

## Comment on Lao Siguang Affirmation of Mencius' "Virtuous Self"

Huiling Luo

College of Liberal Arts, Huzhou University, Huzhou 313000, China

### Abstract

Mr. Lao Siguang's "New History of Chinese Philosophy" has a highly conscious history of philosophy in terms of methods. The book mentions that the "research method of basic source issues" indicates a research direction that returns to the problem itself. The methodology of studying philosophical problems can indeed cooperate with his research. A set of "standards" is used to judge that Confucianism is a philosophy of mind and nature. It is also a set of knowledge about moral values. This ideological judgment also affects Mr. Lao Siguang's interpretation of the Confucian relationship between heaven and man, and presents a quite different evaluation of results.

### Keywords

Lao Siguang; Mencius; Virtuous Self; Xinxing.

## 1. Introduction

Lao Siguang's understanding of the characteristics of Chinese philosophy is different from that of others, but they still have a basic point in common. They believe that the center of Chinese philosophy is human life, and it is a theoretical system developed around life issues. The basic orientation is to solve the problem of the meaning of the value of human life through internalized xinxing training. "This makes the discussion of philosophical issues go beyond the peculiarities of China, the West, ancient and modern, and point to the philosophical wisdom of human universality, which helps us to evaluate truthfully and to make new interpretations based on the times." [1] 21 The basic characteristics and epistemology of Chinese philosophy revealed by him show quite different viewpoints for mainstream Western philosophy.

Based on the cognitive and guiding distinction between Chinese and Western traditional philosophies, the revelation of the grasp of Lao Siguang's meaning is regarded as the guiding philosophy of the basic theoretical characteristics of Chinese philosophy. In general, the reason Chinese philosophy is different from Western philosophy is that Western philosophy is mainly a Western philosophy that seeks to establish a knowledge system and involves intellectual fields. It mainly focuses on the transformation of life or self, so it focuses on the field of will. Due to the self-transformation and the different attitudes of the self to the world, the different schools of Chinese philosophy reflect different characteristics from the self. Like Mr. MouZongsan, Lao Siguang's emphasis on subjectivity is a basic characteristic of Chinese philosophy. He pointed out that in the tradition of Chinese philosophy, there are cosmology and metaphysics, etc., but for the basic interest of Confucianism and Chinese Buddhism, only subjectivity is recognized, and objectivity is not involved.

## 2. Everything is in My Mind

### 2.1. Total Humanism

Regarding the issue of xinxing theory, it is believed that both Confucius and Mencius value the "virtuous self". Corresponding to the multi-dimensional activities of human beings as the subject of life, the self is divided into four parts: "physical self, cognitive self, affective self, and

moral self", roughly referring to the knowledge, affection, and intention of Western philosophy. , Together with the body, can constitute the standard set by Lao Siguang, and he believes that both Confucius and Mencius value the "virtuous self". He further pointed out that Mencius's so-called "words" refers to the cognition of me; the so-called "heart" refers to the virtuous self; the so-called "qi" refers to the affective self or the life self. "'Knowing words' refers to the care of me by virtue of knowing me; 'nourishing the qi' is the transformation of virtuous me to the affection of life." [2] 166 Lao Siguang used "to treat others as yourself, and to eliminate the burden of selfishness." State" [2] 116 and "Realm beyond meaning" [2] 116 to interpret the meaning of "benevolence". He believes that this is a "pure conscious activity" [2] 116. There is no need to seek from outside, and it is not restricted by objective reality. Therefore, people can get rid of private thoughts, upright and open minds, and finally surpass all that exists. Limit, and reach a completely free and autonomous open realm. In his own words, it is "benevolence", which is the full transformation and all-round care of the "virtual self" to the "form-driven self, cognitive self, and affective self".

