Confucian ethics in the light of the Wu Xing text

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**CONFUCIAN ETHICS IN THE LIGHT OF THE
WU XING TEXT**

**SUN QINGJUAN
SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES
2017**

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WU XING TEXT**

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SUMMARY

This thesis concentrates on the moral cultivation aspect of the Guodian *Wu Xing* manuscript and its theoretical connections with the *Mengzi*.

First, the present thesis analyzes first the moral cultivation process in the *Wu Xing* text and argues that the process is completed through three progressive efforts: internalization, externalization, and harmonization. The effort of internalization is realized through the inner-heart approach and the outer-heart approach, respectively. By doing this, *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* as external norms are turned into individual virtues. *Sheng* is different from the other four in the sense that it does not have any external forms but can only exist as an internal virtue. The effort of externalization is to externalize all the five individual virtues, that is, to make *ren*, *yi*, *li*, *zhi*, and *sheng* take form from within. This process is done through practice and results in *de zhi xing* (conducts of virtue 德之行). The last effort, harmonization, is to harmonize all the conducts of virtue. It relies on a qualitative change caused by quantitative accumulation of timely practice. Once this qualitative change occurs, all the five conducts of virtue will be in harmony. This harmony represents the achievement of *de* in a person. Moreover, moral achievements attained from each effort can be observed externally from one's appearance.

Second, this thesis also gives a reinterpretation of the *Mengzi* 6A: 4 on the *nei* (internality 內) and *wai* (externality 外) properties of virtue. It maintains that Gaozi and Mengzi are using different standards to distinguish the internal from the external in their debate. In particular, Gaozi adopts the family-boundary and states

unequivocally that *ren* is internal and *yi* is external, whereas Mengzi utilizes the heart-boundary and his proposition is unclear. To figure out Mengzi's standpoint, this thesis reconstructs the whole picture of his virtue system using metaphors in the *Mengzi* and concludes that virtues in the *Mengzi* are composed of different parts (root 根, sprout 端, and fruit 實) and courses (*bu yan er yu* 不言而喻 and *kuo er chong zhi* 擴而充之), which constitute dynamic processes that embrace both internal and external dimensions as well as a remarkable transition stage from the internal towards the external dimension. Therefore, Mengzi actually holds that virtues integrate both internal and external dimensions. This view of Mengzi is a selective adoption and development of the *Wu Xing*'s notion of "*de zhi xing*."

Finally, this thesis presents a comprehensive analysis on issues concerning *sheng* and *zhi*. It proposes that *sheng* is a functional property in the *Wu Xing*. In addition to its extraordinary functions of hearing and knowing the way of the noble man, *sheng* also serves to regulate the other four individual virtues internally and their conducts of virtue externally. It is the regulative function of *sheng* that makes harmony possible in the *Wu Xing*. A comparative study is conducted on the discrepancies in the understanding of *sheng* and *sheng ren* between the *Wu Xing* and the *Mengzi*, which also reveals additional theoretical connections between the two literatures. This thesis holds that the *Wu Xing* precedes Mengzi to have signs of both the four-sprout theory and the *kuo er chong zhi* notion. Besides, it proposes that the cultivation process in the *Wu Xing* begins logically with *zhi* as an individual virtue and ends with the regulative function of *sheng*, and that the

psychological state of *you* (apprehension 憂) plays a role as a prelude in the whole process.

Taken together, this thesis sheds light on a deeper understanding of the moral cultivation notion in the Guodian *Wu Xing* text and reveals a closer theoretical connection between the Guodian *Wu Xing* and the *Mengzi*.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis presents a research investigation on the *Wu Xing* (The Five Conducts 五行)¹ text, which in particular focuses on the moral cultivation aspect of the Guodian *Wu Xing* manuscript and its theoretical connections with the *Mengzi*. In this introductory chapter, I first explicate the concept of “*wu xing*” and what the *Wu Xing* text refers to in this thesis. Following that is a literature review where I summarize main approaches and accounts in existing literature, point out the current research gap, and also highlight the significance of the present thesis research.

1.1 The *Wu Xing* Theory

For quite some time, in speaking of the term “*wu xing* 五行,” the first response of most people is the *wu xing* of *jin* (metal 金), *mu* (wood 木), *shui* (water 水), *huo* (fire 火), and *tu* (soil 土). However, there is another kind of *wu xing*, which is first known to us through Xunzi’s criticism of Zisi and Mengzi in his “*Fei shi er zi*” 非十二子 chapter. It is said that, “Some of these men only roughly model themselves on the former kings and do not understand their overall system. Nevertheless, their talents are many and their intentions grand. What they have seen and heard is broad and haphazard, and following the old past they create a

¹ In the Pinyin system, there are multiple spellings of 五行, such as, *Wuxing*, *wuxing*, *Wu-xing*, *Wu xing*, *wu xing*, *Wu Xing*, etc. Some scholars also suggest that 五行 should be read as “*wu heng*” or “*wu hang*” (Pang 2000, 29). For the sake of consistency in this thesis, I use “*wu xing*” when it represents a term and “*Wu Xing*” when it refers to the texts or the theory. English translations of the title are also various, such as, *The Five Aspects of Conduct*, *Five Kinds of Action*, *Five Types of Conduct*, *Five Actions*, *Five Virtues* and *The Five Conducts*. In this thesis, I follow Scott Cook’s translation of “*The Five Conducts*”. Unless otherwise specified, other usages are replaced accordingly in quotations afterwards.

new doctrine², calling it the *Wu Xing* 五行” (*Xunzi* 6.7; Wang 1988: 94; Hutton 2014: 41).³ Xunzi further gives a much negative description of the *Wu Xing* theory. He considers the theory “esoteric” which “has no proper explanation.” However, some of the Confucians “embellish their phases and treat the doctrine with deferential respect, saying, ‘These are truly the words of those former gentlemen’” (*Xunzi* 6.7; Wang 1988: 94; Hutton 2014: 41).⁴

It is still possible that the *wu xing* in the *Xunzi* refers to the five elements of *jin*, *mu*, *shui*, *huo*, and *tu*, except that Xunzi ascribes it to Zisi and Mengzi later in the passage. According to Xunzi, “Zisi sings the lead, and Meng Ke chimes in with him. The stupid *ru* of this vulgar age yammer all about this and do not know the error they are committing. Consequently, they accept the doctrine and pass it on, thinking the gift of Kongzi and Zigong to later generations to consist in this. Such is the crime of Zisi and Meng Ke” (*Xunzi* 6.7; Wang 1988: 94-95; Hutton 2014: 41-42).⁵

This is quite severe criticism of Zisi and Mengzi. Apparently, Xunzi regards the *Wu Xing* theory as misleading and detrimental. However, Xunzi does not go into any details about what the *Wu Xing* theory refers to. Meanwhile, for quite a long time after Xunzi, no evidence of other texts that directly explicate the *Wu Xing* theory of Zisi and Mengzi is found in the existing literature. Nevertheless,

² This article is added to the original translation.

³ *Xunzi*, “Fei shi er zi,” 6.7. 略法先王，而不知其統，然而猶材劇志大，聞見雜博。案往舊造說，謂之五行。The original text is from Wang Xianqian 王先謙, *Xunzi jijie* 荀子集解 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1988), 94-95. Translation is by Eric L. Hutton, *Xunzi: the complete text* (USA: Princeton University Press, 2014), with the changes of “Five Conducts” to “*Wu Xing*” 五行 and, in later quotation, “Confucius” to “Kongzi,” similarly hereafter.

⁴ 甚僻遠而無類，幽隱而無說，閉約而無解。案飾其辭而祇敬之曰：此真先君子之言也

⁵ 子思唱之，孟軻和之，世俗之溝猶瞽儒，嚙嚙然不知其所非也，遂受而傳之，以為仲尼子弓為茲厚於後世。是則子思孟軻之罪

many scholars have attempted to decipher the accusation from Xunzi to figure out what the so-called “Si-Meng *Wu Xing*” 思孟五行 is. For example, Xunzi’s commentator Yang Liang 楊倞 of Tang Dynasty notes the *wu xing* as the Five Constant Elements (*wu chang* 五常), namely, *ren* (benevolence/humanity 仁), *yi* (rightness/righteousness/propriety 義), *li* (ritual propriety/ritual 禮), *zhi* (knowledge/wisdom 智), and *xin* (trustworthiness 信) (Wang 2005: 209). Other interpretations have also been proposed by scholars in modern times. For instance, Zhang Taiyan 章太炎 considers the *wu xing* to be the five commonly known elements of *jin*, *mu*, *shui*, *huo*, and *tu* (Zhang 1985: 19), while Guo Moruo 郭沫若 takes it as the Five Virtues (*wu de* 五德), namely, *ren*, *yi*, *li*, *zhi*, and *cheng* (sincerity 誠) (Guo 1959: 133-134). Moreover, some scholars regard the *wu xing* as the Five Cardinal Relations (*wu lun* 五倫), referring to relations between ruler and subject, father and son, husband and wife, among siblings and between friends (Tan 1982: 72), while some even propose that the target of Xunzi’s criticism on the *wu xing* is not the theory of Zisi and Mengzi, but what he really censures is the *Wu Xing* theory of Zou Yan 鄒衍 (Gu 1982: 409-410). Despite the various speculations given by different scholars, no textual support is found at that time and thus none of them can draw a conclusive argument that the *wu xing* in their interpretations is the one that Xunzi has actually criticized.

In 1973, a number of manuscripts written on silk were excavated from the Mawangdui Han Dynasty Tomb 馬王堆漢墓 in Changsha, Hunan Province. Literary discoveries include *Zhouyi* 周易, *Laozi* 老子, *Zhangguo zonghengjia shu* 戰

國縱橫家書, and *Yangsheng fang* 養生方. These findings have greatly promoted academic research of the pre-Qin period. More importantly, one of the manuscripts talking about five moral concepts, *ren*, *yi*, *li*, *zhi*, and *sheng* (sagacity 聖), drew a lot of attention. It is considered the previously unknown theory of Si-Meng *Wu Xing* and is even directly titled as the *Wu Xing* by scholars like Pang Pu 龐樸. Pang proposes that this *Wu Xing* text, often referred to later as the Mawangdui (MWD) *Wu Xing*, belongs to the School of Zisi-Mengzi, and it should be the *Wu Xing* theory that Xunzi has attacked (Pang 2000: 132). Pang also divides the text into two parts, the classic (*jing* 經) and the commentary (*shuo* 說), based on the literature tradition at the time (Pang 2000: 100). This division receives a favorable response from scholars. Wei Qipeng 魏啟鵬, however, disagrees to title the manuscript as “*Wu Xing*” and prefers “*De Xing* 德行” instead (Wei 2005: 131).

Twenty years later, in 1993, more than eight hundred bamboo slips with about thirteen thousand Chinese characters were unearthed from the Chu Tomb in Guodian 郭店楚墓, Hubei Province. *Guodian chumu zhujian* 郭店楚墓竹簡, published by Wenwu chubanshe 文物出版社 in 1998, attracted wide-spread attention at home and abroad. Of all the discoveries, two belong to *Laozi* while the other fourteen are at large recognized as Confucian literatures. Coincidentally, there is also a similar manuscript entitled the *Wu Xing*, which, compared to the MWD *Wu Xing*, has only the classic part but lacks the commentary part. This later-found but more ancient version is usually called the Guodian (GD) *Wu Xing*. Meanwhile, the manuscript from Guodian has the term *wu xing* at its very

beginning serving like the title. This confirms that the manuscripts are better named as “*Wu Xing*” rather than “*De Xing*.”

The excavations of the *Wu Xing* manuscripts in Mawangdui and Guodian provide important materials for solving the long-term puzzle of Xunzi’s criticism of Zisi and Mengzi. The discovered materials not only help us to see much clearer the development trend of the thoughts within the School of Zisi-Mengzi but also have great significance to the research of the pre-Qin thought, especially the Confucian thought in general.

1.2 An Overview of the Issues and Accounts

The discovery of the MWD *Wu Xing* has stimulated great interest among scholars, and the excavation of the GD *Wu Xing* has undoubtedly augmented the interest. A considerable body of research and works emphasizing on different aspects has been carried out since the release of the two manuscripts.

Besides the disputation on the naming of the texts mentioned earlier, another important issue has been about the locating of the *Wu Xing* manuscripts in its historical context, including the dating, author and school. Most scholars hold a similar viewpoint as Pang Pu’s and believe that the GD *Wu Xing* and the classic part of MWD *Wu Xing* were composed before Mengzi. The commentary part was not finished together with the classic part but was added later (Pang 2000: 104). According to Mark Csikszentmihalyi, “In terms of dating, we can be relatively sure that a text titled *Wu Xing* was composed prior to 300 B.C.E., and a commentary to it was likely composed after that date and recopied between 207 and 195 B.C.E.”

(Csikszentmihalyi 2004: 64). However, there are also different opinions. For example, Ikeda Tomohisa maintains that the classic part of *Wu Xing* was composed after Mengzi (Ikeda 2000: 92-133). Wang Baoxuan 王葆琰 proposes that the interment of the Guodian tomb should not be earlier than 278 B.C.E., and the *Wu Xing* was composed after the writing of the *Mengzi* (Wang 2000: 644-649).

Issues concerning the author and school of the *Wu Xing* are more disputable. As mentioned earlier, Pang Pu takes the *Wu Xing* manuscripts as works of the School of Zisi-Mengzi. In particular, he suggests that since the GD *Wu Xing* is prior to the birth of Mengzi, the classic part of the *Wu Xing* probably belongs to Zisi or his disciples (Pang 2000: II). This view receives support from Wei Qipeng 魏啟鵬, although he proposes to name the manuscripts “*De Xing*” instead of “*Wu Xing*” (Wei 1991: 105). Li Xueqin 李學勤, Liang Tao 梁濤 and Jiang Guanghui 姜廣輝 go further and consider the classic part a work of Zisi (Li 1998: 51; Liang 2008: 217; Jiang 2010: 13). Chen Lai 陳來 argues that the author of the classic part is Zisi and the commentary is composed by Mengzi, which establishes Xunzi’s claim of “Zisi provided the tune for them, and Mengzi harmonized it” (Chen 2009: 106-107).

Moreover, Ikeda Tomohisa considers the *Wu Xing* a compromising work of theories of Mengzi and Xunzi instead of connecting it to the School of Zisi-Mengzi exclusively (Ikeda 2000: 116). There are also scholars who connect the *Wu Xing* to Shizi/Shishuo 世子/世碩 or his successors. For example, Ding Sixin 丁四新 does not rule out Zisi being the author but prefers to consider the author of the

Wu Xing to be Shizi (Ding 2000: 160-168). Li Xueqin ascribes the classic part to Zisi but regards the commentary part as a work of Shizi (Li 1998: 47-51). Xing Wen 邢文 and Guo Yi 郭沂 both hold that the author of the commentary part is a successor of Shizi (Xing 2000: 76; Guo 2001: 465).

Furthermore, some scholars doubt the validity of “the School of Zisi-Mengzi” and point out that considering the *Wu Xing* a work of the School of Zisi-Mengzi may have potential problems. Wang Bo 王博 argues that the thought of Zisi is much different from that of Mengzi and thus the *Wu Xing* should be considered a Confucian work related to Zisi and Ziyou rather than Zisi and Mengzi (Wang 2001: 47-48). Kenneth W. Holloway proposes three problems of labeling the *Wu Xing* as a work of the School of Zisi-Mengzi and disapproves the approach of connecting excavated texts with received ones: first, the inclusion of Zisi is problematic due to the unclearness of his biographical information; second, it is highly suspect to include Mengzi since the discussion of “human nature” is missing in the *Wu Xing*; and third, the *Wu Xing* was buried alongside *Laozi*, indicating that “the two texts would have been read one after another” and a great amount of evidence should be provided before concluding that “they might have been understood as belonging to different and competing schools of thought at the time of their burial.” Hence, Holloway argues that, “the notion of schools should be put aside at least until a careful analysis of Guodian qua Guodian has been completed” (Holloway 2009: 6-8).

The second topic of scholars’ interests is the comparison between the two versions of the *Wu Xing*. The GD *Wu Xing* has no commentary while the MWD *Wu*

Xing does. But the classic part of the MWD *Wu Xing* and the GD *Wu Xing* are similar in the content, with only a few differences. Chen Lai categorizes their differences into three: 1) the conceptual sequence is different. While the order of the five conducts in the GD *Wu Xing* is *ren*, *yi*, *li*, *zhi*, and *sheng*, it is changed into *ren*, *zhi*, *li*, *yi*, and *sheng* in the MWD *Wu Xing*, where the connection between *zhi* and *sheng* becomes absent; 2) in chapter 17 of the GD *Wu Xing*,⁶ it says that “*Sheng* and *zhi* are that from which *li* and *yue* (music 樂) derive” 聖智禮樂之所由生也. In contrast, in the MWD *Wu Xing*, it reads that “*Ren* and *yi* are that from which *li* and *yue* derive” 仁義, 禮樂所由生也, which changes the root of *li* and *yue* from *sheng* and *zhi* to *ren* and *yi*; 3) in chapter 18 of the GD *Wu Xing*, it reads that “*Ren* is that from which *yi* and *li* are born” 仁, 義禮所由生也.⁷ But in the MWD *Wu Xing*, this sentence is changed into “*Ren* and *yi* are that from which *li* and *zhi* are born” 仁義, 禮智所由生也. The MWD *Wu Xing* emphasizes more on the connection between *ren* and *yi* and also puts *zhi* behind *li*. The priority of *ren* and *yi* in the MWD manuscript replaces the important role of *sheng* and *zhi* in the GD manuscript (Chen 2009: 143).

Pang Pu and Liang Tao suggest that the classic part of the MWD *Wu Xing* is logically more reasonable and in order, and it is better than the GD version (Pang 2000: 92; Liang 2008: 208-216). However, scholars such as Xing Wen, Li Cunshan 李存山, Guo Yi and Xu Shaohua 徐少華 hold the opposite opinion and consider

⁶ Chapter numbers used in Chen’s analyses are adopted from Li Ling, *Guodian chujian jiaodujì* 郭店楚簡校讀記 (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2002). It is the same below.

⁷ Scholars such as Scott Cook holds that the sentence might be better punctuated after 仁義 instead of 仁. See Cook 2012: 506, especially footnotes 131 & 132.

the GD *Wu Xing* better in order than the MWD version. For example, Xing analyzes that “the thread concerning ‘sagacity and wisdom’ in the Chu slip *Wu Xing* are almost nonexistent in the silk manuscript” (Xing 2000: 74). Li Cunshan agrees with Xing and considers the bamboo slip *Wu Xing* a well-conceived text. Content in the silk manuscript, however, is restrained both by the original text and the thought of Mengzi (Li 2000: 39 & 41). Xing’s view is challenged by Ding Sixin, who advocates that there is still the thread of “sagacity and wisdom” in the MWD silk manuscript. Ding also holds that both versions have their advantages and disadvantages, but the basic ideas are essentially consistent between the two versions (Ding 2000: 129 & 133). Moreover, with a thorough analysis on the consonances and dissonances of the commentary made to the classic, Chen Ligui 陳麗桂 concludes that the classic part considers *sheng* most important while the commentary part lays particular stress on “*ren* and *yi*” and is much closer to the thought of Mengzi (Chen 2013: 222-228).

Previous studies have also explored the relationship between the excavated *wu xing* and the received *wu xing* of *jin*, *mu*, *shui*, *huo*, and *tu*. Pang Pu advocates that “*wu xing*” does not have to be *jin*, *mu*, *shui*, *huo*, and *tu*, and it could refer to five kinds of virtues, which have nothing to do with the received *wu xing* (Pang 2000: 133-137). This view is broadly agreed by most scholars, but there are also different voices. For example, Li Xueqin thinks that the *Wu Xing* theory of Zisi combines the *wu xing* as five elements and the *wu xing* in the moral realm (Li 1994: 288-297). Wei Qipeng also confirms the connection between Si-Meng *Wu Xing* and the *Wu Xing* theory of *jin*, *mu*, *shui*, *huo*, and *tu* (Wei 2005: 159-160). Wang

Baoxuan considers *Shangshu* (The Book of History 尚書) to be the main classic that the *Wu Xing* theory of Zisi is based on (Wang 2000: 648). Li Rui 李銳 thinks that the excavated *Wu Xing* theory is based on the received *Wu Xing* theory, which values “*tu*” (Li 2008: 81). Zhang Fengqian 張豐乾 believes that the excavated *Wu Xing* theory is extended and developed from the framework of the *Wu Xing* theory of the *Shangshu* (Zhang 2008: 35).

Another hot topic focuses on the understanding of Xunzi’s criticism of the *Wu Xing*. Liang Tao holds that the fundamental cause of Xunzi’s criticism is the different emphases between him and the *Wu Xing* theory. Xunzi attaches excessive importance to *li*, whereas the *Wu Xing* and Mengzi particularly value *de zhi xing* (conduct of virtue 德之行) and *ren*, respectively. Another reason that Liang proposes is the contradiction between the statement of the conceptual system of *ren*, *yi*, *li*, *zhi*, and *sheng* and the statement of “*xing yu nei*” (taking shape from within 形與內) and “*bu xing yu nei*” (not taking shape from within 不形與內) in the *Wu Xing*. Xunzi, who stresses the importance of *lei* (category/class 類), cannot tolerate taking the *wu xing* both as *xing yu nei* and *bu xing yu nei* (Liang 2001: 40-46). Sun Xiguo 孫希國 thinks that Xunzi’s criticism is out of political consideration. In particular, Xunzi views that the *Wu Xing* theory is divorced from reality and it cannot satisfy the social development needs at the time (Sun 2011: 152-154). Chen Lai goes over sentence by sentence and points out each reason for Xunzi’s accusations of the *Wu Xing* theory in his “Fei shier zi” chapter (Chen 2009: 151). According to Mark Csikszentmihalyi, “the Zisi named in the *Xunzi* is mistakenly identified with the Zisi of later history.” Csikszentmihalyi argues that the pre-

imperial Zisi, who is associated in the *Xunzi* with the *Wu Xing*, is not the one who is blood related to Kongzi. In addition, he says that, “when the *Xunzi* criticized Zisi and Mengzi, it implies that their interpretation of Kongzi is groundless, a position that might be seen as a partisan attack on the assertion that Zisi had a special connection with Kongzi” (Csikszentmihalyi 2004: 87-88 & 97).

Explorations of the *Wu Xing* text from holistic and philosophic perspectives are also abundant. Pang Pu puts forward a theory of “threefold morality” 三重道德論 and regards the *wu xing* as the *tian di dao de* (morality of Heaven and Earth 天地道德), which is responsible for settling the relations between human beings and Heaven and Earth, human beings and humanity, and body and mind (Pang 2000: 105-119). Liang Tao also considers it a moral theory and proposes that “*de zhi xing*” and “*xing*” (conduct 行) in the *Wu Xing* constitute a “twofold morality” 雙重道德律. The former is internal and self-disciplined while the latter is external and restricted by objective norms (Liang 2008: 187). Liu Xinfang 劉信芳 believes that the *Wu Xing* is an epistemological theory rather than a moral theory (Liu 2001: 33-53). Chen Lai suggests that the notions of “*sheng*” and “*zhi*” in the *Wu Xing* are politically oriented and belong to political philosophy (Chen 2009: 153 & 157). Kenneth W. Holloway takes the *Wu Xing* as a religious system “intended for an entire society of individuals,” and the focus of it “is unification that involves the bringing together of distinct individuals in society” (Holloway 2009: 8).

The discovery of the *Wu Xing* has also promoted the reinterpretations of received texts, especially those of Zisi and Mengzi. Based on a detailed analysis and comparison between the classic part and the commentary part of the *Wu Xing*,

Liang Tao concludes that the commentary part does not follow the doctrine of the classic part rigidly. While inheriting from the predecessor, the author(s) of the commentary also elaborates new ideas. The School of Zisi and that of Mengzi have different understandings of the theory of the *Wu Xing* (Liang 2008: 390-419). Chen Lai assumes that the *Wu Xing*'s emphases on the internality of virtues and their psychological process lay the foundation of Mengzi's "four-sprout" theory (*si duan shuo* 四端說). The distinction between *shan* (goodness 善) and *de* (virtuosity 德) in the *Wu Xing* also provides the basis for the emergence of the *Zhongyong* (*The Doctrine of the Mean* 中庸) (Chen 2009: 136-137 & 157). Mark Csikszentmihalyi notices that the *Mengzi* further develops the *Wu Xing*'s distinction between "acting virtuously" and "acting out of virtue." He says, "In light of the *Wu Xing*, the *Mengzi*'s grounding of moral psychology in human physiology may be situated within a broader discourse about the nature of virtues...The use of the metaphor of 'balancing' (*quan* 權) in quandary situations is a version of the distinction between 'light and heavy' used in the *Wu Xing* to talk about balancing benevolence and righteousness. The *Mengzi*'s use both of aural metaphors and accounts involving *qi* to explain the mechanics of authentic moral action is consistent with the *Wu Xing*'s model of the stages of moral development" (Csikszentmihalyi 2004: 107 & 160).

