identify principle (Heavenly principle, \(L_i, Tianli\)) with mind (heart, \(x\in\)). See Mou 1975, 455. Cf. also Mou 1969.

\(^{732}\) Mou 1975, 452.

\(^{733}\) In fact, for many theologians and other scholars, the result of the argument is totally opposite to Mou’s conclusions.

\(^{734}\) A Chinese contemporary scholar Sun Shangyang, for example, has argued that if the Chinese Heaven can be identified with the Christian God in their providence to the world, they are certainly different in that Chinese Heaven neither "creates" nor "saves" the world, but both "creation" and "salvation" are essential works of the Christian God. See Sun 1994, 72-73.
and through the power of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:4; 1 Cor. 6:11; 2 Thess. 2:13). In Confucianism, however, such a process is often understood as a co-operation between human attempts and internal transcendence such as the Four Beginnings. Such an understanding can find some hints from Roman Catholicism and certain Protestants.

**The argument of Cai Renhou 蔡仁厚**

Mou’s position was followed by his student Cai Renhou, who is a Cultural Nationalist Confucian in Taiwan.\(^{735}\)

Cai says that it is unacceptable for Chinese Confucians, Daoists, and Buddhists that only Jesus Christ can save human beings.\(^{736}\) According to Cai, Christianity proclaims that human beings suffer from original sin. When attention is focused on sin, it is understandable that human beings need the salvation of God to overcome the distance and gap between them. For Cai, the question is, why can the "onetime" sin of Adam cause human beings to lose their divine nature "forever"? Why can human beings not rediscover and re-gain their divine nature by themselves? Following the term of the "original sin" Cai employs the term "original nature", believing that the original nature of human beings is divine and good.\(^{737}\) His emphasis on the “original nature” seeks to prove that human nature was imparted by Heaven and was originally good and that through self-awareness human beings can rediscover their lost nature and reunite therefore with Heaven. This position represents the typical monism of Neo-Confucians at the time of Matteo Ricci. Earlier I mentioned that one of Ricci’s main legacies to the dialogue between Christianity and Confucianism is his notion of "Self-Cultivation", which was both the starting-point and the end point of his dialogical attempts. For Neo-Confucians and their followers, such as Cai Renhou, the expression of faith and love will not stem only from the revelation of God but also from the self awareness of our human nature, and man will no longer need to be saved by God, being able to save them.\(^{738}\)

A tension arises between Confucian sanctification and Christian salvation, since for Cai people are their own lords and can become Holy men or Buddhas, so an

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\(^{735}\) Cai, Zhou & Liang 1985.


external God and His salvation in Christianity are not necessary.\textsuperscript{739} The existential question is how one can follow the Heavenly Principle rather than human lusts and desires. How is the Heavenly Principle accessed from a state of alienation?\textsuperscript{740} This is an important issue, which directly influences the Confucian understanding of the means of salvation. Christian soteriology teaches that the main problem of man is that they do not have the power and capacity to do the right which they know. The presupposition of Confucians such as Cai, the monist unity between Heaven and humanity, enables him to assert that the Heavenly Principle already exists within the nature of man. But this position causes us to raise the issue concerning how, when we know evil as well as good, we are empowered to do good. Cai did not show his readers clearly that he has realized the difference between knowing good and doing good.

Cai also considers the Confucian Heaven superior to the Christian God, because Confucianism understands transcendence as internal, and Christianity understands it as external. By referring to Romans 10:9-10, Cai observes three things: 1) Jesus is the Lord, 2) a person is justified only through faith in Jesus Christ, and 3) this justification comes from God to human beings. But these statements differ from what Confucianism allows. Mencius, for example, says: "Do not practice benevolence and righteousness but act from benevolence and righteousness". This indicates the different sources of the goodness, external or internal origin.

Referring to Gal. 2:20, Cai says that in Christianity everyone can become a christ, meaning that a person should destroy himself (the old, or former self) in order to attain a new life. This is a life which takes inward hold of Jesus Christ and makes the person a temple of Holy Spirit, thus effecting a means of achieving unity with him (Jesus Christ is in Christians, and Christians are in Jesus Christ) and, through his mediation, with God and our fellow man. For Cai this doctrine is attractive, though it differs from the Confucian monistic unity between the common people and Holy men, between Heaven and humanity.\textsuperscript{741} In Confucianism human beings are their own lords, and the external God is unnecessary, since moral cultivation is based on oneself.

\textsuperscript{739} Cai, Zhou & Liang 1985, 138, 140-141.
\textsuperscript{740} Neville has done a study on this question; cf., Neville 2000, 88.
\textsuperscript{741} Cai, Zhou & Liang 1985, 138-139.
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rather than on others.  

Cai’s description of Confucianism and Christianity has shown the essential distinction between the two religions, and the difference is here made obvious: according to Christianity, justification (or righteousness) comes from an external God. But in regard to Confucianism, righteousness already lies potential within human beings, so that justification (to become righteousness) by faith in Jesus Christ is unnecessary.

Because Cai considers the Chinese Heaven superior to the Christian God, he suggests that, if Christians want to have an interactive relationship with Chinese culture, they should replace their God with the Chinese Heaven. For in Chinese Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, everyone can become "a holy man, a true person and a Buddha", whereas Christianity does not teach that everyone can, through their own efforts, actively become Christ. Since Christianity differs here with Confucianism, a fruitful dialogue between them becomes difficult. Thus, the difference between Christianity and Chinese culture cannot achieve a correlation in the face of such obvious difference.

Cai seems certainly to be an exclusive Cultural Nationalist Confucian, and his loyal commitment to his party somewhat hinders the rational force of his argument, though he says that he respects the nature of every great religion and does not ask Christianity to give up its main features. But in order to have a dialogue, all partners should try to find a way to communicate with one another based on a notion of religious truth. And Cai’s solution to a dialogical dead end seems to be the suggestion that Christians to give up some important features of their faith, such as to revise the Christian concept of God according to a Confucian understanding of the Chinese Heaven and to see Jesus Christ as a person who became divine because of

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742 According to Confucianism everyone can become a holy man such as Yao or Shun, according to Buddhism everyone can become a Buddha, and according to Daoism everyone can become a True person. All of them are developed from finite to infinite through their whole lives. Cf., Cai, Zhou & Liang 1985, 138. Yao and Shun are two legendary Sage-emperors in ancient China. The true person is the one who possesses the Dao and becomes immortal. Cf. Huai‘nanzi, Benjing xun: "Neither live nor die, neither empty nor full, is called True person."


744 Christians generally believe that to become like Jesus Christ and to be saved (justification, sanctification and regeneration) are a gift given by God rather than a reward earned by human efforts.


746 Cai, Zhou & Liang 1985, 142.
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his great deeds.\textsuperscript{747} Cai regards the doctrine of the incarnation, the dual nature of the human and divine Christ, as “regrettable” and considers that it should be given up,\textsuperscript{748} otherwise the obstacle standing in the way of integrating the two religions will remain.\textsuperscript{749} Such a suggestion is clearly put forward by the exclusivist Confucianist viewpoint, obviating any possibility of dialogue.\textsuperscript{750} But Christians, of course, cannot accept such a suggestion, since it asks them to give up the essence of their faith so as to attain peace with Confucians. Indeed, Confucians would not be willing to give up their understanding of the Chinese Heaven either. But, Cai does not put forward his suggestion from the viewpoint of attaining religious truth but from the standpoint of advancing Cultural Nationalist Confucianism. In his view, Confucianism is the religious truth, and, though Christianity deserves to be respected, it must revise its doctrines concerning the nature of Jesus Christ if it is to achieve harmony with Confucianism. Thus his claim to be seeking religious truth is in conflict with the essential doctrinal changes he would demand of Christians.

Cai believes, however, that his suggestion is in accordance with Christian Christology and the doctrine of the Trinity, thus making him unable to accept my criticism of him. Cai’s interpretation of Christianity cannot, however, be accepted by most Christians.

As far as Christology is concerned, Cai says that for Christians Jesus is not only the son of man but also the Son of God. Mary was a virgin when she gave birth to Jesus, but Joseph the carpenter was not his real father, for the father of Jesus is God. Thus, Jesus is God who becomes man. The human status of Jesus was a mission from God, since Jesus came to the world in order to give witness to God.\textsuperscript{751} Although Cai does not publicly reject the above Christology, he suggests that we regard this issue from another viewpoint, \textit{i.e.}, from human viewpoint. Cai says that Jesus spent his whole life demonstrating the essence of spirituality, and such a life of spiritual effort enables him to rise up to unite with God. If this is the case, then Jesus is a person who became God. It was later that people added the divine status to Jesus.

\textsuperscript{748} Cai, Zhou & Liang 1985, 141.
\textsuperscript{749} Cai, Zhou & Liang 1985, 142.
\textsuperscript{750} Cai, Zhou & Liang 1985, 19.
\textsuperscript{751} Cai, Zhou & Liang 1985, 18.
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Based on his greatness and spiritual deeds. But Christians in fact generally believe that Jesus Christ is God Himself who became human; and, in Cai’s opinion, Jesus is a human who has become divine. His opinion perhaps makes Christianity acceptable for Cultural Nationalist Confucians but, most Christians will not be able to accept Cai's "Christology", since his theory is similar to the heresy of the adoption theory, which holds that Jesus Christ is God not by nature but by adoption.

Cai tries also to employ the Christian doctrine of Trinity in support of his suggestion that Jesus became divine because of his actions. For Cai Jesus was born a human being, but through his death and resurrection he now holds a position in the Trinity: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Thus, Jesus was a human being who became divine. Christians cannot accept such an interpretation of the Trinity, of course, since the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit always exist, and Jesus Christ did not get the status of "the Son" because of His death and resurrection.

In the light of traditional Christianity, Cai's suggestions both on Christology and Trinity are heresies which can be traced from Gnostic Docetism, the Nicean Creed, and the Arian Controversy. Therefore, Cai's suggestion concerning the integration between Christianity and Confucianism will not easily gain success from the Christian side.

Why has Cai suggested that Christianity rather than Confucianism should

754 According to adoption theory, Jesus was a human being, but he was adopted by God and finally received his divine nature from God. According to the Catholic Catechism Jesus Christ is true God and true man, it reads: "The first heresies denied not so much Christ's divinity as his true humanity (Gnostic Docetism). From apostolic times the Christian faith has insisted on the true incarnation of God's Son "come in the flesh". But already in the third century, the Church in a council at Antioch had to affirm against Paul of Samosata that Jesus Christ is Son of God by nature and not by adoption. The first ecumenical council of Nicaea in 325 confessed in its Creed that the Son of God is "begotten, not made, of the same substance (homoousios) as the Father", and condemned Arius, who had affirmed that the Son of God "came to be from things that were not" and that he was "from another substance" than that of the Father." Catechism of the Catholic Church 1997, 130.

756 Catechism of the Catholic Church 1997, 71-79.
757 For example, Origen has emphasized the two natures of Christ (deus-homo). See de Principiis, II. vi. 3; in Sources Chretiennes, vol. 252, ed. H. Crouzel and M. Simonetti (Paris: Cerf, 1978), 314.106-316.128.
758 See A letter of Arius to Eusebius, Bishop of Nicomedia (c. 321). The citation can be found in McGrath 1998, 139. Arius' position is that the Son is a creature, who, like all other creatures, derives from the will of God. Cf. also Du 1995, 167-180.
change in the encounter between them? Why has he not asked Confucianism to change its doctrine and to give up its concept of “Heaven”? The reason for his position lies in Cai’s peculiar “Host-Guest” theory by which he defends his approach. He says that because Christianity is a guest and Confucianism is the host in China, and the guest should respect the host, it is Christianity rather than Confucianism that should change its doctrine in order to achieve peace and harmony between them in China. Otherwise, the guest should not have come to the host’s country and should leave.\footnote{Cai, Zhou & Liang 1985, 17.} The main element which makes him loyal to Confucianism and negative toward the Christian doctrines of Christology is his exclusive nationalist religious faith in Confucianism.

5.3.2 The arguments of Modern Non-Christian Confucians

The argument of Liu Shuxian 刘述先

The same idea about God’s transcendence and the means of salvation was elaborated by Liu Shuxian.\footnote{Liu Shuxian’s article “Some reflections on what contemporary Neo-Confucian philosophy may learn from Christianity”. See Liu 1991.} He speaks more from the Modern Confucian position,\footnote{Facing the difference between external and internal transcendence, the second group of Neo-Confucians, such as Mou Zongsan, Fang Dongmei, Xu Fuguan, and Tang Junyi, has considered Confucianism superior to Western philosophy of Greek origin. Meanwhile, they have also considered the Christianity of Hebrew origin also inferior to Confucianism. None of these four Neo-Confucians has suggested that Confucianism should learn the concept of the Christian God (External Transcendence) from Christianity. See Li Chenyang 2002, "Fang Dongmei: Philosophy of Life, Creativity, and Inclusiveness" in Cheng & Bunnin 2002, 263-280. Ni Peimin 2002 "Practical Humanism of Xu Fuguan" in Cheng & Bunnin 2002, 281-304. Sin Chan Yee 2002 "Tang Junyi: Moral Idealism and Chinese Culture" in Cheng & Bunnin 2002, 305-326. Tang Refeng 2002 "Mou Zongsan on Intellectual Intuition" in Cheng & Bunnin 2002, 327-346. Fang Dongmei has criticized the Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism but has not suggested that the Chinese learn the concept of external transcendence from Christian theology. See Li Chenyang’s article in Cheng & Bunnin 2002, 271-273.} arguing that Confucianism can borrow and accept the idea of "transcendence" from Christianity because of certain shortcomings within Confucianism. He realizes that Confucians overemphasize theoretically the positive side of human nature and are too optimistic concerning man’s potential for self-cultivation.\footnote{As a background Liu Shuxian has mentioned certain intrinsic limitations of the Confucian tradition, such as an overly optimistic view of human nature, or an overemphasis on behavioral conformity and on immanence. Liu Shuxian 1986b, 9. Cf. also Bresciani 2001, 400-401.} This naïveté is...
especially acute in the light of history’s lessons that man often seeks the negative rather than the positive. Thus, Liu realized that the Christian concept of a transcendent God grasps Him as the source, judge, and overseer for the self-cultivation of human beings.

Liu encloses, however, his Confucian ideal in the ancient maxim of Cheng Yi 程颐 (1033-1107) "Principle is one, while its manifestations are many" (li yi shu wan 理一殊万). This is typical monistic thinking, and Liu has considered all the things in the world as the manifestation and function of the one substance.\textsuperscript{764}

Liu argues his point in the context of his endeavors to define an ethical standard that will promote and preserve the unified world of tomorrow. He has laboriously analyzed the contemporary world situation, where he has found a deep change in all aspects of life, especially following the industrial revolution.

Liu sees the outcome of the multiple and complex changes of society in a string of serious problems haunting contemporary society. He thinks that what is needed is to critically evaluate the tradition.\textsuperscript{765} At the end of his analysis of the world's problems, Liu concludes that there is a vacuum of values and that the most urgent need is that of finding a valuable ethical standard for the post-modern world. He has examined the main recent philosophical trends in the world of relativism, namely logical positivism and language analysis, and opines that neither of them advances a good solution to the problem of establishing a new foundation for ethics. He insists upon defining a universal ethical standard which would permit us to see that there must be a difference between common human behavior (the scope of sociology) and ethical principles of behavior (the scope of moral philosophy); \textit{i.e.}, we must be enabled to judge difference between how people in fact live and behave and how people \textit{ought} to live and behave. In his view, this is the point where Confucianism and Christianity can give a priceless contribution to post-modern world cultures.

As for the Western moral ideal of universal love as taught by Semitic religions, it relies on the external root of a transcendent God. One may refer to

\textsuperscript{764} Liu Shuxian 1986b, 9. Cf. also Bresciani 2001, 400-401.
\textsuperscript{765} Liu Shuxian 1994, 1.
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Immanuel Kant\(^ {766} \) and Paul Tillich,\(^ {767} \) who have discussed moral philosophy. But in Confucianism the root of morality is in human beings and is nothing more than moral conscience, which is the original nature given by Heaven and is the Heavenly Principle immanent within a person. The root of morality is human nature itself, and ethical behavior is simply the development of such an inner and innate nature.

