

论儒家“功夫哲学”与西方“实践哲学”

□ 黄玉顺

摘要：“功夫哲学”涉及三个方面的重要问题：第一，“功夫”概念的共时性内涵与中西哲学的关系问题。《大学》的“八目”——“格致诚正修齐治平”，其实都是功夫问题。儒家的功夫论，大致可以对应于西方的实践哲学。第二，“功夫”概念的历时性转换与儒家哲学的古今之变问题。要使“修齐治平”的逻辑能够在现代社会中得以成立，必须进行主体的现代转换，齐家就是公民做到现代核心家庭的和睦，治国就是公民以某种方式行使国家治理的政治主权，平天下就是公民以某种方式参与到世界事务之中去。因此，“格致诚正”修身功夫的标准，就不能是精英的诉求，而只能是合格的公民人格的养成。第三，功夫哲学及实践哲学与形而上学的关系问题。在宋明理学中，形上本体论与功夫论之间是奠基关系。同理，西方传统的实践哲学也有其形而上学的基础。至于要使实践哲学或功夫哲学成为真正的“第一哲学”，唯有使“实践”和“功夫”观念成为一个“前存在者”及“前主体性”的观念。

关键词：儒家 功夫哲学 实践哲学

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2018年4月14日，倪培民教授和刘笑敢教授在北京师范大学召集了一个工作坊，主题是“中国传统功夫论与功夫哲学”，我参加了那次会议。后来，印象中大概是在2019年或者2020年，倪老师主持的“贵州省哲学社会科学规划国学单列课题”结项，我参与了项目的评审，评为“优秀”等级。

我在2018年那个工作坊的发言，当时讲了什么，记不清楚了。于是我就上网搜索了一下，结果发现了澎湃新闻的一则报道，是这样说的：

山东大学教授黄玉顺以“功夫论的新开展——儒家功夫观念的生活儒学诠释”为题发言。他留意到一种常见现象：很多民间读者经常诟病学院派只会坐而论道、“不做、不懂功夫”，指很少有学者进行参禅打坐；而民间派对功夫的理解，则近似于中老年修身养性之道。黄玉顺认为，这种理解把功夫大大狭隘化了，甚至搞偏了。他主张今天要把狭隘化的功夫论重新扩展还原。

在他看来，功夫在最宽泛的意义上大致有两种含义：一种指为达成某种目标而付出的努力；另一种指通过付出时间、精力和努力之后达到的造诣。宋明理学就是处理“本体”和“功夫”的关系，因此，今天不能离开宋明理学家所理解的《大学》《中庸》来谈功夫。而且，可以从不同角度来谈，

比如《中庸》里的“博学、审问、慎思、明辨、笃行”都是功夫，《大学》里的“格致成正、修齐治平”也都是功夫。哲学学者坐那儿思考儒家哲学，这本身就是在做功夫。

最后，他提到，功夫也有时代性，面临现代转化的问题。他认为，今天的儒家可以盘活《大学》这样的思想资源，关键就在于要认识到：生活方式的转换导致了社会主体的转换，现代社会的主体无疑是个体。而每一个个体需要“格致成正、修齐治平”的这套儒家逻辑，在今天依然是能够成立的。^①

这则报道所记录的我当时的发言，主要谈了两个方面的问题：一是“功夫”概念的内涵和外延问题，强调《大学》的“八目”——“格致诚正修齐治平”都是功夫问题；二是“功夫”概念的现代转化问题，主要是谈现代人怎样“做功夫”的问题。

这两个问题，其实是我一直关注的。2006年出版的拙著《爱与思——生活儒学的观念》这本书里，专门安排了一节，也就是第四讲的第一节，讨论“功夫问题”。我讨论了这样两个问题：（1）对于一个儒者来讲，所谓“纯粹学术”的工作，算不算是一种功夫？（2）我们今天来做功夫，做什么样的功夫呢？^②这其实也是前面谈的两个问题。

现在读到倪老师的大作^③，发现在这两个问题上，我和倪老师所见略同：一方面，全书的三篇正是按《大学》的“八目”来安排的，上篇是“格物致知”，中篇是“诚意正心修身”，下篇是“齐家治国平天下”；另一方面，此书的许多内容也涉及功夫论的现代性开展问题。

当然，倪老师的大作所涉及的内容，远不止这些问题，而是建构了一个涉及古今中西诸多基本哲学问题的庞大体系。我觉得，倪老师的大作，最重要的贡献有这么几点：第一，用“功夫哲学”这个概念来涵括整个儒家哲学的传统，这是对儒家哲学传统的一种独特的总结；第二，对于儒家哲学传统来说，“功夫哲学”不是“照着讲”，而是“接着讲”，成为当代哲学家的一种具有原创性的哲学思想；第三，“功夫哲学”具有融通中西哲学的价值，这是因为：倪老师的论述，虽然看起来是中西对照，甚至含有中西对立的意味，但这恰恰需要一种超越中西对峙的视域，而这正是倪老师所具备的兼通中西的哲学素养的必然体现。

那么，我今天想围绕倪老师的大作，讨论以下几个问题：

一、“功夫”概念的共时性内涵与中西哲学的关系问题 [见英文版第78页，下同]

我主要想谈谈儒家的“功夫论”和西方的“实践哲学”之间的关系。在我看来，儒家的功夫论，大致可以对应于西方的实践哲学。

众所周知，“实践哲学”是亚里士多德所开创的一个重要的西方哲学传统^④，其核心是伦理学或道德哲学，以及政治学，乃至诠释学（海德格尔、伽达默尔）^⑤，等等。这些内容，其实都是与儒家功

① 参见《儒学功夫论在今天如何盘活：立足当代，面向世界》，澎湃新闻网，2018年4月28日，https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_2101051。

② 参见黄玉顺：《爱与思——生活儒学的观念》，成都：四川大学出版社，2006年，第129—134页。[Huang Yushun, *Love and Thought: Life Confucianism as a New Philosophy* (Encino: Bridge21 Publications, 2019), 179-185.]