Last but not least, there are also studies on the *Wu Xing*'s quotations of the *Shijing* (the *Odes* 詩經). Wang Bo summarizes that the *Wu Xing* quotes the *Shijing* in two ways: either 1) beginning with a principle and ending with a sentence from the *Shijing* or 2) starting with a sentence from the *Shijing* and followed by explanation or extension of the meaning. Wang indicates that the interpretation of

Shijing in the *Wu Xing* centers mainly on issues concerning *xin* (the heart 心) (Wang 2001: 39-42). Liao Mingchun 廖明春 follows Li Ling's division of the *Wu Xing* into twenty-eight chapters⁸ and conducts a thorough analysis of the *Wu Xing*'s seven quotations of the *Shijing*, which are chapters four, eight, sixteen, seventeen, twenty-three, and twenty-six, respectively. He explains key words and the sentences, and also compares them with those in the MWD *Wu Xing* as well (Liao 2001: 68-75). Liao's analysis makes the meaning of each quotation clearer and more readily understandable in the text. Wei Qipeng combines the *Wu Xing*'s quotations of the *Shijing* with Kongzi's poetry and thinks that the latter initiates the theory of “*shen du*” (being cautious over one's solitude 慎獨) of the genre of Zengzi and Zisi (Wei 2002: 124-126). Li Yan 李燕 calculates and compares quotations in both the GD and the MWD versions and concludes that the quotations are basically the same in both versions, except that different characters are used sometimes and the MWD version is more elaborated (Li 2008: 35-37). Xie Junzhi 謝君直 holds that the *Wu Xing*'s quotations of the *Shijing* are to express that conducts should be consistent with internal virtues and also to convey the Confucian theory of “conformity of Heaven and humanity in virtue” (*tian ren he de* 天人合德) (Xie 2012: 53-58).

⁸ See Li Ling, *Guodian chujian jiaoduji* 郭店楚簡校讀記 (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2002).

1.3 Text Selection, Research Significance, and Thesis Structure

In light of the existing literatures on the *Wu Xing*, the present thesis attempts to further explore issues concerning the *Wu Xing* text to achieve a better understanding of the *Wu Xing* theory.

To keep the research more focused, this thesis concentrates mainly on the GD manuscript rather than the MWD manuscript or both. The primary text of the GD *Wu Xing* that this thesis is based on is Scott Cook's "'Wu Xing' <五行>: 'The Five Conducts'" in his book of *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian: a study & complete translation I*. Other major references include *Guodian chumu zhujian* 郭店楚墓竹簡 published by Wenwu chubanshe, Liu Zhao's 劉釗 *Guodian chujian jiaoshi* 郭店楚簡校釋, Mark Csikszentmihalyi's *Material Virtue: ethics and the body in early China*, Kenneth H. Holloway's *Guodian: the newly discovered seeds of Chinese religious and political philosophy*, and Dirk Meyer's *Meaning-Construction in Warring States Philosophical Discourse: a discussion of the palaographic materials from tomb Guodian one*.

In writing this thesis, I agree with Holloway's opinion about putting the belonging issues aside and giving a careful analysis of the material itself first. My primary interest is in the moral cultivation in the *Wu Xing*, in particular, how *de* is achieved in a person according to the *Wu Xing* text.

As mentioned earlier, scholars view the *Wu Xing* text differently from different perspectives, considering it a text of moral philosophy, epistemological philosophy, political philosophy or religious system, respectively. No matter how the text as a whole is categorized, however, the moral aspect expressed in the text

is undeniable and nonnegligible. Many works have been conducted through diverse approaches on the *Wu Xing*'s notion of cultivation. For example, Kenneth W. Holloway takes rhetoric as self-cultivation in the *Wu Xing* and divides the process of self-cultivation into two parts: "The initial stage of cultivation features having keen vision, wisdom, being adept, and the way of humans and is finite. The latter stage includes having keen hearing, sagacity, virtue and the way of heaven and is infinite" (Holloway 2009: 74). He also proposes that, "self-cultivation is more than an individual project, but part of a larger system for the society" (Holloway 2009: 78). Mark Csikszentmihalyi describes the *Wu Xing*'s "moral psychology with special attention to the issues of authentic moral motivation and the cultivation of virtuous dispositions" (Csikszentmihalyi 2004: 59). Nevertheless, none of the previous studies offers a systematic analysis of the cultivation process. Therefore, to fill in this research gap, in the second chapter of this thesis, I formulate a cultivation system to explain step by step how self-cultivation is realized through the efforts of internalization, externalization, and harmonization.

Analysis of the moral cultivation process in the *Wu Xing* can offer us a clearer picture of the theoretical connections between the *Wu Xing* and the *Mengzi*. Their closeness is not limited to literal similarities but it is also reflected in Mengzi's selectivity of the *Wu Xing*'s certain notions. One contribution of the *Wu Xing* to the study of received texts is its discussion on the *nei* (internality 内) and *wai* (externality 外) property of virtues. In particular, it distinguishes between two situations: when *ren*, *yi*, *li*, *zhi*, and *sheng* "*xing yu nei*/take shape from within" and when they "*bu xing yu nei*/do not take shape from within." When *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi*

take shape from within, there are accordingly “*de zhi xing*/conducts of virtue;” otherwise, “*xing*/conducts.”⁹ Chen Lai points out that the purpose of the distinction between *de zhi xing* and *xing* in the *Wu Xing* is to indicate that virtues¹⁰ are internal and this contributes to Mengzi’s *xing shan* (human nature being good 性善) and four-sprout theories (Chen 2009: 123 &157). Zhu Songmei 朱松美 thinks that Mengzi does not care about the *xing* 行 in the *Wu Xing* but develops its *de zhi xing* theory and lays one-sided emphasis on the internality of *ren* and *yi* (Zhu 2015: 140). Gao Zhengwei 高正偉 analyzes how the commentary part of the *Wu Xing* develops Mengzi’s view of taking *ren* and *yi* as internal (Gao 2012: 55-62).

In the third chapter of this thesis, I review the debate between Mengzi and Gaozi in the *Mengzi* 6A: 4 and attempts to reconstruct the whole picture of Mengzi’s virtue system. I acknowledge the influence of the *Wu Xing* on the *Mengzi* and agree with Zhu about Mengzi’s development of the *de zhi xing* theory in the *Wu Xing*, but I reject the view that Mengzi considers *ren* and *yi* as merely internal. Instead, I propose that virtues in the *Mengzi* are dynamic processes that integrate both internal and external dimensions, which is in line with the GD *Wu Xing*’s theory of *de zhi xing*.

In the fourth chapter, I attempt to solve issues concerning *sheng* and *zhi*, both of which have especially prominent status in the *Wu Xing*. Pang Pu considers *sheng* and *zhi* to be the most important concepts in the GD manuscript, which is

⁹ *Sheng* is exceptional. No matter it takes shape from within or not, it results in conducts of virtue. *Sheng*’s particularity and its cause are discussed in great depth in later chapters.

¹⁰ In this thesis, I follow Scott Cook’s translation and his differentiation between virtuosity and virtue, using the former as the translation of the concept of *de* 德, and the latter to refer to *ren*, *yi*, *li*, *zhi* or *sheng*. A more detailed discussion could be seen in chapter 2. In Chen’s analysis, the character “*de*” in “*de zhi xing*” represents *ren*, *yi*, *li*, *zhi* or *sheng*. Therefore, “virtue” rather than “virtuosity” is applied here.

why the two are discussed first in the text (Pang 2000: 92). Guo Qiyong 郭齊勇 thinks that *sheng-zhi* plays as the hub of the *Wu Xing* theory (Guo 2001: 20-26). Zhao Fasheng 趙法生 suggests that *sheng* and *zhi* are two most important virtues, which dominate the others in the *Wu Xing* and that without such domination, the so-called theory of Si-Meng *Wu Xing* should no longer hold (Zhao 2008: 38). Most scholars acknowledge the special role of *sheng* and *zhi* as well as their connections with *cong* (be discerning of ear 聰) and *ming* (be perspicacious of sight 明), respectively. However, few of them further explicate what *sheng* and *zhi* really are and what makes them special in the *Wu Xing*. Therefore, in chapter 4, I explore the functional property of *sheng* progressively to explain why it is extraordinary in the *Wu Xing*. And then, combined with preceding chapters, the moral cultivation notion in the *Wu Xing* is more intelligible. I propose a linear sequence among the five virtues in moral cultivation and argue that the generation process of *de* in the *Wu Xing* starts with *zhi* as an individual virtue and is accomplished by the function of *sheng*. To initiate this cultivation process, the psychological state of *you* (憂 apprehension) plays as a prelude at the very beginning. Besides, with a deeper understanding of what *sheng* and *zhi* are, the theoretical correlation between the *Wu Xing* and the *Mengzi* is reinforced. The *Wu Xing* not only anticipates *Mengzi* with signs of the four-sprout theory but also has a potential influence to the notion of *kuo er chong zhi* (developing and filling all the four sprouts out 擴而充之) in the *Mengzi*.

The last chapter is the conclusion part of this thesis. I first give a summary of the preceding chapters, point out the limitations of the current research, and also

discuss related issues not covered in this research due to the thesis length limit.

Further research is needed to address these limitations and uncovered issues, which orientate my future work.

CHAPTER 2 THE GENERATION OF *DE* IN THE *WU XING* TEXT

De 德 is one of the most important concepts in Chinese Philosophy. It is often mentioned together with another important concept *dao* 道. The two together constitute the term *dao de* 道德, which is usually translated as “morality” in English. No one who works on ancient Chinese ethics can ever bypass it. But different philosophers or schools have different understandings of these concepts. The answers may vary to the question of how *de* is generated or possessed in human beings and how human beings can achieve the *dao*. This chapter focuses on the concept of *de* and how it is generated according to the *Wu Xing*’s theory, and its connection with *dao*.

2.1 Discrimination of Concepts

In the *Wu Xing*, there are several concepts concerning *de*, such as, virtuosity, virtue, *ren* (benevolence/humanity 仁), *yi* (rightness/righteousness/propriety 義), *li* (ritual propriety/ritual 禮), *zhi* (knowledge/wisdom 智), and *sheng* (sagacity 聖).¹¹ To explore the generation of *de*, it should be clarified first what *de* is according to the *Wu Xing* text.

¹¹ There are different translations to the Chinese terms. To avoid unnecessary confusion, I use the pinyin forms of Chinese terms in this thesis as far as possible.

***De* as Virtuosity**

De appears a total of twenty-two times in the *Wu Xing* text.¹² Among them, there are 1) *de zhi xing* (德之行 the conduct of virtue) mentioned seven times in strips 1, 2, 3, and 4; 2) *wu de* (无德 without virtuosity) mentioned three times in strips 6, 9, and 21; 3) *you de* (有德 possessing/with virtue/virtuosity) mentioned three times in strips 24 and 29; 4) *you de zhe* (有德者 one with virtuosity) mentioned twice in strips 19 and 20; 5) *wei de* (為德 carrying out virtuosity) mentioned once in strip 18; and 6) *hao de zhe* (好德者 one fond of virtuosity) mentioned once in strip 50.¹³ Only the other five concern directly and exclusively with *de*-itself, which is translated by Scott Cook as “virtuosity.” They are in strips 4, 5, 8, 20, and 27. It is said respectively that,

The conducts of virtue number five, and all five in concert (/harmony) we refer to as “virtuosity.”¹⁴ (Cook 2012: 487-488)

Virtuosity is the way of Heaven.¹⁵ (Cook 2012: 487-488)

Without intention, virtuosity will not be achieved.¹⁶ (Cook 2012: 489 & 491)

Virtuosity is the way of Heaven.¹⁷ (Cook 2012: 500)

¹² Quotations of the *Wu Xing* text in this thesis are based on *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian: a study & complete translation, vols. I*, translated by Scott Cook (Cornell East Asia Series, 2012), with modifications when necessary.

¹³ Strip numbers are adopted from Wenwu’s arrangement. See *Guodian chumu zhujian* (Beijing: Wenwu Press, 1998), 147-154.

¹⁴ 德之行五, 和謂之德

¹⁵ 德, 天道也

¹⁶ 德弗志不成

¹⁷ 德, 天道也

To practice it in a timely manner is virtuosity.¹⁸ (Cook 2012: 504-505)

From these, it can be seen that *de* or virtuosity in the *Wu Xing* refers to the way of Heaven. It is the harmonization (*he* 和) of the five conducts of virtue. To achieve *de*, it requires intention (*zhi* 志) and timely practice (*xing* 行). In other words, in order to obtain *de*-itself and reach the way of Heaven (*tian dao* 天道), one needs to unite the five conducts of virtue in harmony (*he* 和)¹⁹. And such unification will be impossible without intention and practice. This is how *de* as virtuosity comes into being in the *Wu Xing*.

Ren, Yi, Li, Zhi, and Sheng as Individual Virtues²⁰

Besides *de* as virtuosity, there are also individual virtues in the *Wu Xing*. To elaborate these individual virtues, I would like to make a comparison between the *Wu Xing* and the *Mengzi* in this section. Apparently, *de* as virtuosity does not equal *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* in the *Wu Xing* text, which, however, are regarded as *de* by *Mengzi*.

De, written as 惇, is an associative compound composed of two characters: *zhi* 直 and *xin* 心. The *xin* part indicates that *de* has its connection with the heart. The heart in the *Mengzi* possesses the sprouts (*duan* 端) of *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi*. One

¹⁸ 行之而時，德也

¹⁹ There are two translations of “*he*” 和 as a noun in the *Wu Xing*: harmonization and harmony. But they are not incompatible. The former translation highlights the actional effort of harmonizing, while the latter translation describes the static state of harmony.

²⁰ To distinguish with *de*/virtuosity, “individual virtue,” sometimes written directly as “virtue,” is used in this thesis to refer to “*de mu*” 德目, not *de* 德.

must fulfill these four sprouts to achieve *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi*. Moreover, *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* in the *Mengzi* is often mentioned directly as “*si de*” (four virtuosities 四德) by scholars. For example, Li Cunshan uses the term “*si de*,” representing *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi*, in one of his treatises to analyze its relationship with the four sprouts (Li 2015: 19-20). Hence, *de* can refer to any one of the four individual virtues in the *Mengzi*. *Ren*-virtue is *de*, as well as *yi*-virtue, *li*-virtue, and *zhi*-virtue. On the one hand, they emerge differently and have their specific meanings. It is said in the *Mengzi* 2A: 6 that, “The heart of compassion is the sprout of benevolence; the heart of shame, of righteousness; the heart of courtesy and modest, of ritual propriety; the heart of right and wrong, of wisdom. Man has these four sprouts just as he has four limbs” (Jiao 1987: 234-235; Lau 1970: 83).²¹ On the other hand, they also connect and cooperate with each other closely. It is said in the *Mengzi* 4A: 27 that, “The fruit of benevolence is the serving of one’s parents; the fruit of rightness is obedience to one’s elder brothers; the fruit of wisdom is to understand these two and to hold fast to them; the fruit of ritual propriety is the regulation and adornment of them...” (Jiao 1987: 532-533; Lau 1970: 127).²² The fruits or contents of the four *de*/virtues are all centered on the “serving of one’s parents” (*shi qin* 事親) and the “obedience to one’s elder brother” (*cong xiong* 從兄).

²¹ 惻隱之心，仁之端也；羞惡之心，義之端也；辭讓之心，禮之端也；是非之心，智之端也。人之有是四端也，猶其有四體也。 Otherwise specified, quotations of *Mengzi* in this thesis are based primarily on Jiao Xun 焦循, *Mengzi zhengyi* 孟子正義 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), and translations are from *Mengzi*, translated by D. C. Lau (London: Penguin Books, 1970) with modifications when necessary. In this quotation, “germ” is replaced with “sprout,” similarly hereafter.

²² 仁之實，事親是也；義之實，從兄是也。智之實，知斯二者弗去是也；禮之實，節文斯二者是也。 Without otherwise specified, the terms of “germ” or “germs” and “content” in Lau’s translation are changed to “sprout” or “sprouts” and “fruit” respectively in this thesis.

In the *Wu Xing*, however, *de* is virtuosity. It is the harmonization of the five conducts of virtue. None of the four virtues (*ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi*) or even *sheng* itself is *de*. Only the five conducts of virtue in concert can be called *de*. Otherwise, *ren*, *yi*, *li*, *zhi*, and *sheng* are merely individual virtues.²³ Therefore, in the *Wu Xing*, *de* embraces both internal and external dimensions in itself. In particular, *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* as individual virtues are internal. When they take shape from within, they appear as external conducts. This kind of conducts is referred to as “conducts of virtue” (*de zhi xing* 德之行) in the *Wu Xing*. The difference between a “conduct” (*xing* 行) and a “conduct of virtue” is that the latter embraces both internal and external dimensions, while the former only has external attribute. Since *de* is the unification of the five “conducts of virtue,” the dual-dimension property of the conducts of virtue also determines the dual-dimension property of *de*.

To sum up, in both the *Wu Xing* and the *Mengzi*, *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* have been taken as individual virtues. While *Mengzi* took these four individual virtues as virtuosities, the *Wu Xing* put virtuosity on a higher level. It is the unification of the conducts of virtue, which are conducts carried out from within. Hence, *de* in the *Wu Xing* text covers both internal and external dimensions.

²³ Kenneth W. Holloway considers *ren*, *yi*, *li*, *zhi* and *sheng* in the *Wu Xing* as “five ethical principles that are distinct and different in the specific qualities of their development and practice.” See Holloway 2009: 14.

Ren, Yi, Li, and Zhi as External Norms

As mentioned above, in the *Wu Xing*, *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* as individual virtues are internal. However, internal sense is not all that *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* have. Besides being individual virtues, there is another sense of *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* as well.

It is said at the beginning of the *Wu Xing* text that, when *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* take shape from within, they are called “conducts of virtue.” Taking shape from within means that *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* have already been in one’s heart. This kind of *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* is what we refer to as individual virtues. In the *Wu Xing*, these four individual virtues are internal.²⁴

In the same paragraph, it is also said that when *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* do not take shape from within, they are just called “conducts.” Not taking shape from within means that there is no *ren*, *yi*, *li*, or *zhi* within one’s heart. When *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* are not within one’s heart, obviously, they are just external norms of *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* or terminologies that we refer to. Therefore, compared to “conduct(s) of virtue,” “conduct(s)” only fits the external requirements of *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi*. According to the *Wu Xing*, when “conduct(s) of virtue” leads to *de*/virtuosity, “conduct(s)” only results in goodness (*shan* 善).

Thus, there are two kinds of *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* in the *Wu Xing*. One is within one’s heart and the other is not. To achieve *de*, we should focus on the former kind, that is, *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* as individual virtues.²⁵

²⁴ See also Chen Lai 2009: 120-121. Chen thinks that “taking shape from within” requires virtues get started from within and take form externally.

²⁵ To be noted, the *Wu Xing* does not take a specific position towards whether *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* are originally internal or external. This thesis holds that *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* have internal and external forms but it does not discuss whether they are originally inherent in a person or not.

Sheng's Distinctiveness

Sheng along with *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* constitute the five individual virtues or the five external norms. However, *sheng* is different from any of the other four. The difference occurs when the five do not take shape from within. As mentioned earlier, when *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* do not take shape from within, they are simply called “conducts.” But it makes no difference whether *sheng* takes shape from within or not. It is called a “conduct of virtue” in either situation. This makes *sheng* stand out from the five conducts.²⁶

Regarding the reason of *sheng's* specialty among the five, I propose that it is because *sheng* is beyond the scope of taking shape from within or not.²⁷ The discrimination between taking shape from within and not taking shape from within only works on *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi*, whereas it cannot be applied to *sheng*. The conduct of *sheng* is always taking shape from within. It is for parallel and comparison consideration that *sheng* is said to be not taking shape from within. Hence, there may be conducts following external norms of *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* without any internal virtues. But there cannot be the conduct of *sheng* without having *sheng*-virtue inside. The conduct of *sheng* is always a “conduct of virtue.”

²⁶ Scholars hold different opinions regarding whether the conduct of *sheng* is a “conduct of virtue” or merely a “conduct” when it does not take shape. For example, Ding Sixin takes it as merely a conduct (see Ding 2000, 133), while Pang Pu regards it as a conduct of virtue (see Pang 1999, 15). Based on the following reasons, this thesis holds that if *sheng* does not take shape from within its conduct is a conduct of virtue. First, it is faithful to the original manuscript to go with “conduct of virtue” instead of “conduct.” Second, it better explains the distinction between *si xing* and *wu xing* in the following paragraph. Third, the MWD version is sometimes used to argue that the two characters “*de zhi* 德之” in the GD *Wu Xing* are redundant. But the MWD manuscript is posterior to the GD manuscript and subject to changes from later generations, which lowers its reliability in this argument. Last but not least, considering it a conduct of virtue corresponds well with the interpretation of *sheng* in this thesis, especially in chapter 4, which makes the whole work more consistent.

²⁷ This conclusion is benefited from discussions with Professor Vincent Shen during my visit in the University of Toronto, Canada. I sincerely thank him for this insightful viewpoint.

Sheng has its distinctiveness from *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi*, but it is still one of the individual virtues. To be a person with *de*, one must possess all the five virtues internally. The *Wu Xing* text does not offer us a clear reason why *sheng* is different from *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi*. But it is *sheng*'s distinctiveness that makes the difference between the *si xing* (four conducts 四行) and the *wu xing* (five conducts 五行) in the text, and then the difference between *shan* and *de*.²⁸

2.2 The Internalization of *Ren*, *Yi*, *Li*, and *Zhi*

The above section clarifies the different concepts concerning *de* in the *Wu Xing*. This section focuses on the generalization of *de*. According to the *Wu Xing* text, *de* is the harmonization of the five conducts of virtue. In order to get the conducts of virtue, we need to make *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* take shape from within. As analyzed previously, the cultivation of *de* does not refer to *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* in their external sense, but their internal sense, namely, *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* as individual virtues. Then, to achieve *de*, one should first make sure that there are *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* as individual virtues inside. If not, one needs to turn *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* as external norms into internal virtues. The question is how to make this possible?

I propose that there are two ways to internalize *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* according to the *Wu Xing* text, i.e., the *zhong xin* (inner-heart 中心) approach and the *wai xin* (outer-heart 外心) approach. According to the inner-heart approach, we get *ren*, *yi*,

²⁸ More detailed discussion on *sheng* and its specialty can be seen in chapter 4.

and *zhi* as individual virtues; and according to the outer-heart approach, we get *li* as individual virtues. The two approaches are analyzed in details as below.

First, *li*-virtue emerges from the outer-heart approach according to the *Wu Xing* text. It is said in strips 36 and 37 that,

To interact with others with one's outer-heart is to "maintain distance." To maintain distance and make it solemn is to "hold reverence." To hold reverence and not slacken is to "hold awe." To hold awe and make it mighty is to "hold honor." To hold honor and not be arrogant is to "hold humility." To hold humility and interact widely is "ritual (*li*)."²⁹ (Cook 2012: 510-511)

That is to say, while using our outer-heart to interact with others, we are maintaining our distance with others. Then, following the progressive line of *jing* (reverence 敬) – *yan* (awe 嚴) – *zun* (honor 尊) – *gong* (humility 恭), *li*-virtue will be obtained. This displays the emergence of *li*-virtue through the outer-heart approach.

On the other side, *ren*-virtue, *yi*-virtue, and *zhi*-virtue all spring from the inner-heart approach. It is said in strips 32 and 33 of the *Wu Xing* text that,

To interact with others with one's inner-heart is to be "gratifying."
To be gratifying in one's inner-heart and transfer this upon one's brothers is to be "affectionate." To be affectionate with reliability is to be "devoted." To be devoted in all earnestness is to be "loving."

²⁹ 以其外心與人交，遠也。遠而莊之，敬也。敬而不懈，嚴也。嚴而威之，尊也。尊而不驕，恭也。恭而博交，禮也

To love one's father and, in turn, to love others is "humanity (*ren*)."³⁰ (Cook 2012: 507-508)

According to these two strips, if we use our inner-heart to interact with others, there will be the progressive line of *yue* (gratification 悅) – *qi* (affection 戚) – *qin* (devotion 親) – *ai* (love 愛) – *ren*. It is how *ren* comes about. Hence, the generation of *ren*-virtue begins from the using of inner-heart in interacting with others.

The *yi*-virtue comes in a similar way. It is said in strips 33, 34, and 35 that, To clearly discern it in one's inner-heart and act upon it correctly is to be "directed." To be directed and follow it through is to be "unreserved." To be unreserved and have no fear of the domineering is to be "resolute." To not harm the great way with petty ways is to have "straightforward determination." To mete out great punishments for great crimes is to "take action." To value the noble and, in turn, to honor the worthy is "propriety (*yi*)."³¹ (Cook 2012: 508-510)

When the inner-heart is discerning and we act upon it in the right way, there will be the progressive line of *zhi* (directness 直) – *si* (unreserve 肆) – *guo* (resoluteness 果) – *jian* (straightforward determination 簡) – *xing* (action 行) – *yi*. This line shows how the *yi*-virtue evolves from the inner-heart approach in the *Wu Xing*.

