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COMPARATIVE PHILOSOPHY: ITS AIMS AND METHODS

Throughout many studies of Chinese and Asian philosophies, comparisons have often been made between the Chinese or Asian philosophy in question and other philosophies (both Eastern and Western), such as frequent comparisons between the *I Ching* and Whitehead, Kant and Confucianism, Taoism and American Transcendentalism, Buddhism and Hume, and so forth. Hence, some defense of “comparative philosophy” and some discussion of its goals, methods, and *raison d’être* are called for. Many scholars and philosophers would argue that comparative philosophy (especially a comparison of Eastern and Western philosophical ideas, theories, systems, traditions) is just another pointless comparison of apples and oranges—Eastern and Western philosophies are simply too different to bear fruitful comparison. This might seem especially true considering that philosophical texts and theories appear to be so embedded in historical context and tradition, that to compare a philosophical theory originating in the East with one originating in the West, ultimately and ideally calls for a comparison of the entire philosophical tradition of each.

I agree that a single statement or sentence in a philosophical text must be understood in the context of the text as a whole (or the philosophical theory set forth in the text as a whole), and that particular philosophical theories need to be understood in terms of the philosophical tradition within which they exist, and yet just as scholars of comparative literature, comparative religion, comparative musicology, or comparative ethnology, etc. can provide valuable insights through their comparisons (without undertaking the monumental, not to say impossible, task of comparing entire literary, musical, religious, and cultural traditions), so likewise can one compare different philosophical theories without undertaking to compare entire philosophical traditions. The endeavor to see things in their full context must be seen as a limiting concept, an admirable if unachievable

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goal. We can aim at a comprehensive understanding of the onto-hermeneutic environment of a particular philosophical theory (whether in simply trying to understand it, or when trying to understand its similarities and differences in relation to a philosophical theory from a very different philosophical tradition, with which it is being compared), while realizing that such a massively thorough comparison is not actually possible.

The simplest and most common question regarding comparative philosophy is, “Why bother?” In other words, what can one hope to gain from comparisons of say, Confucian and Kantian ethics, *I Ching* and Taoist philosophies of education, or psychoanalytic and *I Ching* aesthetics?

My first answer to all such objections to the enterprise of comparative philosophy is that it is almost inevitable that we understand, or interpret, the new and unfamiliar by comparing it with that with which we are already familiar. According to this phenomenological or hermeneutic principle, someone first encountering the *I Ching*, for example (or any other alien philosophical system), will always think about ways in which this unfamiliar philosophy is similar to the philosophical terrain that is our conceptual “home turf” so to speak. After first identifying what we take to be similarities between the two philosophical theories (or systems, concepts, or traditions), we naturally move on to identifying significant differences: similarities and differences in regard to logic and method of proof, in regard to values, assumptions, and aims. It is by identifying both similarities and differences that we can better understand the two (or more) things (here, theories) better. There is a natural, if logically and epistemologically unjustifiable, tendency to see similarity of different philosophical theories as somehow confirming each of them (insofar as they are similar), just as in science a theory or experiment gains credence if repeated elsewhere under similar but different circumstances. At the very least, such comparisons (of say, the “Tao” with “Nature”) help shed light on how one concept or theory in comparison with others could have been proven differently from the way it was, or what its practical consequences might be, contrary to what one has usually assumed them to be. In fact, it seems obvious to me that highlighting similarities (and differences) between two philosophical theories or traditions helps us to notice assumptions we make without being aware of it—assumptions regarding how a theory can be proven to be true (or false), and what the theoretical and practical implications of a philosophical position are.

In the sense that we see different strategies of thinking, or philosophizing, and different paths we can take in accordance with our own familiar philosophical territory, we get philosophical “answers” from

the comparison. Even our notion of “philosophy” will inevitably be stretched and altered to accommodate differing ways of thinking. Insofar as “comparative philosophy” engages in comparing widely divergent systems of philosophy, it challenges our usual assumptions about what “philosophy” itself is, and hence might even be considered to be (or entail) a kind of “meta-philosophy”—a philosophy of philosophy. By comparing the notions of “change” in Heraclitus, Whitehead, the *I Ching*, and Taoism, for example, we not only learn new theoretical and practical models of change, but our concept of “philosophy” itself is expanded and extended. We understand what “philosophy” is (or could be) not only by comparing particular philosophical concepts/theories/traditions with one another, but also by comparing “philosophy” with “psychology,” “religion,” “literature,” etc. And, again, it is the differences as well as the similarities that clarify the nature of each of the differing domains of discourse. Likewise, with comparison of “comparative philosophy,” “comparative literature,” “comparative musicology,” etc., such comparison of similar yet different disciplines each aimed at comparing things should shed light on the nature of “comparative philosophy” and the project of “comparison” in general (a “philosophy of comparison,” as it were).

