



More Than For The Sake of Defense (郭齐勇著 刘军平译)

Guo Qiyong

Words From the Translator: ever since the Debate on “son’s concealment of father’s stealing of a neighbor’s sheep” as quoted in Confucius Analects started in 2004, it aroused great controversies between Confucian scholars and the modernists. This debate extended farther across the border to the other side of the Pacific and many American scholars joined in this debate with both supportive and divergent views. The following is a reply on the part of Professor GUO Qiyong towards those who disagreed with him.

I sincerely appreciated it that so many scholars have showed their concern on the topic of Confucian mutual concealment of wrong doing among family members. Honestly speaking, I have benefited a great deal from these illuminating writings and comments I avail myself of this opportunity to thank Professor HuangYong for providing me this rare chance to reopen the topic for further discussion. I will concentrate myself on four issues.

I. The Interpretative Tradition of Confucius, Mencius, Xunzi and Song-Ming School of Principle

Some scholars, for instance, Prof. Bryan W. Van Norden has kindly reminded me that I should pay attention to the distinctions between Confucius, Mencius and Song-Ming School of Principle. Actually I have in my noticed that. In my previous paper I pointed out that it is for the convenience of dialogue that I put together the sages’ commentary on consanguinity, as my counterpart Professor Liu Qingpin has used relevant resources from Pre-Qin and Song-Ming Confucians, which, however, does not indicate that I think there are no differences between Confucius, Mencius and Song-Ming School of Principle. [1] In interpreting classic texts, if we have come across some implicit ideas or opinions that aroused controversies in the historical context, should we go back to and trace the origin of sources and developments for this interpretative tradition? As long as my explanation is not contrary to overall thoughts or to the materials explained, should we be more than ready to accept the hermeneutic elucidation given by effective history.

As far as I am concerned, my way of interpreting is more justified than “explaining” classics as one pleases and with one’s own subjective judgment. First and foremost, I want to clarify that the reason why I supplied with abundant commentaries by later Confucians is that on the issue of loving one’s family, Confucius, Mencius and most scholars of Song-Ming School of Principle share similar view

s and their explanations are not contradictory to one another, as they are situated in the same hermeneutic tradition. All of them have attached great importance to the idea that filial piety is the fountain source of benevolence. Therefore, I have every reason to believe that on this issue Song-Ming Scholars have explicitly reified the ideas of Confucius and Mencius. Although they may have differed in many other issues, however, they are consistent on this issue. This is also a fundamental principle of Confucian system.

Some scholars have also mentioned the issue of Xunzi. Briefly let me say that there are tremendous differences between Mencius and Xunzi. Moreover, on the issues of loving one's family, they share the same opinion. Xunzi said: "In approaching one's parents, be intimate; in treating one's old friends, be warm-hearted; reward those with achievements, recognize the services rendered, this is the distinction of benevolence. Honor the noble, respect the illustrious, the virtuous and the talented, the elderly; this is the ethics of righteousness. If we can carry out benevolence and righteousness in a proper way, this is the order of rite. Benevolence means loving people, which also implies that one could approach people in an intimate manner. Righteousness means complying with reason, therefore it is feasible. Rite means behave in proper measure, therefore, one could succeed." (Dalu, Xunzi) Xunzi also said that: "Those who are born between Heaven and Earth, as they are life species, must have possess knowledge. As they possess knowledge, they must love their kind." (Lilun, Xunzi) Love its kind and loving one's family is the natural flow of feeling for those blood species. Moreover, Xunzi does not consider that benevolence and righteousness are internal, he emphasized that rite is nurtured. In his discussing of the origin of rite, he thinks that "Rites have three roots. Heaven and Earth is the root of life, the ancestors are the root of human species, and rulers and teachers are the root of order." (Lilun, Xunzi) This is tantamount to saying that worshipping one's ancestry is one of the origins of rite. To Xunzi's mind, people learned "benevolence" by nurture and so they conform to social norms. Still they rely depend on a prior feeling of loving one's beloved ones. Xunzi thinks that the relationship between father and son are heavenly principle and that "The relationship between ruler and subject, father and son, elder and younger brother and husband and wife begin and are carried out through to the end in ending they begin again. They share the same pattern as Heaven and Earth and endure in the same way for ten thousand generations. This is what is called the Great Basis." (Wangzhi, Xunzi)

