

Hermeneutics and the Revival of Classic Studies

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Although hermeneutics as a theory first developed in the German philosophical tradition with Friedrich Schleiermacher and Wilhelm Dilthey as important predecessors and Hans - Georg Gadamer as the most influential exponent in our time, its basic concepts and principles related to the questions of language, understanding and interpretation are patently universal. Jean Grondin remarks that according to Gadamer, “the universal claim of hermeneutics could indeed be derived only from the doctrine of the *verbum interius* - that is, from the insight (stemming from Augustine read through Heidegger) that spoken discourse always lags behind what one wants or has to say, the inner word, and that one can understand what is said only when one derives it from the inner speech lurking behind it.”¹ That is to say, it is by pointing to the basic and ubiquitous problem of the inadequacy of articulation in language that Gadamer makes the case for the claim to hermeneutic universality. Insofar as language exists everywhere in all human communications, hermeneutics does have a universal appeal, and writing as the more enduring form of language is especially important for hermeneutic explorations. Gadamer argues that in our historical understanding, what is hermeneutically significant is a tradition that comes down to us in writing. Written texts have the dual nature of preserving the meaning of the past for us and at the same time presenting the past to us as a current question, as something to be investigated and understood through a rigorous search for meaning. “Thus written texts present the real hermeneutical task,” says Gadamer. “Writing is self-alienation. Overcoming it, reading the text, is thus the

highest task of understanding.”² When we think of hermeneutics in terms of an effort to understand, especially an effort to read and interpret written texts, there is little doubt that the hermeneutic consciousness is directly relevant to different cultural traditions, whether it is a European tradition or an Asian one.

Not only does Gadamer lay emphasis on the significance of written traditions, but he also puts forward the important notion of the classical as a normative piece of work or an exemplary text “raised above the vicissitudes of changing times and changing tastes.”³ This predilection for writing and the classic leads to a particularly close relationship between hermeneutics and classic studies, and indeed the development of general hermeneutics as a theory in the West cannot be separated from the tradition of biblical exegeses and the philological study of Greek and Latin literature. Since hermeneutics refers to the ontological situation of our being rather than a specific methodology of knowing, as Gadamer insists in following the ideas of Heidegger, and since the world’s great written traditions all have their respective sets of canonical texts and commentaries, the influence of hermeneutic consciousness has definitely helped promote the study of classics and motivate scholars to take a fresh look at their tradition and canonical texts, and reexamine them in a new perspective. With the rise of hermeneutics, there appears to be a revived interest in classic studies, and this is certainly true of classic studies in China.

The entire modern history of China is marked by the introduction of ideas, concepts, and values from the West and simultaneously a radical critique and even re-

jection of the indigenous culture. For centuries in pre-modern times, Confucian classics were revered as canonical texts and required reading for all scholars in China who would sit for civil examinations and move on to a career in the imperial bureaucratic system. The study of the Confucian classics was thus bound up with the life of the literati-scholars in the same way as the Bible was bound up with the life of the clergy. In 1898, however, even before the demise of the last imperial dynasty and under the pressure of bringing up the education system from traditional classic studies to a more modern curriculum and practical orientation, the reform-minded Emperor Guangxu ordered the discontinuation of using Confucian classics as the sole and exclusive texts for government-administered examinations. The classics thus lost their absolute prestige, though they still held a canonical status in the minds of most educated Chinese for a long time. With the overthrow of the monarchy in 1911 and the advent of a New Culture Movement following the students' demonstration on May 4th, 1919, it became increasingly the general tendency for Chinese intellectuals to embrace the modern, Western-derived cultural values and at the same time to launch a strong critique of the Confucian tradition. The radicalism at the time came out of a sense of urgency that must be historically situated and understood, for many intellectuals then felt that China was in great peril of being carved up and colonized by Western powers and Japan, that the ancient Confucian tradition had become a heavy burden weighing the nation down, and that nothing short of rapid and fundamental changes in every aspect of social and cultural life could bring China to a possible rejuvenation.

