

# ‘Penetrating Clearly and Out-spreadly(豁然贯通)’, Eureka, and Cognitive Fluidity

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**Abstract:** The aim of this article is to understand a concept of ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly (豁然贯通)’ by comparing it with a certain concept that has been introduced in a contemporary intellectual trend. It is argued that the concept of ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ in Neo-Confucianism and that of cognitive fluidity in cognitive science have a common cognitive basis, although they differently describe some cognitive features from their distinctive perspectives. With the comparative research, we can find that the concept of ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ gives rise to a theoretical weakness largely due to its metaphysical context. By eliminating the metaphysical features which were pervasive in Neo-Confucianism in the 12th century, it can be interpreted in terms of cognitive fluidity. In conclusion, it is argued that the cognitive fluidity underlies Neo-Confucian concept of ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ by clarifying

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cognitive implications and features it has.

**Key Words:** Penetrating Clearly and Out-spreadly, Eureka, Cognitive Fluidity,  
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## 1

The expression of ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly (豁然貫通)’ was presented to the history of Confucianism by Zhu Xi (朱熹) for the first time. This word has been understood to have a special meaning in that it appears in the commentary on the whole chapter 5 of *Daxuezhangju*, which is the critical phase of the philosophy of Zhu Xi. However, the meaning of "penetrating clearly and out-spreadly overnight (一旦豁然貫通)" has brought a lot of confusion to its readers. This is because there seems no obvious explanation of how it can be done and where its possibility comes from. All that Zhu Xi vaguely mentions about it is the investigation of things and extension of knowledge (格物致知),’ which means the effort of a long time - perhaps naturally(?) - reaches the knowledge. What is it that Zhu Xi says by this?

This article tries to understand ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ by juxtaposing it with one word born by modern intellectual inquiry. It is argued that ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ and cognitive fluidity, respectively derived from the two intellectual trends, Neo-Confucianism and Cognitive Archaeology - Cognitive Science in the broadest sense, are the two expressions of the same human cognitive characteristics in different ways. In other words, ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ is the cognitive liquidity in the modern sense, precedently stated in the inner context of Neo-Confucianism of the 12th century. This article eventually claims that the inner logic of ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly,’ presented in the background of Neo-Confucianism, can be understood in terms of the modern cognitive science phrase ‘cognitive liquidity,’ and explains the cognitive contents and features of ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ in a clear way. Through this explanation, ‘penetrating clearly

and out-spreadly' is claimed to be a general feature of human cognition that still has an appeal, even though it is separated from its metaphysical context, and, at the same time, this claim is suggested to be one alternative way to preserve the significance of 'penetrating clearly and out-spreadly' in the modern sense.

## 2.

There are two references that show most clearly Zhu Xi's viewpoint of 'penetrating clearly and out-spreadly (豁然贯通).' One is the additional explanation of the whole chapter five of *Great Learning*, and the other one is Jinyan Jiangyi (经筵讲义), the summary of his lectures about Great Learning given to Ningzong (宁宗) at the teaching session, who was just crowned in Shaoxi (绍熙) 5th year (1194).<sup>①</sup> Given a careful look at these two materials, it can be seen clearly on what epistemological point of view Zhu Xi put his basis to coin his unique phrase.

“These days I have supplemented the missing part of the meaning of Chengzi as follows: the words of ‘having the ultimate knowledge consists in mastering the sense of things’ means that, in order to enlarge knowledge, one confronts things and masters their reasons or principles....For this reason, when teaching *Great*

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① Zhu Xi himself seems not to often mention or make a topic of 'penetrating clearly and out-spreadly(Huoranguantong)'. This phrase appears four times respectively in *Zhuzi Daquan*(朱子大全) and *Zhuzi Yulei*(朱子语类): in *Zhuzidaquan*, one time in Fang Yi(方谊)'s question and three times in Chen Chun(陈淳)'s question, and in *Zhuziyulei*, one time in his answer to Ye Jiasun(叶贺孙)'s question, one time in Huang Yigang(黄义刚)'s question, one time saying to Shen Xian(沈憺), and one time saying to Guo Youren(郭友仁). In other words, throughout *Zhuzi Daquan* and *Zhuzi Yulei*, Zhu Xi himself mentions it directly only three times. Zhu Xi, *The Complete Works of Zhu Xi*, Shanghai: Shang-hai-gu-di Press and An-hui-jiao-yu Press, 2002, vol.23, p.2667 & 2727; vol.15, p.1117 & 1130; vol.6, p.1859; vol.18, 3671; vol.6, p.528 & 530.

*Learning* at first, be sure to let learners confront all things of the world, further based on what they already know, and eventually reach the utmost phase of mastery. Therefore, when penetrating is achieved overnight by putting time and energy for a long time, the ins and outs (表里) and the elaborate and crude (精粗) of all things shall be reached, the entire substance (全體) and great function (大用) of my heart can be bright, and thus this is called investigation of things (格物), also extension of knowledge to the highest (知之至).”<sup>①</sup>

As Zhu Xi himself admits, the epistemological context of his ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ is inherited from ‘Chengzi’s intention.’ The specific information of ‘Chengzi’s intention’ is revealed more concretely in the statement of two Cheng brothers cited more directly in *Jingyan Jiangyi* (经筵讲义). Here, Zhu Xi enumerates three verses which represent two Cheng brothers’ epistemological argument and also the background of his theory ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’.<sup>②</sup> The key claims are as follows:

“Someone asked, ‘To investigate things (格物), should we reach mastery of each different thing? Or simply once we reach mastery of one thing, we can know everything?’ It was replied, “(So that) how could you penetrate? If mastery of one thing brings that of the many things, even a master would not say so. One thing should be reached today, another thing should be reached tomorrow. If the more things are acquired and accumulated, there is a place to penetrate transcendently

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<sup>①</sup> Daxue Zhangju, *the Complete Works of Zhu Xi*, vol.6, p.20.

<sup>②</sup> *Jingyan Jiangyi* (经筵讲义) in *The Collected Works of Huiyan Xiansheng Zhuwengong* (晦岩先生朱文公文集) vol. 15, *The Complete Works of Zhu Xi*, vol. 20, pp.707~708.

(脱然有贯通处).’”<sup>①</sup>

In these claims, the phrases of ‘there is a place to penetrate transcendently’, ‘there is a place to perceive suddenly (豁然有觉处)’<sup>②</sup>, there is a place to awaken unworldly’(脱然有悟处)’<sup>③</sup> frequently appear. These expressions clearly show the intellectual contexts that ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly(豁然贯通)’ is based on. However, the origin derives from some specific assumptions present widely in the history of Confucianism beyond two Cheng brothers. Thoughts and ideas in *the Book of Changes* and *Analects* are found to be closely related to ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ and this relation simply reveals the correlation among *Reflections on Things at Hand* (近思录), *Notes and Commentaries of Analects* (论语注疏), and *the Book of Changes* (周易). Some passages about two Cheng brother’s investigation of things and extension of knowledge (格物致知) already mentioned are quoted in the Part III, Extension of Knowledge (致知) in *Reflections on Things at Hand*. About that Ye Cai (叶采) totally evaluates as follows:

“It is mentioned two or three times that, ‘after more acquisition and

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① Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi, *The Collected Works of Two Chungs*, vol. 1, Taipei: Han-jing-wen-hua-shi-ye-you-xian-gong-si, 1984, p.188.

