A Yin, a Yang, and the Golden Thread of the Doctrine of the Mean

New Translation of the Confucian Classic and a Rare Commentary

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and the Golden Thread of the Doctrine of the Mean

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This is a translation of part of the second classic, *Doctrine of the Mean*, included in the commentary *Great Learning and Doctrine of the Mean—A New Simplified Commentary*. It follows the translation of part of the first class in the commentary, *Great Learning*, which is ideally meant to be read first before this translation. In Confucianism, *Great Learning* is said to be the entry way into the study and practice of virtue and is traditionally followed, in the orderly fashion of Confucians, by the study and practice of the *Doctrine of the Mean*. This order is emphasized so that the learner is guided toward a masterful level of virtuosity—a virtuosity replete with its etymological root and meaning of virtue. This leads to a revelation of a virtue beyond virtue, or as the *Great Learning* calls it, enlightened virtue. Enlightened virtue is the fundamental nature of humanity, the spirit, or as it is translated within this work, the True Self, a translation that coincides with the cosmology of pre-Confucian Chinese philosophy. In the mid-20th century, those privy to this philosophy, and its presumably lost core teachings that also threaded themselves through early Confucianism, were the recipients of this commentary as a teaching and guide to the practice and propagation of both ancient classics within the commentary. *Great Learning* explains the why and the how to learning, realizing and propagating those core teachings unto the realization of the True Self upon the spiritual path of virtue. Following mastery of virtue that leads to insight into the True Self, *Doctrine of the Mean* teaches the subsequent step of how to tread the spiritual path of the True Self in human life that is inextricably influenced by change and the binary forces of Yin and Yang. As Yin (0) and Yang (1) are the most fundamental binary of temporal life, the *Doctrine of the Mean* teaches how to live within the binary interplay of “a Yin and a Yang,” of 0’s and 1’s, without losing connection with their source, the True Self, and its source, the ultimate 0, or Dao. Due to ancient imperial book burnings, that forced these core teachings into obscurity for over 2,000 years, this commentary and translation provide a refreshing of vital teachings that thread themselves through the foundation of these two Confucian classics, Confucianism’s philosophy and history, as well as through a lineage of transmission known as

the Golden Thread.
Herein you will find a partial translation of *Doctrine of the Mean* and its commentary, the second installment of an ongoing translation of the book *Great Learning and the Doctrine of the Mean—A New Simplified Commentary*. Said to be compiled by Zisi, or even possibly Kongji, Confucius’s grandson, the commentator of this edition affirms the statement by the renowned Confucian of the Song dynasty, Zhuxi, that *Doctrine of the Mean* is Zisi’s work.

Zhuxi himself was responsible for placing it together with three other texts, *Great Learning, Analects* and *Mencius*. Together they are known as the Four Books, which were part of a campaign to introduce the Confucian philosophy as well as form fundamental curriculum for the ancient imperial civil service examinations. Like many things Confucian, order is imperative, and *Doctrine of the Mean*’s study and practice was meant to be undertaken following that of *Great Learning’s*, and before *Analects* and *Mencius*.

The first ten lines of the Doctrine of the Mean is actually considered the text, with the rest being the text’s commentary and explanation. Within this translation work the text a dozen or so lines of the commentary are translated, with no special reason for the selection of commentary other than the amount of translation was similar to that of the first installment of the larger work mentioned above. Along with the original text, and lines of commentary that follow the text, comes the translation and main focus of this work, the commentary of both.

Like *Great Learning*, *Doctrine of the Mean* was subject to the Qin Dynasty’s infamous book burnings. That event which has all but been swept away into the corners of history, and, in error, neglected as an old, dusty and ineffectual event, has led to two centuries of loss, and thus misunderstanding, of the core fundamental teachings of the two classics, as well as pre-Confucian and Confucian philosophy. In retrospect the burnings truly were of such immense historical impact that the health and happiness of humanity even in today’s modern civilization has been exponentially lowered.

Why is this so? Looking first at the opening section of the translation of the *Great Learning* and its commentary, it can be seen that the classic:

“...is in fact a spiritual text, meaning that the text offers teachings on the cultivation and transformation of the individual for the sake of realizing and cultivating the spiritual aspect of humanity. It is a text that extols the practice of virtue and compassion in order to attain the wisdom of the spirit, a wisdom that contains, and which the Great Learning clearly elucidates, the interconnectivity of all of existence. Absolutely pertinent is that the crux, and pivotal affecting impetus of this interconnectivity, is the internal world and
mind of the individual. Common to much of ancient Chinese philosophical thought, and specifically in Daoism, is that the macrocosm of the universe is precisely mirrored in the microcosm of the individual mind. Crucial to this though is that what manifests in existence is not due to a macro effect upon the micro but, in fact, due to the very opposite. All of this is a matter beyond the physical, of the immaterial and energetic, and ultimately, of the spirit.”

The renowned Confucian philosopher, Mencius, exhorted and implored humanity to understand that it (the spirit, or True Self, as it is translated within this work) is fundamentally good. This is something of such long debate amongst the world’s philosophers, theologians, academics and laymen alike, that yet again we can hearken the Qin fires to have emblazoned yet another reason upon its brow as being one of the most tragic events of human history. Again, why? Because, along with other influential Confucian thinkers, like Xunzi, so many an influential historical figure was unable to differentiate between body, mind and the fundamental nature, or True Self. It is the True Self which is fundamentally good, and purely good at that.

Instead it is the mind which is capable of evil, as it, not the True Self, teeter-totters between good and evil, and which can succumb to the needs of the body, or even become completely overwhelmed by them. And how does Great Learning address this? Well, it hasn’t clearly for two centuries and more. It is due to the commentary translated in this work, a commentary done via medium in a teaching on pre-Confucian philosophy done in Taiwan, China in 1947. This is also a very big reason why this translation of the Doctrine of the Mean is unique. For more discussion on the use of mediums, background on the commentator channeled, named Founder Lü, my views on this uniquely-sourced teaching as well as the Buddhist concept of Right View that supports the validity of this commentary and which is mentioned below, please read the opening section of the first part of this translation “Returning the Core to Confucianism.”

Via this mid-20th century commentary the nucleus of Great Learning’s teachings, has resurfaced. To understand better this nucleus, we need to look at the opening section of “Returning the Core to Confucianism:”

Founder Lü’s commentary clarifies Right View within the meaning of the text of the Great Learning...The first step of the eight-step process of realizing the utopic vision of widespread social harmony of Confucianism, clearing the dust, for example, has been translated by the well-known James Legge, and by others, including Charles Muller, as “investigation of things.” As Founder Lü teaches in the commentary, clearing the dust is done by purifying the mind of those things that obstruct the realization of humanity’s fundamental nature, the True Self. Legge and Muller get close with the use of “things” but both lead nowhere close to purification or the internal world of the mind,
which is integral as the subsequent text in the Great Learning moves through the eight-steps first stepping in and through the mind before finally radiating outward to how the mind affects the world external.

Though it is possible that thorough “investigation” of the external world can lead to more understanding and insight into one’s fundamental nature (which is the second internal step), it is more direct, efficient and safer to start first the “investigation” within the mind. Safer because although someone could gain insight into the impermanence of life, nature and even the mind’s thoughts, yet if they are still succumbing to non-virtuous thought, speech and action then they are still harming themselves and others, thus engendering disharmony. The reason for that is due to what I translate in that first and foundational step of the eight-steps as dust. Instead of “things,” dust suggests specifically toxins, dirt or pollutants. Due to the three steps that follow and happen within the mind, the implication is dust of the mind, which Founder Lü teaches, along with vast amounts of Buddhist and Daoist teachings, needs to be purified, or cleared.

Clearing the dust. This must be part and parcel of the process of study and practice of pre-Confucian and Confucian philosophy. This is specifically so for the Great Learning (as without it the next step of revealing enlightened virtue, aka the True Self, cannot be taken) and Doctrine of the Mean (as the Mean cannot be found, realized and followed).

The mean of the Doctrine of the Mean finds its equivalent in the Great Learning’s enlightened virtue. Different terms, same meaning. Different terms, same realization. Though the terms change, like pure gold, the inherent meaning and realization do not intrinsically change, and so thread themselves through both classics, and moreover, due to the ancient core teachings of pre-Confucian philosophy, thread themselves throughout Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism and beyond. Thus, these teachings are called the Golden Thread.

The realization and enlightenment of True Self depends initially on the core teachings and entirely on purifying the mind, or clearing the dust. Yet, if the core teachings, clearing the dust, revealing enlightened virtue, mean and True Self are not properly understood, then they cannot be properly practiced and propagated. The result is that everything else that follows in study and practice, as well as in Confucianism, is tragically empty and void! I wish this was an exaggeration.

The translation of Doctrine of the Mean’s original text is indebted to Charles A. Muller and his translation. Though James Legge’s translation was looked at, again and again Mr. Muller’s translation was more suitable to work from. The differences between Mr. Muller’s and my own lie in my efforts to shorten and simplify the text,
as well as clarify according to my accumulated understanding and insight into the principles.

Shortening and simplification were undertaken because of my own pedagogic interest in adjusting the text for greater ease of memorization. Memorization and recitation of Chinese, as well as other cultures' classics, is an integral part of comprehension as well as a powerful language acquisition method. Recitation in particular moves the study of classics into the all-important realm of practice. It helps the student to avoid the rampant pitfalls of intellectual academics that not only bog down the classics but confuse and nullify their raison d'être. Many classics, and in particular those of the main three Chinese philosophical traditions, are spiritual texts whose purpose is to aid humanity to understand their fundamental nature as well as humanity's own reason for being. Application is paramount in philosophy.

Common to the philosophy of Confucianism is the principle, and person, who has, through practice and application, fulfilled the philosophical teachings. Muller translates this person as “Noble Man,” and Legge, “Superior Man.” In light of the gracious inspiration bestowed to me I delved a bit deeper into the meaning of the word virtuoso and eventually decided to use this instead of Muller’s and Legge’s term, and this term does bring a bit of uniqueness to my translation.

Living life is an art in and of itself, and especially so amongst the close and distant relationships we all have with each other. It has been my discovery that for the sake of spiritual realization, a meaningful life, a healthier mind and body and healthier relationships, Confucianism's principled focus on virtue, along with familial and social roles, is a valuable and effective system of attaining those things. Yet, to achieve this, and on top of a good deal of study and practice, great art and craft is needed. Therefore, it is with the utmost respect for the Confucian sages and practitioners who, instead of recoiling into the isolated seclusion of a Daoist cave or Buddhist temple, undertook their spiritual practices of enlightenment and virtue amidst the churning and rocking waves of social humanity. Thus, in debatably the most challenging field of practice, they became, in the truest etymological sense of the word, virtuosos.

For many of them, this was done via the understanding of and unification with the core teachings of pre-Confucian philosophy, or the Golden Thread. These teachings allowed virtuosos tremendous insight. Insight into what? The “binary code” of existence and humanity.

