

Buddhist and Confucian Attitudes toward Life: A Comparative Study

Guang Xing

Abstract

Chinese traditional culture includes three belief systems: Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism. The first two are native Chinese traditions, while Buddhism is a foreign religion that was introduced from India and was gradually integrated into Chinese culture. All three systems of thought focus on the analysis of human life, such as its nature, its character, its value, its ideal and how to achieve this ideal. Confucianism is a philosophy of life with its emphasis on proper human behavior, morality and the social responsibilities of man, while Taoism emphasizes what is natural and spontaneous in him. Buddhism emphasizes personal moral cultivation with an aim to becoming a perfect man. After a comparative study, we find that there are five similarities and four differences between the Buddhist and Chinese attitudes toward life, and there are also six Buddhist contributions to the Chinese way of life.

Key words: Buddhist, Confucian, Morality, Karma, Equality.

Guang Xing is a professor of Centre of Buddhist Studies, The Univ. of Hong Kong. (guangxin@hku.hk)

International Journal of Buddhist Thought & Culture September 2014, vol. 23, pp. 7-48.

© 2014 International Association for Buddhist Thought & Culture

The day of submission: 2014.7.7 / Completion of review: 2014.8.14 / Final decision for acceptance: 2014.8.25

I. Introduction

Chinese traditional culture includes three belief systems: Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism. The first two are native Chinese traditions, while Buddhism is a foreign religion that was introduced from India and was gradually integrated into Chinese culture. All three systems of thought focus on the analysis of human life, such as its nature, its character, its value, its ideal and how to achieve this ideal. Confucianism is a philosophy of life with its emphasis on proper human behavior, morality and the social responsibilities of man, while Taoism emphasizes what is natural and spontaneous in him. Buddhism emphasizes personal moral cultivation with an aim to becoming a perfect man. As the Chinese Philosopher Fung Yulan (馮友蘭) pointed out:

Because it roams within the bounds of society, Confucianism appears more this worldly than Taoism, and because it roams beyond the bound of society, Taoism appears more other worldly than Confucianism. These two trends of thought rivaled each other, but also complemented each other. They exercised a sort of balance of power. This gave the Chinese people a better sense of balance in regard to this-worldliness and other-worldliness. (Fung 1966, 22)

Thus he said, the poems of Tu Fu (杜甫) and Li Bai (李白) reveal the differences between Confucianism and Taoism. Tu Fu represents Confucian thought, and Li Bai represents Daoist thought. That is because Tu Fu was more concerned with the problems of the nation and the sufferings of its people, while Li Bai led a carefree life. But Confucianism and Daoism do not speak much about life and death, so this left room for Buddhism to develop in China. The systematic discussion of human life and its ideal in Buddhism, which focused on mind, gradually gained ground and developed to its peak in the Sui and Tang dynasties.

During the Song dynasty, these three religions became synthesized and came to exert influence on the lives of the Chinese people. Confucianism promotes the cultivation of man in the world, Daoism promotes cultivation of the physical body, and Buddhism promotes cultivation of the mind. Thus, the

three complement each other. I will mainly focus on Confucianism and Buddhism in this paper to discuss their attitudes toward life, but I will also supplement my arguments with Daoist perspectives about life when appropriate.

II. Similarities

There are five similarities between the Chinese and Buddhist attitudes toward life. First, both emphasize the importance of human life and recognize no supreme power. Second, both pay much attention to morality. Third, both emphasize self-cultivation as an important practice. Fourth, both have a practical attitude toward life, and fifth, both have an open attitude of mind.

A. The Importance of Human Life; No Supreme Power

Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism all value human life, and thus, in their thought systems, there is no place for a supreme power such as God or a god who creates and controls human beings. The teachings of these three systems fully focus on matters of human life itself. The native Chinese philosophies of Confucianism and Daoism focus on how to be a good and perfect person. Confucianism aims to educate people to become gentlemen (君子), worthy persons (賢人) and sages (聖人), while Daoists wish to become immortals (神人), perfect men (至人) and true men (真人).

Confucianism is a system of thought with a focus on personal, social, ethical and political issues, and its emphasis is on human life. The *Lunyu* says, “The Master said, ‘Of all the creatures in the world, the human being is the most noble’” (*Xiaojing*, 9).¹ “A person cannot flock together with the birds and the beasts. If I do not associate with the followers of men, then with whom would I associate?” (*Lunyu*, 18:6).² The *Lunyu* also says, “One day the stables burned. When the Master returned from court, he asked, ‘Was anyone hurt?’ He did not ask about the horses” (*Lunyu*, 10:17).

1 All the English translations of the *Xiaojing* quoted in this paper have been adapted from Rosemount and Roger (2009). See references.

2 All the English translations of the *Lunyu* quoted in this paper have been adapted from Slingerland (2003). Please see References.

Modern Chinese scholars usually cite these passages as evidence to show that Confucius emphasized humankind. Therefore, he established the theory of benevolence (仁學), the core thought of which is the morality of filial piety. Other ancient Confucian masters also had a similar opinion, such as Mencius 孟子 (372-289 BCE) who emphasized that humans and animals are different because of morality. Xunzi 荀子 (313-238 BCE) further said,

Water and fire have the vital energy (氣) but not growth (生); vegetation has growth but not awareness (知); animals have awareness but not righteousness (義); man has the vital energy, growth, awareness and also righteousness, so man is the most valuable under heaven. (*Xunzi*, 9:19)³

According to Confucian teaching, there are four categories of phenomena in the world, and man is the highest among the four because man has righteousness (義) which refers to morality in Confucianism. It is said in the *Zhouyi* (周易) that in the universe, there are three ways, “the way of heaven, the way of man and the way of earth” which are called the three foundations (三才) in Confucianism.⁴ Confucian scholars such as Zhu Xi (朱熹, 1130-1200) all emphasized the importance of man in the universe.

Buddhism holds that there were originally five forms of life: gods, humans, animals, hungry ghosts and hell beings. Asuras were added later, making six. But human life is the most important. This is because being born a human is seen as fortunate, but it is not a superior birth. It is fortunate because it is such a rare occurrence. This is well illustrated in the *Chiggala Sutta* of the *Saṃyuttanikāya* that says the chance of being born a human is less than the chance of a blind turtle, surfacing once in a century, putting its head through a ring tossed by the winds across the surface of the ocean.⁵ This is “...because here, Bhikkhus, there is no conduct guided by the Dhamma, no righteous conduct, no wholesome activity, no meritorious activity.

³ All the quotations concerning *Xunzi* are cited from Wang (1988). Please see References. The translation is mine.

⁴ *The Yi King* translated by Legge (1882, 402).

⁵ (S. 5:456; M. 3:169). The story is also found in the Chinese *Saṃyuktāgama* (Sutra No. 406) and *Madhyamāgama* (Sutra No. 199).

Here there prevails mutual devouring, the devouring of the weak” (S. 5:456).⁶ Human beings are fortunate also because of their capacities for making moral decisions and for performing moral action, as well as for their capacity for spiritual development. That is why the *Ekottarāgama* says that “All Buddhas appear in the human world, [Buddhahood is] not attained as gods (in heavens)” (T. 2, no. 125, 694a4-5). For instance, Maitreya will attain Buddhahood in the human world and is now waiting in Tusita heaven.

According to the Buddhist teaching, moral and spiritual progress, or its opposite, is made at the human level because gods in heaven are enjoying their good karma, while beings in the lower realms are suffering and cannot understand the Dharma.⁷ As humans experience both happiness and suffering, they can understand it. On the other hand, human beings are not superior to other forms of life because, according to the Buddhist teaching, humans are not special creations of nature; any other form of sentient beings, such as animals, can also be born as a human depending on their karma.

B. Importance of Morality

According to Damien Keown, morality is the way people in a society treat one another, while ethics is the critical analysis of the moral conduct by people such as philosophers (Keown 2005, 27). So we find strong moral teachings in both Confucianism and Buddhism, but not so much ethics. This is because both systems of thought are more interested in the morality of human conduct rather than a critical analysis of morality, as they consider morality to be the foundation of human cultivation, and moral perfection as the highest ideal. The ideal person is called a sage (聖人) in Confucianism, a true and free man in Daoism and a Buddha (佛) or Awakened One (覺者) in Buddhism.

⁶ The translation is adapted from Bodhi (2000, 1871).

⁷ In the *Itivuttaka sutta* 83, it is said, “The human state, monks, is reckoned by the devas as going to a good destination. Having become a human being, acquiring conviction in the Dhamma and Vinaya taught by the Tathāgata: this is the devas’ reckoning of the gain that is good to gain. When that conviction is settled within one—rooted, established, and strong, not to be destroyed by any priest or contemplative; deva, Mara, or Brahma; or anyone else in the world: this is the devas’ reckoning of becoming well-established.”

According to Confucianism, the difference between humans and animals is morality which regulates human behaviour and keeps peace in our society. Compared with law, Confucius said,

If you try to guide the common people with coercive regulations (*zheng*) and keep them in line with punishments, the common people will become evasive and will have no sense of shame. If, however, you guide them with Virtue, and keep them in line by means of ritual, the people will have a sense of shame and will rectify themselves. (*Lunyu*, 2:3)

So Confucians emphasize the importance of teaching people to cultivate a moral life. Mencius also said, “Life is what I want; dutifulness is also what I want. If I cannot have both, I would choose dutifulness rather than life”⁸ (*Mengzi*, 11:10). Here it shows that Confucians emphasized morality over life because the ultimate aim of one’s entire life is to achieve moral perfection. It is in this context that Confucius established the theory of benevolence (*仁學*), the core thought of which is morality. According to the *Lunyu*, Confucius said, “benevolence is to love all men” and “to love all men” is described as “Desiring to take his stand, one who is good helps others to take their stand; wanting to realize himself, he helps others to realize themselves” (*Lunyu*, 6:30). Morality is highly emphasized as it is said, “One who truly loved Goodness could not be surpassed” (*Lunyu*, 4:6). So benevolence (*Ren*, 仁) is the highest form of morality in Confucian teaching.

