Connecting Protestantism to Ruiism:
Religion, Dialogism and Intertextuality in James Legge’s Translation of the Lunyu

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This thesis examines the 1861 and 1893 editions of James Legge’s (1815–1897) translation of the Lunyu, collected in the first volume of his Chinese Classics under the title, Confucian Analects. Instead of confining Legge in the discourses of orientalism and cultural imperialism, I reread Legge’s encounter with ancient and contemporary China, his reverence for Kongzi (Confucius), and his appreciation of Ruism (Confucianism) as a monotheistic religion relevant to Christianity. I argue that Legge’s Lunyu shows a spirit of intercultural accommodation through his broad incorporation of Chinese and Western sources, unfolding important nineteenth-century sinological approaches while stimulating the modern development of Sino-Western dialogue.

The study illustrates the textual identities of the Lunyu through a discussion of Kongzi’s life, the early formation of the Lunyu, the reception history of the Lunyu in China and Europe up to Legge’s time, and the editorial history of Legge’s Lunyu that reflects the text’s rich tradition. The study illuminates the significance of religion in Legge’s evaluation of Kongzi and the Lunyu by charting Legge’s religious background and sinological commitment, while relating modern/contemporary theories of ‘religion’ in the West and China to his approach to Ruism. Within these contexts, I show how Legge connects Christian thought to Ruist ethics through his vision of ‘universal love’. Adopting Mikhail M. Bakhtin’s theory of dialogism and Julia Kristeva’s notion of intertextuality, I analyse Legge’s rendition of the title through his correlation between the Ruist, Graeco-Roman and Christian traditions, his translation of ren (perfect virtue, benevolence and love), xiao (filial piety), zhong (faithfulness and sincerity) and li (the rules of propriety), and his revisions. Moreover, to reveal how Legge develops a universal Ruist theology based on his Sino-Christian perspective, I examine his interpretation of Tian (Heaven), Di and Shangdi (both referring to the Supreme Ruler, equivalent to Christian God according to Legge) in ancient Ruist literature, and the way Legge relates these terms to relevant passages in the Lunyu. I elucidate Legge’s sympathetic account of Zhu Xi as a theistic thinker, probing his use of Zhu’s commentaries on ‘learning’, ‘perfect virtue’, ‘transcendence’ and the attributes of God in the Lunyu. In sum, the thesis demonstrates the interreligious, dialogic and intertextual dimensions of Legge’s Lunyu, highlighting its nuanced intercultural values.
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INTRODUCTION

James Legge, Protestantism and Ruism in Translation

The Chinese Classics by James Legge (1815–1897) is widely considered as a significant and enduring body of work that continues to be printed, cited, consulted and appreciated in our present age. In 1838, Legge committed himself to “becoming a true Christian” and began his Chinese studies (see Girardot 2002 and Pfister 2004). His Chinese learning thereafter profoundly transformed his view of God and the world, insofar as his Nonconformist Congregational conviction1 remarkably influenced his translation of Ruist or Confucian texts. From 1843 until 1873, Legge led an eventful life in China. He was the headmaster of the Ying Wa College 英華書院 (the Anglo-Chinese College) (1843–1867) and one of the leading British missionaries in Hong Kong. Later in 1876, he was appointed the first professor of Chinese and sinology at the University of Oxford. He held this professorship until his death in 1897. Legge’s lifelong association with the Chinese and European intellectual communities – historical as well as contemporary – is richly reflected in the 1861 and the revised 1893 editions of his bilingual Chinese Classics. Thus, any single-dimensional approach to the study of Legge’s work could hardly do justice to his intercultural concerns and achievements.

The aim of this thesis is to re-examine Legge’s connection with China through a reassessment of his translation of the Lunyu《論語》, collected in the first volume of his Chinese Classics under the title, “Confucian Analects”. The Lunyu, a compilation

1 ‘Nonconformist Congregational churches’ refer to the independent tradition in British Protestant history. Specifically, Legge’s Congregationalist stance derived from his background as a Scottish Dissenter and development as a liberal-minded Christian in the political and social context of nineteenth-century Britain (see Pfister 2004/I: 7 and Clyde Binfield 2012: 201-44; see also 2.1).
of Kongzi’s or Confucius’s (551–479 BCE) sayings and discussions with his disciples, was one of the first texts Legge perused for his Chinese studies. Sinologists working in English today usually refer to the *Lunyu* as the *Analects* without preceding it with ‘Confucian’, as many of them are debating the actual content of the text or the integrity of ‘Analects’ as a category (see Benjamin A. Elman 2009). Legge, however, views the *Lunyu* as the principal source for tracing Kongzi’s spiritual legacy, relating the text to what he envisages as the ancient monotheistic origin of Ruism or Confucianism. For Legge, the *Lunyu* shows Kongzi’s faithful transmission of Ruism as an ancient Chinese religion, which then has powerfully shaped Chinese statecraft, culture and society for over two thousand years. Arranging the *Lunyu* as the first text in his *Chinese Classics*, Legge discusses its textual and reception history up to his time, introducing Kongzi’s life and his main disciples. As he does for all other texts in his *Chinese Classics*, he consistently parallels the original *Lunyu* with his translation and annotates each saying in both English and Chinese.

Bryan W. Van Norden (2002: 3) notes that Kongzi’s influence on China can be paralleled to that of both Jesus Christ and Socrates on the West. From the Han (206 BCE – 220 CE) to the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), Chinese rulers, officials and scholars employed Kongzi’s teaching in the *Lunyu* and other ancient sources for strengthening imperial governance and for their respective intellectual pursuits. In the twentieth century, the government of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) (1949–present) denounced Ruism during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), yet revived it in recent decades. Meanwhile, the Republic of China (ROC)

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2 After Sima Tan 司馬談 (ca. 165–110 BCE), Kongzi’s teaching gradually formed into a system known as ‘Rujia’ 儒家 or ‘Ruism’ today (see Kidder Smith 2003 and 1.1). On the origin and contemporary debate over the term ‘Confucianism’, see note 30 in 1.2.4. In this thesis I use Ruism to refer to the legacy of Chinese classical tradition and Kongzi’s teaching, which is now generally known as ‘Confucianism’ in the West.
(1912–present), a regime taking root in Taiwan since 1949, has upheld Ruist thought. The representation of Kongzi’s character and thought in the Lunyu hence has acted as the political, intellectual and moral foundation for imperial China and modern Chinese states. For Legge, Kongzi’s teaching reveals a timeless quality, as Legge values how Kongzi inherits divine providence in Chinese antiquity\(^3\) and inspires numerous Chinese thinkers through the dynasties. In this regard, Legge deems the Lunyu as highly relevant to the Bible and other major Western classics. Through his Lunyu, Legge is keen on building a substantial connection between Ruism, Christianity and Western philosophy, believing that Kongzi should be regarded as a religious teacher, who provides fundamental lessons for Chinese people, the West and common humanity.

Modern and contemporary researchers debate on how to accurately examine the legacy of the Christian missionaries in China from the sixteenth century onwards. In his influential work Orientalism (1978), Edward W. Said proclaims that European imperialist ideology motivated the past Western authors’, artists’ and missionaries’ representations of Eastern peoples and cultures. Prior to Said’s Orientalism, Herbert Fingarette (1972) had called into question the Eurocentric thinking in the past missionary reading of China. As Fingarette (ibid.: viii) notes, although the Jesuits and Protestant missionaries in China should be regarded as erudite men, they knowingly or unknowingly maintained their sense of Christian superiority in translating the Ruist classics, despite their admiration for Kongzi. Fingarette’s point here is amplified in Said’s Orientalism, which contends that the European representations of the East, in particular in the nineteenth century, suggest an unequal power

\(^3\) I use ‘Chinese antiquity’ to refer to the cultural events and religious activities occurring and documented during the Xia, Yin and Zhou dynasties (ca. 2100–256 BCE) in Chinese history. See Dieter Kuhn and Helga Stahl (2008) for contemporary scholarly discussions on perceiving the term ‘antiquity’ in Chinese civilisation.
relationship between the author (the West) and the represented (the East) owing to European authors’ imperialist intention to appropriate the East. Through Said’s lens and rationale, Legge would inevitably be labeled a ‘typical’ imperialist, and all his effort on studying Ruism was merely an act of victimising China (see, for example, Wang Hui 2008).

What Said wants to suggest in his *Orientalism* is the necessity to learn from the East–West interactive histories and remember the sufferings of those once colonised by Western powers. Nevertheless, Said’s approach tends to generalise the character of all Westerners associated with the East under an overarching structure of orientalism, ignoring the fact that these Western authors often had their individual identities, visions and worldviews. More fundamentally, they were human beings sharing many common concerns with Eastern peoples.

As James St. André (2003a) reminds us, other than Said’s theory, there are many possible ways of looking at past European translations of Chinese literature. In assessing these translations, we should pay attention to how a particular European author or translator might sympathise with and appreciate the ‘other’, rather than restricting our focus on the alleged imperialist intention in his or her attitude towards the East.

In the case of Legge, Norman J. Girardot (2002) and Lauren F. Pfister (2004) have provided revisionist accounts of Legge’s encounter with ancient and contemporary China. Girardot’s biography of Legge details the many aspects which fostered Legge’s career in Qing China and sinological professorship at Oxford. Pfister’s discussion invites us to re-envision Legge’s spiritual and intellectual development as a devout Christian and committed scholar of Ruism. Girardot and Pfister challenge Said’s interpretation of cultural imperialism in the nineteenth century, instead unveiling a series of complex and often unexpected pictures about
the Victorian connection with contemporary China through Legge.

In this thesis, I will demonstrate what insights and values Legge’s *Lunyu* unfolds for developing intercultural and interreligious dialogue between China and the West. I use Mikhail M. Bakhtin’s theory of dialogism and Julia Kristeva’s notion of intertextuality for analysing Legge’s *Lunyu*. Adopting the theoretical approach of ‘dialogism’ and ‘intertextuality’, my purpose is to unveil the interconnection between Christianity and Ruism in Legge’s translatorial engagement with Kongzi and numerous other thinkers. I will show how Legge develops this Ruist–Christian connection through his philological, philosophical and religious explorations into the *Lunyu* and other relevant sources. The way in which Legge relates Christianity to Ruism illustrates his pioneering prospect for a future wherein Chinese and Western cultures can receive and accommodate each other on grounds of more substantial mutual appreciation. In this regard, ‘dialogism’ and ‘intertextuality’ illuminate Legge’s innovative perceptions of Kongzi’s similarity with Christ and the compatibility between Ruism and Christianity. Focusing on the dialogic, intertextual aspects in Legge’s *Lunyu*, I argue that Legge’s project invites us to reconsider the histories of the *Lunyu*, Ruism and Christianity in broadly conceived intercultural light. Furthermore, it urges us to reread the Anglo-Chinese or Sino-British relationship in the nineteenth century beyond orientalism and imperialism.

I suggest that Legge’s *Chinese Classics* shows a spirit of intercultural accommodation, conditioned in the nineteenth century yet also transcending its historical constraints. Across time and space, it broadens our capacity to appreciate Kongzi’s teaching with reference to Chinese antiquity and through its intersection with Christianity and other religions or traditions. In translating the *Lunyu*, Legge knows that he is coping with one of the most crucial ancient Chinese books, marked by its enduring textual and commentarial history. On determining the scope of his
Chinese Classics, moreover, Legge is aware of the intertextuality between the Lunyu and other central Ruist texts: the Mengzi 《孟子》 (the Works of Mencius), the Daxue 《大學》 (the Great Learning), the Zhongyong 《中庸》 (the Doctrine of the Mean) (these three texts and the Lunyu are known as the Four Books of China), the Shangshu 《尚書》 (the Book of Historical Documents), the Shijing 《詩經》 (the Book of Poetry), the Chunqiu 《春秋》 (the Spring and Autumn Annals), and the Zuozhuan 《左傳》 (the Commentary of Zuo). Legge’s extensive research of multiple ancient Chinese sources informs his Lunyu. To elucidate the Lunyu, Legge consults Xu Shen 許慎 (ca. 58 – ca. 147 CE) and other Chinese philologists, while employing the commentaries by Mengzi 孟子 (372–289 BCE), Kong Anguo 孔安國 (ca. 156 – ca. 74 BCE), He Yan 何晏 (ca. 195–249), Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200) and contemporary Qing scholars. He also compares Kongzi with non-Ruist thinkers such as Mozi 墨子 (ca. 470 – ca. 391 BCE). In addition, he brings Kongzi’s ideas into dialogue with European intellectual and religious thought, using the Bible and Western philosophical, theological and literary writings to enrich the contexts of particular discussions. Broadly, Legge genuinely respects Kongzi and the living Ruist tradition in his attempt to establish a better Sino-Western mutual understanding through his Lunyu.

Reviving the Ruist tradition in his project, Legge is also conscious of the previous European and British interpretations of the Ruist classics. The Jesuit fathers Michele Ruggieri (1543–1607), Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), Philippe Couplet (1623–1693) and Prospero Intorcetta (1626–1696), and the British missionaries Robert Morrison (1782–1834) and Joshua Marshman (1768–1837), amongst others, sought to open meaningful Sino-Western dialogue by incorporating Roman Catholic or Protestant perspectives in their rendering of ancient Ruist texts. For Ricci, developing an accommodationist approach to Ruist culture and a solid
Sino-European friendship contributed to true knowledge of divinity (Spence 1978/2008; Mungello 1985). Yet after Ricci, the Jesuits in China experienced difficulty in harmonising Ruism with Christianity; they accused the Ruist commentaries such as Zhu Xi’s of showing signs of atheism and corruption (Meynard 2011a). Nineteenth-century Protestant missionaries such as William Jones Boone (1811–1864 or 1874) were more hostile to Ruism. Legge has inherited Ricci’s accommodationist spirit. But unlike the Jesuits, Legge uses Zhu Xi’s commentaries to reveal the theistic dimensions in Kongzi’s teaching. Moreover, against many of his Protestant peers, Legge defends Chinese people’s faith in a Supreme Being equivalent to Christian God. Though sometimes suggesting that Ruism requires biblical guidance, generally Legge maintains that the notion of God can be traced and found in Kongzi’s teaching and the Ruist commentaries.

The thesis consists of five analytical chapters, which are interrelated in terms of the way they concern Legge’s two editions of the *Lunyu*. Each chapter examines a set of important themes, where I also discuss Legge’s references to other Chinese classics and his other writings.

Chapter 1 provides the historical background of my analysis, including a discussion of Kongzi’s life, the title and early textual history of the *Lunyu*, the reception history of the *Lunyu*, and the editorial history of Legge’s *Lunyu*. The reception history of the *Lunyu* covers its major Chinese commentarial editions and European translations up to Legge’s time. I also account for Legge’s prioritisation of the *Lunyu*. The purpose of the chapter is to reveal the textual identities of the *Lunyu* through its historical absorption of dynamic intellectual dimensions. The *Lunyu* was a collective compilation after Kongzi, created via ‘speeches and discussions’. Over the dynasties, Chinese commentators adopted Daoist, Buddhist or orthodox Ruist approaches to interpreting the text. Since the sixteenth century, Jesuit fathers and
British missionaries infused Roman Catholic or Protestant elements in translating the text. In creating his editions, Legge engages with both the Chinese commentarial tradition and the works by his Christian predecessors. Overall, this chapter displays the rich context of the Lunyu up to the nineteenth century, which is well attested in Legge’s editions. The chapter paves the way for reading Legge’s Lunyu in terms of dialogism and intertextuality.

Chapter 2 discusses the historical concept of ‘religion’ in Legge’s approach to Ruism and the Lunyu. This chapter aims to show how understanding the history of religious studies stimulates us to rethink the origin and construction of religious traditions in Legge’s vision of Ruism as an ancient religion. First I examine Legge’s religious background and commitment to Chinese studies. I then explore modern and contemporary theories of ‘religion’ and scholarly debate on the history of religious studies. In the Western context, Tomoko Masuzawa (2005) and Richard King (1999) emphasise ‘religion’ as an invented term in European intellectual history, employed to sustain European supremacism ideology in the nineteenth century. However, Ivan Strenski (2006) focuses on the distinction and relation between ‘natural religion’ and ‘revealed religion’ in the Western tradition, arguing that religion has its natural roots and evolving paths through human history. In the Chinese context, Mayfair Mei-Hui Yang (2008) notes how ‘religion’ (known as zongjiao 宗教 in modern Chinese) was imported into China in the late-nineteenth century. Yet Tim H. Barrett and Francesca Tarocco (2012) trace religious terminologies in East Asian Buddhist contexts, while Robert Ford Campany (2012), Anthony C. Yu (2005) and Yu Ying-shih (2010) highlight the discovery of religious meanings in ancient China and the Chinese folk tradition. Overall, the above discussion illuminates the dynamic religious discourses and the idea of a cross-cultural religion in my approach to Legge’s study of Ruism. Both natural religion and revealed theology are central notions to Legge, and Legge
seeks the meaning of a Supreme Being through ancient Chinese terminologies. Legge’s collaboration with Max Müller (1823–1900) also informs his comparative philological study of religious terms in Ruism. Finally, I discuss Legge’s revisionist evaluation of Kongzi and the religiousness of the Lanyu. This chapter sheds new light on the religious issues in Ruism through Legge, relating contemporary religious studies to the dialogic and intertextual dimensions in Legge’s Lanyu.

Chapter 3 moves on to analyse Legge’s Lanyu in light of dialogism and intertextuality. I explore Legge’s unprecedented accommodation of the Chinese commentaries, which contextualises his innovative rendition of the title. I discuss his interpretation of four principal notions in the Lanyu. I also examine his revisions from the 1861 edition to the 1893 one. Bakhtin’s theory of dialogism and Kristeva’s notion of intertextuality enable us to discern many previously neglected elements in Legge’s Lanyu. As I will show, Legge is aware of the historical formation of the Lanyu, and he attempts to build a meaningful dialogue between Kongzi’s teaching and the European intellectual tradition. This provides him with the grounds on which to interpret his title as “Confucian Analects”. Legge’s annotation, which blends English and Chinese, also illustrates a heteroglossic textual space, wherein Legge introduces many ‘forgotten’ Chinese scholars to his readership. While seeking to accommodate more Chinese voices, Legge uses his annotation as the referential site for his interpretation, paralleling both his translation and footnotes with the original text throughout his editions. In terms of intertextuality, Legge’s interpretation of ren 仁 (perfect virtue, benevolence and love), xiao 孝 (filial piety), zhong 忠 (faithfulness and sincerity) and li 禮 (the rules of propriety) in his Lanyu is contextualised in his comprehensive study of both the Bible and ancient Chinese (Ruist and non-Ruist) texts. In addition, Legge’s revision manifests his transformative attitude towards Kongzi and Ruism. In sum, the chapter demonstrates
how Legge’s compassion for China and faith in the love of God informs his translation of the *Lunyu*. Based on his sympathetic comparison between Kongzi, Mozi and Christian thought, Legge views ‘universal love’ and spiritual feelings as central to the ethos of Ruist teaching on divine virtue and its correction of human relationships.

Chapter 4 examines Legge’s view on the ancient Chinese concept of God through his interpretation of  
*天* (Heaven),  
*帝*  and  
*上帝* (both for Legge referring to God) in relation to the *Lunyu*. In Legge’s belief, ancient Chinese fathers used  
*天*,  
*帝* and  
*上帝* to express their faith in a Supreme Being similar to Christian God. Chinese dynastic rulers and scholars have then preserved that divine notion in their consciousness via their abundant references to  
*天*,  
*帝* and  
*上帝* in Ruist literature. This chapter thus focuses on how Legge’s findings of  
*天*,  
*帝* and  
*上帝* in Ruist texts and his other writings on them serve to reveal the role of Heaven and God in the *Lunyu*. Unlike Bishop Boone who deems Ruism as lacking the notion of a God, Legge insists that Christian missionaries should carefully consider the terminologies regarding divinity in Chinese literature, instead of imposing biblical teaching on the Chinese. Believing that Kongzi holds faith in a Supreme Being, Legge views the *Lunyu* as a vital part of the larger context of ‘ancient Chinese monotheism’, a kind of theistic consciousness which has endured Chinese dynastic changes. As I will show, Legge views  
*天* (Heaven) in Kongzi’s teaching as the seat of God and the important basis for developing a theology in Ruism. Legge accordingly regards  
*帝* or  
*上帝* as the true designation of God in Chinese. In his *Lunyu*, Legge values Kongzi’s referencing to  
*天* as a sign of Kongzi’s religious devotion, and he interprets  
*帝* and  
*上帝* in the larger literary and religious context of ancient and imperial China, concerning the early fathers’ religious piety, Kongzi’s teaching and the later rulers’ sacrificial practices. In brief,
Legge seeks to divulge the meanings of High Deities and develop a universal Ruist theology through his intertextual exploration into the Lunyu, other Chinese classics and Western theological writings. Legge communicates his belief in the religiousness of the Lunyu through his endeavour to manifest God’s existence in Ruism.

Chapter 5 studies Legge’s use of Zhu Xi’s commentaries in his annotation. As I will discuss, Zhu Xi plays a uniquely important role in Legge’s interpretation of the Lunyu. Legge appreciates Zhu’s theory of human nature, the mind, the investigation of things, Taiji (the Great Ultimate) and Tianli (the principle of Heaven). He uses Zhu’s analysis to elucidate what he considers as the religious issues in Kongzi’s teaching, relating Zhu’s metaphysics to Christianity and Western philosophy. Contrary to the earlier Jesuits and his Protestant peers such as Bishop Boone, Legge regards Zhu as a theistic thinker, admitting Zhu’s contribution to bridging ancient Ruist learning to the history of Western thought on ethics, religion and science. Legge largely includes Zhu’s commentaries in his Chinese Classics, while defending Zhu in his writings on the Chinese religion. In the chapter, I will examine how Legge deals with the questions of ‘immanence’ and ‘transcendence’ in Ruist learning through his Zhu Xi-based annotation on the Lunyu. I go on to investigate the way in which Legge connects Zhu’s theory of the mind and the heavenly principle to Christian themes on sin and transcendence in his interpretation of ren (perfect virtue). Further, I look at how Legge deciphers the image and attributes of the Supreme Creator in Kongzi’s discussions through Zhu. All in all, Legge reinstates Zhu Xi’s centrality to the ongoing historical development of Ruist–Christian dialogue. His Zhu Xi-based annotation urges us to probe humanity and divinity in new ways.

Legge’s Lunyu unfolds important aspects of nineteenth-century approaches to Sino-Western understanding. For scholars today, it provides insights into the renewal of traditions or religions through their mutual dialogue and accommodation. We will
see in the chapters that follow how Legge grounds his sympathy for ancient and contemporary China in his unswerving belief in God as universally relative, and how he communicates the linkage between Christianity and Ruism through his search for the ultimate truth. As Legge demonstrates in his *Lunyu* and other writings, God’s divinity is related to all humankind, not exclusively to the Europeans. Meanwhile, Legge is aware of the problem of Christian bigotry, and he strives to move beyond the limitations of Eurocentric assumptions, in order to arrive at a more just and nuanced comprehension of Chinese history and culture. As well as standing as memorable literature in sinological and translation studies, Legge’s work encourages us to rethink issues regarding human religiousness, universal love and higher truth in intercultural and interreligious light.
CHAPTER 1

The Lunyu: History, Translations and Legge’s Bilingual Editions

Introduction

For over two millennia, the *Lunyu*《論語》 has stood as the principal text for approaching and understanding Kongzi 孔子 (551–479 BCE, latinised Confucius), one of the leading figures in Chinese intellectual history.¹ The *Lunyu* has also acted as one of the main sources for the ongoing development of the different teachings now generally summarised as Ruism. Historically, numerous scholars have re-edited, commentated and/or translated the *Lunyu*. This process saw the *Lunyu* circulate in and beyond China, influencing and being influenced by many other religious or philosophical traditions. Throughout his life, Legge sought to fulfil his position as a missionary and sinologist by introducing Protestantism to China while translating ancient Ruist texts into English.² In translating the *Lunyu*, Legge presents himself as an active partaker in Kongzi’s discussions, showing his appreciation of Kongzi as a religious teacher. Legge’s *Lunyu* not only testifies to the text’s rich history, but also exemplifies his cross-cultural ideal and Sino-Christian vision.³

This chapter provides a historical overview of the *Lunyu* up to the nineteenth

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¹ Chinese people also refer to Kongzi as Kongfuzi 孔夫子. In classical Chinese, 子 is the designation of a respected thinker, while 夫子 is the appellation for a teacher, in certain contexts referring only to Kongzi. Following the Jesuits, Legge uses Confucius as the equivalent of the name Kongzi. Legge notes: “It is hardly necessary that I should say here, that the name Confucius is merely the Chinese characters 孔夫子 (K’ung Foo-tsze/K’ung Fû-tsze, ‘The master, K’ung’) latinized/Latinized” (1861 and 1893: 56n1). I use Kongzi to refer to the Master in the thesis.

² See Legge’s ‘Preface’ in 1.3.2.

³ Based on Pfister (2012: 34-49), I define ‘Sino-Christian’ as the way in which Legge combines his Christian worldview with his learning of the Ruist worldview via his *Chinese Classics*. The thesis mainly discusses Legge’s 1861 and 1893 editions of the *Lunyu*, while occasionally referring to his 1858 specimen. I include citations of both Legge’s formal editions, adding a slash to note his revision.
century. The intellectual influences the \textit{Lunyu} has historically absorbed reflect its diverse textual identities. Should we read the \textit{Lunyu} as a secular text or a religious scripture? Based on the \textit{Lunyu}, should we deem Ruism as a philosophical system or a religion? The division between religion and philosophy stemmed from early and medieval Christian thinkers’ demarcation between revealed theology and pagan thought in their interaction with and rivalry against Graeco-Roman and non-Christian cultures (Perkins 2004: 1-2; Van Kooten 2010: 3-29). Rather than rush to define the \textit{Lunyu} from ‘religion’ or ‘philosophy’, this chapter intends to probe a series of more fundamental issues regarding Kongzi, the text’s history, and Legge’s two editions.

First, I outline ancient and modern scholarly accounts of Kongzi. I then explore the textual history of the \textit{Lunyu}, drawing on its title, its embodiment into a book and the question of its authorship. I also look at the reception history of the \textit{Lunyu}, including the Chinese commentaries on it and the European translations of it before Legge’s editions. Finally, I discuss the editorial history of Legge’s \textit{Chinese Classics}, examining his layout and prioritisation of the \textit{Lunyu}. Since the thesis aims to analyse Legge’s \textit{Lunyu}, I focus on how Legge conveys his Sino-Christian vision through his \textit{Lunyu} and other writings, while leaving aside the reception history of his \textit{Lunyu}. By contextualising the \textit{Lunyu} in its textual and reception histories up to the nineteenth century, the chapter acts as the important basis for engaging with Legge’s translation.

1.1 Kongzi: his life and personality

Widely referred to as Confucius, Kongzi is revered as the ancient Chinese sage and receives international attention today. Yet Kongzi remains enigmatic to many readers, just as his teaching continues to invite different interpretations. Numerous authors

\footnote{I will show from the second chapter onwards how Legge’s engagement with the \textit{Lunyu} stimulated him to explore the meanings of and relation between ‘natural religion/philosophy’ and ‘revealed religion/theology’ based on Kongzi’s ethics in ancient and dynastic Chinese hermeneutics.}

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have discussed Kongzi in a wealth of publications in many languages. Consonant
with China’s rapid development in recent years and the Beijing 2008 Olympic
Games, the release of the film Kong Zi (2009), starring Chow Yun-Fat and Zhou Xun
and directed by Hu Mei, reintroduces Kongzi’s legacy to his modern audience, thus
marking the potential to popularise Kongzi in our global world.5

While contemporary scholars are generally aware of the ‘represented image’ of
Kongzi in the Lunyu, many of them still accept the Lunyu as one of the primary
sources for envisioning Kongzi’s life, personality and leading position in the
development of Ruism (Van Norden 2002: 3-12). Another indexical work is the
Western Han historian Sima Qian’s 司馬遷 (ca. 145 or 135–86 BCE) Shiji 《史記》
(Records of the Grand Historian),6 where Sima provides a biographical account of
the Master in the ‘Shi Jia (lineage and school) of Kongzi’ 〈孔子世家〉. As Kidder
Smith (2003: 129-56) notes, Sima Qian’s father Sima Tan 司馬談 (ca. 165–110
BCE) reinvented jia 家 (which then meant “people [with expertisel]”) into a term
denoting a political and intellectual “school”, using this category for espousing the
Dao thought (which Sima Tan termed as “Daojia”) against Dong Zhongshu’s 董仲舒
(179–104 BCE) Ru school (known as “Rujia” later). Representing Kongzi through
his ‘lineage and school’, Sima Qian consciously inherited Sima Tan’s reinvention of
varied pre-Han traditions. Sima Tan’s legacy remains in the way Chinese scholars
today use jia to refer to a Chinese intellectual trend or ‘ism’, such as Rujia or Ruism.

According to Sima Qian (2005: 1537, 1537-1566), Kongzi was born in Zouyi陬邑 of the kingdom of Lu 魯國,7 in the 22nd year of Duke Xiang’s reign, ca. 551

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5 Kong Zi was produced by the state-owned China Film Group Corporation (CFGC). This background also shows the PRC government’s political intention to heroise Kongzi as China’s national icon (see the official Kong Zi website at http://kongzi.sina.com.cn/jian/index.html [accessed 7 February 2014]; see also Dotson 2011: 10).
6 Sima Qian has been regarded as one of the most authoritative Chinese historians, if not the greatest. His Shiji portrays Chinese history from the era of Huangdi (2696–2598 BC) until Sima’s time.
7 Zouyi is near today’s Qufu 曲阜 in Shangdong, PRC.
BCE. The son of Shu-liang-he 叔梁祚 (a nobleman with battle merits of Lu) and Yan Shi 颜氏, he was named Kong Qiu 孔丘, with the courtesy name as Zhongni 仲尼. In Sima’s account, Kongzi since his youth had been enthusiastic about learning, although he grew up in a humble environment. The Spring and Autumn period (771–496 or 403 BCE) saw China split into more than ten kingdoms, and during Kongzi’s time, the late stage of the period, the conflicts between these kingdoms became more drastic. Through his adulthood, Kongzi was an exile from Lu; he travelled to many other states, holding his dream to reintroduce order and harmony under Heaven, but mostly he failed. During his travels, nonetheless, he encountered people from all walks of life, many of whom became his disciples. Eventually, Kongzi returned to Lu. He died in the 16th year of Duke Ai, 479 BCE.

According to the Lunyu, the disciples respected Kongzi, less because they regarded Kongzi as authoritarian, but more because they had dialogues with him every day, whereby they learned about Kongzi’s individuality, emotions, wisdom and vision of an ideal society. Based on the portrayal of Kongzi in the Lunyu, authors, commentators, scholars and translators later on have come to capture and reshape Kongzi’s character according to their imaginings and beliefs, by virtue of appreciation, skepticism, or both.

Contemporary scholars’ views on Kongzi vary. For Herbert Fingarette (1972: 1-17), Kongzi is a visionary thinker, whose teaching on human virtue and emphasis on the ritual performance contains some magical elements, though largely unexplored. Anne Cheng (1981: 12-13) deems the Kongzi in the Lunyu as a plain human, through whom we know the “taste for music” and the “moments of frustration, exasperation and even humour”; Kongzi’s language in the Lunyu is

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8 This account has become a common trope in the Chinese biographies of Kongzi after Sima.
9 As Erica Brindley (2009: 65-66n26) notes, the social class of Kongzi’s disciples and even Kongzi himself remains an unsettled issue.
similar to but also softer than “Socratic irony”. Simon Leys (1997: xx-xiv) envisions Kongzi as a talented sportsman, a “bold and tireless” traveller, and an ambitious planner for politics, but the “humiliating failure” of Kongzi’s political career, darkened by unemployment and loneliness, has then been replaced by the myth of the Master as the “Supreme Teacher”. Bryan W. Van Norden (2002: 10) writes an engaging paragraph on Kongzi’s relationship with women, in particular with the politically influential yet licentious Nanzi 南子, although in the Lunyu women are nearly absent. Michael Nylan and Thomas Wilson (2010: 7) point out Kongzi’s achievement as an “archivist-historian”, echoing the later Sima Qian. These representations of Kongzi are quite different and not always complementary with one another. As Nylan and Wilson (2010: 26) observe: “Searching for the ‘authentic’ Kongzi in history, we find no single convincing portrait”. Whereas Kongzi appears enigmatic to those wishing to understand him better, the varied portraits of Kongzi represent him as a multifaceted figure, prompting us to approach him from diverse angles.

In Legge’s Lunyu, Kongzi is the significant communicator between humanity and divinity, although his teaching seems obscure at times. The younger Legge doubted Kongzi’s state as the sage, yet the elderly Legge reassured the greatness of this ancient thinker. For Legge, Kongzi is essentially spiritual and should be remembered as a religious teacher.

1.2 The Lunyu before Legge

The book Lunyu has a long history, beginning from the Warring States period (475–221 BCE) and emerging as a title before or during the Han dynasty (206 BCE – 220 CE). Historically, the Lunyu has played an important role in the development of
Ruism. After the Song scholar Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200), the *Lunyu* became one of the central texts in the Ruist canon, being part of the Four Books\(^\text{10}\) and the Thirteen Classics\(^\text{11}\) in China. As Martha P. Y. Cheung (2006: 21) notes, the *Lunyu* exemplifies the economical style of classical Chinese. The text comprises Kongzi’s short dialogues with his disciples, and the dialogues between the disciples themselves. Their discussions range from the delight of learning, the necessity of sincerity, the idea of virtue and the enactment of rites, to the notion of Heaven, rulership and proper human relations in family and society.

This section focuses on the literary and historical formation of the *Lunyu* before Legge. I use the preposition ‘before’ to indicate the chronological transformation of the text prior to Legge’s editions, and to signal Legge’s contemporary positioning ‘in the face of’ the text.\(^\text{12}\) We should remember Legge’s presence in the history of the *Lunyu*, as Legge himself was aware of this history up to the nineteenth century.

1.2.1 Title and early textual history of the *Lunyu*

The *Lunyu* is characterised by a long tradition of discussions and interpretations. Where the *Lunyu* represents Kongzi as the leading figure, the text took root in many compilers’ collaboration after Kongzi, and has subsequently been reinterpreted by

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\(^\text{10}\) The Four Books comprise the *Daxue*《大學》(*Great Learning*), the *Zhongyong*《中庸》(*Doctrine of the Mean*), the *Lunyu* and the *Mengzi*《孟子》. Zhu Xi annotated them as a collection and established ‘Four Books’ as the core Ruist curriculum (Gardner 1984: 57). Zhu extracted the *Daxue* and the *Zhongyong* from the *Liji*《禮記》(*Book of Rites*), although both texts remain part of it. In the thesis, I use the italic ‘Four Books’ to refer to Zhu’s edition, while I present ‘Four Books’ in roman type as a concept after Zhu.

\(^\text{11}\) The Thirteen Classics contain the *Shijing*《詩經》(*Book of Poetry*), the *Shangshu*《尚書》(*Book of Documents*), the *Li Ji*, the *Yijing*《易經》(*Book of Changes*), the *Zuo zhuan*《左傳》(*Commentary of Zuo*), the *Gongyang zhuan*《公羊傳》(*Commentary of Gongyang*), the *Guliang zhuan*《穀梁傳》(*Commentary of Guliang*), the *Zhouli*《周禮》(*Rites of Zhou*), the *Yili*《儀禮》(*Book of Etiquette and Ceremonial*), the *Lunyu*, the *Xiaojing*《孝經》(*Classic of Filial Piety*), the ancient Chinese dictionary *Erya*《爾雅}, and the *Mengzi*. The commentating on the thirteen texts emerged in the Han dynasty and thrived during Zhu Xi’s time; the notion ‘Thirteen Classics’ was officially affirmed during the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) (Cheng Sudong 2010).

\(^\text{12}\) As Legge’s *Lunyu* is the object of my study, I will not use it as the source for 1.2, but occasionally I mention Legge in order to specify his view on the formation of the *Lunyu*. 
numerous commentators and translators. Upon its earliest formation before and
during the Han dynasty, there were already varied discussions by ancient Chinese
scholars on Kongzi’s sayings and dialogues with his disciples. These discussions
underlie the way in which the Lunyu was embodied into a title and text.

The ‘Yiwen zhi’ (藝文志) (‘Treatise on Literature’) in the Hanshu (漢書) (the
Book of Han) (111 CE)\(^\text{13}\) is one of the earliest sources which refers to the text as
‘lunyu’. The ‘Treatise on Literature’ says:

論語者，孔子應答弟子時人及弟子相與言而接聞於夫子之語也。當時弟子
各有所記，夫子既卒，門人相與輯而論纂，故謂之論語。

Collected conversations/sayings (yu 語) contain/are Kongzi’s responses to his
disciples and contemporaries, and the dialogues between the disciples, and the
conversations/sayings directly heard from the Master. At that time every disciple
took their respective notes. After the death of the Master, the disciples together
edited the sayings, and discussed (lun 論) the compilation. Hence the title
collected conversations (lunyu 論語). [my translation]

Accordingly, the title Lunyu appeared at least as early as the Western Han (206
BCE – 9 CE), since the content of the Hanshu concentrates on the historical events
during this period. As underlined in my translation, ‘conversations/sayings’ is
rendered from yu 語 and ‘discussed’ from lun 論, indicating that the title and
textual body of the Lunyu have been created via ‘speeches and discussions’ (see also
Chen Kehua 2003). The title thus characterises the work as a collective compilation
after Kongzi. With the recent excavations of the Lunyu on bamboo slips (the
Dingzhou version [dated to 55 CE; discovered in 1973] and the Pyongyang version
[dated to ca. 55 CE; discovered in 1992]), we now know that there were many

\(^\text{13}\) The Hanshu is also called the History of the Former Han Dynasty. The work, encapsulating the
history of the Western Han (206 BCE – 9 CE), was composed by Ban Biao 班彪, Ban Gu 班固, Ban
Zhao 班昭 and Ma Xu 馬續 in the Eastern Han (25–220 CE).
different versions of the *Lunyu* circulating during the Han dynasty (Chen Dong 2003; Giele 2010: 121; Zhang Guangyu 2012).

The exact date when the *Lunyu* first emerged as a text remains unclear. Upon Kongzi’s death in 479 BCE, China entered the Warring States period (475–221 BCE). Then China was unified under the Qin dynasty (221–206 BCE), a period when Ruist texts and thought were severely persecuted. The Qin dynasty was succeeded by the Han dynasty, which covered the Western Han (206 BCE – 9 CE), the Xin (9–23 CE) and the Eastern Han (25–220 CE).\(^\text{14}\) The Western Han saw studies of Kongzi’s tradition thrive afresh, while Emperor Wu 武帝 (reign 141–87 BCE) and Dong Zhongshu further canonised the Ru as the sole orthodoxy. The supreme state of Ruism continued throughout the Eastern Han.

The Dingzhou and Pyongyang versions provide new clues into the scope of *Lunyu* studies and circulation in the Han dynasty. Scholars now are examining these manuscripts in relation to the three established editions during the Western Han: the *Old Lunyu*《古文論語》, the *Qi Lunyu*《齊論語》\(^\text{15}\) and the *Lu Lunyu*《魯論語》\(^\text{16}\) (Chen Dong 2003). Here I will not go into the debate regarding the recently excavated manuscripts, but it is noteworthy that all the editions now known to us indicate the multiple ways in which the *Lunyu* was formatted, discussed and transmitted during the Han. According to He Yan 何晏 (ca. 195–249) and Xing Bing’s 邢昺 (932–1010) ‘Preface to the *Lunyu, with Commentaries and Sub-Commentaries*’〈論語注疏解經序〉,\(^\text{17}\) the *Lu Lunyu* was structurally identical with the *Lunyu* known to us today, with twenty books arranged in sequence from

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\(^\text{14}\) The division between the Western Han and the Eastern Han resulted from the interregnum of the Xin dynasty, a brief regime established by Wang Mang 王莽. While the Han dynasty is said to run from 206 BCE to 220 CE, the Xin appearing midway through the Han is considered as a different regime.

\(^\text{15}\) Qi is a state that existed from the Spring and Autumn (771–476 or 403 BCE) to the Warring States period (475–221 BCE). Both periods are within the era of the Zhou dynasty (1046–256 BCE).

\(^\text{16}\) Lu is a state in the Spring and Autumn period, in which Kongzi was born.

\(^\text{17}\) He and Xing discussed the three texts in the order of the *Lu*, the *Qi* and the *Old.*
‘Xue Er’〈學而〉 to ‘Yao Yue’〈堯曰〉 (Ruan 1815/1980: 2454). The Qi Lunyu contained twenty-two books, with the two additional ones entitled ‘Wen Wang’〈問王〉 and ‘Zhi Dao’〈知道〉; the titles of the previous twenty books in the Qi text were identical with those in the Lu, but in the Qi text of these books there was additional material (ibid.: 2454, 2455). The Old Lunyu was excavated from inside the walls of Kongzi’s old mansion, together with the Shangshu《尚書》(the Book of Documents), the Chunqiu《春秋》(the Spring and Autumn Annals) and the Xiaojing《孝經》(the Classic of Filial Piety); all four excavated texts were written in ancient script (ibid.: 2455). The Old Lunyu contained twenty-one books; the last two chapters in its twentieth book ‘Yao Yue’ were divided from it to form another book ‘Zi Zhang’〈子張〉, so that two books were named ‘Zi Zhang’. In the Old Lunyu, too, the book order and more than four hundred characters differed from those in the Lu and Qi versions (ibid.: 2455; see also Liu 2011/1985: 419-24).

The Dingzhou and Pyongyang versions prompt us to reassess the origins of the Old, Qi and Lu texts, whose formation, editorship and appearing sequence remain contentious. According to Chen Dong (2003), the Dingzhou version (transcribed through oral Lunyu traditions) and the Old text were remnants of the Warring States period. We may now suggest that various manuscripts which already existed in the early-Western Han stimulated the three Lunyu systems thereafter. During the Western

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18 Standard modern editions of the Lunyu (see the edition in Chinese Text Project) contain twenty books: ‘Xue Er’ 學而 (to learn and), ‘Wei Zheng’ 為政 (exercising government), ‘Ba Yi’ 八佾 (eight rows of pantomimes), ‘Li Ren’ 里仁 (virtuous neighbourhood), ‘Gong Ye Chang’ 公冶長 (the gentleman Gong Ye Chang), ‘Yong Ye’ 雍也 (the gentleman Yong), ‘Shu Er’ 述而 (to transmit and), ‘Tai Bo’ 泰伯 (the gentleman Tai Bo), ‘Zi Han’ 子罕 (the Master seldom), ‘Xiang Dang’ 鄉黨 (in the village), ‘Xian Jin’ 先進 (the men of former times), ‘Yan Yuan’ 顏淵 (the disciple Yan Yuan), ‘Zi Lu’ 子路 (the disciple Zi Lu), ‘Xian Wen’ 憲問 (Xian asks), ‘Wei Ling Gong’ 衛靈公 (Duke Ling of Wei), ‘Ji Shi’ 季氏 (the Ji family), ‘Yang Huo’ 阳貨 (the gentleman Yang Huo), ‘Wei Zi’ 微子 (the gentleman Wei), ‘Zi Zhang’ 子張 (the disciple Zi Zhang) and ‘Yao Yue’ 堯曰 (Yao says). Each book title is adopted from the first two words or the principal words in the first chapter of that book.

19 ‘Wen Wang’ means ‘ask the king’.

20 ‘Zhi Dao’ can mean ‘to learn the Way’ or ‘to know the Way’.

Han, the three *Lunyu* systems respectively fostered three threads of imperial patronage. As He Yan and Xing Bing’s ‘Preface’ records, Gong Fen, Xiahou Sheng, Wei Xian, Wei Xuancheng, Fu Qing, Xiahou Jian, and Xiao Wangzhi studied the *Lu* text. Wang Ji, Zhu Ji, Wang Qing, Gong Yu, Wulu Chongzong, and Yong Sheng espoused the *Qi* text. The *Old* text, after being discovered, was handed back to the chief of the Kong clan Kong Anguo (ca. 156 – ca. 74 BCE), who then annotated it to form his *Lunyu, with Instructive Explanations* (劉憲 1815/1980: 2454-55). Most patrons of the *Lu* and *Qi* texts noted above pertained to the period after Emperor Wu and Kong Anguo (Chen Dong 2003).

Moreover, the catalogue of the ‘Treatise on Literature’ first lists the *Old Lunyu*, followed by the *Qi* and *Lu* texts. Thus, contemporary scholars Pang Pu (2002: 33-36), Chen Dong (2003) and Tang Minggui (2006: 50) contend that the *Old* text appeared earlier than the other two editions.21 Still, not all scholars agree with this view. The many *Lunyu* manuscripts circulating in the Western Han suggest that the *Qi* and the *Lu* systems might have stemmed from other early sources.

Qing scholars Chen Zhan 陳鱣 (1753–1817), Shen Tao 沈濤 (1792?–1855) and Ding Yan 丁晏 (1794–1875) raised questions concerning the authenticity of the *Old* glosses.22 Nonetheless, the Dingzhou version and other excavated manuscripts can be used to rebuff such doubts.23 These newly discovered manuscripts are

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21 Pang Pu (2002: 37-38) suggests that the Lu scholar Fu Qing (student of Kong Anguo and patron of the *Lu* system) edited the *Lu* text.

22 Chen Zhan (‘Preface to the *Lunyu, Ancient Instructions*’〈論語古訓自序〉) doubted whether Kong Anguo had annotated the *Old Lunyu*. Shen Tao (On the Falsification of the Kong annotation of the *Lunyu*《論語孔注辨偽》) argued that He Yan fabricated the Kong edition. Ding Yan (An Empirical Study of the Falsification of the Kong edition of the *Lunyu*《論語孔注辨偽》) thought that He Yan’s contemporary Wang Su 王肅 (195–256) forged the notes to the *Old* text. See also Yang (1980: 31) and Cheng (1993: 315-16).

23 In examining the formation of the *Lunyu*, Yang Chaoming (2003) reminds us to also consider the *Kongzi Jiayu*《孔子家語》(*Family Sayings of Kongzi*). Many scholars after Wang Bo 王柏 (1197–1274) assume the *Jiayu* as Wang Su’s falsification, but the recently discovered manuscripts contain similar material to the *Jiayu*, possibly edited by Kong Anguo and his descendants.
certainly unknown to Legge. While Legge (1861: prol. 13; 1893: 13) was aware of the Qing controversy over the *Old* text, he was inclined to respect the findings of ancient scriptures based on Kong Anguo’s account. Thus, we should not dismiss the tradition of the *Old* text in any study of Legge’s translation.

The *Lunyu* began to coalesce into a single text in the late-Western Han. During this period, Marquis of Anchang, Zhang Yu 安昌侯張禹 (?–5 BCE) first studied the *Lu* text and then investigated the *Qi* text. He then combined the two traditions to form his edition *Zhang Hou Lun* 《張侯論》, which employed the *Lu* arrangement of books as its basis (ibid.: 2455). In the Eastern Han, Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (127–200 CE) adopted Zhang Yu’s text, while using the *Qi* and *Old* texts to modify the arrangement of the *Lu* text. He therefore forged a new edition entitled the *Lunyu, with Annotations* 《論語注》 (ibid.: 2455). Scholars now tend to agree that the *Lunyu* we use today is predicated on Zheng Xuan’s edition. However, Yang Bojun (1980: 31) reminds us that we should give credit to Zhang Yu’s edition, which guided Zheng’s text. In addition, He Yan’s edition also has influenced later interpretations of the *Lunyu*, often rivalling Zheng’s tradition (Cheng 1993: 317). To summarise, it would be better to treat the *Lunyu* as being managed and integrated by more than one scholar, but its status as a single text was relatively stable after the Eastern Han.

1.2.2 Authorship of the *Lunyu*

In his *Natural History of Religion*, David Hume (1757: 11) notes: “The statue of Laocoon, as we learn from Pliny, was the work of three artists: But it is certain, that, were we not told so, we should never have imagined, that a groupe of figures, cut from one stone, and united in one plan, was not the work and contrivance of one statuary”. Speaking of the *Lunyu*, most people might still assume that it was composed by one single author. Yet in view of its early formation, we should deem
the *Lunyu* as a compilation without an author defined in the modern sense (Yang 2003). As Martin Kern (2010: 50-52) suggests, by the Western Han, “author” was not a meaningful entity, and individual authorship did not exist; the actors were (groups of) compilers who attempted to order ancient teachings through the “texts”, which were in themselves filled with collected narrative threads. Oral speeches and dialogues formed the early layers of the *Lunyu* (ibid.: 53). In the compilation of the *Lunyu*, then, authorship per se was not important, but rather served as a means of organizing historical knowledge. Instead of an author, the reference here was “Kongzi” or an anonymous moral voice (*junzi* 君子 or “superior man”), whose “oral persuasion” compelled the compilers to make deliberate political and ethical choices in relation to their texts (ibid.: 50-53).

Still, many scholars have been discussing who wrote or compiled the *Lunyu*. Most pre-Tang scholars believed that Kongzi’s direct disciples composed the *Lunyu*. Yet this view became untenable after Liu Zongyuan 柳宗元 (773–819), because more attention was paid to the time-span and heterogeneity of the content. The Qing scholar Cui Shu 崔述 (1740–1816) was amongst the most skeptical, asserting that the text could not have been written until much later than the time of Kongzi’s direct disciples, as some material in it seemed to be a conflation under the hands of farther posterity (Yang 2003; Jin 2009: 38). Cui’s point was influential.

Scholars now tend to agree that the disciples of Kongzi’s disciples compiled the *Lunyu* within a century or so after Kongzi’s death (Jin 2009: 38-39). Out of these second-generation pupils, however, the identification for a name to be the definitive author remains unsettled. Yang Bojun (1980: 29) considers the students of Zengzi 曾子 (505–436 BCE), himself the disciple of Kongzi, to be the authors of the text. More recently, Yang Chaoming (2003) identifies Kongzi’s grandson and Zengzi’s student Zisi 子思 (ca. 481–402 BCE) as its author. Yet Yang Chaoming, amongst
other scholars, admits that both the authorship of the *Lunyu* and the exact time when it formed into a book remain debatable.

The question of the *Lunyu*’s authorship suggests its textual openness to different intellectual influences from antiquity to the contemporary. Seen from history, the *Lunyu* has been transformed numerous times through its commentarial and translatorial interactions with other religions or systems of thought.

1.2.3 Chinese commentaries of the *Lunyu* up to Legge’s time

If we conceive of the picture more broadly, the ‘authorship’ of the *Lunyu* not only involves the one(s) who composed it, but also encompasses a wealth of discussions from its compilers, critics and translators. Through its development into a core text for Ruist studies, the *Lunyu* has attracted numerous commentators from every Chinese dynasty and beyond dynastic frameworks. It has also acted as the nexus for the sinological translations and interpretations since the Jesuit mission to China in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

As John B. Henderson (1991), John Makeham (2003: 4) and Daniel K. Gardner (2003: 1-24) remind us, Chinese thinkers through the dynasties often used their commentaries on the *Lunyu* and other Ruist classics as a medium for expressing their specific philosophical ideas. As such, their annotated editions helped to transform and renovate the Ruist tradition through the act of reinterpreting, urging us to rethink the boundary and relation between commentary and translation.

For Antoine Berman (1985/2009: 92, 107), translation denotes all modes of “reformulation” by reconstituting the meaning of a literary work while manifesting the letter of it. Here, commentary and translation support each other by revealing the detail and meaningfulness of the source text, even the residual and untranslatable parts of it (ibid.: 98-99, 109-110). Yet criticism aims to provide a modernist view on
the text and tends to be more hostile against the traditionality of translation and commentary (ibid.: 93-94, 96-98). In sum, Berman (ibid.: 110-111) deems translation, commentary and criticism as interrelated. Furthermore, according to George Steiner (1975/1998), the act of reading and interpreting entails that of translating. Although the process of translation at times could intrigue or mislead us, we translate by means of deciphering and interpreting what we encounter as a reader, actor and editor, in order to make sense of the other and reach an understanding (ibid.: 28-29). Such a mode of translation can also be applied to reading within a single language (ibid.: 29).

If all forms of intellectual interpretation of a particular text involve the practice of translation, even in a single language, then we may suggest that the translation of the *Lunyu* already began upon its earliest formation. Rather than merely survive the passage of time, the *Lunyu* has constantly been reinterpreted and retranslated through history, like any other important ancient text. Thus, we should not overlook how the past Chinese commentators ‘translated’ the *Lunyu*. We will also see how Legge manifests the meaningfulness of the *Lunyu* through his annotated editions.

In Chinese history, the *Lunyu* has encouraged numerous interpretations since the Han, and new editions in Chinese have continued to appear and grow in number right up to the twentieth century and beyond.24 Here I discuss a number of Chinese commentators who predate Legge, such as He Yan and Zhu Xi, as Chinese dynastic rulers have canonised these commentators for building orthodox Ruism in line with imperial governorship. He Yan and Zhu Xi have also greatly influenced the directions of sinology (Henderson 1991; Makeham 2003; and Gardner 2003). Legge

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24 In the modern period, Ch’eng Shu-te 程樹德, Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, Ch’ien Mu 錢穆, Mao Tzu-shui 毛子水, Hsieh Ping-ying 謝冰莹, Li Zehou 李澤厚 and many others have published their editions. These editions contain the original text, the past commentaries, the translation of them from classical Chinese into *baihuawen* 白話文 (modern Chinese), and the comments by the modern author, compiler or translator.
used many of He’s and Zhu’s commentaries to inform his *Lunyu*.

Early thinkers such as Kong Anguo, Zhang Yu and Zheng Xuan had all annotated the *Lunyu*. With reference to them, several standard editions appeared from the Wei-Jin dynasties until the Qing, often differing from one another in their interpretive approaches. During the Three Kingdoms period (220–280), He Yan issued his *Lunyu, with Collective Explications* 《論語集解》. Later, in the Southern and Northern dynasties (420–589), Huang Kan 皇侃 (488–545) recast He Yan’s edition into his *Lunyu, with Collective Explications and Sub-Commentaries* 《論語集解義疏》. He Yan largely used Daoist ideas in his glosses, while Huang Kan adopted both Daoist and Buddhist notions (Elman 2009: 59; Jin 2009: 40). Their works thus spoke to the conflicting sociopolitical milieu in the Wei-Jin and Southern-Northern dynasties (220–589), in which intellectuals preferred to engage in Lao-Zhuang thought 老莊思想, ‘profound theory’ 玄理 and ‘pure discussion’ 清談. He Yan’s model remained indispensible to the exegeses of the *Lunyu* during the Sui (581–618) and the Tang (618–907), and the significance of He’s edition by then even “eclipsed” that of Zheng Xuan’s (Cheng 1993: 317). In the Tang dynasty, the imperial government implemented the *Lunyu* as a mandatory subject in the civil examinations (Guo 1994; see also Elman 2013). The mid-Tang thinker Han Yu 韓愈 (768–824) collaborated with Li Ao 李翱 (774–836) on their *Lunyu, with Written Explications* 《論語筆解》, which anticipated the new Ruist developments in the Song dynasty (Huang 2007).

