

The Inherent Characters of the Human Mind As the Defining Characteristic of Human Beings in Wang Yang-ming's Thinking Way

——Focused upon a Holistic Unity of Ultimacy,
Potency and Primacy

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Abstract: This essay is focused upon identifying the essential characters inherent in the human mind and thereby how the mind can be referred to as defining characteristic of a human being. Within the Confucian world-view emphasizing self-realization toward Ultimate Reality, the human mind has metaphysical significance in the threefold aspect of a dynamic unity constitutive of creativity: ultimacy, potency, and primacy. The mind is characterized by ultimacy in the ontological sense of being identical with the original substance of being which is in harmony with the Ultimate Reality. The mind is characterized by potency in the

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existential sense of its being open to the concrete process of self-realization. And the mind is characterized by primacy in the integral sense of revealing its creative status in the complete manifestation of humanity, which results from the point of view of the dynamic unity of ultimacy and potency. Particularly, the primacy of mind is characteristic of the human mind as heart-mind.

In the case of Wang Yang-ming, the inherent characteristics of the mind have a constitutive status in fulfilling its innate knowledge of goodness, that is, what is called *zhi-liang-zhi* in Chinese characters. The threefold aspect of ultimacy, potency, and primacy inherent in the human mind seems to provide a basis for elucidating the creative relationship between the original substance of the mind, which is “the innate knowledge of goodness” (*liang-zhi*), and its practical efforts which are realizable in the dynamic unity of equilibrium and harmony (*zhong-he*) and the total substance and great function (*quan-ti-da-yong*). The mind as the innate knowledge of goodness can be cultivated, and thus, by eliminating selfish desires, it may reach a state where, as ultimate reality, it functions creatively and where all things can be identical with the mind. The mind has an internal identity as a meaningful entity, and, on the other hand, makes internal decisions for self-transformation. It is here that a human mind has a character of primacy. The mind attaches primacy to a creative agency presiding in the mutual relationship between an integral part of the original substance and integral part of its practical efforts. This characteristic gives significance to the human mind as heart-mind. It seems that the human mind constitutes a dynamic integrality of the unity in creativity and creativity in unity. In terms of the primacy of mind in self-realization, the mind has a character of ultimacy in sustaining the original substance as the ground of self-realization, while it has a character of potency in making practical efforts as the concrete process of self-realization.

Key Words: the Creativity of Mind, Ultimacy, Potency, Primacy, Ultimate Reality, Sagehood, Self-realization, Heavenly Principle, the Rectification of the Mind, the Fulfillment of the Innate Knowledge of Goodness

I. Introduction

A human being leads a self-directed life in the interrelationship between the subject and the object to be in harmony with Ultimate Reality. For such a life, the mind provides an existential source of decision-making for a human being in his relationship to Heaven, Earth, and myriad things. The presidency enables the mind to be characterized as prescribing what a human being is. It is for this reason that Confucianism puts emphasis upon the axiom of self-cultivation and thus governing others.

This essay is focused upon what are the essential characters inherent in the human mind and thereby how the mind can be referred to as the defining characteristic of a human being in Wang Yang-ming's thinking way. The human mind in the school of Xin, which is called that of Lu-Wang, plays a centripetal role in understanding what a human being is. This is because it is only through the human mind that a human being can pursue his own self-realization on the ultimate ground of human nature conferred by heaven.

Given the Neo-Confucian world-view of self-realization toward Ultimate Reality, I think that the human mind has metaphysical significance in the threefold aspect of its dynamic unity constitutive of creativity: ultimacy, potency, and primacy. The mind consists of ultimacy in the ontological sense of being identical with the original substance of being which is in accordance with Ultimate Reality. The mind consists of potency in the existential sense of its being open to the concrete process of self-cultivation. And the mind consists of primacy in the integral sense of having its creative status in the complete manifestation of humanity, which results from the dynamic unity

of ultimacy and potency. Particularly, the primacy of mind is characteristic of heart-mind as a true quality of humanity.

In the case of Wang Yang-ming, the inherent characters of the mind have a constitutive status in fulfilling its innate knowledge of goodness, that is, what is called zhi-liang-zhi. The threefold aspect of ultimacy, potency, and primacy inherent in the human mind seems to provide a basis for elucidating the creative relationship between the original substance of the mind, which is “the innate knowledge of goodness” (liang-zhi), and its practical efforts which are realizable in the dynamic unity of “equilibrium and harmony” (zhong-he) and of “total substance and great function” (quan-ti-da-yong).

Given the self-realization that the process of real learning is based upon human beings having their concrete daily existence of experience in concrete situations, it seems that Wang Yang-ming's main concern is with how to cultivate the body and mind and how to realize the universal humanity in a human being, which is a strenuous and unceasing process toward the attainment of sagehood. Learning depends on an essence of humanity, not to search for objective truths, but to deepen and broaden self-knowledge. Thus, it is predicated upon the ability of subjectivity as an awareness that the possibility of self-realization is ontologically inherent in the human mind. This is closely associated with the goodness of human nature in a Mencian sense. In this sense, Wang Yang-ming emphasizes the original substance of the mind and its practical efforts, which are characteristic of what is, and is meant by, a human being.

II. The Mind as Innate Knowledge

According to the Zhou Dun-yi's *Tai-ji-tu-shuo*, the Supreme Ultimate (tai-ji) generates yang through activity, and yin through tranquility.^① Ever since Song dynasty, Neo-Confucianists regard it as the ability to produce and reproduce (sheng-sheng), and activity and tranquility makes a dynamic unity in it. This view of universe is predicated upon a thinking way of Heavenly Way (tian-dao) in the Xi-ci-zhuan of *the Book of Changes*, that "the successive movement of yin and yang constitutes what is called the Dao. That which ensues as the result of their movement is goodness; that which shows it in its completeness is the nature of men and things. This thinking way basically in accordance with the Golden rule of "the unity of heaven and man" (tian-ren-he-yi), and was developed into the human mode of "the unity of nature and feeling in the mind" (xin-tong-xing-qing). And it holds the key to an understanding of the notion that "principle is one but its manifestations are many" (li-yi-fen-shu) in the ideal pursuit of Ultimate Reality.

From the comprehensive perspective of this thinking way, it is possible to understand that man has an inherent natural propensity of the mind toward moral knowledge, which is the Confucian axiom that human nature is good in the Mencian sense of its being good in primitive and primordial state. As innate knowledge of goodness, liang-zhi, for Wang Yang-ming, is the ability of the mind both to know good and discern goodness, and therefore it is identical with the source of moral knowledge. In this sense, "the innate knowledge of goodness" is the sole function of the mind that ascertains and realizes its true nature, and, on the other hand, it is identified with the function of moral insights into the ontological human reality of being.