Then later, Mencius developed Confucius’ idea of benevolence (*Ren*, 仁) and established the concept of the virtuous nature of man (*性善*). The ideal in Confucianism is the sage (*聖人*), a man with moral perfection, who “broadly extends his benevolence to the common people and brings succour to the multitudes” (*Lunyu* 6:30). This is the Confucian idea of benevolence (*Ren*, 仁) which is love of people and helping them when in difficulty.

The way to achieve this goal in Confucianism is to establish the three immortalities: (1) the establishment of oneself in virtue (*立德*), (2) the

⁸ All the English translations of *Mencius* quoted in this paper have been adapted from Lau (2003). See Bibliography.

establishment of oneself in service (立功), (3) the establishment of oneself in speech (立言). One's personality becomes immortal when one establishes oneself in virtue, one's name becomes immortal when one establishes a reputation for bravery, and one's thought become immortal when one leaves his teaching for future generations. A Confucian realizes his value and moral obligations in the world through these three ways of serving the nation and the people. Thus the establishment of oneself in virtue is considered one of the three immortalities in Confucianism.

According to Buddhism, self-cultivation is three fold: morality (*śīla*), meditation (*samādhi*), and insight (*prajñā*). Here, morality is the foundation, the aim is to achieve insight or wisdom, and the goal is to attain *nirvāṇa*. The Buddhist concept of wisdom has two aspects: intelligence and morality. This is because one starts with morality in his self-cultivation and then achieves his goal, *nirvāṇa*, which can be interpreted as the perfection of morality and intelligence after one obtains wisdom. However, one does not give up morality when he achieves perfection. Therefore, a perfected person is called a Buddha, the Awakened One, who has achieved perfection both in morality and wisdom.

Morality in Buddhism is defined by its precepts, of which there are five basic ones: (1) not to kill any living being, (2) not to steal anything from others, (3) not to commit adultery, (4) not to tell lies and (5) not to take intoxicating drinks. These five Buddhist precepts are comparable with Confucianism's five constants in human relationships: benevolence (仁), righteousness (義), propriety (禮), wisdom (智) and honesty (信).

Confucianism: five constants (五常)	Buddhism: five precepts (五戒)
benevolence (仁)	not to kill or harm any living being (不殺生)
righteousness (義)	not to steal anything from others (不盜)
propriety (禮)	not to commit adultery (不邪)
wisdom (智)	not to take intoxicating drinks (不酒)
honesty (信)	not to tell lies (不妄語)

One common misunderstanding is that after one attains Buddhahood or *nirvāṇa*, one has no more to do. On the contrary, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are busy with the work of saving suffering sentient beings out of compassion. This is particularly true with regard to a Bodhisattva who becomes a Buddha through service to the suffering. In this respect it is the same as Confucianism wherein ideal people perform service to others.

C. Emphasis on Self Cultivation

Because both Confucianism and Buddhism value human life and morality, they both emphasize self cultivation to pursue moral perfection and spiritual awakening to achieve the ideal life. The similarity in both Confucianism and Buddhism in self cultivation is self control and cultivation of the mind, respectively.

According to the Confucian text *Daxue* (大學), the ideal Confucian needs to first cultivate his person, then to regulate his family, then to bring good order to the state, then to display enlightened virtue to the world. So here, cultivation of the person is the starting point and the foundation of the ideal Confucian life. How to cultivate one's own person or self is explained in the *Daxue* as follows:

Wishing to cultivate themselves, they first rectified their minds. Wishing to rectify their minds, they first made their intentions sincere, genuine and pure (*cheng*, 誠). Wishing to make their intentions sincere, genuine and pure, they first perfected their knowledge. Perfecting knowledge lies in investigation of things. Things being investigated, and subsequently knowledge is perfected. Make knowledge perfect, and subsequently one's intentions are made sincere, genuine and pure. Make intentions sincere, genuine and pure, and subsequently the mind is rectified. Rectify the mind, and subsequently the self is cultivated.⁹

Kong Yingda (574-648), a Tang dynasty Confucian scholar, explains the key sentence in the above passage “Wishing to make their intentions *cheng*,

9 (*Daxue and Zhongyong*, 46-47.) The translation is adapted from Ian and Wang (2012). See reference.

they first perfected their knowledge” as follows:

This says that someone who wishes to make his intentions pure (*jing*, 精), genuine and sincere (*cheng*, 誠), must first attend to the matter of knowledge. That is to say, he must start with study and practice. Subsequently he can have a clear understanding of his successes and failures. Therefore, it says, “they first perfect their knowledge.” (Ibid.)

Here the emphasis is on knowledge which is equal to wisdom in Buddhism which is called higher knowledge. This kind of self cultivation is a personal thing. Confucians also advise people to be mindful when one is alone. Because when one is alone, one may act immorally.

As discussed above, the Buddhist path of self-cultivation and self-training has three divisions: morality, meditation, and insight, from which we can see that morality is an integral component of the path to the final goal of *nirvāṇa*. This cultivation includes two processes: observation of precepts, such as the five basic precepts, and the cultivation of mind through meditation. Observation of precepts regulates one’s bodily and verbal actions so that one will not do immoral things such as killing, stealing or adultery which are bodily actions. Lies, slander, harsh words and frivolous talk are verbal actions. The cultivation of mind or mental training is for the purification of mind by eliminating bad thought and cultivating good thought. When the mind becomes purified, one acquires true knowledge and can observe oneself and the phenomenal world as they truly are.

Thus, Mencius said, “All men are capable of becoming Yao or Shun” (*Mengzi*, 12:2). Yao and Shun are considered by Chinese people, particularly the Confucians, as the sages of antiquity. According to the Mahāyāna version of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, which was very popular after it was translated in the fifth century, all sentient beings have Buddha nature and can become enlightened in the future.¹⁰ Daoism also emphasizes the self-cultivation of virtue. Laozi also said something similar,

¹⁰ “O good man! So is Buddha-nature. As all beings will definitely gain *anuttara samyak sambodhi* (unsurpassed Enlightenment), I say that all beings possess the Buddha-Nature” (T. 12, no. 374, 525c22-24).

Cultivate it [*Dao*, 道] in your person and its virtue (*de*, 德) will be genuine (*zhen*, 真); Cultivate it in the family and its virtue will be more than sufficient; Cultivate it in the hamlet and its virtue will endure; cultivate it in the state and its virtue will abound; Cultivate it in the empire and its virtue will be pervasive. (*Laozi*, 54)

D. Practical Attitude toward Life

Both Confucius and the Buddha were quite practical in their attitudes to life as evidenced in the Confucian classics and Buddhist scriptures. First, it is a well known fact that Confucius was not concerned with the afterlife and was concerned only with life in this world. According to the *Lunyu*,

Zilu asked about serving ghosts and spirits. The Master said, ‘You are not yet able to serve people, how could you be able to serve ghosts and spirits?’ ‘May I inquire about death?’ ‘You do not yet understand life, how could you possibly understand death?’ (*Lunyu*, 11:12)

In another place in the *Lunyu*, it is reported that Fan Chi, a disciple of Confucius, asked about wisdom.

The Master said, “‘Working to ensure social harmony among the common people, respecting the ghosts and spirits while keeping them at a distance—this might be called wisdom.’ He then asked about Goodness. The Master said, ‘One who is Good sees as his first priority the hardship of self-cultivation, and only afterward thinks about results or rewards. Yes, this is what we might call Goodness.’” (*Lunyu*, 6:22)

Therefore, according to the *Lunyu*, “The Master did not discuss prodigies, feats of strength, disorderly conduct, or the supernatural” (*Lunyu*, 7:20).

These passages from the *Lunyu* demonstrate quite clearly that Confucius was very practical and was not concerned with anything apart from human life in this world. Later Confucian scholars all inherited this spirit. Because of this practical attitude to life, it is said that Confucius even did not trust prayer.

According to the *Lunyu*,

The Master was seriously ill, and Zilu asked permission to offer a prayer.

The Master said, “Is such a thing done?” Zilu said, “It is. The Eulogy reads, ‘We pray for you above and below, to the spirits of Heaven and of Earth.’ ” According to commentators, the Eulogy is the title of a traditional prayer text. The Master said, “In that case, I have already been offering up my prayers for some time now.” (*Lunyu*, 7:35)

Confucius cast doubt on spirits, and he emphasized we should resolve our problems in life, not by praying to spirits, but by human effort.