Next I will respond to Professor Bai Tongdong's criticism on my paper. As he pointed out in particular that there lies difference between Confucius and Mencius. He goes on to lash on Mencius for his inadequacy, inflexibility, optimism and universalism, which he thinks should be replaced the metaphysics and dynamic style of Confucius. My intent is that the moral metaphysics of Mencius are the developments of Confucius. Prof. Bai Tongdong considers that Confucius is more flexible in dealing with a lot issues by citing Confucius's different comments on King Xu

an of Qi Kingdom and Guanzhong. What I want to question Prof. Bai is that are the comments and opinions given by Confucius in different circumstances contradictory? If so, are they fundamental in nature? Obviously the answer is negative. What then are the principles and standpoints behind the comments? These are the explanations rightly illuminated by Mencius and latter-day Confucians.

Certainly, Professor BAI would not recognize the latter-day Confucian interpretations. What he concurs with is that behind the moral motive is not a kind of metaphysics, but a sort of value calculation. He deems that when we make moral choices, we always sacrifice something for another. In addition the sacrifices based on the value and interests and their enumerations decide on our options. I think this line of thinking has not once for all settle the conflicts. On the contrary, when confronting the issues of particularity and universality, private and public domains, his choice makes him dodge rather than take a compromising attitude in actual situation. Finally, this approach will unavoidably lead to contradictions, as Prof. BAI concluded in his own writing: "These difficulties could not be resolved in all the politics." As his criticism stemming from the above statement aims at Mencius particularly in his writing, I could understand his anti-metaphysical stance. In fact, in solving realistic problem there is no panacea. I agree in part with him that an absolute metaphysical principle could not be implemented in reality. In reality, this is the very error committed by Mr. Liu Qingping, he regards universalism as an absolute principle. Therefore, Professor Bai Tongdong thinks that "Liu's 'solutions' are far more problematic than the problems in the Mencius)"

However, the problem remains that we must be aware of the fact that the solution provided by Mencius is not the abstract metaphysical principle in the sense of Western philosophy, for he constantly associates the concrete individual existence with a kind of moral metaphysics. Mencius is not too idealistic or optimistic as BAI stated. But on the basis of the combination of individual and moral metaphysics, he integrates reality with moral belief. As is known to all, Mencius has very realistic political designs for reality, such as "constant means of livelihood" and "constant heart", I will not enumerate them one by one. In reality Mencius is the embodiment of a perfect example who soberly integrate reality with moral belief. In Mencius, the extreme situation supposed by Tao Ying and the tough question raised by him precisely illustrate that Mencius is not optimistic enough. He is ready to accept the confrontations in reality. Another episode concerns the case when one's sister-in-law is drowning, should one give out a hand to save her. This story shows that when balancing the rule and the exception, Mencius does not absolutely universalize the moral principles. I think Mencius does not go off the track of Confucius' way. Consequently, he constantly takes into account of real life scenario with a specific moral principle. He explicitly expressed what Confucius implied and tried to perfect it. In the similar way, like Mencius, the scholars of Song-Ming School of Principle did not transform their a

rgument into an abstract and absolute metaphysics when they were approaching the problem of moral ontology.

