

THE NOTION OF SELF IN CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

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I. INTRODUCTION

Man in his life always faces by many problems, which has not been over come. In the social life, man being member of society. One is not just a part of society but also the universe as well. He has to contribute to both society and the universe. In the development of human being, one's was influenced by moral value, which was derived from the society. Fung Yu Can states that moral actions are defined as those consciously directed to seeking the happiness of others, without any thought of personal advantage thereform. (M. Elvin in M. Carrithers, 1985: 1980). So, how far the notion of self in the Chinese Philosophy? The notion of self in Chinese Philosophy were extraordinary varied. It becomes popular in Chinese studies.

This study will discuss the very notion of self is alien in Chinese mentally, in term of expression of their attitude. The Chinese mentally has been built from the ancient up to now, which always changes from time to time. The notion of self also always changes parallel to the development of thinking and society. It is quite clear that the self merely as knower in general (irrespective of just what particulars it knows) is similar in all men. The relation of subject to object, what ever it may be, is the same with you and with me. But the self as it interests ethics is not the same in different person. (R.E. Hobart, in Berofsky, 1966: 66) So, it is the concrete, active self, existing through time and differing from others.

To simply the discussion, the notion of self and the Chinese mentally would be derived into two parts, the traditional and contemporary Chinese Philosophy. The former was dominated by Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism. The latter was dominated by Chinese Communism.

In a brief, the Confucianism emphasis on the relation between self and family, Taoism stress on the self should be identified with Tao, Chinese Buddhism mentioned that there is no real self, while Neo-Confucianism stress on the relationship between self and the universe. In the Contemporary Chinese Philosophy, the self should be oriented toward party and country. In relation to this, Godwin C. Chu (1985: 280) explains that in the past, the self other relations among the Chinese were built one the traditional collectivity of kinship networks and supported by such cultural ideas as loyalty, filial piety, chastity, integrity, dignity, endurance, and courage. On the other hand, in Contemporary China; the most important value are loyalty to the party, instead of the kinship group and dedication to the party leadership, personified until recently in Chairman Mao, instead of filial piety to parents and ancestor. In another words, the general characteristic of the Chinese culture and society is

emphasis on group norm and group membership. Hence, the development of Chinese personality particularly in mentality does not the self centered but group orientation. The self becomes alien in Chinese mentality.

For examining this, historical approach and deductive reasoning are needed as well.

II. THE NOTION OF SELF IN THE TRADITIONAL CHINESE

PHILOSOPHY

A. Confucianism

Confucianism was the greatest school in China, which has had the largest and longest influence on all the aspects of Chinese human activities, moral, culture, social and politics. In relation to conception of the self, Tu Wei-ming try to show that a characteristic of Confucian selfhood entails the participation of the other and that the reason for this desirable and necessary symbiosis of selfhood and otherness in the Confucian conception of the self as dynamic process of spiritual development. (in A. J. Marsella ed 1985: 231). Thus, this definition involves two interrelated assumptions i.e the self as a center of relationship and the self as a dynamic process of spiritual development.

As a center of relationship means the self has great influence in the relationship with the family or society. The harmony between them must be realized. As a dynamic process of spiritual development means capability to achieve the ideal man, called chun tzu. Chun tzu is the goal self realization in society. It should be achieved by practicing principle of reciprocity. In relation to this, Confucius recommended the important factor is learning from experienced to develop one self. The learning from experienced can be considered as wisdom of life and basis for developing one's potentiality in both knowing and acting (Cheng, Chung-ying, 1974: 179). He referred to sage-emperors Yao, Sun and Yu. All men are perfect, so, they have a change become chun tzu, eventhough they come from the common people. For this, self cultivation is needed; which is not only altruistic but it is required our own self-development. In the Analects states that "Wishing to establish oneself, one establish others, wishing to enlarge oneself, one enlarges others". Moreover, Tu claims that it is commonly assumed that by stressing the importance of social relations, Confucian thought has undermined the autonomy of the individual self. In this view, a Confucian self devoid of human-relatedness has little meaningful content of its own. (A.J. Maresella, 1985: 233). Thus Confucianism emphasis on ethics in the social relation or self- cultivation. The significant differences in moral development at the individual level are related to different socialization influences. It will then further hypothesized that the form and content of these influences reflect distinctive patterns of dominance within a society (R.W, Wilson, 1979: 1-2).