We see that clearly in the works of Lu Xun, probably the most influential and representative thinker and writer whose short stories and essays exemplify the critical spirit of the May 4th era. He came to Japan as a medical student in 1904, but soon turned to literature as the best means to remedy the deficiencies not of the body, but of the Chinese mind.⁴ In a brilliant allegory of social criticism, Lu Xun famously described the whole of Chinese history as a continual barbaric practice of cannibalism, that every page of the Chinese chronicle was covered, upon close examination, with the two words - "eating people" - despite all the superficial pretensions of Confucian virtues.⁵ The sense of

urgency becomes quite palpable when we read the words Lu Xun wrote to young Chinese at the time: "First, we want to live, second, we want clothing and food, and third, we want to develop. Whoever dares to obstruct us in these three things, whoever it may be, we will fight against him and wipe him out!"⁶ Even more scandalous is Lu Xun's deliberately provocative recommendation for reading that enraged many conservative scholars at the time. In reply to a newspaper's request to draw up a list of must-read books for young people in 1925, he wrote: "In my opinion, it is better to read few - even no - Chinese books, but read a lot of foreign books. The result of reading few Chinese books cannot be worse than the inability to compose pieces of writing. But for the youth of our time, what is most important is action, not writing."⁷ For Lu Xun and intellectuals of the May 4th generation, the radical critique of tradition and the advocacy for change were perceived to be a matter of national survival and therefore totally necessary and justifiable.

If Lu Xun's words give us an indication of the cultural ambience in China in the 1920's, the fate of Wang Guowei provides us with yet another sign of the times in an opposite direction. As an erudite scholar in late Qing and the early Republican period, Wang Guowei was summoned to Beijing by the deposed Emperor Xuantong and became one of the last Emperor's Attendants in the Southern Study in 1923. Four years later, when the Republican forces in their Northern Expedition pushed toward Beijing, Wang Guowei, at the time one of the four distinguished professors at Tsinghua University, threw himself into the Kunming Lake in the Summer Palace and drowned on June 2, 1927. His loyalty to the last Emperor could be seen as emblematic of his commitment to Chinese culture as a venerable tradition, and that is exactly how Chen Yinke, Wang's friend and another distinguished Tsinghua professor, understood the matter. It was in the context of a cultural clash between the East and the West that Chen proposed to interpret Wang Guowei's suicide, and in that context, Wang's death was seen as symbolic of the decline of Chinese culture, of which the core values and the basic social fabric were determined by a set of moral and political relationships, namely the relationships between the monarch and the subject, the father and the son, the husband and the wife, etc. By the time

when Wang Guowei committed suicide, says Chen Yinke, these relationships were broken down and China was “undergoing unprecedented calamities and great changes. When calamities are so extreme that no further change seems possible, how could those in whom the spirit of this culture materialized not bear the same fate and put an end to their lives as the life of their culture ends? This is the reason why Mr. Guantang (Wang Guowei) had no other choice but death, causing great sorrow and regret to the entire world and later generations.”⁸ Such an interpretation of Wang Guowei’s suicide in terms of a cultural thanatology is perhaps true of the Chinese tradition in a most conservative understanding, in which Chinese culture was seen as an integral part of a moral and political system, the system of monarchy to which all literati-scholars pledged absolute allegiance. With the overthrow of the Qing dynasty, then, traditional culture in that specific sense was indeed dead.

Culture is, however, a much larger concept than social and political system. The end of monarchy and imperial history surely does not mean the end of Chinese culture per se. It does entail, however, that Chinese culture transforms itself to accommodate the new situation, and that the study of classics takes a different form and becomes essentially a form of historical inquiry and investigation distinct from the philological approach in the Qing scholarship of earlier generations. In the 1920’s, the call to “sort out the nation’s traditional culture” (*zhengli guogu*) proposed first by Zhang Binglin (1869 - 1936) and then Hu Shih (1891 - 1962) represented not only a fresh look at the cultural tradition and the Confucian classics for elements still relevant and useful in the 20th century, but also a new outlook and new methodology in scholarship. Hu Shih and particularly Gu Jiegang (1893 - 1980) made a tremendous impact on modern scholarship in the study of Chinese history and the classics by taking a critical view of the ancient written texts. As Yu Ying-shih observes, Gu Jiegang’s effort to seek the true face of history through an iconoclastic reevaluation of traditional commentaries on the Confucian classics has really achieved a “Kuhnian paradigm,” and his scholarly works represent “the first systematic embodiment of the modern concept of historiography.”⁹ In fact, Gu’s effort to understand ancient history by a critical reading of the classics has im-