Professor John H. Berthrong in the same way doubted that if Mencius and Song-Ming Confucians are consistent on this point in terms of human nature. He considers that the systemization of Confucius's ethics went through the hands of Mencius, Xunzi and the scholars of Song-Ming School of Principle. On the one hand, Berthrong thinks that there exist, inevitably, overall structural conflicts in the Pre-Qin Confucian classics; on the other hand, he recognizes the efforts made by Song-Ming School of Principle Confucians. He cites Chen Chun as a resource to reform this type of structural conflict. When talking about this overall structural conflict. Professor Berthrong is often stating a theory of paradoxical "hard saying". He believes that different cultural traditions survive this kind of difficult situation or conflicts. According to him, this exposes an overall structural contradiction in the texts of a school. Apparently, he subsumed both the cases in Analects and Mencius into this category of "hard saying". For the present circumstance, he provided a cure for this: "the exegete can try to explain a way or transform the 'hard saying' by pointing out that while it clearly appears to mean the very thing that makes it offensive or difficult, this is not really what such 'hard saying' means." He further justifies his ground by saying that "Such flights of exegetical legerdemain can be wondrous to behold and sometimes are quite convincing, as is the case with Guo's spirited and reasoned defense of the coherence of Confucian ethics in the face of the questions raised by Liu." He also proposed an alternative: "Another common exegetical strategy is to admit that the classical thinker did indeed say what she or he is purported to have said, and that while this might have made sense in the ancient or medieval cultural setting, it is no longer appropriate for the modern world" Professor Berthrong also considers that "Many Confucian scholars now recognize that the "family first" policy implied in these "hard sayings" is no longer appropriate. Liu himself makes it clear that his criticism is designed to advocate for a reformation of the Confucian Way that focuses more squarely on ren 仁 humaneness as the core ethical value and does not abide a narrow reading of xiao/filial piety as a vast structure of patriarchal nepotism." What I want to point out is that, to my great astonishment, my view is irrefutably that we could not "abide a narrow reading of xiao/filial piety. as vast structure of patriarchal nepotism." Additionally, Berthrong attempts to by using Chen Chun's resources to reform the "hard saying" of Confucians. He simply considers that Xunzi attaches greater importance of the universalistic humaneness (I prefer use benevolence) in spite of the fact we could not find much proof from Xunzi's works. As far as rites are concerned, he thinks that they are related with concepts of equality and justice, which implies that we should not follow filial piety unconditionally. Moreover, Chen Chun has well balanced "loyalty" with "forgiveness". He affirms "that ren manifests empathy for other people and the entire cosmos is an extension of the respect for the family of origin" I want to draw attention to the fa

ct once again that I share similar view with Chen Chun concerning the Confucian issue of loving one's family. Furthermore, he attempts to indicate that I have confused or did not distinguish the differences between Confucius, Mencius, Song-Ming Confucians and other Confucians. If I am not mistaken, what Professor Berthrong drives at is that at least from the cases in the Analects and Mencius, Confucian thinkers are still framed or specifically, emphasize a narrow reading of filial piety, that is, they protect unjustly the behavior of their relatives in the name of filial piety. (This is what I am strongly against!) and my explanations are quite similar to that of Chen Chun's, which confused the Pre-Qin Confucian ideas with that of Song-Ming thinkers. Simply put, Professor Berthrong is favor of the views shared by Chen Chun, Song-Ming Confucians or similar to Xun Zi's theory, which he thinks is not Confucius or Mencius' theory. But he did not prove that why Chen Chun's explanation did not work in Mencius. What I am saying is that as for "extension", this is just Mencius idea. As for Xunzi I think I have already elaborated a great deal in the above lines. Since Professor Berthrong thinks that as a "hard saying" in Confucius and Mencius descriptions for loving one's family, or the inescapably exist(Remember: inescapably) contradictions or conflicts, how could Chen Chun or the work done by him reconcile the conflicts between benevolence and filial piety? This so called inescapability is the conflict between filial piety as private virtue and benevolence as public virtue, unless Chen Chun has substantial transformation. In spite of the fact that Berthrong's view is not as radical as Professor Liu Qingping, actually we could find out that Berthrong did not accept the view that family love could be extended as universal one.

