RETURNING THE CORE TO CONFUCIANISM

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English Translation of the Great Learning
大學 英文翻译
This is a new English translation of the Great Learning and a rarely seen commentary of this Chinese and Confucian classic. The new translation of the classic, the commentary and its translation are based on ancient Chinese teachings on the nature and realization of humanity’s fundamental nature. These teachings were central to the Great Learning but fell into obscurity in China for 2,000 years due to imperial book burnings. Resurrected in the mid-20th century in the form of a commentary, these core teachings of Confucianism also weave through Daoism and Buddhism, uniting the three in the purpose of spiritually awakening humanity in this era of materialism and high-technology. The new translation of the classic’s text aims for brevity, simplicity and clarity for ease of pedagogic memorization, without losing the profundity. The commentary translation aims to bring out clearly to readers Confucianism’s vision and step by step process of realizing widespread harmony that must begin, first, and always, from the internal harmony of the individual.
Though the entire commentary is titled Great Learning and the Doctrine of the Mean—A New Simplified Commentary, this translation is a translation of only the Great Learning, its first passage and the accompanying commentary of that passage. Commonly known as the words of Confucius compiled by his student, Zengzi, the Great Learning itself has been generally regarded as the entry way into the study and practice of virtue by Confucians. It is one of the Four Books of Confucianism meant to be read and studied in the Confucian-style of step-by-step order. With the Great Learning being first, its study and application were recommended to be followed next by the Doctrine of the Mean, followed by Analects and Mencius.

A foundational and practical understanding of the entire Great Learning can be sufficiently attained via its first passage, which is why it is the sole focus of this work. Considered the essence of the whole text, this is so for two reasons. One reason being that if the first passage is seen, and applied, as a spiritual practice, then insight into the thrust of the entire text, beyond mere intellectual understanding, can be gained. The second reason is the addition of the commentary translated herein. The commentary provides explanation of the first passage from the philosophical point of view of pre-Confucian philosophy, further deepening understanding of the essence of the text as well as develops upon the lauded humanism of Confucianism, propelling it as such into the spiritual realm.

The original text of the Great Learning 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.

Within the translation of the commentary, what is often translated as “spirit” is translated as True Self. This is due to the commentary being sourced from a teaching given in Taiwan in 1947 as training for teachers aspiring to spread the teachings of Confucianism that are salient to pre-Confucian philosophy and practice. Pre-Confucian philosophy possesses core teachings that unite, in particular, the three main religions of China. Within its philosophy, True Self is the fundamental and uncreated nature of humanity that is at once the source of, yet not subject to, the dualistic and changing nature of physical and energetic existence. It is also the purpose and path of spiritual cultivation within the philosophy.

Within pre-Confucian philosophy many teachings are given via medium in which an immaterial being enters the body of a spiritual practitioner and teachings are thus
expounded. This type of channeling or communication is not unknown to humanity, but will obviously lead to, understandably, some incredulity in readers of the translation of this commentary transmitted in this way. With that said, I sincerely beseech readers to put the translation, and the principles and teachings it puts forth, up to the same objective and critical examination that is used, or should be used, for the daily inundation of information that comes to us via a normal day online.

In a light, yet preemptive defense, I want to say that I have studied and applied the teachings in the commentary for over a decade, and continually have found them to be grounded in wisdom and Right View. Right View is a western Buddhist term and is vital to clear and correct understanding especially with regard to spiritual matters. When it comes to said matters, those with Right View lead inward into the individual mind and pass it through the fires and disciplines of virtue, which the commentary does.

Spirituality with Right View is an internal affair, though not egotistical, and only external as far as the helping of others with their own inner spiritual process. It is also not subdued by popular relativism where anyone’s idea and understanding are valid and true just because they exist and were expressed. Right View contains and leads to truth, and truth is not just anyone’s creation that becomes true by virtue of being “put out there” and/or lauded as right by either those in power or by large numbers of people. Truth is a matter of truth, not a matter of consensus.

In reference to the foundational principle and practice of the Great Learning, clearing the dust, without a correct understanding of this principle it is at best an impotent and abstract idea, and at worst, a misleading obstacle to spiritual development. With correct understanding, or Right View, clearing the dust becomes, as I have found, a correct spiritual practice of purifying the mind which then enables the unveiling of wisdom via erosion of the selfish ego, broadening of compassion and harmonizing of relationships, to just name a few priceless results. With all this said, empirically, I have experienced the validity of the explanation of clearing the dust given via the medium in the commentary. I can then bring validity to the use of a medium as a method of teaching and transmission in this particular case, but for now, for this case only.

Within pre-Confucian philosophy for nearly a century, teachings via medium have included figures of all types of religions from Buddhism to Daoism, to Confucianism and Christianity. This partially explains why in the commentary there is a mix of terms common to Confucianism, Daoism as well as Buddhism. Interestingly, for this commentary on a Confucian text, channeled via medium was the renowned Daoist Lü Dong Bin. One explanation as to why a Daoist was given, and took on, the task to propagate and explain a Confucian text may be that Lü Dong Bin, known as Founder Lü in the commentary, was a scholar of Confucianism prior to his discovery by who would become his teacher, the famous Daoist immortal Zhong Li. Another reason could be that ultimate spiritual attainment of the Great Learning is the Great Way, or
Daoism’s Dao. Also, a Daoist explaining a Confucian text could be to emphasize the place of virtue within spiritual practice, something that can get obscured in the minds of those learning of or practicing Daoism. One often seen translation of the title of the seminal Daoist text Daodejing, is “The Way and the Power.” The Chinese character translated as “power” is actually the character for “morality” or “virtue,” which have greatly underestimated power indeed, but to translate the title as “power” not only betrays the Chinese meaning but leads the reader off into the abstract and relative world of power rather into the simple purity of virtuous human-being. Virtue is the foundation of spiritual practice, it is also notably the basis of the concentration-wisdom practices of Buddhism, and in the purest forms of Daoism, it is foundational.

Founder Lü’s commentary clarifies Right View within the meaning of the text of the Great Learning, which of course influenced my translation and making it a fairly unique translation. 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 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.

Founder Lü confirms in his commentary that the interpretation of the Great Learning’s fundamental principles lacked Right View. Historically speaking, this is not odd. Confucianism went through a “burning of the books” in the Qin dynasty, which the commentator laments and notes, with an added incredulity, that it appears special emphasis in the burning was placed on two parts of the Great Learning. Coincidentally, or not, those two parts make up the crucial first and second step of the

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1 Dao, the infinite void from which all existence is created according to Daoist philosophy, is found throughout Chinese philosophy and is not just Daoist.
eight-step process leading from the internal to the external and the realization of universal peace so prominent in Confucian thought.

Those parts, in my translation, are the aforementioned clearing the dust and what follows it in practice, revealing innate knowing. Clearing the dust is internal purification of the mind through highly-specific mindfulness and the eradication of specific internal states of mind that not only cause the individual pain and suffering, but keep them from reaching the next step of revealing innate knowing. With the interpretation and supplementation of these two parts snuffed out, the absolutely imperative crux of internal purification and practice was snuffed out. Really, for over two thousand years those who have been reading this text have either bravely deduced the meaning (albeit largely erroneously unless by virtue of their own immense wisdom they somehow gleaned the correct meaning) or been given over to the whims of their own or others imaginations. Precarious to say the least.

The Great Learning is the learning of immensity. Its teachings right the compass of learning and guides readers toward the learning and fulfillment of the immensity of the True Self. In Confucianism, the direction of learning is internal. It is an unveiling of something inherently present within each person, rather than an accumulation of knowledge or investigation of external things. How can this learning be done? Renowned Confucian philosopher Mencius tells us clearly “True learning is to go after the stray mind.” “The stray mind” is the dust, and “to go after the stray mind” is clearing the dust. Founder Lü’s commentary goes on to elucidate just what dust is and he thus brings to light a thread that runs through China’s three main religious philosophies. That thread, which is the dust that needs to be found and cleared, are mental impurities, or defilements, which are obstructing the realization and fulfillment of humanity’s fundamental nature.

Great Learning is considered the entry arches of the study of Confucian morality and virtue. The text educates readers on interconnectivity via the concentric ripple effect radiating first from the inner-world of the individual out upon the external-world, even the whole universe. It teaches that this is done through the thoughts, the mind, the body and behavior through to family, society and country and onto the universe at large. Yet, the text has been read, contemplated and translated without the essential understanding of how the individual is to create and ultimately contribute to a peaceful affect upon the universe and whole of life. Though the commentary was meant for practitioners of pre-Confucian philosophy specifically training themselves to teach Great Learning and Confucianism, it is still an important resource for any spiritual practitioner, and due to the language, especially for those of the three main Chinese spiritual-philosophical systems.

The point is Right View, which the translation of the original classic’s text and the commentary aim to provide a helping hand to all those searching for the truth. Truth is a fundamentally a spiritual matter, and an internal matter. In terms of the Great

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2 Buddhism teaches of the Three Defilements: Greed, Anger and Ignorance.
Learning and its vision of widespread social harmony. If, without Right View, the individual is busy studying and “investigating” external things, while disregarding the swirling, jolting and at times raging tumult of the inner mind, then the individual will not attain internal peace. How then can peace radiate, outward in to said person’s body, creating health? Into relationships creating peace and accord? Into society engendering public harmony, and on into aiding the creation of a peaceful universe? No wonder the utopic vision of Confucianism is so easily decried as naïve or impossible as those skeptics so likely have neither heard of, nor, and more importantly, applied upon themselves the core internal spiritual practices of Confucianism.
The Translation

The title of the commentary is Great Learning and Doctrine of the Mean—New Simplified Commentary, but the translation is held to only the Great Learning, the first passage of its original text, and the part of the commentary that accompanies said passage. The original Chinese text, in traditional Chinese characters, will be presented in separated parts with each part followed by my English translation of that part accompanied by own explanations, supplements and thoughts in sidebars under “Translator’s Notes.” Therefore, the parts of the original Chinese and the English translation alternate throughout the entire work. All parts of the translation supplemented in the sidebars are underlined in the body of the translation. Throughout the entire translation, including the Translator Notes, italicized words are terms directly from my English translation of the first passage of the Great Learning, with only small grammatical changes to fit the flow of the language. The English is divided into paragraphs for clarity despite each part of the original Chinese containing no paragraph separation.

The brevity and profundity of Chinese is one of its hallmarks. It is something which not only endears it to the reading experience but also to memorization. In the effort to retain at least a modicum of the brevity and simplicity of the original Great Learning text, which is one of the biggest challenges of translating classical Chinese and frankly often impossible, wordiness in the English was avoided. Reciting, especially until memorization results, is a very good way to delve into the profundity and attain deeper understanding, thus the translation aimed for brevity and simplicity without, hopefully, sacrificing the profundity.

For a juxtaposition the reader can contrast this translation with that of A. Charles Muller’s translation found at the link below.

http://www.acmuller.net/CONF-dao/greatlearning.html
Great Learning and Doctrine of the Mean—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.

