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## Italian Studies on Far Eastern Thought in Comparative Philosophy

Paolo Santangelo

We can say that the first comparative studies to focus on Chinese and Far Eastern philosophies and religions began with the Jesuits, and that Italian Jesuits played a fundamental role in cultural intermediation—for example, Matteo Ricci (Li Madou, 1552–1610), who was guided by a comparative approach in his pioneering missionary activities. At the end of the nineteenth century, several contributions to the study of Chinese language, history, and religions came from the Italian scholars Zottoli, Severini, Puini, Valenziani, and Nocentini. In the first part of the twentieth century, the most eminent scholars were professors D’Elia and Tucci.

Giuseppe Tucci, the founder of the Italian Institute for the Middle and Far East (IsMEO), and a great specialist in religious thought in Eurasia, made a tremendous contribution to comparative studies. At the center of his interest in the religious world was humanity, the subject that in different ways is constantly in search of the universal and the absolute: the “immortal suns in the heavens of the apotheosis of mankind,” “the Minoan and Mycenaean and Assyro-Babylonian cultures, the tormented dramatists and the lucid thinkers of Greece, Zarathustra, the Upanishads, Buddha and Mahavira, Laotze and Confucius.” His broad linguistic knowledge—from ancient Persian to Chinese—allowed him to roam from Chinese philosophy to Indian and Tibetan religions. His most famous studies are centered on Buddhism: *Pre-Dinnaga Buddhist Texts on Logic from Chinese Sources* (Baroda, 1929), *On Some Aspects of the Doctrines of Maitreya(natha) and the Asanga* (Calcutta, 1930), *Minor Buddhist Texts* (Rome, 1956, 1957, 1971), and *The Religions of Tibet* (London 1980), just to mention a few works. The interdisciplinary character of his studies, which include, for example, research on religion and psychology, is evident in many works, like *The Theory and Practice of the Mandala*, where he resorts to the theories of Jung.

Remarkable also has been the production of our colleague and friend Paolo Beonio Brocchieri (who recently passed away), which ranged from religion to politology, and from philosophy to ethics. His works, which are characterized by a broad sense for cultural significance, scientific accuracy, and great clarity of expression, include a synthesis, *Filosofia Cinese e dell’Asia orientale* (Chinese and East Asian Philosophy) (Milan, 1977), and individual essays on Japanese thought, all of which present a steady, comparative approach. His interest in comparative studies emerged in an early article, “Problems of Philosophical Historiography: Validity and Limits of a Comparative Philosophy,” in *East and West* 11 (1960), to reappear in the essays “Osservazioni sul ’700 in Italia e in

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Giappone" (Notes on the Eighteenth Century in Italy and Japan), in *I Congresso italo-giapponese di cultura* (First Congress on the Culture of Italy and Japan) (Kyoto, 1973); and "L' Europa cristiana nel rapporto con le altre culture nel secolo XVII" (Christian Europe and Her Relations with Other Cultures in the Seventeenth Century) (Florence, 1978). A specialist in the history of Japanese thought, he started with an investigation of the great philosopher Ishida Baigan, in the essay "Some Remarks on the Buddhist Elements in the Philosophy of Ishida Baigan," in *Transactions of the International Conference of Orientalists in Japan* (Tokyo, 1958), which he continued in *Ishida Baigan, Seirimondo: Translation, Introduction and Notes* (Rome, 1967) and *Religiosità e ideologia alle origini del Giappone moderno* (Religiousness and Ideology at the Origins of Modern Japan) (Milan, 1965). In the field of Japanese culture, he also produced several essays on the interpretation of Japanese Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism in the Tokugawa period. In his recent "On the Historical Importance of Fujiwara Seika," *Modern Asian Studies* 18, no. 4 (1984), Brocchieri pointed out the "new lexicon and the new intellectual grammar or syntax" of this great Japanese thinker. On the relation between religion and politics, he wrote *I movimenti politici del Giappone* (Political Movements in Japan) (Rome, 1971), *Confucio e il cristianesimo* (Confucius and Christianity) (Turin, 1972–1973); "Modernismo e modernizzazione: Il caso della religiosità giapponese" (Modernism and Modernization in Japanese Religiousness), in *Annali dell'Istituto Universitario Orientale* (Naples, 1975); and "Alcuni problemi di metodo sul rapporto tra religione e politica" (Some Methodological Problems Regarding the Relationship between Religion and Politics), in *Annali della Facoltà di Lingue e Letterature Straniere di Ca' Foscari* (Venice 1975).