However, we not only harvest “answers” (to questions like, “What is ‘philosophy?’”), we also acquire new problems, or problematics. It is a truism that the way a question is put dictates the kind of answer possible, and the better one understands (and the clearer one states) a question, the easier it will be to get the answer: the clearer the question, the clearer the answer. For example, a philosopher familiar only with the Chinese philosophical tradition might never stop to think that there may be an important philosophical question regarding the relationship of a person’s “mind” and their “body,” since the “mind-body problem” is not even (explicitly) raised or recognized in his own philosophical tradition. Similarly, a Western trained philosopher might reconsider the practical consequences of the idea that all “opposites are complementary” (rather than in mutual conflict and contradiction), after learning about the *yin/yang* paradigm of polarity in Chinese philosophy. Or, to take other random examples, a Chinese philosopher might begin to take philosophy of language more seriously after studying Hindu (Mimamsa) philosophy of grammar, and both might find mathematics, logic, and science philosophically problematic in ways not earlier perceived after comparing their own thoughts with Russell, Wittgenstein, Quine, and so on. Comparative philosophy can thus not only expand our notion of what “philosophy” itself is, but even help to expand our notions of mathematics, logic, science, art, literature, etc.

Another line of reasoning that I think can be used to define and defend comparative philosophy is this: it is certainly very common to compare philosophers within a given tradition (say, Confucius with Mencius, or Plato with Aristotle)—why is it, then, unreasonable to compare Confucius with Kant, or Plato with Chu Hsi? The fact that Confucius and Kant are from radically different philosophical backgrounds, to my mind, only makes it more urgent that they be compared, in order that there be a fruitful exchange of “answers” and “questions,” each acting as a stimulating catalyst on the other. Logic leads me to conclude that the more different two things are, the more fruitful a comparison of them will be if some similarity can be identified; a comparison of apples and oranges is not as interesting (philosophically) as a comparison of cabbages and kings. By the way, while “comparative philosophy” in modern times is more or less a Western phenomenon and is generally understood in the West as a comparison of some Eastern philosophical theory with its Western counterpart, I see no reason why a comparison of two Eastern philosophers (such as Confucius and Mencius, or Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu) or a comparison of two Western philosophers (such as Plato and Aristotle) should not also be considered to be “comparative philosophy.” This will expand the usual notion of “comparative philosophy” as employed both by its adherents and detractors, but I would argue that seeing the common element of “comparison” running throughout all traditions of philosophy helps us to understand “philosophy” better (i.e., to see it as inevitably “comparative”).

If, as I have argued in recent papers and a book on the *I Ching*,¹ the *I Ching* operates according to a dialectical (“inclusive”) logic, whereby all entities whatever (concepts, theories, things) contain, and are defined in terms of their “other,” which appears to be the “opposite” of the thing being considered, then it follows that philosophical theories and traditions (and “cultures”) contain within themselves something “other” than what they are, which defines what they are. So comparative philosophy, insofar as it may reveal this hidden “other” lying buried within the heart of any particular philosophical theory, tradition, or culture, uncovers the essential self-alienating, yet defining, kernel or core of each of the two (or more) philosophies being compared. While the *I Ching* is generally agreed to be quintessentially “Chinese” and possibly the most seminal and important of all the Chinese classics, one could argue that the antitheses to which its dialectical logic commits, it, and with which it is implicated, constitute a kind of “rupture,” an opening that allows it to accommodate seemingly incompatible theses or philosophical positions. For example, in my comparison of *I Ching* logic with Hegel and Heidegger, I argue that the *I Ching* certainly commits itself to the view that