Well into the Northern Song (960–1127), Xing Bing refashioned He Yan’s text into his *Lunyu, with Commentaries and Sub-Commentaries* 《論語注疏解経》. In his edition, Xing Bing departed from previous Daoist and Buddhist readings, reinterpreting the *Lunyu* through the ‘study of naming, things and systems’ 名物制度 (Jin 2009: 40; Yeh 1999/2000). In the Southern Song (1127–1279), Zhu Xi
synthesised the *Daxue*《大學》, the *Lunyu*, the *Mengzi*《孟子》 and the *Zhongyong*《中庸》into his *Four Books, with Comprehensive Annotations and Collected Commentaries*《四書章句集注》.

Zhu Xi commented on the four texts according to the ‘study of principle’ 理學, a movement initiated by Northern Song thinkers Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤 (1017–1073), Zhang Zai 張載 (1020–1077) and the brothers Cheng Hao 程颢 (1032–1085) and Cheng Yi 程顥 (1033–1107), amongst others, on reinterpreting the classical tradition. The movement is also known as Neo-Confucianism, or, in Gardner’s (2003: 17) term, a “renaissance” of Ruism by the Song Ruists. Based on Cheng Yi’s theory, Zhu Xi (1182/1983: 44-45) aimed to establish a proper method for studying the *Lunyu* and the *Mengzi*. Zhu further synthesised his Song predecessors’ views into a systematic school of principle (Huang 1956: 1-16; Jin 2009: 40). Zhu was also the first scholar highlighting the importance of the four texts over the other classics (Gardner 2003: 2). Moreover, Zhu’s work ignited the conception of the Thirteen Classics. Throughout the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties (1271–1911), Chinese rulers used Zhu’s *Four Books* for upholding the Ruist canon.

The way Zhu Xi ordered his *Four Books* has been controversial. According to Huang Chin-hung (1956: 12) and Cheng Yuan-min (1966), Zhu preferred the “reading sequence” as the *Daxue*, the *Lunyu*, the *Mengzi*, and the *Zhongyong*. Chen Feng-yuan (2005a) suggests that Zhu, based on his study method, most frequently organised it as the *Daxue*, the *Lunyu*, the *Zhongyong* and the *Mengzi*, although Zhu’s attitude towards the order was transformative. After Zhu, later editions of the Four Books often did not follow a particular order, but rather bound these texts in sequences that catered to different editorial and pedagogical needs.\(^{25}\) Legge’s

\(^{25}\) The common order in modern Chinese editions is the *Daxue*, the *Zhongyong*, the *Lunyu* and the *Mengzi*. 
arrangement of the four texts and prioritisation of the Lunyu reveals his awareness of Zhu and his own sinological and Sino-Christian perspective.

In the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) when the school of principle resurged and flourished, Hu Guang 胡廣 (1369–1418) and others issued the Four Books, with Collective Annotations 四書集注大全 (Cheng 1993: 318). Another scholar Li Yuanyang 李元陽 (1497–1580) revised Zhu Xi’s and other Southern Song thinkers’ theories and issued the Thirteen Classics, with Commentaries and Sub-Commentaries 《十三經注疏》, the first edition of its kind that affirmed the collective title of the thirteen texts.

During the Qing period (1644–1911), in particular under the reigns of Qianlong (1735–1796) and Jiaqing (1796–1820), scholars inherited previous thinkers’ methods, while also highlighting “evidential research” (Li 2006: 572)/‘textual research’ 考據/考證 and ‘linguistic analysis’ 訓詁. The Qing court stressed more on both Zheng Xuan’s authority (Han studies) and the Cheng-Zhu orthodoxy (Song studies), so as to reinforce the imperial ideology of Ruist emperors (Crossley 1999: 224-32). The Qing scholars then tended to “do knowledge for knowledge’s sake” by evidential research and linguistic analysis, and their approach fostered the “Han-Song debate” 漢宋之爭, or the rivalry between Han Learning and Song Learning (Zhang 2009). This debate stimulated the Qing hermeneutical industry and abundant re-issuing of Ruist texts. Important editions here include Ruan Yuan’s 阮元 (1764–1849) Thirteen Classics, with Annotations and Sub-Commentaries 《十三經注疏》 (1815) (see fig. 1) and Qing Imperial Explications on the Classics 《皇清經解》 (1829).

Slightly later, Liu Baonan 劉寶楠 (1791–1855) began to embark upon his Lunyu, with Rectified Commentaries 《論語正義》, a work completed by his son Liu Gongmian 劉恭冕 (1824–1883) and published in 1865.
Fig. 1. First page of Xing Bing’s He Yan-based edition *Lunyu*, with Commentaries and Sub-Commentaries, collected in Ruan Yuan’s *Thirteen Classics*, with Annotations and Sub-Commentaries, 1815. Reproduced from Chinese Text Project.

Fig. 1 shows He Yan and Xing Bing’s *Lunyu* reproduced in Ruan Yuan’s *Thirteen Classics*, which exemplifies the sort of layout Legge would have encountered and perused. It illustrates the interlinear genre of all annotated Chinese classics, read from top to bottom, right to left (see Gardner 1998). After front matter in large characters (title, seal, book title and commentators), Ruan presented Xing’s *shu* 疏 (‘sub-commentaries’, the character shown in large font size) on the gist of the book ‘Xue Er’, arranging these sub-commentaries in small font size, with two lines of them in one linear space. The first chapter of ‘Xue Er’ begins from the eighth line, printed in large font size (子曰學而時習之不亦說乎) [The master

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26 In the bibliographical sections of his *Chinese Classics*, Legge (1861: prol. 129, 133; 1893: 128, 132; 1893d: prol. 172; 1893e: prol. 136) listed Ruan’s *Thirteen Classics* and *Qing Imperial Explications*. As the two editions of Legge’s third to fifth volumes are identical, I cite these three volumes based on his 1893 edition (1893c, 1893d and 1893e).
said: “To learn something and practise it often/at the right moment/in time, is it not to have a conversation/speak?”; 有朋自遠方來不亦樂乎 [To have a friend/friends coming from afar, is it not a delight?]; 人不知而不慍不亦君子乎 [Not to be resentful when people do not know/appreciate (you), is it not (the quality of) a gentleman?].

Following each verse were the glosses by Ma Rong 馬融 (79–166), Wang Su 王肅 (195–256) (both on the first verse), Bao Xian 包咸 (6 or 7 BCE – 65 CE) (on the second verse) and He Yan (on the third verse), in small font size and doubled lines. Afterwards Ruan showed Xing’s sub-commentaries, again in small font size and doubled lines, where Xing displayed his synthetic interpretation of numerous past commentaries on specific philological and philosophical issues regarding the chapter. Clearly, Ruan’s edition demonstrates He Yan’s and Xing Bing’s attempts to ‘translate’ the Lunyu and convey its meaningful literary and historical details through their conscious syntheses of multiple commentaries. For He and Xing, engaging with the past commentaries was a creative process of translation, whereby they were enabled to comprehend the Lunyu and show their comprehension of it as scholars and transmitters of Kongzi’s tradition.

Ruan Yuan’s and Liu Baonan’s editions marked multiple dimensions in Qing scholarship. As shown in Ruan’s edition, whereas later commentators brought up new thought on the Lunyu, earlier commentaries were not entirely superseded, but rather served to stimulate further intellectual dialogues and revisions. In many cases, later editions incorporated earlier annotations, creating more commentarial layers. Thus, although the text has been stabilised after the Eastern Han, its meaning was subject to variation under the interpretations of different scholarly generations. Legge included many of these commentaries in his annotation, especially Zhu Xi’s interpretation.

27 The translations here are mine. See 3.1.3 and 3.3 for Legge’s interpretation.
In its reception history, the *Lunyu* apparently absorbed many ‘non-Ruist’ elements. Daoist and Buddhist values reshaped the *Lunyu* through related commentators, especially from the Wei-Jin to the Tang period. In the Song-Ming periods when Ruism thrived again, Daoism and Buddhism still affected the interpretation of the *Lunyu*. During the Qing, while scholars emphasised evidential research and linguistic analysis, or developed skepticism towards the *Lunyu*, Ruism in the folk tradition was largely mixed with Daoist and Buddhist elements. Historically, moreover, Japan, Korea and Vietnam have admitted the *Lunyu* into their traditions. All these influences synchronically and diachronically enrich and complicate the rationale of the *Lunyu*, extending its scope onto an intercultural and interreligious scale.

1.2.4 European translations of the *Lunyu* before Legge’s editions

The late-Ming and the Qing periods witnessed another dramatic transformation in the literary and linguistic formation of the *Lunyu*, as the Jesuits and Protestant missionaries began to translate it into Latin and later, into other European languages such as French, Italian, Spanish, German and English. These Christian missionaries charted the *Lunyu* from Roman Catholic or Protestant angles, and their translations reflect their attempts to reach new equilibrium between the Chinese tradition and Christian theology.

As D. E. Mungello (1985: 249-50) notes, the Jesuit translation of the *Lunyu*, echoing the historical formation of the text, has been a collaborative effort since the time of Father Michele Ruggieri (1543–1607) and Father Matteo Ricci (1552–1610). In bridging the European tradition and ancient Chinese culture, Ruggieri and Ricci carried their respective visions, motives and agendas, which often were more complicated than simply the conversion to Christianity of the Chinese. One of Ricci’s
goals was also to bring together the shared values between Chinese and European cultures by downplaying their differences, so as to persuade the Ming literati that Christianity could be assimilated into China, and to suggest to the Pope and the European elite that China possessed a religion as pure and divine as Christianity (Spence 1978; Porter 2001: 90-93; and Xu 2011: 2-3). This can be seen in Ricci’s creative translation works, such as the Jiaoyou lun 交友論 (A Treatise on Friendship) (1595) and the Tianzhu shiyi 天主實義 (The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven) (1603). The Jiaoyou lun shows Ricci’s endeavour to combine the ancient Greek (Plato’s and Aristotle’s) conception of ‘friendship’ with one of the five bonds 五倫 in Chinese ethics, where friendship acts as the metaphor of constructing a beneficial Sino-Western relationship (Xu 2011: 5-6). The Tianzhu shiyi also manifests Ricci’s aspiration to anchor Christian doctrine to ancient Chinese teaching, for example to link God’s love to the Ruist idea of ren 仁, as Ricci downplayed what he took to be an impure Ruism tainted by Daoism, Buddhism and the socio-political disorders in Chinese history (Porter 2001: 95-97; Xu 2010: 6-7).

Following Ricci’s accommodationist approach, later Jesuits actively presented their theology at the Ming and Qing courts, while systematically introducing the Ruist classics into Europe by way of their latinised renditions ‘Confucius’ (Kongzi) and ‘Confucianism’ (Ruism). Father Prospero Intorcetta (1626–1696), Father Philippe Couplet (1623–1693) and two other Jesuits’ Confucius Sinarum philosophus [Confucius, the Chinese Philosopher], published in Paris in 1687, is thought to

28. The five bonds are 君臣 (Ruler to Ruled), 父子 (Father to Son), 夫婦 (Husband to Wife), 兄弟 (Elder Brother to Younger Brother), and 朋友 (Friend to Friend).
29. Different translators have rendered ren into “perfect virtue”, “Goodness” or “benevolence”. On Legge’s interpretation of ren, see 3.2.3.
30. Lionel M. Jensen (1997) argues that the Jesuits invented ‘Confucius’, and even its Chinese equivalent ‘Kongfuzi’. By replacing Kongzi with Confucius, the Jesuits fabricate the image of a sage who, despite his otherness to Catholicism, acts as the bearer of China’s natural monotheism, able to be unified with Roman Catholic theology (ibid.: 94). Nonetheless, Nicolas Standaert points out that Jenson exaggerates the inventive element in the Jesuit interpretation of Kongzi and Ruism (see Anne Cheng 2009/2010: 604).
contain the first translation of the *Lunyu* in Europe (see figs. 2 and 3) (Meynard 2009/2010; 2011a and b).

In the *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*, as fig. 2 shows, Kongzi is portrayed as the central figure, standing at the fore of the hall. On the top is the term 國學 (*Guo Xue*, literally ‘Imperial Academy’ or ‘State Learning’), with its Latin transliteration and translation. On the two sides are the titles of the Four Books, the Five Classics and the *Xici*《繫辭》(the *Great Treatise*),

31 each of which is provided with its romanisation. There are some untranslated Chinese terms: at the end of the hall are Kongzi’s courtesy name Zhongni 仲尼 and his status as the ‘Pioneering Teacher under Heaven’ 天下先師, and under the canonical titles on both sides are the Chinese appellations of some of his disciples (for example Mencius 孟子 [Mengzi]). In Intorcetta and Couplet’s commentary below the picture, 孔夫子 (Kongfuzi [Kongzi]) and his courtesy name 仲尼 both appear in the original, each followed by its romanisation.

Perceiving Kongzi as the fundamental figure in China’s classical tradition, Intorcetta and Couplet translate the title *Lunyu* as *Ratiocinantium Sermones* [*Reasoning and Discussions*], arranging it after the *Daxue* and the *Zhongyong*. Moreover, the phrase *Scientiae Sinicae* (literally ‘Learning/Knowledge of China’) is used to indicate the general theme of the *Daxue*, the *Zhongyong* and the *Lunyu* (see fig. 3). As Benjamin A. Elman (2005: 22, 108-109) notes, in attempting to prove the existence of a pure, rational religion in China, the Jesuits used *scientia* (learning or knowledge) for correlating Ruism to the Jesuit focus on physics, mathematics, syllogism and God’s role in the motion of bodies and things. Intorcetta and Couplet clearly inherited the strategy of Ricci, who employed Aristotelian, Euclidean and Ptolemaic theories for correcting what he took to be the errors in traditional Chinese

31 The *Xici* is one of the commentarial texts attached to the *Yijing*. See note 5 in the fourth chapter.

While accentuating Kongzi’s role in the Sino-Catholic dialogue, Intorcetta and Couplet downplayed Zhu Xi, treating Zhu’s school as “tainted with atheism and philosophic materialism” (Mungello 1985: 281; Meynard 2011a and b). Yet Intorcetta and Couplet implicitly admitted Zhu, considerably modelling their *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* after Zhu’s *Four Books* (Meynard 2011a: 31-36). In 1700, Father François Noël (1651–1729) issued his Latin translation of the *Lunyu* in Nanchang. He then incorporated it in his *Sinensis imperii libri classici sex* [Six Classics of the Chinese Empire], a work based on the *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* and published in Prague in 1711 (Mungello 1985: 258; Pan 2010: 191, 198-200).³²

Broadly, the early Jesuits set an example for the missionaries in China from the seventeenth centuries onwards. Though being Protestant, Legge inherited Ricci’s accommodationist spirit, and consulted the *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* and other standard Jesuit works in his editions. The Jesuit tradition today continues to invite new explorations into the history of Sino-European cultural exchange.³³

Before Legge published his first edition in 1861, there had been a few English versions of the *Lunyu*, although an English edition appeared slightly later than the editions in other European languages. The sixteenth to the eighteenth century saw the gradual decline of Latin and the rise of national cultures and vernacular languages in Europe (Brokaw 2005: 11-14). The Jesuit sinologists such as Johann Adam Schall von Bell (1592–1666), Ferdinand Verbiest (1623–1688) and Jean-Baptiste Du Halde

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³² Noël’s *Sinensis imperii* was translated into French, published in 1784 (see Pfister 2004/II: 322n296).
³³ For example, contemporary Jesuit scholar Thierry Meynard’s *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus (1687): The First Translation of the Confucian Classics* (2011a) contains his new translation of this prominent Latin text into English.
(1674–1743) shared Ricci’s tradition but also fostered their discrete German, Flemish and French identities by composing in both Latin and their vernacular languages (Hsia 2009: 14, 30-50, 137-42). In this context, contemporary Continental scholars tended to view English as a vulgar language rather than being academic. As Anne Cheng (2009/2010: 607) notes, shortly after the publication of the Confucius Sinarum philosophus, many abridged copies translated from it into vernacular European languages appeared, often issued as leather-bound pocket editions. An abridged French edition, La Morale de Confucius, Philosophe de la Chine, was issued in 1688 (see fig. 4). This French edition was then translated into English and published under the title The Morals of Confucius in 1691 (ibid.: 607) (see fig. 5).

The numerous European renditions of the Lunyu suggest its ongoing historical reincarnations via ‘relay translation’ and ‘retranslation’. As James St. André (2003b: 60) notes, relay translation refers to “translation from a translation into a third language”, while retranslation means “translation more than once into the same language”. The Morals, a relay translation from La Morale, is thought to be one of the earliest exemplars of the Lunyu in English. Like La Morale, The Morals contains an advertisement on Kongzi’s morality, a section on ‘the Antiquity and Philosophy of the Chinese’, three sections respectively on the Daxue, the Zhongyong and the Lunyu, and a collection of eighty maxims. The section on the Lunyu includes citations from the original. The Morals acted as an index for the introduction of Ruist thought into English, and was subsequently reprinted three times in 1706, 1724 and ca. 1780.

34 Subsequently, 1818 saw Josephus Tela’s revised edition The Life and Morals of Confucius (see fig. 6 above). Tela retained the content and structure of the 1691 text, but rearranged and shortened the 1691 ‘advertisement’ as the ‘preface’, while adding a brief biography of Kongzi after it.

34 La Morale also underwent re-issuing in the eighteenth century.
Fig. 2. Kongzi portrayed as standing with 国学 in Intorcetta and Couplet’s *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*, Paris, 1687. Courtesy of the John Rylands Library, Manchester.
Fig. 3. First four pages of the Lunyu in the Confucius Sinarum philosophus, Paris, 1687. Courtesy of the John Rylands Library, Manchester.
The left page contains the translation of Zengzi’s saying originally in the fourth chapter of the first book. Reproduced from Google Books.

Fig. 5. Sample pages of the Lunyu in The Morals of Confucius, London, 1691. The left page corresponds to that in fig. 4. Reproduced from EEBO (Early English Books Online).
Fig. 6. First two pages of the Lunyu in The Life and Morals of Confucius, London, 1818, a revised edition based on The Morals. Courtesy of the John Rylands Library, Manchester.

Fig. 7. Sample pages of Zengzi’s saying in Marshman’s bilingual Lun-Gnee, Serampore, 1809. Reproduced from Google Books.
The first direct English translation of the complete text of the *Lunyu* is Joshua Marshman’s *Works of Confucius* (1809) (see fig. 7 above). Marshman first provided a biography of Kongzi, entitled ‘The Life of Confucius’, which appears to be Marshman’s synthetic translation of varied accounts of Kongzi based on Sima Qian, the French Jesuit Jean-Baptiste Du Halde and some other classical Chinese sources.³⁵ Marshman then arranged his main text in bilingual format, containing the original as well as its transliteration and translation on facing pages, with the title transliterated as the *Lun-Gnee*. Each character in the original is numbered so as to reference the exact word or phrase in the translation. Marshman also translated some commentaries by Zhu Xi and others, followed by his own notes and ‘Remarks on the

³⁵ Marshman (1809: i) stated that the biography was “[t]ranslated from the Chinese, and collected from his [Kongzi’s] works”. Aside from Sima and Du Halde, Marshman often used his translation of the *Lunyu* to inform the biography. He also introduced the Five Classics (the *Yijing*, the *Shangshu*, the *Shijing*, the *Chunqiu* and the *Liji*) and the Four Books based on Du Halde.
Characters’. In most cases Marshman displayed a single sentence of a chapter to form a bilingual section. According to Marshman (ibid.: xxxiv-xxxv), the edition is designed as primarily a ‘textbook’ for the British public to familiarise themselves with the Chinese language.

Another English translation issued before Legge’s edition is David Collie’s *Chinese Classical Works* (1828) (see fig. 8 above). Collie’s edition comprises his translation of the Four Books in monolingual format, but Collie included certain Chinese characters and phrases in his introductory ‘Memoirs of Confucius’. Collie’s *Lunyu* is divided into the *Shang Lun* (top volume) and the *Hea Lun* (bottom volume). Each book of the original in Legge’s editions is managed as one chapter in Collie’s text, and Collie’s footnotes are printed on the bottom of the page.

From the late-seventeenth century to the nineteenth century, significantly, there was a change of style in the English translations of the *Lunyu*, associated with the emergence of British skepticism towards the earlier Jesuit depiction of China, and the nineteenth-century Anglo-French rivalry on sinology. As James St. André (2006: 193-94) points out, eighteenth-century French sinologues followed the Jesuit tradition, basing their China studies on the textual and developing it mainly within the academy. However, contemporary British public began to learn more about China via firsthand travel accounts by the merchants in Canton and native authors such as George Anson; contrary to the Jesuit idealisation of Kongzi, these British writings often portrayed China in a negative way, yet the British perceived them as more accurate. Whereas the French sinologues adopted a “florid” style in decorating the language of their work, British authors employed a “plain” style in producing their accounts, in order to establish a realistic, scientific understanding of China (ibid.: 194-95). Here, British stress on science at once rejected and inherited the Jesuit notion of *scientia* that highlighted classical, academy-based learning. As Elman
(2005: 283-86) notes, nineteenth-century British Protestant missionaries, in relation to but unlike the earlier Jesuits, began to view science in the modern context, emphasising its pragmatic role in facilitating Sino-Western commerce and public education in Britain and China. Accordingly, Marshman, Staunton and Morrison sought to establish their qualification as sinologists by engaging in “true translation” or “authentic translation” of classical Chinese literature, believing that such a method would contribute to a more accurate system of knowledge about China (St. André 2006: 195-98).

In this context, Marshman’s and Collie’s editions signalled the emergence of British sinology through direct translation of Chinese classics into English, a method which departed from earlier Continental approaches. For example, we can compare the relay translation of Zengzi’s saying (I, 4) in the 1691 edition (fig. 5) and its 1818 reprint (fig. 6) to the direct translations of it by Marshman (fig. 7) and Collie (fig. 8). In the 1691 and 1818 editions, the second issue Zengzi daily examines himself is translated from La Morale (1688: 65) into “[i]f when he has been with his Friends, he has discours’d them sincerely, if he has not satisfied himself with shewing them some slight appearance of Kindness/kindness and Esteem/esteem” (1691: 94; 1818: 81). This relay translation inherited the decorative linguistic fashion in La Morale. Yet Zengzi’s original expression “與朋友交而不信乎” (literally “in associating with friends, am I not faithful”) (I, 4) is terser. Marshman translates it into “in my intercourse with friends, whether I am faithful” (1809: 20), and Collie renders it into “whether in my discourse with friends I have been insincere” (1828/Shang Lun: 1). While Marshman changed 不信 (not faithful) to “faithful”, both he and Collie interpreted the saying in a plain style, so that their readers might perceive Zengzi from a ‘scientific’ angle against the decorative language in the earlier editions.

Further, Marshman’s edition is more distinctive than Collie’s. Marshman
paralleled the original with his translation, enabling the readers to travel directly between the source and target texts. He also referred to the Chinese commentaries as his direct information, and produced his own transliteration, rendition and explication of the *Lunyu*, although in his “Life of Confucius”, apart from consulting the Chinese sources, he still relied to some extent on the Jesuit accounts such as Du Halde’s. Compared with Marshman’s version, the monolingual character of the 1691, 1818 and Collie’s 1828 editions suggests a relative lack of cross-cultural dialogue. The 1691 and 1818 editions especially exude an authoritarian air in terms of their descriptive content and the maxims that follow the text. In comparison, then, Marshman’s bilingual edition looks more balanced and comprehensive, in a sense anticipating the structure and contexture of Legge’s *Lunyu*.

In translating the Chinese classics, Marshman bore his specific Anglo-Protestant agenda. In quoting Sir William Jones, Marshman (1809: vii-viii) laments that the British had long been dependent upon their “French neighbours” for the knowledge about “the language and literature of China”, stating that it is important for the British to “use [their] utmost exertions in cultivating this department of literature”. Once the primary source for knowing China, the Jesuit and French perspectives were now treated by the British with skepticism, as missionaries like Marshman were eager to examine Chinese civilisation by their own travel experience (St. André 2006: 196). Elsewhere in his *Works*, as noted earlier, Marshman (1809: xxxiv) claims that his translation aims to make the Chinese language accessible to the British, “both as opening the way for a thorough investigation of the literature and ancient writings of the Chinese, as well as for the ultimate introduction among *them* of those discoveries in science which so eminently distinguish the western – and, above all, of the Holy Scriptures in their purity and excellence”. Here Marshman shows how Christianity as an asset might lead Britain and Europe to develop science and sinological studies in
the nineteenth century. Acting as one of the examples for the inauguration of British sinology, Marshman’s edition reveals a historical process in which the British missionaries were seeking new ways of understanding China, while being conscious of the Chinese tradition and the Jesuit interpretation.

1.3 Legge’s bilingual Chinese Classics and Lunyu: editions, layout and prioritisation

By the time Legge prepared for his Lunyu and Chinese Classics, he was already faced with more than two thousand years of annotated Chinese editions and the numerous European versions. To understand how Legge engages with this wealth of material, bringing his own unique perspective to bear on age old problems, we need to first look at the way in which Legge edits his Chinese Classics and investigate why Legge arranges the Lunyu to be the first text. In what follows, I discuss the layout of Legge’s Lunyu in his 1858 specimen and his 1861 and 1893 editions, while comparing these versions in order to signpost Legge as a revisionist translator. I also examine the historical factors that underlie Legge’s prioritisation of the Lunyu. I aim to highlight the bilinguality, novelty and comprehensiveness of Legge’s work, as well as the implications of these qualities for Legge’s dialogue with Ruism.

1.3.1 The editions of Legge’s Chinese Classics and the layout of his Lunyu

Legge’s Chinese Classics have two formal editions, both published in the nineteenth century. These two editions are organised in five volumes and consistently presented in bilingual format, with the Lunyu installed as the first text in the first volume.

The publication of Legge’s first edition spanned from 1861 until 1872. The first two volumes contain the Four Books as defined after Zhu Xi. The first volume (1861) comprises the Lunyu (the Confucian Analects), the Daxue (the Great Learning) and
the Zhongyong (the *Doctrine of the Mean*). The second volume (1861) is the Mengzi (the *Works of Mencius*). The other three volumes contain four other texts in the Thirteen Classics. The third volume (1865) is the Shangshu (the *Shoo King*, or the *Book of Historical Documents*). The fourth volume (1871) is the Shijing (the *She King*, or the *Book of Poetry*). The fifth volume (1872) contains the Chunqiu and the Zuozhuan (the Ch’un Ts’ew [Spring and Autumn Annals] with the Tso Chuen [Commentary of Zuo]). In 1893, Legge published his revised edition of the first and the second volumes, along with a re-issuing of the remaining three volumes. Prior to the official debut of his *Chinese Classics*, Legge had prepared his Lunyu specimen for the London Missionary Society in 1858.

The two editions of Legge’s *Chinese Classics* are structured in the same layout. All volumes contain three principal parts: the ‘Prolegomena’, the ‘Body of the Volume’ which is consistently presented as bilingual, and the ‘Indexes’. In the ‘Prolegomena’, Legge introduces the context of the text(s) included in that same volume. The ‘Body’ contains Legge’s main work, where Legge parallels the original Chinese text(s) with his translation and annotation. In Legge’s annotation there is a mixture of Chinese and English, where Legge shows his comprehensive digestion of a variety of Chinese and European commentaries. Legge arranges the ‘Indexes’ in the end of the volume. In the first volume which includes the Lunyu, both editions contain Legge’s ‘Prolegomena’, subdivided into six chapters, which are ‘The Chinese Classics Generally’, ‘The Confucian Analects’, ‘The Great Learning’, ‘The Doctrine of the Mean’, ‘Confucius and His Immediate Disciples’, and ‘List of the Principal Works Which Have Been Consulted in the Preparation of this Volume’. In the ‘Body’, we see Legge’s bilingual *Lunyu, Daxue* and *Zhongyong*. The ‘Indexes’ in this volume serves as the reference for the subjects and proper names in the three texts. It also includes an explanatory list of Chinese characters and phrases.
Chapter I. The Master said, “Is it not pleasant to learn with a constant perseverance and application? “Is it not delightful to have friends coming from distant quarters! “Is he not a man of complete virtue, who feels no anger and dissatisfaction, though men may take no note of him?"
**CONFUCIAN ANALECTS.**

**BOOK I. HEO URH.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of the work</th>
<th>Translated title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>論語</td>
<td>Confucian Analects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'Discourses and Dialogues'</td>
<td>Translated title</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transliterated book title</th>
<th>Transliterated title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lunyu</td>
<td>Lunyu</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Chinese text</th>
<th>Printed in the Chinese format that runs from top to bottom, right to left.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>君子乎</td>
<td>君子乎</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>不亦樂乎</td>
<td>不亦樂乎</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>有朋自遠方來</td>
<td>有朋自遠方來</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>不亦說乎</td>
<td>不亦說乎</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Legge's English translation of the text**

1. The Master said, “Is it not pleasant to learn with a constant perseverance and application?
2. “Is it not pleasant to have friends coming from distant quarters?
3. “Is he not a man of complete virtue, who feels no discomposure though men may take no note of him?”

**Legge's annotation of the text**

- Containing both English explications and Chinese characters or phrases (including particular words from the text, the Chinese commentaries, and the Chinese sources Legge consults)

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**Fig. 10.** First page of the 1861 edition of Legge's translation of the *Lunyu*, published at the author's in Hong Kong and by Trübner, London. Reproduced from Google Books. The right-hand column contains my notes on the structural elements.
CONFUCIAN ANALECTS.

BOOK I. HSIO R.

CHAPTER I. 1. The Master said, 'Is it not pleasant to learn with a constant perseverance and application?
2. 'Is it not delightful to have friends coming from distant quarters?
3. 'Is he not a man of complete virtue, who feels no discomposure though men may take no note of him?'

TITLE OF THE WORK. — 论语, 'Discourses and Dialogue,' that is, the discourses or discussions of Confucius with his disciples and others on various topics, and his replies to their inquiries. Many chapters, however, and one whole book are the sayings, not of the sage himself, but of some of his disciples. The characters may also be rendered 'Digested Conversations,' and this appears to be the more ancient signification attached to them, the account being that, after the death of Confucius, his disciples collected together and compared the memoranda of his conversations which they had severally preserved, digesting them into the twenty books which compose the work. Hence the title— 论语, 'Discreet Sayings,' or 'Digested Conversations.' See 論語註疏解釋序.

I have styled the work 'Confucian Analects,' as being more descriptive of its character than any other name I could think of.

HEAD OF THIS BOOK. — 學而第一

The two first characters in the book, after the introductory—'The Master said,' are adopted as its heading. This is similar to the custom of the Jews, who name many books in the Bible from the first word in them. 第一, 'The first,' that is, of the twenty books composing the whole work. In some of the books we find a unity or analogy of subjects, which evidently guided the compilers in grouping the chapters together. Others seem devoid of any such principle of combination. The sixteen chapters of this book are occupied, it is said, with the fundamental subjects which ought to engage the attention of the learner, and the great matters of human practice. The word 学, 'learn,' rightly occupies the forefront in the studies of a nation, of which its educational system has so long been the distinction and glory.

1. The whole work and achievement of the learner, first perfecting his knowledge, then attracting by his fame like-minded individuals, and finally complete in himself. 1. 子, at the commencement, indicates Confucius, and is also the common designation of males,—especially of virtuous men. We find it, in conversations, used in the same way as our 'Sir.' When it follows the surname, it is equivalent to our 'Mr.' or may be rendered 'the philosopher,' 'the scholar,' 'the officer,' &c. Often, however, it is better to leave it untranslated. When it precedes the surname, it indicates that the person spoken of was the master of the writer, as 子 謻, 'my master, the philosopher.' Standing single and alone, as in the text, it denotes Confucius, the philosopher, or, rather, the master. If we render the term by Confucius, as all preceding translators have done, we miss the indication which it gives of the handwork of his disciples, and the reverence which it bespeaks for him. 学, in the old commentators, is explained by 讀, 'to read chantingly,' 'to discuss.' Chu Hsi.
Fig. 9 shows the 1858 specimen Legge prepared for the London Missionary Society. It is the earliest appearance of the first page of Legge’s *Lunyu*. Fig. 10 shows the first page in the first formal edition of Legge’s *Lunyu*, published in 1861. I have explained the five structural elements of the page in the right-hand column. Fig. 11 shows the same page of Legge’s *Lunyu* in his revised second edition in 1893.

A careful comparison between these versions reveals that Legge continued to revise his work. In translating the second verse, Legge first used the term “delightful” (1858), changed it to “pleasant” (1861), and revised it again to “delightful” (1893). Legge was also expanding his annotation. In other aspects, as Pfister (2004/II: 62-63, 101) notes, Legge changed his transliteration of the book title 學而 from ‘HEǑ URH’ (based on Robert Morrison’s system) to ‘HSIO R’ (based on Thomas Wade’s system). Legge also revised the negative image frame for the chapter number (a style that followed the Delegates’ Version of the Bible) (1858) to a more lucid positive image (1861; 1893). Initially Legge did not order the verses in the chapter with numbers (1858), but later on he added the number of sequence before each verse in both the original and the translation (1861; 1893). All these changes indicate Legge’s stance as a revisionist missionary, translator and sinologist.

In terms of materiality, Legge’s bilingual editions point to the technical, financial and aesthetic factors in Protestant missionary print culture of nineteenth-century China (Reed 2004; Brokaw 2005). Legge’s editions remind us of the challenges Legge and his Protestant predecessors had faced in printing their bilingual texts. Marshman adopted metal type for its efficiency in printing Chinese alongside English and for the way it allowed the correction of individual errors,

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36 In the 1893 edition, Legge revised his transliteration in the first two volumes. However, as the remaining three volumes were simply reprints, the transliteration in them remained the same with that in the 1861 edition. Although Legge’s 1861 transliteration appears similar to the Morrison system while his revised transliteration seems to somewhat follow the Wade-Giles system, Legge does not completely adopt the transliteration from these two systems.

37 For a historical discussion of technology and print culture in China, see Dagmar Schäfer (2011).
although Marshman knew that such typographical correction was costly and that the printed Chinese appeared unsightly (Reed 2004: 34-35). Legge’s printing was based on Samuel Dyer’s (1804–1843) newly developed and relatively inexpensive punch fonts (Penang font) (ibid.: 41). With a furnace, Dyer’s fonts permitted Legge to cast his Chinese type. Under Legge’s supervision, the London Missionary Society Press in Hong Kong became the East Asian hub of Protestant publishing in the 1850s.

1.3.2 Arranging the Lunyu to be the first text

In his Chinese Classics, Legge arranges the Lunyu as the primal text in his first volume, and he positions the Four Books in his first two volumes. Legge’s prioritisation of the Lunyu shows his novel approach to the reading sequence of the Four Books and the Chinese classics writ large. That Legge organises the Four Books ahead of the other texts also suggests his awareness of Zhu Xi.

Legge is the first translator who gives the Lunyu primacy over the rest of the Four Books and other classics (Pfister 2004/II: 103-104). Legge values the Lunyu’s centrality to perceiving the roots of Chinese civilisation and to his missionary and sinological development. At the opening of his ‘Preface’, Legge (1861 and 1893: vii-viii) writes:

The author [Legge] arrived in the East as a Missionary towards the end of 1839 […]. Before leaving England, he had enjoyed the benefit of a few months’ instruction in Chinese from the late Professor Kidd at the University of London/University College, London, and was able in the beginning of 1840 to commence the study of the first of the Works in the present publication. It seemed to him then – and the experience of one and twenty years gives its sanction to the correctness of the judgment – that he should not be able to consider himself qualified for the duties of his position, until he had thoroughly mastered the Classical Books of the Chinese, and had investigated for himself the whole field of thought through which the sages of China had ranged, and in
which were to be found the foundations of the moral, social, and political life of the people. Under this conviction he addressed himself eagerly to the reading of the Confucian Analects, and proceeded from them to the other Works.

[...]

As time went on, and he began to feel assured as to his own progress in the [Chinese] language, it occurred to him that he might venture on such an undertaking [translating the Chinese classics] himself. He studied, wrote out translations, and made notes, with the project [Chinese Classics] in his mind.38

Apparently, the *Lunyu* signals Legge’s ‘first encounter’ with China, and Legge sees his translation project as the pathway to accomplishing his Sino-Christian mission. Referring to the *Lunyu* as the “Confucian Analects”, Legge deems it as the beginning point for studying Kongzi and Ruisim, insofar as Legge defines ancient Ruist texts as the “foundations of the moral, social, and political life of the [Chinese] people”.

While paying tribute to his first Chinese teacher Samuel Kidd, Legge expresses his desire to understand China through continued learning. It is also interesting that Legge asserts himself as the “author” (of the ‘Preface’ and allusively of his volumes), a self-designation suggesting Legge’s Congregational identity and his enthusiasm for earning his own seat in the Chinese classical lineage. Legge posits his authorial assertion in his aspiration for achieving “the duties of his position” as the missionary, translator and sinologist. Moreover, we will see how Legge’s Chinese study has profoundly transformed him, as in his 1893 edition Legge mitigates his authorship by acknowledging other sinologists and the living Ruist tradition. As Girardot (2002) and Pfister (2004) note, the way Legge relates himself to China reveals how he strives for “the whole duty of man”, and beyond Christian precepts, such “whole duty of man” conveys a personal mission on grounds of his faith in the compatibility between China and the West. Already in his ‘Preface’, Legge empathically shows that China needs to be approached from its original roots, i.e. from Kongzi and the

38 In the thesis, all the bracketed information in my citation of Legge’s translations and writings is my addition, unless otherwise specified.
Legge’s prioritisation of the *Lunyu* also stems from his revisionist view of the history of the Four Books. As noted earlier, the order of the Four Books has been controversial after Zhu Xi. In his ‘Prolegomena’, Legge (1861: prol. 2; 1893: 2) introduces the *Lunyu* as the first of the Four Books, followed by the *Daxue*, the *Zhongyong* and the *Mengzi*.\(^{39}\) According to Legge, the arrangement of the classics from the Song scholars onwards is problematic and in need of adjustment. Legge (1861: prol. 2-3; 1893: 2-3) traces the formations of the Five Classics, the Six Classics, the Nine Classics and the Thirteen Classics through the dynasties, suggesting that the Four Books had formed in Chinese literature earlier than the time commonly assumed, while the *Daxue* and the *Zhongyong* had been separately issued before the Song dynasty. While Legge here contests the Song canon on the formation and order of the Four Books, he remains highly aware of Zhu Xi’s influence.

For Legge, the *Lunyu* deserves to be the first in his *Chinese Classics*, as Legge recognises its importance to defining Kongzi’s legacy to Chinese people. Legge believes that studying the *Lunyu* motivates him to understand better ancient and contemporary China, thereby substantiating his own role as a connector between Western and Chinese religious cultures. As we will see, Legge translates and annotates the *Lunyu* based on his vision of Kongzi’s religiousness and his respect for the text’s history. Legge shows in his *Lunyu* how he connects Jesus Christ and Western philosophy to Kongzi and Zhu Xi. Just as Legge’s editions have become a milestone in the continued history of the *Lunyu*, the text also witnessed Legge’s endeavour to deepen the Sino-Western exchange through his participation in its nuanced tradition.

\(^{39}\) Pfister (2004/II: 103) suggests that Legge considers the *Lunyu* to be historically “the earliest of the four texts”.

64
Conclusion

The ancient formation and interpretive tradition of the *Lunyu* in China clearly reflect the multiple evolitional stages of Ruism in Chinese history. Through Kong Anguo, Zheng Xuan, He Yan and Zhu Xi, we witness how Kongzi’s teaching in the *Lunyu* has been transmitted and renewed time and again, by way of the varied trends of philosophical and religious perspectives in these thinkers’ interpretations. There have been traces of Daoist and Buddhist influences in the Chinese commentaries on the *Lunyu* through the dynasties, although not all the commentators acknowledge such influences. For example, He Yan’s commentary reshapes Kongzi’s thought through Daoist elements. On the other hand, Zhu Xi aims to reaffirm the Ruist canon through his interpretation. What is also significant is the different ways in which Western missionaries envisage Kongzi’s character and employ the Ruist commentaries in their translations of the *Lunyu*. The contrast between the Jesuit idealisation of Kongzi and the British representation of the *Lunyu* through plain language suggests not only the transformative Western perceptions of China, but also the Anglo-European rivalry on the development of sinological studies. On the other hand, whereas the Jesuits downplay the role of the Chinese commentaries and dismiss the Daoist and Buddhist dimensions in them, British translators like Marshman begin to display their awareness of the Ruist commentarial tradition in their works. In a word, the history of the *Lunyu*, seen through the numerous editions in China, East Asia and the West, rejects any theoretical archetype or assumption that seeks to confine the text within a single system of thought, instead urging us to appreciate its continued openness to diverse human inquiries.

Legge’s editions undoubtedly testify to the nuanced historical characteristics of the *Lunyu*, demonstrating the text as at once a historical source for Chinese
intellectual life and as the connector of various realms of knowledge. As we will see in the following chapters, Christianity and Ruism for Legge are not two separate traditions but rather are interrelated philosophically and religiously. This becomes clear when we engage with Legge’s *Lunyu* in view of dialogism and intertextuality. The history of the *Lunyu* invokes a uniquely cross-cultural vision for Legge, encouraging Legge to interpret the text with faith and creativity in his reflexive and revisionist dialogue with Chinese foreign culture. At the same time, Legge’s *Lunyu* also reveals the text’s collaborative dimensions in bridging the Chinese and Western traditions, reminding us to always pay attention to the rich intellectual dynamics that underwrites the polyglot, enduring nature of the text.
Introduction

Religion runs deep in Legge’s encounter with China, Kongzi and Ruism. Legge’s Congregationalist commitment is interleaved with his desire to understand China thoroughly. Moreover, I will show in this chapter how translating the Chinese classics has transformed Legge, from doubting Kongzi’s religiousness, to trying to discover the spiritual messages in Kongzi’s teaching, then to frankly acknowledging Kongzi’s legacy for both China and the West. Where Legge’s religious impulse stimulates his search for Chinese religiousness, his translation has moved beyond Christian doctrine, onto a broader realm of cross-cultural religion. Thus, before we examine Legge’s Lunyu through dialogism and intertextuality, it is necessary to map out the meanings of religion for Legge.

In this chapter, I discuss modern and contemporary scholarly debates on religion, relating these debates to Legge’s perception of religion and approach to Ruism in the Christian, Chinese and interreligious contexts. Although we do not live in the nineteenth century, we can try to understand Legge’s religious vision of Ruism by investigating the traces he left to us. To analyse and appreciate Legge’s religious views in these traces urges us to develop an awareness concerning fundamental issues on religion, including the conception of religion and relevant terminologies, the history of that conception, the construction of history, and the reality of the past in relation to the text and textual production. None of these elements can be easily answered. Rather than fit Legge into any single assumption, I intend to demonstrate
how Legge’s work sheds new light on a series of Sino-Christian themes. Grounding Legge’s understanding of religion in the histories of religious studies in the West and China, I will show how Legge establishes his cross-cultural approach to the *Lunyu* through his conception of “ancient Chinese monotheism”. Specifically, ‘cross-cultural’ refers to the way in which Legge blends his Protestant theological perspectives with his apprehension of the spiritual, even divine, dimensions in Kongzi’s teaching. Such a cross-cultural vision derives from Legge’s attempt to reveal the religiousness of the *Lunyu* from within Kongzi’s legacy and through Ruist–Christian dialogue.

The chapter therefore is structured around four interrelated sections. In the first section, I briefly discuss Legge’s religious background in relation to his commitment to China and sinology. The second section explores modern and contemporary theories of religion in the West and China. What are the nature and origins of religion? Was religion simply an invention in nineteenth-century Western academia, or should it be tackled from a different historical light? Discussing these questions helps to contextualise the role of religion in Legge’s contact with the *Lunyu*. Subsequently, the third section examines Legge’s conception of Ruism as an ancient Chinese religion based on his writings. Here, Legge invites us to rethink Chinese religiousness through his vision of ancient Chinese monotheism and engagement with the history of the Ruist tradition. I also trace the relation of Max Müller’s ‘science of religion’ to Legge’s coeval translation. Whereas Müller doubts the religiousness of Ruism, Legge is keen on searching for Ruist divinity from the Chinese classics. Finally, the fourth section investigates why Legge deems the *Lunyu* as potentially a religious text. The key here lies in Legge’s critical yet transforming attitude towards Kongzi. Overall, the chapter shows how Legge delineates religion by probing Ruism through his Sino-Christian perspective, and how the meaning of
religion can be illuminated afresh through Legge’s cross-cultural understanding of Kongzi’s humanity and spirituality. Both this and the first chapters pave the way for my reading of Legge’s Lunyu in light of dialogism and intertextuality.

2.1 Legge’s religious grounding and commitment to China

Legge’s Lunyu and Chinese Classics testify to his novel combination of theology and sinological studies. Before Legge, Intorcetta and Couplet approached the Lunyu through Roman Catholicism, framing Ruism within their idea of it as a pure tradition while rejecting the Ruist commentaries as a source of corruption (Maynard 2011a: 32-33). However, because Legge believed that ancient Chinese monotheism could be traced in the Ruist tradition, he included numerous Chinese commentaries in his editions, while holding an evolutionary view on the history of the Lunyu and on Chinese culture more generally. Legge’s annotated editions also suggest how Legge consciously used the footnote to validate his sinological profession in the nineteenth century (see Grafton 1997 in 3.1). After Legge, many scholars doubt the past Christian missionary translations of the Ruist classics. Whereas diverse scholarly approaches to the Lunyu have emerged since the beginning of the twentieth century, we could discern from many academic publications a tendency to examine the Lunyu in philosophical, humanist or secular terms.¹ In this regard, what is interesting about Legge’s Lunyu is its focus on the theistic aspects of the Ruist tradition and sinological studies. As I will demonstrate throughout the thesis, ‘religion’, as a faith Legge holds and a notion Legge engages with as a sinologist, informs his dialogic,

¹ According to MLA International Bibliography [accessed 2 October 2013], the combined keywords ‘Analects’ and ‘philosophy’ yield 203 results, and ‘Lunyu’ and ‘philosophy’ yield six results. However, the combined keywords ‘Analects’ and ‘religion’ yield only two results, while there is no result regarding ‘Lunyu’ and ‘religion’. Similarly, according to Web of Knowledge [accessed 2 October 2013], ‘Analects’ and ‘philosophy’ yield 27 results, and ‘Lunyu’ and ‘philosophy’ yield three results. But ‘Analects’ and ‘religion’ yield only three results, while ‘Lunyu’ and ‘religion’ yield nothing.
intertextual interpretation of the *Lunyu*. Thus, it would be useful to briefly discuss here Legge’s life as a committed Christian and China scholar.

Born in Huntly, Scotland in 1815, Legge was raised in a family rooted in the Missionar Kirk tradition of Huntly, an independent Congregational Protestant church which dissented from the national Church of Scotland while characterised by its communal practices of Sabbath culture (the Christian Sunday) (Helen Edith Legge 1905: 1, 6-7; Girardot 2002: 18-20, 22-23; Pfister 2004/I: 21-23, 30-34). Legge’s father Ebenezer Legge, mother Elizabeth Cruickshank (who died in 1817) and stepmother Barbara Spence laid much emphasis on children’s biblical edification and moral development (Girardot 2002: 24-25; Pfister 2004/I: 24). According to Legge’s daughter Helen Edith (1905: 1-6), Legge “passed a free childhood”; he excelled in Latin as a lad and surpassed his peers in multiple subjects during his education years at King’s College, Aberdeen from 1831 to 1836. China entered the young Legge’s mind when he discovered in his father’s library William Milne’s (1785–1822) Chinese treatises (Girardot 2002: 28-29). This early encounter with China sparked Legge’s interest in a remote culture and civilisation, therein his vision of a humane kingdom beaming in God’s light would be fulfilled.


Legge (1877: 1) once said: “Looking back on nearly forty years of life, I am
thankful that so long ago I was led to become a missionary to the Chinese.” Legge was the headmaster of the Ying Wa College in Malacca (1839–1843) and in Hong Kong (1843–1867), and the pastor to the Union Church in Hong Kong (1845 or 1849–1870). Legge’s career in Hong Kong and experience in China was far from simply a story of British colonial conquest. His numerous letters written over these decades reveal how his Christian enthusiasm was fueled by his intense love for China and constant passion for Ruist learning (Helen Edith Legge 1905; see also Macklin 2012: 61, 65). While being an active promoter of public education in China, Legge was convinced that Ruist literature proved the Chinese faith in God (Helen Edith Legge 1905: 27-30).

During his brief return to Britain in the late 1840s, Legge wrote: “God knows my supreme desire is to return and serve Him among the Chinese”; “I am tired of this life [in England], and long to be back again among the Chinese” (ibid.: 55, 56). Over his later years in China, Legge distanced himself from the London Missionary Society due to his sympathetic interpretation of the Chinese terms on God and religion, while he built an enduring friendship with Chinese intellectuals such as Wang Tao 王韬 (1828–1897) (Wang 1890/2007; Girardot 2002: 42-68; Pfister 2004/II: 146-50; Wong 2006: 131-42).

In 1876 Legge took up the first professorship of Chinese at the University of Oxford, dedicating himself to teaching Chinese and revising his Chinese Classics until his death in 1897. Before leaving China, Legge visited various sites of religious significance, including the burial place of Kongzi in Qufu, the Altar of Heaven in Beijing and Mount Tai in Shandong province (Helen Edith Legge 1905: 177-203). At Oxford, Legge collaborated with the renowned philologist Max Müller (1823–1900) on The Sacred Books of the East (1879–1910) (see 2.3.2 later). Müller envisioned equalising the world’s religions based on his inspired comparative study of the
ancient Aryan-Indian language and the European (more specifically German and Kantian) philosophical tradition (Girardot 2002: 108, 294; Strenski 2006: 63-90). But Müller had reservations about the religiousness of Ruist texts. Legge, however, insisted that Ruism showed considerable qualities regarding the sacred.

Legge maintained a strong mental attachment to China in his last years in Britain (Helen Edith Legge 1905: 25, 231). Legge’s granddaughter Mary Dominica (1951) told us that the elderly Legge preached in both English and Chinese and enjoyed answering “any questions addressed to him on Chinese life”. For Mary Dominica (ibid.), Legge was sincere and open-minded, as he saw at once that Christianity would not appeal to the Chinese unless Western missionaries tried to understand China, and this conviction compelled him to systematically translate Ruist texts throughout his life. As Mary Dominica (ibid.) notes, “no one today is in touch with the living tradition of Confucianism as he [Legge] knew it”.

It is clear that Legge’s Ruist study, experience in China, friendship with the Chinese and professorship at Oxford have profoundly transformed his perception of God and humanity, and the meaning of his mission. Viewed in the context of his life, Legge’s connection with the Lunyu was formed through his conscious combination of his Congregational identity and Chinese learning. Whereas scholars like Wang Hui (2008) deems Legge’s Chinese Classics as a colonialist project, I argue that Legge has left a rich and far-reaching heritage for both China and the West beyond colonial assumptions. As a Christian, Legge sought to transcend the evil of imperialism through his real sympathy with Chinese people in the nineteenth century. Further, I will show in the thesis how Legge moves beyond narrow Christian doctrine and broadens the meaning of human religion through his dialogue with Kongzi and the living Ruist tradition.
2.2 Modern and contemporary scholarly approaches to religion and *zongjiao*

What is religion? What does it mean when we use the term *zongjiao* 宗教 to refer to religion in Chinese? Why is religion significant to Legge’s dialogue with China? These questions reveal many fundamental issues about ‘religion’ as at once a disputed academic topic and diverse paths of human faith. In this section, I discuss modern and contemporary theoretical approaches to religion and its relevant terminologies in the Western and Chinese contexts. Rather than account for the history of religion per se, I focus on how religion has been studied in Western and Chinese terms, examining religion as forms of knowledge according to varied scholarships. There have been different views not only on the notions of religion and *zongjiao* in the West and China, but also on the conception of history and on how to contextualise religion in a past period such as the nineteenth century. As Michael Dummett (2005: 9) notes, “[t]hinking or saying that a thought is true does not make it true; it is merely to entertain or express that very thought”. The purpose of my discussion is not to judge the truth or falsehood of these approaches, but rather is to ask by what thoughts we can make sense of Legge’s interpretation of Ruism from within the dynamics of these debates.

As Peter Beyer (2012) and Ian Reader (2012) note, it is time for us to step out of unhealthy colonialist attitudes, look around the world, and rediscover the link between religious studies and reality. I suggest that the meaning of reality here involves not only human activities in forms other than the written record, but also a reinvestigation of written texts and of our conception of time and space in relation to them. It is often assumed that a text is simply a representation which conceals or distorts reality. Yet this view neglects the possibility of seeing the text as the very embodiment of the magnitude of reality. Texts contain and enliven actual human
practices, because both writing and reading activate an entity of real consciousness, wherein we seek to bridge the gap between what there is and our ways of seeing it. Thus, a rereading of text-based research of religion and Legge’s writings on Ruism urges us to rethink how we can engage with the history and reality of religious practices.

In modern and contemporary Western academia, there are at least two very different ways of understanding religion. For Jonathan Z. Smith (1982: xi), religion is “solely the creation of the scholar’s study”. As Lucian Hölscher (2012: 244) notes, in the pre-Enlightenment era, Europeans used “law”, “teaching” or “sect” to refer to the worship of God, while it is from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries onwards that ‘religion’ became a widely used notion. In endorsing the view that religion was a Western academic invention, some scholars deem religion as a socio-rhetorical system of classification and categorisation, often underwritten by some form of power and control. According to Russell T. McCutcheon (1997), religion is neither naturally ordained nor self-evident. Instead, the term “sui generis religion” refers to a category of academic discourse and conceptualisation; while being historically conditioned, it is manufactured for specific purposes in relation to the scholar’s “privilege”, “self-imposed methodological strictures” and “self-generated authority” (ibid.: 13). In examining religion, thus, we should question the hegemonic intellectualist scale implied in a particular scholarship, which tends to perpetuate its legitimacy and dominance by means of “generalisation”, “dehistoricisation”, “universalisation” and “essentialisation” (ibid.: 18).