The argument of Du Weiming 杜维明

Du Weiming, the main representative of Modern Confucian, appreciates but does not accept Christianity. He has offered another attempt to solve the tension between the Confucian means of sanctification and the Christian means of salvation. Du says, self-cultivation is not just more effort at perfection but is also the conscious existential act of committing oneself to the process of taking on the identity of one who struggles toward perfection.\(^ {768} \)

Du Weiming discusses and expounds the transcendent side of the doctrine of internal transcendence. In contrast to others, he has suggested that Confucians learn something from Christian external transcendence, indicating that there is something good may be learned in doing so. Nevertheless, he considers the Confucian internal transcendence as superior to the Christian external transcendence.\(^ {769} \)

Du stresses that besides the rebuilding of philosophy through dialogue with the West, China needs to absorb other sectors of Western culture. In addition to the


\(^ {768} \) Du says, “If man is not merely a conglomeration of externalizable physiological, psychological, and sociological states, a conscious choice is required to establish his spiritual identity … The decision to learn, which in the classical sense means to be engaged in self-enlightenment, thus symbolizes a qualitative change in the orientation of one’s life … Learning so conceived is a conscious attempt to change oneself from being in a state of mere psycho-physiological growth to that of ethical or religious existence.” See Du 1979, 89.

\(^ {769} \) Du notices that, historically, not only Confucius, but also Mencius and Xun Zi had a strong religious feeling. For them, since the Heavenly Way (Tiandao) and Human Way (rendao) are inter-related, Heaven is both transcendent and immanent and is not merely external. Du is different from Hall and Ames, since the latter two consider immanence as the feature of Confucian Heaven. However, Du's opinion is not similar to the Transcendence of Christianity. For Du, Transcendence and the actual reality of life are connected and cannot be separated. He stresses that Confucianism aims at incarnating its lofty humanistic ideal in actual reality and not, as in his view of Christianity, leave this world and build a Kingdom of Heaven apart from here and now. Du says that the Confucian ideal is that of using ethical ideals to turn actual political reality around. Cf. Bresciani 2001, 412-413. Cf. also Du 1976, 188.
political, economic and modern psychological sectors, he emphasizes that, in respect to matters dealing with transcendence, China should learn from the religious sector represented by Christianity. For while Confucianism is not lacking a clear sense of transcendence, its orientation toward immanent transcendence causes it to easily fall into political exploitation and secularism. Therefore the Chinese should absorb the essence of Western Christian theology in order to develop her own form of transcendence in Confucianism. What can be learned from Christian theology, according to Du, is the yearning for the transcendent sphere and the spirit of protest against evil in society.

Du asserts that one must make a deliberate commitment to the way of the sage, key being the existential act of commitment to self-cultivation guided by principle. He likens this commitment to entering into faith in Christianity, and he links his concept of Confucian religiosity to the mystical elements of Plato, the writings of St. Augustine, the Stoics, the medieval saints, Pascal, Kierkegaard, and the works of modern philosophers such as Martin Buber, Gabriel Marcel, and Martin Heidegger.

Concerning this commitment, however, Du departs from any analogy with the western tradition in insisting that it is not a Kierkegaardian “either-or” but a Confucian “both-and”. He says,

Paradoxically, neither the fundamental choice nor the qualitative change appears as merely a discrete moment in one's life history. Since Confucianism is not a revealed religion, the "establishment of the will" is not so much a mystical experience of the transcendent Absolute as it is an enlightening experience of the immanent Self. Therefore the never-ending process it entails does not take the form of a dialogical relationship with the "wholly other"; rather, it takes the form of a dialectical development of the Self ... Thus the establishment of the will is both a single act and a continuous process. As a single act, it so shakes the foundation of one's temporal existence as to enable one to arrive at a deeper dimension of self-awareness.

770 Du has mentioned this idea in his two articles: 1994a and 1994b.
771 Du 1976, 210-211.
772 Du 1979, 66-68.
773 Du 1979, 83.
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As a continuous process it reaffirms the bedrock of one's being in an unending effort of self-realization.\textsuperscript{775}

The above quotation shows two things. On the one hand, for Du, human nature is the Heavenly Principle, as is affirmed in the Mencian traditional Scripture of Zhongyong,\textsuperscript{776} and Heavenly Principle is immanent in human being. On the other hand, Du considers human nature very nearly properly understood in the light of the Christian concept of God as the interior ground of one's being and as the image of God in human beings. Concerning this latter point, Neville has pointed out that Du's characterization of Christianity in his early writings, such as in the 1970s, was limited to Karl Barth's version of Kierkegaard, where he emphasized God as the Wholly Other and downplayed the importance of salvation as the continuous pursuit of holiness. Neville says also that Christians have emphasized the abiding image of God in human beings, even though this image might be distorted and rendered impotent by sin. This analogy is rather close to that of the Heavenly Principle by which Heaven gifts human nature.\textsuperscript{777}

Many scholars have noted that Confucianism has no reference to grace, only to human self-cultivation, self-trancendence or self-development. All these terms imply a lifelong process of “learning to be human (\textit{xue zuoren 学做人}),”\textsuperscript{778} which means how to become a sage, or “the full realization of the anthropocosmic reality inherent in our human nature”.\textsuperscript{779} It is clear that in this process no notion of grace or a saviour like Jesus Christ is included,\textsuperscript{780} and learning has been considered as the mode of self-cultivation, which includes eight steps, as Daxue introduces.\textsuperscript{781} Commenting

\textsuperscript{774} Cf., Neville 2000, 89.
\textsuperscript{775} Du 1979, 90.
\textsuperscript{776} See the translation of Zhongyong in Chan 1963, 98: “What Heaven (\textit{Tian}, nature) imparts to man is called human nature”.
\textsuperscript{777} Cf., Neville 2000, 89.
\textsuperscript{781} The eight steps are \textit{gewu 格物} (to investigate things), \textit{zhizhi 知至} (to extend knowledge), \textit{yicheng 意诚} (to be sincere in their thoughts), \textit{xinzhou 心正} (to rectify their hearts), \textit{shenxiu 身修} (to cultivate their persons), \textit{jiaqi 家齐} (to regulate their families), \textit{guozhi 国治} (to order well their States) and
on Du's viewpoint on conversion, one may employ St. Augustine as an example. In Augustine's case, when he came close to his conversion, he desired to convert but could not bring himself to do it because of the power of alienation. Therefore, the question which Du Weiming should answer is: does his Confucian view of human nature determine a self-cultivation that requires and fosters sincerity? Augustine's analysis of the human condition is not merely that we are selfish and alienated from God and that we need to turn to God (or the Heavenly Principle) but also that we choose to be alienated from God and, therefore, need to replace choice with a commitment to God. Christians of Augustine's sort assert a human responsibility for sin that goes beyond merely finding ourselves in a predicament and seeks out the deliberate choice that creates that predicament.

If Confucians such as Du Weiming, therefore, wish only to learn certain aspects of the transcendence of God in Christianity, it will certainly influence their attempts at self-cultivation. Self-cultivation has its own value in the sphere of sanctification, morality, and ethics; however, as far as salvation is concerned self-cultivation cannot act as the means of salvation.

5.3.3 The arguments of Modern Christian Confucians

The argument of Zhuang Zukun 庄祖鲲

In the contemporary discussion of Chinese cultural regeneration, Zhuang Zukun, a Modern Confucian Christian in the USA, points out that the Christian concept of salvation is unknown to the Chinese people because of their failure to grasp in Neo- and Modern Confucianism the external, transcendent, and creative God. Zhuang thinks that it is important to realize the shortcomings of the monistic substantial unity between Heaven and humanity, since such a theory has rejected the idea of transcendence that existed in ancient China. By "transcendence" Zhuang means a

\[ tianxia ping \] (to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout the empire). These can be found from "Daxue 大学, Kongjing 孔经" in Sishu 1992, 2-3.


783 Augustine (vol. 60) 1913, 235.8-236.6.

784 I list him as a Modern Christian Confucian, since he is a Christian who appreciates and respects Confucianism. See Chapter 2.
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belief in a God who is beyond human beings. Zhuang has listed three negative results of such a humanist Confucianism in which God has been ignored:

First, because of not knowing creation and the Creator, the Chinese were not, as were Western Christian scientists, eager to explore the natural revelation from God, \textit{i.e.}, the world of nature. Therefore China did not develop a high level of Western style science, even though the Chinese had earlier noted many natural phenomena and had invented many basic technologies much earlier than Westerners. This opinion is tenuous, since many reasons may have influenced the development of Western science, and Zhuang has pointed out only one of many potential reasons.

Secondly, because of the lack of the external transcendence, many extreme phenomena have appeared in Chinese ethics. "If an emperor asks his subject to die, the subject has to die; if a father asks his son to die, the son has to die", for example, is a twisted development of the Three Bonds of Neo-Confucianism. Such extremism has resulted from the lack of an ethical transcendence grounded in the notion of a transcendent God, and it results in idol worship and terrible feudal ceremonies.

In contrast to this Chinese extremism, the Apostle Paul teaches that children should obey their parents (Eph. 6), but he also teaches that the parents should bring up their children according to the will of God. Both parents and children are under God (Eph. 6:1-4). The Apostle Paul taught as well the correct relationship between slaves and master (Eph. 6:5-8). Therefore, no one should abuse their power.

In fact, according to Ancient Confucianism the relationship between the emperor and subjects and between fathers and sons are also two-way relations. It is not only that the latter have to obey the former, but the former have also the responsibility to take care of the latter.

\footnote{Confucius (551-479 BC) only paid attention to the present life in this world and did not talk about gods and the spiritual world. Confucius said: "To respect the spirits and the gods while holding them at a distance", "While not yet knowing life, how can one know death?" The main line of Chinese culture is represented by Confucianism, which is essentially a form of rational ethical humanism which no longer stresses a personal God in Heaven. Later, in dealing with the question of God, the Chinese were either polytheistic or atheistic. Monotheism was seldom observed. Cf., Zhuang 1998, 201-204, 208-212.}

\footnote{Zhuang 1998, 201-204.}

\footnote{Needham 1954, and Needham 1956.}
Because of the Confucian monistic idea of immanence and unity (same substance) between Heaven and humanity, human beings easily fall into considering themselves the absolute ground of what is right and wrong, and the extremes mentioned above easily become possible. He Lin, a Modern Confucian in China, has discussed the Five Relations and the Three Bonds and has offered a detailed explanation of both the good and bad aspects of them.789

Thirdly, the lack of external transcendence means as well that the Chinese seek only internal transcendence, *i.e.*, to transcend themselves by their own efforts; thus, Christian salvation does not have a place in their lives.790 This self-grounded ethic is one of the serious shortcomings of Confucianism. The concept of salvation has remained totally strange to the Chinese. The position of the Holy Spirit in Christianity has been replaced by that of conscience in Confucianism. Self-cultivation has become salvation, and the monistic unity between Heaven and humanity has become the basis and final goal of human life. Christ and the incarnation have substantially no position in Chinese culture.

Of course, one can seek to answer to this failure within the Confucian ethic, quite apart from a Christian orientation, by referring to the Hindu concepts of “human goodness” (*tat tvam asi, atman on Brahman*) and “freedom” (*moksa*). According to the Hindu teaching, “I” should free myself from ignorance, which concerns the relationship between *atman* (I) and *Brahman*. “To free” is essentially a divine rather than a human attempt, since *atman* (I) is god, and *Brahman* is the basis of godly being and knowledge. Thus, the notion of internal transcendence does not necessarily lead to the conclusion that freedom and salvation are human deeds, as evidenced in the Hindu engagement with it. If Hinduism and Confucianism are equally criticized because of their exercise of internal transcendence, such criticism is not fair, and is perhaps improperly grounded in the presupposition of Christianity. Theoretically such a challenge seems to be tenable, but in practice, “to free” and to be

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789 See He Lin 1988, 6, 8-9, 58-62. Cf., Also Ci Jiwei's article "He Lin's signification of idealism" in Cheng & Bunnin 2002, 189-210, especially the section "Strengthening Confucianism with Western philosophy" in 200-206. He Lin's arguments will be investigated later in this study, where he speaks about whether the Christian God can be ethically accepted by the Chinese.
790 Zhuang 1998, 201-204.
saved easily become human deeds, since in the Hindu sense all that human beings do by ethical effort is considered as divine, thus leading to the disappearance of the distinction between human and divine deeds. This issue will be taken up again when I analyze the comments of a Modern Christian Confucian Liang Yancheng’s position concerning salvation in the light of an understanding of sanctification.

What Zhuang Zukun says about transcendence can be traced back to the three scholars Tang Yijie, Liu Shuxian, and Du Weiming. Thus, Christian transcendence, i.e., the concept of God, has been suggested as a solution to the Chinese contemporary cultural crisis. This affirmative attitude toward the Christian God is not forced on Chinese scholars. In fact, the attitude toward the Christian God in contemporary China is different from that of the era of conflict between Christian and Chinese cultures in 19th and 20th centuries. Many Chinese intellectuals have actively tried to communicate with Christians since the 1980s. They do no longer treat Christianity as a foreign threat but as an opportunity for China to learn and take advantage of new ideas.

The difference between these new scholars and the earlier Cultural Nationalist Confucians can be summarized as follows: a) Earlier Christianity was considered to be a Western imperialist tool of culture, and Chinese scholars responded passively, because of nationalism and patriotism. Now Chinese scholars communicate with Christians actively in order to regenerate Chinese culture and to fulfill the aim of modernization in China. b) Earlier encounters between Christian and Chinese cultures (including Confucianism) were unequal, although Chinese Confucianism being the “host”, Christianity seemed to have been an aggressive power to China. Now the communication is more equal. c) Earlier the dialogue between Christianity and Chinese cultures (including Confucianism) was more subjective. Missionaries wanted to convert Chinese, and the Chinese wanted to resist the missionary efforts. Now dialogue is possible, because it is more objective and academic.

In any case, the concept of transcendence and the concept of salvation have been positively welcomed by those Chinese involved in contemporary cultural regeneration discussions in China. Internal transcendence, i.e., the monistic unity between Heaven (God) and humanity, has been criticized as the root cause for the lack of democracy in China. Since the concept of God and His transcendence and
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salvation are unknown by the Chinese, and man has come gradually to occupy the position of God.

The argument of Liang Yancheng 梁燕城

1) By distinguishing the “Silent Heaven” from the “Loud Heaven” to discover personality or personhood in the Chinese Heaven, Liang tries to integrate Christianity and Confucianism. Liang does not consider the Confucian internal transcendence superior to the Christian external transcendence. In saying “God is immanent, since personality can also be found in the Chinese Heaven or Dao”, Liang wants to show that the Christian God is immanent as is the Chinese Heaven or Dao. In order to avoid the danger that the Christian God may be assimilated to the Chinese impersonal Dao or Heaven, however, he emphasizes that the God is a Personal God rather than an abstract power.\(^{791}\)

On the one hand, for many Confucians and missionaries, if Dao or Heaven is not personal the dialogue between the Christian God and the Chinese Dao will reach a dead end. Personhood is a key feature of the Christian God which cannot be given up for any reason, even for the dialogue with Confucianism. Why is personhood so important in the discussion between Christians and Confucians? As far as I can see, personhood involves the possibility of evaluation concerning whether the person is good or evil, and people seek a God who is perfectly good, having no element of evil in his personhood. But the theologian Heinrich Ott has described another aspect of God’s personhood that is something else besides his goodness, which he called the super-personality of God\(^{792}\), an aspect of His being that does not reject personhood but lifts it to a higher level. Super-personality is not, however, impersonality, which, while it may not be in itself evil, nonetheless loses what is good in God’s personhood. Personhood, then, is an important feature of the Christian God, and as such is a crucial feature for the dialogue between Christians and Confucians. On the other hand, if the Chinese Dao or Heaven has personhood and is equal to the Christian God, the need for mission work, in the view of many Confucians, is obviated. Indeed, the mere acceptance of the personhood of God is not enough to

\(^{791}\) Cai, Zhou & Liang 1985, 290.
define the preaching mission of Christians, since this theological doctrine is held in both Islam and Judaism; but Christians still consider it necessary to preach the Gospel of Christ to Muslims and Jews.

Liang proposes to solve this paradox by distinguishing the "Silent Heaven" from the "Loud Heaven." He argues that both the Silent Heaven and the Loud Heaven have personhood, but they express themselves in different ways. The "Heaven" of Confucius was silent in that he could apprehend it even though it never spoke verbally to him. The benevolent heart of Confucius is, in fact, the same as this Heaven. Thus, for Confucius, Heaven and human hearts are not alienated but united.