"The 'physical self' is based on physical and psychological desires; the 'cognitive self' is based on perceptual comprehension and reasoning activities; the 'affectionate self' is based on vitality and sense of life; the 'virtuous self' is based on value consciousness "[2] 143 The traditional Chinese Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism respectively reflect different realms among them. Lao Siguang believes that Confucianism regards culture and life as the process of continuously realizing value, and the possibility of realizing value activities requires people to be self-conscious, and the ability of self-consciousness is manifested in the ability to make value judgments and demand realization of value autonomously. The purpose of culture and life, which depends on whether the value can be fully realized, is virtue. The realization of value or morality requires implementation and transformation. Transforming oneself is to become a sage and sage; when it comes to transforming the world, it is human culture; the former is time and the latter is enlightenment. From the conscious awakening of value to the full realization of value, the inner heart and the outer things show the establishment of moral order. This kind of self is the virtue ego, and it is the role of the virtue ego that makes us seek transformation step by step. This kind of worldview is a worldview that positively affirms the present world, and is a worldview that seeks to realize value in the world of this world. "In addition to the activities of virtue, the conscious subject can also achieve other state forms. As far as the relationship between the affective self and the virtue self is concerned, mutual exclusion is the conflict between life and reason; if it can be reconciled, it is life. Achieve rationalization. The conflict here is because of the directional nature of affection, that is, the dominance of getting rid of conditional domination, and it can show the direction of freedom. But when rationality and life conflict, there is a disconnected situation, and life is negated. Reason becomes a flood, or reason denies life and becomes separation." [1] 19 He judged that Duan Confucianism belongs to the "virtual self" by a set of criteria, and the value root is attributed to the value philosophy of human "subjectivity". , Regarding the issue of "xinxing theory", it is emphasized that both Confucius and Mencius value the "virtual self". For Lao Siguang, Confucianism has become a completely humanistic doctrine, and strictly rejects any possibility of Confucianism having a metaphysics. The gods mentioned in the books of Confucius and Mencius are just a trivial discourse. But obviously, from the perspective of hermeneutics, such an interpretation cannot be satisfactorily used as a classic interpretation. At the same time, it also narrows the value that Confucianism can play in the space. That is because Lao Siguang completely accepts the fact and value of modern Western philosophy and the dichotomy of reality and ought.

"Metaphysics emphasizes 'being or not', so it takes the concept of 'substance' as its foundation; the theory of mind and nature emphasizes 'can or not', so it takes 'subjectivity' or 'dominance' as its foundation. Understanding this principle, pre-Qin Confucianism will not lose sight of the main thrust of Confucianism. Chaos." [2] 187 It is actually a clear principle that he judges

whether a theory belongs to metaphysics or mind-nature theory by entity or subject. However, this principle alone is not enough to determine whether there are metaphysical facts in "Mencius: Full of Heart". "'Intellectual' and 'knowing the sky' are usually interpreted together with the 'mandate of heaven' in The Doctrine of the Mean. From a literal perspective, the traditional saying seems natural; if 'sex' comes from 'heaven', then from The inference of "sex" can also know the "heaven". But further analysis, from the perspective of philosophy history or philosophical issues, are difficult. From the perspective of philosophy history, "The Doctrine of the Mean" is a late book, so it was assumed that "The Doctrine of the Mean and the inheritance of Mencius cannot be established at all. Mencius himself said that he inherited Confucius, and the characteristic of Confucius' thought is to emphasize the dominant position of the self-conscious mind. Mencius' theory of mind and nature was established clearly from this position. The northern thought tradition of the Pre-Qin Dynasty did not have metaphysics, so then How could Mencius adopt the metaphysical point of view of later generations is really unreasonable.... Secondly, from the point of view of philosophical issues, theoretical difficulties are very obvious. [2] 185-186

## 2.2. Prejudice Against Metaphysics

There are two reasons to support Lau Siguang's argument. The first is the consideration of the history of philosophy, that is, "The Doctrine of the Mean" is a late book, and the metaphysical viewpoint it represents cannot reflect the pre-Qin northern ideological tradition and was adopted by Mencius, who has no metaphysical interest. The other is from a philosophical point of view, if the sky is a metaphysical entity, then even if "sex comes from the sky" we cannot determine "knowing the sky" by "intellectual". Therefore, he believes: "

