
SINO-PLATONIC PAPERS

Number 268

May, 2017

Translator's Preface
to the English Translation of Mou Zongsan's
Nineteen Lectures on Chinese Philosophy

by
Julie Lee Wei

Victor H. Mair, Editor
Sino-Platonic Papers
Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6305 USA
vmair@sas.upenn.edu
www.sino-platonic.org

SINO-PLATONIC PAPERS

FOUNDED 1986

Editor-in-Chief
VICTOR H. MAIR

Associate Editors
PAULA ROBERTS MARK SWOFFORD

ISSN
2157-9679 (print) 2157-9687 (online)

SINO-PLATONIC PAPERS is an occasional series dedicated to making available to specialists and the interested public the results of research that, because of its unconventional or controversial nature, might otherwise go unpublished. The editor-in-chief actively encourages younger, not yet well established, scholars and independent authors to submit manuscripts for consideration. Contributions in any of the major scholarly languages of the world, including romanized modern standard Mandarin (MSM) and Japanese, are acceptable. In special circumstances, papers written in one of the Sinitic topolects (*fangyan*) may be considered for publication.

Although the chief focus of *Sino-Platonic Papers* is on the intercultural relations of China with other peoples, challenging and creative studies on a wide variety of philological subjects will be entertained. This series is **not** the place for safe, sober, and stodgy presentations. *Sino-Platonic Papers* prefers lively work that, while taking reasonable risks to advance the field, capitalizes on brilliant new insights into the development of civilization.

Submissions are regularly sent out to be refereed, and extensive editorial suggestions for revision may be offered.

Sino-Platonic Papers emphasizes substance over form. We do, however, strongly recommend that prospective authors consult our style guidelines at www.sino-platonic.org/stylesheet.doc. Manuscripts should be submitted as electronic files, preferably in Microsoft Word format. You may wish to use our sample document template, available here: www.sino-platonic.org/spp.dot.

Beginning with issue no. 171, *Sino-Platonic Papers* has been published electronically on the Web at www.sino-platonic.org. Issues 1–170, however, will continue to be sold as paper copies until our stock runs out, after which they too will be made available on the Web.

Please note: When the editor goes on an expedition or research trip, all operations (including filling orders) may temporarily cease for up to three months at a time. In such circumstances, those who wish to purchase various issues of *SPP* are requested to wait patiently until he returns. If issues are urgently needed while the editor is away, they may be requested through Interlibrary Loan. You should also check our Web site at www.sino-platonic.org, as back issues are regularly rereleased for free as PDF editions.

Sino-Platonic Papers is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 2.5 License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.5/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 543 Howard Street, 5th Floor, San Francisco, California, 94105, USA.

Translator's Preface
to the English Translation of Mou Zongsan's
Nineteen Lectures on Chinese Philosophy

Julie Lee Wei
Palo Alto, California

FOREWORD

The complete English translation of Mou Zongsan's book, *Nineteen Lectures on Chinese Philosophy*, translated by Julie Lee Wei, was originally to be published by Columbia University Press. When it was submitted to the Press in 2010, the manuscript was reviewed by scholars in its field, who recommended publication. The Press received the copyright from the original publisher, Student Book Co., Taipei, but, just as the Press was preparing to publish, SBC learned that, unbeknownst to itself and the translator, a group of Mou Zongsan's students had acquired the copyright from Mou's widow (now deceased), even though Mrs. Mou had earlier given Ms. Wei permission to translate the book. The Press then halted publication.

Because it is important that the English translation be shared without further delay, the translator has made it available online at www.nineteenlects.com.

Sino-Platonic Papers is pleased to bring attention to this valuable work, and to publish here Ms. Wei's informative and insightful preface to the translation.

— Victor H. Mair
Editor, *Sino-Platonic Papers*

MOU ZONGSAN AND THE *NINETEEN LECTURES*

Nineteen Lectures on Chinese Philosophy: A Brief Account of Chinese Philosophy and Its Implications is not an easy book to read — or, for that matter, to translate — because not only is it an introduction to the philosophy Mou Zongsan developed over a lifetime and recorded in at least a dozen major works (his complete works filling thirty-three volumes), it is also a summary and summation of a lifetime of philosophical thought. How Mou arrived at this philosophy is argued in detail in his major works (among them the three-volume *Xinti yu Xingti* [Mind-substance and Nature-substance] and the two-volume *Foxing yu Bore* [Buddha-nature and Prajna])¹ but stated only in condensed form in the *Nineteen Lectures*. In other words, Mou frequently calls upon the reader to fill in the gaps of argumentation and exposition by going to his other works. This presents a problem for English-language readers who do not read Chinese because, except for one article in *Philosophy East and West*,² Mou's other works have not been translated into English.