³⁰ 以其中心與人交，悅也。中心悅，播遷於兄弟，戚也。戚而信之，親也。親而篤之，愛也。愛父，其繼愛人，仁也

³¹ 中心辯然而正行之，直也。直而遂之，肆也。肆而不畏強御，果也。不以小道害大道，簡也。有大罪而大誅之，行也。貴貴，其等尊賢，義也

Regarding the generation of the *zhi*-virtue, it reads in strip 5 of the *Wu Xing* text that, “If the noble man has no inner-heart apprehension, he will have no inner-heart knowledge (*zhi*)...” (Cook 2012: 487 & 489).³² Apparently, the inner-heart *zhi* is *zhi* as an individual virtue, not the external *zhi*. Therefore, the *zhi*-virtue also belongs to the inner-heart approach. However, the *zhi*-virtue is different from the *ren*-virtue and the *yi*-virtue. As analyzed earlier, *ren*-virtue and *yi*-virtue emerge when we use the inner-heart to interact with others. *Zhi*-virtue starts from the inner-heart apprehension. It does not require to interact with others broadly but concerns specifically with seeing and knowing the *xian ren* (the worthy man 賢人).³³

From the above analysis, it can be concluded that *ren*, *yi*, *zhi*, and *li* as individual virtues emerge from the inner-heart and outer-heart approaches individually. Then, what is inner-heart and what is outer-heart? And how are they related with the internal heart (*nei xin* 內心)? Are they different hearts, or just different parts or aspects of one heart?

According to the *Mengzi* 6A: 15, “the function of the heart is to reflect” (Jiao 1987: 792; Norden 2008: 156).³⁴ In *Mengzi*, the heart refers to the internal heart. This “internal” (*nei* 內) does not preset that there is also an “external” (*wai* 外) heart. On the contrary, there is only one heart.³⁵ Things inside this heart are internal, while things outside this heart are external. We do not use “internal” and

³² 君子無中心之憂則無中心之智...

³³ See strips 14, 24, & 27-28 in Cook 2012: 494, 502-503, and 503, respectively. This theme is expounded in chapter 4.

³⁴ 心之官則思. This translation is adopted from Bryan W. Van Norden, *Mengzi: With selections from traditional commentaries* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2008), 156.

³⁵ The commentary part in the MWD manuscript also holds that the outer-heart “does not imply that one has another heart. This is the same heart.” See Csikszentmihalyi 2004: 340-341, with the change of “mind” to “heart.”

“external” to delimit the heart. Instead, the heart is more like a boundary to distinguish “internal” from “external.” This is why we often refer “*nei xin*” directly as the “heart” or “heart-mind” without using the adjective “internal” in front of it.

Regarding the inner-heart and outer-heart, I understand them as two ways of “reflection” (*si* 思) of the (internal) heart, or to use Scott Cook’s translation of the term in the *Wu Xing*, two ways of contemplation (*si* 思). The inner-heart contemplation is to treat a person, including oneself, as oneself in interacting, while the outer-heart contemplation is to treat a person, excluding oneself, as an other in interacting.³⁶ To treat a person as oneself means to treat the person in the way that oneself wants to be treated. It is like the Confucian golden rule, “Do not impose upon others what you yourself do not desire” (*Analects* 12.2 & 15.24; Yang 2002: 123 & 166; Slingerland 2003: 126 & 183),³⁷ and also “Desiring to take his stand, one who is *ren* helps others to take their stand; wanting to realize himself, he helps others to realize themselves” (*Analects* 6.30; Yang 2002: 65; Slingerland 2003: 63).³⁸ It is a way of empathy, starting with the self and extending his own likes and dislikes to others. It works because all human beings have similar dispositions and desires. Note that the objects of the inner-heart contemplation include the self, that is, the one who is using the inner-heart. The behavior of applying the inner-heart contemplation on oneself is also known as self-reflection.

³⁶ Chen Ligui 陳麗桂 gives her interpretation based on the commentary of the MWD *Wu Xing*. Chen suggests that the “*zhong xin*” means the heart is obedient and close while the “*wai xin*” means to keep distant in interacting. See Chen 2013: 218.

³⁷ 己所不欲，勿施於人。Quotations of the *Analects* are based primarily on Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, *Lunyu yizhu* 論語譯注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2002); translations are from the *Analects: with selections from traditional commentaries* by Edward Slingerland (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2003), with modifications when necessary.

³⁸ 己欲立而立人，己欲達而達人。“Good” in Slingerland’s translation is changed to “*ren*” here.

Besides the similarities shared among all human beings, there are also particularities of each person. Each of us is unique. We are different individuals with distinctive personalities. Hence, what one likes may be disliked by another one. In this case, the inner-heart contemplation is inadequate and the outer-heart contemplation is required, that is, to see others as different individuals from oneself and to treat them in the way each of them deserves to be treated. This is how the *li*-virtue is gradually generated.

By now, the generation of the four individual virtues, i.e., *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi*, has been covered. *Sheng*-virtue seems to fit neither the inner-heart approach nor the outer-heart approach. It is said in strip 26 that, “To have heard the way of the noble man is to be discerning [of ear]; to know it when one hears it is to be sagacious (*sheng*). The sage [is one who] knows the way of Heaven” (Cook 2012: 504-505).³⁹ *Sheng*-virtue is connected to the hearing and the recognition of the way of the noble man (*jun zi dao* 君子道). If one has heard the way of the noble man but does not recognize it, the person is called “not sagacious” (*bu sheng* 不聖). However, again, the *Wu Xing* does not indicate how *sheng* exactly emerges as an individual virtue. The only thing for sure is that there should be no external form of *sheng*. The conducts of *sheng* are always taking shape from within.

2.3 The Externalization of Individual Virtues

As is summarized in the first section, *de* in the *Wu Xing* text is the unification of the five conducts of virtue in harmony. To achieve *de* requires two

³⁹ 聞君子道, 聰也。聞而知之, 聖也。聖人知天道也

indispensable elements, that is, intention and practice. This section focuses on the analysis of these two elements.

The above analysis has shown that *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* as individual virtues can be obtained through the inner-heart approach and the outer-heart approach, respectively. Along with *sheng*-virtue, the next step is to make them take shape from within, that is, to put them into practice as conducts of virtue.⁴⁰ The *Wu Xing* offers an exemplar, the noble man (*jun zi* 君子), to illustrate how to get conducts of virtue.

The noble man is the kind of person who has all five conducts taken shape from within. Such a person possesses all the five individual virtues and puts them into practice timely.⁴¹ It is said in strips 6 and 7 that, “One from within whom all five conducts take shape, and who in a timely manner puts them into practice (‘conducts them’), we call a ‘noble man’” (Cook 2012: 489-490).⁴² This indicates how important the role of practice is.

It is also noteworthy that practice in the *Wu Xing* is not casual. There is the modifying word *shi* 時, which is translated by Scott Cook as “in a timely manner.” “Timely” means things are done or happening 1) before a time limit expires, and 2) at the opportune or appropriate time. However, there is another meaning of *shi* that is not covered by the meanings of “timely.” *Shi* also means “constantly.” In this sense, the noble man not only puts the five individual virtues into practice in a

⁴⁰ This is not to say that the effort of putting individual virtues into practice occurs only when *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* have been fully internalized. It is logically that one has to internalize *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* to get individual virtues first and then carry them out to obtain conducts of virtue.

⁴¹ The term *jun zi* 君子 is translated as the noble “man,” though, to avoid disputation in the contemporary context, I employ both third-person pronouns in this thesis.

⁴² 五行皆形于內而時行之，謂之君子

timely manner but also focuses on the practice constantly. It is just like what is said in the *Analects* 4.5, “The noble man does not go against *ren* even for the amount of time required to finish a meal. Even in the times of urgency or distress, he necessarily accords with it” (Yang 2002: 36; Slingerland 2003: 31).⁴³ The noble man in the *Wu Xing* also never stops practicing the five individual virtues.

Moreover, the practice of the internal virtues is a lifelong project with no end. It is said in the *Wu Xing* that, “The noble man, in carrying out goodness, has that with which he begins, and has that with which he ends. The noble man, in carrying out virtuosity, has that with which he begins, but has not that with which he ends” (Cook 2012: 498-499).⁴⁴ “Carrying out goodness” (*wei shan* 為善) refers to external behaviors. It may be a good deed. But when the deed is over, it is also the end of “carrying out goodness.” Nevertheless, “carrying out virtuosity” (*wei de* 為德) reflects more a person’s internal virtues. All these conducts are virtuous and carried out from the individual virtues within. It is the expression of internal values that never ends. That is why it is said in strips 4 and 5 that, “Goodness is the way of mankind; virtuosity is the way of Heaven” (Cook 2012: 500).⁴⁵ Not only acting good but also acting out of internal virtues can a human being reach the way of Heaven (*tian dao* 天道) and be integrated with Heaven (*tian* 天).

Another indispensable element is “intention” in the generation of *de*. “Without intention, virtuosity will not be achieved” (Cook 2012: 489 & 490).⁴⁶

⁴³ 君子無終食之間違仁，造次必於是，顛沛必於是。 “The gentleman” and “Goodness” in Slingerland’s translation are changed to “The noble man” and “*ren*,” respectively.

⁴⁴ 君子之為善也，有與始，有與終也。君子之為德也，有與始，無與終也

⁴⁵ 善，人道也。德，天道也

⁴⁶ 德弗志不成

Intention shows the direction of the heart. In the *Wu Xing*, it does not refer to all the multitude but only the *shi* (the gentleman 士) class. It is said, “A gentleman whose mind is intent upon the way of the noble man we call a ‘gentleman of intent’” (Cook 201).⁴⁷ The way of the noble man is that all the five conducts take shape from within and are put into practice in a timely manner. To be intent upon the way of the noble man is to aim at internalizing all the five conducts and acting them out timely.

In addition, “intention” is a concept closely connected with contemplation and apprehension (*you* 憂). There are three kinds of contemplation mentioned in the *Wu Xing*, namely, *ren*’s contemplation, *zhi*’s contemplation, and *sheng*’s contemplation. *Ren*’s contemplation is essential/pure, *zhi*’s contemplation is extensive, and *sheng*’s contemplation is effortless. “If not humane (*ren*), one’s contemplation cannot be essential; if not knowing (*zhi*), one’s contemplation cannot be extensive” (Cook 2012: 491-492),⁴⁸ and “if not sagacious (*sheng*), one’s contemplation cannot be effortless” (Cook 2012:492-493).⁴⁹ If the contemplation is not essential/pure, it will not be thorough. If the contemplation is not extensive, it will not be attained. And if the contemplation is not effortless, it will not take form. “If it does not take form, one will not be secure; insecure, he will not be happy; and unhappy, he will be without virtuosity” (Cook 2012: 490-491).⁵⁰ Hence, in order to reach *de*, the contemplations of *ren*, *zhi*, and *sheng* must be kept essential/pure,

⁴⁷ 士有志於君子道謂之志士

⁴⁸ 不仁, 思不能清. 不智, 思不能長

⁴⁹ 不聖, 思不能輕

⁵⁰ 不形不安, 不安不樂, 不樂亡德

extensive and effortless. To keep the contemplations essential/pure, extensive, and effortless, one must have *ren*, *yi*, and *sheng* as individual virtues inside.

The three kinds of contemplation (*ren*'s contemplation, *zhi*'s contemplation, and *sheng*'s contemplation) begin with self-reflecting. When one uses the inner-heart contemplation to reflect on oneself and feels apprehensive, this apprehensive feeling is the inner-heart apprehension. As said earlier, contemplation or reflection is the function of the heart. Hence, I take the inner-heart apprehension as a very initial status of the contemplation process. It occurs when one reflects on oneself. Moreover, it is very important in the forming of *zhi*-virtue and finally *de*. According to strip 5, if there is no inner-heart apprehension, there will be no inner-heart *zhi*; if there is no inner-heart *zhi*, there will be no inner-heart gratification; if there is no inner-heart gratification, the noble man will be insecure; when insecure, the noble man will not be happy; when unhappy, he will be without *de* (See Cook 2012: 487 & 489). Therefore, the inner-heart apprehension plays a much important role in the forming of the *zhi*-virtue and finally *de*.

Besides *zhi*, the inner-heart apprehension is also connected with *ren* and *sheng*. It is said in strips 9 and 10 that,

If not humane (*ren*), one's contemplation cannot be essential; if not knowing (*zhi*), one's contemplation cannot be extensive. If neither humane (*ren*) nor knowing (*zhi*), then, having yet to see the noble man, one's apprehensive heart will be unable to throb and once

having seen him, one's heart will be unable to find gratification.⁵¹

(Cook 2012: 491-492)

If there is no *ren*-virtue or *zhi*-virtue, one's apprehensive heart will not be able to throb when he or she has yet to see the noble man, and his or her heart will not be able to find gratification once he or she has seen the noble man. That the apprehensive heart is unable to throb means the heart does not function in its way. This is because there is neither *ren*-virtue nor *zhi*-virtue inside, and worse still, the subject has no awareness of such moral deficiency without the presence of a noble man.

It follows in strips 11 and 12 that,

If not humane (*ren*), one's contemplation cannot be essential; if not sagacious (*sheng*), one's contemplation cannot be effortless. If neither humane (*ren*) nor sagacious (*sheng*), then, having yet to see the noble man, one's apprehensive heart will be unable to pound, and once having seen him, one's heart will be unable to calm down.⁵² (Cook 2012: 492-493)

According to these two strips, if there is no *ren*-virtue or *sheng*-virtue, one's apprehensive heart will not be able to pound when he or she has yet to see the noble man, and his or her heart will not be able to pound when he or she has seen the noble man. That apprehensive heart is unable to pound also means the heart does not work in its way, and the reason for the dysfunction is the lack of internal virtues as well, which can only be revealed by seeing the noble man.

⁵¹ 不仁, 思不能清. 不智, 思不能長. 不仁不智, 未見君子, 憂心不能惓惓; 既見君子, 心不能悅

⁵² 不仁, 思不能清. 不聖, 思不能輕. 不仁不聖, 未見君子, 憂心不能忡忡; 既見君子, 心不能降

Therefore, if there is no *ren*-virtue, *zhi*-virtue, or *sheng*-virtue, the apprehensive heart will not function due to the moral imperfection of the subject and the absence of the noble man. Conversely, if one is perspicacious (*ming* 明) of sight and is able to recognize the noble man upon his presence, the apprehensive heart will be able to throb or pound if the person does not have *ren*-virtue, *zhi*-virtue, and *sheng*-virtue. Thus, based on the text and the above analyses, we can deduce that the cause of the inner-heart apprehension or the apprehensive heart is the deficiency of individual virtues inside, which is revealed by seeing the noble man. Once the subject manages to internalize the five individual virtues and becomes a noble man himself or herself, the inner-heart apprehension will disappear accordingly, even when there is a noble man.⁵³

In this sense, strips 9 to 11 of the *Wu Xing* can be taken as the instructions to the gentleman in moral cultivation, whose mind needs to be intent upon the way of the noble man to become a “gentleman of intent” (*zhi shi* 志士) first and then a noble man. The intention of the gentleman, representing the direction of the heart, orientates him or her to move toward the way of the noble man, that is, to internalize *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* as external norms and turn them into internal virtues. Otherwise, it cannot be guaranteed that the gentleman’s inner-heart apprehension functions properly, or that his contemplations are essential *ren*-contemplation, extensive *zhi*-contemplation or effortless *sheng*-contemplation.

⁵³ A more detailed and comprehensive analysis on the concept of apprehension/*you* is available later in chapter 4.

2.4 The Harmonization of the Five Conducts of Virtue

Through the inner-heart approach and the outer-heart approach, the noble man obtains *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* as individual virtues. Together with *sheng*-virtue, the noble man gets all the five individual virtues inside, and also practices it in a timely manner. However, this is only the way of the noble man. It is still not *de* or the way of Heaven. Kenneth W. Holloway states that “The basic mechanics of cultivating morality in ‘The Five Aspects of Conduct’ entails two sides, an internal building up and an external manifestation that also include a transmission to others” (Holloway 2009). I do not fully agree with this argument but believe that the *Wu Xing*’s cultivation morality, or the generation of *de*, requires one more effort, namely, the harmonization of all the five conducts of virtue. In other words, it requires not only that all the five individual virtues need to be carried out as five conducts of virtue but also that all the five conducts of virtue that have been carried out must be in harmony, which means they do not conflict but cooperate with each other for the whole. This view point is consistent with Chenyang Li’s claim that *de* in the *Wu Xing* is realized through harmonization while the harmony among the five individual virtues means that they are not exclusive but mutually complement and restrict one another (Li 2011: 63). Then, how to harmonize the five conducts of virtue? To address this question, Aristotle may offer us some thoughts.

In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle distinguishes the difference between two kinds of virtues, i.e., intellectual virtues and moral virtues. Philosophic wisdom, understanding and practical wisdom are intellectual virtues, while liberty and temperance belong to moral virtues. The former owes its birth and growth to

teaching, which requires experience and time, while the latter comes about as a result of habit. Hence, moral virtues in Aristotle do not arise in human beings by nature. On the contrary, they are acquired by the repetition of corresponding acts. As the case with arts, “So too, then, by doing just things we become just; moderate things, moderate; and courageous things, courageous” (Bartlett & Collins 2011: 27). Hence, compared to the products of art, knowledge is of little or no use to the possession of virtues. What is all-important to the possession of virtues is to repeatedly do what is virtuous, i.e., becomes virtuous by repeating virtuous actions.

The noble man’s pursuit of *de* in the *Wu Xing* is similar to what is described in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. As mentioned, the noble man not only practices the five individual virtues in a timely manner but also practices it constantly on a regular basis. It is not a one-time thing but a life-long project. Furthermore, to Aristotle, a man should not be considered virtuous merely because his action is of a certain sort. He can only be considered virtuous when his action also results from a certain state of mind. That is, he knows what he is doing and he chooses to do it for the action itself; meanwhile, the action must be an expression of a formed and stable character of the man.

In the *Wu Xing*, there is also distinction between actions merely of certain sort and actions carried out from a formed and stable character, referring to conducts and conducts of virtue, respectively. The “formed and stable character” in the *Wu Xing* is the five individual virtues of the noble man. The actions are not virtuous unless they are carried out in the spirit of the noble man. Vice versa, if the actions are not virtuous, the man is not genuinely virtuous either.

Since the generation of *de* is also the transition for a noble man from one with individual virtues to one of virtuosity, our question of how to harmonize the five conducts of virtue can be easily transformed into how a noble man can become one of virtuosity. What the noble man does in the *Wu Xing* is to act out all the five individual virtues to be conducts of virtue and practice them in a timely manner. Therefore, one possible answer to the question is to take the transition as a qualitative change of timely practices.⁵⁴ That is, the noble man practices following his internal virtues all the time and, through such a process of accumulation, all his conducts of virtue become harmonious at one point.⁵⁵

However, it should also be noted that there is a very important difference between the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Wu Xing*. In *Nicomachean Ethics*, the repetition of actions is a way to acquire different virtues. But in the *Wu Xing*, the repetition of the noble man's actions is the way to unify all the individual virtues and their corresponding conducts of virtue. Even though the noble man has all the virtues inside and is able to carry them out in practice, he may be confused in action by the diversity of the virtues. He needs to coordinate all the virtues and conducts into a functional "whole," that is, to harmonize the five virtues and then their conducts.

It is not easy to internalize all the five individual virtues and externalize them in practice, and it is no easier to unify all of them in harmony either. Even Kongzi, before he finally reached the state of "following his heart's desires without

⁵⁴ The issue of how a qualitative change is possible is discussed in chapter 4 after the proposition of *sheng* as functional properties.

⁵⁵ This is in line with Kenneth W. Holloway's opinion. Holloway also admits that repetition of moral actions can bring about changes in a person's interior state in cultivation. See Holloway 2004: 127.

overstepping the bounds of propriety” at seventy, had to go through the processes of “taking a place in society” (*li* 立), “being free of doubts” (*bu huo* 不惑), “understanding Heaven’s Mandate” (*zhi tian ming* 知天命), and “being attuned of ear” (*er shun* 耳順) after he set his mind upon learning when he was fifteen (See the *Analects* 2.4; Yang 2002: 12; Slingerland 2003: 9).⁵⁶ This project of repetition is said to be a life-long process. Harder still, no one could be guaranteed a final success in this process. One may never reach the state of harmony/virtuosity throughout a lifetime, but he can always get closer and closer to it. Once the harmony is reached, however, one can enjoy the real freedom, just like Kongzi when he was seventy.

The achievement of *de* can be detected from one’s external appearances. It is said in strips 12 and 13 of the *Wu Xing* that,

Humanity’s contemplation is essential (/pure): essential, it will be thorough; thorough, [one] will be secure; secure, he will be kind (/warm); kind, he will be gratifying; gratifying, he will be affectionate; affectionate, he will be devoted; devoted, he will be loving; loving, he will have the luster of jade...⁵⁷ (Cook 2012: 493-494)

That is to say, when one has *ren*-virtues inside, his essential contemplation of *ren* will gradually lead to the appearance of the luster of jade (*yu se* 玉色), which can be seen externally. Similarly, as it reads in strip 14 that, “Knowledge’s

⁵⁶ 子曰：吾十有五而志于學，三十而立，四十而不惑，五十而知天命，六十而耳順，七十而從心所欲，不踰矩

⁵⁷ 仁之思也清，清則察，察則安，安則溫，溫則悅，悅則戚，戚則親，親則愛，愛則玉色...

contemplation is extensive: ... he will have the luster of jade...” (Cook 2012: 494),⁵⁸ the extensive contemplation of *zhi* also leads to the appearance of the luster of jade.

Regarding the contemplation of *sheng*, it is said in strip 15 that, Sagacity’s contemplation is effortless: effortless, it will take form; taking form, [one] will not forget; not forgetting, he will be discerning of ear; discerning of ear, he will hear the way of the noble man; having heard the way of the noble man, he will have the timbre of jade...⁵⁹ (Cook 2012: 494-495)

The “timbre of jade” or “jade sounds” (*yu yin* 玉音), as noted by Scott Cook, “refers to the audible bearing of the noble man, a reflection and reinforcement of his inner virtue—though in the ‘Wu Xing,’ it likely refers more prominently to his spoken manner” (Cook 2012: 495, footnote 45). Hence, the timbre of jade is also an external indicator of the noble man.

The noble man, with all the five individual virtues inside, is the one with the luster of jade and the timbre of jade. Those with the luster of jade must have the virtues of *ren* or *zhi* inside, and those with the timbre of jade must have the virtue of *sheng* inside. These are the external attributes of the noble man. Only those who really possess individual virtues inside have such observable attributes in them. Otherwise, there is no virtue inside the man and *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* are just external norms.

⁵⁸ 智之思也長, ... 則玉色...

⁵⁹ 聖之思也輕, 輕則形, 形則不忘, 不忘則聰, 聰則聞君子道, 聞君子道則玉音...

A person with virtuosity, according to the *Wu Xing*, is the one who possesses the tones of bronze bells and instills them with the resonance of jade chimestones (*jīn shēng ér yù zhēn zhī* 金聲而玉振之). There is a similar statement in the *Mengzi* 5B: 1, which is translated by Cook as following:

Kongzi was the timely one among sages. Kongzi may be said to have “assembled the great symphony.” “Assembled the great symphony” means to “[possess] the tones of bronze and [instill] them [with] the resonance of jade.” The “tones of bronze” means being orderly in the beginning; “[instilling] them [with] the resonance of jade” means being orderly to the end. Being orderly in the beginning is the business of knowledge; being orderly to the end is the business of sagacity.⁶⁰ (Jiao 1987: 672; Cook 2012: 489-499, footnote 83)

Cook provides us with a very well-founded reading on this and, following interpretations of Cheng Dachang 程大昌 and “Fa xing” 法行 chapter of the *Xunzi*, he concludes that, “Thus the virtue of the noble man would appear to be one that both resounds sonorously like bronze bells yet also carries far and resonates lasting like jade chimestones—a symphonic combination of virtues” (Cook 2012: 498-499, footnote 83). Here, Cook regards the subject, i.e., the kind of person who has the symphonic combination of virtues (*jī da chéng* 集大成) as the noble man. I hold that the noble man has all the virtues inside and may appear with the luster of jade and sound like the timbre of jade, though, he could not assemble the great

⁶⁰ 孔子之謂集大成。集大成也者，金聲而玉振之也。金聲也者，始條理也；玉振之也者，終條理也。始條理者，智之事也；終條理者，聖之事也。The uses of “Confucius” are all changed to “Kongzi.”

symphony. “A symphonic combination of virtues” occurs when all the virtues are in harmony. Only the one with *de* (virtuosity not individual virtues) “can possess the tones of bronze and instill them with the resonance of jade.” Conversely, if a person possesses the tones of bronze and instills them with the resonance of jade, he or she is surely one with *de*.⁶¹

2.5 *De* and *Dao* in the *Wu Xing*

Regarding the relationship between *de* and *dao*, it is said in strip 5 of the *Wu Xing* text that, “Goodness is the way of mankind; virtuosity is the way of Heaven” (Cook 2012: 500).⁶² This indicates two kinds of *dao*, i.e., *ren dao* (the way of mankind 人道) and *tian dao* (the way of Heaven 天道). It is also said that, “The conducts of virtue number five, and all five in concert (/harmony) we refer to as ‘virtuosity’; four conducts in concert (/harmony) we refer to as ‘goodness’” (Cook 2012: 487-488).⁶³ Therefore, *ren dao* refers to *shan*, which is the harmonization of the *si xing*; while *tian dao* refers to *de*, which is the harmonization of the *wu xing*.