portant implications from the hermeneutic point of view.

In his reevaluation of traditional commentaries, Gu Jiegang drew upon Zhu Xi and the legacy of Song dynasty scholarship, while trying to make new discoveries informed by a modern perspective. For example, in the preface to the third volume of *Gu shi bian* [*Discriminations of Ancient History*], which contains essays, letters, and critical notes by different authors on two Confucian classics - the *Book of Changes* and the *Book of Poetry* - Gu argues that the iconoclastic, destructive nature of their work is necessary for the construction and “restoration” of Chinese culture. What those authors try to achieve in that volume, he observes, is at once destructive and constructive:

For the *Book of Changes*, we destroy its status as the sacred scripture of Fu Xi and Shen Nong and construct its status as a book of divination. For the *Book of Poetry*, we destroy its status as the sacred scripture of King Wen, King Wu, and the Duke of Zhou and construct its status as a book of musical songs. I implore readers not to mistake what I call construction here for our own invention. The *Book of Changes* was originally divination, and the *Book of Poetry* was originally musical songs, and what we do is nothing but to wash and rinse their true faces out. Thus by construction we only mean “restoration,” and the so-called destruction is only equal to sweeping clean the blurring dust and dirt. All such views have their origin in the Song dynasty and often find expression in Zhu Xi’s writings and recorded conversations. Once we add to them our modern knowledge and extend their implications, we find in them a great deal of new meanings.¹⁰

In the legacy of Song dynasty scholarship, particularly in Zhu Xi’s writings, Gu Jiegang found a critical genealogy, a sense of continuity in reinterpreting the Confucian classics, whereas he felt confident that his work and that of his fellow scholars were enriched by “modern knowledge,” sophisticated with “new meanings” available only in the 20th century. It is in this modern context that Gu and the other scholars could

treat the Confucian classics not as sacred scriptures, but as texts originated in specific historical conditions and valuable for historical understanding. What is of particular significance for hermeneutics is Gu Jiegang's clear recognition of the historicity of all writing and all commentaries. An important insight he derives, as he puts it, is to "interpret ancient history in the legends of different times in accordance with the situation of those times."¹¹ That is to say, the legends and historical narratives produced in a particular time should be understood not as throwing true light on antiquity but as representing the historical situation of that particular period of time that gave rise to those very legends and narratives. In contemporary hermeneutic parlance, we may say that Gu Jiegang fully acknowledges the horizon of expectations of each historical writer or commentator, and that he understands the commentaries or written texts as belonging to what Gadamer calls the "history of effect" (*Wirkungsgeschichte*). "If we are trying to understand a historical phenomenon from the historical distance that is characteristic of our hermeneutical situation," says Gadamer, "we are always already affected by history."¹² By recognizing the historicity of a legend or narrative from the past, we become conscious of its effect and thus better prepared to understand the situation in which we find ourselves. Again, as Gadamer puts it: "Consciousness of being affected by history (*wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein*) is primarily consciousness of the hermeneutical *situation*."¹³ It is important to note that Gu Jiegang turns this insight into positive usage when he argues that traditional commentaries, even though they cannot tell us the truth about ancient texts they purport to illuminate, may nevertheless let us catch sight of the historical situation from which they emerged. "Though many false materials would not fit in the timeframe they falsify," says Gu, "they become excellent historical materials once they are put in the timeframe in which they arise. When we are in possession of such historical materials, we would be able to understand the ideas and scholarship of that particular time."¹⁴ This is in fact a good explanation of the hermeneutic concept of historicity, that each written text is by definition historical, bringing to us the unspoken ideas and assumptions of its own time even when it professes to speak about antiquity and ancient classics. By differentiating texts produced in different periods of

