

CONTEMPORARY  
CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

*Edited by*

CHUNG-YING CHENG AND  
NICHOLAS BUNNIN



# CONTEMPORARY CHINESE PHILOSOPHY



Dedicated to my mother Mrs Cheng Hsu Wen-shu and the memory of  
my father Professor Cheng Ti-hsien

*Chung-ying Cheng*

Dedicated to my granddaughter Amber Bunnin

*Nicholas Bunnin*

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First published 2002

2 4 6 8 10 9 7 5 3 1

Blackwell Publishers Inc.  
350 Main Street  
Malden, Massachusetts 02148  
USA

Blackwell Publishers Ltd  
108 Cowley Road  
Oxford OX4 1JF  
UK

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*Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data*

Contemporary chinese philosophy / edited by Chung-ying Cheng and  
Nicholas Bunnin

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-631-21724-X (alk. paper) — ISBN 0-631-21725-8  
(pbk. : alk. paper)

I. Philosophy, Chinese—20th century. I. Cheng, Zhongying, 1935–  
II. Bunnin, Nicholas.

B5231 C523 2002

181'.11—dc21

2001043245

*British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data*

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Typeset in 10.5/13pt Galliard  
by Graphicraft Limited, Hong Kong  
Printed in Great Britain by T.J. International, Padstow, Cornwall

This book is printed on acid-free paper.

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**Chung-ying CHENG** was born in Nanjing and moved to Taiwan in 1949. He received a B.A. from National Taiwan University, an M.A. from University of Washington and a Ph.D. from Harvard University, where he held a Santayana Fellowship. He has taught at the University of Hawaii at Manoa since 1963. He has held visiting professorships at Yale, Queens College CUNY, National Taiwan University, International Christian University in Tokyo, Peking University, Berlin Technical University, and Hong Kong Baptist University and received a Doctoris Honoris from the Far Eastern Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow. Professor Cheng founded the International Society for Chinese Philosophy in 1973 and has been its Honorary President since 1983. He founded the *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* in 1972 and has since served as its Editor-in-Chief. He also founded the International Society for the Study of the *Yijing* in 1985. He has published 12 books in Chinese, four books in English and numerous articles on Chinese philosophy in Chinese and English. His main English work is *New Dimensions of Confucian/Neo-Confucian Philosophy* (SUNY Press, 1991).

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# PREFACE

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*Chung-ying Cheng*

Although Western academics have come to know many things about Chinese philosophy in the last thirty years, what they know most is basically confined to classical Chinese philosophy. Through the efforts of many recent scholars a few Neo-Confucian and Neo-Daoist works and philosophers have found their places in sinological and comparative studies. As to contemporary Chinese philosophy one can readily see that students and scholars in the West have least knowledge and least access to such knowledge because of the complexity of source and resource materials and lack of expertise in explanation, translation, and evaluation.

For many years, I have wanted to write an analytical reflection on contemporary Chinese philosophy as a way of opening a new path to revitalize Chinese philosophy in the context of East–West dialogue. Although it is not an easy job, it is a challenging one because there are many different positions to analyze and evaluate. In my analytical notes, I find it possible to integrate these different positions under a common theme and then to characterize them in terms of some deep patterns and main directions. Needless to say, I also have a personal interest in this exploration because I can relate some of my own philosophical views to many of these philosophical works. I also came to know some of these philosophers personally as well as professionally.

I had brief personal contact with Professors Liang Shuming and He Lin when I was invited to give lectures at Peking University and the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in 1985, marking my first return to China after 1949. I came to know Professor Feng Youlan in 1982 at our International Zhu Xi Conference at University of Hawaii at Manoa. I knew Professors Tang Junyi and Mou Zongsan in Hong Kong, but I first met them in 1965 at the 5<sup>th</sup> International East–West Philosophers' Conference in Honolulu. In Taipei, of course, I knew Professor Fang Dongmei (Thomé Fang) because he was my philosophy teacher at National Taiwan University for many years and Professor Xu Fuguan because he was my father's good friend in literature and poetry. In Shanghai I discussed philosophy with Professor Feng Qi when

he invited me to give a series of lectures on Chinese–Western philosophy at East China Normal University in 1987. In the same period in Beijing, I visited Professor Zhang Dainian and came to know Li Zehou as a colleague and a friend.