Then in Berthrong's view how this issue is resolved? He is of the opinion that although Confucian learning has its integrity and consistency, these features are subsumed under the sensibility of the teaching of Chinese philosophy(it teaches the students how to comply with rites and become a proper moral subject) and which are not integrated under certain concept or principle. This consistency is an art of architecture which includes a series of important concepts and principles. The Analects is such an example in case. Let me quote Berthrong directly:

I agree with Guo that there is a general coherence of Confucian ethics, but I suggest it is better to see its pattern as an architectonic, that is, a set of clustered concepts that are woven together into a coherent system designed to help the student find the path of proper conduct. Just as with Chinese calligraphy and painting, there is a strong Chinese philosophical sensibility at play in the work of Kongzi and all of those who have followed him. However, the architectonic cluster of concepts critical to the Confucian philosophical vision means that there can be a number of important principles and ideals at play in seeking the path of proper conduct, and this is very much the case in an early text such as the Lunyu. What we read in Kongzi is the articulation of a powerful vision of mora

lity, education, conduct, and self cultivation that helps the person become a fiduciary moral agent.

In addition, Professor Berthrong thinks that the words “benevolence” and “filial piety” have different connotations under diversified circumstances, therefore, “quan” (weighing over, changing) is used to adjust different concepts and principles.

First of all, what I want to say that my former paper has also emphasized the importance of “Jing” (constancy) and “Bian” (change) in actual life situation. I have got one point to discuss with Berthrong: what are the implications of saying “Chinese philosophical sensibility” and the “architectonic” What does he really mean by saying “becoming a fiduciary moral agent” by complying with rites? Confucius said that “He who can submit to ritual is benevolent. If a ruler could one day himself submit to ritual, every under Heaven would respond to his benevolence” (Book 12, Analects) He also said: “Neither the knight who has truly the heart of a knight nor the man of good stock who has qualities that belong to good stock will ever seek life at the expenses of benevolence; and it may be that he has to give his life in order to achieve benevolence.” (Book 15, Analects) To become a moral subject means to become a “benevolent person”. What Professor Berthrong did see is the special architectonic of Confucianism, but he failed to observe that the absolute and universal Ren I referred is not the abstract principle or concept in the sense of Western philosophy. In my previous paper I also pointed out as far as the integration of substance and function is concerned, the seamless speeches on Ren, cannot be interpreted and understood with modern scholarships focusing on system. Also, Ren cannot be defined explicitly by using the method of categorization in formal logic. I think the multiplicity and fluidity of its meaning is the embodiment of Berthrong’s “sensibility” and “architectonic”. It is because that the “benevolence” comes from Heaven and because it manifested in particular individual, which makes it possible to become a perfect, seamless art of architectonic. I would rather believe that the difference between Professor Berthrong and me derives from the misuse of academic term. However, what baffles me is that since Prof. Berthrong has a great admiration of the art of architectonic and thinks that when facing ethical event, “Quan” could be applied, how then could he think that there lies unavoidable contradiction or conflict in the overall structure of Confucian classical texts? Ultimately, I am of the opinion that if “benevolence” is not based on the unified theory of nature of mind, loving of one’s family could be extended as benevolence, and thus, the overall coherence is not possible. Professor Berthrong regards that this unified theory of nature of mind is the product of Song-Ming School of Principle and is not the invention of Pre-Qing Confucians. This is the reason why he agrees with Chen Chun’s views and assumes that there lies unavoidable contradiction and conflict in the overall structure of Confucian classical texts. What he implies that I confused the different learning among Confucius, Mencius a

nd Song-Ming School of Principle and imposed the views of Song-Ming Confucians on Mencius. In the final analysis our fundamental divergence lies in Pre-Qin Confucianism, especially in Mencius, which could be translated into the question: could loving of one's family be extended to loving others (benevolence)?