Tomoko Masuzawa and Richard King adopt similar views in investigating nineteenth-century European scholarship on religion. As Masuzawa (2005) argues, the nineteenth century saw Europe emerge as an overwhelming colonial power in its encounter with and conquest of most non-European civilisations. In this context,
European scholars developed an enthusiasm for comparing the world’s “religions”, as they sought to map out their own (supremacist) cultural identity by relating Christianity to modernity. The nineteenth-century European construction of religion thus became “a discourse of othering”: non-European traditions lost their power to represent themselves as they became the objects of European religious taxonomy, and the European representations of them served to reflect the narcissistic image of Europe’s progress and superiority in science and modernisation (ibid.: 14-20).

Whereas nineteenth-century European scholars began to dispute over the place of religion in the emergence of scientific discourses, they used Christianity as the standard for judging the Eastern traditions. In this constructed arena of the “science of religion” since the second half of the nineteenth century, China, like many other Eastern nations, fell into one of the categorical studies in European orientalist scholarship (ibid.). As King (1999: 62-81) suggests, nineteenth-century European orientalists were less interested in the oral traditions and ritual practices in the East. Rather, by translating and compiling varied Eastern texts, these European orientalists formulated a “textualism” while mixing their imperialist intentions in it. The European orientalists framed and interpreted Eastern texts within comparative theology, while using their representation of these texts to substantiate the idea of Christianity as a transnational, universal entity, capable of assimilating and surpassing all non-Christian traditions (Masuzawa 2005: 17, 22-23, 72-104).

Clearly, Said’s *Orientalism* (1978) informed McCutcheon’s, King’s and Masuzawa’s arguments. In combining Antonio Gramsci’s theory of hegemony and Michel Foucault’s view on power and knowledge, Said (ibid.) attempts to construct a historically coherent model so as to reveal how the East has been “Orientalised” and otherised through the discursive production and reproduction of dominant Western discourse, especially in the nineteenth century. Within this model, Said argues that
the ideology of European imperialist superiority motivated the nineteenth-century European representation of the “Orient” in literature and translation. Said (ibid.: 160, 165) writes: “The Orientalist can imitate the Orient without the opposite being true […] Orientalism organised itself systematically as the acquisition of Oriental material and its regulated dissemination as a form of specialised knowledge”. This specialised form of textual production and representation “becomes synonymous with European domination of the Orient” (ibid.: 197). Although Said centres on the European representation of the Middle East, his theory tends to generalise many European authors as holding a prototypical imperialist attitude in their association with the East. In this picture, China inevitably fell victim to the discourse of orientalism.

However, many scholars have pointed out the problems in Said’s approach (see Porter 1983/1994; Moore-Gilbert 1997; Gandhi 1998; St. André 2003a; Young 2004; Lewis 1996 and 2004; Markley 2006; Irwin 2006; Fiske 2011; and Zheng 2013). Said’s methodological combination of the optimistic Gramsci and the pessimistic Foucault is controversial. Moreover, Said’s assumption about one-size-fits-all imperialist conspiracy forecloses other possibilities of reading the history of East–West cultural, intellectual, material and spiritual interactions. For example, Said (ibid: 149-150) uses the cases of Antoine Isaac Silvestre de Sacy (1758–1838) and Ernest Renan (1823–1892) to validate his view on the emergence of “modern Orientalism” in Europe, claiming that Sacy and Renan tried “to reduce the Orient to a kind of human flatness”. But here Said himself is reducing Sacy and Renan to his claim, neglecting other possible ways of assessing these two thinkers.2

Said’s Middle-Eastern (Arabic Islamic) background informed his orientalist

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2 See Ivan Strenski (2006: 53-56) for a reassessment of Renan and my discussion on Strenski’s approach below.
framework. As Shany Fiske (2011: 222-23) argues, Said’s model and the postcolonial discourses developed after him do not capture convincingly the reality and transformation of the nineteenth-century Anglo-Chinese/Sino-British cultural and political relationship. China was never in the actual sense colonised by British imperial power; the first Opium War (1839–1842) and the opening of China in 1842 in fact stimulated further interactions between Victorian Britain and Qing China, inspiring certain British thinkers to use the Chinese empire as an example to rethink persistent theoretical issues on recognising and/or reconciling East–West cultural difference (ibid.: 218-19). In this regard, my analysis of Legge’s *Lunyu* highlights how Legge developed his sinological scholarship and translatorial approach to studying Ruism in its own terms and by comparing it to Protestantism/Christianity, in an era when the Victorians were becoming more aware of the richness of Chinese history, literature, philosophy and religious traditions.

As James St. André (2003a) points out, we can use Walter Benjamin’s theory of translation and the afterlife in examining Thomas Percy’s (1729–1811) attitude towards China, and this approach may prove more fruitful. For Zheng Yangwen (2013: 19, 18-22), one main problem of Said’s model is its lack of specific engagement with different Western perceptions of China. For over four centuries, China showed its strength by providing the Westerners with the opportunity to carry out their academic, artistic or commercial projects (ibid.: 19-20). Even in the nineteenth century which saw the British imperial expansion and the outbreak of the Opium War, China still attracted Western admirers and supporters (ibid.: 20). The numerous diverse Western works on China over history compel us to pay closer attention to how China is understood in an individual’s work, rather than subjecting all these works to a preconceived orientalist archetype (ibid.: 21).

Robert Irwin (2006: 7, 82-108) also indicates that the history of orientalism
mostly has been “a story of individual scholars, often lonely and eccentric men”; while devoted to their profession, they regarded their contemporaries as fierce rivals. In Legge’s case, his ‘others’ involved China, Kongzi, the Chinese commentators, the Jesuits, his Protestant predecessors and fellow missionaries, and contemporary European and Qing critics. As I will demonstrate by discussing Legge’s engagement with the Ruist commentaries, for Legge there was a temporal dimension to ‘other’ because he understood it as a cultural concept located in its historicity, rather than an unchanging entity as Said suggests. In one place Legge seemed ruthless against Ruism, yet in another place his chief enemy was not China or Roman Catholicism but a detractor of his translation within the Protestant camp. In addition, since Legge has been referred to as a sinologist, how ‘sinology’ could be related to orientalism remains debatable. Should we deem sinologists as orientalists according to Said (1978: 51)? Or should we look at sinology differently? In sum, as Irwin (ibid.: 7) notes, “there was no overarching and constraining discourse of Orientalism”, and consequently “there were many competing agendas and styles of thought”.

Orientalism itself needs to be re-examined in a light different from Said’s. Moreover, scholars like Florence C. Hsia (2009) have shown how the Sino-Christian interactive history can be discussed through the constructive perspective of science and a subtler exploration into the lives of the many actors involved.

Wilfred Cantwell Smith and Ivan Stenski, amongst others, have theorised religion on grounds different from McCutcheon’s, King’s and Masuzawa’s rationale. Smith (1981: 21) approaches religion from the dynamics of history and the oecumene of humanity, arguing that humankind’s “religious life” is “participation in process”, and developing an understanding of religion stems from our awareness of
its history. Concerned with the irreducibility of history, Ivan Strenski (2006) deals with the question of religion from the notions of “natural religion” and “revealed religion”. As I will show, both these notions function significantly in Legge’s approach to the natural philosophy and theistic potentiality in Ruism. For Strenski (ibid.: 1-6), the views on religion as natural or revealed have run deep in the European intellectual tradition, and Strenski urges us to probe European thinkers individually, asking “why they thought they were right”. Francis Bacon (1561–1626), Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1583–1648), David Hume (1711–1776), Ernest Renan and Max Müller (1823–1900), amongst others, formed their inquiries about the origins of human belief in relation to the natural world and God-given reason. Natural religion stands for the belief that all humans are born with “a talent for being attracted to the ultimate reality” and naturally capable of reaching the truth; conversely, revealed religion comes with “revelation”, namely divine and supernatural intrusions into humankind’s natural knowledge (ibid.: 10-11). Those siding with the orthodoxy of revealed religion view it as the necessary path for ultimate salvation, since humans alone are insufficient and unable to reach truth in their own terms. Revealed religion thus is superior to natural religion. Yet all thinkers in the natural tradition would deem humans’ natural abilities and religious sensibility as the basis for revealed religion. Because revelation cannot be made without nature as its foundation, natural religion is superior to revealed religion. Thinkers like Tom Paine (1737–1809) go on to proclaim that humans have no need for revelation, as they are already endowed with the essence of religion, which is “the best of the religions” (ibid.: 11, 10-12).

In the context of China, it is sometimes assumed that the diction of religion

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3 McCutcheon (2004: 173) describes Wilfred Smith’s study of religion as “normative”, by contrast to Jonathan Z. Smith’s as “socio-rhetorical”.
came into the Chinese-speaking world at the end of the nineteenth century. As Mayfair Mei-Hui Yang (2008: 11-12) suggests, Liang Qichao 梁啟超 (1873–1929), who sought to reform the Qing imperial system into a constitutional government, introduced two terms zongjiao 宗教 and mixin 迷信 to China, based on his Western and Japanese education. Here, zongjiao (translated from the modern Japanese term shukyo) referred to the concept of religion (ibid.: 11), while mixin (translated from the modern Japanese term meishin) referred to superstition or “misguided belief” (ibid.: 12). Liang views zongjiao (religion) as a legitimate expression of human belief in moral truth, contrary to mixin (illegitimate superstition).

Although Liang affirms jiao 教 (as in zongjiao) while downplaying xin 信 (as in mixin), we should remember that jiao and xin have broad implications for the intersections of ethics, knowledge and religion in Chinese history before Liang. Traditionally jiao entails the idea of learning based on rationality, whereas xin invokes moral confidence based on emotions. Jiao and xin have different connotations but are often related, as zongjiao (belief in moral truth) involves both rational learning and emotional confidence.4

According to Tim H. Barrett and Francesca Tarocco (2012), the collocation zongjiao in East Asia has a much longer history beyond nineteenth-century Christian intervention. In Japan, Tominaga Nakamoto (1715–1746) already used zongjiao to refer to “main line or principle of doctrine” and “teaching” when discussing the scope of doctrines that historically rivalled Buddhism (ibid.: 310, 309-310). In Chinese Buddhist history, Fazang 法藏 (642–712) used zongjiao and jiaozong 教

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4 For example, xinxin 信心 (confidence; faith), xinyang 信仰 (belief) and xinnian 信念 (faith; conviction) in modern Chinese are positive terms. Xinxin is often expressed as one’s faith in oneself or in others, xinyang is often used to indicate one’s belief in a thought system, while xinnian can be used in both cases. In addition, xinjiao 信教 means ‘to believe in a teaching or religion’.
宗 for referring to the varied strands of Buddhist doctrines, while Zongmi 宗密 (780–841) employed these terms in his focus on the Zen tradition (ibid.: 310-312). Zongmi’s usage seems to have initiated a consistent appearance of zongjiao and jiaozong. Later on, Wei Yuan 魏源 (1764–1856) used these terms to recount those Buddhist clerical activities, in order to trace the professionalisation of a Buddhist intellectual tradition (ibid.: 314-15). Here, too, we should be aware of the rich historical meanings of jiao and xin in China beyond the Chinese reception of Buddhism. While Liang Qichao’s treatment of zongjiao also stemmed from his sympathy for Buddhism (ibid.: 317), zongjiao (belief in moral truth) in Chinese history has not been restricted in Buddhist or Christian definitions. In brief, it is important to look at the multiple traditions and developments in the history of East Asian religious terminologies, a history which has embodied quest and creation.

How to discover and interpret ‘religion’ in line with China’s enduring past, then, has concerned many scholars. As Robert Ford Campany (2012) notes, while looking on the conceptual issues in studying the Chinese traditions, we can rethink religion by exploring Chinese antiquity, instead of taking Christianity as the model. Meanwhile, we may look for religious ideas and practices in ancient China which are analogous to those in the West. For Anthony C. Yu (2005: 15), religion or zongjiao has long been part of China’s history and “has received discursive embodiment in Chinese religious texts for centuries”. The principal meaning of zong 宗 lies in ancestor, the ancestral lineage, root, origin and basis (ibid.: 9-10). The word jiao 教 in ancient Chinese texts indicates both the signs of Heaven and the teachings of one’s superior, which underwrites a combined form of natural revelation and an authorised state’s role in governing its people (ibid.: 15-18). While Ruism has been revered as

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5 In modern Chinese, zongjiao refers to religion in general, while jiaozong or jiaohuang 教皇 (literally the emperor of teaching) usually refers to the pope.

6 Wei was a Qing scholar influenced by Ruism, Buddhism and European religious thought.
orthodoxy since the Han dynasty, Daoism and Buddhism have also gradually gained their positions in Chinese society, contributing to the phenomenon of sanjiao 三教 (“three teachings” or “three religions”) (ibid.: 8, 18-19). The ‘Annals of Zhou’ (周本紀) in the Beishi《北史》(Histories of the Northern Dynasties) (643–659/2003)\(^7\) says: “In the twelfth month of the guisi year, the officers and the shramana monks gathered before the emperor, who rose to the high seat. They discussed the order of the three teachings. Ruism came first, Daoism second, and Buddhism last” (“十二月癸巳, 集群官及沙門道士等，帝升高座，辨釋三教先後。以儒教為先，道教次之，佛教為後”). This passage indicates the historical context of the Chinese recognition of Ruism, Daoism and Buddhism. In pre-Song China, the three teachings appeared alongside one another, but during the Song dynasty the merging of them began to flourish.

The merging of three teachings in China has sometimes been referred to as ‘syncretism’, but such a reference is contentious, given the derogatory sense of the term when interpreted within the Christian tradition. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (2013),\(^8\) ‘syncretism’ refers specifically to “the system or principles of a school” founded by George Calixtus (1586–1656), who attempted to harmonise the discrepancies in Christianity; it thus means “[a]ttempted union or reconciliation of diverse or opposite tenets or practices, [especially] in philosophy or religion”. Yet this interpretation is almost always shadowed by its derogatory connotation. Hendrik Kraemer (1938/2004) uses syncretism to discuss the nature of both Christianity and other religions, including the case of China. Nevertheless, as Robert D. Baird (1991/2004) warns, the use of the term has been filled with unfavourable confusion, and even Kraemer himself would likely deem it as not being the best description.

\(^7\) The *Beishi* was a work by Li Dashi 李大師 (570–628) and his son Li Yanshou 李延壽.

\(^8\) All my subsequent references to the *OED* in the thesis are drawn from the modern *OED Online* (www.oed.com).
While Baird contends that we should reject it, other scholars seek to understand it in a different light. Michael Pye (1971/2004) argues that the fear of using syncretism in the study of religion also results from the fact that most researchers have been strongly influenced by Christianity. If we consider syncretism from a theological base, which stresses its “real roots”, then it appears pejorative. However, if we approach it from the aspect of phenomenology, which emphasises its “dynamics”, this term conveys a new sense to us (ibid.: 59). Phenomenologically, syncretism is characteristic of ambiguity because, in its constant transformation, it assimilates diverse elements, forms a new religion and dissolves various meanings (ibid.: 65-66). A syncretistic situation is intrinsically temporal, yet it has a coherent religious pattern by its “collection of events in the history of religion” (ibid.: 67, 66-67).

It remains debatable as to whether or not syncretism is applicable to analysing the merging of traditions such as Ruism, Daoism and Buddhism. Yet Pye’s definition enables us to view syncretism as a phenomenon existing in Chinese history. Chinese people have often deemed ‘teaching’ and ‘religion’ as interconnected. This can be observed in the traditional Chinese reverence for Tian Di Jun Qin Shi (Heaven, Earth, Monarch, Parent and Teacher).9 One of the early references to Tian Di Jun Qin Shi can be found in the ‘Treatise on Ritual’ (禮論) of the Xunzi《荀子》:10 “Li 禮 [ritual, which Legge interprets as “the rules of propriety”] has three roots: Heaven and Earth is/are the root of creation, ancestry the root of humankind, and ruler and teacher the root of governance” (禮有三本: 天地者, 生之本也; 先祖者, 類之本也; 君師者, 治之本也). The Qing scholar Liao Yan 廖燕 (1644–1705) perceives Tian Di Jun Qin Shi as the five great elements of the universe (Yu 2010: 9).

9 The five roles are sometimes referred to as Wu En Zhu 五恩主 (the Five Benevolent Masters).
10 The Xunzi is a compilation of the discussions by Xunzi 荀子 (ca. 312–230 BCE) and his disciples. Being an important Ruist thinker after Kongzi, Xunzi holds a different view on human nature from his contemporary Mengzi. Mengzi affirms human nature as originally good, while Xunzi holds that human nature contains the problem of evil, which needs to be curbed through education.
As Yu Ying-shih (2010: 131-35) notes, *Tian Di Jun Qin Shi* presents a significant value system throughout Chinese history, at once maintained by the Ruist scholars as the fundamental principle while being enacted as a ritual in the Chinese folk tradition, which also incorporates Daoist and Buddhist practices. Here, *Tian Di Jun Qin Shi* is manifest as a religious pattern grounded in the combined instruction of nature and humanity, denoting the diverse ways in which one learns from such teaching.

In China’s interaction with the West, the Ming-Qing literati, the Jesuits and the Protestant missionaries all played important parts in rediscovering and shaping the meaning of religion through the exchange between Ruist learning and Western theological and scientific knowledge (Mungello 1985; Elman 2005). The notions *Tian* 天 (Heaven), *Di* 帝 and *Shangdi* 上帝 (both referring to God or the Supreme Ruler), and Kongzi’s teaching on them, are fundamental to the Sino-Jesuit and Sino-Protestant dialogues. *Tian*, *Di* and *Shangdi* exist in many pre-Qin (pre-221 BCE) texts and have endured a long history of interpretation in China (see the fourth chapter). Both the Jesuits and Legge regard these terms as the proof of God in Chinese, mediated and transmitted through Kongzi.

For the Jesuits, Ruism (Confucianism) promises a universal natural religion in light of its ancient theology. The Jesuits envisage Kongzi as the “reassuring order”, using his image for relating Ruism to Christianity against the threat from an otherwise heathen Ruism corrupted by Daoist and Buddhist idolatry. Kongzi’s image here transcends the polytheism in China, as well as the religious conflicts and vexed ideologies in Europe that inflect the Jesuit language (Mungello 1985: 136; Porter: 89). While Legge echoes the Jesuit view on Ruism as Chinese orthodoxy, he approaches Kongzi’s religiousness by highlighting direct reference to the *Lunyu* and its relation to the Bible. Yet the Jesuits and Legge also accommodate Daoism and
Buddhism in their discussions. The three teachings in China appear in the works by Ricci, Athanasius Kircher (1601 or 1602–1680) and Charles Le Gobien (1653–1708), and in the *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* (1687) (Mungello 1985). In his *Religions of China*, Legge (1880a) discusses Ruism, Daoism and Christianity as the three religions. But later on Legge (1892; 1893f) also engages with the Chinese Buddhist tradition, showing his awareness of Ruism, Daoism and Buddhism as the “three religions/doctrines” of China. Clearly, the Jesuits and Legge are searching for the possibility of universal truth by embodying Christian thought with nuanced Chinese traditions.

Throughout the above discussion, we are aware that religion remains a highly contentious topic in the West and China. For Legge, the notions of natural religion and revelation were relevant to the Western and Chinese intellectual traditions. In studying Ruism as a Chinese religion in relation to Christianity, Legge attempted to preserve and reconcile religion with the idea current in nineteenth-century Europe that science was the savior of mankind and source of European strength. Legge’s China project has witnessed his active participation in the nineteenth-century Western academic debate on the world’s religions, as Legge believes that religion is fundamental to human life and civilisations in a secularising world.

### 2.3 Legge, Ruism and the search for cross-cultural religion

Connecting Protestantism to Ruism was Legge’s main concern throughout his life. For Legge, this would be a continued exploration which sparks new movements in the shaping of a cross-cultural human religion. From his early contact with China to his sinological professorship at Oxford, Legge was always convinced that he was dealing with a culture which has preserved the knowledge of God since antiquity,
with a people who have carried God’s instructions in their consciousness. As I will show, Legge’s faith in universal humanity and a relative God enables him to look for divine knowledge in Ruist literature, and such knowledge certifies his belief in Ruism as a monotheistic system rooted in Chinese antiquity. Faith, knowledge and belief are correlated in the way Legge inquires into and understands the religious roots of Ruism. Further, we will see how understanding Ruism and having dialogue with Kongzi becomes Legge’s new religious quest for the foundation of human religiousness across China and the West.

2.3.1 Legge’s writings on the religion of China: a journey into ancient Chinese consciousness of God

Legge’s work is contemporary with us, insofar as the nature, history and study of religion and zongjiao continue to be debated amongst different theoreticians. As a missionary-translator, Legge seeks to communicate the Bible to the Chinese and to reveal the Ruist terminologies regarding Heaven and God to his Western audience. Unlike many of his Christian contemporaries, Legge believes that a supreme God has existed in the Chinese consciousness since earliest times, and this God could be traced and found through an appreciation of Tian (Heaven), Di and Shangdi (both referring to God or the Supreme Ruler) in ancient Ruist literature. While Legge holds that Chinese people would benefit from biblical revelation, he maintains that Western missionaries should recognise God in Chinese terms and deepen their understanding of China. Inheriting the Jesuit model of accommodation and acculturation, Legge also aims to connect the Bible directly to Ruist texts based on his Congregational stance. In this section, I outline Legge’s distinctive cross-cultural approach to ancient

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11 As Wilfred Smith (1979: 1, 8, 12) notes, faith is “a characteristic quality or potentiality of human life” and something “deeper, richer, more personal” (“personal” not necessarily as individual but more as being human in contrast to “impersonal”), whereas belief is “the holding of certain ideas”. Faith and belief are different but can be related in many ways (ibid.: 1-19).
In his early contact with Ruism, Legge already demonstrated his belief in a God known to both Christians and ancient Chinese. As Legge argues in *The Notions of the Chinese concerning God and Spirits* (1852), God is not a “generic absolute appellative” term, but is “relative”; rather than merely an abstract idea, God is a Being who creates relations through His existence. Legge draws on James McCosh’s (1811–1894) theory, defining God in four dimensions. First, God is “the evidence of design in His separate material works”, appearing “out of nature” and is nature’s author and upholder; second, God exists in “the relations which the physical world bears to man”, namely in “the providential arrangements of the Divine government”; third, God is communicated through “the human soul” with this soul’s consciousness, intelligence and benign feelings; and fourth, God is relevant to “the moral qualities of man” (Legge 1852: 97, 100, 105, 107, 97-109). For Legge, all four dimensions are well attested in classical Chinese literature, which inscribes a natural theology. Legge regards *Shangdi* (the Supreme Ruler, transliterated by Legge as Shang-Te) in multiple ancient Ruist sources as the presence of God in Chinese. Here, *Shangdi*, the ultimate creator and governor, signifies the highest order of divinity in Legge’s vision of Ruism as an ancient monotheistic religion.

In his *Notions*, Legge does not speak of Chinese syncretism, nor of Daoism and Buddhism. Yet he does discuss the phenomenon of multi-spirit worship in China. Similar to the Jesuits, Legge reveres China’s antiquity as the root of Chinese monotheism, yet instead of relying on the Jesuit interpretation, Legge rereads the Chinese classical tradition in conjunction with Protestant theology, often paralleling *Shangdi* in the Chinese texts with the New Testament and related theological

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12 McCosh was a Scottish common sense philosopher inheriting the tradition of Thomas Reid (1710–1796) (see 5.2).
discussions. In Legge’s (ibid.: 58-59) view, China since earliest times has embodied the idea of natural religion in relation to the divine; the Chinese have been endowed with the knowledge of God, which explains why China could live through four thousand years as a populated empire with its “moral and intellectual force”.

Whereas Legge charges Chinese people’s excessive worship of spirits and ancestors as superstitious, he appreciates the ethics of the five bonds in Ruist teaching, deeming it as relevant to Western virtues (ibid.: 53, 108-109).

In his *Religions of China* (1880a), Legge develops a different idea about the three religions by comparing Ruism and Daoism to Christianity. In discussing the interplay between these three religions, Legge still pays more attention to the harmony between Christianity and Ruism, but he also accounts for the influence of Daoist principles, although his overall attitude towards Daoism remains somewhat contemptuous. Once again, Legge (ibid.: 244-48) emphasises the existence of God in Chinese antiquity, the possibility and the fact of revelation, and the supernatural intrusion. Nonetheless, for Legge (ibid.: 284-85), Ruist texts lack “organic unity” and “internal cohesion”, as they seem to be the products by different authors; on the other hand, Legge insists that the Old and the New Testaments are characteristic of unity and cohesion because Jesus Christ is thoroughly present in them. At this point, Legge holds that China’s natural religion seems insufficient if it merely relies on Ruist texts without seeking the guide from biblical revelation.

However, it would be misleading to assume that Legge sees China as completely lacking theistic revelation. In his writings, Legge often engages with the

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13 Legge also remarks here that the *Duodejing* 《道德經》, traditionally attributed to Laozi 老子 (ca. 600 – ca. 400 BCE), cannot be deemed as a source of revelation.

14 Here Legge based his view on his belief in God as the author of the Bible and in the unity of biblical theme (Christ’s presence). In fact, the debate over the method and history of biblical documentation already emerged in eighteenth-century Europe and thrived during Legge’s time. See Strenski (2006: 33-60) on the historical criticism (higher criticism) of the Bible. Robert Carroll and Stephen Prickett (2007: xi-xlvi) have noted the multi-authorship and intertextuality of the Bible, conditioned in the history of its formation, translation and reception.
meanings of *Tian* and *Shangdi* as well as the religious sacrifice in ancient China. Legge knows well the debate between seekers (who believe that monotheism is before polytheism) and skeptics (who argue that polytheism appears first and evolves into monotheism) in the Western tradition (see Strenski 2006), yet Legge’s primary task is to evoke God from within Chinese antiquity, as he believes that God, a divine presence in the Bible, has also been present in the Chinese mind. Legge (1852: 113) asks: “Be it that monotheism preceded polytheism, or let it be argued that polytheism in some cases preceded monotheism, how shall I communicate the truth which is deposited in the Bible to the Chinese?” This question reflects Legge’s concern about the significance of Sino-Christian communication, and the necessity for Western missionaries to seek the knowledge of God in Chinese culture, wherein they will “find among the Chinese that consciousness of God” (ibid.: iii-iv). For Legge, there is one God expressed through many names, of which the Chinese *Shangdi* is one. Resonant with the Jesuits, Legge is tracing a purer form of Ruism in ancient Chinese religiousness.

Through working on his *Chinese Classics*, Legge views Ruism as a crucial site for addressing the issues of God. In his ‘Confucianism in relation to Christianity’, Legge (1877a: 3) mentions three principles: “what the [Confucian] books contain about God and other objects of religious worship”, “what they contain about man and his nature, and about a future state”, and “what they contain about the moral and social duties of man”. Whereas these principles still point to Legge’s “very Protestant focus on textual, conceptual, and ethical issues” (Girardot 2002: 221), they reveal Legge’s desire to delve deeper into Ruist texts for divine revelation. As far as Legge’s specific Sino-Christian vision is concerned, Ruist texts provide Legge with the important basis on which to consider a broader possibility about human religion.

For Legge, however, Ruism can be an ongoing mystery. As a translator, Legge
(1877a: 2) admits that it remains difficult for him to completely grasp the meanings of classics such as the *Yijing* 《易經》 *Book of Changes*, as well as the commentaries on it by the Song scholars. While sometimes asserting that Ruist texts provide little revealed knowledge if compared to the Bible, Legge is cautious about connecting Ruism to the notions of nature and revelation (1877a: 3; 1880a). In defining Ruism, he writes: “We are not to look for truth on questions of natural and physical science in the Confucian books. I do not presume to find such even in our Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments” (1877a: 2-3). Faced with the enigma of *yi* 易 (change), Legge constantly attempts to approach Ruism from his communicative perspective about divine truth, which he believes is existent in the ancient Chinese classics. In his ‘Preface’ to the first volume of *The Sacred Books of China* (1879: xv), Legge says that “while the old Chinese books do not profess to contain any divine revelation, the references in them to religious views and practices are numerous”. Insofar as Legge insists on reading Ruism by means of Protestant theology, Ruism at the same time stimulates him to develop a novel approach to the religion of China beyond the dualism of nature and revelation, and Legge encourages his reader “to fashion for himself an outline of the early religion of the [Chinese]” from the references in Ruist texts (ibid: xv).

Although Ruism at times appears to be mysterious and different from the biblical tradition, Legge (1877a: 7-10) believes that the teaching of Kongzi and Mengzi is harmonious with Christianity rather than being antagonistic to it. Legge (ibid.: 12) writes:

Let no one think any labour too great to make himself familiar with the Confucian books. So shall missionaries in China come fully to understand the

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15 Broadly, however, Legge is concerned with the linkage between religion and science (see 5.1.1.2).
16 This work is installed as the third volume of Müller’s *Sacred Books of the East*. 
work they have to do; and the more they avoid driving their carriages rudely over the Master’s grave, the more likely are they soon to see Jesus enthroned in his room in the hearts of the people.

By sympathetically relating Kongzi to Jesus Christ, Legge shows that we can better understand the nature and meaning of human religion through constant search, study and comparison between Ruism and Christianity.

There were multiple stages of transformation in Legge’s lifelong study of the Chinese religion. Earlier Legge (1852; 1877a) mainly focused on the relation between Ruism and Christianity, but later on Legge (1880a; 1892; and 1893f) also engaged with Daoism and Buddhism. Insofar as Legge maintained his belief in Ruism as a monotheistic religion, he also grew more open towards the evolving aspects of the Chinese traditions. What Legge seeks is the ultimate religious oneness, which he believes emerged in China’s early history and is the key to uniting Protestantism and Chinese religiousness. Legge’s emphasis on Sino-Protestant communication shows his attempt to reconcile Christian theology with Chinese antiquity, natural philosophy and historical change based on his vision of religion as cross-cultural.

2.3.2 The ‘science of religion’, Max Müller, and Legge’s coeval translation

While Legge’s *Chinese Classics* participates in the intersected Western and Chinese religious and literary histories, it should also be understood in the specific context of the ‘science of religion’ that emerged in the nineteenth century, promoted by Legge’s colleague Max Müller. Both Müller and Legge were keen on building dialogues between Protestantism and the East via translation: Müller focused on India and Legge on China. Müller was skeptical about the religiousness of Ruist texts, yet Legge remained committed to Ruist–Christian communicability through his method
of coeval translation.

The ‘science of religion’ derived from the debate concerning different religions of the world, as well as the comparativist methodology of translation employed by Müller, Legge and their contemporaries. The debate often highlighted the extent to which Asian religions encouraged the progress of Protestantism and Christianity. Based on Müller’s scope, Ruism/Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism (ancient Indian, Chinese and Tibetan) became part of the debate over the origins of world religions, alongside Protestantism, Roman Catholicism, Judaism, Hinduism and Islam (Lopez, Jr. 1998; Girardot 2010). Brian Houghton Hodgson’s (1800–1894) Sanskrit and Tibetan studies stimulated Müller and his contemporaries to delve into Aryan-Indian scriptures, ancient Chinese classics and other exegetical traditions so as to represent different systems of religion (Lopez, Jr. 1995: 2-5). Müller sought to order and classify all the major non-Christian religions in his Sacred Books of the East (1879–1910). In the compilation and reception of The Sacred Books, Müller and his peers realised that Christianity was merely one of the many religious systems of the world (Plumptre 1868; Girardot 2010: 44).

Müller (1873) grounded the ‘science of religion’ in what he called the ‘science of language’, which he delineated as philological research of and comparison between varied human languages. Accordingly, Müller (ibid.: 34-35) defined the ‘science of religion’ as “an impartial and truly scientific comparison” of human religions from antiquity. The use of comparative philology as a method for understanding foreign cultures and scripts has run deep in European history. European sinology, beginning from the early Jesuits and other thinkers like Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716), also took root in philological studies; these thinkers discussed Chinese words and meanings in order to forge their concepts, ideas and truth claims on Chinese culture (Mungello 1985; Perkins 2004). Müller’s ‘science of
language’ thus inherited and reinvented the European philological tradition. In relation to Müller’s method, Legge adopted ancient Chinese philological scholarship in his interpretation of important Ruist notions and terms like Tian, Di and Shangdi (see the third and the fourth chapters).

Müller (1873: 17, 16-18) perceived religion from two dimensions, one of which concerned traditions such as Judaism, Christianity and Hinduism, and the other of which concerned the “faculty of faith in man”, namely human ability “to apprehend the Infinite under different names, and under varying disguises”. Müller (ibid.: 38) also remarked that “Christianity enjoyed no privileges and claimed no immunities” when confronted with other religions in the world. As Strenski (2006: 64, 63-68) notes, Müller was not Eurocentric, but was an enthusiastic traveller between the novelty of the ‘science of religion’ and the tradition of natural religion; he “looked on all the world’s religious texts as equally sacred”. Using the method of comparative philology, Müller aimed to establish a substantial rationale in which to include Eastern and Western scriptural revelations. If Hume doubted the early-modern naturalists’ deistic belief for lacking evidence in support of their religion, then Müller attempted to prove that natural religion was the common ground of humanity through its rich histories experienced in different parts of the world. Müller deemed the nature worship of Vedic India as the origins of the European soul which led to the highest truth, and he regarded the ancient Aryan-Indian language as the foundation of the European language (ibid: 72-82).

In this reading, it is not surprising that Müller included some of Legge’s translations of Ruist and Daoist texts in *The Sacred Books*,¹⁷ although overall *The

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¹⁷ Legge’s translations of Ruist texts included in Müller’s series are the Shangshu, the religious portions of the Shijing, the Xiaojing, the Yijing and the Liji; those of Daoist texts are the Daodejing, the writings by Zhuangzi 莊子 (369–286 BCE), the Taishang ganying pian《太上感應篇》(the Thái-shang Tractate of Actions and Their Retributions), and other Daoist texts.
Sacred Books reflects Müller’s preference for ancient Indian scriptures, and the Chinese texts installed in this series were defined as religion-related. The Sacred Books excluded Legge’s Lunyu and Mengzi, in part owing to Müller’s skepticism towards Kongzi’s religiousness, even if Müller found Kongzi’s silence on supernatural subjects “remarkable in its own right” (Girardot 2002: 139, 138-39). For Müller, there is a distinction between sacred books and classics: a scripture denotes religious sacredness, whereas a classic is secular and unreligious (ibid.: 644-45).

“Neither Greeks, nor Romans, nor Germans, nor Celts, nor Slaves [sic] have left us anything that deserves the name of Sacred Books”, writes Müller (1879: xl). Yet Müller’s criterion of sacredness is quite ambivalent (Girardot 2002: 253, 645).

Müller (1897: xlv) states that his series will contain the Lunyu and the Mengzi, as Kongzi’s sayings are “of a religious nature, and refer to the principles of his moral system”, while Mengzi’s doctrines are about “the Goodness of Human Nature”. Such a plan was based on Legge’s advice that The Sacred Books should include all of the Five Classics and the Four Books from China (Girardot 2002: 260-61). However, as it turned out, neither the Lunyu nor the Mengzi was present in The Sacred Books. For Müller and many Western scholars after him, Ruism has posed a challenge to the boundary between scripture and classic in the Western tradition (ibid.: 645).

Despite Müller’s doubts about Ruism, Legge maintained his faith in developing a connection between China and Christianity through translation. On the one hand, the mutual influence between Legge and Müller urged Legge to adopt a comparativist strategy for interpreting Ruism in conjunction with Protestant theology. On the other hand, Legge established his independent sinological focus on the natural history and theistic potency of Ruism. Inspired by his experience in China and his shoeless pilgrimage to the Temple of Heaven in Beijing, Legge (1880a: 251) writes:

“It is indeed a wonderful fact to think of, that a worship of the one God has been
maintained in the vicinity of their capitals by the sovereigns of China almost continuously for more than four thousand years”. Legge’s profound feeling for a monotheistic religion that is preserved through Chinese history echoes his sympathetic interpretation of the Chinese terms for God in his other writings.

Translation was the means by which scholars in the discipline of the ‘science of religion’ fostered their respective criticism of the world’s scriptures and classics. Both Legge and Müller were translators using comparative philological methods. Müller translated by himself and also co-translated with others some of the old Sanskrit texts in his Sacred Books; he describes translation as “a difficult art” which entails great linguistic knowledge and scholarly attention (Girardot 2002: 235). Significantly, whereas Müller’s Sacred Books only shows the target language, Legge’s Chinese Classics presents both Chinese and English in the form of coeval translation.¹⁸ Legge (1880a: 69) writes: “We found that a belief in one supreme and only God was coeval with the fathers and founders of [China], and was testified by the primitive written characters”. In this context, it can be said that Müller’s series appears more authoritarian in its monolingual layout. By contrast, Legge’s editions express the dialogic, intertextual relationship between the original and the translation, as well as the coeval connection between Ruism and Christianity.¹⁹

Legge’s translatorial strategy is informed by Müller’s comparative philology. In his ‘Comparative Mythology’ (1909: 32-33), Müller traces the root of the word daughter (duhitar) and finds it to be “duh” in Sanskrit, which means “to milk”; he

¹⁸ According to Eugene Chen Eoyang (1993: 145, 192-96), there are “surrogate translation”, “contingent translation” and “coeval translation”. Surrogate translation represents the text only in the target language. Contingent translation is marked by transliterations, bracketed explanations and extensive footnotes on the original, as the original is assumed as the condition by which the translation works. Coeval translation concerns the connection between the target and source texts, as in a bilingual edition. For Eoyang (ibid.: 194-95), coeval translation conveys the ideal scene where languages and cultures coexist harmonically and pluralistically while retaining their respective characteristics.

¹⁹ Müller’s approach might also result from the technical difficulties of printing different languages in his series. See 1.3.1 on the issues of printing bilingual texts in Legge’s context.
then compares “duh” to the Latin “dūco”, suggesting that “the name of milkmaid, given to the daughter of the house, opens before our eyes a little idyll of the poetical and pastoral life of the early Aryans”. By citing this example from Müller, Legge (1880a: 6-7) notes that he also adopts such a strategy by tracing the roots (the “pictures and ideograms [sic]”) of ancient Chinese characters while comparing them to other languages. In Legge’s interpretation, for example, the character for Heaven, 天 (Tian), combines 一 (“one” or “unity”) and 大 (“great”) and thus shows the notion of “the ruling Power, whose providence embraces all” (ibid.: 8-9). In addition to consulting Müller’s comparative method, Legge also inherits and furthers Marshman’s ‘scientific observation’ of China via plain translation and bilingual representation. Legge absorbed Müller’s and Marshman’s influences and developed his own method by demonstrating the original, the translation and the multi-linguistic footnotes.

The coeval arrangement in Legge’s Chinese Classics enables Ruism and Protestantism to be manifest in explicit dialogism and intertextuality on both textual and religious levels. Combining Müller’s vision of the ‘science of religion’ with a specific focus on the Ruist tradition, Legge’s work anticipates more critical discussions on the religious nature of Ruism in our modern period.

2.4 Legge, Kongzi and the religiousness of the Lunyu

The presence of Kongzi is crucial to Legge’s Lunyu and his entire series of The Chinese Classics. The image and thought of Kongzi often serves as the fulcrum of Legge’s assessment of the Chinese religion and culture, and for Legge, Kongzi’s

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20 It seems that Müller drafted his ‘Comparative Mythology’ long before its formal publication in 1909, as Legge mentioned it in his Religions of China (1880a).
21 See Wolfgang Behr (2005) for a discussion on the tradition of Chinese philological and phonetic debates. See also 3.2.2.
character is most clearly and directly depicted in the *Lunyu*. As a revisionist missionary-translator, Legge’s view of Kongzi is transformative. Although Legge at times is critical of Kongzi for being somewhat obscure on the issues concerning God, soul, and the afterlife, Legge insists that Kongzi should be regarded as a religious teacher, and Legge’s revised 1893 edition demonstrates his deepened respect for the Master.

As discussed earlier, the Jesuits use Kongzi’s image for upholding their ideal of Ruism as a universal natural religion. For Legge, his task is to develop a more direct connection with Kongzi, somewhat differentiated from the Jesuit approach, although Legge inherits the Jesuit tradition by using Confucius as his vehicle of addressing Kongzi, and by deeming Ruism as compatible with Christianity (Girardot 2002: 70). As far as Kongzi’s image is concerned, one distinctive feature of Legge’s work is his heavy reliance upon the *Lunyu*. Legge sees the *Lunyu* as shaped by dialogism, describing it as a text of “Discourses and Dialogues” under his innovatively translated title *Confucian Analects.*

Viewed from Bakhtin’s dialogism, we can say that Legge builds his connection with Kongzi upon his intellectual dialogue with a wide range of relevant thinkers and sources, which is manifest in the heteroglossic environment of his *Lunyu*. In the chapter ‘Confucius and His Immediate Disciples’, Legge writes at length on the life of Kongzi, and his influence and opinions, together with an introduction on eighty-six of his immediate disciples, including the famous ones such as Yan Yuan 顏淵, Min Ziqian 閔子騫, Zigong 子貢 and Zengzi. Legge uses numerous Chinese sources to support his writing, often looking at the *Mengzi*, the *Kongzi Jiayu*《孔子家語} (*Family Sayings of Kongzi*), and the accounts of Kongzi by Sima Qian and the Qing scholar Jiang Yong 江永 (1681–1762). He also draws from the Jesuit material

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22 I will return to this point in 3.1.2.
and the comments by Robert Morrison, John Francis Davis and others. Nevertheless, Legge cites most frequently his translation of the *Lunyu*, seeing it as the principal source for his comprehension of Kongzi’s character, thought and image. The *Lunyu* to Legge not only records Kongzi’s discussions with his disciples, but also contains many useful biographical details about the Master. With reference to the *Lunyu*, Legge (1861: prol. 88; 1893: 88) has the confidence to claim that his paragraphs “contain a more correct narrative of the principal incidents in the life of Confucius than has yet been given in any European language”. Legge aspires to master his Chinese learning through approaching Kongzi and other Chinese thinkers while establishing his own authorial position in the history of sinology.

For Legge, Kongzi is a filial son, a grave father, a follower of the ritual and an enthusiastic learner and educator; he strives to carry out his moral and political ideal in a disordered world, yet he is also a man with doubts. In order to overcome his doubts, Kongzi values learning and education. Here is one renowned autobiographical statement from Kongzi, followed by Legge’s translation:

吾十有五而志於學。三十而立。四十而不惑。五十而知天命。六十而耳順。七十而從心所欲，不踰矩。*(II, 4)*

At fifteen, I had my mind bent on learning. At thirty, I stood firm. At forty, I had no doubts. At fifty, I knew the decrees of heaven/Heaven. At sixty, my ear was an obedient organ for the reception of truth. At seventy, I could follow what my heart desired, without transgressing what was right. (1861: 10-11; 1893: 146-47)*

Here, *Tianming 天命* can also be translated as ‘mandate of Heaven’, ‘destiny’ or

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23 There are occasional differences in the chapter division between the Chinese text in Legge’s editions and that of the modern editions. My citation of the original in the thesis is based on Legge’s editions.
24 Legge at times italicises a particular word or phrase in his translation. In my thesis, unless otherwise noted, all italicisation that appears in his translation is Legge’s.
‘fate’, but Legge renders Tianming into “the decrees of heaven/Heaven”, explaining it as “the things decreed by Heaven, the constitution of things making what was proper to be so”. Legge here blends Zhu Xi’s (1182/1983: 54) gloss “天道之流行而賦於物者，乃事物所以當然之故也” (literally “Heavenly Way’s prevalence and gift for things, is why things are what they properly are”) with his Protestant vision.

According to the OED (2014), “decree” has been used in ecclesiastical, theological or secular judicial senses, but “mandate” has mostly been used in secular legal or political senses. Thus Legge’s choice of “decree” also suggests his theological view of Tianming, as Legge perceives Kongzi’s notion of Tian (Heaven) as divine regulator of things (see the fourth chapter). Moreover, in translating “六十而耳順” (literally “sixty and the ear is compliant”), Legge adds “for the reception of truth”. Zheng Xuan notes that “耳順聞其言而知其微旨” (“the ear compliant is, upon hearing these words, to understand their minutious meaning”), while Wang Bi 王弼 (226–249) commentates that “耳順言心識在聞前也” (“the ear compliant says knowing in mind before hearing”) (quoted in He Yan: 19, 20). Legge notes: “The ear obedient’ is the mind receiving as by intuition the truth from the ear”. Legge’s addition thus shows his awareness of multiple Chinese glosses on 耳順 (the reception of truth as mindful knowledge and recognition), combined with his intuitive understanding. Altogether, in his dialogue with Kongzi, Legge draws inspiration from both the Chinese commentaries and Christian theology.

In the Lunyu, Kongzi regards learning as the pathway to truth and the main source of pleasure in his life. Kongzi remarks: “學而時習之，不亦說乎” (I, 1), which Legge (1861: 1; 1893: 137) translates into: “Is it not pleasant to learn with a constant perseverance and application?” Moreover, Kongzi views learning and thought as inseparable: “學而不思則罔，思而不學則殆” (II, 15), which Legge (1861: 14; 1893: 150) renders into: “Learning without thought is labour lost; thought
without learning is perilous”. For Legge, Kongzi’s emphasis on learning consolidates China as an enduring civilisation, and one of Kongzi’s most remarkable heritages for the Chinese is his indelible role in teaching and education. Legge translates Kongzi’s remark “以不教民戰，是謂棄之” (literally “To fight battles with unlearned min [commoners or people] that is what I call abandoning them”) into: “To lead an uninstructed people to war is to throw them away” (XIII, 30; Legge 1861: 139 and 1893: 275). Here Legge (1861: prol. 93; 1893: 92) comments: “When he [Kongzi] pronounced this judgment, he was not thinking of military training, but of education in the duties of life and citizenship. A people so taught, he thought, would be morally fitted to fight for their government”. Given Kongzi’s legacy, Legge (1861: prol. 93; 1893: 92, 93) observes that education has marked “the distinction of [the Chinese] empire” through history and “is widely diffused throughout China” during the Qing: all schools teach Kongzi, using the Ruist classics are the textbooks. Legge (1861: prol. 1; 1893: 1) also notes: “The authorship, or compilation rather, of [the Five Classics and the Four Books] is loosely attributed to Confucius”. From Legge’s perspective, Chinese people’s passion for education comes with their reverence for Kongzi.

Nonetheless, Legge is critical of Kongzi on certain theological and spiritual issues. In some passages of his ‘Prolegomena’, Legge (1861: prol. 98-102; 1893: 97-101) describes Kongzi as an unreligious man. Here Legge positions himself as both the interlocutor with and the contender against Kongzi, using his Protestant faith to test Kongzi’s thought. The Lunyu records: “子所雅言: 詩、書、執禮” (VII, 17),

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25 Following Mengzi and Zhu Xi in interpreting this case, Legge assumes that Kongzi here holds an ideal of universal education, open to everyone aspiring to learn. However, as Erica Brindley (2009) reminds us, China in Kongzi’s time remained a two-class society, i.e. aristocracy (including the shi 士 class which had then transformed from the warriors to educable men) versus commoners (min 民, such as farmers and artisans). In the Lunyu, Kongzi and his disciples often associate shi with junzi (“superior man”), which indicates that Kongzi expects moral leadership of shi while he sees min as conformists without expecting them to rise to the junzi rank (ibid.: 50, 57-60). Thus we can argue that Kongzi in this case is juxtaposing unlearned min with learned shi.
which Legge (1861: 64 and 1893: 200) translates into: “The Master’s frequent themes of discourse were – the Odes, the History, and the maintenance of the Rules of propriety/Propriety”. Yet Legge (1861: prol. 98-99; 1893: 97-98) laments Kongzi’s “ignorance” of physics, metaphysics and “the origin of man”.26 According to the Lunyu, “子以四教: 文、行、忠、信” (VII, 24), which Legge (1861: 66; 1893: 202) translates into: “There were four things which the Master taught, – [sic] letters, ethics, devotion of soul, and truthfulness”.27 However, “子不語: 怪、力、亂、神” (VII, 20), which Legge (1861: 65; 1893: 201) translates into: “The subjects on which the Master did not talk, were – extraordinary things, feats of strength, disorder, and spiritual beings”. For Legge (1861: prol. 98-99; 1893: 97-98), the above instances reveal the limitations of Kongzi’s jiao or teaching, which does not seem to move beyond humane cultivation and probe humankind’s relation with the natural world in light of providential arrangements.

What especially disturbs Legge is Kongzi’s indefinite attitude towards the notions of Heaven and God. For Legge (1861 and 1893: 95), Chinese high antiquity might have endowed Kongzi with “a divine commission as the conservator of ancient truth and rules”, yet Kongzi does not explore further this divinity. One example here is “子罕言利, 與命, 與仁” (IX, 1), which Legge (1861: 80; 1893: 216) translates into: “The subjects of which the Master seldom spoke were – profitableness, and also the appointments of Heaven, and perfect virtue”. Here, Kongzi’s ambivalence towards the themes of profit, Heaven and ren (perfect virtue) vexes Legge. For Legge (1861: prol. 96; 1893: 95), where Kongzi mentions Tian 天 (Heaven) (for

26 As Legge (ibid.) is critiquing the unreligious or unspiritual aspects of Kongzi, Legge perceives “the origin of man” as theological knowledge relating to cosmogony and to the view of God as the creator of humankind and things (see 4.1).
27 Wen 文 can also mean “culture” (see Bol 1992). Legge’s interpretation of wen as “letters” suggests his specific view on the literary elements (“the reading and study of written texts”) in Kongzi’s teaching (see “letter” in the OED [2014]). Xing 行 can also be translated as “behaviour”, but Legge’s translation “ethics” highlights Kongzi’s focus on the moral dimensions in one’s behaviour.
example, “獲罪於天，無所禱也” “He who offends against Heaven has none to whom he can pray” [III, 13], and “知我者其天乎” “There is heaven; – that knows me” [XIV, 37]), or where Kongzi speaks of Tianming 天命 (the “decrees of Heaven”; see II, 4 above), he does not explicate its purpose so as to “announce any new truths, or to initiate any new economy”. In the Lunyu, neither does Kongzi mention Shangdi, the Chinese equivalent of God according to Legge (1861: prol. 99-100; 1893: 98-99). In addition, Kongzi replies to one of his disciples Zilu 子路: “未知生，焉知死” (XI, 11), which Legge (1861: 104-105; 1893: 241) translates into: “While you do not know life, how can you know about death?” Here Legge feels that Kongzi is uninterested in “the continued existence of the dead” and the afterlife (Legge 1861: prol. 100; 1893: 99).

Given Kongzi’s sometimes obscure treatment of Heaven, God, the dead and the spirits in the Lunyu, Legge (1861: prol. 101; 1893: 100) charges Kongzi for not acknowledging his faith in the divine, only enforcing it “as a matter of form or ceremony”. Legge (1861: prol. 90; 1893: 89) also criticises Kongzi for “a want of freedom” because of Kongzi’s overemphasis on the ritual in his daily life. While the Jesuits portray Kongzi as the ideal bearer of a universal religion, for Legge certain aspects in Kongzi’s character and thought are unclear and even unfavourable. Nevertheless, although Legge disagrees with Kongzi on the ritual matters, he resists putting Kongzi in the category of formalism, the charge the Protestants have often laid against the Roman Catholics. In fact, Legge’s later writings show his growing appreciation of Kongzi’s religiousness. In his Religions of China, Legge (1880a) strongly proclaims that Kongzi should be regarded as a “religious teacher”, rather than a formalist detached from spirituality.

It would be fair to claim that Legge, as a revisionist translator of the Lunyu, does not see Kongzi as an alien ‘other’, but rather as an important companion and
interlocutor. If Chinese people in the nineteenth century, in Legge’s eyes, were ignorant of the external world with “the pride of antiquity” in their character, then it is the presence of Kongzi and his lineage that can be allowed to justify such pride (Legge 1861: prol. 56; 1893: 56). Earlier on, Legge (1861: prol. 90) disregards Kongzi as “less a sage”. Elsewhere he writes:

I hope I have not done him injustice; but after long study of his character and opinions, I am unable to regard him as a great man. He was not before his age, though he was above the mass of the officers and scholars of his time. He threw no new light on any of the questions which have a world-wide interest. He gave no impulse to religion. He had no sympathy with progress. His influence has been wonderful, but it will henceforth wane. My opinion is, that the faith of the nation in him will speedily and extensively pass away. (Legge 1861: prol. 113)

Later on, however, Legge deletes the entire sentence which contains his charge of Kongzi as “less a sage”. Moreover, he changes his above opinion and attitude completely:

I hope I have not done him injustice; the more I have studied his character and opinions, the more highly have I come to regard him. He was a very great man, and his influence has been on the whole a great benefit to the Chinese, while his teachings suggest important lessons to ourselves who profess to belong to the school of Christ. (Legge 1893: 111)

With reference to Legge’s writings on China as discussed earlier, the “important lessons” from Kongzi denote interreligious meanings that combine jiao (“teachings”) with Christian reflections (“to ourselves”). In this light, Kongzi’s image in Legge’s translation has undergone a dramatic transformation, from the unreligious and stagnant figure, to the venerable and promising one. In the later edition, Legge recuperates Kongzi’s prestige as the great educator imagined by the Chinese and the
Jesuits. Admitting that his regard for Kongzi grows as he studies the Master more, Legge tells us that his engagement with China is a journey of infinite learning, and that his dialogue with the Master remains.

