WANG GUOWEI, GU HONGMING AND CHINESE PHILOSOPHICAL MODERNITY

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Abstract: This paper aims to explore the issue of modernity in Chinese philosophy in the early 20th century. The case study focuses on modern scholar Wang Guowei 王國維 (1877-1927)'s criticism of his contemporary Gu Hongming 辜鴻銘 (1857-1928)'s English translation of the classical Confucian text Zhongyong. I argue that Wang Guowei and Gu Hongming's case in fact demonstrates two alternative approaches towards philosophical dialogue and cultural exchange. Wang's approach is a very cultural context-sensitive one: understanding the differences and selecting what is needed for cultural inspiration and reformation—we could call this approach nalaizhuyi 拿來主義 (taking-inism)—borrowing without touching the cultural essence. Gu's approach is more a songchuzhuyi 送出主義 (sending-outism). It is a global-local context sensitive one: searching for the local's path towards the global. Reevaluating Gu's not very exact cultural translation can provide an opportunity to look beyond the "modernization complex," deconstruct westernization "spell," and build a new internationalism. I further argue that Gu's case represents a kind of risky songchuzhuyi and a false internationalism which makes the native culture speak in the other's terms while Wang's cultural stand and his "journey" back to his own cultural sensibility sticks to its own terms and discovers the value of the culture. I then further look at Wang Guowei's ideal of shenshengzhuyi 生生主義 (live-life-ism) which was originally expressed in his Hongloumeng Pinglun 《红楼梦评论》(Critique of A Dream of Red Mansions, 1904) and claim that not only can the ideal of shengshengzhuyi explain the underlying reason for an essential turn in Wang's academic interests from Western philosophy to Chinese history and archaeology, but it can also be applied positively to the contemporary world.

Introduction

This paper aims to explore the issue of modernity in Chinese philosophy in the early 20th century. I have raised the issue in the paper "Wang Guowei and *A Dream of Red Mansions*" where I discuss how crucial to understand the role that Chinese sensibility plays in Wang Guowei's borrowing from Schopenhauer and Nietzsche in his idea of tragedy (see *JET* 8 [2018]). The case study focused on Wang Guowei's *Hongloumeng Pinglun* 紅樓夢評論 (*Commentaries on A Dream of Red Mansions*, 1904). I tried to show that Wang Guowei's alienation/misunderstanding/misinterpretation of Schopenhauer and

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his becoming close to Nietzsche was actually a double movement (backing to his own cultural sensibility), which shows the true face of the beginning of Chinese aesthetic modernity. The case study of this paper will be focusing on Wang Guowei's criticism of his contemporary Gu Hongming (1857-1928)'s English translation of the classical Confucian text *Zhongyong*. Interpreting the differences between Wang Guowei and Gu Hongming will help us further understand the issue at hand. I would argue that at the beginning of the twentieth century, in the process of modernizing Chinese culture, Wang Guowei and Gu Hongming's perceptions of comparative philosophy are quite a showcase. Wang passionately searched for new blood to refresh the old tradition, but his borrowing is dominated by his unconscious attachment to his own culture and a deep understanding of the difference between the East and the West. By contrast, Gu was educated by Western culture; his double movement is shown in the fact that he eventually chose to apply Chinese civilization to a culture he was familiar with. It is very important to revalue his cultural translation: on the one hand, Gu's translation probably is just like Wang 's critique--departing from the original cultural meaning. On the other hand, his cultural translation complicates the issue of modernization in the early 20th century China.

I will divide this paper into two parts. In part one, I will start with a brief introduction of Gu Hongming and Wang Guowei, then I will discuss Wang's criticism of Gu's translation; In part II, I will offer some of my thoughts on the issue of Chinese philosophical modernity and cultural communication.

I. Wang Guowei's Criticism of Gu Hongming's Translation of the *Zhongyong*

I-1. Gu Hongming and Wang Guowei

Gu Hongming was born in Penang, Malaysia in 1857 and studied in Scotland, Germany and Paris, in the fields of literature, engineering, laws. He went back to China in 1885, and worked for a very famous Qing reformer and high official Zhang Zhidong (1837-1909) for 20 years. Zhang was famous for advocating "Chinese learning for fundamental principles and Western learning for practical application". In 1915, Gu became a professor at Peking University. He lived in China until his death in 1928.