Similar to Confucius, the most prominent characteristic of the Buddha was his pragmatism, and because of this, he taught only those things useful for the elimination of human suffering and avoided the metaphysical issues. So according to the *Alagaddūpama Sutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya*, “The Buddha said: Bhikkhus, both formerly and now what I teach is suffering and the cessation of suffering.”¹¹ Therefore, he did not like to discuss metaphysical questions or speculative views, which are purely for the purpose of debate or intellectual curiosity. He in fact disregarded all forms of dogma and did not even hold any view on anything. As recorded in the *Sallekha Sutta*, the Buddha said, “We shall not adhere to our views or hold on to them tenaciously, but shall relinquish them easily. Effacement should be practiced thus.” (M. 1:43)

The ten well-known classical unanswered questions, such as whether the universe is finite or infinite, are typical examples of the content of debates and discussions at the time of the Gautama Buddha in the sixth century BCE. The ten classical questions the Buddha never answered are: (1) is the universe eternal or (2) is it not eternal, (3) is the universe finite or (4) is it infinite, (5) is soul the same as body or (6) is soul one thing and body another thing, (7) does the Tathagata exist after death, or (8) does he not exist after death,

11 (M. 1: 140). The translation is adapted from Bodhi (1995, 234). A similar passage is also found in the *Anurādhasutta* of the *Saṃyuttanikāya* (S. 3:119; Bodhi 1995: 938). The Buddha said: “Formerly, Anuradha, and also now, I make known just suffering and the cessation of suffering.”

or (9) does he both (at the same time) exist and not exist, or (10) does he both (at the same time) not exist and not not-exist.¹²

Gautama Buddha, realising the danger and vanity of such debate, did not join such discussions, because in his opinion, such discussions do not lead one to freedom and liberation from life's problem. Therefore, the Buddha did not give any definite answers and just kept silent when the wanderer Malunkyaputta put these ten classical questions to him. Instead, he said that these questions have nothing to do with the awakened life. Whatever opinion one may have regarding these questions, there is still suffering. Then the Buddha said, "The cessation of suffering (*nibbāna*) I declare is in this very life."¹³ The Buddha expressed the same view when the ascetic Vacchagotta asked whether he held any speculative views.¹⁴

The Buddha was equally pragmatic about presenting his own teachings, confining himself to those things that were only relevant to his goal. He declared that just like the ocean has one taste, the taste of salt, his teaching also has one flavour, the flavour of deliverance.¹⁵

So, Gautama Buddha, transcending all speculative views and theories, did not enter into useless disputes, and as a result, he even did not purposefully formulate any philosophy that would contradict any existing views, and thus, the Buddhist philosophy is an "unexpected consequence" of Gautama Buddha's life. He said, "Seeing all these views, but not grasping them, and searching for the truth, I found inward peace" (Sn verse no. 837).

E. Open Attitude of Mind

Confucianism and Buddhism both have a liberal and open attitude of mind, and both accept whatever is good and wholesome, irrespective of

12 These ten unanswered questions are found in many places in the Pali Canon: D. 1:187-8; M. 1:157, 426, 282; S. 3:213, 258; 4:286, 391; 5:418.

13 *Cūḷamālunkya Sutta* in M. 1:426-430. This is also found in the Chinese translation of Āgamas (T. 1, 804a; 917b).

14 *Aggivacchagotta Sutta* (M. 1:485).

15 (A iv, 201. PTS translation Vol. 4:139). Bhikkhu Bodhi translates as: "Just as the great ocean has but one taste, the taste of salt, so too, this Dhamma and discipline has but one taste, the taste of liberation. This is the sixth astounding and amazing quality that the bhikkhus see in this Dhamma and discipline."

religion, race, ethnicity, gender, nationality etc. They also reject extremism both in thought and practice. According to the *Lunyu*, “The Master (Confucius) said, “The gentleman harmonizes (*he*, 和), and does not merely agree (*tong*, 同). The petty person agrees, but he does not harmonize” (*Lunyu* 13:23). He Yan (何晏, 195-249), in his Commentary to the *Lunyu*, explains the above passage:

Gentlemen are in harmony in their mind, but their opinions or thoughts may be different, so it is said “not the same (in opinion and behaviour).” Petty men have the same habit or indulgence, but they fight for profit, so it is said “not in harmony (not in unity).”¹⁶

The importance of this saying is that it reveals the liberal and open attitude of mind in action and thought of gentlemen, the ideal of Confucian human perfection. As the result of such teachings, Chinese people have accepted and absorbed good thoughts and ideas from other cultures, such as Buddhism. It is in line with such thought and teaching that Confucius emphasized harmony and unity (和爲貴). According to the *Lunyu*, Confucius said:

Master You said, “When it comes to the practice of ritual, it is harmonious ease (*he*, 和) that is to be valued. It is precisely such harmony that makes the Way of the Former Kings so beautiful. If you merely stick rigidly to ritual in all matters, great and small, there will remain that which you cannot accomplish. Yet if you know enough to value harmonious ease but try to attain it without being regulated by rites, this will not work either.” (*Lunyu*, 1.12)

Harmony (*he*, 和) is a very important idea in Chinese philosophy, and it applies both in thought and in practice so that it prevents people from going to extremes. Thus, it is also said in the *Zhongyong*:

The centre is the great foundation of the world. Harmony is the all-pervading Way of the world. Reach the ‘centre’ and ‘harmony’ and Heaven and Earth are in their proper positions and the ten thousand things will be born and grow. (*Daxue and Zhongyong*, 215)

¹⁶ (*Lunyu Zhushu*, 179). The translation is mine.

The open attitude of mind of Confucius is also found in the following saying in the *Lunyu*,

The Master said, “When walking with two other people, I will always find a teacher among them. I focus on those who are good and seek to emulate them, and focus on those who are bad in order to be reminded of what needs to be changed in myself.” (*Lunyu*, 7:22)

The Master said, “With regard to the world, a gentleman has no predispositions for or against any person. He merely associates with those he considers right.” (*Lunyu*, 4:10)

Such an open attitude of mind with the ideal of harmony in Confucianism has influenced Chinese people for thousands of years.

Buddhism also has an open attitude of mind and accepts whatever is good. The *Uttaravipatti Sutta* of the *Anguttanikāya* mentions that Sakka, the leader of the gods, asked the bhikkhu Uttara whether his talks come from the Buddha or not. Uttara said, “Whatsoever is well spoken, all that is the word of the Buddha.”¹⁷ This idea is also reflected in Chinese translations of Buddhist scriptures such as the *Chenshilun* (成實論), translated by Kumarajiva. It says, “As the sūtra says, ‘all the wonderful words in the world come from my (Buddha) teaching’”.¹⁸ The *Dazhidulun* (大智度論) also says, “Furthermore, in the *Shitihuanying dedao jing*, the Buddha said to *Jiao shi jia* (Kauśika): ‘The truths (*satya*), good words (*subhāṣita*), words that are skillful and well spoken, spread throughout the world; all constitute my doctrine.’”¹⁹

It is because of this liberal attitude of mind that Buddhism also believes that one who has realized the truth of impermanence, even without learning Śākyamuni Buddha’s teaching, can also attain enlightenment and become a Buddha, called a Pratyeka Buddha.

It is also because of such an open attitude of mind that Buddhism allows people to worship and make offerings to their ancestors and even to

17 (A. 4:164). PTS translation: (A. 4:112).

18 (T. 32, no. 1646, 244c26-27). The translation is mine.

19 The Chinese title *shi ti huan yin de dao jing* (釋提桓因得道經, perhaps can be restored as *Śakradevendrābhisaṃbodhi Sūtra*: T. 25, no. 1509, 66b7-8).

local gods, wherever Buddhism has spread. Because ancestors are our forefathers from whence we come, we should also show them gratitude, and local gods are an important part of local culture. In the *Anguttaranikāya*, there are three *suttas* discussing how lay Buddhists should spend their wealth and make offerings to ancestors, even to local gods. The *Pattakamma Sutta* mentions four ways of how to spend one's wealth; the *Adiya Sutta* mentions five ways, and the *Bhoga Sutta* mentions three.²⁰ A householder is advised to spend his righteously earned wealth in the following five ways. The fourth one is the most interesting and also related to our studies, and it says a householder is advised to make fivefold offerings to (1) relatives, (2) guests (in reception), (3) the deceased (by dedicating merits), (4) the government (i.e., taxes, etc.) and (5) the deities (according to one's faith). The other four ways to spend one's wealth are: to support himself, his family and dependents comfortably; to share it with his friends and associates; to invest against future misfortune; to support spiritual teachers and virtuous monks.

It is because of this open attitude of mind that Buddhism has absorbed the local culture and its practice, even being influenced by local culture to such an extent that it evolved into Chinese Buddhism with a distinctive Chinese cultural flavour. So in practice, Buddhism accepted the fat Chinese Buddhist monk with a big belly as Maitreya and enshrined his statue in the first shrine room at all monasteries. Buddhism also accepted the Chinese god Guangong (公) into its monasteries as a guardian god placed behind Maitreya. Chinese Buddhists even allow the Chinese to burn paper money as an offering to their ancestors, which is a Chinese tradition and not Buddhist at all.

III. Differences

Based on their different philosophies, there are four differences between the Chinese and Buddhist attitudes to life: (1) a man's position in society, (2) attitude toward life, (3) attitude toward the physical body, and (4) the analysis

²⁰ The *Pattakamma Sutta* (A. 1:67-68. PTS translation: 2:73-77). *Adiya Sutta* (A. 3:45). PTS translation: (3:37-38). The *Bhoga Sutta* (A. 3:259). PTS translation: (3:190-91).

of the nature of man.