The 'heaven' here does not focus on the 'limit definition', but has the meaning of 'intrinsic order'. 'Heaven' is regarded as the 'natural order', and it refers to the truth of everything in general. To say 'knowing its nature, knowing the nature' means to affirm that 'sex' is the source of all things. ....When Mencius said that "heaven" and "sex" are not affirmative of metaphysical entities; "knowing its nature" means "knowing the heavens", and the semantics is the opposite of "the destiny of nature"; "mind" is the subject, and "sex" It is 'subjectivity' and 'tian' is 'natural order'. The meaning of 'Natural Principles' is broad and can lead to certain metaphysical concepts, but at least as far as Mencius himself said, Mencius did not regard 'heaven' as the metaphysical root of 'heart' or 'sex'. "(2) 187-188

Lao Siguang categorically denied the metaphysical elements in Confucius and Mencius thoughts, and believed that any form of metaphysics or cosmology could not have theoretic effect on moral behavior. Confucianism is essentially the philosophy at the center of the theory of mind and nature. If we understand nature as the natural principle and incorporate it into sex, we will regard sex as the innate content of the mind-nature subject. Therefore, he believes that "Mencius: Full of Heart" can avoid the assumption of metaphysical entity. Lao Siguang obviously didn't explain clearly, but confidently said that Mencius did not regard heaven as his heart or sex as the metaphysical root. However, looking at the history of pre-Qin philosophy from different angles, we can also say that the sky is the metaphysical root of all things, or the root of all things, which has never been seriously questioned by Chinese philosophers. Therefore, "insisting on canceling the metaphysical connotation of the concept of 'heaven' in Mencius' thoughts seems to be based on a rigorous conceptual analysis. However, the entire analysis is not only not exhaustive, but also contains a kind of contrast. The prejudice of going to school is used to filter out the possible rich meaning of 'heaven'." [3] 36

Looking back at contemporary predecessors' interpretations of "Mencius: Full of Heart", on the surface it seems that the focus seems to be focused on the issue of "whether it has metaphysical implications", but after in-depth analysis, the key to the problem is how to define the concept of "heaven" The righteousness. Therefore, although Lao Siguang cited two reasons for "the

perspective of the history of philosophy" and the "philosophical problem", as a statement against "heaven" can be understood as a "metaphysical entity". In other words, the "metaphysical entity" and the traditional Western metaphysics implied by this concept are inherently incompatible with Mencius in terms of metaphysics. From this point of view, it seems that we don't need to deny the value of the metaphysics of "Mencius: Full of Heart" because of the individual's words of a unique family in the history of philosophy.

### 3. Objectively Limited Destiny

#### 3.1. Strictly Distinguish between Justice and Fate

A close reading of the "New History of Chinese Philosophy" reveals that although Lao Siguang agrees with MouZongsan's principle that "the quality of Chinese philosophy lies in subjectivity", he still holds a metaphysical attitude towards "Mencius: Full of Heart". Totally opposed attitude. In other words, there are still serious differences in the philosophical propositions of Mencius's "conscientiousness", "intellectual", and "knowing the sky". Relative to the issue of "heaven" and "fate", it emphasizes the theory of "separation of righteousness and fate". He believes that Confucius' basic position is to "first distinguish between 'righteousness' and 'destiny', recognize both 'conscious control' and 'objective restriction', and delimit their respective fields; and then set the value standard and cultural ideals on dominance. Treat all objective restrictions as material conditions." [2] 134 That is to say, "fate" represents a realistic and inevitable problem, and the objective material world forms an insurmountable restriction on human beings; while "righteousness" represents In view of the question of what should be and freedom, people here show absolute autonomy. Confucius strictly separates righteousness and fate, cuts off the connection between man and heaven, so that people don't need to worship a vain transcendence master, and put the root of value completely inward and put in the autonomy of man. Therefore, Lowe's admits that "Mencius put the two concepts of 'heaven' and 'fate' into the 'objective limit', and the basic spirit of Confucianism is fully revealed." [2] 96