What all modern digital computers use today is the binary code of 0’s and 1’s. This code in turn creates all the processing instructions, data and text that computers use to function. In other words, it is different combinations of 0’s and 1’s that are the foundation of everything we see and do on computers. This binary code in turn is akin to the interplay of the fundamental dynamic of essence and function, a dynamic that is part and parcel of East Asian philosophy.
Essence is the platform and foundation. Function is the result that is generated and springs from said platform. Function is the execution of essence, and essence is the source of function. From the point of view of binary code, essence is 0, function is 1.

Within Yin-Yang terms, essence is Yin and function is Yang. Yin, representing emptiness, is 0, and due to its extreme emptiness, that is pregnant with limitless potentiality, Yang, or 1, springs from it. This interplay unfolds throughout the cosmic, the organic, the sub-atomic, and more, as a spiritual binary code.

This can be seen in Great Learning’s eight step process to universal harmony, or as the Confucians say, the Great Harmony. The very essence of realizing the Great Harmony is first clearing the dust (taming one’s mind). This is essence, or 0. From this a practitioner can realize the function, or the second step, reveal innate knowing (realize the True Self), which is 1. 1 then becomes 0 and the essence from which arises the next function, or 1, and then next step of the process of attaining the Great Harmony, rectifying the thoughts. Rectifying the thoughts transforms into 0, and becomes the platform for 1, or righting the mind, and so on in continuous interplay from the mind into the body, the body to the home, the home to the country and on to peace across the universe. It is all the interplay of 0 and 1.

The continuation of the human race does not occur outside of this binary interaction. In the act of procreation, the female is 0, and the male 1. In the process of reproduction, again the female as 0, the essence and platform that nurtures the pregnancy gives birth and creates the child, or 1. From the point of view of Yin and Yang, the essence and female is yin, the male and created child, yang. A yin, a yang, a yin, a yang, and nothing is left undone.

It is the Great Learning which teaches of how and why to realize the fundamental essence of existence, the ultimate Yin and 0, the infinite Dao. This is taught in the classic to be done through the infinite Dao’s manifestation within humanity, the ultimate Yang and 1, the True Self.

Ancient pre-Confucian core teachings about the True Self, known as the Golden Thread, threads itself through the Doctrine of the Mean. The Mean, which Founder Lü teaches, is the True Self, has its Heavenly source elucidated in the classic and teaches how to live according to it. With proper adherence to the Mean or True Self, then the ceaseless binary interplay of 0 and 1, the dance of a yin and a yang, that threads throughout all of existence and humanity, can unfold as it must, and always has and always will.
Great Learning and Doctrine of the Mean—A New Simplified Commentary

Though the skies’ rains are immense,

They cannot moisten the rootless grass.

Though the Buddhas’ Dharma is vast,

They cannot convert those lacking providence.
自序

中庸一書，乃不偏不易之道也。人人終朝由之，而弗能達於至善之地，此所謂失其本矣。

夫中者天之理、地之樞、人之主也。故天無中理，則星斗錯亂，四季失序；地無中樞，則
山崩海潰，萬物失常；人無中主，則心意無束，四相失度。故天、地、人必先得其真理
而後立焉。人列三才之一，為萬物之靈，立天地之中，通四端，兼萬善，此所以得其真理
也。苟失真理，此形雖存，此理則亡矣。降及末運，人心不古，世風頹敗。追其因，系五
倫不重，八德弗振所致。故皇天震怒，頻仍諸劫，以警愚頑，復垂聖道，匡正人心，整飭
倫常，道劫之所以並降，上帝妙用大哉！劫警愚頑，期其心歸善，以達賢關；道渡群真，期其
心歸理，以造聖域。嗟乎！上帝妙用正其宏慈耳。世人弗識，何勝浩歎！斯時也，萬路弗通，惟一金線，舍金線而弗
蹈，則自罹浩劫矣。故太甲曰：天作孽猶可違，自作孽不可活。良不誣也。然聖人教民之道，原
無矜奇，即在日用倫常間。是以不偏之謂中者，即無過與不及。執其兩端，用其中也；不易之謂庸者，即一定而不可移，日常應用之定理也。定理者何？乃君敬、臣忠、父
c慈、子孝、夫婦和順、兄友弟恭、交友以信而已，此不易日常應用之真道，復何難哉！
曰：言則易而行則難矣！聖人無大過人者，不過擇乎中庸，朝斯夕斯，念茲在茲，力行不
息，此所以為聖人也。明知中庸之道為無上大法，言則有鴻，而行則不備，此所以為凡夫
也。聖、凡之殊即在此點，我因有見於此，極表反對空談而弗行者，所以欲挽此浩劫，扶
此狂瀾，別無奇方以營時急，惟有淺言解注中庸作根本解，以期人人信守奉行，人心化
轉，則天心效順矣。所以希聖希賢者，己心也；隨波逐浪趨於下流者，己心也；弭浩劫於
無形者，己心也；醜劫於彌漫者，己心也；心之主權大矣哉！惟望億兆同胞，深識吾言而
實踐之，則吾所注淺言中庸，庶幾於社會人心有所補益雲爾。歲在

中華民國三十六年歲次丁亥孚佑帝君序於西京幹元堂
The Doctrine of the Mean is the Dao of the unbiased and unwavering, where all of humanity comes from and returns to. What is known as losing the root is the inability to arrive at transcendent goodness. The center is the truth of the universe, the pivot of the earth and humanity's master. Thus, if the universe was bereft of this truth the galaxies of stars and the four seasons would flail astray and fall into disorder. If the earth lost its centering pivot, the mountains will crumble to the dry seas as all things would lose their normality. If humanity lacked this centering master, the mind and its thoughts would become unrestrained and the Four Forms uninhibited.

Therefore, the universe, earth and humanity each must first attain, and then secure, truth. Humanity is one of the Three Greats, established between the universe and earth, possessing the greatest capabilities, knowing fully the Four Entries and all

Three Greats: Heaven, Earth and Humanity.

Four Entries: compassion is the entry to humaneness; shame, the entry to fairness; giving way, entry to propriety; discerning right and wrong, entry to wisdom.
forms of benevolence, and hence obtains truth. If truth is relinquished, though the form exists, truth is dead.

Now, fallen into the Degenerate Age, humanity and the world are impure and decaying. Looking for the reason why, found is indifference toward the Five Relationships and a lack of resonation with the Eight Virtues. So, Heaven thunders with anger, and sends repeated disasters to admonish the foolish and stubborn as well as the Dao of the sages to rectify the human mind and reorder human relationships and virtues. This is the simultaneous descension of the Dao and disasters.

Translator's Note

Degenerate Age: the last stage of three stages in Buddhism, characterized by little use of the true original teachings of the last Buddha.

Five Relationships: Confucianism's basic social relations: ruler-subject; father-son; husband-wife, elder brother-younger brother, elder friend-younger friend.


Heaven: in an expression of deep reverence when it, and God, are mentioned by name in this preface, they are placed at the beginning of the line (or top of the line in the original vertical structure of the Chinese text.)

God's immense and mystical function! Descending disaster to admonish the foolish and stubborn to return humanity's mind to benevolence and arrive at the noble gate while Dao transforms the masses in hopes the mind will return to truth and create a sagely land. Alas!

God's mystical function precisely is this great and compassionate, it's just that people of the world don't understand. What a shame! At this time, all roads are blocked except for the Golden Thread. To give up and not tread upon the Golden Thread, one will suffer from disaster.

Golden Thread: ancient pre-Confucian transmission of core teachings on the fundamental nature of humanity. Due to its weaving within multiple philosophical-religious traditions, terms used within this commentary will span the breadth of the various systems. An example is “Degenerate Age” above, which is a Buddhist term, but is of particular pertinence to the core teachings, or Golden Thread.
Hence, Tai Jia is known to have said that "Seemingly, Heaven’s disasters can be disobeyed, but death comes to those that create disasters themselves." There are no false accusations.

The Dao taught by the sages to the people, was never strange and unnatural. It simply lies in the daily use of the Five Relationships and Five Cardinal Virtues. It is via what is called the unbiased center, never going too far yet always sufficient, grasping both ends and utilizing the center. Unwavering is what is known as the mundane, which is set and unmoving. This is a theorem applicable every day. What is this theory? It is just the ruler’s respect, the minister’s loyalty, the father’s compassion, the son’s filial piety and the accommodation and harmony of husband and wife. It is fraternity, brotherly love and friendship based on trust. Again, what is so difficult about applying the true Dao daily? It is that speaking comes easy, yet action is a challenge.

Sages are those who have not gone to extremes, and not going to extremes is aligned with *Doctrine of the Mean*. This is how a sage is from morning to night, thought after thought, taking up the call without sloth. Comprehending the *Doctrine of the Mean* is to know the unsurpassable and great dharma. Speaking profusely yet sparse in action, this is what is called the ordinary person and the difference between them and the sage is this point. As I have seen this I am expressly against those who talk the talk but don’t walk the walk.

**Translator’s Note**

**Tai Jia**: Tai Jia was the fourth emperor of the Shang Dynasty.

**Five Cardinal Virtues of Confucianism**: Humaneness, Fairness, Propriety, Wisdom, Faith.

**Action**: “actions speak louder than words” is a principled theme and emphasis throughout Founder Lá’s commentary of both classics, which is why he says “again,” in his question.

**Extremes**: by avoiding extremes, suffering of personal disaster, such as illness and relationship discord, is avoided while naturalness akin to the Daoist concept of wuwei, or no-action, is neared. To be clear, wuwei is unique in that, as the Daoist classic Daodejing teaches, despite no-action, nothing is left undone. This is paradoxical, and only non-sensical to the intellectual mind, but is a function of the ultimate Dao and humanity’s fundamental nature, or True Self.

Therefore, when aspiring to pull back the disasters and shore up the tumultuous waves, there is no strange method to manage these urgent times. There is only this simplified commentary of the *Doctrine of the Mean*, a fundamental solution in hopes
that all people will have faith and employ it. When the human mind transforms, the mind of Heaven imitates and follows.

Thus, the precious sages and noble ones, these are one’s mind. Following the waves and trends downstream, this is one’s mind. Bringing disasters to formless cessation, this is one’s mind. Fermenting and permeating disaster, this is one’s mind. Alas, the masterful power of the mind is immense! Only with the aspiration that billions of fellow citizens can deeply comprehend my words as they simultaneously enter the humane mind of society are applied, have I done this simple commentary of the *Doctrine of the Mean*.

Date

The Republic of China in the year 1947, Ding Hai Year.

**Fu You Di Jun** at Xijing Qianyuan Temple

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**Imitates and follows**: the mind of Heaven is the True Self, pure, unadulterated and unable to imitate or follow anything because it is not subject to the laws of change that the mind is. What can happen is the human mind can be transformed (or purified) to the point that the mind of Heaven can flow forth, fulfilling itself rather than imitating or obeying the human mind.