③ 倪培民：《儒家功夫哲学论》，北京：商务印书馆，2022年。

④ 张汝伦：《作为第一哲学的实践哲学及其实践概念》，《复旦学报（社会科学版）》2005年第5期；丁立群：《何为实践哲学？——对亚里士多德的回溯与超越》，《马克思主义与现实》2017年第2期。

⑤ 汉斯·格奥尔格·伽达默尔、卡斯腾·杜特：《什么是实践哲学——伽达默尔访谈录》，金惠敏译，《西北师大学报（社会科学版）》2005年第1期；张能为：《伽达默尔与实践哲学传统和解释学重建》，《学术界》2010年第10期。

夫论的内容相通的，这是显而易见的。在这个意义上，可以说，实践哲学其实就是西方的功夫论传统；反过来也可以说，功夫论其实就是中国的实践哲学传统。所以，有学者将孟子的“内圣外王之道”称为“孟子实践哲学思想”^①，颇有道理。

因此，这里不是西方有没有功夫论的问题，也不是中国有没有实践哲学的问题，而是对中西之间的功夫论或实践哲学的共通性和差异性进行比较的问题，也就是探讨中西之间的功夫论或实践哲学的“可对应性”和“非等同性”^②。

二、“功夫”概念的历时性转换与儒家哲学的古今之变问题 [79]

整个《大学》文本所讨论的，其实都是功夫论问题。倪老师的大作也表明，《大学》是最典型的儒家功夫论文献。所以，这里所涉及的，主要是《大学》的思想观念内涵的古今之变、现代转化问题，我曾经专文讨论过。^③现在我分两个层次来谈：

第一个层次的问题是：“修齐治平”的逻辑，今天怎样才能成立？一个人做好了修身，就一定能齐家吗？能齐家，就一定能治国吗？能治国，就一定能够平天下吗？

当然，在西周的宗法制度下，对于姬姓宗族的一个男性成员来说，这个逻辑是能够成立的：“身修而后家齐，家齐而后国治，国治而后天下平。”（《礼记·大学》）但是，在现代社会中，如果要使这个逻辑成立，在我看来，唯一可行的解释就是：随着基本生活方式的转换、时代的转换而发生的社会主体的现代转换，也就是从掌握权力者和士大夫精英转换为普通公民，“修齐治平”的实际内涵也发生历时性的转换。这就是说，对于一个现代公民来说，齐家，就是公民做到现代核心家庭的和睦；治国，就是公民以某种方式行使国家治理的政治主权；平天下，就是公民以某种方式参与到世界事务之中去。

这其实是一个政治哲学话题。实际上，这一切转换都已经发生和已经存在，儒家要做的，不过是用自己的话语来对此加以解释而已，这就是黑格尔所说的“密涅瓦的猫头鹰只在黄昏起飞”。

第二个层次的问题是“格致诚正”的问题，也就是普通公民的“修身”问题。设想，一个普普通通的公民，谈不上什么“功夫”，谈不上什么“境界”，那么，他能不能，或者说有没有能力和资格“齐家”“治国”“平天下”？有没有能力和资格组建和睦的家庭、行使其关于国家治理和参与世界事务的权利？如果有这种能力和资格，那么，对于普通公民、社会大众来说，“功夫论”的意义何在？我想，这是今天的儒家“功夫哲学”要解决的一个重大问题。

这也是我在前面提到的一个问题：现代人应当怎样“做功夫”？这里的“现代人”不仅指儒家和哲学家、社会精英，而是泛指所有人，包括广大普通民众。这是一个极具现实意义的课题：一个普通公民怎么“格物”，怎么“致知”，怎么“诚意”，怎么“正心”？我想强调一点：如果要求“自天子以至于庶人，壹是皆以修身为本”（《礼记·大学》），那么，“格致诚正”修身功夫的标准，就不能是精英的诉求，而只能是合格的现代公民人格的养成。这就要求儒学从传统的精英儒学转变为真正的“公民儒学”^④。

① 郑臣：《内圣外王之道——孟子实践哲学思想初探》，《社会科学家》2012年第10期。

② 黄玉顺：《爱与思——生活儒学的观念》，第4—8页。（Huang, *Love and Thought: Life Confucianism as a New Philosophy*, 25-30.）

③ 黄玉顺：《论“大学精神”与“大学之道”》，《寻根》2010年第4期。

④ 林安梧：《后新儒学及“公民儒学”相关问题之探讨》，《求是学刊》2008年第1期；《儒学转型——由“君子儒学”到“公民儒学”》，《当代儒学》（第18辑），成都：四川人民出版社，2020年，第169—195页；张小星：《后新儒学的“公民儒学”建构及其问题——与生活儒学的“中国正义论”比较》，《东岳论丛》2019年第11期。

三、功夫与形而上学的关系问题^[80]

