

LIN TONGQI: AN ORAL HISTORY

by

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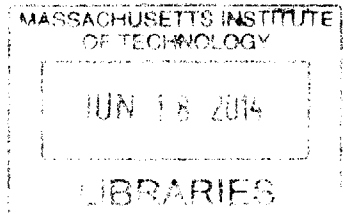
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Submitted to the MIT Sloan School of Management
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ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I explore the life of Professor Lin Tongqi, a well-known scholar of American Chinese studies, by using an oral history methodology. This oral history is named “Suffering and Thinking,” and my goal is to illustrate how a thoughtful soul developed. His life is a trajectory in which Western and Eastern cultures are integrated, a life that is full of confusions and reliefs, challenges and responses, twists and turns, and unexpected insights and transcendences. This oral history also illustrates in a microcosm the fate of intellectuals who lived during the approximately 100-hundred-year tumult and transformation that resulted in modern-day China. Looking back is one way to consider the future. A conversation with Lin Tongqi on Ancient Chinese thoughts follows, which touches on several factors: the dynamics of understanding the Chinese culture, comparative methods of culture study, the relationships between eternal issues and contemporary issues, as well as a brief discussion on the issues facing contemporary China, and the future of Chinese society.

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CHAPTER 1. Motivation and Background

In this thesis, I explore the life of Professor Lin Tongqi, a well-known scholar of American Chinese studies, by using an oral history methodology. The purpose of this study is to examine the fate of intellectuals who lived during the transformation of modern China, both looking back and considering the future.

1.1 Motivation

1.1.1 The Unity of Knowing and Doing

The unity of knowing and doing (知行合一), which was conceived by Wang Yangming (王阳明, 1472–1529), is a traditional Chinese understanding of the relationship between forming knowledge and putting it into practice. Within the concept are bi-directional reinforcing loops. The loops can begin either way: learning from practice can add to knowledge building, and/or knowledge can instruct action. These loops can occur concurrently or they can run on course for a long period of time. I received a pleasant surprise first time I saw MIT's motto: "*Mens et Manus*" (Mind and Hand).

The beginning of the thesis revolved around few questions I have pondered for many years: What is the meaning of strategy? And how can strategy be better managed and executed?

Over the course of more than 20 years of work experience, I have had the opportunity to practice leading or organizing a large number of technical and commercial operations. For instance, for the last 15 years, I have been a venture capitalist in China. During this time, I made many observations and reflections, intentionally and unintentionally. I call this the loop of "the unity of knowing and doing," from which I have obtained knowledge of a product, a business, a company, as well as changes in a country's development. I have experienced direct knowledge originating from R&D, and moving into sales to marketing, from marketing to general management, from supply side to demand side, from an individual enterprise to a portfolio, from finance to economics,

from economics to the whole system of society. Each of these subjects varies in its position and importance in the system. It's complexity and patterns differ. But, one thing is undeniable; in each case, the importance of strategic management is apparent.

Direct challenges from my past work prompted me to seek to overcome the constraints of economics and management science and to conduct a studying in a wide range of East-West knowledge in the social sciences.

In undertaking this study, I benefited from my long-time habit of reading. I was fortunate to come from a family with strong paternal teaching and influence. My grandparents, probably born a few years after the Xinhai Revolution, were part of the first generation of modern Chinese intellectuals. Whenever I visited, I would find them doing work at their desks. Within my own family, everyone read. In a typical scene, my father and mother, my brother and I—in different parts of the house—were glued to the page until late into the night. In my childhood home, there were many books. Since leaving my family home, I continued to read voraciously.

I learned of ancient Chinese literature from a very young age. I fell in love with language before I fell in love with the thoughts behind it. Words are my connection to philosophy, and ancient Chinese literature provided those words first. Ancient Chinese is far more concrete to me than modern words on a page or in the air. It is a language, just as a piece of silk, a substance so beautifully composed that one can hold it in the hand and feel its textures, it touches the heart.

The smaller problems of language, of words, of ideas, are more easily solved, but the larger questions come unexpectedly. As my exploration into the humanities and social sciences goes deeper, and as my life experiences continue to enrich me, the world's common problems and confusion appear as more important concerns in my mind. This is the second loop of “the unity of knowing and doing.” And whether there is a next or are even further loops, I am not quite sure.

Filled with these puzzles and interests in these issues that were so important to me, I came to MIT to participate in the MIT Sloan Fellows Program. This Program attracted me not just because of MIT motto or MIT's world-renowned reputation. Part of the attraction was that MIT Sloan is a school of management. It was founded by Alfred P. Sloan, perhaps one of the greatest corporate management executives not only in the

history of General Motors but also in the history of modern management practices. Another visionary, Peter Drucker, had numerous ideas that played an important role, in my intellectual pursuits. His life is a wonderful example of the “unity of knowing and doing” in the way he explored the world of management science. A reviewer crystallized the importance of these two men: “If Peter Drucker is considered the father of modern management, Alfred Sloan can be considered the man who implemented it. Drucker studied General Motors, specifically its management, and from the study came the best-seller *Concept of the Corporation*.”¹ One further reason for my coming to MIT is the Sloan Fellows Program emphasis on innovation and global leadership, which for me are the core topics of management.

I am very grateful to Professor John Van Maanen, and to the Sloan Fellows Program Office, both of which offered me the space and academic freedom to engage in research and the philosophical study of aspects of Chinese culture, although it might seem less directly related to business management and finance. Perhaps each believes that a Sloan Fellow, such as I, is capable of representing his country (China) while also fulfilling a cultural exchange between China and the United States—these two important countries of the world. I believe it is also part of my duty.

1.2 Passing the Torch (薪火相传): The Fate of Intellectuals During the Transformation of Modern China

The so-called “Scholar culture” has existed for a long time in Chinese history. Zhang Zai (张载, 1020 - 1077) said: “To ordain conscience for Heaven and Earth, to secure life and the destiny of people, to continue lost teachings for past sages, to establish peace for all future generations.”(为天地立心，为生民立命，为往圣继绝学，为万世开太平。)² Such a strong cultural ideal and mission is in the finest tradition of Chinese intellectuals, and it has been sustained for a long time. The inheritance of culture, and the

¹ *My Years with General Motors* by Alfred P. Sloan Jr.

Source :< http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/275912.My_Years_with_General_Motors>.

² See Huang, Zongxi. *Song Yuan Xue An*(宋元学案), Vol 17(横渠学案). (Zhong Hua Shu Ju, 1985)

continuation of traditions is one of the primary and important roles of a state and a nation. As Liang Qichao (梁启超, 1873–1929) said: “Of all things, this is of the greatest importance.”³

The continuation for 1,300 years of the Imperial Examination system came to an end with the rise of modern China, accompanied by the spread of Western academics to the East. Chinese intellectuals turned to the outside world, sought knowledge and other avenues to democracy and prosperity. But no matter where they went, how long they stayed, their concerns over the fate of the nation never changed. Once they completed their studies, the vast majority chose to return immediately to serve the motherland.

My grandfather is one such intellectual. He went to the U.S. in the 1930s to study economics at the University of Michigan, sponsored by the “Boxer Indemnity” fund. Due to these family connections, I had the honor to get to know Professor Lin Tongqi (林同奇, 1923 -) even before I embarked on my current studies at MIT. Today, at the age of 92, Professor Lin is still dedicated to his students including myself.

With his encouragement and, later on, his concern for my academic development,, we both agreed that conducting an oral history mainly focusing on his intellectual biography would be a modest start for my journey of academic exploration of China ancient thoughts.

1.3 Lin Tongqi: A Biography

Lin Tongqi comes from a family of traditional Chinese literati, one of the most prominent, modern, Chinese cultural families.⁴ Born in Beijing in 1923, he first entered the Chemical Engineering Department of Centre University in Chongqing in 1941; two years later he transferred to the History Department of Fudan University in Chongqing Beibei. After graduation, he successively served on the faculty of the English Department of Luoyang Foreign Language College, and Beijing Foreign Language University, for a total of 35 years. In 1984, he came to the United States when he was recruited by the

³ Liang Qichao, “*Zhong Guo Zhi Jiu Shi(中国之旧史)*”, *Liang Qichao Wen Ji*, (Yanshan Press, 1997)

⁴ See Appendix I for more information on the Lin family.

Fairbank Center of Chinese Studies in the Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations and the Harvard-Yenching Institute, Harvard University. As an associate professor, he remained for the next 30 years, engaged in academic research. Professor Lin is internationally recognized as one of the world's foremost authorities in the field of Sinology. His publications are in both English and Chinese and number about 30 papers in academic journals worldwide.

His major works include *Lin Tongqi Anthology: Humanities Seeking -- Contemporary Sino-American Famous Scholars Thought Discrimination* (New Star Press, 2006), and a translation of Paul A. Cohen's work: *Discovering History in China: The Rise of the Chinese Central View in the United States* (Zhonghua Book Company, 2002).

Professor Lin is a living example of civilization. Unlike several of his brothers, he did not go abroad until the age of 60, when he came to the United States to pursue research at Harvard University. There he carried out studies of Chinese ideological problems, and soon became a famous scholar of American-Chinese research.

As a thinker-to-be, an important component of Lin's early life was avid reading, and learning about Western knowledge and thinking under the influence and guidance of his elder brother, Lin Tongji (林同济, 1906–1980). Lin Tongji & Lin Tongqi were 17 years apart in age, but over the years became part of the figures of modern Chinese intellectuals. At that time, Professor Lin studied Western classicist Sea Ray Library (海光图书馆), which has since become a legend in modern Chinese history as the only specialized library of Western thoughts (see Appendix II for more detailed information).

1.4 Topics to be Addressed

In undertaking this oral history research and discovering these personal experiences, I examined not only how individual life encounters may present detours, but I also reflected on the destinies of modern Chinese intellectuals who lived during the upheavals in China.

Based on my interviews with Professor Lin, I developed this study further into a comparative study on China ancient thoughts.

CHAPTER 2. Methodology

2.1 Brief Review of Oral History

What is oral history? According to the Columbia Encyclopedia, “Oral history is the collection and study of historical information about individuals, families, important events, or everyday life using audiotapes, videotapes, or transcriptions of planned interviews.”⁵In fact, there is a long history, both in Chinese and Western historiography, of oral history as a useful method for preserving historical work.

In modern Chinese, the characters for “literature monuments” is written as “文献,” where “文(wen)” is used as a synonym for “献(xian).” However, in ancient Chinese, “wen” and “xian” are different. For example, in *The Analects*, Confucius (孔子, 551–479 BC) said: “殷礼，吾能言之，宋不足征也，文献不足故也。”，which translated means: “I could describe the ceremonies of the Yin (Shang) Dynasty, but without the support of witnesses, and because of insufficient historic records and the words of sages, even Song (can practice some of them, but) but it won’t be sufficient evidence.” Zhu Xi (朱熹, 1130–1200) noted: “Wen, books; Xian, sages” Therefore, visibly, “Wen” refers to written records; “Xian” refers to the sage’s wise words, i.e., oral memories.

Oral history is a tradition in both the West and East. The use of this methodology is evidenced in the work of many historians. Sima Qian (司马迁, 145 or 135–86 BC) toured throughout China visiting elders and gathering the memories of his forefathers, before he settled down to work on the *Historical Records* (史记). He mentioned in his book that “[he has tried to] collect historical stories and anecdotes from all kinds of channels,” verify them with knowledgeable seniors, and represent them in a vivid and accurate manner. For example, stories of prominent figures from Feng County and Pei County at the turn of the Han Dynasty before their rise in social status were collected by means of interviews. In the West, Herodotus (c. 484–425 BC), father of Western history, completed his book *The Histories* (about the Greco-Persian Wars) after he toured Egypt

⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oral_history.

and the Mediterranean region for interviews and witnesses. Thucydides, a Greek historian (c. 460–395 BC), was able to complete his *History of the Peloponnesian War* only after he toured the city-states of ancient Greece, conducting interviews and collecting evidences.

After World War II, the rapid development of technology enabled many people to enjoy unprecedented convenience and comfort. However, in the face of the economic, social and cultural changes brought by the cruelty of war and continuing technological advances, scholars in various fields of science began to doubt the rationality of “advanced” Western civilization, and there followed considerable re-review and reflection. Thereafter, many new disciplines, new data, and new research methods were developed to explore the origins of human civilization, its development, and prospects for the futures.

Oral history is one of the new/old approaches used in this exploration. Thanks to its modern-day restoration and further development (mainly attributed to Columbia University Professor Allen Nevins (1890–1971)) and under the chairmanship of Professor Martin C. Wilber (1907–1997) in the East Asian Study Institute of Columbia University, combined with additional support from the Ford Foundation and others, the oral history program was restored as a functional and dynamic method for preserving history and intellectual achievement including work of oral historians of modern Chinese history, such as Hu Shih⁶ (胡适, 1891–1962), Jiang Tingfu⁷ (蒋廷黻, 1895–1965), Li Tsung-jen⁸ (李宗仁, 1890–1969), and Zhang Guotao⁹ (张国焘, 1897–1979), were recognized as a

⁶ Chinese philosopher, essayist, and diplomat. Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hu_Shih>.

⁷ Historian and diplomat of the Republic of China. Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tsiang_Tingfu>.

⁸ Prominent Guangxi warlord and KMT military commander during the Northern Expedition, Second Sino-Japanese War, and Chinese Civil War. He served as vice-president and acting president of the Republic of China under the 1947 Chinese Constitution. Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Li_Zongren>.

⁹ Founding member and leader of the CPC, bitter rival of Mao Zedong. Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zhang_Guotao>.

huge success in the field of Sinology development in the U.S. Among them, the work of Tang Degang¹⁰ (唐德刚, 1920–2009) was most prominent.

Tang Degang considered oral history to be not that of a person speaking of his own story or of another person in history, but instead it should be conducted jointly with the narrator. He once said: “People think that oral history is relatively easy to do — a person talks, I record. In fact, this is the hardest work, harder than to engage in a research topic. Much more advance preparation is required, and it is very strenuous. Only with sufficient research of the history can we can do it well. This is very serious academic research.”¹¹

Why has oral history received more and more attention? It has advantages. Tang Degang himself thought that, compared with other historical research methods, “oral history is a living history, while other materials are dumb witnesses. Oral history can talk slowly, ask slowly, can be corrected, while other historical methods cannot.”

Interviewees serve as a living, historical presence. Second, Tang started with an analysis of the nature of history: “Although we treat history as a scientific study, fortunately there is a part of the history that just belongs to literature, so we have something to deal with, and we can go out there interested in continuing.”¹²

What is the nature of history? Tang has admitted it has a scientific side, but also that the historical trend of history is toward self-destruction. So the vitality of oral history enables today’s post-modern historians to have thought coincide with place, along with the history and revival of the narrative.