Various research studies concerning religious, aesthetic, moral, and political thought are presently being carried out at the major Italian Universities. Several scholars are researching ancient Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Neo-Confucianism, with an increasing interest in a comparative approach that covers Western philosophy, psychology, sociology, ethics, and aesthetics. The main center of Oriental studies in Italy is the Istituto Universitario Orientale in Naples, which was founded in 1732 by Father Matteo Ripa (1682–1746) of the Congregation of the Holy Family of Jesus Christ, first known as Collegio de' Cinesi (College of Chinese).

Professor Lionello Lanciotti, who is a full professor of Chinese philology at the Istituto Universitario Orientale, coeditor of *East and West*, and editor of *Cina*, did the first Italian translation of the Taoist manuscript excavated at Mawangdui: *Il libro della virtù e della via: Il Te-tao-ching secondo il manoscritto di Ma-wang-tui* (The Book of Virtue and the Way: The *Te-tao-ching* According to the Manuscript of Ma-wang-tui) (Milan, 1981). Among Professor Lanciotti's studies on classical Chinese thought

that should be remembered is the volume *Che cosa ha veramente detto Confucio* (What Confucius really said) (Rome, 1968; Spanish edition, Madrid, 1971), where the personality and thought of this great philosopher were attentively investigated through a thoroughgoing analysis of the *Lunyu*. In the appendix of the volume, the life of Confucius and the criticisms of him in both China and the West are dealt with extensively. In an essay on the thought of Wang Chong (Rome, 1967), Professor Lanciotti stressed that autonomy in *belles-lettres* as well as the first aesthetic literary theories in ancient China began in Wang Chong's era. In two other essays, he investigated the concepts of the infinite and image in ancient China: "Il concetto d'infinito nell'antica Cina" (The Concept of the Infinite in Ancient China) and "L'immagine nella Cina antica" (Image in Ancient China), in *Cina* 22 (1990) and 23 (1991). Professor Lanciotti also edited five more volumes, including the proceedings of several congresses organized by him in Venice: *Sviluppi scientifici, prospettive religiose e movimenti rivoluzionari in Cina* (Scientific Developments, Religious Perspectives, and Revolutionary Movements in China) (Florence, 1975); *Il diritto in Cina* (Law in China) (Florence, 1978); *La donna nella Cina imperiale e nella Cina repubblicana* (The Woman in Imperial and Republican China) (Florence, 1980); *Incontro di religioni in Asia fra il III e il X secolo d.C.* (Encounter of Religions in Asia between the Third and the Tenth Centuries A.D.) (Florence, 1984); and *Venezia e l'Oriente* (Venice and the Far East) (Florence, 1987).