我刚才谈到，儒家的功夫论大致可以对应于西方的实践哲学。不过，我注意到，倪老师的“功夫哲学”本身涵盖了形而上学问题，主要是第五章“儒家心性之学与功夫本体论”和第六章“儒家需要形而上学吗”。这似乎就不同于西方的实践哲学了，因为按照西方哲学的传统，“实践哲学”是与形而上学或所谓“理论哲学”相分离的^①，两者的内容是“善”与“是”的区分^②。那么，我在这里提出两个值得讨论的问题：

（一）宋明理学本体论与功夫论的“奠基关系”^[80]

回到宋明理学，本体论和功夫论也是分开的；不仅如此，前者是后者的前提。这就是说，根据孔子所说的“性相近，习相远”（《论语·阳货》），宋明理学有一个基本的三段式设定：第一，先天的“性相近”，这是心性本体，于是有本体论；第二，后天的“习相远”，这是本体的遮蔽、放失；第三，所以需要功夫，由此“以复其性”^③“复其本体”^④，于是有功夫论。但这种所谓“分开”，其实是一种“奠基关系”（*Fundierungsverhältnis, foundation-laying relationship*）^⑤，即形而上学本体论是为功夫论奠基的。

（二）实践哲学与“第一哲学”的关系问题^[81]

1. 西方的实践哲学，其实也有其形而上学基础^⑥，与宋明理学的“本体和功夫”的奠基关系是同构的。尽管今天的哲学界许多人“反形而上学”，倡导所谓“后形而上学”^⑦，将实践哲学与形而上学对立起来，但无论如何，实践哲学仍然有其形而上学基础，仍然有其“本体论承诺”（*ontological commitment*）^⑧。

例如康德的“道德形而上学原理”^⑨，“在他的实践哲学中为形而上学找到了栖身之处”^⑩。有人认为这是“康德实践哲学的深度悖论”^⑪，其实未必；只不过，不同于传统形而上学，康德诉诸某种“未来形而上学”^⑫。所以，有学者认为，康德的批判哲学其实出自“形而上学的动机”^⑬，其结果是“批判的形而上学”^⑭。

① 邓安庆：《“无形而上学的伦理学”之意义和限度——以亚里士多德〈尼各马可伦理学〉的三种论证为例》，《哲学动态》2011年第1期；丁立群：《理论哲学与实践哲学：孰为第一哲学？》，《哲学研究》2012年第1期。

② 徐长福：《是与善的分类及其意义——从亚里士多德哲学中开出“元实践学”的尝试》，《南京大学学报（哲学·人文科学·社会科学版）》2006年第3期。

③ 朱熹：《大学章句序》，《四书章句集注》，北京：中华书局，1983年，第1页。

④ 王阳明：《传习录上》，《王阳明全集（新编本）》卷一，吴光等编校，杭州：浙江古籍出版社，2010年，第38页。

⑤ 黄玉顺：《形而上学的奠基问题——儒学视域中的海德格尔及其所解释的康德哲学》，《四川大学学报（哲学社会科学版）》2004年第2期。

⑥ 王艳秀：《亚里士多德实践哲学的内在背反及其现代效应——从形而上学与伦理学的关系看》，《道德与文明》2013年第1期。

⑦ 哈贝马斯：《后形而上学思想》，曹卫东、付德根译，南京：译林出版社，2001年。

⑧ 蒯因：《从逻辑的观点看》，江天骥等译，上海：上海译文出版社，1987年，第8页；黄玉顺：《形而上学的黎明——生活儒学视域下的“变易本体论”建构》，《湖北大学学报（哲学社会科学版）》2015年第4期。

⑨ 康德：《道德形而上学原理》，苗力田译，上海：上海人民出版社，2005年。

⑩ 阎孟伟：《对形而上学的实践哲学反思》，《哲学研究》2019年第4期。

⑪ 刘清平：《“理性”何以“实践”？——康德实践哲学的深度悖论》，《南京社会科学》2017年第4期。

⑫ 参见康德：《任何一种能够作为科学出现的未来形而上学导论》，庞景仁译，北京：商务印书馆，1997年。

⑬ 张汝伦：《批判哲学的形而上学动机》，《文史哲》2010年第6期。

⑭ 韩水法：《论康德批判的形而上学》，《哲学研究》2003年第5期。

甚至海德格尔，他尽管要用“基础本体论”（*Fundamentalontologie, fundamental ontology*）来为“传统本体论”即形而上学^①奠基，但他仍然承认形而上学本体论与形而下学（例如科学与伦理学）之间的奠基关系，即“存在问题的目标不仅在于保障一种使科学成为可能的先天条件，而且也在于保障那使先于任何研究存在者的科学且奠定这种科学的基础的存在论本身成为可能的条件”^②。所谓“保障一种使科学成为可能的先天条件”，其实就是传统形而上学本体论。他在这里表达的思想，我称之为“双重奠基”^③，即基础本体论为形上本体论奠基，而形上本体论为形下学奠基。^④

2. 当然，自伽达默尔的“哲学诠释学”以来，一些学者试图将实践哲学视为“第一哲学”^⑤，这似乎解构了或者颠覆了上述奠基关系，即实践哲学不再被视为形而下学，而是与海德格尔的“基础本体论”或“此在生存论”相匹配的，它消解了或者先行于形而上学。但在我看来，就伽达默尔的“哲学诠释学”而论，它所理解的“诠释”实践，是否足以形而上学奠基，还是值得怀疑的，我对此有专文讨论。^⑥