**Fu You Di Jun**: another name for Founder Lü.
中庸之我見

中不偏，庸不易；子程子言之詳矣！中者大中至性，不易謂其常而不變也。然不易至性，默藏我身，人人有而不知其有，乃以血心主身而陷性于萬劫矣。斯時也，如能覺察血心之非，幡然覺悟，恪奉格致之道，矢志作去，則不易之真性複明，而我一身有良主矣。如是，則可代天地以化育，與天地共參贊也。故聖人立教，以日用倫常為立身之本，格致之道為見性之基，是以中庸大道，不尚矜奇，本系平庸。抱我大中至正之真性，發乎至誠，將忠孝節義無過、無不及，完全作到，則人道全備，人道全備，而天道有階可升矣。所以欲修天道者，必由人道為始，人道、天道一也，世人豈可誤解乎。或問曰：一而已矣，何有天人之別？吾曰：在力行中庸之道時為人道，全乎中庸之道，則即為天道矣。
Doctrine of the Mean—Commentator’s View

The center, unbiased; the ordinary, unwavering—Chengzi explained this in detail. The center is the great center and utmost True Self; the unchanging, the constant and the unwavering, is also the utmost True Self; it resides within each individual person who, not knowing this, takes their body and mind as their master and sinks the True Self into myriad disasters.

Now, if through examination of the insignificance of the body and mind, which brings awareness and even sudden and complete insight, then, with scrupulous reverence, clear the dust and reveal innate knowing, vowing to undertake affairs in this way, then the unchanging True Self will become bright again and one’s body will have a good master. If done this way then one can stand in the stead of, and be part of the delegation of, Heaven and Earth, and educate.

Thus, the sages establish and propagate the teachings. The foundation is the establishment of the individual in the daily use of the Five Relationships and Five Cardinal Virtues as well as in the Dao of clearing the dust and revealing innate knowing to realize the True Self. The non-strange, essentially ordinary, supreme Dao of the Doctrine of the Mean, contains the True Self righted at the great center and is expressed through utmost sincerity. By means of this loyalty, filial piety, frugality and fairness are undertook without extremes yet always sufficient, fulfilling the Dao of Humanity. With the Dao of Humanity fulfilled, there then are steps to the Dao of Heaven. So, those that aspire to cultivate the Dao of Heaven, must start with the Dao of Humanity, for they are one. How can people mistake it? Why only one? Why then the difference between Heaven and humanity? I’ll say this, when completely executing the Doctrine of the Mean as if it is the Dao of humanity, this is the Dao of Heaven.

Translator’s Note

Chengzi: Educator and contemporary of Confucius responsible for explaining “center” and “ordinary” of the Doctrine of the Mean as “unbiased and unwavering.”

Clear the Dust and Reveal Innate Knowing: purify the mind and enlighten the True Self, two principles from the Great Learning.

Non-strange: the Ultimate Dao and Doctrine of the Mean are so ubiquitous so as to be ordinary, and no fantastical efforts are made to reveal them as such efforts betray the Dao.

Without extremes yet always sufficient: a salient characteristic of the expression of the Mean.
中庸之定義

中庸定義者何？尚篤行也，行之不篤，乃信之未堅矣。觀中庸一書，始言一理，中散為萬事，末複合為一理；放之則彌六合，卷之則退藏於密，其味無窮，皆實學也。是以首章先令人明瞭天之明令於我者是何物？曰性。性具五德，率而行之，實現於外，盡其美善，則凝至道矣。故聖人覺性，凡夫迷性；聖凡之分，在覺、迷之別，聖者先覺者也。將自性能事不遺盡備，書於中庸，垂法萬世。蓋中庸所載，皆孔聖當年之實學也。故人能奉中庸之道而作，一者，為聖教之實踐人。二者，亦即我自性之實踐人也。力行聖人之中庸，正所以盡自性之能事矣。故先覺者，覺自性也，曰立道立教；後覺者，受先覺之覺啟自性也，曰修道受教。是以初入德者，未覺其性，乃修聖人之道，受聖人之教，及覺自性，乃修自性之道，受自性之教也。故我定義主要不尚空談，而重力行，始終不渝焉。
Doctrine of the Mean—Definition

How to define the *Doctrine of the Mean*? Still, it is sincere practice and propagation. If practice and propagation are not sincere then faith is not strong. Looking at the classic *Doctrine of the Mean*, the very beginning expresses one truth, the center, from which everything in existence disperses. The *fruit* returns and unites with one truth, disperses again throughout the six directions, rolls itself up once more and retreats into hiding—the nuances within are boundless and all are practical learning.

It is the first section that initially causes people to the understand what thing has been brightly commanded to people by Heaven. It is called the True Self. The True Self contains the Five Moral Merits which guide, are practiced and displayed externally. Exhausting this beautiful benevolence *is* the coalescence of the utmost Dao. Thus, sagely people enlighten their True Self while the ordinary confuse it. The difference between the sagely and the ordinary lies in the difference between enlightenment and confusion, of which enlightenment has first come to the sages.

Without omittance and fully equipped, the capabilities of the True Self and its dharma have been dropped down to the world in the form of the classic, *Doctrine of the Mean*. Generally speaking, the *Doctrine of the Mean* covers the practical learning of Confucius during his time. Therefore, if people can revere and practice the *Doctrine of the Mean*, one, they will be practitioners of the teachings of the sages, and two, practitioners of their own True Self.

Diligent practice of the sages *Doctrine of the Mean* is precisely the exhaustion of the capabilities of the True Self. Hence, those who are enlightened first are those who have realized the True Self, which is called establishing the Dao and the teachings. Those whose enlightenment follows after are receivers of the inspiration of enlightening the True Self by those enlightened first, and this is called receiving the teachings and cultivating the Dao. It is because of the True Self not being enlightened by those just starting to breech virtue that the Dao of the sages is cultivated, and their teachings received. With enlightenment of the True Self then there is cultivation of the Dao of the True Self, and the reception of its teachings.

Translator’s Notes

Fruit: from the Great Learning, “fruit” are the myriad differentiations of all phenomena.

Six directions: north, south, east, west, up and down.

Confucianism’s Five Moral Merits: warm, upright, respectful, frugal, humble.
Hence, primarily, my definition does not emphasize empty talk but that of unwavering diligent practice from start to finish.
中庸之源流

朱熹先生序曰：中庸何为而作也？子思子憂道學之失其傳而作也，誠然。蓋人人各有一部中庸，身中藏之久矣。從寅會生人，以至於今，凡為人者，莫不皆有。噫嘻！落於後天，受氣拘物蔽，則有而不知其有矣。吾謂：此部中庸即人人心中所藏之中庸，聖人能將己身所密藏之中庸啟封質人，以教萬世，化人人各將身中密藏之中庸啟封，行諸於世，盡其全道以呈獻於天矣。嗚呼！此鑰聖人受之於天，啟萬民之鎖，令各探討己身之中庸也。由是觀之，其中庸源流，必發自於天矣。
Doctrine of the Mean—Source and Transmission

How the *Doctrine of the Mean* came into being was said by Mr. Zhu Xi to be via Si Zi who, due to the unfortunate loss of study of the Dao, transmitted this work. Truly, this is so. Generally speaking though, each and every person has a volume of the *Doctrine of the Mean* that has long been hidden, even since the first appearance of humans in the Yin and Hui ages until today. Indeed, all that are human have possessed it! It is largely unknown though as after birth it is restrained by the atmosphere and enshrouded by materialism.

I call this volume of the *Doctrine of the Mean*, the *Doctrine of the Mean* stored within each and every person. It is the sages that can avail the capabilities of the hidden *Doctrine of the Mean* and initiate and confer the nature of humanity through teachings to the world, transforming each and every person to take up their own hidden *Doctrine of the Mean*, and exhaust its initiation and conference of it all over the world unto the respectful offering of Dao to Heaven.

Alas! This key that the sages received from Heaven to unlock the people is teaching all to investigate one’s own *Doctrine of the Mean*. Via this view, the source and transmission of *Doctrine of the Mean*, must be sourced from Heaven.

*Figure 1* Mr. Zhu Xi: Song Dynasty Confucian philosopher instrumental in the propagation of the study of Doctrine of the Mean.
天命之謂性，率性之謂道，修道之謂教。

【字解】天：乃理天也。命：猶令也。性者理化萬殊之一也。率：循也。道：乃自性中所具五常之道也。修：乃盡性之能事也。教者化也。

【節解】道自理天所出，佛心普渡萬緣，自性大源賦自理天也。天者，非氣象之天，乃真空至靜無極理天也。在天未命於我之前曰理，既命於我之後曰性耳，理與性無別也。性本至靜，萬物皆備，五常具焉，落後天遂蔽其真矣。如悟之覺之，克念除欲，復性本來面目，率性中所具之五常而實踐之，則入世曰人道，人道大備，出世則自合天道矣。然覺性、率性初入德時乃受聖人之教，及至覓性後，率性時，即受自性之自教矣。或問曰：此何理？吾曰：人人自性中各具一部中庸。聖人先覺探討自性之中庸，以盡其能事，載諸書面，以啟人人自性之中庸也。故修自性之中庸，乃初受聖人中庸之啟示，及自性圓明後，仍須力行自性之中庸也。
The Mandate of Heaven is the True Self. Guiding the True Self is Dao. Cultivating the Dao is education.

**Education:** Learning to the Confucians was a matter of self-learning unto the internal realization of one’s fundamental nature. It was not an accumulation of knowledge. Rather it was an unveiling of what is, and always was, innate. Thus, the renowned Confucian, Mencius, said “True learning is to go after the stray mind.”

[Character Explanation] **Heaven** is the **Heaven of Truth**. **Mandate**, similar to an order. The **True Self**, one of the myriad manifestations of Truth. **Guiding** is from what is to be adhered to. **Dao** is the Dao of the **Five Cardinal Principles** present within the True Self. Cultivating is exhausting the capabilities of the True Self. **Education**, transformation.

### Translator’s Notes

**Heaven of Truth:** For pre-Confucian Chinese philosophy it is formless infinity without beginning or end, still, quiet and everything is born of it.

**Mandate:** At once the True Self, at once the transmission and Golden Thread.

**True Self:** Not just “one of,” but the one and source from which humanity’s myriad manifestations of Truth spring from. Mind, thought, speech and action are those manifestations.

**Five Cardinal Virtues:** Confucianism’s humaneness, fairness, propriety, wisdom and faith.

**Transformation:** Gradated insight into the fundamental nature of humanity, and thus existence, as well as into humanity’s spiritual Purpose.

*note: all italicized words in the translation of the commentary are words from the translation of the original text of *Doctrine of the Mean.*
[Section Explanation] Dao, exiting from the Heaven of Truth, is the mind of Buddha providing salvation for the myriad destinies and is the great source of the True Self endowed by the Heaven of Truth. Heaven is empty of energy and form and is the ultimately quiet, limitless and true emptiness of the Heaven of Truth.