I see each distinguished contemporary Chinese philosopher as engaged in a struggle to articulate some essence or aspect of Chinese philosophy through efforts to develop a method of thinking and a form of expression that met a high personal standard of articulation. All of them made efforts to link their thought with Western philosophical ideas, but they also tended to evaluate the Western tradition critically from the standpoint of the being of the human person and the well-being of humankind. Many lacked an opportunity to have dialogue, debate, or conversation with Western philosophers, but they succeeded in constituting a diversity of discourses with a central theme: understanding the Chinese mind in understanding the West and vice versa. Some of them used Western philosophy as a method and even adopted some fundamental theses from Western philosophers such as Bergson, Dewey, Russell, and Kant, but they always tried to argue and articulate some profound ontological, epistemological, and ethical insights from the Chinese tradition, whether manifest or hidden. They did not always wish to criticize the models and standards that they adopted from the West. Even though they were awakened to rational modernity, they carefully used aspects of the Chinese tradition to gain deeper understanding of the issues at hand. Their visions were always global in scope and suggested an optimistic prospect as their cultivation opened new roads of philosophical development. To say the least, they remind us that the task of philosophical thinking has unlimited potentiality and need not be limited to one or two paradigms. Humanity and culture never will end with one tradition and must not be dominated by one school. Our question is how we can effectively create and enjoy philosophical creativity through persuasion and equality rather than by coercion and dominance.

In 1997, I visited Nick Bunnin in Oxford when I was a visiting professor of philosophy at Berlin Technical University. I was much impressed by Nick's intensive work with young Chinese scholars on contemporary Chinese philosophers at the Institute for Chinese Studies at University of Oxford. Consequently, I proposed collaboration with him on a volume on contemporary Chinese philosophy to be published by Blackwell Publishers. I thought that a presentation of contemporary Chinese philosophers together with selected translations of their work would be useful and necessary before any analytical work could be done. He agreed and we worked hard together over a distance of half the earth for two years on this pioneering project, which involved collaboration with 16 young scholars in Chinese philosophy whom we invited to join the project. Each wrote a chapter on a philosopher from the list of names we had chosen and in a framework that we had developed.

We started with a rough division of contemporary Chinese philosophy into four stages that covers all the major philosophical developments and philosophical positions of Chinese philosophy in the twentieth century. The four stages, *pioneering new thought from the West*; *philosophizing in the Neo-Confucian spirit*; *ideological exposure to dialectical materialism*; and *later development of New Neo-Confucianism*, also constitute four orientations of contemporary Chinese philosophy: *Western orientation*, *Earlier Neo-Confucian orientation*, *Chinese Marxist orientation*, and *Later Neo-Confucian orientation*. On this basis, we set up four parts of the book in order to include the leading philosophies of each stage and to construct common measures and guidelines for the authors to follow in their chapters. We both looked at the contributed chapters and offered comments for revision. For myself, I commented on the organization, content, and ideas of the chapters from both logical-critical and historical points of view. All of the authors used our comments positively to improve the quality of their contributions.

Nick will provide a general introduction to describe the content and intent of each chapter. I shall write about very recent Chinese philosophers to bring the study up-to-date and shall also conclude with an overview and appraisal of contemporary Chinese philosophy and its nature based on my analysis of its origin and differentiation. I shall also explore the most recent concerns and directions of Chinese philosophy and its prospects for future development. With utmost modesty, I suggest that this book will initiate both a new era and a new area of contemporary Chinese philosophy and culture studies.

I wish to thank Nick warmly for our excellent collaboration and also to thank our contributors for their enthusiasm in joining hands with us.

Chung-ying Cheng  
Honolulu, Hawaii  
February 28, 2001



# INTRODUCTION

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*Nicholas Bunnin*

*Contemporary Chinese Philosophy* introduces the thought of sixteen of the most inventive and influential Chinese philosophers over the last century. This has been a turbulent period in which philosophical concepts, theories, and systems played a crucial role in China's continuing adjustment to modernity. Our primary aim is to expound and critically examine the work of figures whose creativity and sensitive interpretation of features of Chinese and Western thought are most worthy of philosophical attention. As a whole, the book depicts a complex philosophical culture and provides a platform for further investigation and innovative philosophical work. In addition, the editors take pride in offering a showcase for extremely talented Chinese contributors working in China, Hong Kong, and the United States. Our one non-Chinese contributor has long worked as a specialist on Chinese philosophy in Hong Kong. We are indebted to all the authors for their diverse perspectives, scholarly knowledge, and critical insights.

Because our purposes are philosophical, we have excluded lesser philosophers who have had greater public impact. Mao Zedong (1893–1976) is the most prominent of these. We have also omitted excellent Chinese philosophers whose work can be understood entirely as contributions to Western philosophy. For example, much sophisticated Chinese philosophy of science (dialectics of nature) can be understood without reference to the background of Chinese philosophy. The response of our readers is the test of our judgment in shaping this book. We hope that even those seeking a more comprehensive work of intellectual and cultural history will be attracted by the excitement of studying the deep, complex, original, and provocative thought of the philosophers who are included. This is especially important because the Chinese philosophical culture that was fragmented by bitter political conflict and exile in the middle of the twentieth century is currently being reunited. Contacts among Chinese philosophers in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the United States are increasingly rich and productive. New approaches to comparative philosophy and world philosophy have also encouraged Western philosophers to cultivate interests in

Chinese philosophy. In his two concluding chapters, Chung-ying Cheng explores these developments and their implications for the future development of Chinese philosophy and presents an interpretation of contemporary Chinese philosophy. For now, we hope that readers will use *Contemporary Chinese Philosophy* to help determine an agenda of problems for their own further study and creative philosophical work.