It is clear that the *wu xing* is the five conducts of virtue, which are obtained when *ren*, *yi*, *li*, *zhi*, and *sheng* take shape from within. When the five conducts of virtue are in concert, there would be *de*.

Speaking of the *si xing*, however, it is not as clear. There are two possible readings of the *si xing* and the key lies in how to properly understand “*xing* 行.”

⁶¹ Li Yan 李燕 offers a summary of discussions on *ji da cheng* 集大成 and *jin sheng yu zhen* 金聲玉振. See Li 2008: 34-35.

⁶² 善, 人道也. 德, 天道也

⁶³ 德之行五, 和謂之德, 四行和謂之善

Two kinds of *xing* are mentioned in the *Wu Xing*. One is *xing* as merely the “conduct” and the other is *xing* as the “conduct of virtue.” Accordingly, one reading of the *si xing* is to take it as the four conducts and the other reading is to interpret it as the four conducts of virtue. The two readings, correspondingly, cause totally different understandings of the term *shan* in the *Wu Xing*.

In particular, if the *si xing* refers to the four conducts, it means that *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* are not individual virtues but external norms. In this case, the person carries out his conducts in accordance with the requirements of social norms. Hence, the conducts confirm to social norms, but they are not taking shape from within. The person does not have corresponding virtues inside either. Such conducts, even though they are good objectively, do not have any subjective goodness. In other words, there is no subjective sense of morality in the conducts. When the four conducts are in concert, they are only in concert externally in behaviors. They cannot represent a person’s internal moral status.

It should be noted that conducts following the external norms do not have subjective moral sense, though, they are still considered good in the *Wu Xing*. This is congruous with Xunzi’s claim that “goodness is a matter of deliberate effort.” Unlike Mengzi, Xunzi holds that human’s *xing* is bad. It is said in the “Xing e” 性惡 chapter of *Xunzi* 荀子 that, “People’s nature is bad. Their goodness is a matter of deliberate effort” (*Xunzi* 23.1; Wang 1988: 434; Hutton 2014: 248).⁶⁴ Xunzi holds that human’s *xing* 性 is bad and *shan* falls into the category of *wei* (deliberate effort 偽). This means that *shan* in Xunzi is not embraced in human’s *xing*. Hence,

⁶⁴ 人之性惡, 其善偽也

shan, at least at the first place, is external. It is the result of learning and transformation.

The other reading of the *si xing* is to consider it to be the four conducts of virtue. This means that the *si xing* is not merely compliance of external norms but results from virtues taking shape from within. In this case, *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* have been internalized as individual virtues. When the internalized four virtues are put into practice and result in harmony, there would be *shan*. This *shan*, despite of its objective goodness, has also subjective goodness. A person, who has the four conducts of virtue in harmony, not only carries out good deeds but also carries out good deeds stemming from his internal virtues with a subjective sense of morality.⁶⁵

No matter the *si xing* refers to the four conducts or the four conducts of virtue, the harmonization of the *si xing* belongs to the *ren dao*, i.e., the way of mankind. The harmonization of the *si xing* does not involve *de* but only *shan*. *Shan* does not qualify as *tian dao* or the way of Heaven, but *de* does. *De* is the harmonization of the five conducts of virtue. If the *si xing* refers to the four conducts of virtue, *sheng*-virtue and its conduct of virtue are omitted from *shan*; if it refers to the four conducts, then *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* in the *si xing* need to be internalized first and, together with *sheng*-virtue, be put into practice in harmony to achieve *de*.

It is said in the *Wu Xing* that “Virtuosity is the way of Heaven” (Cook 2012: 488 & 500). However, this statement does not necessarily mean that *de* completely

⁶⁵ A more comprehensive discussion among scholars on the distinction between the *si xing* and the *wu xing* can be seen in Liu Xinfang 劉信芳 2014: 46-50.

equals *tian dao*. From my perspective, a proper understanding of the statement “Virtuosity is the way of Heaven” should be that “Virtuosity is the way of Heaven (in human beings).” In other words, *de* is not all what *tian dao* is. Instead, it is the embodiment of *tian dao* in human beings. Therefore, the content of *de* is embraced by *tian dao*, but the scope of *tian dao* exceeds that of *de*. It is based on its content that the *Wu Xing* ascribes *de* to the *tian dao*. It is also based on its content that human beings have the possibility to get access to *tian* and *tian dao*. The content of *de* belongs to *tian dao*, though, the acquisition and exertion of *de* still belong to *ren dao*. It is a series of individual virtues, conducts of virtue and their harmonization in human beings. Therefore, regarding the two kinds of *dao* in the *Wu Xing*, i.e., *ren dao* and *tian dao*, *shan* belongs to the *ren dao*, whereas *de* is the embodiment of *tian dao* in human beings, which connects human beings with the *tian* and also bridges *ren dao* with *tian dao*.

In conclusion, according to the explication on *de* and the individual virtues in the *Wu Xing*, in order to achieve *de*, one needs to first internalize *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* as individual virtues through the inner-heart and the outer-heart approaches, and then act them out together with *sheng*-virtue as conducts of virtue. Finally, *de* is achieved when all the five conducts of virtue reach harmony through a constant effort of practice. Upon the achievement of *de*, one will be able to sound like the tones of bronze and instill them with the resonance of jade. Meanwhile, the achievement of *de* is also the premise for one to connect with the *tian* and get access to the *tian dao*.

The above analysis in this chapter has clarified the generation of *de* in the *Wu Xing* text. However, some questions still remain unanswered. For example, how *does sheng* come into being as an individual virtue? What is its relationship with the other four individual virtues? These questions are addressed in following chapters.

CHAPTER 3 VIRTUES AS DYNAMIC PROCESSES:

A READING OF THE *MENGZI* 6A: 4

The issue of the internality or externality of *ren* (benevolence/humanity 仁) and *yi* (rightness/righteousness/propriety 義) is traceable to the Warring States Period. One of the most famous recorded debates happened between Gaozi and Mengzi. According to the *Mengzi* 6A: 4, Gaozi holds that *ren* is “*nei*” (內 internal) and *yi* is “*wai*” (外 external), while Mengzi is believed to hold that both *ren* and *yi* are “*nei*.” The excavation of the *Wu Xing* (The Five Conducts 五行) text sheds new light on this issue. Drawing on the *Wu Xing*, I will argue in this chapter that Mengzi does not simply consider *ren* and *yi* internal but asserts that the four virtues are dynamic processes composed of multiple courses, while these processes integrate both internal and external dimensions. In other words, I hold that the viewpoint of Mengzi is actually to consider the four main virtues both internal and external.

3.1 The Debate between Gaozi and Mengzi

It seems at first glance that the difference between Gaozi and Mengzi merely lies with *yi*, as they both agree that *ren* is internal. In particular, the only debate between them seems to be whether *yi* is internal or external. Starting from this point, Kwong-loi Shun presents three possible readings of what Gaozi and Mengzi are arguing about: 1) whether or not *yi* must be accompanied by the proper feelings, which indicates that one is fully inclined to the correct action; 2) whether or not *yi* is part of human’s *xing* 性, which is shared by all human beings; and 3)

whether our knowledge of *yi* comes internally from our *xing* or is learned externally (Shun 1997: 98-101).

Shun himself prefers the third reading and considers the source of *yi* to be the real issue on which Gaozi and Mengzi disagree (Shun 1997: 103-109). Gaozi thinks that what is right and wrong must be learned, but Mengzi believes that we know it innately. James Behuniak takes a similar view as Shun but argues that emotion ultimately integrates internal and external (Behuniak 2004: 38-46). Bryan Van Norden holds that the debate between Gaozi and Mengzi should be the first one, i.e., whether or not *yi* must be accompanied by the proper feelings. In particular, Norden believes that Gaozi excludes feeling from *yi* and takes it as correct action only, whereas Mengzi argues that *yi* must be accompanied by proper feelings (Norden 2007: 287-301). Franklin Perkins argues for the second reading. He thinks that what the debate really concerns is whether *xing* is good or bad. If *xing* is good, it makes virtues (including *yi*) internal; otherwise, if *xing* is bad, it makes virtues (including *yi*) external (Perkins 2010: 26 & 32).

Here, I would like to go back to the starting point and ask: is the debate between Mengzi and Gaozi really about the internality/externality of *yi*? To be more specific, do they really employ the same standard? In other words, do they really talk about internality and externality in the same sense? Scholars have proposed different opinions on this question. For example, Pang Pu thinks that the discriminations and utilizations of internality and externality are different between Gaozi and Mengzi (Pang 2006: 28-30). I agree with him on this point. Let us take a closer look at the *Mengzi* 6A: 4.

Gaozi claims that, “Appetite for food and sex is nature [*xing*]. Benevolence is internal, not external; rightness is external and not internal” (Jiao 1987: 743; Lau 1970: 161).⁶⁶ When being asked by Mengzi why he takes *ren* as internal and *yi* as external, Gaozi elaborates with the example of an old man. He says that the old man is treated as an elder only because of his elderliness. The elderliness is in the old man and he does not owe anything of his elderliness to anyone else. Just like the whiteness of the old man is external to us, so is his elderliness. That is why Gaozi calls *yi* external.

Mengzi replies that the situation of *yi* is different from that of whiteness. He says that “treating as white” is the same whether one is treating a horse as white or a man as white. But he questions Gaozi whether to treat a horse as old is the same as treating a man as old. Obviously, this implies Mengzi’s proposition that there is a difference between how to treat an old horse and how to treat an old man. Mengzi also points out that it is not the one who is old that is *yi*, but the one who treats the old man as an elder.

However, Mengzi’s reply does not convince Gaozi, who continues to argue with the example of a brother. He says that he loves his own brother but not the brother of a man from Qin 秦. In this case, the reason lies in himself. That is why he calls *ren* internal. But he treats both an elder of a man from Chu 楚 and an elder of his own family as an elder. In this case, the reason lies in their elderliness. Hence he calls *yi* external.

⁶⁶ 食色，性也。仁，內也，非外也。義，外也，非內也

This time, Mengzi replies with the example of a roast. He says that his enjoyment of the roast provided by a man from Qin is the same as the enjoyment of his own roast. Even though the roasts are from different sources, the enjoyment is the same, because the enjoyment of roast obviously depends on our own taste and experience. Therefore, it is absurd to say that such enjoyment is external. Similarly, even though the elderliness of a man from Chu and the elderliness of a man of one's own family are of different persons, the treatment is the same, since the treatment also depends on us. Hence, *yi* should not be regarded as external but internal (See Jiao 1987: 743-745; Lau 1970: 161).

The record of the debate ends here. Although we do not know the final result, we can see their stands clearly. According to Pang's interpretation, the so-called "*ren* is internal" in Gaozi simply means that one loves his or her own younger brother but not the younger brother of a person from Qin. This implies that *ren* is partial and regional rather than boundless or universal. The boundary for Gaozi, according to Pang, is the self.⁶⁷ Meanwhile, as Pang analyzes, "*yi* is external" simply means that one respects an elder of Chu just as he or she respects his or her own elders. This implies that the scope of *yi*, in the sense of respect, is beyond the self and extends outside the state to all elders. This is why *yi* is considered external by Gaozi. Pang holds that Gaozi does not talk about *ren* and *yi* in their moral sense, but focuses on their limits of performance (Pang 2006: 28-30).

In contrast, Mengzi discusses the internality/externality issue in a totally different sense in the debate. He focuses more on the moral feelings of a person. In

⁶⁷ I read Pang's "self" here as the male-self. Based on the male-self's relationships with others, the internality (virtues of those with blood relationships) or externality (virtues of those without blood relationships) of certain virtues is differentiated.

the old-man example, Mengzi argues that although the elderliness is in the other person, it is not *yi*. What actually counts as *yi* is the moral feeling of respect, which arises from the heart and is obviously inside a person. Therefore, *yi*, given its origin, should be considered internal.⁶⁸

3.2 Previous Views about *Ren* and *Yi*

To better understand Gaozi and Mengzi's debate, it is necessary to briefly analyze the issue of internality or externality of *ren* and *yi* against their background.

According to Zhang Dainian 張岱年, it is Mozi 墨子 that first combines *ren* and *yi* as one term. It appears twenty-seven times in the *Mozi* 墨子. For example, in the "Suo ran" 所染 chapter it reads that, "If one has for friends none but those who love benevolence and righteousness ..." (*Mozi* 3.5; Johnston 2010: 22-23);⁶⁹ in the "Shang xian" 尚賢 chapter it says that, "Hence if the rulers in the world now desire to do benevolence and righteousness ..." (*Mozi* 10.6; Johnston 2010: 88-89);⁷⁰ and also in the "Fei ming" 非命 chapter it reads that, "Therefore those who practice benevolence and righteousness must examine it and vigorously refute it" (*Mozi* 37.10; Johnston 2010: 348-349).⁷¹

Besides the *Mengzi*, other received texts have also discussed the question of whether *ren* and *yi* are internal or external. For example, the issue of internality and

⁶⁸ Kenneth W. Holloway holds that "Mencius's point of contention is not that Gaozi is incorrect but rather that his statements represent a lesser understanding. In other words, Mencius's view encompasses and expands upon Gaozi's position." See Holloway 2009: 38.

⁶⁹ 其友皆好仁義... Otherwise specified, quotations of *Mozi* are based on *The Mozi: a complete translation*, translated and annotated by Ian Johnston (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

⁷⁰ 且今天下之王公大人士君子, 中實將欲為仁義...

⁷¹ 今之為仁義者, 將不可不察而強非者此也

externality of *ren* and *yi* appears in the “Jing xia” 經下 chapter of the *Mozi*, where it is said that, “(The answer to whether) *ren* and *yi* are internal or external (is that they are) internal. The explanation lies in matching in the face” (*Mozi* 41.B75; Johnston 2010: 566-567).⁷² These lines are further explained in the *Jing xia commentary* 經下說:

Benevolence: Benevolence equates with love; righteousness equates with benefit. Love and benefit relate to “this” (the self); what is loved and what is benefited relate to “that” (the other). Love and benefit are neither internal nor external; what is loved and what is benefited are neither internal nor external.⁷³ (*Mozi* 43.B75; Johnston 2010: 566-567)

From the above lines, it can be seen that, same as Mengzi, Mozi refuses the idea of taking *ren* as internal and *yi* as external. Furthermore, Mozi criticizes the view that *ren* is internal and *yi* is external as an example of “wild raising” (*kuang ju* 狂舉) (*Mozi* 43.B75; Johnston 2010: 566-567). According to Sun Yirang 孫怡讓, *kuang ju* or wild raising is equal to nonsense (*wang shuo* 妄說) (Sun 2001: 328). Just like it is fallacious to say that the left eye is external and the right eye is internal, it is also nonsense to consider *ren* internal and *yi* external (*Mozi* 43.B75; Johnston 2010: 566-567).⁷⁴

⁷² 仁義之為內外也，內，說在作顏。The translation is modified based on Johnston’s. There is the mismatch between the original translation and the cited Chinese, which is “To take benevolence as internal and righteousness as external is wrong. The explanation lies in matching in the face.”

⁷³ 仁，仁愛也。義，利也。愛利，此也。所愛所利，彼也。愛利不相為內外，所愛所利亦不相為外內

⁷⁴ 其為仁內也、義外也，舉愛與所利也，是狂舉也，若左目出右目入

The view in the *Guanzi* is different from that in the *Mozi*. In the “Jie” 戒 chapter of *Guanzi* 管子, it reads that, “Benevolence comes from within. Righteousness is expressed without (*wai zuo* 外作)” (*Guanzi* X, 26; Li 2004: 509; Rickett 2001: 381).⁷⁵ While it is clear that the first half of this sentence states that *ren* is internal, it requires more attention to decode the second half. It seems rather hasty to simply interpret the sentence as it is saying that *yi* is external. In order to understand this sentence properly, I suggest to introduce a similar statement from the bamboo manuscripts of the Guodian Chu tomb. It is stated in the *Thicket of Sayings I* (*Yucong*, *yi* 語叢一) that,

In the way of mankind, some virtues come forth from within, and others are instilled from without (*wai ru* 外入). Those which come forth from within are humanity, loyalty, and trustworthiness. Those which (are instilled from without) are propriety ... Humanity is born from mankind; propriety is born from the Way. One is born from within; the other is born from without.⁷⁶ (Cook 2012: 822-823)

Compared with the “Jie” chapter of *Guanzi* cited above, there is a little difference in the *Thicket of Sayings I*, which uses “*wai ru*” 外入 instead of “*wai zuo*” 外作. *Wai ru* means that things come in from outside. The original things are

⁷⁵ 仁從中出，義從外作。This quotation is based primarily on Li Xiangfeng 黎翔鳳, *Guanzi jiaozhu* 管子校注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 2004); the translation is adopted from *Guanzi: Political, Economic, And Philosophical Essays From Early China: a study and Translation* by W. Allyn Rickett (Boston: Cheng & Tsui Company, 2001)

⁷⁶ 人之道也，或由中出，或由外入。由中出者，仁、忠信。由外入者，義...仁生於人，義生於道。或生於內，或生於外。Quotations of the Guodian manuscripts in this thesis, such as the *Thicket of Sayings I*, *Six Virtues*, *Human Nature comes via Mandate*, and *The Five Conducts* (*Wu Xing*), are based on *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian: A study & complete translation, Volume I and II*, translated by Scott Cook (Cornell East Asia Series, 2012), with modifications when necessary.

external. In this sense, *yi* in the *Thicket of Sayings I* is external. However, the situation may be different for *wai zuo* in the “Jie” chapter, which only implies that the *zuo* (expression 作) part is *wai* (outside 外). Consequently, there are at least two possible readings: 1) both the original thing and its expression(s) are outside, and 2) the original thing is inside but its expression(s) is outside. In the first case, *wai zuo* has the same meaning as *wai ru*, which makes *yi* external. But in the second case, *wai zuo* may mean that something is expressed out from a thing inside. That is to say, the original thing is internal but its expression is external. Hence, it can also mean that *yi* is internal and when it is expressed, it appears in the outside.

More importantly, in both the *Guanzi* and the *Thicket of Sayings I*, internality and externality are discussed in the same sense using the self, or more precisely, the heart as the boundary. The *Mozi* associates *ren* and *yi* with love and benefit. Although he denies there is the distinction of internality and externality between love and benefit or between what is loved and what is benefited, he does consider that love and benefit relate to “this (*ci* 此),” that is, the self; while what is loved and what is benefited relate to “that (*bi* 彼),” that is, the other. Both the *Guanzi* and the *Thicket of Sayings I* discuss the origin of *ren* and *yi*, i.e., whether they arise within the heart or from the outside. What arises within the human heart would be internal, whereas arises from the outside is external.⁷⁷

There are other instances where *yi* is considered external in the Guodian manuscripts. In the text of the *Six Virtues* (*Liu de* 六德), it says that, “Humanity is

⁷⁷ It is necessary to make it clear that the “self” used in the *Thicket of Sayings I* is different from that used by Pang Pu mentioned earlier. While the former refers to the “heart,” the latter refers to the “person.”

[a matter of the] internal, propriety is [a matter of the] external, and ritual and music [matters] in common [to both]” (Cook 2012: 786 & 791).⁷⁸ However, “internal” and “external” are used in a sense that is at least different from that in previous citations. Specifically, the distinction between internality and externality is not based on the heart. Instead, the “internal” and “external” in the *Six Virtues* are defined based on the family boundary, meaning within and outside a family, respectively. Thus the text goes on to explain that, “The internal positions are the father, son, and husband; the external positions are the ruler, minister, and wife” (Cook 2012: 786 & 791).⁷⁹ Different positions are due to different blood relationships. The internal positions are occupied by people with blood relationships, whereas the external positions are constituted by those with no blood relationship.

To sum up, the above statements on the distinction between internality and externality can be grouped into two categories:

Category 1 is the family-boundary distinction, which uses the family boundary as the standard to distinguish between internal and external, as is utilized in the *Six Virtues*. Basically, from this viewpoint, the distinction starts from the male self. According to his relationships with others, it ascribes the virtues applied to those with blood relationships as internal and those without blood relationships as external. That is to say, if a virtue is internal according to the family boundary distinction, it means that this virtue is applied to members within a family with

⁷⁸ 仁, 內也. 義, 外也. 禮樂, 共也

⁷⁹ 內位父、子、夫也; 外位君、臣、婦也

blood relationships; if a virtue is external, it means that this virtue can be applied to those outside a family, without blood relationships.

Category 2 is the heart-boundary distinction, which takes the human heart as the boundary to distinguish internal from external, as shown in the “Jie” chapter and the *Thicket of Sayings 1*. According to the heart-boundary distinction, if a virtue is internal, it means that this virtue inheres within a person’s heart from the very beginning; otherwise, it is external.

Regarding the debate between Mengzi and Gaozi, it is uncontested that Mengzi’s internality-externality distinction is based on the heart-boundary, given that Mengzi frequently discusses the human heart and always connects the four virtues with the human heart when he mentions them. For example, he says that the four virtues, *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi*, have their roots in a noble man’s heart (See the *Mengzi* 7A: 21; Jiao 1987: 906; Lau 1970: 186). He also uses the metaphor of the trees of the *Niu* Mountain to explain that it is not that human’s heart is without *ren* and *yi*, but that human loses his or her heart with *ren* and *yi* just like the trees of the *Niu* Mountain are denuded by axes (See the *Mengzi* 6A: 8; Jiao 1987: 775-776; Lau 1970: 164-165). Hence, Mengzi’s distinction between internality and externality in the debate with Gaozi clearly falls under Category 2, i.e., the heart-boundary distinction.

In contrast, Gaozi’s discrimination between internality and externality falls into Category 1, i.e., the family-boundary distinction. According to Pang Pu, Gaozi utilizes the blood relationship as the distinction boundary. From Gaozi’s perspective, the object of love is a person of one’s own family with blood

relationship, not someone of Qin without any blood relationship. Since the performance of *ren* is within one's own family, *ren* is internal. Regarding *yi*, Gaozi points out that one treats both an elder of a man from Chu and an elder of one's own family as an elder. The performance of *yi* is not limited to members of one's own family with blood relationship. Rather, its performance is beyond the family. Hence, *yi* is external.

From the above analysis, it can be seen that Gaozi and Mengzi focus on different aspects of virtues in the debate. While Gaozi emphasizes the limits of performance or application of different virtues using the family-boundary distinction, Mengzi argues from the aspect of the origin or generation of the virtues based on the heart-boundary distinction. That is to say, while Gaozi's argument is beyond the three readings and concerns about the scope of application, Mengzi bases his argument on the third reading that Shun provides about the source of *yi*. Therefore, in their debate, Gaozi and Mengzi are trying to convince each other from their own perspective, which are actually different.

It should be noted that the division between the two categories of the internality-externality distinction is rather loose. In fact, the two are not exclusively separated but are intertwining with each other for most of the time. In some situations, both may have made their appearances on the same philosopher. For example, while Mengzi employs the heart-boundary in his debate with Gaozi to distinguish internality and externality, he also uses the family-boundary in other places of the *Mengzi*. It is said in the *Mengzi* 7B: 24 that, "The way benevolence pertains to the relationship between father and son, righteousness to the

relationship between prince and subject, ..., is the Decree (*ming* 命), but therein also lies human nature (*xing* 性). That is why the noble man does not describe it as Decree” (Jiao 1987: 991; Lau 1970: 198-199).⁸⁰ Accordingly, in dealing with the relationship between father and son, that is, relationship within a family, the virtue of *ren* is applied; while dealing with the relationship between prince and subject, the virtue of *yi* is more predominate. Here, instead of using the heart boundary, Mengzi adopts the family boundary in the application of *ren* and *yi* as Gaozi does in their debate. Therefore, to tell one category from the other relies on the concrete statement and the different emphases a philosopher has made. As for their debate, Gaozi and Mengzi are using the family-boundary and the heart-boundary, respectively.

3.3 Mengzi's Virtue System

In interpreting Mengzi's notion, Liang Tao makes two moves. First, he comes up with two definitions of *ren*. In a narrow sense, *ren* refers to the heart of compassion (*ce yin zhi xin* 惻隱之心). It is a kind of moral feeling. In a broad sense, however, *ren* is equal to the original heart (*ben xin* 本心) that people are born with, which embraces not only the heart of compassion but also the heart of shame (*xiu wu zhi xin* 羞惡之心), the heart of respect (*gong jing zhi xin* 恭敬之心), and the heart of right and wrong (*shi fei zhi xin* 是非之心). It integrates *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi*. In both senses, *ren* is internal. Liang contends that it is *ren* in the broad sense that matches the use of the term by Kongzi (Liang 2008: 378-381). Second, Liang uses

⁸⁰ 仁之與父子也，義之與君臣也，...，命也。有性焉，君子不謂命

ren, in the broad sense, to integrate the other three virtues. He states that, in Mengzi, *ren* is the moral ideal, *yi* is subject to *ren*, and *li* is subject to both *ren* and *yi* (Liang 2008: 383). As a result, *yi*, just like *ren*, is internal.