Before Heaven has bestowed the mandate to oneself it is called Truth, and after it is bestowed it is called the True Self. Truth, and the True Self, are not different. The True Self is ultimately quiet, possesses the Five Cardinal Principles, is equipped with the myriad things yet this Truth is gradually shrouded in backwardness. If one is enlightened, restrains the thoughts, eradicates desire and restores the original face of the True Self, while adhering to the practice of the Five Cardinal Principles inherent within the True Self, then within the mortal world this is called the Dao of Humanity.

With Dao of Humanity fully equipped, when leaving the mortal world, the Dao of Heaven will be naturally joined with. Thus, with regard to enlightening and adhering to the True Self, when virtue is just entered into, that is when the education of the sages is received. After discovering, and then adhering to the True Self, that is when the education of the True Self is received.

There might be a question to why this is so? I say that within each and every individual’s True Self there is a volume of the Doctrine of the Mean. It is the sages that first realized this, investigated the True Self’s Doctrine of the Mean, exhausted its capabilities and then compiled it into book form to inspire the True Self’s Doctrine of the Mean within each and every individual. Hence, cultivation of the True Self’s Doctrine of the Mean is to first acquire the sages’ inspiration. After the True Self is full, round and bright, then the True Self’s Doctrine of the Mean needs to be applied.
道也者，不可須臾離也；可離，非道也。是故，君子戒慎乎其所不睹，恐懼乎其所不聞。

【字解】離：去聲。須臾者頃刻之間也。睹：視也。聞：聽也。

【節解】所謂道者，即性中所具五常之德也。身離五常之德，則心性相悖，心與性悖，則蔽其真矣；是以不可須臾離也。離五德則無道，無道即無倫常，無倫常者，人道尚不能容，況天道益深嚴乎！是以覺性、率性為人生當前惟一要務，不宜忽作忽輟，以自甘墜落也。應以虛無之性，自耕自耨，戰兢自持，慎心物於隱微，遏意惡於動機，原性無瑕，則與真理可通耳。故君子戒慎乎其所不睹者，非懼人睹也，懼理睹也；恐懼乎其所不聞者，非懼人聞也，懼理聞也。君子所修者，理也。所戒慎恐懼者亦理也；小人所戒慎恐懼者，人睹人聞也，而不戒慎恐懼理睹、理聞焉，君子小人由此辨矣。
Dao cannot be left for an instance, for what can be left is not Dao. Thus, such is the virtuoso, prudent when not seen and cautious when not heard.

Virtuoso: “from Late Latin virtuosus "good, virtuous," from Latin virtus "moral strength, high character, goodness; manliness; valor, bravery, courage (in war); excellence, worth," from vir "man."”

https://www.etymonline.com/word/virtuous

[Character Explanation] Left is the falling tone. Instance, a flash of time. Seen, can be observed. Heard, can be listened to.

[Section Explanation] What is known as Dao is the virtue of the Five Cardinal Principles within the True Self. When the body leaves the virtue of the Five Cardinal Principles then the mind and the True Self mutually rebel. As the mind and True Self run contrary to one another, truth is enshrouded. Cannot be left for an instance is to be used.

Departure from the Five Moral Merits is to depart from Dao and lacking Dao means to be bereft of the Five Relationships and Five Cardinal Principles. These may still be intolerable to humanity but Heaven is even all the more rigorous.

It is the enlightening of the True Self, guided by Dao, which is the one and only vital affair of human life that is neither to be neglected nor ceased by self-abandonment. Rather, by means of the nothingness of the True Self, work the plow and hoe, wage the battle with trepidation, be cautious with the hidden and the subtle mental defilements, while

Translator’s Notes

Falling tone: Mandarin Chinese uses four tones in its pronunciation system. Many Chinese characters contain different meanings, which are differentiated by tone. The common meaning of the character for “to leave” is usually pronounced with the second, or rising tone. Here though it is spoken with the falling tone and meaning “to adhere to; to depend on.” “Cannot be left” is still used for its brevity and likeness in meaning.

Mutually Rebel: rather, the mind rebels against its source, the True Self, which, unchanging and completely pure, is void of any intention or ability to rebel.

Nothingness: not to be thought of as completely empty but quiescent to such extremity that it spontaneously and naturally bears what is known as “mystical presence.” That, within humanity, is the the True Self.

Mental Defilements: Greed, Anger and Ignorance, most commonly seen in Buddhist philosophy.
restraining motivations of ill-intent. The original True Self is unblemished and thus is connected to Truth. So, the virtuoso, prudent when not seen, is not afraid and cautious of being seen and heard by humanity, but afraid and cautious of being seen and heard by Truth. That which the virtuoso cultivates, as well as what prudence and caution are, is Truth. The ignoble’s prudence and caution is reserved only for what humanity sees and hears of them without regard for what Truth sees and hears. This is the difference between the virtuoso and the ignoble.

**TRANSLATOR’S NOTES**

**Truth:** refers to Heaven of Truth, and source of the True Self.

**Ignoble:** literal translation is “small person.” Even modern China uses “big” and “small” to qualify people of different stature, such as “big” for elders, leaders and high-level management, and “small” for younger siblings and relatives and beginners. In ancient China, and particularly for Confucianism, this type of qualification was based on moral integrity whereby those possessing a high degree were “big people” or virtuosos, and those with a low degree, “small,” low, or ignoble.
莫見乎隱，莫顯乎微，故君子慎其獨也。

【字解】見：音現，表現也。隱：暗處也。顯：昭著也。微：細事也。獨者人所不知，而已所獨知之地也。

【節解】性落後天，被氣拘物蔽而失權衡，主自心台焉。心者，念善念惡，念一起則流景德四播，如湍水之中，驟激微石，則水紋波波羅羅，層層外出，達至四周之極而後已焉。心者，湍水中之微石也，一念善一念惡，莫不波羅外現，天地鬼神悉共鑒之。隱微者，心物欲動未動之際也。見顯者，波羅四周之寬大也。是故，修性之君子所慎者，心物欲動未動之際也。所懼者，心浪見顯，波羅四周之寬大也。嗟乎！聖人之所以為聖人，其初入德時立志於隱念，而後修其至德，以凝至道，化民教民，功同天齊，見於兩大，其所見於道者，莫不始於隱念之立志也。愚人之所以為愚人者，其初入德時失志於微念，而後逐波逐浪，趨於下流，心物之發，身物之行，疊罪如山，變愚人而為惡人矣。其所顯其惡者，莫不始於微念之立志也。是故君子慎其獨者，乃慎隱隱微心念也。
Nothing is more manifest than the hidden, nor more obvious than the subtle, thus, the virtuoso is cautious when alone.

[Character Explanation] The pronunciation of “to see” is similar to “appear” and means “to manifest.” Hidden, a dark place. Obvious is the clearly shown. Subtle, the little things. Alone, that which others do not know and the places only privy to oneself.

[Section Explanation] After the True Self descends into the mortal world, it is restrained by airs and shrouded by materialism and defilements whereby it loses its balance and power as master of the platform of the mind. The mind’s thought comes together as either a good or evil thought and scatters to the four directions like water rushing over a pebble bed and layer upon layer of wrinkling waves fan outward unto the four fringes until finally dissipating. A good thought, an evil thought, those pebbles of the mind’s rushing water, always spread outward, and all gods and demons of Heaven and Earth are warned.

Where the mental defilements desire to arise yet have not yet arisen, this is the hidden and the subtle. The waves of the great vastness of the four corners, this is the manifest and the obvious. Thus, the virtuoso is prudent of where the mental defilements desire to arise yet have not yet arisen and cautious of the manifestation of the mind’s waves in the great vastness of the four corners.

Alas! What is regarded as the sage is that who during beginning stages of moral development, establishes an aspiration from a hidden thought which is followed by the cultivation of ultimate virtue, completely joined with the ultimate Dao, and teaches and transforms the people. It is
similar to Tianqi’s work manifesting from Heaven and Earth, as this manifestation of Dao cannot but begin in a hidden thought of an established aspiration.

What is regarded as the fool is that who during the beginning stages of moral development, loses their aspirations in a subtle thought and then merely rides the waves and current downstream. As mental defilements arise, and the body follows, sins pile up like a mountain and the fool becomes evil.

This obvious evil cannot but begin in a subtle thought of an established aspiration. Thus, the virtuoso is cautious when alone, this is caution of the mind’s thoughts.

Translator’s Notes

Tianqi: an ancient Chinese nature deity.

Thought: Founder Lü’s contrast between manifestations of "thought" has an air of Chan (Zen) Buddhism. Chan Buddhism is known for its use of huatou, or short phrases continuously contemplated upon until logical reasoning is suspended to the point where the "head of the word" (literal translation of the Chinese huatou) can be revealed. This could bring great insight and even enlightenment of what Buddhist’s refer to as Buddha-nature. Huatou is the point before a word, or more precisely, thoughts “arise yet have not yet arisen,” or in terms of the Doctrine of the Mean, hidden before they manifest as the subtle.
喜怒哀樂之未發，謂之中；發而皆中節，謂之和。中也者，天下之大本也；和也者，天下之達道也。

【字解】樂：音洛。中節之中：去聲。節：即節度也。

【節解】無極一動，生出太極，太極判分兩儀，兩儀生四相，四相生八卦，八卦變化而生萬事萬物。追本探源，系無中生有焉。喜怒哀樂即兩儀四相之比也，喜怒哀樂未發之前，曰身中無極；喜怒哀樂既發之後，曰身中太極也；未發之前，曰大中，性也；既發之後，曰變象，情也。故修道者必須克情複性，自性與理無殊。天之所喜者，喜善也；天之所怒者，怒惡也；天之所哀者，哀群生迷性也；天之所樂者，樂群生修道以覺自性，歸根還本源也。我自性之喜怒哀樂與天相同，則無不中節矣。所以中者，天之理、地之樞、人之主也。自性所發，喜怒哀樂皆合天地之中理，則內含太和矣。我抱性中之太和，匡正人心，以期化轉末運之厲氣，風移俗，轉古風，達性中太和於天下，猶春風霑霑，所到之處，動植潑，均沾恩沾惠。此所謂和也者，天下之達道也。
Before pleasure, anger, sorrow and joy arise, this is the Mean. When they aptly arise, this is Harmony. The Mean is the great source of all under heaven. Harmony is the expression of Dao throughout all under heaven.

[Character Explanation] *Joy* is pronounced *luo*. *Aptly* is the falling tone and means appropriate.

[Section Explanation] With one movement the *Infinite Void* begot the Supreme Ultimate. The Supreme Ultimate divided into *Heaven and Earth*. Heaven and Earth begot the *Four Forms* who begot the *Eight Trigrams*. The Eight Trigrams’ transformations begot all things.