在我看来，要将实践哲学视为真正的第一哲学，只有一种可能，那就是真正彻底地重新理解和解释“实践”，即真正彻底地回到“前存在者”“前主体性”的观念视域；这同样适用于儒家的“功夫”观念，即“功夫”被理解和解释为“前存在者”“前主体性”的事情。在这个问题上，我也有过一些探索。^⑦

这个问题，可以更加深入地讨论。但无论如何，倪老师把形而上学纳入“功夫哲学”，这是一个直击当代哲学前沿的想法。

（责任编辑：杨翌琳 责任校对：易诗樵）

① 海德格尔：《面向思的事情》，陈小文、孙周兴译，北京：商务印书馆，1999年，第68—69页。

② 海德格尔：《存在与时间》，陈嘉映、王庆节译，熊伟校，北京：生活·读书·新知三联书店，1999年，第13页。

③ 黄玉顺：《〈周易〉与现象学对于哲学重建的意义》，《国际儒学论丛》（第10辑），北京：社会科学文献出版社，2021年，第1—13页。

④ 黄玉顺：《何谓“哲学”？——论生活儒学与哲学的关系》，《河北大学学报（哲学社会科学版）》2021年第2期。

⑤ 张汝伦：《作为第一哲学的实践哲学及其实践概念》，《复旦学报（社会科学版）》2005年5期；张能为：《伽达默尔“实践哲学”作为“第一哲学”何以可能及其意义理解》，《社会科学战线》2020年第9期。

⑥ 黄玉顺：《“直”与“法”：情感与正义——与王庆节教授商榷“父子相隐”问题》，《社会科学研究》2017年第6期；《前主体性诠释：主体性诠释的解构——评“东亚儒学”的经典诠释模式》，《哲学研究》2019年第1期。

⑦ 黄玉顺：《实践主义：马克思哲学论》，《学术界》2000年第4期；《前主体性对话：对话与人的解放问题——评哈贝马斯“对话伦理学”》，《江苏行政学院学报》2014年第5期；《前主体性诠释：主体性诠释的解构——评“东亚儒学”的经典诠释模式》，《哲学研究》2019年第1期；《前主体性诠释：中国诠释学的奠基性观念》，《浙江社会科学》2020年第12期；《如何获得新生？——再论“前主体性”概念》，《吉林师范大学学报（人文社会科学版）》2021年第2期。

On Confucian *Gongfu* Philosophy and Western Practical Philosophy

Huang Yushun*

Abstract: *Gongfu* philosophy involves three important issues. First is the synchronic connotations of the concept of *gongfu* and the relationship between Chinese and Western philosophies. The “eight steps in moral cultivation” in the *Great Learning*—approaching things personally, deriving knowledge, having one’s desire be sincere, having one’s mind be right, cultivating one’s character, managing one’s household well, governing one’s state well, and making all under heaven peaceful—in fact, are all issues of *gongfu*. In fact, Confucian *gongfu* theory roughly corresponds to Western practical philosophy. Second is the diachronic transformation of the concept of *gongfu* and the change in Confucian philosophy from ancient to modern. In order to validate the logic of “cultivating one’s character, managing one’s household well, governing one’s state well, and making all under heaven peaceful” in modern society, it is necessary to carry on with the modern transformation of the subject: managing one’s household well is citizens’ achievement of harmony in the modern nuclear family; governing one’s state well is the citizens’ exercise of the political sovereignty of national governance in a certain way, and making all under heaven peaceful is their participation in world affairs in a certain way. Therefore, the standard of “approaching things personally, deriving knowledge, having one’s desire be sincere, and having one’s mind be right” cannot be merely the pursuit of elites but the cultivation of the qualified citizen’s personality. Third is the relationship between *gongfu* philosophy, practical philosophy, and metaphysics. In the Neo-Confucianism of the Song and Ming dynasties, metaphysical ontology laid the foundation for *gongfu* theory. Similarly, traditional Western practical philosophy also has its metaphysical foundation. In order to make practical philosophy and *gongfu* philosophy the real “first philosophy,” the concepts of practice and *gongfu* should be “pre-existence” and “pre-subjectivity.”

Keywords: Confucian, *gongfu* philosophy, practical philosophy

On April 14, 2018, I had the privilege of attending the workshop on “Traditional Chinese Theory of *Gongfu* and *Gongfu* Philosophy” organized by Ni Peimin 倪培民 and Liu Xiaogan 刘笑敢 at Beijing Normal University. Later, in 2019 or 2020, I participated in the evaluation of a Guizhou Provincial Philosophy and Social Sciences *Guoxue* Project hosted by Professor Ni.

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My address at the 2018 workshop was reported in the press as follows:

Professor Huang Yushun 黄玉顺 from Shandong University gave a speech on “The New Development of *Gongfu* Theory: Interpreting the Confucian Concept of *Gongfu* through Life Confucianism.” He observed that many popular readers criticize academic Confucians for only sitting and prattling about the general principle. “No *gongfu*” means that few scholars practice meditation. The popular understanding of *gongfu* 功夫 (self-cultivation effort) is similar to the Way of cultivating one’s morality in old age. Huang Yushun believed that this kind of understanding has greatly narrowed *gongfu*. He argued for a re-expanded restoration of the narrowed-down *gongfu* theory today.