Silent Heaven can be compared with negative theology (via negativa), since in this theory God does not speak and human beings cannot hear him. This notion (where Dao or Heaven does not speak verbally) has been particularly emphasized in Daoism and is not strange to Confucianism. On the issue of language and expression Christianity and Confucianism are quite close to each other, since negative theology asserts that language cannot fully describe God. This failure of language is based on two facts: the finite, experiential basis of language, and the hiddenness of God. And Confucianism is close to Christianity in sharing these two features concerning language in its notion of the “silent” and “loud” heavens. For Liang, as long as a personal understanding of Heaven is not lost, Christianity will continue to share these features. We must note, of course, that the Silent Personal Heaven of Confucianism differs from the Loud (= to speak) and Revealed God (= Heaven) of Christianity in that the Christian Loud Heaven (God) is closely related to biblical revelation, whereas as Silent Heaven of Confucianism shows itself in a different way. The Christian God reveals himself in love, mercy, and righteousness; and He has actively participated in human history.

While Liang argues that the Heavenly Principle is personal, most

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792 Ott 1971.
794 Cai, Zhou & Liang 1985, 301. Liang's claim is questionable, since the feature that Heaven is personal does not prove that Heaven is the same as the Christian God. Indeed personal gods bear many differences, and many religions claim that their gods are personal. For example, the God of Jews, the God of Christians and the God of Muslims are different but all are personal. Liang's attention has been focused on proving that Confucianism is not atheistic.
Confucianism cannot agree.\textsuperscript{795} For, as mentioned in chapters 2 and 3, Heaven was replaced by the Heavenly Principle in the Cheng-Zhu school of Neo-Confucianism in the 11th century. The denial of a personal god in the Christian sense as a fundamentally transcendent and self-conscious person seems to be clear, but, a personalistic element is not totally absent in Neo- and Modern Confucianism, either.\textsuperscript{796} In respect to the personality of Heaven, Liang’s argument is more consistent with Ancient Confucianism than Neo-Confucianism.

However, for Liang, the Heavenly Principle in Neo-Confucianism is not in conflict with the Silent Heaven in Confucius. For Liang, the Heavenly Principle in Neo-Confucianism is the same as the personal Silent Heaven in Confucius. From Mencius to Wang Yangming, the pathway to truth has been through the subjective approach of experiencing inwardly beauty and goodness in order to arrive at knowledge of them in themselves. But Mencius has pointed out that such a phenomenon as human empathy is neither decided by life experience nor decided by psychological reactions. As mentioned above, Neville calls the Mencian Four Beginnings “the Center of self”. And this center I consider to be similar to the \textit{imago Dei}, though Liang calls them the revelation of Beauty and Goodness in human hearts.\textsuperscript{797}

Liang argues that this empathy is a moral experience, and its source is the Heavenly Principle, which is expressed as both the universal truth (objective Heaven or Dao) and the inner nature of human hearts (subjective nature or heart). The Heavenly Principle does not only give birth to the moral experience in human beings but also gives birth to all the things in the universe. The moral experience of

\textsuperscript{795} Cf. Nikkilä 1982, "The term Tian used in Shujing", 78-114; "The term Tian used in Shijing" see 153-174. "The term Tian used in the Confucian Analects" see Nikkilä 1992, 20-49; see also 164-169 concerning Confucian Heaven, the distinction of the Characteristics of Tian in the Analects, Tian of Confucius and of Shujing, Tian of Confucius and of Shijing, Tian of Confucius and of Laozi, and Tian of Confucius and of Mozi.

\textsuperscript{796} Cai, Zhou & Liang 1985, 294. Du Weiming says, Tian is impersonal, but is not inhuman, either. Similar to Zhang Zai Du says that human beings are like the “respectful son or daughter of the cosmic process”. Du Weiming 1985, 42-43. Chung-ying Cheng says also that the ultimate reality is neither absolutely personal nor absolutely impersonalistic: “That Heaven can be addressed as a person is because the individual has reached an ideal of identification of himself with the ultimate and total. This is an immanent point of view of Heaven as a person, not a transcendent point of view of God as a person… Heaven is not another person, but an ideal extension of my being and existence or an internal creative source of my energy and my perception of the internal good.” Cheng 1991, 459.

\textsuperscript{797} Cai, Zhou & Liang 1985, 295-296.
5. Confucian ideas of the means of salvation in Christianity

goodness and beauty is closely related to human beings and possesses the feature of personality; therefore, Beauty and Goodness must also be personal, otherwise we cannot have a “personal” experience of them in our hearts. Therefore, if moral experience is similarly personal, the Heavenly Principle should also be personal; and the Heavenly Principle is, in fact, another form of the Heaven, which is personal.

In other words, moral experience is the revelation and fulfillment of the Heavenly Principle, and they both are united as One; thus, the Heavenly Principle cannot be a non-personal objective principle. The Heavenly Principle is the potential moral experience, and moral experience is the fulfilled Heavenly Principle. On the one hand, the nature of the heart itself can be seen as the source of human moral experience and reactions, and, on the other hand, it is the Highest Truth, which has hidden its personal reality and is the Silent Heaven of Confucius. Thus, the Silent Heaven of Confucius and the Heavenly Principle in Neo-Confucianism do not differ: they are “personal” Truth. 798

This is Liang’s argument, though he has never explained to his readers how the Chinese concept of Heaven and the Christian concept of God relate to each other, given that the personal dimension of Heaven is proven. Personhood is indeed one of the necessary features of the Christian God; but, in addition to it, God has many other qualities beyond this one. Concerning the issue of the personality, two things should be pointed out. First, in the light of Ancient Confucianism, represented by the Five Classics, Heaven is indeed personal. 799 Secondly, it is a disputed issue concerning whether the Chinese Heaven has personhood in the light of Neo-Confucianism. 800 In Christianity, God’s personhood means mainly that God wishes a personal relationship with human beings by revealing Himself, by communicating and by loving. Therefore, when the personhood of the Confucian Heaven is proven, such a proof can lead only to the conclusion that the Confucian Heaven is theistic.

Liang follows a line somewhat similar to that of Ricci. For Ricci the Chinese

799 Ricci and his followers also hold the opinion that the Chinese Heaven has personhood.
800 Gernet, for example, opposes such an argument. See Gernet 1985, 192-247. Sun Shangyang again supports the argument of Ricci concerning personhood by saying that the Chinese people no longer worshipped God as a personal divinity during the 16th-17th centuries, but in the ancient times the Chinese actually did worship Heaven and the Sovereign on High (God) as a personal deity. In Sun's
God or Heaven possessed a personhood just as does the Christian God, but the tradition was degenerated in Neo-Confucianism because of Buddhism and other elements. For many Confucians the Chinese Heaven has never been personal either in ancient times or in Neo-Confucianism. For example, Sun Shangyang accepts Ricci’s understanding, but Heaven in the Ancient Confucianism possesses in his view at most the function of rewarding and punishing and has nothing to do with creation and salvation. Thus, the Chinese Heaven is different from the Christian God. In addition, Sun criticizes Gernet for mistakenly considering Neo-Confucianism as the representative of all Confucian schools.  

Liang argues that both the ancient Heaven and the Neo-Confucian Heavenly Principle are personal. It is a recent opinion in Neo-Confucianism that Heaven or the Heavenly Principle has the feature of personhood, a fact that has not much been noted by either theologians or sinologists. What is the difference between personhood and that which possesses it? No precise definitions of these two concepts have been offered in the Confucian discussion, and the main difference between them seems to involve the extent and degree of personhood ascribed to Heaven. Usually the Neo-Confucian Heaven and the Heavenly Principle are considered as non-personal, while the ancient Heaven is traditionally considered as personal. Liang's interpretation of Heaven’s personality in Neo-Confucianism is more a theory of his own than that of Neo-Confucians or Cultural Nationalist Confucians, since he emphasizes that some features of personhood can also be found in the Neo-Confucian Heavenly Principle. It seems Liang's argument is based on the Four Beginnings (imago Dei) of Mencius, which belong to the ancient primary scriptures of Confucianism.

Liang argues, the Heavenly Principle can show itself silently by exchanging with human hearts without speaking, but this does not prevent it from clearly manifesting itself. The Heavenly Principle, as the absolute Truth itself, is free to manifest itself in any way it chooses. Contrary to the silent approach, the Heavenly Principle has also shown itself through an interpersonal relationship. This revelation opinion, what Gernet speaks about was Neo-Confucianism rather than the ancient tradition. Sun 1994, 72-73.

801 Sun 1994, 72-73.
is concrete and verbal, as fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, who is the incarnation of the Logos in the flesh. Thus, Heaven has manifested itself in two ways without giving ground to imagine that there are two heavens, one being called Silent Heaven, and the other being called Loud Heaven. There is, in fact, only one Heaven, who shows himself in two ways: silently and loudly. Accordingly, the human experience concerning the two forms of Heaven belong also to two different realms.\footnote{Cai, Zhou & Liang 1985, 298-300.} The personal characteristics of the Christian God are expressed in the doctrine of the trinity: God is the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. One God is wholly manifested in three circumincessional persons.

2) Concerning Original Sin, Liang Yancheng says that the problem of how it has been transmitted into later generations is important for understanding the means of salvation and sanctification. Liang quotes Paul’s letter to Romans: "Sin entered the world through one man" (Rom. 5:12), Liang focuses on the term "world", since "the world" is the root of human science, and the basic position of humanity is Being-in-the-world. He says, "world" is not an external environment but the basic structure of human existence.\footnote{Cai, Zhou & Liang 1985, 250.} This "world" has become a part of every human being's heart, and humanity cannot be alienated from the "world", where sin exists.\footnote{Cai, Zhou & Liang 1985, 250-251.}

Facing such a legacy of Original Sin, Liang argues that no one can overcome it, not even the Confucian sages:

First, a sage can overcome some personal sins and might train disciples to do the same, but they cannot overcome the legacy of Original Sin in the world.\footnote{Cai, Zhou & Liang 1985, 253. Cf., Lao Zi says: "My words are very easy to know, and very easy to practise; but there is no one in the world who is able to know and able to practise them." (70:1). Confucius says: "My doctrines make no way. I will get upon a raft, and float about on the sea." (The Analects 5:7).}

Secondly, Liang argues that sages usually cannot achieve their purposes and have to wait upon the action of the future generations, who, however, usually treat the sages as idols.\footnote{Cai, Zhou & Liang 1985, 254.}

Thirdly, Liang says that after completing the achievement of benevolence and virtue a sage should be able believe in God through faith. God will not force sages to
believe in Him, neither can sages force God to show his revelation. Nevertheless, they could open their hearts to faith so as to meet God, because sages have achieved the realm of substantial goodness which enables one to know the truth. Liang says that Christians as well should practise benevolence after they believe in God; and only in this way can they experience the realm of Confucian sages.  

For Liang, the above three difficulties cannot be overcome by sages themselves, but the Christian God has already actively shown Himself through His revelation and has met people in the incarnation of Logos so that the heritage of Original Sin can be overcome. Through such an analysis of the difficulties of the Confucian sages, Liang hopes to show that human beings cannot save themselves. He hints that the salvation offered by God in Christ is required by all human beings, including Confucians. In saying this Liang forwarded a rather new interpretation of Christianity. But two problems emerge from his analysis.

Liang's viewpoint may be welcomed by Confucians, but he will struggle to get Christian approval. For, according to the Christians of the Augustinian tradition, one can neither overcome his personal sins nor achieve the realm of substantial goodness, since human beings have lost their ability to do any good after the Fall and before having been saved by God in Christ.

On the other hand, Christians can accept Liang's claim that sages (like Confucius) can meet God only if they have faith. But Confucians probably will not accept such a suggestion, as the Cultural Nationalist Confucian Cai Renhou argues. The external power of the Christian God is not necessary for Confucians to become sages, since they are their own lords. Thus, the problematic difference between Christianity and Confucianism on the means of salvation and sanctification stands unresolved. "Salvation" is a different concept from "sanctification". The former relies on an external power, and the latter is based on self-cultivation.  

Earlier when the comments of Zhuang Zukun were analyzed I mentioned a potential challenge to my claim that the lack of external transcendence means that Chinese people seek only internal transcendence, in fact, here whilst the distinction between salvation and sanctification is here analyzed, one may similarly challenge that although according to Christian theology salvation is God’s divine deed, the concept of salvation does not definitely contain the idea that salvation is possible only from the influence outside of human beings. The concept of sanctification does not either contain the
perfection may be the goal for both of them, Confucians will certainly not accept the suggestion that Confucian sages should also have faith in God on the grounds that the Confucian ethical culture is lower than that of Christians. Indeed, as I mentioned earlier, the Cultural Nationalist Confucian Tang Junyi has divided the main content of his Confucianism into nine horizons and argued that the Confucian ethical culture is higher than that of Christianity. 812

It seems that Liang tried to have an inclusive attitude toward Confucianism, but soteriologically he remains exclusive; thus, his understanding of the means of salvation is difficult for most Confucians to accept. Nor can many exclusive Christians accept Liang’s inclusiveness in respect to Confucianism.

The Cultural Nationalist Confucians regard Christian means of salvation (= justification through grace by faith in Jesus Christ), i.e., external transcendence, as a weakness. Modern Non-Christian Confucians such as Liu Shuxian and Du Weiming, however, have shown their appreciation of Christian external transcendence and criticized Confucian internal transcendence. Other scholars, who are regenerating Chinese culture, such as Tang Yijie, have suggested that China learn something about transcendence from Christianity. Some Christian Confucians have suggested that Confucians accept the Christian means of salvation. All of these people have focused on the differences between Christianity and Confucianism. What is clear is that a difference exists between Christianity and Confucianism concerning transcendence in its dynamic sense, i.e., concerning the means of salvation. No matter whether they are called external transcendence or internal transcendence, the difference between them is obvious.

Important is the question whether the above scholars can succeed, since beginning an analysis by finding differences will generally lead to conflict or failure in cultural exchange. 813 Of course, a comparison and a dialogue between the two

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812 Neo-Confucians took the metaphysical reality of heart-mind as the replacement of the ancient personal God (Heaven, Sovereign on High).
813 Zhuo Xingping says: “[f]rom the historical viewpoint seeking similarity between Christianity and Chinese culture is the first step in their encounter and to understanding each other. In the beginning of any encounter seeking similarity between different cultures is an essential and even the only approach
Confucian ideas of the means of salvation in Christianity

Religions should not always simply take up similarities and homogeneity as presuppositions, even though they are totally different and a comparison between them would be possible and valuable. If the comparison can show in what aspects the two religions are different, one may further try to discover why they are different and seek a resolution of difference through dialogue. In the context of the dialogue between Confucianism and Christianity, however, Christians often have a strong intention of converting Confucians to Christianity, and Confucians either strongly reject or actively accept such an attempt. A third group of people joining the dialogue aims at the possibility of a harmony between the two religious believers and seek “objective” truth, and they hold a pluralistic view.

For the sake of preaching the Gospel, which is a strange concept for the Confucians, Christians should find similarities with them in order to more easily approach them, since homogeneity is highly appreciated in the Confucian way of thinking. For the sake of rejecting Christianity, some Confucians will be happy if no similarities can be found between them, although this dissimilarity may be bad news for those Confucians who would like to convert to Christianity. For those who aim at a harmony between two religious positions and seek objective truth, similarities are also crucial, since they need a reason to co-exist in order to reach a final harmony.

In the final chapter I will try to lay out the basic problems in the Confucian-Christian dialogue from the viewpoint of those who aim at a harmony and seek to establish exchange and connection. Without "similarity" there will be neither a common language in which to discuss nor the contact points of dialogue and the means of exchange. Although seeking similarity may lead to historical and epistemological mistakes, it can help the two different sides to start a dialogue and to coexist together, thus, this is the first step of real understanding and knowing each other”. See Zhuo Xinping 2004, "Comprehensive Theology ---- An Attempt to Combine Christianity with Chinese Culture", Luo Mingjia & Huang Baoluo 2004, 205-212.
objective truth.
6. Basic problems in the Confucian-Christian dialogue

The confrontation of Confucian understandings of the Christian doctrine of salvation has been achieved mainly through the analysis of four elements of salvation (God as the Saviour, created human beings as the object of salvation and its status, and the means of salvation). As I made clear in the beginning of this study, however, the analysis of these issues itself is not my aim. Instead my aim is to uncover and display the basic problems in the Confucian-Christian dialogue. This explains also why I have employed a survey-type method and why my analysis sometimes is not so in details.