**Conclusion**

The divinity of God is not limited to the Christian West. We learn this as we engage with Legge’s *Lunyu, Chinese Classics* and other writings, where Legge painstakingly searches for a new pathway for apprehending and revealing God through Kongzi’s teaching. In translating Kongzi and Ruism, Legge mitigates his rigorous Protestant precepts by adopting more than one observational or interpretive standpoint. At times he castigates the Chinese religious traditions, in particular Daoism and Chinese Buddhism, when interpreting them through the lens of Protestant theology. Yet he is also highly aware of the problem of Christian bigotry, and thus able to shift his grounds and discuss China’s religious tradition in accordance with Chinese history and reality (see Legge 1877b). In many of his unpublished letters and manuscripts, we discover that Legge not only wrote in both English and classical Chinese, but also had correspondence with many European and Qing intellectuals. Just as he maintains a dialogue with multiple critical voices in his bilingual editions, he appears strategic and flexible in dealing with religious issues between the West and China. For Legge, China borders on the natural/revealed boundary in the Western religious tradition, but it is precisely in this interconnected realm of Protestantism and Ruism that the meanings of the divine could be broadened and furthered.

Legge is at once the perceptive scholar and the creative artist, who raises fundamental questions about the role of religion in the interaction between two cultures. How can one communicate between two geographically distant lands? Can
the nature of Chinese antiquity coexist in harmony with the Christian School, despite their sometimes different characteristics? The answers remain unknown to many, but Legge shows us the possibility to engage with these questions via his lifelong commitment to translating Ruisim and Protestantism into each other. As far as the Lunyu is concerned, we are yet to understand Legge’s intellectual exchange with the diverse Chinese and European voices encompassed in his editions, as well as his sophisticated interpretation of important notions in Kongzi’s sayings. The theme of the next chapter, therefore, is to investigate Legge’s Lunyu in light of dialogism and intertextuality, and to analyse the relationship between humanity, Kongzi’s discussions and Christian thought in Legge’s translation.
CHAPTER 3

Translating Chinese Foreign Voices, Humanity and Universal Love through “Discourses and Dialogues”:
The Sino-Christian Dialogism and Intertextuality in Legge’s *Lunyu*

**Introduction**

Reading Legge’s translation of the *Lunyu* is a continued discovery of new meanings regarding humanity, God and numerous Chinese foreign voices. In Legge’s *Lunyu* the reception histories of the text in China and Europe, two cultures often regarded as foreign to each other, are combined. Recognising the Chinese faith in God from antiquity to the contemporary, Legge is convinced that Ruist ethics shares many similarities with Christian values. Legge makes diverse Chinese and European commentaries visible in his annotation, enriching his *Lunyu* through the presence of ‘others’ on linguistic, literary, philosophical and religious levels. Philologically, Legge uses his annotated translation to enhance his sinological profession. By consulting various commentaries, moreover, Legge is keen on developing and deepening his interreligious dialogue with Kongzi and the Ruist tradition.

As I have noted, Legge probed the nature of religious truth and the attributes of God through his cross-cultural approach to Ruist texts and the Bible. Identifying Kongzi as the sage and religious teacher of China, Legge sought to establish his position in the Ruist tradition via working on his *Chinese Classics*. On the other hand, the nineteenth century also saw Protestant thinkers strive to redefine theology and “affirm the humanity of Jesus”; instead of deeming Jesus Christ as simply a preordained biblical figure, Protestant thinkers relocated their study of Christ in new
debates concerning the legacy of Romanticism and the emergence of scientific discourses (Welch 1972: 4-5, 6). As a sinologist and Congregationalist, Legge views Kongzi and Christ as fundamentally similar in their character, and his Lunyu reconfigures humane and theological issues in the relation between Kongzi’s teaching and Christian thought.

This chapter is structured around three interrelated sections. In the first section I use Mikhail M. Bakhtin’s theory of dialogism to examine Legge’s Lunyu, which Legge defines as “Discourses and Dialogues”. I discuss how Legge embeds his innovatively translated title “Confucian Analects” in the larger dialogic contexture of the Chinese and European traditions, exploring the bilingual, heteroglossic aspects in his annotated editions. The second section analyses Legge’s interpretation of four principal notions in the Lunyu: ren 仁  (perfect virtue; benevolence), xiao 孝  (filial piety), zhong 忠  (faithfulness; sincerity) and li 礼  (propriety; ceremony). Using Julia Kristeva’s theory of intertextuality, I will show how Legge perceives these Ruist notions through his vision of human spirituality, a relative God and divine love. I also examine how Legge’s integral comprehension of Chinese and Western sources informs his interpretation of these notions. Finally, the third section looks at Legge’s revisions from his 1861 to his 1893 editions, discussing his transformative reflections on Kongzi’s teaching.

In sum, by means of ‘dialogism’ and ‘intertextuality’, I aim to divulge how Legge, in translating the text Lunyu, uses multiple Chinese and Western sources for relating himself to Kongzi and for connecting Protestantism to the Ruist tradition. While consulting the Chinese commentaries for philological explanations, Legge further attempts to reveal in the Lunyu an ideal of humanity and universal love based on his Sino-Christian vision.
3.1 Translating Chinese foreign voices through “Discourses and Dialogues”: dialogism and heteroglossia in Legge’s bilingual Lunyu

How should we read and reread Legge’s lifelong relationship with Chinese religious traditions, texts and history? When we open Legge’s bilingual Chinese Classics, we see the original characters and texts stand in parallel with Legge’s translation and annotation (see 1.3). Perhaps some scholars would say that such a representation seems to be an orientalist’s typical strategy in ‘appropriating’ or even ‘colonising’ the East in the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, I claim that the presence of the original in Legge’s work indicates Legge’s vision of China’s compatibility with the Western traditions. Systematically, Legge’s annotated editions demonstrate his engagement with the original, providing us with a critical basis for understanding Chinese in its classical form. As Anthony Grafton (1997: 5-33) observes, the footnote has performed multiple ideological and technical functions since the nineteenth century, as scholars have begun to consistently annotate their work so as to express their individual views and standards, validate their authorship, and enhance their communication with the readers’ needs and interests. Where the modern footnote proves the annotator’s professional role in a particular branch of human knowledge, it also serves as the (sometimes nostalgic) reminder of past intellectual traditions, while inciting further debates on the subject matter (ibid.: 14). On the other hand, we should remember Berman’s reflection on the supporting role of the annotation/commentary in a translation (see 1.2.3). Legge’s Lunyu bears witness to the formation of the sinological profession. Yet perhaps more importantly, it shows Legge’s conscious effort to bridge Chinese and Western cultures through his bilingual presentation, and to revive China’s classical tradition through his unprecedented inclusion of the Chinese commentaries. What motivates Legge to
accomplish his work is his religious sympathy for China. Using Bakhtin’s concept of
dialogism and heteroglossia, we are enabled to perceive Legge’s work as a special
Sino-Western embodiment of antiquity and modernity, whose depths and novelty are
enacted via Legge’s inspired interactions with his original sources.

In many of the examples discussed later, I provide my literal translation that
seeks to correspond to the word and syntax of the original while avoiding ‘translation
shifts’, i.e. “departures from formal correspondence in the process of going from the
source language to the target language” (see J. C. Catford 1965: 73) even though this
would make the translation more acceptable in the target language. I present my
translation vis-à-vis Legge’s also in order to clarify Legge’s attempt to achieve
‘equivalence’ and ‘intertextual coherence’ through his philological, philosophical and
religious engagement with the Lunyu. As Mona Baker (1992/2010) notes,
‘equivalence’ is central to translating on word, lexical, grammatical, textual and
pragmatic levels. Recognising the differences between the source language and the
target, translators deal with the problems of ‘non-equivalence’ via varied strategies,
such as by using a more general, neutral word or a loan word with explanation to
interpret the original (ibid.: 21-42). According to Christiane Nord (1997: 31-33),
‘intertextual coherence’ conditions an acceptable translation: a translation is not
communicative nor meaningful unless the translator negotiates a way of remaining
faithful to the source culture while making his or her text intertextually coherent to
the situation of the receiver in the target culture. In this regard, rather than assume
that my translation is more correct than Legge’s, I employ theories of dialogism,
heteroglossia and intertextuality to highlight how the Lunyu might be understood
differently in the dialogue between my translation and Legge’s, and how the meaning
of the Lunyu is informed and enriched by the way Legge coherently relates it to other
Chinese and the Western sources.
3.1.1 Bakhtin’s theory of dialogism and heteroglossia

For Bakhtin (1981), the language of the novel is distinctive, presenting a contrast to the language of the epic. The epic is a monolithic entity, delineated by self-enclosed monologues that underpin the epic’s authoritative discourse. Conversely, the language of the novel is made up of stratified, centrifugal forms of expression, whose meaning is produced and determined through its conversational relationship with another language. The language of the novel is thus characterised by dialogism. It is open to and ready to be transformed by the living environment that surrounds it, in which different voices coexist, speaking to while influencing one another. Within the multivocal environment of the novel, the meaning of an utterance not only relates to pre-existent utterances, but also stimulates further responses or new modes of reception (Bakhtin/Volosinov 1986; Allen 2000: 19).

According to Bakhtin (1981: 272-73, 288, 291-92, 325), dialogism in the novel is embedded in “heteroglossia”, which creates, nourishes and inspires the novelistic language. This dialogic novelistic language lives beyond itself, encouraged by its impulse to connect with an answering object (Bakhtin 1981: 292, 199). Bakhtin argues that Dostoevsky’s heroes in his novel are not objects merely bespeaking the author’s consciousness, but possess their respective personalities in their dialogic relationships with the author (Bakhtin 1984: 5-77). Bakhtin deems Dostoevsky’s novel as “polyphonic”, characterised by the “authentic unfinalizability” of the voices in it (ibid.: 68). The thoughts of others activate the polyphonic novel, and the author is compelled to “broaden, deepen and rearrange” his or her consciousness so as to “accommodate the autonomous consciousnesses of others” (ibid.: 68, 68-69).

Bakhtin’s theory of dialogism urges us to view the act of translating as analogous to that of writing a novel. It especially illuminates our study of the
bilingual edition within its socio-historical and cultural contexts. What conditions a bilingual edition is a complex heteroglossic environment, always already double-voiced and internally dialogised. The translator’s (one speaker’s) connection with the original author (another speaker) is formulated upon their constant interactions. Being sensitive to the specificities of the source language, the translator organically builds a dialogic connection with it, seeking to discover new modes of expression in the target language while being responsive to the original. In relation to such translatorial heteroglossia, the translator coordinates two worldviews through his or her creation of the double-languaged image. Furthermore, dialogism and heteroglossia in translation echoes Nord’s (1997: 34) view on translating as “comparing cultures”. For Nord (ibid.: 34, 137-38), ‘culture-specificity’ refers to a phenomenon “found to exist – in this form or function – in only one of the two cultures being compared in the translation process”. Yet through his or her dialogic effort, the translator activates the “communicative interaction” between the source and target languages so as to accommodate the culture-specificity of the original to the target-culture receivers (ibid.: 32).

Through Bakhtin, we can come to apprehend Legge’s Lunyu as a form of polyphonic creation, wherein Legge builds and furthers the dialogic communication between his source and target cultures. Like Dostoevsky’s novel in Bakhtin’s view, Legge’s annotated bilingual editions illustrate how Legge mitigates his authority by including other thoughts, however foreign he might make them appear to his readers. By his extensive footnotes, though, Legge also shows his readers how the culture-specificity of his Chinese source can be correlated to the history of the Western intellectual tradition. Concerned with the dialogic character and history inherent in the Lunyu, Legge explicitly manifests Kongzi, himself and all other characters as the co-creators of a continued Sino-Western dialogue.
3.1.2 The Lunyu and the novelty of Legge’s Confucian Analects

Legge’s dialogic approach to the Lunyu is primarily revealed in the way he reads and translates its title. As the modern OED (2013) points out, “[t]he use of the word Analects to render the Chinese title [the Lunyu] apparently originated in the translation by James Legge in his [1861 edition of] The Chinese Classics”. Legge’s “Confucian Analects” is characteristic of cross-cultural novelty when viewed from Bakhtin’s theory of dialogism. By choosing the term ‘analects’ as the English expression of ‘lunyu’ 論語, Legge retains the dialogism of the original title while creating a new set of meanings and standards to the reception of the text in international sinology after him.

Legge bases his rendering of the title “Confucian Analects” on He Yan and Xing Bing’s reference to the Hanshu commentary (see my discussion of it in 1.2.1). Accordingly, Legge (1861: 1; 1893: 137) explains:

論語, ‘Discourses and Dialogues,’ that is, the discourses or discussions of Confucius with his disciples and others on various topics, and his replies to their inquiries. Many chapters, however, and one whole book, are the sayings, not of the sage himself, but of some of his disciples. The characters may also be rendered ‘Digested Conversations,’ and this appears to be the more ancient signification attached to them, the account being, that, after the death of Confucius, his disciples collected together and compared the memoranda of his conversations which they had severally preserved, digesting them into the twenty books which compose the work. Hence the title – 論語, ‘Discussed Sayings,’ or ‘Digested Conversations.’

While indicating the original title 論語, Legge foregrounds “Discourses and Dialogues” as the key to his translation of the title. For Legge, translating the Lunyu is an inspection into many Chinese foreign voices, into a wide range of “discussed sayings” or “digested conversations”. Seeing the text as a series of dialogues by its
content and compilatory history, Legge presents himself as a creative participant in inheriting and reinventing its dialogic character. Following his explanation, Legge (1861: 1; 1893: 137) tells us: “I have styled the work ‘Confucian Analects,’ as being more descriptive of its character than any other name I could think of.” Clearly, Legge’s dialogic understanding of the Lunyu inspires him to translate the title into “Confucian Analects”, which for Legge properly and stylistically expresses the original.

Legge’s title “Confucian Analects” also shows his imaginative association between classical Chinese, Greek and Latin. According to the OED (2013), ‘analects’ stems from ancient Greek ἄναλεκτα, the neuter plural form of ἄναλεκτος which combines the prefix ἄνα- (ana-) with λεκτός (chosen) to form its meaning as “select” or “choice”; such a combination is after the verb ἄναλέγειν, meaning “to pick up” or “gather up”. With reference to ἄναλεκτα, the post-classical Latin word analecta means “literary gleanings, collections of fragments or extracts”; analecta then is often used to refer to the extracts from the works by classical Greek and Latin writers. As the first translator who uses ‘analects’ to render the Lunyu, Legge innovatively embodies Kongzi’s legacy with the roots of Western culture. Legge’s title also serves to assure the (Western) readers of the connectibility between the ancient Chinese and European traditions.

There is a twofold dialogism in Legge’s title: it conveys the dialogic feature of the original Lunyu, while animating the intellectual exchange between ancient China and Europe. Pfister (2004/II: 102) notes that Legge’s use of the Analects reveals his extensive learning in Latin: this new title “creates an antiquarian air of the ‘classic’ source of information” on Kongzi or Confucius, and constructs a connection with the early Mediterranean era through cross-cultural envisioning of “ideal historical confluences”, prior to the rise of the Roman empire. On the other hand, as Legge
compares the text to the extracts of ancient Greek and Latin classics, his title somewhat implies the non-religiousness of the *Lunyu*, if we consider the division between classics and scriptures. Legge’s use of ‘analects’ rather than ‘gospels’ seems to suggest his reservations about whether or not the *Lunyu* should be considered as a source of revelation. As discussed in the second chapter, Legge once criticises Ruist texts for lacking the organic unity and internal cohesion which the Bible shows. However, Legge does not retreat from seeking the divine in the *Lunyu*. As Thierry Meynard (2011: 26-27) observes, in their *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* (1687), Intorcetta and Couplet compare Kongzi to Aristotle, in order to establish a Sino-Western dialogue and inquire into how the Chinese and European philosophical systems could be further connected to the Bible and various theological schools. For the Jesuits, if Christianity could be developed from Greek philosophy, it could similarly be developed from Ruism (Meynard 2011: 42). Legge’s approach to Ruism echoes this Jesuit view. As I will show, in Legge’s annotated translation, the secular–sacred division is transformed into a heteroglossic interreligious performance, containing both Ruist and Christian elements.

Relating Kongzi and Ruism to the European classical canon, Legge’s choice of ‘analects’ has influenced the study and translation of the *Lunyu* to date and changed our use and understanding of ‘analects’. While the term ‘analects’ in general still means literary or philosophical extracts, a collection of them or an anthology, it is now rarely used in that way. Instead, it has been remembered as the *Analects* [*of Confucius*], a canonised name specifically referring to the *Lunyu* in English and sometimes in other European languages, just as the Bible now, according to the *OED* (2013), refers exclusively to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, although the term ‘bible’ in general means “a collection of books” or “a library”. After Legge, the international reception of the *Analects* as the *Lunyu* has proved to be a series of
ongoing cross-cultural dialogue. On the other hand, the use of ‘Analects’ seems naturalised in numerous publications, as in John B. Henderson’s *Scripture, Canon, and Commentary: A Comparison of Confucian and Western Exegesis* (1991). Yet as I have shown, the appearance of the *Analects* reminds us of Legge as the innovative translator and dialogic thinker. Today, sinologists, translators, and the common readers, in particular for those working in the English language, knowingly or unknowingly inherit Legge’s legacy, and continue to employ the *Analects* to refer to the *Lunyu* in their research and discussions.

3.1.3 Doubling the language: bilinguality and heteroglossia in Legge’s editions

Legge’s *Lunyu* or *Confucian Analects* consistently presents to the readers a bilingual and heteroglossic environment, as do the other texts in his *Chinese Classics*. A synthesis of the original, the translation and the annotation technically marks both editions of Legge’s *Lunyu*. It is a portrayal of dialogism within dialogism, allowing for the simultaneous performance of bilinguality and heteroglossia. In the upper portion of the page, Legge displays his translation in parallel with the original text above it, so that the target language dialogically echoes the source language. Legge also presents the title of the text and the heading of each book in bilingual format. This bilingual presentation shares yet another dialogue with the heteroglossic annotation in the lower portion of the page. In his annotation, Legge blends Chinese with English, exhibiting wide-ranging Chinese and European commentaries with reference to the original and the translation.¹

The idea of ‘double-languaged’ dialogism and heteroglossia enables us to

¹ In his bibliography for the 1861 edition of the first volume, Legge lists 25 Chinese sources (presented bilingually) and 18 European sources (three in Latin, nine in English and six in French). In the 1893 edition, Legge adds two Chinese sources, two English ones and seven titles of the Chinese dictionaries (see 3.2.2). Legge uses many of these sources in annotating the *Lunyu*. 
appreciate the novelty of Legge’s work, wherein we discover diverse Chinese foreign voices. For Walter Benjamin (2004: 21), translation is a mode formulated by the freeing of one language into another; the translator renders the meaning of a language by not domesticating it, for meaning must be freed in order to articulate itself as ‘foreignising’ expression. Fluency or transparency in translation is not synonymous with the monologue. Instead, it means reaching the level of echoing the other, so that the translator’s own language is expanded and deepened by the foreign language (ibid.: 22). As Graham Allen (2000: 27, 27-28) observes, we must recognise that “language is never our own”; it is an ongoing change driven by the otherness it seeks to address. In this regard, Legge is certainly aware of his task as a translator. He writes and organises his footnotes meticulously in line with his bilingual presentation. In his annotation, aside from interpreting the title in the first place, he commentates the heading of each book and expounds each saying. Where he explains a character or a phrase, he first presents it in Chinese and then discusses it in English. If he cites a Chinese source, he lists this source in Chinese.

To give an example, here is Legge’s annotation on the first sentence in the Lunyu, “學而時習之” (I, 1):²

學, in the old commentators, is explained by 誦, ‘to read chantingly,’ ‘to discuss.’ Choo He/Chû Shî [Zhu Xi] interprets it by 效, ‘to imitate,’ and makes its results to be 明善而復初, ‘the understanding of all excellence, and the bringing back original goodness.’ Subsequent scholars profess, for the most part, great admiration of this explanation. It is an illustration, to my mind, of the way in which Choo He/Chû Shî [Zhu Xi] and his followers are continually being wise above what is written in the classical books. 習 is the rapid and frequent motion of the wings of a bird in flying, used for ‘to repeat,’ ‘to practise.’ 之 is the obj. of the third pers. Pronoun, and its antecedent is to be found in the

² Literally it means: “To learn something and practise it often/at the right moment/in time, is it not a pleasure?” Legge’s (1861: 1; 1893: 137) translation is: “Is it not pleasant to learn with a constant perseverance and application?”
pregnant meaning of 學. 不亦 is explained by 豈不, ‘is it not?’ See 四書補註備旨. To bring out the force of ‘also’ in 亦, some say thus: – ‘The occasions for pleasure are many, is it not also one?’ 說, read yuè, as always when it has the 4th tone marked, stands for 悅. What is learned becomes by practice and application one’s own, and hence arises complacent pleasures in the mastering mind. (1861: 2; 1893: 137-38)

As we can see, Legge’s annotation enlivens an environment of heteroglossia, where different voices and commentaries in history are dialogically connected, echoing the bilingual presentation of the main text. We first hear the varied interpretations of the character xue 學 (to learn; learning). Legge mentions the connection between xue and song 誦 (“to read chantingly” and “to discuss”) in “the old commentators” of China. Legge here possibly refers to a line in the Chuci《楚辭》(the Songs of the South), which reads: “然中路而迷惑兮，自厭按而學誦”, literally “Yet midway through the path I was stuck by a feeling of confusion, and I suppressed my discontent and learned to chant poetry”. Here we are also reminded of the two authors of the Chuci, Qu Yuan 屈原 (343–278 BCE) and Song Yu 宋玉 (ca. 298 BCE – ca. 222 BCE), and of its editor Wang Yi 王逸 (89–158 CE). For Legge, to learn Kongzi’s poetic opening “學而時習之” by chanting it (xue er shi xi zhi) leads to a greater appreciation of Kongzi’s teaching. Legge then adds his translation of Zhu Xi’s interpretation on xue, presenting Zhu’s ideas xiao 效 (“to imitate”) and “明善而復初” (“the understanding of all excellence, and the bringing back original goodness”) in both Chinese and English, while providing his reflection on Zhu’s interpretation. The use of Zhu Xi here foregrounds Legge’s consistent referencing to Zhu’s commentaries (see the fifth chapter). As to the title《四書補註備旨》by the Ming (1368–1644) scholar Deng Lin 鄧林, Legge (1861: prol. 131; 1893: 129-30)

3 The Chuci is an anthology of classical Chinese verse. This work and the Book of Poetry are considered to be the two great works of poetry in pre-Qin (pre-221 BCE) China.

4 The above line was composed by Song Yu, from his ‘Nine Changes’ 〈九辯〉 in the Chuci.
translates it into “The Four Books, with a complete Digest of Supplements to the Commentary, and additional Suggestions”. Legge (ibid.) mentions Deng and his edition, while telling us that the text he consults is the Qing scholar Du Dinji’s 杜定基 (ca. 1730 – ca. 1800) revised 1779 edition. Legge acknowledges Deng’s and Du’s contributions, making their voices contemporary in his heteroglossic scene.

Legge’s dialogue with Kongzi and other Chinese commentators continue to develop through his revisionist study of Chinese literature. In his later edition of the above annotation, Legge (1893: 138) further explains 但 it is better to consider 亦 as merely redundant; – see Wang Yin-chih’s [Wang Yinzhi’s] masterly Treatise on the particles, chap. iii; it forms chap. 1028 to 1217 of the 皇清經解”. Here, we encounter the works by Wang Yinzhi 王引之 (1766–1834) and Ruan Yuan. The “masterly Treatise” Legge mentions refers to Wang’s Treatise on the Meanings of the Classics 《經義述聞》 (1797/1827). Wang’s Treatise then was collected in Ruan’s Qing Imperial Explications 《皇清經解》 (see 1.2.3), a title Legge (1861: prol. 133; 1893: 132) translates into “Explanations of the Classics, under the Imperial dynasty of Ts‘ing/Ts‘ing Dynasty” with a note on its publication year 1829. Altogether, Legge’s additional gloss on 但亦 marks his new dialogue with Wang and Ruan, revealing his refined knowledge of the debate over a particular phrase in contemporary Qing hermeneutics.

The example above shows Legge’s sophisticated grasp of the Lunyu and the numerous Chinese scholars related to it, from the far past to the contemporary. Rather than stress his own authorial presence, Legge sympathises with important Chinese commentators such as He Yan and Zhu Xi and some other lesser-known Chinese figures, being attentive to their comments while making place for them in his annotation. The dialogic, heteroglossic nature of Legge’s work is conveyed in the explicit presence of varied Chinese titles and the cultural-historical contexts where
they are embedded. It is also expressed in the way the annotation echoes the bilingual presentation of the main text. Certainly, reading Legge’s annotated translation is never a monologic experience. His revisionist presentation of the foreign encourages us to delve into the ideas of particular Chinese thinkers or artists, so as to reflect on how the meanings of a character or phrase in a passage of the *Lunyu* might be explored or rethought. As Legge (1861: prol. 133; 1893: 132) remarks, “[t]he publication of so extensive a Work [by Ruan Yuan] shows a public spirit and zeal for literature among the high officers of China, which should keep foreigners from thinking meanly of them”. While China in many ways remains foreign to Legge, he is able to shift his standpoint, think from the Chinese side, and openly appreciate his source culture.

Together with the Chinese commentaries, European literature is well covered in Legge’s annotation. Legge uses Intorcetta and Couplet’s *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* (1687), Joseph de Prémare’s *Notitia Linguae Sinicae* [Notice of the Chinese Language] (1728, published for the first time in Malacca in 1831), and the translations by Marshman (1809), Collie (1828), Abel-Rémusat (1817) and Julien (1828). He also consults Morrison’s *Dictionary* (1815–1823). Concerned with Kongzi’s relation with Christianity, Legge often cites the Bible for exegetical comparison, sometimes in his annotation and more frequently in his ‘Prolegomena’ and other writings. For example, Kongzi says: “苟志於仁矣，無惡也”, which Legge translates into: “If the will be set on virtue, there will be no practice of wickedness” (IV, 4; 1861: 30; 1893: 166). Legge (1861: 30; 1893: 166) then compares it to a biblical passage: “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin” (King James Version, 1 John 3: 9). For Legge, Kongzi’s notion of the virtuous will is relevant to

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the will of a Christ-like man, one who “is born of God” and who remains morally immaculate. In addition, Legge connects Kongzi to canonical English literary writings. For example, Kongzi remarks: “人之過也, 各於其黨, 觀過 斯知仁矣” (IV, 7); Legge’s translation reads: “The faults of men are characteristic of the class to which they belong. By observing a man’s faults, it may be known that he is virtuous” (1861: 31; 1893: 167). In his note here, Legge (ibid.) cites Oliver Goldsmith’s ‘The Deserted Village’ (1770, l. 164): “And even his failings leant to virtue’s side”. In Legge’s thought, both Kongzi and Goldsmith observe human faults as a way of approaching human virtue.

Throughout his *Chinese Classics*, Legge presents all his footnotes in such multivocal, heteroglossic fashion. His annotation shows the possibility to harmonise Chinese and English cultures through linguistic and literary connections, and philosophical and religious exchanges. Legge weaves a wealth of information in his work through intertextual reading of Chinese and European literature. Meanwhile, Legge is specific about what he has to say by citing a source with reference to the word or the phrase on question. Legge’s work testifies to Berman’s reflections (1985/2009; see 1.2.3) on the friendly relationship between commentary and translation. Whereas Legge criticises Kongzi in the ‘Prolegomena’, in annotating the *Lunyu* he mostly provides other scholars’ explanations rather than emphasising his own opinions. If Legge acts as a critic in his ‘Prolegomena’, he attempts to be an impartial observer and supportive editor in arranging his footnotes and transmitting the views of others, in particular those from the Chinese tradition. As Pfister (2004/II: 99-100, 153) notes, Legge’s incorporation of the Chinese commentaries has transcended that of his European predecessors. As well as consulting Kong Anguo, Zheng Xuan, He Yan and Xing Bing, Legge recognises Zhu Xi’s salience in Ruist commentarial history, frequently discussing Zhu’s interpretations. We will see how
Legge’s Zhu Xi-based annotation opens up new Sino-Christian dialogue.

When compared with his British predecessors’ works, the heteroglossic feature in Legge’s annotated editions is especially distinctive. While Marshman’s edition is also bilingual, his section for the Chinese commentaries is monolingual in English, although he defines the authority of the comment to be “by Cheu-Hee [Zhu Xi] and Others”, stating that the comment is “a strict translation from the Chinese” (Marshman 1809: 2; see also 1.2.4). On annotating the first sentence of the Lunyu, for example, Marshman (ibid.: 2) provides his translation of Zhu Xi’s annotation on the Four Books, including the two additional comments by Chengzi 程子 (Cheng Yi) and Xie shi 謝氏.

The dispositions of men are by nature virtuous; but some make a more speedy advance in virtue while others advance more slowly; these latter then should strive to overtake them who have made the greatest advances therein; thus may they clearly comprehend the nature of virtue, and arrive at the perfection of the first sages. Learn then, without cessation, as birds continually exercise themselves in flying. Learn, and perpetually practise; thus what you learn will become fixed habit; your mind will be filled with delight; your ideas be constantly enlarging, and nothing appear beyond your capacity.

Chhung-chee [sic] [Chengzi] says, “practise” means perpetually practice; be continually reviewing your ideas, and imprint them deeply in your mind; then will you feel delight. Again he says, He who is learning, should constantly exemplify his ideas in his conduct. Continually reduce your ideas to practice; thus will learning become a second nature, and you will enjoy true happiness.

Chea-see [Xie shi] says, “Continually to practise,” implies, that no time should elapse without practice. Sit like a statue; thus fixed, incessantly study. Collect your thoughts to one point; thus collected, perpetually study.

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6 Marshman’s monolingual commentarial section also concerned the typographical difficulty of mixing Chinese script with English in his time (see 1.3.1).

7 Xie shi refers to Xie Liangzuo 謝良佐 (1050–1103), a disciple of the Cheng brothers and a respected scholar.

8 The romanisation Chhung-chee here seems to be a typo, as Chenzi is romanised as Chung-chee in other places in Marshman’s edition.
Marshman translates the commentaries in Zhu’s *Four Books*, but he does not clarify the detail of Zhu’s original view in his monolingual prose. Unlike Legge, Marshman does not display important terms such as “learn”, “exercise/practise” and “delight” in their original character. Nor does Marshman specify how and why Zhu Xi’s commentaries are significant to the passage in question. In Collie’s English-only edition, the Chinese commentaries are even less visible. Collie (1828: 1) notes on the first sentence: “When the knowledge we acquire by study, is by long and repeated meditation perfectly matured, and wrought into the mind, it becomes a source of pure delight”. Collie’s comment only provides a preliminary sketch without showing a detailed study of his Chinese sources. Different from Marshman’s and Collie’s translations, Legge’s editions illustrate the Chinese commentaries much more explicitly and comprehensively, clearly demonstrating his reflexive appreciation of Zhu Xi.

On a first glimpse, Legge’s work might appear ‘less fluent’ or ‘less transparent’. Yet examining it in light of dialogism and heteroglossia, we are surprised at how Legge’s work has embodied Benjamin’s vision of ideal translation. With reference to his intercultural sources, Legge illustrates how two languages, images and worldviews, while alternately given, could echo and liberate each other on many levels. His editions act as a milestone in the history of sinological translation and studies, and opens up a novel page for their continued development.

3.2 Revealing divine love through Kongzi’s teaching on humanity:

Legge’s intertextual interpretation of the principal notions in the *Lunyu*

It would be difficult to pin the *Lunyu* down to a single subject, but as we read through the text, we find several principal notions which characterise it as the main source of understanding Kongzi and Ruism. The principal ideas in the *Lunyu* include
ren 仁  (perfect virtue; benevolence), xiao 孝  (filial piety), zhong 忠  (faithfulness; sincerity), and li 礼  (the ceremony; the propriety). By discussing these ideas, Kongzi encourages his disciples to become junzi 君子, i.e. gentlemen or superior men who cultivate themselves in order to perfect their virtue. Kongzi’s ideal of humanity is predicated on the proper organisation of the five-bond relations, whereby a junzi constantly attempts to learn, practise and achieve the principles of ren, xiao, zhong and li. As a dialogic text, the Lunyu presents the multifaceted ways in which the core Ruist notions can be approached and comprehended through Kongzi’s discussions with different disciples.

In the previous section, I used Bakhtin’s theory of dialogism and heteroglossia to illuminate Legge’s unprecedented inclusion of Chinese and European commentaries in his annotation on the Lunyu. In this section, I shift my focus on to Legge’s translation of ren, xiao, zhong and li, drawing on how Legge reveals the spiritual dimensions of the Lunyu through his Sino-Christian imagining of God and divine love. Here, Julia Kristeva’s theory of intertextuality assists us in discerning the multilayered ways in which Legge relates his religious concerns to Kongzi’s discussions. In establishing meaning for these principal Ruist notions, Legge consults various sources, either indicated in his annotation or discussed in his other writings. What marks Legge’s intertextual reading of the Lunyu, then, is the way Legge relates Christianity and ancient European philosophy to the ideas of Kongzi and other Chinese thinkers, whereby Legge formulates his unique Sino-Christian views. As Kristeva’s concept of intertextuality draws inspiration from Bakhtin’s dialogism (see 3.2.1 below), we can also sense the relation between intertextuality and dialogism in Legge’s translation, manifest in the Sino-Christian analytical contexture Legge forms through his dialogic engagement with his material. Thus, on one level, I contextualise my analysis in the intertextuality between Legge and ancient/modern
scholarship on the interpretation of a certain Ruist notion. On another level, I focus on Legge’s intertextual comprehension of Kongzi’s ideas, both in the main text of his *Lunyu* and in his other writings.

Because Legge is sure of ancient Chinese faith in God, he detects a sacred message underlying all core Ruist values taught by Kongzi. For Legge, notions like *ren, xiao, zhong* and *li* are concerned with the perfection of human society and the fulfillment of humanity, and thus should be explored through their connection with divine love and virtue. Believing that Kongzi should be approached as a religious teacher, Legge regards Kongzi’s faith in the ancients as containing a higher purpose suggesting human faith in God. Love and faith act as the engine for Legge in his intertextual reading of the *Lunyu*, a reading encompassing the scope of both Protestantism and Ruism. As Pfister (2004/II: 79-80) notes, Legge was considerably influenced by a new movement of “revivals” amongst contemporary Dissenter groups, including the Congregationalist communities in China. This “new wave of revivals”, which occurred in North America, England, Wales and Scotland in the 1850s, sparked a time for spiritual awakening and intense religious reflection through the use of “emotive methods” in missionary work (ibid.: 79). Such revivalist strategies urged Legge to approach the Chinese with a message of divine love, often balanced between his Christian perspective and sympathy for China (ibid.: 122).

Whereas Legge at times criticises Kongzi for his seeming indifference towards the conception of God, he is eager to rediscover religious emotions and divine love in the *Lunyu*. As David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames (1987: 119-120) note, in the *Lunyu* Kongzi sometimes defines love as “graduated” rather than universal; by graduated love Kongzi preconditions “personal judgment” in one’s love for others, emphasising the gradating nature of love which begins from the family members, then extending by degree out into society. This poses a problem for Christian interpretation of Ruist
love, as the highest form of love in Christianity means “agapē”, originating from one’s connection with God and manifest through one’s universal love for all others (ibid.). To deal with this problem, Legge uses Mozi’s 墨子 (ca. 470 – ca. 391 BCE) notion of jian’ai 兼愛 (universal love) to contest and complement Ruist love, rather than simply asserting his Christian view. By jian’ai Mozi (I, 5; IV; VII) highlights the significance of one’s love for all humankind under Heaven, regardless of one’s familial tie and social class. Legge appends his translation of Mozi’s theory of jian’ai (IV) to the ‘Prolegomena’ of his Mengzi, wherein he discusses Ruist ren, Mohist jian’ai and Christian love. According to Legge (1861b: prol. 121-23; 1893b: 118-19), it was Mengzi’s hostility towards Mozi’s notion of jian’ai⁹ that resulted in the conflict between Ruism and Mohism. Han Yu, in his ‘Studies on Mozi’ 〈讀墨子〉 (?/1993), has noted Mozi’s compatibility with Kongzi. Legge uses his translation of Han Yu’s commentary as part of his argument, suggesting that Kongzi, based on his compassion for the human condition, might be more capable of appreciating Mozi’s thought. Legge (1861b: prol. 120-25; 1893b: 117-22) maintains his Sino-Christian focus on Chinese ideas of love, seeking the common foundation for Ruist love and Christian love through other thinkers like Mozi.

As we will see, to establish an intertextual dialogue between Ruist ethics, Protestant virtue and the Chinese and European philosophical traditions has been Legge’s primary concern. In doing so, Legge insists that Ruism would benefit from a deeper interaction with Christianity, on the conception of God and universal love.

3.2.1 Kristeva’s theory of intertextuality

Kristeva’s theory of intertextuality highlights the innovative aspects of the literary

⁹ Mohism was prevalent in Mengzi’s time. Mengzi hostilely remarks that Mozi’s notion of jian’ai does not recognise one’s particular reverence for one’s father, thus abasing humanity to the state of beast (III, ii, 9).
language, which she refers to as “poetic language”. In Kristeva’s understanding of Bakhtin, dialogism is created through the act of writing, as writing is an interactive conversation in which “one reads the other” (Kristeva 1986: 39). When creating a text the writer constantly experiences the voices of the other; the writer’s subjectivity is defined by a series of communications with these voices, and such communications occur within both “the interior of the text” and “the space of texts” (ibid.: 40). As Kristeva puts it, ambivalence in dialogic discourse “implies the insertion of history (society) into a text and of this text into history”; this is because the practice of writing, in Bakhtin’s definition, can be seen “as a reading of the anterior literary corpus and the text as an absorption of and a reply to another text” (ibid.: 39). Consequently, a literary text, affected by the dialogism and ambivalence in its discourse, becomes a form of “poetic language” which works as the double, wherein a message is never monologic but rather is paired with the other.

In Kristeva’s perception, dialogism should not merely be described as a form of intersubjectivity, since this implies that two separate subjectivities pre-exist and remain unchanged in their dialogue. Insofar as dialogism is embedded in the communication between diverse voices and texts in the writing process, it should better be read as a phenomenon of intertextuality (ibid.: 36-39). In light of intertextuality, the word or language created in a text does not possess a pre-existent subjectivity. Rather, different voices responding to, absorbing and transforming one another mark the language of writing as intertextual communication. Kristeva (1980) encourages us to trace the expression of poetic language through the other-consciousness of a particular text, such as its under-consciousness, side-consciousness and non-consciousness, because these consciousnesses create the intertextuality of a literary work.

Viewed from Kristeva’s perspective, intertextuality challenges the assumption in
translation studies that a text is either ‘domesticated’ or ‘foreignised’ when rendered into another text, and that a translator could predetermine his or her intention without being affected by the bilingual environment of his or her work (see, for example, Venuti 1995/2008). In conventional translation studies, the translator, like the original author, is often assumed to possess a given subjectivity, identity and ideology, which remain intact even as he or she interacts with other languages, values and cultures. Yet in terms of intertextuality, the translator’s connection with other languages and ideas involved in translating determines his or her identity and intention. In line with Nord’s notion of ‘intertextual coherence’ (see 3.1), Kristeva’s view underscores how the translator gives meaning to a text via his or her reading of it in relation to other texts. Here, ‘equivalence’ is not simply to produce a translation that conforms to the source-culture specificity, but rather is achieved through the way the translator shapes his or her understanding about a coherent, acceptable translation in interacting with the histories and traditions of the source and target cultures.

Kristeva’s idea of intertextuality provides an insight into our reading of Legge’s *Lunyu* as a form of poetic language. For Legge, translating the *Lunyu* is an intertextual experience, always stimulating him to develop dialogue with Kongzi and other thinkers in manifold Sino-Christian contexts. Legge provides meaning to the *Lunyu* through his interaction with its related literature in the Chinese and Western contexts. If we pay closer attention to the way Legge translates the principal notions in the *Lunyu*, we discover that Legge constantly seeks to connect with other voices and texts as his source of inspiration.

3.2.2 A brief note on Legge’s philological study of classical Chinese

There has been a long tradition of interpretations on *ren* and other central Ruist notions by Chinese and Western scholars. Since my thesis examines Legge’s
interpretation of the *Lunyu*, I mainly focus on how Legge approaches these Ruist notions, linguistically and symbolically, by looking at both Legge’s *Lunyu* and other writings. Still, it is important to note here that the study of ancient Chinese characters concerning the interpretation of the Chinese classics has continued to raise interesting debates amongst Chinese scholarship from antiquity to the contemporary.

As Elman (1982; 2009) notes, in China there were philological developments on the phonology and paleographical structure of classical Chinese, long before the emergence of evidential research and linguistic analysis during the Qing dynasty (see 1.2.3). According to Wolfgang Behr (2005: 15-42), these Chinese philological developments alert us to the morphological, semantic, programmatic, sociolinguistic and phonological changes in different Chinese scholars’ glosses through the dynasties. In this and the following subsections, I do not intend to provide an extensive discussion on the philological debates raised by modern scholars. Yet it should be noted that Elman’s and Behr’s discussions point to the necessity to revisit relevant ancient Chinese sources, both for establishing historically informed explanations on the phonological dimensions of classical Chinese and for building an awareness of language change through Chinese history.

We have seen how Legge established his comparativist philological approach through collaborating with Max Müller, while building his sinological stance via his Chinese sources. On the linguistic and symbolic meanings of the Ruist notions in the *Lunyu*, Legge mostly consults the Han philologist Xu Shen 許慎 (ca. 58 – ca. 147 CE) and the *Kangxi Dictionary* 《康熙字典》(1710–1716), blending his findings in these sources intertextually with his reading of other Ruist texts. One of Xu Shen’s major contributions to early Chinese philology is his explication on *liushu* 六書 (literally ‘six writings’, meaning ‘the six types or classifications of characters’) in his
Shuowen jiezi《說文解字》(On Characters).\textsuperscript{10} The term liushu had appeared earlier in the Zhouli《周禮》(the Rites of Zhou) (before ca. 150 BCE), where liushu refers to the fifth category of liuyi 六藝 (the six arts).\textsuperscript{11} Xu Shen then details these six classifications of characters (see table 1; see also Elman 1982: 495).\textsuperscript{12}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Modern explanation</th>
<th>Examples given by Xu Shen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>zhishi 指事</td>
<td>ideographs</td>
<td>shang 上 (above); xia 下 (below)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xiangxing 象形</td>
<td>pictographs or pictograms</td>
<td>ri 日 (sun); yue 月 (moon)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xingsheng 形聲\textsuperscript{13}</td>
<td>phono-semantic compounds</td>
<td>jiang 江 (river, combining the semantic radical 水 [water] and the phonetic 工); he 河 (river, combining the semantic radical 水 [water] and the phonetic 可)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>huiyi 會意</td>
<td>compound ideographs</td>
<td>wu 武 (combining 止 and 戈 to form its meaning as referring to the military); xin 信 (combining 人 and 言 to form the meaning of sincerity or confidence)\textsuperscript{14}</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>zhuan zhu 轉注</td>
<td>derivative cognates</td>
<td>kao 考; lao 老 (kao derives from lao, with the meaning of lao as the seventy-year-old or the white-haired)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jiajie 假借</td>
<td>phonetic loan characters</td>
<td>ling 令 (mandate or law, which combines 丷 and 丅); chang 長 (to last long or go far, which combines 兀 and 匚)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{10} Xu Shen’s Shuowen jiezi has been recognised as the first Chinese dictionary which specifically focuses on character analysis and which arranges the characters by means of shared components.

\textsuperscript{11} The six arts here refer to li 禮 (rites), yue 樂 (music), she 射 (archery), yu 駕 (chariotoeering), shu 書 (writing), and shu 數 (mathematics).

\textsuperscript{12} Before Xu Shen, the six classifications were mentioned in the Hanshu (111 BCE) in slightly different terms. Xu Shen further explains these classifications, providing six pairs of characters as his examples.

\textsuperscript{13} Xingsheng is also referred to as xiesheng 諧聲 (phonetic compounds) in modern scholarship.

\textsuperscript{14} See also 2.2 on xin.
Xu Shen here classifies ling 令 and chang 長 as phonetic loan characters, but he does not specify the words from which ling and chang are phonetically borrowed. The Qing philologist Duan Yucai 段玉裁 (1735–1815), in his Shuowen jiezi zhu 《說文解字注》 (On Characters, with Annotations) (1815), suggests that ling 令 could be a phonetic loan character from 靈 (spirit). On the other hand, Duan Yucai classifies chang 長 as a character of huiyi (compound ideographs) in his gloss.

Xu Shen’s classification anticipates the multiple developments and contested debates on the phonology, paleography and etymology of Chinese characters up to the nineteenth century and our modern period. From Duan Yucai’s glosses, we sense that later scholarly generations did not always follow Xu Shen, often adding new views based on their revisionist studies and real experiences of language use. However, it would be safe to claim that Xu Shen’s Shuowen jiezi has been regarded as one of the authoritative sources for exploring ancient Chinese. In this context, Legge’s Chinese Classics demonstrates his growing sensitivity to the philological dimensions in ancient Chinese and the history of Chinese character studies. In his 1861 edition Legge does not list any Chinese dictionaries he has consulted, but in his 1893 edition, Legge (1893: 134-35) adds a series of philological sources, including Xu Shen’s Shuowen jiezi (with the glosses by the Tang scholar Xu Kai 徐鍇 [920–974]), the Song scholar Dai Tong’s 戴侗 (ca. 1200 – ca. 1284 or 1285) Liushu gu《六書故》 (On the Six Classifications of Characters), the Zihui 《字彙》 (1615), the Kangxi Dictionary, the Peiwenyunfu 《佩文韻府》 (translated by Legge as the Kangxi Thesaurus) (1704–1711), and Ruan Yuan’s Jingji zuangu bing buyi《經籍纂詁并補遺》 (translated by Legge as A Digest of the Meanings in the Classical and other Books, with Supplement) (1798). Although Legge does not mention Duan Yucai’s work, his use of the earlier works and other Qing sources reflects his awareness of past and contemporary Chinese philological approaches. In particular, Legge’s
reliance on Xu Shen shows his inclination to value ancient Chinese scholarship on the study of classical Chinese.

3.2.3 Ren 仁: revelations of perfect virtue and divine love

The notion ren 仁 is central to Kongzi’s vision of humanity. In the Lunyu, Kongzi and his disciples exchange ideas about ren in numerous cases, although Kongzi is also quite reserved about qualifying someone as possessing ren, regarding ren as the benchmark for human perfection. In the Lunyu, Kongzi relates ren to many aspects in one’s daily life. Kongzi does not introduce ren as an instrumental concept but rather highlights how ren springs from one’s internal feelings, regulating one from within oneself in relation to the external world. In addition, for Kongzi, the meanings of ren are not fixed, as on the question of ren Kongzi often provides particular responses to disciples based on his understanding of their individualities. Chen Yongming (2004), amongst others, suggests that ren is perhaps the highest principle for Kongzi and the development of Ruism after him. In most of the cases where ren is discussed, Legge translates it into “virtue” or “perfect virtue”. In a few other passages, Legge renders it into “the good”, “benevolence” and “all benevolent actions”.

According to Xu Shen, ren combines the two elements 人 (human) and 二 (two), which means qin 親 (to be akin, related or close). Duan Yucai hence notes that ren could be viewed as a character of huiyi (compound ideographs). The Kangxi


16 On practising ren, Kongzi provides different answers to Yan Yuan 颜渊, Zhong Gong 仲弓, Si Ma Niu 司馬牛, Fan Chi 樊遲, Zi Zhang 子張, and Zi Gong 子貢 (see XII, 1; XII, 2; XII, 3; XII, 22; XIII, 19; XVII, 6; and XV, 9).
Dictionary indicates that ren is related to the character 元, which is also composed of the elements 人 and 二. In the case of 元, 二 precedes 人 and is positioned on top of 人, yet in the case of 仁, 人 precedes 二 and is positioned side by side with 二. Thus, 元 refers to “在天” (“relating to Heaven”), while 仁 refers to “在人” (“being human”). Manifest as the human, ren also has implications for the divine.

Western missionaries since the sixteenth century have tended to treat ren as a reference to divinity. Yet Anne Cheng (1997: 68-69) suggests that Kongzi is concerned more with how ren is applied to the moral and emotional reciprocity between two humans based on its character composition. According to Chen Yongming (2004: 9-10, 160-162), the notion of a natural God might exist in Chinese antiquity, in particular during the Yin/Shang (1600–1046 BCE) and the first half of the Zhou (1046–771 BCE) dynasties, but Ruism after Kongzi was grounded more in secular morality than in divine instruction. Chen (ibid.: 169-70) thus proclaims that Kongzi’s idea of ren is rooted not in God’s will but in a human’s natural abilities; through education, one is able to advance one’s moral character and acquisition of knowledge. However, Fu P’ei-jung (2010: 116) reminds us about the rich possibilities of ren in relation to both Ruism and the Western intellectual tradition: although many modern scholars accentuate the secular humanist aspects of ren, the more we explore ren the more likely we will discover in it profound religious sentiments. Fu’s point opens a window for us to engage in Legge’s approach to ren.

On the meanings of ren, Legge (1861: 3; 1893: 139) mentions the difficulty in providing “a uniform rendering of this term”. His intertextual reading of ren is first shown in his incorporation of Mengzi’s and Julien’s opinions. Mengzi regards ren as man or human, and Julien translates it into humanitas; both explanations are further associated with the concepts of “benevolence” and junzi (“superior man”) (ibid.). Legge thereby filters his perception of ren in the Lunyu through his Sino-Christian
reflections. Most often, Legge interprets ren as “virtue”. For example:

巧言令色，鮮矣仁。(I, 3)

Fine words and an insinuating appearance are seldom associated with true virtue. (Legge 1861: 3; 1893: 139)

人而不仁，如禮何？人而不仁，如樂何？ (III, 3)

If a man be without the virtues proper to humanity, what has he to do with the rites of propriety? If a man be without the virtues proper to humanity, what has he to do with music? (Legge 1861: 19; 1893: 155)

仁遠乎哉？我欲仁，斯仁至矣。(VII, 29)

Is virtue a thing remote? I wish to be virtuous, and lo! virtue is at hand. (Legge 1861: 68; 1893: 204)

剛毅、木訥，近仁。(XIII, 27)

The firm, the enduring, the simple, and the modest are near to virtue. (Legge 1861: 138; 1893: 274)

While Legge’s interpretations demonstrate the poetic intertextuality between ren and “virtue”, they also present some subtle differences. In the first example, Legge’s rendering “true virtue” conveys Kongzi’s ren through one’s honesty and inner search for truth, rather than through the way one pleases others. Legge (1861: 3; 1893: 139) notes that ren here means “the principle of love” and “the virtue of the heart”. In the second example, Legge’s translation “virtues proper to humanity” shows his sensitivity to the humane meaning of ren defined in the Chinese commentaries, and Legge uses Zhu Xi’s gloss “心之全德” (literally “the heart’s complete moral power”, which Legge translates as “the entire virtue of the heart”) to support his rendition.17

17 Legge does not specify Zhu’s name here, but he quotes Zhu’s definition of ren as “心之全德” (see Zhu 1182/1983: 48, 131).
Yet by framing ren here within the humane spectrum, Legge’s translation also implies a contrast between pagan Ruist virtues and divine Christian virtue, as the meaning of “virtue” in the nineteenth-century West, if not otherwise specified, remained attached to God (see the modern OED’s explanations below). But Legge does not dismiss the possibility of relating ren to his religious concerns through “virtue”, as shown in the third and fourth examples. Where Legge is aware of the Chinese commentaries, the variation in Legge’s interpretations of ren also invites us to look into the conception of virtue in the European linguistic and religious contexts, therein Kongzi’s vision of humanity would reveal a series of new meanings.

According to the OED (2013), the principal meaning of virtue, as “a quality of persons”, is “[c]onformity of life and conduct with the principles of morality”, “voluntary observance of the recognised moral laws or standards of right conduct”, and/or “abstention on moral grounds from any form of wrong-doing or vice”. In archaic usage until the nineteenth century, virtue denotes “[t]he power or operative influence inherent in a supernatural or divine being”. When used as a countable noun, virtue may refer to “[a] particular moral excellence” and/or “a special manifestation of the influence of moral principles in life or conduct”. These three layers of definition manifest the way in which virtue simultaneously addresses Christian theological concerns and ancient and contemporary moral philosophy. Catholic catechism defines the seven virtues as faith, hope, charity, prudence, temperance, fortitude and justice. The first three are known as the spiritual or theological virtues, and the remaining four as the cardinal or pagan virtues.

As James M. Gustafson (1978: 12-13, 61) notes, Catholic theology has been embedded in the philosophy of natural law, developed from Aristotelian metaphysics and ethics; it emphasises the natural aspects of the moral law and the church’s authority in reorienting human conduct. Here, Scripture is considered to be less
important, simply serving as an articulation of the natural law. Nevertheless, the modern Protestants look for the meanings of virtue from biblical instruction. Protestant theologians since the sixteenth-century Reformation have tended to reject the natural law tradition by placing the Bible in the centre of theological debates, drawing on how biblical narratives might act as the channel to understanding God’s grace in humankind’s moral and ethical development (ibid.: 63). In this sense, Legge’s Congregational stance is reflected through his frequent comparison between ancient Ruism and biblical teaching (Legge 1850; 1852; see also 2.3.1), although Legge also incorporates ancient Greek philosophy and the Jesuit tradition in his interpretation. Ultimately, biblical notions of God, Lord Jesus and love are central to Legge’s rendition of ren (Legge 1850: 53).

For Legge, the ethos of virtue stems from divine love, going beyond human reasoning; in God’s love one finds a way to love the world and perfect oneself. Based on the Bible, Legge (1883: 6) writes that “the whole duty of man is comprised in the one little word Love”, which is “the fulfilling of the law”; moreover, Jesus Christ goes beyond the law for the love of God. Compared with Christian love, Legge feels that the moral sentiment and language in Chinese society and writings are seldom “gushings of the heart” but rather “calculations of the understanding” (ibid.: 18). Yet although Legge complains about the absence of a “loving God” in the Chinese classics, he maintains that the devotion to God exists in the highest moral principles of Ruism (ibid.: 19, 13-17).

Conscious of God’s love while convinced that the Chinese know God, Legge seeks to reveal the divinity of Ruist love via Kongzi’s discussions on ren. When Kongzi urges a young person “入則孝，出則弟，謹而信，汎愛眾，而親仁”, Legge translates: “A youth, when at home, should be filial, and, abroad, respectful to his elders. He should be earnest and truthful. He should overflow in love to all, and
cultivate the friendship of the good” (I, 6; 1861: 4; 1893: 140). Here Legge embeds ren in one’s ai 爱 (love) “to all” and “the friendship of the good”, thus implicitly connecting ren to Mohist universal love, ancient Greek philosophy and Christianity.