Mencius' view seems to be great significance in explaining the character of "the innate knowledge of goodness", in that he describes what is it and how it is formed into

^① Zhou Dun-yi, *Tai-ji-tu-shuo*, in *The Collection of Zhou Dun-yi*, Vol.1.

human virtue. On intuitive though empirical grounds, Mencius is of opinion that man universally possesses human nature as the defining quality of man. When spontaneously responding, human nature exhibits good in concrete feelings and acts. The spontaneous inceptive insights of the moral mind are rationally strengthened, cultivated and incorporated into man's character, which is called virtue (de):

What a man is able to do without learning is his good ability (liang-neng). What a man knows without deliberation is his good knowledge (liang-zhi). No child does not know love for his parents. When he grows up, no child does not know respect for his elder brothers. To love one's parents is benevolence (ren). To respect elders is righteousness (yi). They are principles which are universally present in all men under heaven.^①

A man of virtue has the potential to incline himself towards good acts in his life, and thereby he urges himself to cultivate himself into a fully virtuous character, which is called sagehood (sheng).

On the Mencian basis, “the innate knowledge of goodness” is the existential condition for recognizing or intuiting the goodness of human nature. This is because it is the goodness of human nature in operation as well as the faculty to constitute such goodness. Therefore, it formulates knowledge of good and right in the living contexts where the mind responds with “the innate knowledge of goodness”, that is, knowledge of all the particularities of life where moral decisions and sentiments are evoked and aroused.

Given the Mencian notion that the mind is good and “the innate knowledge of goodness” intuitively responds in goodness, it seems that the mind possesses the moral

^① Mencius.7A-15

principles making possible the knowledge of good and right. This is based upon the Confucian axiom of self-knowledge in the mind: how to grasp the initial insight into good and right through the function of “the innate knowledge of goodness” and how to strengthen them and invoke similar insights on all other occasions.

III. The Ultimacy of Mind as Original Substance

Wang Yang-ming’s argument is that “the mind is identical with principle.” (xin-zhi-li)^① This implies that the mind, as an activity, defines and describes, creates and discovers the principles in terms of which things are to be understood and evaluated. In his philosophy, therefore, it is understandable to suggest that the mind is creative, and, in a dynamic field of its activity and experience, it evinces whatever principles are found among things, which coincide necessarily with principles in the objective nature of things.

To begin with, Wang is of opinion that the mind has an originality of the human nature which is in accordance with the Way of Heaven. The perfection of the mind is characteristic of innate knowledge:

Dao is innate knowledge. From the beginning it is perfect. It regards what is right as right and what is wrong as wrong. If we only rely on it with regard to what is right and what is wrong, everything will be correct.^②

“The innate knowledge of goodness” is understood as the will toward good as well as the self-knowledge of the good. It is itself the standard and source of good, and so it

^① Wang Yang-ming, *Instructions for Practical Living*, 3

^② Ibid., 265

is characterized as the ultimate reality of total reality as well as that of the mind. It is the special activation of mind in man which can immediately judge the morality of each and every activity of his. It is possible to say that it is what makes self-knowledge possible in man. Therefore, only when he can judge himself through the activity of “the innate knowledge of goodness” does man know and affirm his moral worth.

The great man regards Heaven, Earth, and the myriad things as one body. He regards the world as one family and the country as one person. As to those who make a cleavage between objects and distinguish between the self and others, they are small men. That the great man can regard Heaven, Earth, and the myriad things as one body is not because he deliberately wants to do so, but because it is natural to the humane nature of his mind that he does so. Forming one body with Heaven, Earth, and the myriad things is not only true of the great man. Even the mind of the small man is not different. Only he himself makes it small.^①

This means that man may realize his original nature of goodness and thereby sustain the original state of the unity of his mind with heaven, earth, and the myriad things. Particularly, the phrase of “forming one body with Heaven, Earth, and the myriad things” provides a basis for his argument that the mind manifests principle.

Wang Yang-ming regards the mind as the ultimate principle as well as human nature, and furthermore regards the aboriginal state of the mind as supreme goodness in a Mencian sense. He says about the ontological state of the mind:

Our nature is the substance of the mind and Heaven is the source of our nature.
To exert one's mind to the utmost is the same as fully developing one's nature.

^① Wang Yang-ming, *Inquiry on the Great Learning*

Only those who are absolutely sincere can fully develop their nature and know the transforming and nourishing process of Heaven and Earth. Those who merely preserve their minds, on the other hand, have not yet exerted them to the utmost. Knowing the affairs of a district or a country is what the titles prefect and magistrate mean. It is a matter within one's own function, and it means that one in his moral character has already become one with Heaven.^①

He thinks that man can know changes of the ultimate principle, because the substance of the mind is human nature and the source of human nature is from the ultimate principle. Man always is good in the original substance (human nature), but a difference between good and evil arises when the original substance is lost in the functioning of the mind.

As the ultimate substance of the mind, “the innate knowledge of goodness” is characterized as an active perception of goodness as the essence of human nature. So, it is described as a state of “vacuity, intelligence, perceptiveness, and sensibility” (xu-ling-ming-jue) or as a state of “intelligent clarity and illuminating perception” (ling-chao-ming-jue). On the other hand, on the ground of the ultimate substance, “the innate knowledge of goodness”, when activated, not only generates all moral judgment - of knowing goodness - and moral acts in concrete situations, but also is itself supremely good. This is because it is based upon the ontological foundation of being unobstructed, spontaneous, self-verifying, and self-sustaining.

The mind as “the innate knowledge of goodness” is a perceptive state which embodies the substance of goodness, while it is a sensitive process of response, growth, and development. This creative and active aspect is the functioning of the mind. So, he says:

^① Wang Yang-ming, *Instructions for Practical Living*, 6

The mind has no substance of its own. Its substance consists of the right or wrong of the influences and responses of heaven, earth, and all things.^①

The mind can be activated when one is alerted to a situation, in a Mencian sense, and furthermore, when it is kept free from the influence of selfish desires and prejudices. Based upon the belief that "the mind is identical with principle," for Wang Yang-ming, "the innate knowledge of goodness" is the genuine acts of the mind in its application to human situations. Moral principles and their knowledge are actualized when the mind applies itself to situations of moral significance. In this sense, it seems that the doctrine of "fulfilling the innate knowledge of goodness" is of great significance in the cultivation of the mind as implicitly posed by Mencius.

As noted above, given the conception of "the innate knowledge of goodness" as the will toward good as well as the innate knowledge of good, man experiences what "the innate knowledge of goodness" dictates as good in the basic and intimate relationship of his family and social life. These experiences are developed into what Mencius calls the virtues of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom, which stems from Confucius' theory of virtues that filial piety and brotherliness are the bases for the supreme virtue of benevolence (ren).