② “Today, if people want to know thoroughly, they must investigate things. And thing is not something after the existence of a thing. Once having a lot of understanding the principles of things ranging from one to ten thousand, there is a place to perceive suddenly (豁然有觉处).” *The Collected Works of Two Chungs*, vol. 1 and *Henan Chengshi Yishu*, vol. 17, p.181.

③ “Extension of knowledge to the highest does not necessarily acquire all principles in the world, and also it does not mean that one mastery leads to understanding all things. This just means that as understanding is accumulated ranging from on to ten thousand things, there is a place where to recognize suddenly and naturally (脱然有悟处).” This passage is not found today in *the Collected Works of the Two Chungs*, but just quoted as two brothers’ saying in *Daxue Huowen* (大学感问) and *Jingyan Jinagyi* (经筵讲义). *The Complete Works of Zhu Xi*, vol.6, p.525.

accumulation, there will be natural penetration like a sudden escape,’ ‘when accumulated repeatedly, the principles reveal themselves spontaneously,’ and furthermore ‘more understanding opens eyes to bring recognitions.’ These mean the hope that scholars can be aware of the natural laws of each thing in the world due to their devises and accumulations.... Making examples of Confucius’ disciples, these are when Yanzi(顏子) lamented for loftiness of Confucius and when Zengzi(曾子) answered yes to the statement that the doctrines or teachings of Confucius were penetrated to one.”<sup>①</sup>

Here Confucius’ famous claim of ‘penetration to one (一以貫之)’ can be easily understood to be originally sourceful to Zhu Xi’s ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly (Huoranguantong).’ That is, the genealogical origin of ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ dates back to Confucius’ ‘one penetration.’ However, this does not mean the retroactive limit of ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly.’ Both of the chapter 15 Liren (里仁) and chapter 2 Weilinggong (卫领公) in *Analects* mention ‘one penetration,’ and the explanation in *Notes and Commentaries of Analects* concerning the chapter 15 Liren suggests that this retrace can be connected to *the Book of Changes* (周易).

There is the foremost(元) in goodness(善) and there is a destination(會). The world has different ways but their destination is the same, and one hundred thoughts reach one place. Once the foremost is known, a great deal of goodness is (all) mentioned. Therefore, without waiting to learn a lot, we can know through one.<sup>②</sup>

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① Zhu Xi and Lu Zuqian (ed.), *Ye Chi, Reflections on Things at Hand*, vol.1, translated by Lee Kwangho, Seoul: Acanet Press, 2004, pp.347~348.

② He Yan, Xing Bing, *Notes and Commentaries of the Analects*, Wen-yuan-ge-si-ku-quan-shu,

Confucius said, “Uh, what do you think and what would you think in this world? The world returns to the same place but the roads are different, and the place to get is one, but thinking is one hundred kinds, so what do you think, and what would you think?”<sup>①</sup>

Citing a commentary of Xici (系辞传) in *the Book of Changes* in order to interpret ‘penetration to one (一以贯之)’ in *Notes and Commentaries of Analects* shows that the genealogical archetype of ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ proves the theoretical relevance to be retraced to *the Book of Changes* through ‘penetration to one.’ Because of this, ‘one penetration’ in *Analects* is cited reversely in *the Correct Definition of the Book of Changes* (周易正义) in order to interpret a commentary of Xici, the process of which shows a circular logic.

The less, the more gained; the more, the more reduced. There would be one hundred kinds of thinking, but not the two destinations. Knowing the core truly is not dependent on obtaining far and wide. If you penetrate one, you will reach the ultimate satge without any thought.<sup>②</sup>

Zhu Xi, who succeeded this reason - maybe it could be Cheng Yi - has this logic: “Everything in this world has its own principles, and all principles come from one origin, and thus this is the reason everything cannot but be penetrated.”<sup>③</sup> In other words,

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vol.195, p.669.

① Zhu Xi and Lu Zuqian(ed.), *Ye Chi, Reflections on Things at Hand*, vol.1, translated by Lee Kwangho, Seoul: Acanet Press, 2004, pp.347~348.

② Wang Bi & Kong Yingda, *Notes and Commentaries of I Ching*, One of the Explanatory Notes and Commentaries of Thirteen Classics, Beijing: Beijing University Press, 2000, p.358

③ In *Jingyan Jiangyi* (经筵讲义) of *The Complete Works of Zhu Xi*, - *Jingyan Jiangyi* (经筵讲义) of *the Collected Works of Zhu Xi* (朱熹集) is the same - this phrase is considered as Zhu Xi's words,



Zhu Xi configures the inner logic of ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ by accepting the premise of One Principle (一理) to include all principles in the world which is described in two Cheng brothers’ statements, ‘penetration to one’ of *Analects*, and *the Book of Changes* . Therefore, he could say this in *The Original Meaning of the Book of Changes*.

There are no two principles in origin, but it is naturally such that the roads are different and thoughts are one hundred different. So, how can we have any thinking? If we are sure to follow it after we have a thought, to follow it is also narrow.<sup>①</sup>

Furthermore, in his much more definite tone, Chen Chun (陈淳) states the correlation between One Principle and One Penetration (一贯) that ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly ’ premises, as follows:

One(一) is One Principle. This is a place of great fundamental where is chaotic in an entire body, and penetration(貫) means that One Principle prevails and penetrates among all things. Sage’s mind is also confused and just has only One Principle. This is one great fundamental, and from this great fundamental a dragon

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Meanwhile, Daxue Huowen (大学惑问) includes it as part of Cheng Yi’s statement. There are two reasons for this confusion: one is that this phrase does not appear in the original version vol. 15 of *Henan Chengshi Yishu* (河南程氏遗书), and the other is that it appears consequently in Zhu Xi’s quotation of two Cheng brothers’ statement. Considering the method of description of Daxuehuowen, it is supposed to be Cheng Yi’s statement while considering the original version vol.15 of *Henan Chengshi Yishu*. It could be Zhu Xi’s statement. *The Complete Works of Zhu Xi*, vol.20, p.708; Zhu Xi, *The Works of Zhu Xi*, Chengu: Si-chuan-jiao-yu Press, 1996, vol.2, p.590; *The Complete Works of Zhu Xi*, vol. 6, p.525; *The Collected Works of the Two Chengs*, vol. 1, p.157

① The Original Meaning of The Book of Changes (周易本义) in *The Complete Works of Zhu Xi*, vol.1, p.139.

appears. In all daily life, clearance or response and advance or retreat on a small scale and participation in heaven and earth, help with fostering all things in heaven and earth on a large scale, and all acts, all goodness and ten million kinds of roads are streamed from and are penetrated into this one great fundamental.<sup>①</sup>

### 3.

It has been viewed above that the origin of ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly(Huoranguantong)’ consists in the epistemological viewpoint of “penetrating to one ‘ in *Analects* and ‘different roads but the same destination (涂殊归一)’ in *the Book of Changes*. The next is to explore various interpretations of what significance ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ has. Three features, correlated to each other, are repeatedly found in these interpretations. They can be expressed to be the leap under the premise of cognitive asymmetry, the thinking of ‘one Principle and its many manifestations (理一分殊)’ under the premise of only a metaphysical truth, the matter of the superposition of epistemology and of axiology, etc.