In his view, *gongfu* in its broadest sense has roughly two meanings. One is the effort to achieve a certain goal; the other is the achievement of something through investing time, energy, and effort. Neo-Confucianism in the Song (960–1279) and Ming (1368–1644) dynasties dealt with the relationship between substance and *gongfu*. Therefore, we cannot talk about *gongfu* today without the *Great Learning* and the *Doctrine of the Mean* as understood by Song–Ming Neo-Confucianism. Moreover, we can talk about it from different angles, for example, extensive study (*boxue* 博学), prudent inquiry (*shenwen* 审问), careful reflection (*shensi* 慎思), clear discrimination (*mingbian* 明辨), and earnest practice (*duxing* 笃行) in the *Doctrine of the Mean* are all *gongfu* and so are “approaching things personally (*gewu* 格物), deriving knowledge (*zhizhi* 致知), having one’s desire be sincere (*chengyi* 诚意), having one’s mind be right (*zhengxin* 正心), cultivating one’s character (*xiushen* 修身), managing one’s household well (*qijia* 齐家), governing one’s state well (*zhiguo* 治国), and making all under heaven peaceful (*pingtianxia* 平天下)” in the *Great Learning*. When a philosopher sits thinking about Confucian philosophy, he or she is practicing *gongfu*.

Finally, he mentioned that *gongfu* also has its times and confronts the problem of modern transformation. He believes that Confucianism nowadays can reinvigorate ideological resources in the *Great Learning*. The key is to realize that the transformation of lifestyle leads to the transformation of social subjects, and the subject of modern society is undoubtedly the individual. That each individual needs to achieve the set of Confucian logic—approaching things personally, deriving knowledge, having one’s desire be sincere, having one’s mind be right, cultivating one’s character, managing one’s household well, governing one’s state well, and making all under heaven peaceful—is still valid today.¹

In this speech, I mainly discussed two issues: first is the connotation and extension of the concept of *gongfu*, emphasizing that the “eight steps in moral cultivation” (*bamu* 八目) in the *Great Learning*—approaching things personally, deriving knowledge, having one’s desire be sincere, having one’s mind be right, cultivating one’s character, managing one’s household well, governing one’s state well, and making all under heaven peaceful—in fact, are issues of *gongfu*. Second is the modern transformation of the concept of *gongfu*, which is mainly about how modern people practice *gongfu*.

I have been consistently concerned about the two issues. My book *Love and Thought: Life Confucianism as a New Philosophy* [爱与思——生活儒学的观念] has a section devoted to the *gongfu*, discussing the following questions: (1) For a Confucian, can so-called purely academic work be regarded as *gongfu*? (2) What kind of *gongfu* should we practice?² These are actually the two issues discussed above.

When I read Professor Ni’s book *Philosophizing Gongfu through Confucianism* [儒家功夫哲学论],³ I found that I share his same views on these two issues. On one hand, the three chapters of the book are arranged according to the “eight steps” in the *Great Learning*. The first part is approaching things personally and deriving knowledge; the second is having

1 “How to Reinvigorate Confucian *Gongfu* Theory Today: Based on Contemporary Times and Facing the World” [儒学功夫论在今天如何盘活：立足当代，面向世界], *Pengpai*, April 28, 2018, https://www.thepaper.cn/newsDetail_forward_2101051.

2 Huang Yushun, *Love and Thought: Life Confucianism as a New Philosophy*, trans. Li Xuening and Yan Meirong (Encino: Bridge21 Publications, 2019), 179–185.

3 Ni Peimin 倪培民, *Philosophizing Gongfu through Confucianism* [儒家功夫哲学论] (Beijing: Commercial Press, 2022).

one's desire be sincere, having one's mind be right, and cultivating one's character; and the third is managing one's household well, governing one's state well, and making all under heaven peaceful. On the other hand, the book mainly deals with the modern development of the theory of *gongfu*.

Of course, Professor Ni's masterpiece deals with much more than these issues. Instead, it constructs a vast system of fundamental philosophical issues in both ancient and modern China and the West. In my opinion, his prime contributions are as follows. First, he encompasses the whole tradition of Confucian philosophy in the concept of *gongfu* philosophy, which is a unique summary of the tradition of Confucian philosophy. Second, for the Confucian philosophical tradition, *gongfu* philosophy is not "to follow" but "to continue," becoming the original philosophical thought of contemporary philosophers. Third, *gongfu* philosophy has the value of integrating Chinese and Western philosophies. Although it seems to be a contrast between Chinese and Western philosophies, and even contains the meaning of the confrontation between Chinese and Western philosophies, it needs a perspective beyond the confrontation between Chinese and Western philosophies, which is the inevitable embodiment of the philosophical quality that Professor Ni possesses.

I would like to discuss the following questions based on Professor Ni's masterpiece.

The Synchronic Connotation of the Concept of *Gongfu* and the Relationship between Chinese and Western Philosophies [Refer to page 86 for Chinese. Similarly hereinafter]

Here I will mainly talk about the relationship between Confucian *gongfu* theory and Western practical philosophy and argue that Confucian *gongfu* theory can roughly correspond to Western practical philosophy.

It is well known that practical philosophy is an important Western philosophical tradition initiated by Aristotle.⁴ Its core is ethics or moral philosophy, political science, and even hermeneutics (Heidegger and Gadamer).⁵ In fact, all these contents are interlinked with Confucian *gongfu* theory. In this sense, it can be said that practical philosophy is actually the Western tradition of *gongfu* theory. Conversely, it can be said that *gongfu* theory follows the tradition of Chinese practical philosophy. Therefore, some scholars treat Mencius's "Way of inner sageliness and outer kingliness" as his practical philosophy,⁶ which is quite reasonable.