Humanity, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom are also manifestations. Nature is one. As physical form or body it is called nature. As matter of the creative process it is called the Lord. In its universal operation it is called destiny. As endowment in man it is called man's nature. As master of man's body it is called the mind. When it emanates from the mind we have filial piety when it is

^① Ibid., 277

applied to the father, loyalty when it is applied to the ruler, and so on to infinity.^①

The virtues of man are in accord with the operation of “the innate knowledge of goodness”, and so “fulfilling the innate knowledge of goodness” is to cultivate man's character toward virtue which always leads to good conduct warranting the sanction of “the innate knowledge of goodness”.

When the correct principles of its application are required for achieving moral goodness, “the innate knowledge of goodness” can recognize a need and indeed constitutes the actual will to search for these principles. This is because it motivates all the necessary investigations of things which lead to the necessary extension of knowledge. The sincere investigation of things yields correct and relevant principles of application as well as the knowledge necessary for the judgment of good and right by “the innate knowledge of goodness”. “These are all offshoots of the mind that is sincere in its filial piety[, and yet] nevertheless there must first be such a mind before there can be these offshoots.”^②

The ideal state of mind in which “the innate knowledge of goodness” is ready to apply, and is capable of generating, insights into moral situations is one in which the mind is highly sensitive, lively, and self-reflective. This state of mind which enhances and achieves the creative activity of “the innate knowledge of goodness” is maintained by eliminating selfish desires.

“The innate knowledge of goodness” as moral knowledge is not intended to look for principles in things or to justify one's principles when found. For instance, the principles of filial piety, loyalty, faithfulness, and humanity respectively cannot be found in the parent, ruler, friends, and the people. “They are all in the mind that is all,

^① Ibid., 38

^② Ibid., 3

for the mind and principle are identical."^① "The innate knowledge of goodness" is intended to apply and activate one's mind and let it creatively and intuitively judge good and bad in the most concrete sense:

When the mind is free from the obscuration of selfish desires, it is the embodiment of the Principle of Nature, which requires not an iota added from the outside. When this mind, which has become completely identical with the Principle of Nature, is applied and arises to serve parents, there is filial piety; when it arises to serve the ruler there is loyalty; when it arises to deal with friends or to govern the people, there are faithfulness and humanity. The main thing is for the mind to make an effort to get rid of selfish human desires and preserve the Principle of Nature.^②

To motivate all the necessary investigations of things, man preserves the integrity and potential of "the innate knowledge of goodness". To reflect and inspect "the innate knowledge of goodness" is to preserve and nourish it when there are affairs for it to apply to, while to preserve and nourish it is to inspect and reflect it when there are no affairs for it to apply to. The very continuous activity of such a moral mind is a guard against wrong judgments and forms the justification for the validity of the moral judgments or moral choices which one adopts on its basis. It is possible to say that "the innate knowledge of goodness" inclines the mind towards the action which it sees as good. "There have never been people who know but do not yet know."^③ As the original substance of mind, "the innate knowledge of goodness", thus, is characteristic of "the unity of knowing and acting" (zhi-xing-he-yi).

^① Ibid., 3

^② Ibid., 3

^③ Ibid., 5

On the ontological basis that the mind manifests the ultimate principle with its unity and creativity, the unity of the ultimate principle and the human nature can be fully realized by the mind. It is necessary that, as the activity of the mind, “the innate knowledge of goodness” should be in creative and spontaneous accordance with supreme goodness. It is consequent that the mind has a character of ultimacy, in the sense that its original substance is equivalent to the ultimate principle of supreme goodness which is in accordance of the Way of Heaven.

IV. The Potency of Mind for Practical Efforts

Wang Yang-ming suggests “the unity of knowing and acting (zhi-xing-he-yi)” as a method of self-realization, which is beneficial and indispensable to self-knowledge. He reconstructs Zhu Xi's interpretation of “investigation of things” (ge-wu) into “the unity of knowing and acting” and tries to be faithful to the original meaning of it in the *Great Learning*. He pays attention to not so much the method of “investigation of things” per se as to the philosophical foundation upon which such a method is advocated.

For a man to become what he ought to be, the “original substance” of principle in him must have self-sufficiency and creativity alike. In that the ultimate basis of self-realization is located within human nature, self-knowledge cannot be secured only through a gradual process of intellectually appropriating the principle inherent in external things. Principle, as the ground of being, must become an integral part of what he ought to be existentially. On the other hand, as a practical matter, “investigation of things” must comply with an inner awareness, so that empirical knowledge can be transmuted into self-knowledge, which means that man's learning is self-discovery, not imposing a set of established social values upon the self. Thus, “investigation of things”,

for Wang Yang-ming, is not investigating external phenomena but rectifying natural things and human affairs.

In terms of human potentiality for practice, it seems that to know necessarily leads to a transforming action, and to act entails a deepening and broadening effect on the existing knowledge. Therefore, citing a passage of "like loving beautiful colors and hating bad odors" in the *Great Learning*, Wang Yang-ming says as follows:

I have said that knowledge is the intentional direction for action and action the practical effort of knowledge, and that knowledge is the beginning of action and action the completion of knowledge.^①

Knowing and acting are potentially two aspects of the activation of the mind. They mutually entail and condition each other to stimulate a creative development of the mind. Action begins when a thought has assumed a directionality and becomes an intention (yi), while conscious reflection ceaselessly functions as a guide so long as the actualizing process remains incomplete.

In the relationship of knowing and acting, knowing evokes the whole process by which what is known is simultaneously manifested in daily conduct, whereas acting is an integral part of the whole process by which what is acted upon is meaningfully identified in the context of self-awareness. In this sense, Wang Yang-ming clearly argues that "knowledge in its genuine and earnest aspect is action, and action in its intelligent and discriminating aspect is knowledge."^②

Given the human reality that the ontological being of man is interrelated to his existential becoming, ontologically man already possesses what he needs for the

^① Ibid., 5

^② Ibid., 133

actualization of the self-realization, and, on the other hand, he must make practical efforts to become what he ought to be. As practical efforts, the words of "investigation of things", which is construed as the investigation of things by Zhu Xi, is interpreted as the "regulation" or "rectification" of human affairs by Wang Yang-ming.

The concept of "investigation of things" is closely associated with the quality of the existential man as perceived by a process of inner reflection. This quality is nothing other than "the sincerity of the intention" (cheng-yi). Predicated upon the Neo-Confucian viewpoint of "the unity of nature and feeling in mind" (xin-tong-xing-qing), the mind in the activity of intention links up with things:

The mind is the master of the body, and the pure intelligence and clear consciousness of the mind are the innate or original knowledge. When this innate knowledge which is pure intelligence and clear consciousness is influenced by things and events and responds to them with activity, it called the will. With knowledge, there will be the will. Without knowledge, there will be the will.^①

As directed toward a thing and involved in a situation, intention can be motivating force for action and realization of a value in a situation. In that intention gives meaning to things, the creative employment of intention is regarded as the basis for "the unity of knowing and acting" (zhi-xing-he-yi) and "fulfilling the innate knowledge of goodness" (zhi-liang-zhi).