Above all, ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ is featured by some cognitive asymmetry and epistemological leap which is possible to understand under the premise of this asymmetry. Because of this, the matter of cognitive asymmetry and the leap forms a junction for diverse arguments of how to interpret ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly.’ This phenomenon is unavoidable since ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ includes the logic that essentially put its basis on asymmetry in terms of all the cognitions. The two following quotations illustrate this point in that they commonly

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① Chen Chun (陈淳), *The Meaning of Neo-Confucian Words*, translated by Park Wounsik, Seoul: Yeogang Press, 2005, pp.120 ~ 121.

include the word of leap about the key difficulty that is caused by the cognitive asymmetry.

Zhu Xi does not give up the idea that the nature of things are revealed by investigating things (格物), and extending knowledge (致知) is completed by subjectifying the principle (理) of objective things, because he believed that investigating things is the first starting point for ‘sage.’ He takes the position that extending knowledge (致知) is impossible if it is not through investigating things. This is because he believes that acquired knowledge (经验知) achieved through investigation of things can be a basis of intuitive knowledge (直观知) necessary for the leaping phase of ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly,’ in which it is recognized that myriad principles (萬理) lead to One Principle (一理).<sup>①</sup>

In Zhu Xi’s opinion, the final goal of investigating things (格物) is to recognize the principle (理) of the universe. However, just investigating one thing is not bound to grasp the principle of all things. Also, specific individual thing cannot be investigated..... Just as ordinary people often experience in the normal recognition process, ideas and perceptions of people can achieve the leap, that is, ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ at a certain stage by making a gradual process of mastering or investigating thoroughly (穷究) external things repeatedly. Conforming to Zhu Xi’s way of understanding, this is the leap to the universal from the specific, based on experiential activities.<sup>②</sup>

The leap from acquired knowledge (经验知) into intuitive knowledge (直观知)

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① Lee Kangdae, *The Anthropological Understanding on Zhuxism*, Seoul: Ye-moon-seo-won, 2000, p.156.

② Chen Lai (陈来), *Neo-Confucianism in The Song and Ming Dynasties*, translated by Ahn Jaeho, Seoul: Ye-moon-se-won Press, 1997, pp.265 ~ 266.

that Lee Gangdae (李康大) mentions, and the leap from the specific into the universal that Chen Lai (陈来) mentions, tell the fact that ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly(豁然贯通)’ is essentially a theoretical device to go beyond the limits of epistemological break. That is to say, they interpret the word of ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ to be used as the very device that fills the blank space in the leaping process from the limited recognition of acquired knowledge and the specific into intuitive knowledge and the universal which are quite different from those in themselves. However, there are also two quite different interpretations shown in their understanding of the leap.

It is Chen Rongjie (陈荣捷) that has a feeling of severe resistance to the break and the blank space that the word of leap implies. Criticizing the Western scholars who try to understand ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ to mean ‘sudden penetration (忽然贯通),’ he argues that ‘clearly and out-spreadly (豁然)’ can be translated to be ‘widely opened (开明)’ or ‘brightly opened (开大)’ but it should not be translated into ‘sudden (忽然).’ His criticism is ascribed to some Western scholars’ trying to translate Zhu Xi’s ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ into the one similar to ‘sudden religious awakening.’ According to him, ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ means ‘(awareness or insight) gradually deepens, eventually becomes wide and large, and penetrates.’<sup>①</sup> Chen Rong-jie’s explanation does not provide the clarified concept of the leap, while Lee Gangdae and Chen Lai state it in an explicit way. Chen Rongjie seems to argue that there is no such a thing as leap by translating ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ into gradually spreading process of awareness. He tries not to conclude ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ to be kind of mystical qualitative leap. This can be seen clearly in that he agrees with J. Legge’s English translating ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ into the “wide and far-reaching penetration.”<sup>②</sup> So to speak, he takes

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① Chen Rongjie (陈荣捷), *A New inquiry into Zhuzi*, Taipei: Xue-sheng-shu-ju, 1988, pp.341 ~ 342.

② Ibid., p.341.

precaution against the exaggerated interpretation of ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ by limiting the meaning of it to ‘the expansion of insight or awareness’ in the sense of a gradual development. However, the interpretation that expansion of insight includes any leap seems to have indisputable validity, as is shown in that Zhu Xi himself manifests ‘all the principles of the world cannot be investigated thoroughly (穷究).’ Chen Rongjie’s retort has weakness that it still gives no answer to the concrete process of expansion of insight. In this respect, he seems to evade the issue that Lee Gangdae and Chen Lai point out.

Unlike Chen Rongjie, Lao Siguang (劳思光) and Feng Youlan (冯友兰) express certain views about the issue of leap. Both of them acknowledge that the issue of epistemological leap is involved in Zhu Xi’s viewpoint. However, they show a little difference in treating this issue. Despite his acknowledgement of the existence of such a leap, Lao Siguang is pessimistic in his claim that no theoretical explanation can be given for the process.<sup>①</sup> In contrast, Feng Youlan holds his ground firmly that such a possibility cannot exist at all, starting from his doubt as to the leap.

