

RESEARCH CENTRE FOR CHINESE  
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# 中国哲学与文化

THE JOURNAL OF CHINESE PHILOSOPHY AND CULTURE

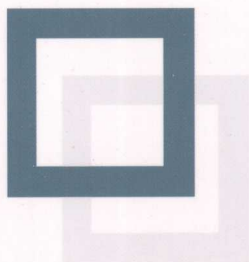
第二辑

NO.2

注释，诠释，还是创构？

Annotation, Interpretation, or Creative Reconstruction?

刘笑敢 主编



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广西师范大学出版社

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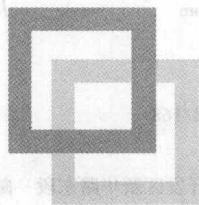
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· 桂林 ·

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## 在 2006 年克鲁格奖颁奖仪式上的演讲

余英时\*

成为 2006 年 John W. Kluge Prize 的共同得主,我深感荣幸,并在这里表示感谢。不过在自我反省以后,我认识到今天我得以在这里的主要理由应该说是透过表彰我来表达对中国文化传统和作为一门学科的中国思想史的敬意,前者是我毕生学术研究的对象,而后者则是我所选择的专门领域。

在 1940 年代,我对中国历史和文化研究开始产生浓厚的兴趣,那时,中国的历史思考正陷于一种实证主义和反传统的模式中。中国整个过去都被负面地看待,无论何种看起来像是独特的中国的东西,都被解释成是对于以西方历史发展为代表的文明进步的普遍模式的一种背离。其结果,中国传统文化各个方面的研究,从哲学、法律、宗教到文学和艺术,常常等同于谴责和控告。毋须赘言,那时我对中国文化的认同,更要紧的也是对我个人的认同,处于一种完全的迷失中。所幸的是,我得以在香港完成我的大学教育,继而我又能在现已是我家园的美国攻读研究生。

当我的认识和视野随着时间而渐渐开阔,我开始明白真相是我们必须清楚地认识到中国文化是一种具有明显自我特征的原生传统。中国文化开始清晰呈现出她的特定形态是在孔子(前 551—前 479)的时候,这在古代世界是一个非常重要的年代,在西方有个更为人所知的称呼是“轴心时代”。人们已经注意到的是,在这个时期,包括中国、印度、波斯、以色列和希腊在内的几个高度发达的文化都发生了一种精神觉醒或“突破”。它所产生的形式或是哲学推理,或是后神话的宗教想像,或如中国

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\* [美]普林斯顿大学校聘讲座教授。

据《纽约时报》(*The New York Times*)2006 年 11 月 15 日报道,克鲁格奖(John W. Kluge Prize)是由克鲁格捐资,为诺贝尔奖未能涵盖的人文研究,如历史学、政治学、社会学、哲学、人类学、宗教学、语言学和批评而设立的不分语言的奖项,由美国国会图书馆主持颁发。本文是在 2006 年 12 月 5 日颁奖仪式上的演讲。——译者按

那样,是一种道德—哲学—宗教的意识的混合体。这一觉醒直接导致了现实世界与超现实世界的区分。作为一种新视野,超现实世界使思想者——他们或者是哲学家,或者是先知,或者是圣贤——拥有必要的超越观点,从而能够反思与批判性地检视与质疑现实世界。这便是通常所知的“轴心时代”的原创超越,但其确切形态、经验内容和历史过程则每个文化各不相同。这种超越的原创性在于它对涉身于其中的文化产生持久的塑造性影响。

孔子时代中国的原创超越的一个结果是出现了最重要的“道”的观念,它是相对于日常生活的现实世界的超现实世界的一个象征。但是,中国这个“道”的超越世界从最开始起便被认为是与日常生活的现实世界彼此相关的,这与处于轴心突破中的其他古代文化迥然不同。例如,柏拉图认为存在着一个看不见的永恒世界,而现实世界只不过是它苍白的复制,这种概念在早期中国哲学的图景中是全然没有的。在中国的宗教传统中,像基督教那样将神的世界与人的世界决然二分的类型也不存在。我们在中国诸子百家的思想中,找不到任何与早期佛教极端否定现实世界、强调空无相类似的观点。相反,“道”的世界从不远离人的世界,正如孔子讲得好:“道不远人。人之为道而远人,不可以为道。”而且我要马上讲,“道”的这一个观念并非只是孔子及其追随者拥有,包括老子、墨子、庄子在内的中国“轴心时代”所有的主要思想家都共享这一观念。他们共同相信,“道”虽是隐藏的,但在人的世界中却无处不发生作用,即便是只有一般理解力的男女在其日常生活中也能或多或少地体会并践履这种“道”。“轴心时代”的原创观念,尤其是儒家与道家的观念,确实对于此后许多世纪的中国人的生活产生了日渐增长和日渐深刻的影响,因此可以不夸张地认为,“道”和历史构成了中国文明的内核与外形。