Venerable Confucius—Founder of Confucianism
The Confucian Classics—
Great Learning and
Doctrine of the Mean

New Simplified Commentary

By

Founder Lü
Figure 1 Statue of Founder Lü, also known as Fu You Di Jun.
大學浅言新注

自序（一）

大學一書，儒教內聖外王之道也。體之分化，用之闢合，無不皆備矣。誠修性了命之金丹，齊家治國之路徑。曩昔時，誤與諸經並齊曰：四書之一篇耳。於今捧視，迥與前異，不禁有今昔之感。降及末運，頻仍諸劫，濃雲毒霾，現出凄慘陰沈之幕。黎庶不窮其源，鹹曰：數之所定，理不得而移之；劫之所至，人不得而挽之。溯流窮源，其弊焉在？究其劫始，乃系人人悉以儒教為腐，學經廢弛之咎耳。餘因有鑒於此，繼之以思，如欲挽此浩劫，扶此狂瀾，除勸善以正人心外，非續之以根本解決不可。何曰根本解決？格物、致知二章是也。因道脈相衍至秦，運數應隱，故慘遭離火之焚，獨失格致二章，迷入門之階梯矣！如是已曆二千餘載，無復知其源者。時值三期，道劫並降，道以覺迷，劫以警世。此

皇天之妙用，世人惜未識哉！餘恭奉

皇天明命，應運補述格致二章，使殘月復圓，光照全球，鹹令登仁造域者，初步有所階梯耳。此所謂根本解決，根本解決後，始知明其明德為體，實踐親民之功為用也。如是則庶幾令天下後世有所憑照雲爾。

歲在

中華民國三十六年歲次丁亥元月上浣孚佑帝君序於西京幹元堂
The Great Learning—New Simplified Commentary

Commentator’s Preface (I)

The Great Learning is the Dao of Sagely Within-Kingly Without of Confucianism where essence splits, function combines, and nothing is excluded. It truly is the Golden Elixir of the cultivation of the True Self and fulfillment of one’s mission as well as the path of harmonizing the home and ordering the country.

In ancient times, all classics were mistakenly regarded as equal and the Great Learning merely one of the Four Books. From the esteem it’s held in today, continuous from former times, a sense of present and past can’t be helped. Now it has come to the Degenerate Age of repeated catastrophes where dense clouds and poisonous haze put forth a miserable and somber screen. People don’t exhaustively understand the source, and, unmoved by reason, say rather that it’s all predestined. Thus, catastrophe comes. No one will pull back and go against the current to trace the source, see the problems and understand the creation of catastrophe. This is due to all people regarding Confucianism as decayed and thus neglecting the study of the classics.

As I have seen and contemplated on this, if there is an aspiration to pull back against calamity and right the roaring waves, then other than extolling goodness that rights the human mind only a fundamental

Translator’s Notes

Dao: infinite void, way, method or path. Here means “way, method.”

Sagely Within-Kingly Without: the Confucian principle of internal and external cultivation.

Essence-Function: a dynamic of interaction integral to Chinese philosophies found throughout existence. Briefly, essence is the essential underlying platform of the dynamic that gives rise to the outward resulting reaction, or function. Here, Sagely Within is essence and Kingly Without is function.

Golden Elixir: Daoist term for the unity of body, energy and mind.

True Self: the pre-Confucian philosophy English term for the spirit.

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

Fire: the infamous book burning ordered by Emperor Qin Shi Huang of the Qin dynasty.
solution can be used. What is the fundamental solution? Clear the dust and the revelation of innate knowing, and only these two parts.

As Daoist sects mutually developed unto the Qin dynasty, fortune hid and tragedy came with the fire. Particularly lost were the two sections, clearing the dust and revelation of innate knowing, and hence lost were the steps to the entryway. It has been this way already that knowledge of this has not been recovered for more than 2,000 years.

Now, time has come to the Three Periods where Dao and catastrophes descend simultaneously. Dao serves to enlighten ignorance while catastrophes warn the world. These are Heaven’s extraordinary functions that people of the world pitifully don’t understand. I respectfully accept Heaven’s enlightening mission and acquiesce to the destiny of supplementing and explaining the two parts of clearing the dust and revealing innate knowing. This is so that the incomplete moon can be made full so that it will light the entire world and guide all, who tread with humaneness and create the land, with steps to follow from the very beginning.

This is what is called the fundamental solution, and what follows is an initial understanding that enlightened virtue is the essence and actualizing the work of enlightening the people is the function. In this way it is possible to
give the following generations of **all under heaven** some license to **speak**.

In the year of

The 36\textsuperscript{th} Year of the Republic of China 1\textsuperscript{st} 10 Days of the 1\textsuperscript{st} Month of Ding-Hai Year

Preface by Fu You Di Jun at Xi Jing Qian Yuan Temple
序（二）

蓋學庸一書，乃聖門心法之傳，內聖外王之道也。自經秦火之後，獨失格物、致知二章，曆千秋而為懸案矣。今雖經諸儒注解，但該二章仍缺如故。嗚呼！格物者乃大學初步階梯也。心物之隱微而不知慎，意惡之動機而不知遏，欲邁以上七條，是舍本而逐末矣！然秦火一炬，何以獨失此章而矣？以其道脈之應隱耶？抑以其書之非時不泄耶？猶是群疑弗決矣！降及末運，人心不古，皆因人人不知心物之慎，意惡之遏，何能明其明德為體，實踐親民為用哉！是以純陽帝君有鑑於此，具悲天憫人之心，將學庸用淺言新注，內中精神泄盡無遺，俾使庸庸士庶，一見易於明瞭，咸知性理之大本大源，不出己身耳。復將格物、致知二章應運補述，真是千古懸案，一旦解決，從此大學可全璧矣！此書一出，人人瞭解，恪遵奉行，可為救世之慈航也。小子智識淺陋，何敢作序，然有帝君之命，不敢違逆，爰綴數語，勉附駟尾，尚望四海高明，不吝指教為幸，是為序。時在民國三十六年歲次丁亥孟春山東于陵王心齋序於西京干元堂
Generally speaking, the Great Learning and Doctrine of the Mean is a transmission of core Confucian teachings and is the Dao of Sagely Within-Kingly Without. Following the Qin fires, missing were the two parts clearing the dust and revealing innate knowing, making this a mysterious case among a millennium of history. Although these classics were the discourse of all of Confucianism, alas, the two parts were still missing in this way.

Clearing the dust, the mental defilements hidden and subtle that know no prudence, motivate evil-thinking and are unrestrained, is the first step of the Great Learning. Merely desiring to take the upper seven steps is to lose the essential and pursue the inconsequential. With one torch of the Qin fires, why was this part lost in particular that concealed Dao propagation, and restricted timely divulgence of this book? Many questions still remain.

Now it has come to the Degenerate Age where the human mind is not ancient as all people do not know how to be prudent with the mental defilements and restrain evil-thinking. How can enlightened virtue, the essence, and the actualization of enlightening the people, the function, be understood?

It’s by virtue of Chun Yang Di Jun understanding this and possessing Heaven’s grief and compassion for people that he brings Great Learning and Doctrine of the Mean—New Simplified Commentary’s core essence and spirit out completely without omittance. It is done
in order that all people with one look can understand and know the True Self’s vast essence and source does not lie outside of the body.

In response to the times these two parts, clearing the dust and revealing innate knowing, are supplemented again. It truly is an ancient and unsettled case yet, once it’s solved the Great Learning can be fully penetrated. With this book’s appearance all now can understand and scrupulously follow and practice what can be a ship of benevolence that can save the world.

My knowledge is shallow and coarse, how can I dare give this preface? Due to Di Jun’s mission, I don’t dare disobey. Therefore, hitching a ride on the back of greatness I have composed a few words. I still request that the best and brightest of the four seas generously give guidance. This is the preface.

Date.

The 36th year of the Republic of China 1st Month of Spring of Ding Hai Year.

Preface by Wang Xin Zhai in Shandong Wuling at Xi Jing Qian Yuan Temple

Figure 2 Rooster, greed; snake, anger; pig, ignorance; the three mental defilements depicted in a Tibetan Buddhist Bhavachakra painting.
序（三）

蓋學庸者，孔氏之遺書，啟發天下後世覺性之功、盡性之徑也。於何可見？首之三綱領已詳盡無餘矣！蓋以明德為體、親民為用，方可止於至善也。能知性之所止，止於無極；欲造無極，必須恪奉定靜安慮，循序不紊之路而作，雖奉定靜安慮之功，實際乃我性中所具矣！如欲求其身定、意靜、心安、性慮之功，非從格物入不可。因其心物不格，紛紜其間，欲求其身定不可得。靈身弗定，意靜、心安、性慮三大聖功誠為艱矣！格其心物，則靈身、色身猶白玉之無瑕，漸入於定矣！身定則意靜，意靜則心安，心安則性慮起矣！性慮者，虛天下萬民不覺明德性也。由是勃然興起，以我先覺之性覺後覺，使各復其性，此親民之道之所由來也。然既明德足，親民之功欲罷而弗能者矣！降及末流，世風不古，好惡不公，鹹以潔矩大法為無關緊要，相率置諸高閣，無有問津者。以致專尚奇異，奢侈侈波泛瀾塵寰，若長此以往，微微道心，奄奄殆盡，世界前途，何堪設想？幸蒙師兄奉敕垂諭，大意謂欲想消劫弭禍，挽回狂瀾，非復尊學庸以為主旨不可，俯思先賢所注，文意深奧，凡學識淺者，多望洋興嘆！因之敬懇純陽帝君臨壇，以淺言新注，約月餘而全書注竣。捧讀內容，體用分明，理無不備。複蒙不密真寶，竟將格物全章文言應運補述，以啟群迷，使人人得覓造聖域之階梯也。查格物之文言，自經秦火焚失無餘，至今已曆二千餘年，莫明真義，良可歎也！今得蒙恩補述，使眾生尤如撥雲見日，誠世界之大幸也。俯思佛恩如天，浩大莫名，務望學庸到處，希各沉心參悟，用以宣化，人心得平，明德必明，而天下萬國必實現大同矣！茲值注成付梓，因命作序以光聖典，小子自愧固陋，何敢作序，乃以佛命難違，謹作俚語，借附驥尾，尚望四海高明，不吝指教為幸。是為序。歲在民國三十六年倉次丁亥春季山東長山朱秀梧序於西京幹元堂
Generally speaking, Great Learning and Doctrine of the Mean are the legacy of Confucius. They are inspiration for later generations of all under heaven to attain initial insight into the True Self as well as the path to exhausting the True Self. How can this be seen? The beginning three principles have already been detailed this abundantly. In general, enlightened virtue is the essence, enlightening the people the function, and this can lead to fixating on transcendent goodness.

Knowing where the True Self lies one can fixate on it unto the infinite. Aspiring to create the infinite, there must be respect for concentration, clarity, calm, contemplation and completion and the following of their path in sequential order. Though this is done and the achievement of concentration, clarity, calm, contemplation is esteemed, in reality all are contained within the True Self.