In terms of practical aspects, compared to a botanist’s research of principles of plants, he could make "further his exploration (而益窮之)" thanks to the already researched principles of plants. However, it would be difficult for him to "to seek to reach its culmination (以求至乎其極)." The principles of plants are infinite, and

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① “The investigation of principles (穷理) and the extension of knowledge (致知) completely correspond to each other, and furthermore, both of them are achieved at the same time. This indicates tacitly the course from the ‘individual principle (殊别之理)’ to ‘common principle (共同之理).’ However, this jump of it, which is in Zhu Xi’s theory and two Chengs’ theory alike, cannot be a clear interpretation. Zhu Xi describes it as ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly,’ which is the same meaning of two Chengs’ description ‘getting to have a place naturally to penetrate transcendently (脱然自有贯通处).’ Lao Siguang, *A History of Chinese Philosophy(Song and Ming Dynasties)*, Translated by Chung Inchai, Seoul: Tam-gu-dang Press, 1991, p.360

also knowledge about concrete things are unlimited, so how ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ could take place? (making a little concession) A botanist could have ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ about the principles of plants, but here ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ mentioned in the whole chapter 5 of Daxue Zhangju (大学章句) means "The wholeness and great function of my mind cannot but be enlightened." ‘Penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ in this sense will not be reached just by the means of enlarging knowledge.<sup>①</sup>

Feng Youlan’s argument reveals the fact that the issue of epistemological leap ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ includes is closely related to another issue. In other words, since the pursuit of knowledge about specific things and the discipline of mind for the wholeness and large activities work quite differently, there cannot exist a qualitative leap between them. His point seems to be rather close to pointing out about the error of category. The reason he can criticize like this is that Zhu Xi’s ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ itself is constrained by the epistemological matter, or that it is related to the matter of interpretation as to including axiological boundary.

#### 4.

The issue of what the content of penetration in implied ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ is related to reveals another dimension of interpretation as to this word. Lee Myonghan (李明汉) and Gusmoto Masassuku shows obviously another theoretical implication of ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly.’

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<sup>①</sup> Feng Youlan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy* (New Edition), vol.5, Beijing: Ren-min Press, 1988, p.178.

Recognizing the mind is recognizing an implicative meaning (义理) and delicacy (精微) of the mind rather than trying to recognize the spirit and perception of the mind. From there, it finally transcends things and attains the higher stage to dominate them. As the principles of things are reached through these methods, the recognition of the mind can reach the ultimate stage (致知), and, by this investigation of things and extension of knowledge (格物致知), the moral stage revives. The so-called ordinary people of rural or women escape the oppression and feel free. Using the words of Mencius, "attain from the left and right and come across the origin," and reach the stage "to learn for ourselves (自得)." This is what penetrating (貫通) in Zhu Xi's Daxue Buzhuan(大学补传) means.<sup>①</sup>

‘Penetrating clearly and out-spreadly (豁然貫通)’ is that all individual moral principles are based on their nature and to realize that this nature is benevolence (仁), and, at the same time, that this benevolence is the same as the Supreme Ultimate (太極), namely, the metaphysical reality that has myriad things exist in the heaven and earth. Therefore, it is to acknowledge firmly that this "principle of existence" has all the beings exist and also it is the basis for all morality to be possible. Likewise, to make a thorough realization that the universal order, which is the basic viewpoint of Confucianism, is the moral order and that the moral order also is the universal order, namely, One Principle of existence, is ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ itself and also is the purpose of Zhu Xi's theory of the investigation of things and extension of knowledge (格物致知论).<sup>②</sup>

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① Gusmoto Masassuku, *A History of Confucianism in the Song and Ming Dynasties*, translated by Kim Byunghwa and Lee Hyegyung, Seoul: Ye-moon-seo-won Press, 2005, pp.288~289.

② Lee Myunghan (李明汉), "A Study on Zhu Xi's Theory of Investigation of Things and Extension

What is shown in these two interpretations indicates the statement that ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ cannot be understood basically without the premise of axiological viewpoint, at least to Zhu Xi. In other words, it could be safely said that Zhu Xi’s ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ can be understood only at the superposed viewpoint of epistemological perspectives and axiological perspectives, and furthermore, as far as the epistemological leap is included in the axiological purpose, it can have its theoretical significance. To use a classic representation of Confucianism, it could be summarized that “the purpose of Zhu Xi’s investigation of things and extension of principle (格物穷理) consists in the understanding of a law to be natural (所当然之则) based on the thorough extension (穷究) of ‘a reason to be so (所以然之故).’”<sup>①</sup> Because of this, there are obviously some scholars who interpret the meaning of ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ focusing on axiological awareness. According to this interpretation, ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ is described as a moral boundary.

When the basis of my naturalness (所當然) is recognized to be the nature of my mind and Heavenly Providence (天命), it is penetrated far and widely that all the laws of naturalness are also based on my nature and Heavenly Providence. Therefore, under any circumstances, naturalness soars and we will be able to practice morality voluntarily, depending on our nature. It is the subject’s being aware of its identity and at the same time the identity’s revealing itself inside the subject. In this state, the entire substance (全体) and great function (大用) of the mind are completely revealed. This is the boundary that things are investigated (物

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of Knowledge," *Journal of Chinese Studies*, vol. 54, The Society for Chinese Studies, 2006, p.494.

① Lee Gangdae (李康大), *The Anthropological Understanding on Zhuxism*, Seoul: Ye-moon-seo-won Press, p.150



格) and ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ that Zhu Xi yearns after.<sup>①</sup>

After all, all the issues are converged to one point. Hong Seongmin (洪性敏)’s and Masassuku’s viewpoints are based on the following interpretation of Ho Wailu (侯外廬) and Lao Siguang that basically Zhu Xi’s investigation of things (格物) does not mean the exploration of scientific truth in the physical meaning but it is related to the moral goodness.

The main point of investigation of things and extension of knowledge consists in thoroughly investigating Heavenly Principle (天理), revealing humanity, lecturing the words of sage, and exploring worldly reasons, never in ‘natural appearances like grasses and trees.’ Because of this, Zhu Xi’s ‘things (物)’ indicates Heavenly Principle, humanity, sage’s words, and worldly reasons, and the purpose of investigation of things and extension of knowledge is not to explore things related to scientific truth of natural appearances like grasses and trees but to explicate the moral goodness of Heavenly Principle, humanity, sage’s words, and worldly reasons.<sup>②</sup>

Lao Siguang also agrees about this respect. Because of this, he argues that “whether Zhu Xi’s theory is agreed or opposed, it is quite a big error to approve Zhu Xi’s investigating things is close to scientific research.”<sup>③</sup>

As seen above, Feng Youlan and Chen Lai defer or disagree with this excessive

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① Hong Seongmin, “The Ultimate Principle and Practical Knowledge”, *Journal of Eastern Philosophy*, vol. 58. The Society of Eastern Philosophy, pp.217~218.

② Gusmoto Masassuku, *A History of Confucianism in the Song and Ming Dynasties*, translated by Kim Byunghwa and Lee Hyegyung, Seoul: Ye-moon-seo-won Press, 2005, pp.288~289.

③ Lao Siguang, *A History of Chinese Philosophy (Song and Ming Dynasties)*, translated by Jeong Yinjae, Seoul: Tam-gu-dang Press, 1991, pp.360~361.

interpretation. Chen Lai regards ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ as a leap from specific recognition to general recognition, or as the essential limit of epistemologically inductive reasoning, so to speak, just as an evasive expression of the logic that absolute certainty cannot be reached through the inductive logic. Feng Youlan concludes that this leap is out of the question by his reasoning that objective awareness has nothing to do with moral discipline. There could be several criticisms and objections, but, seen at least from Zhu Xi’s viewpoint, there is no question that superposition of the epistemological and axiological statements is evident as several scholars have pointed out.