Professor Antonino Forte, a full professor of East Asian religions and philosophies, and a specialist in the history of Tang Buddhism, particularly of Maitreyan utopianism and political influence during the reign of Empress Wu, is the director of the Italian School of East Asian Studies in Kyoto. He is also participating in the Hobogirin Project (*Dictionnaire Encyclopédique du Bouddhisme d'après les Sources Chinoises et Japonaises*). He has written several articles: "Hui-chih fl. 676–703 A.D.: A Brahman Born in China," in *Annali dell'Istituto Universitario Orientale* 45 (Naples, 1985); "Brevi note sul testo kashmiro del Dharani-sutra di Avalokitesvara dall'infallibile laccio introdotto in Cina da Manicintana" (Brief Notes on the Kashmir Text of the Dharani-sutra of the Unfailing Laced Avalokitesvara, Introduced into China by Manicintana), in *Orientalia Iosephi Tucci memorae dicata*, ed. G. Gnoli and L. Lanciotti (Rome, 1985); "La secte des Trois stades et l'heresie de Devadatta: Yabuki Keiki corrige par Tan Yong-tong," in *BEFEO* 74 (1985); "Un gioiello della rete di Indra: La lettera che dalla Cina Fazang inviò a Uisang in Corea" (A Letter Sent by Fazang to Uisang), in *Tang China and Beyond*, ed. A. Forte (Kyoto, 1988) In addition, he has published the following volumes: *Political Propaganda and Ideology in China at the End of the Seventh Century: Inquiry into the Nature, Authors and Functions of the Tunhuang Documents S. 6502, Followed by an Annotated Translation* (Naples, 1976), and *Mingtang and*

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*Buddhist Utopias in the History of the Astronomical Clock: The Tower, Statue and Armillary Sphere Constructed by Empress Wu* (Rome/Paris, 1988). Professor Forte was also editor of *Tang China and Her Neighbours: Studies on East Asia from the Seventh to the Tenth Century* (Tokyo, 1987), and *Tang China and Beyond: Studies on East Asia from the Seventh to the Tenth Century* (Kyoto, 1988). Five of the eight papers included in this last work deal with Buddhism in East Asia.

Professor Paolo Santangelo, full professor of Chinese History, is interested in the intellectual and social history of Ming-Qing China. His research activities on the evolution of social and ethical thought between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, proceed along two lines. The first includes contributions on contemporary Chinese thought and historiography, such as "Some Recent Interpretations of Napoleon in Chinese Historiography," in *Cina* 15 (1979); "Il concetto di libertà individuale nel pensiero di Chen Duxiu fra il 1915 e il 1919" (The Concept of Individual Freedom in Chen Duxiu's Thought in the Period between 1915 and 1919), in *Cina* 16 (1980); and the volume *La vita e l'opera di Yu Suwon* (The Life and Thought of Yu Suwon, Korean Philosopher of the Eighteenth Century), published in 1981 by the Istituto Universitario Orientale, Naples. The relations between Chinese and Korean Neo-Confucianism are also examined, in "Neo-Confucian Debate in 16th Century Korea: Its Ethical and Social Implications," in *T'oung Pao* 76 1990.

Santangelo contributed two essays on Gu Yanwu, "Gu Yanwu's Contribution to History: The Historian's Method and Tasks," in *East and West* 32 (1982), and "Chinese and Barbarians in Gu Yanwu's Thought," in *Collected papers of the XXIX Congress of Chinese Studies* (Tübingen, 1988), and he has also authored the volumes *Confucio e le scuole confuciane* (Confucius and the Neo-Confucian Schools (Rome, 1986), and *Il 'peccato' in Cina* ("Sin" in China) (Bari, 1991). In the latter work, the concept of good and evil in Neo-Confucianism and their origin and relation to the Chinese attitudes toward retribution, destiny, conscience, and responsibility are thoroughly investigated. Several articles published in IsMEO's journal, *East and West*, deal with the same subject. Two essays on Sun Yat-sen's thought were published, in *Cina* 12 (1975) and *AION* 36 (1976).

Professor Santangelo is presently working on a new book, which concerns emotion and desire in Neo-Confucian thought and fiction from the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries. In an attempt to understand the ambiguity in the perception of the emotions and passions, in both literary and philosophical writings this new volume illustrates their fundamental role in Chinese philosophy and the significance of their differences from the Western tradition.