*Infinite Void*: this is *Dao*, all quiet, dark and still. The Supreme Ultimate is the first, natural and spontaneous expression of the Infinite Void. Their terminology comes from possibly the most ancient Chinese classic, *Classic of Change*. Within terms of binary code, *Dao* is 0, *Supreme Ultimate* is 1.

*Heaven and Earth*: or *Yang* and *Yin*.

*Four Forms and Eight Trigrams*: young and old *yang* and *yin* are the Four Forms which further form a system of symbols representing basic characteristics of the cosmos, or the Eight Trigrams. Both find their source in the Classic of Change.

In pursuit and investigation of the source of existence, it is from the void. *Pleasure, anger, sorrow and joy* are the associations of Heaven and Earth and the Four Forms. *Before pleasure, anger, sorrow and joy arise*, this is the Infinite Void within the body. *After pleasure, anger, sorrow and joy arise*, this is the Supreme Ultimate within the body. Before they *arise*, this is the great *Mean* of the *True Self*. After arising, this is the fluctuation of Form and emotion. Thus, those who *cultivate* the *Dao* must reign in the emotions and restore the *True Self* as the *True Self* and Truth are one in the same.

That which Heaven takes *pleasure* in, is goodness, and that which *angers* it is evil. That which brings *sorrow* to Heaven is the people’s misplacement of the *True Self*. That which gives it *joy* is the people’s *cultivation* of the *Dao*, enlightenment of the *True Self* and subsequent return to the root and source.

My own *arising of pleasure, anger, sorrow and joy* is one and the same with Heaven’s and hence, is invariably *apt*. So, the *Mean* is the Truth of Heaven, the pivot of Earth
and the master of humanity. When the *True Self arises pleasure, anger, sorrow and joy* are aligned with Heaven and Earth's Truth of the *Mean*, as they then contain supreme *Harmony*.

That which embraces the *Dao* to inspire the masses' lost *True Self* is one's own *True Self*, and it is the great root of all under heaven. Examining and observing the catastrophes and evil pervading the Degenerate Age, it is caused by all people losing the *Dao* of the *Mean* and *Harmony*. Embracing the great harmony of the *True Self*, rectifying the human mind, transforming the Degenerate Age’s evil airs, affecting change of customs that return them to ancient form, the great *Harmony* within the *True Self* will be attained throughout all under heaven. Just like spring breezes and mists rustling and donning the foliage, the *Harmony* and expression of *Dao* of all under heaven moistens with grace and benevolence.
致中和，天地位焉，萬物育焉。

【字解】致：推而極之也。位者安其所也。育者遂其生也。

【節解】此一節，乃將我性天中和之道推廣行遠，以至乎其極之征驗也。故先將我己身之天地正其位，己身之萬物遂其育，則己身中之天地遂蹈中履和矣。然已蹈中履和，何能化轉乾坤之厲氣？宇宙之殺機？必須極力將我性天中和之道推廣行遠，使人人身中天地各正其位，人人身中萬物各遂其育，則整個之大天地豈不轉災殺為吉祥乎。蓋群生身中天地萬物與整個之大天地、大萬物一體連貫焉。群生身中之天地萬物各得其位育，則整個天地萬物安能不得其位育乎，蓋其返求諸身也。
Reaping the Mean and Harmony, Heaven and Earth are righted and all things are nurtured.

[Character Explanation] Reaping is propagation to the utmost extent. Righted is set in place. Nurtured is proceeding to grow.

[Section Explanation] This section is the propagation far and wide of the Dao of the Mean and Harmony of one’s True Self which accordingly creates extreme tests. Thus first, right one’s own Heaven and Earth and satisfactorily nurture all things of one’s own, so that one’s own Heaven and Earth can proceed to tread upon the Mean and Harmony.

Then, already treading upon the Mean and Harmony, how can the evil energy of Qian Kun and the killing throughout the universe be transformed? It is necessary to make all matters of effort to propagate one’s own Dao of the Mean and Harmony far and wide, stimulating the righting of all people’s Heaven and Earth and aiding all people’s things to attain satisfied nurturing. How then won’t the catastrophes of killing pervading the entire greater Heaven and Earth be transformed?

Heaven, Earth and all things of the masses are one interconnected body with the entire greater Heaven, Earth and all things. When Heaven, Earth and all things of the masses are righted and nurtured then the entire greater Heaven, Earth and all things cannot but also be as well. Why not reflect and return everything to oneself?

Tests:
Propagating “far and wide” the existence of, and helping others realize their own, True Self, is inherently challenging. Yet, “tests” are the very aids to realizing, and sustaining the realization of, the True Self upon the Mean.

Qian Kun:
Heaven and Earth, from the Classic of Change.

Reflect: the point here is that the external is a mirror of the internal. If there is a problem in the external world, the cultivator of the Dao upon the Mean reflects upon themselves, looks into their own mind, finds the problem internally and corrects it skillfully thereby enacting a corresponding correction upon the external.
【總論】中庸一書，首言天命之謂性。何謂天命？天者理天，命者理散萬殊，賦於人人心中，故曰命。由是觀之，理乃性之大源也。在未賦性於人前，乃真空至理，無在無不在。大無不包，微無不入，渾渾噩噩，圓陀自如也。既賦性於人後，散則支配全體，聚則歸於微渺。然人但知性之用，曰知覺運動，及其性之體何在？則即弗知，此人人迷本之故也。天之所命，至善純潔之性，寄託人身何處？必須得聞至道之人方知。或問曰：至道何處見也？吾應曰：至道已降塵寰，普渡大開，希各善男信女迅訪速求，勿失良辰焉！至道者何？曰修性也，修性歸理曰聖，自性人情曰凡，故聖人先知一身自性之所在，復達於知覺運動周身之用，由己身小無極而通大無極矣。是以聖人所注者慎獨，慎獨者何？即畏身中之小無極也。由這一點看來，人須先修至德以凝至道，則聖域賢關咫尺眼前矣。故聖人以至道化民，先使人人心明性之所在，曰系自理天而賦，然後教之以格、致、誠、正功夫，將自性復初，率我自性實踐於外，此乃聖人化行俗美之道也。是以中庸首節曰天命、曰性、曰道、曰教，經旨奧意，已言盡無遺矣！其下系其用也。乃言欲明曉性之大源，性之所具，首先戒慎恐懼。戒慎者何？慎己所獨知之地也。恐懼者何？懼己心流浪播四周也。由是觀之，我之一身即天地之大本，我之一心即天地之中耳。能進行到此步功夫，身中之至道是不可須臾離也。以我自性之中和正氣，以化轉天地之厲氣，由我一身外推，盡性之所知，發性之所能，以化人人鹹令覓其自性也。如人人心中天地得位，人人身中萬物得育，則整個大乾坤可不整而安矣。何也？天地者，人人之逆旅也。群性之自天亦即無極真空之天也，群性自天各得其位育，則乾坤安得不效順乎。
In the first line of the Doctrine of the Mean, the Mandate of Heaven is the True Self, what is the Mandate of Heaven? Heaven is the Heaven of Truth. Mandate is the one truth disseminated throughout the myriad manifestations and which has been bestowed within each person. Via this view, Truth is the great source of the True Self.

Before the True Self was bestowed to humanity it was the utmost Truth of true emptiness—inexistent yet everywhere, encompassing every immensity, penetrating every minutia, turbid and unrestrained. Once the True Self was bestowed to humans, allocating itself throughout their beings, it collected itself and returned to the subtlest of minutia. Then although humanity understands the functioning of the True Self as being a dynamic of consciousness, as to the whereabouts of the True Self, it has no idea. This is the source of each and every person's confusion of the source. Heaven's Mandate is the pure and transcendentally good True Self and to know where it has been entrusted in the body requires receiving the transmission from a person of the ultimate Dao.

Now, a question might be, how to seek the ultimate Dao? I should say, the ultimate Dao has already descended into the mortal world starting the great salvation. I hope all good faithful men and women will quickly seek, and inquire about it, not wasting this opportune time.

What is the ultimate Dao? Cultivation of the True Self. Cultivating the True Self and returning to Truth, this is called sagely. Via the True Self and entering into the emotions, this is called ordinary. Thus, sages first know where the True Self resides within the body and so recover its use of consciousness in the entire body which, being itself a little infinite void, connects it to the great infinite void. This is done by means of the sage abiding in caution when alone. What is caution when alone? Fearing one's own little infinite void.

Looking from this point of view, humanity needs first to cultivate ultimate virtue to conjoin with the ultimate Dao. Then the arches to the land of the sages and worthies will be right before one's eyes.
Hence, sages transform the people via the ultimate Dao, first aiding each and every person to clearly comprehend the existence and place of the True Self’s source. This is to say, Heaven of Truth bestows the True Self and then educates humanity to use the gongfu of clearing, revealing, rectifying and righting to recover the True Self and guide its capabilities as they are executed externally.

This is the sages Dao of transforming and beautifying the vulgar. It is done by means of Doctrine of the Mean’s profound purpose and meaning, known as the Mandate of Heaven, True Self, Dao and education of which I have spoken of completely, without omittance. What follows, is application.

To speak of comprehending clearly the great source and location of the True Self, first, prudence and caution. What is prudence? Prudence is one’s own knowledge of where one is. Caution? Cautious of one’s mind flowing aimlessly in all directions.

From this view, one’s own body is the great root of Heaven and Earth. One’s own mind is the Mean of Heaven and Earth. The capability to proceed to this step of the ultimate Dao of the Mean, is the gongfu of cannot be left for an instance.

Right Energy of the Mean and Harmony of one’s True Self, via one’s external propagation, exhaustion and execution of the True Self’s wisdom and capabilities, is used to transform the evil energy of Heaven and Earth. Then each and every person can be transformed and guided to seek the True Self.

If each and every person’s internal Heaven and Earth can be righted and all things nurtured then the great Qian Kun cannot but be entirely at peace. How? Heaven and Earth is humanity’s hotel, while it’s Heaven is the True Self, and a Heaven of the infinite void and true emptiness at that. With humanity’s own Heaven righted and nurtured, how will the Qian Kun not follow suit?

**TRANSLATOR’S NOTES**

**Gongfu:** commonly used in relations to martial arts (Kungfu), this word refers to mastery of a practice, skill, craft, body of knowledge etc. The reference here is to mastery of one’s mind, or internal gongfu.

**Clearing, revealing, rectifying and righting:** four stages of the paramount gongfu of internal cultivation, laid out in the Great Learning. Clearing the dust (purifying the mental defilements), revealing innate knowing (realizing the True Self), rectifying the thoughts and righting the mind.