As noted earlier, Legge uses Mozi’s notion of jian’ai (universal love) to complement Kongzi’s and Mengzi’s discussions on love. For Aristotle, moreover, noble love is conditioned in friendship. As Aristotle (2009: 148, 152) notes, “[t]he truest friendship […] is that of the good”; friendship relies on “loving” rather than being loved, and loving constitutes “the characteristic virtue of friends”. For Legge, Ruist ren, when viewed through Mohist and ancient Greek love, could further be combined with Christian teaching. In his Religions of China, Legge (1880a: 307) mentions how he holds the idea of God as “wonderful in counsel, mighty in working, and grand in love”, and how Christ becomes “the Friend of sinners” and restores their faith in God. Thus, Legge’s translation above reveals how ren could be intertextualised through Sino-European religious and philosophical dialogue.

In another passage, when Fan Chi asks what ren (which Legge translates as “benevolence”) is, Kongzi replies that ren is “爱人” (which Legge translates as “to love all men”) (XII, 22; 1861: 124; 1893: 260). To Legge, ren as benevolence speaks to a charitable action in relation to God, whereby one extends one’s love for all others. In addition, when Youzi 有子 roots ren in “孝弟 [f]ilial piety and fraternal submission”, Legge interprets ren here as “all benevolent actions” (I, 2; 1861: 2-3; 1893: 138-39). Clearly, Legge attempts to recast the graduated love (which prioritises one’s love for the family members) in Youzi’s remark through his vision of universal love.

For Legge, ren as “virtue” comes before ren as “benevolence”. Where ren denotes the good, benevolence or all benevolent actions, Legge reminds us of its underlying reference to divine virtue. Legge highlights “virtue” as one’s
introspection and moral correction through one’s inner connection with God, enabling one to achieve “benevolence” by developing good relations with others. Thus, different from Anne Cheng’s view, Legge’s use of “virtue” as the principal term for *ren* gives primacy to a human’s internal spiritual development over this human’s external relation with another human. In Legge’s view, one’s devotion to the family and all others in society takes root in one’s internal piety towards God, since God’s love, by its relative power that works through each individual psyche, is the very cause of charitable human actions. As *ren* is near Kongzi in his wish for attaining to it, Chinese people in Legge’s thought should strive to reach for God on the way of perfecting their virtue, because God is “never far from any one of us” according to the Bible (Legge 1883: 24).

Holding faith in God, Legge develops an intertextual understanding between biblical narratives and Kongzi’s view on *ren* and humanity. As discussed earlier, Legge connects the Bible to Kongzi’s discussion on how we could eradicate evil by setting our *zhi* 志 (“will”) on *ren* (virtue; benevolence) (see 3.1.3), implying that God’s will empowers human will on the path of virtue. For Kongzi, *ren* is a process of learning by virtue of our self-examination and interaction with others. For Legge, Kongzi’s insight into the maintenance of benevolent human relations is relevant to Christ’s vision of humanity. Legge appreciates a famous statement by Kongzi on *ren*, “己所不欲，勿施於人” (XII, 2; XV, 23), translating it into: “[N]ot to do to others as you would not wish done to yourself” and “What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others” (1861: 115, 165; 1893: 251, 301). For Legge (1861: prol. 49, 110; 1893: 49, 109), this is Kongzi’s “golden rule”, resonant with Christ’s words that “[a]ll things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them” (St. Matthew 7: 12). Albeit somewhat critical of the negative form of Kongzi’s remark, Legge (ibid.) notes that it is embedded in a positive context of altruistic love.
Elsewhere, Legge praises Kongzi’s golden rule again when discussing Mozi’s notion of *jian’ai*. According to Legge (1861b: prol. 123; 1893b: 119-20), the problem of Mozi’s notion lies in its overemphasis on “expediency”, which treats love as a means rather than true feelings from one’s heart. Here, Legge once more cites Christ’s sentiment above, along with “[t]hou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (St. Mark 12: 31); he argues that one can fulfill Mozi’s *jian’ai* by grounding it in the spirit of generosity shared by Kongzi and Christ. In his intertextual analysis of Kongzi, Mozi and Christ, Legge urges us to rethink the foundation and connotation of universal love. In Legge’s view (1861: prol. 111; 1893: 109-110), Kongzi’s *ren* does not seem to move beyond the five-bond ethics, resulting in Chinese people’s ignorance of the world outside China; by contrast, Christ’s rule is “for man as man, having to do with other men, all with himself on the same platform, as the children and subjects of the one God and Father in heaven”. Human faith in God enables the realisation of universal love amongst humankind beyond racial, national and religious demarcations (Legge 1861b: prol. 125; 1893b: 122).

Translating *ren* into “virtue” and “benevolence”, Legge highlights *ren* first as one’s internal devotion to divine truth and then as one’s benevolent actions for others. Legge’s specific reading of *ren* invites us to reconsider many *ren*-related notions in terms of his interpretation, including *xiao* 孝 (“filial piety”), *dao* 道 (“path of duty”), *de* 德 (“goodness”), *yuelle* 樂 (“music”; “delight”), *yi* 藝 (“polite arts”), *zhi* 知 (“wisdom”; “knowledge”), *zhong* 忠/xin 信 (“sincerity”), *li* 禮 (“rules of propriety”), *gong* 恭 (“gravity”), *jing* 敬 (“reverence”), *kuan* 寬 (“generosity of soul”), *min* 敏 (“earnestness”), *hui* 惠 (“kindness”), and most importantly, *ai* 愛 (“love”). The rendering of Ruist ethics via the language of “duty”, “soul” and “love” relates humanity to divinity through Ruist–Christian intertextuality, enabling Legge to uphold his vision of *ren* as “perfect virtue”. For Legge, God’s planning of *ren* is
perfect, and humankind who internalise God’s love are secure in the wholeness of their virtue and in their interrelationships.

3.2.4  **Xiao 孝: connecting filial piety to love and the worship of God**

The notion *xiao*孝 acts as the basis for achieving *ren* in Ruism. Kongzi discusses *xiao* less frequently than *ren* in the *Lunyu*, but much of Kongzi’s thought on *xiao* can be found in the *Xiaojing*. The importance of *xiao* is revealed in the way Kongzi and his disciples define the goodness and harmony of familial, social and governmental organisations.\(^{18}\) Legge translates *xiao* into “filial piety” or “be filial”, centering its meaning on the feeling of love and respect. He attempts to uncover the divine connotation of *xiao* through intertextual comprehension of Christianity and Kongzi’s teaching in the *Lunyu*, the *Xiaojing* and other Chinese classics.\(^{19}\)

On the character *xiao*孝, Legge (1879: 449; 1880a: 71) again uses Xu Shen’s analysis, explaining it as presenting 老 (an old man) over 子 (a son), thus suggesting a son bearing up or supporting his parent or father. Linguistically, Legge (1879: 449; 1880a: 71) notes that the character *xiao* must be established very early, given that it has been used as a phonetic element in “at least twenty other characters”. Being aware of the phonological history of *xiao*, Legge also appreciates its symbolic meaning based on Xu Shen’s comment.

In the *Lunyu*, Kongzi considers *xiao* to be primarily revealed in the parent–child relationship. As Kongzi remarks, “父母唯其疾之憂” (literally “Parents are concerned with the well-being of their children”), so that children should serve their parents through the conduct of *xiao*, which Legge interprets as “filial piety” (II, 6;

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\(^{18}\) The Qing scholar Wang Yongbin 王永彬 (1792–1869) noted that “百善孝為先” (“amongst all the good characters, *xiao* comes first”), and this saying still influences many Chinese people today.

\(^{19}\) Legge’s translation of the *Xiaojing* is included in the first part of his *Sacred Books of China* (volume 3 of *The Sacred Books of the East*) (1879), but it is not included in his *Chinese Classics*. 

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1861: 12; 1893: 148). Here are two other examples of Kongzi’s discussions on xiao and Legge’s translation:

今之孝者，是謂能養。至於犬馬，皆能有養；不敬，何以別乎？(II, 7)20

The filial piety now-a-days means the support of one’s parents. But dogs and horses likewise are able to do something in the way of support;– without reverence, what is there to distinguish the one support given from the other? (1861: 12; 1893: 148)

色難。有事弟子服其勞，有酒食先生饌，曾是以為孝乎？(II, 8)21

The difficulty is with the countenance. If, when their elders have any troublesome affairs, the young take the toil of them, and if, when the young have wine and food, they set them before their elders, is THIS to be considered filial piety? (1861: 12; 1893: 148)

For both Kongzi and Legge, xiao or filial piety is demonstrated in one’s reverence for one’s parents and elders. Compared with one’s relationship with the animals, one naturally feels more intimate with one’s parents. Thus, one’s conduct of xiao is distinctive by one’s innermost reverence and sincere countenance in serving the parents and elders. Extending from the parent–child relationship, Kongzi regards xiao as one of the fundamental qualities of a ruler. Kongzi remarks that “臨之以莊則敬, 孝慈則忠, 舉善而教不能, 則勸” (literally “Be present with dignity before them [the people], they then respect; be filial and kind, they then are loyal; praise the good and teach the unable, they then conform”) (II, 20), which Legge (1861: 16; 1893: 152) translates into: “Let him [the ruler] preside over them with gravity;– then they [the people] will reverence him. Let him be filial and kind to all;– then they will be

20 Literally “Nowadays filial piety is called being able to feed/raise [the parents]. As to dogs and horses, they all can be fed/raised. Without respect, how can we make a distinction?”

21 Literally “Countenance is where the difficulty lies. When in trouble the elders receive the youths’ help, and when with wine and food the youths serve the elders, is this to be regarded as filial piety?”
faithful to him. Let him advance the good and teach the incompetent;—then they will eagerly seek to be virtuous”. In Legge’s reading of Kongzi, a ruler demonstrating filiality, kindness, gravity, goodwill and enthusiasm for education would inspire reverence, faith and virtue in the people.

Both Kongzi and Legge agree that the feeling of respect in xiao is connected to love. Kongzi provides further explanations on xiao in the Xiaojing, where he relates the conduct of xiao to the virtue of love, one’s spiritual development and the role of religious sacrifices. When Kongzi remarks that “生事愛敬，死事哀戚，生民之本盡矣” (literally “To treat [parents’] life affairs with love and respect and their death with sorrow and grief, one fulfils one’s role/duty as a living commoner”) (Xiaojing XVIII), Legge (1879: 488; 1880a: 71) translates: “The services of love and reverence to parents when alive, and those of grief and sorrow for them when dead:—these completely discharge the fundamental duty of living men”. Here, Legge (1880a: 71) defines Kongzi’s xiao or filial piety as the “worship of parents”, and such worship has to be felt through one’s natural emotions, in which love plays a central part. As discussed earlier, Legge (1861: 2-3; 1893: 138-39) translates Youzi’s remark “孝弟也者，其為仁之本與” (literally “Filial piety and fraternal duty, these are the foundation of ren”) (I, 2) into: “Filial piety and fraternal submission!—are they not the root of all benevolent actions?” Legge (1861: 3; 1893: 139) notes that ren in Youzi’s remark is to be explained as “the principle of love” and “the virtue of the heart”. For Legge, the “filial piety” in this passage is not necessarily confined in the familial context, but rather could be envisaged as the basis for universal love and benevolence through one’s internal piety towards divine principle and virtue.

In Legge’s vision, indeed, Kongzi’s teaching on xiao or filial piety promises divinity if we explore it intertextually with Christian thought and the conception of God. As St. André (2012: 2-11) notes, the notion “filial piety” has run deep in
English/British culture before it was applied to the case of China. Sir Thomas More used “filial love” (1533) and “filial fear” (for example 1536; 1538) to indicate one’s relationship with God, and since then “filial fear” has become one of the commonest expressions in English literature, connected to the Bible (ibid.: 2, 3, 2-5). Associated with “filial”, the phrase “filial piety” appeared in the writings by Sir Philip Sydney (1590), Thomas Heywood (1624; 1641), James Shirley (1633; 1640), David Hume (1648) and others; here, “filial piety” may refer to devotion to the divine, but in most instances it was more secular in tone (ibid.: 3-5). John Webb (1669) first applied “filial piety” to China, a country seen by him as a good model for practising this notion. Yet although many British authors in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries seemed to have China on their mind (an image that could be positive or negative) based on their reading of the missionary works, their use of filial piety often had no specific reference to the Chinese (ibid.: 8-10). Since the nineteenth century, the British have tended to devalue filial piety in favour of the conception of romantic love and/or independence, while they have begun to dismiss filial piety in China as a potential factor of its backwardness (ibid.: 10-11). Clearly, St. André’s discussion indicates the problem in the modern tendency to assume filial piety as a particular notion or practice from China, not always perceived in a positive light while seemingly irrelevant to Western values. The history of the use of filial piety in English writings suggests its deep roots in the Western tradition. Moreover, such history invites us to open new Sino-Western dialogue on the meaning of filial piety, so as to decipher its cross-cultural and universal dimensions in religious and literary terms. What underlies Legge’s interpretation of xiao is precisely his awareness that filial piety is a shared value between Chinese culture and Christianity.

In his writings, Legge (1861b: prol. 75; 1893b: 72; 1880a) employs “filial duty”, “filial devotion” and “natural piety” to highlight one’s connection with God, the
Creator of Heaven, Earth and humankind. Legge is certainly conscious of the religious meanings in both “filial” and “piety”. As St. André (2012: 3) has noted, the term “filial” in English literature suggests “natural feelings of a child towards a parent”, and it is related to God when associated with love and fear. The term “piety”, according to the OED (2013), denotes “[s]enses relating to the quality of feeling or showing pity” and “[s]enses relating to devotion”. The first category of senses refers to “pity”, “mercy” and “compassion”, while the second refers to “[r]everence and obedience to God (or to the gods)”, “[f]aithfulness to the duties naturally owed to one’s relatives, superiors, etc.” and/or “[a]n instance of reverence or faithful devotion”. The phrase “filial piety” hence embodies the emotions and notions of love, fear, compassion and duty in religious devotion.

Legge grounds his understanding of xiao in his intertextual reading of the Bible and Kongzi’s teaching. For Legge (1880a: 95, 95-96), xiao or filial piety, taught in both Ruism and Protestantism, concerns one’s nature, duty and destiny in relation to God. In the Xiaojing Kongzi remarks that “夫孝，天之經也，地之義也，民之行也” (VII), which Legge (1879: 473) translates into: “Yes, filial piety is the constant (method) of Heaven, the righteousness of Earth, and the practical duty of Man”. Here, xiao enlightens a man through Heaven and Earth, making him aware of his duty. Legge (1880a: 69-83) envisages Kongzi’s view of xiao in the context of ancient Chinese monotheism, whereby Legge highlights the relation of Chinese people’s ancestor worship to ancient Chinese rulers’ worship of God, from the Yin to the Zhou dynasty. In Legge’s view, China’s continued history and prosperity is the evidence of God’s blessings, and the notion of xiao can be attached to the fifth commandment: “Honour thy father and mother, that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee” (ibid.: 88). Legge (ibid.: 4, 69, 73) is certain about the coeval relationship between Christianity and the faith of early Chinese fathers Yao and
Shun舜. For Legge, Shun’s practice of filial piety exemplifies ancient Chinese devotion to God through the state sacrifice. Nonetheless, Legge laments that after Yao and Shun, Chinese people’s religious feeling seems to have been cut off from the worship of God and directed only to ancestor worship (ibid.: 70, 84). Legge deems Chinese people’s use of Daoist and Buddhist elements in ancestor worship as superstitious, while complaining that the five-bond ethics “says nothing about men’s duty to God” (ibid.: 87, 105). Overall, Legge feels that ancient Chinese faith in God should be revivified in the common practice of xiao in China.

In sum, Legge interprets xiao as embodying one’s reverence for the parents and piety towards God. For Legge, the divine meaning of xiao is well attested in both the Bible and Ruist texts. Legge’s intertextual exploration between xiao, filial piety and devotion to God suggests how Ruist love and Christian love can empower and complement each other in the development of human virtue.

3.2.5 Zhong忠: the heart as the foundation of love, faith and divine union

The notion zhong忠 is indispensible to Kongzi’s teaching on human virtue. Zhong denotes sincerity and truth in one’s heart. In the Lunyu, Kongzi highlights zhong in various contexts with regard to other principles such as ren and xiao, and Legge translates zhong differently based on the context in which it is mentioned. For Legge, zhong is apparently connected to Protestant ethics on many levels, as this notion is closely associated with feelings and conduct of love, faith and forgiveness. As a whole, what substantiates Legge’s multiple renderings is his constant endeavour in communicating God’s love through Kongzi teaching.

According to Xu Shen, zhong忠, meaning “to revere”, combines the radical 心

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22 Yao and Shun are said to be the rulers during the period of the Three Huang and Five Di三皇五帝 (ca. 2852 – ca. 2070 BCE) (see note 20 in the fourth chapter). Yao was succeeded by Shun.
(heart; mind) and the phonetic element 中. Thus Xu Shen deems zhong as a character of xingsheng (phono-semantic compounds). Legge does not follow Xu Shen here. For Legge (1861: 3; 1893: 139), zhong embodies 中 ("middle" or "the centre") and 心 ("the heart"), thereby presenting "loyalty, faithfulness, action with and from the heart". Legge views zhong from a moral and spiritual perspective, interpreting it as the emblem of one’s innermost devotion (to God the central divine power) and benevolent action (for others). Through his symbolic reading of zhong, Legge stresses faith and grounds it in his Sino-Christian vision.

For Anne Cheng (1997: 70-71), Kongzi’s discussions on zhong reflect the Master’s personality: being gentle, serious, respectful and serene, Kongzi looks for the equilibrium between the integrity of the self and altruistic values. On his way of arriving at a balanced view of the world, zhong 忠 and shu 忍 (heartfelt consideration, empathy or forgiveness) are both important to the shaping of Kongzi’s moral character: zhong demands Kongzi to be true to his self, while shu encourages him to think for others (ibid.: 70). In brief, Anne Cheng here suggests that zhong in the Lunyu is formulated through Kongzi the man and thus rooted in the humane.

In Legge’s thought, however, zhong should be understood within and beyond humanity, in the intertextuality of human morality and divine love. Like xiao or filial piety, zhong is associated with ren as virtue, and Legge’s translation of zhong signals a profound intertextuality between Ruist love and Christian love. As Christianity accentuates the relation of God’s love to human faith in God, Kongzi notes, “愛之，能勿勞乎？ 忠焉，能勿誨乎？” (XIV, 8), and Legge (1861: 142; 1893: 278) translates: “Can there be love which does not lead to strictness with its object? Can there be loyalty which does not lead to the instruction of its object?” Legge’s

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23 While Legge interprets xin 心 as “heart” in discussing zhong, he also recognises xin as “mind” in Zhu Xi’s context (see the fifth chapter).
translation links *ai* (“love”) and *zhong* (“loyalty”) through the Ruist–Christian connection, highlighting Kongzi’s religiousness in relation to Protestant virtue.

Furthermore, Legge values the unity of Kongzi’s doctrine that reveals the Sino-Christian meaning of love and loyalty. Legge views Kongzi as a man of humility and transcendence, in particular in the way he shows his virtue to the disciples. When Kongzi tells Zengzi that “吾道一以貫之”, Legge translates, “my doctrine is that of an all-pervading unity”; Zengzi’s explanation, “夫子之道，忠恕而已矣”, is then translated into: “The doctrine of our master is to be true to the principles of our nature and the benevolent exercise of them to others,—this and nothing more” (IV, 15; 1861: 33-34; 1893: 169-70). Legge’s translation suggests Kongzi’s devotion to the conception of “unity”, which embodies *zhong* as the “principles of nature” within his self and *shu* as the altruistic action of “benevolence”. Legge’s reading of *zhong* and *shu* stresses Kongzi’s way of achieving moral equilibrium between his inward feelings and outward actions. Yet for Legge, Kongzi’s way of *zhong* and *shu* also denotes a transcendental dimension concerning God’s all-pervading, unifying force.

Insofar as Legge perceives the being of God as relative, he deems Kongzi’s teaching as containing an element of sacred devotion to God. The *Lunyu* tells us that Kongzi teaches four things, “文 行 忠 信” (VII, 24), which Legge (1861: 66; 1893: 202) translates as “letters, ethics, devotion of soul, and truthfulness”. Whereas Legge criticises Kongzi for lacking awareness of spiritual beings (see 2.4), his interpretation of *zhong* into “devotion of soul” here echoes his view of Kongzi as a religious teacher, inviting his readers to envision Kongzi’s religiousness in his lifelong commitment to education. Moreover, *zhong* in this passage not merely concerns *wen* 文 (“letters”) and *xing* 行 (“ethics”), but also relates to *xin* 信 (“truthfulness”). In the *Lunyu*, Kongzi discusses the significance of *zhongxin* 忠信 in a few other
occasions, and Legge’s translation of zhongxin underlies the intertextuality between Ruist and Protestant ethics:

主忠信，無友不如己者，過則勿憚改。 (I, 8; IX, 24)\(^{24}\)

Hold **faithfulness and sincerity** as first principles. Have no friends not equal to yourself. When you have faults, do not fear to abandon them. (1861: 5, 88; 1893: 141, 224)

言忠信，行篤敬。 (XV, 5)\(^{25}\)

Let his words be **sincere and truthful**, and his actions honorable and careful. (1861: 159; 1893: 295)

In the first example, Legge’s translation indicates Kongzi’s adherence to the right. Here, zhongxin as “faithfulness and sincerity” relates Kongzi’s first principles to Christian faith. In the second example, Legge again sheds a Protestant light on the way Kongzi connects zhongxin in a man’s words to the reliability of his action. While bearing God in his mind, a man who speaks truth with sincerity would generate benevolence. In Legge’s interpretation of zhongxin as faith, sincerity and truth, it is God’s love that motivates a man like Kongzi to choose his friends carefully and strive for moral ascendancy and accuracy.

Legge further incorporates the Christian focus on providential governance in Kongzi’s notion of zhong. He translates Kongzi’s remark “君使臣以禮，臣事君以忠” (III, 19) into: “A prince should employ his ministers according to the rules of propriety; ministers should serve their prince with **faithfulness**” (1861: 25; 1893: 161). Here, zhong as “faithfulness” is contextualised in the ruler–servant relationship: the ruler expects complete faith of the ministers by treating them with propriety, just

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\(^{24}\) Literally “Abide by loyalty and faith, have no friends inferior to yourself, and when you err do not fear to correct your mistake”.

\(^{25}\) Literally “Speak with loyalty and faith, act with sincerity/determination and respect”.

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as God demands thorough devotion from His servants by giving His love to them. Elsewhere, Legge’s rendering of Kongzi’s saying “居之無倦，行之以忠” (XII, 14) reads: “The art of governing is to keep its affairs before the mind without weariness, and to practice them with undeviating consistency” (1861: 121; 1893: 257).

Interpreting zhong as “undeviating consistency” in this case, Legge alludes to consistent divine governance upon human affairs. Kongzi’s ideal government echoes Legge’s thought on the interaction between God and His followers. Legge parallels his theory of Protestant providence with Kongzi’s vision of state governance, and interweaves the two in his translation.

In Legge’s symbolic and religious reading, zhong bespeaks an original revelation regarding the linkage between human faith and divine love. Whereas Legge translates zhong in different terms based on Kongzi’s varied contexts, what underlies Legge’s work is the concept of spiritual constancy. Examining zhong through Legge, we feel Legge’s passion for unifying his and Kongzi’s thought into Sino-Christian harmony. By synthesising the ideas of loyalty, truth, devotion of soul, faithfulness, sincerity and consistency into poetic intertextuality, Legge’s renderings reflect his integral perception of Christianity and Ruist religiousness, as well as his strong belief in the way God contributes to the unity of one’s character.

3.2.6 Li 禮: reading Kongzi’s rules of propriety through the spirit of love

In conjunction with ren, xiao and zhong, the notion li 禮 runs deep in Kongzi’s ethics, specifically in the way it addresses the religious aspects in ancient Ruism. Alongside Kongzi’s discussions about li in the Lanyu, the role of li is demonstrated extensively in the Liji 《禮記》 (the Book of Rites). Translating li into “(the rules of) propriety”, “ceremonies” or “regulations”, Legge seeks to connect Kongzi’s conception of this term to love and spirituality. In this subsection I focus on Legge’s
interpretation of *li* in the *Lunyu*. Yet it should be remembered that, like his translation of other crucial Ruist notions, Legge’s intertextual reading of *li* is embedded in his thorough comprehension of ancient Chinese texts.²⁶

For Legge, the meanings of *li* are intertextual, and should be approached philologically and symbolically in the context of ancient Ruism and Chinese scholarship. Legge (1885: 9) defines *li* as an “ideagram [sic] of religious import” based on Xu Shen’s comment that “禮，履也。所以事神致福也”, which Legge translates as: “[*Li* is] a step or act […] whereby we serve spiritual beings and obtain happiness”. As Legge explains (1880a: 11-13; 1885: 9-10) according to Xu Shen, *li* combines the radical 示, meaning “spiritual beings”, appears in other relevant characters such as *shen* (spirits), *ji* (sacrifices) and *qi* (prayer); the right element 豐 “is phonetic”, while it also symbolises “a vessel used in performing rites”. The *Kangxi Dictionary* notes that 豐 was used alone as a character in ancient times, and later on 示 was added to it so as to emphasise the role of the rites. Quoting Xu Shen and the *Kangxi Dictionary*, Legge (1885: 10) observes that both forms, 禮 and 豐, convey the spiritual significance of *li* as a notion and practice.

Modern scholars approach *li* from different perspectives. Anne Cheng (1997: 74) is inclined to interpret Kongzi’s *li* within a humanist scope of ritual performance. However, Fu P’ei-jung (2010: 108, 107-115) argues that Kongzi is a conscious inheritor of the religious legacy of *li* in ancient China. The performance of *li* in the Xia, Yin and early Zhou dynasties stresses the “ideal about union”, the “tradition of culture” and the “concrete details of the ritual”; here, it is natural piety towards the conception of union that fulfils a ritual and makes *li* meaningful (ibid.). As Fu (ibid.: ²⁶ Whereas Legge’s translation of the *Liji* is not included in his *Chinese Classics*, it forms the third part of his *Sacred Books of China* (volume 27 of *The Sacred Books of the East*) (1885).
notes, Kongzi’s time saw the spiritual value of *li* and *yue* (music) severely corroded, and the *Lunyu* reveals Kongzi’s love for the ancient tradition by the way he eagerly seeks to revive it. Kongzi’s lament about the decline of *li* and *yue* suggests that he remains deeply concerned with the spiritual connotation in *li*, rather than simply deeming it as an instrument of secular moral or political schemes. Fu’s point echoes Legge’s view that *li* should be understood from spiritual and religious angles.

On translating *li*, Legge (1885: 10) employs Mengzi’s opinion that *li*, together with *ren* (“benevolence”), *yi* 義 (“righteousness”) and *zhi* 智 (“understanding”), is rooted in human nature and emotions. Humankind has a heart filled with natural feelings, and *li* stems from one’s feelings of modesty, courtesy, complaisance and reverence (*Mengzi* ‘Gongsun Chou’, 6 and ‘Gaozi’, 6; Legge 1885: 10; see also Legge 1861b: 79, 278; 1893b: 203, 402). Based on his intertextual comprehension of Mengzi, Xu Shen and the *Kangxi Dictionary*, Legge (1885: 10) points out the “twofold symbolism” of *li* as at once religious and moral. While *li* is important to the Ruist ideal of harmony and perfection, Legge finds it difficult to interpret *li* with the same term, and he chooses “the rules of propriety” and “ceremonies” rather than “rite/s” for translating *li*. In the *Lunyu*, *li* first appears in Youzi’s remark that “禮之用，和為貴” (literally “The use of *li* values harmony”) (I, 12), which Legge (1861: 7; 1893: 143) translates into: “In practising the rules of propriety, a natural ease is to be prized”. Here Legge (ibid.) notes:

禮 is not easily rendered in another language. There underlies it the idea of what is proper. It is 事之宜, ‘the fitness of things,’ what reason calls for in the performance of duties towards superior beings, and between man and man. Our term ‘ceremonies’ comes near its meaning here.

27 In discussing his choice of terms, Legge does not mention the term ‘ritual’.
In a sense, Legge’s choice of “propriety” and “ceremonies” reflects his critical assessment of *li*. Though revering Kongzi as a religious teacher, Legge criticises Kongzi for overemphasising the role of ceremonies (see 2.4). For Legge (1885: 10-11), Chinese people have focused excessively on “the fitness of things” or external formality, ignoring spiritual feelings that underlie the performance of sacrifices. According to Legge (ibid.), what matters in the ideal of *li* is the “spirit”, especially the spirit of love.

Interpreting *li* with reference to *ren, xiao* and *zhong* in Kongzi’s teaching, Legge highlights *li* as an expression of love, piety and devotion. Kongzi tells us that *xiao* (filial piety) means “無違” (literally “to be without disobedience”), which Legge translates as “not being disobedient”; the meaning of “無違” is “生事之以禮；死葬之以禮，祭之以禮” (literally “[When parents are alive] serve them with ritual, and when they are dead bury them with ritual and sacrifice to them with ritual”), which, according to Legge, means that “parents, when alive, should be served according to propriety”, that “when dead, they should be buried according to propriety”, and that “they be sacrificed to according to propriety” (II, 5; 1861: 11; 1893: 147).

Reading *li* (“propriety”) in the context of filial piety, Legge’s rendition invites us to rethink *li* as suggesting one’s devotion to the parents and the higher spiritual realm of God. Kongzi remarks that “吾不與祭，如不祭” (literally “If I do not participate in the sacrifice, it would be like I do not sacrifice”) (III, 12), which Legge (1861: 23; 1893: 159) translates into: “I consider my not being present at the sacrifice, as if I did not sacrifice”. While we can read Kongzi’s remark as addressing the importance of personal participation in the sacrifice, Legge’s translation stresses Kongzi’s ‘being present’. For Legge, Kongzi’s presence, like Christ’s, signifies the communion between humanity and spirituality. Though censuring Kongzi’s sometimes elusive attitude towards spiritual issues, Legge (ibid.) here highlights Kongzi’s “sincerity in
sacrificing”, implying that Kongzi’s emphasis on ancestor worship should be deemed as a reference to the worship of God in ancient China.

As Legge (1885: 1) observes, Mengzi provides a “more definite” language in addressing the moral aspects in human feelings. However, Kongzi also mentions the emotive dimension of li, conveyed through one’s feelings of simple joy or true sorrow. When Kongzi says, “禮，與其奢也，寧儉；喪，與其易也，寧戚” (literally “Regarding the ritual, economy is better than extravagance; regarding mourning, sorrowful feelings are better than formal details”) (III, 4), Legge (1861: 19-20; 1893: 155-56) translates: “In festive ceremonies, it is better to be sparing than extravagant. In the ceremonies of mourning, it is better that there be deep sorrow than a minute attention to observances”. Here, Legge’s translation again accentuates the spirituality of li: the role of ceremonies, whether festive or mournful, is to elevate the virtue of love and devotion.

Despite his criticism of Kongzi, Legge manifests and maintains Kongzi’s faith in ancient Chinese legacy through his interpretation of li in Kongzi’s teaching. Kongzi who describes himself as “信而好古” (literally “being faithful and fond of antiquity”) (VII, 1) is a man “believing in and loving the ancients” in Legge’s view (1861: 59; 1893: 195). The three themes Kongzi often discusses are “詩、書、執禮” (literally “[fragments of] the Shijing [the Book of Poetry], the Shangshu [the Book of Historical Documents] and the enactment of the ritual”) (VII, 17), which Legge translates as “the Odes, the History, and the maintenance of the Rules of propriety/Propriety” (1861: 64; 1893: 200). Legge’s use of “believing in”, “loving” and “maintenance” shows his perception of Kongzi’s true devotion to the ancient tradition.

As Legge (1880a: 3, 3-4) proclaims, Kongzi as the sage certainly “helped to preserve the ancient religion of his country”, and Ruist texts related to Kongzi
contain important religious teaching, similar to the role of the Old and New Testaments in Christianity. In translating *li*, then, Legge grounds Kongzi’s emphasis on “rules” and “regulations” in his zeal for preserving ancient Chinese culture. For example:

興於詩，立於禮，成於樂。(VIII, 8)

It is by the Odes that the mind is aroused. It is by the Rules of propriety/Propriety that the character is established. It is from Music that the finish is received. (Legge 1861: 75; 1893: 211)

殷因於夏禮，所損益，可知也；周因於殷禮，所損益，可知也；其或繼周者，雖百世可知也。(II, 23)

The Yin dynasty followed the regulations of the Hea/Hsiâ [Xia]; wherein it took from or added to them may be known. The Chow/Châu [Zhou] dynasty has followed the regulations of Yin; wherein it took from or added to them may be known. Some other may follow the Chow/Châu, but though it should be at the distance of a hundred ages, its affairs may be known. (Legge 1861: 17-18; 1893: 153-54)

Legge’s interpretation in these passages indicates the dual dimensions in the way Kongzi inherits the ancient spirits of *li*. By the “Rules of propriety/Propriety”, Legge reads Kongzi’s notion of *li* as a set of ethics and principles for establishing one’s character in relation to poetry, history and music. By “regulations”, Legge interprets Kongzi’s view of *li* as concrete laws and duties developed in ancient times, which should be carefully traced and followed. Both dimensions, when put together, manifest Kongzi’s love for ancient teaching.

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28 Literally “[Let one] be stimulated by poetry, stand by the ritual and achieve perfection through music”.
29 Literally “The Yin dynasty inherited the ritual of the Xia, and what they dropped from or added to it is knowable. The Zhou dynasty inherited the ritual of the Yin, and what they dropped from or added to it is knowable. If any, successors of the Zhou are knowable, though a hundred generations have passed since”.
As in the case of Zhong, Legge’s translation of Li connects Christian definition of love, duty and service to Kongzi’s view on proper ruler–servant relationship. Legge translates Kongzi’s remark “上好禮，則民易使也” (XXIV, 44) into: “When rulers love to observe the rules of propriety, the people respond readily to the calls on them for service” (1861: 156; 1893: 292). Stressing love and observance in the attitude of 上 (literally “those in the position of ascendency”), Legge presents Li as an occasion of religious and moral learning for rulers, who then act as the spiritual model for the people. For Legge, ruler–servant relationship in Kongzi’s ideal is similar to God–human relationship in Christian thought, and this Sino-Christian analogy manifests the spiritual dimension of Li as the “rules of propriety”.

In translating Li as a Ruist notion and practice, Legge’s stance is critical. He highlights love, spirituality and true devotion, which he thinks is not sufficiently revealed in Kongzi’s discussions. Yet Legge mitigates his criticism of Li through his intertextual apprehension of classical Chinese scholarship, sympathetically interpreting Kongzi’s role in transmitting ancient Chinese culture. Ultimately, love is central to Legge’s view of Li in relation to all other aspects in Ruist ethics.

3.3 Legge’s dialogic revisions from his 1861 edition to his 1893 one

In his lifelong engagement with the Chinese classics, Legge frequently rethought his work, making changes in it. Comparing his two editions of the Lunyu, we discover that Legge revised his translation and annotation on nearly every page. In some passages Legge changed a word or a phrase, while in others he revised his punctuation. Legge also revised his spelling and certain specific words into the capitalised form. For example, Legge revised ‘heaven’ to ‘Heaven’ in certain sayings, consistently using the capitalised ‘Heaven’ in his 1893 edition, except the case ‘son of heaven’.
amended a few Chinese typos. Through revising his *Lunyu*, Legge captures a new meaning in Kongzi’s discussions and refreshes his view of Kongzi. Focusing on several examples, I will show how Legge demonstrates his revisions as a series of dialogic performance.

Bakhtin emphasises the ‘unfinalising’ dialogue between two voices, languages and worldviews, and the way they inspire each other in a novel. In Legge’s context, his enjoyment and creativity in studying Kongzi encourages him to refine his translation. We see a change between Legge’s two editions at the opening of the text, where Kongzi expresses his happiness:

學而時習之，不亦說乎？有朋自遠方來，不亦樂乎？人不知而不慍，不亦君子乎？(I, 1)

Is it not pleasant to learn with a constant perseverance and application? Is it not pleasant/delightful to have friends coming from distant quarters? Is he not a man of complete virtue, who feels no discomposure though men may take no note of him? (1861: 1; bold 1893: 137)

Legge’s transformative rendering of le 樂 (to be happy) reveals his dialogic reflection between all his editions: he used “delightful” in his earliest specimen (see 1.3.1), changed it to “pleasant” in the 1861 edition, and revised it back to “delightful” in the 1893 edition. Does Legge’s eventual choice of “delightful” suggest his feeling of this term as expressing greater joy with a ‘light’ in it?

Elsewhere, we see a similar revision:

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31 For example, the typo 人 (1861: 3) was amended to 仁 (1893: 139) in “其為仁之本與” (I, 2).
32 See pp. 41-42 for my literal translation.
33 Legge made another change in the third verse. In the 1858 specimen he translated it into: “Is he not a man of complete virtue, who feels no anger and dissatisfaction, though men may take no note of him?” But Legge changed “anger and dissatisfaction” to “discomposure” in his two formal editions. This section focuses on Legge’s revision between his two formal editions.
34 In other passages, Legge also translates 樂 into “enjoyment” or “joy”.

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知之者不如好之者，好之者不如樂之者。(VI, 18)\(^{35}\)

They who know the truth are not equal to those who love it, and they who love it are not equal to those who find pleasure/delight in it. (1861: 55; bold 1893: 191)

Here again, Legge changed “find pleasure” to “delight”.\(^{36}\) On the other hand, Legge’s unchanged rendering of the pronoun 之 (it) into “the truth” suggests his adherence to the nuanced connotation of truth in the Ruist tradition, echoing his translation of Kongzi’s autobiographical statement. If the younger Legge simply finds pleasure in “the truth”, the elderly Legge, who delights in it, receives deeper meaning from Kongzi’s truth. Kongzi was a man who enjoyed life. He rejoiced in meeting a friend from a distant place (I, 1) and in cultivating his learning (VI, 18). He felt comfortable when retreating from the ritual of attending a formal audience (X, 4), and when he had the company of his disciples at a relaxing hour (XI, 25). He was happy when passing his leisure time at home, living a simple and honest life (VII, 4; VII, 15; X, 16), or when he was able to have a private, personal dialogue with a king (X, 5). Through their dialogic exchange of religious and philosophical thought, Legge becomes more open to what he received from Kongzi. He invites more light into the Lunyu, and he learns to share the Master’s joy in their interaction.

Another interesting revision is Legge’s addition of parenthesis with some particular words or phrases. For example, Legge changed his translation of “惟仁者，能好人，能惡人” (IV, 3) from “It is only the truly virtuous man, who can love, or who can hate, others” (1861: 30) to “It is only the (truly) virtuous man, who can love, or who can hate, others” (1893: 166). Legge parenthesises the adverb “truly” in the

\(^{35}\) Literally “One who knows it is not equal to one who is fond of it; one who is fond of it is not equal to one who enjoys it”.

\(^{36}\) Words such as delight, delightful or delighted appeared in a few other cases in the 1861 edition, yet Legge used them more frequently in the 1893 edition.
later edition, as this term does not appear in the original, yet it for Legge suggests Kongzi’s undertone in describing a virtuous man. Legge’s revision here also shows his attempt to manifest the sincerity of Kongzi’s virtuous man without betraying the original. In addition, Legge displays his agency by using the parenthletic technique to signal his own voice. As Legge’s view of Kongzi grows subtler, he is seeking new equilibrium between faith and creativity.

In another passage, Kongzi receives a child from Huxiang, where the residents are notorious for their incommunicable character. Here is the example and Legge’s revision:

互鄉難與言。童子見，門人惑。子曰；「與其進也，不與其退也。唯何甚？人潔己以進，與其潔也，不保其往也。」(VII, 28)

It was difficult to talk (profitably and reputably) with the people of Hoo-heang [Huxiang], and a lad of that place having had an interview with the Master, the disciples doubted. The Master said, “I admit people’s approach to me without committing myself as to what they may do when they have retired. Why must one be so severe? If a man purify [sic] himself to wait upon me, I receive him so purified, without guaranteeing his past conduct.” (1861: 68; bold added 1893: 204)

Legge’s addition “profitably and reputably”, while absent in the original, reveals his new view on the passage based on his regard for Kongzi as a religious teacher. Kongzi says that he would receive a man who “潔己以進” (literally “cleanses himself for coming to the meeting”, which Legge translates into “purify himself to wait upon me [Kongzi]”), even if Kongzi does not know whether or not this man, of a place like Huxiang, would remain good and virtuous when retiring from the

37 Literally “The people of Huxiang are difficult to talk with. A boy there met Kongzi, which perplexed the disciples. The Master said, ‘I am with his coming to meet me, not with his retreating. Why be so strict? A man cleanses himself for coming to the meeting. I appreciate his cleanliness. I do not warrant his past behaviour’”.

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interview. Legge (1861: 68; 1893: 204) notes that the theme here is Kongzi’s readiness “to meet approaches to him though made by the unlikely”. The elderly Legge sees more clearly the spiritual dimension in Kongzi’s vision of human purification concerning profit and reputation into the future. Legge has charged Kongzi for showing no interest in the idea of progress, the announcement of “new truths” and the initiation of “new economy” in relation to Christian providence (see 2.4). Yet Legge’s revision here demonstrates his reflexive identification with Kongzi’s sympathy for human transcendence.

There are other cases where Legge revises his translation by parenthesising a phrase or adding a new thought with parenthesis (see, for example, III, 8 and VII, 18). From these cases, as exemplified in the above two, we detect a multilayered pattern of dialogism. Legge vividly expresses his role as a reflexive translator through his parenthetic interpretations, weaving his creative thought in the translation without deviating from the original. On a second level, Legge’s parenthetic style activates the ‘double-languaged’ contexture between the original and the translation within them, thus inviting the readers to engage deeper in their textual and religious dialogue with both Kongzi and the translator.

Significantly, too, Legge capitalised critical terms denoting Chinese religious elements in the 1893 edition. He changed “state” to “State” in numerous cases (for example, X, 11, 14; XI, 25; XII, 7, 20), “propriety” to “Propriety” in certain passages (see VIII, 8 in 3.2.6), and “heaven” into “Heaven” in particular instances (see II, 4 in 2.4). These changes reveal Legge’s deepened faith in ancient Chinese religiousness, shown through his transformed perception of the deified role of the early Chinese state in regulating sacrifices, and the theological potency of Tian (Heaven) in Ruism.

It is often assumed that when one grows old, one tends to become more dogmatic. Legge’s revision of the Lunyu shows that this is not always the case. From
the above discussion, we see that the elderly Legge is more concerned with
manifesting the religious and philosophical nuances in the *Lunyu*. We also feel
Legge’s stronger passion for blending his own voice with Kongzi’s messages. Legge
learned to relate his Sino-Christian vision to the “Discourses and Dialogues” more
thoughtfully via his parenthetic reinterpreting, his capitalised “Heaven”, “Propriety”
and “State”, and his greater accommodation of the Chinese views. Legge’s revision
reverberates with his changing perspective on Kongzi and Ruism in the
‘Prolegomena’. Earlier, Legge charges Kongzi for his stagnancy and lack of spiritual
prospects. Later on, however, Legge reassures Kongzi’s status as a religious teacher,
whose instruction on humanity shows theological possibilities. By virtue of
revisionist dialogism, Legge ascertains us that Ruist China and Christian West can
continue to educate and illuminate each other in their religious connection.

**Conclusion**

Legge has a vast vision of love when he translates the principal notions in the *Lunyu*.
In interpreting these notions, Legge values Ruist and non-Ruist thinkers of ancient
China, using Mozi’s idea of *jian’ai* (universal love) to correct what he considers to be
problematic in the Ruist treatment of love, such as the tendency to view love as
graduated and the limitation of the five-bond ethics. Studying Legge’s translation of
*ren, xiao, zhong* and *li* in view of dialogism and intertextuality, we discover that
Legge conveys their meanings through the larger contexture of humanity, faith,
spirituality and divine love, encompassing Chinese and Western religious and
intellectual thought. For Legge, ultimately, it is in the love of God that we come to
terms with a foreign culture, relating it to our own while rethinking the common
grounds for all cultures.
The quest for universal divinity through the commonality between Jesus Christ, Kongzi, Mozi and other thinkers marks the distinctiveness of Legge’s work. Legge aspires to complete his whole duty in his explorations into the Lunyu, as he is sympathetic with the presence of the foreign, while being concerned with the relation of divine love to human development. Despite his criticism of Ruism in certain passages, Legge’s Lunyu moves beyond the dichotomy between sacred Christianity and secular China, manifesting faith in shared human spirituality that would pave the way for the discovery and creation of a new human religion. Believing that God is approachable to all, Legge encourages us to continue our study of his Lunyu – his visionary showings of “Discourses and Dialogues” – based on the spirit of universal love.
CHAPTER 4

Searching for a Universal Theology in Ruism:
Legge’s Interpretation of the Chinese Heaven and God in Relation to the Lunyu

Introduction

For Legge, Chinese people do know God, and God has existed in Chinese literature since earliest times. As I have shown, while Legge attempts to understand Ruism in its own terms based on his respect for Kongzi, he is confident in incorporating the Christian message of universal love in his translation of ren (“perfect virtue”), xiao (“filial piety”), zhong (“faithfulness”) and li (the “rules of propriety”) in the Lunyu. What underlies Legge’s dialogic, intertextual interpretation of these Ruist values is his belief that there has been a supreme spiritual being guiding the teaching of ancient Chinese fathers. In Legge’s view, the divinity of God in early China is manifest through three terms, Tian 天 (Heaven), Di 帝 and Shangdi 上帝 (both referring to the Supreme Ruler such as God), and the ways in which ancient Ruist texts address these terms show the Chinese awareness of High Deities or an omnipotent God.

As Michael J. Puett (2002: 25, 322-23) notes, early Chinese texts until the Western Han reveal a nuanced and vexed world of debate, concerning the tensions between humanity, divine powers and sacrifice that emerged in particular historical situations. Also recognising Heaven and Di as the highest divine beings in ancient China, Puett (ibid.: 80-121) urges us to look at how claims of self-divinisation (human attempts to gain the power of spirits for their specific purposes) arose from the multiple and sometimes contradictory explanations on Heaven–human or
Di–human relations in the Lunyu and other ancient Chinese sources. In this regard, both Legge and Puett remind us to revisit the theistic dynamics in early Chinese thought. Legge focused more on the Sino–Christian dialogue in his search for a universal theology in Ruism within the nineteenth-century debate on religion. Puett employs an anthropological approach to ancient Chinese theism across Ruism and other Schools, an approach also reflecting his critical study of various sinological accounts in the twentieth century. I argue that Legge’s work on China still displays a radical dimension, as it challenges the assumption that Ruism is simply secularist and encourages us to rethink how ancient Ruism might concern the questions of theology and transcendence.

In this chapter, I will discuss Legge’s interpretation of Tian, Di and Shangdi in relation to the Lunyu. These three notions are central to Legge’s conception of Ruism as a monotheistic religion. In the third chapter, I discussed the dialogic, intertextual nature of Legge’s Lunyu. This chapter will focus on Legge’s others writings, such as Letters on the Rendering of the Name God in the Chinese Language (1850), The Notions of the Chinese concerning God and Spirits (1852), the ‘Preface’ to the first volume of The Sacred Books of China (1879), The Religions of China (1880a), ‘A Letter to Professor F. Max Müller Chiefly on the Translation into English of the Chinese Terms Tî and Shang Tî’ (1880b) and ‘Christianity and Confucianism Compared in Their Teaching of the Whole Duty of Man’ (1883), amongst others. Having outlined Legge’s conception of God and the Chinese religion (see 2.3.1), I will analyse in detail the above sources by Legge in this chapter. Legge’s writings are crucial to dissecting the meanings of Tian, Di and Shangdi, as in them Legge provides a series of substantial arguments on the theological, philosophical and translatorial connection between Ruism and Christianity. Legge insists that the idea of God in Chinese should be formulated through a thorough comprehension of
ancient Chinese texts. Thus, this chapter aims to demonstrate how Legge’s other writings illuminate his perception of the Chinese Heaven and God with reference to the Lunyu and other relevant ancient sources.

This chapter first examines Legge’s interpretation of Tian as Heaven and his view of God in relation to Tian. For Legge, Tian illustrates the idea of the sky as a spiritual realm denoting God’s presence, and Kongzi’s notion of Tian testifies to the divinity of Heaven. I also investigate Legge’s view of ‘Heaven, Earth and humanity’ in Ruism, as shown in the Shangshu, the Yijing and the Lunyu. Since Legge deems God as the Creator of humankind and the universe, he is sympathetic with women’s inferior position in China, as is implied in the relation between (the dominant) Heaven and (the dominated) Earth in Ruist teaching. Concerned with the role of Heaven, Legge maintains that Chinese people need to recall the existence of God in their consciousness, and love is the key to resolving moral corruption in China.

This chapter then discusses Legge’s exploration of Di and Shangdi, the two terms Legge believes to be the Chinese designations of God. As I will show, Legge is convinced that we can understand Kongzi as a religious teacher by tracing Di and Shangdi in Ruist literature throughout Chinese history. In defending the religiousness of Kongzi and Ruism in relation to Christianity, Legge demonstrates his nuanced thought on Di and Shangdi in his writings, based on his intertextual comprehension of exemplary Chinese texts and Christian theological debates. Discussing Di and Shangdi in the context of Legge’s writings, I draw on how Legge formulates both terms as the Chinese language for God, and how his defence of the use of them informs his interpretation of God in relevant passages in the Lunyu.

I separate my discussion of Tian, Di and Shangdi into two sections, because I am aware that Kongzi does not always mention the three notions together in his teaching: insofar as the Lunyu is concerned, Kongzi only speaks of Tian, while the
discussions of *Di* and *Shangdi* by him or ascribed to him are to be found in other Ruist texts. Nonetheless, it is important to note that, in Legge’s thought, *Tian*, *Di* and *Shangdi* are closely related ideas, and Legge shows his endeavour to articulate these three notions in his writings and translations.

Affirming ancient Chinese faith in God, Legge is searching for the possibility of a universal theology by relating *Tian* to God’s revelatory language and by arguing that the Chinese have referred to God as *Di* and *Shangdi* throughout their history and in their literature. Legge believes that the more we comprehend the *Lunyu* in conjunction with other Ruist texts, the more likely we are to discover divine revelation and develop a clear, integral conception of Kongzi’s religiousness and ancient Chinese monotheism.

### 4.1 *Tian* 天:

**towards a universal theology through Heaven, Earth, humanity and love**

In Ruist literature, the notion *Tian* 天, meaning sky or Heaven, signifies the vast provider above the human world. *Tian* is capable of making all things on Earth possible, as it encompasses all practice of virtue. In many pre-Qin (pre-221 BCE) Ruist texts, *Tian* is often associated with the notions of *Di* and *Shangdi* (God or the Supreme Ruler from above), while it is also related to the concept of *Di* 地 (Earth or the ground).¹ According to the *Shangshu*, *Tian* is indispensible to the religious sacrifices of the early rulers Yao and Shun, who emerge as the deified *Di* Yao 帝堯 and *Di* Shun 帝舜, and whose canon has lastingly influenced Kongzi and his disciples. On the other hand, in the *Yijing*, *Di* (Earth) signifies the *yin* or feminine ground, contrary to the *yang* or masculine *Tian* (Heaven). In the *Lunyu*, Kongzi

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¹ While 地 (Earth) is pronounced as *di* in modern Chinese, 地 was not necessarily homophonous with *Di* 帝 in ancient Chinese. As Duan Yucai notes, the ancient pronunciation of 地 has been controversial in the phonology of the character.
speaks of Tian several times, regarding it as a divinising source; Kongzi does not mention a Supreme Ruler or elaborate Earth’s role, but he reveres Yao and Shun. Zigong, however, dismisses Di (Earth) as the place where things fall. In other major Ruist texts such as the Zhongyong, Kongzi discusses Heaven, Earth and Shangdi.

For Legge, then, it is important to grasp Tian (Heaven) in the Lunyu through a broader exploration into the Shangshu, the Yijing and other Ruist sources, in order to holistically comprehend the Chinese Heaven in relation to God, Earth, humanity and divine love. Legge deems such intertextual reading as crucial to envisaging ancient Chinese monotheism. As Legge (1893c: 3; 1882: 1-3) is aware, before Kongzi there had existed many ancient Chinese documents (which then were compiled as the Shangshu via Kongzi or others) and a version of the Yijing, and their relevance to Ruist teaching is evident in the Lunyu, where Kongzi mentions the Shu (possibly referring to fragments in the Shangshu) (II, 21) and the Yi (Yijing) (VII, 16), while the chapter containing Di (God) is drawn from related passages in the Shangshu. The Shangshu provides Legge with the basis for perceiving Yao’s and Shun’s divine roles in his interpretation of the Lunyu. Moreover, through the Yijing, specifically the Shiyi《十翼》(the Ten Wings or the Appendixes according to Legge), Legge finds the grounds for exploring God through the dynamics of yin (the feminine) and yang陽 (the masculine) in the threefold conception of ‘Heaven, Earth and humanity’.

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2 I cite Legge’s Shangshu (the third volume of his Chinese Classics) based on his 1893 edition, a reprint of his 1865 one. See also note 26 in the first chapter.
3 “書云孝乎，惟孝友于兄弟，施於有政” (“What does the Shoo-king/Shù-ching [Shangshu] say of filial piety? – ‘You are filial, you discharge your brotherly duties. These qualities are displayed in government’”) (Legge 1861: 17; 1893: 153).
4 “加我数年，五十以学易，可以无大过矣” (“If some years were added to my life, I would give fifty to the study of the YIH/Yijing, and then I might come to be without great faults”) (Legge 1861: 64; 1893: 200).
5 The Shiyi, also known as the Yizhuan《易傳》, refers to the ten commentarial texts (zhuan 傳) appended to the Yijing, which are usually included in standard modern editions of the Yijing. While the Shiyi was traditionally ascribed to Kongzi, scholars after Ouyang Xiu 欧陽脩 (1007–1072) began to doubt or reject this view. In Legge’s (1882: 26-31) view, Kongzi could not be the author of the Shiyi, in that these texts are not homogeneous and none of them bears the superscription of Kongzi.
Some modern scholars tend to stress the transformation from religion to politics in the Chinese references to *Tian* from antiquity to later dynasties. According to Max Kaltenmark (1961: 17, 43), *Tian* (Heaven) denotes the divinity of ancient China; the designation of early Chinese rulers as “the representative[s] of heaven” suggests the theocratic nature of the Chinese monarchy until the Qin dynasty (221–206 BCE). During the Han (206 BCE – 220 CE), however, Ruism (which Kaltenmark deems as non-religious) transformed the religious character of the monarchy into one based on secular moral governance (ibid.: 43). To Anne Cheng (1997: 48), the transformation of *Tian* from denoting religion to presenting politics had already begun during the Zhou (1046–256 BCE). King Wu of Zhou 周武王\(^6\) views his replacement of the Yin dynasty as a sign of *Tianming* (the mandate of Heaven), using it for justifying the political legitimacy of his Zhou regime (ibid: 48, 56). In this regard, Kaltenmark and Anne Cheng indicate how the emphasis on political governorship in Chinese history has tempered or altered the religious meaning of *Tian* in ancient China.