Readers are also encouraged to distinguish between what is valuable and what should be disregarded in the works considered. Several of the philosophers, for example, sought to determine the essence of Western philosophy and the essence of Chinese philosophy, initially to learn the secret of Western success and later to defend the value of Chinese culture and institutions. Others employed single developmental models of culture and philosophical thought. These approaches can be understood in the context of China's response to Western power and much can be retrieved to be deployed in more sophisticated analyses, but these essentialist or developmental models do not offer a suitable framework for understanding and assessing the complexity and variety of either Chinese or Western thought.

An important feature of the volume is the diversity of Chinese and Western influences on the authors discussed, and this variety in itself helps to undermine a monolithic or overly simplified vision of either tradition. Chinese influences include the *Yijing* (Book of Changes); Confucius, Mencius, and Xunzi; the Daoists, Laozi and Zhuangzi; the legalist Han Feizi; Mozi and the later Mohists; Mere Consciousness and Chan Buddhism; Zhu Xi, Lu Jiuyuan, Wang Yangming and other Neo-Confucians; and the Qing school of textual criticism. Western influences include Plato, Aristotle, Leibniz, Hume, Kant, Schiller, Mill, Hegel, Marx, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Green, Bergson, Woodbridge, Dewey, Russell, Moore, Wittgenstein, and Foucault. Many of the philosophers were deeply influenced by their studies abroad in Japan, the United States, Britain, France, Germany, or Austria.

Although there were personal rivalries and factional divisions among the philosophers discussed in *Contemporary Chinese Philosophy*, friendships and influences between teachers and students and among colleagues have also been important. In addition, the intellectual perspectives of many of the figures were shaped by their early education in the Chinese classics, in Buddhist or Daoist thought, or in Western scientific, political, and philosophical ideas. Institutional factors were also important. Different cities, institutions, philosophical and intellectual journals and publishers helped to shape the thought of philosophers who worked in them. Peking University throughout the period, Tsinghua University in the first half of the twentieth century, and the Institute of Philosophy of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences since its foundation in the 1950s have been influential centers of Chinese philosophical thought in Beijing. Fudan University has played a similar role in Shanghai. During the Japanese occupation in the 1930s and 1940s, the Southwest Associated

University in Chungqing and later Kunming provided a focus of intellectual life in exile from Beijing and Tianjin. Several important figures migrated to New Asia College (later integrated into Chinese University of Hong Kong) and Taiwan National University and Academia Sinica in Taipei after the establishment of the People's Republic in 1949. Harvard University and University of Hawaii at Manoa have provided centers for Chinese philosophical thought in the United States.

*New Youth*, edited 1915–21 by Chen Duxiu (1879–1942), was remarkable as a focus of new and exciting ideas, but many other journals provided forums for popularizing thought in early-twentieth-century China. *Philosophical Review* maintained high intellectual standards in the publication of professional philosophical articles in the 1930s and 1940s. English-speaking readers have had access to the journals *Philosophy East and West* and the *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* for discussion of contemporary Chinese philosophy over the last several decades. Among publishers, Commercial Press had the most distinguished record of promoting philosophical discussion in China, but other presses have also been important.

Although the figures in the volume vary in the degree and orientation of their public involvement, the overwhelming presence of China in crisis overshadowed much of their philosophical work. An exploration of the causes, symptoms, and transformations of crisis in modern China would be out of place here, but a brief historical sketch will hint at the context of instability and the changing patterns of aspiration and despair in which philosophers have worked. In these circumstances, the depth and creativity of their philosophical work is remarkable.

Contemporary philosophy began in China as part of the response to the weakness, ossification, and corruption of the Qing dynasty near the end of the nineteenth century. Intellectuals feared that foreign powers would destroy China as a unified state and overwhelm Chinese culture. Japan, which had rapidly modernized after the Meiji restoration, was regarded as a special threat because it was so close to many aspects of Chinese thought and culture. The failure of early Republican institutions after the Revolution of 1911 and the slide into warlord rule, supplemented by disillusion over the carnage of the Great War in Europe, undermined the appeal of Western liberal models for Chinese modernization. A demand for reform and rejection of traditional Confucian culture culminated in the New Culture Movement and the May Fourth Movement, but this liberal moment was soon succeeded by the formation of the Guomindang and the Chinese Communist Party. The rivalry between these Leninist revolutionary parties with military wings produced civil war and further instability. Political and military conflict and the corrupt ineffectiveness of Guomindang governance formed a prelude to the Japanese seizure of Manchuria in 1931 and more extensive invasion of 1937.