II. "Root" : On the Issue of Extension

In fact in my previous paper I reiterated my point that "loving one's family" could be extended as universal love and the relationship between the two. My essential outlook remains that as a core idea of Confucians, this kind of love (benevolence) comes from Heaven and loving one's parents is the root and application of this type of universality, supremacy and ontology. But quite a number of scholars could not acknowledge this "extension" and in particular they could not accept the metaphor of the "root". Professor Heiner Roetz thinks that (for the purpose of refute his criticism let me quote his original writing):

for most Confucians, to downplay the possible conflict between family and morality has been more typical than to expose it in a sharp manner. Correspondingly, there is an all too smooth conception of the "extension" or enlargement of the family ethos to the world at large. The breach between the natural and closed morals of the family and the unnatural and open morals beyond is easily glossed over by "root" metaphors that figure also prominently in the present debate (Guo 2007, Huang 2007). Mengzi in particular hardly accounts for this breach, which is probably the background of Gaozi's dissent and Xunzi's critique

As far as I am concerned, "loving one's family" is not a kind of natural and closed family ethics, which is deeply rooted in man's moral mind. I think that the reason why many scholars consider there exist incredible tensions between "loving one's parents" and "benevolence", is that they always presuppose that the two are fundamentally incompatible in principle, which means that "loving one's parents" merely springs, historically, from a patriarchic tradition. This tradition was even earlier than the birth of Confucianism and therefore, influenced Confucianism. What I want to drive home the point is that basically "loving one's parents" is a kind of universal moral mind(heart), which of course is the application of benevolence. Therefore, it is not at all closed in character. Rather it is open to the universal benevolence from its root. If we assume that Confucian ethics have covered up or downplay the contradiction and conflict between universality and particularity, if we regard universality as absolute primary principle, could the contradiction be resolved?

We do not deny there may exist conflict between universality and particularity.

The other way around is that we think the intellectual tradition of Confucianism has straightforwardly faced the possibility of conflict. If not so, how could Ta o Ying in Mencius assume such extreme case in poses such tough questions, and obviously Confucian attempted to solve the problem, not to downplay it. While people like Mr. Liu Qingping consider that Confucians especially Mencius went astray in trying to solve the issue, however, we think that the significance of Confucian thinking lies in this particular path of solution, which, on the one hand, recognizes the universality and absoluteness of human morality; on the other hand, it faces squarely the particularity of the individual case. What I am explaining is that any kind of universal justice or love could not depart from a particular individual. The particular, individual love is always the root or starting point of departure for universal justice and love. I want to clarify here once again that the root or point of departure is practical in its sense, not an abstract principle of metaphysics. Some scholars such as M. Ashraf Adeel may refute my view by stating that, if benevolence comes from human heart at the very beginning, then it does not spring from the root of loving one's family, for loving one's family is just the application of benevolence. Mr. M. Ashraf Adeel and some other scholars also mentioned that regarding loving one's family as the beginning of a natural tendency contradicts the ideas of sense of compassion (Ce Yin) because compassion relates to a common person without particularity.

As I have already pointed out from the ontological sense, benevolence is the substance. However, from the point of practice and theory of development, loving one's family is the root. In Mencius this theory of development and practice is a process of "seeking conscience" (Qiufangxin). Indeed, moral conscience is innate, but it does not mean that each individual has a sense of conscientiousness. To Mencius mind, if one does not possess this conscientiousness, it means that he has lost his moral mind, thus, his "differentiating between human being and animals". The ontological root does not contradict with the start point of real life practice and moral self development.

My understanding the relationship between "sense of compassion" and "loving one's family" is well reflected in what Mencius said "a sense of compassion means benevolence" (Gaozi, Part A, Mencius). Compassion is the heart in oneself as well as conscience. As is endowed by Heaven, it equals also the moral heart. When explaining ontology, Mencius always uses the immediate presence to explicate it, which is the integration of universal principle with concrete existence rather than spitting the two apart. If we are forced to tear it apart in terms of discriminating the differences between the concepts, then we can refer to Zhu Xi's explanation: "Benevolence is the root. Compassion is the sprout coming from the root. Loving one's family, loving people and things are the branches and leaves." (Master Zhu's Conversation, Zhuzi Yulei compiled by Li Qingde, published by China Book Company, 1994, p. 2869) Compassion is the sudden presence benevolence of consciousness at the moment, which is always connected with nature. While l

oving one's family is the performance of benevolence in the sense of practice. Although compassion is taken as the beginning together with four beginnings, they differ in terms of angle and structure. This does not suggest they contradict each other.