However, not all modern scholars take the above view. Modern sinological interpretations of *Tian* are quite contradictory (Fu 2010: 126-27). After Legge, Western missionaries such as Richard Wilhelm (1873–1930) maintained their theological focus on translating Ruist thought, suggesting that Kongzi’s idea of *Tian* contains theism or a monotheistic God (ibid.: 126). Chung-ying Cheng (1971) stresses more on how Kongzi perceives *Tian* and *ming* 命 (life, mandate, decree, fate or destiny)\(^7\) as humane elements in one’s moral development. Whereas Christianity defines God as the Supreme Creator that predestines one’s life, Ruist

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\(^6\) King Wu of Zhou was the official founder of the Zhou dynasty, and he inherited the moral leadership of his father King Wen 文王.

\(^7\) In the *Lunyu*, Kongzi mentions *ming* in some passages, but not always precedes it with *Tian* (Heaven). Legge interprets Kongzi’s notion of *ming* as “the decrees/appointments of Heaven” even in the cases where *Tian* is not mentioned. Later translations either make Kongzi’s idea of *ming* more secular, or reintroduce its sacred connotation. For example, Arthur Waley (1938/2000: 130) translates *ming* in this saying into “fate”, D. C. Lau (1979: 96) interprets it as “Destiny”, while Anne Cheng (1981: 74) renders it into “Décret Céleste [Celestial/Heavenly/Divine Decrees]”.

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teaching highlights the co-working of *Tiandi* 天帝 (Heaven-God which combines *Tian* and *Di* [God]) and humanity, as well as one’s ability to create meanings for one’s own life in relation to the dynamics of nature and reality (ibid.: 117). Yet Chung-ying Cheng (ibid.: 118) appreciates the “moral autonomy” preserved in both Ruist and Christian religious consciousness, admitting the possibility of probing universal ethics in Ruist–Christian dialogue. From an anthropological perspective, Puett (2002) reconsiders the impact of Heaven–human dynamics on the design of imperial regimen in line with specific individuals and events since the Western Han.

In Legge’s view, the central meanings of *Tian*, *Di* and *Shangdi* always spring from the religious rather than the political, and Ruism strengthens their religious meaning rather than weakening it. By translating these terms into Heaven and God while highlighting their interconnection, Legge inquires into how these terms preserve Chinese divine consciousness despite the dynastic changes in China. While Legge deems *Di* and *Shangdi* as the Chinese terms for God, he carefully elaborates *Tian* or Heaven in Ruist texts, regarding it as indispensible to Chinese people’s vision of God. Here, we should be aware of a distinction between Legge’s understanding of *Tian*, *Di* and *Shangdi*, and his perception of the Roman Catholic use of *Tianzhu* (the Lord of Heaven). Legge appreciates *Tian* for its role in developing theological Ruism. Yet on translating God into Chinese, Legge prefers *Di* and *Shangdi* to *Tianzhu*. As I will discuss in the next section, Legge accuses *Tianzhu* of its inappropriate combination of Heaven and Lord, as in Legge’s theory God is the Supreme Ruler rather than simply the Lord, while God is related to universal subjects, not merely to Heaven. On the other hand, Legge holds a high regard for Ruist *Tian*. Legge’s respect for *Tian* and rejection of *Tianzhu* is predicated on his Scottish Protestant perspective, which stresses the use of Ruist terms for communicating biblical messages to Chinese people who would then spontaneously recognise Christian ethical values.
through the Ruist tradition (Pfister 2004/II: 224).

On the meaning of *Tian*, Legge again consults Xu Shen (ca. 58 – ca. 147 CE), and he appends Dai Tong’s (ca. 1200 – ca. 1284 or 1285) explanation. According to Xu Shen, *Tian* 天 means 顛 (top); the character 天 comprises 一 (one) and 大 (great), thus showing a supreme entity paramount to all. Dai Tong, in his *Liushu gu* 《六書故》(II), explains *Tian* as “在上而大者”, meaning “that which is above and great”. Adopting Xu’s and Dai’s views, Legge (1879: xxiv; 1880a: 9, 8-9, 60) interprets *Tian* as “one” or “unity” over “great”, being at once a symbol of the visible sky and a reference to spiritual Heaven. *Tian* as Heaven signifies “the ruling Power”: it “embraces all” through its providential arrangements, and “awakens the idea of the sky” in its infinite magnitude (Legge 1880a: 8-9; see also 2.3.2).

In his ‘Letter’ to Max Müller on translating the Chinese names for God into English, Legge (1880b: 8, 8-9) maintains that *Tian* presents a spiritual entity by which the Chinese speak of God, “the One Supreme Being over all”, not simply one of the chief gods in the Chinese religion. For Legge (1880a: 8-11; 1880b: 9), the structure of *Tian* signals the ancient Chinese conception of God by its presentation of “the Great One”. Through the character *Tian*, God on high is to be revealed as the ruling power of love, spirits, matter and humanity. With reference to *Tian*, Legge (1880b: 18) further asks: “How does the idea of God first arise in the human mind? How did it become the practice, universal perhaps, certainly not confined to China, to use the name of the visible sky in the sense of God?” As Legge (1850: 38, 53, 57) notes in his *Notions*, *Tian* or Heaven in Ruist texts potentially points to God’s universal power and love; it should be understood as a metaphor for divine truth rather than a non-theistic term that obscures such truth. Precisely because there has been an interchange of expression between *Tian, Di* and *Shangdi* in Ruist texts and in numerous Chinese scholars’ usage, Legge is certain that *Tian*, a transferrable notion
in relation to God, is crucial to “the theology in the Chinese classics” (Legge 1880b: 9, 29; see also Legge 1879: xxiv). In considering the role of Tian in ancient Chinese thought, Legge has moved beyond Christian bigotry (see Legge 1877b), in order to probe the possibility of a universal theology in Ruism.

If Tian for Kongzi presents a realm of high spirituality, encouraging one to realise ren, xiao, zhong and li, then Legge’s translation of Tian into Heaven also denotes God’s love and compassion. Legge’s attempt to develop a theology from Ruist texts is echoed in his interpretation of Tian in the Lunyu. Kongzi remarks: “天生德於予” (literally “Tian gives birth to de [spiritual power, moral power or virtue] for me”); Legge’s translation reads: “Heaven produced the virtue that is in me” (VII, 22; 1861: 66; 1893: 202). While Kongzi regards Tian as the procreator of moral power and deems himself as its receiver, Legge interprets Tian as divine producer of virtue (the principal term Legge uses to translate ren and Ruist love), presenting Kongzi as a figure similar to Jesus Christ. According to Legge, Kongzi bears Heaven’s creation and virtue in his consciousness (“in me”), just as Christ is the mediator between divinity and humanity.

In another example, Kongzi says: “不怨天, 不尤人。下學而上達。知我者, 其天乎”, which Legge translates into: “I do not murmur against Heaven. I do not grumble against men. My studies lie low, and my penetration rises high. But there is Heaven;—[sic] that knows me!” (XIV, 37; 1861: 152-53; 1893: 288-89) Here “下學而上達” also means “I teach those below and [then] reach Heaven” or “I chased down teaching and elevate/rise to virtue”. These alternative interpretations show how Kongzi achieves high virtue through educating the inferior. Legge’s rendition (“[m]y studies lie low, and my penetration rises high”), nevertheless, stresses more on how heavenly divinity guides Kongzi in studying “men and things” with a penetrating spirit, so as to grasp “the high principles involved in them” or Tianming (which
Legge here renders as “the appointments of Heaven”) (Legge 1861: 153; 1893: 289) (see also 2.4 and note 7 above). Seeing God through Heaven, Legge portrays Kongzi as conscious of God in his attempt to understand humanity and affairs by means of divine instruction.

In Legge’s view, Kongzi’s notion of Tian or Heaven implies the way the world acts through God; Kongzi implicitly admits Tian as divine guidance for humans who often are troubled by their limitations. Despite his criticism of Kongzi’s reservations about the purpose of Tian (see 2.4), Legge’s translation presents Kongzi’s discussions on Tian as beginning points for exploring God’s divine action. To give an example, here are a dialogue between Kongzi and Zigong, and Legge’s translation:

子曰：「予欲無言。」
子貢曰：「子如不言,則小子何述焉？」
子曰：「天何言哉?四時行焉，百物生焉，天何言哉？」(XVII, 19)

The Master said, “I would prefer not speaking.”
Tsze-kung [Zigong] said, “If you, Master, do not speak, what shall we, your disciples, have to record?”
The Master said, “Does Heaven speak? The four seasons pursue their courses, and all things are continually being produced, but does Heaven say anything?” (1861: 190; 1893: 326)

We should first note a grammatical shift from the inactive wu 無 ([to have] nothing) to the active bu 不 (not [doing/to do something]) in the original. Kongzi wishes “無言” (to “have nothing to say”) (line 1), but Zigong replies: “子如不言，則小子何述焉？”, literally “Master, if you are not speaking, then how can we, your disciples, narrate about it?” (line 2) Legge’s translation does not make this inactive/active distinction, yet the shift from wu to bu alerts us to the linguistic logic in early
Chinese texts.\(^8\) Zigong’s response also refers to another saying by Kongzi: “述而不作” (“I narrate and do not create”, which Legge translates as “[I am] [a] transmitter and not a maker” based on Zhu Xi’s (1130–1200) explanation of *shu* 述 as “傳舊而已” [“to transmit the old and that is all” or in Legge’s rendition, “simply to hand down the old”] (VII, 1; Zhu 1182/1983: 93; Legge 1861: 59 and 1893: 195). In response to Zigong, Kongzi says: “天何言哉？四時行焉，百物生焉，天何言哉？”, literally “Tian, has it a word to say? Four seasons operate by it, hundreds of things live through it, Tian, has it a word to say?” (line 3) For Kongzi, *Tian* guides humans via the *xing* 行 (action) of four seasons, followed by the *sheng* 生 (birth or creation) of all things, rather than through *yan* 言 (speech). By adding “continually” to his translation,\(^9\) Legge shows how Heaven here may denote God’s action, leading our surrounding world to always seek its highest purpose. To Legge, God’s action for the creation and continuum of the universe is beyond human language, and it is in this reading that Heaven shows God’s superlative virtue.

In annotating the above passage, Legge (1861: 190; 1893: 326) mentions the difficulty in defending Kongzi “from the charge of presumption in comparing himself to Heaven”, because Legge views Heaven as divine reminder of human imperfection. Yet Legge uses Zhu Xi’s gloss to mitigate his criticism of Kongzi. Zhu (1182/1983: 180) regards Kongzi’s remark (“I wish to have nothing to say”) as a warning against some scholars (Zigong here) who judge a sage simply by his words. For Zhu (ibid.), Kongzi’s notion of *Tian* manifests “天理之實” (“the truth of *Tianli* [the principle of Heaven]”) prior to any speech.\(^10\) Through Zhu, Legge explains Kongzi’s “lessons and laws” as shown in his actions, not merely in his words. In sum,

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\(^9\) Legge uses the italics here to signify his own addition, but elsewhere he uses them to show what might be suggested in the original based on the Chinese commentaries (see II, 4 in 2.4).

\(^10\) I will explore further Legge’s dialogue with Zhu Xi on the principle of Heaven in the fifth chapter.
Legge envisions Ruist Heaven as the token of God’s workings, permitting us to reassess Kongzi’s religiousness through his actions in accordance with providence.

Elsewhere, Kongzi says: “獲罪於天，無所禱也” (literally “There exists/is no prayer when having committed a sin/crime against Tian”); Legge’s translation reads: “He who offends against Heaven has none to whom he can pray” (III, 13; 1861: 23; 1893: 159). Tian in Kongzi’s original remark can be interpreted as an impersonal entity with no deities. However, Legge translates Kongzi’s idea of Tian into Heaven as defined in Christianity, where God the personified Ruler (“to whom”) is to be recognised as the governor of the universe and human affairs. The shift from Tian to personified Heaven suggests Legge’s attempt to make a Chinese foreign notion coherent to the Protestant context so as to persuade his nineteenth-century Western readers that Kongzi’s teaching contains monotheistic truth. Legge further uses Zhu Xi’s and his followers’ commentaries to sustain his view that Ruist Heaven contains an image of God. Zhu (1182/1983: 65) notes that “天即理也” (literally “Heaven then is principle”), which Legge (1861: 23; 1893: 159) interprets as “Heaven means principle”. Legge then asks: “But why should Heaven mean principle, if there were not in such a use of the term an instinctive recognition of a supreme government of intelligence and righteousness?” For Legge, Zhu’s idea of the heavenly principle presents Heaven not as the material sky but as divine order, endowed with the character of a supreme regulator. Legge then (1861: 23; 1893: 159) consults 《四書拓餘說》 (which Legge translates as ‘A Collection of Supplemental Observations on the Four Books’) (1795) by the Qing scholar Cao Zhisheng 曹之升, and notes: “We find 天 [Heaven] explained in [Cao’s work] by 高高在上者, ‘The lofty one/One

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11 Legge (1861: prol. 132; 1893: 131) writes: “[Cao’s] work contains what we may call prolegomena on each of the Four Books, and then excursus on the most difficult and disputed passages. The tone is moderate, and the learning displayed extensive and solid. The views of Choo He/Chû Hsi [Zhu Xi] are frequently well defended […]. I have found the Work very instructive”.
who is on high”. Legge’s use of Zhu’s and Cao’s commentaries here shows his belief of a personified supreme God in the living Ruist tradition.

Significantly, concerned with the theological potency of Heaven in the Lunyu, Legge is aware that Tian in Ruist literature is often associated with Di 地 (Earth) and ren 人 (humanity). Here, Legge values the Shangshu and the Yijing as the main sources for tracing the symbolic meanings of ‘Heaven, Earth and humanity’ and their implications for Ruist teaching. As I have noted, the Shangshu and the Yijing are both relevant to Kongzi’s discussions and the development of Ruism. By studying these two texts, Legge is searching for a more complete system of God in Ruism, seeking to measure the extent to which God underlies and unifies the Ruist ‘Heaven, Earth and humanity’ through their yin–yang transformations.

The Shangshu notes: “惟天地萬物父母” (literally “Only Tian [Heaven] and Di [Earth] are the father and the mother of all things”), which Legge translates into: “Heaven and Earth is the parent of all creatures” (‘Tai Shi’; 1893c: 283-284). The indicative “is” Legge uses suggests his view of Tiandi 天地 (“Heaven and Earth”) as one unit, whereas we may alternatively interpret Heaven (father) and Earth (mother) as two separate elements. Legge’s translation hence alludes to the oneness of God the Creator.

Moreover, by examining the yin–yang relation in the Yijing (the Shiyi), Legge seeks to unravel a Ruist theology which for him underwrites the connection between Heaven, Earth and humanity. In the Yijing, the emblem of Tian (Heaven) is the trigram qian 乾, denoting father, sun and yang 陽 (the bright and masculine), while the emblem of Di (Earth) is the trigram kun 坤, denoting mother, moon and yin 陰 (the dark and feminine). Tian (Heaven) begins things, and Di (Earth) completes them. Accordingly, Legge draws on this passage:

12 The notions yin and yang appear in the ‘Xici’ and the ‘Shuogua’.

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昔者聖人之作易也，將以順性命之理，是以立天之道曰陰與陽，立地之道曰柔與剛，立人之道曰仁與義。兼三才而兩之，故易六畫而成卦。分陰分陽，迭用柔剛，故易六位而成章。（‘Shuogua’，2）

In the past, change (yi 易) was the wise men’s making which they applied to smoothen/conform the patterns (li 理) of life (xing 性 [yin yang xing] and ming 命 [fate]), that with which the way of Heaven is established is called yin and yang. (That with which) the way of Earth is established is called soft and hard (two yi-categories). (That with which) the way of men is established is called benevolence (ren 仁) and righteousness (yi 義). Simultaneously there are three powers with two sides, for which reason change has six strokes that then create the gua, divided into yin and yang, alternatingly being soft and hard. Consequently the change’s six positions create the compositions (of the sixty-four hexagrams). [my translation]

Anciently, when the sages made the Yi, it was with the design that (its figures) should be in conformity with the principles underlying the natures (of men and things), and the ordinances (for them) appointed (by Heaven). With this view they exhibited (in them) the way of heaven, calling (the lines) yin and yang; the way of earth, calling (them) the weak (or soft) and the strong (or hard); and the way of man, under the names of benevolence and righteousness. Each (trigram) embraced (those) three Powers; and, being repeated, its full form consisted of six lines. A distinction was made of (the places assigned) to the yin and yang lines, which were variously occupied, now by the strong and now by the weak forms, and thus the figure (of each hexagram) was completed. (Legge 1882: 43, 423-24)

My translation shows how Heaven (yin and yang), Earth (soft and hard) and humanity (benevolence and righteousness) dynamically present the patterns of life in relation to the wise men’s creation of change. Legge, however, translates “將以順性命之理” (literally “[the wise men] applied [their making of change] to smoothen the patterns of xing [yin yang xing] and ming [fate]”) into “it was with the design that (its figures) should be in conformity with the principles underlying the natures (of men and things), and the ordinances (for them) appointed (by Heaven)”. In Legge’s view, Heaven designs and determines the change, inspiring the sages to exhibit the ways of
Heaven, Earth and humanity.

For Legge (1882: 43-44), the Yijing reveals a holistic universe underwritten by a divine being (manifest as Heaven here) beyond the yin-yang dichotomy. Legge further discusses Zhu Zhen’s 朱震 (?–1138) commentary:

易有太極, 太虛也。陰陽者, 太虛聚而有氣也。柔剛者, 氣聚而有體也。仁義根於太虛, 見於氣體而動於知覺者也。自萬物一源觀之謂之性, 自稟賦觀之謂之命, 自通天地人觀之謂之理, 三者一也。

In the change there is the Great Ultimate. This is the Great Void. Yin and yang are the amassed qi\(^{14}\) that exists in the Great Void. Soft and hard are amassed qi with a body. Benevolence and righteousness take root in the Great Void, are seen in the body of qi, and move according to perception/consciousness. Viewing them from the one origin of the ten thousand things, it is called xing (yin yang xing). Viewing them from their endowments, it is called fate. Viewing them from going through Heaven, Earth and men, it is called principle/pattern. The three are one. [my translation]

In the Yi there is the Great Extreme. When we speak of the yin and yang, we mean the air (or ether) collected in the Great Void. When we speak of the Hard and Soft, we mean that ether collected, and formed into substance. Benevolence and righteousness have their origin in the great void, are seen in the ether substantiated, and move under the influence of conscious intelligence. Looking at the one origin of all things we speak of their nature; looking at the endowments given to them, we speak of the ordinations appointed (for them). Looking at them as (divided into) heaven, earth, and men, we speak of their principle. The three are one and the same. (Legge 1882: 44)

Legge’s interpretation “ether collected, and formed into substance” (compared with “amassed qi with a body”), “nature” (compared with “yin yang xing”), “the ordinations appointed (for them [all things])” (compared with “fate”) and “(divided

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\(^{13}\) Zhu Zhen, a Song scholar before Zhu Xi, completed the Hanshang yizhuan《漢上易傳》 (Commentaries on the Appendixes to the Yi) in 1136.

\(^{14}\) Qi 氣 (vital force; energy) contains an abstract principle rather than being material or a physical matter (see the fifth chapter). Juqi 聚氣 (amassed qi) is a technical term in the Yijing.
into) heaven, earth, and men” (compared with “going through Heaven, Earth and men”) tellingly shows his theistic reading of Zhu Zhen. For Legge, Zhu Zhen elucidates God’s being that turns things from the Great Void into substance, affirming their good nature (benevolence and righteousness) through divine intelligence; God as the ultimate oneness creates the universe and divides it into Heaven, Earth and humanity, governing their movements while making them related universally. Legge (ibid.: 44) perceives such oneness as the abstruse meaning of the Yi, manifesting God through creation and cosmogony. As Legge (1880a: 95-96) proclaims in his *Religions of China*, Heaven, Earth and humanity should be deemed as the joined elements of God’s plan, given that God is the “true parent of all things”. In Legge’s thought, it is by recognising God that we can discern a penetrating, God-inspired principle in the unified Heaven, Earth and humanity, which substantiates the divinity of Ruist literature at large.

Whereas the *Yijing* presents Heaven, Earth and humanity as interrelated and equally important, Kongzi does not discuss the relation between Heaven and Earth in the *Lunyu*. However, Zigong states that Kongzi receives his learning from King Wen and King Wu of Zhou, whose doctrines “未墜於地，在人” (“have not yet fallen to the earth/ground” and “are to be found among men”) (XIX, 22; Legge 1861: 210 and 1893: 346). Zigong stresses ren 人 (humanity) as the upholder of the ancestral canon, yet ‘humanity’ here does not include women, and Earth is deemed as a threat resulting in the fall of the canon. Although Zigong does not mention Heaven here, his view tendentially perpetuates the male Heaven’s high position and the female Earth’s low position in Ruist teaching.

In Legge’s view, nonetheless, God makes Heaven and Earth to constitute the one universe, creating men and women to form the complete meaning of humanity. Accordingly, Legge is sympathetic with women’s situation in China, based on his
observation of how Chinese women have experienced the ‘husband to wife’ relation in the five-bond ethics in Chinese history and reality. Legge (1880a: 107-112, 266; 1883: 28-29) laments women’s inferior position in Chinese family and society, although he admits that a woman would be respected in China when she becomes a mother. As Legge notes (1880a: 111), a woman “has no occasion to bless the religion of China”, while Kongzi and Mengzi pay little attention to women in their discussions. In Legge’s opinion (1880a: 108-109; 1883: 29), the practice of concubinage in China, by which a man is allowed to have a wife (qi 妻) and one or more mistresses (qie 妾) (see also St. André 2003a: 54), has resulted in women’s slavery and has aggravated the inequality between men and women. Legge especially condemns the infanticide of girls and foot-binding in China. He deems infanticide as a lack of love, and quotes a Mohammedan placard in Guangzhou as saying that foot-binding is a sin “against the Supreme Lord” (Legge 1880a: 111).

The ‘woman problem’ in China prompts Legge to correct Ruism through Christianity. Legge (ibid.: 266, 266-67) thinks that Christianity “vindicates for woman a position of equality with man”, as the Bible (1 Peter 3:7; Ephesians 5:25) teaches that husbands should love and honour their wives rather than treating them as domestic servants. Legge (1880a: 266) also notes that “there is neither male nor female” in Jesus Christ. For Legge, Christianity is more advanced on gender issues than Ruism, because Christ’s compassion for humanity transcends the male–female dichotomy.

Concerned with moral corruption and women’s situation in Chinese history, Legge seeks to theologically retrieve the high virtue of Tian in ancient Chinese knowledge, while using his translation to manifest Tian as the guiding principle for

15 For a historical discussion on foot-binding and the European perception of it, see Patricia Buckley Ebrey (2003).
human rulers. This is shown in his critical view of this passage in the *Lunyu*:

大哉，堯之為君也！巍巍乎！唯天為大，唯堯則之。蕩蕩乎！民無能名焉。巍巍乎！其有成功也；煥乎，其有文章！ (VIII, 19)

Great indeed was Yaou/Yâo [Yao] as a sovereign! How majestic was he! It is only Heaven that is grand, and only Yaou/Yâo corresponded to it. How vast was his virtue! The people could find no name for it. How majestic was he in the works which he accomplished! How glorious in the elegant regulations which he instituted! (Legge 1861: 78; 1893: 214)

Kongzi uses “巍巍乎” (“how majestic”), “蕩蕩乎” (“how vast”) and “煥乎” (“how glorious”) to express his admiration for Yao in relation to Heaven. Literally, “唯堯則之” means “only Yao imitates it [Heaven]”. Here *ze* 則 (to imitate) corresponds to *shu* 述 (to narrate), as shown in “述而不作” (“I narrate/imitate and do not create”) (VII, 1). The parallelism in “巍巍乎！其有成功也；煥乎，其有文章！” (literally “How majestic! There exists accomplished achievement; How glorious: there exist cultured/elegant rulings!”) also suggests an exclamation. Legge is aware of *ze* as ‘to imitate’, but here Legge (ibid.) bases his translation of *ze* (“corresponded”) on Zhu Xi’s (1182/1983: 107) explanation that *ze* means “能與之準” (literally “to have the ability to be with it [by its] standard”, which Legge renders into “could equalize with it”). Accordingly, Legge’s interpretation of “蕩蕩乎” as “[h]ow vast was his virtue” is also predicated on Zhu’s (ibid.) gloss that “獨堯之德能與之準” (“Only Yao’s de [spiritual power, moral power or virtue] is able to be with it [Heaven] by its standard”). Through Zhu, Legge presents Kongzi’s vision of Yao as the ruler with heavenly virtue. Nonetheless, Legge critiques Kongzi’s comparison of Yao to *Tian*.

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16 Literally “民無能名焉” means “people had not the ability to name it”. This again reveals Kongzi’s implicit distinction between moral leaders and common people.
17 Legge (1885: 430) translates “天垂象，聖人則之” (*Liji*, ‘Jiaotesheng’, 24) into “Heaven hangs out its brilliant figures, and the sages imitated them”.
18 Legge here quotes Zhu’s gloss “能與之準” without mentioning Zhu’s name.
Insisting that *Tian* acts as the agent of God’s divineness, Legge (1861: 78; 1893: 214) notes Kongzi’s lack of “a right knowledge of, and reverence for, Heaven”. For Legge, the correct understanding of Heaven is to recognise it as the virtuous being on high, alluding to God and transcending humanity. Thus, although Legge admits Yao’s merits, in Legge’s thought Yao cannot be compared to Heaven and God.

In his *Religions of China* (1880a) and his ‘Christianity and Confucianism Compared’ (1883), for example, Legge charges Yao for using concubinage as a means of testing Shun’s character, as the *Shangshu* records that Yao gave his two daughters simultaneously to be Shun’s wives (‘Yushu’ I, 4; see also Legge 1893c: 26-27). Despite Yao’s good intention, as Legge (1880a: 109; 1883: 29) notes, the later Chinese monarchs’ practice of concubinage caused evils, corruption, and women’s sufferings. Therefore, Legge laments Kongzi’s failure to comment on the problem of concubinage.

Though critiquing Yao and Kongzi in the above instances, Legge remains convinced that *Tian* presents the essence of Ruist theology through Kongzi’s reference to it. The rationale of Legge’s *Letters on the Rendering of the Name God in the Chinese Language* (1850: 45) and *Religions of China* (1880a: 4-6, 22-26) sees Legge maintain his faith in Kongzi as the legitimate heir of ancient Chinese monotheism. According to Legge, we should broadly view Kongzi as being conscious of heavenly divinity in the way he transmits Yao and Shun’s canon, while Kongzi’s teaching sets a model for the dynastic rulers and literati after him in the continued development of religious Ruism.

The capitalised Heaven, which appears more frequently in Legge’s revised edition, shows Legge’s deepened belief in *Tian* as the agent of God and the foundation of Ruist theology. For Legge, *Tian* should not be deemed as the material sky. On the contrary, *Tian*, as the Ruist reference to divinity against moral corruption,
enables us to probe the meaning of God. Nonetheless, to Legge, God loves all beings equally, while women’s situation in China suggests that Chinese people are yet to learn how to love more fully. In Legge’s thought, if the Chinese recall God in their consciousness and admit God as the universal savior, they will become more advanced on being good and beneficent.

4.2 *Di 帝* and *Shangdi 上帝*:

Legge’s intertextual exploration into ancient Chinese faith in God and the role of God in the Lunyu

In ancient Ruist texts, the terms *Di 帝* and *Shangdi 上帝* refer to the presence of a God or Supreme Being in relation to Heaven and Earth, and they are relevant to the formation of early Chinese religion. In the *Lunyu*, *Di 帝* (God) appears in the first chapter of the last book ‘Yao Yue’, which bears a close relation with the *Shangshu*, a defining text for Yao and Shun’s canon. Apart from the *Lunyu* and the *Shangshu*, both *Di* and *Shangdi* are seen in many other Ruist texts. Kongzi speaks of *Tian* and shows his devotion to Yao and Shun in the *Lunyu*, while he discusses *Di* and *Shangdi* in other texts such as the *Zhongyong*. In Legge’s view, *Di* and *Shangdi* express the personified God par excellence in Chinese, playing a central role in defining Ruism as a monotheistic religion.

On *Di* and *Shangdi*, Kaltenmark and Anne Cheng draw on how the ancient divine connotation in these terms has become tenuous since the Warring States period (475–221 BCE). As Kaltenmark (1961: 17-18) notes, *Di* had a long history in ancient China, ultimately referring to a supreme deity *Shangdi* in relation to Heaven. But in 288 BCE, King Zhaoxiang of Qin 秦昭襄王19 (325–251 BCE) took the title

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19 King Zhaoxiang of Qin was a ruler of the state of Qin during the Warring States period. The state of Qin later conquered the other states and established the Qin dynasty.
Xi Di 西帝 (Di of the West). Though transient, this title marked a shift in the meaning of Di from religion to secular rulership (ibid.: 18). Anne Cheng (1997: 54) deems the Qin dynasty (221–206 BCE) as the turning point. Prior to the Qin, the rulers were generally called Wang 王 (King, for example King Wu of Zhou [Zhou Wu Wang]), while Di was reserved for referring to the mythical governing figures from higher antiquity, the period of the Three Huang and Five Di 三皇五帝 (ca. 2852 BCE – ca. 2070 BCE).\textsuperscript{20} Yet when the King of Qin, Zhou Zheng 趙政 (Ying Zheng 嬴政) (259–210 BCE) unified China in 221 BCE, he designated himself as Shi Huangdi 始皇帝 (the First August Emperor) (ibid.: 54). Zhou Zheng’s legacy is manifest in his self-declaration as China’s first emperor, and in the fact that his Qin reign signifies the inception of imperial China, an era which lasted until the beginning of the twentieth century. From the Qin onwards, then, Di has often been used within the term Huangdi 皇帝 (Emperor), referring to China’s secular rulers.

Other modern scholars attempt to rediscover the supernatural roles of Tian, Di and Shangdi in the pre-Qin (pre-221 BCE) formation of the Chinese religion. For Puett (2002), Heaven and Di alert us to the complex nuances in ancient China’s theistic narratives. Kelly James Clark and Justin T. Winslett (2011) have also reassessed the presence of High Gods or High Deities in 25 pre-Qin texts, not sanctioned by the Ruist genre.\textsuperscript{21} In these texts, Tian appears 324 times, Shangdi appears 91 times, and Di appears 44 times; all three terms often emerge as divine punisher or rewarer, guiding the human world through providence (ibid.: 937-39). Such a result shows that early Chinese literature is replete with imaginings of

\textsuperscript{20} Although the period 三皇五帝 is known as the Three Sovereigns and Five Emperors, I use the literal Huang 皇 and Di 帝 to refer to it, because, as I will show later, Huangdi 皇帝 (commonly translated as emperor) was not used before the Qin.

\textsuperscript{21} Clark and Winslett’s database contains Ruist texts, e.g. the Lunyu, the Mengzi, the Xiaojing, the Shangshu, the Shijing and the Yijing, etc., and non-Ruist texts, e.g. the Chuci, the Mozi, the Laozi, the Hanfeizi 老子, the Hanfeizi 韓非子 and the Sunzi bingfa 孫子兵法, etc.
extrahuman beings, and hence it is problematic to assume that the Chinese religion simply concerns immanence without manifesting a transcendent Law or God. Overall, Puett’s view and Clark and Winslett’s findings invite us to move beyond the religion/secularism or transcendence/immanence dichotomies, rethinking the religious legacy of pre-Qin literature for the development of later Chinese regimes.

To Legge, the presence of Tian, Di and Shangdi in pre-Qin and post-Qin Chinese literature – in particular in Ruist texts – serves as the evidence of enduring Chinese religiousness. Legge believes that the reference of these terms to the supreme God has been preserved in the Chinese mind throughout the dynasties, regardless of the political factors in Chinese history. Insofar as Tian enables us to probe the theology in Ruism, Legge is certain that Di and Shangdi best express the name of God in Chinese. Legge adopts the explanations on Di by Xu Shen and Dai Tong. As Xu explains 帝 as deriving from 上 (shang, above), Legge (1879: xxiv) interprets 上 as “what is above”, i.e. the supreme power that marks the character of 帝.22 Legge (ibid.: xxv) then values Dai’s comment “帝，都計切主宰之尊稱，故天曰上帝，五氣曰五帝，天子曰帝” (Liushu gu, I), translating it into: “ Ti [Di] is the honourable designation of lordship and rule. Therefore Heaven is called Shang Ti; the five Elementary Powers [金, 木, 水, 火 and 土, or Metal, Wood, Water, Fire and Earth] are called the five Ti; and the Son of Heaven – that is, the Sovereign – is called Ti”. Both being ancient Chinese notions, as Legge (1879: xxv) argues, Di and Shangdi are the personal names by which the Chinese speak of God, just as early Christian fathers employ the word God so as to address the “Supreme Power in the absolute” out of the vaguely expressed Heaven.

Legge insists on using Di and Shangdi to translate God, based on his deepened

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22 Yet Legge is skeptical about Xu Shen’s explanation that the phonetical element of 帝 is ci 束, saying that no similitude could be found in the forms or sounds of 帝 and 束.
knowledge of ancient Chinese texts and careful examination of contemporary missionary accounts. In Legge’s time, Christian missionaries in China debated on translating God into Chinese, which split them into three parties. The Roman Catholics maintained that Tianzhu 天主 (the Lord of Heaven) was the Chinese name for God. Legge, the English and Scottish Presbyterians, the Wesleyans, the London missionaries and the Germans believed the answer was Di or Shangdi. The American Protestants, such as William Jones Boone (1811–1864 or 1874) of the Episcopal Church, and the supporters of the Church of England, deemed Shen 神 (Spirit or spiritual beings) as the proper term (Girardot 2002: 276-77). There were disagreements even amongst the British Protestant missionaries. In the 1840s, Legge agreed with Robert Morrison (1782–1834), William Milne (1785–1822) and Joshua Marshman (1768–1837) that Shen was the term for God. Yet later on, he shared Walter Henry Medhurst (1796–1857) and Charles Gutzlaff [Karl Gützlaff]’s (1803–1851) view that Di and Shangdi were the proper Chinese names for God, while Shen referred to a false god or inferior gods (Legge 1850: 4; Mungello 2003: 591).

Legge’s Letters on the Rendering of the Name God in the Chinese Language (1850) and his Notions of the Chinese concerning God and Spirits (1852) provide us with a basis on which to understand his translatorial choice of Di and Shangdi, as well as his intertextual exploration into ancient Chinese faith in God. The two works were initially written as a defense against his detractors, specifically Bishop Boone. According to Boone (1848; 1850), the Chinese have been polytheists: they are not aware of a God as defined in Christianity, and thus it would be unacceptable to use the name of the chief god in China for the translation of Jehovah, Elohim or Theos. For Boone (1850: 4-5), in order to abide by the First Commandment and the Bible while avoiding the problem of polytheism, it is necessary to use the generic term of
the Chinese gods, *Shin [Shen]*, to render God into Chinese. In contrast to Boone, Legge (1852: 7) writes:

Do the Chinese know the true God? Among all the Beings whom they worship, does one stand forth, so pre-eminent in his attributes, so distinguished from all the others, that we cannot but recognize in him the high and lofty One, who doeth according to His will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, the blessed and only Potentate, of whom and through whom and to whom are all things? These questions I answer unhesitatingly in the affirmative.

By strongly affirming Chinese people’s faith in God, Legge launches a series of arguments against Boone’s opinions. Insisting that God is a relative term rather than a generic one, Legge believes that God has been present in the Chinese consciousness through *Di* and *Shangdi*, while the Chinese religion has been monotheistic since earliest times, able to be connected in equivalent terms with Christianity (see also 2.3.1). From Legge’s *Letters* and *Notions*, we can see that Legge is keen on developing meaningful dialogues with his Christian contemporaries on the theological question of the Chinese God and High Deities. Contrary to Boone and many other missionaries, however, Legge is apparently much more sympathetic with the Chinese, constantly signalling his (Western) readers that divine truth should be sought in Chinese literature and in its intertextuality with Western theological writings, rather than simply in the Bible.

First, Legge (ibid.: 10-16) argues that God’s existence has been evident in the *Yijing* and in the later Chinese commentaries on it, contrary to Boone’s claim that the *Yijing* is an atheist or non-theistic text. For Legge, the interpretations by Kong Anguo (ca. 156 – ca. 74 BCE), Cheng Yi (1033–1107), Cheng Hao (1032–1085) and Zhu Xi, as well as the revisions by scholars of the Kangxi reign (1661–1722) have all acknowledged *Di* as the Supreme Ruler, which for Legge signifies the equivalent of
Christian God. Legge thus defends Zhu Xi against Boone’s criticism of Zhu as atheist. In Legge’s view (ibid.: 17), Zhu is an innovative, respectable thinker who “often gets the better of his philosophy” in his elaboration of Taiji (the Great Ultimate), li (principle) and qi (vital force or energy), and Legge goes on to proclaim that Zhu “speaks like a true Theist” in many passages. As Legge (ibid.: 16-22) notes, Zhu considers the yin–yang (feminine–masculine) relation as the interaction between gui 鬼 (ghost) and shen 神 (spirit), yet Zhu does not deny the existence of Di, the Ruler on high over gui and shen. Thus, Legge deems Boone’s use of Shen for translating God as utterly unfavourable in that it may put the Chinese religion in a state of inferiority. In addition, as Legge (1850: 56-58) argues, it is the relative Shangdi rather than the generic Shen that is capable of unfolding the idea of Trinity (the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost/Spirit) in Chinese.

In his Letters (1850) and Notions (1852), while Legge disapproves of the use of Shen within the Protestant camp, he also disagrees with the Roman Catholic use of Tianzhu. For Legge (1850: 58; 1852: 130), although Tianzhu is also a relative term like Shangdi, it would be inappropriate to use Tian as the prefix to God, for God is the Lord of Heaven, Earth and “every portion of the universe”, rather than simply being associated with Heaven. Legge (1852: 130) also argues that Zhu 主 has been commonly used to translate the concept of the Lord, while God corresponds to the term Ruler. Here, Legge again shows a strategic shift of viewpoints with regard to his addressees. On the one hand, Legge appreciates the fact that there has been an interchange of Tian, Di and Shangdi in the way the Chinese refer to High Deities. On the other hand, Legge uses Di and Shangdi as a defense against the Catholic term Tianzhu, although in his translation he is sympathetic with Ruist Tian. In Legge’s interpretation, as discussed earlier, Tian or Heaven contains an allusion to God and serves as the beginning point for the discovery and development of the theology in
Ruiism. Nevertheless, in defending his support of *Di* and *Shangdi* against the Roman Catholics, Legge disregards *Tianzhu* as incapable of fully expressing the attributes of God. Moreover, compared to *Tianzhu*, Legge (1852: 130, 130-32) thinks that *Shangdi* presents the original designation of God in China, and it is “what God is in English, what *Elohim* was in Hebrew, what *Theos* was in Greek”. Accordingly, Legge’s distinction between God and Heaven has more to do with his defense of the use of *Di* and *Shangdi*, for while Legge dismisses the use of *Tianzhu* in his writings, he reveres Ruist *Tian* in his translation. Overall, Legge is confident in his independent Congregational approach and in its contribution to the present progress of Christianity and world religions. While maintaining that *Di* and *Shangdi* most lucidly convey the Chinese names of God, Legge views *Tianzhu* as a past Roman Catholic invention by Pope Clement XI (1649–1721), in many ways unrepresentative of God in Chinese.

For Legge (1850: 9-27; 1852), God is related to everyone and everything in the world: the varied designations such as the Hebrew *Elohim*, the Greek *Theos*, the Chinese *Shangdi* and the English God speak to the same Supreme Being, the One who unites the world through His omnipresent power and divine love. According to Legge (1852: 77), generic nouns such as “tree” or “city” do not make sense unless we express them by “this tree” or “the city of London”; these nouns pertain to many and “cannot be given to one without the help of a restrictive term or phrase”. However, God as a relative term is not limited by such expressions, while it has “in itself a definitive restrictive force”, in the sense that there can be only “one father in a family, one master in a household, one sovereign in a nation” (ibid.: 77). In this regard, Legge draws on various sources in support of his thought that God is just as relevant to China as it is to the West and all other cultures, and that the nature of the one God is intertextually revealed in the ideas of Christian theologians and other
religious thinkers. As Legge (ibid.: 82-96) notes, St. Athanasius (ca. 296-298–373), John Calvin (1509–1564), Stephen Charnock (1628–1680), Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727), Samuel Horsley (1733–1806) and the American Horace Bushnell (1802–1876), amongst others, have all sought to clarify the truth of God as relative in their understanding of the attributes of God. In addition, the Jews and the Mohammedans in China have approached this issue similarly by seeing God as relative, and since they define God’s role as the Judge, God is thought to be connected to the spiritual rather than the material (ibid.: 83, 132-33). In relation to all these views endorsing the relative nature of God, Legge is certain that the existence of God in the Chinese religion could be traced in all major Ruist texts through the designations of *Di* and *Shangdi*.

On the Chinese use of *Di* for *Huangdi* (Emperor), Legge shows his revisionist perception grounded in his vision of Chinese monotheism and awareness of the pre-Qin/post-Qin distinction. As Legge (1850: 42) suggests, although the Chinese have used both *Shangdi* and *Huangdi*, they would not confound the idea of the Supreme Being with that of an emperor. For Legge (1852: 125; 1879: xxvi-xxix; 1880b: 18), Chinese use of *Di* shows an analogy between *Di* and Elohim, or between *Di* and Divus: these terms initially were the designation of the Supreme Ruler and presented the idea of God, yet they were subsequently applied to earthly emperors. As Legge (1879: xxviii) comes to discover, the pre-Qin sovereigns were never called *Huangdi*. Kongzi addresses Yao and Shun solely by their names in the *Lunyu* and in other Ruist texts, while *Di* either appears alone or precedes Yao and Shun in the sense of *Di* Yao 帝堯 and *Di* Shun 帝舜 in the *Shangshu*. Thus, Legge (ibid.: xxviii-xxix) believes the use of *Di* in pre-Qin Ruist texts reveals its status of “Divus” or “the Divine One”, higher than *Shen*, human rulers and lower-rank ministers.

In the *Lunyu*, Kongzi speaks of *Tian* in a few passages, but he does not mention
Di or Shangdi. Yet in the Zhongyong Kongzi remarks: “郊社之禮，所以事上帝也” (literally “The li [sacrifice/rites] of jiao [a suburb designated to Heaven] and she [the spirits of the soil or Earth] is/are thus employed to serve Shangdi”) (XIX), which Legge (1861: 268; 1893: 404) translates into: “By the ceremonies of the sacrifices to Heaven and Earth they [King Wu and the duke of Zhou] served God”. Legge views this remark as an important proof of Kongzi’s support for monotheism, paralleling it with the biblical passage “They knew God” (Romans 1:21) as the epigraph to his Religions of China (1880a). Another relevant remark in the Liji reads: “祭帝於郊，所以定天位也；祀社於國，所以列地利也” (‘Li Yun’ 25), which Legge (1885: 385) translates into: “They [the ancient kings] [...] sacrificed to God in the suburb (of the capital), and thus the place of heaven was established. They sacrificed at the altar of the earth inside the capital, and thus they intimated the benefits derived from the earth”. According to many passages in the Liji, Di or Shangdi is often associated with Heaven and Earth. Thus, whereas Kongzi does not always mention Heaven, Earth and God together, Legge coherently perceives Kongzi’s teaching in all Ruist texts, so as to come to terms with an outline of Ruist theology. The less it seems that Kongzi discusses the relation between God, Heaven and Earth, the more it provides Legge with the possibility to inquire into their divine connection. In Legge’s view, the numerous religious references in ancient Ruist texts pinpoint Kongzi’s spiritual character. Moreover, as Legge explains in his Notions, Di and Shangdi often resurge in Chinese literature through the dynasties, indexically showing the preservation and continuance of China’s monotheistic tradition.

Viewed in the above light, Legge believes that the appearance of Di in ‘Yao Yue’ of the Lunyu contextualises Kongzi’s teaching through ancient Chinese monotheism and the Shangshu, where the religious elements in ‘Yao Yue’ are to be found. ‘Yao Yue’ shows the teaching of China’s ancient sovereigns: Yao 堯, Shun
舜, Yu the Great, 大禹, Tang, 湯 and King Wu of Zhou. At the opening, Yao teaches Shun:

天之曆數在爾躬，允執其中。(XX, 1)

Oh! you, Shun, the Heaven-determined order of succession now rests in your person. Sincerely hold fast the Due/due Mean. (Legge 1861: 214; 1893: 350)

As Legge (1861: 214-15; 1893: 350-51) explains, “天之曆數” literally means “the represented and calculated numbers of heaven”, which can be elaborated as “the divisions of the year, its terms, months, and days, all described in a calendar, as they succeed one another with determined regularity”. Legge notes that he follows Zhu Xi (1182/1983: 193), who interprets “曆數” as: “帝王相繼之次第，猶歲時氣節之先後也”, literally “The order of the succession of Di [God] and 王 [King] is like the sequence of year, time, energy and season”. Legge echoes Zhu’s view on the principle of Heaven as the transcendental law (see 5.2.2). Accordingly, Legge’s translation, “the Heaven-determined order”, accentuates the succession from Yao to Shun as divine predetermination, first mediated through the heavenly principle and then through Yao’s teaching.

In the same passage, Shun follows Yao’s canon and passes on his sovereignty to Yu the Great, who then founded the Xia dynasty. Subsequently, Tang, founder of the Yin dynasty, announces his substitution of the Xia dynasty and banishment of its last ruler 桀 (Lu Gui 履癸) to be an action by Heaven’s mandate, which should be examined by Di. Tang says:

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23 Yu the Great was the first ruler of the Xia dynasty.
24 Tang was the first king of the Yin dynasty.
25 桀 is said to be a corrupt ruler.
Legge’s interpretation of Tang’s prayer to Di and Huanghuang Hou Di (the Majestic Supreme Ruler) manifests God’s role as divine punisher and rewarder in the arrangements of ancient Chinese sovereignty. Based on his theory of the divinity of Di in his Notions, Legge (1861: 215; 1893: 351) describes the term 皇皇后帝 as “the remarkable designation of God”. In particular, by translating Tang’s remark “簡在帝心” (literally “the reading exists in the mind of Di”) into “[t]he examination of them [the ministers of God; the virtuous men whom Tang would call to office] is by thy mind, O God”, Legge (1861: 216; 1893: 352) sees in Tang a desire to “act in harmony with the mind of God”, as Tang represents God’s will “in his punishing or rewarding”.

While Tang founded the Yin dynasty, it declined at the hand of its last ruler Zhou 紂 (Di Xin 帝辛). In the passage below, King Wu, the founder of the Zhou 周 dynasty, declares that his decision to depose Zhou 紂, the last ruler of the Yin dynasty, is a sign of Heaven’s mandate, like Tang’s deposition of Jie. King Wu says:

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26 The substance of this passage can be found in ‘Tang Gao’ (Announcement of Tang), in the ‘Shangshu’ (‘Book of the Yin/Shang Dynasty’) of the Shangshu (III, 3).

27 In Legge’s annotation, he revised the appellation of the ancient rulers from “emperors” (1861: 215) to “kings” (1893: 351), as he becomes aware of the pre-Qin/post-Qin distinction on the application of Di and Huangdi (1879: xxvi). On the term Hou (queen or empress), Legge notes that although it now often refers to “empress”, in ancient times it was used for “sovereign” and applied to “emperors” (1861)”kings” (1893), and in Tang’s prayer it is in apposition with Di.

28 Like Jie before him, Zhou 紂 is said to be a tyrant.
雖有周親，不如仁人，百姓有過，在予一人。（XX，I）

Although he [Zhou 紂] has his near relatives, they are not equal to my virtuous men. The people are throwing blame upon me, the one/One man. (Legge 1861: 215; 1893: 351)

In interpreting “雖有周親，不如仁人”, Legge again incorporates the commentary by Zhu Xi (1182/1983: 193), who cites Kong Anguo’s remark\(^{30}\) that “周，至也” (“zhou 周 denotes zhi 至 [close]”), and that the sentence means “紂至親雖多，不如周家之多仁人” (literally “While Zhou 紂 has many close relatives, they cannot be compared to the numerous virtuous men [men of ren] in the Zhou 周 family”).\(^{31}\) Legge’s translation emphasises King Wu’s self-divinisation, like Yao, Shun, Yu and Tang before him. For the elderly Legge, especially, King Wu could be deified as the One, as he punishes the evil, secures the good and bears the woes of common people on behalf of God.

From Legge’s perspective (1852: 53-57; 1879: xxv-xxvi; 1880a), the Chinese have internalised their ancestral canon and remained faithful to their ancient high God, despite the emergence of Huangdi after the Qin. In this sense, although the Chinese have also worshipped other beings, Legge (1852: 57) believes that they remain monotheistic in their devotion to God, while their “superstition” and “idolatry” at worst are analogous to those in Roman Catholicism. In addition to early

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\(^{29}\) The substance of this passage can be found in ‘Tai Shi’〈泰誓〉(Great Declaration), in the ‘Zhoushu’〈周書〉(‘Book of the Zhou Dynasty’) of the Shangshu (IV, 1).

\(^{30}\) On Zhu Xi’s reference to Kong Anguo’s commentary, see Chen Feng-yuan (2005b: VI).

\(^{31}\) The twentieth-century translators have other explanations. For example, Arthur Waley (1938/2000: 219-220) translates “雖有周親，不如仁人” as “[a]lthough I have my Chou [Zhou] kinsmen, / [t]hey are less to me than the Good Men”. Here the speaker King Wu refers to himself as the subject, and “周親” refers to his own relatives in the Zhou 周 family. D. C. Lau (1979: 158) translates it as “I may have close relatives, / [b]ut better for me to have benevolent men”. Here the subject is also King Wu, while “周親” is interpreted as “close relatives”. Anne Cheng (1981: 152) translates it as “[j]’ai beau être à la tête des Zhou, / [j]e leur préfère les hommes de ren [even though I am in command of the Zhou people, I prefer the men of ren to them]”, the subject, too, is King Wu. The controversy lies in the fact that 周 may refer to the dynastic Zhou, yet it may also be used in the sense of zhi 至 (near; close).
Ruist texts, Legge (1852: 22-53; 1880b: 10) points out that *Di* and *Shangdi* have been revered as the highest deity in the state sacrifices of China later on. Here, Legge draws on the passages in the *Statutes of the Ming Dynasty* 《大明會典》(1497–1502, 1509–1511, 1529–, 1545–1549, 1576–1587), specifically the statement by Emperor Jiajing (reign 1521–1567) in 1538. For example:

仰惟玄造兮，於皇昊穹，時當肇陽兮，大禮欽崇。(*LXXXII*)

To Thee, O mysteriously-working Maker, I look up in thought. How imperial is the expansive arch, (where Thou dwellest.) Now is the time when the masculine energies of nature begin to be displayed, and with the great ceremonies I reverently honour Thee. (Legge 1852: 24)

朕祗於來月朔旦，躬率臣民，上尊皇天上帝泰號，仰高玄九重，預告於諸神眾祇，煩為朕運爾神化，昭爾靈顯，通朕微衷於上帝，祈賜允鑒之慈，享朕欽薦之號。(*LXXXII*)

On the first day of the coming month, We shall reverently lead our officers and people to honour the great name of *Shang-Te* [*Shangdi*], dwelling in the sovereign heavens, looking up to that nine-storied lofty azure vault. Beforehand, we inform you, all ye celestial and all ye terrestrial spirits, and will trouble you, on our behalf, to exert your spiritual influences, and display your vigorous efficacy, communicating our poor desire to *Shang-Te*, and praying Him mercifully to grant us His acceptance and regard, and to be pleased with the title which we shall reverently present. (Legge 1852: 26)

In Legge’s interpretation, Emperor Jiajing’s prayers to *Haotian Shangdi* 昊天上帝 and *Huangtian Shangdi* 皇天上帝 show his faith in God and his awareness that all the *shen* (spirits) and members of his earthly monarch are God’s servants. Legge (1852: 37; 1880b: 8) further proposes the comment “天帝一也” (“Heaven and Tī [*Di*] indicate one Being”) by another Song scholar Yang Fu 楊復, who is said to be one of Zhu Xi’s disciples. In so doing, Legge demonstrates that God, manifest as *Di* and
Shangdi in relation to spiritual Heaven, is not alien to the followers of Kongzi and Zhu Xi.

In his quest for divine truth through China’s connection with Christianity, Legge (1852: 111) maintains that Di and Shangdi, rather than Shen, make the Chinese truly related to himself and all other humans. Di and Shangdi, Legge (ibid.: 63) feels, enable Western missionaries to fully sympathise with the Chinese. As Legge is adamant about ancient Chinese faith in God, he thinks that our appreciation of Di and Shangdi in Chinese literature through history would contribute to an integral understanding of the religious commonality of Ruism and Christianity. More broadly, through his intertextual exploration of God in various cross-cultural writings, Legge believes that different peoples in the world can come to be united. Despite the different designations of God, Legge (ibid.: 111) is assured that humankind speak to God out of the same “mysterious springs” in their mind, and God promises the completion of the universe and the unity of humanity amidst human diversity. In Legge’s thought, our connection to God makes us understand that humankind is of one blood and one nature.