Also in the field of history, Associate Professor Filippo Coccia of the Istituto Universitario Orientale, has made several studies on modern and contemporary China, particularly in respect to problems concerning po-

litical thought, ideology, and the mass media. Recently he published the essay "Ideologia e cultura nell'esperienze maoista" (Ideology and Culture in the Maoist Experience), included in the collection *Mao Zedong, dalla politica alla storia* (Mao Zedong: From Politics to History (Rome, 1988). In the essay "Lu Xun e la cultura cinese del primo novecento: note biografiche e rilettura degli scritti del periodo giapponese, 1902–1909" (Lu Xun and Chinese Culture at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century: Biographical Notes and a Review of the Works of the Japanese Period), *AION* 43 (1983) and 44 (1984), the issues mentioned above, which subsequently unfolded during the May Fourth Movement, are specifically pointed out.

Professor Coccia is presently working on a new volume, which will cover the following subjects: (1) the function of the press in the process of the formation of a modern Chinese political culture, (2) the transition from *shidafu* to 'intellectual', and (3) the antinomy induced by the impact of Western culture.

As part of a research project on the modernization of Japan, Professor Franco Mazzei investigated the development of Japanese thought during the Tokugawa period, adopting a comparative approach. The influence of the school of Wang Yang-ming, as well as the ideas emanating from *kokugaku* and *shushigaku*, in providing the intellectual foundation that facilitated the assimilation of new, dominant, outside cultural elements, permitting 'functional' change along with 'institutional' continuity, was pointed out in his "Etica economica e spirito del capitalismo nella modernizzazione del Giappone" (Economic Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism in Japanese Modernization), in *Il Giappone* 22 (1982).

At Naples, Associate Professor Alfredo Cadonna took part in an Italian research effort, the Tao-tsang Project, made two contributions to the *Handbook of the Taoist Canon*, and has intensively investigated Dunhuang religious literature. In 1984, he published *Il Taoista di Sua Maesta: Dodici episodi da un manoscritto cinese di Dunhuang* (an annotated translation of the Dunhuang manuscript: Episodes in the life of Taoist Ye Jingneng [S 6836]), and, more recently, "Una bibliografia ragionata degli studi su due maestri taoisti alla corte del Tang: Ye Jingnang (?–710) e Ye Fashan (616–720)," in *Cina* 23 (1991). He also edited *Turfan and Tunhuang: The Texts* (Florence, 1992). His research topics include metaphysical and cosmological terminology in Chinese thought.

In the field of modern Japanese thought, Dr. Gustavo Cutolo has investigated the evolution of Katayama Sen's political ideas, in *Il Giappone* 21 (1982), and has also done research on the historical process of the assimilation of Confucianism by Japan. At present he is at work on a study of Fujiwara Seika, in his *La vita e l'opera di Fujiwara Seika* (Life and Work of Fujiwara Seika) (forthcoming), where he provides an exhaustive picture of the literary production of this Japanese thinker, pointing

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out his relationship with the political world of his time, the Chinese and Japanese influences on him, and his role as a teacher and moralist.

Taking a historical-linguistic approach, Dr. Paolo Calvetti has recently addressed the evolution of some Marxist concepts in circulation at the beginning of the Meiji period, in "L'evoluzione del lessico socialista nel Giappone Meiji" (The Evolution of the Socialist Lexicon in Meiji Japan), in *Il Giappone* (Rome, 1985–1987). Dr. Paolo Villani has investigated the socioreligious problems connected with the term "Shinto," in *Lo shintoismo: Variazioni su temi linguistico-religiosi* (Shintoism: Variations on Linguistic-Religious Subjects) (Naples, 1990).