A. Man's Position in Society

Confucianism and Buddhism are different in their consideration of human values in society. According to Confucianism, society consists of human beings, and the existence of human beings depends on society so that they can evolve morally. Therefore, the interests of society are greater than individual interests, so the latter must submit to the former. Human beings hold different positions in society; some are higher while others are lower. However, each strata of society has its own duties and obligations to perform. It is only in such a way that society maintains its order, and human beings realize their ambitions through their service to the society they live in. Confucius advocated the hierarchy of kings and ministers and the relationship between fathers and sons. Mencius developed this idea into five different relationships. Mencius said:

This gave the sage King further cause for concern, and so he appointed Hsieh as the Minister of Education whose duty was to teach the people human relationships: love between father and son, duty between ruler and subject, distinction between husband and wife, precedence of the old over the young, and faith between friends. (*Mengzi*, 5:4)

The Confucian classic *Xiaojing* further divided people in society into five categories: the Son of Heaven (天子), the Princes of States (諸侯), High Ministers and Great Officers (卿大夫), Inferior Officers (士) and the Common People (庶人). According to Confucianism, people in different positions in society have strict rules and regulations to follow and also duties to perform so that the society can be peaceful and orderly. This tradition of practice is called *Li* (禮, propriety or rites) and should be learned and followed by everyone throughout imperial China. It was this ritual of Confucianism that has been criticized vehemently in modern Chinese history.

Sometimes Confucianism attributed one's fate in society to *Tian* (天),

which is a very vague concept. Tian is considered by Confucians to be the source of absolute authority—one capable of punishing, of sending blessings, or of determining the course of one's life, as well as the fate of the state and its ruler. However, on the other hand, Confucianism also emphasizes the individual's value. The *Lunyu* says, "Confucius said, 'The three armies can have their generals taken from them by force, but even a commoner cannot be deprived of his will in this fashion'" (*Lunyu*, 9:26). This affirms the will and individuality of the common people. Mencius clearly said, "All men share the same desire to be exalted. But as a matter of fact, every man has in him that which is exalted. The fact simply never dawned on him. What man exalts is not truly exalted" (*Mengzi*, 11:17).

According to the Buddhist teaching, all human beings are equal without the slightest difference, and there is no social hierarchy at all. People may achieve a higher position in society all due to their personal effort and circumstances, but not due to fate or pre-determinism. Buddhism rose up in India against the caste system of Brahmanism which taught there were four categories of hierarchy among human beings. From highest to lowest they were: Brahmins, royalty, ordinary people and slaves. According to Brahmanism, the caste system was created by God and was therefore divine; therefore each man's caste was determined by birth. Buddhism rejected the idea of God and his creation, and the Buddha said in the *Suttanipāta*, "Not by birth does one become a Brahmin; not by birth does one become a non-Brahmin. By action one becomes a Brahmin and by action one becomes a non-Brahmin" (Sn. 650).²¹ Thus, Buddhism completely attributed an individual's position in society to their own effort and morality rather than birth, as Brahmanism did. Buddhism advocated the equality of human beings both in practice and in theory in the following three ways.

First, in practice, Buddhism welcomes all people from all walks of life, and they are treated equally once they convert to Buddhism. The Buddhist scriptures say:

Just as, when the great rivers...reach the great ocean, they give up

²¹ The translation is adapted from Norman (1996, 107).

their former names and designations and are simply called the great ocean, so too, when members of the four social classes—khattiyas, Brahmins, vessas, and suddas—go forth from the household life into homelessness in the Dhamma and discipline proclaimed by the Tathāgata, they give up their former names and clans and are simply called ascetics following the Sakyan son.²²

So within the Buddhist community, all people are treated equally, and only seniority is considered.

Second, all people are equal under the law of karma (deeds), and they will be reborn according to their own karma, not according to their social status as kings, Brahmins, commoners or slaves. The theory of karma in Buddhism operates according to the concept of “dependent origination.” The Buddha was only its discoverer, not its inventor. So he cannot control the workings of karma; he can only explain how it works. So the Buddha said, “You should do your own work, for the Tathāgatas only teach the way” (*Dhammapāda*, verse 276). “By oneself is evil done; by oneself is one defiled. By oneself is evil left undone; by oneself is one made pure. Purity and impurity depend on oneself; no one can purify another” (*Dhammapāda*, verse 165). All people are totally equal in the face of the consequences of their own actions.

Third, all people have equal opportunity to achieve the highest goal of Buddhism, *nirvāṇa*, without the slightest difference as to caste, race, religion, gender, social status, etc. According to Mahāyāna teachings, all sentient beings can attain Buddhahood, as mentioned above. The *Verses of Elders* (*Theraghātā* and *Therīghātā*) records many stories about people from different backgrounds who attained the highest goal of *nirvāṇa*, such as Upali, the barber from the Sākya family.

Daoism offers a different view of man in the world and in society. Daoists think that individual existence and the nature of man should be preserved. Both Laozi and Zhuangzi opposed royalty, human desire and civilization, in order to preserve individuality. Both Daoism and Buddhism

22 (A. 4:202). Translation is adapted from Bodhi (2012, 1144). This is also found in the Chinese translation of the *Ekottarāgama* (T. 2, no. 125, 658c4-10).

emphasize individuality, but the former emphasizes more the naturalness of man while the latter emphasizes more individual moral responsibility.

B. Attitude toward Life

Confucianism and Buddhism have different ideas of life and its values. Confucianism considers human life as happy and enjoyable and encourages people to participate actively in social life. According to the *Lunyu*, Confucius said that the virtuous or sages are free from anxiety (*Lunyu*, 9:29). The virtuous are described as, "...the type of person who is so passionate that he forgets to eat, whose joy renders him free of worries, and who grows old without noticing the passage of the years" (*Lunyu*, 7:19). Thus it shows Confucius' optimistic attitude toward life and his eagerness to learn the truth. Confucius also praised his disciples who enjoyed a simple and happy life. He praised Yan Hui by saying:

What a worthy man was Yan Hui! Living in a narrow alley, subsisting on a basket of grain and a gourd full of water—other people could not have born such hardship, yet it never spoiled Hui's joy. What a worthy man was Hui! (*Lunyu*, 6:11)

A simple life and the pursuit of truth are highly praised in Confucianism. Mencius praised enjoying happiness together with others. He said that a gentleman enjoyed three kinds of happiness:

There are three things a gentleman delights in, and being ruler over the Empire is not amongst them. His parents are alive and his brothers are well. This is the first delight. Above, he is not ashamed to face Heaven; below, he is not ashamed to face man. This is the second delight. He has the good fortune of having the most talented pupils in the Empire. This is the third delight. There are three things a gentleman delights in and being ruler over the Empire is not amongst them. (*Mengzi*, 13:20)

Three things enjoyed by a man in life are (1) the health and well-being of his family, (2) having no regrets, and (3) teaching the talented. Mencius believed that personal happiness is closely associated with social responsibility.

Confucian scholar Zhou Dunyi (周敦 , 1017-73) of the Song dynasty, based on the ideas of Confucius and Yan Hui 回 in the *Lunyu*, believed that the happiness promoted by Confucius and Yan Hui was the highest form of happiness a man could pursue.

On the other hand, because Buddhism starts with the analysis of suffering in human life, many people misunderstand Buddhism as being pessimistic. In fact, the Buddhist attitude toward life is realistic and objective because it recognizes both happiness and suffering in life.

First, Buddhism recognizes different forms of happiness, both material and spiritual, for those who have a family, as well as for those who are single and/or religious people. In the *Aṅguttaranikāya*, one of the five original collections written in *Pāli* containing the Buddha's discourses, there is a list of different kinds of happiness (*sukhāni*), such as: the happiness of family life, the happiness of being a recluse, the happiness of sensory pleasures, the happiness of renunciation, the happiness of attachments, the happiness of detachment, physical happiness, mental happiness, etc.

Second, Buddhism focuses on suffering, our lifelong problems, because its goal is to solve life's problems. Buddhism teaches us not to run away from problems but to face them and find solutions to them. That is because one can never solve life's problems by running away from them; on the contrary, they become worse. It is only when we face our problems and analyze their causes that we find solutions to them. That is why Buddhism not only starts with focusing on life's problems but also analyzes the causes of these problems and recommends ways to solve them. When our life's problems are solved, there is happiness in life. This attitude toward life, which is full of suffering, was attractive to many people. It was a better approach than always trying to see the rosy side of life. Rahula said in his book *What the Buddha Taught*:

It [Buddhism] does not falsely lull you into living in a fool's paradise, nor does it frighten and agonize you with all kinds of imaginary fears and sins. It tells you exactly and objectively what

you are and what the world around you is, and shows you the way to perfect freedom, peace, tranquillity and happiness. (Rahula 1978, 17)

Third, just as a physician always thinks of his patients' illnesses, his aim is to cure them. The Buddha always compared himself to a physician and his aim was to eliminate life's suffering. The Buddhist attitude toward life can be summed up in two basic tenets: (1) all things in life and in the world are interconnected, interrelated and interdependent, (2) therefore, everything is impermanent and changing, and nothing is independent and everlasting. Thus, problems arise in our lives when things change.

Buddhism says that birth is suffering, old age is suffering, illness is suffering, and death is suffering, etc., but Buddhism concentrates more on the analysis of erroneous perceptions and ways of thinking. The Buddha said the following about "self":

It would be better, bhikkhus, for the unlearned worldling to regard this body, built up of the four elements, as his self rather than the mind. For it is evident that this body may last for a year, for two years, for three, four, five or ten years...or even for a hundred years and more. But that which is called thought or mind or consciousness, continuously, during day and night, arises as one thing, and passes away as another thing.²³

To compare, Confucianism emphasizes moral cultivation and achievement as the value of human life, while Buddhism emphasizes the analysis of the phenomena of life and understanding it.