After the Communist victory in renewed civil war, the People's Republic was founded in 1949 under the leadership of Mao Zedong (1893–1976), and Nationalist rule under Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Jieshi) (1887–1975) was restricted to Taiwan. In China, the imperfectly effective Nationalist censorship gave way to more systematic intellectual control. The government and party reshaped universities on terms expressed in Mao's statements of cultural and intellectual policy in Yanan. Campaigns were organized to denounce ancient and contemporary intellectual rivals. The brief relaxation of the Hundred Flowers period led to the renewed control of the Anti-Rightist Campaign. The failure of the Great Leap Forward was followed by the decade of the Cultural Revolution in 1966–76, in which education was disrupted and intellectuals were sent to the countryside. Two decades of relative stability, economic success, and growing intellectual freedom under a policy of Openness and Reform were interrupted by the events of June Fourth 1989. In recent years, the despair and nihilism among intellectuals in the aftermath of the Beijing Massacre have given way to cautious anticipations of consolidating and extending reform, with Marxist, liberal, and Confucian thinking contributing to the debate. For most of the period since 1949, political dictatorship on the mainland was mirrored by political dictatorship in Taiwan, but an extended period of economic success has been followed by greater intellectual freedom and democratic reform.

Although there are liaisons, affinities, puzzles, and disputes that interweave among all the chapters of the volume, we hope that readers will be assisted by a division into four sections: Pioneering New Thought from the West; Philosophizing in the Neo-Confucian Spirit; Ideological Exposure to Dialectical Materialism; Later Development of New Neo-Confucianism. Each of the main chapters is accompanied by a bibliography and a set of discussion questions. Chung-ying Cheng supplements these chapters with an account of Recent Trends in Chinese Philosophy in China and the West and offers an Onto-Hermeneutic Interpretation of Twentieth-Century Chinese Philosophy: Identity and Vision. A Glossary of important Chinese philosophical terms used in the text concludes the work.

### **Pioneering New Thought from the West**

Two writers can be seen to have been initiators of the Chinese intellectual response to modernity: Kang Youwei (1858–1927) and Yan Fu (1854–1921). Kang presented a vision of change that motivated the Hundred Days Reform in 1898. This movement offered hope of modernizing Qing dynasty rule, but was crushed by the empress dowager Cixi's palace coup. Although Kang had an appreciation of Western civilization, his thought was grounded in Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist thought. He placed his criticism of late-Qing-dynasty China and his hope of reform in the context of ancient Han-dynasty controversies between new text and old text Confucianism. He claimed that

the old text (*guwen*) versions of the classics, allegedly saved from the book-burning of China's first Emperor, were forgeries and that the true versions were those of the new text (*jinwen*) school of the Former Han dynasty. From this perspective, Kang argued that Confucius was a reformer and a utopian, with an ultimate vision of a society of great unity under the virtue of humanity (*ren*) and the rule of the people. His policy failed, but the strategy of marshaling available intellectual resources for reform and the recourse to utopian ideals recurred.

Yan Fu published translations and extensive philosophical commentaries on works by Thomas Huxley, Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, and others as a means to understanding Western strength and Chinese weakness. His elegant commentaries related these works to a framework of Chinese thought, and the popularity of his writings extended the range of those seeking to assess and alter Chinese intellectual life and public institutions.

Other philosophers contributed to the revival of late-Qing intellectual life. Zhang Taiyan's (1868–1936) early collaboration with Kang Youwei ended because of conflict between Zhang's commitment to overthrowing Qing rule and Kang's more limited reformist aims. Zhang's training in philology and textual criticism supported his sophisticated assessment of Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist texts and his rejection of Kang's new text Confucianism. His linguistic knowledge and understanding of logic informed his mature philosophical system, in which his account of perception was influenced by Kantian idealism.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Zhang took part in radical educational experiments with Cai Yuanpei (1868–1940), a brilliant classical scholar who later became China's leading educator. Cai's works on aesthetics, religion, and moral philosophy were grounded in his mastery of the Confucian classics and his study of Western philosophy in Germany. He argued that the emotions, which were focused on irrational religious beliefs, would be better directed to aesthetic objects and that aesthetics could replace religion as a source of cultural unity and vitality.

As Chancellor of Peking University 1916–26, Cai attracted imaginative scholars with independent minds. The New Culture and May Fourth Movements arose from this milieu to embrace modernization and to condemn Confucian culture as a source of Chinese weakness. The various strands and figures of the May Fourth Movement have been subject to continuing investigation due to their emblematic status in marking China's commitment to modernity. Chen Duxiu (1879–1942), who argued for a transformation of Chinese culture through science and democracy, and Li Dazhao (1879–1927), who founded the first society in China to study Marxist theory, were leading figures in this radical setting.

We can note the work of three further philosophers who extended the range of Western ideas available to Chinese philosophical thought. Zhu Guangqian

(1897–1986) introduced themes from Croce in his aesthetic and psychological writings. The poet Zong Baihua (1897–1986) developed an aesthetic theory drawn from Kant, Goethe, Daoist thought, and the *Yijing* to explore the relationship between aesthetics and space in terms of fulfillment and emptiness. Hong Qian (1909–92) took part in the Vienna Circle as a student of Moritz Schlick. His lucid and rigorous search for a consistent and coherent logical empiricism influenced generations of Chinese philosophers.