time, Gu Jiegang and his contemporaries tried to put the classics and their commentaries in their appropriate timeframe, and thereby they obtained an important insight into the process of "ancient history being built up layer upon layer" in historical narratives. It is difficult to recover the truth of a particular event in the remote past from the various legends and historical records, Gu Jiegang argues, but if historians collect all the relevant materials, arrange them chronologically in sequence, and examine them in their various stages and interrelations, then it is possible to know how the historical narrative is constructed by those very legends and records, and how it is added on and modified in time. "The main idea I have about ancient history is not its truth," Gu thus declares, "but its transformation."¹⁵ As Zhou Yutong observes, Gu Jiegang was trying to "study the change of ancient history by using the method of studying narrative transformations."¹⁶ From the 1920's till the 1940's, that was certainly a radical outlook in the study of ancient history and the classics, and its methodological value can be fully appreciated in the light of contemporary scholarship, particularly the theory of hermeneutics, even though the actual content of Gu Jiegang's work and argument has been subjected to re-examination and criticism in recent years.¹⁷

That is to say, Gu and his fellow scholars are initiators of a new approach in classic studies, the modern concept of classic scholarship and historiography, in which many of his insights are significant from the hermeneutic point of view. In retrospect, however, scholars in the Qing dynasty already developed a sense of historical transformation, for in their effort to go back to the authentic teachings of the ancients through a rigorous philological investigation, they were able to set themselves free from the constraints of centuries of old exegeses and commentaries, and see the edifice of authoritative interpretation as historically built up over the generations. This is what Liang Qichao (1873 - 1929) saw as the general tendency of Qing scholarship, a tendency he described as "seeking liberation through the restoration of antiquity."¹⁸ That may also describe what Gu Jiegang does in his reevaluation of the Confucian classics and traditional commentaries.

In his monumental work, *Guan zhui bian* [*Tube and Awl Chapters*], Qian Zhongshu made the observation that the philological scholarship in the Qing had al-

ready recognized the interrelationship between parts and the whole in making sense of a sentence or a text, and he compared the Qing scholars' approach to the classics with Dilthey's understanding of the "hermeneutic circle."¹⁹ This may well be the first appearance of the term "hermeneutic circle" in a Chinese context, and Qian's seminal remarks remind us of the hermeneutic insights we may derive from the long exegetical tradition in Chinese classic studies. In recent years, hermeneutics has given many scholars of Chinese culture a much-needed theoretical perspective from which they try to take a new look at canonical texts and commentaries and to discover new meanings and values in the Chinese tradition. John B. Henderson's book, *Scripture, Canon, and Commentary: A Comparison of Confucian and Western Exegesis*, put the Confucian commentary tradition on a world map with other great written traditions: commentaries on the Homeric epics, the Indic Vedanta, Quranic exegesis, rabbinic Judaism, and the Christian biblical interpretation. In this pioneer work, Henderson argues that commentators in all these different traditions hold very similar views with regard to the canonical texts they comment on, and that they all assume that their canonized scriptures have the following characteristics: that they are all-encompassing, coherent, self-consistent, profound, and fraught with moral and spiritual meanings. To substantiate these claims or basic assumptions, commentators all adopt similar strategies and thus become surprisingly comparable. It indeed appears to be "a general rule that the further commentarial traditions developed away from their canonical sources, both chronologically and conceptually, the more similar they became to one another, both with respect to the assumptions they made about the nature of the canon and the strategies they devised for supporting these assumptions. The very act of canonization," says Henderson, "had systematic consequences that were in part independent of the peculiarities of the canonical text."²⁰ Steven van Zoeren's book, *Poetry and Personality*, is more traditionally sinological and focused on Chinese commentaries on the *Book of Poetry* from the Han to the Song dynasties and tried to discuss them in the light of hermeneutics.²¹ Taking the problem of the inadequacy of language as the point of departure, which Gadamer considers to be the basis for the universal claim of hermeneutics, I have discussed philosophical