My analysis has revealed that all Confucians claim to represent authentic Confucianism. The interpretations of the main ideas of Confucianism vary, however, from one school to another, occasionally drifting into total controversy. There are a variety of Confucian schools. When unraveling the Confucian ideas about the Christian belief in God, for example, the results were somewhat confusing: some Confucians seem to fully accept the concept of God and even welcome its use in China, whereas other Confucians seem to totally reject the idea of God. The reason for this situation is that anti-Christian Confucian documents tend to focus on the differences between Chinese traditions and Christianity, but Modern Confucians underscore similarities. Thus, when the dialogue between Christianity and Confucianism is studied, much effort has to be laid on finding out who is who and where they are in respect to the Confucian field of thought.

In this last chapter I will try to answer the question concerning how Confucians understand the Christian doctrine of salvation by summarizing the basic problems in the Confucian-Christian dialogue. First, I will summarize the hidden difference between the ways of thinking of Confucians and Christians, and then I will
summarize four matters that may easily form obstacles for the Chinese in accepting Christianity. Finally, I will also mention some positive enhancements for dialogue.

6.1 The hidden differences between Confucian and Christian ways of thinking

The ultimate aim of Confucian morality is to fully develop the full potentiality of human nature out of the seeds of goodness inherent in each person. The fundamental idea is that man is perfectible and that the cultivation of the self must be the aim of every life. The theory that the partial Buddha-nature inherent in each being is obscured and soiled by the passions and by wrong thoughts, for example, had been transposed by the Neo-Confucian thinkers of the eleventh and twelfth centuries into the terminology of the Confucian tradition: the 'heavenly principle' (Tianli 天理), in which everyone shares, is considered opposed to 'human desires' (renyu 人欲), which are the result of egoistic thoughts. The effort to achieve individual perfection, which was Confucius' main object, thus, consisted in inwardly rediscovering one's share of the heavenly principle and developing it, while overcoming the passions and thoughts which obstruct the development of the five cardinal virtues (humanity, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and sincerity). Therefore, despite starting from very different concepts, obvious analogies to the moral attitudes of the Christian world abound.  

In Confucianist terms, one should speak of "overcoming one's nature" (kexing 克性) instead of "following one's nature" (shuaixing 率性), since such was a precept in Confucius' Analects.  "Overcoming one's nature" is the only way to reach the perfection of the Dao. The Jesuit missionaries were struck by the analogies between Christianity and the Confucian classics in this respect, as also were the Chinese intellectuals. The Analects also speaks in ways that are similar to important teachings found in the New Testament: "Do not do unto others what you would not have them do unto you."  

The preoccupations of the Chinese were fundamentally different from those of the Jesuit Missionaries. Ricci was hoping that the distinction between what depends upon oneself and what does not would lead the Chinese to think about the salvation   

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814 Cf., Gernet 1985, 143.
815 Lunyu, XII, 1: keji fuli wei ren (Humanity consists in conquering oneself in order to return to propriety).
of their souls; but for the Neo-Confucians that very distinction had no purpose other than to set one on the road to wisdom and teach one to live in harmony with the immanent order of the universe. The Chinese did not undertake their examinations of conscience in order to beg Heaven to pardon their faults but in order to understand their own defects better and correct them. They submitted themselves to austerities not to humiliate themselves before God but to win greater control over them. Such was done in order to achieve a greater harmony with ‘the principle of heavenly order’, which they believed to be actively present in nature, in society, and even in themselves. This would enable them to silence their egoistic reflections and thoughts. The fundamental idea in Chinese morality was for an individual to perfect himself, whereas a Christian thinks mainly of the salvation of his soul by God.\textsuperscript{817}

The difference between the Chinese and the Christian moralities is radical, not only because Christianity holds human nature to be corrupted but also because China is unfamiliar with the idea of a sovereign God. They proceed in totally opposed ways. Christian morality relates to a transcendent God and, thus, its starting-point is the divine perfection. Through an ecological understanding of life, however, Lai Pinchao tries to provide a conceptual framework through which Christianity and Confucianism may find themselves complementing rather than contradicting each other, as I made clear in section 5.3.2. For the Western moral ideal of universal love as taught in Christianity relies on the external root of a transcendent God. But in Confucianism the root of morality is human nature itself, and ethical behavior is simply the development of such an inner and innate nature.

We may say that the notion of sanctification is a good contact point between Roman Catholic Christianity and Confucianism. In the Christian view, man was created good and was, then, ontologically good at origin, being in the image of God. Although Confucians do not consider human beings as created by God, they affirm the good origin of human beings. The argument of the Cultural Nationalist Confucian Cai Renhou that everyone can become a \textit{shengren} 圣人 (holy man, saint, sage), can find certain support from the doctrines of Thomas Aquinas, who considers

\textsuperscript{816} \textit{Lunyu}, XII, 2: \textit{jisuo bu yu, wu shi yu ren} 己所不欲，勿施于人.

\textsuperscript{817} Cf., Gernet 1985, 145.
sanctification the result of both God's grace and human merit. In both Confucianism and in the doctrine of Aquinas the nature of man was initially good.

It is more difficult, however, to integrate Confucianism with Protestants on the issue of sanctification. On the one hand, one of the central insights of Luther’s doctrine of justification by faith alone is that the individual sinner is incapable of self-justification. It is God who takes the initiative in justification, providing all the resources necessary to justify the sinner. One of those resources is the “righteousness of God.” This is to say, the righteousness on the basis of which the sinner is justified is not his own righteousness but a righteousness which is given to him by God. This has led to the development of the concept of “forensic justification”. As Luther declares in a famous phrase, a believer is “at one and the same time righteous and a sinner” (simul iustus et peccator); righteous in hope, but a sinner in fact; he is righteous in the light and through the promise of God, yet a sinner in reality. Thus, perfection is a goal which cannot be achieved in the earthly lives of human beings. Lutheran Protestants cannot agree with Cai’s argument that everyone can become a shengren by his own effort. On the other hand, Protestants agree also that it is possible for everyone (though only as Christians) to become "a christ" (starting with the small "c" rather than capital "C"). A christ is one who possesses the holy, righteous and love-nature of Christ and “becomes participant in the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4), and this condition is what is termed sanctification. No one, however, (including Christians) can become Christ (starting with capital “C”), who is the incarnation in the flesh of the Logos, the second person of Trinity.

Tuomo Mannermaa’s interpretation of justification according to Luther may help us in answering Cai’s question whether everyone can become Christ or a christ. Mannermaa thinks that Luther treats the word "justification" as referring only to the event of being declared righteous; the accompanying process of internal renewal, which is termed "sanctification" or "regeneration", is regarded as theologically distinct. For Luther, righteousness cannot be alienated from Christ’s divine being, since it is an attribute of God, which was given to human beings in Christ. Thus, Luther found it appropriate to say that through faith in Christ a real exchange occurs,

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818 Tuomo Mannermaa (1935-) is a scholar of Luther studies in Finland. His interpretation of Luther has strong influence over Finnish theologians.
the righteousness of God in exchange for the sinfulness of human beings. The righteousness of God that is ours by faith is therefore a real participation in the life of God. This seems to come close to what Orthodoxy understands by *deification* and *theosis*. It should be carefully noted, however, that the goal of Christian salvation is different from that of Confucian self-cultivation, since the former aims at becoming participants of the divine nature, and the latter aims at achieving an oneness or identity between human beings and Heaven. According to Mannermaa, Christ is both *favor* and *donum*, and in faith itself Christ is really present (*In ipsa fidei Christus adest*). This understanding of Luther is different from that of Melanchthon and his followers, who treat "justification" and "sanctification" as two different matters.\textsuperscript{819}

One may conclude that in the Christian view, truth and perfection lie only outside this world; after he is justified by faith alone, one must continue to struggle with his own nature, his bodily desires and all their temptations in order to be sanctified. The sole thing that matters for a Christian has two aspects: on the one hand, his soul will be saved through justification by faith alone; on the other hand, as a new person in Christ, man begins a journey of sanctification to become more and more like Jesus Christ through the guiding of the Holy Spirit in his actions and behavior.\textsuperscript{820} Confucian morality, however, is based upon the idea of an immanent monist moral order that is present not only in the cosmos and society, but also in human beings themselves. Thus, to act correctly means to integrate oneself into the order of the world without looking for a world to come. It should be noted, however, that, while the differences between Confucianism and Christianity are so obvious that some modern scholars conclude that a mutual understanding is rather difficult, others have nonetheless considered the differences as minor or have valued more the similarities between Confucianism and Christianity.

\textsuperscript{819} This term is also called "*theopoiesis*". In Latin it is called "deification". Mannermaa 1979, 11. See also UC 1998, viii, and 25. Mannermaa 1979, 10-13.
\textsuperscript{820} Some Non-Christians and even Christians think that people have free will and can guide their actions and behavior by reason, thus being rewarded with the salvation of their souls. Thus, the only thing that matters to Christians and the only purpose of morality is the salvation of the soul. This is certainly not the case, however, for Lutheran protestants.
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6.2 Four obstacles in the Confucian-Christian dialogue

6.2.1 Theological perspective: the monistic unity between Heaven and humanity

The Neo-Confucians and Cultural Nationalist Confucians formed their position on the Christian God based on the idea that Confucianism is superior to all other ideologies. The theological basis of this superiority is the monistic unity between Heaven and humanity in Confucianism. Except for the Modern Confucians, who are influenced by the Enlightenment tradition from the beginning of the 20th century, most of the Neo-Confucians and Cultural Nationalist Confucians from the 16th to the 20th century consider Confucianism as a perfect system, and the appreciation of antiquity is a feature of their ways of thinking. They do not allow criticism of Confucianism, and therefore, all other ideologies (or philosophies or religions) have to be assimilated to Confucianism; otherwise Confucians will reject them. Christianity has also faced this approach of assimilation or rejection by the Chinese.

Matteo Ricci himself noticed this feature of Confucianism and chose, successfully, the approach of stressing the assimilation between Confucianism and Christianity. His approach is called “the Rule of Matteo Ricci”. It includes three points: To accept the veneration of the ancestors as a non-religious custom of missing them and showing them filial piety; to accept the veneration of Confucius as a non-religious custom of respecting him as a good teacher; and to employ the Chinese terms “Shangdi” and “Tian” as the equivalents of the Christian concept of God.

Indiscriminate assimilation rather than systematic reasoning characterizes the encounter between Christianity and Confucianism. Confucians and missionaries have paid much attention to ferreting out the similarities between Confucianism and Christianity, which has allowed the question whether the concept of God plays a role in the Chinese world has become the standard of accepting or rejecting the Christian concept of God. It seems that if the alleged assimilation is proven false, the argument based on the viability of the concept of God will automatically lose its meaning.

Those Chinese, who reject the idea of the Christian concept of God, have mainly relied on cultural nationalist loyalty to Neo-Confucianism. Ricci’s assimilation has received most of the critical attacks from the representatives of Neo-Confucianism.
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There are two obvious shortcomings in these attacks. On one hand, the Chinese counterparts did not provide them with any detailed arguments, since they merely appealed to their nationalistic loyalty to Neo-Confucianism. On the other hand, Confucians of this kind did not concentrate on the concept of Shangdi and Tian as used in Ancient Confucianism, but based on their understanding of Tian in Neo-Confucianism.

These Confucians considered their interpretations of Confucianism as the true authentic Confucianism. Many Confucians have not always made a clear distinction, however, between Ancient Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism. The terms Shangdi and Tian have quite different meanings in the different schools of Confucianism.

Interestingly, the very similarities between Christianity and Confucianism that supported Ricci and his followers for persuading Confucians to accept the Christian concept of God helped certain other Neo-Confucians and Cultural Nationalist Confucians to maintain their belief in the superiority of Confucianism.\footnote{For example, Zou Yuanbiao, a Neo-Confucian in the time of Ricci, expressed such opinions directly to Matteo Ricci. See Zou Yuanbiao’s “Jishui Zhou Zhongjie gong quan ji . Yuanxue ji”. Cf. Also Sun Shangyang 1994, 143.} This move supported the Confucians’ national pride and made them more confident of their cultural superiority. They take the view epistemologically that nothing new can challenge Confucianism and that they do not need to learn anything new to revise their understanding of the truth. This is convenient for Confucians when encountering Christians, but it may be far from the truth.

The Cultural Nationalist Confucians are confident that they have achieved a depth of truth in the field of metaphysics which is not compatible with the Christian concept of God. Cultural Nationalist Confucians have systematically and logically expounded on this issue, claiming that they have created a new ontology of “moral metaphysics”.\footnote{Bresciani 2001, 473.}

Their ontological view can be defined as “empirical”, as it is guided by experience and is dependent upon observation or experience alone, apart from the methods of western science or grounding their view in \textit{a priori} rational ideas. Their thinking differs from Western metaphysical theories, which are constructed on the basis of deductive reasoning grounded in some fundamental principle of
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epistemology. Cultural Nationalist Confucian ontology is built on the experience of human conscience as gained by means of moral action, and they typically share certain common axioms: self-knowledge, the interconnection between the heavenly Dao and the moral self (i.e., the unity between Heaven and humanity), and the Dao as simultaneously immanent and transcendent. The influence of process theology on Confucians is obvious.

From the Christian point of view, Cultural Nationalist ontology seems to deny the existence of God and, consequently, raises the moral self to the place of God. But this philosophical expression on their part, in fact, may be due to a mutual misunderstanding.

Looking at the philosophical elaborations of the doctrine of theologians such as Thomas Aquinas, one can observe that they describe God’s nature in terms of God’s very essence: God is both transcendent (God and human beings are different and, therefore, not of the same substance) and immanent (although God is different from man, God and man are not separated from each other), outside and beyond man while at the same time intimate to man, and is closer to the human self than is the self to itself.

The misunderstanding on the part of Cultural Nationalist Confucians lies in that they may have taken biblical language as philosophical statements and seen the Christian concept of God more as indicating an external relation to human nature. Consequently, they inferred that, since, according to Confucian belief, human nature is in communion with Heaven, there is no need for such an external God in order to live a human moral life and accomplish one’s goal of human perfection.

Even though it is true, however, that “the monistic unity between Heaven and humanity” is a basic Confucian belief, Cultural Nationalist Confucians have never really believed that one’s moral self is Heaven or that a human being is the Dao. Certain statements by Cultural Nationalist Confucians, therefore, should be seen as echoing the mystic language used by many of them.

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824 Mou Zongsan’s disciple Cai Renhou did indeed say that Jesus should be understood as a man who became God because of his great deeds, please see Cai, Zhou & Liang 1985, 18-19.
825 Bresciani 2001, 479-480.
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6.2.2 Spiritual perspective: Christianity as spiritual opium

Since the New Cultural Movement in the late 1910s in China, Christianity has been criticized both from the Enlightenment ideal and the revival of Cultural Nationalism. In addition to nationalism and loyalty to Confucianism, rationalism has been employed as a main tool of analysis in the encounter between Christianity and Chinese culture (mainly Confucianism).

During the New Cultural Movement (Xin wenhua yundong 新文化运动, 1915-1919) Christianity has been criticized as being in conflict with science and democracy. The Young China Association (Shaonian zhongguo xiehui 少年中国协会, 1920-1921) has used science as the main tool to criticize all religions. Christianity was criticized simply because it is a religion. Resistance concentrated mostly on the issue of the existence of God. Christianity has been described as spiritual opium, contradictory to human rationality. This critical tradition went on until the end of the 1970s in mainland China.

The negative attitude to Christianity thus resulted mainly from the tension between the Enlightenment ideals and religion. The Enlightenment philosophers constructed their ideal of human civilization on the basis of reason, and viewed all that hinders reason as a stumbling block to the road of human progress. They believed that religion is undoubtedly one of the main negative powers in human nature and related religion to the blindness, ignorance, superstition, prejudice and evils of human life.

Enlightenment ideas have dominated Chinese intellectuals for a long time. Since the assault on religion is the logical result of Enlightenment ideas in modern China, the Enlightenment rather than Cultural Nationalism has played the main role in rejecting Christianity. However, since the beginning of 1980s more and more intellectuals in China have been gradually realizing the shortcomings and the limits of the Enlightenment.

Emphasizing the functions of Christianity in providing ethical grounds for human living and in establishing peace (the building of harmony society) would

826 The main people of this group are Chen Duxiu 陈独秀, Cai Yuanpei 蔡元培, and Hu Shi 胡适. Their writings were published mainly in the Journal Xin Qingnian 新青年 (New Youth). Concerning details on this issue see Lin Cixin 1996, 33-52.
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probably help the Chinese understand more about the true nature of the Christian God, which might also throw Christianity into a new light in which it is seen no longer as spiritual opium.