Contrary to the Confucian concept of happiness and being active in life, the Daoist attitude toward life is conservative and they emphasize withdrawal from society with the aim of becoming a truly free and sagely man. Daoists emphasize the natural harmonious flow life, or non-action (無為, *wu-wei*). Here non-action does not literally mean "inactivity" but rather "taking no action that is contrary to Nature"—in other words, letting Nature take its own course. This offers a refuge and escape for those who have faced great difficulties in life

²³ (S. 2:47; 12:31): Bhikkhu Bodhi (2000, 566).

and failed to achieve their goals in society as prescribed by Confucianism. So it supplemented the Confucian attitude toward life before Buddhism was introduced.

C. Attitude toward the Human Physical Body

Both Confucianism and Buddhism consider that human life and the physical body are products of nature, but they have different attitudes toward them. According to Confucianism, human life is a natural phenomenon and it is concrete so it is quite important in the world. Therefore, Confucianism upholds that life should be protected. “He who understands destiny does not stand under a wall on the verge of collapse” (*Mengzi*, 13:2). So Confucianism does not advocate the meaningless sacrifice of life.

As quoted above, Confucius valued human life over any other thing. Mencius also said:

Though nothing happens that is not due to Destiny, one accepts willingly only what is one’s proper Destiny. That is why he who understands Destiny does not stand under a wall on the verge of collapse. He who dies after having done his best in following the Way dies according to his proper Destiny. It is never anyone’s proper Destiny to die in fetters. (*Mengzi*, 13.2)

It seems that Mencius here discusses human destiny or fate, but there is nothing secret and mysterious about it because he advises people to follow their normal course of life, not to go to dangerous places and perform extreme actions because human life is precious.

Confucian scholars also considered that the physical body is given by one’s parents, so one should protect it. The *Xiaojing* said, “Your physical person, with its hair and skin, are received from your parents. Vigilance is in not allowing anything to do injury to your person; that is where family reverence begins” (*Xiaojing*, 1:1).

This also explains why the Chinese, particularly the ancient Chinese, preferred to bury their dead in a sturdy coffin rather than cremate them. The

preservation of the dead body was considered a way of respecting one's parents because the body was a gift from one's parents. However, when human life is compared with morality, Confucianism considers morality more important. Thus, Confucius said, "No scholar-official of noble intention or Good person would ever pursue life at the expense of Goodness, and in fact some may be called upon to give up their lives in order to fulfill Goodness" (*Lunyu*, 15:9). Mencius also said:

Life is what I want; dutifulness is also what I want. If I cannot have both, I would choose dutifulness rather than life: On the one hand, though life is what I want, there is something I want more than life. That is why I do not cling to life at all costs. On the other hand, though death is what I loathe, there is something I loathe more than death. That is why there are troubles I do not avoid. (*Mengzi*, 11:10)

Later, during the Song and Ming dynasties, Confucian scholars even considered that it was a small matter even if one starved to death, but it was a serious matter if one lost his moral behaviour.

Buddhism, on the other hand, considers that human life consists of five aspects or aggregates. These are (1) material form, (2) feeling or sensation, (3) apperception, (4) mental formation, and (5) consciousness. When these five aspects work together, human life exists. First, these five aggregates are inseparably linked and work together as a whole. They are interrelated, interdependent and interconnected to one another through the laws of causation. There can be no consciousness without a body; although there could be a body without consciousness, it would not be sentient.

Second, the five aggregates are all impermanent, all constantly changing. (1) Each of the five is impermanent, and (2) the combination of the five together is also impermanent. They are not the same in any two consecutive moments. Here, "A" is not equal to "A." They only exist in a flux of momentary arising and disappearing. Therefore, according to Buddhism there is no such thing as a permanent and everlasting soul. Consciousness also cannot be considered a soul; it is merely a reaction or response to one of the six faculties (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind) as its basis, and one of the

six corresponding external phenomena (visible form, sound, odour, taste, tangible things and mental formations, i.e., an idea or thought) are its object. To perceive any of the five aggregates as a part of “self” leads to a particular kind of wrong view known as “the view that the body exists permanently” (*sakkāyadiṭṭhi*) (M. 1:130; 140-144; A. 2:128).

In contrast with Confucianism, Buddhism considers the physical human body only as an instrument for the development of a higher and nobler purpose, a moral and spiritual life. Buddhism neither considers the body sacred nor as a corrupting influence as other religions do. Therefore, Buddhists do not preserve the physical body when it dies as Confucians do. Buddhists cremate the corpse which is considered as no more than a log without consciousness. However, this does not mean that Buddhists harm themselves or support suicide. On the contrary, Buddhists also try to protect their bodies because without it one can not attain the highest goal of life, *nirvāṇa*. Therefore, Buddhists also take great care of their bodies and maintain it in good condition by leading a healthy life.

The Daoist attitude toward the physical body is similar to Confucianism’s, but Daoists consider that the physical body is more important than fame so they try to preserve the living body in various ways.

The differences in attitude toward the body between Confucianism and Buddhism represent the difference in attitude between Chinese and Indian people. Indians believe in an eternal soul that transmigrates from one life to another by abandoning the old body and taking a new one. So the body is compared to clothes that can be changed at any time. So the body is not so important because you can have a new one when the old one is abandoned. But Chinese people do not have this concept of soul. According to Confucianism, when a person dies, his life just ends (We will discuss this later). In Confucianism there is no discussion of an afterlife. This life and this body are very important to them, so the preservation of the physical body is a preservation of life. Therefore, while one is alive, one should not harm the physical body, and when one dies, his body will be buried, not cremated.

D. The Nature of Man

Confucianism and Buddhism differ in their analysis of the nature of man. According to Confucianism, the nature of man is basically good, while Buddhism says the nature of man is neutral neither good nor bad. Mencius thought that the nature of man was good (性善), and his idea influenced later Confucian scholars and became the mainstream idea of Confucianism.

Mencius' entire argument started from the idea that "No man is devoid of a heart sensitive to the suffering of others" (*Mengzi* 3:6). This is the original mind. Mencius said that there are four virtues to this original mind: benevolence (仁), dutifulness (義), rites (禮), and wisdom (智). Mencius said:

The heart of compassion is possessed by all men alike; likewise the heart of shame, the heart of respect, and the heart of right and wrong. The heart of compassion pertains to benevolence, the heart of shame to dutifulness, the heart of respect to the observance of the rites, and the heart of right and wrong to wisdom. Benevolence, dutifulness, observance of the rites, and wisdom do not give me a lustre from the outside, they are in me originally. Only this has never dawned on me. (*Mengzi*, 11:6)

According to this passage, Mencius thinks that the nature of man is naturally good; humans only need to discover their good nature and act accordingly. The bad happenings in the world are all due to human desire and emotion which block out man's inherent good nature. Thus he said:

Benevolence is the heart of man, and rightness his road. Sad it is indeed when a man gives up the right road instead of following it and allows his heart to stray without enough sense to go after it. When his chickens and dogs stray, he has sense enough to go after them, but not when something strays is his heart. The sole concern of learning is to go after this strayed heart. That is all. (*Mengzi*, 11:11)

Mencius' idea comes from the *Zhongyong*: "What heaven (天命) decrees is called nature." Thus, Mencius' thought about the good nature of man became the mainstream of Confucian thought.

But another Confucian scholar, Xunzi, (312-230 BCE) disagreed with Mencius; he thought man's inherent nature was evil. Xunzi said in his book that "man is mean from birth, so if there is no teacher and no law, man will only seek for benefit"²⁴ (*Xunzi*, 4:10). Again Xunzi said, "The nature of man is evil, and good is only an appearance"²⁵ (*Xunzi*, 23:1). But Xunzi's idea was ultimately not accepted by Confucian scholars and did not become the mainstream thought.

On the other hand, according to Buddhist thought, the nature of man is neutral, so that a man can grow up as a good person as well as a bad person. It all depends on his education and training, his living environment and the society he grows up in. The root cause of all bad happenings in the world is man's ignorance, and from ignorance comes craving and hatred. Buddhism teaches that craving, hatred, and ignorance are the three poisons that poison the mind. Therefore, Buddhism emphasizes the observation of moral rules (precepts) to regulate man's behaviour and mental training in order to eliminate unwholesome thoughts in the mind. Because the human mind is originally pure and is polluted by external influences such as bad habits and circumstances, so they can be eliminated through systematic training.

According to Buddhist teachings, man's behaviour is guided and led by his mind. Therefore, because mind is the forerunner of everything, mental training is more important. All of Buddhist practice is mental training and mental purification. So it is said, "Not to do all bad things, but to do good to purify one's mind. This is the teaching of all Buddhas."²⁶

IV. Buddhist Contribution

As Confucianism confines itself to "this world experience," it is weak in many areas of study such as ontology, epistemology and methodology. Even its philosophy of life is not well established, as pointed out by the Chinese scholar Du Jiwen (杜繼文).

24 The translation is mine.

25 The translation is mine.

26 *Dhammapāda* verse No.183.

It is said in the *Zhuangzi*, “Outside the limits of the world of men, the sage occupies his thoughts, but does not discuss them; inside those limits he occupies his thoughts, but does not pass any judgments” (*Zhuangzi*, 2:10). The historical book of *Zhoushu* also said that Zhougong and Confucius do not discuss matters not of this world because it is difficult to find out the truth (*Zhoushu*, 883). Yan Zhiyui (之推, 532-95) similarly said, “Whatever people believe is all from what the eyes can see and ears can hear, and they doubt anything from outside of the realm of the eyes and ears.”²⁷ This actually is a Confucian idea.