In the first section of *Contemporary Chinese Philosophy*, we have selected five philosophers for detailed attention: Liang Qichao (1873–1929), Wang Guowei (1877–1927), Zhang Dongsun (1886–1973), Hu Shi (1891–1958), and Jin Yuelin (1895–1984). Each captures an aspect of the intense search for new ideas and new values.

After collaborating with Kang Youwei in developing a program of Confucian reform, Liang Qichao, who is discussed by Yang Xiao in chapter 1, developed a philosophically sophisticated and influential understanding of history, politics, culture, and law. He constructed a methodology for comparing Chinese and Western ideas and institutions and set out the first plan for a modern history of Chinese philosophy. His rejection of essentialism allowed him to shift attention from preserving Chinese Confucian culture to preserving China as an independent state. His assessment of democracy, citizenship, nationalism, liberty, rights, human relationships, and civil law founded the modern Chinese understanding of civic society. Of particular interest are his arguments for distinguishing between political and legal liberty and social and ethical liberty, and his understanding of the relationship between national rights and people's rights.

Wang Guowei, who is discussed by Keping Wang in chapter 2, responded to the thought of Kant, Schiller, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche to establish an aesthetic theory of remarkable scope and sensitivity. His theory integrated German aesthetic thought into traditional Chinese theory of art and provided grounding for bold critical studies. His philosophy of criticism centered on six concerns: aesthetic education, spiritual detachment, art as play, the artist as genius, the refined, and the poetic state. Of these, his accounts of the poetic state and the refined show the greatest originality. Tension between Wang's attachment to idealist metaphysical, aesthetic, and ethical systems and his intellectual respect for positivism, hedonism, and empiricism persuaded him to give up philosophy early in his intellectual life. His romantic commitment to a royalist restoration led to his death by suicide in 1927.

Zhang Dongsun, who is discussed by Xinyan Jiang in chapter 3, was also influenced by Kant, but focused his philosophy on the theory of knowledge. A pluralist epistemology, which distinguished independent and mutually irreducible elements in cognition, led to an examination of cultural and linguistic factors shaping knowledge. He grounded his epistemology in a panstructuralist cosmology that was deeply influenced by Buddhist thought. Zhang rejected the concept of substance and proposed a sophisticated structuralism, according to which

all that existed in reality were structures or orders. His identification of morphological differences between Chinese and Western languages as a source of different philosophical orientations, although still controversial, provided a framework for later explorations by Chinese and Western philosophers.

Hu Shi, who is discussed by Hu Xinhe in chapter 4, succeeded Zhang Dongsun as China's most influential liberal thinker. An article in *New Youth* initiated the vernacular revolution in Chinese literature. His doctoral dissertation at Columbia University asserted the claims of Chinese thought to be capable of supporting scientific practice. He followed Zhang's lead to create the paradigm of modern historical studies of Chinese philosophy and employed his historical theories and insights in an attempt to systematize the Chinese national heritage. His demand for clarity, bold hypotheses, and testability, drawn from Dewey's experimentalist pragmatism, extended to his accounts of culture, education, and politics. His politics were gradualist and democratic. In a famous exchange with Li Dazhou in 1919, Hu supported beneficial piecemeal reform in opposition to total revolutionary change.

Jin Yuelin, who is discussed by Hu Jun in chapter 5, replaced an early enthusiasm for Neo-Hegelian idealism with a passion for modern logic. He did much to introduce modern logic and its underlying philosophical thought in China. He was attracted to Russell's version of analytic philosophy, but rejected the claim that the method of analysis precluded the development of a metaphysical system. For his own metaphysics, he focused on the Chinese concept of *Dao*, but this exploration is also remarkable for his deployment of modality, centering on the notion of logical possibility. The clarity and sophistication of his argument has had wide influence in China.

### **Philosophizing in the Neo-Confucian Spirit**

Reassessment of the complex traditions of Chinese philosophical thought played an increasingly important role as the century progressed. The diversity of commitment among philosophers concerning modernization and traditional values was shown in the 1923 debate on Science versus Metaphysics as some intellectuals, led by Zhang Junmai (1887–1969), powerfully contested the May Fourth Movement's optimistic endorsement of Western models of modernity.

A scholarly revival involving fresh interpretations of ancient Confucian, Daoist, Mohist, legalist, and Buddhist texts was crucially important, but the main inspiration from traditional Chinese thought derived from the great Neo-Confucian syntheses of the Song and Ming dynasties, especially in the writings of Zhu Xi (1130–1200) and Wang Yangming (1472–1529). The subtlety and scope of their philosophical intelligence and the tension between Zhu Xi's realism and Wang Yangming's focus on mind provided room for modern reflective interpretations of their work.

In the second section of the volume, we focus on four philosophers: Xiong Shili (1885–1968), Liang Shuming (1893–1988), Feng Youlan (1895–1900), and He Lin (1902–92).