However, there is a problem with Liang's reading. Although *ren* is the core idea in Kongzi and Confucian ethics takes *ren* as one of the most important virtues, we cannot say that *ren* is the uppermost value in Confucian ethics. For example, in the *Xunzi*, *li* is evidently more prominent than *ren*. Similarly, *ren* is not the supreme virtue in Mengzi either, not all the time at least. On the contrary, the four virtues, namely, *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi*, are weighed equally in Mengzi for most of the time. When they are considered internal, there is no subordination among them; rather, they are parallel with each other. Therefore, it is still up for debate of Liang's method by using *ren* in its broad sense to integrate other virtues and prove that *yi* is internal circuitously. In the following analysis, I argue in detail for the equal importance of the four virtues and attempt to figure out whether they are internal or external in the *Mengzi*.

It is said in the *Mengzi* 2A: 6 that, "The heart of compassion is the sprout of benevolence; the heart of shame, of righteousness; the heart of courtesy and modest, of ritual propriety; the heart of right and wrong, of wisdom. Man has these four sprouts just as he has four limbs" (Jiao 1987: 234-235; Lau 1970: 83).⁸¹ The four hearts⁸² are said in parallel to be the sprouts (*duan* 端) of *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi*. More importantly, as sprouts, they are all internal to one's heart. Just like the four limbs,

⁸¹ 惻隱之心，仁之端也。羞惡之心，義之端也。辭讓之心，禮之端也。是非之心，智之端也。人之有是四端也，猶其有四體也

⁸² To be noted, "heart" here is a direct translation of the Chinese character *xin* 心. The four "hearts" are actually four feelings (*qing* 情). They are different from the heart that all feelings are internal to.

the four sprouts are possessed by every sound person and none of them is superior or inferior to the others. In the *Mengzi* 6A: 6, it is said that, “The heart of compassion is possessed by all men alike; likewise the heart of shame, the heart of respect, and the heart of right and wrong” (Jiao 1987: 757; Lau 1970: 163).⁸³ This again guarantees that every person possesses these four sprouts internally.

The most important point is that all four sprouts are essential to human beings and thus none of them can be omitted. In the *Mengzi* 2A: 6, it is clearly indicated that absence of any one of them will make a human being no longer fully human: “(From this it can be seen that) whoever is devoid of the heart of compassion is not human, whoever is devoid of the heart of shame is not human, whoever is devoid of the heart of courtesy and modesty is not human, and whoever is devoid of the heart of right and wrong is not human” (Jiao 1987: 233; Lau 1970: 82-83).⁸⁴ In this sense, it is not difficult for us to perceive the equal importance of the four sprouts in the *Mengzi*. Then, when the four sprouts finally lead to the four virtues of *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi*, the four virtues should also be of equal importance. According to this four-sprout thesis, people should make their decision or behave based on a comprehensive consideration of these four virtues in accordance with the concrete relationships and specific situations.

For example, a judge (in the ancient China) should not rely on his feeling of compassion toward a wrongdoer when he decides a case. Instead, the judge should make a clear distinction between right and wrong and punish the wrongdoer according to the law or the requirements of *li*. This does not mean a departure from

⁸³ 惻隱之心，人皆有之。羞惡之心，人皆有之。恭敬之心，人皆有之。是非之心，人皆有之。

⁸⁴ 無惻隱之心，非人也；無羞惡之心，非人也；無辭讓之心，非人也；無是非之心，非人也。

ren, but it is an indispensable measure to safeguard justice and *yi* in the right of his role. This is also the public's expectation of a judge. In ancient China, famous judges have gained good reputations by punishing their own guilty families or relatives impartially.

Mengzi is not the only one who advocates the equal importance of *ren* and *yi*. The *Wu Xing* (The Five Conducts 五行) text excavated from Guodian also holds the same position. *Ren* and *yi*, together with *zhi*, *li*, and *sheng*, are parallel with each other at the very beginning of the text. Their conducts are both called “conducts” (*xing* 行) when not taking shape from within and “conducts of virtue” (*de zhi xing* 德之行) when taking shape from within. When it comes to the punishment of crimes, there are statements in the *Wu Xing* indicating that *ren* and *yi* may in some way contradict with each other. It is said in strips 40 and 41 that,

Straightforward determination is the orientation of propriety (*yi*);
harboring lenience is the orientation of humanity (*ren*). Firmness is
the orientation of priority (*yi*); pliancy (/flexibility) is the orientation
of humanity (*ren*).⁸⁵ (Cook 2012: 513-514)

Obviously, “firmness” (*gang* 剛) and “pliancy” (*rou* 柔) are opposites, while it may not be explicitly clear for “straightforward determination” (*jian* 簡) and “harboring lenience” (*ni* 匿). Nevertheless, it is said in strips 39 and 40 that,

⁸⁵ 簡, 義之方也。匿, 仁之方也。剛, 義之方也。柔, 仁之方也。 Strip numbers of the *Wu Xing* text are adopted from Wenwu's arrangement. See Jimenshi Bowuguan 1998: 147-154. Quotations of the *Wu Xing* text are based on *The Bamboo Texts of Guodian: A study & complete translation, Volume I*, translated by Scott Cook (Cornell East Asia Series, 2012), with modifications when necessary.

As a word, “*jian*: straightforward determination” is like “*lian* (練/鍊): refined/hardened”—that which is great and obvious. As a word, “*ni*: harboring lenience” is like “*ni ni* (匿匿): secretive”—that which is meticulous and protective.⁸⁶ (Cook 2012: 512 & 514)

Therefore, straightforward determination/*jian* and harboring lenience/*ni* are also opposites. In terms of orientation, there is no subordination between *ren* and *yi*; rather, *ren* and *yi* are opposites. In dealing with crimes, one needs to balance *ren* and *yi* in opposite orientations: straightforward determination, i.e., “to mete out great punishment for great crimes,” and harboring lenience, i.e., “to pardon minor crimes” (Cook 2012: 511-512).⁸⁷ Otherwise, “If one lacks straightforward determination, he will not take action. If one does not harbor lenience, he is not discerning of the way” (Cook 2012: 511-512).⁸⁸

Some scholars may suggest to interpret it from another angle: when the judge punishes the wrongdoer in the name of law or under the requirements of *li* or any other principles, he is also showing his compassion towards the victims, other people, and even other things that are involved. Sometimes, the judge may also have compassionate feeling towards the wrongdoer, both external material wellbeing and internal moral deficiency. In these cases, he seems to be practicing *ren*, because his conduct is performed out of the sprout of *ren*. This interpretation does not contradict my main claim, but I still would like to point out one of its weaknesses. When we say that the judge shows compassion in the cases, it does not

⁸⁶ 簡之為言猶練也，大而顯者也。匿之為言也猶匿匿也，小而防者也

⁸⁷ 有大罪而大誅之，簡也。有小罪而赦之，匿也

⁸⁸ 不簡，不行。不匿，不辨於道

necessarily imply that the sprout of *ren* is inherent in the judge. I am not denying the possibility that judges, as human beings, may impose personal feelings in their judgments from time to time. But an honorable judge is supposed to be just, impartial and incorruptible, which means he should not be controlled or affected by personal emotions in settling a lawsuit. In the above instance, the judge exerts compassion (i.e. the sprout of *ren*), if there is any, only indirectly by resorting to the means of principles. “Indirectly” here refers to that the sprout of *ren* is actually entailed in and represented by the principles utilized, not that carried by the judge himself. In other words, the exertion of *ren* is achieved by taking the advantage of the exertion of *yi*. Even the judge’s concern of the wrongdoer’s inner deficiency should also be restricted within the allowed scope of *yi*. This is decided by the role the judge plays. If he resign himself, that would be another story. But as long as he is a judge, he should never disregard *yi*.

This is one of the reasons why Mengzi always promotes the virtues of *ren* and *yi* simultaneously. Regarding the relationship of *ren* and *yi* in the *Mengzi*, I agree with Pang Pu’ s reading. According to Pang, the virtue of *yi*, developing from the heart of shame and dislike, also runs as a kind of moral restriction to the virtue of *ren*. The heart of shame (*xiu* 羞) leads people to feel shameful about their not being good and the heart of dislike (*wu* 惡) shows the detestation towards other’s not being good (Pang 2005: 452). With such a limitation, people should apply their heart of compassion only to good people and good deeds in an appropriate scope without abusing it.

Since *yi* is parallel with and of equal importance as *ren* for Mengzi, Liang's reading of the internality of *ren* and *yi* seems inadequate. Then, how to appropriately understand Mengzi's view on internality/externality of *ren* and *yi*, as well as *li* and *zhi*? In my view, Mengzi actually establishes a virtue system that embraces both internal and external dimensions based on the heart-boundary. Whereas the four virtues originate from the internal of the heart, moral practice brings them out into the external of the heart.

Moreover, in elaborating his theory on the four virtues, Mengzi uses a great many analogies and metaphors, among which three of them are very systematic, i.e., the root (*gen* 根), the sprout, and the fruit (*shi* 實). All these three elements are parts of a plant, and Mengzi takes advantage of this connection to elaborate his theory. It is said in the *Mengzi* 7A: 21 that, "That which a noble man follows as his nature, that is to say, benevolence, rightness, ritual propriety and wisdom, have their roots in his heart..." (Jiao 1987: 906; Lau 1970: 186).⁸⁹ Claiming that the four virtues have their roots in the heart does not necessarily mean that virtues are completely inside the heart, but only their roots are in the heart. Therefore, only the root part of the four virtues is implied as internal here. In addition, these roots, since they are roots of virtues, entail the possibility or potentiality for a person to be good and also the tendency toward goodness.

Form these roots, then, come out the sprouts. As quoted earlier, "The heart of compassion is the sprout of benevolence; the heart of shame, of righteousness; the heart of courtesy and modesty, of ritual propriety; the heart of right and wrong,

⁸⁹ 君子所性，仁義禮智根於心。To avoid confusion, "*jun zi* 君子" is referred to as "a/the noble man" throughout this thesis instead of "a gentleman," which is replaced here. And the phrase of "is rooted in" in Lau's translation is also changed to "have their roots in."

of wisdom. Man has these four sprouts just as he has four limbs” (*Mengzi* 2A: 6; Jiao 1987: 234-235; Lau 1970: 83). That is to say, the sprout of the heart of compassion arises from the root of *ren*; the sprout of the heart of shame grows from the root of *yi*; the sprout of the heart of courtesy and modesty emerges from the root of *li*; and the sprout of the heart of right and wrong results from the root of *zhi*.

At the beginning of *Human Nature Comes via Mandate* (*Xing zi ming chu* 性自命出) of the Guodian manuscripts, it is said that,

In general, although all people possess [human] nature (*xing*), the heart-minds have no fixed inclinations, [which instead] depend upon [external] things to rise, depend upon gratification to take action, and depend upon practice to become fixed. The vital energies of joy, anger, grief, and sorrow are [human] nature; once they manifest externally, things take hold of them.⁹⁰ (Cook 2012: 697-698 & 700)

Meanwhile, it is also said in a later section that,

In general, human nature acts as host, and the [external] things take hold of it. The tones of bronze [bells] and stone [chimes] are such that they do not sound unless they are struck. Although humans have their nature and their heart-minds, they do not emerge unless taken hold of.⁹¹ (Cook 2012: 700-702)

⁹⁰ 凡人雖有性，心無定志，待物而後作，待悅而後行，待習而後定。喜怒哀悲之氣，性也。及其見於外，則物取之也

⁹¹ 凡性為主，物取之也。金石之有聲也，弗叩不鳴。人雖有性心，弗取不出

This is to say, *xing* is something originally within the heart, namely, *xing* is internal at the beginning based on the heart-boundary. And the heart can correspond to and be moved by stimulations outside. When the heart is moved, different feelings arise and may be detected from outside, which is the process from internal to external. In the *Mengzi*, the hearts of compassion, shame, modesty and courtesy, and right and wrong are also translated as the feelings of compassion, shame, modesty and courtesy, and right and wrong by scholars such as Bryan W. Van Norden (Norden 2008) and James Legge (Legge 1885). They are the sprouts of the four virtues and kernels of Mengzi's ethical system. They have their roots in the heart. When the heart is moved by, for example, seeing a child who is about to fall into a well, there will be the heart/feeling of compassion. Seeing a child here is the external event required for the stirring of the heart, and the feeling of compassion is the result of the heart being stirred. The same applies to the other three kinds of sprouts. However, just like the roots, the sprouts are only parts of the whole. In other words, the four sprouts are not whole virtues but only parts of the virtues. For example, the heart of compassion, being the sprout of *ren*, is only a part of *ren* as a virtue (*ren*-virtue). The same applies to the other sprouts.

The growth from roots to sprouts, for Mengzi, is the course of *bu yan er yu* (expressing without being told 不言而喻). It means that the course from the roots of *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* to their sprouts is spontaneous. The generation of the four feelings does not need any command from the original heart. If the four roots are complete and healthy, the four feelings will come into being naturally and appropriately. It continues in the *Mengzi* 7A: 21 that,

That which a noble man follows as his nature, that is to say, benevolence, rightness, ritual propriety and wisdom, have their roots in his heart, and manifests itself in his face, giving it a sleek appearance. It also shows in his back and extends to his limbs. His four limbs expressing them without being told to do so (*bu yan er yu*).⁹² (Jiao 1987: 906; Lau 1970: 186)

In this course, the heart, which contains the four roots, responds spontaneously to certain kinds of things outside and produces these four kinds of feelings. Take the feeling of compassion for example. Everyone has the heart that cannot bear to see the sufferings of others. When a person suddenly sees a child who is about to fall into a well, he or she will experience a feeling of alarm and distress. This is not because he or she wants to gain the favor of the child's parents or to seek the praise of his or her neighbors and friends. It is neither because he or she dislikes of the reputation of having been unmoved by such an event. Instead, it is the spontaneous response from one's heart without any deliberate thinking inside or any instructions outside that command him or her to feel so. Once receiving the stimulations from the outside, the four roots in the heart will naturally lead to the four feelings. Furthermore, the good qualities from the roots also ensure the goodness of these four feelings.

By now, we can see why Mengzi argues that all of the virtues are internal, even though the level of sprout already requires some responses to the external

⁹² 君子所性，仁義禮智根於心，其生色也睟然，見於面，盎於背，施於四體，四體不言而喻。 I translate the last sentence differently from Lau's. The translation of "have their roots in the heart" emphasizes that the roots are originally furnished by men, which is more consistent with Mengzi's notion of *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* not being infused into us from outside but being possessed by men inherently (*Mengzi* 6A: 6).

world. The emphasis on the roots and sprouts also composes a competent argument for most researches that take *ren* and *yi* as merely internal in *Mengzi*. However, a crucial part would be omitted if the study stops at the root and sprout parts, that is, the fruit part. It is said in the *Mengzi* 4A: 27 that,

The fruit of benevolence is serving one's parents; the fruit of rightness is obedience to one's elder brothers; the fruit of wisdom is to understand these two and to hold fast to them; the fruit of ritual propriety is the regulation and adornment of them ...⁹³ (Jiao 1987: 532-533; Lau 1970: 127)

Here Mengzi gives four kinds of affairs as the fruits of *ren*, *yi*, *zhi*, and *li*, namely, serving one's parents, obedience to one's elder brothers, understanding and holding fast to the former two things, and regulating and adorning them. In practice, each of these can be accomplished only by moving beyond the heart-boundary. According to Mengzi, to be benevolent, righteous, appropriate, or wise is not just to have their roots and sprouts inside but to act them out and apply them in concrete affairs. Evidently, correct practice or action, which includes the external dimension, plays a crucial role in Mengzi's theory. And just as all the three parts, namely, root, sprout and fruit, belong to a plant and constitute its full growth, the tendencies in one's heart, the four feelings and the four kinds of affairs, form the whole picture of the four virtues.

One effort of Mengzi is trying to prove the completeness of the moral potentials inside us. This is why he advocates that human's *xing* is good and all the

⁹³ 仁之實，事親是也。義之實，從兄是也。智之實，知斯二者弗去是也。禮之實，節文斯二者是也

four virtues are internal. But his ultimate goal is to inspire people to act out these potentials and behave morally. It is not difficult to catch this message, because it is what he talks about all the time. It begins with basic family relationships that everyone deals with, such as serving one's parents and obeying one's elder brothers, and extends to relationships outside a family into much bigger communities. It is said in the *Mengzi* 7A: 15 that,

What a man is able to do without having to learn it is what he can truly do; what he knows without having to reflect on it is what he truly knows. There are no young children who do not know loving their parents, and none of them when they grow up will not know respecting their elder brothers.⁹⁴ (Jiao 1987: 897-898; Lau 1970: 184)

This passage, by referring to the intuitive ability (without having to learn) and intuitive knowledge (without having to reflect), affirms the potentialities or the roots of virtues. However, these potentialities should be put into practice, such as loving their parents as children and respecting their elder brothers as younger ones. Moreover, it is confirmed by following that, "Loving one's parents is benevolence; respecting one's elders is rightness. What is left to be done is simply the extension of these to the whole Empire" (Jiao 1987: 899; Lau 1970: 184).⁹⁵ Loving one's parents and respecting one's elder brothers are *ren* and *yi*, respectively. Since everyone under heaven has such potentialities, everyone is supposed to act upon them consciously.

⁹⁴人之所不學而能者, 其良能也。所不慮而知者, 其良知也。孩提之童, 無不知愛其親者; 及其長也, 無不知敬其兄也

⁹⁵ 親親, 仁也。敬長, 義也。無他, 達之天下也

Furthermore, in the debate with Gaozi, Mengzi uses various examples involving brothers, uncle, villagers and people from another state. Mengzi gives his arguments mainly in the context of dealing with all these relationships. The Neo-Confucian Wang Yangming (王陽明) of the Ming Dynasty, deeply influenced by Mengzi, gives an illustration very much to the point. He says that,

It is like when [we] say that someone knows filial piety (*xiao* 孝) and knows respect for elder brothers (*ti* 悌), it must be the case that the man has already practiced filial and respectful conducts. Only in this way, can [we] say he knows filial piety and knows respect for elder brothers. It is not just because he can say things about filial piety and respect for elder brothers that we call him knowing filial piety and knowing respect for elder brothers.⁹⁶ (Wang 1992: 4)

The genuine knowledge of filial piety and respecting elder brothers has already embraced the dimension of behavior that is external to one's heart. Hence, to evaluate a person is to see what he does externally, not just what he says that he has internally. No matter what a person says and how he says it, if he does not practice his words, it is not genuine knowledge. This is not new. It is said in the *Analects* 5.10 by Kongzi that "Now when I evaluate people I listen to their words but then closely observe their conduct" (Yang 2002: 45; Slingerland 2003: 43).⁹⁷

⁹⁶ 就如稱某人知孝, 某人知弟, 必是其人已曾行孝行弟, 方可稱他知孝知弟, 不成只是曉得說些孝弟的話, 便可稱為知孝弟. This translation is by myself.

⁹⁷ 聽其言而觀其行

The process from the four sprouts to the four affairs is the course of *kuo er chong zhi* (developing and filling all the four sprouts out 擴而充之). It is said in the *Mengzi* 2A: 6 that,

Man has these four sprouts just as he has four limbs. For a man possessing these four sprouts to deny his own potentialities is for him to cripple himself; for him to deny the potentialities to his prince is for him to cripple his prince. If a man is able to develop and fill all these four sprouts that he possesses out (*kuo er chong zhi*), it will be like a fire starting up or a spring coming through. When these are fully developed, he can take under his protection the whole realm within the Four Seas, but if he fails to develop them, he will not be able even to serve his parents.⁹⁸ (Jiao 1987: 235; Lau 1970: 83)

Holding these four sprouts is not the end; one needs to further develop and complete them in conduct externally. The four sprouts are like the very beginning of a fire or a spring – only after development can they be completed and be able to protect all under heaven. Otherwise, if we stop them at the stage of sprouts or roots, they will not be enough to even serve one's parents.

Obviously, this course of *kuo er chong zhi* is not merely internal anymore. All these conducts, such as serving one's parents and respecting one's elder brothers, go beyond one's heart. They are carried out externally to deal with the

⁹⁸ 人之有是四端也，猶其有四體也；有是四端而自謂不能者，自賊者也。謂其君不能者，賊其君者也。凡有四端於我者，知皆擴而充之矣，若火之始然，泉之始達。苟能充之，足以保四海；苟不充之，不足以事父母

outside world. But different from the course of *bu yan er yu*, the course of *kuo er chong zhi* is not a spontaneous one. Rather, it requires deliberate and detailed work.

In the course of *bu yan er yu*, when the heart is stirred by things outside, the four roots in the heart spontaneously lead to the four sprouts. An urge or impulsion of doing something to deal with the stimulation, which could be some one, some thing or some situation, would reside in the four sprouts. That is to say, certain feeling arises in the heart and it has the potentiality of leading to certain kind of action. To continue with the earlier example, when seeing a child who is about to fall into the well, the feeling of compassion arises spontaneously. With the feeling of compassion, it would be reasonable to suppose that one at the same time has the urge of doing something benevolent, i.e., to save the child. When this feeling of compassion is developed, the stronger the feeling is, the stronger the urge to save the child would be. Eventually, when the feeling is filled out, the action of saving the child follows. This is the kind of conduct a benevolent person would do. On the contrary, if one kills this sprout of *ren* or denies the potentiality, it is to cripple oneself and no benevolent conduct would ever follow. There, of course, would be no *ren* by refusing to act benevolently. Hence, one needs to develop and fill out the four feelings into concrete conducts consciously.

As seen from the above analysis, Mengzi's notion about the four virtues is not just considering them internal, but also implies the external dimension, namely, the conduct part.⁹⁹ To sum up and more clearly interpret my understanding of

⁹⁹ It is not that there are two kinds of virtue, internal virtue and external virtue, but that each virtue (*ren*, *yi*, *li*, or *zhi*) has two dimensions, internal and external.

Mengzi's virtue system in the current thesis, a diagram is drawn as below (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Mengzi's Virtue System

From Figure 1, it can be seen that there are three different parts of virtues in Mengzi, namely, roots, sprouts, and fruits, referring to the four roots, four hearts, and four affairs, respectively. However, virtues are not static but dynamic instead. Rather than focusing on the three parts, it is more helpful to concentrate on the two dynamic courses of the virtues: *bu yan er yu*, from the four roots to the four hearts or the four feelings, and *kuo er chong zhi*, from the four hearts or the four feelings to the four affairs. In Mengzi, virtues as *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* are composed of these different parts and different courses. They embrace both internal and external dimensions, and also a remarkable transition stage from an internal dimension towards the external dimension. In other words, Mengzi's theory of virtues is a combination of both the internal and the external. Virtues in the *Mengzi* constitute dynamic processes.

3.4 Development of the *Wu Xing*'s Theory

Mengzi's theory is a further development of what has appeared earlier in the Guodian *Wu Xing* text. It is said at the very beginning of the *Wu Xing* that, "The Five Conducts: If humanity (*ren*) takes shape from within, we call it a 'conduct of virtue'; if it does not take shape from within, we [simply] call it a 'conduct'" (Cook 2012: 485-486).¹⁰⁰ This means that *ren* is regarded as a "*de zhi xing*" (conduct of virtue 德之行) when it takes shape from within; otherwise, it is only called a "*xing*" (conduct 行). It is the same with *yi*, *li*, and *zhi*. In this sense, when these four actions are internalized, they turn into individual virtues. If not, they are just external conducts. Only *sheng* 聖 is different from the other four of the *wu xing* (five conducts 五行), because it is said that, "If sagacity (*sheng*) takes from within, we call it a 'conduct of virtue'; if it does not take shape from within, we [still]¹⁰¹ call it a 'conduct of virtue'" (Cook 2012: 486-487).¹⁰² No matter *sheng* takes shape from within or not, it is called a "*de zhi xing*." This makes the difference between the *si xing* (four conducts 四行) and the *wu xing*.

It follows that, "The conducts of virtue number five, and all five in concert (/harmony) we refer to as 'virtuosity'; four conducts in concert (/harmony) we refer to as 'goodness'" (Cook 2012: 487-488).¹⁰³ From this we can see that, "conducts" in the *Wu Xing* are good. If a person acts in accordance with *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* externally, the conduct is good but not virtuous. Only if he or she internalizes and

¹⁰⁰ 五行：仁形于內謂之德之行，不形于內謂之行

¹⁰¹ The original translation is "we [simply] call it a 'conduct of virtue.'" Changes are made here due to the choice of "*de zhi xing*" over "*xing*" in the situation when *sheng* does not take shape in this thesis.

¹⁰² 聖形于內謂之德之行，不形于內謂之德之行

¹⁰³ 德之行五，和謂之德，四形和謂之善

harmonizes all five kinds of action and turns them into virtuous actions can he or she be considered virtuous. This makes the noble man (*jun zi* 君子) stand out. Because, “One from within whom all five conducts take shape, and who in a timely manner puts them into practice (‘conducts them’), we call a ‘noble man’” (Cook 2012: 489-490).¹⁰⁴ The standard for judging a noble man is not just what he does but whether he does it out of internal virtues or following external norms.