Wang Yang-ming defines intentions as the result of actual creativity of the mind as a process of response. Intention is initiated or arises only in reference to and in response to concrete things where the mind activates itself.

^① Ibid., 137

Therefore, if there is no mind, there will be no body, and if there is no body, there will be no mind. As something occupying space, it is called the body. As the master, it is called the mind. As the operation of the mind, it is called the will. As the intelligence and clear consciousness of the will, it is called knowledge. And as the object to which the will is attached, it is called a thing. They are all one piece.^①

In so far as it is concerned with the mind, intention as activation of the mind clearly is a basis for decision-making in the mind, because it is the prerequisite for action and the occasion of an experience. It is only through intention that the mind can become related to the world for the action.

Therefore if one wants to make his will sincere, he should rectify (ge) it right in the thing or event to which the will is directed, get rid of selfish human desires, and return to the Principle of Nature. Then in connection with this thing or event the innate knowledge will be free from obscurity and can be fully extended. This is the task of making the will sincere.^②

In this sense, "investigation of things" (ge-wu), for Wang Yang-ming, is regarded as a dynamic process through which man's ontological being is manifested in his existential becoming.

The master of the body is the mind. What emanates from the mind is the intention. The original substance of the intention is knowledge, and wherever the intention is directed is a thing.^③

^① Ibid., 201

^② Ibid., 201

^③ Ibid., 6

As the directionality of the mind, intention provides a link between its original substance (knowledge) and its intended object (a thing). The sincerity of the intention refers to a process through which the intention becomes faithful to the genuine directionality of the mind. Such a process inevitably involves the rectification of the intended object and the penetration into the original substance of the mind. It is identical with the process of cultivating the body and with that of regulating the mind.

For example, when the intention is directed toward serving one's parents, then serving one's parents is a thing..... Therefore, I say that there are neither principles nor things outside the mind. The teaching in the *Doctrine of the Mean* that “without sincerity there would be nothing,” and the effort to manifest one's clear character described in the *Great Learning* mean nothing more than the effort to make the intention sincere. And the work of making the intention sincere is nothing other than the investigation of things.^①

Given the Neo-Confucian notion of heart-mind that the mind is made of vital force (qi) which in substance is the very stuff from which all things with forms and shapes are made, for Wang Yang-ming, emotions and desires are part of the function of the mind. But emotions and desires are apt to disturb and divert the growth of the total mind and its higher faculty of “the innate knowledge of goodness”, so that the mind as a whole may not function in accordance with man's innate good nature. Therefore, to align the mind with true reality and potential appropriate action, it is necessary to control emotions and desires to the extent that they don't affect the natural movement of the mind as an integral part of nature. In this sense, the reciprocal interaction of “the innate knowledge of goodness” with the control of selfish desires reinforces the potency of

^① Ibid., 6

“the innate knowledge of goodness” and makes it possible to apply itself successfully in all life situations.

In terms of the potency of “the innate knowledge of goodness”, the content that it is fulfilled by eliminating selfish desires implies that all desires conforming to “the innate knowledge of goodness” are recognized by it as good. Wang Yang-ming thinks that all seven feelings - joy, anger, sorrow, fear, love, hatred, and desire - flow out of its nature and are the activities of “the innate knowledge of goodness”. The ability of “the innate knowledge of goodness” is such that what constitutes selfish desires is self-evident to “the innate knowledge of goodness”. In this sense, it is to certify for itself whether or not it operates without the obstruction of selfish desires. That is why the constant checking of man's mental attitude and, thus, the constant cultivation of his mind's sensibilities is essential in preserving and nourishing the strength of “the innate knowledge of goodness”. From this it follows that “the innate knowledge of goodness” is reinforced and cultivated into a powerfully sensitive awareness and will in the mind, so that “the innate knowledge of goodness” intuitively recognizes valid principles for justifying its judgments. Therefore, it is consequent that the mind has the quality of potency.

As noted above, given that “the unity of knowing and acting” is predicated upon the identity of the mind and principle, in justifying the moral decisions and judgments of “the innate knowledge of goodness”, Wang Yang-ming suggests that the Heavenly Principle (tian-li) is none other than “the innate knowledge of goodness” inherent in the mind from two interrelated points of view: internal in an ontological sense and universal in an epistemological sense. The former is based upon his assumption that the mind is principle (xin-zhi-li). The latter is based upon the doctrine of "investigation of things" (ge-wu) and "the extension of knowledge" (zhi-zhi).

In the case of the internal point of view, the activity and the substance of the mind

constitutes what principle is. Principle is creatively generated from the mind as a creative power. The mind defines itself and defines the universal and necessary principles by its nature. This is based upon the ontological axiom that the mind shares with all other minds the ultimate reality from which it derives itself.

“The innate knowledge of goodness” has some attribute of “spiritual awareness and clear illumination” (xu-ling-ming-jue) as the Heavenly Principle does. This means that “the innate knowledge of goodness” manifests both the affective and cognitive dimensions of the mind, in that the Heavenly Principle is the original substance of the mind.^① As a spiritual awareness, “the innate knowledge of goodness” is characterized as an all-embracing sensibility which embodies the whole universe by a self-sufficient “anthropocosmic feeling.” On the other hand, as clear illumination, it is characterized as the penetrative insight which grasps the ultimate reality by a self-generative “intellectual intuition.” In this respect, although it is closely associated with the sense and the intellect, it is reducible neither to sensory perception nor to conceptual understanding. Ultimately, it is understood as the innermost and indissoluble reality of man, and it is the ultimate reason why the inner sage in each human being can never be completely lost.

In the case of the universal point of view, the mind provides its own ground of justification for its moral judgments and moral decisions. Wang Yang-ming argues that the supreme good resides in the mind and is not sought in the external realm of thing and affairs. The standard of goodness is formed in the evaluative-creative activities of the mind. Despite being the innermost reality of man, for the sake of its own self-realization, “the innate knowledge of goodness” is not confined to human beings, or even to animate beings. This is because it is the ultimate reality of heaven, earth, and

^① Ibid., 133

the myriad things.^①

On the ontological basis, the mind is the affective manifestation of the Heavenly Principle, and the Heavenly Principle is the original substance of the mind. On the existential basis, however, when the mind faces the danger of being fixated on its intended object, it is gradually materialized (*wu-hua*) by the inertia of the thing. In such a case, the dynamism and creativity essential to self-realization will not be generated, and the original substance of the mind is buried.