Wang Guowei was 20 years younger than Gu Hongming. Gu had developed his interest in Chinese culture in his late 20's when he was in Europe. Wang developed his interest in Western philosophy in his 20's too, when he moved from his hometown in

Zhejiang province to Shanghai. However, his interest in Western philosophy lasted less than 10 years. In their later years they were both viewed as "cultural conservatives." They taught at Beida and Tsinghua respectively and both wore traditional clothes and queues, which was symbolic in the eyes of cultural revolutionaries in the 1920's.

Gu's translation of the *Zhongyong* was first published in Shanghai in 1906, and later in London in 1908. At that time, Wang Guowei was the chief philosophy editor of a Journal called *World of Education* in Shanghai. He published his criticism of Gu's English translation in that journal in the very same year, 1906. Gu had been back in China for above 20 year, while Wang Guowei was still passionate about Western philosophy.

I-2. Wang Guowei's Criticism of Gu Hongming

In his (Shu Gu Tangsheng *Yingyi Zhongyonghou* 書辜氏湯生英譯中庸后) [Comments on Gu Tangsheng's English Translation of *Zhongyong*], 1906), Wang comments that the biggest problem with Gu's translation is that it is "not faithful to the past" since he applies Western philosophical terms which bear no [semantic] connection at all with *Zhongyong*'s own terms…. He says,

> Although Zhongyong 中庸 is a philosophy which raises 'Cheng' (誠) [integrity, sincerity] as the essence of cosmos and life, it is still different from modern Western philosophy. 'Cheng' as a concept is not only different from Fichte's 'Ego,' Schelling's 'Absolute,' Hegel's 'Idea,' Schopenhauer's 'Will,' and Hartmann's 'Unconscious,' but it is also different in interpretation and explanation. I don't think that borrowing the concepts of modern Western philosophy to interpret ancient Chinese philosophy is the right way to approach our ancient philosophy in its own terms. Our ancient scholars were not so systematic in their writing; in one passage, they can freely talk about both *tiandao* 天道 and *renshi* 人事, the same as for a whole chapter, and they feel free to use one word to express all the different meanings, and to use one concept to discuss both *tian* and human beings. (Wang, 1997, 45)

He chose one paragraph from Gu's translation of Ch. 23 of the *Zhongyong* to show why the words Gu chose to translate the *Zhongyong* were philosophically unfit:

> 誠則形，形則著，著則明，明則動，動則變，變則化。
> Where there is truth (誠 *cheng*), there is substance(形 *xing*). Where there is substance (形 *xing*), there is reality (著 *zhu*). Where there is reality (著 *zhu*), there is intelligence (明 *ming*). Where there is intelligence (明 *ming*), there is power (動 *dong*). Where there is power (動 *dong*), there is influence (變 *bian*). Where there is influence (變 *bian*), there is creation (["creative power" in the London version] 化 *hua*). (Ibid, 46)

Gu uses *truth* to translate the central concept of the *Zhongyong*, 誠 *cheng*, which is usually translated as sincerity or integrity. 形 *xing* (form; determinate) as substance; 著 *zhu*（manifest）as reality; 明 *ming*（understanding）as intelligence; 動 *dong* (affected）as power; 變 *bian*（change）as influence; 化 *hua*（transformed）as creation/creative power.