Furthermore, Mou says in Lecture 1 of the *Nineteen Lectures* that the lectures are a "second order" discussion. The lectures were delivered to graduate students of philosophy at National Taiwan University and presumed that the students already had a knowledge of the history of Chinese philosophy and, it turns out, of Western philosophy as well, and that they were ready for a discussion of key issues in Chinese philosophy as well as a comparison of some of those issues with corresponding ones in Western philosophy.

Because the *Nineteen Lectures* presumes a knowledge of Chinese history and the history of Chinese philosophy which the English-language reader may not have, I have listed in the selected bibliography some works in the English language that can serve the reader as background reading or as companions to the study of the *Nineteen Lectures*. These include the *History of Chinese Philosophy* edited by Bo Mou, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* compiled by Wing-tsit Chan, and the

¹ Thanks to Victor Mair for alerting me to the correct Mandarin pronunciation of the Chinese for *bore* 般若 (Sanskrit *prajna*), characters which are otherwise pronounced *ban* and *ruo*.

² Mou Tsung-san, "The Immediate Successor of Wang Yang-ming: Wang Lung-hsi and His Theory of Ssu-Wu," *Philosophy East and West* vol. 23, no. 1–2 (January/April 1973), pp. 103–120. Reprinted in Mou Zongsan, *Complete Works* [Mou Zongsan Xiansheng Quanji 牟宗三先生全集], 33 vols. (Taipei: Lianjing Chuban 聯經出版, 2003), vol. 27, pp 497–533.

one-volume *Encyclopedia of Chinese Philosophy* edited by Antonio S. Cua, among others. Some of these works have extensive bibliographies that point to additional resources.

I have also listed in the selected bibliography reference works that are grouped under each of the major schools of thought in Chinese philosophy, that is, Confucianism, Daoism, School of Names, Buddhism, and so on. Again, some of the works listed have bibliographies that will point the reader to further studies.

Here I will only fill in for readers who are not familiar with Mou Zongsan some background that can help orient them to the rationale and *modus operandi* of the *Nineteen Lectures*. To do this, I will rely on Mou Zongsan himself, by giving a synopsis of a lecture he delivered in 1987, almost ten years after the completion of the *Nineteen Lectures*. This lecture, entitled “Ten Great Debates of Seminal Philosophical Importance in the Development of Chinese Culture” (Zhongguo wenhua fazhan zhong yili kaichuang de shi da zhengbian 中國文化發展中義理開創的十大爭辯), was published later that year in *E-Hu Monthly Journal* (*E-Hu Yuekan*).³ The lecture was delivered in Chinese to a Chinese audience. What were these ten great debates which covered a period spanning more than two thousand years, from the fourth century BCE to the present time? They are listed below. Although Mou does not connect them to the *Nineteen Lectures* in his lecture, it can be seen that nine of the ten great debates are discussed in the present volume, the *Nineteen Lectures*. They are not specifically identified as the ten great seminal debates in the *Nineteen Lectures*, but the issues of nine of the debates are presented in the book, albeit in abbreviated form.

Before describing these ten great debates, let me first make a few introductory remarks about Mou Zongsan (1909–1995). That he is a towering giant of modern Chinese philosophy is well recognized. His long life spanned the twentieth century. He was a polymath whose breadth of knowledge and achievement in philosophy was unrivalled among his contemporaries in China and perhaps in all of Chinese philosophy. While most philosophers produce works in only one or a few areas of philosophy, he produced works in many disciplines, including logic, metaphysics, epistemology, moral philosophy, philosophy of history, and comparative philosophy. While it is rare for a scholar to master more than one of the major branches of Chinese philosophy, Mou became an

³ The article is in *E-Hu Yuekan* 鵝湖月刊 vol. 12, no. 11 (May 1987), reprinted in Mou, *Complete Works*, vol. 27, pp. 371–383.

authority on all three main branches, Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, writing critical histories on each.⁴ He was also a translator, translating major works by Kant and Wittgenstein into Chinese. Furthermore he had a life-long interest in the political development of modern China and the problem of governance, publishing books and articles on the subject.

One of Mou's favorite words in the *Nineteen Lectures* is the Chinese word *ceng* "level," used alone or in compounds, as in *cengxu* "order" (e.g., "first-order," "second-order"), *cengci* "order, level, hierarchy," and *cengmian* "level, aspect, dimension."