在把中国文化传统本质上视为固有起源和独立生长的前提下,我在过去几十年里尝试沿着两条主要线索来研究中国历史。第一,中国文化必须按其自身的逻辑并同时从比较的角度来加以理解。所谓的“比较的角度”,我指的是在早期中华帝国时代的印度佛教和十六世纪以来的西方文化。毋须赘言,十九世纪中国与西方的第二次相遇是震撼世界的历史事件。从二十世纪初开始,中国人的思想在很大程度上专注于中西相对的问题。但如果仅仅用自身的逻辑来解释中国的过去,而缺乏比较的角度,那无疑会有掉到简单的中华中心主义这个古老窠臼之中的危险。

第二,在我对从古代到二十世纪的中国思想史、社会史和文化史的研究中,我总是将焦点放在历史阶段的转变时期。无论是“轴心时代”以前,还是“轴心时代”及其以后,中国与其他文明相比,其悠久历史的延续性尤其显著。但是,在中国历史的演进中,连续与变化是始终并存的。因此,我使自己的研究设定在两个目标:首先是弄清楚中国历史上重要的思想、社会和文化变迁,其次是尽可能辨识中国历史变迁的独特模式。中国历史上这些意义深远的变迁其重要性常常超出了朝代的更替。虽然“朝代循环”的观念长期被传统中国所奉行,而且短时间内也在西方流行,但这是个很误导的观念。二十世纪初期,中国的历史学家以其日本同行为榜样,开始按照西方的历史模式重新建构和重新解释中国历史。此后便通常认为,中国一定曾经历过与西方历史相似的发展阶段。在二十世纪前半期,中国的历史学家采用早期欧洲的断代模式,将中国历史分成古代、中世纪和近现代;1949 年以后,则以五阶段论取而代之。后者在今日中国仍为正统,即便在实际的研究中不总是这样,至少在理论上仍是如此。这种削足适履的方法,无论它有什么其他的优点,不可能对作为一种固有传统的中国文化作出完全合理的评估。我确信,只有通过关注中国历史变迁的独特过程与方式,我们才有可能更清晰地看到这个伟大的文化传统是如何在其内在活力的推动下(这种活力虽不是唯一的因素,但却是主要的因素)从一个阶段走向另一个阶段。

现在容许我转到另一个问题:作为两个不同的价值系统,在历史的视野里中国文化是如何与西方文化相对照的?刚才提到,我最初接触这个问题是在 1940 年代后期,那时中西相对的一系列问题支配了整个中国思想界。此后,这些问题从来没有在我的意识之外。我在美国生活已达半个世纪,当我在两个文化之间遨游,这些问题对我来说已经具有了一种真实的存在意义。经过一些最初的心理调适,我早已能在接受美国的生活方式的同时保留我的中国文化认同。然而,中国文化是否能和西方的核心价值相容,我们最好的导引还是来自于中国历史本身。

中国初遇近代西方是在十六世纪末,那时耶稣会士来到东亚传教。对文化敏感的利玛窦,当他在 1583 年到达中国时,很快发现当时中国的宗教氛围是极其宽容的。儒、佛、道基本上被视为可以合一的事物。事实上,在王阳明(1472—1529)的影响下,晚明的儒家确信三教各自掌握了同一种“道”的一个面向。正是这种对宗教的宽容精神使得利玛窦在