As I pointed out in "Wang Guowei and A Dream of Red Mansions":

> One of the most persistent ideas in Chinese philosophy is that since there is no transcendent divinity in Chinese culture comparable to the Western transcendent spirit, the Chinese concerns for "life" are expressed and embodied in "the proper way of human beings" (rendao 人道) and concrete, familiar things in this world (renshi 人事). Concepts such as dao and tian in Chinese philosophy cannot be interpreted in the same way as the concepts of Idea, God, Will, and other absolute principles often found in Western philosophy. Chinese philosophy concerns itself with the proper way of human beings even more than the way of tian; or, to put it another way, the way of tian" (tiandao 天道) is actually the same as the proper way of human beings (rendao 人道) and is not something above and beyond rendao. (He, 2018, 60)

Cheng as a philosophical concept shouldn't be understood in the way as the *one* behind the many, the *truth beyond* or *behind* things. This chapter of *Zhongyong*, in fact, describes the ongoing inter-transforming process of cultivating utmost *cheng* in oneself. It expresses all the spontaneous, continuous possibilities in this process. The metaphoric, poetic Chinese language expresses these *inter-relational*, *con-consummate* achievements in a holographic but not a systematic way. Applying Western terms such as *truth*, *power*, *reality* and *influence*, will misinterpret the Chinese sensibility and turn it into an *effective*, *external*, *causal*, *linear power relationship*. Just like Wang says in his comments:

> ...[those terms are] now translated into Western metaphysical terms such as substance, reality, isn't a mistake to use Western philosophy to interpret this book (*Zhongyong*)?…there is no the term like *tian* in foreign language, just like no such term as *God* in our Chinese language….our Chinese *tian* is not the *heavens* 天, not *God*, it is something in between, it is theomorphic physical reality but has the spirit of divinity. That is the same for the concept of *xing* 性. (Wang, 1997, 47)

Wang's criticism is no doubt correct. Not only does it show that he is a master of his own culture, just as the later scholars agreed, but it also demonstrates his deep understanding of both Chinese and Western philosophy. This case actually could be used as an example to argue against the mainstream reading of Wang's borrowing from Western philosophy—I

call it the "westernization" interpretation (I have argued in "Wang Guowei and *A Dream of Red Mansions* against this dominant [mis]reading). I will explain my point in more details later.

Now, probably it is a little hard to understand Gu Hongming's case. Gu is also famous for his language abilities and cultural sensibility. Of course, those things cannot guarantee that he would be a good translator. With 20 years lived in China when he translated *Zhongyong*, with his reputation as an "extreme" protector of traditional values and culture, [he is notorious for advocating monarchy and concubinage], was Gu's understanding of Chinese culture really as inferior as Wang criticized? Or there was a hidden thought behind his cultural translation?

Let us first look at the English words he chose to translate the title of *Zhongyong*---*The Conduct of Life; or, The Universal Order of Confucius*. He explained: "the Chinese word *Chong* 中 means central-hence right, true, fair and square; and *Yung* 庸 means common, ordinary—hence universal. The two Chinese words therefore mean the true, fair and square universal standard of right; in short, the common sense of right." (Gu, 1920, 7)

As I mentioned above, Gu was an advocator of Chinese civilization. He claims that the Western civilization failed to order the society with its police and physical force, whereas Chinese civilization is successful in cultivating "moral force." He argues:

> This force in China is not police or physical force. It is the force of the highly developed, law-abiding instinct of the Chinese people…It comes from a strong sense of moral obligation in the Chinese people. But whence do the Chinese obtain this? The answer is: from Chinese civilization. I say, therefore, that Chinese civilization is a wonderful success. (Ibid, 12)

In another very popular book, *The Spirit of the Chinese people* (1915), Chinese civilization is described as a "religion of good citizenship," (Gu, 2013b, xxv) a "power of goodness." (Ibid, xxix) Gu hoped to derive from Chinese civilization a way of ordering human society. Having this strategy--exploring the Chinese model of "universal order, a conduct of life" for the world, it is not that hard to understand this seemingly strange translation:

> *xing* 性 as law of our being
> *dao* 道 as moral law
> *jiao* 教 (usally translated as education) as religion

In *The Spirit of the Chinese people*, Gu again provides an eloquent argument for the Confucian "religiousness," he claims that

> The greatness of Confucianism lies even in *this*, that it is not a religion…the greatness of Confucianism is that, without being a religion, it can take the place of religion; it can make men do without religion. (Ibid, 16)

He was so eager to provide a "remedy" for Western civilization that he composed a "practical" or "popular" translation rather than a philosophical translation for Western readers. Here, I don't mean that he didn't want to do a faithful translation, I believe that he actually believed that he was doing a faithful translation. He was so faithful to his mission that he failed to be faithful to translating Chinese sensibility in its own terms.