## 5.

At this point, the most critical third premise of ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ is revealed. In other words, ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ assumes the combination of a reason to be so and a law to be natural in Neo-Confucian terms. In addition, this means more than the point that ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ assumes the existence of ‘One Principle (一理)’ which includes everything in the universe in a singular way. This is because myriad experiential things, special things, and the concrete existence of ‘a reason to be so’ and ‘a law to be natural’ should be assumed in the case that the existence of cognitive asymmetry mentioned earlier is combined to the existence of ‘One Principle.’ In other words, ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ assumes universal unity of some concrete extraneous things, and to put it in terms of Song dynasty’s Neo-Confucian term, this is none other than ‘one principle and its many manifestations (理一分殊).’ The consistent inner logic core of *the Book of Changes*, *Analects*, and ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ is the thinking of ‘one

principle and its many manifestations.’

For instance, it is said in *the Book of Changes* that "the roads are different but the destination is the same," and Cheng Yi says that "one thousand, ten thousand roads go all the way to the capital." In addition, Confucius mentions ‘penetrating to one.’ The reason Confucius’ words can have meaning is that all the roads set through all the way to the capital, and all the ways get to the same conclusion. According to Lee Hyang-joon’s analysis, likewise, the composition of all the ways and only one conclusion or destination is a conceptual device called a metaphor of travel that forms the semantic structure of ‘one principle and its many manifestations.’<sup>①</sup>

In case it is accepted as shown in his analysis that the inner logic of ‘one principle and its many manifestations’ could be understood as a complex of metaphors, the content that the internal logical structure of ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ depends on the logic of ‘one principle and its many manifestations’ eventually means that the former depends on the same complex of metaphors the latter depends on. At this time, the most commonly presented is ‘a metaphor of travel’. This is because ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ includes cognitive asymmetry, i.e. the matter of insight into a lot of experiential knowledge and moral unique One Principle, so inevitably it cannot but be closely related to specific metaphors of asymmetry. This works closely with the metaphor implying a relationship of one and many, one and ten thousand - generally according to the idiomatic usage that ‘ten thousand’ means unspecified plenty, and ‘a metaphor of travel’ is the most typical example to include this asymmetry. Because of this, ‘one principle and its many manifestations,’ as the Neo-Confucian argument taking ‘a metaphor of travel’ with a metaphor of roots, does the theoretical functioning of giving consistency to the internal logicity of ‘penetrating

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① Lee Hyang-joon, "An Analysis of Metaphors on Zhu Xi's Li-yi-fen-shu." *The Journal of Asian Philosophy in Korea*, vol. 24, The Society for Asian Philosophy in Korea, 2005, pp.65-91

clearly and out-spreadly.’

This is also true in case of another metaphor, i.e. Man’s Home inherent in ‘one principle and its many manifestations.’ Man’s Home is the idea of treating the entire universe as one homogeneous group on a basis of the singularity of principle. In other words, Man’s Home is a metaphorical way of thinking which assumes identifying the Universe or Nature with Human and according to this, the universe and the human are understood to have a qualitatively homogeneous phase of size differences, in that the former is a macrocosm and the latter is a microcosm.

Knowing about individual principle of things, we can know all the principles of things without mastering every principle of them, because external forms of all things, internal reasons of their existence, and principles of existence are all strung out with one principle. Moreover, as my mind and body is a microcosm for the macrocosm of the Universe, I am bound to maintain my own phenomenon within the entire framework. Within this close relationship, my mind is enlightened in the great use of the entire.<sup>①</sup>

The metaphorical equality of Human and the Universe works as a connecting inner ring that functions to bind awareness of a reason to be so (所以然之故) of individual things and insight to a universal law to be natural (所当然之则) into a homogeneity. Because of this, it is certainly concluded that the combination of ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ and specific metaphors assumes a certain metaphysical context. Here, the Neo-Confucian meaning of ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ is finally formed. The assumption of combining ‘to be natural (所当然)’ and ‘to be so (所以然)’ also

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① Pyun Wonjong, *The Formation of Zhuxism and Thinking Structure of Its Argument*, Pajoo: Korean Studies Information Service System (KISS), 2007, p.88.

arises from here and ‘the realm to transcend and dominate things’ also has its background here. It is inevitable that the mystical shadow of One Principle could be glanced at this point. Therefore, such a mystical commentary as Meng Peiyuan’s appears.

The theory of investigating things should have a thorough grasp of the whole. That is to say, it is to grasp the principle that generalizes all morals in human society by catching hold of the rules that generalize operations of the Universe. Zhu Xi suggests the theory of ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ for this..... is the realization that arises on the basis of very much accumulated experiential knowledge. This is illogical perpendicular activity in which logical reasoning is disconnected and the space and time of reasoning are also disconnected. Also, this is a kind of creative thinking, the creation of significance, the act of transcending awareness, and at the same time the full penetration of the absolute truth.<sup>①</sup>

However, Meng Peiyuan’s explanation makes the meaning even more twisted. What kind of thing is the ‘illogical perpendicular activity in which logical reasoning is disconnected and also the space and time of reasoning are disconnected,’ which is a mystical explanation? How can it be ‘the act of transcending awareness and at the same time the full penetration of the absolute truth’? Does this mean a certain ability to have to transcend recognition is given to us in order to understand ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly (豁然貫通)’? However, isn’t understanding ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ a sort of knowledge in a sense, and thus can it be said to be a recognition? If so, how can we recognize what transcends recognition? Isn’t this a contradiction of

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① Meng Peiyuan, *The Concepts of Neo-Confucianism*, translated by Hong Wounsik et al., Seoul: Ye-moon-seo-won Press, 2008, pp.718~719.

description? Now turning away from this mystical explanation, turn our eyes from one kind of plain man, let's look for one plain human cognitive feature. Then, this makes a topic of the word of 'cognitive fluidity' found in an unexpected realm.

## 6.

Steven Mithen's cognitive fluidity, G. Lakoff and M. Johnson's conceptual metaphor, and G. Fauconnier and M. Turner's conceptual blending show the overview of the modern understanding of 'penetrating clearly and out-spreadly.'<sup>①</sup> These concepts resolve the problem of 'leap' which is the first meaning of 'penetrating clearly and out-spreadly,' and, at the same time, resolve the problem of a superposition of epistemological and axiological dimensions. If a general leap can be accepted, the superposition of epistemological and axiological dimensions eventually can be understood as a special type of leap. If so, how can these concepts resolve the problem of leap in 'penetrating clearly and out-spreadly'?