Furthermore, it is said in a later passage that, “The noble man, in carrying out goodness, has that with which he begins, and has that with which he ends. The noble man, in carrying out virtuosity, has that with which he begins, but has not that with which he ends” (Cook 2012: 498-499).¹⁰⁵ This is because “carrying out goodness” (*wei shan* 為善) refers to external behaviors. It may be a good deed. But when the deed is over, it is also the end of “carrying out goodness.” But “carrying out virtuosity” (*wei de* 為德) reflects more a person’s internal virtues. All these acts are virtuous and performed from within. It is the expression of internal values that never ends. That is why it is said that, “Goodness is the way of mankind; virtuosity is the way of Heaven” (Cook 2012: 500).¹⁰⁶ It is not only by acting good but also by acting out of internal virtues that human beings can reach the way of Heaven (*tian dao* 天道) and be integrated with Heaven (*tian* 天).

As seen from the above, on the one hand, virtues are not necessarily inborn in the *Wu Xing*, and thus a person needs to internalize *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* when they are external norms to get individual virtues; on the other hand, internalized virtues

¹⁰⁴ 五行皆形于內而時行之，謂之君子

¹⁰⁵ 君子之為善也，有與始，有與終也。君子之為德也，有與始，無與終也

¹⁰⁶ 善，人道也。德，天道也

should be further acted out and continuously practiced. In other words, there are two lines of thought indicated in the first paragraph of the *Wu Xing*. One is the internalization of *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi*; and the other is the externalization of the internalized four individual virtues. The difference of the four individual virtues between these two lines is that the later ones have become parts of the subject, which are internal, while the former ones are external to the subject. Mengzi's theory is a further development of the *Wu Xing*'s notion, which attaches great importance to the dynamic process and action. It is only that Mengzi puts his emphasis on the externalization part mentioned in the later line above, that is, the *Wu Xing*'s "*de zhi xing*" part, and takes the four individual virtues as being originally internal.

Mengzi's emphasis on virtues being originally internal is connected with his *xing shan* (human nature is good 性善) theory.¹⁰⁷ Considering human's *xing* to be good is based on that the four virtues have their roots in the heart, which provides the potentials or tendencies for goodness. In contrast, Gaozi does not take *ren* and *yi* as human's *xing*, which can be seen from his arguments in the *Mengzi* 6A: 1-3. Hence, when Gaozi uses the willow example to demonstrate that "To make morality out of human nature is like making cups and bowls out of the willow" (Jiao 1987: 732; Lau 1970: 160),¹⁰⁸ Mengzi replies with a series of questions. He asks, "Can you make cups or bowls by following the nature of willow? Or must you mutilate the willow before you can make it into cups and bowls? If you have to mutilate the willow to make it into cups and bowls, must you,

¹⁰⁷ For example, Franklin Perkins suggests that the issue of whether *xing* is good or bad emerged from the concern about the virtues as internal or external. See Perkins 2010: 26.

¹⁰⁸ 以人性為仁義，猶以杞柳為桮棬

then, also mutilate a man to make him moral? Surely it will be these words of yours men in the world will follow in bringing disaster upon morality” (Jiao 1987: 733-734; Lau 1970: 160).¹⁰⁹ From these questions, it can be seen that Mengzi is deeply concerned with Gaozi’s argument that separates *ren* and *yi* from human nature.

According to Kwong-loi Shun, there are four possibilities following Gaozi’s belief. Since Gaozi thinks that the human’s *xing* is neither good nor bad, and therefore “human beings can follow *xing* and at the same time (a) develop in the direction of goodness, (b) not develop in the direction of badness, (c) develop in the direction of badness, or (d) not develop in the direction of goodness” (Shun 1997: 89). Shun continues that, from Mengzi’s perspective, Gaozi’s analogy of comparing *xing* to the willow and *yi* to cups and bowls “fails to allow for possibility (a)” (Shun 1997: 89). As a result, Mengzi instead compares the human being to the willow and the human’s *xing* to the *xing* of the willow. In this way, becoming *ren* and *yi* in Gaozi turns out to be going against the human’s *xing*, which obviously will do great harm to society. On the contrary, as Mengzi asserts, accounting *ren* and *yi* as internal and as part of human’s *xing* will enhance human beings’ moral sense and encourage them to act towards goodness.

Now that the main point of this chapter has been elaborated, that is, developing from the *Wu Xing*’s “conducts of virtue” theory, virtues for Mengzi embrace both internal and external dimensions, there is one final problem to be

¹⁰⁹ 子能順杞柳之性而以為桮棬乎? 將戕賊杞柳而後以為桮棬也? 如將戕賊杞柳而以為桮棬, 則亦將戕賊人以為仁義與? 率天下之人而禍仁義者, 必子之言夫!

addressed: If Mengzi holds that *ren* and *yi* are both internal and external, why does he not speak it out in the *Mengzi* 6A: 4? There are three possible reasons.

First, Mengzi does not need to emphasize the external attribute of virtues because the Confucian tradition from the beginning has affirmed the importance of conduct. Confucian scholars never talk about virtues without the dimension of conduct. Take Kongzi for example. According to Liang Tao, *ren* and *li* are the two most important concepts of Kongzi. Liang summarizes that *ren* refers to relative affections (*qin qin* 親親) and loving people (*ai ren* 愛人), which is a kind of internal self-consciousness; while *yi* refers to social distinctions (*cha deng* 差等) and status (*ming fen* 名分), which is a series of moral norms (Liang 2008: 239). Apparently, *li*, as a series of moral norms, is used to restrict human's behaviors. It can by no means be separated from the dimension of conduct. I agree with Liang in this regard. Speaking of *ren*, however, the truth is that it is not merely internal consciousness but also involves the dimension of conduct.

Let us first look at what *ren* means to Kongzi. When Kongzi replies to his disciples about what *ren* is, he answers differently depending on different persons and situations. There are at least seven times recorded in the *Analects*. They are in the *Analects* 6.22, 12.1, 12.2, 12.3, 12.22, 13.19, and 17.6, respectively. From Kongzi's replies, it is not difficult to tell that all what he says points to appropriate behaviors in different situations, that is, in retirement, in management and in interacting with others. For example, according to Kongzi, to become *ren*, one needs to restrain himself or herself in cultivation and return to *li*; more specifically, one should not look, listen, speak, or move, unless it is in accordance with *li* (see the

Analects 12.1; Yang 2002: 123; Slingerland 2003: 125). These are instructions of proper behaviors. The most frequently mentioned answer of Kongzi is the one when he replies to Fan Chi 樊迟 in the *Analects* 12.22. He explains *ren* with the following statement, “Care for others” (Yang 2002: 131; Slingerland 2003: 136).¹¹⁰ To care for others is not just to say that “I care” or to have the feeling of caring. But it also requires people to actually carry out the caring actions. Hence, *ren* in Kongzi, as well as other virtues maintained by Confucianism, is not just an internal virtue but the virtue of behavior. Virtues have their meaning only when they are applied in practice. They need to be completed in reality and in daily life. Youzi 有子, one of Kongzi’s disciples, understands and concludes the essence of *ren* quite well. He says that, “Might we not say that filial piety and respect for elders constitute the root of *ren*” (*Analects* 1.2; Yang 2002: 2; Slingerland 2003: 1).¹¹¹ Mengzi also follows this line and places great emphasis on filial piety and fraternal duty, the ways of serving one’s parents and elder brothers. Based on such a background, Mengzi does not need to especially highlight external dimension of the four virtues.

Second, the challenges from the mainstream of thought at that time, especially that from Gaozi, may also constitute a reason that Mengzi does not explicitly advocate that *ren* and *yi* are both internal and external. As enumerated in the second section of this chapter, most materials take *yi* as external and none of them consider it internal. Undoubtedly, all these previous statements must have greatly contributed to Gaozi’s arguments. In order to effectively refute Gaozi’s

¹¹⁰ 樊遲問仁。子曰：“愛人。”

¹¹¹ 孝悌也者，其為仁之本與！“Goodness” in Slingerlands translation is changed to “*ren*.”

notion of regarding *yi* as exclusively external, Mengzi needs to emphasize more on the internality of *yi*. Therefore, when arguing with Gaozi, instead of talking about the application scope, Mengzi argues about the origin of *yi*. What Mengzi focuses on is the root part and the sprout part of *yi*, which are internal. He holds that, *yi* and the other three virtues (*ren*, *li*, and *zhi*) “are not welded on to me from the outside; they are in me originally” (*Mengzi* 6A: 6; Jiao 1987: 757; Lau 1970: 163). This constitutes one of the reasons why he argues so strongly about the internal property of *yi*.

Finally, the debate on the internality/externality of *ren* and *yi* is closely connected with the debate on *xing* between Gaozi and Mengzi. As is recorded in the *Mengzi*, debates between Gaozi and Mengzi always centered on *xing* (*Mengzi* 6A: 1-3). Even in announcing that *ren* is internal and *yi* is external, Gaozi opens with the statement of “Appetite for food and sex is *xing*” (*Mengzi* 6A: 4; Jiao 1987: 743; Lau 1970: 161).¹¹² Thus, there would be no surprise for Mengzi, holding that the human’s *xing* is good, to emphasize on the internal aspect of virtues, which decides the goodness of the human’s *xing* from the source.

In conclusion, Mengzi, following the *Wu Xing*’s theoretical line of “*de zhi xing*,” actually holds that all the four virtues, *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi*, are dynamic processes, from roots to the four sprouts, and eventually to the four basic kinds of affairs. The four virtues are not merely internal but they integrate both internal and external dimensions. The reason why Mengzi argues primarily for the internal attribute rather than advocating both internal and external dimensions of virtues may be threefold: 1) in Confucianism, virtues like *ren* and *yi* always involve the

¹¹² 食色, 性也

external dimension of conduct and thus Mengzi, as a Confucian, does not need to highlight the externality of virtues; 2) Mengzi's focusing on the internality of virtues may also be a reasonable response to the mainstream of the thought at that time, as shown in the arguments of Gaozi; and 3) Mengzi's emphasis on internal attribute of virtues is also consistent with his belief that the human's *xing* is good.

CHAPTER 4 *SHENG, ZHI, AND YOU*

Previous chapters have discussed *de* in the contexts of the *Wu Xing* and the *Mengzi*, respectively. In chapter 2, *de* in the *Wu Xing* is realized sequentially through the processes of internalization of *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* in the sense of external norms, externalization of *ren*, *yi*, *li*, *zhi*, and *sheng* in the sense of individual virtues and harmonization of conducts of virtue of *ren*, *yi*, *li*, *zhi*, and *sheng*. In chapter 3, *de* in the *Mengzi* equates *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* as individual virtues and is a dynamic process that embraces both internal and external dimensions. What is more, a lineage between the *Wu Xing* and the *Mengzi* is revealed in the rear section of chapter 3 and Mengzi's point of view about the internality and externality of *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* is considered a further development of the *Wu Xing*'s "*de zhi xing*" theory. However, as pointed out at the end of chapter 2, a very important issue is left unsolved, that is, the puzzle of *sheng*. This chapter attempts to solve this puzzle and related issues through both a brief analysis of the Chinese character *sheng* 聖 and a comparative study between the *Wu Xing* and the *Mengzi*. In addition, this chapter also proposes an internal sequence among the five conducts in moral cultivation, beginning with *zhi* and ending with *sheng*, while *you* (憂 apprehension) plays as a prelude of the whole process. The theoretical account proposed in this chapter aims to provide a holistic picture of the theory of *de* in the *Wu Xing*.

4.1 *Sheng* as A Functional Property

Sheng has been one of the most important but mysterious concepts in the Confucian tradition. Usually, it refers to no less than two things: a quality and the kind of person (*sheng ren* 聖人) that possesses the quality. As a quality, the meaning of *sheng* slightly changes during the evolution of the character. These changes in turn alter the role of the person who has the *sheng* quality. It is the same case when it is used in Confucianism, especially during the Pre-Qin period, which makes *sheng* difficult to understand like the Confucian concepts of *tian*, *Dao*, *ren*, and so on. Worse still, the excavation of the *Wu Xing* adds the mystique of *sheng*, making it even less clear.

In the *Wu Xing*, *sheng*, on the one hand, parallels with the other four virtues and has been mentioned together with them as the five individual virtues; on the other hand, it somehow surpasses the other four. At the very beginning of the text, there is the title-like term “*Wu Xing*/The Five Conducts” referring to conducts of *ren*, *yi*, *li*, *zhi*, and *sheng* as well. Later, two different situations of the five individual virtues are discussed successively, taking shape from within and not taking shape from within. When taking shape from within, the conducts of the five are the same, all being conducts of virtue. However, when not taking shape from within, *sheng*’s conduct stands apart from the other four’s. Specifically, *sheng*’s conduct is a conduct of virtue while the other four’s are merely conducts. This breakaway of *sheng* from the other four leads to the difference between the *si xing* (四行 four conducts) and the *wu xing* (五行 five conducts), and further, between *shan* and *de*. Then, how can we properly understand *sheng* and its status in the *Wu*

Xing: what is *sheng*? And what is its relationship with the other four, or how does it get along with them? In order to figure out its meaning in the *Wu Xing*, an etymological study of *sheng* is necessary.

The character 聖 made its earliest appearance in the oracle bone inscription, China's most ancient surviving writing system. *Sheng* as an associative compound character was sometimes written as ¹¹³, that is, a man (*ren* 人) with a big ear (*er* 耳), to emphasize a person's acute hearing. Sometimes, *sheng* was also written as or with the addition of a mouth (*kou* 口), meaning to speak or to predict. It became a character with three components: *ren* 人 (man), *er* 耳 (ear), and *kou* 口 (mouth). The mouth speaks and the ear hears, which make the most common way of communication possible. Note that, the "ear" in the character is not of ordinary size. It is written in an exaggerated size to highlight the ear's acuteness. Hence, *sheng* primarily refers to the quality of sharp hearing, and accordingly, *sheng ren* is the one who possesses the quality of sharp hearing. In other words, *sheng* is the extraordinary function of the ears and *sheng ren* is the one who has such extraordinary function.¹¹⁴ This kind of hearing, since it is much more sensitive, is by no means limited to daily or common communication use.

¹¹³ Early graph forms are retrieved from <http://vividict.com/WordInfo.aspx?id=895>. Accessed February 2017.

¹¹⁴ Scholars like Chen Ligui 陳麗桂 and Wei Qipeng 魏啟鵬 also consider *sheng* to be an extraordinary sense of hearing. See respectively Chen 2013: 314-316 and Wei 2000: 146.

There must be something that *sheng ren* can capture with acute hearing, but ordinary people cannot.¹¹⁵

After the mid-term of Western Zhou 西周 period, one of the three components *ren* 人 was gradually transformed to *ren* 壬 and the character was written as 𠂔 on the bronze. Sometimes, *ren* 人 was even cut out and only *er* 耳 and *kou* 口 were kept as 聃. According to Guo Moruo 郭沫若, there used to be only one character for *ting* 聽 (to hear), *sheng* 聲 (sound), and *sheng* 聖 in ancient times, and the character is composed of *er* and *kou* as 聃. The mouth is the organ for sending messages and ears are the organs for receiving. The combination of the two means that when the mouth delivers a message, the ears get the message. The ears get the message through the *sheng*/sound, and the measure or action of getting is *ting*/to hear (Guo 1983: 137). *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 says that, *sheng* 聖 means *tong* 通 (having a thorough understanding).¹¹⁶ *Fengsu tong* 風俗通 also explains that, *sheng* 聖 is equal to *sheng* 聲 and means *tong* 通, saying that when one hears the sound, he or she will be informed and be able to have a thorough understanding of the heaven and the earth and regulate myriad things.¹¹⁷

From above, we can see that the initial meaning of *sheng* is connected to one's ability of acute hearing. With such an ability, one will be fully informed once

¹¹⁵ To be noted, there is no moral sense involved in the original meanings of *sheng* and *sheng ren* at the beginning. Chen Lai also thinks that the concept of *sheng* in ancient times is not that morally sacred. See Chen 2009: 151.

¹¹⁶ 聖, 通也. Xu Shen 許慎. *Shuowen jiezi*. In *Chinese Text Project. Pre-Qin and Han*. Accessed July 2016. <http://ctext.org/dictionary.pl?if=en&id=34362>.

¹¹⁷ 聖者聲也, 通也, 言其聞聲知情, 通於天地, 調暢萬物. Yiwen leiju 藝文類聚, edited by Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢. In *Chinese Text Project. Post Han*. Accessed July 2016. <http://ctext.org/dictionary.pl?if=en&id=542430>.

he or she hears the sound. Further, the character is given an extended meaning of having a thorough understanding of everything. Moreover, the extended meaning also gives *sheng* the ability to regulate everything based on the knowledge one gets through his or her thorough understanding. To sum up, *sheng* has three progressive functions: 1) acute hearing, 2) a thorough understanding, and 3) ability to regulate.¹¹⁸

Therefore, it is no wonder that *sheng* is connected with the ability of hearing in the *Wu Xing* text. For example, in strips 25 and 26, it reads that, “To hear it and know it is sagacity (*sheng*)” (Cook 2012: 503-504).¹¹⁹ This statement in the *Wu Xing* reflects the first two functions of *sheng*, i.e., acute hearing and a thorough understanding. But one more important feature is that the thing to hear and know here is not something random but is the way of the noble man (*jun zi dao* 君子道). There are two elements required to be *sheng* in the *Wu Xing* corresponding to the two functions: 1) to hear the way of the noble man and 2) to know the way of the noble man. As pointed out earlier, *sheng* is not limited to everyday communication, but it is the ability to hear what ordinary hearing cannot perceive. In the *Wu Xing*, the thing that is beyond common perception is the way of the noble man. “To have never heard the way of the noble man is called ‘not discerning [of ear] (*bu cong* 不聰)’” (Strip 22-23; Cook 2012: 502-503).¹²⁰ But even “To have heard the way of the noble man” is not *sheng* yet. Instead, it is “to

¹¹⁸ The three functions are well demonstrated when *sheng* is used in the sage king (*sheng wang* 聖王), who hears from and regulates the myriads of people with his face to the south.

¹¹⁹ 聞而知之, 聖也

¹²⁰ 未嘗聞君子道, 謂之不聰

be discerning [of ear] (*cong* 聰)” (Strip 26; Cook 2012: 504-505).¹²¹ Only when one is discerning of ears, which means that the person hears the way of the noble man, and then knows it is the way of the noble man, can he or she be recognized as *sheng*.¹²² This knowledge of the way of the noble man should not be general or incomplete; rather, it must be thorough.

It seems that the pursuit of *sheng* in the *Wu Xing* refers to the way of the noble man, which is perceived by the acute/discerning hearing. Since *sheng ren* is the one who possesses the quality of *sheng* as proposed earlier, the pursuit(s) of *sheng* and that of *sheng ren* should be consistent. Logically, the way of the noble man should also be the target of *sheng ren*. But why is it said in strips 26 and 27 that “The sage (*sheng ren*) [is one who] knows the way of Heaven” (Cook 2012: 504-505)?¹²³ Is the pursuit of *sheng* the way of the noble man or the way of Heaven? It should be first clarified that this is not an either-or question. Both the way of the noble man and the way of Heaven could be the pursuits of *sheng*, but they are at different levels, or more specifically, they are two extremes. This results from the incomplete equivalency between *sheng* and *sheng ren* in the *Wu Xing*. For the way of the noble man, it can be perceived by the acute hearing and this perception symbolizes the minimum requirement of *sheng*. If one is *sheng*, which at least means one has acute hearing, he will hear and know the way of the noble man. In turn, if one hears and knows the way of the noble man, then he or she definitely possesses *sheng*. However, to know the way of the noble man is not the end. Rather, the maximum achievement of *sheng* is to know the way of Heaven in order to

¹²¹ 聞君子道，聰也

¹²² See also Chen Lai 2009: 152-153.

¹²³ 聖人知天道也

become a *sheng ren*. This means that the *sheng ren* in the *Wu Xing* text does not simply refer to a kind of person who possesses the quality of *sheng* but someone who possesses *sheng* in its complete and utmost form. The quality of *sheng* exists in the developing process from one extreme to the other, but the *sheng ren* is developed and completed. Then how to get to the maximum achievement from the minimum requirement of *sheng*? In other words, how can a person become a *sheng ren* and know the way of Heaven from hearing and knowing the way of the noble man through *sheng*?

There are three steps to make this achievement possible for a gentleman (*shi* 士).¹²⁴ First, after hearing and knowing the way of the noble man, the gentleman needs to be intent upon it to become a gentleman of intent (*zhi shi* 志士). This intention (*zhi* 志) will orient the gentleman's cultivation toward the way of the noble man. Second, as a gentleman of intent, one needs to internalize *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* as external norms through the inner-heart and outer-heart approaches. Once one has possessed all the five individual virtues inside and can further practice them in a timely and constant manner, he or she will reach the level of a noble man (*jun zi* 君子) in moral cultivation. The last step is to make the five conducts of virtue in concert to become a person of virtuosity/*de* (*you de zhe* 有德者). By achieving *de* in a person, one at the same time reaches the way of Heaven. From this we can see that, in the *Wu Xing*, the *sheng ren* surpasses one who possesses only the virtue of *sheng* but equals to the *you de zhe*, namely, one who possesses

¹²⁴ I consider the subject of moral cultivation in the *Wu Xing* begins with the *shi* class. It does not involve classes below *shi*.

virtuosity, a concert of the five conducts of virtue. As a person of virtuosity, both the *sheng ren* and the *you de zhe* are capable of getting access to the way of Heaven.

Therefore, the above steps to know the way of Heaven are actually a different formulation of the generation processes of *de* in the gentleman proposed in chapter 2. As discussed in chapter 2, the gentleman should be intent upon the way of the noble man, and the way of the noble man is to have all the five conducts take shape from within and put them into practice in a timely manner. To reach the way of Heaven from the way of the noble man, one needs to make the five conducts of virtue in harmony. It has also been pointed out that it is the timely practice (*xing* 行) that makes the transition from the way of the noble man to the way of Heaven possible. It is a way of harmonization of all the five conducts of virtue in daily life through the repetition of practice. But the harmonization here is made through external work in practice. It first deals with the disharmony of external behaviors and then looks for impacts inwardly. If we take this process of harmonization as relying on the external behaviors and working passively, then how about the internal aspect? In addition to external efforts, is there any work done actively from within for the ultimate harmony? I would like to put forward a possible theory on this issue in the following.

Ren, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* as external norms can be turned into individual virtues through the inner-heart and outer-heart approaches, respectively. However, even though they are virtues, they have different aspects and concentrations. Conflicts may still exist. For example, the tension between *ren* and *yi* as individual virtues is laid out from strip 37 to strip 41 in the *Wu Xing*. It says that, straightforward

determination (*jian* 簡) and firmness (*gang* 剛) are the orientations of *yi*, while harboring lenience (*ni* 匿) and pliancy (*rou* 柔) are the orientations of *ren* (Cook 2012: 513-514).¹²⁵ Straightforward determination-harboring lenience and firmness-pliancy are two pairs of opposites. For instance, in dealing with a case, being straightforward and firm require the judge to enforce the law strictly and take a firm hand with the criminal; harboring lenience and pliancy, on the other hand, needs the judge to pursue the case out of principle and show his mercy toward the criminal. The orientations of *ren* and *yi* are diametrically opposed to each other, which further result in different conducts externally.

As mentioned above, to reach harmony, one way is to get a qualitative transition from outside to inside through timely practice. For example, a judge needs to balance *ren* and *yi* in dealing with cases. In light of different circumstances, the application of straightforward determination and harboring lenience should be varying in degree. This also applies to the utilization of firmness and pliancy. In principle, if it is a serious crime, severe punishment should be firmly imposed to have straightforward determination; and if it is a minor crime, the person should be flexibly pardoned to harbor lenience (See strip 38; Cook 2012: 511-512). Such flexibility in handling with cases may be difficult for a judge as a beginner. However, with the accumulation of cases handled, ideally, an experienced judge will be able to reconcile different orientations of *ren* and *yi* in an easy manner. This transition is not only a technic improvement in dealing cases externally, but it also symbolizes the internal change

¹²⁵ 簡, 義之方也. 匿, 仁之方也. 剛, 義之方也. 柔, 仁之方也

of the judge, since reconciliation of opposite orientations is not always done compulsorily but is eventually carried out with ease by the judge. This kind of harmonization works externally through practice at the beginning.