At the end of the *Preface* to the *Zhongyong* translation, Gu stated again:

> In the following translation then this idea of moral obligation, which forms the basis of human conduct and social order in the scheme of the Chinese civilization, will be explicitly set forth. There is of course no "new learning" in all this, but what is better, there is *true* learning in it… The enunciation in the same form and language as it is in this book, written two thousand years ago, is to be found in the latest writings of the best and greatest thinkers of modern Europe. (Gu, 1920, 13)

His "reconstructed" translation provided a pragmatic interpretation of Chinese values that, in his mind, were very compatible with great modern European philosophy —which is exactly Wang's criticism.

It is worth to mention that twenty years later, in 1926, only a year before he committed suicide in Kunming lake, Wang Guowei was a Tsinghua Professor in Classical studies and was the same age of Gu Hongming when Gu published his translation of the *Zhongyong*. Wang wrote a note after his comments for another publication which said "Mr. Gu is known for his brilliance and knowledge. This paper pointed out some small specks in his translation. If readers use this comment to diminish Mr. Gu's contribution, it is definitely not my wish, nor was of my intention when I wrote this article twenty years ago either." (Wang, 1997, 54)

I personally believe that, by then, Wang Guowei probably understood why Gu Hongming gave *Zhongyong* such a foreign face. It was already far from his interest in Western philosophy and they were already both be called as cultural conservatives.

II. Some Thoughts on Cultural Translation, Issue of Philosophical Modernity, and New Internationalism

II-1. Cultural Translation and the Issue of Philosophical Modernity

This case study serves not only as a simple remind that we should conduct *in situ* practice when evaluating the process of modernization in the beginning of the 20th century. The "westernization" reading of modern scholars' works is one of the typical issues. What do I mean by "westernization" reading? I think, this phenomenon is represented by two trends. One, studies on modern Chinese culture are measured by Western culture, focusing on whether the "borrowing" is correct/success or not; two, using "the borrowed principle and methodology" to argue "scientifically" for the uniqueness and superiority of Chinese culture or for its self-denial.

Wang Guowei and Gu Hongming's case in fact demonstrates two alternative approaches towards philosophical dialogue and cultural exchange. Wang's approach is a very cultural context-sensitive one: understanding the differences and selecting what is needed for cultural inspiration and reformation—we could call this approach *nalaizhuyi* 拿來主義 (taking-inism)—borrowing without touching the cultural essence. Gu's approach is more a *songchuzhuyi* 送出主義 (sending-outism). It is a global-local context sensitive one: searching for the local's path towards the global. Gu applies Western terms in his translation and suspends the cultural nuances to fit the globality. One could say, that he was trying to build a new internationalism with Chinese civilization. Their senses of "modern" have different directions and can't be simply categorized in the main "westernization" generalization. A comparative perspective is needed when introducing a new culture in one's own society, so one could learn to properly select without losing what should be cherished for the sustainable development of a long-standing culture.

A double movement is also needed so one could develop a healthy sense of contribution to the global dialogue. Wang Guowei's passionately searching for new blood to refresh the old tradition is still very inspiring in many ways in contemporary Chinese scholarship. His borrowing from Western civilization was selective and practical, determined by his deeply rooted cultural sensibility. Gu was actually selling Chinese culture in a language that was attractive or acceptable enough to Western readers. To reevaluate his not very exact cultural translation can provide an opportunity to look beyond the "modernization complex," deconstruct westernization "spell," and build a new

internationalism. Of course, we should admit that Gu's reconstructed cultural translation is very risky—it might develop an even deeper and bigger misunderstanding of one's own culture and the target audience, so it eventually will end up as a false internationalism. Perhaps studying the intention behind this kind of translation and pointing out its value and damage is one way that leads to the proper path—especially after a hundred years of movement of modernity.