The cognitive fluidity Steven Mithen proposes draws some interest with its three issues in the discussion of 'penetrating clearly and out-spreadly.' First, the cognitive fluidity is claimed to be not a priori ability but an experiential, historical ability fulfilled in the long process of evolution. Second, the cognitive fluidity has as its own feature the

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① Steven Mithen, *The Prehistory of the Mind*, Translated by Yoon Soyoung, Seoul: Young-lim Cardinal Inc., 2001; G Lakoff • M Johnson, *Metaphors We Live by* (with a new afterword), Translated by Noh Yangjin and Na Ikjoo, Seoul: Park-i-jung Press, 2006; Gilles Fauconnier • Mark Turner, *The Way We Think: conceptual blending and the mind's hidden complexities*, Translated by Kim Donghwan and Choi Youngho, Koyang: Ji-ho Press, 2009; As for what explanations those concepts here would present about the cognitive premises of racism implied in Holocaust, refer to Lee Hyangjoon, "Shoah: How is it possible to be an anonymous I—chimann?", *The Study of Humanities*, vol. 42, Gwanjoo: The Institute of Humanities in the Chosun University, pp.69~101.

fusion of disparate things those words like ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ include. In terms of the combination of heterogeneous conceptual frameworks, relating it with the first issue, it can be seen to provide an empirical explanation about the leap in ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly.’ The third is that the notion of cognitive fluidity calls the attention to metaphors and analogies. If the attempt to understand ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ in the Neo-Confucian form of cognitive fluidity is acceptable, this third issue brings up reconsidering the metaphorical thinking. Conceptual metaphors are one of the modern alternatives to meet this reconsideration, and the conceptual blending is suggestive of a modern understanding of ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly,’ in that it includes conceptual metaphors with the more comprehensive mode of thinking and thus attempts to present generalized theoretical model. Now let’s look at these issues briefly.

Briefly, Steven Mithen argues that a phenomenon of ‘cognitive fluidity’ had taken place in the human brain before human race experienced an explosion of culture between approximately 60,000 years ago and 30,000 years ago. According to his argument, before that, the human race thought and acted depending on specified modularized ways of natural intelligence, social intelligence, and general intelligence which had no fluidity. Among those intelligences, the block of cross-fusion by a sort of isolation was continued for a long time. When these three types of intelligence solved problems, independently of each other, solve problems and became free from the some mode to decide behaviors and created a new mode of liberal fusion named ‘cognitive fluidity,’ the human race had the phenomenon called culture for the first time. The main point of his argument is that this mind is that of the modern human mind.

In both development and evolution, from that one made up of a series of relatively independent recognition realms, human mind has undergone - underwent

- a transformation, while ideas, ways of thinking, and knowledge were flowing freely among the realms.<sup>①</sup>

Thought and knowledge that were before caught in the chapel of differentiated intelligence now drift freely back and forth in the cathedral of the mind - or at least in the part of it - and create new types of thinking together in harmony, which are part of almost unlimited imagination.<sup>②</sup>

In terms of empirical explanation of where is the origin of ‘almost unlimited imagination’ the modern mind possesses, this feature of the mind presents a concrete example how the fusion of different cognitive realms easily regarded as the leap can be achieved without the mystical One Principle that ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ assumes. In other words, the cognitive fluidity can be a modern and refined replacement of ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly,’ using fusion instead of leap. On the other hand, he confesses that he did not figure out the mechanism of how the cognitive fluidity arises.<sup>③</sup> Nevertheless, the conclusion he has reached, since he suggested the cognitive fluidity, provides more productive theoretical possibility for the discussion of ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly.’

Enumerating the traits of modern mind distinguished from those of our ancestors who were closer to us but extinct, as well as those of primates who are the closest to us, they would be the use of metaphor, and the passion about the

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① Stephen Mithen, *The Prehistory of the Mind*, Translated by Yun, Soyoung, Seoul: Young-lim Cardinal Inc., p.225.

② Ibid., p.268.

③ "This argument is still not perfect. This is because I have to explain how the fluidity of new awareness arises. I believe the explanation is related to the change of traits of language and consciousness in the mind." Ibid., p.268.



analogy, as Jerry Porter describes. Chimpanzees cannot use metaphor and analogy. With the only one intelligence, they cannot even have mental resources, let alone a language for metaphors. Early humans could not use a metaphor owing to the lack of cognitive fluidity. In the case of modern humans surviving at present, however, analogy and metaphor infiltrate all aspects of the thinking, being the core of art, religion, and science.<sup>①</sup>

His point that analogy and metaphor are the core of the products of modern mind implies that ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ also is a function of the mind which has a close correlation with analogy and metaphor. As already discussed earlier, the world view of ‘one principle and its many manifestations’ that ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ assumes includes conceptual metaphors such as ‘Man’s home’ and ‘travel metaphor.’ Actually the expression of ‘penetrating’ in ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ projects into the relation between the principle and things, between the awareness of individual principles of things and the insight of general principles, any schematic structure that comes from the empirical situation of threading several scattered things with a sharp tool such as a sharp, long skewer.

## 7.

That Steven Mithen’s concept of cognitive fluidity calls attention to the importance of metaphorical notion suggests that the inner structure of ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ relies on the superposited structure of conceptual metaphor. In other words, ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly,’ as the Neo-Confucian cognitive fluidity, can be

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① Ibid., pp.309～310.

explained by the conceptual metaphor itself. According to the theory of conceptual metaphor, the expression of penetrating refers to the source area of this metaphor. That is, this expression has as its sources our behavior of broaching to thread several things with a long tool such as a skewer or thread, and our conceptual schemes to make a structure of the behavior. In addition, on the other side of the goal area, there exist 'one principle and its many manifestations', or specific recognition and general recognition, 'to be natural (所当然)' and 'to be so (所以然)', 'under learning (下学)' and 'upper master (上达).' To have 'one principle and its many manifestations' as an example, 'one principle' is equivalent to a skewer and 'its many manifestations' is to several things. And the effort of a man trying to find a skewer to broach those things based on his recognition of them is equivalent to the investigation of things and extension of knowledge (格物致知), and the insight to penetrate a number of things, furthermore all things, is equivalent to 'penetrating clearly and out-spreadly.' Also, the idea that the things and the skewer can be interconnected by this broaching is a ground to justify the argument of 'one principle and its many manifestations' that one principle and its many manifestations are connected to each other. Furthermore, 'one principle and its many manifestations' itself keeps its internal structure by the combination of several conceptual metaphors, as previously mentioned.