传教方面取得非凡的成功,许多儒家精英人物皈依了基督教,其中特别值得注意的是被称为“传道三柱石”的徐光启(1562—1633)、李之藻(1565—1630)和杨廷筠(1557—1627)。儒家相信人同此心以及得“道”的普世性,这使一些儒家转而支持儒耶的结合,儒家的“道”至此扩展到将基督教也包括进来了。中国与西方在宗教层面上的这种早期关系,无论如何都不可能解释成为一种冲突。在十九世纪末,也正是那些思想开放的儒家才热情地接受那些在近代西方占主导地位的价值与理念,像民主、自由、平等、法治、个人的自主性,以及最重要的人权等等。当他们中的一些人第一次访问欧美并停留足够的时间做第一手观察时,首先给他们留下深刻印象的都是西方宪政民主的理念与制度。协助理雅各(James Legge)英译儒家经典的王韬(1828—1897)在1870年从英国回到香港时,就把英国的政治与法律捧上了天。王韬可能是第一个使用“民主”这一中文术语的儒家学者,他对晚清的儒家政治思想起了相当大的影响。到了二十世纪初,中国出现了以今文经学和古文经学而著称的两个相对立的儒家学派,两派虽然各有一套,但都倡导民主。前者赞成立宪制,后者推动共和制。王韬曾将英国政治与司法比作儒家经典中所描述的三代,也许是受此启发,今古文经学两派开始有系统地在早期儒家文献中寻求民主观念的起源和演化。显然,在这样做的过程中,他们已经把中西文化的兼容性看作是理所当然的了。

最后,我想就“人权”说几句话。就像“民主”这个词,作为一个术语,“人权”是西方独有的,在传统儒家的话语中不存在。但是,如果我们同意联合国1948年的共同宣言中有关“人权”的界定,即人权是对共同人道和人类尊严的双重承认,那么我们也完全可在不使用“人权”这一西方术语的情况下来谈论儒家的“人权”理念。在《论语》、《孟子》和其他早期文献中就已经清楚地论述了对共同人道的承认和人类尊严的尊重的观念。了不起的是最迟到公元一世纪,在皇帝的诏书中,儒家强调人类尊严的观点已被公开引用来作为禁止买卖和杀戮奴隶的充分依据。在公元9年和35年颁布的帝王诏书中都引述了孔子的同一句名言:“天地之性人为贵。”奴隶作为一种制度,从来没有被儒家接受为合法。正是儒家的人道主义,才使得晚清儒家如此欣然地接受西方的人权理论与实践。

如果历史是一种指引,那么中西文化之间在基本价值上似乎存在着

大量重叠的共识。中国的“道”毕竟就是对共同人道和人类尊严的承认。我比以往任何时候都更坚信，一旦中国文化回到“道”的主流，中西相对的一系列问题也将随之而终结。

(何俊 译)

## **Address of Yu Ying-shih on the Occasion of Receiving the John W. Kluge Prize at the Library of Congress (2006)**

I feel enormously honored to be a co-recipient of the John W. Kluge Prize in 2006, for which I am grateful. After much reflection, however, I have come to the realization that the main justification for my presence here today is that both the Chinese cultural tradition and Chinese intellectual history as a discipline are being honored through me. The former has been the subject of my lifetime scholarly pursuit, and the latter my chosen field of specialization.

When I first became seriously interested in the study of Chinese history and culture in the 1940s, the Chinese historical mind happened to be cast in a positivistic and anti-traditionalistic mold. The whole Chinese past was viewed negatively, and whatever appeared to be uniquely Chinese was interpreted as a deviation from the universal norm of progress of civilization as exemplified in the historical development of the West. As a result, studies of aspects of the Chinese cultural tradition, from philosophy, law, religion to literature and art, often amounted to condemnation and indictment. Needless to say, I was at a complete loss as to the Chinese cultural identity and, for that matter, also my personal identity. It was my good fortune that I was able to finish my college education in Hong Kong and pursued my graduate studies in the United States, now my adopted country.

As my intellectual horizon gradually widened over the years, the truth was beginning to dawn on me that Chinese culture must be clearly recognized as an indigenous tradition with characteristics distinctly its own. The crystallization of Chinese culture into its definitive shape took place in the time of Confucius (551 – 479 B. C. E. ), a crucial moment in the ancient world better known in the West as the Axial Age. During this period, it has been observed, a spiritual awakening or “breakthrough” occurred in several highly-developed cultures including China, India, Persia, Israel and Greece. It took the form of either philosophical reasoning or post-mythical religious imagination or, as in the case of China, a mixed type of moral-philosophic-

religious consciousness. The awakening led directly to the emergence of the dichotomy between the actual world and the world beyond. The world beyond as a new vision provided the thinking individuals, be they philosophers, prophets or sages, with the necessary transcending point from which the actual world could be examined and questioned, critically as well as reflectively. This is generally known as the original transcendence of the Axial Age, of which the exact shape, empirical content and historical process varied from culture to culture. The transcendence is original in the sense that it would exert a long-lasting, shaping influence on the cultures involved.