6.2.3 The Political perspective: Christianity as an element of political turmoil

Cultural Nationalists have asserted that Christianity is the tool of Western imperialism to invade China.

Since Christianity placed itself outside and above the social/political order instead of combining with it and reinforcing it as the established cults usually do, it was seen as a threat to order in Chinese society. By remaining external and of a different nature, Christianity seemed to ruin the very basis of Chinese society, which depended upon respect for a total order and was sensitive to any opposition between the spiritual and the temporal. The idea that everyone is allowed to worship the God of the Christians, was taken by many Neo-Confucians as an act of usurping the imperial privilege.\(^{827}\)

In order to understand why the Christian concept of God is rejected in terms of Chinese politics, it is necessary to analyze the relationship between religion and politics in China, a relationship very sparingly described in the Confucian sources.

The Chinese emperors held total power over the organization of the society and the universe, even space and time.\(^{828}\) It was simply impossible for any religion to be an autonomous power in China. According to Shujing within the chain of authority described by Heaven, kings, officials, and the masses, the latter should always obey the former.\(^{829}\) Since Heaven has lost its metaphysical sense in the Neo-Confucian

\(^{827}\) Father Intorcetta, for example, who arrived in China in 1659 and died in Hangzhou 杭州 in 1696, wrote: “It is not permitted for those of an inferior order to make sacrifices to spirits of a superior order; and if they do so, it is not with a pure heart nor according to ritual and the prescribed order but in the hope of obtaining some advantage ....” See SS 1662, 130.

Jiang Dejing, a Neo-Confucian, who opposed Christian concept of God, said: “Recently, when I had set up a family temple to worship my ancestors, the Western men of letters (missionaries) found fault with me, saying: ‘These are your family masters. But there must also be a greater master. Do you not recognize him?’ To which I scoffingly replied: ‘That greater master is the Sovereign on High (Shangdi) and in our China only the son of Heaven [i.e., Emperor] may sacrifice to him. Nobody else would dare to do so.’” See PXJ, III, 1a-b.

\(^{828}\) The Shijing reads: “普天之下, 莫非王土; 率土之滨, 莫非王臣.” (Under the whole heaven, every spot is the sovereign’s ground; to the borders of the land, every individual is the sovereign’s minister.) See also Mengzi 孟子. Wanzhang shang 万章上. disizhang 第四章. Sishu 四书 (The Four Books) 1992, 434-437.

\(^{829}\) Nikkilä 1982, 201.
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tradition, emperors came at last to occupy the top position in the chain of authority.
No one and nothing in the kingdom, therefore, should challenge the ruling power of
the emperors. A religion could not sink its roots in China unless it gets permission
from the rulers. The rulers needed to be certain that the religion was not harmful to
their rule but was in fact a benefit to the political regime.\(^{830}\)

This situation continues even in contemporary China. For example, many
foreigners may have difficulty to understand the Chinese Three-Self Protestant
Church, because it stresses above all “to love the country and to love the church”
rather than “to love the church and then to love the country”. Many conservative
Christians argue that the church should be placed before the country, whereas the
Chinese government wants to be certain that the country is placed before the church.

Therefore, many Confucians have opposed Christianity and have rejected the
Christian concept of God, since they have been afraid that Christianity would bring
harm to Chinese society.\(^{831}\) How can this problem be solved?

First, Christians should emphasize the doctrine that Christians should obey the
authority of government, which has been taught both by Paul and Peter in the Bible.
Christianity should offer the Chinese rulers the assurance that the essential aim of
Christianity is not to rebel against the government. This doctrine could help the
Chinese better understand Christianity.

Second, a seeming inconsistency between the apostle Peter’s words in
scripture and Luther’s teaching about the relation of church and state should be
resolved in respect to the question concerning whom people should obey in a conflict
between faith and politics. Peter clearly indicated that he felt obliged to follow God
rather than the secular government. And this sort of idea frightens Chinese rulers and
is very likely to be rejected.

\(^{830}\) Many other scholars have also noticed this feature. Since in China, religious matters are inseparable
from the affairs of state. A cult is only authorized once it has been officially recognized and integrated
into the hierarchy of cults, under the patronage of the emperor. Thus, in the past, the Buddhist and
Taoist cults had to be associated with the official cults of the literate tradition. The emperor allots titles
to the deities just as he allots them to the most eminent human personages. Li Qiuling has discussed
the position of religion in contemporary China, and the situation is still the same as in the 16th century,
although the Communist Party has replaced the emperor now. See Luo Mingjia and Huang Baoluo
2004, 310-325. See also the responses by Fredrik Fälman and Birger Nygaard, in 318-325.

\(^{831}\) Lin Qiliu, for example, a Neo-Confucian in the 17th century, argued that Matteo Ricci and his
fellows seemed to respect Confucianism’s criticizing only Buddhism, when, in fact, their true intention
According to Lutheran theory of the Two Kingdoms, while all creation belongs to God, he rules the world using two different forms of government: the secular and the spiritual. God’s secular government (reign) is related to the left-hand kingdom or earthly realm. This embraces all people who live in God’s world, whether they believe in Him or not. God’s spiritual government (reign), on the other hand, is related to his right-hand kingdom or heavenly realm. This comprises all those who believe in Christ and live under his lordship. God rules the secular realm through earthly government. Through law and reason by social and political institutions God rules in this realm. God rules the spiritual realm through the means of grace. God uses His word rather than reason, gospel rather than law, mercy rather than coercion to rule. The highest authority and the only authority in this realm is the word of God, not the edict of kings, the decrees of parliaments, or the judgments of courts.\footnote{832}

Thus, Christians have a double-identity. Understanding such a double-identity will be helpful in reducing the conflicts between Christianity and Confucianism.\footnote{833} According to the double-identity, Christians are spiritually the citizens of the Heavenly Kingdom and are not controlled by any human being; but secularly Christians are concrete and secular inhabitants, being located in the world, and they have the responsibility to serve other people and to obey the secular rulers. The secular rulers should, of course, give the Christians the right to believe in God. If

was to forsake Confucianism and proclaim Christianity. Lin has an article "Zhuyi lun lue 诛夷论略" in PXJ, vol. 6.

\footnote{832}Luther used two important terms.

The first is the Two Realms (Zwei Reiche Lehre), which refers to the two spheres of one's existence: before God and before humanity. “The geistliche Reich (the spiritual realm) is one's existence coram deo (before God). The weltliche Reich (the worldly realm) refers to one's existence coram hominibus (before humanity). The spiritual realm is eternal and everlasting; it is the realm of the Gospel, revelation, and faith. Two motifs run through Luther's thought about the spiritual realm: freedom and equality. Freedom allows one to act in service for the benefit of others. Equality asserts that the spiritual realm is not governed hierarchically. In this realm all Christians are equal. Whereas the spiritual realm is eternal and proleptic, the secular is finite and fleeting. Here law and convention instead of service are definitive; it is the realm of reason and unbelief.”

The second term is Luther's idea of Two Governments (Zwei Regimmente Lehre). “The Two Governments are the flip side of the coin to the Two Realms. The first (das geistliche Regiment) is the spiritual government of the church exercised through the proclamation of the Word of God and proper administration of the sacraments. The second (das weltliche Regiment) is the worldly government of emperors, rulers, and ruled, which is governed by law and enforced by coercion. The responsibility of the secular realm is to limit the effects of sin and malfeasance and thus to ensure that the unjust will not run rampant over the weak and downtrodden.” Whitford 2004.

Confucians understand this teaching, they will probably no longer consider Christianity as a challenge to the secular ruling in China.

6.2.4 The Ethical perspective: the Christian concept of God as conflicting with Confucian ethics

Christians take God as central to their faith, and secular things are meaningful only in the sense that they are related to the divine. Confucians, however, lay much emphasis on this-worldliness and human ethics. Christian morality is abstract, since all men are equal before God. But Chinese morality is totally preoccupied with relations that are both hierarchical and complementary, the model of which appears to be provided by the universe itself; *yin* 阴 and *yang* 阳, Heaven and Earth, husband and wife, sovereign and subject are all similarly bound by relation.834

Confucians were well aware of the reason that missionaries were not authorizing Chinese ancestor worship. Some of the Confucians had already paid attention to certain differences between the Chinese and the Christians. A Neo-Confucian in the 17th century, Zhang Guangtian 张广湉, could not accept that a person should place God before his own parents.835 Missionaries were often criticized by Confucians, therefore, because of their lack of filial piety.836

Another important reason for Confucians to reject the Christian concept of God is the conflict between the position of God and the doctrine of the Three

834 Cf., also *Lunyu*, XIV, 35. Gernet concludes: “The analogy between Chinese and Christian precepts can be no more than a deceptive appearance, for in Chinese morality there is no such thing as aspiration towards a God external to this world. On the contrary, it hinges upon the idea that one must find within oneself, and there develop, the innate sense of good which is there as a reflection of ‘the principle of heavenly order’. See Gernet 1985, 160-163
835 Zhang says: “Among them, when a father or a mother dies, they offer up no sacrifices and erect no temple. They are content to recognize the Lord of Heaven as the father of all and show little regard for those who gave them birth, considering them simply as their brothers. If they did not behave in this way, they would be infringing one of the great prohibitions of the Lord of Heaven. Are we to discontinue the sacrifices we offer to our ancient kings and abandon the offerings we make to the nine ancestors of the imperial temples, and thus encourage the people to follow them?” See PXJ, V, 29b. Translation is cited from Gernet 1985, 186.
836 A Neo-Confucian in the 17th century, Li Can 李燦 criticized Matteo Ricci, since for him Ricci had abandoned his own family and thus Ricci should not have any right to speak of filial piety. Li says: “Ricci set off on a sea voyage of 10 000 li (half a kilometer) to come to China. Did he even take with him his father or mother, wife or children? I am not accusing him of filial impiety on that account. I am accusing him of committing a great impiety by speaking about filial piety when he himself has abandoned all his family.” PXJ, V, 26b. Translation is cited from Gernet 1985, 187.
For Christians, to establish an eternal relationship with God is much more important than happiness in the secular life. Thus, some missionaries taught in China that it is sometimes necessary to disobey superiors and parents.\textsuperscript{838}

The doctrine of the Three Bonds is for Confucians, however, the basis of a stable society, which the Christian concept of God seemed to challenge, since God was viewed by Christians as positioned above emperors, parents and husbands.

Even though God commands humanity in the fourth commandment to “respect your father and your mother”, honor paid to one’s parents cannot be compared with that paid to God. Jesus said: “Those people who love their parents more than me are not worthy of being my disciples.” In fact, the first commandment of God is “I am the Lord your God. You shall have no other gods before me.” What does this mean? Martin Luther answers this in his\textit{ Small Catechism}: “We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.” The term “all things” covers everything in the world, both concrete things and abstract ideas. Christians believe indeed that God will not harm emperors or parents if they follow the good will of God (such as the “mandate” of Chinese culture). It is correct, therefore, to place God before emperors and parents. Many Confucians, however, cannot accept the idea that God will not bring harm to emperors and parents only as long as God is placed in the first position.\textsuperscript{839} Therefore, conflict remains between the notion that God must have the first position and Confucian doctrine of the Three Bonds. Consequently, Confucians reject the Christian concept of God.

\textsuperscript{837} The term “The Three Bonds” refers to a hierarchy of service and obligation: The minister serves the king, the son serves the father, and the wife serves the husband. The textual evidence of The Three Bonds occurs in the Legalist classic\textit{ Hanfeizi}: “The minister serves the king, the son serves the father, and the wife serves the husband. If the three are followed, the world will be in peace; if the three are violated, the world will be in chaos.” See Chapter “Zhongxiao 忠孝” of\textit{ Hanfeizi}. For the precise reference, see \textit{Hanfeizi suoyin} 1982, chapter 51, 863.

\textsuperscript{838} After Ricci Manuel Dias the Younger declared in 1642 that it was a crime to obey the orders of his parents if they ran contrary to his duty and that there was even some merit in disobeying them. “Simple explanations concerning the Ten Commandments of the Holy Doctrines of the Lord of Heaven” (1642), cited by Goto Motomi “Evolution of the Decalogue in China”, 11. This translation is cited in Gernet 1985, 187. Father Francesco Brancati said in 1650: “One should not obey the orders of one’s father and mother if they run counter to reason; if these orders are contrary to those of the Lord of Heaven, one should obey the Lord of Heaven and not one’s parents.” This translation is cited also from Gernet 1985, 187.

\textsuperscript{839} Concerning the Three Bonds, see the following analysis on the arguments of Modern Confucian He Lin.
6. Basic problems in the The Confucian-Christian dialogue

Instead of trying to solve the conflict between the Three Bonds and the Christian concept of God, many Neo-Confucians have been trying to enlarge the gap between the two ideologies. Even though the salvation of the soul is important for Christians, however, they did not reject the importance of ethics. Even if Christians have taken a negative stand on the Three Bonds, they have respected the Five Relations of Confucianism very seriously and further consider the relationship between God and human beings as the Highest Ethic. Missionaries wish by the term “the Highest Ethic” to indicate that the relationship between God and human beings is the basis and presupposition of relationships among human beings. Human relationships are usually considered as belonging to the field of ethics, so the relationship between God and human beings is called “the Highest Ethic” in order to show its importance.

It is understandable, therefore, that some Christians have argued that the Christian concept of God is similar to Heaven or the Sovereign on High of Ancient Confucianism, because they have considered the relationship between God and human beings as the Highest Ethic. Such an Ethic has also been considered the contact point between Christianity and Confucianism.

One may nevertheless consider the relationship between God and man as the Highest Ethic if you take account of the attempt of some Confucians to expand Confucianism on a Christian basis. In addition to the Three Bonds and the Five Relations, Heaven (Tian) or the Sovereign on High (Shangdi) was placed on the top of the hierarchical chain of authority from Heaven, to kings, to officials and to the masses in Ancient Confucianism. The Shujing further discloses a related chain of obedience by which the king should obey Heaven and the ancestral kings, the people should obey the king and his officials, sons should obey their fathers, and brothers should obey old brothers. Heaven gave a mandate to a ruler, who started a Dynasty,

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840 For example, the Neo-Confucian Lin Qilu 林启陆 said: “(After death) all the good and evil that people have done will be judged by God; and there is no difference between good and evil, since only those who obey the Lord of Heaven are good, even if they have been dishonoring Heaven and earth, disrespecting spirits and gods, disobeying emperors and parents. And those people, who disobey the Lord of Heaven, are evil and will fall into hell, even if they have been respecting Heaven and earth, honoring spirits and gods, and loving emperors and parents.” PXJ, vol. 6.

841 This refers to the idea that: The emperor should act like an emperor, the subject should act like a subject, the father should act like a father, the son should act like a son, and the wife should act like a wife.
and then his descendants followed him in obeying Heaven. Whether a Dynasty can continue or not depends upon whether the ruler’s descendants can obey Heaven’s will. If they do, Heaven will let them continue ruling; otherwise, Heaven will take the mandate from them and give it to another family.\textsuperscript{842}

From a modern perspective the doctrine of the mandate of Heaven is a means of legitimizing the military takeover of the Shang by the Zhou, as in the notion “God is on our side”. Religious legitimization of political and military actions is an age-old phenomenon that is still evident today.

The doctrine of the mandate of Heaven and the idea that Heaven has a moral will have become the ground for the Chinese to worship and to respect their ancestors. Family virtues were corrupted and torn down by later descendants rather than by their ancestors. These later corrupted descendants lost the mandate for ruling, which the ancestors had received from Heaven. Therefore, the real guide for people is Heaven, and, according to Shujing, the kings act usually on behalf of Heaven. Kings are accountable for their actions, however, because Heaven supervises and regulates his actions through the people. The people have the power over the king.

Together with the Heavenly mandate, the Heavenly democracy is a vital part of Zhou thought. The king and the people are responsible to Heaven, but Heaven is responsible to no-one. This is so because Heaven is the ultimate authority and a supremely functioning entity. It should be noted that the whole issue of Heavenly democracy can be found only in Shujing and not in Shijing. This fact indicates that the idea of a Heavenly democracy gradually disappeared in China, since Shijing was later than Shujing.\textsuperscript{843}

During the history of the encounter between Christianity and Confucianism, the latter has gone through different stages of development: emperors first replaced

\textsuperscript{842} Nikkilä 1982, 199-202. The ruling elite during the Western Zhou Dynasty, for example, conceived of Heaven as a moral deity who had decreed that the Zhou conquer the Shang because their moral virtue was superior. This belief came to be known as the Mandate of Heaven (Tianming), and in the early classical texts it is attributed to the aforementioned Duke of Zhou, brother of King Wu. The fully-developed doctrine states that the authority and power to rule are given to a particular family by Heaven based on the family’s virtue, and when that virtue declines, the authority to rule is taken away. Thus the later Shang kings were degenerated and corrupted, Heaven responded by taking away from them the mandate to rule and giving it to the Zhou kings, who were paragons of virtue and benevolent ruler. During Zhou period, this concept became the basis for the Confucian theory of dynasty change: why and how the authority to rule can be passed from one family line to another, with both dynasties being legitimate.
Heaven in the chain of obedience, and the Five Relations was then replaced by the Three Bonds.