each person is merely a focal point on a social nexus, intimately connected to all other persons and “things” (i.e. processes); on the other hand, the *I Ching* is different from itself, alienates itself from itself, distances itself from itself, insofar as it also commits itself to the complementary view that benevolent social interaction must be complemented by its “opposite”—silence, inaction, and solitude (or occasional isolation, in order to recover one’s “authenticity”). Comparison of Hegel and Heidegger with the *I Ching* similarly reveals a “rupture” or antithetical “difference” lying within their philosophies: in the case of Hegel who insists that all thought is self-contradictory and is identical to its “other,” we find that in fact Hegel’s own dialectic leads him to postulate that they are somehow the same and yet different; Hegel argues not only for identity of “opposites,” but for “identity-in-and-through-difference”;² similarly, Heidegger seems to be arguing straightforwardly for the thesis that “authenticity” is the “opposite” of “inauthenticity,” but in fact I would argue (as Steiner does) that Heidegger actually commits himself to the view that “authenticity” lies precisely in overcoming “inauthenticity” and “fallenness”—thus, far from being mutually exclusive “opposites,” authenticity and inauthenticity while poles apart are nevertheless polarized complementary aspects of a single dialectical process that incorporates both the thesis of authenticity and the antithesis of inauthenticity.³ While no doubt it is possible to uncover/discover such dialectical “contradictions” (or “ruptures”) within the *I Ching* (or Hegel, Heidegger, or any philosopher, philosophical tradition, or culture) without engaging in comparative philosophy, one could still argue that such comparison of disparate, seemingly inconsonant, philosophies (and cultures) helps one gain insight into the inner “other” of any given philosophy (or culture). Such comparisons seem not only to put the compared philosophies in a new light, or help us to see them from another perspective, but may in the end reveal a common pattern running throughout all philosophies and cultures that constitutes their inner contradiction/rupture; in other words, comparison of various philosophies with one another (or various cultures with one another) may expose a similarity in how each is essentially different from itself: the nature of inner contradiction (which is defining) may turn out to be the same (and of course somewhat different) in the various philosophies (or cultures) compared—more specifically, we may discover that all philosophies (and cultures) are dialectical.

One curious complication in the theory of comparative philosophy is the fact that throughout history, and especially nowadays with the internet and “cyberspace” which erode or transcend all national and cultural boundaries or barriers, there has never been a purely

“Eastern” philosophy or culture, nor has there been a purely “Western” philosophy or culture. Each has inseminated (or infected) the other; one thinks of historical examples such as the influence of the *I Ching* on Leibniz’s binary system, or the influence of “Oriental” philosophy and culture on Hegel (in both his philosophy of history and history of philosophy). Even as far back as Plato, one can discern elements of non-“Western” thought (regarding the nature of the soul [*psyche*], and its reincarnation in human or non-human form). As for the “East” and its various philosophies and cultures, even if it is true that China, Japan, and India were for millennia so isolated from other philosophical traditions and cultures that they were pure and self-contained, this is now certainly no longer true. One has only to think not only of the highly permeable interface and interflow of information on the internet, but also of the large number of travelers and students who these days leave the “East” (or “West”) and return to their home cultures inoculated or influenced with ideas and values from the “other” culture, which are thereby imported and incorporated into the home culture. It is becoming increasingly difficult to speak of the “East” and the “West”; such a distinction seems increasingly artificial and difficult to maintain. I do not mean that there are no differences between the “East” and the “West,” but only that always and especially in the twenty-first century these differences are diminishing due to mutual intellectual and cultural influence. For the philosophy of comparative philosophy, this would seem to entail the somewhat paradoxical conclusion that “comparative philosophy” (defined as comparison of some “Eastern” philosophy with some “Western” philosophy) is no longer possible, because there is no longer any purely “Eastern” philosophy or purely “Western” philosophy. On the other hand, because of the increasing confluence and intercourse between these different yet increasingly similar philosophical traditions or cultures, such comparisons are inevitable; for example, a young philosopher from China who gets his Ph.D. in America will in some cases return home to China and “Chinese philosophy” will be transformed by the influence of his training in “Western” philosophies, so that any future intra-cultural discourse on “Chinese philosophy” will in fact already involve or include some discussion of “Western” philosophy that has surreptitiously influenced and changed “Chinese philosophy”; philosophical discourse within the national boundaries of China will, in other words, inevitably evolve into comparison of “Chinese philosophy” and “Western philosophy,” because there will no longer be any such thing as pure “Chinese philosophy” (and of course the same is true for a philosopher studying, or otherwise influenced by, “Chinese philosophy”). It is becoming more and more common for “Western” philosophers to know something about and think in

terms of “Eastern” philosophies such as Buddhism, Zen, Taoism, and so forth; and likewise with “Eastern” philosophers. Philosophy is becoming intercultural world philosophy, just as the process of globalization in the information age is creating a world culture whose hallmark is identification-through-differentiation; differences will always remain, but they are paradoxically the grounds for identity-in-and-through-difference. This historical tendency for “opposites” (here, “opposite” cultures—the “East” and “West”) to evolve into one another is of course predictable according to *I Ching* dialectical logic.