The very first page of the *Nineteen Lectures* states that the book will be a "second-order" discussion of Chinese philosophy. Here he is revealing the logician in himself. He uses the word *xu* "order" here, but elsewhere he uses *cengxu* "order" (as in first-order, second-order) in the same sense. *Cengxu* "order" in this sense is a word borrowed from Western logic. Mou was for many years a professor of logic and published two books on logic, one of them on Aristotelian and symbolic logic.⁵ He also taught Western philosophy and Chinese philosophy in various universities in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.⁶ His earliest publications of the 1930s, when he was in his twenties, include writings with titles such as "Is the Dialectical Method Truth?" (1931), "Contradiction and the Theory of Types" (1933), "Logic and Dialectical Logic" (1934), "A Review of Jin Yuelin's Book *Logic*" (1936), and "A Review of the Logical System of W. E. Johnson."⁷

In the *Nineteen Lectures* Mou often distinguished his various discussions of Chinese philosophy with the word "levels," meaning levels, orders, aspects, or dimensions. So a question can be discussed on a number of different levels, such as the logical level, moral level, ontological level, empirical level, transcendental level, epistemological level, soteriological level, subjective level,

⁴ These are *Xinti yu Xingti* 心體與性體 (Mind-substance and Nature-substance), a three-volume history of Neo-Confucianism; *Foxing yu Bore* (Buddha-Nature and Prajna), a two-volume history of Buddhism; *Caixing yu Xuanli* (Material-Nature and Xuan Metaphysical Principles), a history of Neo-Daoism, all reprinted in Mou, *Complete Works*, vols. 5-7, 3-4, and 2, respectively.

⁵ Mou Zongsan, *Lizexue* 理則學 [Logic], in Mou, *Complete Works*, vol. 12.

⁶ For a chronology of Mou's life and works, see Cai Renhou 蔡仁厚, *Mou Zongsan Xiansheng Xuesi Nianpu* 牟宗三先生學思年譜 [Intellectual Chronology of Mou Zongsan] (Taipei: Student Book Co., 2000).

⁷ These articles are found in Mou, *Complete Works*, vol. 25.

objective level, historical level, and so on; or he will point out that a question or discussion belongs to the first order or to a higher order. One of his original observations is that the *Lotus Sutra*, the main text of Tiantai (Tendai) Buddhism, and the *Prajna-paramita Sutra* (*Prajna Sutra*) are different from other sutras because the others are first-order texts while these two are second-order texts, with the difference that the first is on the ontological level and the second on the cognitive and soteriological level.

We see here Mou as Buddhologist-cum-logician. Mou Zongsan was a thinker of many levels or dimensions (*cengmian*). He was a logician, historian of Chinese philosophy, metaphysician, moralist, political thinker, Confucian and Neo-Confucian, defender of the faith (maintaining again and again that the Three Teachings of China — Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism — are philosophies and at the same time religions), comparativist and syncretist, and patriot–nationalist–polemicist. (“Defender of the faith” is used loosely here, as Mou has argued that the Chinese philosophies Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, if considered as religions, are based on reason not faith.) He thought Kant’s philosophy closest to Chinese philosophy (meaning here the Three Teachings), and made heavy use of Kantian terminology and concepts. Mou also resembled Kant in many ways. Like Kant he was a diminutive figure, a professor and classroom teacher of great eloquence and charisma, an indefatigable student and writer until old age, a conversationalist of wit and humor, and a celebrity–philosopher whose lecture halls were always packed (although for Mou celebrity came later in life).⁸

Mou was one of the most analytical of Chinese philosophers, not least because of his training in logic. Because he looked at questions on many levels and from many aspects, any given discussion of a topic can be an interweaving of many threads (levels, aspects, dimensions). For example, Lecture 7 of the *Nineteen Lectures* interweaves and integrates Daoist *wu* “Nothing,” Confucian *wu* “without,” and Kant’s categorical imperative. Or, to give another example, if the *Nineteen Lectures* is like a symphony of philosophical themes, then its Lecture 2 is an overture that sounds and anticipates many of the themes and patterns that are to follow and develop in succeeding chapters. Without being

⁸ Reminiscences of Mou by his students may be found in Cai Renhou 蔡仁厚 and Yang Zuhan 楊祖漢, eds., *Collected Writings in Memory of Mr. Mou Zongsan* [Mou Zongsan hsiensheng jinian ji 牟宗三先生紀念集] (Taipei: Dongfang Renwen Xueshu Yanjiu Jijinhui 東方人文學術研究基金會, 1996).

alerted to Mou's propensity to interweave disparate themes or threads in a highly original way, Lecture 2 — which moves from discussing the extensional to the intensional, then from Hegel's abstract universal to his concrete universal, then to the Three Contemplations of Buddhism, likewise a progression from abstract universal to concrete universal — might initially strike the reader as a bewildering congeries of ideas.

To return to the ten great debates: their issues are discussed in the *Nineteen Lectures* although they are not specifically identified there by that name. As recounted in Mou's article, the ten great debates were as follows.