The first change means that Neo-Confucianism differs from Ancient Confucianism in that there is no concept of *Shangdi*. Neo-Confucianism became a thinking without knowing the Highest Ethic (*i.e.*, the personal relationship between God and human beings).

The second change from the Five Relations into the Three Bonds also resulted from the degeneration of Heaven from theism to humanism. A Modern Confucian He Lin 贺麟 says that the Five Relations are reciprocal and, hence, conditional, whereas the Three Bonds impose moral duties that are unilateral and, hence, conditional or absolute. The essence of the Three Bonds consists of the requirement that the minister should not stop behaving like a minister when the ruler does not behave like a ruler, that the son should not stop behaving like a son when the father does not behave like a father, and that the wife should not stop behaving like a wife when the husband does not behave like a husband.\[844\]

The moral thinking of Jesus, however, is to treat love as an end in itself and unilaterally to carry out pure duties, thereby rising above the kind of worldly morality marked by mutual advantage and exchange. In Neo-Confucianism, however, the unconditional sense of duty and pure freedom of will remain philosophically latent and politically suppressed.

The Three Bonds had become an important representative of Confucian faults as well as the main culprit to be criticized until the age of the May Fourth Movement (1919) The rationality of the Enlightenment was employed as the main tool of the critics.

After decades of emphasis on rationality without proper knowledge or constant virtues, many contemporary scholars in China have considered the lack of the transcendent God as the main reason of Chinese cultural crisis. The ancient idea of *Shangdi* or *Tian* in China has been degenerated and forgotten in contemporary China. The coming of Christianity to China has helped the Chinese people rediscover

the ancient concept of Heaven, which can help China find a solution to their cultural crisis.

Once the conflict between the Christian God and Confucian ethics is solved as mentioned above, Christians will be able to appreciate Confucian contributions to ethics and moral cultivation. And this is so even though Christians do not consider moral cultivation as the means of reaching salvation. Nevertheless, Confucians will be happy if they see that Christians also consider moral life an important part of human life. Such similarity of moral appreciation will help Christians and Confucians correctly understand each other and treat each other in a friendlier manner.

6.3 Affirmative elements in the Confucian-Christian dialogue

Once these problems have been taken into consideration, one may also find many positive possibilities for the dialogue between Christians and Confucians. My analysis has raised five positive reasons for Confucians to accept the Christian concept of God.

The first important reason for many Confucians to accept the Christian concept of God is religious enthusiasm. I did not spend much space on this issue in this work, but it is certainly an important positive element in promoting the Confucian-Christian dialogue. Yang Tingyun is a famous example of this kind of Confucian. In Christian missionary activities, some missionaries influenced people through their warm hearts and enthusiasm while others preached the Gospel through rational persuasion. Religious enthusiasm, grounded in belief in God, has shown results in China.

The second important reason which has helped Confucians to accept the Christian concept of God was the well received personalities of the missionaries. I did not refer much to this element in this work either, but it is even more important than religious enthusiasm in promoting the Confucian-Christian dialogue. The deeds of the missionaries made them resemble Confucian gentlemen. The missionaries sought neither financial benefit nor sexual pleasure, and such a deed is the traditional ideal for a Chinese gentleman.

The third important reason for many Confucians to appreciate or to accept the Christian concept of God was the missionaries’ employment of the Chinese classics.
Instead of preaching the Gospel loudly and clearly at the very beginning of their acquaintance, Matteo Ricci chose to enter the dialogue with Chinese by expressing appreciation for the Chinese classics. This lenient approach is one reason why many Confucians have adopted an affirmative outlook on the Christian concept of God.

The fourth important reason which helped Confucians to accept the Christian concept of God is the indigenizing daological approach of Liang Yancheng. Similar to the previous approach of Ricci, such an approach resembles the maxim from Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274): “gratia naturam non tollit, sed supponit et perficit” (Grace does not destroy nature, but supports and perfects it). The whole Chinese tradition is thus connected with the Christian theology rather being rejected totally. This approach is not only meaningful epistemologically for the Chinese people but also important psychologically for them to face Christianity.

The fifth important reason which helped Confucians to accept the Christian concept of God is missionaries’ employment of human natural reason in explaining Christian doctrines. Even though, “to understand the truth about God” implies a belief in an existing God, Ricci did not ask Confucians to come to faith in God. What he did was to help Confucians first gain an understanding of God and then led them to believe in the existence of God. Ricci preferred to use this approach, which was different from the traditional Christian approach of requiring belief in order to understand. Ricci did this because he knew that rationality was highly regarded among Confucians. In order to convince Confucians of the correctness of the Christian concept of God, Ricci displayed the argument of the five ways of Thomas Aquinas.

The basis of Ricci’s approach is that everything in this world is in a dynamic state which is being unceasingly changed by something else. Since nothing is changed unless it has the potential to change, a first cause of change which is not changed by anything becomes logically necessary. This first cause Aquinas called God. Through such an exercise of natural reason many Confucians could accept that the world is the creation of God. And while this stance differs from Neo-Confucianism, it finds support in the ancient Chinese classics.

Concerning morality, Ricci also employed reason to prove the existence of God. Ricci’s argument, which he called the source of morality, offered a new way of
6. Basic problems in the The Confucian-Christian dialogue

thinking about the source of morality for those Confucians who were not satisfied with the actual state of human morality. Confucians have acknowledged the similarity in ethics between Christianity and Confucianism but have realized that they have different opinions concerning how to get the power to practice the good that people know.

Some Neo-Confucians and many Modern Confucians have demonstrated their positive attitude to the Christian concept of God, because the transcendence of the Christian God is seen as the power and final purpose for ethical action. The distinction between so-called internal transcendence and external transcendence has become a reason for some Confucians to appreciate the Christian concept of God. The failing history of Confucianism in the past hundred years has also indicated that, without properly realizing the limitations of human beings, blind optimism concerning the goodness of human nature results naturally in cultural crisis. They have concluded that self-cultivation and seeking perfection are necessary, but that salvation by an external God should also play an important role in people’s lives, if only in the realm of ethics.

The Enlightenment of rationalism and the post-modernist critiques of rationalism have helped Modern Confucians hold an affirmative attitude toward the Christian concept of God. The shortcomings of rationalism have especially influenced many Chinese intellectuals who are neither Confucians nor Christians to propose the Christian transcendent God as a solution to the contemporary cultural crisis in China.
Summary

Summarizing my analysis of Confucian understandings of the Christian doctrine of salvation, the following four things (God, human beings, its status, and means of salvation) become clear:

- Concerning God the Saviour in Christianity: Some Neo- and Modern Confucians (especially Boston Confucians and Modern Christian Confucians), who appreciate Ancient Confucianism and the *a priori* and *a posteriori* arguments for the existence of God, usually have an affirmative response to the Christian doctrines of God the Saviour. Since they support the assimilation between the Christian God and the Chinese concepts of *Tian* or *Shangdi* based on the Five Classics and human natural reason. Most Neo-Confucians and especially Cultural Nationalist Confucians usually deny the existence of God and cannot accept the Christian doctrine of God. Since they hold a monistic ontology and anthropology, they consider all things including Heaven (or God) and human beings are of same substance, and all differences in the world are only the different manifestations of the same Oneness. The transcendent nature of God is not a problem in the light of Ancient Confucianism, whereas Neo- and Cultural Nationalist Confucians may accept the concept, but do not understand it in the same way as Christians do. Again, according to Ancient Confucianism, *Shangdi* or *Tian* has personhood and is the creator of the world, but other later Confucians have non-personal understandings of the concept.

- Concerning the object of Salvation, *i.e.*, created human beings and its status: For both the Confucians, who appreciate Ancient
Confucianism, and many Modern Confucians, salvation by God is necessary, at least in the light of ethical practice, but many Neo- and Cultural Nationalist Confucians cannot accept salvation by an external God.

On the one hand, Confucians do not have consensus on the origin of human beings and their original nature, ability and limit. Some Neo- and Modern Confucians (especially Boston Confucians and Modern Christian Confucians) believe that human beings were created by God in *imago Dei*. For many of them, *imago Dei* is a substantial part of human nature, and Original Sin has damaged it but has not made it lost. They, like Roman Catholic Christians, have a relatively optimistic attitude to human ability and overlook the limits of it. Further, they believe in the possibility of cooperation between God and human beings. For Protestant theology, this Catholic understanding of human ability is problematic, but not much has been discussed on this topic among Confucians. Many Neo-Confucians, all Cultural Nationalist Confucians and some Modern Confucians reject the Christian anthropology that human beings were created by God because of monism. They emphasize the potential of human beings, since they believed that human nature is imparted by Heaven, and there is no substantial difference between human beings and Heaven. For them, human beings and Heaven are not only of the same substance but also, in fact, the monistic Oneness and identical.

On the other hand, Confucians do not have consensus on the state, to which human beings are to be saved. That is to say, many Confucians realize that the goal of Christian salvation is different from the religious final end of Confucianism. Christian salvation refers to both justification and sanctification. Justification is by faith and through grace. Sanctification is the process that human beings become participants of the divine nature (*2 Peter 1:4*), which is also called “deification” or “theosis”. The final religious end of Confucianism is different from justification but is similar to sanctification in
Christianity. Such a similarity is an important contact point in the Confucian-Christian dialogue, however, the difference between them is also obvious. Since in Confucianism, the goal for human beings is to become the monistic identity: oneness with Heaven. This difference of goals comes from different ontology. Christian anthropology affirms *imago Dei* in human nature but does not deny the distinction between Creator and Creation, thus, *imago Dei* is understood in its relational rather than substantial sense. This is to say, *imago Dei* is not a substantial part of human nature but is the nature of God, which dwells in human beings. Confucian anthropology, however, does not only affirm that human nature was imparted by Heaven but also that human beings and Heaven are of the same substance. In Confucianism, the relationship between human beings and Heaven is not understood in relational but in a substantial sense. In Christianity, human beings and God have relationship with each other, but in Confucianism human beings and Heaven are the monistic Oneness and so are identical.

The distinction between Christian salvation by God and Confucian perfection-seeking by self-cultivation is obvious. This distinction can also be helpful for the dialogue between Christians and Confucians, if one can distinguish the difference between religion and ethics and between justification and sanctification (or regeneration).

- Thus, the means of salvation are different between Confucianism and Christianity. For Christians, human beings cannot save themselves, and justification is only through grace and by faith (*sola gratia/sola fide*). This is to say, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, human beings can become participants of the divine nature through a process of development. Jesus Christ, the incarnation of the *Logos*, who is both human and divine, however, is the only mediator to reunite human beings with God. Confucians have called the mean of Christian salvation as “external transcendence”. For Confucians, human beings can save themselves by self-cultivation, and this is called “internal
transcendence”. For them the Natural Law (Li 理, Principle) is the mediator between human beings and Heaven, and through which human beings are able to uncover and to realize the human nature (Xing 性 or Li 理), which is the subjective form of the Natural Law (Tianli 天理, Heavenly Principle) in human beings.

My argument in this study is not an apologetic for Christianity. I have instead analyzed Confucian understandings of the Christian doctrine of salvation through a systematic theological analysis. As I mentioned in the beginning of this work, the analysis itself of Confucian understandings of the four elements of Christian salvation is not my aim, what I intended to do was to find the basic problems in the Confucian-Christian dialogue.

My analysis indicates that Confucianism has the theological and philosophical conceptual structure to understand and even to accept a Christian position. I mentioned also five affirmative elements in the Confucian-Christian dialogue, but this in itself does not mean that Confucians should become Christians. Their conceptual structures have resilience and critical power, with which Christian apologies will still have to deal.

The basic distinction between Christianity and Confucianism exists in their respective ways of thinking. In order to have peace between Christians and Confucians in China, four perspectives need attention, since they may form obstacles to the Confucian-Christian dialogue. Theologically, the monistic unity between Heaven and humanity is one of the most important features which distinguishes Confucianism from Christianity. Spiritually, Christians should help the Chinese people understand that Christianity is not spiritual opium. Politically, the Chinese people should be sure that Christianity is not a disruptive element for turmoil. Ethically, the Chinese people need to know that the Christian concept of God does reject but at the same time fulfills Confucian ethics. These four problems should be solved by seeking similarities between Christianity and the Chinese cultural heritage (including Confucianism); otherwise, dialogue between Christianity and Confucianism will most likely be stalled.
It is not so easy to explain philosophically the differences between Christians and Confucians, nor is it easy to show whether the differences between them are essential or not. Generally speaking, most of these similarities can be found between Christianity and Ancient Confucianism, whereas most differences will be found with Neo- and Cultural Nationalist Confucianism. Also, Modern Confucians, have a more open attitude to dialogue between Christianity and Confucianism than other Confucians. It is an essential issue to find out the difference among different schools of Confucians.

The theoretical question is, why are the discoveries of similarities and differences between them so important theologically for the Confucian-Christian dialogue? On the one hand, according to the experience of Ricci, similarities will help Christians approach Confucians in China, since too many strange ideas often frighten people. On the other hand, the difference between Christianity and Confucianism is a basic feature of missionary work. If the difference is not well explained, people will not be able to do missionary work or to have a fruitful dialogue. For this reason understanding the differences and similarities between them is very important.

The discovery of similarities and differences has different meanings for different people. Some aim at the missionary work of preaching the Gospel, some aim at rejecting Christianity, and again others aim at seeking objective truth and social harmony between Confucianism and Christianity.

The discovery of similarities and differences can help one understand what elements in Confucianism prevent the transmission of Christianity to China, and vice-versa. Christians and Confucians often have different understandings, which end in controversy. However, it is still possible for Confucians to accept the Christian concepts of God and salvation, since many similarities do exist between Confucianism and Christianity.
Appendices

I. The Five Classics

(Appendix to section 2.2)

The Five classics and the ancient tradition have usually been considered as the sources of Confucianism. I will not discuss much about these books for the following reasons: The Book of music has long been lost in Chinese history and Confucius himself said that he did not have a chance to study the Book of change. The present version of the Book of rites is generally believed to have originated after Confucius. The original version, if it existed is no longer extant. It is generally believed that Confucius was the compiler of the historical Commentary Spring and autumn, which is a bare historical narrative rather than a philosophical or religious work. The Book of document (Shangshu or Shujing) and the Book of songs (Shijing), however, will be referred to often in this study.

The first of the Five Classics is the Book of songs, also called Poems (Shijing 诗经). It includes 305 poems, which may be dated between c. 1000 and c. 600 BC. Traditionally, they are said to have been collected by Confucius from a total of some three thousand items, some of which had originated from remote antiquity. Others argue that they were collected by officials commissioned to do so in order to discover the extent and depth of popular feeling. Disputed, however, is whether Confucius had a hand in forming the collection?