I have adopted the oral history method in this thesis in order to collect comprehensive information and materials about Professor Lin Tongqi’s legendary life.

2.2 The Interview Process

¹⁰ Historian, academic, and author. Graduated from Nanjing University majoring in history; finished his PHD at Columbia University, later taught Chinese history at Columbia. Also professor at City University of New York for 20 years, retired 1991. Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tang_Degang>.

¹¹ Zhong Shaohua, *Oral history is a living historical*, A07, China Books Newspaper, 2004

¹² Tang Degang, *History and Redology*, Guangxi University Press, 2006: 24,25,34

Professor Lin and I met for the first time at 3:00 p.m. on May 6, 2013 at his house. He is an older man of slim but strong build, still hale and hearty. Our first talk lasted six hours and covered many topics. I felt most fortunate to meet with and be personally tutored by such a refined and learned man in his home in a small New England town.¹³ Professor Lin revered Wang Yuanhua¹⁴(王元化, 1920–2008), whom he quoted now and then throughout our talks.

On that day, I also met Professor Lin's family. They were very friendly and insisted that I have dinner with them. I tried to decline their hospitality, afraid of giving them too much trouble on my first visit, but I finally acquiesced. Lin Bogong, the eldest son, cooked some delicious pies in the traditional Beijing style. Lin Bogong specializes in computer sciences, and when he learned that I was a venture capitalist, he shared some of his novel ideas with me. Professor Lin's wife, seeing that we were talking spiritedly, came over to ask us to take a break, reasoning that health is just as important as work. She shared with me the secrets of her longevity. She is two years older than Professor Lin and is in sound health. Professor Lin showed me Yang's Tai Chi, which he practices on the terrace. Behind their house is a large reserve, with rabbits, deer, and other animals that appear from time to time. Once, we even saw a peacock fan its tail. It was a sunny afternoon in late spring. The light on the pond could be seen through the new green twigs. That scene is still fresh in my mind as a pleasant memory.

We worked on the oral history interviews in May and December, 2013, and in January and February, 2014. In all, I visited Professor Lin more than 10 times, spending one to two hours at each visit. I tape recorded each interview and also took notes.

The transcription was originally in Chinese and usually finished in a few days following each interview by myself. Since the study load at MIT is quite demanding, I finished the transcription work after I had completed my assignments, often around midnight, under a lamp with my head buried in papers.

¹³ Professor Lin told me their home address, a town named Reading. When he explained to me that the name of the town should be pronounced "red-ing" instead of "read-ing," we both smiled knowingly.

¹⁴ Famous literary theorist, critic, modern writer, and famous researcher of *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* (文心雕龙). Considered one of the most distinguished scholars and spiritual leaders of Chinese intellectuals for the last 30 years. Source: <<http://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E7%8E%8B%E5%85%83%E5%8C%96>>.

In going over each transcript, I removed many of my own remarks, such as “Oh, my!” which interrupted the flow in reading. Occasionally Professor Lin’s voice would trail off into an “Aaaah” or a murmur. These are omitted from the transcript.

When the lightly edited transcript was sent to Professor Lin for review, he returned it promptly, with numerous changes clearly marked. Most of these changes were for clarification only. After that, the English translations were carefully made with my best efforts to be faithful to the original text.

Regarding key historical events and figures mentioned in Professor Lin’s interview, I checked documents and materials available afterwards, so as to be correct and accurate. I would feed my findings back to Professor Lin on the following interview, which often led to his recollection of more related events and details, sometimes very important ones.

Examples include memories of Ji Pang and articles in memory of Wang Daoyi, among others. Perhaps the most interesting one is his recollection of the “Sea Ray Library” incident presented below (also see Appendix II for further details).

2.2.1 Mr. Lin’s Recollection of the Sea Ray Library Incident

Mr. Lin: The Sea Ray Library Incident happened, as far as I can remember, on a Saturday. At that time, I spent my Saturdays mostly in the library. It happened that on that Saturday I was sick so I stayed at my mother’s house.

Chen: So you were in the library on most Saturdays.

Mr. Lin: Mostly. That day I was sick, perhaps I had a cold, so I stayed at my mother’s instead. There was a security practice among the underground CPC members. If my memory hasn’t failed me, the practice was that if someone brought you some food, it meant a threat was pending and maybe someone was after you. I was also engaged in some underground work for the CPC at the time, so I know this practice. Several cues were used. For example, one dish sent to you meant one thing, two dishes meant another.

That day, my mother suddenly came to and said that someone had brought me a dish. I did not miss the cue, so I decided that I should leave at once, and I took the name Zheng as my surname. An underground CPC member named Wu Qiang gave me a hand. He is still alive. He found a rickshaw, placed a quilt over me, and took me away. I remember he took me to the Big World, near the YMCA of Shanghai, where he found me a place to stay. I stayed there for about 10 days and then Shanghai was liberated.

Chen: Shanghai was liberated in May that year, if I am right.

Mr. Lin: Yes, in May.

Chen: So the incident also happened in May?

Mr. Lin: Ten days to two weeks before the liberation.

Chen: We can work out the accurate date. It was one of the first two Saturdays in May. Do you remember which one, the first or second?

Mr. Lin: Probably the second. So I waited there, as Shanghai was to be liberated soon. When Kuomintang (KMT) secret agents arrived at the library, they first focused their attention on my brother Lin Tongji, believing that he had been helping the CPC. The head of the secret agents had been a student at Southwest Associated University and knew that Lin Tongji was a rightist when he taught at the university. He did not believe that Lin Tongji was not helping the CPC. However, Lin Tongji talked with him and with other secret agents. The head of the secret agents was himself an intellectual, and he became convinced that it was unlikely that Lin Tongji was helping the CPC. Later, it was disclosed that there was another man surnamed Mao. I am not sure whether it was true.

Anyway, then they focused on me. They thought someone else must have leaked information to the secret agents against me. At that time we were engaged in underground work for the CPC. We listened to the radio, wrote down news broadcast by the CPC, and printed it. We bought a printing machine, and I did most of the printing work. Then we packed the copies and handed them out. I did most of the work there, so word soon spread that I was doing that work.

The head of the secret agents suggested that they would put an end to the case if he could see me in person. Lin Tongji agreed and they went to my mother's house. He knew I was not there. He just pretended that he was willing to help. Finding that I was not at my mother's, the head of the secret agent was annoyed. Fortunately, he knew that Shanghai was soon to be liberated, with cannons booming and several places already taken by the PLA. So he decided to put an end to the case without seeing me.

* * * * *

His recollections are a valuable historical record since Professor Lin is a key surviving witness of many events. More importantly, we explored key academic issues, which we identified in the interviews as topics for discussion when we met the next time. His timely feedback and interactions added to my knowledge and further promoted my considerations and understanding of comparative study on China ancient thoughts.

2.3 Comparative Study

Today, the cultural exchange between America and China is extensive. Even so, there are vast cultural and values differences between the two countries. To help close the gap is one of the unavoidable responsibilities of today's scholars. A comparative study of the two cultures not only benefits their ability to understand each country's culture, but through the comparison, the perspective of "otherness" is established, a new perspective that allows for re-examining each culture.

As intellectuals living in two cultures, Chinese students who are studying in the United States will probably gain a better understanding of the disconnection between

theory and reality and between different theories. In such a setting, most students inevitably become “double intellectuals.” It provides an opportunity to become suspicious of universally accepted theory, perhaps even suspicious of one’s own perceptions. This is important for Chinese students seeking greater academic development. Through the experience of rigorous research and a high level of awareness of the problematic, and the back-and-forth connection, it is possible to both create a Chinese modern academic and to establish a tradition different from the Western academic tradition of modernism.

Comparative cultural study is the primary analytical tool used by Benjamin Schwartz¹⁵ (1916–1999). He became famous for his study of Mao Zedong; later Harvard’s appraisal of him was a “Chinese ideology historian” considered to be the dean of Western Sinology research. His study of China was not limited to the text, but also relied on his perspective. He had unique insights on Confucius and Lao-Tzu. He found it strange that the moral autonomy the Chinese inherited from Confucius is greater than what most prominent social scientists were aware of at the time. Schwartz’s view was that most U.S. social scientists consider that a human being adopts a number of social roles: boss, employee, father, or wife. A human being has to first play those social roles fully before having time to be himself and to do whatever he likes. In comparison, Confucius believed that a person’s autonomy is not limited, and one should exert his autonomy throughout the course of playing all his social roles.

To conduct research of one’s work self is a kind of comparative cultural study, especially true in the case of an individual with a Chinese cultural background and a Chinese scholar with a Western culture background, each forming dialogues on the different interpretations of ancient Chinese ideology.

From this point of view, Lin Tongqi began his study of Schwartz’s works 15 years ago in a very systematic way. During my interviews with him, we had many conversations based on his research, which ultimately became the second part of Chapter 3 of this thesis: a conversation about ancient Chinese thoughts.

¹⁵ American academic, author, and Sinologist. Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benjamin_I._Schwartz>.

Today, with my academic studies at MIT soon to be completed, I feel greatly fulfilled with my achievements in this program. I am fortunate to have had an opportunity to weave the study of Chinese thinking and ancient Chinese knowledge and management with the latest contemporary Western studies on this topic. These two seemingly disjointed but parallel tracks, after nearly a year, have resulted in a harvest that can be described as abundant and overflowing.

CHAPTER 3. Oral History and Conversation on Ancient Chinese Thoughts

3.1 Introduction

This chapter contains key portions of my interviews with Professor Lin Tongqi. I believe that his thinking and insights add considerably to the body of literature on ancient Chinese thoughts and is an excellent of the use of the oral history methodology.

* * * * *

Mr. Lin: First, I would like to say, it is a great pleasure to be interviewed by you under the frame of this oral history project.

Chen: You are welcome. For me, this is a very good opportunity to learn from you.

Mr. Lin: I would like to name this project “Sufferings and Thinking”.

Chen: Could you be more specific about your thinking with regard to these two terms?

Mr. Lin: The term “suffering” originated from Brahmanism and Hinduism in India, was borrowed by Buddhism, and later introduced into China. According to the *Dictionary of Religion* by Ren Jiyu (1998), the word was originally used for the quantification of time. However, in Buddhism, this term has various interpretations. One popular interpretation goes that four “*Jie*”(劫, whose meaning is closest to “suffering” in Chinese)¹⁶ were identified in a cycle representing the existence of any element: “forming,” “living,” “deterioration,” and “emptiness.” The human world and the earth

¹⁶ *Jie*: Kalpa, a Sanskrit word. Source: <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kalpa_\(aeon\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kalpa_(aeon))>.

itself follow such a cycle. First it is “formed,” created in the form of gas, then liquid, then solid. This stage does not allow human beings to exist. Next is the stage of “living,” in which human beings exist. Then follows the stage of “deterioration,” in which disasters occur in the form of wind, water, and fire calamities, from which human beings suffer. The last stage is “emptiness,” often referred to in Buddhist doctrines.

I have only a shallow understanding of Buddhist philosophy. The terms “adversity” or “adversities,” as I use them here, are intended to refer to the sufferings I have experienced in my life—some natural, but more man-made. I use the term *jie* to refer to this life of mine, and the happenings I take with me through my life. I want to stress the sufferings I have experienced and, in a larger sense, the fate of intellectuals of my generation.

Wang Yuanhua said that he lived a turbulent life. First were the wars, then the political campaigns during the grim years. The term “turbulent,” as he used it, was intended to describe the wars and then a series of political campaigns. I have lived a similar, very turbulent life. To me, the term “turbulent” is related to two major things: wars and revolution. I use the term *jie* to highlight the sufferings and adversities I have experienced.

First were the wars. I have experienced four wars in my life. As a small child about five years old, I lived in Beijing and experienced the wars between warlords, especially the war between Wu Peifu and Zhang Zuolin. This began the period of our life when we had to flee calamities. From that time on, so-called “calamity fleeing” has haunted my memories.

The second war was the Northern Expedition by Chiang Kai-shek. This was an ambitious expedition. Sun Yat-sen dispatched Chiang Kai-shek to leave the base at Guangzhou and fight his way north. After the Northern Expedition, around 1929, Chiang went to Nanjing and set up a central government dominated by the KMT. After Chiang settled in Nanjing, he started some business developments, copying what he learned from the fascists, and hoping to benefit the national economy

Unfortunately, his efforts did not last long because the Japanese came, which led to the Anti-Japanese War—the third war I experienced. From my earliest memories, the Japanese have been invading China. It is generally accepted that the third war formally

started as a result of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident, or July Seventh Incident, in 1937. In fact, the Japanese invasion began as a result of the September Eighteenth Incident, in 1931, and it lasted 14 years.

After the Anti-Japanese War was over, we enjoyed a period of peace and development. In 1945, Mao Zedong went from Yan'an to Chongqing to meet with Chiang Kai-shek, and to agree on a political declaration. At that time, people expected that the KMT and the Communist Party of China (CPC) would cooperate in the development of China. However, the agreement was merely a scrap of paper and was never implemented.

Who should be blamed for the failure of the Agreement? I personally think Chiang Kai-shek should be blamed because he held greater power at that time. He had to make some concessions to Mao, but he never planned to implement them. Of course, the CPC can also be blamed. But I would rather not make any comment on that.

Some of us hoped to walk a “third line,” one advocated by the Fabian Society, which was welcome among Chinese intellectuals at that time. Chu Anping¹⁷ (储安平, 1909 - 1966?), founder of *Observation*, supported it. The Fabian Society, or the Labor Party, proposed both political and economic freedom, and demanded political and economic equality, and political and economic democracy. We believed in the proposal. Also, there was a British political scientist named Harold Laski¹⁸ (1893–1950) whose doctrine (although now relatively unknown) was prevalent at the time, and for a long time we believed his theory.

We looked forward to cooperation between the KMT and CPC for the development of China. Sadly, cooperation did not come as we had expected. On the contrary, the two parties fought for another three years, which is the fourth war I experienced. The Nationalist-Communist Civil War was over in 1949 when the CPC won the war and united China. From that point, we expected a period of relative peace and

¹⁷ Chinese scholar, intellectual, noted liberal journalist, and editor of *Guancha* (观察, *The Observer*) in the Civil War era of the late 1940s. Widely considered to be one of the most famous rightists in China.

¹⁸ British political theorist, economist, author, and lecturer. Active in politics, served as chairman of the British Labour Party from 1945–46. Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harold_Laski>.

domestic development, but to our surprise, Mao Zedong launched a series of large-scale political movements.