Another way to make the five conducts of virtue in harmony and reach the way of Heaven initiates internally by utilizing the functions of *sheng*. Besides the two functions (i.e., acute hearing and a thorough understanding) mentioned above, *sheng* in the *Wu Xing* also has the third function, that is, the ability to regulate the other four individual virtues. The purpose of regulation is to break through the conflicts and reach the internal harmony among all individual virtues. Instead of waiting for the external accumulation of practice to bring along the internal change, the third function of *sheng* works directly on the conflicting individual virtues. For example, *sheng* helps to bridge *ren* and *yi* as individual virtues. For a judge who has *sheng* inside, he or she would have a thorough understanding of and try to regulate *ren*-virtue and *yi*-virtue. By considering the different appeals of *ren*-virtue and *yi*-virtue, a compromise should be made internally. Once the internal compromise is achieved, their external conducts of virtue will also be in harmony. Alternatively speaking, if *ren* and *yi* as individual virtues are in harmony internally, their orientations will comprise with each other, and the conduct of *ren*-virtue and the conduct of *yi*-virtue will not contradict in solving a case.

Note that the internal compromise or internal harmony is not reached readily. It takes time and effort. If a judge manages to possess this internal harmony, he or she will become a *sheng ren* or

you de zhe. Meanwhile, in addition to working internally, *sheng* also works externally to have conduct of virtue.¹²⁶ As mentioned earlier, the harmony realized through practice is a qualitative change resulting from quantitative accumulation of virtuous conducts. *Sheng*'s function of regulation runs through the whole process to make the external conducts as harmonious as possible. This function is not only a catalyst that accelerates the qualitative change to happen but also explains how a qualitative change is possible. It is because *sheng* bridges the conducts of virtue and provides an opportunity for them to connect and compromise for the sake of the best whole before the achievement of the internal harmony. If there is no *sheng*, tension and conflict will always be accompanied with the accumulation process of the conducts of virtue. Through a timely practice, conflicts may be fewer, but there is still the possibility of contradiction. Even though conducts during the accumulation is virtuous individually, they can still mess with each other when encountering. Take the example of *ren* and *yi* again. As internal virtues, their conducts are undoubtedly virtuous. But *ren* and *yi* have opposite orientations. When they meet each other, they may conflict with each other internally as individual virtues and externally as conducts of virtue. The conduct of *ren*-virtue and the conduct of *yi*-virtue do not always get along with one another. Only when there is *sheng* and it functions to regulate the external conducts can a qualitative change be possible.

Therefore, for a sage/*sheng ren* who possesses the virtue of *sheng* in its complete and utmost form, he or she is able to use the functions of *sheng* to make

¹²⁶ The internal function of *sheng* is prior to its external function, since *sheng* as an individual virtue is prior to its conduct of virtue.

all the individual virtues communicate and compromise with each other to maintain his or her internal harmony and further ensure the external harmony.¹²⁷ For those who have not reached the moral status of a *sheng ren* but have the virtue of *sheng*, namely, the noble men, they can also use *sheng*'s functions to reach the internal harmony and assist with the achievement of the external harmony through timely and constant practice till the obtainment of the internal harmony. It is only that the process of communication and compromise for a *sheng ren* is spontaneous, but for a noble man, he or she still needs to pay great and long-term effort.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, issues concerning *sheng* seem mysterious and unsolvable. Nevertheless, from the above analysis we can see that if we take *sheng*-virtue in the *Wu Xing* as a functional property, some of the conundrums related to *sheng* will be readily solved.

First, why does *sheng* fit neither the inner-heart approach nor the outer-heart approach? These two approaches, as we know, are two different ways to internalize external norms into individual virtues. However, unlike *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi*, which can be doctrinal and static as external norms, *sheng* does not have any external form. Ever since its appearance, it has been as a dynamic function internally. Hence, it does not need either of the two approaches to be internalized. In other words, *sheng* is not something gained externally, but it originates internally.

¹²⁷ In this sense, the improvement of *sheng* from being able to hear and know the way of the noble man to being able to know the way of Heaven is also the cultivation of a person from being a gentleman of intent to a *sheng ren*.

Second, the conducts of *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* could only be conducts of virtue when *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* take shape from within. Then why is *sheng* different from the other four in the sense that its conduct is conduct of virtue no matter it takes shape from within or not (See strips 1-4)? This can be explained from two aspects. On the one hand, *sheng* is always an internal virtue. Therefore, its conduct naturally is conduct of virtue. On the other hand, the difference from the other four exists only when *sheng* does not take shape from within. If *sheng* is always internal, then, how could it be possible to make *sheng* not take shape from within? In other words, since *sheng* is internal, there is no such case that when *sheng* takes shape it does not take shape from within. So, the only possible explanation is that the *Wu Xing*'s focus in this statement is not on "from within" (*yu nei* 于内) but on "does not take shape" (*bu xing* 不形). When *sheng* does not take shape, it means *sheng* works inside regulating the four individual virtues. Even though it works inside and does not exist in any external forms, its function of regulating is still a kind of conduct. This regulating conduct is based on the internal virtue of *sheng*, and thus it is conduct of virtue. The difference between *sheng* and the other four virtues (i.e., *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi*) results when *sheng*'s conduct of virtue works internally. Table 1 below may make this point easier to understand.

Table 1 *Sheng*'s particularity

	TSFW		¬TSFW	
<i>ren</i>	InV	CoV	ExF	Con
<i>yi</i>	InV	CoV	ExF	Con
<i>li</i>	InV	CoV	ExF	Con
<i>zhi</i>	InV	CoV	ExF	Con

<i>sheng</i>	InV (function externally)	CoV	InV (function internally)	CoV
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Note: TSFW = taking shape from within; ¬TSFW = not taking shape from within;
InV = individual virtue; ExF = external form; CoV = conduct of virtue;
Con=conduct

From the table we can see that when *ren*, *yi*, *li*, *zhi*, and *sheng* take shape from within, they are individual virtues, and their conducts are conducts of virtue that operate externally. However, there is difference when the five do not take shape from within. In this case, *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* are external norms, and this is why they cannot take shape from within. But for *sheng*, it can never be an external norm. What makes its conduct a conduct of virtue is that *sheng* can function internally to regulate all the five individual virtues.

Last but not least, why does *sheng* play such a significant role in the *Wu Xing*? *Sheng*'s status is obviously higher than that of *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* in the *Wu Xing*. A great many scholars working on the *Wu Xing* are well aware of this special status of *sheng*. For example, Li Cunshan 李存山 points out that *sheng* is most important among the five virtues (Li 2000: 240), and Chen Ligui 陳麗桂 also considers that *sheng* is special in the *Wu Xing* and is superior to the other four virtues (Chen 2013: 257). Wang Bo argues that *sheng*'s special status manifests in its connection to the way of Heaven and its relationship with the other conducts of virtue (Wang 2001: 53-56). Scott Cook says that, "While the five conducts are to some degree equal partners in virtue, 'sagacity' nonetheless holds a privileged place" (Cook 2012: 467). Kenneth W. Holloway believes that, "The paragraph (Strips 26-29) begins with sagacity, which might indicate it is deemed of greater

importance in relation to the connections with terms subsequently mentioned (*zhi*, *ren*, *yi*, and *li*)” and “...sagacity represents the highest form of cultivation” (Holloway 2009: 51 & 60). In discussing the hierarchy of the body in the *Wu Xing*, Mark Csikszentmihalyi proposes that *sheng* is analogous to the mind/heart as the other four virtues to the sense organ of the body (i.e. eyes, ears, nose, mouth, hands, and feet), and, what is more, the mind/heart should lead the body to make sure that actions are healthy and moral, not the other way round (See Csikszentmihalyi 2004: 85).

Now from the above analysis in this section, we have at least one reason to understand *sheng*’s priority and authority and why it plays a leading role among the five individual virtues, that is, only *sheng* has such a function of regulating, even commanding, the other four to make adjustments or changes to coordinate with one another. Moreover, *sheng* provides the possibility for the achievement of *de* or the way of Heaven. If there is no *sheng*, both the four individuals internally and their conducts of virtue externally will be in chaos. In a word, *sheng* makes harmony reachable in the *Wu Xing*.¹²⁸

4.2 Dynamic Courses of *Kuo Er Chong Zhi* in the *Wu Xing*

As seen in the above analysis, due to its functions, *sheng* deserves a higher status in the *Wu Xing* than the other four virtues. To be noted, however, *sheng* is not necessarily the highest pursuit. This lies in the difference between *sheng* and

¹²⁸ There are different understandings to the concept of *sheng* and its connection to the other virtues in the *Wu Xing*. For example, Franklin Perkins mentions a possibility of taking *sheng* as a mate-virtue which makes “all of the other ways of acting internally rooted.” See Perkins 2014: 506. Here, I take *sheng* as an individual virtue, focusing more on its regulative function and its role in harmonizing not only virtues but also their conducts.

sheng ren in the *Wu Xing*. As clarified earlier in previous section when discussing the objects of *sheng*, *sheng* primarily refers to the ability to hear and know the way of the noble man, whereas what *sheng ren* knows is the way of Heaven. This indicates that the objects of *sheng* are not single but with two extremes. Knowing the way of the noble man is a sign and minimum requirement of *sheng*, while knowing the way of Heaven is the ultimate achievement of *sheng*. Therefore, *sheng* is a quality subject to improvement. Only when *sheng* is developed and filled to its capacity, from hearing and knowing the way of the noble man to knowing the way of Heaven, can the person possessing *sheng* be called a *sheng ren*. Otherwise, the person is only on its way to becoming a *sheng ren*.

The development of *sheng* sounds quite similar to the course of *kuo er chong zhi* (developing and filling all the four sprouts out 擴而充之) in the *Mengzi* as discussed in chapter 3. In *Mengzi*, the four sprouts refer to the feeling of compassion (*ce yin zhi xin* 惻隱之心), the feeling of shame (*xiu wu zhi xin* 羞惡之心), the feeling of courtesy and modest (*ci rang zhi xin* 辭讓之心), and the feeling of right and wrong (*shi fei zhi xin* 是非之心). Correspondingly, the four fruits are serving one's parents (*shi qin* 事親), obedience to one's elder brothers (*cong xiong* 從兄), regulating and adorning the former two things (*jie wen si er zhe* 節文斯二者), and understanding and holding fast to them (*zhi si er zhe er fu qu* 知斯二者弗去). The process from the four sprouts to the four fruits in *Mengzi* is the course of *kuo er chong zhi*. In this process, the four sprouts should be developed to their extremes and eventually come into effect in practice as four fruits. There are two

procedures: to fully develop the sprouts and to practice based on the developed sprouts.¹²⁹ In the *Wu Xing*, if we take hearing and knowing the way of the noble man as the sprout of *sheng*, knowing the way of Heaven as the full development of the sprout, and the regulation of conducts afterwards as the fruit, then the development and fulfillment process of *sheng* can be seen as the pioneer of the course of *kuo er chong zhi* in the *Mengzi*.

Obviously, *sheng* in the *Wu Xing* is different from that in the *Mengzi* in both its meaning and status. In *Mengzi*, *sheng* or *sheng ren* is in a completed status as the utmost goal and *sheng ren* is the one who possesses *sheng*. In the *Wu Xing*, however, *sheng* is not a completed status yet but instead needs to be developed and filled to its extreme. When *sheng* is still being developed, it is not the utmost goal. Only after it is completed through the course of *kuo er chong zhi* can it be considered the same as the *sheng* in *Mengzi*. In the *Wu Xing*, *sheng ren* is not just one who possesses *sheng* but a person who possesses *sheng* in its completed form.¹³⁰

If the growth of *sheng* as an individual virtue in the *Wu Xing* gives the sign of the notion of *kuo er chong zhi* in the *Mengzi*, how about the development of the other four individual virtues, i.e., *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi*? Compared with *ren*, *yi*, and *li*, *zhi* is more often bound with *sheng*, which has a similar developing pattern with *sheng* in the *Wu Xing*. While *sheng* is primarily linked to hearing, *zhi* has its connection with seeing. It is said in strip 27 that, “To have seen [the way of] the

¹²⁹ This is not saying that conducts only come after the full development of the sprouts. It is the case when the sprouts are not denuded at its beginning and not hewn down in developing. Most of the time, these two procedures go hand in hand.

¹³⁰ Liu Xinfang 劉信芳 also thinks that *sheng* and *sheng ren* are different in the *Wu Xing*, and points out that *sheng* in the *Wu Xing* is not completed but exists in a process. See Liu 2014: 54.

worthy man (*xian ren* 賢人) is to be perspicacious [of sight] (*ming* 明); to know it when one sees it is to be knowing (*zhi*)” (Cook 2012: 504-505).¹³¹ Therefore, like hearing in the *Wu Xing*, seeing is not restricted to normal visual ability either, but refers to being perspicacious of sight. The object of such seeing is specifically the worthy man. Not everyone can see the worthy man, but only those who have perspicacious sight can. To have seen the worthy man is being perspicacious of sight, and to further know that the worthy man possesses virtue is *zhi*. Otherwise, “To have seen the worthy man and yet not know that he possesses virtue is called ‘not knowing (*zhi*)’” (Cook 2012: 503).¹³² From this we can see that the minimum requirement of *zhi* is to be able to see the worthy man and know that he or she possesses virtue. But this is not the end for being *zhi*. It should be further fulfilled. In strips 31 and 32, it says that “To know it when one sees it is to be knowing (*zhi*). To know it and be settled in it is humanity (*ren*). To be settled in it and put into practice is propriety (*yi*). To put it into practice and hold it in reverence is ritual (*li*)” (Cook 2012: 506-507).¹³³ That is to say, based on *zhi*, one can achieve *ren*, *yi*, and *li* through being settled (*an* 安)¹³⁴, putting into practice (*xing* 行), and holding in reverence (*jing* 敬) progressively. The process from seeing the worthy man and knowing he or she possesses virtue to having *ren*, *yi*, and *li* is the *kuo er chong zhi* course of *zhi*.

Ren, *yi*, and *li* have their own *kuo er chong zhi* courses as well, even though they are different from the patterns of *sheng* and *zhi*. Chen Lai, based on strips 12

¹³¹ 見賢人，明也。見而知之，智也

¹³² 見賢人而不知其有德也，謂之不智

¹³³ 見而知之，智也。知而安之，仁也。安而行之，義也。行而敬之，禮也

¹³⁴ There are different translations to *an* 安. Cook uses “being secure in”. I prefer “being settled.”

to 16, proposes that the inchoation of moral consciousness plays a primitive yet foundational role in the realization of moral conducts in the *Wu Xing*. Further, by taking strip 32 to strip 37 as the commentaries on strip 21 and strip 22, Chen concludes that these strips are actually talking about the natural developing process of *ren*, *yi*, and *li* from their beginning of internal sprouts to their completed status. In particular, when elaborating *ren*, the *Wu Xing* uses feelings of *yue* (gratification 悅), *qi* (affection 戚), *qin* (devotion 親), and *ai* (love 愛). This elaboration, as Chen argues, is only “one step away” from Mengzi’s use of *ce yin zhi xin* as the sprout of *ren*. Likewise, the use of *jing* (reverence 敬), *yan* (awe 嚴), *zun* (honor 尊), and *gong* (humility 恭) is also very close to Mengzi’s taking *gong jing zhi xin* as the sprout of *li*. Chen asserts that *yi*, starting from *zhong xin bian ran* (to clearly discern it in one’s inner-heart 中心辯然), can also be connected to Mengzi’s *shi fei zhi xin*. Therefore, he holds that the discussion of *ren*, *yi*, and *li* in the above passages lays a good foundation for the “four-sprout” theory (*si duan shuo* 四端說) in Mengzi (Chen 2009: 136-137).

I agree with Chen’s view on *ren* and *li*, as well as the connection between the *Wu Xing* and the four-sprout theory of Mengzi. However, whether *yi*-virtue in the *Wu Xing* is connected to Mengzi’s *shi fei zhi xin* is debatable. Chen holds that *yi* concerns right and wrong, which refers to confirming one’s choice and acting upon it uprightly (Chen 2009: 137). According to the Commentary of the MWD *Wu Xing*, however, *zhong xin bian ran* is understood differently. In explaining the statement of “to clearly discern it in one’s inner-mind and act upon it correctly (Cook 2012: 510),” the Commentary goes that, “If it was possible to have all the

good food and drink of the world, and one is called over and given it to eat, one's inner mind would nevertheless to be confused. Finding being called over for food distasteful, and not accepting what one is called over for, thereby acting in the correct manner, is being upright" (Csikszentmihalyi 2004: 338).¹³⁵ The story behind this statement appears in the Tangong 檀弓 chapter of *Liji*, "where a starving man will not accept food offered inappropriately" (Csikszentmihalyi 2004: 339). That is to say, the starving person refuses the food because it is provided in a patronizing way and he feels not respected. Similarly, Mengzi also utilizes this story while arguing that people should choose *yi* over life when these two contradict with each other. He holds that even a homeless person will not accept the food or soup if it is given with contempt (see *Mengzi* 6A: 10). In this way, *zhong xin bian ran* in the *Wu Xing* is more like the *xiu wu zhi xin* in the *Mengzi*, rather than the *shi fei zhi xin* which leads to *zhi*.

Nevertheless, both Chen's interpretation and the Commentary in MWD *Wu Xing* show that the classic part of the *Wu Xing* may have influenced the four-sprout theory of Mengzi. This view is also held by other scholars. For example, based on strips 21 and 22, Wang Bo 王博 also thinks that, the *Wu Xing* attempts to ascribe different feelings to different moral aspects. He then considers this effort to be the harbinger of the four-sprout theory in Mengzi. Moreover, when Wang discusses the inner-heart and the outer-heart in the *Wu Xing*, he makes the connection between

¹³⁵ 中心辯焉而正行之直也。有天下美飲食於此，呼嗟而予之，中心迷也。惡呼嗟而不受呼嗟，正行之，直也。 This original manuscript of MWD *Wu Xing* and its translation is adopted from Mark Csikszentmihalyi, *Material Virtue: ethics and the body in early China* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

the *Wu Xing*'s feelings in the internalization process of *ren*, (i.e., *yue* (gratification 悅), *qi* (affection 戚), *qin* (devotion 親), and *ai* (love 愛) and the *Mengzi*'s sprout of *ren* (i.e., *ce yin zhi xin* 惻隱之心), as well as the connection between the feelings in the internalization process of *li*, i.e., *jing* (reverence 敬), *yan* (awe 嚴), *zun* (honor 尊), and *gong* (humility 恭) and the *Mengzi*'s sprout of *li* (i.e., *gong jing zhi xin* 恭敬之心) (Wang 2001: 41).

Therefore, according to Chen and Wang, the feelings of *ren*, *yi*, and *li* in the *Wu Xing* have their corresponding counterparts in the *Mengzi*. These feelings can be seen as the prototype of the sprout-theory in *Mengzi*. If we follow their interpretations and affirm such a connection between the *Wu Xing* and the *Mengzi*, then signs of the *kuo er chong zhi* notion can also be found in the cultivation of *ren*, *yi*, and *li* in the *Wu Xing*. These feelings develop and extend through interactions with others. In the case of *ren*, when using one's inner-heart in interaction, the sprout is gradually developed from *yue* (gratification 悅) to *qi* (affection 戚), then *qin* (devotion 親), and finally *ai* (love 愛), while the fruit is to love one's father and eventually love all the people. For *yi*, there is also a line that shows the progressive development of the sprout from *zhong xin bian ran* (to clearly discern it in one's inner-heart 中心辯然) to *zhi* (direct 直), then *si* (unreserved 肆), and finally *guo* (resolute 果). The fruits of *yi* could be *jian* (straightforward determination 簡) and *xing* (taking action 行). Both *jian* and *xing* in the *Wu Xing* are external conducts. It reads in strip 22 that, "without straightforward determination, he will not take action; not taking action, he will not be [in accord with] propriety (*yi*)" (Cook 2012:

501-502).¹³⁶ It is explained later in strips 34 and 35 that to have “straightforward determination” is to not harm the great way with petty ways and to “take action” means to mete out great punishments for great crimes (Cook 2012: 509-510).¹³⁷ In other words, the fruits of *yi* in the *Wu Xing* could also be taken as “to not harm the great way with petty ways” and “to mete out great punishment for great crimes.” Last, when using the outer-heart in interacting with others, one can develop the feelings of *li* through the progressive line of *jing* (reverence 敬), *yan* (awe 嚴), *zun* (honor 尊), and *gong* (humility 恭), which is analogous to the *gong jing zhi xin* in the *Mengzi*, and result in interacting widely as its fruit.

Here, in making a connection between the *Wu Xing* and the four-sprout theory of Mengzi, I am not proposing that the course of *kuo er chong zhi* and how it operates in the *Wu Xing* are exactly the same as those in the *Mengzi*. What I am suggesting is that, besides the four-sprout theory, the *Wu Xing* also provides a prototype for the *kuo er chong zhi* theory in the *Mengzi*. Specifically, the *Wu Xing* talks about different feelings that are ascribed to different moralities, and it also involves dynamic progresses. This again confirms the connection between the *Wu Xing* and the *Mengzi*, and that Mengzi’s taking virtues as dynamic courses is a further development of ideas shown in the *Wu Xing*.

Moreover, a sequence can be found from the above analysis on *sheng*, *zhi*, *ren*, *yi*, and *li*. As individual virtues, the five come into being in an order. In particular, *zhi* as an individual virtue emerges first, and then leads progressively to *ren*, *yi*, and *li* as individual virtues through the efforts of being settled, putting into

¹³⁶ 不簡不行, 不行不義

¹³⁷ 不以小道害大道, 簡也。有大罪而大誅之, 行也

practice, and holding in reverence. The three efforts are explained in details right after in strips 32 to 37, using the inner-heart and outer-heart approaches. These two approaches of internalization, on the one hand, describe the *kuo er chong zhi* process of *ren*, *yi*, and *li*; on the other hand, they are also the unfolding of the three efforts. In order to be settled, one needs to use one's inner-heart in interacting with others. And then through a *kuo er chong zhi* process of *yue* (gratification 悅), *qi* (affection 戚), *qin* (devotion 親), and *ai* (love 愛), one makes *ren* internalized as an individual virtue. After being settled, one needs to clearly discern in his or her inner-heart and act upon it correctly, that is, to put it into practice, which will gradually lead to *yi* as an individual virtue through a *kuo er chong zhi* process of *zhong xin bian ran* (to clearly discern it in one's inner-heart 中心辯然), *zhi* (direct 直), *si* (unreserved 肆), and *guo* (resolute 果). Holding in reverence refers to the situation when one uses his or her outer-heart in interacting with others. In such case, one needs to go through a *kuo er chong zhi* process of *jing* (reverence 敬), *yan* (awe 嚴), *zun* (honor 尊), and *gong* (humility 恭) to finally reach *li* as an individual virtue. The individual virtue of *sheng* comes into the picture when there is conflict among the individual virtues and their conducts of virtue. It serves as a coordinator and works throughout the whole process till the attainment of the ultimate harmony, which is also the symbol of the achievement of *de* or the way of Heaven. Logically, the sequence of the five individual virtues can be illustrated as *zhi*→*ren*, *yi*, *li*→*sheng*.¹³⁸ In short, the generation process of *de* in the *Wu Xing*

¹³⁸ There are two things to be noted in this sequence. First, *sheng* is the last not because it is the last to emerge among the five individual virtues, but because it works to the end. Second, there is no

starts with *zhi* as an individual virtue and is accomplished by the function of *sheng*.¹³⁹

4.3 *You* as A Prelude to Moral Cultivation

In previous sections, I have proposed a linear sequence among the five conducts from *zhi*-virtue to *sheng*-virtue in pursuing *de* or the way of Heaven, and also analyzed how *sheng* fulfills the whole process via its functions. This section focuses on *zhi*, another significant virtue in the *Wu Xing*, and attempts to clarify how *zhi* being the first individual virtue comes into being through the inner-heart approach and how it starts the journey of pursuing *de*. Meanwhile, I will argue that the emergence of *zhi*-virtue is closely related to the psychological state of *you* (apprehension 憂), while such a relationship seems overlooked in the existing literature.

clear sequence among *ren*, *yi* and *li*. For *ren*, it requires *zhi* and being settled. For *yi* and *li*, however, the situations are more complicated. Take *yi* for example, “To be settled in it and put it into practice is *yi*” 安而行之，義也。It could mean that *ren* plus practice is *yi*. But it could also mean that *zhi* with being settled and practice is *yi*. It is similar with *li*. “To put it into practice and hold it in reverence is *li*” 行而敬之，禮也。Li could either refer to *yi* with addition of reverence, or refer to *zhi* added with being settled, practice, and reverence. Based on both the former cases of *yi* and *li*, the sequence would be *ren*→*yi*→*li*. But it is not in both the latter cases (See also Holloway 2009: 61). Since there is the statement of “To be settled in it and respectful of it is *li*” 安而敬之，禮也 in strip 28, it seems that what is more important is the respectful feeling in *li*. Hence, I tend to believe that *zhi* precedes *ren*, *yi* and *li* in emergence, but there is no order among the latter three. When discussing *ren*, *yi* and *li*, being settled, practice, and reverence are the foci, rather than their sequence.