If aspiring to attain a concentrated body, clarity of thought, calm mind and contemplation that arises from the True Self, beginning by clearing the dust cannot be avoided. If the mind’s dust is not cleared and thus swirls within it, the concentrated body aspired for cannot be obtained and the three main Confucian achievements of clarity of thought, calm mind and contemplation arising from the True Self will truly remain difficult.

Once the mind’s dust is cleared, the spirit-body and the physical-body will be as unblemished as white jade, and gradually concentration can be entered into. With concentration of spirit-body there is clarity

**Translator’s Notes**

**Exhausting:** as the True Self is the infinite void without beginning or end, once insight into it is attained then the path to fully realizing it is started, a realization which needs to be exhausted.

**Three Principles:** from the first line of GL: “revealing enlightened virtue, enlightening the people, in fixating on transcendent goodness.”

**True Self:** the fundamental and uncreated nature of humanity that is at once the source of, yet not subject to, the dualistic and changing nature of sensory and temporal life.

**Body:** spirit-body, True Self. To clarify, the True Self is always concentrated and always unblemished, rather it is the mind caught up in the defilements that loses touch with and clouds over the True Self.

**Concentration:** realization of the True Self as the True Self is neither concentrated or distracted, it is one-pointed.
of thought. With clarity of thought there is calm of mind. With calm of mind there is contemplation that arises from the True Self.

Contemplation that arises from the True Self is contemplation on behalf of all people under heaven having not realized the nature of enlightened virtue. Following one’s own initial realization of the True Self there then is a spontaneous arising to guide others to realize this nature. This is the source of the Dao of enlightening the people. As enlightened virtue is sound there is aspiring effort of enlightening the people to aid those whose isn’t.

Descending into the Degenerate Age the ways of the world are not ancient, as good and evil are not just. Use of insignificant laws and regulations are categorically widespread while ministers establish high courts one after another without inquiries or interest. This consequently results in the blazoning of the crooked and extravagant which flood the world. If this continues for long the subtle heart of Dao will be surrounded with peril. How can the future of the world be imagined?

Fortunately, Brother has received the divine order. It’s broadly defined as the aspiration to cease all catastrophes and reduce the insane floods of distress. This is impossible by believing only in one’s own judgement and not reviving reverence for the Great Learning and Doctrine of the Mean. Learners lacking knowledge, sighing and not knowing how to proceed, humbly pore over this profound commentary from the virtuous one. Due to his respectful earnestness, Chun Yang Di Jun entered the temple using over a month to complete the New Simplified Commentary. Read with reverence and honor as essence-function are
defined and separated clearly and the principles are complete.

There is restoration of the true treasure that was covered but never secret so indeed the entire Great Learning is supplemented with timeliness. This can inspire the confused masses and allow them to see the steps toward the land of sages.

Investigating the part of clearing the dust’s passing through the Qin fires, so much was lost in the burning. For already over 2,000 years the true meaning has been unclear. So very exasperating! Today, receiving the grace of this supplemented commentary, which gives sentient beings an experience akin to parting the clouds and seeing the sun, honestly, it is the world’s great fortune!

I humbly regard that the Buddhas’ grace is as vast and inexplicably immense as the sky. I hope that Great Learning and Doctrine of the Mean can be spread everywhere and all can immerse in it, attain insight and use it to propagate. For the human mind to be at peace enlightened virtue must be revealed. Then all countries under heaven will realize the Great Harmony.

Now this preface is ready for press. The undertaking of the preface of this bright and holy text is my destiny yet, with humility and shame, how can I dare to do a preface? The orders of the Buddhas are difficult to violate. So, hitching a ride on greatness I will carefully complete an unrefined version. I still request that the best and brightest of the four seas generously give guidance.

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**Translator’s Notes**

**Essence-Function (cont.):** In GL, clearing the dust is essence, revealing innate virtue is the function that then becomes the essence for the function of rectifying the thoughts and so on for the next five steps unto all under heaven is at peace. This is the true interplay of existence and can be imagined with numbers e.g. essence is 0 and function is 1.

**Buddhas:** Pre-Confucian philosophy regards the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of Buddhism, the Immortals of Daoism and the Sages of Confucianism as all compassionate servants of the propagation of the teachings of Dao during the Degenerate Age.

**Great Harmony:** The Confucian ideal of harmonious humane humanity that occurs when all of humanity has cleared their mind’s dust, revealed innate knowing and enlightened virtue, and are aiding others in doing the same.
This is the preface.

Date.

The 36th year of the Republic of China Spring of Ding Hai Year.

Preface by Zhu Xiu Wu in Shandong Chang Shan at Xi Jing Qian Yuan Temple
Figure 3 Master Fu met with the reigning Emperor Liang Wu Di during the Liang dynasty wearing a Daoist crown on his head, Buddhist monk robes on his body and Confucian shoes upon his feet. Master Fu is regarded as an incarnation of Maitreya Bodhisattva, also known in Buddhism as the future Buddha. Within pre-Confucian philosophy Maitreya is also a founding patriarch in charge of propagating the Dao through the teachings of the three main Chinese religions during the Degenerate Age. His form of dress as Master Fu illustrated the combining of the three religions and the core teaching that unites them.
大學之我見

大學一書，其意至深，其理至微，系無極大乘大法。複細觀之，亦系極簡極明之文，至平至庸之行也。嗚呼！聖人之道，原自平庸，不尚矜奇，人每視為平庸而弗踐之，誤矣！豈知平庸之道，正趨聖域之道也。惜乎！世人誠、恒、堅三字不能抱定耳。故學經諄諄誥誡，以勵後世，吾注解之下，不勝感歎，聖人憫世之心苦，教誨天下後世之法密也。總言大學經旨，三綱領已道盡無遺矣！中令所謂半部論語而治天下，何用半部哉！學經之明德親民，用之以治國平天下而不盡也。曩昔堯舜揖讓，垂拱而治，萬民浑渾，其心朴樸，焉用鈇鉞而降之哉！究其治國之要素、教民之良法，不外自明明德實踐親民，以化億兆庶民咸明其明德。明德複初，見於言行，將其自治於一身，用法而轄之乎。人人各有自治精神，身心性融化一爐，歸於理域，不但在世為聖化之民，身逝亦證薩陀陀之仙。故大學之八條目，先以格物入手，何曰格物？內聖之初功也。於何可見？私欲盡盡，天理流行，性與天理，如長天秋水相映一色，明明德複。實踐親民之功為用，致我良知以外王也。此聖人所教為民父母者，應由是處入手，至懇切大學要之處也。如是則舉意必誠，動心必正，性為聖君，心作賢明之臣，以道化身，則身、心、性融為一矣！性本至靜，有感隨通，發於心而役其身，莫非皆道也。須知身、心、性亦有三大分別，性本至善，心本有善有不善，身本惡濁者也。如性秉其權，則心身共役，雖欲心之妄動，身之妄行，誠難為矣！故格物，致知，誠意，正心，此四部為內聖之體也。內體具足，溢於一身，則身不修而修矣！由身推用，何處著手？則必先齊其家，欲齊其家，當何如也？內聖具足，見於言行，謙恭忍讓，兢兢持己，治家有道，處事秉公，夫有如是不家齊者，欲其齊家，如是則齊家之心也。齊其心則身未有不齊者，不齊其心而欲齊身，誠難為矣！一國乃各家宗之集，如果用齊家作起，內顧無瑕，施德於外，如春風到處，萬物□然，明德感昭，群起相應。聖曰：速於置郵而傳命。誠然！如是一國大治，鹹知仁為體，義為用，尊卑禮讓，惠然和風，一國與一家、一身誠無異矣！猶文王以德化民，感昭天下，諸侯咸慕，士民引領，如是則未有不王天下者。故修身、齊家、治國、平天下，此外王之用也。苟舍內聖之體而欲實作外王之用，吾知其非然也。
TRANSLATOR’S NOTES

Mahayana Dharma: Sanskrit Buddhist term for the teachings and practice of Mahayana Buddhism. Founder Lü is explaining the core teaching and purpose of GL is to teach all people how to realize their True Self and, just as the teachings of Mahayana Buddhism exhort, help others to do the same.

Three Principles: from the first line of GL: “revealing enlightened virtue, enlightening the people, in fixating on transcendent goodness.”

Title: this is a specific saying first used for Confucius’s Analects, but also refers to something small or simple that can influence great change, especially of writing.

Clasping and Cupping of Hands: Here the use of the Confucian principle of Propriety as principle and practice of government is being illustrated through the image of the ritualized use of hands.

Great Learning—Commentator’s View

The Great Learning’s meaning is profound. Its truth is subtle. It is the infinite Mahayana dharma. Carefully reconsider and observe it. It is a text that is at once complex yet also extremely simple and clear, utterly ordinary, and utterly common in practice. Alas! The Dao of the sages is sourced in the ordinary and never strangely adored. When everyone sees it as commonplace, there will be no mistakes in practice.

How can the Dao of the ordinary be known? It directly approaches the Dao of the attainment of the sages. Such a pity! The people of the world cannot hold firmly to the three words sincerity, constancy and perseverance. Hence, the Great Learning has been repeatedly advising and urging in earnest for generations. As for my commentary, its with great lamentation and the laboring effort and compassion of the sages that I teach the latter generations of all under heaven this subtle dharma.

Generally speaking, the purpose of the Great Learning has already been explained by the three principles, which has won it the honorific title of “with only half of the Analects all under heaven was at peace.” Of what use is half?! The Great Learning’s principles of enlightened virtue and enlightening the people are not exhaustive enough to bring order to the country and peace to all under heaven.
In ancient times the sage-kings Yao and Shun used the bequeathing of clasping and cupping of hands to unify their kingdoms. In those times the people were diverse and their minds simple and pure. What need was there for the battle-axe? Investigating the crux of this governing method, benevolent education of the people cannot exclude their own revealing of their own enlightened virtue and the application of enlightening the people so as to enable the myriad masses to reveal this enlightened virtue.

The rebirth of enlightened virtue will appear in words and actions as it influences order upon individuals themselves. What need for the use of law?! Every single person has the spirit and capability of putting themselves in order. Body, mind and spirit coming together is a return to the territory of truth. With this not only when alive are people sagely, but after death they can attain the stature of an immortal.

Therefore, of the eight steps of the Great Learning, clearing the dust is the starting point. What is clearing the dust? It is the initial practice of the Sagely Within. Why is this? With selfish desire cleansed, Heavenly’s Truth flows forth. Heavenly’s Truth and the True Self becoming clear and monochromatic as the vast sky and autumn floods, this is enlightened virtue revealed again. With enlightened virtue revealed again and applied through enlightening the people, innate knowing is conveyed through the Kingly Without. The sage that teaches the people like a parent should begin teaching this crucial point in earnest. In this way, thought

**TRANSLATOR’S NOTES**

**Immortal**: Daoist title of a practitioner who has reached a high level of spiritual cultivation and attainment.

**Sagely Within**: Confucianism’s individual internal practice, led by clearing the dust, or mental defilements.

**Heaven’s Truth**: also translated as “Heaven’s Law,” is the source of the True Self. By clearing the dust of selfish desire, then at once humanity’s fundamental nature, the True Self, and its source, can be revealed. This is revealing enlightened virtue.