So, in a span of about 35 years, I experienced wars between warlords, the Northern Expedition, the Anti-Japanese War, and finally the Nationalist-Communist Civil War. After those 35 years, my life was virtually ruined. I was a target in nearly all of the political movements. My life has been worn away because of those wars and political movements.

Chen: Is it true that in 1949 you were intercepted by someone from the Central Military Committee on your way to the Beijing Foreign Language Institute to report for work, and that subsequently you were appointed to work at the Foreign Language School of the People's Liberation Army?

Mr. Lin: Yes, it is true. Originally, I was to be transferred to Beijing Foreign Language Institute to teach English, as I have a reasonable mastery of English. So Fudan University let me go. At that time, the Army was also establishing a foreign language school, and they wanted to pick some teachers from the Beijing Foreign Language Institute.

Chen: So it proved that you were politically reliable to them.

Mr. Lin: Yes, because I once engaged in underground work, which is quite risky.

3.2 Sufferings

Mr. Lin: People cannot always be their own master but are sometimes subject to the influence of the "environment. My life has been full of sufferings and adversities. I group the sufferings I have experienced into three categories: near-death sufferings, life sufferings, and political sufferings.

3.2.1 Near-Death Sufferings

Mr. Lin: Life sufferings may be unique to me. I have been fortunate enough to have survived several near-death sufferings, which raises the question: how do I continue to live my remaining life? I have encountered several life sufferings. Maybe I think differently from other people. I am now convinced that my life should be on a campus. I became a teaching assistant, then a lecturer, an associate professor, and professor. I live on campus, and I am free to roam in a “world of thoughts,” as described by Schwartz in *The World of Thought in Ancient China* (1985). I never think of leaving the campus; it is my world, the place where I should be for the rest of my life, because it provides space for my thoughts to roam. Several times I have been almost forced to leave my world. Luckily I pulled through and continue to live on the campus.

The first near-death suffering occurred during bombings by the Japanese. In 1938, the Japanese took Wuhan and Changsha, and in the process cornered Chiang Kai-shek in Chongqing, then a city of Sichuan Province. Between 1940 and 1945, the Japanese often bombed the hinterland. In 1940, my whole family was nearly killed when the Japanese bombed Beibei. A bomb was dropped about the distance from here to the door, perhaps a dozen meters. Luckily, the bomb did not explode but created a huge pit in the ground. There was a tremendous air impact that smashed the glass doors and windows. That was really a near-death suffering. At that time, Japanese bombings were not targeted at military facilities, but instead were random, intended more as a psychological threat, with the purpose of shaking the determination of the Chinese to resist the Japanese army. Random bombings caused great mental distress for everyone.

In 1941, a large bomb attack hit Chongqing, leaving 7,000 people suffocated to death in an underground shelter. The tragedy is documented as part of our modern history. I was studying at Nankai at the time, and I had gone into town to see my family. As I returned to Nankai, I saw many dead bodies, most of them severely burned. That was a Japanese crime I witnessed with my own eyes.

The second near-death suffering happened somewhat earlier than the liberation of Shanghai, during the Sea Ray Library Incident in May 1949 (see Appendix II). I

remember it was the second Saturday in May. I did not go to the library because I was home sick at my parents' house.

Chen: Speaking of that incident, it is said that some secret agents of KMT came for you. Was it because you had participated in underground activities organized by the CPC?

Mr. Lin: That's right. I organized an underground reading club, a peripheral organization of the CPC. The club consisted of young people, students, and workers. We studied books about Marx and Leninism. I read *Children of a Landlord*, a novel by Lu Lin,¹⁹ which is considered to be highly leftist. We also recorded, printed, and distributed news about liberated areas, which we learned from the radio. We wanted to do something helpful for the CPC.

The underground organization of CPC tried to convince me to join the CPC. However, I rejected the suggestion because I was afraid the CPC would limit my freedom because of its "iron disciplines."

Mr. Lin: The secret agents told Lin Tongji that they would not end the case unless I met with them. My father begged me not to meet them, saying it was better to see one die than two. Apparently, my father, like many others, thought that Lin Tongji was more likely to die than return alive. Surprisingly, he did escape and survived, partly because the head secret agent was a graduate from the Southwest Associated University and knew that Lin Tongji was an editor of *Strategies of the Warring States* (a bi-weekly publication by the intellectual group). He did not believe Lin Tongji could be connected with the CPC. The fact is that at that time, the underground CPC organization on the campus of Fudan University was using the library for underground activities. But Lin Tongji did not tell me, so I had no idea about that.

¹⁹ Lu Lin, (鲁林, original name Yu Runquan, 俞润泉, 1925-2003). Chinese writer and reporter. In 1945 Mao Zedong went to Chongqing peace talks with Chiang Kai-shek. Lu Lin's article was one of only four reports of this historical event.

My third near-death suffering also happened prior to the liberation. As an underground Communist activist, I guided the People's Liberation Army across Baidu Bridge and into the city, even as bullets were flying in the air. I also participated in counterespionage. But I believed it was life-risking work at that time.

The fourth near-death suffering happened when I worked in the May 7th Cadre School. In 1969 and into the early 1970s, all the faculty of the school were transferred to the May 7th Cadre School of the Headquarters of the General staff established in Zhongxiang County, Hubei Province. I stayed there for three years. Due to my poor health, my appointed task was to grow watermelons instead of the more arduous labor required to plant rice in the fields. Everyone waited for watermelons I grew! I lived in a thatched cottage with earth walls with a Mr. Zhu. One summer, it was raining hard and when I left the cottage, I could see approaching floodwaters. I hurried back into the cottage to bring Mr. Zhu out, and we rushed out together, taking nothing but Mr. Zhu's watch from the table. We had just left the cottage when it collapsed. Another few seconds and Mr. Zhu might have been dead in the cottage.

3.2.2 Life Sufferings

Next, I'd like to talk about my life sufferings. I took for granted that I would be able to study on campus. However, twice my campus life was threatened. The first was when my work in the May 7th Cadre School had finished, in 1971 or 1972. Everybody was concerned about where they would go since the Cadre School had been cancelled. When we first came to the Cadre School, we were encouraged to mingle with the poor local peasants for the rest of our lives, not just a short while. That was painful for me, since I wanted to live on a campus, not in a rural village. There was a man in charge of personnel management named Sun Mengbi. Every time he came to the Cadre School, we were concerned because he often came to announce who could return to work at the language school. I was not among the first. When we asked what we should do, we were told to be prepared to remain at the Cadre School. It made me sad to hear that. Another time he said we would be sent from the Cadre School back to our birthplace. I was born

in Fuqing County, Fujian, near Minhou, and I never expected to stay in that town for the rest of my life. This was far from my expectation.

Another life suffering happened sometime before the liberation of Shanghai. I was engaged in preparations to liberate the city—what I thought was only a temporary job for me. Then came an order that everyone engaged in the preparations should plan to continue participating in the administrative work of the district for the rest of their lives. This was another great suffering for me. Fortunately, the Higher Education Association soon began searching for teachers to teach English. They found me and I was delighted to be back on the campus.

3.2.3 Political Sufferings

Last are political sufferings. I use this term because I experienced endless political movements during those years, all aimed at, or at least involving, intellectuals. I do not know whether intellectuals in other countries have endured as much political suffering as we have.

The first was the Anti-Revolutionary Suppressing Movement. Prior to this was the movement against the “three evils” and the “five evils,” but it did not primarily target intellectuals.

The Anti-Revolutionary Suppressing Movement started when, based on clues found in communications between Hu Feng²⁰ and others, Mao Zedong believed that Hu Feng had organized an anti-revolutionary group. Consequently, he approved actions to be taken against Hu Feng’s anti-revolutionary group. I was not closely related to the group. The only connection between the group and me was Ji Pang²¹, who was indeed a key member of the Group. We shared upper and lower bunk beds when we studied at Fudan University, and we were very close. He was a poet, had been overseas, and a key member

²⁰ Hu Feng (胡风) (1902 - 1985), original name Zhang Guangren (张光人). Chinese writer, literary and art theorist, who followed Marxist theory in political and social matters but not in literature. Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hu_Feng>, <http://www.bqcc.com/storm1_cn.htm>.

²¹ Ji Pang (冀沅) (1918–2013), original name Chen Xingzhong (陈性忠). Born in Java, Indonesia, graduated from Fudan University in 1947. Honorary member of the National Committee of Chinese Writers Association. Famous contemporary writer, poet, representative of The July School (七月派).

of July Poetry Club centered around Hu Feng. We were on good terms. To me, he was a kind person. That's why I was ordered to confess. I knew nothing about the matter.

It happened as follows: We were told to attend a meeting, so my wife and I went, as she too worked in the Army at that time. During the meeting, a junior middle school student surnamed Wu suddenly stood up and shouted, "Lin Tongqi, come up here and confess!" I am a timid person and his shouts scared me into a cold sweat. I asked him what I should confess to? I was really baffled. After that meeting, no one dared to be close to me, except my wife, and I was isolated. So, I decided to become involved in the Anti-Revolutionary Suppressing Movement. I was ordered to write confession reports, which I did. I wrote mostly about my social relations but seldom revealed my true thoughts. The movement lasted through 1954 and 1955.

In 1956, the Anti-Rightism Movement was launched. First, Lin Tongji was the mistaken target, but soon the focus of the movement shifted to me. At that time, the two schools, originally under the management of the Third and Second Departments of the General Staff, were united into a college. The attitude of the CPC Committee of the college toward me was based on the opinion of the political commissar of the college from the Second Department (surnamed Zhang, as I remember), who thought I was a real rightist, judging from my remarks. In fact, my opinions were "rightist" enough to rank me among the rightists. For example, I was against personal worship or a personal records system. Such opinions alone were enough to make me a rightist. So the members of the CPC committee from the Second Department had good reasons to establish me as a rightist. However, members of the CPC Committee from the Third Department—for example, He Xiaohui—knew me better. When I joined the Army, the Third Department sent people to fetch me, and he was one of them, a sober-minded man.

When we met for the first time, I said to him: "Look at the apple. An English philosopher named George Berkeley (an archbishop) once said, 'Except for the smell, the sense you feel when you bite it, the color, or all the sensations it leaves in our mind, what remains as an apple?'" As Berkeley pointed out, there is nothing left of the apple except a bundle of sensations. My question took He Xiaohui by surprise. He regarded it as a puzzling question. Hearing my words, He Xiaohui formed an impression about me—that I was a strange person, full of strange ideas.

So, at one meeting, he pointed out that “the question about Lin Tongqi is not one of his political stands but an epistemological one.” At that time, Mao Zedong said a political stand was a question of “the buttocks,” while epistemology is a question of “the head.” What is more important of the two is where you sit, or where you place your buttocks. That is why, later, as I remember, Wang Yuanhua once said that the essence of Mao Zedong thought was that “the buttocks come before the head,” or the position where you place your buttocks decides your stand. I must say, there is something irrational in Mao Zedong thought. At that time, Mao Zedong thought was worshipped as the “Bible” in China. Now we find that many problems existed with his thought.

Therefore, the leader from the Third Department gained a clearer understanding of me. There followed some disputes between Committee members from the Second and the Third Departments. Finally, they decided that I should be considered a “medium rightist.”

During the Anti-Rightism Movement in 1956, I was studying at Beijing Foreign Language Institute. Following the decision about my political standing, I returned to my school, but later than the others. Then in 1964, Leng Qingyun, a leader of the school and a good person, had an official talk with me and said, “You have been mistakenly labeled as a ‘medium rightist’ for six years, and subject to internal control. That conclusion has now been cancelled from your personal records and you do not need worry about that any more.”

At that point I had experienced three political sufferings. First the Anti-Revolutionary Suppressing Movement, then the Anti-Rightism Movement, and then the Anti-Right Deviation Movement. The last one had little to do with me as I was already a rightist and there was no need to pursue me further.

But then came the Cultural Revolution. Big character posters were posted in the school, saying that there was a “Three Family Village” in our school: Wang Daoyi, President of the school; Zhu Shuyang, Dean of the department; and me. The rebels wanted to label me as “an anti-revolutionary academic tyrant,” which now sounds quite ridiculous. Nevertheless, we were forced to parade through the streets wearing a tall hat that marked our identity, and we were denounced by the rebels all the way.

At the time, a woman surnamed Zhang and a man surnamed Zhou were chosen by the rebels to be their advisors. Both had worked with me in the same teaching and research office, perhaps even appointed by the management of the college to be there for supervision. At any rate, they were familiar with me. They said I was a good person and should not be a target for denunciation. Their comments protected me to some extent, and I managed to come through the Cultural Revolution as an “anti-revolutionary academic tyrant.”

Political sufferings were unique in China, and there were too many of them; indeed, nothing like that has occurred in any other country. To me, those were the most critical sufferings.

Chen: I think intellectuals in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe had similar experiences.

Mr. Lin: In Eastern Europe, there seemed to be nothing like the “thought reform” we experienced. They could form a political opinion about someone, and that was all. The concept of “thought reform” was something unique invented by Mao Zedong. He was ambitious enough to believe he could reform people’s thoughts. Stalin didn’t consider reforming people’s thoughts; instead he destroyed their bodies. Mao focused more on people’s thoughts. In fact, he had been trying to reform people’s thoughts since the Yan’an Rectification. That is what is unique about Mao Zedong: his attempt to reform people’s thinking.

In the end, I experienced four political sufferings: the Anti-Revolutionary Suppressing Movement, the Anti-Rightism Movement, the Anti-Right Deviation Movement, and the Cultural Revolution.

In total, I have experienced nine sufferings: four near-death sufferings, two life sufferings, and three political sufferings. One was a natural disaster and the rest were man-made. Nine sufferings are enough for one lifetime. Fortunately, I was young enough to pull through all of them without thinking too much about them at the time. Now I feel fortunate that I survived all of them.

After 1976, with the reform policy implemented, I slowly recovered. In 1984, I came to the U.S. to visit my relatives and, God knows why, I settled down at Harvard and began a long period of reflection.

3.3 Lin Tongqi's Thinking

Chen: Your experience is of unique value, as you have lived a very special life. Following the Cultural Revolution, most of your peers were already in their fifties. Their youth had been worn out by all the political movements, and most of them were unable to achieve anything major in their academic career. You are different. You began to work on thinking and the history of thinking, even though you were in your sixties. You have made outstanding contributions in these fields. This is quite special. Very few intellectuals of your generation have done this.