The key term in Confucian ethics is jen. It can only be achieved by the individual self (chi). This means that Confucius regard the individual as an activeself; which is capable of reaching a state of moral autonomy and achieving sagehood (King in Munro, D, 1985: 57). Jen can be cultivated and developed in inter human relationship because it is based on the principle of reciprocity or shu. "What do you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others". Wilson (1981: 3) describes that reciprocity involves the ability to understand the claims of others has a strong cognitive component based on the capability to differentiate one's own goals from those others. Involve is an awareness of the self in relation to others and an understanding of the implications of the claims that other people make. In realization of jen, Confucius stressed on the filial piety, then extended into the society. He claimed the five human relationship or wu lun; are the relation between ruler and minister, between father and son, between husband and wife, between elder and younger brothers, and between friends and friends. Man can not become truly human if he does not feel the need to reciprocate affections of other people (Tu Wei ming, 1972: 188).

The most important in the wu lun is the principle of hsiao or filial piety. It is as the very center of personal, family and social existence (King in Munro, D, 1985: 85). It was pushed into the center of Chinese mentality. This principle, in the modern China was modified into filial to the group collectivity or state.

How far the relation between self (chi) and group (chun)? Is the notion of self is alien in the Confucian mentality? For answering the question, King categories the human community according to Confucianist theory into three parts; i.e: chi, the individual, chia, the family and the chun the group. For Confucian the emphasis is on the family, and for this reason Confucian ethics has developed an elaborate role system on the family level (Munro, D, 1985: 610), furthermore he also claims that the self is an active entity capable of defining the roles for himself and others an moreover of defining the boundaries of groups which the self is the center (Munro, D, 1985: 64).

In a brief, that in the Confucian view point the harmony between the self and others becomes an important element. The self could be realized in connection with others based on the five human relationship. Man as a part of the family and society. There can be no self perfection without an effort to perfect others (Munro, D, 1985: 22). Moreover, in Analects also explains that finding himself in opposition to the whole, through the social process, in cooperation with others.

Individual was to be defined and understood in term of formalized relationship with others through established social forms. Thus, the balanced and harmonization between the self and society becomes important elements in Confucian notion of the self. On the contrary, Mo Tzu emphasizes on the universal love, because accordingly each person having his own particular morals and his own particular values for words. It was duty of the head of family, each community and each state to unify the values of those beneath him. So, in this case, a person should not think himself but he could serve

others. He should not make distinction between himself, his family and the society as a whole. Everything should be based on universal love.

Mencius, as a Confucianist shows that the self as microcosms are complete in itself. "All things are already complete in us". (M. Elvin, in M. Carrithers, 1985: 166). Every individual is complete in himself, every individual can become a sage; and everyone is equal to everyone else (Chan, 1973: 50). He also states that human nature is good, which should be related in the society. On the contrary, according to Hsun Tzu the human nature is bad, it should be educated cultivated. Thus, both Mencius and Hsun Tzu emphasized on the moral value. This value could be understood in human activity in relation to the society through self cultivation. Tu Wei-ming (1979: 71) state quite clearly that the point of departure in Confucianism is self cultivation rather than social responsibility. It is true that Confucian self-cultivation necessary leads to social responsibility, and furthermore, the process of self-cultivation in the Confucian sense ought to be carried out in social context. Still it can be maintained that the perfecting self rather than the corresponding society is really the focus of attention.

In relation to the social environment and moral imperative of Heaven, the self did not allow the individual to be seen isolation from them. (Barry, 1970: 15). Man should practice ritual for making a good habit, for example ancestor worship an mourning when his parents died.