**Kingly Without**: the natural external expression of effective practice of the Sagely Within. Stately as ancient China’s sage-kings, magnificent as Mahayana and Hua Yan Buddhism’s Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.
arises rectified, which rights the mind, crowns the True Self as ruler with mind a virtuous minister employing Dao to transform the body. Thus body, mind and True Self become one.

The True Self is essentially tranquil, though when it senses an opening it flows through the mind which then employs the body. Could it be that this is all the Dao? It is vital to understand the three main differentiations of the True Self, mind and body. The True Self is fundamentally and transcendentally good. The mind is fundamentally good, and not good, while the body basically is foul and filthy. If the True Self holds the reins, the mind and body are both employed. With the mind and body controlled by delusional thought and action, they are very difficult rectify. Thus, the four parts, clearing the dust, revealing innate knowing, rectifying the thoughts, and righting the mind are the essence of the Sagely Within. When the inner essence is complete it overflows into the body, thus without disciplining the body, the body is disciplined.

Utilizing the body thus, where should the hands go to work? First and foremost, to harmonizing the home. Aspiring to harmonize the home, what is this like? When the Sagely Within is sound, it is seen in speech and action that is polite, modest, forbearing and accommodating with careful bearing of oneself. Order the home has its Dao as affairs are to be handled fairly. Those with a disharmonized home that are aspiring to harmonize it need to harmonize the minds of the home. Harmonizing the mind will leave no body unharmonized. If the mind is not harmonized, yet harmony is aspired for the body, this truly is difficult.

Since a country is a concentration of homes, if harmonizing the home is utilized first, and those homes are unblemished within and virtuous to all outside, then this is like a spring breeze blowing across a land budding and sprouting. With enlightened virtue moving brightly and resounding mutually amongst the masses, a broad sweeping ordering of the country will happen, just as Confucius
said, “faster than setting up a post to convey orders.” With everyone understanding that humaneness is the essence and fairness is the function, propriety is given to all regardless of social status. Benevolence thus alights the wind and one country, one home, and one individual, are rectified equally.

Just as Emperor Wen used virtue to rule his people. All under heaven were moved, all ministers admired him and all citizens were led and guided. In this way all under heaven are kings. Thus, disciplining the body, harmonizing the home, ordering the country and all under heaven are at peace, are the function of Kingly Without. I know there is no other way for those aspiring to effectively utilize Kingly Without.
大學之定義

大學之定義者何？以上大學之我見所論，此為萬民上者，應修內聖之體，以達外王之用。或曰：庸庸士庶，何可法乎？吾曰：非然。須知聖人立教之意，本不執定一端而論。自天子以至於庶人，壹是皆以修身為本之語，由是可見梗概矣！無論尊卑貴賤，只要至誠不息，明性復初，及其至善，何分尊卑貴賤哉！朱注曰：大學者大人之學也。以吾所見非然，正與所論相反。我曰：大學者，正小人之學也。然既稱為大人，已內格無物，性珠圓明，效天之大，盡性之能事，何須又複學也。所謂大學者，正小人之所學，小人者細民也，因雖系細民，性之所具，與聖賢無異。苟能內格心物以覓良知，意之所發，誠必隨之；心之所舉，身必如之。如是雖身系細民，而學功已屆大人之境。嗟乎！人不自學，猶密藏珍器而不知作何用也。大好明德埋於塵紛之下，極明皓月藏於濃雲深霧之中，人人恪遵學經奉行，始終不怠，雖大人亦非大人，小人亦非小人矣！及其造峰，吾性無絲毫之差別。噫！世人不悟，何勝浩歎！
Great Learning—Definition

How to define the Great Learning? As I talked about in Great Learning—My View above, all people should practice the essence, **Sagely Within**, so as to arrive at the function of **Kingly Without**. In other words, how can ordinary common people be governed by law? I say they can’t.

An understanding of the meaning behind the sages founding of religion is needed, which is not defined by a grasping at one end only. The text from rulers to the people, **One is fundamental to disciplining the body** is a guideline displaying no regard for seniority or social class. All that is needed is unceasing **rectification** and the recovering of the enlightened True Self unto the utmost **fixation upon transcendent goodness**. What need for division by **age and class**?

**Zhu Xi** said, “The Great Learning is learning for the **elite**.” According to me this is not so and in fact it is the opposite. I say the Great Learning is precisely learning for the **commonalty**. Since both are called elite as their internal dust has already been cleared and the bright round pearl of the True Self mimics the vastness of heaven while fully employing its capabilities, what need is there for re-learning?

This so-called Great Learning is precisely what the commonalty is to learn. 
Commonalty refers to the common people. Although common, the True Self still resides within them making them no different than the sages. If the mind’s dust can be cleared unto the discovering of innate knowing, then thoughts that arise will invariably be rectified. The mind that thus arises will invariably be righted, and the body follows accordingly. Along these lines the commonalty’s learning will arrive at the elite’s attainment.

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**Translator’s Notes**

**Age and Class:** or “end” in the first line of the paragraph.

**Zhu Xi:** Song Dynasty Confucian philosopher.

**Elite:** The ancient Chinese meaning refers to an imperial minister or official of high social status, in contrast to the low, vulgar and uneducated commoner.

**Both:** the so-called elite and commonalty.

**Mimics:** this is not a purposeful imitation as the True Self is itself sourced from Heaven, and as Heaven is so is the True Self naturally. Without agenda, spontaneous, un-concocted and uncreated the True Self displays the attributes and abilities of Heaven.
Alas! If humanity does not learn of itself, its like having a hidden treasure and not knowing its function! The immense and good enlightened virtue is buried under a dusty miasma. Though it’s unsurpassably bright, like the luminous moon, its hidden in dense and deep clouds and haze. If all with reverence scrupulously pursue the learning of the Great Learning from start to finish without laziness, though the elite are not elite and the common are not common, the highest attainment will be attained. My True Self is no different in the least. Oh! If the people of the world cannot penetrate and gain insight, how can there be vast exclamations of success?!
大學之源流

大學源流，人鹹曰孔子之言，而曾子述之，此其源流也。吾曰：非然。何知其非然也？我可以說：未有天地，而大學之道已在。大學之道，如經天之日月，行地之河海，織成錦繡乾坤者，大學也；長養萬物之功者，大學也。在未有天地之時，大學之綱領條目、文字畫面雖無，而經體、經用、經旨、經功則有矣，不過至孔聖時，得一貫心法，懷不二性學，將乾坤萬物之大學總括於書面耳。至於源流，相信不自至聖始，乃系天道以啟端也，願修道君子幸熟思焉。
Great Learning—Source and Transmission

The Great Learning’s source and transmission has been said by all to be the words of Confucius as compiled by Zengzi. This is known to be its source and transmission. I say this is not so. How to know it is not so? Let me say that when there was no Heaven and no Earth, the Dao of the Great Learning already existed. The Dao of the Great Learning is akin to the passing of the sun and moon through the sky and the movement of the rivers and seas over the earth. That which weaves the silken embroidery of Qian Kun is the Great Learning. That which gives rise to all things is the Great Learning.

Though the book the Great Learning, and its guiding principles and text, did not exist when Heaven and Earth did not exist, the classic’s essence, it’s function, it’s purpose and practice, all existed. However, with the coming of the sage Confucius and his receiving of the unifying core teaching, which contained the learning of the non-dual True Self, the Great Learning and its inclusion of Qian, Kun and all things, were compiled into the original book form and its transmission thus commenced.

Trust that it did not find beginning with the sage but its beginning was inspired from the Heavenly Dao. It is my wish that all noble persons who cultivate Dao will fortunately familiarize themselves with this understanding.
Great Learning—Text and Commentary

大學之道：在明明德，在親民，在止於至善。

【字解】大學者，發揚自性之大也。明即切磋琢磨之功。明德即原性。親民即推自性之能事，化天下同胞，使各複其自性之謂。至善即無極境界。

【節解】大學之道，在人之性天中。既在性天中，又何必複學也？因其人落紅塵，氣稟所拘，物欲所蔽，將充份之性天而陷於萬丈塵氛之內，所以必須用切磋琢磨之功，以期複明性天也。大學者換而言之，即令人學習發揚性天之學也，雖系學天，而實不出己身耳。故先格心物、除私欲，原性複初，自身之內聖功夫則到止境，內聖之功具足即體固矣！複加以親民之用。何曰親民？民者，身中之良民也。良民者何？即性天也。使天下同胞各親其良民，即聖人所謂兼善天下也。然我一人性體靈明，皇天何喜？本乎皇天一視之心。願天下同胞，咸能用上切磋琢磨之功，複回性天之極大光明。由己推人，毫無人相，可以說明明德之功，系內聖也；親民之功，系外王也。內聖外王之功具足，一言而為天下後世法，一行而為天下後世則，在世曰聖賢，出世曰仙佛，至善境界不行而至矣。
The Dao of the Great Learning lies in revealing enlightened virtue, in enlightening the people, in fixating on transcendent goodness.

[Character Explanation] Great Learning: to develop and make full use of the immensity of the True Self. Revealing: the practice of “cutting and polishing.” Enlightened virtue: original True Self. Enlightening the people: promoting and propagating the capabilities of the True Self, transforming all fellow citizens under heaven and helping each one to revive the meaning of the True Self. Transcendent goodness: the state and realm of infinity.

[Section Explanation] The Dao of the Great Learning is within humanity’s True Self. As it is within the True Self, why then must it be learnt again? Humanity has fallen into the mortal world where the atmosphere clings and binds and material desires enshroud the abundant True Self sinking it within the miasma. So, the practice of “cutting and polishing” must be utilized so that in time the True Self will be revealed.

In other words, the Great Learning is the study of showing humanity how to develop and make full use of the heavenly-bestowed True Self. Although it is the study of heaven, truly one’s own body is never left. Thus, first clear the mind’s dust and eradicate selfish desire, uncover again the True Self and your own practice of Sagely Within can reach its end so that the essence is forged solid.

Additionally, there is the function of enlightening the people. What is called enlightening the people? People, or the good person within the body. What is the good person? The True Self. Guiding every fellow citizen under heaven to enlighten their
own good person is what is known as the sages benefiting all beings under heaven. When only one’s own True Self is divinely bright, how can Heaven be pleased?! Heaven has always been one-minded in the wish that all fellow citizens under heaven can apply the practice of “cutting and polishing” and resurrect the utmost vastness and brightness of the True Self. From yourself propagate to others without the least bit of human form.

It can be said that the practice of revealing enlightened virtue is Sagely Within and enlightening the people is Kingly Without. Soundly practicing Sagely Within-Kingly Without, one’s speech becomes the dharma and one’s actions become the guidelines for all following generations under heaven. When alive one is called a sage or worthy, when dead, an Immortal or Buddha. The state of transcendent goodness is thus fulfilled without effort.