As we mentioned earlier, the thought reform really brainwashed many of them. They lost their ability to think. That is why there are very few, such as Gu Zhun²² and Wang Yuanhua, in your generation and why they and you are extremely valuable today. You have not lost your ability to think. In this sense alone, it is valuable for us to work on this oral history project in order to leave something for future generations.

I have several questions that I have wondered about for a long time. For instance, did you study thinking and the history of thoughts in your spare time? Your job is not related to such studies. Did you have time and the conditions to access materials related to thoughts and the history of thinking between 1949 and 1984? Were you politically allowed to do such research? How were you able to continue such studies for 35 years?

Mr. Lin: To answer those questions, let's turn to thinking. First, the term "thinking" as I use it here is not the same as "cognition," which is limited purely to the cognitive process. The term "thinking" as I use it here refers not only to cognition or intellectual

²² Gu Zhun (顾准, (1915 - 1974). Intellectual, economist, and pioneer of post-Marxist Chinese liberalism. A victim of "anti-Rightist" purges, he spent his later life in prisons and reeducation centers. Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gu_Zhun>.

activity but also to feelings and will, or intention.. I want to make it clear that my thinkings are reflections about the era in which I lived.

Zhang Hao (1937–)²³ compiled a book of self-selected works entitled, *Exploration of Age*, and I think we share some common thoughts. Generally speaking, there is an environment surrounding reflections, so my reflections arise out of that environment, and are not just about my own thoughts alone, although it may seem like you are thinking all by yourself, about your life, or the universe, and other eternal topics.

Such environment-related reflections are important, as they are situation-specific. There are two types of situations. The first is those eternal situations that remain unchanged for the short lifetime of human beings, such as reflections about the universe and nature. Yes, they also change, but we cannot feel it when we think; our life is too short and such situations last much longer. We also think about aspects of eternal-life topics such as birth, death, love, and desires. Those are major events in our life but they are, in essence, eternal topics. We face the same situation without much change when we think about those topics.

There is another type of thinking, which I regard as thinking about the continuous evolution of history and society, or “reflections on the era,” or our reflections about or reactions to the times we live in. My reflections are related to two aspects: the eternal topics and the era we are living in. My reflections about the turbulent era concern many changing factors—wars, revolutions, and various political movements. In this regard, I am different from others who explore only eternal topics without considering the era.

3.3.1 Five Stages of Thinking

My thinking can be roughly divided into five stages:

²³ Chinese contemporary historian specializing in the history of modern Chinese thought. Academician of Academia Sinica, Taiwan. Bachelor of History from National Taiwan University; Masters and Ph.D. from Harvard University in 1966, supervised by Benjamin Schwartz. Taught for 30 years in the U.S. Department of History, Ohio State University (1968–1998).

1. Childhood enlightenment: This refers mainly to family education. I was born in 1923, and I lived at home until 1937 when the Anti-Japanese War broke out. Those 14 years comprised the childhood enlightenment period for me.
2. Adolescence: After the start of the war when I left home, until 1942, was my adolescent period (age 14 to 20). My self developed, I grew in both physiological and psychological terms, and I began to experience adolescent emotions and lusts (something romantic). Once I even had a secret crush for a woman, for a very short period—typical of adolescents. I will come back to this later. That was a period of self development.
3. Youth: From 1943 to 1949 (age 20 to 26) was a period of transition for me, from self-development to self-expression, accompanied by a strong desire to be myself.
4. Disorientation: This refers to the period between 1949 and 1984 when the CPC came into power. After 1949, I began to gain some political awareness, whereas before that I had only some cultural awareness. I use the term “disorientation” because I did not know what to do and I lost myself. I had been brainwashed. This period was a painful experience lasting from 1949 until 1984.

After 1976, there was a period of about six years of adjustment following Mao Zedong’s death. During those years, people did not break away from the conventional mode of thinking developed under the influence of Mao Zedong thoughts. I was exploring, not knowing what I really wanted. Because I taught the English language, I first thought of studying grammar and then later, linguistics. I settled on research about thoughts only after I came here in 1984.

5. Self-regression: When talking about “thinking,” I focus mainly on “self,” which is actually the evolution of one’s whole personality.

Those are roughly the stages of my thinking, about which there is much I can say.

3.3.2 Childhood Enlightenment

Mr. Lin: Let me begin with my childhood enlightenment. I stayed home and did not go to school until 1937, when I was 14. Then I went to primary school for a year, in the sixth grade. Before that time, I received my primary school education from my father

basically at home. His teaching was based on the Four Books and Five Classics and Master Zuo²⁴'s Spring and Autumn Annals, which he liked very much himself. He did not give me any real lessons, though, as he was too busy in his position as a chief judge of the Supreme Court. Most of the time, he gave me brief explanations and then told me to study on my own. For example, he would take up any of the Four Books or the Five Classics and read a passage from them without much explanation, then told me to study it. I learned some passages by heart. I used to read those passages aloud many times, perhaps twenty. I used numbered paper slips to keep count of the times I read the passages.

The Four Books and Five Classics teach people how to behave. Formerly, people studied them in preparation for the imperial examination. But they were cancelled in 1905, before I was born. However, we studied them anyway, for self-cultivation rather than for any career as a government official. My father wanted me to study the Four Books and Five Classics mainly for character development.

Later I found this was true for many others. For example, He Huaihong²⁵ said that learning such classic literature provides lifelong benefits for people. Hu Shih said that such literature provides a solid foundation for future development in humanistic disciplines. Jiang Mengling²⁶ said that such literature provides a life orientation for people at a young age.

Wu Jingxiong²⁷ held a similar view. Although it is not known by many today, Wu was quite an enlightened member of Kuomintang and served as president of the Shanghai Court. He said he was not wise enough to know the meaning of what he had learned by heart as a child, but later he gained a better understanding. He argued that one should not

²⁴ Zuo Qiuming (左丘明, fl. 5th century BC) was a court writer of the State of Lu, and contemporary of Confucius during the Spring and Autumn Period of ancient.

²⁵ He Huaihong (何怀宏, 1954–). Currently a professor of philosophy at Peking University,

²⁶ Jiang Menglin (蒋梦麟, 1886-1964). Notable Chinese educator, writer, and paramount politician. From 1919 to 1927, he also served as President of Peking University. Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jiang_Menglin>.

²⁷ Wu Jingxiong(吴经熊, 1899-1986). Chinese jurist and author of works in Chinese, English, French, and German on Christian spirituality, Chinese literature, and legal topics. Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Ching_Hsiung_Wu>.

be forced or enticed to learn, and pointed out that what one learns in his early days will benefit him in the future.

Take one sentence from the Analects, for example: “Being aware of what you know and what you don’t know is wisdom.” (知之为知之，不知为不知，是知也。) I still remember this sentence, which wields great influence on me. I try to admit what I know, as well as what I do not know. This is wisdom.

Another example is the first three sentences of the Analects, which are about learning: “Is it not pleasant to learn with constant perseverance and application? Is it not delightful to have friends from distant quarters? Is he not a man of complete virtue who feels no discomposure although men may take no note of him?” (学而时习之不亦悦乎，有朋至远方来不亦乐乎，人不知不愠不亦君子乎?) These three sentences benefit me greatly. Confucius considered learning as a pleasure, and said one should practice and review what one has learned. That means putting what you have learned into practice. Having friends come from afar to chat about anything topic is also a pleasure. The last sentence is of special significance in my opinion. One should be content with being unknown to others and should abstain from vanity. I take great benefit from these three sentences.

Chen: By these three sentences, Confucius considered three things: How to learn by yourself, how to communicate with knowledgeable people, and how to deal with people who do not know you as a knowledgeable man.

Mr. Lin: You are right. Such classics are of great value to us. Even if we cannot fully practice what we learn from them, they at least provide some guidance for us. I think my life can be described as surviving the turbulent times, being content with being unknown to others, and remaining a commoner. I survived all those years filled with life threats, revolutionary activities, and political movements, and I have had several near-death sufferings. I have never thought of myself as being known to powerful people nor have I sought to be a government official. In academic circles, many people seek to be known to all. That is why I think the last of the three sentences of the Analects is of special importance to me. Remembering not to “feel discomposure though men may take

no note of me” sometimes works well, although no one can practice such guidelines to the fullest extent.

Confucius has another well-known remark: “One who aspires after the Way but is ashamed of poor clothes and poor food is not worth discoursing with.” (士志于道，而耻恶衣恶食者，未足与议也) My father was a chief judge of the Supreme Court and thus was paid a decent salary. He also taught at a university. In total, he had a monthly income sometimes as high as 600 Chinese silver dollars, which was quite a sum at that time. However, my mother once told me that half of his salary went for social intercourse—getting together with his friends to compose poems and eat out.

Chen: That’s a tradition of the Chinese scholars in the past.

Mr. Lin: Yes. That’s a tradition. Most of the time they got together to talk about academic topics or compose poems for contests.

Chen: I have read Qi Baishi’s²⁸ biography. He was a carpenter, with little formal education. Yet, he liked to attend parties held by local celebrities and men of letters, and while there drank and composed poems. That’s the tradition.

Mr. Lin: This tradition is better than many parties today where people mostly eat, drink, or play drinking games. At the traditional parties, those present compose poems, which makes the parties more tasteful. And people did not feel ashamed for their inferior clothes or complain about food because they enjoyed each other’s company. So this sentence still has some influence on me.

I also remember another remark by Confucius: “Do not do to others what you would not have them do to you.” (己所不欲，勿施于人) This sentence is well-known. Confucius warned us not to force something you do not like to be forced onto yourself, onto others. He was also against forcing what you like onto others because other people

²⁸ Qi Baishi (齐白石). (1864–1957). Well-known contemporary Chinese painter. Source: <<http://www.chinaonlinemuseum.com/painting-qi-baishi.php>>.

might not like what you like. There is another saying that has some influence on me:

“Life and death, poor or rich, it’s all destined.” (生死有命， 富贵在天)

When I was young, my father encouraged me to read these classics, which in my opinion are still valuable for people today. I was told that the Chinese classics are popular again, and some families have begun to teach their children in traditional ways. I am not against it. Mao Zedong argued that when dealing with the classics, we should accept the good and reject the bad. I personally consider him to be too ambitious to make such remarks because one person cannot decide what’s good and what’s bad for all. We have to make our own judgments.

Chen: Absolutely. And we cannot decide until we are well informed.

Mr. Lin: We have to first fully understand something before we select. It is not wise to accept or reject something before you really know it.

Chen: Mao Zedong thought is actually a continuation of the May Fourth Movement, which advocated anti-feudalism. I think there is some problem with the term “anti-feudalism.”

Mr. Lin: What is anti-feudalism? I think the term “feudalism” was a mistake.

Chen: You are right.

Mr. Lin: What does feudalism mean? Does it apply to everything in ancient China?

Chen: Feudalism is a European concept for which there is no equivalent in China.

Mr. Lin: Feudalism is something that existed in Western Europe, which is quite different from what the term means in China.

Summing up what I have just talked about, I think the Chinese classics I studied in my early years were quite important for me, as they laid a solid foundation for my later development. So I am not against children learning the Chinese classics today.

Chen: Tradition continues. For example, I named my daughter Yudian, which sounds like “raindrop.” This is name has rich cultural connotations. Confucius had a student named Zeng Dian. He had a famous phrase to express his agreement (Yu, “与”) with Dian (“点”), the state-governing philosophy, governing by means of rituals and music. That is why I named my daughter using these two words.

Mr. Lin: According to the Analects, Confucius went to bathe in the river and someone asked him about the state-governing philosophy. Confucius was particular about rituals. In his opinion, rituals established rules for everything. He agreed with Zeng Dian’s state-governing philosophy because it agreed with his own. So the classics do have their influence on me.

Chen: I think it is not easy to take the good and reject the bad. As an individual influenced by the Chinese tradition, you have a lot of things integrated within yourself. They are like your features. It would be difficult to decide which one to give up and which one to keep. It is not something you can choose. You are born with them, your character and temperament.

Mr. Lin: So when you first enter the world, then you think about it, which certainly takes much effort. It is necessary. It is too radical to remove what you think is bad before you fully understand it. Consider the saying: “Life and death, poor or rich, it’s all destined.” That saying is of some use to us, although fate is hard to explain. In any case, what we learn when we are young is crucial to our future development. It gives us a point from which to begin.

3.3.3 Adolescence

Mr. Lin: Let's move to the second stage, adolescence, which follows the order of self development.

It was during the Anti-Japanese War when I left home at the age of 14. I remember that my family moved to Chongqing in October, 1937. I first went to Guangyi Middle School and we lived at my uncle's house. He was the dean of the Department of Geology at Chongqing University. He began working there before the Anti-Japanese War so when the war broke out, we moved to Chongqing to live in his home. He recommended that I go to Guangyi Middle School. That was an interesting school. Students arrived at school in a kind of sedan chair carried by two men on their shoulders. Most students and teachers in the school were locals, and they ate a lot of hot pepper. I was not used to that, and soon my stomach began to hurt. About a month later, I left that school and stayed at home because of my stomachache. Then I transferred to Nankai Middle School where I stayed for 6 years until I was 20 years old.

Chen: This Nankai Middle School was the one in Tianjin.

Mr. Lin: It was called Nanyu Middle School. It was Nankai Middle School in Tianjin before it moved to Chongqing. The headmaster was the same, a gentleman named Zhang Boling.²⁹ It was a very good school, producing many talented people who are still active today. Zhu Guangya³⁰ was a graduate from that school, as were many other scientists.

Chen: Is Zhu Guangya your senior by age?

Mr. Lin: Yes, a few years older than me. When I attended that school, at first I felt unhappy because I was away from home for the first time. However, I slowly got used to life in the school. When I was in Nanjing, I attended Jinling Middle School.

²⁹ Zhang Boling or Chang Po-ling (张伯苓, 1876–1951). Chinese educator who founded Nankai University and the Nankai system of schools. Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zhang_Boling>.

³⁰ Zhu Guangya (朱光亚, 1924 - 2011). Renowned Chinese nuclear physicist. Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zhu_Guangya>.

Chen: That was also a very good school.

Mr. Lin: Yes, it was. It is said that my father was paid well at that time. But there were too many children. Eleven in all and seven or eight were at school at the same time. We all wanted to attend a good school, which cost a lot at that time. So our life then was not so easy.

When I went to Nankai Middle School, everybody else wore shirts of a European style, but I wore my elder brother's traditional Chinese clothes. I felt sort of ashamed of them. I lived in the school after leaving home.