Ancient Chinese Buddhists had already noticed the deficiencies of Confucianism. Zhidun (支遁, 314-66) said, “Outside the limits of the world of men, the [Chinese Confucian] Classics do not cover.”²⁸ Huiyuan (334-416) also said:

“Outside the limits of the world of men, the sages occupies their thoughts but do not discuss them”, it is not because they are not unable to discuss, but because if they discuss, it may deviate from the truth; inside the limits of the world of men, the sages discuss but do not dispute, if dispute it rises doubt. (T. 52, no. 2102, 31a12-16)

It is in those areas “outside the limits of the world of men” that Buddhism has contributed much to Chinese culture.

A. Analysis of Mind

Traditional Chinese philosophy, particularly early Confucianism before the Song dynasty (960-1276), emphasized self-cultivation, morality, and the actual world, less about understanding the human mind. It was only during the Song dynasty that Confucian scholars started to discuss the mind, together with the nature of man, by assimilating Buddhist thought and teachings. But Buddhism has concentrated fully on the analysis of the mind since its

²⁷ Translation is mine (X. 61, no. 1156, 446a2-3).

²⁸ *Guang Hongming Ji* (廣弘明集 卷15: T. 52, no. 2103, 196 b20).

inception because Buddhism traces all human behaviours (verbal, physical and mental) back to their origin, the mind. Thus, the *Dharmapada* (法句經, translated into Chinese by Vighna around 224) says:

Mind is the origin of events. They have mind as the chief, and are mind-impelled. If one harbours an evil thought in the mind and then speaks or acts, suffering pursues one necessarily, as a cart [necessarily] rolls over the track. Mind is the origin of events. They have mind as the chief, and are mind-impelled. If one harbours a good thought in the mind and then speaks or acts, Happiness pursues one necessarily, as a shadow follows its substance. (T. 4, no. 210, 562a13-16)²⁹

This idea is also evidenced in the writings of Liu Mi (劉謐), a Chinese elite of the late Song and early Yuan dynasty. In his essay *San Jiao Ping Xin Lun* (三平心論, A Discussion on the Three Religions), Liu Mi quoted what Emperor Xiaozhong (孝宗) of the Southern Song dynasty said in his essay “Yuandao Bian” (原道辯, A Discussion on the Origin of the Way): “Buddhism is for the cultivation of mind, Daoism is for the training of the physical body, and Confucianism is for the governance of the world” (T. 52, no. 2117, 781b28-29). Here the important matter is the recognition of Buddhism as a religion to train the mind. Zhang Yanyuan (張遠, 618-907), a literati of the Tang dynasty, already said, “[I] practice Confucianism and Daoism for the cultivation of person and body respectively, but practice Buddhism for the cultivation of my mind and nature” (*Quan Tang Wen*, Scroll 790). So the three systems of teachings are for three aspects of human life in society. Confucianism is for the cultivation of the person with the aim of governing the nation. Daoism is for the cultivation of the body with the aim of acquiring health and longevity, and Buddhism is for the cultivation of the mind with the aim of purifying the mind of bad thoughts.

²⁹ The English translation is adopted from The Chinese Version of *Dharmapada* (1995). It corresponding to the Pāli *Dhammapāda*, verses 1-2.

B. Moral Responsibility

The Buddhist contribution to Chinese thought and philosophy of life is its theory of moral responsibility, called karma and retribution, which is an important teaching in Buddhism. The Confucian philosophy of life is confined to this life only, and it teaches people to actively participate in life and contribute to society as previously discussed. But Confucians never really discuss man's destiny in society which is all attributed to heaven or fate. Thus, Confucianism does not have a theory that ties one's destiny to good or bad deeds.

Daoism, on the other hand, teaches a different way of life in which people can escape the worldly life and be free from all worldly responsibilities by being natural. Daoism advocates the theory of *Chengfu* (承負) which means future generations will suffer the consequences of their fathers' bad deeds. *Chengfu* can be translated as "inherited bad consequences." Therefore, the causes of one's misfortune are ascribed to one's father, not to one's own deeds. One will naturally blame their father's or grandfather's bad behaviour for their misfortune. This is unfair to future generations. The *Tai Ping Jing*, scroll 39 explains:

Cheng (承, inherited) means previous, and *fu* (負, bad consequences) means afterwards. *Cheng* means the forefathers acted according to nature (天, *tian*), but they committed some small mistakes without knowing for a long time, and as a result, it accumulated much bad. The future generations are guilty of their (fathers) bad actions and suffer the consequences. So the previous is *cheng* and afterwards is *fu*. *Fu* means that the bad consequences may not affect one only person, but several generations. Thus the later generations may continue to suffer. *Fu* means that the previous generations owe the future generations. (*Taipingjing Hejiao*, 70)

Thus, according to the Daoist text *Yijing*, "The families that accrue goodness will have good fortune; the families that accrue bad things will have misfortune."³⁰ Therefore, according to Daoism, when a person does bad things

30 Quoted from Tang (1999, 164). The translation is mine.

it will affect seven future generations. This considers the family as a unit or group when speaking of ethics.

Buddhism is particularly strong in this area of thought to explain man's fate in the world and the causes that contribute to it. Buddhism emphasizes individual responsibility rather than family responsibility. According to the Buddhist teachings, a man's good fortune or misfortune depends on his own behaviour (words, deeds and thoughts). This is called karma, and it operates in the past, present and future. Here, our "intentional" thoughts, words, and deeds are responsible for our future life, either good or bad, but not "unintentional" actions. According to the law of karma, we are what we create. As the Buddha said in the *Cūḷakammavibhanga Sutta*, Sutta no. 135 of the *Majjhima Nikāya*:

Beings are the owners of their deeds. Their deeds are the womb from which they spring. With their deeds they are bound up. Their deeds are their refuge. Whatever deeds they do, good or evil, of such they will be heirs.³¹

Here it is clear that, according to the Buddhist teachings, one takes responsibility for one's own actions but not the father's, in accordance with traditional Chinese thought. Following are four tenets of the Buddhist doctrine of karma. (a) One is responsible for one's own deeds, either good or bad. Good people will enjoy good life both in this and the next worlds, while bad people will suffer in this life and the next. This reveals to us how our ethical choices and actions can become either a cause of pain and bondage or a means to a happy life. (b) One will experience the consequences of one's own deeds, either good or bad, in this life or the next; or possibly even in future lives, depending on the nature and circumstances of his deeds. Nobody will escape the consequences of their own deeds, however long it may take. (c) All people are equal under the law of karma, and karma recognizes no distinctions between kings and subjects, the noble and the ignoble, the rich and the poor, etc. (d) The Buddhist theory of karma is a law itself that works on the theory of Dependent Origination. Nobody can disrupt it, so no gods or

31 Translation is adapted from Bodhi (M. 3:206).

supernatural powers can intervene. In fact, God plays no role at all in human life. Therefore, if a person has done something bad, and if he has not suffered the consequences in this life, then he will suffer the consequences in the next life or in later lives.

However, it is a mistake to think that we are created by our past karma only. According to the *Mahākammavibhanga Sutta* of the *Majjhimanikāya* (no. 136), our karma is perpetually in the making. By our every action we are altering it. Hence, the future is not all determined by the distant past. The present is also changing it. Every moment we are creating our future. Therefore, every moment we must be careful. Thus, the theory of karma emphasizes what we are doing here and now, not the past or future.

Buddhism does not stop there. It also traces the root of all moral choices to the mind. In other words, morally good or bad actions all originate in the mind, as we previously quoted from the *Dharmapada*. So the teaching of karma guides people to do good and avoid bad for a better future life. Thus, it supplements the teachings of both Confucianism and Daoism.

According to Yuan Hong's (袁宏) *Houhanji* (後漢紀), the history of the Latter Han dynasty, when the teaching of karma was introduced, "Kings, ministers and nobles all were at a loss when they learned the teaching of retribution (karma), life and death."³² This shows that the teaching of karma was a totally new idea to the ancient Chinese people who considered only what they could see and hear. This Buddhist idea has since been accepted by the Chinese people and has become part of their life philosophy. It has influenced the lives of many Chinese people for centuries and still plays an important role in maintaining morality in China.

According to Zürcher, an eminent Buddhist scholar, the Daoist Lingbao (靈寶派) tradition accepted the Buddhist idea of rebirth at the end of the fourth century, and Buddhist concepts and terminology became such major and permanent elements in Daoist texts that some scholars treat this tradition as simply a straightforward adoption of Buddhism (Zürcher 1980, 84-147).

Thus, the idea of karmic retribution became part of the common

32 Daoxuan (道宣) also quoted this saying in his *Guang Hongming Ji* 廣弘明集 (T. 52, no. 2103, 99c7-8).

religious inheritance of later China. One can see the influence of this thought in Chinese novels and stories and even in daily conversation. Simply put, good begets good, and bad begets bad. But this belief is a mixture of Buddhist karma and Daoist *chengfu*. Many Chinese scholars recognize the importance of this teaching and its contribution to the stability of society for long term development.