**Translator’s Notes**

**Human Form:** (my translation) Buddhist terminology referring to the human condition of ignorantly believing that the ego is human and different from other humans and beings. Within context of the commentary, the True Self is intrinsic to all humans so Founder Lü advises equanimity when enlightening the people.

**Without Effort:** this resounds with the Daoist spiritual principle and achievement of wuwei, or no-action. The crux is that when the practice of Sagely Within brings the spiritual practitioner to revealing enlightened virtue, or the True Self, the selfish desires and mental defilements of the ego are cleansed allowing the True Self to arise spontaneously without any ego-based purposeful motivation, good or evil. The True Self, sourced from the Heavenly Dao, will thus naturally bring about the realization of itself in all beings and situations as it cannot help itself, realizing then the Daodejing’s wuwei er wu buwei, “not acting yet nothing is left undone.”
知止而後有定，定而後能靜，靜而後能安，安而後能慮，慮而後能得。

【字解】知止即知己所當止之境。定者罣心意繫意馬，不能任其馳騁，使其有所歸宿也。靜者清靜無為，念茲在茲，朝斯夕斯也。安者身有所循，心有所歸，性有所安，各得其所，次第不紊也。慮者內功已足，而慮外功之弗成，抱悲天憫人之至慮，慮人不修性，慮世不清寧也。得者盡其性中之能事，廣建聖功，慈以化人，悲以懽世，三千大千視為一體，四億七千萬悉如同胞，由我性天之光明，而推及億兆同胞，各複自性，而我之佛果，不期其得而自得也。

【節解】以上三大綱領，人各能毅然作去，結果達到至極無以復加至善之境界。然初步欲學大學之功，須先心知止於何處？曰止於性天也。心有所歸，而性不問自定矣！性定之後，則此身若有若無，此心如在如不在，此性若非然而非然也。清靜無為，渾然一理，靜若山嶽，動似河海，而達到真靜之境界，此所謂身有所循，心有所歸，性有所安矣！性既安則內聖之功具足，以下慮與得者，此其外功也，亦可以說是親民之道耳。內聖雖系具足，必以悲天憫人之心常抱，苦口婆心化世，一人性天未明，己之性天猶未明至極峰耳。慮者，慮世界眾生不悟，慮社會同胞性天未明，此以眾生為慮，以天下為憂也。亦即先天下之憂而憂，後天下之樂而樂是也。量己性之所知，發己性之所能，己立立人，己達達人。如春風到處霑然拂面，萬物為之發芽，人人為之喜色也。如是眾生覺性，而己之外功得矣。
When where to fixate is known, then there is concentration. With concentration, there can be clarity. With clarity, there can be calm. With calm, there can be contemplation. With contemplation, there can be completion.

[Character Explanation] When where to fixate is known is knowing the place where one is to fixate the mind. Concentration is the restraining of the monkey mind, never giving it free rein by providing it a place to return to and rest. Clarity refers to purity, stillness and wuwei which is held in the mind unceasingly, from morning to night. Calm is the body having guidelines to follow, the mind having a place to return to, the True Self at peace, and all receiving their place. These steps are in order.

Contemplation is when the internal practices are sound yet the external are not. Embodying the compassion of Heaven for people, contemplation is for people who don’t spiritually practice and for the world that is not pure and peaceful. Completion is the exhausting of the True Self’s capabilities, widely establishing the Confucian practices, using benevolence to convert others and compassion to pity the world. The great chiliocosm is seen as being essentially one. Four hundred and seventy million people are all fellows. They are propagated to via the light of one’s True Self so that each can recover their own True Self. As for one’s Buddhahood, it unexpectedly completes itself.

TRANSLATOR’S NOTES

Monkey Mind: Here Founder Lü uses an idiom literally translated as “heart like a frisky monkey, mind like a cantering horse.” “Monkey mind” is a western Buddhist term for the fickle, frivolous and unsettled mundane mind polluted with defilements.

Purity: the Chinese is derived from “The Classic of Purity,” a Daoist classic teaching how to discover the purity and stillness of the True Self.

True Self at Peace: this is best taken as an illustration within the context of the sentence rather that as an actual end to a process of the True Self, initially agitated or excited and then, becoming peaceful. The nature of the True Self is infinite yet unchanging, neither agitated or calm, so it does not need to attain peace.

Steps: the steps starting from when where to fixate is known to completion.

Great Chiliocosm: Buddhist cosmological view of existence. “One Mount Sumeru, four continents, one sun, and one moon make up a world. 1,000 of these worlds are called a small-chiliocosm. 1,000 small-chiliocosms are called a medium-chiliocosm world. 1,000 medium-chiliocosms are called a large-chiliocosm. Due to there being a small-chiliocosm, medium-chiliocosm and large-chiliocosm, it’s a called a “great chiliocosm.”

Buddhahood: contemplation and completion mirror the practices and efforts of Mahayana Buddhism’s bodhisattvas who effort to aid all beings
If every person resolutely uses the three main guiding principles above, the result will be the arrival at the state of utmost and unsurpassable transcendent goodness. Thus, in the initial stages of learning the practice of the Great Learning, knowing at which point the mind fixates is needed first. This is called fixating on the True Self.

With the mind returned, the True Self unquestionably and naturally concentrates itself. After the True Self is concentrated, it is like there is, and there is not, a body, and as if the mind is present, yet not present. It is like the True Self is not natural, yet is natural. It is pure, still, wuwei and truth undivided. Still and clear as a mountain peak, it moves like the rivers and oceans arriving at the state of right stillness. This is what is known as the body has a guide, the mind a resting place and the True Self, peace.

When the True Self is calm then the practice of Sagely Within is sound and the following contemplation and completion are the practice of Kingly Without, which is also known as the Dao of enlightening the people. Although the Sagely Within is complete, there must be a constant holding in the mind of the compassion of Heaven for humanity and a giving of earnest and well-meaning advice in order to transform the world. When another's True Self is not bright, your own True Self has not reached the utmost peak of its brightness. Contemplation is contemplation of the world’s sentient beings, of society’s fellow citizens, and their lack of understanding and brightness of the True Self. This is contemplation for sentient beings and concern for all under heaven. It is namely
“worry before the people fear something will happen, and be happy after the people are happy.”

Knowing the capacity of the True Self, unleashing its capabilities, establish yourself, achieve attainment, and help others to do the very same. Then it will be as the spring winds blowing away the hazy mists, and all things are sprouting buds while the people wear expressions of cheer. In this way sentient beings realize their True Selves and one’s practice of the Kingly Without reaches completion.

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3 This quote is from Fan Zhong Yan, Song dynasty official and writer.
物有本末，事有終始，知所先後，則近道矣。

【字解】物：即有形質之物。本：即發物之源頭。末：萬殊也。事：親民渡眾之事也。始：即開端。終：即結局。知：即明徹。先：即先天賦性皇。後：即後天生我父母也。道：即無極至境。

【節解】凡世界具體之物必有源頭，例如一株植物，源頭在其極細極微之顆種裡，此其物之本也。此株植物由根發本，自本生枝長葉，終於結億萬極細極微之顆種，此其末也，亦即由末返本耳。如物無本，則末從何來？無末則返本無從，本能生末，末復能返本也。至於人間，凡一事多半有始無終，美滿之事情，結果陷於苦惱。如複性天之人，以親民之功，為已應份之事，朝斯夕斯，念茲在茲，幹幹不息之真精神而矢志前進，將以造至善之極峰為終矣。苟其始勤終怠，莫言親民之事，縱極細極微之事亦萬無一成，我且拿個比喻：蒼天之始終也，試觀之，每年春夏秋冬，寒來暑往分毫不錯，從開天闢地為始，傾天陷地為終，無有一年不是如此，甚至無有一月一日一時不是如此者。大始大終，人何不法歟？果能如天地之始終，凡天事人事無一不成也。知所先後者何解？知者，明徹我形覺之先後也。能明曉性之源頭，身之由來，當然孝道是不可少者。然在一般明哲來論：順親之心，養親之身，大哉孝乎！殊不知孝先天之孝，亦在孝之一端也。何曰先天孝？天下眾生靈性，本是一個所生，所以方稱世界之人皆我同胞也。此孝何盡？能將我性天複初，實現親民之功，俾兄弟姐妹攜手還原，共造無極境界，此謂孝先天賦性之孝，盡孝之大也。所以盡孝於先天，盡孝於後天，兩層大孝，可以說為並重也，果能如是則近道矣！亦曰造至道矣也可。然此節分析理氣象焉，物有本末，象也；事有終始，氣也；知所先後，理也；以理氣象而悟至道，庶乎其不差矣。
All things from a root bear a fruit, all matters have an end and a start. To know the origin and lineage of all is to be close to Dao.

[Character Explanation] Things are all things that have form. Root is the source from which all things spring. Fruit refers to the myriad differentiations of all phenomena. Matters are all affairs related to enlightening the people. Start is the starting point. End is the finishing point. Know is clear understanding. Origin is the divine Heavenly Mother who bestows the True Self. Lineage are one’s earthly parents. Dao is the infinite void.

[Section Explanation] All things of the world must have a source, just as a plant whose source is within an extremely fine and small seed, this is the root of things. Via its plant root the plant sprouts from the root, naturally growing into stems and leaves, of which the extremely fine and small seed eventually reaches its ends, the fruit, which then returns to the root. If things have no root, where will the fruit come from? Without fruit there is no way of returning to the root. The root creates fruit; thus, fruit can again return to the root.

As for humanity, most of its affairs begin without finishing. Whereas what started full of promise ends stuck in distress. If people that rediscover their True Self, and during the practice of enlightening the people, complete their required affairs, focusing from morning to night, working ceaselessly and spiritedly while pledging to keep going forward, they will create the end and utmost pinnacle of transcendent goodness. If starting diligently but ending in laziness, don’t even mention the matter of enlightening the people, not even one extremely fine and small matter will be completed.

I’ll use a metaphor, the starting and ending of the vast blue sky. Examine and observe the annual spring, summer, autumn and winter with the coming and going of cold and heat, all without the least deviation. From the start of the universe and earth until they sink to their end, there will never be a year unlike
this, nor even a month, day or hour unlike this. The great start, the great end, how can humanity not follow? If the start and end of the universe and earth can be imitated, not one affair of Heaven and humanity will go incomplete.

What’s the explanation of to know the origin and lineage of all? To know is thoroughly knowing the origin and lineage of one’s physical form and enlightened awareness. Knowing the source of the True Self and the body, it becomes evident that filial piety cannot be lacking. According to one kind of philosophical thinking, obeying the will of, and taking care of the health of, parents is great filial piety. Uniquely misunderstood is that one end of filial piety also includes filial piety for Heaven.