Nankai provided a really good education, one that valued comprehensive development. I remember the school often invited well-known figures, including Zhou Enlai³¹ and Feng Yuxiang,³² to give speeches at school. I remember that Zhou Enlai talked about fighting against the Japanese and defending China. But I do not remember the details. We were ordered to stand when Feng Yuxiang gave his speech. His speech was lively and touched us all.

The education at Nankai was not only about intellectual development but also about social conduct, and the school valued sports. Baseball was popular there although not in many other schools. Later it was popular in Taiwan.

Chen: That was likely the influence of the U.S.

Mr. Lin: We liked baseball at that time. We did sports after class. So I think Nankai provided an excellent education for me. I was also into music and literature, but not philosophy yet. I am still interested in music.

³¹ Zhou Enlai (周恩来, 1898–1976). First Premier of the People's Republic of China, serving from 1949 until his death in 1976. Zhou served under Mao Zedong and was instrumental in consolidating control of the Communist Party's rise to power, forming foreign policy, and developing the Chinese economy. Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zhou_Enlai>.

³² Feng Yuxiang (冯玉祥, 1882–1948). Warlord and leader in Republic of China. Vice Premier of the Republic of China from 1928 to 1930. Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feng_Yuxiang>.

I like music. I like listening, and I can read staves, but nothing more. I had a classmate named Hu Boliang.³³ His mother was a musician. We often went to his home. His mother would play the piano and he played the violin. At that time young people valued literature and music.

During that time, I had a secret crush on a female researcher at an economics research institute that was part of Nankai University. I was about 16 or 17, and she was much older than me. I was interested in Tolstoy at that time, and one of his books relates to secret crushes for the opposite sex, and I had a similar experience. I mention this because I think secret crushes are common during adolescence.

Chen: It is a human emotion. Everybody desires something good and beautiful.

Mr. Lin: At that time, another friend of mine, Liang Zhongdai,³⁴ also liked music. He was on very good terms with Lin Tongji. He lived near us, perhaps across the river. He was a strange person, mostly alone, with an aesthetic taste. He was recognized for his skill in the French language. At that time he had many gramophone records. Li Tongji was closely connected with his family so I often went to Liang Zhongdai's home to listen to music. At that time also I liked poetry from the Tang Dynasty, and I still remember some.

When I was young, I liked the writings of Wang Wei.³⁵ I had a friend named Feng Junkai who later became a professor in Tsinghua University engaged in teaching and

³³ Hu Boliang (胡伯亮, 1923–). Piano player and educator, graduated 1956 from The Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. His mother, Zhou Shuan (周淑安, 1894–1974) was born in a Christian missionary family. In 1914, as the one of the first ten Tsinghua University female students, she went to Harvard University, the New England Conservatory of Music, New York College of Music to study music theory, piano and vocal music. Received BA degree from Harvard. First modern-day Chinese vocal educator, first female chorus conductor, first female composer. Source: <<http://baike.baidu.com/view/1368294.htm?noadapt=1>>.

³⁴ Liang Zongdai (梁宗岱, 1903 - 1983). Chinese poet and translator. Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liang_Zongdai>.

³⁵ Wang Wei (王维, 699 - 759). Tang Dynasty Chinese poet, musician, painter, and statesman, one of the most famous men of arts and letters of his time. Many of his poems are preserved, and 29 are included in the highly influential 18th-century anthology *Three Hundred Tang Poems*. Source: <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wang_Wei_\(8th-century_poet\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wang_Wei_(8th-century_poet))>.

research in thermal engineering. He taught many students. We were good friends at that time and often spent time in the woods reading Wang Wei.

I also liked Zhu Guangqian,³⁶ who wrote *Twelve Letters* for young people. His works are easy to understand. For a time I was quite interested in him. I remember reading books in the bookstore. At that time, my family was not well off so I did not buy books but instead read them in the bookstore. At the time, people were welcome to read in the bookstore. It was during that period that I became interested in arts, literature, and music.

It was also during that period that I became interested in studies of thoughts. Lin Tongji started a club to study the *Strategies of the Warring States*,³⁷ which interested me. Another brother was studying aviation in Central University, and he too was interested in the development of literature. On weekends, we walked from Shapingba to Chongqing (a long distance, but we had no money for bus fare). We walked to meet our eldest brother, and then the three of us would discuss *Strategies of the Warring States*. I was quite young at that time but still found it interesting. That was the start of my research on Chinese thinking, when my interest shifted from literature to the study of thoughts. So it was during this period of adolescence, the second of my personal development, that I began to develop my own thoughts.

Chen: So you were in Nankai for all of those six years?

Mr. Lin: Yes. I was 14 and studying in Nankai when the Anti-Japanese War started. I was enrolled at Nankai Middle School for four years before I entered the Central University. It was while I was at Nankai Middle School that I had to stay home for a long period because of the stomachache. My brother also attended Nankai, so he sent his notes home by mail and I studied at home. In fact, I did not graduate from the junior middle

³⁶ Zhu Guangqian (朱光潜, 1897–1986). Founder of the study of aesthetics in 20th-century China. Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zhu_Guangqian>.

³⁷ 战国策, renowned ancient Chinese historical work and compilation of sporadic materials on the Warring States period compiled by various unknown authors between the 3rd to 1st centuries BCE. Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zhan_Guo_Ce>.

school or from the senior middle school because I mostly stayed at home owing to the stomachaches.

It was during those years that I began to develop my own thoughts. I shared much in common with my brother, as we were often together. He liked literature and history, so we often went to Jiangling, and Jiangbei. Fudan University was across the river. We would lay in the river's edge, watching the blue sky and white clouds, talking, or singing to beats. He was very demanding about singing to the beat. He would stop me, and we would repeat a part of some song over and over until we got the right beat. We paid considerable attention to the beat, but cared little how our voices sounded! We have remained on good terms and he is still interested in literature and history.

Chen: When did you begin to learn English?

Mr. Lin: Lin Tongji was the first to teach me English. He told me not to read English and instead gave me a book with translations. That set me on the right path.

Chen: Did you begin to learn English when you were studying in Nankai Middle School?

Mr. Lin: No. It was about the time I entered the Central University.

Chen: Did Nankai teach English at that time?

Mr. Lin: Yes. I remember the English teacher was a man surnamed Zhang. He taught very well and was quite famous.

Chen: Was that's the first time you began to learn English?

Mr. Lin: I actually began earlier than that. I studied English at home from my sister. My father did not teach me English.

Chen: Your sister who later went to study at Harvard?

Mr. Lin: Yes. Lin Tonghuan, She is still alive. In fact, she disciplined us—me, my brother, and another young man. She was strict with us. Sometimes she would punish us by ordering us to stand still and balance chopsticks on our head. She had her own way of dealing with us.

Chen: How many years older is she?

Mr. Lin: Five.

Chen: Then you are almost the same age group. Was she able to discipline you?

Mr. Lin: Yes, she was. We were quite naughty. But she was strict, and we obeyed her.

One time I went to Nanchuan for holiday. My brother had graduated from university where he studied aviation. I had a cousin who was given a prize so he was able to establish a laboratory. He made an airplane framework, without an engine, and placed the framework in a wind tunnel. My brother worked in my cousin's factory as a technician. I stayed there for a summer holiday. There was a large pool so we were often in the pool. I still remember that holiday when my brother and I spent time together. That was an experience to remember. Gradually I grew up.

Chen: You had quite a special experience. You did not go to a formal primary school before the age of 14, and missed most of your formal education in Nankai Middle School for health reasons.

Mr. Lin: Yes. That is true. I studied mostly at home.

Chen: Maybe the lack of education in a formal school system cultivated your free thinking.

I wonder about your younger brother, Lin Tongji (林同驥). He was director of the Mechanics Institute and an active thinker. Was he influenced by the political movements?

Mr. Lin: Well, Mao Zedong issued an order that natural scientists who returned from abroad should not be criticized or denounced, so he was not as much influenced by the political movements. He was sent to take care of the boilers for heating, so he studied the boiler while working, and later formulated an equation for the use of the boiler, which was much talked about at that time.

Chen: An equation for energy efficiency.

Mr. Lin: He was that sort of person, you know. He did not give up research work even when he worked with boilers.

Chen: So his experience is quite different from yours.

Mr. Lin: He later went abroad again. I came abroad after that. As far as I know, he first went to England and later came to the U.S.

Chen: He went abroad earlier than you did?

Mr. Lin: He came abroad 12 years earlier.

Chen: He went abroad after the summer holiday you just talked of, not long before he started to work.

Mr. Lin: Yes, he worked for about two years and went abroad in 1941.

Chen: He first went to England.

Mr. Lin: Yes. First to England, then to the U.S. He stayed abroad for 10 years, or perhaps it was 12 or 13 years.

Chen: In fact, could you have gone abroad earlier?

Mr. Lin: Things would be quite different if I had gone abroad earlier. I think my experience would be somewhat like that of Lin Yusheng.³⁸ Sometimes a small decision makes great difference.

Chen: But you just cannot know ahead of time how things will go. Maybe your experience in mainland China, full of sufferings, was the drive that pushed you to study the history of thoughts.

Mr. Lin: Yes. That really helped.

Chen: If a person lives a very comfortable life without adversities, it is unlikely that he will achieve much in research on subjects like the history of thoughts because he has not experienced many adversities.

Mr. Lin: I believe if you have a strong will, you will pull through difficulties and adversities. Sometimes, just when you think everything is going well, something unpleasant happens.

Chen: As you have mentioned, one's experience may be related to the education one received earlier in life. That's why Confucius advised us not to do to others what we do not want them to do to us. Confucius valued a modest and balanced attitude toward life.

³⁸ Yu-sheng Lin (林毓生, 1934–). Graduated from National Taiwan University of Arts Department of History, Ph.D. from Committee on Social Thought, University of Chicago. Post-doctoral research at Harvard University. Honorary Professor of History, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

3.3.4 Youth

Mr. Lin: At the age of 20, I moved from the second or Adolescence stage, to the third stage, Youth. For me, this stage was one of self expression. It lasted six years between the ages of 20 and 26. That was the stage when I developed from a literature scholar to a philosophical thinker.

This development was connected to the influence of my family on me. Lin Tongji was also interested in philosophy so he influenced me to a certain extent. We were on good terms for we shared much in common.

“At the age of 25, one should express himself.” I read that line in a biography of Beethoven (Rolland, 2007) and I became determined to express myself. You can imagine how ambitious I was at the age of 25, just as Beethoven was described by Rolland in his saga.

Chen: You read the English version?

Mr. Lin: Yes, the English version, not the Chinese version. I read mostly in English. I think the original is more revealing than the translation. I am not expert at Chinese and feel more at home with English.

I once wrote an article that talked about the private cause, the public cause, and the historic cause. In the article I argued that one should first succeed in his private cause. Then he should seek success in something benefiting the public, not just himself or his immediate family. Lastly, he should seek to achieve something of historic significance, something that can stand the test of time, and something that will become part of history. This sets the highest demand on a person. I was very ambitious at that time to consider all three causes.

Chen: You were really ambitious.

Mr. Lin: I read many of Rolland’s biographies, mostly the long ones. I read his biography of Tolstoy. I was greatly influenced by Rolland, so I did not think about

joining the CPC. After the liberation, people wondered about you if you did not join the CPC.

Chen: So you joined the CPC after the liberation.

Mr. Lin: Yes. Wu Qiang introduced me to the CPC. He is still living and we are close friends.

Chen: But you did not join the CPC when you engaged in the underground work for it.

Mr. Lin: He wanted me to join the CPC at that time, but there were strict procedures for becoming a member of the CPC. The candidate had to be inspected carefully. He asked me to join the CPC, but I did not.

Chen: That was before 1949.

Mr. Lin: In 1949, or perhaps sometime in 1948.

Chen: Do you still keep in contact with him?

Mr. Lin: Yes. We are good friends. We met at an alumni meeting at Fudan University. He is a good person and we remain friends even after so many years.

Chen: I checked about Ji Pang, whom you mentioned earlier, when I went home. I believe he is likely to be still living.

Mr. Lin: Still living? Where?

Chen: In Hangzhou. He went to Hangzhou after the Hu Feng incident, and began teaching at a middle school called Anhui Middle School.

Mr. Lin: Is he still there?

Chen: I recently read about him. He is in a nursing home in Hangzhou. He would be the last one who was involved the Hu Feng incident.

Mr. Lin: I think so.

Chen: Hu Feng seemed to be quite a figure as he toured around and gave speeches in academic and artistic circles.

Mr. Lin: Yes. He could not have been against the CPC, and anyway, he was vindicated. That was my life during the third stage, until the age of 26. Under the influence of Romain Rolland, I displayed strong ego-centrism.

Chen: Is this the same period when you worked as a researcher in Sea Ray Library?

Mr. Lin: I worked at Sea Ray Library before liberation. I remember, because it was when the PLA was approaching.

Chen: That was a period of special significance to you. Although you worked there for only a short period, you began to study the history of thoughts as a way to fully express yourself. Your research work stopped after 1949, am I right?

Mr. Lin: After 1949, when I was ready to fully express myself, Mao Zedong came to the forefront, launching various thought reform movements. So I was soon lost even before I had time to fully express myself. That was quite a long period, and I still remember the painful experiences of that period.

Chen: Did you have any ideas or thoughts during that period that are now worth being proposed as mature thoughts? For example, the private cause, the public cause, and the historic cause were at that time quite ambitious and enterprising. Did you propose anything at that time that you believe is still valuable today?

Mr. Lin: The three causes were my own idea. There were other thoughts that were much talked about by many people. So I think they are still valuable.

Chen: Did you keep any articles written at that time?

Mr. Lin: I had many thoughts at that time, but I did not put them on paper.

Chen: While participating in the establishment of Sea Ray Library, you read a lot of Western classics.

Mr. Lin: Yes. A lot about literature. I studied philosophy later.

Chen: When did you begin systematically studying philosophy?

Mr. Lin: It was also about that time. At that time I had already begun to shift my focus from literature to philosophy.

Chen: That was about 1949, when you returned Shanghai and to Fudan University, wasn't it?

Mr. Lin: Yes. That was after I returned to Fudan University.

Chen: Do you read very fast?

Mr. Lin: I read rather slowly. I like to read intensively rather than extensively. I do not read much but I like reading for details and in depth.

Chen: Did you have access to books from abroad about philosophy during the Cultural Revolution?

Mr. Lin: Yes. I was able to find some.

Chen: So you continued reading books about philosophy.

Mr. Lin: The scope was quite limited, as the circulation of such books was restricted, but I found some. I read *A History of Western Philosophy* by Quan Zengjia (1985), and I have also read his other works. In my opinion, he made a remarkable contribution in this field, and his books are of high quality. I was able to find some works in English, mostly about philosophy and statistics.