To explain the same in terms of the theory of the conceptual blending, a very similar case is found in an anecdote in the history of science. It is none other than that of Archimedes' Eureka.<sup>①</sup> The important thing in this anecdote is the phenomenon of

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① It is a general opinion among scholars of science history that in fact, Archimedes' shouting 'Eureka' naked in the bathroom, would be an exaggerated anecdote. This anecdote about Archimedes is described in the preface of Marcus Vitruvius Pollio's *De Architectura* after 120 years of Archimedes' death. The information related with Archimedes is referred to G. W. F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse Zweiter Teil Die Naturphilosophie Mit den mündlichen Zusätzen*, translated by Park Byoungkie, Pajoo: Na-nam Press, 2008, pp.628 ~ 629.

overflowing water which he experienced in the bathtub, and the insight that made him shout ‘Eureka’ is the recognition that he figured out the way to know the ingredients of the king’s crown. This heterogeneity of cause and consequence is explained by the fusion of conceptual systems having the mental space as a model, as is the argument of the conceptual blending theory.

According to the explanation of the conceptual blending theory, the epistemological content that is grasped at the moment of watching the water overflowing in the bathtub makes up the input space 1, and, on the other hand, the crown makes up the input space 2. At this point, an incident that can be called ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ happens. This is because a person who is present in the input space 1 comes to have the input space 2 and the thought of space-across, and he creates the blending space where water goes into the crown. Next, to be interpreted following the diagram of cause and effect in which this incident of imaginary blending spaces is considered to be the cause of the consequence of overflowing water again in the bathtub, a metaphorical analogy would be made possible that the water overflows as much as the volume of the ingredients of the crown just like the water overflows as much as the volume of the person.

To remember one thing here, the incident that a person goes into the bathtub and the incident that the crown is put into the water should be fused into one in order to make this imagination possible in your head. Obviously, Archimedes did not yet experience the incident of putting the crown into the water. He just put his body in the bath, but that was all. However, through the conceptual blending - through the exercise of his ability of the cognitive fluidity in its same meaning- he imagines the case of the crown put in the water container instead of himself in the water, and through the

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footnote appeared on page 200.

metaphorical inference that the same result would come out as entering the bathtub, he reaches the conclusion that he can measure the volume of the crown. Without his imaginative thinking of putting the crown in the water instead of himself, the cry of 'Eureka' would have been impossible for good in this anecdote.

Therefore, like 'penetrating clearly and out-spreadly (Huoranguantong)' the cognitive fluidity is none other than the blending of this conceptual schemes, which indicates the ability of interaction between conceptual schemes and knowledge acquired from different empirical areas rather than the assuming of the mystic 'One Principle.'

In this sense, the logic of the conceptual blending of fusing his experience of entering the bathtub with the imaginary case of the crown in the water container is virtually identical to the logic of conceptual metaphor of projecting the relationship of a skewer and things into 'one principle and its many manifestations.' This is sort of the ability of metaphor and analogy included in the cognitive fluidity. Also, the logic of 'penetrating clearly and out-spreadly,' empirically interpreted, is identical to it. That is to say, Zhu Xi's 'penetrating clearly and out-spreadly' is replaced by the cognitive fluidity that is featured by the empirical, disjunctive fusion of conceptual schemes, if the leap of 'penetrating clearly and out-spreadly' assumes is replaced by the fusion of conceptual schemes, the metaphysical 'One Principle' is excluded, and the process of projection and fusion occurring in the background of awareness of different conceptual schemes takes the place.

## 8.

If so, what is gained and lost from 'penetrating clearly and out-spreadly (豁然贯通)' as the cognitive fluidity? Zhu Xi's 'penetrating clearly and out-spreadly' is

featured by the leap and ‘one principle and its many manifestations (理一分殊),’ and the superposition of epistemology and axiology. The cognitive fluidity replaces the projection between conceptual schemes or the conceptual blending for the leap and the superposition. The mystic presence of One Principle is excluded in ‘one principle and its many manifestations.’ In that case, what remains is the projection and blending between the empirically disparate systems of knowledge and conceptual schemes, and the emergent, blending conceptual schemes that emerge as a consequence of it. According to Steven Mithen, the evolutionary process that induces the blending of these conceptual schemes does not have any purpose.

This transition to the mind with cognitive fluidity was not inevitable and also was not even planned well in advance. Evolution just used a window of opportunity which was created blindly only by breeding the mind which had multiple differentiated intelligences.<sup>①</sup>

The vigorous process of cultural evolution the reins of which were loosened due to the emergence of cognitive fluidity constantly changed the environment of growth of children and eventually resulted in knowledge which had a new kind of specific domain. However, all the minds develop cognitive fluidity. That is the defining trait of modern man’s mind.<sup>②</sup>

The ability of cognitive fluidity is eventually shown as one of the various human attempts to overcome the problems that were caused by the preceding, evolutionary development of the mind that was a differentiated modular structure. Combining this

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① Stephen Mithen, *The Prehistory of the Mind*, translated by Yun Soyoung, Seoul: Young-lim Cardinal Inc., 2001. p.302.

② Ibid., p.304.

perspective and the cognitive unconsciousness which the theory of conceptual metaphor assumes - that is, the assumption that most of the metaphorical thinking is unconscious, we come to obtain the modern image of 'penetrating clearly and out-spreadly' more specifically.

In modern interpretation, the phrase 'penetrating' of 'penetrating clearly and out-spreadly' points to the cognitive fluidity but the phrase 'clearly and out-spreadly' seems to include the meaning of 'sudden' in a slightly different sense from what Chen Rongjie is opposed to. Even if 'clearly and out-spreadly' is translated to 'one day,' the subtle meaning of 'suddenly one day' still does not disappear. 'Suddenly' and 'one day' can be understood to be a correspondence at the moment of consciousness when the cognitive unconsciousness, which the conceptual metaphor theory assumes, renders the solution to a problem. In other words, 'penetrating clearly and out-spreadly' reaches the mature heights of cognitive fluidity and makes it without blending concepts and doing the projecting at the level of consciousness, and furthermore, it is meant that, through the imaginative thinking about conceptual blending schemes of being emergent this way, it succeeds in solving the current problem. The reason that it is felt to be the leap is related to the fact that the problem solving method comes to consciousness with the epistemological break of abridgment of any process, because we do not have the self-awareness of this unconscious problem-solving process in our consciousness. Chen Rongjie's criticism is partly acceptable, in that the leap and the break would disappear when such cognitive unconsciousness and consciousness are embraced as a single larger psychological work.

On the other hand, the common point of 'penetrating clearly and out-spreadly' (豁然贯通) and the cognitive fluidity is that we do not need to know everything to solve problems, as is epistemologically impossible, if not referring to Feng You-lan's criticism. But it is not the main point. 'Penetrating clearly and out-spreadly' means that,

without knowing everything, with the help of skillful imaginative rationality, our cognitive fluidity reaches at the level of deriving the solution of a current problem almost unconsciously from the blending and fusing of what we knew previously. To cry ‘Eureka,’ Archimedes just dipped his body in the bathtub, which was enough. However, his brain had been constantly looking for ways to figure out the volume of the crown, and finally he found out its appropriate model by combining the incident that the amount of water changed according to his volume and the case of the crown. The continuity Chen Rong-jie mentions was still working.