By the way, a simple argument used as early as the first East/West Philosophers Conference at the University of Hawaii in 1939 (and later by Archie Bahm)⁴ to justify the enterprise of comparative philosophy is that it will hopefully lead to different cultures understanding one another, and if not to cultural homogeneity at least to a “global village” characterized by peaceful co-existence, rather than conflict due to mutual misunderstanding and intolerance. There are, however, at least two problems with this seemingly reasonable program for world peace through comparative philosophy. First of all, what exactly is the philosophical “tradition” (or “culture”) of, say, China (which is to be compared to the philosophical “tradition” of, say, America)? Are not the mainstream traditions and cultures of each in fact composed of innumerable micro-traditions and micro-cultures (for example, the Confucian tradition, the Taoist tradition, the Pragmatist tradition, the Puritan tradition, etc.), and would not such a conglomerate “world culture” or “world tradition” (of philosophy) still be composed of smaller streams of thought, “sub-cultures”? This idea that perhaps no supervenient “world philosophy” is even in theory possible in fact accords with the holistic and dialectical view of the interrelationship of wholes and parts, as set forth in the *I Ching*, and does not mean that comparative philosophy is a waste of time, but only that such comparisons of very different philosophical cultures and communities cannot be expected (even in theory) to culminate in pure philosophical homogeneity; it is arguable that such philosophical (and cultural) homogeneity is not even a desirable goal, diversity being the spice of life and thought.

Another problem (raised by D. Krishna and R. Panikkar⁵) is that such philosophical (and cultural) homogeneity resulting from comparative philosophy may in fact be the dominance of one “tradition” (or culture) over all others; specifically, the danger is that while comparative philosophy claims to aim at being objective and neutral, what actually happens is that some Western philosopher takes ideas and arguments from Eastern philosophies and distorts them by forcing them Procrustean fashion into Western philosophical categories, so

that they are not viewed objectively and neutrally at all but are rather merely incorporated into the dominant, parochial, Western philosophical “tradition.” As Panikkar puts it (somewhat cynically, I think): “The West not being able any longer to dominate other peoples politically, it tries to maintain—most of the time unconsciously—a certain control by striving toward a global picture of the world by means of comparative studies.”⁶ While this view, that philosophers (in the “West”) are conspiring in a post-colonial era to dominate other (philosophical) cultures may be considered “politically correct” in some quarters, to my mind it is an unlikely and unreasonable hypothesis. However, rephrased in the words of D. Krishna as “reporting of [philosophical] data in terms of a conceptual structure already formulated in the West,”⁷ comparative philosophy (defined by Panikkar as, “the philosophical study of one or some problems in the light of more than one tradition,” and as “a kind of formalized analysis of the common patterns present in the diverse philosophical systems”)⁸ sounds less sinister and conspiratorial, although still patronizing toward non-Western traditions and cultures (needless to say of all developing, third-world cultures such as the “philosophical traditions” of, say, Africa). At the very least there is the unwitting tendency to analyze non-Western philosophical traditions and systems according to the prevailing typology (i.e., in terms of Metaphysics, Logic, Epistemology, Ethics, Aesthetics, Political Philosophy, etc.). I fear, for example, that my own recently published book on the *I Ching* may have made just such an error, insofar as the *I Ching* itself and Chinese philosophy in general do not categorize philosophical concepts and theories according to such a typology of branches of philosophy, seeing different issues and answers as organically intertwining, rather than artificially differentiated according to a kind of division of philosophical labor.⁹ The danger of one tradition or culture (the “West,” in particular the English speaking world, more precisely America) overwhelming the rest of the world with an undesirably excessive influence on alternative philosophical traditions (and cultures) is especially salient when we come to the translation of philosophical texts into the current *lingua franca*, namely English. Perhaps this is one pragmatic argument against comparative philosophy insofar as it inevitably requires translation of non-Western philosophical texts into Western languages (especially English), leading most philosophers in the world at this time to have to re-think their positions and problematics in terms of the English language and the categories, positions, and problematics of Western philosophers and the “Western philosophical tradition.”