3.3.5 Disorientation

Chen: The next stage is the stage of disorientation after 1949. It was quite a long period.

Mr. Lin: At that time I had a strong desire to present myself and my ideas on thoughts. When I said a person should fully present himself at the age of 25, there is a strong individual heroism in me. What's ironic is that I had hardly said that when my own self became lost after Mao Zedong came into power. Or as it is expressed these days, "I was indoctrinated with Mao Zedong thought." The term "indoctrinate" means filling your brain with certain doctrines or dogma as if your brain has been cleaned of what you originally had in it. There was a better term for it at that time: "ideological transformation."

Chen: It sounds like *clyster* or *lavage*.

Mr. Lin: Yes. Somewhat like that. Mao Zedong was too ambitious and confident of his programs to simply kill people. Instead he sought to transform your thinking by indoctrination. That's the "ideological transformation" in the Mao Zedong Era. That was something unique to China. If we look back, we can find something similar in ancient China.

Both Legalism and Confucianism had similar practices. Confucianism is quite complicated in many aspects. It involves a tutor, as in Rousseau's theory, who knows what you need better than you know yourself. According to his theory, people do not know what they really need. Mao carried that tradition further in his ideological transformation, which was much more powerful than force and instead intent on reforming people's souls. Perhaps Mao copied Rousseau's practice. Questions have been raised about some of Mao's practices.

So, before I really had time to present myself, I became lost. That was quite a complicated and horrible time. I read Michel Foucault (1926–1984), and found him to be quite a strange person and his book was not easy to understand. I read some but failed to understand what he said. However, one thing was quite enlightening to me. In the preface of *The Foucault Reader*, he mentioned an English philosopher named Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832), a utilitarian. Perhaps for the purpose of saving money or to promote efficiency, Bentham built a central tower (Note: *the Panopticon*³⁹) surrounded by a circle of small cells that housed prisoners. The high tower in the center was intended to monitor the prisoners below in their cells. The prisoners gradually became obedient, afraid that their violations might be observed from the high tower. Soon there were no violation among the prisoners, so the person who monitored others began to monitor himself, afraid of violating rules himself. That's indoctrination or "ideological transformation," with the external monitoring becoming internal unconscious monitoring—to some extent voluntarily.

Chen: Mao Zedong talked about transition as being from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom, a process in which internal restrictions replace external control.

³⁹ See: < <http://www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory/newhistoricism/modules/foucaultcarceral.html>>

Mr. Lin: That's why I think Mao was too powerful. Later, he was worshiped as a holy figure. Mao like the personality cult—or at least he was not against it. Soon that personality cult prevailed across the country.

Chen: That's also because China provides a hotbed for nurturing a personality cult.

Mr. Lin: That is based on the concept of the sage king, similar to the philosopher-king advocated by Plato in ancient Greece. The sage king, or philosopher-king, is not just the political ruler but a also symbol representing a perfect kingdom in the human world. Mao said he himself preferred to be a tutor. He thought much the same as Rousseau did. He was not content with the tangible government but sought to reform everyone's thinking so each person would monitor himself/herself. That's a powerful approach—and a horrible one, I now believe. Many people worshipped him, including me. I feel ashamed about that now as I recall it from my past.

A few did resist the ideological transformation, like Liang Shuming.⁴⁰ Another was Li Zehou,⁴¹ who was quite an independent person with his own thoughts. When he was sent away to a rural area to “reform his thinking,” he brought with him *Critique of Pure Reason* by Immanuel Kant. He read it by putting it under a book by Mao Zedong, while others were reading works by Mao. He came out as soon as the reform ended and the opening-up policy was implemented, and he wielded tremendous influence over the intellectual and cultural circles. That was because he had been well prepared.

Chen: He became famous when he was in his twenties. He must have been among the first university graduates after the liberation.

⁴⁰ Liang Shuming (梁漱溟, 1893 - 1988). Philosopher, teacher, and leader in the Rural Reconstruction Movement in the late Qing Dynasty and early Republican eras of Chinese history. Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liang_Shuming>.

⁴¹ Li Zehou (李泽厚, 1930-). Chinese scholar of philosophy and intellectual history. Born in China; currently resides in U.S. Considered an important modern scholar of Chinese history and culture whose work was central to the Chinese Enlightenment in the 1980s. Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Li_Zehou>.

Mr. Lin: He was a student at Beijing University, studying aesthetics under the guidance of Zhu Guangqian. He was quite young. He considered Zhu idealistic and Cai Yi⁴² materialistic, so he took a position somewhere in between. He was an original philosopher, with independent thinking. He once believed others, but not fully. In general, he was quite independent.

Chen: Liang Shuming and Li Zehou, as you just mentioned, studied thoughts and were competent thinkers. They were able to think independently. They were immune to the ideological viruses that might otherwise have attempted to invade and control them.

Mr. Lin: Yes. Wang Yuanhua was another example. He turned to studying Mao Zedong, but soon shifted his interest elsewhere.

Chen: He also tried the ideological transformation but found it very painful.

Mr. Lin: I admire Wang Yuanhua. He talked to me quite a lot during his last days, and I feel ashamed that what I have done does not compare with what he did.

Chen: Those were well-known scholars at the time. There were also quite a number of rightists who were young scholars or students. They were classified as rightists only because they expressed alternative points of view. They studied philosophy and other Western doctrines and expressed their opinions. They were mostly obscure people. A lot of them were not only brainwashed but also physically tortured after they were sent to rural areas and were forced to endure hard physical work.

Mr. Lin: Yes, you are right. For me, the Anti-Rightism Movement was both a near-death suffering and a political suffering. I was politically controlled and it was also life-

⁴² Cai Yi (蔡仪, 1906–1992). One of the earliest scholars who applied a dialectical materialist point of view on research of aesthetics problems in China.

Source: <<http://www.baike.com/wiki/%E8%94%A1%E4%BB%AA>>.

risking. Because I expressed my own opinions—some quite radical at the time—I was ordered to write self-criticizing reports. I was allowed three paid months to reflect on my thinking and write such reports. Later, the supervising leaders were generous enough to let me leave. I brainwashed myself during those three months. I found many works by Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao and buried myself in those books for three months. I even felt somewhat convinced. It something like the example of the central tower, where something inward urged me to speak as I was expected to. In fact, at that time, if I did not speak as expected and rejected the concepts of ideological transformation, then I might have been killed. Quite a number of rightists were sent to places with even worse living conditions for further ideological transformation. I had a friend named Zhu Qiyun, who later became a well-known journalist for *Ta Kung Pao*. He was sent to the Great Northern Wilderness. He survived and returned alive, but if it had been me, I would have died there. Many rightists who were sent there died there, far away from their homes.

Chen: A book titled *Notes on Jiabian Valley*, published in China, records some of the events that happened to rightists in Gansu Province during the ideological transformation.

Mr. Lin: That's not the only place where such ideological transformation was carried out in China. Under such pressure, most people became lost and very few were able to pull through and remain true to themselves. There was a man named Jin Guantao. He was young, yet able to think independently.

In such an environment, people were under surveillance, and as they began to monitor themselves in the course of ideological transformation, they became lost. How did that happen? First, they did not know what they wanted. They grew confused, gradually became brainwashed into a state of confusion, and lost themselves.

A human being's self is quite another issue. I do not agree with self-centralism but it is good to keep one's independent personality, isn't it? I think the self is a very special phenomenon. As I have mentioned elsewhere, the term "self" is something similar to the nature of a thing. In Buddhist theory, the nature of everything is emptiness. Everything happens because we think it happens.

Chen: What you said sounds like an idiom. In my opinion, this idiom means that nothing actually happens because the nature of the world is emptiness.

Mr. Lin: I agree. The term “emptiness” in Buddhism means existence.

Chen: Things exist because something else is empty.

Mr. Lin: Yes. Not absolutely empty. There has been much academic debate about this, and I have not studied it thoroughly. What I said just now is only my personal understanding of it.

Chen: So you think one should be himself, or at least he should have his own independent personality or self.

Mr. Lin: Yes, I think so. I am familiar with the work of David Hume (1711–1776), a kind of sensualist. He thought there was no such thing as a self in a person. According to him, you feel this way now, and that way in the next second, so there is no such thing as a consistent self. His idea sounds similar to the Buddhist one: believing that the nature of everything is empty. They are not exactly the same, but there is much in common. Some people believe there is no “self” because a person changes constantly, every day, from the moment he is born until his death. They believe there is no consistent self in anybody. Yet, Hume also thought that although one is different at his death from what he was at his birth, there is something consistent throughout all the changes so that people can still recognize the person – and that is his self. So he did not give a definite answer. He even did not hint at whether there is a “self” in flesh or in spirit. This is a major topic in discussions about the self. But we cannot talk about this now in detail.

Chen: Did you think about the consequences or possibilities that might have happened if you had not written those self-criticism reports, or if you had written poor self-criticism reports, or if you had failed to succeed in the ideological transformation?

Mr. Lin: Certainly I did. First it is forced on you, and then it becomes a self restraint. That is why I think it was a powerful tool. Ideological transformation turned external restraints into self restraints. I wrote those self-criticism reports for three months, and after the three months I began to worship Mao. From that point of view, I think the ideological transformation was an ambitious movement targeted at reforming the soul.

Chen: Such ideological transformation was also used by the Manchu over the Han Chinese during the Qing Dynasty.

Mr. Lin: That's also why the Japanese wanted to destroy the self-respect of the Chinese. The Japanese Yasukuni advocates considered the Chinese to be an inferior people because the Chinese had been obedient to Mongolians and later to the Manchu. So the Japanese adopted a similar strategy, convinced that if they were tough enough the Chinese would be obedient to them.

Chen: The Japanese treat their own people in the same way.

Mr. Lin: Japanese Shinto.

Chen: They paralyze their own people by ideological penetration.

Mr. Lin: That's Shinto education. I don't know much about it. As far as I know, there is no such a thing as the self in Shinto.

Chen: Perhaps that is because of the concept of "filial piety," which is widely valued in Confucian society in the East.

Mr. Lin: Traditional Chinese culture is quite complicated. The Chinese people are obedient to power, on the one hand, but they have also a strong desire to be independent.

The Japanese were not aware of this aspect of the Chinese, so they failed to conquer China.

3.3.6 Self-regression

Mr. Lin: Let's come back to the topic of disorientation. It was ironic that Mao Zedong came to power just as I was about to present myself. I became lost after three months of reflection and self-criticism. It was a critical period for me. Between 1949 and 1984—more than 30 years while I was in China, and six or seven years after the reform and opening-up policy was implemented—I still did not know where to go or what to do. I was a language teacher, so I thought about studying language grammar. Then I came to visit relatives in the U.S. I planned to return to China, but I became involved in several projects here. Later I was invited to help Tu Weiming⁴³ with several projects. My children were also in the U.S. at that time and there were no close relatives in China, so I settled here.

Nostalgia is a strange emotion. People get homesick in their later years. When they are young, they have hopes and plans for the future and seek achievements. When they become older, they accept themselves as they are and begin to cherish the past. I am doing this oral history partly for this reason. I recovered from the trauma I had suffered and found myself after I came to the U.S.

I want to talk more about self recovery. In the self-recovery stage, I found myself once again, I recovered my own self. On the other hand, I am now quite different from the self of many years back. After so many years of unpleasant experiences, I now have time to reflect on my experiences, thanks to the pleasant academic environment Harvard has provided me. Thanks to the help of Tu Weiming and others, I can do academic research and present myself in academic circles. In recent years, I am in the process of

⁴³ Tu Weiming (杜维明, born 1940), is an ethicist and a New Confucian. He is Professor of Philosophy and founding Dean of the Institute for Advanced Humanistic Studies at Peking University. He is also Research Professor and Senior Fellow of Asia Center at Harvard University. Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tu_Weiming>.

recovering myself, finding myself, somewhat akin to Lao-Tzu and Zhuangzi in terms of ideology.

I admire Lao-Tzu. According to Schwartz, Zhuangzi believed in mysticism, which sounds like a derogatory term, or now what we call reflective enlightenment. He advocates the integration of nature with human beings. According to Schwartz, Lao-Tzu and Zhuangzi advocate the return to the sea as the ultimate reality of being reabsorbed. Lao-Tzu advocates the return to the mother. You came from your mother and should return to your mother. The term “mother” here refers to nature or the universe. So the return to the mother means to return to and integrate with nature.

Chen: The modern word today is “matrix.” The Chinese term “mother” may also mean a uterus, a motherly body.

Mr. Lin: Yes, sort of.

Chen: This term is a translation by Schwartz. Is there a counterpart in English?

Mr. Lin: Yes. There is. “Return to the Mother,” means the same as the way a drop of water returns to the sea of the ultimate reality. Schwartz strongly emphasized this concept. He explored it in the Confucian context, and identified the concept of “ultimate reality,” which is termed “*tian*” (天, meaning “sky”). In the West, it is “God.” So Schwartz gives a very broad definition for the counterpart of “*tian*” in Western culture.

Chen: But the term seems to be borrowed from Confucian theory.

3.4 Conversation on Ancient Chinese Thoughts

3.4.1 The Dynamics of Understanding Chinese Culture

Chen: Schwartz also proposed that one could understand the Chinese culture by referring to the concept of “sky.” Yet, I think it was difficult for him to really understand it. In my opinion, “sky” is always around you wherever you are, monitoring you, like a divine force. You can understand it only by reflection or reflective enlightenment, as you just termed it. We learned the poems of ancient times when we were young. Here is the poem by Su Shi (“泥上偶然留指爪，鸿飞那复计东西? ”):

The wild goose left footprints in the snow
It is a matter of chance,
Because nobody knows where it was heading?
East or West, it is simply not certain.

It is the one with which you concluded your anthology. It should be understood in a Chinese manner, which is: at a certain moment, there is both a notion of existence and one of non-existence, which are opposite to, yet co-exist with, each other. The wild goose has gone but left her footprints. It is an image of both existence and non-existence. This kind of logic is present almost everywhere in Chinese culture.

Let’s look at another example, two well-known verses by Li Bai, “两岸猿声啼不住，青舟已过万重山”:

Cries of startled monkeys are still echoing in my ears,
Yet my boat has gone thousands of miles down the river.