Viewed in this respect, although its object was deleted, Archimedes’ ‘Eureka’ primarily means to solve the problem of ‘how to measure the volume of the crown,’ not to find out the only principle to solve all the problems. Even if it is generally one way of measuring the volume, we can devise a number of ways to measure the volume besides this. This suggests that, to be replaced by the cognitive fluidity in the modern sense, ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ should throw out its mystical assumption of One Principle or only a skewer.

This illustrates where Zhu Xi’s theory of ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ has its weakness. The weakness is implicit in the context of a broad range of metaphysical theories surrounding ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ rather than the phrase itself. Concretely, both the logics of ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ and cognitive fluidity share the same premise. It can be called kind of ‘cognitive asymmetry.’ Cognitive asymmetry is present between ‘cognitive object (认知对象)’ and ‘cognitive experience (认知经验).’ While cognitive objects are arithmetically infinitely open, the cognitive experience we have as human beings is fundamentally limited. From this simple fact, the asymmetry of cognitive activities occurs. To overcome the limitations that this asymmetry causes, ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ and cognitive fluidity are the phrases entitled by the efforts to apply contents of limited experience to a variety

of cognitive objects through a variety of methods. The projecting and the blending, and the penetrating all require the union or the fusion of all heterogeneous things, or require the possibility and necessity of disjunction (异接). If experiences could be abstracted to conceptual schemes, 'penetrating clearly and out-spreadly' and cognitive fluidity are the different names given to various uses of conceptual schemes that are established to reflect uniquely human cognitive features, chosen as such cognitive tools.

Definitely, the difference is that the cognitive fluidity is an empirical phrase without any cognitive intervention, so it claims the open interconnection and fusion of conceptual schemes, while 'penetrating clearly and out-spreadly' has a background of metaphysical determinism about the list of the cognitive tools and objects that need to be interconnected. That is to say, Neo-Confucianism claims one principle for one thing. This is a project to try to tie human experience to one vision. The transcendental 'One Principle' is none other than a declaration of making this vision absolute. This project interferes with a variety of reflective discussions about life. The weakness of Neo-Confucianism as Confucianism lies in this. The philosophical projects to revive Confucianism in the modern way should overcome this weakness. In other words, diversity should be restored from the narrow vision of things and human situations held by Neo-Confucian scholars in Song dynasty.

The case is the same with the problem of 'penetrating clearly and out-spreadly.' As long as 'penetrating clearly and out-spreadly' is understood under the reign of 'One Principle,' we will never stop wandering for good to seek for the only metaphoric skewer that can penetrate all things in the world. On the other hand, the reality we face requires us to command 'penetrating clearly and out-spreadly' without such a principle. 'Penetrating clearly and out-spreadly' is a general feature of human cognitive abilities that is still appealing even separated from the metaphysical context, and this argument is an alternative to preserve the epistemological significance of it in the modern way.



## 9.

When we understand ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ in the juxtaposition with cognitive fluidity, what can we get by this? There is no problem in using ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ as the Neo-Confucian cognitive flexibility. However, at the moment it is mentioned, we always have to be careful with that intervention of the metaphysical context that surrounds it. This intervention means that of the mystical context Chen Rong-jie tries to decline. Trapped in this context, ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly,’ transcendently or inherently, would be restructured drastically around the mystical ‘One Principle.’ In addition, cognitive fixity would be obtained, not the cognitive flexibility. An odd result of exerting the fluidity to obtain fixity would come out. Cognitive fluidity fixed to ‘One Principle’ is no longer the fluidity. Furthermore, in case we abandon exerting this power, the only thing that would happen to us is none other than the fate of a snake which cannot cast off its skin, as F. Nietzsche says.

The snake dies which cannot cast off its skin. The minds that are disturbed to alter their opinion are the same. They stop being the minds.<sup>①</sup>

What we are required to have is the spirit to continue to exert the fluidity just like a snake casts off its skin. Otherwise, ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ would remain itself just as another name for ‘autistic obstinacy (自蔽固执)’ that is obsessed with the

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① Friedrich Nietzsche, *Nietzsche Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe (KGW)* vol.1, *Morgenröthe*, Translated by Park Chankook, Seoul: Chaek-se-sang Press, 2009, p.422.

already established, with epistemological horizon closed. Moreover, it would have the high probability of becoming worse than simply approving obstinacy, in that it could be claimed to be ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’, not the obstinacy.

Zhu Xi’s ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ is the metaphysically excessive cognitive fluidity. After eliminating the excess, the assertion that the expansion of knowledge affects the value judgments is rather modern. The problems that occurs all the time is the excess and exaggeration. The reason that G. Moore argues that naturalistic errors are errors is due to the fact that our cognitive fluidity is not opposed to the conceptual blending of knowledge domain and value domain, in addition to the common sense that knowledge and value are the conceptual schemes to interact each other. In short, their boundaries are unclear. Furthermore, these philosophical reflections require our modest critical evaluation about ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’ and the delicate blending, excluding the mystical ‘One Principle.’

The abilities of cognitive fluidity and conceptual blending require us to produce creatively a variety of tools to penetrate with, not just one tool. Even if the skewer is not found, it must be invented. When we discard one mystical skewer and pay attention to a variety of skewers, and thus when we seek and speculate a variety of possibilities of penetration abandoning the skewer, could we regenerate the classical Neo-Confucianism through the context of ‘penetrating clearly and out-spreadly’? In this respect, how could the people today be described who still have the blind faith and tenaciously stick to conceptual schemes and phrases of the past today the past? Should we tell them that they are falling onto the brink of ‘autistic obstinacy’ that has buried his cognitive ability and imagination into the given conventions ignoring to explore a number of alternative schemes that are disjunctive to Neo-Confucianism?

(Translated by Kim, Yon-jae)

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## 豁然贯通、优莱卡、认知的流动性

李向俊

**中文提要：**本文是从豁然贯通与现代的知的潮流产生的另一种词语并置一起了解的角度。从性理学与认知考古学——广义上的认知科学——这两种知的潮流衍生出来的两种词语，就是说，我想主张，虽然豁然贯通与“认知的流动性”这两个词语本来就是人的同样的认知特点，但在不同的方式来把握这些词语。进一步说，从这种观点来了解豁然贯通时，能发现的理论性弱点在哪里。其弱点不在于豁然贯通的词本身，而在于围绕这概念的广泛的形而上学理论的脉络上。如果我们除掉在 12 世纪的性理学蔓延的形而上学的局面，那么它就变成为认知的流动性的表现。总之，本文主张豁然贯通的内在机制就理解称之为认知的流动性的认知作用，并且阐明这种结论所解明的豁然贯通的认知的内容与特点。

**关键词：**豁然贯通，优莱卡，认知的流动性，概念的隐喻，概念混成