THE FIRST DEBATE, BETWEEN CONFUCIANISM AND MOHISM.

(The issues are discussed in Lecture 3 of the *Nineteen Lectures*.) By the Han dynasty (208 BCE – 220 CE) this debate had been won by the Confucians, making Confucianism the dominant philosophy of China for the next two thousand years.

THE SECOND DEBATE, BETWEEN MENCIUS (MENG ZI) (372 – 289 BCE) AND GAO ZI, RECOUNTED FIRST IN *MENCIUS (MENG ZI)*.

The debate centers about the words "The innate is nature." Mencius's main argument was that morality was within human nature, that the human being had both a physical nature and a transcendental moral nature (*ren yi nei zai*, "humaneness and righteousness are within"). To understand this question is to understand morality, Mou says, and the question is the defining one of Confucianism. It is understood by few people, he says, and it was Mencius who brought it out. (This question is discussed in Lecture 19 of *Nineteen Lectures*, and also in Lectures 15, 16, and 17.)

THE THIRD DEBATE, BETWEEN CONFUCIANISM AND NEO-DAOISM DURING THE WEI AND JIN DYNASTIES (220–420 CE).

Daoism had been revived and had become ascendant, yet the supreme position of Confucius as Sage could not be denied. The issue then became one of reconciling Confucianism and Daoism. Leading thinkers in the effort to reconcile Confucius and Lao Zi were Wang Bi, Xiang Xiu, and Guo Xiang. The Theory of Tracks and Grounding (*Ji Ben Lun*) or of the Manifest and the Hidden (also understood as

the subjective states of Being and Nothing, or immanence and transcendence) was the solution that led to reconciliation. (This issue is discussed in Lecture 11 of the *Nineteen Lectures*.)

THE FOURTH DEBATE, AS TO WHETHER “NAMES AND WORDS [*MING YAN*]” COULD ALWAYS EXPRESS TRUTH OR REALITY, OR WHETHER SOME TRUTHS WERE INEFFABLE.

Mou points out that this question was pre-figured in the opening words of the *Dao De Jing*, the seminal text of Daoism: “The Way [Dao] that can be spoken is not the eternal Way. The name that can be named is not the eternal name.” This debate also took place during the Wei and Jin dynasties, and Wang Bi was also a leader in the debate. Mou says that this question is a perennial one in philosophy, appearing in the twentieth century in the form of the early Wittgenstein’s assertion that as regards what we cannot speak about we must keep silent, and that things that are ineffable include metaphysics, goodness, beauty, and so forth, or the logical positivist’s claim that statements about metaphysics are meaningless. (The *Nineteen Lectures* does not directly discuss the Wei-Jin “names and words” debate in Lecture 11 on the Wei-Jin period, but in the same chapter Mou launches into a discussion of the same issue in its modern guise, the issue of whether some things are unsayable. This leads to his discussion of analytic discourse versus non-analytic discourse. Western science and philosophy are based on analytic discourse, Mou says, while non-analytic language, such as paradox, is a vast realm of reasoning that has not been developed in the West. In China, non-analytic language is a well-recognized means of expressing philosophical and religious truth, especially in Buddhism, according to Mou. (Analytic versus non-analytic discourse is discussed at length in Lecture 16.)

THE FIFTH DEBATE, DURING THE NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN DYNASTIES PERIOD (420–589), ON WHETHER THE SPIRIT WAS MORTAL OR IMMORTAL.

After Buddhism entered China, this debate grew out of the Buddhist theory of transmigration and reincarnation. (Mou in Lecture 12 discusses Fan Zhen’s essay “The Spirit Is Mortal,” which refutes the Buddhist view. He notes that, strictly speaking — unlike Christianity — Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism did not have the concept of an immortal individual soul, although Buddhism had the concept of the ever-abiding Buddha-body.) Mou says in his article that this debate did not fully

develop because the Buddhists did not fully understand their side of the question, and that it holds deep philosophical questions that can be considered anew.

THE SIXTH DEBATE, ONE WITHIN THE Tiantai School of Buddhism after Buddhism was absorbed into China, and which grew into a debate between Tiantai and Huayan schools of Buddhism.

The focus of the debate was the question of Perfect Teaching or Perfect Doctrine [*yuan jiao*]. (Lectures 13 to 17 of the Nineteen Lectures discuss this question, and it appears here and there in other lectures as well.) Mou says that this debate has not been properly understood and that it concerns the ultimate of philosophical questions, one which has not been considered in Western philosophy.

THE SEVENTH DEBATE, IN THE SOUTHERN SONG DYNASTY PERIOD (1127–1279) BETWEEN CHEN TONGFU AND ZHU XI (1130–1200).