Therefore, it is not a question of whether there is a theory of *gongfu* in the West, or whether there is practical philosophy in China. Instead, it is an issue of comparing and contrasting Chinese *gongfu* theory and Western practical philosophy, that is, discussing the "commensurability" and "non-equivalence."⁷

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- 4 Zhang Rulun 张汝伦, "Practical Philosophy as the First Philosophy and Its Concept of Practice" [作为第一哲学的实践哲学及其实践概念], *Fudan Journal (Social Sciences Edition)* [复旦学报(社会科学版)], no. 5 (2005): 155–163. Ding Liqun 丁立群, "What Is Practical Philosophy: Retrospective on and Transcendence of Aristotle" [何为实践哲学? ——对亚里士多德的回溯与超越], *Marxism and Reality* [马克思主义与现实], no. 2 (2017): 148–155.
 - 5 Hans Georg Gadamer and Carsten Dutt, "What Is Practical Philosophy: An Interview with Gadamer" [什么是实践哲学——伽达默尔访谈录], trans. Jin Huimin 金惠敏, *Journal of Northwest Normal University (Social Sciences Edition)* [西北师大学报(社会科学版)], no. 1 (2005): 7–10. Zhang Nengwei 张能为, "Gadamer, the Tradition of Practical Philosophy, and Hermeneutic Reconstruction" [伽达默尔与实践哲学传统和解释学重建], *Academics* [学术界], no. 10 (2010): 48–56.
 - 6 Zheng Chen 郑臣, "The Way of Inner Sageliness and Outer Kingliness: A Preliminary Study of Mencius's Practical Philosophy" [内圣外王之道——孟子实践哲学思想初探], *Social Scientist* [社会科学家], no. 10 (2012): 15–19.
 - 7 Huang, *Love and Thought: Life Confucianism as a New Philosophy*, 25–30.

The Diachronic Transformation of the Concept of *Gongfu* and the Change of Confucian Philosophy from Ancient to Modern ^[87]

The whole text of the *Great Learning* is actually all about *gongfu* theory, and Professor Ni's masterpiece also mentions that the *Great Learning* is the most typical treatise on Confucian *gongfu*. What is involved here is mainly the transition from ancient to modern times and the modern transformation of the ideological connotations of the *Great Learning*, which I have discussed in my treatise.⁸ Two perspectives are involved.

First, how can the logic of "cultivating one's character, managing one's household well, governing one's state well, and making all under heaven peaceful" be valid today? If a person does a good job of self-cultivation, will he or she be able to manage the household well? If one can manage the household well, will he or she surely govern the state well? If one can govern the state well, will he or she surely make the world peaceful?

Of course, under the patriarchal system of the Western Zhou dynasty (1046–771 BCE), for a male member of the Ji clan, this logic would be valid: "After physical cultivation, the family shall be in harmony; after family in harmony, the country shall be governed; after country well-governed, then the world shall be in peace" (*Book of Rites*, "Great Learning"). However, in modern society, if this logic can be established, the only feasible explanation is one involving the transformation of modern times and the modern lifestyle and the modern transformation of social subjects. That is to say, with the transformation of social subjects from rulers and elite scholar-officials to ordinary citizens, the connotations of "cultivating one's character, managing one's household well, governing one's state well, and making all under heaven peaceful" has also undergone a diachronic transformation. For a modern citizen, a family in harmony means that citizens achieve harmony of the modern nuclear family; that a country is well-governed involves the citizens' exercise of the national governance of political sovereignty in a certain way, and world peace means that citizens participate in the world affairs in a certain way.

This is actually a question of political philosophy. All those modern transformations have already come about, and what Confucians needs to do is only to explain them with their own words. This is what Hegel meant in saying that the owl of Minerva "spreads its wings only with the coming of the dusk."

Second is the issue of "approaching things personally, deriving knowledge, having desire be sincere, and having one's mind be right," that is, the issue of self-cultivation of ordinary citizens. For an utterly ordinary citizen, for whom there is no "*gongfu*" or "spiritual attainment" to speak of, does he or she then have the ability and qualification to realize "well-managed family," "well-governed country," and "peaceful world"? Is he or she qualified to form a harmonious family and exercise his or her right to govern the country and participate in world affairs? If so, what is the meaning of *gongfu* theory for ordinary citizens and the general public? I think this is a major issue to be solved by Confucian *gongfu* philosophy nowadays.

This is also one of the issues I mentioned earlier, namely, how should modern people practice *gongfu*? By "modern people" I mean not only Confucians and philosophers and social elites but all people in general, including the general public. This is a subject of great practical significance. How does an ordinary citizen approach things personally, derive knowledge, have one's desire be sincere, and have one's mind be right? One point I have to emphasize

8 Huang Yushun 黄玉顺, "On the Spirit and the Way of the *Great Learning*" [论 "大学精神" 与 "大学之道"], *Root Exploration* [寻根], no. 4 (2010): 28–34.

is that if it is required that “everything be based on self-cultivation from the emperor to the common people” (ibid.), the standard of “approaching things personally, deriving knowledge, having one’s desire be sincere, and having one’s mind be right” must be open to any qualified citizen, not the exclusive pursuit of elites. This requires Confucianism to change from a traditional elite Confucianism to the real “civil Confucianism.”⁹

The Relationship between *Gongfu* and Metaphysics [88]

The Confucian *gongfu* theory can be taken to correspond roughly to Western practical philosophy. However, Professor Ni’s *gongfu* philosophy itself covers issues of metaphysics, mainly focusing on “The Study of Confucian Mind and Nature and *Gongfu* Ontology” [儒家心性之学与功夫本体论] and “Does Confucianism Need Metaphysics?” [儒家需要形上学吗] in Chapters 5 and 6. This seems to be different from Western practical philosophy. According to the tradition of Western philosophy, practical philosophy is separate from metaphysics or the so-called theoretical philosophy.¹⁰ The content of both is the distinction between “goodness” and “being.”¹¹ Two questions raised are worth discussing.