The second important center in Italy for Sinological studies and research is at the University of Venice, the Institute of Chinese Language and Literature, founded in the 1960s by Professor Lanciotti. At the present time, the Institute is headed by Professor Sabattini, who, for several years, has been involved with problems concerning the study of aesthetics in modern and contemporary China. In particular, he has studied the Chinese scholar Zhu Guangqian, on whom he has published several essays, including "Crocianism in Chu Kuang-ch'ien's 'Wen-i hsin-li-hsueh,'" in *East and West* 20, nos. 1–2 (1970), and "Croce e Zhu Guangqian" (Croce and Zhu Guangqian) in *Lettere Italiane* 4 (1983). An abstract of his volume, *The Aesthetic Thought of Zhu Guangqian, with a translation of his 'Wenyi xinlixue'* (Rome: IsMEO, 1984), has already been published. The final version will come out at the end of this year, published by IsMEO. In this work, Professor Sabattini illustrates the crucial problem of cultural development in contemporary China, and analyzes both the contribution of Zhu Guangqian to the introduction of Western aesthetic theories in China, and Zhu's original contribution to the absorption of these theories into Chinese culture. The basic trends in Western idealism (such as Croce's philosophy) and in aesthetics (British, French, and German) are reviewed and arranged in the context of the Chinese tradition. According to Professor Sabattini, for a correct interpretation of Zhu's contribution in this field it may be useful to understand, in terms of syncretism, the cultural mediation performed by a number of Chinese scholars who introduced Western concepts into China and contributed to the shaping of contemporary Chinese civilization.

Professor Sabattini has also investigated Chinese politics and ideology. On this subject, he produced the volume *Movimenti politici* (Chinese Political Movements) (Rome, 1972), in addition to a number of essays, such as "La Lega Democratica dalle origini al 1949" (The Democratic League of China from Its Origins to 1949), in *Cina* 9 (1972); "La Rivoluzione del 1911 e il problema costituzionale" (The 1911 Revolution and the Constitutional Problem: A Few Introductory Notes), in *Cina* 12 (1975); "L'introduzione del marxismo in Cina" (The Introduction of Marxism into China), in *Cina* 16 (1980); and "Sun Yat-sen e i partiti politici" (Sun Yat-sen

and Political Parties), in *Cina* 12 (1975). The aim of these works was to point out basic trends in Chinese political movements and the contribution of these movements to the process of modernization.

At the University of Venice, Professor Maurizio Scarpari, a specialist in classical Chinese, is now working on pre-Han Chinese philosophy, with special attention to the Confucian school. He is the author of the volume *La concezione della natura umana in Confucio e Mencio* (The Concept of Human Nature in Confucius and Mencius, Venice, 1991), which is concerned with the debate on how human nature was conceived in ancient China.

Dr. Guido Samnarani is presently researching modern and contemporary Chinese history. In his essay "Intellectuals and Marxism in China in the May Fourth Period: Hu Hanmin and the Debate on the Materialistic Concept of History," in *Cina* 16 (1980), and in *A Missed Modernization: Particularities and Problems of Capitalistic Development in China between Two World Wars* (Venice, 1988), he has examined several issues concerning modernization and the cultural and ideological conflicts among the new generations during the two World Wars.

At the University of Venice there are a few promising young researchers in the history of thought: Dr. Fabrizio Pregadio, Dr. Marco Ceresa, Dr. Riccardo Fracasso, and Dr. Franco Alberto Gatti. Dr. Pregadio, as a member of the Italian research team in the Tao-tsang Project (a European effort coordinated in Paris by K. Schipper), contributed twenty-one items to the *Handbook of the Taoist Canon* (forthcoming). Starting in 1985, in Japan, he researched the history of Taoism, and in particular the Chinese tradition of alchemy. He has just published "*The Book of the Nine Elixirs and Its Tradition*," in Yamada Keiji and Tanaka Tan, eds., *Chugoku kodai kagakushi ron [zoku hen]* (Kyoto, 1991). He is also the author of articles on Taoist alchemy: "Una introduzione ai recenti studi taoisti" (An Introduction to Recent Taoist Studies), *Cina* 17 (1981); and "Un lessico alchemico cinese: Nota sullo *Shi yao erh ya* di Mei Piao" (A Chinese Alchemical Lexicon: Notes on Mei Biao's *Shiyao erya*), in *Cina* 20 (1986). He has authored as well an annotated translation of selected chapters of *Baopu zi: Ko Hung: Le Medicine della Grande Purezza, dal "Pao-p'u tzu nei-p'ien"* (Ge Hong: The Medicines of the Great Purity, from *Baopu zi neipian*) (Rome, 1987).