Mou points out that while most of the debates among Confucians of the Song and Ming dynasties concerned the question of "sage-within," namely, moral self-cultivation or achieving a life of virtue or sagehood, this debate between Chen Tongfu and Zhu Zi fell under the rubric of "king-without," that is to say, the debate is not about personal morals but about public affairs, about polity and politics. The Neo-Confucian ideal for a man was to become "sage within and king without" (*nei-sheng wai-wang*). To strive for "king-without" meant that the gentleman should, in addition to cultivating the moral self, also engage in politics so as to bring about "the kingly way" or good governance. The debate rose out of discussion about the value of the Han and Tang dynasties. Zhu Zi, from a purely moral position, argued that the Han and Tang dynasties were without value because their emperors were a degenerate lot, and, from a purely moral viewpoint, the illustrious Emperor Gao Zu of the Han and Emperor Taizong of the Tang could not pass muster. Yet they were much admired heroes, one the founder of the four-hundred-year-long Han dynasty, and one the founder of the three-hundred-year-long Tang dynasty. Under the moral criterion, only the legendary sage-emperors Yao, Shun, and Yu could pass muster. Chen Tongfu came out to defend the hero-emperors of the Han and Tang against Zhu Zi and the Neo-Confucians' moralistic judgement. (This debate is discussed in Lecture 2 of the *Nineteen Lectures*.)

THE EIGHTH DEBATE, BETWEEN WANG LONGXI AND NIE SHUANGJIANG, BOTH MEMBERS OF THE WANG YANGMING (1472–1529) SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY.

Its focus was the interpretation of what Wang Yangming meant by “developing one’s innate moral sense or intuition [*zhi liangzhi*].” (The issues surrounding *liangzhi* — innate moral sense — are discussed in Lectures 7, 18, and 19 of the *Nineteen Lectures*.)

THE NINTH DEBATE, BETWEEN XU JINGAN AND ZHOU HAIMEN, ALSO MEMBERS OF THE WANG YANGMING SCHOOL OF THOUGHT, ABOUT “THE NINE TRUTHS AND THE NINE EXPLANATIONS [*JIU DI JIU JIE*].”

One of Wang’s four famous sentences was “Without good without evil is the mind-in-itself [*wu shan wu e xin zhi ti*].” Xu Jingan objected to this statement, saying that if the mind has no good or evil then there is no right or wrong, yet Confucianism certainly affirms that there is good and evil, right and wrong. Xu Jingan’s nine-part argument is called “nine truths.” Zhou Haimen retorted that Wang Yangming’s “without good without evil” did not mean there is no right and wrong but that “without good without evil meant the ultimate good.” His response was called “nine explanations.” (The issues in this debate are discussed in Lectures 7 and 19 of the *Nineteen Lectures*, although Xu Lingan and Zhou Haimen are not mentioned by name.)

THE TENTH DEBATE IS THE DEBATE GOING ON AT THE PRESENT TIME, THE DEBATE ABOUT CLEARING OBSTRUCTIONS IN THE PATH OF CHINESE PHILOSOPHY.

Every Chinese person should be concerned with this question, Mou says. Addressing a Chinese audience in 1987, he says that Chinese culture is like a river that is at present obstructed, the chief obstruction being Marxism, which has conquered China. He says the Chinese people are being destroyed by this “Dao of the devil,” a great tragedy. Therefore the immediate task is to “annihilate communism.” As long as Marxism is not eliminated, the life of the Chinese people will not flow unobstructed. It is urgent that we facilitate the opening up and liberalization of China so that internal contradictions (between Deng Xiaoping’s Four Insistences on the one hand and Openness on the

other) will bring about the disintegration of the Communist party, and only then can the Chinese people be revived.⁹

The second task of the tenth debate is to "digest the West," and here the emphasis is a religious one, Mou says. That is because the main philosophical traditions of Chinese culture, whether Confucianism, Daoism, or Buddhism, are Eastern types of religion, fundamentally different from the Christian type of religion of the West. So the second task before the Chinese is to "distinguish the character of Christianity [*bian ye*, literally, 'distinguish Ye' (Jesu)]." Mou says he is not against religious freedom, whether it concerns Catholics or Protestants, but that the Chinese, from the position of Chinese culture and as masters of Chinese culture, have the obligation to distinguish the character of different religions. Chinese culture has its special character. The Chinese people should not be confused about this and should not allow anyone to take advantage of such confusion or make deliberate distortions and usurpations of their religious traditions.