Foundation-Laying Relationship of Ontology and *Gongfu* Theory in Song–Ming Neo-Confucianism [88]

Returning to Song–Ming Neo-Confucianism, ontology and *gongfu* theory are also separate there. Moreover, the former is the premise of the latter. That is to say, based on Confucius’s doctrine that “by nature, people are nearly alike; by practice, they get to be wide apart” (*Analects* 17:2), Song–Ming Neo-Confucianism evinces a basic three-stage pattern: (1) the innate “alikehood in nature,” which is the substance of the mind, hence the ontology; (2) the *a posteriori* “wide disparity through practice,” which is the occlusion and dissipation of the substance; and (3) the necessity of *gongfu*, which takes time to “restore the nature”¹² and “restore the substance.”¹³ Thus is the theory of *gongfu*. However, this so-called “separation” is actually a foundation-laying relationship (*Fundierungsverhältnis*),¹⁴ that is, metaphysical ontology laid the foundation for *gongfu* theory.

- 9 Lin An-wu 林安梧, “Discussion on Post-Neo-Confucianism and ‘Civil Confucianism’” [后新儒学及“公民儒学”相关问题之探讨], *Seeking Truth* [求是学刊], no. 1 (2008): 13–20; “The Transformation of Confucianism: From ‘Gentleman’s Confucianism’ to ‘Civil Confucianism’” [儒学转型——由“君子儒学”到“公民儒学”], in vol. 18 of *Contemporary Confucianism* [当代儒学] (Chengdu: Sichuan People’s Publishing House, 2020), 169–195. Zhang Xiaoxing 张小星, “The Construction and Problems of ‘Civil Confucianism’ in Post-Neo-Confucianism: A Comparison with the ‘Chinese Theory of Justice’ in Life Confucianism” [后新儒学的“公民儒学”建构及其问题——与生活儒学的“中国正义论”比较], *Dongyue Tribune* [东岳论丛], no. 11 (2019): 96–104.
- 10 Deng Anqing 邓安庆, “The Meaning and Limits of ‘Ethics without Metaphysics’: A Case Study of Three Kinds of Argumentation in Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*” [“无形而上学的伦理学”之意义和限度——以亚里士多德《尼各马可伦理学》的三种论证为例], *Philosophical Trends* [哲学动态], no. 1 (2011): 48–55. Ding Liqun, “Theoretical Philosophy or Practical Philosophy: Which Is the First Philosophy?” [理论哲学与实践哲学：孰为第一哲学?], *Philosophical Research* [哲学研究], no. 1 (2012): 78–84, 97, 128.
- 11 Xu Changfu 徐长福, “The Classification of Being and Goodness and Its Significance: An Attempt to Create a ‘Meta-Praxeology’ from Aristotle’s Philosophy” [是与善的分类及其意义——从亚里士多德哲学中开出“元实践学”的尝试], *Journal of Nanjing University* (Philosophy, Humanities, and Social Sciences Edition) [南京大学学报(哲学·人文科学·社会科学版)], no. 3 (2006): 111–119.
- 12 Zhu Xi 朱熹, preface to *Commentaries on the Great Learning* [大学章句], in *Commentaries on the Four Books* [四书章句集注] (Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company, 1983), 1.
- 13 Wang Yangming 王阳明, *Instructions for Practical Living I* [传习录上], vol. 1 of *Complete Works of Wang Yangming* (New Edition) [王阳明全集(新编本)], eds. Wu Guang 吴光 et al. (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Ancient Books Publishing House, 2010), 38.
- 14 Huang Yushun, “The Foundation of Metaphysics: Heidegger and His Interpretation of Kantian Philosophy from the Perspective of Confucianism” [形而上学的奠基问题——儒学视域中的海德格尔及其所解释的康德哲学], *Journal of Sichuan University* (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition) [四川大学学报(哲学社会科学版)], no. 2 (2004): 36–45.

Relationship between Practical Philosophy and the ‘First Philosophy’ [88]

In fact, Western practical philosophy also has its metaphysical basis¹⁵ and is isomorphic with the foundation of “substance and *gongfu*” of Neo-Confucianism in the Song and Ming dynasties. Although many people at present in philosophical circles are “anti-metaphysical” and advocate “post-metaphysics”¹⁶ opposed to practical philosophy and metaphysics, in any case, practical philosophy still has its metaphysical basis. It still has its “ontological commitment.”¹⁷

Taking Kant’s metaphysics of morals,¹⁸ for example, he “found a root for metaphysics in his practical philosophy.”¹⁹ Some people regard this as “the deep paradox of Kant’s practical philosophy,”²⁰ but that is not necessarily true. In contrast to traditional metaphysics, however, Kant appealed to some kind of “future metaphysics,”²¹ so some scholars believe that Kant’s critical philosophy actually comes from “metaphysical motives,”²² and the result is “critical metaphysics.”²³