III. Power and Corruption: On Some Realistic Issues

I want to call attention to the fact that although most people disagreed with my views, as far as the story of Confucius' comment on stealing the ship is concerned, it is far more easier to accept than the other two cases in Mencius. Because we know that in modern legal system, family members have no obligation to be witness against each other. The remarkable difference that lies between Confucius' case and that of Mencius' is that if the hero of the story is in power. The so called corruption can only become effective as long as power is involved. In explaining the divergent ways of thinking in handling problems between Pre-Qin Confucians and Song-Ming School of Principle Confucians, Prof. Berthrong mentioned that Song-Ming School of Principle Confucians were officials in themselves. Essentially they knew the distinction between the public and private and they attached great importance to the balance of the two.

The factor of power has been actually neglected by most discussants. In order to prevent the corruption engendered by power, the best method is to place restrictions on the unlimited use of power. We of course respect the legal restrictions on power but at the same time we must point out that the ethics of loving one's family by Confucians is not the very reason triggering off power corruption. On the contrary, it is a restraining force in history. This is my realistic consideration of the issue and I justify my own ground by saying that I am acting on the spur of the moment to defend Confucianism.

As loving one's family is a sentiment as well as a fundamental ethical fact that can not be changed. In the history of China, there were two sharply divergent views of ethical-political theories. One is Confucian that regards loving one's family as the root of morality. The other is the Legalists that consider it as the triggering factor for potential crime and destroying social stability. When the latter school of thought went to the extreme, it turned into "the law of punishing the related family" (Lianzuo zhi) Family members turning against each other were called upon by the government is a case in point. I think nobody would accept this bizarre way of treating one's beloved ones. In fact from the very start Confucian idea of loving one's family had been used to oppose "the law of punishing the related family". In Yantielun of Zhouqin, the very thought that Confucians used to fight against "the law of punishing the related family" is the

idea and system of mutual concealment among families (Pls. confer Zhuzhi Jicheng by Huangkung, Published by China Book Company, 1954, pp.58-59). The idea of Qing in (loving one's family) has actually acknowledge the private space for the individual and family, which has effectively resisted totalitarianism, state supremacy that deprived the individual of privacy and the right of keeping silent. Qing in, therefore, is not personal desire but the distinction between individual rights and virtue, public and private rights as well as public and private morality, which has efficiently drawn a line between social and political boundaries.

In its strictest sense, China was not an autocratic country until Song Dynasty. Before that it was more like the federal system. When confronted with the chaos brought about the fiefdom and breaking up of the states, Song Dynasty carried out two political strategies that were different from former times; one is the overall reforming the civilian government by discharging the generals' power, the other is taking back the power of the army and return it to state, thus a real centralized government appeared. I do not want to comment on the pros and cons of the system. What I do want to say is that after the birth of the centralized government a civil society has appeared and prospered unprecedented in Chinese history, thus the emergence of a series of village contracts, public schools and public fields that continued through later periods. The foundation of civil society in China was based on the family structure of the ethics of loving one's family. This structure has effectively defied the penetration of totalitarianism and prevented the abuse of power in the name of universalism or state apparatus. The structure is not a hindrance to the so-called justice, as Mr. Ci Jiwei pointed out; "In a society taking Shan (kindness) as its primary feeling, although people's behavior conformed and surpassed the standard of justice, since they treat each other kindly and regard it as a baseline, they do not need the motive of justice to sustain their relationships. Nor do they need any legal procedures to implement them." (The Double Face of Justice by Ci Jiwei, published by Sanlian Shudian, Beijing, 2001, p.240) Justice does not mean the highest principle as some people imagined, which can pass verdict on morality. The universal and absolute justice without taking consideration of particularity is dangerous for its injustice and bias because violence often runs rampant in the name of justice. This is the very reason, I assume, that Mr. Liang Shuming advocated town and village autonomy during the epoch of democracy and science in May 4th Movement.