The second book of the Five Classics is the Documents Classic, also called the Book of documents (Shangshu 尚书 or Shujing 书经). This book was recognized during the Han 汉 Dynasty (206 BC - AD 8), as one of the Five Classics and has served for more than two thousand years as the foundation of Chinese political philosophy. The text contains the earliest writings of China's traditional literature,

845 Cf, Loewe 1993, 415-423.
with some chapters dating nearly a thousand years before its recognition as a classic. Confucius was said to have edited this book. But, since other chapters may be much later, there is a dispute concerning the authenticity and date of this book.\textsuperscript{846}

The third book of the Five Classics is the *Book of rites* (*Liji* 礼记). It was also said that Confucius employed the *Book of rites* as a textbook for disciples, but the version we have now is a ritual anthology of ancient usage, prescriptions, definitions and anecdotes. It seems that its forty-nine sections do not originate from the same time or the same scholarly context. The date of each section and its provenance are subjects of considerable dispute, just as the date and origin of the *Liji* as a whole have proved to be controversial throughout Chinese intellectual history.\textsuperscript{847}

The fourth book of the Five Classics is the *Book of changes* (*Yijing* 易经 or *Zhouyi* 周易). This book was traditionally regarded as the inspired product of the "Four sages". According to one tradition, they are Fu Xi, King Wen, Duke of Zhou and Confucius. This text was used in its earliest form as a manual of divination. Since at least the Han Dynasty (206 BC -- AD 8), when it was first given a place among China's classics, the work has become the foundation on which innumerable commentators have erected moralistic, metaphysical, apocalyptic and soteriological constructs. In the pre-Han period (before 206 BC) the original text on divination had already undergone a long process of interpretation and re-interpretation, resulting in the incorporation of a group of commentaries, the so called "Ten Wings" (*shiyi* 十翼), into what was to become one of the classical texts. Thus, one should be careful when speaking of the *Book of changes* as a single text. It is perhaps convenient to use the title *Yijing* (*Book of changes*) to refer to the original parts of the hexagram and line statements, with special reference to the original context in which they were composed and to use the title *Zhouyi* 周易 (*Changes of Zhou*) as referring to the complete canonical text (*i.e.*, including the "Ten Wings"), with the entire text being understood as one of the Classics.\textsuperscript{848}

The fifth book of the Five Classics is the *Spring and autumn* (*Chunqiu* 春秋). This is one of the traditional classical texts, whose content is a chronicle of the reigns

\textsuperscript{847} See Riegel's "Li Chi", in Loewe 1993, 293-297.
\textsuperscript{848} See Shaughnessy's "I ching (Chou I)" in Loewe 1993, 216-228.
of twelve dukes of the state of Lu 鲁 covering the period from 722 to 481 BC. It contains, in barest outline, notations of the internal affairs of Lu, of diplomatic conferences, feudal wars, Lu's relations with neighboring states, and occasional records of eclipses, floods, earthquakes, and prodigies of nature. This book appears to be a bare record of facts, composed in an extremely terse style, and arranged in chronological order. The title is usually taken to stand as a synecdoche for the four seasons of the year, and, therefore, to be a generic term for annals; it gives its name to the period that it covers (722-481 BC). This work is now currently known under the headings of its three main commentaries, the Gongyang zhuan 公羊传, the Guliang zhuan 谷梁传 and the Zuozhuan 左传. 849

849 See Cheng's "Ch'un ch'iü" in Loewe 1993, 67-76.
II. The Four Books

(Appendix to section 2.2)

The first book of the Four Books is the Confucian Analects (Lunyu 论语). This book is considered a piece of primary scripture for three reasons: 1) The collection of conversations between Confucius and his disciples has the founding role in what came to be called "Confucianism". Confucius said that he himself was a transmitter rather than a creator, implying that he was only transmitting earlier things. 2) The book provides the major themes and motifs of Confucianism and has elements developed by nearly every other major thinker. 3) This book provides a particular orientation to the life of the sage, i.e., to criticize intellectually and seek to amend in action the current social habits in the light of a better way.850

The second book is the Great learning (Daxue 大学). This book teaches that the task of education is not limited to private edification but runs with appropriate shifts in nature through personal social roles, family structures, community life, and even to the most universal and remote structures of political office. This book is also a part of the Book of rites (Liji 礼记).851

The third book is the Doctrine of the mean (Zhongyong 中庸). This book provides the classical expression of the Confucian model of the self as a polar structure stretching between the inner heart of centered readiness to the world in which responds to all things according to their value and the ten thousand things. It is usually believed that this book is the work of Zisi, the grandson of Confucius and the teacher of Mencius.852

The fourth book is the Book of Mencius (Mengzi 孟子). This book is considered primary scripture because of its elaboration of the nature of the centered

850 Cf., Neville 2000, 4.
851 Cf., Neville 2000, 5.
852 Cf., Neville 2000, 5.
readiness to respond to the true worth of things as described by Mencius (390-305 BC) in his discussion of the Four Beginnings. Mencius 2A:6:

Mencius said, all men have the mind which cannot bear [to see the suffering of] others. The ancient kings had this mind and therefore they had a government that could not bear to see the suffering of the people. When a government cannot bear to see the suffering of the people, the government of the empire will be as easy as making something go round in the palm.

When I say that all men have the mind which cannot bear to see the suffering of others, my meaning may be illustrated thus: Now, when men suddenly see a child about to fall into a well, they all have a feeling of alarm and distress, not to gain friendship with the child's parents, nor to seek the praise of their neighbors and friends, nor because they dislike the reputation [of lack of humanity if they did not rescue the child]. From such a case, we see that a man without the feeling of deference and compliance is not a man; and a man without the feeling of deference and compliance is not a man; and a man without the feeling of right and wrong is not a man. The feeling of commiseration is the beginning of humanity; the feeling of shame and dislike is the beginning of righteousness; the feeling of deference and compliance is the beginning of propriety; and the feeling of right and wrong is the beginning of wisdom. Men have these Four Beginnings just as they have their four limbs. Having these Four Beginnings, but saying that they cannot develop them is to destroy themselves. When they say that their ruler cannot develop them, they are destroying their ruler. If anyone with these Four Beginnings in him knows how to give them the fullest extension and development, the result will be like fire beginning to burn or a spring beginning to shoot forth. When they are fully developed, they will be sufficient to protect all people within the four sears (the world). If they are not developed, they will not be sufficient even to serve one's parents.853

Mencius has elaborated the themes of the original goodness of human nature and its perpetual frustration and perversion in this book.854

III. The eleven quotations of Ricci

(Appendix to section 2.4.2)

From the Chinese classics Ricci has quoted 11 passages in which reference is made to Heaven (Tian 天) or to the Sovereign on High (Shangdi 上帝).\textsuperscript{855} These quotations are:

1) Our Lord of Heaven is the Sovereign on High mentioned in the ancient [Chinese] canonical writings [as the following texts show]: Quoting Confucius, the Doctrine of the mean says: "The ceremonies of sacrifices to Heaven and Earth are meant for the service of the Sovereign on High". Zhu Xi comments that the failure to mention Sovereign Earth (houtu 後土) [after Sovereign on High] was for the sake of brevity. In my humble opinion what Zhongni [i.e., Confucius] intended to say was that what is single cannot be described dualistically. How could he have been seeking merely for brevity of expression?

吾天主，乃古經書所稱上帝也。中庸引孔子曰：“郊社之禮以事上帝也。”朱注曰：“不言后土者，省文也。”窃意仲尼明一，以不可为二，何独省文乎？

2) One of the hymns to the Zhou sovereigns in the [Book of Odes] runs as follows: "The arm of King Wu was full of strength; Irresistible was his order. Greatly illustrious were Cheng and Kang, King led by the Sovereign on High."

周頌曰：“執兢武王，無兢維烈。不顯成康，上帝是皇。”

3) In another hymn we read: "How beautiful are the wheat and the barley, whose bright produce we shall receive! The bright and glorious Sovereign on High [Will in them give us a good year]."

又曰：“於皇来牟，將受...明，明昭上帝。”

4) In the "Hymn to the Shang Sovereigns" there is the following: "And [Tang's] wisdom and virtue daily advanced. Brilliant was the influence of his character [on Heaven] for long, And the Sovereign on High appointed him to be a model to the nine regions."

商颂云：“圣敬日足齐，昭假迟迟，上帝是示氏。”

\textsuperscript{854} Cf., Neville 2000, 6.  
\textsuperscript{855} See Ricci 1985, 120-125.
5) In the "Major Odes" we read: "This King Wen, watchfully and reverently, with entire intelligence served the Sovereign on High."

雅云：“维此文王，小心翼翼，昭事上帝。”

6) The Book of changes has the following: "The Sovereign [Lord] emerges from Zhen in the East. This word "Sovereign" "Emperor" does not connote the material heavens. Since the blue sky embraces the eight directions how can it emerge from one direction only?"

易曰：“帝出乎震。”夫帝也者，非天之谓，苍天者抱八方，何能出于一乎?

7) In the Book of rites it is stated: "When all these points are as they ought to be, the Sovereign on High will accept the sacrifices."

礼云：“五者备当，上帝其乡食。”

8) It continues: "The son of Heaven himself ploughs the ground for the rice with which to fill the vessels, and the black millet from which to distil the spirit to be mixed with fragrant herbs, and for services of the Sovereign on High."

又云：“天子亲耕，......以事上帝。”

9) In the "Oath of Tang" [in the Book of History] it is stated: The sovereign of Xia is an offender, and, as I fear the Sovereign on High, I dare not but punish him.

汤誓曰：“夏氏有罪，予畏上帝，不敢不正。”

10) It also says [in the "Announcement of Tang"]: "The great Sovereign on High has conferred even on the inferior people a moral sense, compliance with which would show their nature invariably right. But to cause them tranquility to pursue the course which it would indicate is the work of the Sovereign."

又曰：“惟皇上帝，降哀于下民，若有恒性，克绥......犹，惟后。”

11) In the "Metal-bound Coffer" of the Book of History the Duke of Zhou says: "And he was appointed in the hall of the Sovereign to extend his aid to the four quarters of the empire..."
The fact that the Sovereign on High has his hall makes it obvious that the speaker is not referring to the physical blue sky. [Therefore], having leafed through a great number of ancient books, Ricci is convinced that the Sovereign on High, and the Lord of Heaven are different only in name.

金滕周公曰：“乃命于帝庭，敷佑于四方。”上帝有庭，则不以苍天为上帝可知。历观古书，而知上帝与天主特异以名也。
IV. The degeneration from theism to humanism

(Appendix to sections 3.1 and 3.3)

Belief in the God underwent a radical transformation in the history of China. What follows is a brief introduction to the degeneration from theism to humanism in the history of the ideological development in China. The ancient Chinese believed in a personal monotheistic God who was called Di; but later the concept Tian gradually replaced this religious belief. Although Tian was also originally personal, it finally became a non-personal principle and power. Thus, theism gradually faded and humanism became stronger and stronger. I have called this development “degeneration from theism to humanism”.

The term “degeneration” is not employed with a negative sense here, though it is sometimes used in the negative sense, as in the case of the Evangelist Yuan Zhiming.\textsuperscript{856}

The earliest appearance of the character Di (Sovereign) was found in the Shang oracle inscriptions (jiaguwen), which date to Shang Dynasty (1751-1112 BC). In these Oracle inscriptions the character Di resembles the form of a flower's fruit. There are three different interpretations of this term Di: as transcendence, as natural existence, and as the existence of human beings themselves.\textsuperscript{857}

The term "Di" was later gradually replaced by "Tian". Some scholars have even suggested that the terms "Di" and "Tian" refer to the same transcendental God.\textsuperscript{858} This Sovereign on High was called "Tian" (Heaven) in the Xia 夏 Dynasty (2183-1752 BC) and "Shangdi" (Sovereign on High) in the Shang 商 Dynasty (1751-183

\textsuperscript{856} See Huang 2002, 19-52.
\textsuperscript{857} See Xu Zhiwei 1998.
\textsuperscript{858} Cf., He Shiming 1996 (1), 29.
Appendices

1112 BC). The Zhou 周 (1111-249 BC) people appreciated literature and mixed "Heaven" and "Sovereign on High" into the "Huangtian shangdi" (Heavenly Sovereign on High).

The written oracles from the Shang Dynasty reveal that people at that time considered the "Heavenly God" as "God", who not only controls nature and the universe but also decides the blessings and woes of human beings. Nikkilä says as well: "Other issues with regard to Heaven shared by Shih Ching [Shijing] and Shu Ching [Shujing] are: Identification of Heaven with Shang Ti [Shangdi] and the polarity between Heaven and earth." The term Di appears quite frequently in the Confucian classics. In the Shujing 天 appears in 29 sections, “Shangdi 上帝” in 12 sections, “Di 帝” in 4 sections, “Huangtian 皇天” in 3 sections, “Huangdi 皇帝” and “Huangtian shangdi 皇天上帝” in one section. In the Shijin, “Tian” appears in 19 sections, “Haotian 昊天” in 12 sections, “Di 帝” in 9 sections, “Shangdi 皇帝” in 8 sections, “Huangdi 皇帝” in 12 sections, and “Haotian shangdi 昊天上帝” in one section.

In the Shujing "Heaven" resembles a personal divine transcendence. For example, Nikkilä 1982, 203 reads: "According to Shu Ching [Shujing], Heaven in Chou [Zhou] thought cannot be defined strictly; it is an autonomous, independent, supremely functioning entity, the ultimate initiator of things and principles, desiring a harmonious and happy coexistence for the people in all their social relations and for the entire universe as well."

Heaven was favorable, the kings before the Shang Dynasty had virtuous ministers, and they used their virtue to become the recipients of the Heavenly favor. The kings were accepted by the people and obtained their mandate to rule from Heaven. The Shujing maintains that the lord of Xia Dynasty (-1751 BC) neglected the government, and the people did not respect the sacrifices but lived a life of pleasure. Thus, Heaven gave the mandate to Tang, who carried out the Heavenly punishment of Xia, thus establishing the Shang Dynasty (1751-1112 BC). The last Shang rulers

859 See Sun 1994, 72.
were drunkards, and the people imitated them in this respect. Thus, Heaven destroyed Shang, removed its mandate, and gave it to Zhou (1111-249 BC).\footnote{See Nikkilä 1982, 78-114.}

In Shang (c. 1750-1045 BC) religion there were three realms: 1) \textit{Di} (Sovereign or Lord) or \textit{Shangdi} (Sovereign on High or High Lord or Lord Above); 2) lesser gods who personified the powers of mountains, rivers, and other natural features.; and 3) the kings. The communication among them is a two-way channel of sacrifice and divination.\footnote{See Keightley 1978, 33-35.} God was the supreme anthropomorphic deity who sent blessings or calamities, gave protection in battles, sanctioned undertakings, and passed on the appointment or dismissal of officials.

Such beliefs were continued into the early Zhou, but were gradually replaced by the concept of Heaven (\textit{tian}) as the supreme spiritual reality. This does not mean that Heaven and spiritual beings did not continue to be highly honored and greatly respected. But their personal power was supplanted by human virtue and human effort, and man, through his moral deeds, was now able to control his own destiny. It was in this light that ancestors were regarded in West Zhou times.

During the Shang, great ancestors were either identified with God, or considered as mediators through whom requests were made to the Lord. In the Zhou, they were still influential but, as in the case of Heaven, their influence was exerted not through their power but through their moral example and inspiration. They were to be respected but to be kept from interfering with human activities. Individual and social categories were to be stated in moral terms according to a "Great Norm".

The above beliefs are illustrated in ancient Chinese classics. Wing-Tsit Chan has given a description mainly according to the Five Classics: the \textit{Book of history} (\textit{Shujing} 书经, also called \textit{Shangshu} 商书), the \textit{Poems} (\textit{Shijing} 诗经), the \textit{Zuozhuan} 左传 (Zuo's commentary on the \textit{Spring and autumn annals}), and the \textit{Guoyu} 国语 (Conversations of the States). Confucius believed that the way to get society on the right track again was to go back to the example of ancient sage-emperors. The needful thing was to convince people they must act in accordance with the roles society has given them. The father must act like a father, the son like a son; the ruler must be a real ruler like those of old, wise and benevolent; the ministers of state must
be true civil servants, loyal, fearless and self-giving; the husband must be like a husband, the wife like a wife; and friends must be loyal to each other. These five basic relationships are the basis of the Confucian tradition.\textsuperscript{864}

Beginning with the West Zhou Dynasty (1066-771 BC) the emphasis of thinking was gradually transferred from the spirit to the human and, thus, to humanism -- not the humanism that denies or slights a Supreme Power but one that professes the unity between Heaven and humanity that had dominated Chinese thought from the dawn of its history and had reached its climax in Confucius (551-479 BC). The conquest of the Shang (1711-1066 BC) by the West Zhou in 1066 BC inaugurated a transition from tribal society to feudal. Prayers for rain were gradually replaced by irrigation. Di, formerly the tribal Sovereign, became the God for all. Man and his activities were given greater importance. Having overthrown the Shang, founders of the West Zhou had to justify their right to rule. Consequently, they developed the doctrine of the Mandate of Heaven, a self-existent moral law whose constant, reliable factor was virtue. This doctrine stresses that man's destiny -- both mortal and immortal -- depended, not upon the existence of a soul before birth or after death nor upon the whim of a spiritual force, but upon his own good words and good deeds. The West Zhou asserted, therefore, that the Shang, though they had received the mandate to rule, had forfeited it because they failed in their duties. The mandate then passed on to the founders of Zhou, who deserved it because of their virtue. Obviously, the future of the house of West Zhou depended upon whether future rulers were virtuous.\textsuperscript{865}

The available sources allow us to say more about the early Zhou religion than about the Shang. In particular, it is possible to distinguish the religion of the common people in the Zhou from the rituals and beliefs of the ruling elite. Both groups believed in gods, ghosts, ancestors, and omens (the significance to human beings of unusual phenomena in nature) and practiced divination, sacrifice, and exorcism. Shangdi was also worshipped by the Shang kings and The Zhou worshipped as well a deity called "Tian" (Heaven). It seems that they worshipped Heaven before their takeover of the Shang.