As a result of the Chinese original transcendence in the time of Confucius, the all-important idea of Tao (Way) emerged as a symbol of the world beyond vis-a-vis the actual world of everyday life. But the Chinese transcendental world of Tao and the actual world of everyday life were conceived from the very beginning to be related to each other in a way different from other ancient cultures undergoing the Axial breakthrough. For example, there is nothing in the early Chinese philosophical visions that suggests Plato's conception of an unseen eternal world of which the actual world is only a pale copy. In the religious tradition, the sharp dichotomy of a Christian type between the world of God and the world of humans is also absent. Nor do we find in classical Chinese thought in all its varieties anything that closely resembles the radical negativity of early Buddhism with its insistence on the un-reality and worthlessness of this world. By contrast, the world of Tao was not perceived as very far from the human world. As best expressed by Confucius, "The Tao is not far from man. When a man pursues the Tao and remains away from man, his course cannot be considered the Tao." I must hasten to add, however, that the notion of Tao was not the monopoly of Confucius and his followers but shared by all the major thinkers in the Chinese Axial Age, including Lao Tzu, Mo Tzu and Chuang Tzu. It was their common belief that Tao is hidden and yet functions everywhere in the human world; even men and women of simple intelligence can know and practice it in everyday life to a larger or lesser degree. Indeed, judging from the ever-growing and ever-deepening influences of the ideas originating in the Axial

Age, especially Confucian and Taoist ideas, on all aspects of Chinese life down through the centuries, it may not be too much an exaggeration to suggest that Tao and history constitute the inside and the outside of Chinese civilization.

Taking the Chinese cultural tradition to be essentially one of indigenous origin and independent growth, I have tried over the decades to study Chinese history along two main lines. First, Chinese culture must be understood in its own terms but at the time also in a comparative perspective. By "comparative perspective" I refer to both Indian Buddhism in the early imperial period and Western culture since the 16th century. Needless to say, China's second encounter with the West in the 19th century was a historical event of world-shaking magnitude. Since the beginning of the 20th century, the Chinese mind has been largely preoccupied with the problematique of China-versus-the-West. To interpret the Chinese past solely in its own terms without a comparative perspective would surely run the risk of falling into the age-old trap of simple-minded sinocentrism.

Second, in my study of Chinese intellectual, social and cultural history, from classical antiquity to the 20th century, my focus has always been placed on periods of change when one historical stage moved to the next. Compared to other civilizations, China's is particularly marked by its long historical continuity before, during and since the Axial Age. But continuity and change went hand-in-hand in Chinese history. Therefore, the purpose I have set myself is twofold: firstly, to identify the major intellectual, social and culture changes in the Chinese past and, secondly, to discern if at all possible the unique pattern of Chinese historical changes. More often than not, such broad and profound changes in Chinese history transcended the rise and fall of dynasties. Thus the notion of "dynastic cycle," long held in traditional China but also briefly in vogue in the West, is highly misleading. In the early years of the 20th century, Chinese historians, following the example of their Japanese colleagues, began to reconstruct and re-interpret the Chinese past according to the historical model of the West. Since then it has been generally assumed that China must have undergone similar stages of historical devel-

opment as shown in European history. In the first half of the 20th century, Chinese historians adopted the earlier European schemes of periodization by dividing Chinese history into ancient, medieval and modern periods, which has been replaced since 1949 by the five-stage formulation. The latter remains the orthodoxy in China up to this day, at least in theory if not always in actual practice. This Procrustean approach, whatever merits it may otherwise have, cannot possibly do full justice to Chinese culture as an indigenous tradition. Only by focusing on the unique course and shape of Chinese historical changes, I am convinced, can we hope to see more clearly how that great cultural tradition moved from stage to stage driven, mainly if not entirely, by its internal dynamics.

