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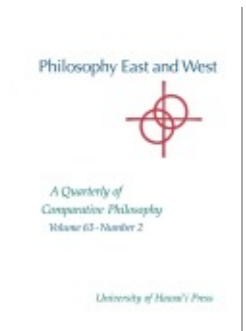
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## Readings from the Lu-Wang School of Neo-Confucianism (review)

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sions offered by A. C. Graham (*Chuang-tzŭ: The Seven Inner Chapters and Other Writings from the Book Chuang-tzŭ* [London: George Allen and Unwin, 1981]) and Liu Xiaogan (*Classifying the Zhuangzi Chapters* [Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994]) of the text to which Coutinho makes reference are useful, but the analysis of Chu rhyme and the inner chapters in David McCraw's *Stratifying Zhuangzi: Rhyme and other Quantitative Evidence* (Taipei: Academica Sinica, forthcoming) undermines the placement of a single Zhuang Zhou in Chu and points toward a chorus of authors within the *Zhuangzi's* first seven chapters.

*Readings from the Lu-Wang School of Neo-Confucianism*. Translated with introductions by Philip J. Ivanhoe. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2009. Pp. xi + 197. Paper \$14.95.

Reviewed by **JeeLoo Liu** California State University at Fullerton

A new set of translations of works by Neo-Confucians is a desperately needed project for the study of Chinese philosophy, and Philip J. Ivanhoe, in his new book *Readings from the Lu-Wang School of Neo-Confucianism*, has taken an admirable lead in his selective translations of two prominent Neo-Confucians, Lu Xiangshan and Wang Yangming, known together as the Lu-Wang School. *Readings from the Lu-Wang School* reflects a deep philosophical understanding of the two philosophers' views, and a comprehensive knowledge of the tradition of Chinese philosophy. The translated text is accompanied by helpful introductions to each philosopher and detailed scholarly notations. These notations, along with the elegant translation and representative selections of the text, make this book the authoritative edition of the Lu-Wang works in English.

The writings of Neo-Confucians have not been adequately translated into English, and this is a main reason why Neo-Confucian philosophy is not widely known in the English-speaking world. Many philosophers working on Chinese philosophy lack a mastery of Chinese and must rely on existing translations. The only comprehensive translations from all of the major Neo-Confucian works are compiled in Wing-tsit Chan's *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton University Press, 1963). However, it is not easy to engage in respectable philosophical study of Neo-Confucianism on the basis of this source book alone. Ivanhoe's translation of Lu Xiangshan's and Wang Yangming's works is thus a welcome endeavor.

When the reader must rely on existing translations to approach Chinese philosophy, she would naturally wonder whether the selection is representative of the philosophers' views and whether the translation accurately captures the philosophical spirit of these philosophers. Ivanhoe's *Readings* can dispel such worries. With both Lu Xiangshan and Wang Yangming, Ivanhoe's selections are more comprehensive than Chan's *Source Book*. Ivanhoe's choice of Lu Xiangshan's work is similar to Chan's selections, including Lu's philosophical correspondence with friends, his short essays, and his recorded sayings. Ivanhoe does not provide as many quotes from Lu's recorded sayings as Chan does, and this is a minor drawback of the book.

However, Chan's selection from Lu's letters or other writings amounts to scanty paragraphs or remarks out of context, while Ivanhoe places his selections in their original context by covering a major part of each piece. Chan's selections from Wang Yang-ming's work include only Wang's *Inquiry on the Great Learning* (*Daxuewen* 大學問) and *Instructions for Practical Living* (*Chuanxilu* 傳習錄), whereas Ivanhoe's *Readings* includes both these documents (which he translates as *Questions on the Great Learning* and *A Record for Practice*), as well as additional selections from Wang's philosophical correspondence and his poetry. Overall, Ivanhoe's *Readings* gives a more complete presentation of the two philosophers' philosophical writings than the *Source Book* does. One also gets to see more of the philosophers' personalities from the various writing styles selected.