Despite its being ontological substance and possessing the Heavenly Principle, in the context of daily affairs, the mind has to extirpate human desires in order to nurture its substance, rectify the functioning of the mind, and ultimately preserve the Heavenly Principle. In this respect, there is a difference between “the Mind of the Way” (*dao-xin*) and “the Mind of Man” (*ren-xin*)^② The former is broad in extension and genuine in quality, whereas the latter is a limited and false representation of the original substance of the mind. Therefore, when the mind ceases to function in accordance with its original substance, in the terminology of Cheng Hao, “the humanity that is inherent in it may be paralyzed.”^③ In this sense, extirpating human desires and preserving the Heavenly Principle both aim at the elimination of selfishness so that the genuineness of “the innate knowledge of goodness” can be secured.

On the other hand, unlike Wang Yang-ming, Zhu Xi argues that the mind is not simply nature and therefore cannot simply be principle, whereas human nature is principle. In that human nature is derived from ultimate reality, it is potentially

^① Ibid., 201

^② The chapter of *Da-yu-mo* in *Shu-jing* says, “The mind of man is unstable, and the mind of Way is subtle. Only refine and only single can we grasp the mediate.” This sentence is so famous in Neo-Confucianism, which is called “The Instruction of the Mind composed of Sixteen Characters”. Neo-Confucianists have made some arguments about this content.

^③ Cheng Hao, *He-nan-cheng-shi-yi-shu*, 2shang, *er-xian-sheng-yu* 2shang

endowed with all the principles of things. On the other hand, it takes some effort of the mind to discover them through a process of actively seeking principle. For Zhu Xi, the mind must be exercised in a rational manner before it can reach a state of illumination of knowledge and insight into supreme goodness. Therefore, the true identity of the mind is only established in a process of “the investigation of things and extension of knowledge of the principle of things.”^① This means that the mind should look for principles in things, and what the mind gets from the outside enables the mind to maintain and establish its fidelity to its true nature without the obstruction of selfish desires. In this sense, it seems to Zhu Xi that only after the mind has become clear about the principles of things can the mind issue sincere intentions conforming to the ultimate principles of nature. In particular, concerning the doctrine of investigation of things and the extension of knowledge in the *Great Learning*, according to Zhu Xi, when a man arrives at the utmost of the knowledge of principles of things, his mind reaches a state of sudden penetration and comprehensive understanding. In that the mind is characterized as an agent of moral judgment, therefore, it seems that there is no difference between Zhu Xi's and Wang Yang-ming's doctrine. But, for Zhu Xi, the mind is “the innate knowledge of goodness” only when it possesses knowledge of the principles of things and liang-zhi arises only through a process of seeking principle in the light of the investigation of things outside of the mind.

The notion of principle (li), for Neo-Confucianists, is characterized by the ultimate reason and rationality of things. It not only explains why things are what they are, but also why things are related to one another and to the ultimate reality in an orderly way. In terms of a principle of unity as well as of differentiation, the ontological unification of all principles into one ultimate principle is what makes it metaphysically possible for

^① *Zhu-zi-yu-lei*, Vol. 62

the mind to grasp the total understanding of principle intuitively and inductively.

On the basis of Cheng Hao's doctrine of "recognizing benevolence" (shi-ren) that "the man of humanity forms one body with all things in the universe",^① the identification of subjectivity (liang-zhi) and ontological reality (Heavenly Principle), as a defining characteristic of a human being, seems to have been deeply rooted in a unique type of anthropocosmic experience. For Wang Yang-ming, sagehood symbolizes genuine humanity, and genuine humanity is in an ontological sense an irreducible reality, though existentially its concrete manifestations can be obstructed and distorted. Despite its self-sufficiency, the irreducible reality can always generate dynamism and creativity, which entails a process of self-realization. The process of self-realization ultimately leads to the complete manifestation of the Heavenly Principle. In this sense, the potency of mind enables the Heavenly Principle as an ontological reality to become the original substance of the mind, and thereby the original substance of the mind as pure subjectivity must be extended to manifest the Heavenly Principle.

The various steps from the investigation of things and the extension of knowledge to the bringing of peace to the world are nothing but illuminating the bright virtue. Even loving the people is also a matter of illuminating the bright virtue. The bright virtue is the virtue of the mind; it is humanity. The man of humanity regards Heaven and Earth and myriad things as one body. If a single thing is deprived of its place, it means that my humanity is not yet demonstrated to the fullest extent.^②

Consequently, it seems that "investigation of things" (ge-wu), as a way of

^① Cheng Hao, *He-nan-cheng-shi-yi-shu*, 2shang, er-xian-sheng-yu 2shang

^② Wang Yang-ming, *Instructions for Practical Living*, 89

rectifying man's intentions, must be practiced from the commencement of learning to the completion of sagehood. However, in that sagehood can never be completed in an existential sense, "the investigation of things", for Wang Yang-ming, is actually an unceasing process of self-cultivation, which is not a departure from human nature but a return to it. This is because the real source of man's ability to eliminate the obstructing and distorting forces of bad habits and selfishness lies in his own mind.

V. The Primacy of Mind in Non-activation and Activation

The comprehensive realization of a human being depends on the non-activation and activation of mind. As noted above, it is based upon the idea that "humanity in the mind forms one body with Heaven, Earth, and the myriad things." According to King Shun's statement in the *Book of History*,

The mind of man is restless, prone (to err), its affinity to what is right is small. Be discriminating, be uniform (in the pursuit of what is right), that you may sincerely hold fast the Mean.^①

"The Mind of the Way" (dao-xin) is the ultimate reality revealing itself, while "the Mind of Man" (ren-xin) is the activities of emotion and desires, by which individual man is individuated. As the mind is the individuating principle of oneself and the Way is the ultimate reality embracing the multitude of all things, the cultivation of the mind is characterized as identifying himself as a man connected with all things in the world,

^① Ibid., 142

in virtue of the highly cultivated state of his mind and character.

Given the ontological point of view that the innate knowledge of a human being is the same as that of Heaven, Earth, and myriad things, the mind originally has the endowed qualities of equilibrium (zhong) and harmony (he) which are introduced by *Zhong Yong*. Wang Yang-ming explains the double-sided relationship of the mind of non-activation and activation in terms of “the unity of substance and function”. The human mind originally has the endowed qualities of equilibrium and harmony. To sustain the mind in “total substance and great function,”^① however, any state of the mind should be constant, not sporadic, and furthermore there should be no complete attainment of equilibrium without the attainment of harmony,^② both of which respectively are regarded as the possession of a great foundation and the achievement of the universal way.

These states of mind are possible through sincerity. “Only those who are perfectly sincere can establish the great foundation for humanity.”^③ It means that it is not until the state of harmony after the contact of “the innate knowledge of goodness” with external things can be maintained that the state of equilibrium before the contact of “the innate knowledge of goodness” with external things can be maintained. In other words, the original substance of the mind, equilibrium, can be maintained in proportion to the maintenance of harmony through the moral self-cultivation in daily life.