Conclusion

The Chinese divine consciousness is clearly shown in Legge’s exploration of Tian, Di and Shangdi. As Legge maintains that Tian, Di and Shangdi evince the being and attributes of God in Chinese, his interpretation of them invites us to re-evaluate Kongzi’s teaching in theological light, while opening up new Sino-Christian dialogue on understanding the higher purpose of humanity. There are many layers and nuances in Legge’s discussions on Tian, Di and Shangdi. Convinced that Tian acts as the base of Ruist theology, Legge examines this notion in the Lunyu through the virtue, action
and spiritual guidance of Heaven, deemed by Legge as God’s providence. Further, by looking at Kongzi’s teaching intertextually through the *Lunyu*, the *Shangshu*, the *Yijing* and other sources, Legge demonstrates that the Chinese from antiquity to subsequent dynasties do not simply envisage God as *Tian* or Heaven, but rather use *Di* and *Shangdi* to express their religious devotion and clarify God as the Supreme One. In conjunction with the Bible and the Christian theologians, Legge discusses the references to *Tian*, *Di* and *Shangdi* by Zhu Zhen, Zhu Xi, Emperor Jiajing, Yang Fu and other Chinese thinkers. In so doing, Legge points out how the theology in Ruism could be established from within the Chinese tradition, while also drawing lessons from Christian thought. In Legge’s vision, the alternating appearance of *Tian*, *Di* and *Shangdi* in Ruist literature proves that Ruism contains elements of both natural philosophy and revealed theology. Altogether these terms illuminate the theistic origin of Ruism, validating Kongzi as China’s religious teacher. Precisely because Legge sees the meaning of them as springing from the depth of ancient Chinese religiousness, *Tian*, *Di* and *Shangdi* for Legge present Ruism as a transcendental system of religion, capable of going beyond itself in order to arrive at the ultimate truth.

As we will see in the next chapter, Legge’s use of Zhu Xi’s commentaries in his *Lunyu* indicates how Zhu can be deemed as a theistic thinker and important mediator between Kongzi and Christianity. Through his dialogue with Zhu Xi, Legge unfolds many of his deepest concerns about the transcendental facets in Ruism, including the necessity of learning, the problems of human nature and original sin, the pathway to perfect virtue, and the recognition of Heaven and God as the highest principle.
CHAPTER 5

Reconnecting the ‘Study of Principle’ to the Lunyu and the Divine:
Legge’s Religious and Intertextual Dialogue with Zhu Xi

Introduction

In reassessing the scope of Legge’s Lunyu in dialogic and intertextual terms, another aspect requiring our in-depth reassessment is Legge’s unprecedented inclusion of the commentaries by Zhu Xi, the renowned Song dynasty thinker. Reading through Legge’s annotation on the Lunyu, we see Legge draw from Zhu most frequently. Zhu Xi’s canon bears on the intersections of society, state and religion in Chinese imperial history, contributing to the renewal of China’s statecraft tradition (William Rowe and K. C. Liu 2008: 77-79; Wm. Theodore de Bary 1999: 764-65). Legge’s choice of Zhu suggests his adherence to a long Chinese intellectual tradition in which the Lunyu and other important Ruist classics were made subservient to governance and orthodox state-ideological argumentation. Legge’s Zhu Xi-based annotation also reflects his understanding of a European tradition centering on the relation between religion and statecraft.¹ Thus, it is crucial to re-evaluate Legge’s hermeneutical association with Zhu.

In this chapter, I explore Legge’s use of Zhu’s commentaries in his Lunyu, focusing on how his Zhu Xi-based annotation helps to resituate Zhu’s lixue 理學 or ‘study of principle’ in the Sino-European debates on religion and philosophy. As I will show, Legge’s study of Zhu enables us to discover the spiritual or theistic

¹ As Legge (1861: prol. 106; 1893: 105) notes, just as Ruist virtue has been central to Chinese governance, so too Christian virtue has been fundamental to the relation between the church, state and society in the West.
elements in Zhu’s thought, while recognising many conceptual analogies between Ruism and Christianity, specifically on learning, nature, sin, evil and transcendence. Moreover, Legge’s dialogue with Zhu prompts us to move beyond any narrow doctrine and rethink the historical construction of tradition as well as the meaning of God on grounds of universal humanity.

Zhu Xi, one of the founders of Song Ruism or Neo-Confucianism, is often considered as an innovative thinker in Chinese history. Zhu’s commentaries occupy a fundamental position in the way Legge explicates many characters, phrases and passages in the Lunyu, even though he consults Kong Anguo, He Yan, Xing Bing and others. However, Zhu’s influence is liable to be misunderstood. For instance, Arthur Waley (1949/1960) criticises Legge for his seemingly slavish obedience to Zhu’s commentaries, yet as Girardot (2002: 358-59) notes, Waley misjudges Legge’s adoption of Zhu. While postcolonial perspective (see Wang 2008) has been central thus far, I value Girardot’s (2002: 359) reassessment that Legge recognises Zhu’s emphasis on “the need to understand” the scope of a text in its own terms. Legge is not an uncritical follower of Zhu (Pfister 2004/II: 181, 238-39), as the bilingual synthesis in Legge’s annotated translation demonstrates. Legge combines his own thoughts with a careful selection of Zhu’s ideas.

In this chapter, I mainly investigate Legge’s Zhu Xi-based annotation on the Lunyu. Where applicable, I also look at Legge’s ‘Prolegomena’ on the Daxue, the

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2 In this chapter and the thesis, I choose the term Song Ruism rather than Neo-Confucianism to refer to the movement of the ‘study of principle’ during the Song dynasty, and the Song Ruists rather than the Neo-Confucians to refer to the initiators of this movement, including Zhou Dunyi, Zhang Zai, Cheng Hao, Cheng Yi, Zhu Xi and Zhu’s contemporaries (see also 1.2.3).

3 Waley (1949/1960: VII) contends that many passages in Legge’s translation of the Mengzi are “certainly wrong”, partly resulting from Legge’s following Zhu Xi rather than an earlier scholar Zhao Qi 趙岐 (108–201). However, as Girardot (2002: 359) notes, Waley’s opinion here is incongruous, for Waley assumes that Zhu could not capture the original meanings of an ancient text owing to the greater distance of time between him and the text, but what underwrites this assumption seems to be another problematic assumption that his own twentieth-century edition could do better than the works in the previous centuries.
Zhongyong and the Mengzi for supplementary analysis. In general, however, we should remember that Legge consults Zhu on a regular basis throughout his Chinese Classics. As Martha P. Y. Cheung (2006: 15) notes, Chinese commentarial history (or “Chinese thought tradition”) suggests a methodological model of “discourse on translation” by direct and indirect layering; direct discourse features texts on translation itself and translation’s relation with outside factors, while indirect discourse deals with conceptual issues on translation and the cultural and intellectual foundation that sustains these issues (see also Cheung 2003: 395-99). Cheung’s view is related to my analysis of Legge’s engagement with Zhu Xi, in which I will show how Legge conceptually and strategically uses Zhu’s thought on ‘principle’ as an index of developing Ruist–Christian dialogue and as a mode of discoursing on proper techniques of interpreting the Lunyu.

This chapter introduces Zhu Xi’s Four Books, his underlying ‘study of principle’ and his role in the Sino-Western dialogue on religion and science. A comparative analysis of the early Jesuits’ ‘disguised approach’ to Zhu divulges how Legge reinstates Zhu’s significance to the Ruist–Christian dialogue. The Jesuits, in contrast, charged Zhu’s system as tendentially atheist, concealing Zhu’s influence on their interpretation (see Meynard 2011a and b). This analysis shows how we can rethink Zhu in light of religion, ethics and science. In this context, then, I discuss the way in which Legge rehabilitates Zhu’s canon and the Chinese commentarial tradition by looking at his revisionist assessment of Zhu’s contribution.

This chapter also examines particular examples of Legge’s use of Zhu Xi’s commentaries in his Lunyu. Legge’s citation of Zhu on the first character of the Lunyu, ‘xue’ 學 (learning), opens up a broader debate on the intertextuality between Kongzi’s teaching, the Daxue (the Great Learning) and Christian interpretations. Within this intertextual context, I discuss how Legge uses Zhu’s commentaries to
expand Kongzi’s notion of learning on to the Ruist Way of the Great Learning, where Legge raises his inquiries into the transcendental possibility of Ruism in relation to Christianity. Here, I compare the views of Kongzi, Zhu, the Jesuits and Legge, demonstrating that Legge’s approach to learning through Zhu is poised between religious immanence and transcendence, both of which are, as discussed in the third chapter, related to Legge’s engagement with Zhu for interpreting perfect virtue.

Legge is concerned with the philosophical and spiritual dimensions of Zhu’s analysis, and he shows how Zhu’s interpretation of the Lunyu cements the connection between Ruism and Christianity. Finally, I argue that Legge enthusiastically uses Zhu’s commentaries as a means of revealing the image of God, based on his perception of the Ruist Heaven and his belief in the theological potency of Ruism. This is shown in the way Legge embodies his conception of God with Zhu’s notion of Tianli 天理 (the principle of Heaven) in annotating some of Kongzi’s relevant discussions.

Through these varied perspectives, this chapter illuminates the ways in which Legge reconnects Zhu Xi’s thought and Song Ruism to his translation of the Lunyu, and to the questions of God and universal divinity. Legge respects Zhu’s canon and nuanced understanding of the evolving history of Ruism. On this basis, Legge’s use of Zhu demonstrates his capacity to synthesise the Chinese and Christian traditions on an even larger cross-cultural and cross-religious scale.

5.1 Zhu Xi, the Jesuits and Legge:
rejuvenating the ‘study of principle’ through Ruist–Christian dialogue

Zhu Xi’s contribution to Ruism is widely appreciated. In China, Zhu was canonised
as the leading figure of Ruist studies shortly after his death in 1200. Emperor Lizong of Song (reign 1224–1264) officially venerated Zhu in 1227, and the Yuan, Ming and Qing rulers employed Zhu’s hermeneutics on the Four Books as the basis for the civil examinations from 1313 until 1905 (Wing-tsit Chan 1963: 589; Zhu Jieren 1999/2010: 6). Zhu’s scholarship continues to exert a great influence. Many scholars now consider Zhu as one of the most authoritative figures in Chinese cultural history, recognising his centrality to the maintenance and transformation of Ruism. For Ch’ien Mu (2009), Zhu’s status is as important as that of Kongzi. In Gardner’s (1983: 183, 183-84) view, the philosophical issues which Zhu raised “continue to preoccupy the Chinese intellectual tradition until the present century”.

Clearly, Zhu opens up new prospects for Ruist studies, pioneering the early modernisation of Ruism and of Chinese culture writ large.

In the history of the Western translation of Ruist texts, nonetheless, Zhu Xi’s canon was subject to much skepticism and dispute amongst the Christian missionaries. As Thierry Meynard (2011a: 29-36) notes, the Jesuits in the seventeenth century disagreed with Zhu in their interpretation of the Ruist classics, judging Zhu’s commentaries as containing certain signs of atheism, pantheism and materialism. In the nineteenth century, some Protestant missionaries in China such as Bishop William Boone also showed a hostile attitude towards Zhu and his followers, disregarding their works as incompatible with biblical teaching (see the fourth chapter). Legge’s view of Zhu is thus distinctive from his Christian predecessors and contemporaries. Legge finds it necessary to incorporate Zhu’s commentaries in both his editions of the *Lunyu*, and he openly expresses his admiration for Zhu in his later edition.

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4 During Zhu’s life, Emperor Ningzong (reign 1194–1224) once employed Zhu as the imperial tutor but then banished Zhu and even prohibited his teaching in 1196. Yet Zhu continued to develop his scholarly work until his death (Wing-tsit Chan 1963: 588; Zhu Jieren 1999/2010: 5-6).
5.1.1 Zhu Xi: his thought and influence

Zhu Xi’s legacy is reflected in his innovative personality, enthusiasm for education, encyclopaedic comprehension of ancient Chinese teaching, and numerous scholarly works throughout his life. According to the statistics of the *Siku quanshu* 《四庫全書》 (the *Complete Library in Four Branches of Literature*) (1773–1782), Zhu’s extant works amount to over six hundred *juan* (twenty million or so Chinese characters), covering wide-ranging academic subjects (Zhu Jieren 1999/2010: 8-10). One of Zhu’s most remarkable achievements is his synthesis of the *Daxue*, the *Lunyu*, the *Mengzi* and the *Zhongyong* into the Four Books, wherein he fashions his interlinear commentaries on each passage in these texts, thus transforming the discussions of Kongzi and Mengzi on to a new analytical spectrum. Zhu is the great syncretist of the works by his Song predecessors such as Zhou Dunyi, Zhang Zai, Cheng Hao and Cheng Yi, based on whom he systematically developed his ‘study of principle’. Zhu’s thought has influenced both Chinese and Western thinkers on issues regarding religion and science.

5.1.1.1 Zhu Xi’s *Four Books* and ‘study of principle’

Zhu Xi’s synthesis of the Four Books best expresses the way he combines early Ruist teaching with the ‘study of principle’ in Song Ruism. Zhu gave primacy to the *Daxue*, the *Lunyu*, the *Mengzi* and the *Zhongyong* over other Ruist classics in the genealogy of ancient Ruism (Xu Deming 1996/2010: 1). Zhu then made a radical invention by appending extensive commentaries to the four texts while integrating them in one edition (Chan 1963: 589; Xu 1996/2010: 1-2). In the late 1150s, Zhu began to

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5. *Juan 卷* (literally ‘roll’) was the unit commonly used in ancient and imperial China for binding a particular amount of written works.

6. On Zhu Xi’s order of the Four Books and Legge’s readjustment of it and prioritisation of the *Lunyu*, see my discussion in 1.2.3 and 1.3.2.
compile his *Sishu jijie* (the *Four Books, with Collected Explanations*). Later, his participation in three formal academic meetings stimulated him to commence a major revision of his previous *Sishu* works. He renamed his work as the *Sishu zhangju jizhu* (the *Four Books, with Comprehensive Annotations and Collected Commentaries*) in 1177, and officially published this title in 1182 (Xu 1996/2010: 1-2). This 1182 edition appeared to be the fruition of Zhu’s lifelong revisionist reflections on his Ruist studies.

Zhu Xi emphasises the *Daxue*, arranging it as the first text. Zhu deems the *Daxue* as the primal source for grasping Kongzi’s teaching as the Rui Way. Zhu also completed the *Huowen* (the *Queries*) on the four texts respectively between 1177 and 1179 (Huang Shen 2000/2010: 491-92). Zhu composes the *Queries* in a polemical style, different from the interlinear character of his *Four Books*. In the *Queries* Zhu presents a wide range of intellectual inquiries and debates, assisting the readers in investigating the varied dimensions of a particular passage so as to form their own judgments on it (ibid.: 492-93).

The Song Ruists, in their revisionist studies of ancient Ruism, were concerned with several notions: *Taiji* 太極 (the Great Ultimate), *li* 理 (principle), *qi* 氣 (vital force; energy), *xing* 性 (nature), *xin* 心 (mind) and *gewu* 格物 (the investigation of things). Zhu seeks to consciously synthesise these notions in a new way, in order to establish a more comprehensive system for the rationale of the ‘study of principle’. Zhu resolutely renovated Ruist texts in his mission to reveal “the truth embodied in the canonical texts”, and hence provided a corrected, renewed body of thought that would represent orthodox Ruism and save the ancient Chinese tradition (Gardner 2003: 18, 17-24).

On *Taiji* (the Great Ultimate), *li* (principle) and *qi* (vital force or energy), Zhu Xi furthers Zhou Dunyi’s and the two Chengs’ views into his own model. At the

In Zhu’s model, Taiji is “complete in all things as a whole and in each thing individually”, as it contains all the actual and potential principles of the myriad things in the totality of its being (Chan 1963: 590; Ching 2000: 46).

For Zhu Xi, Taiji is not a physical entity, and both li (principle) and qi (vital force or energy) exist in it. In defining Taiji, Zhu asserts that “未有天地之先, 毕竟是先有此理”, literally “There is no a priori [existence of] Heaven and Earth; after all, there is a first when there is this li”; taken together it can also mean: “Before there is/are Heaven and Earth, ultimately this li first exists” (Li 1270/2010, I: 113).

My two interpretations here show the different possibilities of grasping Zhu’s idea of principle: principle derives from a posteriori knowledge in the first instance, but appears as an a priori existence in the second. More central to Zhu’s metaphysics is the relation of li to qi than the a priori/a posteriori dichotomy. Zhu claims that “理未嘗離乎氣。然理形而上者, 氣形而下者”, literally “Li never departs from qi, yet li is formless, and qi is with form” (ibid.: 115; see also Meynard 2011a: 53). Like the transcendental and immanent facets of God in Western theology, li and qi are the two core aspects of Zhu’s Taiji: li as xing er shang 形而上 (formless) unifies all things without any division (for example that of good and evil), while qi as xing er xia 形而下 (with form, such as yin and yang) acts as the agent of creation and contributes to the birth and change of things (Li 1270/2010, I: 113-25; Chan 1963: 590; Ching 2000: 44-47). Li is the base of qi and coexists with qi (Li 1270/2010, I: 114-16).

Zhu Xi affirms li as the high principle. Zhu defines qi as necessary to our

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7 The Zhuzi Yulei or Zhuzi yulei daquan《朱子語類大全》 was compiled by Li Jingde 黎靖德, a Song scholar after Zhu Xi. It is now considered as one of the most important sources for understanding Zhu’s thought.
understanding of immanence, marked by the process of the cosmos, not as material or a physical matter. \textit{Qi} contains an abstract principle (ibid.: 116). \textit{Taiji} is the great \textit{li} of the universe, operating metaphysically while penetrating all things; when interacting with \textit{qi}, \textit{Taiji} is shown through the transformation of things (ibid.: 113-15, 218, 222-23). Zhu’s ontology of \textit{li} and \textit{qi} is purely transcendental, while some of his discussions on them present the physics–metaphysics dynamics. Scholars now are debating whether Zhu blurs the distinction between immanence and transcendence or more fully affirms the notion of transcendence claimed to be existent in ancient Ruism (Meynard 2011a: 51). Zhu’s theory of \textit{Taiji}, \textit{li} and \textit{qi} invites multiple interpretations on immanence, transcendence and their possible relations.

\textit{Xing} 性 (nature), \textit{xin} 心 (mind) and \textit{gewu} 格物 (the investigation of things) are important to Zhu Xi, as these notions concern human ability to extend knowledge and achieve self-transcendence with reference to \textit{Tianli} 天理 (the principle of Heaven). \textit{Tianli} bespeaks the transcendental character of \textit{Taiji}. For Zhu, \textit{xing} (nature) corresponds to \textit{li}, and \textit{xin} (mind) to the quintessence of \textit{qi}; mind, nature and principle are correlated, with the mind being the governor of the physical body, dictating \textit{xing} (nature) and \textit{qing} (emotions) (Li 1270/2010, I: 215-34). Like many earlier Chinese thinkers, Zhu maintains that the natural universe and humankind are mutual mirrors of one principle; the universe is the ontological foundation for humans, who then participate in the excellence of \textit{Taiji} which bears on the moral perfection of heavenly schemes (Ching 2000: 94). Zhu notes that “性即理也” (“[human] nature then is principle”) and that “性無不善” (“[human] nature is always good”), although human nature, through the human mind’s dynamic experience, may be affected by the problem of evil (Li 1270/2010, I: 196, 223; Ching 2000: 96-100). Thus, for Zhu, we should engage in \textit{gewu} for extending our self-knowledge and understanding of the world. By investigating things thoroughly, the mind is enabled to rectify itself and
govern its movements in line with order (Li 1270/2010, I: 226-30, 487-88). Zhu believes that humans need to consciously affirm their perfectibility by transcending the obscuration of evil and returning to their original clear mind (ibid.: 366, 487-91). A clear mind resembles physical purity and is capable of reaching higher truth and reflecting the principle of Heaven.

5.1.1.2 Zhu Xi’s role in reconciling religion with science

Zhu Xi is significant to the dialogue between religion and science. Legge’s use of Zhu speaks to deeper historical meanings concerning the transformation of and correlation between Chinese learning and Western science. As Elman (2005: 5-6) notes, Zhu highlights the necessity to grasp the universal principle through one’s surrounding world, and for Zhu, a return to classical Ruist teaching leads one to properly cultivate one’s morality while developing coherent knowledge of things. The Ming scholar Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472–1529) drew on Zhu critically to probe the mind’s role in the investigation of things (ibid.: 6-8). Intorcetta and Couplet attacked Zhu’s materialist tendency by following Ricci’s Aristotelian and Scholastic approach, yet they still adopted Zhu’s model of the Four Books in arranging the Confucius Sinarum philosophus (Elman 2005: 108-109, 114-15; Meynard 2011a).

The Qing thinker Xu Shou 徐壽 (1818–1884) combined Zhu’s thought with his scientific learning, based on his collaboration with the Protestant missionaries John Fryer (1839–1928) and Alexander Wylie (1815–1887) on translating Western scientific knowledge into Chinese (Elman 2005: 308-309, 314-15). Fryer also translated Xu Shou’s reference to Zhu into English (ibid.: 315). From the Sino-Jesuit to the Sino-Protestant contact, Zhu directly or indirectly stimulates Chinese and Western thinkers to correlate ancient learning, theology, philosophy and natural science, so as to widen the scope of human understanding on a universal scale.
Legge’s view of the Daxue shows his awareness of Zhu Xi’s role in the historical development of Ruist learning in relation to the history of Western science. Legge (1861: prol. 28; 1893: 28) writes: “I believe that the Book [Daxue 大學] should be styled T’ae Hŏo [Tai xue]8 […] as setting forth the higher and more extensive principles of moral science, which come into use and manifestation in the conduct of government”. Legge here discusses Zheng Xuan and Zhu Xi: Zheng explains 大學 (Tai xue) according to the Han setting of the Imperial Academy,9 while Zhu interprets 大學 (Daxue) as the learning of adults (those reaching the age of fifteen) in contrast to that of children in ancient times.10 Like the Jesuits (see 1.2.4), Legge highlights orthodox Ru Academy through the Daxue. Yet whereas the Jesuits conceal Zhu’s influence in their approach (see 5.1.2 below), Legge anchors Zheng and Zhu to what he calls “moral science”. “Moral science” historically refers to “moral philosophy” (ethics, sometimes including psychology and metaphysics) (OED 2014). In the West there is a long tradition of debate on the relation between ethics and science, stemming from the Graeco-Roman model, and developing through Christian views, the Enlightenment thinkers, the nineteenth-century emergence of social sciences and new issues regarding science, technology and human affairs in the twentieth century; the tensions between Western and non-Western values have also informed such debate (Alan Beyerchen 2003). Through Zheng and Zhu, Legge’s exemplification of the Daxue as “moral science” also illuminates the Sino-Western linkage between moral learning, religion and

8 As Xu Shen notes, the ancient pronunciation of 大 was tai. Legge (1861: 219; 1893: 355) is aware of it.
9 Zheng (quoted in the Liji, with Rectified Commentaries《禮記正義》 with Kong Yingda’s 孔穎達 [574-648] sub-commentaries [2013]) notes: “《大學》者, 以其記博學, 可以為政也”, which Legge (1861: 219; 1893: 355) translates as “the book/Book was called 大學 [Tai xue] […] because it recorded that extensive learning, which was available for the administration of government”. Emperor Wu established Tai xue as the Academy for Ru learning in 124 BCE (Loewe 2012: 7).
10 Zhu (1182/1198: 1-2, 3) foregrounds this ancient adults–children contrast in his ‘Preface’ to the Daxue, interpreting it as “大人之學”, which Legge (1861: 219; 1893: 355) translates as “the Learning of Adults”.

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science along history.

For Legge, Zhu Xi’s thought has a uniquely strong appeal, as Zhu’s conception of nature, mind and principle touches on fundamental Christian issues, such as sin, evil, human perfectibility and transcendence. Legge finds Zhu’s notion of the principle of Heaven analogous to the meaning of God in Christian teaching. Many of Zhu’s ideas contain physical and metaphysical dimensions. Yet Zhu is not simply a dualist, for he often focuses on how metaphysics illuminates physics, and how we can perfect our virtue by gaining knowledge of the world, clearing our mind, returning to our original goodness, and resting in harmony with the heavenly principle. Zhu’s view is compatible with Christianity. The Bible says: “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5). Jesus Christ purges human sin by living within human sufferings while transforming them into divine joy through his death and resurrection (Legge 1880a: 289-99). In this regard, both Christ and Zhu emphasise one’s transformation and transcendence as the emblem of universal salvation.

As we will see, Zhu Xi’s formulation of the heavenly principle in many layers enriches Legge’s comprehension of ren (perfect virtue; love), Tian (Heaven) and Dil/Shangdi (God). Through Zhu, Legge refines his understanding of the Ruist Way and his Sino-Christian vision of ‘moral science’ or ethical learning, in physical, metaphysical and spiritual terms.

5.1.2 Zhu Xi’s place in the Christian interpretation of Ruism:
a brief overview of the early Jesuit approach

While Zhu Xi’s authority has been secured in China from the thirteenth century onwards, the place of his canon was obscure in the Christian interpretation of the Ruist classics up to the nineteenth century. Legge was not the first missionary who
developed a solid grasp of Zhu’s commentaries. Before Legge, the Jesuits and Protestant missionaries such as Joshua Marshman, amongst others, had developed considerable awareness of Zhu’s commentaries on the ancient Ruist classics. However, it would be fair to claim that Legge reaffirms the significance of Zhu’s system to the intertextual dialogue between Ruism and Christianity.

As Elman (2005: 108-116) and Meynard (2011a and b) point out, the earlier Jesuits in China had investigated Zhu Xi’s thought and Song Ruism, while comparing them to classical European philosophy and Christian theology. Intorcetta and Couplet’s *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* exemplifies the Jesuit endeavour to relate Ruism to the European philosophical and religious tradition, but it also reflects the problem of how Zhu’s ‘study of principle’ might be fit into Catholic theology. Although Intorcetta and Couplet used the Four Books as the basis for the *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*, they concealed Zhu’s theory in their interpretation, judging it as a dubious system containing signs of atheism and materialism, which has exerted a pernicious influence on the Ming-Qing academy.

The Jesuits’ “disguised choice” for Zhu Xi’s canon partly resulted from the debates of the Rites Controversy over the problem of heresy in both Europe and China (Meynard 2011a: 18-24, 29-36). In this context, the Jesuits adopted a rationalistic method in interpreting the Chinese classics, in order to convince the European Church fathers, political rulers and critical thinkers that Ruism shared a commonality with Christianity, based on rational faith in God rather than false superstition. Rivalling Zhu’s ‘study of principle’, thus, Intorcetta and Couplet’s *Confucius Sinarum philosophus* recasts the Four Books through a Scholastic model grounded in the theories of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) (ibid.). Intorcetta and Couplet believed that while Kongzi’s teaching could be related to and interpreted through Aristotle, Aquinas’s system provided a more accurate alternative
to the exegesis of the Four Books than Zhu’s (ibid.: 51).

As Elman (2005: 60) and Meynard (2010a: 31-32, 36) remind us, the Jesuits implicitly drew many elements from Zhu Xi’s system. Like Legge after them, Intorcetta and Couplet were impressed by the scope of Song Ruism and Zhu’s leading position in it. Despite their criticism of Zhu, Intorcetta and Couplet employed Zhu’s model to structure the *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*, in which they prioritised the *Daxue* as Zhu did (Meynard 2011a: 31, 33). As I have noted, Intorcetta and Couplet use *scientia* (learning or knowledge) for conjoining the *Daxue*, the *Zhongyong* and the *Lunyu* (see 1.2.4). This indicates their attempt to redefine and extend Zhu’s system of the Four Books through their view on God’s union with humanity, and on the reconcilability between religion and science.

In the history of the Sino-Christian encounter, Western missionaries never ignored Zhu Xi. Yet the early Jesuit criticism of Zhu has influenced later scholarly judgment of him (Ching 2000: 4). Even today, it is still often assumed that Zhu presents a system of immanence and atheism, incompatible with Christianity or irrelevant to the history of Western learning. In this regard, Legge’s incorporation of Zhu’s view innovatively redefines Zhu’s importance to the conceptual connection between Ruism, Christianity and modern science.

5.1.3 Rehabilitation Zhu Xi and the Chinese commentarial tradition:

Legge’s revisionist assessment and appreciation of Zhu’s canon

Legge came across Zhu Xi in the beginning of the 1850s, or perhaps even earlier. Legge’s first Chinese teacher Samuel Kidd emphasised Chinese learning within the context of “history and development”, using examples from the Four Books, practical works and modern Chinese poetry to guide his students (Pfister 2004/I: 114, 114-17; see also 2.1). When Legge began to conceive of the plan for his *Chinese
Classics in the early 1840s, he was already familiar with the scope of ancient Chinese literature and the major Chinese figures associated with it (Girardot 2002: 13, 40-41). Although Legge does not state exactly when he commenced his study of Zhu Xi, it possibly occurred at a relatively early stage of his missionary career, a time by which he was involved in the missionary debate over the Chinese terms for God, while engaging with his research of classical Chinese literature.

Zhu Xi is essential to Ruism’s historical, cultural, political and social development in different ways through different times. In the nineteenth century, the Qing rulers and scholar-officials, faced with Euro-American pressure and internal rebellion, strategically renovated Zhu’s academic legacy on provincial and central levels as a means of activating Qing administrative network and reaffirming Qing bureaucratic authority (Daniel McMahon 2005: 72-102). Despite the tension between Han Learning and Song Learning in Qing scholarship, the Qing government hailed the Cheng brothers’ and Zhu Xi’s ‘study of principle’ (the Cheng-Zhu orthodoxy) as its state ideology, using Zhu’s commentary on the Four Books as the standard for the civil examinations system (Gong Shuduo 2007: 14; see also 1.2.3). Considered in this context, Legge’s engagement with Zhu Xi suggests his sensibility to the political implications of Zhu’s moral doctrines for the maintenance of contemporary Qing regime and the art of Qing statecraft.

In Legge’s Letters on the Rendering of the Name God in the Chinese Language (1850), Zhu Xi’s influence is implicit: Legge discusses the Shangshu, the Shijing, the Yijing and the Liji, amongst others, while mentioning a few concepts relevant to Zhu, such as qi (vital force or energy, which Legge translates into “correct and righteous spirit” [49]), gui (ghost, which Legge explains as “man dead, the soul in opposition to the body, subtile, and, as a verb, spiritualizzare” based on a Chinese–Latin dictionary [28]), and shen (spirit). Legge’s translation of qi stresses the moral,
spiritual elements in it, which anticipates his appreciation of the theistic character in Zhu’s thought. In Legge’s *Notions of the Chinese concerning God and Spirits* (1852), Zhu becomes salient, playing a central role in the way Legge deploys his theological arguments. Legge borrows Zhu’s ideas so as to shape his own conception of *Di* and *Shangdi*. He also defends Zhu against Bishop Boone’s criticism of him as atheist. By the time Legge published his *Notions*, then, he had developed considerable knowledge of Zhu’s theory, recognising Zhu’s significance to his Chinese studies and translation project.

Legge’s appreciation of Zhu Xi grew deeper through the second half of his life, which is reflected in his revised ‘Preface’ to the first volume of his *Chinese Classics*. Here Legge deems Zhu as central to clarifying his understanding of Kongzi’s teaching on practical and spiritual levels, even in those passages where he disagrees with Zhu. If, to Legge, Kongzi at times appears somewhat distant and unsympathetic with Legge’s own concerns about the theistic attributes of Heaven and God, Legge seems to have enjoyed a more intimate intellectual dialogue with Zhu by regularly presenting Zhu’s thought in his annotation. As I will show, Legge tells us how Zhu speaks to his mind and inspires him personally (see Legge’s annotation on *xue* in 5.2.1 below), and he often praises the beauty, correctness and wisdom of Zhu’s thought.

Legge consults Zhu Xi in one or many chapters of each book, mentioning him much more frequently than he cites other Chinese annotators or any Western author. As Legge annotates all chapters in all books of his *Lunyu*, table 2 shows the sum of chapters of each book and the number of chapters where Legge explicitly mentions Zhu in his 1861 and 1893 editions of the *Lunyu*:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of the book (modern pinyin transliteration)</th>
<th>Number of chapters</th>
<th>Number of chapters where Legge mentions Zhu Xi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. ‘Xue Er’</td>
<td>16 chapters</td>
<td>4 chapters: 1, 4, 6, 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. ‘Wei Zheng’</td>
<td>24 chapters</td>
<td>7 chapters: 1, 4, 6, 7, 13, 21, 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. ‘Ba Yi’</td>
<td>26 chapters</td>
<td>6 chapters: 4, 5, 7, 8, 13, 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. ‘Li Ren’</td>
<td>26 chapters</td>
<td>1 chapter: 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. ‘Gong Ye Chang’</td>
<td>27 chapters</td>
<td>4 chapters: 1, 6, 17, 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. ‘Yong Ye’</td>
<td>28 chapters</td>
<td>4 chapters [1861]: 1, 3, 8, 17; 5 chapters [1893]: 1, 3, 8, 17, 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. ‘Shu Er’</td>
<td>37 chapters</td>
<td>11 chapters: 1, 2, 16, 17, 19, 20, 23, 27, 28, 32, 34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. ‘Tai Bo’</td>
<td>21 chapters</td>
<td>5 chapters: 1, 2, 9, 12, 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX. ‘Zi Han’</td>
<td>30 chapters</td>
<td>3 chapters: 3, 16, 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X. ‘Xiang Dang’</td>
<td>18 chapters</td>
<td>4 chapters: 1, 5, 6, 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI. ‘Xian Jin’</td>
<td>25 chapters</td>
<td>3 chapters: 1, 13, 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII. ‘Yan Yuan’</td>
<td>24 chapters</td>
<td>7 chapters: 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIII. ‘Zi Lu’</td>
<td>30 chapters</td>
<td>3 chapters: 3, 8, 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIV. ‘Xian Wen’</td>
<td>47 chapters</td>
<td>8 chapters: 1, 2, 6, 13, 32, 33, 40, 43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XV. ‘Wei Ling Gong’</td>
<td>41 chapters</td>
<td>10 chapters: 2, 5, 10, 16, 17, 29, 33, 34, 35, 38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVI. ‘Ji Shi’</td>
<td>14 chapters</td>
<td>4 chapters: 1, 3, 6, 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVII. ‘Yang Huo’</td>
<td>26 chapters</td>
<td>4 chapters: 6, 7, 10, 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVIII. ‘Wei Zi’</td>
<td>11 chapters</td>
<td>4 chapters: 7, 8, 9, 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIX. ‘Zi Zhang’</td>
<td>25 chapters</td>
<td>title; 8 chapters: 2, 3, 4, 10, 11, 12, 18, 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XX. ‘Yao Yue’</td>
<td>3 chapters</td>
<td>1 chapter: 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legge already mentions Zhu Xi in numerous chapters in his 1861 edition. Legge retains all these Zhu Xi-based explanations and mentions Zhu in one more chapter (VI, 24) in his 1893 edition. In addition, there are other chapters where Legge quotes Zhu’s glosses without giving Zhu’s name (see III, 3 in 3.2.3 and VIII, 19 in 4.1). The place of Zhu’s canon hence is stable in Legge’s 1861 edition and ever more so in his 1893 one, even though Legge’s view of Zhu, as I will show later in my qualitative analysis, has been transformative, moving from a somewhat critical judgment to a more appreciative attitude. A more detailed calculation based on table 2 shows that the number of Legge’s Zhu Xi-based footnotes (101/102 chapters) occupies approximately one fifth of the sum of his footnotes (499 chapters), and in some
books Legge’s Zhu Xi-based footnotes amount to around a quarter or one third of his annotation. Zhu’s voice appears more salient than his Chinese and European counterparts in Legge’s annotative corpus, especially if we consider the heteroglossic nature of Legge’s work, and the fact that Legge does not always mention other thinkers in his footnotes. Legge enthusiastically presents Zhu as his important interlocutor for elucidating Kongzi’s teaching.

In his ‘Prolegomena’, Legge (1861: prol. 18-21; 1893: 18-21) notes the thriving commentarial industry on the Lunyu since the Han. After discussing the early works by Kong Anguo, Zheng Xuan, He Yan and a few other scholars, Legge (1861: prol. 20; 1893: 20) writes:

> Passing over other dynasties, we come to the Sung [Song], A.D. 960–1279. An edition of the Classics was published by imperial authority, about the beginning of the 11th/eleventh century, with the title of “The correct Meaning.” The principal scholar engaged in the undertaking was Hing P’ing [Xing Bing]. The portion of it on the Analects is commonly reprinted in “The Thirteen Classics,” after Ho An’s/Ho Yen’s [He Yan’s] explanations. But the names of the Sung dynasty are all thrown into the shade by that of Choo He/Chû Shî [Zhu Xi], than whom China has not produced a greater scholar. He composed [1861]/He composed, or his disciples compiled [1893], in the 12th/twelfth century, three Works on the Analects: – the first called “Collected Meanings,” the second, “Collected Comments;” and the third, “Queries.” Nothing could exceed the grace and clearness of his style, and the influence which he has exerted on the literature of China has been almost despotic.\(^\text{11}\)

Legge marks the Song dynasty as a turning point for the development of Ruism.

While singling out Zhu Xi as the most authoritative Song Ruist, Legge describes Zhu’s influence as “almost despotic” – a critique suggesting Legge’s Congregational stance, favouring the idea of progress and the freedom of individual interpretations

\(^\text{11}\) Legge here provides the original names of the commentators and the original titles of their works in Chinese in his footnotes.
over any arbitrary norm. As I have noted, Legge disagrees with the Song Ruists on arranging the Four Books; he reorders these texts and prioritises the *Lunyu* in his *Chinese Classics* (see 1.3.2). Yet here Legge also recognises Zhu’s leading role in the Ruist canon and “the grace and clearness of his style”. Moreover, Legge becomes more sensitive to Zhu’s tradition, indicating in his 1893 edition that Zhu’s works on the *Lunyu* might also be his disciples’ compilation. Legge seeks to accommodate Zhu’s canon while upholding his Nonconformist view of the Four Books in the face of Zhu’s authority.

Legge’s above view also derives from his observation of the Qing reception of Zhu Xi. As Legge (1861: prol. 20; 1893: 20) goes on to suggest, Zhu’s annotation met many challenges during the Qing, with scholars like Mao Qiling 毛奇齡 (1623–1716) vehemently opposing Zhu. For Legge, Zhu’s commentaries rivalled those of the earlier thinkers and his Song contemporaries, and Zhu’s canon raised fundamental hermeneutical issues for the Qing reviewers who fostered the “Han-Song debate” (see 1.2.3). Such a phenomenon, to Legge, speaks to the need to reinvestigate Zhu with reference to other Chinese commentators across the Han, Three Kingdoms, Tang, Song and Qing. In his *Lunyu*, Legge often uses Kong Anguo’s and He Yan’s commentaries to contest or supplement Zhu’s ideas (see also Pfister 2004/II: 110-111). In his *Daxue* and *Zhongyong*, Legge prefers to compare Zhu’s glosses with those of the Tang or other Song scholars (ibid.: 111). Yet only Zhu’s and Mao Qiling’s commentaries appear throughout the first volume of Legge’s *Chinese Classics*, but still, Legge’s reference to Zhu is “by far the more numerous” (ibid.). In Legge’s *Mengzi* (the second volume), *Shangshu* (the third volume) and *Shijing* (the fourth volume), although Legge also counterbalances Zhu with other commentators, generally Legge relies more on Zhu (ibid.: 175-76, 211). Legge’s annotated *Chinese Classics* shows the dynamic interaction between Zhu, other
thinkers and Legge himself. Yet evidently Legge introduces Zhu as the major thinker in his project.

We can see Legge’s growing appreciation of Zhu Xi from the sharp difference between Legge’s 1861 and 1893 prefatory statements to the first volume of his *Chinese Classics*. Earlier, Legge (1861: x) says:

It would have been an easy matter to swell the volume now presented to double the size. In the Chinese Commentators he had abundant materials to do so; but the author’s [Legge’s] object has been to condense rather than expand. He has not sought to follow Choo He [Zhu Xi] or any other authority. The text, and not the commentary, has been his study. He has read the varying views of scholars extensively, but only that he might the better understand what was written in the Book. He has also consulted the renderings of other translators, but never till he had made his own. He may have sometimes altered his own to adopt a happier expression from them, but the translation is independent. He has not made frequent mention in his notes of the labours of other scholars, – not because he undervalues them, but because there was no necessity to call attention to the circumstance, where he agree with them, and where he differed, he thought it more seemly to avoid “doubtful disputations.”

Later on, however, Legge omits all his 1861 statement from the fifth paragraph onwards, including the above passage. Instead, he provides a new account of his revised editions as well as his approach to Zhu Xi and others. In the revised ‘Preface’, Legge (1893: x) says:

[…] He [Legge] thought indeed at one time of recasting the whole version in a terser and more pretentious style. He determined, however, on reflection to let it stand as it first occurred to him, his object having always been faithfulness to the original Chinese rather than grace of composition. Not that he is indifferent to the value of an elegant and idiomatic rendering in the language of the translation, and he hopes that he was able to combine in a considerable degree correctness of interpretation and acceptableness of style. He has to thank many friends whose Chinese scholarship is widely acknowledged for assuring him of
He has seen it objected to his translations that they were modeled on the views of the great critic and philosopher of the Sung [Song] dynasty, the well-known Chû Hsi [Zhu Xi]. He can only say that he commenced and has carried on his labours with the endeavour to search out the meaning for himself, independent of all commentators. He soon became aware, however, of the beauty of strength of Chû’s style, the correctness of his analysis, and the comprehension and depth of his thought. That his own views of passages generally coincide with those of ‘The Old Man of the Cloudy Valley’12 should be accepted, he submits, as complimentary to him rather than the reverse.

The younger Legge accentuates his independence over the significance of other commentaries. He struggles to fend off Zhu Xi’s influence by asserting his own authority. Nevertheless, Legge’s continued dialogue with Zhu has transformed his approach and deepened his understanding of the living Ruist tradition, a tradition which, as Legge has learned, involves the text, the commentary and intercultural friendship. While presenting himself as a faithful translator of the Ruist classics, the elderly Legge becomes more open to other voices in sinological studies. He describes Zhu as his intimate friend across time and space, acknowledging Zhu’s thought, style and importance.13 Legge encourages us to appreciate his general agreement with Zhu’s interpretations.

In reconnecting Zhu Xi’s ‘study of principle’ to Kongzi’s teaching, Legge reassures Zhu’s centrality to rejuvenating Ruism and to establishing a more comprehensive vision of humanity, knowledge and religion. As Legge’s regard for Kongzi becomes higher, his respect for Zhu also grows greater. Zhu stimulates Legge to apprehend Kongzi through his inspired language on Heaven, principle and the law of the universe, where Legge furthers his inquiries into the meaning of God.

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12 ‘The Old Man of the Cloudy Valley’ is Legge’s translation of Yungu Laoren 雲谷老人, one of Zhu Xi’s (self-designated) literary names (hào 號).

13 Legge hoped to publish “several additional volumes” on Zhu Xi and Song Ruism, although he did not realise this plan during his life (Girardot 2002: 494).
5.2 Interpreting the Way, perfect virtue and divine principle of Heaven: Legge’s religious and intertextual dialogue with Zhu Xi in his Lunyu

For Legge, translating the Lunyu is continued learning. As Legge’s annotation on the text shows, Zhu Xi contributes to a more complete understanding of ancient Ruisim and furthers the Ruist–Christian dialogue. Legge consults Zhu for multilayered intellectual and religious purposes. Legge employs Zhu’s commentaries as a means of connecting the Lunyu to the Daxue, in order to broaden the meaning of ‘learning’ and ‘perfect goodness’ through interreligious debate. Through Zhu, too, Legge expounds issues of self, mind and human nature in Kongzi’s teaching on ren (perfect virtue), while incorporating Christian thought on sin and transcendence in his interpretation. Moreover, Legge uses Zhu’s theory of principle for revealing the image and attributes of God the Creator in Kongzi’s relevant discussions.

In Zhu Xi’s ‘study of principle’, qi with form and formless li are both central to his definition of Taiji (see 5.1.1.1). Legge correlates the functioning of qi and li in Zhu’s system to notions regarding ‘immanence’ and ‘transcendence’ in the Western intellectual tradition. Here, immanence denotes a divine principle inherent to the physical world (such as a pantheistic God, similar to Zhu’s ‘qi with form’), while transcendence refers to a universal principle on high (such as God or Shangdi, similar to Zhu’s ‘formless li’, e.g. Tianli [the principle of Heaven]), existing independently of the physical world and encouraging human progress on a purely metaphysical level (see also Meynard 2011a: 49-55). The Jesuits disguise Zhu, instead using Aquinas’s method for discerning religious transcendence in Ruism (ibid.). By contrast, Legge openly accepts Zhu, relating the immanent cause in Zhu’s theory to the Scottish common sense philosophy (Scottish realism), while focusing on the linkage between Zhu’s metaphysics and Christian transcendence.
In Legge’s time, the Scottish common sense tradition and Kantian philosophy both engaged with the question of religious transcendence. There are patterns of Scottish realism and Kantian transcendence in Legge’s use of Zhu’s philosophy for annotating the *Lunyu*, although Legge does not explicitly mention Reid or Kant in his work. As I have noted, the theory by James McCosh, an inheritor of Thomas Reid (1710–1796), informs Legge’s definition of God and approach to Ruist texts (see 2.3.1; see also Girardot 2002: 108 and Pfister 2004/I: 78-82 and II: 255). Reid (1764) disagrees with Locke’s and Hume’s proposition that the human mind receives knowledge empirically through abstract ideas; for Reid, the external world’s substantial existence provides the foundation for human realisation of their common moral principles. For Legge, both Zhu’s theory and Reid’s tradition recognise the moral principles which relate humans to their surrounding world. In addition, Immanuel Kant’s (1724–1804) transcendental philosophy inspires Legge’s collaborator Müller to approach the world’s religions creatively.14 Here I will not discuss Kant in detail. Yet it is noteworthy that Kant (1781, 1787 and 1785) forms his idea of moral transcendence through the synthetic *a priori* principle, which Kant defines as the transcendentental law being able to connect itself to the new and unknown. Legge’s metaphysical dialogue with Zhu is intertextually synthetic but often moves beyond the *a priorila posteriori* dichotomy, prompting us to grasp God’s divine principle through the simultaneity of immanent and transcendental causes.

Legge’s exploration of Zhu Xi’s thought shows that notions such as immanence and transcendence should be comprehended broadly in an intercultural light. Through reflections on Zhu, Legge accepts the common moral postulate shared

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between Scottish realism and Ruist teaching. Focusing on transcendence, he relates Zhu’s system of principle to central topics in Christianity and Western philosophy.

5.2.1 Extending the *Lunyu* through the *Daxue* to the highest excellence: immanence and transcendence via Zhu Xi in the Ruist Way

Learning is central to Kongzi’s prospect for human development. Legge uses Zhu Xi’s glosses on the *Lunyu* and the *Daxue* to unravel the immanent and transcendental dimensions in Kongzi’s teaching on learning. In this subsection, I focus on how Legge interprets Ruist learning intertextually through his Zhu Xi-based annotation on the *Lunyu* and discussions on the *Daxue*. Recognising Zhu’s emphasis on the *Daxue*, Legge fashions broader Sino-Christian dialogue on learning, ‘perfect goodness’ and the purpose of humanity in Ruist ethics. Zhu’s analysis permits Legge to understand Ruism as a simultaneously immanent and transcendental system. Through Zhu, Legge values Kongzi’s view on the common character of learning, while extending it metaphysically to the highest Ruist Way.

Legge’s annotation on the first character of the opening line in the *Lunyu*, ‘xue’ 學 (learning) (see also 3.1.3), unfolds some insights into his view of the important concept of learning in Kongzi’s and Zhu Xi’s thought. Zhu interprets xue (to learn or study) as xiao 效, which Legge translates as “to imitate”. Zhu (1182/1983: 47) further explains: “人性皆善，而覺有先後，後覺者必效先覺之所為，乃可以明善而復其初也”, literally “Human nature is always good, and some realise (something) prior to others. Those with a late realisation must emulate the behavior of those with a first realisation, and thus, by enlightening goodness one then restores one’s beginning”. The original remark presents “明善” (“enlightening goodness”) as the method for “復其初” (“restoring one’s beginning”), while Legge (1861: 2 and 1893: 138) deems “明善而復初” (which Legge translates into “the understanding of all
excellence, and the bringing back original goodness”) as one unit, being the results of learning. Zhu adopts Mengzi’s view of good human nature, yet he is aware that humans possess different abilities. But for Zhu, the less able could improve their knowledge by learning from the abler. Zhu embeds his view of knowledge in the context of a human’s moral nature and self-cultivation, rather than deeming it as simply an object. Agreeing with Zhu, Legge (1861: 2; 1893: 138) adds:

Subsequent scholars profess, for the most part, great admiration of this explanation. It is an illustration, to my mind, of the way in which Choo He/Chû Hsî [Zhu Xi] and his followers are continually being wise above what is written in the classical books.

In his comment, Legge admits Zhu’s impact on later Chinese scholars, and his personal admiration. Zhu wisely penetrates the meanings of the ancient texts while remaining humble before the ancients. Legge engages with Kongzi and Zhu in an ongoing journey of cross-cultural learning.

Legge’s appreciation of Zhu Xi’s thought on learning is shown in the way he interprets Kongzi’s autobiographical remark: “吾十有五而志於學” (“At fifteen, I had my mind bent on learning”) (II, 4; see also 2.4). Kongzi aged fifteen “志於學” (literally “had the will to learn/to learning”), a will Legge translates as the “mind bent on learning”. Legge (1861: 10; 1893: 146) notes: “The ‘learning,’ to which, at 15, Conf./Confucius [Kongzi] gave himself, is to be understood of the subjects of the ‘Superior Learning.’ See Choo He’s/Chû Hsî’s [Zhu Xi’s] preliminary essay to the Tâ Hêö/the Tâ Hsio [the Daxue].” For Legge (1861: 219; 1893: 355), Zhu’s view of the Daxue as “the Learning of Adults” (the learning of those reaching the age of fifteen; see 5.1.1.2) clarifies the context of Kongzi’s remark. Legge moreover endorses Zhu’s (1182/1983: 1-2, 54) view of “大學之道” (“the Way of the Great Learning”, or in
Legge’s term, “Superior Learning”) as Kongzi’s aim as a young adult. Legge uses Zhu’s commentary to illuminate the intertextuality in Kongzi’s notion of learning which encompasses the *Lunyu* and the *Daxue*. In so doing he stimulates further Sino-Christian exchanges on achieving the Ruist Way.

In the *Lunyu*, Kongzi remarks: “我非生而知之者，好古，敏以求之者也” (VII, 19) (literally “I am not born with this knowledge. I am fond of antiquity, actively seeking it”), which Legge (1861: 65; 1893: 201) translates into: “I am not one who was born in the possession of knowledge; I am one who is fond of antiquity, and earnest in seeking it there”. Elsewhere Kongzi ranks “生而知之” (“being born with this knowledge”) as supreme (XVI, 9). Legge (1861: 65; 1893: 201) adopts Zhu Xi’s explanation to stress Kongzi’s recognition of both natural and acquired knowledge, highlighting one’s “connate or innate knowledge” and “intuitive principles of reason” as the basis for learning ancient subjects (see also Zhu: 1182/1983: 98). For Legge, Zhu’s theory of principle significantly connects Kongzi’s teaching to the meaning of God and natural ethics in Christian morality.

According to the *Daxue*, learning is fulfilling the ancient Ruist Way, and its ultimate end is to rest in perfect goodness. The opening line in the *Daxue* reads: “大學之道，在明明德，在親民，在止於至善” (“The Way of the Great Learning consists in revealing the enlightened virtue, rejuvenating the people, and resting in zhishan [perfect goodness]”). Here we see the three stages through which the Ruist Way can be achieved. Zhu (1182/1983: 1) defines the *Daxue* as “古之大學所以教人之法也” (“the principles by which the ancients educated the people”). He grounds Kongzi’s notion of learning in the *Daxue*, believing that Kongzi’s sagesness is shown through his effort to transmit the ancient law (ibid.: 1-2).

Concerned with the *Daxue*, Zhu Xi and the Jesuits interpret zhishan (perfect goodness) differently. Zhu stresses both the principles of affairs and the principle of
Heaven, but the Jesuits focus more exclusively on transcendence. Echoing his theory of *Taiji*, Zhu (1182/1983: 3) explains *zhishan* as “事理當然之極” (“the ultimate end of the proper principles of affairs”). Accordingly, when one completes the first and the second stages (revealing the enlightened virtue and rejuvenating the people), one naturally reaches perfect goodness and stops there. This state of perfect goodness sees *Tianli* (the principle of Heaven) arrive at its extremity, where selfish human desires no longer exist. Thus, for Zhu, perfect goodness is both immanent and transcendental. Yet Intorcetta and Couplet translates *zhishan* into the *summum bonum* (the highest good), perceiving it as a transcendental object based on Platonic, Aristotelian and Thomist metaphysics, thoroughly distinguished from the first two stages (Meynard 2011a: 44-46). Unlike Zhu, the Jesuits view perfect goodness as pure transcendence, revealing the eternal being of God above the physical world (ibid.: 44).

In Legge’s view, however, we should pay more attention to the way Kongzi perfects his virtue by learning from the good in humanity, before moving on to discern the transcendental message in Ruist learning. In the *Lunyu*, Kongzi mentions *shan* 善 (goodness) in many cases. Where Kongzi connects *shan* to learning, Legge interprets *shan* into “good qualities” or “excellence”:

三人行，必有我師焉。擇其善者而從之，其不善者而改之。(VII, 21)

When I walk along with two others, they may serve me as my teachers. I will select their *good qualities* and follow them, their bad qualities and avoid them. (1861: 66; 1893: 202)

篤信好學，守死善道。(VIII, 13)

With sincere faith he unites the love of learning; holding firm to death, he is perfecting the *excellence* of his course. (1861: 76; 1893: 212)
The first example literally means: “Amongst three men moving/walking there must be (at least) one teacher for me. I differentiate their goodness and follow it. What is not good, I then transform.” Here, Kongzi observes three walking men without being part of them, and he determines which one(s) of them possess(es) goodness. He is distant from the men he speaks of. Yet in Legge’s translation, Kongzi is one of the three walking men, and he learns from the other two by their good qualities. For Legge, Kongzi perceives goodness as deriving from common humanity, and through following the good qualities of others one touches on the higher spiritual aspects of universal goodness. As the second example shows, Legge highlights the perfection of shandao 善道 (the way of goodness, which Legge interprets as “the excellence of [one’s] course”) through one’s religious faith and devotion to learning. Reading Legge’s translation here in conjunction with his Daxue, we can see that Legge coherently interprets the Ruist notion of goodness through Zhu Xi’s context. In his Daxue, Legge (1861: 220-221; 1893: 356) translates zhishan (perfect goodness) into “the highest excellence” based on Zhu’s definition of it (see above), which, as Legge elaborates, is “the ground where we ought to rest” and the state of “the highest excellence”. Different from the Jesuits, Legge accepts Zhu’s view of perfect goodness as addressing both immanent humanity and transcendental spirituality. For Legge and Zhu, Kongzi values learning through the common good as the pathway to excellence. When we comprehend Kongzi’s teaching in line with the Daxue, the state of goodness would reveal its eventual transcendental purpose, defined by Legge as the highest goal of the Ruist Way.