In comparing Ivanhoe's *Readings* to the original Chinese texts, I was often struck by the ingenious choice of words that Ivanhoe makes. The choices reflect Ivanhoe's philosophical insights on the philosophy at issue. For example, one would naturally be tempted to translate Wang Yangming's phrase *benti* 本體 as "substance" (as Chan has done in the *Source Book*) since this is the standard translation for the phrase in other contexts, but this rendition makes it seem that Wang has postulated some transcendent entity in his ontology. Ivanhoe translates it as "the original state," "the fundamental state," or "the embodied state," depending on what the context demands, such as in "Knowing is the original state of the heart-mind" (p. 147) and in "The nature is the embodied state of the heart-mind" (p. 145). Such translations not only make Wang's philosophy more accessible, but also prevent misinterpreting Wang's philosophy as a form of "panpsychism" (p. 109). Ivanhoe's translation is both reflective and insightful. He does not rigidly use the same word to translate the same Chinese character, since he understands that Chinese characters take on different meanings in different contexts. For example, the Chinese word *shi* 實 is translated as "the real thing itself," "actual," "substantial," and "concrete," et cetera (p. 49 n. 68). In one passage, Lu discusses how various schools have different teachings (*shuo*) and actuality (*shi*), various practices corresponding to their teaching (p. 51). Ivanhoe's translation explicates the remark by rendering *shi* as "the actual forms of life." In another case, he renders *shi jian* as "substantive view" and its counterpart *xu jian* as "insubstantial view" (p. 64), and such translations enhance the reader's comprehension. These are just some examples that show how the translation reflects a deep understanding of the philosophy and of the language.

One of the best features of this book is its detailed notations, which sometimes give helpful background for a particular passage, sometimes cite the literary source of a particular phrase, and sometimes biographically sketch people referenced in the text. Such notations are indispensable for readers not thoroughly familiar with Chinese classics, since frequently some words and phrases are used with reference to remarks in these classics and convey special meaning. For example, the casual phrase "like water pouring off a high roof" is explained as coming from the *Book of History*, with the connotation that if one grasps the basics, then all else comes easily (p. 77 n. 204). Another similar case is seen in the remark "One will be like the person who tried to build his house [according to advice he received from people passing

by] on the road; the task will never be completed" (p. 81). Ivanhoe explains that this is a paraphrase of lines from the *Book of Songs* (p. 81 n. 219). Examples like these are abundant. Ivanhoe does not just translate the text; he lets readers know where Lu or Wang derived their literary repertoire in the explication of their views. These scholarly notations are consistent throughout the book, with careful cross-referencing to previous notes. Ivanhoe takes great care to make sure that the book gives readers a full comprehension of not just the literary meaning but also the philosophical origin of the text.

There are two minor issues that I suggest for revision in a second edition, however. One is that the book is titled *Readings from the Lu-Wang School of Neo-Confucianism*, but the first part of the book (pp. 1–26) is an introduction and a translation of the *Platform Sutra* from Zen Buddhism. Ivanhoe has his reason: "We begin this volume of translations from the Lu-Wang School with selections from the Buddhist classic the *Platform Sutra* primarily because of the tremendous, poorly understood, and often overlooked influence Chinese Buddhism in general and this text in particular has had upon neo-Confucian thought" (p. 3). I appreciate his rationale and see that it is helpful to understand that Wang Yangming's "mind as a mirror" metaphor (p. 119) makes a direct allusion back to the poems cited in the *Platform Sutra* (p. 16). However, having the *Platform Sutra* as part 1 of this book gives the mistaken impression that it is part of the lineage of the Lu-Wang School. Both Lu Xiangshan and Wang Yangming derived their philosophical ideas from various sources—Confucian classics, Daoist ideas, and certainly Zen Buddhism as well. Choosing only selections from the *Platform Sutra* in this book on the Lu-Wang School seems to place undue emphasis on the influence of Zen Buddhism alone. Furthermore, such an association between the Lu-Wang School and Zen Buddhism, although commonly made, is not uncontroversial. Both Lu and Wang severely criticized Buddhist ideology in their lifetimes and would probably reject such an association. I would thus recommend placing the *Platform Sutra* in an appendix, rather than as part 1 of the book.