The human reality of being and becoming is supported by two mutual double-sided aspects of the same process: “the preservation of the Heavenly Principle” (cun-tian-li) and “the extirpation of human desires” (mie-ren-yu). To preserve the Heavenly Principle is to “establish sincerity” in the sense of protecting the genuineness of man's

^① Ibid., 76

^② Ibid., 45

^③ Ibid., 76

ontological being. Such acts are dependent upon his ability to conquer human desires. On the other hand, to extirpate human desires is not only a means to an end but also a continuous process of self-purification.

The word refinement (jing) in the phrase "refinement and singleness (jing-yi)" refers to the principle of man and things, while the word refinement in the phrase mental energy (jing-shen) refers to material force. Principle is the order according to which material force operates, whereas material force is the functioning of principle. Without order it cannot function, and without functioning there will be nothing to reveal what is called order. Refinement is refinement. If one is refined, he will be intelligent, single-minded, spiritual, and sincere, and if he is single-minded, he will be refined, intelligent, spiritual, and sincere. They are not two different things.^①

In this sense, man's nature is such that his spiritual sensibility and loving care link him in an organismic unity with the cosmos as a whole. Man's primordial unity with all beings in the universe is essentially an experienced and lived reality, that is, what man is ontologically. Therefore, the distinction between the great man and the small man lies not in man's being but in what he has become. Man has become small not because the limitation of humanity, but because humanity has been "buried" in selfish desires. When man's humanity is neutralized, despite his being, existentially he may become an example of inhumanity.

The real manifestation of humanity is closely associated with the extirpation of selfish desires. To extent that selfish desires are eliminated, "the innate knowledge of goodness" in man will be revealed naturally. Man is ontologically one with heaven,

^① Ibid., 153

earth and the myriad things, and yet in his concrete experience he is aware that the existential process through which he can become what he ought to be must align with a differentially structured relationship. Although such a relationship provides a concrete manifestation to the organismic unity of his being, it can intellectually, as well as experientially, limit or even falsify his self-realization. In this respect, "the expiration of selfish desires" is to free man from being fixated on a limited and falsified vision of humanity. The function of "the innate knowledge of goodness" is to differentiate selfish desires from the Heavenly Principle.

According to Wang Yang-ming, innate knowledge clearly is the equilibrium before the feelings are aroused, and is one undivided substance, a perfect unity. Only when the mind coming into contact with external things does the distinction between activity and tranquility, which respectively refer to the state of being acted upon and penetrating things and that of being absolutely quiet, arise. In this sense, "there is activity in tranquility and tranquility in activity."^① This is based upon the view that the principle of tranquility originally is neither good nor evil, which is called "the highest good," and good and evil in the mind appear from the perturbation of the vital force.^② For Wang Yang-ming, it seems that the mind of non-activation is in epistemological identity with the mind of activation, which is characteristic of the primacy of the mind.

In that the innate knowledge of a human being is the same as that of Heaven, Earth, and myriad things, they can form one body with a human being. It is in the human mind that this unity is manifested to the most refined and excellent degree.^③ The character of the mind can be expressed as follows:

^① Ibid., 155

^② Ibid., 101

^③ Ibid., 274

The original substance of the mind is the state of absolute quiet and inactivity, the equilibrium before the feelings are aroused, and the broad and extremely impartial mind. The natural effect of the mind will be that, when acted on, it immediately penetrates all things, that, when the feelings are aroused, each and all attain due measure and degree, and that it responds spontaneously to all things as they come.^①

From the point of view of “the unity of substance and function”, “the rectification of the mind” (zheng-xin) and “the intentions of sincerity” (cheng-yi) respectively are the two-fold simultaneous ways of the maintenance and restoration of the original substance of the mind. Sincere intentions lead to the rectification of the mind, because the original substance of the mind is essentially sincere:

The master of the body is the mind. What emanates from the mind is the intention. The original substance of the intention is knowledge, and wherever the intention is directed is a thing. For example, when the intention is directed toward serving one's parents, then serving one's parents is a thing..... Therefore, I say that there are neither principles nor things outside the mind. The teaching in the *Doctrine of the Mean* that ‘Without sincerity there would be nothing,’ and the effort to manifest one's clear character described in the *Great Learning* mean nothing more than the effort to make the intention sincere. And the work of making the intention sincere is nothing other than the investigation of things.^②

Sincerity is a true principle and innate knowledge.^③ The human mind is endowed

^① Ibid., 72

^② Ibid., 6

^③ Ibid., 281

with the necessary quality for the attainment of sagehood. On the other hand, sincerity as the original substance of mind is regarded as "a task[an effort] rather than as a state of mind." In this sense, Wang Yang-ming cites Cheng Hao's statement that it is necessary "to preserve it [humanity] with sincerity and seriousness" as well as a passage from the *Great Learning* that "those who wished to rectify their minds would first make their intentions sincere."^①

The sincerity of intention holds the key to "the investigation of things and the extension of knowledge" for the self-cultivation. This is because it is through the sincerity of the intention that the mind is naturally rectified, and that the personal life is also naturally cultivated. Intention as the creative activation of the mind is the driving force for action and naturally conforms to the perception of goodness of the mind. Particularly, a sincere intention is one in which the intention conforms to the ultimate principle of goodness or perception of good in "the innate knowledge of goodness." In this sense, it is possible to say that knowing and acting are potentially two aspects of the activation of the mind.

The existence of the mind as a creative agency in its best state is characteristic of equilibrium (zhong) and harmony (he). So, when the mind is free from the influence of self-centered desires, it naturally is not yet activated, but it can naturally respond in an appropriate way for all things to find their proper places in a comprehensive harmony (he). Equilibrium and harmony are the ultimate good and are inherent in all men. When the mind is only identical with the ultimate principle (li), it is a state of equilibrium, whereas, when it naturally responds according to "the innate knowledge of goodness" and goodness, it is a state of harmony. Thus, the creative function of the mind can be explained as the unity of equilibrium and harmony.

^① Ibid., 121

In particular, Wang Yang-ming defines intention as the result of actual creativity of the mind in a process of response. Intention is initiated or arises only in reference to and in response to concrete things, a situation in which the mind activates itself. In so far as the mind is concerned, intention as activation of the mind clearly is a basis for decision-making or choice-making in the mind, because is the prerequisite for action and the occasion of an experience. It is only through intention that the mind can become related to the world through action.