II-2. Building a New Internationalism through Wang Guowei and Chinese Philosophy

Now I would like to take a new perspective to further look at Wang Guowei's case. In fact, after 1907, Wang Guowei experienced a rather dramatic academic turn. His short passion for *xixue* 西學 (Western learning) died out as his devotion to *guogu* 國故 (national cultural heritage studies) intensified. Although one could argue that his mentor, Luo Zhenyu 羅振玉 (1866-1940), the famous archaeologist, played an important role in this turn, still we should never underestimate the importance of the inner departure made by Wang himself. [1] As a devoted Confucian scholar, Wang's encounter with Schopenhauer inevitably turned out to be a rather frustrating experience. One passage from *Hongloumeng Pinglun* 《紅樓夢評論》 (Critique of A Dream of Red Mansions) demonstrates his cultural stand very well. In the passage, Wang refers to Schopenhauer's pessimistic doctrine as "*wusheng zhuyi* 無生主義" (lifeless-ism) and characterizes his own doctrine, in direct opposition to Schopenhauer, as "*shengsheng zhuyi* 生生主義" (live-life-ism). I have quoted it in other articles on Wang Guowei, but never had chance to explain it. I requote it here:

> One doctrine that is opposed to this (pessimistic) doctrine of lifeless-ism (*wusheng zhuyi*) is live-life-ism (*shengsheng zhuyi*)... Based on the ideal of live-life-ism, if we want to maximize the quality of life in this world, we should minimize the purview of the individual. The so-called "maximizing of happiness" and "benefit for the greater number" is only a dream of ethics... however, without this dream, our world will be ruled by the law of the jungle. (Wang, 1983, 58)

My interpretation is that Wang's emphasis on *live-life-ism* was derived from what I call "cultural unconscious"—the very Confucian sensibility—*renjian jingshen* 人間精神（the

[1] Yuan Yingguang, Liu Yinsheng (1996), 75-79. For the discussion of Wang Guowei's relationship with Luo Zhenyu, See Luo Jizu *Wang Guowei zhi Si* (The Death of Wang Guowei), (1999).

spirit of this world) [2] that is implied by the expression of "minimizing the purview of the individual" and "maximizing the happiness and benefit of the greater number." This cultural unconscious was so dominant in his thinking that it made Wang eventually depart from Schopenhauer and Western philosophy altogether.

Interestingly, apart from the paragraph quoted above from *Hongloumeng Pinglun*, the phrase did not appear in any of Wang's other works. Apparently, Wang had no intention of establishing a full-fledged theory of "living." However, through my ongoing reading of Wang Guowei, I believe *shengsheng zhuyi* articulates his Confucian sensibility, as does the phrase *renjian jingshen* (the spirit of this world) that expresses it. Not only can it be used to explain the underlying reason for the essential turn in Wang's academic interest from Western philosophy to Chinese philosophy, history and archaeology; it also provides a means to explore how the ideal of *shengsheng zhuyi* could be applied positively to the contemporary world.

Shengsheng zhuyi—live-life-ism is not only an affirmation of this human world (as I tried to show in the article "Wang Guowei and A Dream of Red Mansions"), but more importantly, it represents the ideal of living a sustainable life in this world. In an article *Lun Jinnian zhi Xueshujie* 《论近年之学術界》 (On Contemporary Scholarship) which was published in 1905，Wang criticizes Kang Youwei and others because they use the "new learning" (namely, Western learning in Chinese eyes) to "pursue their political goals."[3] While Wang acknowledges the importance of national independence, he believes that independence and strength cannot be gained by joining the world's mainstream, which is—competing and fighting for survival (*zheng* 爭), using Wang's expression in *Hongloumeng Pinglun*—"ruled by the law of the jungle." (Wang, 1983, 58)

Many years later in 1924, by then Wang, as a well-known Chinese historian and "conservative" scholar, wrote a long memorial to Emperor Pu Yi 溥儀（1906-1967), which is entitled as *Lunzheng Xueshu* 《論政學疏》 (Memorial on Politics). In that letter, Wang summarized the damages and harms of Western learning (*xixue*) to the already decaying Chinese civilization:

> Western learning is prevailing in the world. It is because nations seek after wealth and

[2] I have used the concept of *renjian jingshen* 人間精神 (spirit of this world), or *renjian qinghuai* 人間情懷 (feelings for this world) to describe the cultural sensibility that plays role in Wang Guowei's thinking.