"Tao's general and deeds are also related to fate; Tao's abolished and destined are also related to fate." (The Analects of Confucius-Xianwen) This paragraph best shows the difference between Confucius's "ought to be" and "inevitable." "As far as 'righteousness' is concerned, it is natural that 'the act of the Tao' conforms to 'righteousness', and 'the abolishment of the Tao' does not conform to 'righteousness'. But the Tao 'should be done' is one thing; whether the Tao can 'act' or 'cancel' 'Is a matter of fact, which is determined by objective constraints; therefore, when Confucius said yes or no, neither person can be responsible for himself, nor can he decide arbitrarily by those who oppose it. The way to "do" or "no" is success or failure. Questions; Tao 'should be done' is a question of right and wrong of value. What people can be responsible for lies in the question of right and wrong, not the question of success or failure." [2] 132 thought that Mencius's so-called heaven mainly refers to the range that cannot be exerted by manpower. For Mencius Whether the sky has a metaphysics or not is an attitude of opposition. Lao Siguang uses a self-designed standard different from others to judge the subjectivity of Confucianism as a human being. The interpretation of the relationship between righteousness and fate advocates the separation of righteousness and fate, and Confucianism also advocates the "relationship between man and nature". A two points between heaven and man'.

Therefore, in his concept, the strict separation of righteousness and destiny makes Confucianism a complete humanism. The "knowing the destiny" of Confucius "knowing the destiny at fifty" ("The Analects of Confucius") actually means that knowing the destiny means knowing the objectively restricted field. The word "天" has no substantive meaning under this complete humanism. And Confucius' humanism will not have any meaning of primitive religious belief in personality god because of the addition of the word "天". Therefore, in order

to insist on his judgment of Confucian humanism, in order to make people's dominance have absolute decision-making power, he must refuse all the participating values of heaven and man at all hesitation. Therefore, Lao Siguang's interpretation of the relationship between nature and humanity has taken the path of dichotomy between nature and humanity.

The significance of Confucius's idea of separation of righteousness and fate not only determines the spiritual direction of Confucianism in the future, but also the leading thought and theory put forward by Mencius after Confucius. In other words, it means that the conscious dominance of man has formally replaced the belief in personality god and will. It is thought that "only to observe life according to the 'fate', then everything in life is just a part of the phenomenon of the universe; since it is determined under the inevitable series, it does not matter right or wrong, good or evil; from this one step further, all so-called human endeavors are also part of the phenomenon of the universe. It is fundamentally worthless. Because the emergence of 'effort' itself, and its results, are determined and determined in the final sense. In this way, there is no place to pay in life. If it is in 'fate' By setting the concept of 'righteousness' outside, then the concepts of value, self-consciousness, freedom, etc. will be revealed from this, and the meaning of life will also be revealed from this.

### **3.2. Refuse to Recognize the Confucian Harmony of Nature and Man**

Lao Siguang believes that Confucianism uses "righteousness" to affirm that people have conscious dominance, can make value judgments, and strive to get rid of the facts limited by fate, so that human values can be manifested; otherwise, in the limit of fate, everything has already been determined. We can only passively accept fate and wait for it. All human actions will have no focus, and all human moral efforts will appear meaningless under the constraints of inevitable facts. Therefore, his concept, Confucius established the concept of separation of righteousness and fate by consciously dominating, Mencius will carry forward and establish an ideological system based on the theory of xinxing. Therefore, "under the context of Lao Siguang's interpretation, the 'righteous-fate relationship' can only be understood as the distinction between two planes and opposing realms, that is, the separation of the 'value world' and the 'fact world'. It does not exist. Any religious significance, or metaphysical transcendence, and subordination relationship can allow us to further interpret as a certain kind of "relationship between heaven and man." Interpretation theory is based on the dichotomy of "facts and values" in modern Western philosophy. Mencius' "Cultivation of Virtue" is structured into a complete system of "subjective philosophy". [2] 173 Confucianism and Mencius Confucianism belong to the science of mind and nature, and there is no need to discuss metaphysical entities in terms of interpretation. Therefore, the parts of the Analects and Mencius that involve heaven are different from the views of other scholars.

In order to fulfill the Confucianism of Confucianism and Mencius, the overall structure can be supported as long as people's conscious dominance of subjectivity, and there is no need to rely on metaphysical support, because the relationship between the destiny (destiny) of pre-Qin Confucianism and people cannot tolerate anything. Fuzzy zone. Therefore, it is necessary to distinguish between inevitable and ought to be theoretical objects so as not to confuse theoretical validity. In other words, the reason for seeing heaven and fate separately is that heaven is inevitable and metaphysical, fate is real and limited by experience, and human beings are ethical actors with moral consciousness as the mainstay. These three must Clear distinctions make philosophical theories more effective in argumentation. Therefore, in Lao Siguang's interpretation, the separation of righteousness and destiny implies the rupture of the relationship between heaven and man. Finally, it was proved by Lao Siguang that the Confucian proposition of the unity of nature and man refused to be established.