C. Saṃsāra, the Cycle of Rebirth (六道輪回)

A Buddhist teaching closely related to karma is *saṃsāra*, the cycle of rebirth into the six realms of life: gods, asuras, humans, animals, hungry ghosts and hell beings. According to Buddhist philosophy, man has been trapped in the cycle of *saṃsāra* since time immemorial in one form or another, and he will remain there until he attains liberation. The realm that one will be reborn into after death depends on one's karma or one's behaviour in the present, as well as one's deeds in past lives, although Buddhism does not believe in a soul. This was a totally new idea to the Chinese. Buddhism filled a gap in Chinese philosophy with its teaching of rebirth because Confucius refused to discuss any afterlife, and Daoist teachings concerning the afterlife is vague, particularly regarding one's bad deeds. According to the Chinese scholar Tang Yijie (湯一介), there was no concept of retribution in the afterlife in ancient Chinese thought (Tang 1991, 164). This is supported by the *Mouzi Lihoulun* (牟子理惑論), written in the second or third century CE, according to which, Chinese people did not believe in reincarnation at that time. "A critic asked: the Buddha's teaching says that after death people must be reborn. I just cannot believe this opinion!" (Keenan 1994, 94). That is because there is no concept of soul in Chinese thought equivalent to Indian or Western concepts, and that is because there is no such idea of God creating the universe in Chinese philosophy. After a brief examination of the problems and issues related to the concept of soul in Chinese philosophy, Wei-Ming Tu says, "Soul, in the Chinese sense, can perhaps be understood as a refined vital force that mediates between the

human world and the spiritual realm” (Tu 2005, 8556). Therefore, even in regard to immortality, Confucians still confined their philosophy to this life alone. Wei-Ming Tu said:

For the Confucians, one achieves immortality by establishing one's moral excellence, by performing unusually meritorious political deeds or by writing books of enduring value. These three forms of immortality are deeply rooted in the historical consciousness of the Chinese, but they also point to a transcending dimension that makes morality, politics, and literature spiritual (or soulful) in the Confucian tradition. The individual soul achieves immortality through active participation in the collective communal soul of the moral, political, and literary heritage. Soul is not only inherent in natural objects; it is also present in cultural accomplishments. (Ibid.)

On the other hand, even what the Daoists advocate is not the immortality of the soul but longevity of the physical body, as Tu says:

In the Daoist tradition, immortality is attained through inner spiritual transformation. In a strict sense, what the Daoists advocate is not the immortality of the soul but longevity of the physical body. Yet the reason why the body can age gracefully (or elevate itself to a state of agelessness) is that it has become translucent like the soul, without desires or thoughts. (Ibid.)

This was the situation before the introduction of Buddhism. This concept of soul still cannot explain the inequality in the world. With the introduction of Buddhism, the idea of rebirth in past, present and future lives into six possible forms of life was also introduced into China, and it influenced Chinese thought tremendously.

Some Confucian scholars criticized Buddhism for teaching that humans could be reborn as animals or insects because Confucians highly valued human life and differentiated it from animals. He Chengtian (何承天, 370-447), in his essay *Daxing Lun* (達性論), criticized the Buddhist teaching of saṃsāra, saying:

Heaven and earth instruct people to be frugal and simple while Qian and Kun guide people by change and brevity. It is so earnest

to instruct people, how could [human beings] be called as sentient beings together with those can fly or swim and those creep? (T. 52, no. 2102, 22a2-4)

According to the Buddhist teaching of *saṃsāra*, a human can be reborn into any of the six realms (gods, asuras, humans, animals, hungry ghosts or hell beings) dependent upon one's deeds (karma) in this and previous lives. The first three realms of gods, asuras and humans are considered good, and those born there must have had good karma. A person with really good karma will be born into one of the Buddhist heavens, and those with slightly less will be born as asuras or humans. Originally there were only five realms in early Buddhism, but the realm of the asuras was added later. According to Buddhist teachings, asuras are gods who like to fight, but they still enjoy long life in heaven. The latter three realms of animals, hungry ghosts and hell beings are considered unfortunate and full of suffering, so those born there must have had bad karma. Among these three realms, animals are better than hungry ghosts, and hungry ghosts are better than hell beings. In other words, those who are born in hell have accrued much bad karma from previous lives. These ideas were gradually absorbed into Chinese culture beginning in the fourth century, and we see it in many story books produced at that time.

D. The Concept of Universe

Together with the teachings of karma and *saṃsāra*, Buddhism also contributed to the development of the religious universe. Other teachings linked to karma and rebirth are the concepts of heavens and hells which were not clear in the Chinese tradition before the introduction of Buddhism. Chinese people have some vague concepts for heaven (*Tian*) and hell (Yellow Springs). This simple Chinese belief of an afterlife was replaced by graphic, detailed visions of layer upon layer of Buddhist paradises and hells. In Buddhism there are three realms of: desire (*kāmaloka*), form (*rūpaloka*) and formless (*arūpaloka*). There are also 33 different heavens for different types of gods and 18 different hells for different types of demons.³³ These ideas enriched

³³ For instance, the *Da lou tan jing* 大樓炭經 (T. 1, no. 24) translated by Fali and Fajū in 290-307 in

Chinese popular belief and religion. Thus, according to Mark Lewis, Buddhism greatly enriched the Chinese vision of the afterlife (Lewis 2009, 215).

Before Buddhism was introduced in the Han dynasty, there is little evidence that Chinese people believed in reward and punishment in the afterlife. “The most common operative principle seems to have been that, given a proper burial, people received treatment in the afterlife commensurate with their positions in life; ritual rather than conduct determined one’s fate” (Ibid.). The Buddhist teaching of karma brought morality to the spirit world of Chinese belief and pervaded Chinese visions of the afterlife in the Northern and Southern Dynasties and beyond.

E. Analysis of Life and Death

Confucianism advocates active participation in the world and in society, while Daoism advocates withdrawal from society through its teaching of *wuwei*, following the course of nature without any action. So in a way, both systems of thought emphasize gain and loss in this life and in the world. But they do not transcend worldly matters.

Confucians consider that life and death are natural phenomena; human life is happy, and death is eternal peace and the end of life. One who practices morality and serves the people will have happiness in life. Death is the natural end of life. As the *Liji* says, “That the bones and flesh should return again to the earth is what is appointed. But the soul in its energy can go everywhere; it can go everywhere”³⁴ (*Liji*, 196). Again “The intelligent spirit returns to heaven, the body and the animal soul returns to the earth” (*Liji*, 36). The *Xunzi* says that “death is a major event, at which a gentleman will be at peace, and petty people will be at rest.”³⁵ According to Confucianism, man should work hard during his lifetime and only rest after death. This attitude toward life and death influenced later Confucians and the

Luoyang mentions many different heavens and hells.

34 All the English translations of the *Liji* quoted in this paper have been adapted from *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. 28, part 4. Translated by Legge (1885). See Reference.

35 The translation is mine.

Chinese in general that they should work hard in life.

Confucians do not emphasize death and never discuss it. When Ji Lu asked about serving the spirits of the dead, Confucius is reported to have said, “While you are not able to serve men, how can you serve their spirits?” Ji Lu continued, “I venture to ask about death?” He was answered, “While you do not know life, how can you know about death?” (*Lunyu*, 11:12). So Confucians rarely talk about life after death. This shows that Confucianism had no interest at all about death and spirits. This led to Fan Zhen (範縝), a Confucian scholar in the sixth century, writing a treatise titled *Immortality of Soul* that criticized the Buddhist concept of rebirth.

Daoism, on the other hand, also values life; it cherishes life for the purpose of achieving longevity of the physical body and does not talk about death. In fact, Daoists avoid talk about death and dislike death. It is said in the *Zhuangzi*:

There is the great Mass (of nature)—I find the support of my body on it; my life is spent in toil on it; my old age seeks ease on it; at death I find rest in it—what makes my life good makes my death also good. (*Zhuangzi*, 6:2)

So the Daoist attitude toward life and death is that they are natural occurrences; therefore, we should not be bothered and let nature takes its course. Because of this attitude, for Chinese people, death has become a forbidden topic for the average person to talk about. There is no need to think of it because it is a mystery accompanied with fear and trepidation.

However, the Buddhist attitude toward death, just as all other problems in life, is to face it rather than try to escape it because death is an inevitable fact of life. The sooner we know our condition, the safer are we because we can then take the steps necessary for our betterment. Gunaratna says:

It is by understanding death that we understand life; for death is part of the process of life in the larger sense. In another sense, life and death are two ends of the same process and if you understand one end of the process, you also understand the other end. (Gunaratna 1982, 1-2)

According to the Buddhist teaching of rebirth, life does not end at death, but continuous on to the next life in one of the six realms, dependent on one's deeds in this life. So according to the Buddhist teaching, one who leads a moral life by doing only good in thought, word and deed in this life will enjoy both this life and the next life. Thus it is said in the *Dhammapāda*, "The doer of good rejoices in this world. He rejoices in the next world. He rejoices in both worlds" (*Dhammapāda*, verse 16).

According to Buddhist philosophy, rebirth is dependant on three factors: (1) the complete union of father with mother, (2) the mother is in season and (3) the re-linking of consciousness. The re-linking of consciousness arises "dependent upon volitional activities." The conscious life of man in his present life is conditioned by his volitional activities, his good and bad actions, his karma from a past life.

The entire life-stream, in the Buddhist view, is a continual process with no end; death is only a transformation from one life to the next as the karmic forces one's life generates give it shape and form in the appropriate sphere of existence with a new physical body and name. A good man leading a moral life is always a happy man. He has no fear of death because he has no fear of the afterlife. So, personal moral responsibility is fully established through Buddhism's theory of karma and rebirth.