[3] Wang Guowei (1983), 95. This article was originally published in *Jiaoyu Shijie* 1, no. 93 (1905).

> strength. However, since the Great War (World War I) in Europe, all the powerful states in the West are in decline…having never seen a life this cruel before… Half of the reason for the moral decline, fights and poverty, of the last 20 years in China was caused by this (the New Learning)… I have been thinking of the reasons and found two: one, Westerners consider rights as bestowed upon people. Their politics is all about wealth and powerful states. Contest and competition is a natural thing to them, making progress is considered as a great quality…therefore, states fight with each other; the superior fights the inferior, the poor fights the rich…those are all derived from greed. The harm of Western learning comes from the fighting heart.
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> I see the Westerners deal with things through scientific methodology. Science deals with space, time, materials and the bodies of humans and animals…as for human heart and human society, they have their own national/cultural character...cannot be ruled by science…Westerners only see this, but forget all the other aspects of life…this is the second disadvantage of Western methodology.[4]

Wang's frustration and disappointment with the new learning is directed against its ideal of individualism and its valorization of struggle, contest and competition. For him, this is the root of *life-less-ism*. His nostalgia for the culture he was immersed in—a culture for "human heart and human society" (in that sense, Wang Guowei and Gu Hongming share the same feelings towards Chinese culture)—the root of the ideal of *live-life-ism*, is expressed in his letters to some of his close friends.

On March 14, 1919, in a letter to his mentor Luo Zhenyu, Wang wrote, "The current situation of the world is the consequence of the Western idea of pursuing wealth and strength in the last hundreds of years… If, in the future, there are still survivors, they must adopt Eastern values and politics." (Wang, 1984, 285) Again, in 1920, in a letter to his Japanese friend, archeologist Kano Naoki (1868-1947), he wrote: "Eastern values and politics will prevail in this world in the future. A shallow mind just cannot see it." (Ibid, 311)

Wang's promotion of *Eastern values* is also expressed in one of his very influential historical works, *Yinzhou Zhidulun* 《殷周制度論》(On Yin and Zhou Systems).[5]

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[4] Quoted from Yuan and Liu (1996), 420-422. There were debates about the authenticity of the memorial. According to Luo Jizu, Luo Zhenyu's grandson, the memorial was indeed written by Wang, Luo Zhenyu's adaptation is without the beginning and the ending (Luo Jizu, *Wang Guowei zhi Si* [The Death of Wang Guowei], 291).

[5] Wang Guowei's *Yinzhou Zhidulun* 《殷周制度論》(On Yin and Zhou Systems) was included in *Guantang Jilin*《觀堂集林》(Guantang Collection，Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1959). *Guantang Jilin* was a collection originally edited by Wang Guowei in 1922, which includes Wang's works on ancient history, archaeology, Chinese graphology etc.—his contribution to *guogu*—cultural heritage studies. Guantang is Wang's another style name.

Like Confucius, Wang also "follows Zhou." (*Lunyu*, 3: 14) Wang uses the ideas of *qinqin* 親親（consummating intimacy [family feeling]), *zunzun* 尊尊（revering the esteemed） and *xianxian* 賢賢（lifting the good） to explain the ideal practice of Confucian moral-political philosophy. In a letter to Luo Zhengyu, on September 13, 1917, he explained why he was writing *Yinzhou Zhidulun*:

> I just finished my writing on the political system of the Yin and Zhou Dynasties…It is about the reformation of the Shang system by the Zhou…The imperial system is derived from the sensibility of *qinqin* (consummating intimacy) tradition. Rulers, dukes and princes are derived from the *zunzun*（revering the esteemed) tradition… all the ritual ceremonies of the Zhou dynasty come from this system, and ruler, duke, high officials and common people are brought into morality by this system, making their community a moral one. There has never been a better political ideal. (Wang, 1984, 214)