What is called filial piety for Heaven? The True Self of all sentient beings under heaven originally comes from one Mu. Hence, all are called people of the world and all are fellow citizens. How to fulfill this filial piety? By recovering the True Self, realizing the practice of enlightening the people, taking the hands of all brothers and sisters to enable them to return to their source thereby creating together the realm of infinity. This is what is called the great fulfillment of filial piety for Mu, the Heavenly giver of the True Self. Therefore, fulfilling Heavenly and earthy filial piety, these two levels of great filial piety, can be said to be equally important. In this way one can be close to Dao. It could also be said that this is realizing the utmost Dao.

Translator’s Notes

Heaven: formless infinity without beginning or end, still and quiet from which everything is born, including the universe and the earth.

Enlightened Awareness: True Self.

Mu: Heavenly Mother, or Lao Mu of pre-Confucian philosophy, the Heavenly source, or mother, of the spiritual True Self. Pre-Confucian philosophy finds much of its philosophy, cosmology and practice rooted in Daoism, but due to humanity coming to the Degenerate Age, Confucianism’s and Buddhism’s have united to aid humanity and sentient beings in understanding their true nature and purpose.

Truth, Spirit and Form: These are three different dimensions of mystical creation as described in the Classic of Changes. “Form” is the physically sensed material dimension. “Spirit,” a formless dimension that can be sensed with non-physical senses. “Truth,” formless, quiet, infinite void.
Thus, this section has analyzed Truth, Spirit and Form. *All things from a root bear a fruit*, this is Form. *All matters have an end and a beginning*, this is Spirit. *To know the origin and lineage of all*, this is Truth. Attaining insight into Dao via Truth, Spirit and Form, all beings are the same in this way.
古之欲明明德於天下者，先治其國；欲治其國者，先齊其家；欲齊其家者，先修其身；欲修其身者，先正其心；欲正其心者，先誠其意；欲誠其意者，先致其知；致知在格物。

【字解】明德：道心也，心靖息爭，大同之景象也。治：治理也。齊：齊家先齊心也。修：克己也。正：居中也，不偏不倚，大中至正。誠：無虛也。致：推廣也。格：除也，即格心物，驅物也。

【節解】此一節乃由用返體也。言古代聖君賢相，將自己明德複初，而後實踐親民之用。欲使天下同胞，咸明其固有之明德，應當由何處入手？必須先將本國士民格其心物，致其良知，然後始能明其明德於天下。欲將國內士民格其心物，致其良知，必須先由家庭作起。諺曰：治國易而齊家難。何也？治國之道，除行仁政外，以法濟其所不足。齊家則不然，需用大化之力，先齊其心，舉家言行范于道德，鹹能明其明德，而後家有千口，心只一心也。然欲齊其家，必須先修其身，修身之法無他，初步必須言行相顧，舍己從人，虛心容物，二六時中，如對鬼神。曾子曰：十目所視，十手所指，戰兢自持，恐德不足以化他人，而況肆之乎！但欲作到此步，必須先正其心，心者一身之主，萬相之宗。心之所發，意必隨之；意之所動，身必行之。此心中立不倚，澄然如長天之水，萬里一色，浩然正氣，充塞兩大。欲作此步，非先從誠意上手不可，意何以誠？意者心之發，心發意隨，一體連貫。此意蕩蕩如虛空懸掛，本無著落，忽善忽惡，本無止象，如不加以誠字，則渺渺何著？誠者何？即不虛之謂。意發中誠，身行合理，意存至誠，而心則大中至正矣。欲至此步者，必須致其良知，良知即自性也。致者，推廣行遠也。如良知埋沒，心意又安所歸乎？心既無歸，仍無止境，雖欲正而不可得。性者君也，心者臣也，意者民也，身者役也。君心克明，峻德是懷，而心、意、身始能共役，而踐之以道也。君失其位，則飛沙橫流，變吉祥為禍殃矣！而又安能得其道哉。欲致其良知，必須先格心物，將氣秉所拘，物欲所蔽，一切傳染之性鹹去，恢復固有本然之性，則以上造詣不行而至矣。此章系由用返體，萬殊總歸一本，氣象終還一理。諺曰：水流千遭歸岱海。此之謂也。總言，聖經賢傳，佛學道典，千言萬語，不外一性，性之所發，理不得而奪之；理之所生，勢不得而移之；勢之所至，人安得而強之乎！欲移其數何難，遵循大學條目，實地力行，則命由我造，福自天申矣！信然。
The ancients that aspired to reveal enlightened virtue for all under heaven first ordered the country. Those that aspired to order the country first harmonized the home. Those that aspired to harmonize the home first disciplined the body. Those that aspired to discipline the body first righted the mind. Those that aspired to right the mind first rectified the thoughts. Those that aspired to rectify the thoughts first revealed innate knowing. The revelation of innate knowing lies in clearing the dust.


[Section Explanation] This section is function returning to essence. When speaking of the ancient sages and people of noble and worthy character, they revived their enlightened virtue and put into practice, this is the function of enlightening the people. Aspiring to aid all fellow citizens under heaven in revealing their intrinsic enlightened virtue, this should start where? It is vital to first lead the country’s citizens to clear their minds’ dust and reveal innate knowing which will enable the revealing of enlightened virtue for all under heaven.

Aspiring to aid the country's citizens to clear their minds' dust and reveal innate knowing must first start with the home. It's proverbial to say that ruling a country is easy but harmonizing the home is not. Why is this so? The Dao of ruling a country, other than governing with humaneness, supplements with laws. Harmonizing the home is not done this way, rather immense effort is used to first
harmonize the mind and raise the model of the home’s speech and behavior to such a moral standard that all can reveal enlightened virtue. Then, even if the home has a thousand mouths, all are of one mind.

Aspiring to harmonize the home must be preceded by disciplining the body. There is no other way than disciplining the body and, initially, speech and behavior need be mutually attended to. Then all day and night, as if battling demons, selfishness is to be decreased and accommodation of others and magnanimity with possessions increased.

As Zengzi put it, “all eyes are watching and all fingers are pointing”. So, as others are endeavored to be aided, wage the battle with care and the apprehension that one’s own moral integrity is also not up to par so as to avoid exacerbating things!

Yet aspiring to reach this step, the mind must be righted first. The mind is the master of the body, giving purpose to the myriad manifestations of existence. As the mind goes so must the thought, and as thought goes so does the body. With the mind’s neutrality never wavering, becoming clear and monochromatic as the vast sky and autumn floods, its awe-inspiring righteousness fills the space between the two greats.

In aspiring to reach this step it cannot be done without the effort of rectifying the thoughts. Thoughts are the arising of the mind, and when the mind arises, thought follows, like one body joined. Thoughts hang in space, shaking and trembling,

Translator’s Notes

“All eyes are watching and all fingers are pointing”: citizens in society mutually preventing immoral behavior. Another layer to this is the immaterial entities of Buddhist and Daoist cosmology who are known to keep an eye on and record the good and evil behavior of humanity.

Two Greats: Heaven and earth.

Rectifying: this my translation of the Chinese character that is often translated as “sincerity,” when it is in noun-form. As “sincerity” has no verb form and because brevity is favored for ease of memorization of the text, rather than add a verb and create a phrase, such as Legge’s “sought to be sincere,” I have used rectify. Rectifying implies correction from wrong to right, or upright, and sincerity is part and parcel of the human effort changed from wrong to right in thought, speech and behavior.

practice of clearing the dust, though here Founder Lü jumps to and emphasizes the compassionate actions needed to help others.
without a place to settle, and are at once good, at once evil, and unceasing. If *rectifying* is not brought into the fold how can they be influenced?

How to rectify? It’s known as not being vain. As *thoughts* arise *rectified* from the center, the body and behavior then align with truth. As thoughts sustain their *rectification*, the *mind* is *righted* at the great center.

Aspiring to reach this step, the *revelation of innate knowing* must take place. *Innate knowing* is the True Self while *revelation* is propagation far and wide. If *innate knowing* is buried then both *mind* and *thoughts* have nowhere to return to. The *mind*, having no place to return to, never ceases, and though *aspiring* to be *righted*, cannot attain it.

The True Self is the ruler, the *mind* the minister, the *thoughts* the people and the body the servant. The *minister’s heart*, subdued and bright, bears great virtue causing the *mind*, *thought* and *body* to begin to serve and practice according to the Dao. If the minister loses its position, *dust* flies at random and auspiciousness is transformed into catastrophe, how then can the *Dao* be *attained*?!

Aspiring to reveal *innate knowing*, first and foremost *clearing* the *mind’s dust* is a must. By eradicating all the energies and material desires that restrain, cover and pollute the True Self, the intrinsic and original True Self can be recovered. Then without adhering to the above guidance, achievement is attained.

This section goes via the function back to the essence. As all the myriad things return to one root, Spirit and Form finally return to one Truth, as proverbial waters all return to the sea. This is how it is.

In summary, the Confucian transmissions of the classics, including Buddhism’s and Daoism’s in all their abundant language, never venture from the True Self. As the True Self arises, *truth* cannot eliminate it; as truth comes forth, destiny cannot change it; accomplishing destiny, how can people not be powerful? How hard it is to *aspire* to change destiny, but by adhering to the guidelines of the *Great Learning*, truly making effort, destiny becomes one’s own creation and fortune is offered by Heaven. Believe it.
物格而後知至，知至而後意誠，意誠而後心正，心正而後身修，身修而後家齊，家齊而後國治，
國治而後天下平。

【字解】如前。

【節解】是以將後天一切氣秉所拘，物欲所蔽，傳染之性悉數格去，則猶撥雲霧而重睹青天矣！
如是推廣行遠，致達我良知之所能，以盡其天職而化民也，意雖欲惡不得其伴矣！故曰誠。誠其
意，意有所止，雖心發以不正，而意亦弗隨之，心安得不正乎！心居至正，覺心源漸趨性海，性
安得不磊落光明哉！故格致誠正，內聖之功也。身既修，見於言行，大德所感，未有不俯首而受
化之者。舉家心齊，始曰家齊。國者，一家一家所集合也。我家齊，眾家慕之。推廣行遠，咸向
春風，複濟之以法，而國大治矣！國治，諸侯回應、朝野仰望，士民引領，安謂天下不太平乎！
故修齊治平，外王之功也。體用分明，則內聖外王備矣！
When the dust is cleared, innate knowing is revealed. When innate knowing is revealed the thoughts are rectified. When the thoughts are rectified the mind is righted. When the mind is righted the body is disciplined. When the body is disciplined the home is harmonized. When the home is harmonized the country is ordered. When the country is ordered all under heaven is as peace.

[Character Explanation] Same as the above section.

[Section Explanation] With the eradication of all the postnatal energies and material desires that restrain, cover and pollute the True Self, it is as if clouds and haze are pushed away and the clear sky is seen again. In this way propagate far and wide, catalyzing the capabilities of one’s own conscience so to fulfill one’s Heavenly occupation of converting the people without the thoughts being accompanied by evil desire. Thus, it’s called rectify. Rectify the thoughts, and the thoughts can stop, and although the mind may not be righted, the thoughts won’t follow and the mind remains at peace. The mind, residing upright and awakened, gradually tends toward the sea of the True Self where, at peace, it is continuously bright.