Dissatisfaction with his early studies of “Mere Consciousness” Buddhism led Xiong Shili, who is discussed by Jiyuan Yu in chapter 6, to Confucianism and the project of recovering the true *Dao* of Confucius as a basis for Chinese revival. In this work he drew inspiration from Wang Yangming, but also wished to integrate Western learning in a system of modern Confucian thought. Using the *Yijing*, he sought to determine a metaphysical basis for Confucian ethics and an active Confucian conception of the self, linking original reality and function, which he held to be in some sense the same, with the processes of change and the grounding of human virtue. Xiong’s system found legitimate roles for both philosophy and science, but sharply distinguished their two domains. His densely argued thought raised deep questions about the relationship between metaphysics and morality.

Liang Shuming, who is discussed by Yanming An in chapter 7, developed an account of Confucian spontaneity that was based on the thought of the Neo-Confucian Wang Xinzhai (1483–1541) and was also influenced by the writings of Henri Bergson. He argued that intuition as well as intellect was a source of knowledge and later incorporated his insights about intuition within a practically oriented conception of reason. He argued that Confucian concerns with intuition, harmony, and our capacity to live in accord with nature provided a basis for culture that was superior to a Western demand to conquer nature or an Indian rejection of the self and nature as illusory. He recognized a sequence in the appropriate temporal order of these three cultural inclinations and traced the weakness of China to the premature realization of the Confucian ideal. His comparative theory of human cultures was accompanied by a parallel theory of types of human personality and issued in the conviction that after the fulfillment of economic needs, the time for Confucian culture and the Confucian self would come.

Feng Youlan, who is discussed by Lauren Pfister in chapter 8, used the techniques of modern logical analysis to develop a philosophical system that aimed to correct and develop Zhu Xi’s realist conception of principle (*li*) in a New Principle Learning. Like Xiong Shili, Feng sharply distinguished between philosophy and science, but grounded this distinction on a radical difference between the dimension of actuality and the dimension of truth-and-reality. His thought provided room for a philosophical mysticism based on the intellectual contemplation of the unity of reality. His ethics and politics retained a core of traditional values in the context of modernity. The sophistication and breadth of Feng’s system were informed by a detailed historical understanding of the complexity and variety of Chinese philosophical thought. This understanding was manifested in three major histories of Chinese philosophy, in which Feng sought to reconstruct the arguments underlying the aphoristic



and unsystematic surface of Chinese philosophical texts. The changing ambitions and emphases of these histories reflect Feng's intellectual development and his turn to materialism. His commitment to China's modernization and his conception of the true and faithful subject of a legitimate ruler provide an intellectual basis for his ambiguous relations to Maoist authority.

He Lin, who is discussed by Jiwei Ci in chapter 9, sought to reinterpret the doctrines of the School of Mind of Lu Jiuyuan (1139–93), and Wang Yangming (1472–1529) in order to provide a Chinese contribution to a universally true Hegelian idealist system of philosophical thought. In doing so, he aimed to resolve China's modern cultural crisis by returning to true philosophy. He construed mind objectively in terms of logic rather than subjectively in terms of psychology and considered mind to be the total of Kantian *a priori* principles or Neo-Confucian *li*. Like Hegel, he understood mind to be dynamic and developing rather than static. By using the identity of substance and application to erode distinctions between mind and principle and mind and matter, he sought to reconcile the traditions of the Neo-Confucian Schools of Mind and Principle. Within his idealist framework, He attempted to bring culture, nature, spirit, and the *Dao* into a single intelligible order. His philosophical universalism sanctioned the strengthening of Confucian philosophy of principle with truths that are explicit in Western philosophy, but only implicit in Chinese philosophy.

### Ideological Exposure to Dialectical Materialism

After the victory of Bolshevism in Russia, Marxist thought came to dominate Chinese radical thinking. Chen Duxiu and Li Dazhao become China's first significant Marxist theorists and founded the Chinese Communist Party with Mao Zedong (1893–1976) and others. As the first party leader, Chen led many intellectuals away from earlier Chinese radical movements, such as anarchism, and Li's arguments for interdependent moral and economic revolutions founded Marxist ethical thinking in China. The political and social commentaries of Lu Xun (1881–1936), China's greatest modern writer and a sympathizer of the Communist Party's radical aims, called for popular reform and the recognition of democratic rights. Zhang Shenfu (1893–1986), whose 1927 translation of *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* introduced Wittgenstein's philosophy to China, attempted to integrate the philosophy of Confucius, Bertrand Russell, and dialectical materialism. The revival of the Communist Party under Mao after its near destruction under its urban-based leadership led to years of struggle and eventual triumph. Mao's populist and voluntarist Marxism established the parameters of public discussion over a wide range of subjects, including philosophy. The utopian aims and ideological rigidities of Mao's thought were used repeatedly to restrict the range of debate, even though Mao's theory of

contradictions could distinguish between tolerable and dangerous disagreements. The imposition of orthodoxy curtailed much of the potential creativity of Marxist theory. Nevertheless, some philosophers contributed to serious Marxist thought and historical reassessments of Chinese philosophy. We can note the influence of Guo Moruo (1892–1978), whose periodization of Chinese philosophy on the basis of changing modes of production and his judgment of the philosophers who were therefore progressive or reactionary did much to shape the study of the history of philosophy in China. In the open exchanges earlier in the century, Guo's rejection of a static essence of Chinese society and thought contributed to the development of historical understanding, but, imposed as an orthodoxy, these views distorted and constricted philosophical study.