Now let me turn to the question of how, as two different systems of values, does Chinese culture stand vis-a-vis Western culture in historical perspective? My earliest exposure to this question occurred in the late 1940s when the problematique of China-versus-the-West, mentioned earlier, dominated the Chinese intellectual world. It has not been out of my consciousness ever since. Living in the United States for half a century, the question has acquired a truly existential meaning for my life as I move between the two cultures from moment to moment. With some initial psychological readjustments, I have long been able to enjoy the American way of life while still retaining my Chinese cultural identity. However, the best guide with regard to whether Chinese culture is compatible with the core values of the West can only be provided by Chinese history.

China first encountered the modern West at the end of the 16th century when the Jesuits came to East Asia to do their missionary work. The culturally sensitive Matteo Ricci, who arrived in China in 1583, was very quick to discover that the Chinese religious atmosphere at that time was highly tolerant; Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism were generally regarded as one and same thing. As a matter of fact, under the influence of Wang Yang-ming (1472 – 1529), late Ming Confucians firmly believed that each of the three religions in China captured a vision of the same Tao (Way). It was this spirit of religious tolerance that accounted for Ricci's extraordinary success in his

conversion of many leading members of the Confucian elite, notably Hsü Kuang-ch'i (1562 - 1633), Li Chih-tsao (1565 - 1630) and Yang T'ing-yün (1557 - 1627), the "three pillars of evangelization." The Confucian faith in the sameness of human mind and the universal accessibility of Tao to every human person anywhere led some Chinese converts to promote a synthesis of Christianity with Confucianism. The Chinese Tao was now further expanded to include Christianity. This early relationship between China and the West at the religious level can by no means be described as a conflictual one.

In the late 19th century, it was also the open-minded Confucians who enthusiastically embraced values and ideas dominant in the modern West such as democracy, liberty, equality, rule of law, autonomy of the individual person and, above all, human rights. When some of them visited Europe or America for the first time and stayed there long enough to make first-hand observations, they were all deeply impressed, first of all, by the ideals and institutions of Western constitutional democracy. Wang T'ao (1828 - 1897), who assisted James Legge in his English translation of Confucian classics, returned to Hong Kong from England in 1870 praising her political and legal systems to the sky. He was probably the first Confucian scholar to use the term "democracy" in Chinese (*min-chu*). Wang exerted a considerable influence on Confucian political thinking in the late Ch'ing. At the turn of the century, there were two rival Confucian schools in China known as the New Text and Old Text, respectively. Both advocated democracy, though each in its own way. The former was in favor of constitutional monarchy, while the latter pushed for republicanism. Perhaps inspired by Wang T'ao, who compared the British political and judicial systems favorably to China's Golden Age as described in Confucian classics, both Confucian schools began a systematic search for the origins and evolution of democratic ideas in early Confucian texts. In so doing, it is clear that they took the compatibility between Chinese culture and Western culture as two systems of values for granted.

Last but not least, I wish to say a word about "human rights." Like "democracy," "human rights" as a term is linguistically specific to the West and nonexistent in traditional Confucian discourse. However, if we agree that

the concept of “human rights” as defined in the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of 1948 is predicated on the double recognition of a common humanity and human dignity, then we are also justified to speak of a Confucian idea of “human rights” without the Western terminology. Recognition of a common humanity and respect for human dignity are both clearly articulated in the Analects, Mencius and other early texts. It is remarkable that by the first century C. E. at the latest, the Confucian notion of human dignity was openly referred to in imperial decrees as sufficient grounds for the prohibition of the sale or killing of slaves. Both imperial decrees, dated 9 and 35 C. E. , respectively, cited the same famous Confucian dictum: “Of all living things produced by Heaven and Earth, the human person is the noblest.” Slavery as an institution was never accepted by Confucianism as legitimate. It was this Confucian humanism that predisposed late Ch’ing Confucians to be so readily appreciative of the Western theory and practice of human rights.

If history is any guide, then there seems to be a great deal of overlapping consensus in basic values between Chinese culture and Western culture. After all, recognition of common humanity and human dignity is what the Chinese Tao has been about. I am more convinced than ever that once Chinese culture returns to the main flow of Tao, the problematique of China-versus-the-West will also come to an end.

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