The third task in the tenth debate is to "erect the foundation," namely, to protect the Chinese cultural tradition, or, in other words, to restore the great foundations of the Chinese nation. The fourth task is to seek modernization for China. The Chinese should modernize but not Westernize, because Westernization means losing one's Chinese foundation or roots. If the Chinese people cannot succeed in these four tasks — to destroy communism, "digest the West" (including "distinguish Christianity"), erect the foundation, and modernize — then they will not be able to fulfill their own nature. Mou quotes the *Doctrine of the Mean*: "Fulfill one's own nature, fulfill the nature of others, fulfill the nature of all things." He says that just as a person should fulfill his or her nature, so a people should also fulfill its nature. So the mission of the Chinese people at present is to clear the path of Chinese culture so that it can live unobstructed and flourish. If the life of the culture is crooked and distorted, then the life of the nation will suffer. Mou concludes with the words: "Unless a people fulfills its nature, it cannot be ready for the task of building a nation. This therefore is the common mission of all Chinese people."

⁹ The Four Insistences were the pre-conditions for implementing the Four Modernizations. The Four Insistences are: Insistence on socialism, proletarian dictatorship, leadership by the Communist party, and Marxism–Mao Zedong thought. From Deng's speech of March 30, 1979 (online).

These concerns of the tenth debate are very much in evidence throughout the *Nineteen Lectures*, and the book itself can be said to be part of this tenth debate. Mou is not only a philosopher committed above all to Confucianism, but also a patriot and nationalist, committed to re-examining, re-formulating, re-evaluating, clarifying, and protecting the roots of Chinese culture — its philosophical and religious traditions — and bringing them into the modern world by explaining them in modern terms, all of which he does in the *Nineteen Lectures*.

Nor is Mou only a nationalist. As one can see in Lecture 1 of *Nineteen Lectures*, he thinks that the Chinese philosophical-religious heritage can help the modern world, a world of moral and spiritual decay. Confucius, Mou says in Lecture 1, spoke not only to the people of Shandong but to people everywhere. Mou is a formidable syncretist and synthesist who in *Nineteen Lectures* uses his tremendous knowledge of both Chinese and Western philosophy to evaluate such Chinese traditions as Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism against one another, and these against Christianity and such philosophers of the West as Kant, Hegel, Russell, and Heidegger. He is often able to explain each side in terms of the other, and in the process of clarification move towards the integration of all into world philosophy.

ABOUT THE TRANSLATION

This translation is based on the 1983 edition of *Zhongguo Zhexue Shijiu Jiang* 中國哲學十九講 (Nineteen Lectures on Chinese Philosophy) published by Student Book Co. (Xuesheng Shuju) in Taipei, Taiwan.

It would be nice if there were standard translations of important Chinese philosophical texts or of Chinese technical terms used in philosophy. Unfortunately, as students and translators of Chinese philosophy know, there seldom are. Take for example the title of an important text of classical Confucianism, the *Zhong Yong*. This title has been translated as *Doctrine of the Mean* (James Legge), *Centrality and Commonality* (Tu Wei-ming), *Focusing the Familiar* (Roger Ames), and *The Unwobbling Pivot* (Ezra Pound),¹⁰ where Legge understands the first word, *Chong*, as “mean,” Tu as “centrality,” Ames as “focusing,” and Pound as “pivot.” *Biejiao* in Buddhism has been translated as

¹⁰ Thanks to Victor Mair for pointing out Pound's translation.

Separate Teaching, Separation Teaching, Special Teaching, Distinctive Teaching, Differentiating Teaching. Or take the word *ren*, the supreme virtue in Confucianism. It has been translated as benevolence (Legge), humanheartedness (Derk Bodde), humanity (Tu), humaneness (Victor Mair), empathetic concern (Serena Chan), goodness, love (*Encyclopedia of Chinese Philosophy*) and other words as well. The Mencian term *ceyin* has been translated as sympathy (Angus Graham), sympathetic concern (John Berthrong), and mercy (Jason Clower). The term *tianli* has been rendered as Heavenly Principle, Heavenly Principles, Universal Coherence, Heavenly Pattern by various translators,¹¹ as well as Moral Law (Clower). This list of illustrative translations is by no means exhaustive.

The translator is thus faced with choice and compromise amidst an embarrassment of riches, for it is often the case that each alternative translation has something to recommend it. To illustrate the situation in which the translator often finds herself, although I appreciate and admire the merits of Tu's translation of *Zhong Yong* as *Centrality and Commonality*, and Ames's arguments for translating it as *Focusing the Familiar*, I have followed Legge's translation *Doctrine of the Mean* as a compromise, both serviceable and sensible, in the present volume. *Doctrine of the Mean* is a long-established, well-recognized translation, and one used in such respected works as the *Encyclopedia of Chinese Philosophy* and the *History of Chinese Philosophy* (edited by Bo Mou), and I shall not quarrel with it, even though I do not think it a better translation than Tu's or Ames's or Pound's. And likewise with many other more conventional translations that I have adopted.