#### 4. Reflections on Xinxing Destiny

Lao Siguang believed that Confucius inherited the direction of Zhou Dynasty's spiritual personality, affirmed the status of people, and regarded it as the root of Confucianism, basically mastering the characteristics of Confucianism as a humanistic morality. However, the interpretation of Confucianism as a kind of "complete humanism" based on its concept of separation of righteousness and fate is inevitably suspected of partiality. Did the primitive religious beliefs in ancient China really disappear completely by Confucius? Or is it a truly complete human culture? Can't help but be suspicious.

According to him, it is not only difficult to explain the "natural virtues in the Analects" ("The Analects of Confucius"), "the generals of the sky will lose Siwenye" ("The Analects of Confucius"), and "the Confucian Confucian "Master is Mu Duo" ("The Analects of Confucius") and other sentences, even more important issues in Confucianism, why the relationship between heaven and man has been abolished. In the contemporary Confucian studies, there are different people who speak of the value of what kind of position and value the sky occupies in Confucianism before the Qin Dynasty. But if you insist on obliterating the exclusion, it does not seem to be faithful to the text.

Secondly, the method of distinguishing the self into the physical self, the cognitive self, the affective self, and the moral self is obviously influenced by the body, mind, knowledge, affection, and intention in the Western philosophical tradition. Confucius and Mencius emphasize the virtue of me, but they are also respected for the physical me, cognition me, and affection. "The Analects of Confucius" emphasizes "learning", and in "Mencius", the expressions "practice shape" ("Mencius•Zhenxinshang") and "Qi is moving will" ("Mencius•GongsunChoushang") both express body The importance of cognition and affection. "Lao Siguang's theoretical motivation is not problematic. It should be reasonable to regard subjectivity theory as the theoretical setting standard, but it is one-sided to regard subjectivity theory as the only theoretical setting standard." [4] 6 In fact, Confucius and Mencius did not separate people at different levels. In Confucianism, people who are in a concrete practical situation are present as a whole and a whole life. Benevolence in Confucianism is obviously not only a purely conscious activity, but also not just an activity to remove selfish thoughts and establish a public mind.

#### 5. Conclusion

Fate always exists for human beings. "It cannot be separated as Lao Siguang said. Righteousness and fate are the practice of impeccable destiny, and gradually merge into one in the process, achieving the unity of righteousness and destiny. Unity is not a real existence, but a metaphysical comprehension of the realm of life." 56 The completion of Confucian moral practice should include the vertical aspect of the rich connection between man and the sky, man and self. The inner aspect of the connection, the multiple connection aspect of people and the world of life, and the connection aspect of the connection between people and ancient and modern history. If Lao Siguang accepts benevolence completely into the subjectivity as an interpretation, and cannot grasp the manifestation of the life activity process, it is incomplete and meaningless, and it is really difficult to get a satisfactory understanding.

## References

- [1] Li Xianghai. Lu Xing. A Aspect of Chinese Philosophy in the 20th Century——A Study of Chinese Philosophy in Hong Kong and Taiwan from MouZongsan and Lao Siguang [J]. Academic Research, 2008 (7), p.19-21.
- [2] Lao Siguang. A new history of Chinese philosophy (1) [M]. Taipei: Sanmin Bookstore, 2010, p.96-188.
- [3] Yuan Baoxin. From Heidegger, Laozi, Mencius to contemporary Neo-Confucianism [M]. Taipei: Taiwan Student Bookstore, 2008, p.36.
- [4] Chai Wenhua. Analysis of Lao Siguang's philosophy history and methodology [J]. Philosophy Trends, 2015 (6), p.6.
- [5] Lai Xianzong. Separation of Righteousness and Fate, Opposition of Life and Righteousness and Unity of Righteousness and Fate: Confucian Confucian Reflections on "Fate" in the Dialogue of Chinese and Western Philosophy [J]. Philosophical analysis, 2017, 8 (6), p.56.