**Right Energy:** Pure energy, unadulterated by selfish desire and emotions, sourced direct from the ultimate Dao via the True Self. A Confucian term.
仲尼曰：君子中庸，小人反中庸。君子之中庸也，君子而時中；小人之反中庸也，小人而無忌憚也。

【字解】中者不偏之謂。庸者不易之謂。王蕭本作小人之反中庸也，程子亦以為然，今從之。忌者禁也。憚者懼也。

【節解】中庸二字，前注已詳矣！無容重述焉。君子覺性，故行中庸之道；小人迷性，故反中庸之道也。我本五德悉備，念念在我性中，君子而時中者，不偏之中，不易之庸，朝省夕惕，營營在抱也。若夫小人則非然，任四相以放縱，馳心意而無束，自認作事嚴密，謂人弗知，是以先自欺而後欺人，故無所忌憚以縱欲也。結果氣象之質，陷自性于萬劫矣！良可歎也。
Confucius said: The virtuoso is the Mean while the ignoble runs contrary to it. The virtuoso is always with the Mean, while, running contrary to it, the ignoble fears no consequences.

[Character Explanation] Mean, unbiased and unwavering. Wang Xiao was ignoble and ran contrary to the Doctrine of the Mean, to which Chengzi concurred, and so it’s been until present day. Consequences are something to abstain from. Fear is to be apprehensive.

[Section Explanation] The Doctrine of the Mean’s two characters have already been explained above and no repetition is needed. The virtuoso has enlightened the True Self and so practices the Dao of the Doctrine of the Mean. The ignoble has confused and lost the True Self, and thus runs contrary to the Dao of the Doctrine of the Mean.

The Five Moral Merits are originally complete and, thought after thought, are within one’s True Self. The virtuoso is always with the unbiased and unwavering Mean, embracing it morning and night. If the ignoble is not thus, and gives free reign to and indulges the Four Forms, lets the mind run wild without restraint, secretly undertakes affairs and keeps them from others—this is first deceiving oneself followed by the deception of others, as well as self-indulgence without fear of consequences. The result and nature of the situation is that the True Self is sunk into myriad catastrophes. This is easy to sigh about!

Translator’s Notes

Wang Xiao: unknown historical person and apparently not of the highest moral order.

Chengzi: Song dynasty educator known for defining the Doctrine of the Mean as “the unbiased and unwavering.”

Two characters: the Chinese name of the classic is only two characters, meaning “center” and “ordinary” respectively, and translated as Mean.

Within: rather, is inspired by the True Self. The True Self, being of the infinite void of the ultimate Dao, is unencumbered by the conceptual limits of thought, and does not in and of itself “think.” It inspires thought, the Five Moral Merits, the Five Cardinal Principles etc. for the sake of fulfilling the aspiration to aid humanity in discovering its fundamental nature, the True Self.

Affairs: immoral and harmful affairs.
子曰：中庸其至矣乎！民鮮能久矣。

【字解】鮮：上聲，下同。鮮者少也。

【節解】溯自青陽時代，萬民迷性未深，其心渾渾，其身朴朴，自性靈明，邪欲遁跡，斯時也，人心猶存無極之真理焉。降及紅陽，人心漸放，殺機頻動。故聖賢奉天承運，創始文化，提倡道德，治人倫修禮樂，人道遂稱大備。故將乾坤萬物之中庸載諸於書，以啟人人自性之中庸也。在斯時，人人雖不能盡其中庸全道，而悖乎中庸之大體者尚鮮。降及白陽，人心奸詐，利欲薰蒙，風厲氣彌漫乾坤。雖人人各具無上之靈性，密藏至尊之中庸，而鮮有探討者也。故聖人此言，預知白陽時代，人心無恒，鮮有遵乎自性之中庸，而實踐於外者。是以聖人預知白陽之氣象，因而感歎焉！
How pervasive the Mean is! Thus, few can sustain it for long.

[Character Explanation] Few is the rising tone, and hereafter is such. Few, or a small number.

**Green Yang Period:** The propagation of the core teachings of pre-Confucian philosophy is traced through three periods, the Green Yang, Red Yang and White Yang. The Green Yang ranged from the pre-Xia dynasty (pre-2,000 BC) until the time of Mencius (Warring States period circa 300 BC), from which the Red Yang period began. It then proceeded unto the early 20th century and the White period of today.

**Followed in step:** did not arise and go astray.

[Section Explanation] In the Green Yang Period humanity’s confusion of the True Self was not so deep, the mind less clever, the body simpler and as the True Self was spiritually bright, evil desire followed in step. During this time, it was just like the human mind contained the truth of the infinite void.

Descending into the Red Yang, the human mind gradually went astray and killing increased. The sages and worthies accepted and took on the burden of Heaven’s decree, created and extolled a culture of morality to bring order to human relationships, propriety and the arts and finally fully equip the Dao of Humanity. Thus, Doctrine of the Mean of Heaven, Earth and all things, was compiled into book form in order to inspire the Doctrine of the Mean within each and every person’s True Self. Although at this time all people were unable to exhaust the complete Dao of the Doctrine of the Mean in general few were those who ran contrary to it.

Descending into the White Yang, the devious human mind’s effervescent selfish desires and decadent evil suffused itself throughout Heaven and Earth. Although each and every individual possesses the ultimate spiritual True Self and the hidden and most-revered Doctrine of the Mean, few are those that explore it.
子曰：道之不行也，我知之矣，知者过之，愚者不及也；道之不明也，我知之矣，贤者过之，不肖者不及也。

【字解】知者之知去声。

【节解】难乎！中庸之道，至圣深知内弊焉。圣人所谓知者过之，此知非指良知之人，乃指认气为理之人也。虽自己执气质之知，而理想认已良知矣。然既复良知，性之所发，皆不偏之中，不易之庸也，又安能过之乎！故过者犹不及也。及其愚者，自性浓染，气欲勃勃，自身五恩尚不能报答，何能觉自性以行道也？道之不明，至圣深知内弊焉。自己居贤之人，与前认气为理之人，大同小异。而不肖与愚者，内中少有分殊；不肖者，气欲蒙之尚浅，易於格除，而愚者，气欲固蔽深矣。如能立无畏大志，始终不渝，以觉自性，亦可以认以前种种，如同昨日死；以后种种，如同今日生也。然至圣既称知者、贤者，而知者、贤者，下遍加一遍字，由过字上注目，即非真知、真贤也。我敢大膽加句断语：知者过之，贤者过之；乃与愚者不及，不肖者不及同也。希各注意此点，为要焉。
Confucius said: I know why the Dao is not practiced, the wise look past it and the foolish cannot near it; I know why the Dao is not enlightened, the worthy look past it and the unworthy cannot near it.

[Character Explanation]
Wise is the falling tone.

[Section Explanation] It is so difficult this Doctrine of the Mean! Aspiring sages deeply understand one’s inner faults.

What Confucius termed as the wise does not point at those who have recovered their True Self, rather it points to those who have taken energy as the Truth. Although thinking the wisdom of energy has been grasped and the ideal of the True Self recovered, the expression of the recovered True Self is the unbiased and unavailing Doctrine of the Mean, how then can it be looked past? Thus, looking past is akin to cannot nearing.

As for the foolish, with their True Selves blemished, desires and emotions running rampant and unable to return the favors of the Five Graces, how can they enlighten the True Self and cultivate the Dao?

The Dao is not enlightened, aspiring sages deeply understand one’s inner faults. The worthy, and the wise mentioned before, are largely identical. As for the unworthy and the foolish, there
are a few differences between them. The desires and emotions of the unworthy are shallow and more easily eradicated while those of the foolish are harder and deeper.

If a lofty and fearless aspiration can be made and abided by from beginning to end then by means of the enlightened True Self it can be said it is as if all things of the past passed away yesterday and all things of the future are born today.

Though still aspiring sages are called the wise and the worthy, if the word “past” is added along with its explanation above, then they are not truly wise nor truly worthy. I dare with great gall to say that the wise and the worthy who look past are no different than the foolish and the unworthy who cannot come near. I hope that everyone will take note of this vital point.
人莫不飲食，鮮能知味也。

【字解】見前。

【節解】天生一民必具一性，在聖不增，在凡不減，不過迷悟之分，即聖凡之別。吾問世人曰：一身知覺運動誰之力也？世人必對曰：一氣運之耳。不但不覺自性，猶未知身中有自性也。猶人莫不飲食，而鮮有知其飲食之理者。夫飲者水也，飲水必須思源，水尚有源流，而支配我身者豈無源流乎！身之支配源流，性也；性之源流，理也。覓一身之源流，曰覺自性；追性之源流，曰知理。知理為後知真行，則自臻於道矣。由飲水之微事可以悟出理性之大源，食物必須思本，如黍、穀類，其生長繁殖之源何在？在其初植之粒種裡。一粒植地，萬粒生焉。人類之繁殖恒河沙數，化育無窮，究其源，在一理也。故一理而分萬性，萬性分賦萬民。是以覺性、盡性備，其中庸全道可臻至理焉。換而言之，曰：人莫不飲食，鮮能知飲食之源理也。聖人以日常飲食之細事，內寓與理，以期人人窮究飲食之源理而漸窮性理之大源也。循循善誘，引人入聖之苦心由此可見矣。（五恩者天、地、君、親、師恩也。）
There is no one who doesn’t eat and drink, yet few understand the flavor.

[Character Explanation] Same as above.

[Section Explanation] Each person that Heaven has created must have the True Self. It is not increased for the sages nor lessened for ordinary people, however the difference between the sages and ordinary people is the difference between confusion and realization. If I ask the people of the world, “who powers the processes of one’s consciousness?” They will definitely reply, “energy.” Not only is there no insight into the True Self, it is as if there is not even awareness of it within the individual.

It is like people eating and drinking, few understand the truth of it. When water is drunk, there must be some thought of its source as it still has a source that dictates its flow. As for that which allocates oneself, how can there be no source? The source that dictates the flow and allocation of oneself is the True Self. The source that dictates the flow and allocation of the True Self is Truth. Discovering the source that dictates the flow and allocation of oneself is known as realizing the True Self. Pursuing the source that dictates the flow and allocation of the True Self is called realizing Truth. After realizing Truth, upon Right Wisdom and Right Practice, one then arrives at the Dao.

Via the act of drinking water, great insight into the great source of the True Self and Truth can be attained. When eating, there must be contemplation of the source, like for example, millet. Where is the source of its elaborate growth? At the brink of its growth in a seed. One seed planted in the earth sprouts myriad seeds.

The elaborate growth of humanity, and its limitless transformations, is like that of the grains of the Ganges River. Upon investigation of the source, it is found in one Truth. One Truth then separated into the multitudes of True Selves which were bestowed to the multitudes of people.

It is by means of realizing and exhausting the True Self and fulfilling the complete Dao of the Doctrine of the Mean that Truth can be arrived at. In other words, there is

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**Translator’s Notes**

**Energy**: part of the Heaven of Spirit and Heaven of Matter, but not of the Heaven of Truth which is without energy and matter. It is important to keep in mind that this commentary was done in 1940’s China, when traditional Chinese culture, and its terminology such as “energy,” was more common. Though today the answer might be different, the lack of insight into the True Self is still the same.