In Legalism, the status of the self should not be psychologically stronger than the law because states are thrown into disorder by people having numerous private opinions as to the nature of their duty. It could be understood because Legalism emphasized on the law, fa, the method of government, shu, and power or shih. Legalist argued that welfare of the state or society as an organized whole, required standards and values diametrically opposed to those regarded as admirable in individual relationship (M. Elvin, 1985: 168). The self has to respect and follow the law of the state and society. It becomes apart of those. Unfortunately, the status of self in Legalist view point become very low. Punishment and reward is needed for organizing the state and society under the law.

B. Taoism

Different from Confucianism, which emphasis on the harmony between the self and society, Taoism claims that the self should be identified with the Tao. Why? Because everything derived from Tao and it will come back to Tao. There is the reversal movement of Tao. The self is part of nature, so it is not alienated from nature. According to Taoism, one should be life by wu wei or non action, means life to follow the law of nature or the Way. The self is in nature itself. One has to act integrated with nature and not opposed the nature.

In reality, there is a social life. How is to become a good member of society? According to Chuang Tzu, one of the Taoist, the process of socialization through the external process of ritual and learning the classics

constitutes the imposition of something extrinsic on top of the inner self. (Berling, J, in Munro, D, 1985: 104). Then to find the free and autonomous self, one has to break free from institutions and conventions of the social world. Moreover, he advocates two layers. Firstly, it is comprised of the label attached to individual by society. The label represent judgement which is no way touch or reflect the real self. Secondly, the socialized self consist of the various roles and functions designed by society. (Berling, J, in Munro, D, 1985: 105). From the society's point of view, the citizen's contributions lies in the fulfillment of his or her social and economical roles, this is how ones becomes a useful and responsible member of the society because every individual differed, both in what they capable of understanding and in their ideas of true and false.

The self was real or unreal as others objects distinguished by convention. It derives from Tao. For making perfect self one should not make distinction because all things in the world derives from the same resources, i.e Tao. The Tao is beyond distinction, concept and label. The self should be identified to Tao. Another term of perfected self is the man of spirit, which wanders free and easy though Heaven and Earth. The Taoist goal is to become one with all things and to coexist with Heaven and Earth. (Chan, 1973: 188). Everything has Tao in itself, the one Tao unites all of things. So Tao is transcendent and immanent as well.

Berling concludes that because of the Taoist art of living entails a notion of self and whole far different from the conventional view, it is difficult for one who so aspires to maintain a balance between uncovering the inner core of the self and being open to whole life. What one expresses in the Taoist art of living in the Tao which forms the self nature of all things and the unity of life in its dynamic flux (in Munro, D, 1985: 117). In a word, the self should be integrated with the Tao. The distinction between each others should be eliminated because in the Tao everything is the same. There is no different between good and bad, right and wrong.

It is apparent that Taoism stress on the self than on the society, but in this case not the self as individualism like in the western point of view. The self is dependent on the Tao. Thus, the self is not absolute freedom to choose what is like, but he should follow the Way. Furthermore, Neo-Taoism quite similar with Taoism. Accordingly, there is no things under Heaven which do not hold a relationship to one another as of the self and the other. Therefore, the action of the other on its own behalf at the same time plays a great function in helping the self. Thus, though mutually opposed, they at the same time are mutually indispensable. (Fung Yu Lan, 1953: 221). The given condition of certain individual depends upon the condition of the entire universe.

C. Buddhism

The general aim of Buddhist doctrine is the individual salvation escape from rebirth into suffering. The Buddha's single goal in coming into the world was universal salvation. Everything is related to everything else, called *pratitya*

samutpada or dependent co-origination. To achieve the goal of life by leaving household life, celibacy and mediocrity. The Buddhist monk forget his family, so that his wife become widow, his children orphans, and his parent left uncared for. So, the Buddhist ideal could be said emphasized on individualism but accordingly there is no permanent self or ego. In the world there is only One mind i.e: Buddhahood.