In the third section of the volume, we focus on three philosophers: Feng Qi (1915–95), Zhang Dainian (1909–present), and Li Zehou (1931–present). All are creatively heterodox in their interpretations of Marxism and in their use of other intellectual sources.

Feng Qi, who is discussed by Huang Yong in chapter 10, constructed an original philosophy of value on the basis of Daoist, Confucian, Buddhist, Kantian, Hegelian, and Marxist insights. His main study concerned the theory of wisdom, which he understood as knowledge of *Dao* as the fundamental principle of the universe and of human life. Wisdom found its application in our cognitive and practical activities and in our moral cultivation. Philosophers had the task of transforming knowledge, which requires an attachment to objects and the self, into wisdom, which sees reality as a whole without such attachments. This transformation came through the sudden enlightenment of intellectual intuition and moved from the realm of the nameable to the realm of the unnameable. Feng sought to transform the theory of *Dao* into method and into virtue. These transformations involved dialectic: the dialectic between analytic and synthetic methods, the dialectic between knowledge and practice, the dialectic between logical and historical methods, and the dialectic between agreements and disagreements. This last dialectical movement realized a notion of non-perspectival, yet nonfoundational, objectivity. Feng's account of virtue required an understanding of freedom as self-conscious, voluntary, and natural action, and this conception of freedom was to be realized in individuality.

Zhang Dainian, who is discussed by Cheng Lian in chapter 11, was inspired by his brother, Zhang Shenfu, to integrate analytic method, dialectic materialism, and traditional Chinese philosophy in investigations of central philosophical problems and historical studies and in consideration of cultural questions facing China. According to Zhang, philosophy is the study of the principles of nature and the rules of human life, with humans seen naturalistically as a natural species. Matter is fundamental to life and mind, but Zhang held that it is a mistake to reduce ideals to the category of matter. He used the distinction between root and perfection to synthesize materialism and idealism. In his historical studies, Zhang sought to bring out the systematic nature of Chinese thought and

approached his task through an analysis of fundamental categories and doctrines, rather than chronologically. *A Handbook of Concepts and Categories in Classical Chinese Philosophy* is a masterly expression of his mature understanding of Chinese thought. Zhang explored the materialist tradition of Chinese philosophy and interpreted its dialectical thought and humanitarian ideas. His cultural studies argued for a synthesis of Chinese and Western approaches to man and nature, the individual and society, and analytic and dialectical thinking.

Li Zehou, who is discussed by John Zijiang Ding in chapter 12, is best known for his aesthetic thought and for his interpretation of Kantian philosophy. Li has stressed the guiding role of practical rationality and the complementarity of Confucian and Daoist thought throughout the history of Chinese aesthetics. In his general philosophy, Li developed an “anthropological ontology” on the basis of his account of human subjectivity. In this post-Marxist practical philosophy of human subjectivity, Li sought to preserve Marx’s fundamental ideas while relinquishing other aspects of Marxist theory. He held that Marxist philosophy must turn from the tasks of criticism to those of humane philosophical construction. He argued that through the humanization of nature, the rational and the social in human nature transforms the perceptual and the natural. Li used the thought of Kant, Heidegger, Wittgenstein, and Foucault to explain the role of human subjectivity in transforming Marxism and to present his vision of a post-Marxist philosophy.

### Later Developments of New Neo-Confucianism

After 1949, philosophers in Taiwan and Hong Kong were eager to provide a more systematic reinterpretation of traditional Chinese culture and philosophy in light of a deeper and more informed understanding of Western philosophy, specifically the works of Plato, Kant, and Hegel. A mark of this commitment was the 1957 Declaration on Chinese Culture, promulgated by Tang Junyi, Zhang Dongsun, Mou Zongsan, and Xu Fuguan and giving rise to the Movement of Contemporary New Confucianism.

In the fourth section of the volume, we focus on four philosophers: Fang Dongmei (1899–1977), Xu Fuguan (1903–82), Tang Junyi (1909–78), and Mou Zongsan (1909–95).