Thus, clearing the dust, revealing innate knowing, rectifying the thoughts and righting the mind are the practice of Sagely Within. The disciplining of the body is seen through speech and action, inspiring a sense of virtuousness, as there is no one who does not bow their head as they transform.

Lifting the minds of the home to harmonization is what is called harmonizing the home. The country is a collection of individual homes. If my home is
harmonized, all homes look up to it. Propagating this far and wide like the spring winds, this way will repeatedly influence until the widespread ordering of the country. When the country is ordered, the atmosphere and climate respond, all levels of society are reverent, the elite and commonalty are guided and lead, unto all under heaven are at great peace. So, disciplining the body, harmonizing the home, ordering the country and all under heaven are at peace is the practice of Kingly Without. With essence and function clearly defined, Sagely Within-Kingly Without are thus fully equipped.
自天子以至於庶人，壹是皆以修身為本。

【字解】天子：天下元首，替天行道，教養萬民者。庶人：萬民也。壹：無極代稱，數之始也。

【節解】天子元首替天行道，教養萬民，必須由己身作起。欲從己身作起，當先由何處入手？必自格物、致知、誠意、正心，次第不紊，循序而進，內聖之功方足，如是則性天污垢消盡，一身聳聳，潔白如玉，以不言化諸國，以立身教萬民，推廣行遠，天下萬民咸知修身為本，民已自治，何用被治乎？故聖君之治民者，非治民身也，治民心也；只治其身，不治其心，則舍本而逐末矣！如能治其心，而身無有不治者；空治其身，而心亦未有不馳者。故聖君非治民也，化民也。欲實現萬民皆得其化，非己身內聖之功具足不可。治民、化民，誠有分析，可不細思歟。所謂自天子以至於庶人，其間氾濫無疆矣！可以說一個團體，為其團體之長即君，被其所使即臣。如一個商號，經理，君也，其下臣也。只要經理一身作則，言行合度，待人如己，未有其下而不盡忠於經理者。此從一個小範圍說起，任何團體皆然，由小推大，方能極言。自天子以至於庶人，壹是皆以修身為本也。先由一個小團體之君臣，而推到整個天下之君臣；個個小團體，君明臣忠，則大天下之君臣亦然。此何理也？假如大天下之君臣，不順天之道，執天之行，安能化小團體之君明臣忠哉？故由各個小團體之景象，則自知大矣！此一貫之理，不可移焉，休謂君只言皇上，臣只言官也，一個團體莫非君臣，一個組織莫非君臣，世人休執一也。
From rulers to the people, One is fundamental to disciplining the body.

[Character Explanation] Ruler: head of state of all under heaven who represents Heaven and practices and propagates the Dao by educating the people. People: the masses. One: numerical representation of the first movement of the infinite void.

[Section Explanation] A ruler and head of state who represents Heaven and practices and propagates the Dao by educating the people must lead by example. Aspiring to lead by example, how should they begin? They must themselves without wavering follow the steps of clearing the dust, revealing innate knowing, rectifying the thoughts and righting the mind.

Following this order, the practice of Sagely Within can be fulfilled as any and all filth polluting the True Self will be dispersed. The ruler, with a lustrous body pure as white jade, transforms the country and educates the people, not with words, but with personal actions. Propagating thus, far and wide, all people then know that disciplining their own bodies is fundamental. If people are ordering themselves in this way, what need of being ordered? Thus, the sage-kings ruled their people not by ruling their bodies but by ruling their minds.

To only rule the body without regard for the mind is to discard the root and tend toward the fruit. If the mind can be ruled, there is no body that cannot be ruled. Emptily ruling the body, there is no mind that will not run wild. Thus, the

Translator’s Notes

One: In the Chinese text the capitalized form of the number one is used. Capitalization of numbers is used only in banks for anti-fraud uses and to avoid numerical errors in modern times. Spiritually and philosophically the number “one” has many implications. Confucius said in the Analects “Shen, my doctrine is that of an all-pervading unity.” Laozi in the Daodejing said “The Tao produced One; One produced Two; Two produced Three, Three produced All things.”

Polluting: True Self is pure and cannot be polluted per se, rather it is covered by and lost in mental defilements.

Rule: The Chinese character “to rule” also means “to heal.” Ruling in the GL is akin to healing, as it is ruling within the context of educating people to realize their fundamental nature and their own power of creating personal peace and collective harmony rather than pushing a controlling narrative to attain an agenda whose purpose is consolidating power.
sage-kings didn’t really rule the people, they transformed them. Aspiring to realize the transformation of the masses is impossible without fulfillment of the practice of Sagely Within. For ruling the people and transforming the people, truly there is analysis that needs careful consideration.

With regard from rulers to the people, there is limitless inundation between them. It can be said that within a group, the leader is the ruler, and those ruled are the ministers. Within a business, the manager is the ruler and all below them are the ministers. As long as the manager, and their speech and behavior, are principled and measured, treating others as their own, there are none that would not be loyal to the manager. In terms of any group, including small groups, all are this way, and spreading such from small to large groups, this way can reach its utmost.

From rulers to the people, One is fundamental to disciplining the body. Initially from the ruler and ministers of a small group there is spreading to the rulers and ministers of all under heaven. With enlightened rulers and loyal ministers, the rulers and ministers of the entirety of all under heaven will naturally be thus. How can this be true? For example, if the rulers and ministers of the entirety of all under heaven don’t adhere to the Dao and accord with Heaven, how can the rulers and ministers of small groups be enlightened and loyal? Thus, first from the scene of small groups will the large know themselves. This is the one connecting truth that cannot be changed. A group, or an organization, cannot be without rulers and ministers so the cessation of the view that rulers are regarded as only imperial and ministers only as officials is needed. Humanity needs to understand this.

Translator’s Notes

Ruler: ruler-minister relationship is part of Confucianism’s Five Bonds.

Scene: platform.

Large Know Themselves: or “the large naturally develop.” Founder Lü speaks plainly of the natural procession of influence from small to large. Government is no different.

Imperial: Or presidential, parliamentary, congressional etc.
其本亂而末治者否矣；其所厚者薄，而其所薄者厚，未之有也。

【字解】本者格致誠正是也。末者修齊治平是也。

【節解】所謂其本亂者，乃格、致、誠、正四步功夫皆未循序作到，而欲實踐修齊治平之舉，誠為難矣！如同灌溉植物，不溉其根而澆枝葉，則愈澆愈枯，人可不自警歟！所以舍本逐末，乃是根本極大錯誤。厚者何？曰性。薄者何？曰情。應厚其所厚，薄其所薄為然，故道德君子未有厚者薄待，薄者厚遇也。
When the fundamentals are confused order does not reach fruition. Thus, the meager do not minister the prodigious, nor does the prodigious serve the meager.

[Character Explanation] Fundamentals: clearing the dust, revealing innate knowing, rectifying the thoughts and righting the mind.

Fruition: disciplining the body, harmonizing the home, ordering the country and all under heaven is at peace.

[Section Explanation] If the four step gongfu of clearing the dust, revealing innate knowing, rectifying the thoughts and righting the mind is not followed in order then the practice of giving rise to disciplining the body, harmonizing the home, ordering the country and all under heaven is at peace, truly is difficult. It’s the same as watering plants, if the stems and leaves are sprayed but the root is not watered, the more water sprayed, the drier the plant. People can see for themselves. So, discarding the root and tending toward the fruit is a fundamentally huge mistake.

Prodigious is the True Self, meager the emotions. It should be that the prodigious has its place and the meager as well. Thus, the noble person of virtue does not treat the prodigious meagerly, nor the meager prodigiously.
Translator’s Notes: Emotions

Although continuously lauded in the western cultural value system, the emotions in East Asian philosophy are problematic at best. Within China’s three main philosophical systems the Three Mental Defilements of greed, anger and ignorance are considered emotions, and primary one’s due to their basic and deleterious effects. They, and all emotions, are intrinsically empty, meaning they change and are impermanent and have no substantial nature. They also cause turbidity of the mind, drain energy, harm the body and cause myriad problems in human relationships. Emotions are a huge and basic part of human suffering and that is because, on an individual level due to habit, and on cultural level due to a conditioned value system, having and expressing an emotion is a process of self-validation. This might be less problematic if at the same time the emotion arose and was expressed, sight and wisdom of the larger picture wasn’t lost, which would help to avoid an emotional binge on food that harms the body, or an angry argument with a partner that breaks up a meaningful relationship etc. This all because of a deep and fundamental confusion of believing the emotion, which is the meager, is the most real, while neglecting the prodigious, which is the True Self.
【總論】大學一書，雖曰大人之學。究其根源，乃人人之學也。人人各具天賦靈性，至圓至明，在聖不增，在凡不減；婦人孺子，莫非皆然。人在幼稚，性本至善，曰本然之性。身歲漸長，氣拘物蔽，曰傳染之性。人人各具其性大，惜乎不知覓耳，此所謂大而不知其大，小而反行小矣！孔子言，曾子述，一篇經文，總括意義，無非令人人各覓其大。何為大？曰性。何為小？曰情。如能將我具有之性大，下定決心，用上苟日新，日日新，又日新功夫，將性大複初，則我一杯之水純潔，傾于大海之中，渾然焉分。然而性大者，非一人獨具，天下萬民悉具也。天下有一人未複其本然之性大，則我性何足為大？所以大學之道者，即令人人學其覓性大之道也。欲覓性大，當學何功？須用格致誠正，循序不紊功夫，矢志前進，將人相、我相蕩然掃淨，視人猶己，性系同胞也。我覺性，同胞迷性，我心何忍？故應實踐親民渡眾，舍己從人，化人為善之責，躋世界為大同之任。人人身有所循、心有所歸、性有所安，則我臻至善矣！何曰至善？能將我一杯之潔水，傾于大海之中，渾然不分，此至善也。假杯水有纖塵之染，則傾海之後，亦顯然有斑矣！至善者，無極真空也。我之性大與無極合併則我一身則非我矣！何也？大而無外，窮極乾坤，萬物即我，豈視一四肢百骸之軀為我哉！如是則至善無階可升矣。此事縱婦人孺子各皆能之，惟人自棄，何勝浩歎！故古聖教世，先令世人由格物之功著手，而達於上上之乘。苟一日克己，則即一日聖賢；終身克己，則即終身之聖賢，至善者身儲焉！願天下萬民迴光返照耳。其下，物有本末，事有終始，知所先後，則近道矣之語，乃聖人循循善誘，引人入聖之法也。人能知物有本末，返躬自想，一物尚能返本，何況人乎！俗語曰：種瓜得瓜，種豆得豆。植物尚能返本，人可不自警歟！人之本末為何？具性形兩層論：先天賦我之性，本源在何？曰真理也。後天生我之身，本源在何？曰父母也。先後兩層，大本大源，既已明曉，應當複性返本，歸於真理。盡孝抱本，順養父母，果如是如植物之返本，則誠若天地，恒若日月，安有事而不終始乎！由此明瞭先天、後天之分，洞徹本然傳染之性，則近於至善之道矣！聖人深恐天下後世之人，讀是書誠易，行是書則望洋生歎耳。故先以物與事作入德之徑，曉先後之殊，則不難趨進至善之路，內聖之功具足，則外王如風行迅雷之速。綱領條目，一以貫之，真如矢之不倚耳。
Conclusion] Although the Great Learning has been considered a body of learning for the elites exclusively, after looking into its source its actually for all people. Every single person possesses the supremely round and bright True Self bestowed by Heaven, that neither increases for the sages or decreases for the ordinary person and is equally the same for women and children.