Hsuan-tsang (596-664), the Buddhist idealist claims that the real self is impossible. He summaries that the theories of the self held by the various schools may be reduced to three kinds. Firstly, that the substance of the self is eternal, universal, and as a consequence enjoys happiness or suffers sorrow. Secondly, that although the substance of the self is eternal, its extension is undeterminate, because it expands or contracts according to the size of body. Thirdly, that the substance of the self is eternal and infinitesimal like an atom lying deeply and moving around within the body and those acts. (Chan, 1973: 375). All of those theories are unreasonable.

Furthermore, there three additional theories of the self. The first holds the self is identical with the aggregates (namely, matter, sensation, thought, disposition and consciousness). The second holds that it is separated from aggregates. And the third holds that it is neither identical with nor separated from aggregates. (Chan, 1973: 373). Again, does the substance of the real self conceived by the various schools think or not? If it does, it would be not eternal because it does not think all the time. If it does not, it would like empty space, which neither acts nor receives fruits of action. Therefore, on the basis of reason, the self conceived of the theory can not be established (Chan, 1973: 376).

Moreover, the Chinese Buddhist schools take a similar position. They try to help people stop thinking of the self and dharmas (or phenomenal things) as independent existence. Instead, the person should realized that there is only one reality (Munro, D, 1985: 20). In this case, the Bodhisattva gave some advice and help to salvation others.

D. Neo-Confucianism

Neo-Confucianism based their concept of self in the Confucian theory, which had viewed these as primary of the self corresponding to the moral duties, for criticizing Chinese Buddhism and Taoism. Both focused on attention on the radically individual character of self realization. The Confucian notion of the self as the dynamic center of a larger social whole, biological continuum, and moral/spiritual community. In the Sung, this Confucian view of self become noticeably enlarged, in ways that reflect the expansive economic, social and cultural trends of the times. (Bary, in Munro D. 1985: 332).

The notion of self in Neo-Confucianism was characterized the relation between man as a microcosms and the universe as a macrocosms. Chu Hsi states that each individual thing embodies the Great Ultimate and the universe as a whole embodies the same Great Ultimate. The Great Ultimate in the

universe as a principle is one and its manifestations are many. (Tu Wei-ming. 1979: 76). Everything consists of two elements li or principle and chi or material force. The two are always dependent on each other and had never been separated. Man also consists of principle and material force, but in he is endowed with delicate stuff called mind. The mind can transform material force through self-cultivation. The main concern of self cultivation is self knowledge. Which may give the impression that the solitary individual is the primary matter for discussion. In relation to this, the Great Learning states that when things are investigated knowledge is extended, when knowledge is extended, the will becomes sincere, when the will is sincere, the mind is rectified, when the mind is rectified, the person is cultivated (Tu Wei-ming in Munro D.1985: 215). It could be seen from two side, from the individualist deals with the self solitariness in communication with others, and to experience the common spring of humanity. Self knowledge reveals the uniqueness of being shared by all members of the human community in society.

Moreover, Chu Hsi saw the individual as partaking of the supreme value of the way in his own concrete particularity or he assigned man a high dignity by virtue his role in creative process of heaven and earth. He also refers to the Great Learning in the explanation of the goal or fulfills the ultimate of heavenly principle.(Bary in Munro D. 1985: 334-337). It could be achieved by self development and self integration through learning for the sake of oneself. Then man investigates everything in the universe, particularly the principles or li for finding his principle. Clearly, he gives the highest priority, which should always attack to the fulfillment of the person, i.e to the fullest development and exercise of human capabilities within given circumstances. (Bary in Munro D. 1985: 334).

Based on the circumstances of individual, the public morality could be built and realized in the family, the school, the society, the community, the state and in the world. In this case, Chu Hsi explains the three structural principles of the Great Learning Firstly, the ordering of human society starts with the self cultivation, but true cultivation of one's nature, on's humanity, implies extension of this process to all mankind by assisting everyone to achieve self-perfection. Secondly, For the ruler and those who participate in rulership it becomes their duty-part of their own, delft cultivation to provide the means for others achievement of self perfection. Lastly, fulfillment of the highest good/supreme ultimate in each person corresponds to what one might all the development of his own individuality or personhood, the extension of this principle to all men as the precondition for ordering the state and pacifying the world (Bary in Munro D. 1985: 351).