Fang Dongmei, who is discussed by Chenyang Li in chapter 13, sought to synthesize Confucian, Daoist, Mohist, Buddhist, and Western thought in a comprehensive system of comparative culture and philosophy. He based the possibility of individual wisdom, integrating reason and emotion, on distinctive types of cultural wisdom. His system was animated by a universal urge to life and gave fundamental roles to the concepts of *Dao*, harmony, the unity of nature and value, and creativity. He stressed the importance of the *Yijing* as a metaphysics of change in constructing an account of reality. He was critical

of classical Neo-Confucian thought for its narrow exclusion of rival views. His feeling for cultural detail and his integrative scope gave his philosophical exposition a rhapsodic power. He saw the facets of the world, from the natural world of physics and biology to the human world of psychology, aesthetics, morality, and religion, as organized in a hierarchy of layers, but gave each layer nonreductive autonomy as part of a harmonious whole.

Xu Fuguan, who is discussed by Peimin Ni in chapter 14, presented New Confucian views in a less systematic and metaphysical way than others considered in this section. He placed anxiety at the core of Chinese philosophical reflection in contrast to curiosity as the source of Western philosophy and sought to trace the consequences of this claim for understanding human life and the Chinese concern for the heart–mind. Because of human embodiment and the unity of the heart–mind, he saw bodily recognition, as a concrete and emotionally grounded method of knowing, as a crucial aspect of human knowledge. His scholarly appreciation of past philosophers was founded on a method of bodily recognition and tracing back, but he also saw bodily recognition as a method to discover and transform one’s true subjectivity. In his political thought, Xu argued that although the Confucian tradition lacked a democratic dimension, the Confucian conceptions of the embodied self and the practice of virtue were both compatible with democracy and necessary for full realization of democracy. He argued that Zhuangzi’s metaphysical notion of the *Dao*, when embodied in life, became the best representative of the Chinese aesthetic spirit as the realization of freedom in the unity between life and art.

Tang Junyi, who is discussed by Sin Yee Chan in chapter 15, interpreted the Neo-Confucian thought of Lu Jiuyuan (1139–93) and Wang Yangming (1472–1529) and the role that they assigned to the mind in intellectual and moral cultivation. He sought to ground these ethical concerns in a doctrine of universal metaphysical and moral substance. Moral life requires us to be self-governing and to transcend our actual selves by realizing ourselves as a universal rational moral substance: the ethical self. Through self-reflective and self-conscious thought at a moment, a thought that can create a moral world, we must resist indulgence. We can transcend our actual selves by taking part in moral activities. At the center of his ethical account are the heart–mind and our capacity for feeling–penetration, involving cognition, emotions and will. We use our feeling–penetration in relation to nine horizons dealing with the objective world, self-consciousness and the transcendence of the subjective and the objective. The transcendence of the self is a theme that united his ethical and metaphysical views. Tang understood cultures as different manifestations of the heart–mind as the ethical self and argued for the superiority of Confucian over Western culture. His notion of Confucianism, involving *ren* and unity, allowed room for democracy and reform by being abstracted from any pattern of institutions.

Mou Zongsan, who is discussed by Refeng Tang in chapter 16, used his deep understanding of Chinese and Western philosophy to criticize those who concentrated on chance parallels between Chinese and Western doctrines or who construed Chinese thought within a structure formed by a single Western school. He sought to revive Chinese philosophy while avoiding these interpretive dangers. After work on modern logic, he turned to Kantian theory of the self and the assessment of Daoist, Confucian, and Buddhist philosophy. Although he was fascinated by Kant, Mou developed his thought through criticism of Kantian claims. His mature system of moral metaphysics focused on human beings as moral subjects who, unlike Kantian selves, took part in infinite mind with a world-creating capacity for intellectual intuition.

With a renewal of officially sanctioned Confucian philosophy in China and greater contact among philosophers in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, New Confucianism can contribute to the reintegration of Chinese philosophical life after the politically enforced divisions of half a century. Other Chinese and Western influences can also contribute to this reintegration. In addition, the schools of Chinese philosophy, from their origin to their modern interpretation, provide grounds for fusion with Western philosophy and a standpoint from which Western philosophy can be constructively criticized. In these circumstances, Chinese philosophers, holding diverse views but sharing a complex intellectual culture, can display subtlety, dynamism and openness to dialogue as Chinese philosophy takes its place in world philosophy.

I became interested in contemporary Chinese philosophy through work with the Philosophy Summer School in China: China Britain Australia. Since 1988, the Summer School has held intensive sessions in Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Panyu, and Suzhou with British staff members and members drawn from an outstanding younger generation of Chinese philosophers. In recent years, Australian staff members and members from Hong Kong and Taiwan have also taken part. Chung-ying Cheng and I first met at a conference cosponsored by the Summer School. Several of our contributors were Summer School members or took part in projects that grew from Summer School roots. I am especially grateful to Professor Qiu Renzong and his colleagues at the Institute of Philosophy, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and the Summer School staff members over the years for maintaining an institution that has produced so much friendship and good philosophy. I hope that they will see *Contemporary Chinese Philosophy* as further fruit of our work together.

Finally, I thank Chung-ying for his erudition and friendship and our contributors for their enthusiasm and hard work. I hope that readers will gain as much as I have from their efforts.

