

**COMMITTEE VI**  
Eastern Approaches to Knowledge and  
Values: With an Emphasis on "QI"

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**Discussant Paper on Jong Ho Bae's Paper**

**VIEW OF NATURE AS SEEN FROM ORIENTAL PHILOSOPHY**

by

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VIEW OF NATURE  
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The paper on "View of Nature as Seen From Oriental Philosophy" written by Prof. Jong Ho Bae of Won Kwang University, Korea. The author states from the very beginning that he confines his attention only to the tradition and science of only Confucianism and not oriental philosophy as a whole.

Apart from the preface, the paper is divided into 3 major parts, namely; The Yin-Yang and the Five Substances; On the Theory of Li-Ch'i and On the Problems of Nature and Man.

In Yin-Yang and the Five Substances the writer traces the development of the concept of Yin-Yang and the Five Substances in Chinese philosophy. He examines the explanation of Tsou-Yen (B.C. 350-270); Liu-Hsin, a Confucianist of Han dynasty, Ch'eng-I-Ch'uan (1033-1107 A.D.) in Sung Dynasty, etc.

In the sub-section of this part, he explains also the Theory of Yin-Yang in the Book of Change, the latter being the most profound principle on view of nature among the Confucian canonical books. In Sung Dynasty, the Book of Change is highly regarded together with Ta-Hsueh (The Great Learning) and Chung-Yung (The Book of Means). The author goes on to expound concepts given by important Chinese thinkers of the times, e.g. Chou-Rhum-Hsi (1017-1073 A.D.) in Sung Dynasty, and Chang-Heng-Chu (1020-1077 A.D.) The former consolidated the thought of Taoism and Buddhism and affirmed Confucian Philosophy by means of the Explanation of the diagram of T'ai-Chi, affirming that Ting-Ching is prior to the Yin-Yang. While the latter developed the concept of the Supreme

Void (T'ai Hsu).

In the following sub-section of the same part, the author goes into great length to explain the T'ai-Chi and the T'ai-Hsu. Again taking up important Chinese thinkers like Chu-Tzu (1130-1200 A.D.), Chou-Ryum-Hsi and Chang-Heng-Chu.

In the second part on "The Theory of Li-Ch'i" the author first discusses Chu-Tzu's Dualism of Li-Chi focussing on the philosophy expounded by Cheng-I-Chuan who established the dualism of Li-Ch'i. This thinker replaces Tao and Ch'i in the Book of Change with Li and Ch'i. Then Chu-Tzu systematizes the dualism of Li-Ch'i by explaining that "the Ch'i is the instrument which produces all things and Li becomes the principle of producing all things." Significantly this view, the author points out, opens up possibility to unite heaven (the nature) and human as unity and further - the harmony of the whole universe.

In the sub-section of this second part, the author takes the readers to examine some of the ideas expounded by Korean thinkers in 16th century. He discusses the dispute between two Korean thinkers; Yi T'oegye (1501-1570 A.D.) and Ki Kobong (1527-1572 A.D.) on the issue of Li. The former explained li as the spirit matter and the Ch'i as material matter, and held that Li and Ch'i change alternately while the latter insisted that Li and Ch'i change simultaneously. Following thinker, Yi Yulsok (1536-1584 A.D.) insisted that only Ch'i is active and moving.

In the next sub-section of the second part, the author discusses the nature of Human and Non-Human Things in the development of philosophical discussion in Korea. He examines ideas as expressed by Yi Waeam (1677-1727 A.D.), and Han Namdang (1682-1752 A.D.) Later he elaborates Yu-Ch'i Theory expounded by Im Nongmun and Yu-Li Theory expounded by Ki Rosa. The former held that "the Li corresponds to the inartificial nature of Ch'i, so that, the Li is nothing but the attribute of Ch'i" (p.20). While the latter held that "the Ch'i is changing accordance supervision and order of the Li, the Ch'i which moves due to the supervision of Li is

is no more than the hand and feet of the Li's activities."(p.20) The author concludes that dispute between these two thinkers as follows: "They, thus, did not inquired the similarities and dissimilarities in human and non-human thing in the light of epistemology. Both of them aimed at the great harmony with heaven and earth.

In the last part the author deals with "Problems of nature and Human" which as he points out - the correspondence of heaven, earth and human is one of thoughts in Confucianism.(p.22) here in this part, the author touches also on Taoism by discussing briefly on Lao-Tzu and Chuang-Tzu, though in the opening remark of this paper he states that he will limit his attention only to Confucianism.

The author concludes his paper noting that " the way to deliver humankind from the crisis of ruin can be founded in the Ch'i's philosophy in Orient, which aims at the Great Harmony of nature and human."

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We have seen briefly the vast content covered in this paper. As my duty to this conference, i would like to offer few comments and remarks. I hope the learned author will forgive my ignorance.

As I see it, the topic of the paper is rather misleading. The paper discusses only from Confucianism therefore should not use the term Oriental Philsophy as the latter would cover also the great tradition of Taoism and later cooperation of Buddhism as well.

Again within Confucianism itself, the author fails to discuss the view of nature as expressed by Meng-Tzu and Hsun Tzu, the leading exponents of Confucianism. The latter being of more significant important as it was with Hsun Tzu that nature is viewed very differently for philosophers preceeding him. Hsun Tzu encouraged the Chinese to 'utilize' nature, much in the same sense as science attempts to do. The study on the view of nature as propagated by Hsun Tsu should, therefore be necessary in order to have the proper view of nature as seen from Confucianism.

The paper tries to cover too large scope of materials hence makes the reading tiring at times. At some points, the author gives dates of philosophers and thinkers but does not always follow the chronological order causing much difficulty to follow the thoughts discussed. For example on p.4 while explaining about the philosophy of Ch'eng-I-Ch'uan (1033-1107 A.D.) the author goes back again to Tsou-Yen (B.C.350-270)

In the second part on "The Theory of LI-Ch'i" the author starts out with Chinese thinkers but later on discusses Korean Schools of thought . This may be necessary as the discussion was taken up in Korea, but this geographical shifting makes it harder to follow especially by readers who are not familiar with Korean sources.

This paper, to my knowledge, has great academic value for specialists on Confucianism but it would have been much more interesting for an international gathering like the one we are at present had the author focuses on major philosophical trends viewing on nature, or focussing on a specific issue so that the author can fully expound the concept discussed.

In closing, I am grateful for the knowledge I have derived from studying this paper.