Humanity is fully manifested when the mind has embraced and penetrated in all things. Everyone has his mind. So there are many mind in the world. On the contrary, Lu Hsiang-Shan states that there is only one mind. The substance of mind is infinite. If one can completely develop his mind, he will become identified with Heaven (Tu Wei-ming 1979: 77-78). According to Wang Yang-Ming, the great man regards Heaven and earth and the myriad things as one body. He regards the world as one family and the country as one person.

Mark Elvin sum up in a very general way the self as conceived of by the mainstream. Neo-Confucian thinkers, it might say that it had the status of microcosm reflecting a macrocosm. The self as carrier of moral action, it also meant that any distinctive individuality which would usually be associated with impure matter-energy or selfishness was for the same reason morally somewhat suspect (Mark Elvin in M.Carrither, 1985: 174).

By the perfectibility of man, however, it is not meant that man can create his own nature at random. It means that man's own strength rather than the meditation of some supernatural agent, is the source of actualizing his inexhaustible potentiality. It also suggests that the meaning of life is created and experienced internally in man himself. For man's designed to perform a great task in life realization, which in its fullest development lends not only to peace the world but to perfect identification with Heaven (Tien) (Tu Wie-ming 1979.71-72).

III. THE NOTION OF SELF IN THE CONTEMPORARY CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

The notion of self in the traditional China is emphasized on the harmony self and family and society, integration an unity between self and the universe. Tao or Heaven. Different from these, in the contemporary China, is stress on alienation, tension and contradiction. (Tu Wei-ming, 1979: xxi). In the classical thought, the orientation of the individual ego vis the interested of the family or clan has been superseded by the subordination at the self-interest to the collective or state (Baum in R W Wilson.1970: 103). So there will be harmony between the ideal of the self and the actually of behavior and thought in daily life as a member of society or citizen of the state. G.C.Chu (1985: 272) states quite clearly that the self is conceptualized as a configuration of roles expressed in self develops out of interaction. The self develops out of interactions with significant others, mediated by materials and objects on one hand and ideas, beliefs and values on the other.

The old Chinese concept of self was oriented toward family members as significant others, but in new Chinese leans more toward relations built on appears to be a utilitarian and material basis. The changing of this view may be caused by the influence of Western view point and Communist ideology, It also caused by many ideological campaign waged since 1949 and during the Cultural Revolution According to Kang Yu Wei (1858-1927). The family was a source of small scale collective selfishness, and was to abolished children could then be brought up identical fashion in institutions (M. Elvin in M.Carrithers. 1985: 179). Rather different from other view point, the Chinese child begins his life as a member of a group. He does not belong to the mother alone, but he belong to the entire extended family. When he was born there is no boundary, which is perceived between the self and the external environment. As a consequence the development of Chinese personality in mentality does not the self orientation but group orientation. Thus, he has

strong relationship with his group. For example, when has want married, the first consideration is his parent and his family. The process of socialization was reflected in the Chinese society and culture up to now, especially in the rural area. The conventional anthropological and sociological wisdom indicate that the Chinese culture has always emphasized the importance of collective bounds of human solidarity over individualized bounds (C.L. Boum and R. Boum. 1979: 100). The Chinese moral value also stress strong group identification conformity to group expectations, cooperation with other group members, and loyalty to group leaders (R.W Wilson 1979: 15).

The notion of group has been change from the traditional to the contemporary Chinese. In the traditional the group was emphasized on family and kinship, while in the modern Chins, it stress on the collective or state, it could be noted that there is differences between rural and urban area. In the rural area, the Chinese government has been remarkably tolerant of traditional child rearing practices, interfering only minimally with the strong local / village and family. While in the urban area have integrated traditional element of the cultural emphasis on group solidarity and the submersion of the self (C.L Baum & R. Baum 1970: 103). For example in urban area the growth of group care for infants and children for the parents who working all day.