and literary hermeneutics in the perspective of East-West studies. By examining canonical texts and their commentaries, I argue that philosophers, mystics, and poets have all tried to make use of the suggestiveness of language to solve the problem of articulation and expression, and that in order to arrive at full and adequate understanding of the classics and the cultural tradition, we must regard the hermeneutic process as an open-ended dialogue, a pluralistic search for meaning.²²

Since the mid-1990's, the study of hermeneutics and its relevance to classic studies in the Chinese tradition have inspired many scholars in Taiwan, the US as well as mainland China to engage in the search of a Chinese hermeneutic tradition. The collection of essays edited by Ching-I Tu, *Classics and Interpretation*, represents the result of a concerted effort by a group of scholars who gathered together at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, in 1996 for the discussion of various Chinese texts in light of the hermeneutic theory. Though most essays deal with Confucian classics and their interpretations, particularly the Song reinterpretation of the classics by Zhu Xi and the other Neo-Confucian philosophers, the volume also contains essays on the exegesis of the Taoist canon and Buddhist sutras, on modern and contemporary interpretations of Confucian classics, and thus cover a wide range of topics in Chinese culture.²³ Another conference with a more focused discussion on canon and commentary was held at the City University of Hong Kong in 1999, but canon was understood in a broad sense as texts of importance and influence, that is, classics not only of the Confucian tradition, but also of Taoism and Buddhism, of history and literature. Commentary likewise included not only traditional Han and Tang commentaries on the Confucian classics or Qing scholarship in classic studies, but also influential commentaries in literary criticism, even 19th-century Christian interpretations of Confucianism. There were also discussions of cross-cultural issues in the encounter of Chinese and Christian canons. A sequel to these two earlier conferences will be another international conference, to be held again in Rutgers University in October 2001. Scholarly conferences and seminars have also been held in Taiwan, where a number of scholars form a group led by Huang Chun-chieh of the National Taiwan University and systematically explore the themes of hermeneutics and the study of

Chinese classics in East Asia. Their research has produced a number of essays published in several journals, notably National Taiwan University's *Historical Inquiry* (*Taida lishi xuebao*). Huang Chun-chieh concentrates his own study on *Mencius* and has so far published two volumes in Chinese on the history of the study of *Mencius* with a particular emphasis on hermeneutic issues, and also a book in English that summarizes his Chinese publications under the rubric of what he calls a "Mencian hermeneutics."²⁴ On the Chinese mainland, hermeneutics has also drawn a lot of attention from scholars in different fields and become an increasingly familiar subject for study. A complete Chinese translation of Gadamer's magnum opus, *Truth and Method*, first appeared in 1993 - 95 and then reprinted in 1999. A number of other important theoretical works have also been translated into Chinese in recent years. While knowledge of Western theories gradually increases, some scholars have called for a specifically Chinese hermeneutics and point to the rich commentary tradition as the foundation for such a culturally specific theory.²⁵ More recently, some have responded to such a call and tried to offer a hermeneutic theory, or at least a theoretical discussion of hermeneutics, based on traditional Chinese literary criticism and commentaries.²⁶

To put it simply, hermeneutics has indeed promoted the study of classics and their commentaries in the Chinese tradition in a way that has not been possible for decades, and it is therefore no exaggeration to say that there is a revival of classic studies in China and overseas because of the influence of hermeneutics. Since this is still going on and much of the research is yet to appear in print, it is hardly possible at the present moment to summarize the current tendency in any detail. We may try to draw a few points in conclusion and perhaps raise some questions for further exploration. One definite point is that we learn to respect our own tradition, try to explore the ancient classics and traditional commentaries for possible insights and cultural values for our own time, and thus adopt an attitude rather different from the radical critique of traditional culture during the May 4th era. With this change of times and social conditions comes the necessary question of historical evaluation: how do we inherit the critical spirit of the May 4th generation without severing ourselves from the long history and tradition before the

20th century? Or to put it differently, how do we appreciate the legacy of our tradition, particularly as deposited in the ancient classics and traditional commentaries, without betraying all that which we have attained and have become in the more recent modern history? The balance between a sense of history and our present responsibilities, between cultural inheritance and a prospect for future development, this is indeed a profoundly historical question, and thus a hermeneutic question as well.