\textsuperscript{864} See Chan 1963, 3-4.  
\textsuperscript{865} See Chan Wing-isit 1963, 3-4.
 Eventually Heaven became the most widely-used term for the highest spiritual being by the emerging class of intellectual elite during the Zhou period. During the early Zhou Tian was often used synonymously with Shangdi, but it had slightly different connotations that gradually came to predominate. Shangdi clearly denotes a "personal" deity, but it also had impersonal connotations as the realm or abode of the gods and ancestors. It forms a close parallel with the English usage of the word "Heaven". "Heaven" can be used in a personal sense to refer metonymically to God ("Heaven help us") and can be used in an impersonal sense to mean the realm of God ("Heaven is above all yet, there sits a judge that no king can corrupt"); it can be used as well in a purely naturalistic sense to denote the sky or atmosphere ("The heavens opened up in downpour"). Tian came to cover the same range of meanings, though only gradually. During the Western Zhou the first two senses of Tian predominated; the third, purely naturalistic meaning, was only used by a small minority of classical philosophers.

In general, the beliefs of Western Zhou commoners were closely tied to the agricultural cycle and to the forces that influenced it. Commoners were thus more concerned than their elite brothers with the negative or dangerous spiritual forces inhabiting the world. In contrast to the most abstract Heaven, these forces took the form of an astonishing variety of gods, ghosts or demons, and spirits. A few of the more troublesome of these were a sacred serpent, a thorn demon, hungry ghosts, and a water-bug god. Others were more neutral, such as the gods of particular mountains, rivers, and seas (usually depicted in hybrid animal or animal-human forms), earth gods (tushen 土神) of other specific localities, and the highest gods, variously called Shangdi, Shanghuang and Shangshen. With the possible exception of the high gods, none of these spiritual beings was immortal. They could even be killed, either by humans or by other gods.

The early Zhou elite were more concerned with the powerful ruling gods and political matters. So, the common ground shared by the two groups was much more extensive than their difference, which for the most part consisted of differences in
emphasis and interpretation. These distinctions begin to emerge in the Western Zhou and became clear in the Eastern Zhou period. 866

866 Concerning the above introduction, see Joseph A. Adler's Chinese religious traditions chapter 2 "Sacrifice, divination, and the mandate of Heaven: The Shang and Western Zhou periods" in www.kenyon.edu/depts/religions/fac/Adler/Writings/Ch2-Shang.htm
V. The nine horizons of Tang Junyi’s Confucianism

(Appendix to section 3.2)

The nine horizons are described by Tang as follows:

"In the beginning, our cognition is about external, not internal observation, which is [our mind] being conscious of others and not self-conscious... Hence the first horizon of the nine horizons is the horizon of manifold separate individuals (wanwu sanshu jing). From this we observe the realm of individuals ... The second horizon is the horizon of transformation according to classes (yilei chenghua jing). From this we observe the realm of classes. The third horizon is the horizon of functioning in sequence (gongneng xuyun jing). From this we observe the realm of cause and effect, and the realm of means and ends." 867

"The middle three horizons are horizons of self-consciousness, not of the consciousness of others. The first horizon [in this group] is the horizon of mutual perception (ganjue hushe jing) ... In this horizon, a subjective substance first knows that the manifestations of the objects of its cognition are included in its perceptions. The space and time in which we find the manifestations are internal to the heart-mind which has conscious reflections following perceptions. One then knows from inference that all existing substances are subjective substances that have the ability to perceive. These subjective substances can mutually perceive each other and also are independent of each other.

... The second horizon in the group is the horizon of observation in suspension (guanzhao lingxu jing). From this we observe the realm of meaning ... This world of pure manifestations, pure meaning, can be expressed in language, words and symbols ... literature, logic, mathematics are collections of linguistic symbols. They indirectly express the various pure manifestations, pure meaning. Our music, painting and arts use collections of voice, sounds and shapes directly to express the various pure manifestations, pure meaning.

...

The third horizon of this middle group is the horizon of practicing morality (daode shijian jing). From this we observe the realm of moral conduct. Its main point is to discuss our having self-conscious ideals and seeking to universalize them.  

"The last three horizons are the horizons in which the subjective incorporates the objective and transcends the distinction between the subjective and the objective. It is the horizon where we transit from self-consciousness to trans-consciousness. Yet this trans-subjective-objective [horizon] still follows the order of having the subjective incorporating the objective and develops further from there. Hence it still takes the subjective as the chief. ...  

In these three horizons, knowledge must all be transformed to wisdom, or belongs to wisdom, and be used in our lives to help us to achieve real and valuable existence of our lives. ...  

Of these last three horizons, the first horizon is named the horizon of returning to one God (guixiang yishen jing). From this we observe the realm of God. Its main point is to discuss the horizon of the trans-subjective-objective, unifying-subjective-objective God as described in monotheism. This God is the substance that occupies the highest position.  

The second horizon is the horizon of the dual-emptiness of self and dharma (wofa erkong jing). From this we observe the realm of dharma. Its main point is to discuss the Buddhist views on the classification and meaning of all realms of dharma and manifestations. [Buddhism] sees that for both emptiness is their nature, their real manifestation. Both belong to the category of emptiness. This destroys our attachment to the [distinction between] the subjective and the objective. ...  

The third horizon is the horizon of flowing of Heavenly virtue (tiande liuxing jing), which is also named as the horizon of exhausting one's nature and establishing one's mandate. From this, we observe the realm of nature and mandate. Its main point is to discuss the Confucian idea of exhausting one's subjective nature and to establish the objective mandate from Heaven. [Following this Confucian idea has] the consequence of creating a connection between the subjective and the objective ... This [horizon] can be seen as connected to the horizon of practicing morality, and can be called the ultimate horizon of practicing morality or the horizon of establishing the Great Ultimate.  

Tang said,  

“For this so called horizon of the flowing of heavenly virtue, we can see simultaneously the flowing of heavenly virtue in the accomplishment of human virtues. Hence it is simultaneously the trans-subjective-objective horizon. This differs from the horizon of returning to one God, where there is a vertical vision proceeding from below and extending to above, enabling us to see the existence of God or Spirit who unifies the subjective and the objective, making our faith extend upwards, and transcending the opposition between the subjective and the objective. This also differs from the Buddhist idea of destroying the subjective attachment to the self and the objective attachment to the \textit{dharma}. [If we follow Buddhism] we look at the world in its ten directions and observe truly the nature of all subjective-objective, internal-external \textit{dharma} that exists in the realm of \textit{dharma}. This makes our wisdom to flow downwards and transcend the opposition between the subjective and the objective. Now when I talk about the flowing of the human and the heavenly virtues, the main point is to proceed in accordance with the order of the existence of our lives and the sequence in which the present world manifests itself, moving from what comes first to what comes later” \textsuperscript{870}.

\textsuperscript{869} Tang 1977 (vol. 24, I), 51-52.  
\textsuperscript{870} Tang 1977 (vol. 24, II), 155-156.
VI. The Taiji 太极

(Appendix to section 4.1.1)

In his Taiji tu shuo 太极图说 (An explanation of the diagram of the Great Ultimate) Zhou Dunyi 周敦仪 (1017-1073) says:

The Ultimate of Non-Being and the Great Ultimate (Taiji)! The great Ultimate through movement generates yang. When its activity reaches its limit, it becomes tranquil. Through tranquility the Great Ultimate generates yin. When tranquility reaches its limit, activity begins again. When tranquility reaches its limit, activity begins again. So movement and tranquility alternate and become the root of each other, giving rise to the distinction of yin and yang, and the two modes are thus established.

By the transformation of yang and its union with yin, the Five Agents of Water, Fire, Wood, Metal, and Earth arise. When these five material forces (qi) are distributed in harmonious order, the four seasons run their course.

The Five Agents constitute the system of yin and yang, and yin and yang constitute one Great Ultimate. The Great Ultimate is fundamentally the Non-ultimate. The Five Agents arise, each with its specific nature.

When the reality of the Ultimate of Non-Being and the essence of yin, yang and the Five Agents come into mysterious union, integration ensues. Qian 乾 (Heaven) constitutes the male element, and kun 坤 (Earth) constitutes the female element. The interaction of these two material forces engenders and transforms the myriad things. The myriad things produce and reproduce, resulting in an unending transformation.

It is man alone who receives (the Five Agents) in their highest excellence, and therefore he is most intelligent. His physical form appears, and his spirit develops consciousness. The five moral principles of his nature (humanity or ren, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and faithfulness) are aroused by, and react to, the external world and engage in activity; good and evil are distinguished; and human affairs take place.

The sages settles these affairs by the principles of the Mean, correctness, humanity, and righteousness (for the way of the sage is none other than these four), regarding tranquility as fundamental. (Having no desire, there will therefore be tranquility.) Thus he establishes himself as the ultimate standard for man. Hence the character of the sage is "identical with that of Heaven and Earth; his brilliancy is identical with that of the sun and moon; his order is
identical with that of the four seasons; and his good and evil fortunes are identical with those of spiritual beings." The superior man cultivates these moral qualities and enjoys good fortune, whereas the inferior man violates them and suffers evil fortune.

Therefore it is said that 'yin and yang are established as the way of Heaven, the weak and the strong as the way of Earth, and humanity and righteousness as the way of man'. It is also said that 'if we investigate the cycle of things, we shall understand the concepts of life and death'. Great is the Book of Changes! Herein lies its excellence! 871

Zhou's explanation has offered the essential outline for Neo-Confucian metaphysics and cosmology, which has affected Chinese intellectuals (including Neo-Confucians) very deeply in the last eight hundred years. This doctrine was influenced by the Book of Changes and the ideas of the Five Agents, and the Daoism of Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi.

From this explanation He Shiming has summarized four important points, which have been important for the first Neo-Confucian responses to the Christian God: a) *Taiji* is the origin of the universe. b) The Way of humanity is fitted to the way of Heavenly *yin* and *yang*; thus, Heaven and man are united. c) *Taiji* derives from Non-Being, an idea which can be traced to the Daoism of Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi. d) In order to reach the ultimate state of human life people should emphasize tranquility; thus, Zhou initiated a way of cultivation for the later Neo-Confucian school of mind led by Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming. 872

Zhu Xi has assimilated the concepts of the Great Ultimate advocated by Zhou Dunyi and combined it with the concept of principle of Cheng Hao and his brother Cheng Yi. Zhu held that the Great Ultimate has no physical form but consists of principle in its totality. All actual and potential principles are contained in the Great Ultimate, which is complete in all things as a whole and in each thing individually.

The relationship between the Great Ultimate in the universe and the Great Ultimate in each individual thing is not one of whole and part, but one similar to moonlight shining on objects. Each object has its own moonlight, but this moonlight is moonlight as a whole. Zhu Xi develops a cosmogony and an idea of principle in which it denotes being in everything and at the same time beyond all things.

871 The above translation is quoted from Chan 1973, 463-464.
872 See He 1996 (1), 92-93.
These two concepts may be said to be the two main gates through which the "School of Principle" opens to the metaphysical world of Absolute, but there is nothing in all this of a religious attitude. Such a metaphysical system, opening to the Supreme Ultimate and to the Heavenly Principle, can be viewed as the substratum of a spiritual search for the principle of everything, the way the philosophical system of Aristotle became in Europe the substratum of systematic Christian theology.

For Zhu,

there is the Ultimate! and yet also the Supreme Ultimate!

He continues:

(These words) do not mean that it (the Supreme Ultimate) is a physical something glittering in a glorious manner somewhere. They only mean that in the beginning, when no single physical object yet existed, there was nothing but principle (li).

Everything in the universe has its own "li", which exists although the thing does not actually exist. It is the Ultimate normative principle. This may be a way to ascend from the 'li' perceived a thing to the absolute 'li' of this thing from there, to the Great Ultimate. (Zhuzi leiyu 朱子类语)
VII. The Li 理 and Qi 气

(Appendix to sections 4.1.1 and 5.2.1)

According to the Confucian Zhang Zai 张载 (1020-1077), the term Li 不能 be alienated from the concept qi, which is not necessarily either spirit or matter but may equally be either.

The qi is universal energy, uncreated and omnipresent, which fills space, in which it is invisible (wu 无) or becomes visible by condensing itself and taking the form of visible bodies (you 有). Longobardo explains that you is 'that which has consistency, wu that which can neither be seen nor touched and which is very simple, very pure, and very subtle, much as we Christians conceive spiritual substances to be', but it is not spiritual substance for (1) it cannot exist on its own, given that it is but one of the aspects of the primeval air [the qi]; (2) it supports all material accidents and thus composes the being of all things: it is both their being and their substance; (3) because all things which appear to be spiritual are called ki [qi] ... by all the philosophers both ancient and modern and above all by Confucius, who, when asked by his disciples to explain what the spirits were, replied that they were nothing but air.874

The qi is active by nature. It is in a state of constant evolution by reason of its division into the yin and the yang and constitutes the combinations which give rise to the association of the yin and the yang; the action of the qi consists of condensing itself to form substances and bodies, the various elements of which must necessarily sooner or later return to the undifferentiated mass of universal energy. Invisible forces and spirits as well as human intelligence are all nothing but more or less subtle and refined forms of the universal energy, while visible bodies are the grosser forms produced by its accumulation.

The doctrine of principle was also developed by the greatest Neo-Confucian Master Zhu Xi. For Zhu, it is the principle of things to be actualized, and actualization requires principle as its substance and material force as its actuality. Thus, the Great Ultimate involves both substance and material force. The former is necessary to explain the reality and universality of things. It is incorporeal, one, eternal and unchanging, uniform, constituting the essence of things, always good, but it does not contain a dichotomy of good and evil and does not create things.

The latter is necessary to explain physical form, individuality, and the transformation of things. It is physical, many, transitory and changeable, unequal in things, constituting their physical substance, involving both good and evil (depending on whether its endowment in things is balanced or partial). While seemingly dualistic, principle and material force are never separate. Principle needs material force in order to have something to adhere to, and material force needs principle as its own law of being. The fact that they always work together is due to the direction of the mind of the universe, which is the universe itself.\(^{875}\)

Concerning the relationship between principle (\textit{li}) and material force (\textit{qi}) three factors should be distinguished: one is permanence or immutability (and that is principle); the other is mutation (everything is changing, and thus belongs to material force); the third is the perfect overlapping of the two, namely that all material force is principle and all principle is material force.

If in the whole of reality you see only mutation, you are shortsighted and prejudiced; if you see only permanence, you also are prejudiced. Only if you accept that whatever changes used to be permanent and whatever is permanent used to be changing, and again that permanence is the reason for change, then you have reached a correct view of reality. Thus, the relationship between principle and material energy is, as one may say in Western philosophical language, that of being and becoming, where becoming is following being or being is the master of becoming, where principle is inner to material force, and where principle and material force are one (or all material force is principle and all principle is material force).\(^{876}\)

\(^{874}\) See Longobardo 1701, 48.
VIII. Two wings of Neo-Confucianism

(Appendix to section 5.1.3)

The Cheng brothers and Zhu Xi have been considered as the representatives of the realistic wing of Neo-Confucianism, which emphasizes in Principle. Lu Xiangshan (1139-1193) and Wang Yangming (1472-1529) have been considered as the representatives of the idealistic wing of Neo-Confucianism, which emphasizes heart-mind. The basic difference between the two wings can be shown in the thoughts of Lu Xiangshan and Zhu Xi. According to Zhu Xi, for example, mind is the function of human nature, and human nature is identical with Principle. To Lu Xiangshan, however, mind is Principle. While both philosophers agreed that human nature was originally good, Zhu Xi contrasted the Principle of Nature (Tianli) with human desires. To Lu, such a contrast is untenable. For Zhu Xi, the investigation of things means investigating the principle in things. For Lu, investigation means investigating the mind, since for him all principles are inherent and complete in the mind.\footnote{See Chan Wing-tsit 1973, 573. Concerning Lu Xiangshan's discussions on the Principle of Nature, see Chan 1963, 574.}
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