My interpretation is that the echoing cries of the monkeys are a static notion, while the boat sailing down the river is a dynamic motion. The two co-exist simultaneously in the image created in the poem. Such a concept and philosophy are what we have learned and internalized in our selves since our childhood. That is perhaps what Schwartz called a lack of language intuition or culture that prevents Westerners from appreciating the Chinese culture. We Chinese believe that the law of impartiality exists within our mind. However, the Western counterpart of “*tian*,” or “Heaven,” is something aloft, far above human beings, and out of reach. Laymen are expected to obey the will of Heaven. This concept is reflected in Western cultures, in which an individual needs to die and be reawakened in order to find and realize his self. The ultimate goal of the development of the self is freedom, with no restraints or controls placed on him.

In the Chinese culture, an individual believes he is born free, with the freedom to think with his own will. This makes sense. So Lao-Tzu imagined himself as a drop of water returning to the sea. Such concepts are also present in the doctrine of Taoism, in a very literary mode. Someone who realizes the Way, or the truth, will think such a state is a stateless world, or the ultimate ideal life, in which an individual is integrated with the world. To the Chinese, the world is both empty yet contains everything. That's a very unique philosophy of the Chinese culture.

Mr. Lin: Schwartz insists that all major cultural and religious systems, such as the Chinese culture, the Indian culture, Judaism, and Buddhism, have one thing in common, which is the "problematique." This term is quite different from the term "problem," and it is difficult to accurately define.

Chen: Yes. A purpose is necessary for academic research. You have to be equipped with question awareness, instead of following existing conventions. Take chemical experiments, as an example. We cannot go headlong into an experiment without a purpose. We need direction and know what we hope to find through the experiment.

As you just mentioned, I think Western academic circles tend to have a major say in Sinology. There are some questions about this. The Chinese perspective of the history of China, proposed by Paul A. Cohen⁴⁴, is a regression from the perspective of the missionaries, as proposed by John K. Fairbank⁴⁵. That's closer to our own perspective, which originated from the Chinese cultural backgrounds and is thus closer to the truth. As Schwartz pointed out in the 1960s, it will take some time before Western scholars really understand the Chinese culture and make sense of the Chinese language. Therefore, there are still gaps between Western scholars and Chinese scholars, especially those with Chinese cultural backgrounds like we have. They are still regarded as having only a

⁴⁴ Paul A. Cohen (柯文, born 1934) is Edith Stix Wasserman Professor of Asian Studies and History Emeritus at Wellesley College and Associate of the Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies, Harvard University. His research interests include 19th-20th century China; historical thought; American historiography on China. Source: <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Cohen_\(historian\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Cohen_(historian))>.

⁴⁵ John King Fairbank (费正清, 1907 - 1991), was a prominent American academic and historian of China. Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_K._Fairbank>.

standby perspective and, therefore, many of their concepts are proposed from a Western perspective. It is like using the Western bow compass to draw a shape for the Chinese culture, which may not even be a circle. It is not fair to the Chinese culture, and from the perspective of academic research, it is defective. Or at least it is not the best approach to academic research.

Mr. Lin: Later, Schwartz took another approach, the “Weberian Verstehen” seeking to become immersed in the Chinese language environment as a means of achieving a better understanding of the Chinese culture.

3.4.2 Comparative Methods of Culture Study

Chen: I believe the approach taken by Weber and Schwartz to understand the Chinese culture is problematic. They adopted comparative methods for their studies. However, no two things can be compared. I don’t think the Chinese and Western cultures can be compared. We talked about Mou Zongsan’s⁴⁶ comments on Kant. He tried to join the “fingers of God” as proposed by Kant. According to Kant, however, the notion of God or the absolute world, is one world; the world of human ethics and philosophy is another; and the two worlds are separate and cannot be united. I believe it is actually impossible for a Chinese to understand Kantian theory or to answer Kantian questions because Kant argues that God is there because he is in the culture. You and I are neither Catholic nor Christian so we cannot understand that. It is dictated by our cultural background. Perhaps these questions are simply different ones.

Mr. Lin: Maybe it is still possible for them and us to talk about such issues. But according to Schwartz, it takes tremendous effort to step into the other’s shoes. He thinks we share the same problem of awareness but give different answers. However, as long as the question is the same, there is still a possibility for us to exchange ideas.

⁴⁶ Mou Zongsan (牟宗三, 1909 - 1995). Chinese New Confucian philosopher.

Chen: I reserve my opinion about this. I think it is possible for them and us to exchange ideas about 99% of the questions, but the ultimate problem may arise from the remaining 1% of the questions that fails despite every communication.

Mr. Lin: Debates remain as to whether there is a common denominator between different cultures. Human existence is a common issue for all because birth and death are shared stages of life.

3.4.3 The Relationships between Eternal Issues and Contemporary Issues

Chen: In our last talk, you mentioned two types of reflections: one about eternal issues, the other about the era we live in. I was thinking about this when I was compiling my notes.

Take those two fruits, for example [pointing to two dishes on the table]. We define one as an apple and the other as a pear, and they represent two cultures. You can find many things in common between the apple and the pear. But there is one difference, perhaps a minor difference: one is an apple and the other is a pear. They are different. We can trace the current difference back to ancient times. At least, they are both fruits from plants, much more sophisticated than single-celled microorganisms. At some point long ago, they must have had common ancestors.

We now talk about the Chinese civilization or the Christian civilization. They were two civilizations that originated before the times of Confucius and Jesus Christ. They became an apple and a pear. Isn't it true, then, that they also had a common origin some 2,500 years ago, or even earlier than that? I believe the answer is yes. If we had looked at that time, the courses of development might have been much clearer. But if we shorten history and compare the two civilizations at the times of Confucius or Jesus Christ, they were quite different, very far apart from each other. So, in fact, the eternal issues may be the common issue. Yet, the common issues of 2,500 years ago and our time may not be the same issues, not the ultimate issues.

I often think about such questions with reference to natural sciences and anthropology. It's quite interesting. Recently American professor Michael Keevak (2011) published an interesting book: *Becoming Yellow: A Short History of Racial Thinking*. As he points out, genetic studies show that there is no such racial division as yellow, white, or black races because the genes were handed down by common ancestors about 100,000 years ago, and genetic integration was completed by that time. Then sometime after 100,000 years, African people became darker complexioned because of greater exposure to the sun. There are many Chinese with complexions lighter than white people. The theory of races was proposed by Western scholars in the 16th or 17th century. Before that, during the time of Marco Polo, Western people admired the Chinese civilization and called the Chinese "white" people. Later, they valued their own civilization and called themselves white people because the word "white" represents "noble." This way, they integrated cultural factors with the ethnographic physical anthropological concepts.

Mr. Lin: That's quite an interesting issue, involving multiple disciplines.

Chen: This concept has now been justified. As to the yellow race, white people have some very interesting prejudices. They believe there are some genetic problems inherent in white people (for example, Down Syndrome, a hereditary disease). People with Down Syndrome used to be called Mongoloids (as in Mongolian disease), believing that such white people, with a little degradation, become yellow people. Following that logic, a little degradation in Chinese people would leave us as black people, which is ridiculous.

Mr. Lin: I do not know much about such a belief. It is not a mainstream belief in academic circles, but according to Schwartz, there is an axial civilization.

Chen: That was a concept first proposed by Karl Jaspers⁴⁷ (1883–1969) in 1940, who sought to view the world from a sectional perspective. This concept is not his major contribution, but he was the first to propose it.

Mr. Lin: That's true. Our discussion about these issues is beginning to go into great detail.

⁴⁷ A German psychiatrist and philosopher who had a strong influence on modern theology, psychiatry and philosophy. Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_Jaspers>.

Chen: Thanks to your inspiration. I do not hold a true-or-false attitude, but I cherish a skeptical attitude.

Mr. Lin: It is understandable. There is no way to analyze. Schwartz wanted to analyze the secret of life. He thought this process itself was the biggest mystery for people.

Chen: Everybody is involved in the process.

Mr. Lin: Talking about differences between the West and the East, they both have a common task—the general issue of life in the universe. Aware of the question is a common issue, but the difference lies in the different answers.

3.4.4 Issues Facing Contemporary China, and the Future of Chinese Society

Chen: Different answers are achieved by different approaches. In fact, the so-called “Social Darwinism,” about society, economy, and military causes, are all aimed at becoming stronger, faster, and higher. What drive substantiates such efforts? Individualism, or the pursuit of personal liberty. This is a pursuit originating from the Enlightenment. How do we address this issue? In my opinion, we should trace the issue back and seek answers from Chinese traditional culture.

There is a concept that requires clarifying. In the academic community, Confucian culture is often taken to represent what is believed to be typical of Chinese traditional culture. In my opinion, the two cultures are not the same. I still stick to my original idea. I think the Confucian culture is only one stage of Chinese traditional culture, with its own origin, development, and tendency toward ossification. Many elements in Chinese traditional culture should not be deemed as, or simplified into, Confucian dogmas. For instance, we talk about ideas that we think of as Confucian—interpretations of the sky, the earth, and human beings. They are quite different from those of Mencius⁴⁸ a few hundred years later. The nature of a Confucian concept was simply the nature of human beings. But Mencius developed it into a concrete virtue of human beings—quite different from the one proposed by Confucius, which is much more inclusive and active, like an active chemical element. Mencius worked it into a concrete molecule.

⁴⁸ 372–289 BC. Chinese philosopher, the most famous Confucian after Confucius himself.

Confucius was a thinker who bridged up the gap between ancient time and the times after him. I think he was greatly influenced by ancient Taoism. He studied the *Book of Changes* in his later years and regretted that he found it too late. Perhaps his remark hints that he began to return to nature and wanted to consider the question from the point where he was at that moment. He was a relay player. Unfortunately, succeeding players have twisted and ossified his active thoughts into rigid dogmas, perhaps for political reasons.

Later on, many scholars tried to interpret his theories and concepts, making the Confucian culture more concrete, with little development and doomed to ossification. Therefore, the Confucian culture cannot be deemed as the real Chinese traditional culture, in spite of the fact that it existed for a long time. Real traditional Chinese culture should be explored and structured following the stages of its natural development. I believe Liang Shuming best summarizes the Chinese traditional culture in his proposal that “向上心强，相与情厚 (“Man should be enterprising in his pursuit and amiable to others”). The first part is similar to the Western concept of “being aggressive,” but Liang also suggests the importance of the horizontal relationship, the relationship with other people, with non-living things, and the environment. That is a very Chinese theory.

The term “*ren*” (仁, “benevolence”) also refers to the relationship between two persons. It is about relationship rather than rigid dogma, isn’t it? Confucian concepts are a set of principles for conduct and relationships. Such relationships are dynamic and can be experienced through human nature and interaction. Such concepts and theories are more meaningful than the dogmas attached them. I think they play important roles if explored and revealed. Such significances are not brought about by Confucian doctrines. In my opinion, Confucian theories help to solve many of China’s problems and, in a large sense, and may set examples for solving many problems in different cultures of the world. We should think about and study where our culture originates. We should trace back to Confucius and even further back.

Mr. Lin: Schwartz believed there is a concept similar to the one of ultimate reality in Confucian theory. He mentioned that there is a God in Judaism and in Christianity, whose counterpart in the Chinese culture is sky. There are different symbols representing

the same concept. I do not know what in India represents the same concept. In Buddhism, it is the concept of “emptiness.”

There is a concept of ultimate reality in all major cultures, in different names, and with different cultural ideas and denotations. Schwartz thought this common concept provided people with a basis for communications on fundamental topics. I think his idea is quite profound. Although the ultimate reality seems to be far away from us, it is related to many modern issues today. Many people do not bother to think about ultimate reality. Instead, they seek satisfaction of their material desires.

Chen: Yes. Their material desires are much stronger than before, but nothing else.

Mr. Lin: Very few people are interested in this topic.

Chen: That’s because people began to focus on material desires ever since modernization began in the West.

Mr. Lin: Yes. Now people are more practical and mundane.

Chen: Indeed, the Chinese themselves are following this trend. Many Chinese do not care about it. They want to be rich before caring about such topics. But perhaps you will no longer be able to live in the healthy, harmonious, and normal way you did before you got rich.

Mr. Lin: China is now fully engaged in modernization, but people are ideologically confused. Schwartz identified major issues concerning human life and the universe, which are common to all. According to him, such issues are universal, both in the past and in the present. They are topics about which people can exchange ideas. Some people think different cultures cannot communicate because they are too different. Some Sinologists think communication between Western and Chinese cultures is difficult because they have different question awareness. Schwartz believes that different cultures

have different elements, but they also share many things in common, such as life, death, love, and desire.

He also discusses the issue of language. According to him, people using different languages can communicate, but it takes much more effort to realize full communication between different language users. You have to think in the same manner as the other person thinks, and have a real understanding of the environment, politics, and economy before you can really get inside the culture of that people.

Chen: Cross-cultural study is still in its infancy. That's what Schwartz said in 1964 – and after half a century, there still does not seem to be much change.

Mr. Lin: That is because scholars today hold opinions different from Schwartz's.

Chen: They talk at different levels of culture understanding.

Mr. Lin: Many Chinese today pursue only material prosperity. Schwartz wrote a book entitled *In Search of Wealth and Power: Yen Fu and the West* (1964). He argues that Yen Fu had great ambition, but first he had to talk about wealth and power because China had to survive the current crisis. If you do not pursue wealth and power, you will be oppressed by others, and the nation will perish. So he had to talk about wealth and power. So far, all the nations of the world are still in search of wealth and power, and some are being destroyed by others. That is social Darwinism. or the "law of the jungle." This theory still prevails in China and the rest of the world.

Chen: China has been forced to struggle to exist and survive.

Mr. Lin: China is still forced to do so, which is why Schwartz said it is understandable. If China did not pursue wealth and power, it would not be able to exist in the modern international world.

Chen: In fact, most of people in China today do not wonder about the ultimate goal, but are aware of one thing: to a certain degree, Darwin's theory of evolution is still popular in the human world. People feel at home with what they behold, or at least they have not found big problems with the theory. So they choose to accept it.

Mr. Lin: In fact, Darwinism is adopted by many, although it is short of being a wise vision.

Chen: Yes. A rather superficial doctrine, short of foresight. That's why it worries those who are truly concerned about the fate of the human race. The human race is still in a stage of chaos and confusion, and does not have a sober awareness of its own behavior.

Mr. Lin: Yes. This often reminds me of the fate of the *Titanic*. Everybody was enjoying themselves without knowing what they were about to encounter.

Chen: Not knowing that they were approaching an enormous crisis.

Mr. Lin: Today the world is confronted with climatic and energy-related crises, among many other problems. Yet, people continue to seek worldly delights.

Schwartz raises the question about the future of the human race. It is a critical question, not only for China but for the entire human race. In fact, the West still today follows this direction. That is why Schwartz felt lonely and isolated. Nobody wanted to listen to him or share his worries. Now the Chinese have also become concerned about how to be wealthy and powerful and to catch up with other modernized nations.