The rectification of the mind and the cultivation of a moral character are different aspects of efforts in pursuit of the original substance of the mind. This is because the former is an effort to maintain the mind before the feelings are aroused and the latter is an effort to restore the mind after the feelings are aroused. In this sense, "if the mind is rectified, there will be equilibrium, and if a proper personal life is cultivated, there will be harmony."^①

From the perspective of the holistic unity of a human being, it might be said that the primacy of mind is from the two complementary points of view of the ultimacy and potency of mind. The mind is of ultimacy, in that a human being makes ceaseless efforts to rectify his mind for the constant maintenance of the original substance of the mind. On the other hand, the mind is of potency, in that he makes ceaseless efforts to make his intention sincere for the restoration of the original substance of the mind through removing selfish human desires. Therefore, it is consequent that the primacy of the mind is supported by the two dynamic positions of ultimacy and potency of mind.

VI. Self-realization in the Primacy of Mind

^① Ibid., 88

Wang Yang-ming regards the main function of the mind as “the innate knowledge of goodness”, which, as the defining substance of mind (ben-ti), is called the vital force (qi) of “spiritual illumination” (ling-ming) in its actual operation. “The innate knowledge of goodness” as self-knowledge is making an evaluative judgment of intentions (yi), and thereby the choice and development of good or bad is dependent on “fulfilling one's innate knowledge of goodness” (zhi-liang-zhi). “Innate knowledge is the spirit of creation, [and] this spirit produces heaven and earth, spiritual beings, and the Lord.”^①

It is necessary that the completion of “the innate knowledge of goodness”, that is, “fulfilling one's innate knowledge of goodness”, should entail the efforts of a human being for both the maintenance and the restoration of the original substance of the mind. Concretely, he makes a ceaseless effort, on the one hand, to rectify his mind for the constant maintenance of the original substance of the mind and, on the other, to make his intention sincere for the restoration of the original substance of the mind through the removal of selfish human desires.

However, to sustain the mind in “total substance and great function,”^② harmony is essential since there is no complete attainment of equilibrium without the attainment of harmony.^③ This synchronized attainment of equilibrium and harmony respectively are regarded as the possession of a great foundation and the achievement of the universal way. These states of mind are possible through sincerity. Therefore, “only those who are perfectly sincere can establish the great foundation for humanity”^④ The original substance of the mind, equilibrium, can be maintained in proportion to the maintenance

^① Ibid., 261

^② Ibid., 76

^③ Ibid., 45

^④ Ibid., 76

of harmony through the moral self-cultivation in daily life. This means that the intention is the mind of activation.

According to Wang Yang-ming, innate knowledge clearly is the equilibrium before the feelings are aroused, and is one substance of perfect unity. It does not make any distinction between activity and tranquility, which respectively refer to the state of being acted upon and penetrating things and that of being absolutely quiet. In particular, as for a solution to the question of the relationship of equilibrium and harmony to activity and tranquility, he makes the following observation:

The state before the feelings are aroused exists in the state in which feelings have been aroused. But in this state there is not a separate state which is before the feelings are aroused. The state after the feelings are aroused exists in the state before the feelings are aroused. But in this state there is not a separate state in which the feelings have been aroused. Both are not without activity or tranquility and cannot be separately characterized as active or tranquil.^①

Only when the mind coming into contact with external things does the distinction between activity and tranquility arise. In this sense, he argues that "there is activity in tranquility and tranquility in activity"^② This is based upon the view that the principle of tranquility originally is neither good nor evil, which is called supreme goodness, and good and evil in the mind appear by the perturbation of the vital force.^③ In this respect, it seems that the mind of non-activation is in epistemological identity with the mind of activation.

Wang Yang-ming ascribes even external things to the sincerity in the mind. So, he

^① Ibid., 157

^② Ibid., 155

^③ Ibid., 101

says:

When the original substance of the nature is restored, there will be equilibrium and harmony. As the *Book of Changes* says, "Investigate principle to the utmost and fully develop one's nature until destiny is fulfilled. When equilibrium and harmony exist in perfection, a proper order prevails in the universe and all things attain their full growth and development. That is the full development of the nature and the fulfillment of destiny." ^①

It is through the sincerity of the intention that the mind is naturally rectified, and that the personal life is also naturally cultivated. Nevertheless, the rectification of the mind and the cultivation of the personal life are different aspects of efforts in pursuit of the original substance of the mind. In this sense, "if the mind is rectified, there will be equilibrium, and if the personal life is cultivated, there will be harmony." ^② Thus, he argues the epistemological ability of the mind:

It is necessary only for a person fully to realize the substance of his own mind, and then its functions will be found right in its midst. If one should nourish the substance of his mind so that there is really equilibrium before the feelings are aroused, then naturally when they are aroused they will attain harmony in due measure and degree, and wherever they may be applied they will be correct. On the other hand, if there is no such mind, even if one may have gone into many names, varieties, and systems of things, they really have nothing to do with him but are merely ornaments. Naturally, when the time comes to use them they are of no use. I do not mean to neglect the names, varieties, and systems completely. I

^① Ibid., 127

^② Ibid., 88

merely point out that if we know that first things must come first, then we can approach the Way.^①

The existence of the mind as a creative agent in its best state is characteristic of equilibrium (zhong) and harmony (he). So, when the mind is free from the influence of self-centered desires, it naturally is not yet activated, but it can naturally respond in an appropriate way for all things to find their proper places in a comprehensive harmony. Therefore, equilibrium and harmony are the ultimate good and are inherent in all men. When the mind is only identical with the ultimate principle, it is a state of equilibrium, whereas, when it naturally responds according to “the innate knowledge of goodness” and goodness, it is a state of harmony. Thus, the creative function of the mind can be explained at the unity of equilibrium and harmony. He says:

Activity and tranquility are one. If it is in accord with the Principle of Nature, the mind that is empty and tranquil at midnight will be the same mind that responds to events and deals with affairs now. If it is in accord with the Principle of Nature, the mind that responds to events and deal with affairs now is the same mind that is empty and tranquil at midnight. Therefore activity and tranquility are one and cannot be separated.^②

Wang Yang-ming argues that there is indeed no true distinction between the mind of non-activation (wei-fa) and the mind of activation (yi-fa). So, he says:

The equilibrium before the feelings are aroused is innate knowledge. It is neither before nor after any state and is neither internal nor external but is one

^① Ibid., 67

^② Ibid., 231

substance without differentiation. Activity and tranquility may refer to the mind's engaging in something or nothing, but innate knowledge makes no distinction between doing something and doing nothing. Activity or tranquility may also refer to the state of being absolutely quiet and that of being acted upon and penetrating things, but innate knowledge does not make any distinction between such states. Activity and tranquility appertain to the time when the mind comes into contract with things, whereas in the original substance of the mind there is no distinction between activity and tranquility.^①

In this sense, a sage in Neo-Confucianism would have the ontological quality of “the innate knowledge of goodness” and the epistemological ability to extend it to embody the ultimate principle. The mind, on the one hand, is a perceptive state which embodies the substance of goodness, but, on the other, is a sensitive process of response, growth, and development.