¹³⁹ There are different opinions. Wang Bo, for example, proposes two sets of series to elaborate the generation relation among *ren*, *yi*, *li*, *zhi*, and *sheng*: 1) the *wu xing* series, initiating with *sheng*, and 2) the *si xing* series, beginning with *zhi* (Wang 2001: 55). Holloway also thinks that *sheng* and *zhi* “are able to unify different sides of our moral conducts.” He divides the process of self-cultivation into two parts, the initial stage/lower levels (which contains the cultivation feature of *zhi*) and the latter stage/advanced levels (which has the cultivation feature of *sheng*), and believes that “the advanced stage of self-cultivation is developed from the lower stage” (Holloway 2009: 61-62 & 74). Chenyang Li applies the “harmonious thinking mode” (*he xie de si wei mo shi* 和諧的思維模式) in dealing their relationship and thinks that there is no linear sequence among *ren*, *yi*, *li*, *zhi*, and *sheng*. Li holds that the five individual virtues are mutually complement and being both cause and effect to one another (Li 2011: 64).

To begin with, we should note first that it is *zhi* as an internal virtue rather than as an external norm that leads to further progression in cultivation. Based on strip 5, I ascribe the internalization of *zhi* to the inner-heart approach in chapter 2. In making the connection between *zhi* and the inner-heart approach, I also pointed out a difference in the patterns of internalization between the inner-heart *zhi* and *ren*-virtue or *yi*-virtue, which belong to the inner-heart approach as well. While the internalization of *ren* and *yi* concerns interacting with others in a broad sense, *zhi*'s internalization involves interacting with the worthy man specifically. It reads that, "To have never seen the worthy man is called 'not perspicacious [of sight].'...To have seen the worthy man and yet not know that he possesses virtue is called 'not knowing (*zhi*).' To see it and know it is knowledge (*zhi*)" (Cook 2012: 502-504).¹⁴⁰ If one has never seen a worthy man, it is not because there is no worthy man but because the person is not perspicacious of sight and cannot recognize the worthy man when he or she is present. If one is perspicacious and sees a worthy man, he or she should further know that the worthy man has virtue to become truly *zhi*. Only this kind of *zhi* is conducive to moral cultivation.

According to strips 32 to 34, in interacting with others using one's inner-heart, there will be the initial psychological status of gratification (*yue* 悅) and be discerning (*bian ran* 辯然), which lead to *ren*-virtue and *yi*-virtue, respectively. The achievement of the inner-heart *zhi* through seeing and knowing the worthy man (who possesses *de*) also includes one emotional property. Based on strip 5, we can see that in interacting with the worthy man using one's inner-heart, one will

¹⁴⁰ 未嘗見賢人，謂之不明... 見賢人而不知其有德，謂之不知。見而知之，智也

have the initial status of being apprehensive (*you* 憂). Scott Cook points out that feelings of apprehension are where the path to virtuosity begins with, which ultimately lead to their opposite, complete happiness or contentment (Cook 2000: 121), and the inner-heart apprehension is the prerequisite to the cultivation of virtuous conduct (Cook 2000: 131). In the light of this instructive conclusion, I focus in this section on the potential relationship between apprehension and *zhi*-virtue and argue that apprehension in the *Wu Xing* is the initial emotion that leads to the inner-heart *zhi*. It is not any apprehension; rather, it must be the inner-heart apprehension (*zhong xin zhi you* 中心之憂). Then, what is inner-heart apprehension and how does it lead to the inner-heart *zhi*? There is no definition or explanation in the *Wu Xing*, but there are some connected paragraphs we can trace to sort out a possible solution.

You 憂 appears three times in the *Wu Xing*. Except the one in strip 5, both the other two are modified quotations from the *Odes*. One is in strip 9 and the passage that contains it reads: “If neither humane (*ren*) nor knowing (*zhi*), then, having yet to see the noble man, one’s comprehensive heart will be unable to throb, and once having seen him, one’s heart will be unable to find gratification” (Cook 2012: 491-492).¹⁴¹ The other one is in strip 12 and the passage reads that, “If neither humane (*ren*) nor sagacious (*sheng*), then, having yet to see the noble man, one’s apprehensive heart will be unable to pound, and once having seen him, one’s heart will be unable to calm down” (Cook 2012: 492-493).¹⁴² From these, the

¹⁴¹ 不仁不智，未見君子，憂心不能懌懌；既見君子，心不能悅

¹⁴² 不仁不聖，未見君子，憂心不能忡忡；既見君子，心不能降

apprehensive heart (*you xin* 憂心) is connected with seeing the noble man (*jian jun zi* 見君子). The proper function of the apprehensive heart should be throbbing or pounding when one has yet to see the noble man and be gratifying or calming down when once one has seen the noble man. Since all emotions or psychological states are believed to be from the heart in the ancient Chinese context, the apprehensive heart and the inner-heart apprehension in the *Wu Xing* could be taken as two sides of the same coin. The former term emphasizes on the “heart,” which is apprehensive, while the latter one underlines the emotion of “apprehension,” which is from the inner-heart. Therefore, same as the apprehensive heart, the inner-heart apprehension is also connected with the noble man. This can also be verified by strip 5 when it discusses the noble man and the inner-heart apprehension together.

In either of the two situations mentioned above, i.e., 1) when there is neither *ren* nor *zhi* internally, and 2) when there is neither *ren* nor *sheng* internally, the apprehensive heart is said to be related to seeing the noble man. With the retrospect to strips 22 to 27, however, we get that the *zhi*-virtue is actually connected with seeing and knowing the way of the worthy man, while the *sheng*-virtue relates to the way of the noble man. Given that *sheng*-virtue is comparatively much advanced in moral cultivation than *zhi*-virtue, in principle, the way of the noble man should be accordingly superior to the way of the worthy man. However, there seems no such differentiation between situations 1) and 2). Both situations are followed with seeing the noble man, instead of seeing the worthy man in situation 1) and seeing the noble man in situation 2). The reason may be that the gap between “(the way of) the worthy man” and “(the way of) the noble man” is

blurry in the discourse. In strip 43, it even says that “[One who] radiantly elevates [all of his conducts] to the way of the noble man we call ‘worthy’” (Cook 2012: 515).¹⁴³ Hence, the focus is not on the moral hierarchy between (the way of) the worthy man and (the way of) the noble man, but they are parallel in the text and most of the time they both refer to the same kind of person who has virtues inside.

From these we can see that the *zhi*-virtue, the inner-heart apprehension/the apprehensive heart, and (the way of) the noble man/(the way of) the worthy man are connected with one another. If the noble man has no inner-heart apprehension, he will have no inner-heart *zhi*; ¹⁴⁴ if there is no *zhi*-virtue internally, the apprehensive heart will not function properly when seeing the way of the noble man; and to get the inner-heart *zhi* relies on seeing and knowing the way of the noble man.

Besides the mutual connections between the *zhi*-virtue, the inner-heart apprehension/the apprehensive heart, and (the way of) the noble man/(the way of) the worthy man, there is also a causal relationship among them. According to Chen Ligui, the inner-heart apprehension in the *Wu Xing* is the self-consciousness of the uneasy feeling in the depth of one’s heart. It is initially the anxiety of not being self-satisfied (Chen 2013: 213 & 312-313). I agree with her on this insightful interpretation of the inner-heart apprehension. However, Chen does not specify where the feeling of unease and anxiety comes from, nor does she specify what the subject is insufficient in.

¹⁴³ 赫嘯嘯達諸君子道，謂之賢

¹⁴⁴ This is based on strip 5 “君子亡中心之憂則亡中心之智.” I consider the premise in this sentence not accurate and read “the noble man” here as a noble-man-to-be, because when a noble-man-to-be becomes a noble man, the inner-heart apprehension will disappear and turn into inner settlement. More discussions follow in later paragraphs.

In explaining “having yet to see the noble man, one’s apprehensive heart will throb” from the *Odes*, Han Ying 韓嬰 uses a quotation of Kongzi’s discourse, “The noble man has three apprehensions: Not knowing, how could you not be apprehensive? Knowing but not learning, how could you not be apprehensive? Learning but not acting, how could you not be apprehensive?” (Han 1980: 18)¹⁴⁵ Hence, the primary source of apprehension for the noble man is “not knowing” (*fu zhi* 弗知). In the *Wu Xing*, the object of (not) knowing is the way of the noble man (/the worthy man). The apprehension, then, is caused by not knowing the way of the noble man. In other words, it is the lack of the way of the noble man that leads to the inner-heart apprehension. The consciousness of such deficiency in oneself is the inner-heart *zhi*. The premise of self-consciousness is being discerning of ears and perspicacious of sight, since only with such keen perceptions can the subject hear the way of the noble man and see (the way of) the worthy man. Having heard the way of the noble man and seen the way of the worthy man, with a retrospection (contemplation on oneself using one’s inner-heart), the subject will realize or be conscious that he or she does not possess such quality inside. This constitutes the trigger of the inner-heart apprehension and the motive to start the journey of moral cultivation. Such interpretation of the *Wu Xing* is also in line with the Confucian notion that “when you see someone who is worthy, concentrate upon becoming their equal” (*jian xian si qi yan* 見賢思齊焉, see the *Analects* 4.17; Yang 2002: 39; Slingerland 2003:35). Having seen the noble man/the worthy man, one’s inner

¹⁴⁵ 君子有三憂：弗知，可無憂與？知而不學，可無憂與？學而不行，可無憂與？ The original text is from Han Ying, *Hanshi waizhuan jishi* 韓詩外傳集釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1980), p.18. Translation is my own.

insufficiency in morality is exposed through comparison and the inner-heart apprehension arouses correspondingly due to such insufficiency. In order to dispel this unpleasant feeling of apprehension and become morally sufficient, one will proactively commit oneself to cultivation and strive to be morally equal to the noble man. Hence Scott Cook's take of the inner-heart apprehension being caused by the nobleman's failing to act properly seems inappropriate (See Cook 2000: 126), since the noble man is internally moral sufficient and the apprehension feelings have been settled.

The phased target of moral cultivation in this stage refers to the achievement of the way of the noble man. This target is set, but the process is an ongoing one. That is to say, seeing the way of the noble man triggers the inner-heart apprehension through self-contemplation. The awareness of the inner-heart apprehension is the inner-heart *zhi*. This inner-heart *zhi* allows the subject to know what he or she is insufficient in and further cultivate oneself to become a noble man, namely, to know the way of the noble man. Here, the differentiation between the inner-heart *zhi* and the *zhi*-virtue should be made clear. The inner-heart *zhi* is a kind of *zhi*-virtue, or more specifically, it is the initial status of the *zhi*-virtue. As suggested earlier, the *zhi*-virtue, like the *sheng*-virtue, exists in the process. It has the minimum requirement of seeing the worthy man and knowing that the worthy man possesses virtuosity. This minimum requirement is also the trigger of the inner-heart apprehension and then the inner-heart *zhi*. The content of the inner-heart *zhi* is the consciousness of the inner-heart apprehension and its cause of internal moral insufficiency. In contrast, *zhi* as an individual virtue has a much

broader scope. *Zhi*-virtue concerns not only that “To see it and **know** it is knowledge (*zhi*)” (i.e., the inner-heart *zhi*; See strip 25; Cook 2012: 503-504) but also that “To hear it and **know** it is sagacity (*sheng*)” (See strip 25; Cook 2012: 503-504), and even “To **know** it and be settled in it is humanity (*ren*). To be settled in it and put into practice is propriety (*yi*). To put it into practice and hold it in reverence is ritual (*li*)” (See strip 27 and 28; Cook 2012: 506-507). *Zhi*-virtue is internally connected with the other four. All above different kinds of knowledge are within the scope of *zhi* as an individual virtue. This reaffirms that *zhi* is a quality subject to improvement, from inner-heart *zhi* to *zhi*-virtue in a broad sense.

The cultivation process is triggered by seeing and knowing the noble man and ends with possessing of the way of the noble man. In this process, *zhi*-virtue is evolved, improved and completed, from seeing and knowing the way of the noble man (the minimum requirement) to *zhi* as an individual virtue in a broad sense. At the end, when the way of the noble man is achieved, the inner-heart apprehension would be accordingly turned into inner-heart gratification, and then the feeling of being settled (*an* 安), which is the beginning of the *kuo er chong zhi* process of *zhi* towards *ren*, *yi*, and *li*.¹⁴⁶

We can also see from the above that being settled is in fact the opposite state of being apprehensive in the *Wu Xing*. It is because while the inner-heart apprehension is caused by the lack of virtue inside, being settled happens to be brought by the achievement of the way of the noble man, that is, having all the five

¹⁴⁶ Review section 2 of this chapter on the *kuo er chong zhi* process of the *zhi*-virtue.

individual virtues internally and practicing them in a timely manner.¹⁴⁷ According to strip 8, “If it does not take form, [one] will not be settled” (Cook 2012: 490-491).¹⁴⁸ In turn, if one wants to be settled, one should have it “take form (*xing* 形).” “Taking form” is short for “taking form/shape from within.” According to Chen Lai, *xing* 形 usually indicates the moving direction toward the external. “Taking form from within” means conducts should start with internal virtues and take form externally (Chen 2009: 120-121). In other words, “taking form” is actually another expression of having the individual virtues inside and then practicing them out. When one can make it “take form,” one becomes morally flush with the noble man and a noble man himself or herself.

Being settled is the inner state when one reaches the way of the noble man, but it is not enough. In the *Wu Xing*, the ultimate inner pursuit is the state of being happy (*le* 樂).¹⁴⁹ According to strip 29, “With harmony, there is happiness” (Cook 2012: 505-506).¹⁵⁰ Based on preceding sentence, i.e., “...[that in which the] five [conducts find harmony]” (Cook 2012: 505-506),¹⁵¹ this harmony is the harmony of the five conducts of virtue.¹⁵² Since harmony of the five conducts of virtue actually represents the achievement of *de* or the way of Heaven, we can say that

¹⁴⁷ Scott Cook indicates in different places that the opposite of (the feelings of) apprehension is the sense of complete happiness and the sense of delight. See Cook 2000: 121 and 125, respectively. It is indisputable that happiness and delight are opposite feelings of apprehension. But to be precise, the direct opposite of apprehension in the *Wu Xing* is being settled.

¹⁴⁸ 不形不安

¹⁴⁹ Scott Cook also regards (complete) happiness as the final prerequisite of moral virtuosity, which can only be achieved in the ultimate stages of the cultivation journey. See Cook 2000: 121 & 131. But his view of taking happiness/music as essentially equivalent to *sheng* is arguable.

¹⁵⁰ 和則樂

¹⁵¹ 五行之所和也

¹⁵² There is another harmony referring to the harmony of the four conducts in later paragraph, which results in unity (*tong* 同) and then goodness, not happiness and *de*. See strips 31 and 32.

happiness results when one reaches the way of Heaven. This also explains why it is repeated in the *Wu Xing* that “unhappy, he will be without virtuosity” (Cook 2012: 488-489, 490-491 & 500-501)¹⁵³ and “with happiness, there is virtuosity” (Cook 2012: 505-506).¹⁵⁴

In other words, the inner states from apprehension to settlement and then happiness reflect different levels of moral achievements. They are in line with the process of cultivation. It is the inner-heart apprehension that leads to moral cultivation in the first place when encountering with the noble man. After becoming morally equal to the noble man by having all the five individual virtues inside and practicing them out constantly, one will turn the apprehension feeling into the inner settlement. However, being settled is just a status when one is internally sufficient. Only when one reaches the peak of moral cultivation, that is, having obtained *de* or the way of Heaven, can he or she enjoy the true and supreme happiness in harmony.

¹⁵³ 不樂(則)亡德, see strips 6, 8 & 9, and 21.

¹⁵⁴ 樂則有德, see strip 29.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary of the Current Research

In the present thesis, I conduct a research on Confucian ethics based on the GD *Wu Xing* manuscript.

First, I perform an exploratory analysis on the moral cultivation in the *Wu Xing*. I argue that self-cultivation towards *de* or the way of Heaven is a process composed of three progressive efforts: internalization, externalization, and harmonization. The internalization of *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* as external norms to individual virtues is realized through the inner-heart and outer-heart approaches. Together with *sheng*-virtue, the five are externalized or taken shape from within through timely practice to become *de zhi xing* (conducts of virtue 德之行) by the noble man. For the gentleman, he or she needs to be intent upon the way of the noble man and become a noble man himself or herself first. With accumulation of constant practice, at one point, a qualitative change will occur and all the individual virtues and their conducts of virtue will be in harmony. This harmony represents the achievement of *de* in a person, which can be detected externally since one is being able to sound like the tones of bronze and instill them with the resonance of jade. When one reaches *de*, he or she also gets access to the way of Heaven, since *de* and the way of Heaven have the same content.

Second, I present a re-reading of the *Mengzi* 6A: 4 and identify Mengzi's selective adoption of the *Wu Xing*'s notion of *de zhi xing*. The review of the *nei* (internality 內) and *wai* (externality 外) properties of virtue, especially of *ren* and *yi*, is provoked primarily by the first paragraph of the *Wu Xing* text. It distinguishes

situations when *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* “*xing yu nei*” (take shape from within 形與內), which results in *de zhi xing*, and when *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* “*bu xing yu nei*” (do not take shape from within 不形與內), which leads to merely *xing* (conducts 行). As analyzed in the second chapter, the *Wu Xing*’s descriptions of these two situations imply that there are two forms of *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi*: external norms and internal virtues. The case in the *Mengzi* is different. According to his debate with Gaozi recorded in the *Mengzi* 6A: 4, it is generally believed that Mengzi takes both *ren* and *yi* as internal. I argue, however, this judgment is at least not all-inclusive. By going over previous discussions against the debate between Gaozi and Mengzi, I categorize two boundaries in differentiating the internal from the external of virtues, namely, the family-boundary and the heart-boundary. I propose that while Gaozi is adopting the family-boundary, Mengzi is using the heart-boundary in their debate. Therefore, the two thinkers are trying to convince each other from their own and distinctive perspective. As discussed in the third chapter, since Gaozi speaks up clearly for his view on the internality and externality of *ren* and *yi* based on the family-boundary, my concern is to figure out what Mengzi’s proposition really is. To this end, I reconstruct the whole picture of his virtue system using metaphors of *gen* (root 根), *duan* (sprout 端), and *shi* (fruit 實) in the *Mengzi*. Just like a plant, there are the four roots of virtues in one’s heart, four feelings as the sprouts of virtues and four affairs as their fruits. The root parts of virtues are internal to one’s heart, the sprout parts spontaneously germinate when the heart is stimulated externally, and the fruit parts refer to conducts externally. The course from root to sprout is called “*bu yan er yu*” (expressing without being told 不言而喻) and the

course from the sprout to the fruit is called “*kuo er chong zhi*” (developing and filling all the four sprouts out 擴而充之). In the *Mengzi*, virtues as *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* are composed of these different parts and courses and, all together, they constitute dynamic processes, embracing both internal and external dimensions and a remarkable transition stage from the internal dimension towards the external dimension. Therefore, Mengzi actually holds that virtues are not merely internal but both internal and external. This view of Mengzi is in line with the *Wu Xing*’s notion of “*de zhi xing*,” having virtues take shape from within. Mengzi adopts and develops the *Wu Xing*’s notion by claiming that *ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi* have their roots inherently in the heart, so that the effort of internalization is left out.

Last but not least, I attempt to solve puzzles concerning the two most important virtues in the *Wu Xing*, namely, *sheng* and *zhi*. Through a brief analysis of the Chinese character *sheng* 聖, I suggest that *sheng* in the *Wu Xing* should be a functional property. Besides the extraordinary functions of hearing and knowing the way of the noble man, *sheng* also serves to regulate the other four individual virtues internally and their conducts of virtue externally, which makes harmony possible in the *Wu Xing*. Then, through a comparative study between the *Wu Xing* and the *Mengzi* on their discrepant understandings of *sheng* and *sheng ren*, more theoretical connections between the two texts are revealed. Specifically, in addition to the prototype of the four-sprout theory, signs of the *kuo er chong zhi* notion can also be found in the developing processes of *ren*, *yi*, *li*, *zhi*, and *sheng* in the *Wu Xing*. Moreover, a logical cultivation sequence of *zhi*→*ren*, *yi*, *li*→*sheng* among the five individual virtues in the *Wu Xing* is formulated. The generation process of

de in the *Wu Xing* starts with *zhi* as an individual virtue and is accomplished by the function of *sheng*. In initiating the process by the virtue of *zhi*, the psychological state of *you* (apprehension 憂) plays an indispensable role. The apprehension of moral deficiency in oneself triggered by seeing the worthy man is called the *zhong xin zhi you* (inner-heart apprehension 中心之憂) and the self-consciousness of such apprehension is the inner-heart *zhi*. In full length, having heard the way of the noble man and seen the way of the worthy man, with a retrospection or contemplation (*si* 思) on oneself, the subject realizes that he or she does not possess equal moral quality inside. This constitutes the trigger of the inner-heart apprehension and the motive of starting the journey of moral cultivation. It is noteworthy that the inner-heart apprehension in the *Wu Xing* is periodical. When one cultivates and becomes morally equal with the noble man, such apprehension will disappear and the subject will be settled (*an* 安) internally. Further, if one reaches *de* or the way of Heaven, he or she can enjoy the ultimate inner pursuit of happiness (*le* 樂).

5.2 Research Limitation and Future Directions

My current study is mainly based on the GD *Wu Xing* text and focuses on its moral cultivation issue and theoretical connections with the *Mengzi*. However, the text itself is an intellectual treasure and what has been done here is no match for what it offers. More new topics that need to be well researched are still possible.

For example, the psychological state of *le* (happiness 樂) is briefly mentioned but no further elaboration is given in this thesis. How should the term 樂

be properly interpreted in the *Wu Xing*? Should it be read as *le* (happy/happiness) or *yue* (musical/music) exclusively, or it can be interpreted from either aspect? What is its relationship with *de*, harmony, and the five individual virtues? These questions are worth discussion. Kenneth W. Holloway thinks that “Since the most consistent text for the occurrence of the word ‘music’ in the text is virtue, the two terms should be related” (Holloway 2009: 65). Chenyang Li discusses the character in its sense of music (*yue* 樂) together with *he* 和 and considers them cognate, with the former being a symbol of the latter (Li 2011: 62). Scott Cook and Jin Bingjun 金秉駿 argue for both senses of the character. Cook holds that “we cannot fully separate the notion of *le* 樂 as ‘happiness’ from that of *yue* 樂 as ‘music’ — the two were, in fact, one and the same word” (Cook 2000: 132). While Jin underlines the “happiness” sense of the character in the *Wu Xing*, he also suggests that the original meaning of sage is to enjoy happiness through music, just as gods do. I agree with Cook on the inseparability of the two senses of the character in the ancient Chinese context and think that there is still space for further exploration of the property and functions of the term in the *Wu Xing*.

Another topic that is not fully discussed in this thesis is on *si* (contemplation 思) and *shen du* (be cautious over one’s solitude 慎獨). I mention in chapter 2 that there are three kinds of contemplation: *ren*’s contemplation, *zhi*’s contemplation, and *sheng*’s contemplation. I also point out in the same chapter that there are two ways of contemplation: the inner-heart contemplation (i.e., to treat a person, including oneself, as oneself in interacting) and the outer-heart contemplation (i.e., to treat a person, excluding oneself, as an other in interacting).

In my opinion, the three kinds of contemplation all begin with contemplating on oneself, which belongs to the inner-heart contemplation. Contemplation in this sense is like the Confucian idea of *xing* (examination 省) which has a particular focus on examining oneself, that is, self-examination. Therefore, I believe that *ren*'s contemplation, *zhi*'s contemplation, and *sheng*'s contemplation on oneself using one's inner-heart are three ways of self-examination. This kind of self-examination is an examination of one's heart. The notion of *shen du* follows the discussion of the three kinds of contemplation. According to the commentary of the MWD *Wu Xing*, *du* 獨 here refers to the heart and *shen du* accordingly means to be cautious over one's heart. Since both the concepts of *si* and *shen du* in the *Wu Xing* are closely connected to the heart and self-examination, I would like to probe into both issues and their connection in my future study.

Moreover, this thesis concentrates on the moral aspect of the *Wu Xing* but does not involve its social and political aspects, which are also of great importance. For example, chapters 2 and 4 in this thesis analyze *sheng* and *zhi* mostly in their moral sense, but Chen Lai regards the discussion of *sheng* and *zhi* in the *Wu Xing* as political-oriented and considers it political philosophy, which centers on "hearing the way of the noble man" and "seeing the worthy man" (Chen 2009: 153-157). Besides, it is said in strip 29 that, "with virtuosity, the states and households will sing [one's] praises" (Cook 2012: 505-506).¹⁵⁵ Obviously, moral cultivation is not restrained to oneself but also closely related to the wellbeing and prosperity of the whole society. The *Wu Xing* also talks about notions of "*gui gui*" (valuing the

¹⁵⁵ 有德則邦家舉

noble 貴貴), “*zun xian*” (honoring the worthy 尊賢), and sentencing guidelines of *jian* (straightforward determination 簡) and *ni* (harboring lenience 匿). From these, moral principles in the *Wu Xing* are also political instructions, which require detailed study in the future.

Last but not least, the current study focuses on the GD *Wu Xing* while the MWD *Wu Xing*, especially its commentary part, is not covered. Certainly, it will be interesting and important to see how the issues discussed in the current study are dealt with in the MWD *Wu Xing*. An in-depth examination with a broader vision and a more holistic perspective involving both versions of the excavated *Wu Xing* and even other unearthed materials is needed in my further research.

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