More specifically in the study of history and in classic studies, we learn to appreciate the scholarship of our predecessors, for example, the important works done by Gu Jiegang and his fellow scholars in the first half of the 20th century. When we know more about hermeneutics, we realize how significant some of Gu's ideas and insights are with regard to the study of ancient classics and traditional commentaries. In a recent discussion of the Confucian commentary tradition and Chinese intellectual history, Daniel Gardner concludes that though traditional commentaries "are intended to tell us, the reader, something about the classic, which of course they do, but they also tell us something about the commentator, and perhaps even about his contemporary fellowship of readers, insofar as he is a spokesman for them." Therefore commentary as a genre, says Gardner, "is an extraordinarily valuable, even indispensable source for cultural historians of China."²⁷ The recognition of the historicity of all commentators, the acknowledgement of the value of commentaries for the illumination not so much of ancient classics but of their own time, all these are the important insights Gu Jiegang had clearly articulated in the 1920's. How to build on those insights to deepen our understanding of both the classics and their commentaries - that is our task today.

Finally, hermeneutics, particularly in Gadamer's understanding, is universal rather than culturally specific, and it is not a scientific methodology for the realization of truth. It is, to put it in another way, more of a descriptive ontology than a prescriptive epistemology, more art than theory. That makes the claim to establish a specifically Chinese hermeneutics seem to retreat from the universal to the local, and therefore more limited than it is intended to be. The use of Chinese texts may certainly give the discussion of understanding and

interpretation in the Chinese tradition a cultural specificity or character, just as Gadamer's reference to Greek and German traditions makes his theory distinctly Western. It is, however, far more difficult to claim cultural specificity of hermeneutics as an art and theory, and to differentiate it from the basic consideration of the problems of language and understanding, which constitutes the universality of the hermeneutic consciousness. For students of the Chinese classics and traditional commentaries, it is more important to reexamine the history of classic studies, to come up with specific insights that are not fully understood or articulated before, and to have a better and comprehensive view of the long cultural tradition. Significant theoretical contributions to hermeneutics, either universal or culturally specific, can only be expected much later, after we have gone through a long process of learning and investigation, when many research projects have produced concrete results as scholarly publications. The interest in hermeneutics has led to a great deal of revived interest in classic studies, but what we see now is just a promising beginning, a more positive attitude toward our own classical tradition. It will take a lot of effort before we understand what the revival of classic studies will actually mean in the larger context of historical transformations.

- 1 Jean Grondin, *Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), p. xiv.
- 2 Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd revised ed., translation revised by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Crossroad, 1989), p. 390.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 288.
- 4 See Lu Xun, "Na Han zixu" [Preface to *Call to Arms*], in *Lu Xun quanji* [Complete Works of Lu Xun], 16 vols. (Beijing: renmin wenxue, 1981): 1:416 - 17.
- 5 Lu Xun, *Kuangren riji* [Madman's Diary], in *quanji* [Complete Works], 1:425.
- 6 Lu Xun, "Beijing tongxin" [Beijing Correspondence], in *quanji* [Complete Works], 3:51.
- 7 Lu Xun, "Qingnian bidu shu" [The Must - Read Books for our Youth], in *quanji* [Complete Works], 3:12.
- 8 Chen Yinke, "Wang Guantang xiansheng wanci bing xu" [Preface and Text of Elegy for Mr. Wang Guantang], *Yinke xiansheng shi cun* [Mr. Chen Yinke's Po-