F. Equality of and Compassion toward All Sentient Beings

As discussed previously, ancient Chinese society recognized a social class system. In other words, there was no equality in ancient China, and the Confucian teaching of *Li* or propriety supported that premise. According to the *Zuo Zhuan*, "As there are ten suns in the heaven so there are ten classes of people" (*Chunqiu Zuozhuan Zhu*, 1284). So in ancient China, there were already classes of people, but it was not so strict. Later, Confucius explained it according to *Li* or propriety when he said that in a society there must be kings and ministers, fathers and sons. Dong Zhongshu (179-104 BCE) further explained it in terms of "the three bonds and five eternal."

According to the Buddhist teaching, people are equal in three aspects: (a) They are equal in birth as all people are born into this world from parents; not created by Brahma or God from different parts of his body as in Hinduism. (b) All people are equal in the capacity of leading a good moral life because, as we said above, all people are equal under the law of karma. In other words, people have equal opportunity to improve their lives by themselves. (c) All people have equal opportunity to achieve the Buddhist goal of *nirvāṇa*, becoming a morally perfect man and achieving ultimate happiness.

The other Buddhist contribution to Chinese culture is compassion which is equally directed to all sentient beings without any distinction. The Buddhist *Mettā Sutta* says:

And he should not do any mean thing, on account of which other wise men would criticize him. Let all creatures indeed be happy (and) secure; let them be happy-minded. Just as a mother would protect with her life her own son, her only son, so one should cultivate an unbound mind toward all beings. (Sn. 145, 149)³⁶

Here compassion is described as unconditioned love toward all sentient beings. Thus, modern scholars such as Conze described compassion as the universal morality.

Compassion is a virtue which uproots the wish to harm others. It makes people so sensitive to the sufferings of others and causes them to make these sufferings so much their own that they do not want to further increase them. (Conze 1967, 86)

The best example of compassion is Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara (Guanyin 觀音 or 觀世音 in Chinese Buddhism). The above definitions vary, yet central to all is the claim that compassion concerns our attitude to the suffering of others. The thought of equality in Buddhism was welcomed by ordinary Chinese people, particularly those at the bottom of society such as women who suffered under class divisions.

³⁶ Translation is adapted from Norman (1996, 24).

V. Conclusion

The three teachings of Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism complement each other in their philosophies of life because they emphasize different aspects of life. Buddhism, even though originally a foreign religion, has contributed much to the Chinese way of life, particularly in its moral teachings about conscious human actions (karma) and their consequences or retribution (rebirth) and with its concepts of heavens, hells, gods, ghosts and demons. Chinese people normally practice a mix of these three religions their thought systems are inclusive not, exclusive. Therefore, the combination of the three teachings encourages people to participate actively in society, and at the same time they also transcend the worldly concepts of gain and loss. Thus, one accepts their social responsibilities while still keeping one's mind clear and peaceful, yet maintaining an independent personality. This is meaningful both to personal well-being and to social peace and order.

Abbreviations

A	<i>Aṅguttaranikāya</i>
D	<i>Dīghanikāya</i>
M	<i>Majjhimanikāya</i>
S	<i>Saṃyuttanikāya</i>
Sn	<i>Sutta-Nipāta</i>

References

Primary Sources

- Aṅguttaranikāya*. Ed. Morris R. Vol. 1-2 (1995). Ed. Hardy E, Vol. 3-4 (1976, 1979). Oxford: Pali Text Society (Reprint.).
- CBETA* (Chinese Buddhist Electronic Tripitaka Association DVD), Taiwan: 中華電子佛典協會, 2011.
- Chunqiu Zuozhuan Zhu* 春秋左傳注 [The Books of Chunqiu and Zuozhuan With Annotation]. Ed Yang, Bojun. Zhonghua Shuju, 1981.
- Dīghanikāya* Vol. 1-3. Ed. T.W. Rhys Davids, and J. E. Carpenter. Oxford: Pali Text Society. 1995 (Reprint.).
- Ekottarāgama*. T. 2, no. 125. Chinese Trans. Gautama Saṅghadeva, 397.
- Guang Hong Mingji* 廣弘明集 [Expanded Collection on Propagating and Illuminating Buddhism]. T. 52, no. 2103. *CBETA* (2011)
- Lunyu Zhushu* 論語注疏. Ed. Li Xueqin. Beijing: Beijing Univ., 1999.
- Madhyamāgama*. T. 1, no. 26. Chinese Trans. Gautama Saṅghadeva, 398.
- Majjhimanikāya*. Ed. V. Trenckner, Vol. 1 (1993). Ed. R. Chalmers, Vol. 2-3 (1994). Oxford: Pali Text Society (Reprint.).
- Saṃyuktāgama*. T. 2, no. 99. Chinese Trans. Guṇabhadra, 435-43.
- Saṃyuktāgama*. T. 2, no. 100. shorter version and the translator's name lost, registered under Qin dynasties (352-431).
- Saṃyuttanikāya*. Ed. L. Feer. Vol. 1 (1999), 2 (1994), 3 (1975), 4 (1990), 5 (1976). Oxford: Pali Text Society (Reprint.).
- Taipingjing Hejiao* 太平經合校. Ed. Wang Ming. Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1960.
- Xunzi Jijie* 荀子集解. Ed. Wang Xianqian. Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1988.
- Zhoushu* 周書. Ed. Linghu Defen. Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1971.
- “Zhang Yanyuan 張遠: Sanzu Dashi Beiyin Ji 三祖大師碑記.” in *Quan Tang Wen* 全唐文, 卷790.

Secondary Sources

- Bodhi Bhikkhu,
trans. 2000
trans. 2012.
- The Connected Discourse of the Buddha: A Translation of the Saṃyuttanikāya.* Boston: Wisdom.
- The Numerical Discourse of the Buddha, A Translation of the Aṅguttara Nikāya.* Boston: Wisdom.
- Cheng,
Ch'eng-K'un
1946.
- “Characteristic Traits of the Chinese People,” *Social Forces* 25 (2): 146-55.
- Conze, Edward
1967
- Buddhist Thought in India.* Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan.
- Fung, Yu-lan
1966
- A Short History of Chinese Philosophy.* NY: Free.
- Gunaratne, V. F.
1982
- Buddhist Reflections on Death.* Wheel No. 102 / 103. Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society (Online Editions © 2006).
- Johnston, Ian,
and Wang Ping,
trans.
2012
- Daxue and Zhongyong* (Bilingual Edition). Hong Kong: The Chinese Univ.
- Keenan, John P.,
trans.
1994
- How Master Mou Solves Our Problems: A Reader-Response Study and Translation of the Mou-tzu Li-huo lun.* Buffalo: State Univ. of New York.
- Keown, Damien
2005
- Buddhist Ethics: A Very Short Introduction.* Oxford: Oxford Univ.
- Kupperman,
Joel J.
1999
- Learning from Asian Philosophy.* NY: Oxford Univ.
- Lau, D. C.,
trans.
2003
- Mencius.* Rev. ed. Hong Kong: The Chinese Univ.
- Legge, James,
trans.
1891
trans.
1882
trans.
1885
- The Writings of Kwang-Tze.* Vol. 40 of Sacred Books of the East, Part 2, The Texts of Taoism, ed. Max Muller. Oxford: Clarendon.
- The Yi King.* Vol. 16 of Sacred Books of the East, Part 2, The Texts of Confucianism, ed. Max Muller. Oxford: Clarendon.
- The Li Ki.* Vol. 28 of Sacred Books of the East, Part 3, The Texts of Confucianism, ed. Max Muller. Oxford: Clarendon.

- Lewis, Mark
2009 *China Between Empires: The Northern and Southern Dynasties*. Cambridge and London: Harvard Univ.
- Lodén, Torbjörn
2006 *Rediscovering Confucianism: A Major Philosophy of Life in East Asia*. Kent: Global Oriental.
- Ñāṇamoli
Bhikkhu, and
Bodhi Bhikkhu,
trans.
1995 *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha*. Boston: Wisdom.
- Norman, K. R.,
trans.
1996 *The Rhinoceros Horn and Other Early Buddhist Poems: Sutta-Nipāta*. Oxford: PTS.
- Rahula, Walpora
1978 *What the Buddha Thought*. London and NY: Gordon Fraser. (Orig. pub. 1959.)
- Rosemount, H. Jr.,
and Roger T. A.,
trans.
2009 *The Chinese Classics of Family Reverence: A Philosophical Translation of the Xiaojing*. Honolulu: Univ. of Hawaii.
- Slingerland,
Edward,
trans.
2003 *Confucian Analects with Selections from Traditional Commentaries*. Cambridge: Hackett.
- Tang, Yi-Jie
1991 *Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism, Christianity and Chinese Culture*. Washington D. C.: Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication.
- Taylor, R. L.
with the assistance
of Howard Y. F.
Choy,
eds.
2005 *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Confucianism*, 2 vols. NY: The Rosen.
- Tu, Wei-Ming
2005 *Soul: Chinese Concepts*. Vol. 12 of *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Lindsay Jones. 2nd ed. Detroit: Macmillan.
- Walshe, Maurice,
trans.
1995 *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīghanikāya*. Boston: Wisdom.
- Yao, Xinzhong,
ed.
2003 *Routledge Curzon Encyclopedia of Confucianism*, 2 vols. NY : Routledge Curzon.
- Zürcher, Erik
1980 "Buddhist Influence on Early Taoism: A Survey of Scriptural Evidence." *T'oung Pao* 66:84-147.