One very important term where I have followed convention rather than my own preference is the English translation of *sheng*, conventionally translated "sage" or "sagehood," the highest level of the moral person. I think a better, more accurate, translation is "holy man" and "holiness." I mentioned the preference for the translation "holy man" ("holy person" is also fine) for *sheng* or *shengren* to a prominent student of Mou's (only as a thought, with no intention of replacing the word "sage" with "holy man"), and was greeted with horror and vituperation. I think this is because the English word "holy" among Chinese people is mostly associated with Christianity, which Mou often denigrated, although he viewed Jesus as a sage, as can be seen in the *Nineteen Lectures*. Later I was

¹¹ Thanks to Stephen Angle for pointing out the translations "Universal Coherence" and "Heavenly Pattern."

very glad to find that Mou himself gave the English words “holy man” and “sage” as synonyms for *shengren* in his magnum opus, *Xianxiang yu Wuzhishen* (Appearance and Thing-in-Itself).¹² And I find that the English dictionary definition of “holy” matches Mou’s definition of *sheng* more closely than the definition of the English word “sage.” “Holy” and “holiness” do not have to belong to any religion, Christian or not. However, I have kept to the conventional translation “sage” and “sagehood” for *shengren* and *sheng* (with “holy man” sometimes in square brackets) so as not to ruffle any feathers.

Luckily for the translator of Mou Zongsan’s *Nineteen Lectures*, Mou has simplified the task of choice by providing his own English translations for many technical terms in the *Nineteen Lectures*, as well as in an English article in *Philosophy East and West*, and in a number of his other articles and books. However, there remain many technical terms for which he does not provide English translations, and so the translator must look at how Mou has explained the term in the *Nineteen Lectures* or his other works.

For example, I have translated *biejiao* in Buddhism as Special or Distinctive Teaching rather than Separate, Separation, Differentiating or Differentiated Teaching (all respected translations of *biejiao*), based on Mou’s own explanation of the term in a 1988 article on Buddhism.¹³ However, I realize that the other translations are also correct because they reflect different aspects of *biejiao*. For instance, Separate Teaching takes its name as the opposite of Identical Teaching, the former referring to the Huayan school’s teaching that Buddhahood meant being “separate from the Nine Realms,” and the latter to the Tiantai school’s teaching that it meant being “identical to the Nine Realms.” Another example is my translation of the term *zhengdao*, which has been translated as Dao of Politics, Way of Politics, and Way of Governance. Based on Mou’s own definition in his book *Zhengdao yu Zhidao* (The

¹² Mou Zongsan, *Xianxiang yu Wuzhishen* 現象與物自身 (Appearance and Thing-in-Itself) (Taipei: Xuesheng Shuju 學生書局, 1990), pp. 96–97. Mou says in paragraph 3 on p. 96 that “his [the *shengren*’s] will is also the Heavenly will” and that the *shengren* is the “Heavenly man, Holy man, Sage.”

¹³ Mou Zongsan, “The Meaning of ‘Middle Path’ according to the Three Teachings Common, Special, and Perfect” [Yi tong, bie, yuan san jiao kan fojia de ‘zhongdao’ yi 依通，別，圓三教看佛家的中道義], in Mou, *Complete Works*, vol. 27, p. 392.

Dao of Polity and the Dao of Governance), I have translated *zhengdao* as Dao of Polity, taking "polity" in its meaning of the constitution or principles forming the basis of governance.¹⁴

Because there can be numerous different translations of a given Chinese technical word, phrase, or book title, I have often resorted to square brackets to give the original Chinese word or words in *pinyin* spelling and Chinese characters. Whenever I read translations of Chinese philosophy in English, and there are no Chinese characters to indicate the Chinese technical word or words meant, I often wish that there were at least *pinyin* spellings of the technical word(s) in Chinese. So I have used square brackets to give *pinyin* spellings of the original Chinese word or words, to disambiguate the meanings of an English translation, and to provide alternate translation or translations (because some readers may recognize the term only in an alternate translation or translations). To give an example, in translating the word *ren*, I may give the following: "humanity [*ren*, humaneness, benevolence]." But why not simply give "humaneness" for *ren*? Because *ren* means not only humaneness but also humanity or humanness. Why not just "humanity"? Because humanity can also mean humankind, which is not the meaning of *ren*. And why not just "humanness"? Because "humanness" may not convey to readers the meanings of "humaneness" and "benevolence" in the word *ren*.

Square brackets are also useful to remind the reader of the multiple meanings of a Chinese term, that a Chinese term may not be co-terminous or identical to any one English word. Take the word *li*, for example, in the sense of "propriety." The word *li* also means "rules of propriety, etiquette, rites, ceremonies, ritual, rituals, institutions."