- ems], appendix in *Hanliu tang ji* [Collection at the Hall of Cold Willows] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1980), p. 7.
- 9 Yu Ying-shih, "Gu Jiegang, Hong Ye yu Zhongguo xiandai shixue" [Gu Jiegang, Hong Ye and Modern Chinese Historiography], in *Shixue yu chuantong* [Historiography and Tradition] (Taipei: Shibao wenhua, 1982), p. 274. For a study in English of Gu Jiegang and Chinese history, see Laurence A. Schneider, *Ku Chieh-kang and China's New History: Nationalism and the Quest for Alternative Traditions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).
 - 10 Gu Jiegang, Preface to volume 3 of *Gu shi bian* [Discriminations of Ancient History], 7 vols. (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 1982): 3:1.
 - 11 Gu Jiegang, Preface to volume 1 of *Gu shi bian* [Discriminations of Ancient History], 1:65.
 - 12 Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 300.
 - 13 *Ibid.*, p. 301.
 - 14 Gu Jiegang, Preface to volume 3 of *Gu shi bian* [Discriminations of Ancient History], 3:8.
 - 15 Gu Jiegang, "Da Li Xuanbo xiansheng" [Reply to Mr. Li Xuanbo], in *Gu shi bian* [Discriminations of Ancient History], 1:273.
 - 16 Zhou Yutong, "Gu zhu Gu shi bian de duhou gan" [Thoughts after Reading Gu's Discriminations of Ancient History], in *Zhou Yutong jingxueshi lunzhu xuanji* [Zhou Yutong's Selected Writings on the History of Classic Studies], ed. Zhu Weizheng (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin, 1983), p. 609.
 - 17 See Li Xueqin, *Zouchu yi gu shidai* [Out of the Era of Doubting Antiquity] (Shenyang: Liaoning daxue chubanshe, 1994). Based on new materials made available by archeological discoveries in recent decades, Li Xueqin proposes to move beyond the skepticism cultivated by Gu Jiegang's scholarship in *Gu shi bian* [Discriminations of Ancient History], particularly the doubt about many allegedly specious ancient books. Li also acknowledges, however, that "the current of skeptic thought since the late Qing has played a progressive role and must be recognized as such, as it tried to break through the stifling encirclement of old ideas" (p. 9).
 - 18 Liang Qichao, *Qing dai xueshu gailun* [An Overview of Scholarship in the Qing Dynasty], in *Liang Qichao lun Qing xue shi er zhong* [Two Works by Liang Qichao on the History of Qing Scholarship], ed. Zhu Weizheng (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin, 1983), p. 520.
 - 19 Qian Zhongshu, *Guan zhui bian* [Tube and Awl Chapters] (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1979), p. 171.
 - 20 John B. Henderson, *Scripture, Canon, and Commentary: A Comparison of Confucian and Western Exege-*

- sis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), p. 5.
- 21 See Steven van Zoeren, *Poetry and Personality: Reading, Exegesis, and Hermeneutics in Traditional China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).
 - 22 See Zhang Longxi, *The Tao and the Logos: Literary Hermeneutics, East and West* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1992).
 - 23 See Ching-I Tu (ed.), *Classics and Interpretations: The Hermeneutic Traditions in Chinese Culture* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2000).
 - 24 See Chun-chieh Huang, *Mencian Hermeneutics: A History of Interpretations in China* (New Brunswick: Transactions, 2001).
 - 25 See Tang Yijie, “Nengfou chuangjian Zhongguo de jieshixue” [Can We Establish a Chinese Hermeneutics?], *Xue ren [Scholar]* 13 (March 1998), and “Zailun chuangjian Zhongguo jieshixue wenti” [Further Argumentation toward a Chinese Hermeneutics], *Zhongguo shehui kexue [Social Sciences in China]*, no. 1 2001.
 - 26 Li Qingliang, *Zhongguo chanshixue [Chinese Hermeneutics]* (Changsha: Hunan shifan daxue chubanshe, 2001).
 - 27 Daniel K. Gardner, “Confucian Commentary and Chinese Intellectual History,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 57 (May 1998): 417.