A second minor issue is a disagreement on the translation of a particular term that Lu Xiangshan uses in his short essay "Seek and You Shall Get it." Ivanhoe translates the term as "pure knowing" in the first line: "Pure knowing lies within human beings," and explains that "Pure knowing (*liangzhi* 良知) is a term of art, taken from the *Mengzi*" (p. 91 n. 262). However, although *liangzhi* is indeed a term of art for Wang Yangming, what Lu Xiangshan uses here is "pure heart-mind" (*liangxin* 良心), not "pure knowing" (*liangzhi* 良知). This may seem a trivial distinction since Wang seems to use pure knowing (*liangzhi* 良知) to interpret the original state of the heart-mind (*liangxin* 良心); however, a case can be made that Lu and Wang differ in their views on the original state of the heart-mind. Lu explains Mengzi's phrase "not losing one's fundamental heart-mind" this way: "The 'four sprouts' are none other than this heart-mind. 'What Heaven has endowed me with' is none other than this heart-mind" (p. 73). He also says repeatedly, "Benevolence is the human heart-mind" (p. 92). His view of the human heart-mind focuses on one's inborn moral sensibilities such as compassion, shame/resentment, reverence/humility, and knowing right from

wrong (the *four sprouts*), while Wang's view seems to focus more on the knowing (*zhi* 知) aspect. Whether Lu and Wang really differ in their views is itself a worthy topic for dispute, but Ivanhoe's translation in this case does not allow such distinctions to be made, and could lead to an interjection of Wang's ideas into Lu's philosophy.

In conclusion, Ivanhoe's *Readings* is a highly commendable translation of Lu Xiangshan's and Wang Yangming's works. It gives good coverage of their philosophical views and literary styles, and can be used as a reliable sourcebook for the Lu-Wang School. This book can be used for any course on Neo-Confucianism, and I will certainly adopt it myself when I teach such a course. I hope Ivanhoe will continue his endeavor and bring more Neo-Confucian works into the English-speaking world.

*Die Kunst des Lebens und andere Künste: Skurrile Skizzen zu einem euro-daoistischen Ethos ohne Moral.* By Günter Wohlfart. Berlin: Parerga Verlag, 2005. Pp. 286.

Reviewed by **Geir Sigurðsson** University of Iceland

East-West philosophical encounters pose a tantalizing problem: virtually endless comparisons and attempts to find resonating (or contrasting) features seem to prevent us from ever getting to the heart of the matter and say what we want to say. It can be hard enough, as a matter of fact, to have to deal with only one of the traditions in question, as it requires that we work through a long list of commentaries and interpretations before we can even hope to find anything resembling a solution to the problem(s) giving rise to our explorations. In this way, the history of philosophy has become philosophy itself, as Günter Wohlfart writes in his challenging book, *Die Kunst des Lebens und andere Künste* (The art of living and other arts), echoing a complaint made by Albert Camus.<sup>1</sup> The widespread philosophical tendency to bypass the complex historical and hermeneutical web of dialogues and return to simplicity, *zu den Sachen selbst* (Edmund Husserl), to that which "really matters," is an understandable temptation. The tendency is recurrent in the history of Western philosophy, reaching a higher level of urgency at the turn of the twentieth century and beyond. In China, however, ancient Daoist philosophy already presents itself as such an endeavor to rid itself of the baggage of tradition, history, and established systems in its quest for optimal ways of living—and dying. The Daoist sage is one who finds stability and tranquility in the continuous turbulence of an ever-changing existence. But one does not become a sage out of the blue. Sagehood demands a long and continuous process of learning, self-cultivation, perspicacity, et cetera. It may very well consist in simplicity and plainness, but unfolding and cultivating these qualities is not necessarily simple and plain. It requires complex "undoings" of the acquired views and tendencies with which modern life has imbued us.

Sagehood is therefore a paradoxical combination of acquisition and forgetting—or this seems to be one among the many flavors contained in Günter Wohlfart's philosophical soup of spicy Zhuangzian tales as well as Daoist- and Zen-inspired