Square brackets are also sometimes used in this translation to contain my own added glosses or notes in certain cases where they may help to clarify the meaning of a word or words.

Mou Zongsan may give multiple English translations of a term. These translations may be scattered in different parts of the *Nineteen Lectures* as well as in his other writings. For example the term *xinti* (literally, mind-substance). He indicates, in his English-language article in *Philosophy East*

¹⁴ See Mou Zongsan, *Zhengdao yu Zhidao* 政道與治道 (Taipei: Guangwen Shuju 廣文書局, 1961), p. 23, line 1: "...the structure which produces political power (namely, the constitution or *zhengdao*)..."

and West,¹⁵ his preference for the translation “mind-in-itself” but also indicates that “ontological mind,” “metaphysical mind,” and “transcendental mind” are correct translations as well. Then take the term *xingt* (literally, nature-substance). In his book *Xinti yu Xingt* 心體與性體, he gives several paraphrastic translations of *xingt*. They include “moral ability,” “moral spontaneity,” and “inward morality.”¹⁶ Again, the translator is faced with choice and compromise. It is cumbersome to list all the translations of a term in the text; one has to settle for one or two, and the rest perhaps put into the footnotes. As an example of the choices, *Xinti and Xingt* has been translated as *Mind-Substance and Nature-Substance* (Umberto Bresciano), *Metaphysical Mind and Metaphysical Nature* (Liu Shu-hsien), *Ontological Mind and Ontological Nature* (Jason Clower), *Constitutive Mind and Constitutive Nature* (Sebastien Billioud). I have chosen to use the literal translation *Mind-substance and Nature-substance*, or *Moral Mind and Moral Nature*, and let Mou himself explain in various passages in the *Nineteen Lectures* what the terms mean. Under these circumstances, it is obviously helpful to spell the original Chinese title, *Xinti and Xingt* 心體與性體 in *pinyin* romanization for readers who do not read Chinese.

One of the most important words in Confucianism is the word *li* 理 “principle, pattern, reason, universal truth.” Stephen Angle translates it as “Coherence.” I follow Mou in translating *li* as “reason” almost always in *Nineteen Lectures*, although I may also translate it as “Principle” or “Reason-Principle,” or add these alternatives in square brackets.

Mou sometimes uses an English word that is not quite idiomatic. For example, he may use the English “frame” where “framework” would be more idiomatic, or “pattern” where “paradigm” would have been better. In these cases I have supplied the more idiomatic word and put Mou’s English word in square brackets, so: “...framework [frame].”

I have underlined the English words that Mou uses in the Chinese text. Because a Chinese word is written with the same character whether it is singular or plural, Mou will sometimes use an English word in the singular where a plural would be correct. In such cases, I have changed it to a plural form.

¹⁵ Mou, “The Immediate Successor,” p. 112.

¹⁶ Mou Zongsan, *Xinti yu Xingt* 心體與性體, 3 vols. (Taipei: Zhengzhong Shuju 正中書局, 1990), vol. 1, p. 40.

I have capitalized many words to show that they are technical terms. This is done by some other authors, for instance Ng Yu-kwan in his book, *T'ien-t'ai Buddhism and Early Madyamika*.¹⁷ I have added many references for quotations from classical Chinese texts such as the *Analects*, *Mencius*, *Dao De Jing*, and *Zhuang Zi*. I have added some endnotes and re-written others for the benefit of English-language readers. But by and large I have kept to the endnotes in the original text. Although I have added to the references given in the original Chinese text of the *Nineteen Lectures*, these are by no means exhaustive. More references and annotations could no doubt benefit the reader, but the enlargement of this apparatus would make the translation unwieldy and further delay its availability.

All translations of quotations from Chinese texts are my own, unless otherwise noted. I am indebted to Victor Mair for permission to quote (occasionally with slight adaptation) from his translation of Chuang Tzu (Zhuang Zi). Occasionally, in the course of translating Mou's nineteen lectures, repetitious sentences in the text have been deleted or condensed.

It is hoped that this translation will be useful to students, teachers, and other interested readers of Mou Zongsan's thought, especially since it is the first English translation of a book by Mou. Better or more heavily annotated translations of the *Nineteen Lectures* may appear in the future, but in the meantime, I hope that this translation will serve a longstanding need.

— Julie Lee Wei

2011

¹⁷ Ng Yu-kwan, *T'ien-t'ai Buddhism and Early Madyamika* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1993).

Since June 2006, all new issues of *Sino-Platonic Papers* have been published electronically on the Web and are accessible to readers at no charge. Back issues are also being released periodically in e-editions, also free.

For a complete catalog of *Sino-Platonic Papers*, with links to free issues, visit the *SPP* Web site.

www.sino-platonic.org