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Mr. Lin: That's about all, I think. I don't like to have it end and your work is just beginning which would take you much time.

Chen: My pleasure. I have learned a lot from you.

CHAPTER 4. Conclusion

Professor Lin experienced misfortunes and sufferings in his life, yet he has lived and is today living a meaningful life. The land where he was born and where he lived is rich in culture and laid a profound foundation for his life. The era in which he lived was star-studded. His interactions and friendships with many prominent cultural figures during his youth helped him to make significant transitions in his life. Unfortunately, his career as a thinker was discontinued abruptly, by force, just when he was about to embark on his journey of cultural exploration. Yet, his later visit to the U.S. provided him a perfect opportunity to exchange a large quantity of cultural experiences and studies with American scholars, thus bringing him to the peak of his life and career.

I propose that there are three modes for studying human history and culture: literature, philosophic, and religious. As Professor Lin noted, he completed the transition from the literature mode to the philosophic mode during his youth (or the third stage of thinking). Then, when he came to the U.S. and became acquainted with Professor Schwartz, Schwartz's religious concepts, such as "transcendence," had a significant impact on Lin's thinking. Later Lin found himself converting to Taosim, which signaled his transition to the religious mode of study.

Lin's oral history shows us how Western and Eastern cultures were integrated in him to create an almost perfect series of steps in the process of his personal development: a foundation of traditional Chinese culture; exploration of Western culture, study of the English language, exploration of the world of thoughts in Western culture, communications and interactions between Western and Eastern cultures, and his return to Taoism and Lao-Tzu's and Zhuangzi's philosophies. The oral history interview process clearly illustrated how a thoughtful soul developed, full of confusions and reliefs, challenges and responses, twists and turns, and sudden insights and transcendences.

In a larger sense, is this not a similar process for the development of Chinese culture in the modern era? Concepts of different levels: individuals, eras, and histories., Why do the way of their development seem so similar to each other? Is this the inevitable recurrence of the "fractal character" (Mandelbrot, 1967) in the evolution of history? Is

there a certain mysterious law that functions in the same manner at different points of time? That remains a wonder for us to explore.

APPENDIX I

LIN TONGQI'S FAMILY HISTORY⁴⁹

The Lins originated in Henan, a province in northern China. Their first ancestor was said to be the son of Bigan, a venerable and righteous prince of the Shang Dynasty (1751–1112 B.C.). Bigan's son was born a little before 1122 B.C., i.e., more than 3000 years ago. As years went by, the Lins spread and settled all over China. One branch moved to Fujian, a province in southern China, probably in the seventh century during the Tang dynasty (618-907 A.D.). After another 29 generations, the direct line of Lin's ancestry in Fujian moved to Donghan in Fujian province, a place now belonging to the Greater City of Fuzhou.

Professor Lin Tongqi's great-grandfather, Lin Zhuosan (1830–1896), is identified as belonging to the 27th generation of this line. Zhuosan, after serving as a teacher for some time, became a Juren and then a Jinshi.⁵⁰ Later he served as chief magistrate of Shunde, a county in the southern province of Guangdong. When he retired and returned to his native city of Fuzhou, he built four houses. He lived in one of them and rented out the other three.

Zhuosan had four sons. His eldest son the grandfather and also the grandfather of T. H. and Tung-chu) was Lin Fuxi (1848-1925), who was first a Juren and then became a Jinshi in 1886. His second son apparently died as a young man. His third son Lin Fuyung (1860-1922) was a Juren. His fourth son, Lin Fuyi (1870-1930) (Tung Po's grandfather) was also a Juren in 1893 and could have become a Jinshi later if the Keju system had not been abolished in 1905.

It is important to note that Fuyi was probably the first of the Lins who gave up the career of a typical scholar-official and studied law at Jingshi University, later known as Peking University, now known as "the Harvard of China." He graduated in 1911. After graduation, he served as a judge for the rest of his life. He later became a judge of the High Court of Jiangsu Province.

⁴⁹ Source: Lin, Tongqi. *Lin Tongqi Anthology*, 2006

⁵⁰ Juren and Jinshi: two major degrees in the Imperial Examination system, equivalent to a modern degreesuch as a Masters and PhD.

Fuyi in fact took a crucial step in the modern transformation of the Lins' career path. The *literati* tradition, which stressed the study of Confucian classics, poetry composition, essay writing, and calligraphy, gave way to modern more professions.

It was also significant that all three of Fuyi's sons became professionals in the modern sense. His first son, Lin Silian (1889–1914), graduated from Peking University and later studied post and telecommunications in Austria. The other two sons were Lin Siming (or Shuming, 1892–1987) and Lin Sichen (1894–1960). After receiving their engineering education in the U.S., they became an architect and a geologist, respectively. The shift to modern professions for the Lins seemed to occur as early as the first decade of the twentieth century. These professions are, however, ones that stress knowledge and wisdom rather than wealth and power.

“Si” generation parented their children of the “Tong” generation kindly and equally, even during the unrest of the war-torn era, often with meager salaries, they tried to provide their children with a good education, and dozens of them gradually became famous. Here are a few outstanding examples:

Tung-Yen Lin⁵¹ (林同棧); Lin Dongji⁵² (林同驥); and Tung Hua Lin⁵³ (林同驊).

⁵¹ A structural engineer who pioneered the standardized use of pre-stressed concrete. See: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tung-Yen_Lin>.

⁵² Famous Chinese mechanical scholar, graduate of the Department of Aerospace Engineering, Central University, Chongqing, 1942. Received Ph.D. in aerospace engineering, University of London, 1948. The same year, he went to the University of Washington and engaged in research and teaching about rarefied gases. Later, he visited the laboratory of the University of California for rarefied gas field studies, and Brown University for research in fluid mechanics and the elasticity of applied mathematics. After 1949, Lin Dongji hoped to return to China to practice his knowledge and talents. At that time America viewed him as a rare talent, so the U. S. government would not allow him to leave easily. He struggled for five years, and in fall 1955, accompanied by his wife Zhang Bin, return to China. He was Academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and won the China National Natural Science award. He had made important contributions in the studies of rarefied gas, aerospace, marine engineering mechanics. In 1984, he received the Badge of Honor issued by the National Defense for “Dedication to national defense science and technology.” He also served as deputy director of the Institute of Mechanics, Chinese Academy of Sciences, China Aviation Society, and deputy director of the China Aerodynamics Research Committee, the International Institute of Theoretical and Applied Mechanics. See: <<http://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E6%9E%97%E5%90%8C%E9%AA%A5>>.

⁵³ Chinese-American aerospace and structural engineer best known for designing China's first twin-engine aircraft during World War II. See: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tung_Hua_Lin>.

APPENDIX II

ABOUT THE SEA RAY LIBRARY

The Sea Ray Library of Western Thoughts⁵⁴ was founded in 1948 by Lin Tongji, a well-known, patriotic intellectual and Shakespeare scholar, with funding from K. P. Chen, founder of Shanghai Commercial and Savings Bank. It closed in 1949, shortly after Shanghai was liberated, thus it existed for only one year. Nevertheless, the library left an indelible page in Chinese history, and its name is forever connected with these two prominent financial and cultural figures.

Lin Tongji was a famous thinker among the academia of modern China, and a prominent figure in the School of Strategies of the Warring States. As a state-financed student, he went to America for further study after graduating from Tsinghua University. He majored in the International Relations, the History of Western Literature, and Science of Politics, consecutively, at the University of Michigan and the University of California–Berkeley, where he received a Ph.D. degree. Later, he taught at the University of California and the Millersville University in the U.S.

Upon his return to China in 1934, he became a professor of Economics and Politics at the Nankai Institute of Economics, and an editor of the *Nankai Social and Economic Quarterly* (English) at Nankai University. In 1937, he began teaching at Yunnan University and Fudan University. He passed away in San Francisco in November, 1980, during a lecture tour to the U.S.

Lin Tongji is the elder brother of Professor Lin Tongqi.

K. P. Chen⁵⁵ (陈光甫, also known as Huide, styled himself Guangfu, alias Bingshou) was born in Zhenjiang, Jiangsu Province. Following in his father's footsteps, he worked as an apprentice in the Xiangyuan Customs Agency in Hankou for seven years beginning at the age of 12. During the apprenticeship, he worked hard to improve his

⁵⁴ Ref: "Sea Ray Library Overview", Shanghai the Archives, Ref Q275-1-2591.

⁵⁵ Ref: < http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/K._P._Chen>.

English and financial knowledge. In 1898, he sat for a test and was consequently recruited by Hankou Customs House. Later, he joined Hanyang Arsenal as an interpreter. Thanks to his proficiency in English, Chen was selected as a member of the delegation of Hubei Province to the International Fair in St. Louis in 1903. Thereafter, he enrolled at Simpson University, Iowa, and then in Ohio, successively. After graduating from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, he returned to China in 1909. His talents were greatly appreciated by Cheng Dequan, then governor of Jiangsu Province, who appointed him as head of the provincial financial department and General Manager of Bank of Jiangsu.

In 1915, he founded Shanghai Commercial & Savings Bank (Shanghai Bank) and China Travel Agency, both of which hold significant status in the modern history of China.

Many common banking services are currently available, such as one dollar accounts, fixed deposit by installment, fixed deposit for withdrawal by installment, coupons savings, education savings, notice deposits, and traveler's checks. All were pioneering initiatives in China, promoted by Shanghai Bank. Knowing well that the secret of success in the financial business lies in credit, which in turn is based on services, at the inception of Shanghai Bank, he established the motto "Serving Society," as the primary guideline for the bank. Many laughed at him, as they believed the primary purpose of a bank is to make profit rather than provide service. They did not understand that he was succeeding by providing services to society. To him, the bank would earn a deserved profit by serving the public and in return it would reap satisfaction and confidence from its customers. Chen and Shanghai Bank are widely recognized in the history of finance in China.

Chen was not only one of the first financial capitalists full of wisdom, ambition, and creativity, but he was also knowledgeable and interested in reading and studying new things. After the outbreak of the Anti-Japanese War, Shanghai Bank was moved west to Chongqing, where it went through a slack period, which left Chen more time to read and communicate with intellectuals who were taking refuge in the southwest.

In the summer of 1937, Chiang Kai-shek held a conference in Lushan that included influential intellectuals across China, known as “Lushan Conference.” Lin Tongji was among those who were invited.

In 1941, Lin Tongji came to Chongqing from Kunming for medical treatment. He became acquainted with K. P. Chen through Ji Chaoding,⁵⁶ a classmate at Tsinghua University, who was then Chen’s secretary (interestingly, the secretary was a secret CPC member under Zhou Enlai’s direct supervision), and soon became a frequent visitor at Chen’s home. He even replaced Chen’s home tutor for reading.

It was during that time that Lin Tongji proposed to Chen that Shanghai Bank contribute a fund to set up a special library of Western thoughts, to which Chen readily agreed. As Lin Tongji later recalled, “In my opinion, Shanghai was an over-commercialized city, and a library that collected books and magazines of Western thinking would show that Shanghai Bank did not focus solely on financial profit but also sought to serve pure culture. Such a library would also be of great significance in providing access to those seeking to absorb Western thinking for the future cultural development of China.” After the war, Chen did as he promised and the library was founded by Lin Tongji at #16, Lane 209, Panyu Road in Shanghai, a three-story building of Western style. The house was bought by Shanghai Bank as a residence for Chen, but he declined to live there, and the house became used for the library.

As an open library with a distinctive collection, it had great social influence at that time. Books in the library were collected mainly through three channels:

1. Books were purchased in Europe and America and mailed to the library. Quite a number of valuable old and rare editions of some books were purchased from private owners and secondhand bookstores. Lin Tongji bought books in English, French, and German of a total cost of \$3,000 on a tour in 1946.
2. Lin Tongji contacted university libraries during his tour to Europe and America and asked them to donate some duplicate copies.

⁵⁶ Ji Chaoding (冀朝鼎, 1903-63). Economist, Ph.D., Columbia University. Held a high position in the Kuomintang government. His young brother, Ji Chaozhu (冀朝铸) was an English interpreter for Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai. Source: <http://www.conservapedia.com/Chi_Chao-ting>, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ji_Chaozhu>.

3. The third channel was donations from celebrities. Kong Xiangxi and Zhang Jia'ao, among others, donated books to the library. Those books were marked with an imprint commemorating their donation. Among these books is an original edition of *Das Kapital* in German.

In addition to public book lending, the library also hosted reading and reporting forums every one or two weeks, where club members gave lectures on a wide range of subjects, including philosophy, politics, economics, and culture. One lecture was on "Novels by Dostoevsky"; another one on "Several Issues of Journals of the USA." Once Zhang Junmai, was invited to talk on the "Constitutionalism of China," and a teacher from Fudan University talked about the "Essence and Literature of Marxism-Leninism." In addition to bank staff, outside readers were also allowed to attend the lectures.

On May 13, 1949, just before Shanghai was liberated and K. P. Chen had left Shanghai for Hong Kong, the Sea Ray Library was suddenly surrounded by police and spies. All of the library staff, including Lin Tongji, and even readers who happened to be in the library, were taken prisoners by the KMT. They were questioned about who were CPC members, and what Communist books and magazines were stored in the library. The next day, they were escorted back to and retained in the library. The KMT secret agent searched the library for Communist books and magazines, saying that all of them would be "collectively shot to death." Lin Tongji was also handcuffed and questioned on the third floor of the library, where the secret agents demanded that he tell everything about his participation in the underground work he had done for the CPC. The secret agent left hurriedly when the PLA began to attack the central part of Shanghai, putting an end to the incident at the Sea Ray Library.

What is interesting is an anecdote from the event. The secret agent who led that incident later was referred by Lin Tongji to Chen in Hong Kong and later went to the U.S. for further study.

Even at the peak of his career, Chen remained watchful, knowing that the environment was constantly changing and the only way to maintain the vitality of the bank was to make constant improvements. He urged his employees to continue studying to keep up with the times. He often told them that study helps to keep people from being arrogant and selfish. He himself had a habit of reading and three mornings each week he

would invite experts to lecture him on history and philosophy and have briefings on economic and financial publications every Saturday afternoon.

Sea Ray Library was founded based on this dedication to intellectual studies. Chen often said to others that he actually had three achievements rather than two, as he fondly included Sea Ray Library as the third.

Sea Ray Library was closed soon after liberation, and its books were transferred to the People's Library of Shanghai, where the "Catalog of Books of Former Sea Ray Library" is available for reference.

Chen passed away in Taipei in 1976.

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