Zhou, as an agricultural society with a patriarchal clan system, emphasized blood relationships and used these to enhance its authority. The Zhou ruler viewed the close clan relationship as the important band to bond the society. Wang Guowei does not promote the idea that Chinese society should return to the ancient patriarchal clan system, but rather examines the origin of this "moral group" in order to pursue the "ideal of politics." That is, through these three concepts *qinqin*, *zunzun* and *xianxian*, Wang perceived the spontaneous moral power of natural feeling, which he viewed not only as the bond that holds the whole of society together, but also sustains it forever. He claims:

> In the ancient time, the so called "*guojia*" 國家 (state family), is not just the crux of politics, it is also the crux of *daode* 道德... if the ruler, dukes and high official everyone follow one's duty and ritual… if the upper understands the difference of male and female through *qinqin zunzun* and *xianxian*, the below will be regulated subsequently. This is called *zhi* 治 (governing)… this is the essence of the politics of Zhou… how could the sages in the ancient time have no intention to pursue one's family's happiness and wealth… but they do realize that one family's happiness is one with ten thousand family's happiness, and one and ten thousand family's happiness is combined with its *daode*. Therefore, the one who rules long is focusing on *de* 德（excellence）and *min* 民（people). (Wang, 1959, 475-476)

Wang believes "the great strategy of peaceful governing of ten thousand of generations" to be expressed through the *qinqin* and *zunzun* system of Yin and Zhou. His confidence in the *shengsheng*（ceaselessly creative）system of Chinese moral political philosophy arises

exactly here, however, in a time of cultural angst, such as that when he took his own life, the confidence and the ideal were only destined to be a sentimental "dream" journey…

Conclusion*: Shengshengzhuyi*: The Contribution of Chinese Philosophy?

If Gu Hongming's case represents a kind of risky *songchuzhuyi* and a false internationalism, Wang Guowei's "journey" back might bring an opportunity to develop a new understanding of the culture which could be beneficial for contemporary world. One big difference between the cultural stands of Gu Hongming and Wang Guowei is Gu's *songchuzhuyi* makes the native culture speak in the *other*'s terms, while Wang's "journey back" sticks to its *own* terms and discovers the value of the culture.

Wang Guowei's double movement back into his own cultural sensibility is a process of affirmation of his ideal of *live-life-ism*. He reads Confucian moral-political philosophy as "*ziran* 自然" (natural, spontaneous) philosophy[6]. Confucian moral-political philosophy is an organic and dynamic philosophy derived from the authentic feeling of human beings. Wang's fresh historical eye sees the Zhou political system as deriving from the true feeling for/with the people (i.e., "*minyi* 民彝") (Wang, 1959, 477) which not only shows that Wang was eager to save the already collapsed last imperial dynasty (of course he tragically failed), but more importantly, to affirm that the essence of this "*ziran*" philosophy is not for contest (*zheng* 爭), but for a sustainable development.

Yet, in his time of cultural angst, Wang, as a scholar searching for remedies to repair his culture and console himself, eventually failed. The disappointment and frustration with the new search for the meaning of life and nostalgia for the culture in which he was immersed was the main reason for him to choose death. In my opinion, Wang's tragic ending only enhances the high value in which he held his culture and demonstrates strikingly how far the reality failed his ideal.

Wang's frustration with the culture of *zheng* (fighting, competing) and his ideal of returning to the "*ziran* culture/philosophy" on which the *shengsheng zhuyi* (live-life-ism) is based should still inspire us who live in this contemporary world. Today, we live in a

[6] In Wang Guowei's article *Kongzi zi Xueshuo* 孔子之學說 (Confucius's Teachings) (was first published on the *Journal of Education World* [no. 161-165] in 1907-1908) in which he discusses Confucian *tiandao* as following *ziran* and *shengsheng* 生生 is its innate character. He then claims that "moral intention" (*daode*) is the *ziran* (nature) of human being (Wang Guowei, 1997, 110-116).

world that is so big and at the same time so small. We can experience the pains of others far from us—tsunamis and earthquakes, religious conflicts, power competition, global climate changes, etc. The philosophy of *shensheng zhuyi*, as expressed in Wang Guowei's life and thinking, is needed for supporting each other and for rebuilding this one world with nature and one another.

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