However, every enterprise carries some danger with it, and I would still maintain that comparative philosophy can offer a lot to the

world's philosophical community, and to each participating tradition (or culture). There are not only the benefits mentioned above (such as clarifying the dialectical nature of all philosophies and cultures) but also, for example, the revelation or exposure of the myths and metaphors we live by in our diverse traditions and cultures without ever being fully cognizant of them and their influence on our ways of thinking and living.

There still remain other issues regarding the validity and worth of "comparative philosophy," which are worrisome and difficult to resolve, such as whether "comparative philosophy" can stand alongside other branches of philosophy as an independent discipline (in the way, for example, that "comparative literature" stands alongside "literature" and "literary criticism" or "comparative religion" stands alongside "religion" and "history or religion"). There is also the question as to whether studies of philosophical issues, ideas, arguments, and theories taken out of their larger context (i.e. tradition) is not like tearing a plant up by its roots. Both these questions were broached tangentially above. Regarding "comparative philosophy" as an independent discipline, I have already argued that all philosophy is intrinsically and unavoidably "comparative" (as indeed all thinking is) and that while someone might specialize in comparative philosophy narrowly conceived according to the widely received ostensive definition as a comparison of some Eastern philosophy with some Western philosophy, this cannot justify calling "comparative philosophy" an "independent discipline." But so what? I have argued that it is still a useful enterprise in many ways, even if not formally recognized as an independent branch of philosophy alongside other recognized branches of philosophy, such as philosophy of law, philosophy of history, philosophy of science, philosophy of mathematics, etc. In my view, it is better (more realistic and useful) to recognize that comparative philosophy is always a useful adjunct to all these branches of philosophy; in other words, they all inevitably at some point engage in comparing one philosophy (of law, history, science, etc.) with another, and thus contain comparative philosophy as one of their methodological components or strategies, and if they neglect to compare "Eastern" philosophies (of law, history, science, etc.) with their "Western" counterparts, it is to their detriment, since assumptions and alternative paradigms will go unnoticed. As for the issue of de-contextualization, I have above committed myself to the view that ideally (in the "best of all possible worlds") comparisons would be carried out on a grand scale with entire traditions being compared, rather than piece-meal and out of context. But since this is impossible, comparison of one theory (out of context) with another (also out of context) is better than no comparison at all; while there is definitely

the disadvantage of likely distortion, there is always the advantage of seeing one's own view in a new light.

Concerning the topic of context, it is worth mentioning Wing-tsit Chan's view that in translation of a philosophical text from one language into another, care must be taken to translate a philosophical term (such as "Tao") in different ways, according to textual context, rather than to always translate it into the target language with the same word.¹⁰ Another point regarding translation of philosophical texts, in connection with comparative philosophy, is that while I think Western (or Eastern for that matter) translators and interpreters of philosophical texts should avoid mindlessly accepting the received translation (of, say, *chün-tzu* as "gentleman"), I think it is going too far to proffer such extravagant and eccentric translations (based on far-fetched etymology of Western terms) such as "authoritative person," which may authentically convey in this case the notion of someone who maintains continuity of tradition while creatively "authoring" some new contribution. Such translations are I think misleading in their connotation and do little to advance either genuine understanding of Chinese philosophy (in this case) or comparative philosophy in general.¹¹

It may seem that I have so stretched (I would say expanded or enlarged) the notion of "comparative philosophy" that the concept of "comparative philosophy" is no longer recognizable or useful. Note, however, that anyone who attacks "comparative philosophy" is comparing it to "philosophy" as ordinarily understood and is thus engaging in (or indulging in) "comparative philosophy," at least as I understand it and have defined it. It would seem that any attack on "comparative philosophy" is self-defeating if and insofar as it compares "comparative philosophy" with philosophy in general, although perhaps here we ought to speak of meta-comparative philosophy, since the purpose would seem to be the clarification of "philosophy" itself (i.e., meta-philosophy, philosophy of philosophy). In any case, it is generally agreed that what "philosophy" is, is itself a philosophical question, and until this can be settled (probably never) it is difficult to see how any final consensus can be reached as to the definition or (in)validation of "comparative philosophy." What I have offered is a tentative, working definition and defense.