In the modern society, school training, the media and associational pressures generally emphasize identification with larger group such as brigades and communes and of course, with society as a while. The emphasis in training is on shifting identification to the larger secondary group on investing them with the same degree of commitment that traditionally was reserved for primary group such as the family (Wilson, 1981: 11). Moreover, L. Baum and R. Baum conclude that there is a continuity of values on two levels. First government interference in the dynamics of family life rural China has often more rhetorical then real. And second, in those sectors where change has been occurred, as in schools and urban child-care careless, both language and thee style of communication utilized continue to manifest long standing Chinese value and modes of presentations (R. Wilson, 1979: 102). The changing of those value could be shown in the Contusion five relationship (wu lun), which have been replaced with the five loves be love of country, love of leaders, love of labor, love of science and love of public property.

Each person should act in social life. In the Chinese social life, strong identification among members of group in an especially note-worthy characteristic, and identification in term of the group has been remarked upon as an attribute of identifications in both traditional Chinese society and the contemporary social order. (R.W. Wilson, 1981: 11). In connection with this case G.C. Chu (1985: 259) suggests three sources of the strength of self i.e: firstly, significant others. In time of severe distress, one usually seeks comfort in one's spouse, family members or close friends. Secondly, cultural ideas, including moral values and religious beliefs. Thirdly, materials which perhaps rather fragile one. The arrogance of the wealthy is too well known to require elaboration. However the notion of self derives its strength from all three sources, some individuals may rely more on one then on the others.

The self in configuration self-other relations in variety of setting in the family, the Chinese male would consider himself a son, brother, a husband, a father but hardly himself. While the female before marriage, she followed her father. After marriage, she followed her father. After the death of her husband she followed her son (G.C. Chu 1985: 258). Thus, the self of male and female in the family different in function. The self of male is higher status than female. Male has greater responsibility than female in family or in society.

Furthermore, Chu also notion that the Chinese culture as one dominated by submission to authority, however after the 1949 revolution, the submission to authority is change. Now the people whom the good communist is supposed to serve are not the concrete individual people who surround a person, but the abstract people in general, all of the Chinese people with the exception of class enemies. and indeed all of the opposed of the world. (RP Madzen in RW Wilson, 1981: 154). To serve people means to realize a society without class and exploitation.

The Communist party promote the new Chinese man or a new self concept. The new self is to be characterized by selfless dedication to the cause of building a collective utopia under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. The ultimate goal, in the words of Chairman Mao, is to serve the people whole heartedly. The self should be oriented toward a collective significant other, in a way defined by the ideology of Mao (G.C. Chu, 1985: 268).

In all the very notion of self in China is alien to the Chinese mentally from traditional up to now. In the Chinese socialization, the motivation to correct behavior based on the quality of human relationships and the integrity of the group then in quality of individual.

IV CONCLUSION

On the basis of the study above of the very notion of self is alien to the Chinese mentally, the following conclusion can be made

Firstly, the notion of self in Chinese philosophy were varied from ancient until the present day. It is alien to the Chinese mentally because it modified by the Chinese, which emphasis on group such as family, society, brigades, commune and collectivity of the state.

Secondly, in the traditional Chinese philosophy the notion of the self could be categories into four main ideas. Confucianism emphasis on the harmony between self and family through self cultivation. Taoism stress on the identification of the self with Tao through follow the Way and law of nature. Buddhism claims that actually there in no real self in the world there is only One mind beyond the real world. It emphasis on salvation from rebirth. Neo-Confucianism focused on the self as microcosm. which should be identified to the macrocosm through understand clearly about principle or li. It could be achieved by self knowledge.

Lastly, in the contemporary Chinese philosophy Communist Party mentions that the self should serve people in general. In the rural area it has been oriented in the traditional ideas such as family, society, collectivity and group leaders. In the urban area more identified to the self and to group identification, group member and loyalty to group leaders.

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