Dr. Franco Alberto Gatti investigated the Taoist poetic genre *buxu*, in *Pacing the void* (Cantos), and is researching Tang Taoism on the basis of historical and historiographic sources. He has published the essay "Apropos of Ye Jingneng the Wizard: An Annotated List of Historical Sources with a Translation of Selected Passages," in *Cina* 23 (1991).

Dr. Marco Ceresa is researching a Chinese pharmacopoeia. He has already published an annotated translation into Italian of the *Classic of Tea (Il canone del te)* (Milan, 1990).

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Dr. Riccardo Fracasso's field of research concerns Chinese mythology: "Teratoscopy or Divination by Monsters: A Study of the *Wu-tsang Shan-ching*," in *Hanxue yanjiu/Chinese Studies* 1 (1983). He has made particular reference to the *Shanhai jing*, an annotated translation of which he is now preparing. Being a specialist of oracular sources, he recently made use of such sources in order to investigate Chinese ancient mythological topics, in "Holy Mothers of Ancient China: A New Approach to the Xiwangmu Problem," in *T'oung Pao* 74 (1988).

The third center for Far Eastern Studies is at the University of Rome. Here Professor Bertuccioli headed the Italian project of cataloging and indexing the Taoist texts at IsMEO, included in the European *Tao-tsang* project, in collaboration with K. Schipper. He researched Matteo Ricci's references to Taoist religion, in "Matteo Ricci and Taoism," in *International Symposium on Chinese-Western Cultural Interchange in Commemoration of the 400th Anniversary of the Arrival of Matteo Ricci S. J. in China* (Taipei, 1983). Twice he visited and wrote about the Taoist center of Maoshan: "Reminiscences of the Mao-shan," in *East and West* 96 (1974); and "Mao-shan Revisited," in *East and West* 35 (1985).

At the University of Rome, Professor Piero Corradini, a specialist in Far Eastern history, is the author of a volume on Confucianism, *Confucio e il Confucianesimo* (Confucius and Confucianism) (Fossano, 1973). Within the ambit of his studies on Italian missionaries in China, he investigated Matteo Ricci's life and thought and organized a congress on the subject, and Dr. Maria Laura Cigliano edited the resulting publication, *Acts of the International Congress of Studies on Matteo Ricci* (Macerata, 1984). He also published several essays on Matteo Ricci; for example, "Attualita e modernita di Matteo Ricci" (Actuality and Modernity of Matteo Ricci [a Man of the Renaissance]), in the *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Chinese-Western Cultural Interchange* (Taipei, 1983).

Dr. Silvio Vita is researching Chinese and Japanese Buddhism, particularly the Chan Buddhist school. On this topic, he has already published several articles, including "The School of Mount Niu-t'ou and the School of Pao-t'ang Monastery by Hirai Shun'ei," *East and West* 37, nos. 1-4 (1987); and "Li Hua and Buddhism," in *Tang China and Beyond*, ed. A. Forte (Kyoto, 1988). He is now working on a catalog of Chinese Inscriptions from A.D. 756 to 779 (forthcoming in *Epigraphical Series*, to be published by the Italian School of East Asian Studies, Kyoto).

In the field of history of religions, Professor Ugo Bianchi produced several important essays using a comparative approach. However, they do not concern Far Eastern studies.

At Padua University, Professor Gian Giorgio Pasqualotto has investigated comparative thought. He has published *Il Tao della filosofia* (The Tao of Philosophy) (Parma, 1989), in which Taoism and Zen Buddhism are compared with some Western philosophers (Heraclitus, Spinoza,

Nietzsche, and Heidegger). In other articles, he has compared Buddhist thought with Socrates, in "Dialogo socratico e dialogo Zen," *Paramita* 36 (1990), and with Hume, in "Il buddhismo e Hume," *Paramita* 25 (1988). Professor Pasqualotto will be publishing an essay on the limits of language in Wittgenstein and Zen Buddhism.

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