When humans are infants and toddlers, the True Self is transcendentally good, so it is also known as the original spirit. As age increases, airs and humor restrain and materialism blinds, polluting the True Self. Every single person possesses the immensity that is the True Self, but alas they don’t know how to seek it. This is known as being immense but not knowing the immensity which results in being small and regressing toward the small.

To summarize this classic’s meaning, which was spoken by Confucius and compiled and written by Zengzi, is none other than to guide each and every person to seek and find the immensity. What is the immensity? It’s the True Self. What is the small? It’s the emotions.

If through a determined use of the practice “If you renew yourself for one day, you can renew yourself daily, and continue to do so” the immensity of the True Self one possesses will be unveiled. This is just like a pure glass of clean water being poured into the sea, when mixed how can it be separated? Moreover, the immensity of the True Self is not possessed by only one person as it is possessed by all people under heaven. If for one person the True Self’s immensity has not been unveiled, how can one’s True Self be complete and immense?

So, the Dao of the Great Learning teaches each and every person the Dao of seeking and finding the immensity of the True Self. Those that aspire to seek and find the immensity of the True Self should then learn what practice? Clearing the dust, revealing innate knowing, rectifying the thoughts and righting the mind, without any alteration of the steps, must certainly be the practice used.

Vowing to go forward, cleansing and eradicating completely the human-form and I-form, see others as being like oneself and the True Self as one’s fellow citizen. If one has
awakened to their True Self but one’s fellow citizens have lost it, how can one’s heart tolerate this? So, enlightening the people and transforming the masses should be undertaken while discarding oneself, accommodating others and taking on the duty of transforming all people unto goodness and raising the world to the Great Harmony. When each and every person’s body has guidelines, their mind’s have a place to return to and the True Self is calm, this is the arrival at transcendent goodness. What is transcendent goodness? When I take a pure glass of clean water, pour it into the sea, and it mixes without separating, this is transcendent goodness. If for example the glass of water is dirty, after pouring it into the sea the specks and blotches will appear. Transcendent goodness is the True Emptiness of the infinite void. As the immensity of one’s True Self and the infinite void are one, what one considers self is not self. How is this so? Immense and all-inclusive, exhausting completely Heaven, Earth and all things between, this is self. How can this four-limbed skeleton of a body be seen only as self then?

Accordingly, there is no step higher from transcendent goodness. It can be accomplished by women and children alike, yet if people abandon it how can there be any accomplishment?! Therefore, ancient sages first taught the people of the world to employ the practice of clearing the dust to reach this unsurpassable level of attainment.

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If self-restraint can be practiced for a day, then that is a day of sageliness. A life of self-restraint, a life of sageliness. Transcendent goodness is stored within the body, and I hope that all people under heaven can return to this light.

With regard to all things from a root bear a fruit, all matters have an end and a beginning, to know the origin and lineage of all is to be close to Dao, this is the skillful means of the sages to lead people through the entrance into the dharma of the sages. If people can understand that all things have a root and fruit then through self-reflection it can be further understood that a thing still can return to the root. This is also so for humanity! Laozi said "plant a melon, get a melon, plant a bean, get a bean." Plants still return to the root, humanity must awaken itself to this!
Why is this so for humanity? Due to its possession of the two levels of spirit and form. The innate True Self bestowed by Heaven has its source in what is called Truth. The postnatal body, its source is parents. The innate and divine; the postnatal and earthly; these two levels are from great sources.

With this already understood then recovery of the True Self and returning it to the root and Truth should be undertaken through the exhausting of filial love, repaying immense debts of gratitude to the root and obeying and caring for parents. If it is like plants returning to their roots, then as true as there is Heaven and Earth, and as long-lasting as the moon and sun, there are no matters that do not end and begin. Via this clear understanding of the difference between innate and divine, and the postnatal and earthly, thoroughly penetrating through to the once polluted True Self, this is to be close to the transcendent goodness of Dao.

The sages, deeply apprehensive, desire that the following generations of all under heaven will read this classic with ease, gazing into the distance with a sigh. Hence, they began with things and matters as the entry way on the path of virtue. Knowing the difference between the innate and divine and postnatal and earthly, the road to transcendent goodness will not be left. With the practice of Sagely-Within fulfilled, the Kingly-Without will move like raging wind and lightning. These principles pervade and unify, truly unwavering as a vow.
The information age has been one of the greatest gifts of humanity to itself. Not because humanity can access and accumulate unlimited information, data and knowledge with a tap of the screen, but because it is naturally, and incessantly, confronted with basic questions. Questions about what is real, fact, right and true and what is not, and many more other questions. This inevitably leads to an occasional, if not very frequent, questions about ourselves and who we think we are. Spiritually, this is extremely important.

We may have liked, identified, supported or even abhorred something, yet due to virtual access of multiple points of views and angles of research and study, our understanding changed, and along with it, so did we. Before the internet when information was relatively rarer, our understanding of ourselves would come under less frequent confrontation as the validity of the knowledge, information or even material possessions that supported our self-understanding was confronted less. Granted, there are numerous ways to create a virtual echo chamber where one is confronted less as the frequency of confrontation with different points of views is lessened, yet still, things get through, and change to our understanding about ourselves changes.

When I was growing up people of all ages, including myself, could base varying degrees of their self and existence upon what kind of soda they liked. The liking of a brand of soda created a viable and, at least in theory, a stable understanding and definition of themselves. With the coming of the internet and vast proliferation of information it became not only a matter of whether a person liked Coca Cola or Pepsi, but also a matter of health. For many people the process of discovering that their choice of soda, and a pillar of their idea of themselves, involved a health dynamic inclusive of the factors of refined sugar, food coloring, carbonation, preservatives and refrigeration, some of which had a possible relationship with diabetes, just as an example, caused a confrontation with that idea of self. Where before someone might say “I’m a Pepsi-guy,” now new questions arose, change became necessary and with that the whole sense of self associated with the soda shifted. It could have been uncomfortable too, angering, and even downright painful, yet thankfully it happened, because a soda, in truth, has nothing to do with the immensity of what each person, and humanity, really is. Truth is the crux, and if knowledge is power in this day in age, only true knowledge is power, and that knowledge can lead us to not only better health, but to a truer understanding of ourselves.

One reason I chose to do the translation of the Great Learning and Founder Lü’s commentary was in order to aid others in developing a keener ability of discernment needed for this age of information and materialism, and the times that are to follow. This discernment is a matter of wisdom, and wisdom is seeing things clearly, beyond desire and need, beyond anger and apathy. It is seeing things with the clarity of peerless objectivity so as to discern the truth. This ability to see is in staggering need for
so very many around the world, confused by the limitations and emptiness of materialism and the constant fact-fiction vacillation throughout the realms of media, technology, science, academics, finance, economics, health, religion, spirituality and more.

The translation is also an effort in the necessary clarifying and revitalization, for the western world, of that which is, and always has been, pithy to Confucianism. It is at once an effort to restore an ancient understanding of, and a new introduction to, the original salient meaning of the core practices Confucianism. Absolutely core and fundamental to the Great Learning’s eight step process toward Great Harmony is clearing the dust. Due to certain events of historical importance discussed in the commentary, a crucial explanation of the meaning of the fundamental first step, and its natural successor and second step, revealing innate knowing, have been all but lost on humanity for two millennia. This has of course greatly, and negatively, affected the practice and propagation of Confucianism, putting it often into the sole realm of humanism without its prominent partner, the cosmological and spiritual. Hence, the importance of this new and simplified commentary.

This translation varies much from previous translations because it is based on my own decade of study and practice of the original text, and especially of Founder Lü’s commentary. It is a translation done by a practitioner of the principles within, rather than just intellectual research. Therefore, Founder Lü’s repeated emphasis on the practices of the Sagely Within, and specifically clearing the dust, resonates very much with my understanding, practice and insight into spirituality and Chinese philosophy, and thus compelled me to do the translation. This emphasis would be largely, if not completely, lost on a “traveling” researcher and writer, who for the sake of their project, only “takes a tour” of the text. You really can’t get to know a place unless you live in it, and spiritual texts cannot be understood unless they are put into practice.

Not that everything has been translated as well, or as accurately as it could be. Therefore, the above needs to be kept in mind when what might seem like a stretch, or possibly even just wrong in the translation, is informed greatly by the commentary, my own receiving and cultivation of the core teachings of pre-Confucian philosophy, and, most importantly, my own practice. This then influences how certain characters, terms and principles are translated, such as the use of “True Self” for “spirit” mentioned above. Another example is fixate from when where to fixate is known. The Chinese means “stop; cease.” Though Legge, who uses “point,” and comes much closer than Muller with his “rest,” it is extremely, extremely difficult to know what Confucius meant here without receiving these same core teachings, the same teachings Confucius received himself and mentioned by Founder Lü in the part above, Great Learning-Source and Transmission.

The translation of the Great Learning text also differs as it aims for a brevity that aids memorization of the text for pedagogic reasons. The Chinese version is remarkably easy to memorize, and within the context of ancient-traditional Chinese education, the compiling of the text in an easy to remember way was done for reasons of education.
Pedagogically, memorization was key to bearing the fruit of deeper insight into the profound principles of the text, which when memorized first, tend to open up into deeper understanding later within a person’s life and as experiences are put up into the light of the principles. It is my hope that with ease of memorization along with even a short amount of study of the commentary the reader can recite the passage, delve into its meaning, attain the short-term benefit of clearing and focusing the mind and be inspired to put the principles into practice.

What has thus been presented here is a translation of the original Great Learning text along with a commentary of, according to my point of view, one of the most important explanations of the foundational principles and purpose of Confucianism. Within the context of the eight-step process to Great Harmony, if the foundation and first step is not understood correctly then it cannot be properly employed. It then stands to reason, along the lines of simple cause and effect, that the following steps become mere wisps of ephemeral mist, and relegated only to empty ritual or mere intellectualization without providing the dynamic and powerful effect of wisdom and humaneness upon humanity, the world and the universe that Confucianism is meant to provide. May this translation aid Confucianism and all those that teach, practice and propagate it to provide just that.
References


Image References

Book Cover and Inner Cover Page images at beginning of translation are the authors own images.

Figure 1 Statue of Founder Lü, also known as Fu You Di Jun. Author's own image.

Figure 2 The Wheel of Life. http://boninfo.org/tv/1777/300129/2016100/view/fotof841896d19dcf81443413232c50f8add.silnik.png

Figure 3 Master Fu. Image from Maitreya's Sacred Footprints (弥勒圣踪). Zhuang, Bi Jia.