Certainly, as many scholars pointed out, modern Chinese family structure is shrinking. But it does not imply that family is no longer important or it no longer plays its role in social structure as it is still the basic unit in society. To my mind, downplaying family ethics is the critical problem facing contemporary China. After 1949, the tradition Chinese ethics had been seriously devastated, civil society has never degenerated as it is today. This is the very reason that I want to safeguard the "loving one's family" ethics. It is hoped that in China today the right between public and private, between public morality and private

te morality we could draw a clear boundary, taking into the interests of both universalism and the individual existence.

IV. China and West : On Interpreting Two Traditions

From his Christian perspective, Sidney Callahan criticized “loving one’s family” ethics. I think my present and previous papers could well respond to his challenge. In his article Professor Callahan also mentioned the other two problems with Confucian family ethics: women’s position and young people’s position. I want to answer briefly as follows.

First of all, for the issue of young people’s position, all I want to express is that Confucians indeed show great respect for the elderly, but this does not mean they are against regeneration and self-independence. In essence, Confucians emphasized “renewal with the times” and “selecting the talented” by recommending more younger and virtuous talents to administer the society. Instances of this are innumerable in Confucian classics. Historically, Confucian ideas were regarded as more revolutionary than outdated.

I think Callahan has confused the two issues.




As for women’s position, there have always been criticisms historically. Scholars could easily find such sayings as “Only women and the mean person are difficult to deal with” or “starving is a small matter, while losing one’s integrity is a big matter”, and provide their etymological, interpretative and contextual comments on these. I will not go to details. I will not hope to convince most of my critics by providing etymological reading. I have to admit that women were discriminated against from early history until present. The worst cases were the Virtuous Archway or Tablets during Ming-Qing dynasties which were soaked with blood and tears. But I want to ask: is this problem caused by historical limitation or by Confucians? Phallogocentric(male-dominated) society is very common in the countries in the world, if we merely impugn it as a particular case of Confucianism, is it appropriate? For such an issue, my idea is that we should know how to explore the positive resources from the tradition rather than impute all the guilt to it. I very much appreciate Prof. Callahan’s effort in excavating feminist theory from Christian tradition. Similarly, could we find some of value from Confucian tradition? Historically, did Confucians relatively ease the tensions of women in a male-dominated society? I think feminist ideas based upon an absolute universalistic stance will also lead to new problems(I do not think this is the standpoint of Prof. Callahan). That is, in a male-dominated society it will change female into male. The distinction of internal and external family for Confucians

ans has to some extent preserved the possibility of feminine world, which resisted the random invasion by male, as in the Dream of Red Chamber in which the heroines truly despised the male sovereignty.

In the final analysis, I want to conclude by pointing out that in treating a cultural tradition, we should observe it closely from its inside, from its exegetical tradition rather than looking from the outside. I welcome criticisms that are pertinent not irrelevant. Also, it is my desire to open dialogues with scholars from the West as long as this dialogue is built on mutual understanding. Prof. Ma Lin misunderstood me by saying that a primary concern behind my challenge of Liu Qingping's corruption thesis is that it would damage the image of Confucian tradition and may mislead a great majority of people to discard it as worthless. For this reason I seems to have been obliged to proceed with Liu's line of treating Confucianism as one unitary whole in order to justify it as a whole. In fact, what I showed great concern for is not that Confucianism will be cast away but that the textual reading of the true intent of the sages which might be neglected in these debates, for the purpose of establishing dialogue with Western thinkers who could have understood more comprehensively Confucian ideas. More importantly, the exploration of tradition will be of significance for contemporary Chinese society. Therefore, let me change Professor Ma Lin's title "Beyond the Urgency of Defense" a little bit to fit my purpose: More Than For the Sake of Defense.

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[1] As for the differences between Pre-Qin and Song-Ming Confucians, pls. refer to the detailed discussions of my book The History of Chinese Philosophy, Beijing: Higher Education Publishing House, 2006.

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