For Heidegger, although he used fundamental ontology (*Fundamentalontologie*) to lay the foundation for “traditional ontology” (metaphysics),²⁴ he still admitted the foundation-laying relationship between metaphysical ontology and physics (such as science and ethics), writing that “[t]he question of being thus aims at an a priori condition of the possibility not only of the sciences, . . . but it aims also at the condition of the possibility of the ontologies which precede the ontic sciences and found them.”²⁵ The so-called “a priori condition of the possibility” is actually the traditional metaphysical ontology, and what he expressed here is what I call the “double foundation,”²⁶ that is, the fundamental ontology is the foundation of the metaphysical ontology, and the metaphysical ontology is the foundation of the physics.²⁷

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- 15 Wang Yanxi 王艳秀, “The Inner Reversal of Aristotle’s Practical Philosophy and Its Modern Effects: From the Relationship between Metaphysics and Ethics” [亚里士多德实践哲学的内在背反及其现代效应——从形而上学与伦理学的关系看], *Morality and Civilization* [道德与文明], no. 1 (2013): 35–41.
- 16 Jürgen Habermas, *Nachmetaphysisches Denken*. Translated by Cao Weidong 曹卫东 and Fu Degen 付德根 as [后形而上学思想] (Nanjing: Yilin Press, 2001).
- 17 W. V. Quine, *From a Logical Point of View*. Translated by Jiang Tianji 江天骥 et al. as [从逻辑的观点看] (Shanghai: Shanghai Translation Publishing House, 1987), 8. Huang Yushun, “The Dawn of Metaphysics: The Construction of ‘Changing Ontology’ from the Perspective of Life Confucianism” [形而上学的黎明——生活儒学视域下的“变易本体论”建构], *Journal of Hubei University* (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition) [湖北大学学报(哲学社会科学版)], no. 4 (2015): 66–71, 149.
- 18 Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*. Translated by Miao Litian 苗力田 as [道德形而上学原理] (Shanghai: Shanghai People’s Publishing House, 2005).
- 19 Yan Mengwei 阎孟伟, “Reflections on Practical Philosophy of Metaphysics” [对形而上学的实践哲学反思], *Philosophical Research*, no. 4 (2019): 25–31.
- 20 Liu Qingping 刘清平, “How Can ‘Reason’ Be ‘Practical’: The Deep Paradox of Kant’s Practical Philosophy” [“理性”何以“实践”?——康德实践哲学的深度悖论], *Nanjing Journal of Social Sciences* [南京社会科学], no. 4 (2017): 52–58.
- 21 Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics That Will Be Able to Come Forward as Science*. Translated by Pang Jingren 庞景仁 as [任何一种能够作为科学出现的未来形而上学导论] (Beijing: Commercial Press, 1997).
- 22 Zhang Rulun, “Metaphysical Motives of Critical Philosophy” [批判哲学的形而上学动机], *Journal of Literature, History, and Philosophy* [文史哲], no. 6 (2010): 32–40.
- 23 Han Shuifa 韩水法, “On the Metaphysics of Kant’s Criticism” [论康德批判的形而上学], *Philosophical Research*, no. 5 (2003): 42–50, 70.
- 24 Martin Heidegger, *Zur Sache des Denkens*. Translated by Chen Xiaowen 陈小文 and Sun Zhouxing 孙周兴 as [面向思的事情] (Beijing: Commercial Press, 1999).
- 25 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996), 9.
- 26 Huang Yushun, “The Significance of *Zhouyi* and Phenomenology for the Reconstruction of Philosophy” [《周易》与现象学对于哲学重建的意义], in vol. 10 of *International Tribune of Confucian Studies* [国际儒学论丛] (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2021), 1–13.
- 27 Huang Yushun, “What Is Philosophy?: On the Relation between Life Confucianism and Philosophy” [何谓“哲学”?——论生活儒学与哲学的关系], *Journal of Hebei University* (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition) [河北大学学报(哲学社会科学版)], no. 2 (2021): 1–8.

Of course, since Gadamer proposed philosophical hermeneutics, some scholars have tried to regard practical philosophy as the “first philosophy,”²⁸ which seems to deconstruct or subvert the above foundation-laying relationship. In other words, practical philosophy is no longer regarded as physics but as a match with Heidegger’s fundamental ontology or “the existential constitution of *Dasein*,” which disintegrated or predated metaphysics. In my opinion, however, as far as Gadamer’s philosophical hermeneutics is concerned, it is doubtful whether the hermeneutical practice is sufficient to lay the foundation for metaphysics. I have written an article to argue my viewpoint.²⁹

As far as I am concerned, there is only one possible way to regard the practical philosophy as the real first philosophy: to re-understand and explain “practice” completely, namely to completely return to the conceptual horizon of “pre-being” and “pre-subjectivity.” This endeavor is applicable to the Confucian concept of *gongfu*, which is understood and explained as a matter of pre-existence and pre-subjectivity. I have written on this subject more extensively elsewhere.³⁰ But in any case, Professor Ni’s inclusion of metaphysics in *gongfu* philosophy is an idea that strikes right at the forefront of contemporary philosophy.

Translated by Li Xuening* and Yan Meirong**

- 28 Zhang Rulun, “Practical Philosophy as the First Philosophy and Its Concept of Practice,” 155–163; Zhang Nengwei, “On the Possibility for Gadamer’s Practical Philosophy to Be the First Philosophy and Its Meaning” [伽达默尔“实践哲学”作为“第一哲学”何以可能及其意义理解], *Social Science Front* [社会科学战线], no. 9 (2020): 1–17.
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