**Ganges River**: the great river of India whose infinite sands have graced the metaphors of many Eastern philosophical and spiritual teachings, including especially those of Shakyamuni Buddha.
no one who doesn’t eat and drink, there are just so few who understand the source and Truth of eating and drinking.

As profound Truth is housed within, the sages employ this daily and miniscule affair of eating and drinking. They hope all people will comprehend the source and Truth of it and thus gradually comprehend the great source of the True Self and Truth. From this the patient and systematic guidance of people into the aching heart of the sages can be seen.
子曰：道其不行矣夫！

【字解】夫：音扶。

【節解】夫子在列國時代，一車兩馬，周遊列國，講道德說仁義，朴朴風塵四十餘載，力竭聲嘶，鞠躬盡瘁。而當時諸侯利欲薰蒙，不尚孔子內聖外王之道，惟以強兵利國之心為抱。夫子見大道不能行諸於世乃回魯焉。刪詩書訂禮樂，乘天地至公作春秋，以權行天子事，而亂臣賊子懼焉。道其不行矣夫，此一句乃孔聖萬難之語，不得已之詞也。吾注至此，如親聆其衷腸，如親聞其聖歎，不由我心戚戚然，柔腸一轉，為天下蒼生不禁潸潸淚落也。嗟乎！聖人憫世之心苦矣，芸芸眾生，誰識聖意哉！
Confucius said: How unfortunate the Dao cannot be practiced!

[Character Explanation] The pronunciation of Fu is the rising tone.

[Section Explanation] During the time of fractured states, Confucius, on his two-horsed cart, roamed the breadth of these states teaching morality, humaneness and fairness. For 40 plus years he toiled and labored, tired and weary from bowing, he exhausted his energy with a sound of careful hesitation.

At that time, the desire for power by government ministers suffused everywhere leading to a lack of esteem for Confucius’s Dao of the Sagely Within-Kingly Without as they only embraced the use of war to gain power for the state. Seeing that the Great Dao couldn’t be practiced throughout the states, he returned to the state of Lü. There he revised the Book of Odes, compiled works on propriety and music, and maintaining the fairness of Heaven and Earth, compiled Spring and Autumn for ruling matters of government. This scared corrupt ministers and their thieving progeny.

How unfortunate the Dao cannot be practiced! This sentence is the lament of Confucius, having no alternative when up against his myriad challenges. Commentating up to this point, it is as if I have intimately been privy to his inner feelings and actually heard the sage’s exasperation. So, my own heart’s sorrow cannot be helped and with a wrenching in my gut cannot help but weep for all life under heaven. Alas! The laboring heart and compassion of the sage, for the sake of the world and its multitudes of sentient beings, who can understand this sagely meaning!
子曰：舜其大知也與！舜好問而好察邇言，隱惡而揚善；執其兩端，用其中於民；其斯以為舜乎！

【字解】知：去聲。與：平聲。好：去聲。察：考察。揚：稱揚。兩端：乃兩頭。邇：近也。

【節解】大哉舜乎！孝弟兼全，仁德具備，自天子以至於庶人，皆可以舜作模範也。然舜之聖德如此偉大，其性蓋與我同，而舜之所以為舜者，乃克念作聖，畢露天真，發揚自性之廣大以求至乎其極。舜之所以好問者，蓋與天同；天者，至虛至靈，人抱謙德，則受益無窮矣。而好察邇言者，凡世俗之淺言俚語，內中皆密真理，不以淺近俚語而弗考察，然入聖之徑乃由淺入深者也。隱惡而揚善者，天道似乎順人情也。人皆喜美譽，惡逆言，隱其惡而弗諫，則悛改無期矣。揚其善而心喜，其善即止於此而不益耶。舜之所以隱惡揚善，雖曰順乎人情，以吾觀之，正戒世矣。我雖與彼隱惡，而作惡者應知悔；我雖與彼揚善，而作善者應知懼，此何理也？曰：人作善作惡，天公不言不語，希惡者知悔，善者益修，此其天公之本意矣。及其惡者不知悔，而惡盈不得不罰；善士益加修，而功圓安得不賞乎？舜之所以隱惡揚善之意，正與天公一體焉。執其兩端，用其中於民者，大中至正之道也。試觀春風到處，萬物發；商飆起時，萬物殄滅，此乃天地至公之定理也。聖人以道化民，曰執中，中與公，其意乃一而二，二而一也。聖人執其兩端，用其中於民者，正與天地之大公一也。教民有道，施民以德，萬民受德而知其大德。立之以法，司之以法，而萬民守法而不越法。噫！蓋舜即天也，舜之行與天殊無二焉。
Confucius said: How great was the wisdom of Shun! Shun was inquisitive, and observant of even trivial talk; he minimalized others evil and praised their goodness; grasping and utilizing the two ends to right the people; this is who is known as Shun!

Translator’s Notes

**Shun**: one of pre-Confucianism’s legendary sage-kings who rule prior to the Xia Dynasty.

**Minimalized**: this word is a less direct translation of the Chinese, which could be translated as “hiding” but it is not used here as it does not imply reduction and/or eradication (of evil) that “minimalize” does.

[Character Explanation] *Wisdom* is the falling tone. *Yu* is the rising tone. *Tend* is the falling tone. *Observant* is to observe and examine. *Praised* is to praise. *Two ends* are two heads. *Close* is to draw near.

**Yu**: a final particle used in literature.

**Tend**: not used in the translation as “inquisitive” and “observant” sufficed.

**Close**: also not needed in the translation.

[Section Explanation] The great Shun! He was equipped with humaneness, morality and both filial and brotherly love. From rulers to the people, all can take Shun as a role model. Though Shun’s sagely virtue was this great, its nature is similar to mine.

The person who is known as Shun is the sage, pure as flower dew, who restrained his thoughts and expressed the immensity of the *True Self* in search of its limits. Shun’s *inquisitiveness* is similar to Heaven’s. As humanity upholds humble virtue, via the ultimately empty and spiritual Heaven, they will receive **limitless benefits**.

**From rulers to the people**: a line from the Great Learning.

**Limitless benefits**: as the humbly virtuous, and especially so for the virtuoso, who tread the path of the Mean, skillfully employing the interplay of yin and yang in daily life, connects themselves with Heaven. Heaven’s utmost emptiness engenders limitless capacity, which includes blessing the virtuosos that live in accordance with it.
As for observant of even trivial talk, all worldly slang and trivial talk contain within it the hidden Truth. It is here that the path of the sage is begun, drawing near to the trivial and the slang, and thus via the shallow, the profound is entered.

He minimalized others evil and praised their goodness, this seems like Heaven is acquiescing to human emotions. Humans love beauty, praise evil and speak disrespectfully. If evil is minimalized and not restrained, then there is no hope of reform. Praising goodness for one’s own pleasure, this goodness will get to a point and go no further.

**Acquiescing:** as explained above, the use of “hiding” in Chinese suggests only concealment, not reduction and/or eradication, which, as Founder Lü says, gives the appearance that Shun and Heaven are acquiescing to evil human emotions, which is not the case. The Chinese “hiding” becomes “minimalizing” which connotes “renunciation.”

**Great Center:** this is the True Self, the Mean and the Doctrine of the Mean.

**Dao:** way or method.

**Law:** here means the principles of wisdom and virtue taught and exemplified by the sages. Another translation is the Buddhist term “dharma.”

Although Shun’s minimalizing of others evil and praising their goodness is said to be acquiescing to human emotions, from my view, it truly is renunciation of worldly ways. Even though one minimalizes another’s evil or raises another’s goodness, for evil one must know regret and for goodness one must know fear. What’s the reasoning here? It is that when it comes to the doer of goodness and evil, Heaven’s justice says nothing, as Heaven’s essential meaning is that those who do evil will know regret and those that do good will cultivate beneficially. If evil-doers are unaware of regret, when evil reaches fullness there must be punishment, while the cultivation of those doing good will be supported and, upon the fullness of their efforts, will be rewarded. Shun’s minimalizing others evil and praising their goodness, is one with Heaven’s justice.

The Dao of Righted at the Great Center, this is grasping and utilizing the two ends to right the people. Examining the spring winds blowing all around and as all things sprout, when violent winds arise, all things are destroyed. This is the principle of the justice of Heaven and Earth. The sages who use the Dao, to transform the people, grasp the center. The center and justice are one and the same. The sages grasping and utilizing the two ends to right the people, is precisely one with the great justice of Heaven and Earth.

There is a Dao to educating the people. Grant the people virtue and as all people receive virtue they will then know great virtue. Establish law, govern by the law and all people will observe and not transgress the law. Ah! Regarding Shun and Heaven, the actions of Shun are no different than Heaven’s!
子曰：人皆曰予知；驅而納諸罟、護、陷阱之中而莫之知辟也。人皆曰予知；擇乎中庸而不能期月守也。

【字解】予知之知去聲。罟：音古。護：胡化反。阱：才性反。辟：與避同。期：居之反。罟：網也。護：機檻也。陷阱：坑坎也。

【節解】痛哉！聖人之言也。人人各具圓明之性，落於氣象，被世俗一切薰陶冶染，遂認逆旅為家鄉，執血心為吾主矣。而猶恃聰明自謂予知，豈知已將具體之性，驅於罟、護、陷阱之中而己猶未知也。人人皆自謂聰明，擇乎中庸，期月尚不能自守，況恒久乎。由是觀之，世人自恃聰明者，鉤心鬥角，爭名奪利，為已聰明也，如是愈聰明則自性愈迷深矣。若夫人大聰明者，修自性，以期光明磊落；養浩然以期充塞兩大，此謂先天之真聰明矣。蓋中庸者，終身不可須臾離之道也。擇乎其一，期月尚不能自守，安得謂知乎。
Confucius said: All people say they know, yet they fall into traps, snares and nets knowing not how to avoid them. All people say they know, yet despite their intentions they cannot adhere to the Doctrine of the Mean for even a month.

[Character Explanation] *Know* is the falling tone. *Net* is pronounced the same as “ancient.” *Traps* upend the reckless, *snares* upend the *True Self*, *avoiding* cannot be done and *adherence* cannot be resided in. *Nets* are fishing nets. *Traps* are snaring contraptions. *Fall into* is rough-going.

[Section Explanation] Such is the pain in Confucius’s words! All people possess the full and bright *True Self*, but as they take their *hearts of blood* as their masters, it descends into the realms of spirit and matter. Molded by the fumigated pollution of the mortal world people proceed to think their backwards movement is the way home.

**Translator’s Notes**

**Hearts of blood**: body, self.

**Two Greats**: Heaven and Earth, of which humanity fits correctly between when realization of, and living in accordance with, the True Self occurs.

Maintaining their cleverness, they say they know, yet how can they already know the *True Self* specifically as they have unwittingly *fallen into traps and nets*? All people say they are clever yet as to adhering to the **Doctrine of the Mean** for even a month, they cannot do it, not to mention for an extended period of time.