To sum up, the revelation of “the innate knowledge of goodness” in the real world shows that “the innate knowledge of goodness” is not simply a particular principle of man but a universal principle focused upon the explanation of the objective world, because of the ontological identity of “the innate knowledge of goodness” with the objective world. “Fulfilling one's innate knowledge of goodness” is significant as the exhaustive extension of knowledge leading to the realization of the capacity for moral knowledge (liang-zhi) through both moral self-cultivation and social practice. This is because “fulfilling the innate knowledge of goodness” is based upon the state of the mind of non-activation and activation of equilibrium and harmony. For Wang, “investigation of things” means to eliminate what is incorrect in the mind so as to preserve the correctness of its original substance

^① Ibid., 157

Consequently, the "original substance" of being and the "practical effort" of becoming respectively are regarded as the ultimate ground and concrete process of self-realization which together form the unity of knowing and acting. It seems that the "original substance" of principle is not only inherent in human nature but also is embodied in the mind. In this sense, it is on the ground of the whole process of internal self-transformation that the mind is identical with principle.

A human being makes ceaseless efforts, on the one hand, to rectify his mind for the constant maintenance of the original substance of the mind and, on the other, to make his intention sincere for the restoration of the original substance of the mind through removing selfish human desires. In terms of the primacy of mind, the completion of "the innate knowledge of goodness" necessarily entails the efforts of a human being for both the maintenance and the restoration of the original substance of the mind.

As noted above, given that the ultimacy of mind is "the innate knowledge of goodness" in creative and spontaneous accordance with supreme goodness, "the innate knowledge of goodness" plays a role of potency in "the unity of knowing and acting" in daily life. In the relationship between the unity of mind and principle and the unity of knowing and acting, it seems that the primacy of mind entails primacy for "fulfilling one's innate knowledge of goodness", that is, the realization of "the innate knowledge of goodness" through moral self-cultivation and social practice. This is because the original substance of the mind is regarded as "the innate knowledge of goodness" itself (*liang-zhi-ben-ti*), and the sincerity of intentions proceeds "the investigation of things".

VII. Conclusion

The mind is originally derived from the ultimate reality of Dao in the sense of

being ontologically real. Through a process of cultivation which is initiated by the mind itself, the mind is integral with the Dao, although a human being is apt to lose this original identification of his mind with the Dao. This process of integrating with the Dao can be regarded as a self-realization in Neo-Confucianism, especially in the Schools of Zhu Xi and Wang Yang-ming and their successors.^①

From the Neo-Confucian point of view of "the unity of nature and feeling in mind", it might be said that, given the unity of knowing and acting, that "knowledge is the beginning of action and action is the completion of knowledge," if a man is intent on becoming a great man, he has only to remove his selfish desires so that he may realize his original nature of goodness, and thus restore the original state of the unity of his mind with the heaven, earth, and the myriad things. From the point of view of the unity of substance and function, "the rectification of the mind" (zheng-xin) and the keeping of sincere intention (cheng-yi) respectively are the two-fold simultaneous ways of maintaining and restoring the original substance of the mind. Sincere intentions lead to the rectification of the mind. This is because "only those who are perfectly sincere can establish the great foundation for humanity."

A human being has a universal nature which all individual beings share and which is intrinsically good, but the concrete being can be such that his nature is influenced by the particularities of his temperament and vital desires. In Neo-Confucianism, the mind is the individuating principle of a human being. The notion of the mind is characterized by the fact that the mind combines all the functions of the mind, heart, and instinct, not just the logical rational abilities of an epistemological mind. The mind is a concrete

^① As for this content, the reference book is *The Yijing-theories and Moralistic Metaphysics of the Neo-Confucian Schools of Li-xue and Xin-xue in the Song-Ming Dynasties* by Yon-Jae Kim

reality which can exhibit feelings, reasons, and desires. Therefore, the mind may be described as a heart-mind, which can be compared to a microcosm of life. This is because the mind is composed of vital force (qi) which all things in the world are made of. In this respect, there is no difference between mind and body except the difference of crude and refined material.

The mind can be particularized because of its feeling, desires, and its identification with a body, while it can be universalized because of its principles and its identification with the ultimate reality. A human being can exhibit particularizing emotions and desires and can be identified with the body. On the other hand, in recognizing the mind as his individual principle, a human being is individuated from a universal source and therefore potentially shares with other human beings the same qualities in virtue of the universal nature of human beings.

A human being and his mind are not irreducible, not only because they are not absolutely separate entities, but also because the state both of a human being and his mind can be transformed through cultivation. The mind as “the innate knowledge of goodness” can be cultivated, and thus, by eliminating selfish desires, it may reach a state where the ultimate reality functions creatively and where the mind and all things can become one. The mind has an inner identity as a meaningful entity, and, on the other hand, makes an internal decision for self-transformation. It is here that a human mind has a character of primacy. The mind attaches primacy to a creative agency presiding in the mutual relationship between an integral part of the original substance and an integral part of its practical efforts. This characteristic gives significance to the human mind as heart-mind. It seems that the human mind constitutes a dynamic integration of unity in creativity and creativity in unity. In terms of the primacy of mind, in self-realization the mind has the characteristic of ultimacy in sustaining the original substance as the ground of self-realization, while it has a characteristic of potency in

making practical efforts the concrete process of self-realization. Wang Yang-ming's ultimate goal is that the state where the mind fully cultivated is an exhibition of individuality through the creative activities of life and participation in the universal. And so a human being becomes an ideal man who is ideally individuated by his efforts to cultivate his mind toward supreme goodness, which is called the attainment of sagehood.

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从王阳明的思维方式里对人类存在下 定义的心的内在属性

——以终极性、潜在性、本源性的统一为中心

金演宰

中文提要：本稿主要分析心的内在本质，从而分考察人心成为人类存在的特点的过程。在程朱学、陆王学等新儒学的世界观里设定出终极实在的指定性，将与此的协调和统一视作是自我实现的最高目标。尤其是王阳明在阐明人类修养的本质方面很好体现了这一点。他的良知本质、致良知的实现、知行合一原则等都在人类修养的本质如何归为人心的问题上构成形而上学的基础。本稿认为人心存在三种特点，即心的终极性、潜在性以及本源性。以上三种是人心的三种方面，它们之间的统一性创造性地得到组合，很有活力地得到发挥，在阐明心的本体与其实践之间的具体关系方面构成基础。具体来说，人心与终极实在成为一体，在这种存在论方面具有终极性；人心又总是向自我实现的具体过程敞开着，在实存方面具有潜在性；人心在整体体现人类本性方面又发挥着创造性的作用，在统合方面具有本源性。其中，人心的本源性还以终极性与潜在性之间有活力的统一作为基础。在这种意义上“致良知”包含着心的创造性与具体实践领域的内容。

关键词：心的创造，终极性，潜在性，本源性，终极实在，天理，正心，致良知，圣人，自我实现