My final argument in defense of comparative philosophy comes as a response to one line of argument against it. It might seem that in order to compare two things (here two philosophies or two philosophical traditions), one must somehow stand outside both (philosophies or traditions) in order to view them objectively, but that somehow philosophy is unlike a literary tradition, for example, in that the comparative philosopher is so steeped in his tradition that he

cannot escape it or “suspend” (*epoche*) it phenomenologically. But it seems to me that philosophy is a very “iffy” subject—one’s conclusions are always tentative, contingent upon premises and presuppositions all of which can never be proven. Hence, it is incumbent upon the philosopher (here, philosopher concerned with the definition and validation/invalidation of comparative philosophy) to keep an open mind and to try not to assume that the tradition in which he was trained to think is true beyond doubt. And one of the benefits of comparative philosophy would seem to be that it not only brings to light hidden assumptions, presuppositions, premises, paradigms, myths, metaphors, etc., but also exposes the pre-reflective conditions (Wittgensteinian “life-forms”) that make philosophizing possible in any given culture at any given historical epoch. Thus, in a strange way, comparative philosophy seems to make itself possible (by discovering/uncovering the “possible conditions of its own philosophizing”). In the words of Panikkar¹² (who is generally critical of “comparative philosophy”): “We may even conjecture that psychology, geography, upbringing, or other factors have predisposed peoples or cultures to take one of the [philosophical] visions [being compared] . . . ,”¹³ and one of the aims of comparative philosophy is to reveal these pre-philosophical conditions and biases that make philosophizing possible (or even necessary).

As G. Larson says in the introduction to *Interpreting Across Boundaries*, it is no more difficult to cross the boundary from one culture or tradition to another than it is to cross the boundaries in ordinary conversation (where misunderstanding is always already rife but which we do with some success). Hence, it would seem that Kipling is wrong: East and West not only can, but will and must meet (in philosophical dialogue), and in their “mutual fecundation” and cultural impact, transform one another so that they become similar and different in new and interesting ways.¹⁴

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ENDNOTES

1. *I Ching Philosophy* (Taipei: Yeong Dah Publishing Co., 1999).
2. See *Hegel's Logic*, translated by William Wallace with a foreword by J. N. Findlay, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975).
3. See Heidegger's *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York and Evanston: Harper and Row, 1962); see also George Steiner, *Martin Heidegger* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).
4. See Archie Bahm, *Comparative Philosophy* (Albuquerque, NM: World Books, 1977).

5. See Daya Krishna, "Comparative Philosophy: What It Is and What It Ought to Be," and Raimundo Panikkar, "What Is Comparative Philosophy Comparing?"—both in *Interpreting Across Boundaries: New Essays in Comparative Philosophy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988).
6. *Ibid.*, Panikkar.
7. *Ibid.*, Krishna.
8. *Ibid.*, Panikkar.
9. In my book, *I Ching Philosophy* and in my Ph.D. dissertation on Chuang Tzu (*Chuang Tzu and the Problem of Personal Identity*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1988), I dissect the philosophies of the *I Ching* and Chuang Tzu along the lines of traditional divisions of philosophy in the West, for example, with chapters on "Aesthetics in the *I Ching*" and "Taoist Metaphysics." Whether I am offering an orderly and systematic exegesis of these two classics of Chinese philosophy or doing violence to their spirit and intent by such pigeonholing is not for me to say.
10. See the Appendix, "On Translating Certain Chinese Philosophical Terms," in Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966).
11. For eccentric and misleading translations, such as "authoritative person" for *chun-tzu*, see Roger Ames and David Hall, *Thinking Through Confucius* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1987). For my own views regarding translation of Taoist philosophical works, see my "On Translation of Taoist Philosophical Texts: Preservation of Ambiguity and Contradiction," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 25, no. 1 (March 1998).
12. *Op cit.*, Panikkar, p. 122.
13. *Ibid.*, Panikkar, p. 126.
14. Or, as Ben-Ami Scharfstein states in his *Philosophy East and West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978) "... the effort we make to understand the others, who are so different from us, may help us to understand ourselves more clearly" (p. 47). Scharfstein also states that "contrast increases visibility" (p. 29), and "... whenever we perceive or think, we compare, that is, respond to similarities and differences" (p. 28); he makes the same point I do, but more concisely when he says: "... comparison is essential to perception and thought" (p. 29).

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