Looking at things this way, people of the world maintain this cleverness, scheme against one another, vying for fame and power, all to be clever. What results is that the cleverer they become, the deeper the confusion about the *True Self* becomes. If these people use their great cleverness to cultivate the *True Self* and awe-inspiring righteousness in hopes of filling the two greats with continuous brightness, this is the true cleverness of Heaven.

Generally speaking, the **Doctrine of the Mean** is the *Dao of cannot be left for an instance*. There is but this one intention. If for one month this still cannot be adhered to, how can it be known?
子曰：回之為人也，擇乎中庸，得一善，則拳拳服膺而弗失之矣。

【字解】回：孔子弟子，名顔淵。拳拳：奉持之貌。服：猶若也。膺：胸也。

【節解】復聖擇乎中庸，得一善者，非擇乎中庸之一也。所謂一善得而萬善備，了而萬善矣。復聖受至聖心法，明徹萬事萬物，以一貫之至理，擇乎中庸之道者，正盡中庸之全道也。是以拳拳服膺，念茲在茲，而戒慎恐懼焉。夫一善之一者，深而解之，一即無極別名，無極本無一字，至虛至靈，此一字不過強名之。復聖明徹天地萬物不出一理，事事物物以一貫之，一善者，即一理，由一理而兼萬善也。蓋中庸之首章已盡其詳，萬善之融合曰道，道乃一理之用。復聖悟徹至道，知一仍是有象，未造極峰，須了一，始能臻於至理，復聖樂道，蓋明洞一之歸宿，所以為樂也，此系從天道來論。然力行中庸之道者，初步入手，能以擇乎中庸一章，力行不息，由人道而邁進天道亦甚可嘉焉。
Confucius said: Hui as a human being adhered to the Doctrine of the Mean. Having received the One Virtue and holding it firmly in mind, it seems he never lost it.

[Character Explanation] 

Hui was a student of Confucius’s, named Yan Yuan. 

Holding it is the appearance of maintaining with reverence. 

Seems is just like. 

Mind is the chest.

[Section Explanation] The sage that received the One Virtue and adheres to the Doctrine of the Mean, does so with the One of the Doctrine of the Mean. What is known as receiving the One Virtue and all virtues are fulfilled, is the realization of all virtues via the realization of One.

It was the sages who received the sacred core teachings and comprehending completely all things and all matters by means of the ultimate truth of the penetrating One, adhered to the Dao of the Doctrine of the Mean and truly exhausted the complete Dao of the Doctrine of the Mean. It is done by virtue of holding it firmly in the mind, thought after thought with restraint, prudence and caution.

Going deeper into One of One virtue, it is another name for the infinite void. As there are no words to name or describe the ultimately empty and spiritual void, One was the name given it. The sage who comprehends completely Heaven and Earth and all things and all matters, without exception does so with the all-penetrating One Truth. One Virtue is One Truth and via One truth all virtues are fulfilled.

Already fully detailed in the first part of the Doctrine of the Mean, the coalescence of all virtues is called Dao and it is a function of One Truth. The sage, attaining complete insight into the ultimate Dao, knows that One still has form and has not reached the apex of infinity and so needs to attain the complete enlightenment of One to begin stepping toward ultimate Truth. Again, the sage emphasizes the Dao to illuminate where One returns to.

From the point of view of the Dao of Heaven, the first step for the beginning practitioner of the Doctrine of the Mean is adherence to the first part of the Doctrine of the Mean. Practicing without stopping, the Dao of Heaven can be stepped toward via the Dao of Humanity, and praise will be had.

Translator’s Notes

**Chest:** the heart. In ancient China the heart and mind were often one and the same.

**One:** threading its way through Confucius’s words in the Analects, to Laozi’s Daodejing and, though less obviously, the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha, is the pre-Confucian core teaching of “One.”

**Dao:** here is path or method.
Conscience within conscience and action as one could easily be translated as “knowledge.” The principle then though it would lose the imperative of virtue, which the Ming Dynasty, Wang Yang Ming, was specifically pointing to. He blazoned this principle in response to the intellectual trends of his time where knowledge was merely conceptualized, in effect for the sake of itself, rather than applied in any meaningful and benefiting way. The similarity of his ideal to the process of any learner of any field who aims to prove and exhaust what has been learned within the fields of study, or life, is evident. Yet, the focus must crucially be on conscience, and thus on morality and virtue. It cannot be that the practice and application of any field of study is inherent with Wang Yang Ming’s principle, as that would give allowance to all kinds of immoral and harmful endeavors such as, for lack of a better but albeit pertinent example, terrorism.

His principle is not a principle of relativism. Humanity in the Degenerate Age, where moral relativism has, and is, affecting widespread and holistic pollution throughout humanity and the world, is so often at a moral precipice to say the least. Seeing the obvious immorality of individuals and groups undertaking study and practice of heinous methods of harm, we can understand that Wang Yang Ming was pointing to the study and enlightening of the True Self, the fundamental and pure nature of humanity. This enlightenment, if not yet attained, is to be trodden towards upon the path of study and practice of virtue as set about by the sages. In this way, the moral precipice can be avoided in the endeavors of life.
I chose to translate this text to support, further and bolster my own spiritual study and practice of virtue and the True Self in order to bolster my own efforts to be a good man in the world today. Time will tell if my efforts via this translation translated into results. At the very least, progress took place just by undertaking the translation. Whereas on and off since 2007 I had been focused on the previous book of Confucianism’s Four Books, *Great Learning*, I had not ventured into the study or conscious practice of the second of the four, *Doctrine of the Mean*. To have this opportunity was not only very fortunate, even auspicious and serendipitous, but it also was a testimony to the progression of my spiritual practice. Why is this so?

*Great Learning* is the door into the study and practice of virtue and its ultimate individual attainment of enlightening the True Self. It is also the study and practice of the individual’s, and humanity’s, spiritual purpose of life. Simply put, what the classic is teaching is how to enlighten yourself, now, go do it, help others to do it, so that the everyone is enlightened, and life is better (as evidenced by more harmony throughout many, or even most, parts of life).

*The Doctrine of the Mean* though, is the study and practice of the True Self and living life in accordance with it amongst society, and, specifically, amongst the machinations of one’s own mind and emotions. Having the good fortune to receive the opportunity to undertake this translation showed, through the serendipity of the project’s arising in my life, that I was ready to move on in my own spiritual study and practice and development as a human being into the finer spiritual practice of the Mean.

Whatever personal progress I’ve made is in no small part due to my reception of the core teachings of pre-Confucian philosophy and, which is based on those teachings, the study of Founder Lü’s commentary on *Great Learning* and *Doctrine of the Mean*. Confucius was also a recipient of these core teachings and mentions them more specifically in *Analects* [4-15] “…my Way is penetrated by a single thread.” “Single,” is One, as mentioned by Founder Lü on page 55 of this translation and “thread” is the Golden Thread or transmission of core spiritual teachings passed down from pre-Confucian philosophy. Laozi speaks of “One” in the *Daodejing*, “Dao produces One, One produces Two…” as the direct function and result of the great Dao.
Without these teachings, clarification of the basic and most fundamental meanings and purpose of both *Great Learning* and *Doctrine of the Mean* would have remained abstract, while any gleaned or contrived understanding would be risky. Risky because what we as readers, academics or spiritual practitioners might come to understand about the principles in these texts, and what we might begin to apply in our lives due to what we have come to understand, could be WAY off the mark. Spiritually speaking, indescribable amounts of time can be wasted, confusion created and, even, harm done by being off that mark. This is especially pertinent in modern times with the prevalence of many forms of relativism, including moral and spiritual. These days risk of confusion is exponentially increased when not only are the ideas and opinions of others so readily available online en masse, but also when objective and clarifying discussion ungoverned by emotionality is hard to come by.

By choosing this translation I was fortunate to come across more study, and thus opportunity for practice, of human emotions. More study equals more practice, which equals more mindfulness. Mindfulness is another aspect of the spiritual life now seen to be quite mainstream and thus subject more and more to relativism. Confucius in the text of *Doctrine of the Mean*, and Founder Lü in his commentary, focus the sights of mindfulness on the constant and careful observation of the human emotions. This is crucial for the practice of virtue and eventual enlightenment of the True Self.

The *Great Learning* teaches to *clear the dust*, *dust* being the thoughts and emotions that enshroud our fundamental nature and True Self. Once they are sufficiently swept away; as they are understood more and more clearly that they are not our fundamental nature and are wisps of mist on far off mountain ranges; as clarity and wisdom break through those wisps more and more, then a glimpse of humanity’s true nature can be had. The matter of sustaining this realization then ensues, and here is where the *Doctrine of the Mean* comes in. *Before pleasure, anger, sorrow and joy arise, this is the Mean.* Here becomes the practice, the constant meditation that occurs in life day in and day out, that point *before* the emotions *arise.*

As for my translation, it is “One” that also sets it apart. Using “One Virtue” on page 56 certainly contrasts with Mr. James Legge’s “what was good” and Charles Muller’s “a certain goodness.” What dictates and informs my translation is first, the core teachings and second, the practice of those teachings which leads to empirical evidence via insight gained through experience.

Attempts were made to achieve brevity and conciseness within the translation for ease of memorization and recitation. These traits are hallmark of many Confucian, as well as Daoist and Chinese Buddhist, texts to aid learning and spiritual practice. Especially for Confucian early education, the seeds for insight into the philosophy’s principles
and truths were sown via the pedagogical method of classics recitation. I hope that my translation can aid that effort.

With that said, language is no barrier or reason to overlook the English versions of Chinese philosophy. Learning what the ancient Chinese taught and learned, which is fundamental to all of humanity, takes priority over the language it is presented in. The essence of Chinese culture is a spiritual essence. That essence is the ultimate Dao and the ultimate Dao’s manifestation within each and every one of us, the True Self.

My wish is the same as Founder Lü’s in that more and more people can know of, study about and practice for the realization of their fundamental nature and True Self and aid others in doing the same thing. Due to the interconnectivity of all people and things in life, from, as Great Learning teaches, the inner world of the individual all the way out into the global world and universe, harmony depends upon personal insight into the most harmonious aspect of each individual within humanity, that being the True Self. With this realization and adherence to the teachings of the Doctrine of the Mean, more and more people can become virtuosos of the Mean, of the yin and yang of 0’s and 1’s that is existence’s and humanity’s fundamental binary code, thereby facilitating greater and greater harmony.
References


Image References


Book Cover. Author’s own image

Figure 1 Zhu Xi. https://m-auction.artron.net/search_auction.php?action=detail&artcode=art0023270240

Figure 2 Wang Yang Ming. http://www.sohu.com/a/223574775_488117

Figure 3 Statue of Lao Zi and “One.”
http://www.360doc.com/content/14/0623/21/16393706_389184491.shtml