By consulting Zhu Xi, Legge extends Kongzi’s teaching on learning to the Way of the Great Learning, while connecting it to broader Sino-Christian dialogue. In his ‘Prolegomena’, Legge balances his view between Zhu Xi and Western missionaries, emphasising the Daxue as both commonplace and containing a higher mission. Here
Legge does not mention the Jesuit view, but he contrasts the comment of the French author Guillaume Pauthier (1801–1873) with the view of a writer in the Chinese Repository (1832–1851). Pauthier suggests that there is “a higher mission” in the *Daxue* because the text demonstrates “a system of social perfectionating” that “has never been equalled”. On the other hand, the writer in the Chinese Repository argues that while the *Daxue* may be translated as “Superior Learning” and deemed as “the *summum bonum* of the Chinese”, it simply consists of “a few commonplace rules for the maintenance of a good government” (Legge 1861: prol. 27-28; 1893: 27-28).

After providing the above two views, Legge prompts the readers to fathom the truth of the *Daxue* between its common instruction and transcendental character. Meanwhile, Legge appears more critical of Zhu Xi, charging Zhu for being “too extravagant” in the way he annotates the *Daxue* and in his claim that one can perfect one’s knowledge through the investigation of things (1861: prol. 32; 1893: 32). At this point, Legge, to some extent echoing the Jesuits, defends Christianity by viewing the *Daxue* as somewhat incomplete, which could be advanced by biblical teaching. Overall, though, Legge lays his judgments carefully and remains respectful for the *Daxue* and its commentarial tradition. As Legge (1861: prol. 34; 1893: 34) concludes, the *Daxue* “cannot be thought meanly of”, for the principles contained in it are both “commonplace” and “eternal verities”.

Legge’s dialogue with Kongzi and Zhu Xi on learning rejuvenates Ruism and the commentarial tradition within it. In his Zhu Xi-based annotation, Legge displays a living energy for exploring the meaning of human perfectibility. Like the Jesuits, Legge deems transcendence as developable from Ruism. But unlike the Jesuits,

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15 In annotating the *Lunyu*, Legge sometimes also criticises Zhu Xi in this way.
16 As Meynard (2010a: 32-33) notes, because the Jesuits in China viewed the thriving commentaries by the Song Ruists as a sign of corruption, they paradoxically held a “Protestant” stance by emphasising the return to ancient Chinese texts rather than the commentarial tradition on them, just as Martin Luther (1483–1546) stressed the norm of the Bible rather than the Church.
Legge uses Zhu’s system for conjoining the *Lunyu* and the *Daxue*, whereby Legge is enabled to maintain his Sino-Christian vision while appreciating Ruist learning as immanent and transcendental.

5.2.2 From human nature and original sin to the state of higher nature: Legge’s dialogue with Zhu Xi on achieving perfect virtue

In the third chapter, I discussed the ways in which *ren* is presented as the core value in Kongzi’s teaching and Legge’s rendition. By translating *ren* into “perfect virtue”, Legge draws on the connection between Ruist love and the Christian conception of *agapé*, urging us to further probe the meaning of universal love. As I will show, Legge develops his dialogue with Zhu Xi on *ren* through relating Zhu’s theory of mind, human nature and principle to the Christian themes of original sin and transcendence. In Legge’s regard, Zhu and his followers’ commentaries are well suited to his Sino-Christian inquiries into the problem of human selfishness, the conquering of sin and evil, and the role of virtue as the guiding principle above the physical world. Highlighting Zhu’s notion of virtue as “higher nature”, Legge’s annotation demonstrates the extent to which moral transcendence in Ruism can be revealed and revived through Zhu’s thought.

One significant example is Legge’s interpretation of Kongzi’s dialogue with Yan Yuan

顏淵問仁。子曰:「克己復禮為仁。一日克己復禮，天下歸仁焉。為仁由己，而由人乎哉？」

顏淵曰：「請問其目。」子曰：「非禮勿視，非禮勿聽，非禮勿言，非禮勿

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17 Yan Yuan, also known as Yan Hui, is believed to be Kongzi’s favourite disciple. In the *Lunyu*, Kongzi praises Yan Yuan in many cases, in particular for his virtuous character and love for learning. For example, Kongzi remarks: “回也，其心三月不違仁，其餘則日月至焉而已矣” (“Such was Hwuy/Hûi [Yan Hui] that for three months there would be nothing in his mind contrary to perfect virtue. The others may attain to this on some days or in some months, but nothing more”) (VI, 5; Legge 1861: 50 and 1893: 186).
Yen Yuen/Yen Yüan [Yan Yuan] asked about perfect virtue. The Master said, “To subdue one’s-self/one’s self and return to propriety, is perfect virtue. If a man can for one day subdue himself and return to propriety, all under heaven will ascribe perfect virtue to him. Is the practice of perfect virtue from a man himself, or is it from others?”

Yen Yuen/Yen Yüan [Yan Yuan] said, “I beg to ask the steps of that process.” The Master replied, “Look not at what is contrary to propriety; listen not to what is contrary to propriety; speak not what is contrary to propriety; make no movement which is contrary to propriety.”

Yen Yuen/Yen Yüan [Yan Yuan] then said, “Though I am deficient in intelligence and vigor, I will make it my business to practise this lesson.”

(1861: 114; 1893: 250)

In annotating the above dialogue, Legge initiates a critical discussion through Zhu Xi and others on the meanings of “克己” (to “subdue one’s-self/one’s self”) and “復禮” (to “return to propriety”) for achieving perfect virtue under Heaven. On 克己 (to “subdue one’s self”), Legge (1861: 114; 1893: 250) notes:

In Ho An/Ho Yen [He Yan], 克己 is explained by 約身, ‘to restrain the body.’ Choo He/Chû Hsi [Zhu Xi] defines 克 by 勝, ‘to overcome,’ and 己 [the self] by 身之私欲, ‘the selfish desires of the body.’ In the 合講, it is said – 己非即是私，但即附身而存，故謂私為己, ‘己 [the self] here is not exactly selfishness, but selfishness is what abides by being attached to the body, and hence it is said that selfishness is 己.’ And again, 克己非客去其己，乃克去己中之私欲也, ‘克己 is not subduing and putting away the self, but subduing and putting away the selfish desires in the self.’

In Legge’s reading, He Yan tends to interpret ji 己 (the self) as “the body”, while Zhu Xi’s view on ji contains an implicit distinction between the self and “the selfish desires of the body”. Such a distinction is significant to Legge. Following Zhu’s view, Legge consults 《四書遵註合講》 (translated by Legge as ‘The Four Books, according
to the Commentary, with Paraphrase’) (1730) by the Qing scholar Weng Fu 翁復18 for elaborating the question Zhu raises regarding the self, the body and selfish desires. As Legge explains, the body is vulnerable to siyu 私欲 (“selfish desires”) or si 私 (“selfishness”); the self is affected if the body succumbs to the selfish desires in it. Thus, it is selfish desires that impede the achievement of perfect virtue.

But what is the nature of selfish desires, and how should one overcome selfishness? Legge discusses these questions in terms of Zhu Xi’s theory of mind and the Christian view on the contrast between divine spirit (presenting God’s will) and the human (presenting the sensual flesh). As I have noted, Zhu believes that human nature is originally good, but the human mind contains the problem of evil (such as selfishness), owing to the mind’s interaction with the physical world. In other words, selfishness obscures the self when material temptations disorientate the mind.

Accordingly, Legge (1861: 114-15; 1893: 250-51) notes:

This ‘selfishness in the self’ is of a three-fold character: – first, 氣稟, said by Morrison to be ‘a person’s natural constitution and disposition of mind:’ it is, I think, very much the ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος or ‘animal man;’ second, 耳, 目, 口, 鼻之欲, ‘the desires of the ears, the eyes, the mouth, the nose;’ i.e. the dominating influences of the senses; and third, 己, ‘Thou and I,’ i.e. the lust of superiority. More concisely, the 己 [self] is said, in the 翼注, to be the 人心 as opposed to the 道心, ‘the mind of man’ in opposition to the ‘mind of reason.’ See the Shoo-king/Shû-ching [the Shangshu] II. ii. 9/15. This refractory ‘mind of man,’ it is said, 與生俱生, ‘is innate,’ or, perhaps, ‘connate.’

Here, Legge uses multiple sources to explicate human selfishness in Zhu Xi’s conception of self and mind. As Legge points out, selfishness derives from three elements. The first is one’s qibin 氣稟 (“physical endowment”, a notion from Zhu

18 As Legge (1861: prol. 131; 1893: 129) remarks, Weng Fu’s ‘Four Books, according to the Commentary, with Paraphrase’ is an analysis of Zhu Xi’s Four Books.
Legge interprets qibin as “a person’s natural constitution and disposition of mind” based on Robert Morrison’s explanation, also relating this notion to the Greek phrase ψυχικός ἄνθρωπος. The phrase ψυχικός ἄνθρωπος, which Legge interprets as “animal man”, combines the adjective ψυχικός (animal, natural or sensuous) and the noun ἄνθρωπος (man). It can be found in the Greek Bible which corresponds to the teaching in the King James edition: “But the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:14). The “natural man” here speaks to the “animal man” Legge mentions. In Legge’s view, selfishness first stems from the sensual, animal-like aspect of one’s natural self, impeding one from grasping “the spirit of God”. Legge then explains that the second element of selfishness derives from the activities of the sense organs, and that the third one is the human “lust of superiority” over an object (a confronting other). As Legge suggests, these elements point to the opposition between “the mind of man” and “the mind of reason”, as is shown in Zhang Zhentao’s Zhu Xi-based commentary in 《四書翼註》 (‘A Supplemental Commentary, and Literary Discussions, on the Four Books’ [see 5.2.1 above]), which can be traced back to a saying in the Shangshu: “人心惟危，道心惟微” (“The mind of man is restless, – prone to err; its affinity for the right way [the mind of reason] is small”) (‘Dayu Mo [Counsels of the Great Yu]’, 13; Legge 1893c: 61). For Legge, Zhu’s notion of the human self manifests the wrestling between the lower human mind and the higher mind of reason, while Legge uses the teaching in the Shangshu to support his own view that the problem of selfishness is innate or connate to the human.

Significantly, thus, Legge’s dialogue with Zhu Xi and other commentators on

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19 For a critical discussion on the symbolic analogy between the animal man in Greek mythology and Adam in Christianity, see Paul Diel’s Symbolism in Greek Mythology: Human Desire and Its Transformations (1980).
subduing selfish desires reveals a fundamental question on human nature. Concerned with Zhu’s theory of the human mind, Legge (1861: 115; 1893: 251) discovers a message of original sin in Kongzi’s discussion:

In all these statements [on selfish desires], there is an acknowledgement of the fact – the morally abnormal condition of human nature – which underlies the Christian doctrine of original sin. With reference to the above three-fold classification of selfish desires, the second paragraph shows that it was the second order of them – the influence of the senses, which Conf./Confucius [Kongzi] specially intended.

As Legge observes, Kongzi admits the perverse effect of the senses in human nature, something corresponding to the problem of original sin in Christian thought. For Kongzi, our sensual desires often pose a threat to the cultivation of perfect virtue. Legge sees such a view from Kongzi as an important means of connecting Ruist and Christian discussions on sin and evil. In Legge’s understanding, both Ruist and Christian ethics have been struggling with the question of human evil: Ruist thinkers respond to it with their awareness of the selfish desires in the human mind, while Christian fathers probe it through the concept of original sin. That Legge raises the debate on sin through Kongzi and Zhu also reflects his Victorian concern about the questions of the body and sexuality. As John Maynard (1993: 31-33) notes, in the Victorian age, ascetic belief beginning from Saint Augustine’s (354–430) teaching (see my discussion below) still strongly influenced the public view of the human bodily nature: sexual/sensual impulses should be restrained because they threatened to jeopardize the purity of the human mind and one’s intention for self-transcendence. The tension between Christian asceticism and the body’s sexual drive often lies at the heart of the Victorian discourses, and a sense of conflict between the conscious self and the sensual self deeply affects many Victorian individuals, forcing them to tackle
this issue in various creative ways (ibid.: 1-38). For Legge, the message of sin and evil in Kongzi’s remark shows the relevance of Ruist ethics to the Victorian discourse on religion and the human flesh, unfolding further Ruist–Christian dialogue on human nature and the moral correction of evil.

In the Lunyu, Kongzi does not specify whether human nature is intrinsically good or bad, but some of his discussions, as in his above dialogue with Yan Yuan, reveal his awareness about the problem of evil in human nature. For Mengzi (‘Gongsun Chou’, 6; ‘Gaozi’, 6), however, human nature is essentially good, because humans are inclined to exercise good actions based on their natural feelings of compassion, shame and modesty, as well as their natural knowledge about right and wrong; they possess these feelings as their four limbs (see also 3.2.6). Zhu Xi adopts Mengzi’s opinion, yet Zhu also considers the origin of evil in humanity, reminding us that Mengzi’s belief in the goodness of human nature should be understood in his teaching about the righteousness of feelings (Li 1270/2010, I: 229). In Zhu’s view, although human nature is good, human desires have good and bad kinds: a good desire is based on ren and directed to ren (perfect virtue, benevolence, altruism and love), while a bad desire is characterised by qingyu 情欲 (lustful emotions), which often threaten to destroy the principle of Heaven (ibid.). As discussed earlier, Zhu deems evil as deriving from the selfish desires in the mind’s interaction with the physical world. In this regard, where the problem of evil alludes to human sin, sin for Zhu is not intrinsic in human nature, but rather is the obscurcation of the mind by all kinds of selfish desires and lustful emotions. For Zhu (1182/1983: 3; see 5.2.1), the human mind is susceptible to selfish desires, but the substance of human nature is originally enlightened, and such a naturally enlightened state always exists.

In Christianity, original sin has been a crucial yet contentious topic. According to the Bible, humankind bears the sin of Adam and Eve by their first transgression
against God’s order, but Jesus Christ, the second Adam sent by God, saves all the sinners through his sufferings, death, and resurrection. Saint Augustine (1998 I/24; 1999 I/25) defines original sin as a wound in humanity, making humans less good and in need of God’s moral healing. For Augustine (1998 I/24: 349, 402-403 [Answer to Julian, II, 18, 37, 38]), the sin of Adam and Eve explains why humans need to be reborn through Christ for their eventual union with God.

Yet Augustine does not blame original sin entirely on human nature. Like Mengzi and Zhu Xi, Augustine affirms the goodness of human nature and the necessity of learning. Human nature is good, because God creates nature and God is always good (Augustine 1993: 1-4, 85; 1998 I/24: 372 [Answer to Julian, II, 56]). In addition, licit intercourse in the context of conjugal love should be deemed as good, although bad use of carnal concupiscence is to be condemned as sin (Augustine 1999 I/25: 367-70 [Answer to Julian, III, 178-185]). To Augustine (1993: 70-81, 104-105), the cause of sin is human will: when one wills a bad desire, the movement following it is evil, but through one’s pursuance of truth under God’s guidance, one can learn to will right actions. As G. R. Evans (1982; 2002: 9) notes, Augustine sees evil as nonexistence or the absence of goodness; human disobedience to God (the first human evil) constitutes original sin, yet sin is not a being or substance but merely a bad quality. Augustine (1993) teaches that God has foreknowledge about human sin, but God’s love for humanity never ceases. Later on, Aquinas furthered Augustine’s view on God’s eternal goodness, specifically on the Neo-Platonic pattern in it that highlights the notion exitus et reditus (coming [from God] and returning [to God]). For Aquinas, God is the ultimate end of humanity, and humans are naturally inclined towards this divine purpose through their “spiritual communion or friendship with God” (Gustafson 1978: 7).

Protestant fathers such as Martin Luther (1483–1546) and John Calvin
(1509–1564), on the other hand, view God and original sin from the perspective and problem of human faith. For Luther, the theology of Augustine and Aquinas overemphasises God’s role as the natural and moral corrector of human sin, thus neglecting the more essential religious problem in human nature with regard to the mercy of God (Gustafson 1978: 8-12). In Luther’s view, the relationship between God and humankind poses an elemental question regarding faith. Concerned with faith, both Luther and Calvin deem original sin as a basic error in human nature, rooted in human incapability to trust God and accept God’s grace. Therefore, the remedy for such sin is to evoke humankind’s faith in God, whereby humans would be renewed and transformed into beings of real freedom (ibid.: 10-11).

For Legge, to discover and develop the theme of original sin in Ruism through Ruist–Christian dialogue is significant. Such dialogue goes beyond the boundary between the assumed ‘Christian’ and ‘non-Christian’ traditions, enabling us to look into the shared issues of human nature and contemplate the possibility of a universal salvific will. In his Religions of China, Legge (1880a: 296) writes:

The knowledge of God in Confucianism, which has become a heritage of the Chinese people, is very precious; but the restriction of the worship of Him to the sovereign has prevented the growth and wide development among them of a sense of sin. The doctrine of the goodness of human nature, again, may be held so that it shall not conflict with the teaching of our scriptures on the same subject, but its tendency is to lead the scholarly class to think too highly of themselves as capable, unhelped from without, of all virtuous achievement, and to resent the suggestion that our religion is better than their own. There is, in a word, no bringing down of God to men in Confucianism in order to lift them up to Him.

In this assessment, Legge again affirms God’s existence in Ruism, which Legge perceives as the Chinese “knowledge of God” according to his findings in Ruist texts.
(see the fourth chapter). As Legge notes, the belief in the goodness of human nature characterises the common ground of Ruism and Christianity, but the problem of sin in human nature is not sufficiently dealt with in Ruism (specifically in Mengzi’s and Zhu Xi’s teaching), resulting in the Chinese literati’s complacency and common Chinese people’s ignorance. Like Luther and Calvin, Legge believes that perfect virtue is achieved through restoring the sense of sin and faith within humanity in relation to God. Legge hence calls for an awakening of the religious feelings of sin and faith in the Chinese consciousness.

Despite his above criticism, Legge regards Zhu Xi as central to his inquiries about the ultimate solution to evil in humanity. For Legge, moral rectification (taught by Roman Catholicism) and the question of faith (stressed by Protestantism) are both relevant to Kongzi’s teaching, and Zhu clarifies the heavenly principle as the transcendental divine virtue in Kongzi’s message. As Kongzi teaches Yan Yuan, “克己” (to “subdue one’s self”) should be followed by “復禮” (to “return to propriety”), so that “天下歸仁” (literally “all that is under Tian returns to ren”, which Legge translates into “all under heaven will ascribe perfect virtue to him [the man subduing his self and returning to propriety]”). Here, after discussing the problems of selfishness and original sin, Legge (1861: 115; 1893: 251) notes:

復禮 [to “return to propriety”], – see note on 禮 [“the ceremonies, or rules of propriety, spoken of in these (Ruist) books, are not mere conventionalities, but the ordinations of man’s moral and intelligent nature in the line of what is proper” (Legge 1861: 72; 1893: 208)], VIII. 2. It is not here ceremonies. Choo He/Chû Hsi [Zhu Xi] defines it – 天理之節文, ‘the specific divisions and graces of heavenly principle or reason.’ This is continually being departed from, on the impulse of selfishness, but there is an ideal of it as proper to man, which is to be sought – ‘returned to’ – by overcoming that.
Clearly, Legge uses Zhu Xi’s commentary to illuminate the spiritual dimensions in the Ruist propriety. Zhu interprets li (the rules of propriety) here as “天理之節文” (literally “the jie [etiquette, segments or moral integrity] and wen [culture or elegance] of the principle of Heaven”), which Legge translates into “the specific divisions and graces of heavenly principle or reason”. Legge detects a lucid message of divinity in Zhu’s view. For Legge, Zhu presents Kongzi’s notion of propriety as “heavenly principles or reason”, regulating one’s “moral and intelligent nature” rather than being formalist rules deprived of spirituality. Zhu hence reveals the transcendental character in what Kongzi considers to be proper. In Legge’s vision, Zhu’s idea of the principle of Heaven is analogous to the Christian definition of God-given reason. In Christianity, God bestows reason in humans and ensures human goodness because God exemplifies perfect virtue and predestines the purpose of humanity. We have seen how Augustine, Aquinas, Luther and Calvin emphasise God as divine grace, serving to correct human sin and recuperate human faith. Likewise, to Legge, Zhu perceives Heaven as the ultimate regulator of the human mind, whose divine morality is manifest through its “節文” (“specific divisions and graces”). Both Christian thinkers and Zhu recognise the necessity to overcome evil and return to divine source for perfecting humanity.

Moreover, Legge uses Zhu Xi’s commentary as a reminder that ren (virtue) is the central value in Kongzi’s teaching precisely because it denotes the religious faith of a transcendental mind above the physical flesh. This is shown in Legge’s annotation on another of Kongzi’s discussions on ren:

民之於仁也，甚於水火。水火，吾見蹈而死者矣，未見蹈仁而死者也。（XV, 34)

Virtue is more to man than either water or fire. I have seen men die from
treading on water and fire, but I have never seen a man die from treading the course of virtue. (1861: 168; 1893: 304)

Legge (1861: 168; 1893: 304) notes:

民之於仁也 – ‘the people’s relation to, or dependence on, virtue.’ The case is easily conceivable of men’s suffering death on account of their virtue. There have been martyrs for their loyalty and other virtues, as well as for their religious faith. Choo He/Chû Hsî [Zhu Xi] provides for this diff./difference in his remarks: – [“無水火不過害人之身，而不仁則失其心，是仁有甚於水火” (Zhu 1182/1983: 168)] ‘The want of fire and water is hurtful only to man’s body, but to be without virtue is to lose one’s mind (the higher nature), and so it is more to him than water or fire.’ See on IV. 8.

As Legge explains, Kongzi views virtue as being always good to humankind, contrary to water and fire which can be beneficial or harmful, and Zhu Xi elucidates Kongzi’s notion of virtue as a manifestation of “higher nature”, regulated by the mind of reason and the principle of Heaven (as I have noted earlier) rather than the physicality of things. In Legge’s reading, Zhu deems water and fire as affecting humanity merely on a physical level, while Zhu believes that humans who tread “the course of virtue” are able to endure and transcend their physical sufferings, as their faith in higher truth (understood by Legge as an expression of religious martyrdom) provides them with a means of spiritual redemption. Accordingly, Zhu’s commentary echoes Legge’s previous annotation on Kongzi’s way of learning (“If a man in the morning hear the right way, he may die in the evening without regret”) (see IV, 8 above), where Legge interprets Zhu’s notion of “the principles of what is right in events and things” from the perspective of higher truth, inspired by divine will and action.

Certainly, in Legge’s imagining, we can continue to explore Kongzi’s “course of
virtue” through a deeper reflection on the human soul, death, the afterlife and futurity. Here, Zhu Xi’s distinction between higher nature (relating to eternal virtue) and the human body (relating to the indeterminate physical world) helps to strengthen Legge’s belief in Kongzi’s religiousness. Although Legge sometimes complains about Kongzi’s seeming indifference towards humankind’s spiritual life, he translates Kongzi’s teaching on zhong (faithfulness) into “devotion of soul” (see 2.4 and 3.2.5), believing that Kongzi is concerned with the possibility of an immortal virtuous life above and beyond the human flesh. As we have seen, in his Notions, Legge (1852: 105) states that God’s work is manifest through the “consciousness, intelligence and benign feelings” of the human soul (see 2.3.1). In his Religions of China, further, Legge (1880a: 297, 301) notes that Kongzi’s teaching on human virtue could be complemented by the themes of the “sacrificial death of Christ” and the “revelation of the future” in Christian doctrine. Christ’s death elevates the human soul that awaits God’s judgment, and God wills an eternal future which, as Legge claims, “satisfies the longings of the soul or the instincts of our moral nature” (ibid.: 301). In this regard, whereas Kongzi does not explain how a human who treads the course of virtue could possibly be rewarded an eternal life, Legge deems Zhu Xi’s notion of higher nature as the significant channel between Ruism and Christianity, in that it highlights the ever-enduring principle of a moral and intelligent mind over the physical body, a principle existing within and beyond the spectrum of time, and resonating with Christian teaching on God’s righteous judgment upon humanity and the afterlife of the soul.

Through his dialogue with Zhu Xi, Legge reveals how Zhu’s commentaries may serve to fill the gap between Ruism and Christianity on metaphysical and theological levels. On account of the relevance of Zhu Xi’s thought to Christianity, Legge’s adoption of Zhu is remarkably distinctive. Rather than dismiss Zhu as atheist or
materialist, Legge demonstrates that divinity works at the heart of Zhu’s theory of nature, mind and the principle of Heaven. By way of Zhu, moreover, Legge fosters new interreligious inquiries about the common foundation of faith and virtue, the prospect of humanity within and beyond the human, and the existence of a transcendental will in relation to the question of universal salvation.

5.2.3  Tracing the image and attributes of the Creator:

God as divine nature and truth in Legge’s Zhu Xi-based annotation

Insofar as Legge consciously affirms God’s centrality in the connected knowledge of Ruism and Christianity, he seeks to develop ideas regarding the attributes of God in Ruist teaching. How Zhu Xi might contribute to a better understanding of God in Ruism is yet another significant aspect in Legge’s use of Zhu’s commentaries. Because Legge stresses the transcendental principle in Zhu’s thought, he wants to reveal a clearer theological system in Ruism through Zhu’s articulation of Heaven, nature, creation, spiritual beings and truth.

We have seen that Legge uses Zhu Xi’s commentary to explain “天之曆數” (“the represented and calculated numbers of heaven”) in Yao’s instruction to Shun (see 4.2). Zhu Xi’s metaphysical envisioning of the ordination of nature apparently appeals to Legge. In his *Notions* (1852), Legge rejects Bishop Boone’s opinion that Zhu Xi is ignorant of God, instead asserting that Zhu’s ideas of *Taiji* (which Legge interprets as “the great extremity”/“the great terminus”), *li* (which Legge interprets as “the principle of order”) and *Dao* (which Legge interprets as “the supreme Reason”) reflect certain attributes of a Supreme Being, dwelling above *gui* (ghosts) and *shen* (spiritual beings) (see also 4.2). Legge recognises Zhu’s synthesis of the Great Ultimate, principle and *Dao* (the Way) as higher nature, viewing these notions in Zhu’s system as indices of God’s image and attributes. Convinced that Zhu’s view of
principle is transcendental, higher than the interaction of ghosts and spirits (or that of yin and yang), Legge understands that a study of Zhu’s interpretation of spiritual beings is still required in order to better grasp the theology in Ruism.

In Christian thought, humankind and the universe are God’s creation and holistically reflect God’s image. Legge more than once affirms in his writings that God is the true Creator of Heaven, Earth and humankind. Legge’s belief is well attested in the Bible, which teaches us: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth”; “God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them” (Genesis 1:1 and 1:27). God’s image is perfect and supreme, and all the beings, created by God and subjected to God, partake God’s image through the fundamental goodness of their nature and essence. In this regard, Legge believes that the term Shangdi (the lofty One on high) not only enables us to correctly apprehend God by his superlative qualities, but also presents a capacity for expressing the Trinitarian image of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost/Spirit in Chinese (see 4.2).

Augustine was amongst the earliest Christian fathers who sought to establish a more comprehensive understanding of God’s image, based on his synthesis of biblical teaching, the Trinity and Plato’s notion of participation (Luigi Gioia 2008). In his Confessions, Augustine (1992/2008: 227-28 [XI, ix (11)], 301-302 [XIII, xxxii (47)]) describes Heaven, Earth and all the creatures as the work of God, made in God’s image and likeness; nature thus is to be understood as a sign of God’s mercy and wisdom, embodied through God’s supreme power of reason and intelligence. As Augustine elucidates in his City of God (1972/2003: 1081-1082 [XXII, 29]), God creates a kingdom of peace beyond human perception, but God encourages human participation in His kingdom, so that humans can perfect their own images to the image and likeness of God. As Luigi Gioia (2008: 232-36) notes, Augustine’s
doctrine of the image of God is developed from the image of the Trinity. For Augustine (1992/2008: 276 [XIII, v (6)], 279 [XIII, xi (12)]), our appreciation of God the Trinity, i.e. of the way Father, Son and Holy Spirit works through us in a simultaneous, everlasting and infinite state, is necessary and beneficial to our spiritual growth. Augustine admits that human image cannot be compared to God’s image, but humans “are called to grow in the image and in the likeness of the Father by adhering to him through the Son”, and by relating themselves to God through their mind and the inner man in them (Gioia 2008: 234, 235). Humankind is created in the image of God the Trinity, and human love for God will guide humans towards eternal happiness, restoring human self-understanding while permitting humans to partake the divine unity of the illuminated natural universe (Augustine 1992/2008: 273-80 [XIII, i (1)–xii (13)]; see also Gioia 2008: 275, 293).

In Legge’s view, the Christian notion of the image of God is relevant to the way in which Zhu Xi explains the appearance and metaphysics of nature. In annotating the Lunyu, thus, how to make proper use of Zhu’s commentaries for relating nature to God’s existence and eternal truth remains Legge’s central concern. Legge sees Zhu’s emphasis on the creation and transformation of nature in Kongzi’s teaching as a necessary pathway for tracing a supernatural being like God. Here is one example:

子在川上曰: 「逝者如斯夫！不舍晝夜。」(IX, 16)

The Master standing by a stream, said, “It passes on just like this, not ceasing day or night!” (Legge 1861: 86; 1893: 222)

Literally, Kongzi’s remark here means: “The one who/which passes on is like this! It never gives in, day and night.” In Legge’s (1861: 86; 1893: 222) view, this passage shows how Kongzi “was affected by a running stream”, suggesting both Kongzi’s
sensitivity to the interrelation between nature and humanity and his reflection on what humans could learn from nature, manifest through the flowing water. Legge (1861: 86; 1893: 222) notes:

What does the *it* in the transl./translation refer to? 者 [the one who/which] and 如 [to be like] indicate something in the sage’s mind, suggested by the ceaseless move./movement of the water. Choo He/Chû Hsî [Zhu Xi] makes it 天地之化, = our ‘course of nature.’ In the 註疏 [commentaries by He Yan and Xing Bing] we find for it 時事, ‘events,’ ‘the things of time.’ Probably Choo He/Chû Hsî [Zhu Xi] is correct.

In the company of Zhu Xi and others, Legge is seeking the hidden meaning above and beyond the physical movement of water by probing its ceaselessness, bestowed by a divine force which Legge believes is taking shape in Kongzi’s mind. Water in this context is not only a bodily image, but a sign referring to something abstract which causes the movement of the water. Zhu explores the phenomenon of running water through a metaphysical inquiry, explaining the ‘it’ in Kongzi’s remark as “天地之化” (literally “the teaching, changes or coming-into-being of Heaven and Earth”), which Legge interprets as the “course of nature” where we participate. As Zhu (1182/1983: 113) notes, the operation of the universe suggests “道體之本然” (“the origin of the Way’s substance”): we come across the Way by seeing a sign from our surrounding world, such as a stream visible to us, yet ultimately we know the Way only through our learning mind’s eye. In Legge’s thought, Zhu’s explanation, compared to He Yan’s and Xing Bing’s, more accurately and insightfully reveals the

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20 *Hua*  化 has multiple meanings in Chinese literature. Xu Shen explains *hua* as *jiaoxing* 教行, or “teaching and action”. According to the *Kangxi Dictionary*, *hua* means “teaching”, “the civilising action” or “changes”. *Hua* is also used in the sense of *zaohua* 造化, meaning “creative transformations”, “that which makes things come into being”, “fortune” or “destiny”. In his essay ‘The Translation of Lin Shu’, Qian Zhongshu (1910–1998) (1979: 292) comments that “the highest standard of literary translation is ‘hua’”, as perfect translation for Qian is to make one language appear completely natural in another while revealing all the meanings in the original [Note: Lin Shu (1852–1924) was a prominent scholar who translated numerous Western literary works into Chinese.]
metaphysics of nature in relation to the causality of the universe. With reference to Zhu, Legge furthers his quest for Kongzi’s seeming awareness about ‘the invisible one’, whose existence is the very reason for the movement of the stream, and whose image is imitated in the principle of this movement. Whereas Kongzi does not explicate how he would conceive of such an image, for Legge Zhu’s view helps to illustrate a vision of the true Creator of the universe, from whom, by whom and through whom all things find their eternal pattern in nature, in the harmonious unity of Heaven and Earth.

In his *Notions* (1852), Legge further adopts Zhu Xi’s theory to elucidate Kongzi’s recognition of the ultimate truth. He draws on Kongzi’s remark in the *Zhongyong*:

鬼神之為德, 其盛矣乎! 視之而弗見, 聽之而弗聞, 体物而不可遺。使天下之人齊明盛服, 以承祭祀, 洋洋乎如在其上, 如在其左右。《詩》曰: 「神之格思, 不可度思! 矧可射思!’ 夫微之顯, 誠之不可揜如此夫。(Zhongyong 16)

How abundantly do spiritual beings display the powers that belong to them! We look for them, but do not see them; we listen to, but do not hear them; yet they enter into all things, and there is nothing without them. They cause all the people in the empire/kingdom to fast and purify themselves, and array themselves in their richest dresses, in order to attend at their sacrifices. Then, like overflowing water, they seem to be over the heads, and on the right and left of their worshippers. It is said in the Book of Poetry, “The approaches of the spirits, you cannot surmise;—and can you treat them with indifference?” Such is the manifestness of what is minute! Such is the impossibility of repressing the outgoings of sincerity! (Legge 1861: 261-62; 1893: 397-98)\(^{21}\)

As Legge (1852: 20) observes, the key theme here does not lie in Kongzi’s description of spiritual beings, but rather in his conclusive word on the importance of

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\(^{21}\) The translation is drawn from the two editions of Legge’s *Zhongyong*. In his *Notions*, Legge uses Medhurst’s translation to discuss this passage.
cheng 誠 (honesty, interpreted by Legge as “sincerity”). Zhu Xi (1182/1983: 25) interprets cheng as 真實無妄 (literally “being real and substantial, containing no illusion”, which Legge translates into “true and sincere, without falsehood”). In support of Zhu, Legge cites Hu Bingwen’s 胡炳文 (1250–1333) gloss in his 四書通 (a title Legge translates as ‘The Perspicuous Explanation of the Four Books’) (1326). Legge (1852: 20) translates Hu’s remark “凡物之終始，莫非陰陽合散之所為，而陰陽合散，莫非真實無妄之理” into: “The beginning and ending of all things is invariably caused by the union and dispersion of the active and passive primordial matter, which union and dispersion again are certainly from the principle of order, true and sincere, without falsehood”. For Legge, Kongzi’s stress on sincerity once again validates his role as a religious teacher, who is concerned with the spiritual development of religious participants rather than the formalism of religious sacrifices. Through Zhu and Hu, Legge reminds us that sincerity in Kongzi’s remark should be understood as a spiritual substance, enabling us to see through the nothingness of illusion and falsehood so as to attain to the ultimate truth. In Legge’s regard, Zhu’s and Hu’s explanations fundamentally present a sincere attitude as the essence of the highest principle, illuminating the true meaning of humankind’s religious activities. According to Legge (1852: 21), Hu’s Zhu Xi-based commentary develops Kongzi’s notion of sincerity “as synonymous with the more frequently mentioned ‘principle of order’”, thus reaffirming the transcendental value of Zhu’s theory of principle, able to guide us towards God’s eternal truth.

In his dialogue with Zhu Xi, Legge envisions nature as the metaphysical embodiment of God’s supreme reason and principle, revealing an infinite capacity for the completion of intelligence, and bestowing true harmony to the universe through perfect moral order. Legge would likely admit that God remains the mystery for both Christians and the Chinese. Yet believing in the theistic values in Zhu’s
system, Legge uses Zhu’s glosses to unveil ‘the invisible One’ in Kongzi’s discussions on the Way of nature. For Zhu, *li* (principle) and *qi* (vital force or energy) ontologically are abstract notions, and they also suggest the metaphysical power of creation through the transformation of affairs. Zhu’s theory of principle depicts *Taiji* or the Great Ultimate as being “at once one and many”: like the celestial body whose light is reflected upon the waters, *Taiji* exists as the original source of the Way and truth of the universe, inviting us to share its image through its infinite divisions and configurations (Chan 1987: 53). For Legge, insofar as *Taiji* is the One foregrounding Heaven, Earth and the cosmic order, those divided signs in our surrounding world always direct us to the one principle above and beyond them, which marks their originally unified form while operating as their forethought. With reference to Zhu, Legge is convinced that this highest principle of nature presents the truth of *Taiji*, thus showing the immortal presence of the Creator.

**Conclusion**

Zhu Xi plays a central role in the way Legge connects his Christian thought to Kongzi’s teaching. Zhu’s conception of *Taiji*, *li* and *qi* is ontologically metaphysical while showing different possibilities of formulating immanence, transcendence and their relations. Whereas the Jesuits downplay Zhu’s system, Legge reinstates Zhu’s significance to developing theological Ruism, the Ruist–Christian connection, and the dialogue between religion and science. Legge is able to appreciate Ruism as both immanent and transcendental by relating Zhu’s theory to Christian thought, Scottish realism and contemporary Western philosophical debate. As I have shown, while Kongzi simply states that he at fifteen “had the will to learning” (II, 4), Legge’s Zhu Xi-based annotation extends Kongzi’s remark to the *Daxue*, the Ruist Way and the
For Legge, Zhu’s theory of *xing* (nature), *xin* (mind) and *Tianli* (the principle of Heaven) corresponds well to Christian thought on goodness, sin, evil and God’s moral guidance, and hence Zhu’s model at its highest level is purely transcendental and entirely connectible to Christian divinity. As I have demonstrated, there are different ways of interpreting Zhu’s ideas of *jie* (etiquette, segments or moral integrity) and *wen* (culture or elegance). But because Legge views Zhu’s notion of the principle of Heaven as analogous to God-given reason in Christianity, his interpretation of *jie wen* as “specific divisions and graces” is theologically loaded. Legge deems the heavenly principle as the proof of how we should approach Zhu as a theistic thinker, who transmits, clarifies and renovates Kongzi’s religiousness. Further, Legge believes that the higher truth in Zhu’s elaboration of our surrounding world manifests the image and attributes of God in Ruist thought. Whereas Zhu’s idea of *zaohua* alternatively means creative transformations, Legge’s translation of it as “the course of nature” highlights God’s constancy in, beyond and above the interaction of affairs, ghosts and spirits. On the whole, Legge systematically confirms Zhu’s contribution to the fine values and theistic aspects of Ruism, showing how Zhu’s renewal of Ruism inspires common religious understanding from within Ruist history and via its connection with Christianity and other traditions.

Without doubt, Legge’s dialogue with Zhu Xi motivates us to think anew about human faith, relocating our ideas of learning, transcendence and eternity in the broader spectrum of human spirituality. Here, we are encouraged to conceive of God and Christ’s salvific mission in a different way, because Legge’s project indicates that God’s grace and dispensation, through His many names and facets, is not necessarily restricted in the doctrine of a particular belief system, but rather can be accommodated to the universal capacity of human consciousness across all cultures.
and traditions, encompassing all the possibilities and impossibilities at their highest and deepest. Such universal spiritual enlightenment enables us to perfect our moral nature, love others afresh, and resume our faith in the natural, the human and the divine. It is on this new ground that Legge’s *Lunyu* reveals its new meanings for the twenty-first century and beyond.
Legge’s *Lunyu* has opened up multiple possibilities for the mutual understanding between China and the West. The techniques by which Legge creates his *Lunyu* reflect his awareness of the manifold historical issues involved in the formation of the *Lunyu*, including its textual embodiment into a book, the Chinese commentaries on it from the Han to the Qing dynasty, and the earlier Jesuit and Protestant editions. Contextualising such history in his annotated translation, Legge illustrates the importance of the *Lunyu* to grasping Kongzi’s spirituality and the theistic dimensions of Ruism, in conjunction with nineteenth-century discourses of sinology, comparative religion and science. Beyond the nineteenth century, Legge’s *Lunyu* continues to inspire new discussions on translation studies and intercultural communication, promising more in-depth Sino-Western exchanges in time to come.

Attempting to discover universal human religiousness in Kongzi’s teaching, Legge adopts a cross-cultural approach to the *Lunyu* which combines his Ruist studies with his personal quest for divine truth. Legge’s approach urges us to probe the intersection between faith, knowledge and belief, so as to inquire into the fundamental meaning of living and working with our intercultural neighbours. In the history of East–West interaction, Legge’s role as the pioneering missionary, translator and sinologist can never be overestimated.

I have shown through my analysis how Legge’s translation of the *Lunyu* is of a dialogic, intertextual character and centrally an activity of interreligious understanding. Resonant with Legge’s cross-cultural approach to Ruism as a religion,
dialogism and intertextuality unfold the subtle Sino-Christian nuances in Legge’s *Lunyu*, revealing the way Legge connects with Kongzi and the Ruist tradition philologically, religiously and interculturally. Legge’s view of Ruism as relatable to Christianity and Western philosophy resituates Kongzi’s teaching in interreligious dynamics and interdisciplinary contexts of religious, sinological and translation studies. Through his dialogue with Ruism, Legge broadens the way religion can be debated and conceptualised beyond the confinement of any single belief system. His *Lunyu* stimulates us to reread the text via the intersection of multiple Chinese and Western intellectual inquiries, and therefore rethink the idea of religion and the historical construction of tradition and knowledge.

Legge inherits and transforms the Jesuit accommodationist strategy, displaying a more open attitude towards the commentarial history of the *Lunyu*. Highlighting the Four Books and Zhu Xi’s canon, Legge goes on to establish the *Lunyu* as the primary text for evaluating Kongzi. Whereas Max Müller tends to deem the *Lunyu* as nonreligious, Legge defines Kongzi’s spirituality through direct references to the *Lunyu*, insisting that the text and the tradition associated with it bears ancient Chinese religiousness in relation to all other major Ruist texts. Legge hence reassures the *Lunyu*’s crucial role in comprehending the theistic aspects of Ruist literature at large, from within ancient China and through its correlation with the world’s other traditions. His approach manifests how an emphasis on Kongzi’s similarity with Christ constitutes important Sino-Christian dialogue concerning common humanity and universal divinity. For Legge, insofar as humanity is felt in Christ’s sufferings, divinity is to be found in Kongzi’s teaching on virtue, learning and self-transcendence.

Legge’s use of the ‘analects’ to translate the *Lunyu* and revisionist account of Kongzi’s teaching illustrate his dialogic imagination of the connectibility between
ancient China and Graeco-Roman Europe. Based on this cross-philosophical linkage, Legge believes that theology as defined in Christianity is developable from Ruism. In his *Lunyu*, Legge interprets *ren* (perfect virtue, benevolence and universal love), *xiao* (filial piety), *zhong* (faithfulness and sincerity) and *li* (the rules of propriety) within the intertextuality between his miscellaneous sources, rather than exclusively in line with the authority of the Bible. In translating the *Lunyu*, then, Legge extends the connotation of humanity and divinity by moving beyond the narrower Christian doctrinal context towards a more universal vision, encompassing ancient Chinese and Greek philosophy, European theology and many other cultural voices.

Furthermore, believing in pre-Qin Chinese consciousness of God, Legge seeks providence in ancient Ruist literature, interpreting the native terms *Tian*, *Di* and *Shangdi* as the Chinese expressions of God, instead of simply modelling what he perceives as ancient Chinese monotheism after Christian thought. In addition, Legge draws significant analogies between Zhu Xi’s ‘study of principle’ and Christian thought on the critical themes of learning, human nature, sin, evil and transcendence. While using Zhu’s thought to unravel the subtle fibres of natural philosophy and revealed theology in Ruism, Legge invites us to rethink how Zhu might contribute to a more nuanced discussion on the attributes and image of God, as well as the creation of the universe.

Accordingly, Legge’s “Discourses and Dialogues” with Kongzi and other thinkers in his *Lunyu* is able to provide fundamental lessons for us in the diversified global world today. The multivocal, revisionist, accommodating and ever-evolving character of Legge’s *Lunyu* prompts us to recognise its vast capacity for Sino-Western mutual accommodation. Through Legge, we are encouraged to revise the orientalist and imperialist reading of China’s relationship with the West in the nineteenth-century and beyond. As I have noted, Said’s *Orientalism* (1978) has
considerably impacted many scholarly approaches to the nineteenth-century Western literature on the East. Nonetheless, Legge’s historically informed engagement with the Lunyu and thoughtful interpretation of Kongzi’s teaching pronouncedly point to the limitation in Said’s orientalist arguments.

Legge’s Lunyu stimulates us to further the East–West cultural dialogue on an interdisciplinary basis, whether or not we agree with Legge’s concern about the universal God and the relation of religion to human salvation. For scholars focusing on the centrality and questions of religion regarding worldwide human agendas, they can learn from Legge’s Lunyu for reassessing Ruism within the dynamics of interreligious quest and dialogue. Conversely, for scholars deeming religious issues as less central, they may also discover in Legge’s Lunyu how developing a sympathetic view of a tradition foreign to them would surprisingly renew the meaning of humanity. Legge’s appreciation of Kongzi, the Chinese commentators and contemporary sinologists motivates us to widen our intercultural understanding based on friendship and interdisciplinary human interaction. Ultimately, Legge’s work is the testament to how diverse academic inquiries may converge through the encounter between individual visions and scholarly collaboration, and how humanity and divinity can enrich each other through their interreligious and cross-cultural connection.

For Legge, faith, knowledge and belief are not mutually exclusive notions or categories. They might not even be simply notions or categories in the way Legge relates them. In translating the Lunyu, Legge tells us that his personal faith acts as the sustenance for his search for the true knowledge about Ruism. Legge also demonstrates how he uses his extensive knowledge of the Chinese and European intellectual traditions for clarifying, deepening and validating his belief in the existence of God in Kongzi’s teaching. Broadly, Legge transmits the Jesuit tradition
on using *Scientiae Sinicae* (‘Learning/Knowledge of China’) to illuminate the connection between ancient China, science and divine understanding. Legge then renovates the Jesuit vision by admitting the dimension of ‘moral science’ in the evolving Ruist tradition, because he believes that understanding the history of Ruism makes him come nearer to the truth, the very essence of knowledge. Unlike the Jesuits, Legge appreciates the ways in which both reason and emotions function in our seeking after the mysterious and in the development of knowledge. In Legge’s thought, God encourages the pursuance of human knowledge in all possible ways because God is truth and constantly invokes better understanding of truth.

From the perspective of religion and religious studies, Legge’s central concern has been how Ruism might be admitted into the larger scope of academic discussions on the sacred. In the first section of his *Religions of China*, ‘The meaning in these Lectures of the name Confucianism’ (my italics), Legge (1884a: 4) concludes:

I use the term Confucianism, therefore, as covering, first of all, the ancient religion of China, and then the views of the great philosopher himself, in illustration or modification of it, – his views as committed to writing by himself, or transmitted in the narratives of his disciples. The case is pretty much as when we comprehend under Christianity the records and teachings of the Old Testament as well as those of the New.

Just as Legge deems Confucius as the Latin equivalent of Kongzi, Confucianism here is less an invented term of the Jesuits or of Legge’s own. On the contrary, Legge uses Confucianism – which I refer to as Ruism in the thesis – to consolidate his belief in the Chinese meaning of God, the universally relative source of divinity for Legge that sustains China as one of the world’s continued civilisations. Following the above statement, Legge (ibid.: 4) entitles his second section as ‘The error of not regarding Confucius as a religious teacher’. This clearly points to Legge’s faith in ancient
Chinese monotheism and in Kongzi’s religiousness, echoing the numerous theological insights we have found in Legge’s interpretation of the *Lunyu* and his other writings.

In Legge’s vision, what Kongzi provides for China is precisely what the Bible teaches the West. It is the truth and meaning regarding the highest purpose of humanity, which prompts Ruism and Christianity to connect through their mutual understanding, whereby we can go on to explore the common origin of human religious consciousness. As Anna Sun (2013: 40-42, 50-51, 57-60) notes, as well as his sinological achievements, Legge’s legacy is shown in the way he moved Ruism out of discourses of the narrower missionary circle and relocated it in the academic context of the ‘science of religion’, through his collaboration with Max Müller and his personal approach to Ruism. This was a decisive moment that anticipated Ruism’s participation in the flourishing arena of comparative religious studies in our modern period. In order to more holistically present the religiousness of Ruism, as I have noted, Legge took a step even further by encouraging Müller to include the *Lunyu* and the *Mengzi* in his *Sacred Books* scheme, although this plan was halted owing to Müller’s reservations about Ruism. While there is reason to perceive Legge’s movement as an academic reinvention of Ruism, I want to highlight again that what drives Legge to do so has been his earnest search for the divine, which he believes is rooted in the consciousness of Westerners and Chinese alike. Legge distinctively places Kongzi, the *Lunyu* and Ruism at the heart of his personal quest and contemporary academic debate on religion in relation to other disciplines.

I have discussed how modern and contemporary religious studies help us approach Legge’s vision of Ruism based on his belief in ancient Chinese monotheism. While conditioned in the specificities of the nineteenth century, the spirit of Legge’s *Lunyu* continues to evolve with important debates on religion in our
present time. To specify how Legge’s Sino-Christian concern might be connected to contemporary religious scholars’ views on Ruism, it is useful to point out here a few recent directions on the studies of interreligious dialogue. For example, Catherine Cornille includes three case studies on Ruism’s respective interactions with Christianity, Islam and Judaism in her *Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Inter-Religious Dialogue* (2013). She also discusses Daoism in her monograph *The Im-Possibility of Interreligious Dialogue* (2008). On the other hand, Ruism and Daoism are not listed as the main subjects in David Cheetham, Douglas Pratt and David Thomas’s *Understanding Interreligious Relations* (2013). This reflects the fact that contemporary scholars have not yet reached an agreement on the nature and conception of religion in our global context, where the positions of Ruism and Daoism still seem obscure.

Remembering the legacy of the Jesuits and Legge, I argue that controversies over whether and to what extent Ruism and Daoism should be regarded as religions do not necessarily preclude their deserved position in our debate on the world’s religions and interreligious issues, insofar as ‘religion’ itself has been a contested topic. In this light, Cornille’s accommodation of Ruism and Daoism contours a seemingly more fruitful picture about the future directions of religious studies. She recognises the surprising dynamics and rich subtlety in the formation of human religiousness, often formed through the historical and ongoing confluence of manifold human inquiries. As Anna Sun (2013: 2-6) observes, the complex histories and realities in which Chinese people receive and practice Ruism or Confucianism urge us to see beyond the theocentric norms (as defined in Judeo-Christianity and Islam) in conventional religious studies, in order to capture the meaning of religion in humankind’s daily lives. In addition to Anna Sun, I suggest that we need to build and deepen the dialogue between theistic and non-theistic models for recognising a
system like Ruism. A non-theistic reading of Ruism serves as the reminder of the limitation of Christian doctrine, and a theological re-imagination of Ruism through the intertextuality between Ruist literature, the Bible, the Quran and other classics/scriptures allows us to see Ruism in lights previously neglected or underestimated. This is precisely why Legge’s *Lunyu* has been indispensible to understanding Ruism.

Indeed, Legge’s *Lunyu* permits us to envisage new theoretical or methodological models by rethinking the relationship between religious, translation and sinological studies, and by pondering how this relationship might contribute to intercultural understanding. Legge shows that faith is the underlying force of his translation, but he is aware of specific philological or technological issues in the translating process. While adopting Müller’s comparativist method, Legge draws on Xu Shen and Zhu Xi in interpreting concrete aspects in ancient Chinese characters and the idea of cosmogony, embedding his translatorial elaboration of Xu and Zhu in the intertextuality between Christian, ancient Chinese and other traditions. For Legge, engaging with Chinese historical and cultural specificities from antiquity to the Qing dynasty through translation is an essential part of his religious quest for the universal. Legge reassesses Chinese antiquity by viewing it as the participant in the world along with other traditions, and he seeks to validate China’s contemporary connection with international persons and intellectual communities.

Legge develops sympathy for the *Lunyu* through his reflection on Christian bigotry. Insomuch as he equalises Kongzi with Christ in their way of providing important lessons for all humankind, his *Lunyu* alerts us to the universal dimensions in Ruist teaching. As is well attested in his *Lunyu*, sinological and translatorial investigation for Legge provides the technique for bridging the specific to the scope of universal understanding. In this regard, Legge illustrates how his religious attitude
plays a central role in accomplishing the task of making one culture understood in another through his faithful identification of their common grounds. From other sides, Legge also suggests how translation and sinological studies, rooted in comparative philological research in order to generate specific truth claims, may forge new horizons for interreligious understanding. Altogether, Legge’s Lunyu opens a window into theorising translation in light of religion while perceiving religion by means of translation. It also calls for a redefinition of religious studies and sinology through their interconnection.

On the basis of intercultural communication, then, we can come to critically appreciate the subtler interdisciplinary layers in Legge’s vision. I have indicated how dialogism and intertextuality in Legge’s Lunyu bears on important interreligious explorations. As John Ross Carter (2012: 3-12) points out, contemporary religious studies still do not address adequately the essential questions on what it means for a person to live well and religiously, and how a person, aware of his or her environment and relationship with others, shapes his or her self-knowledge through the search for common understanding. For Carter (ibid.: 23-34; 170-73), developing dialogue between two belief systems is not simply an acquisition of information by comparing them through terminologies. Beyond that, it is about being open and discovering the very foundation of faith within the human, by way of genuine recognition of the roles of traditions, communities and friendship in relating one to others, and in grounding all of them towards the common prospect (see also Cornille 2013: xii-xvii). Carter (2012: 34) writes: “This search for interreligious understanding requires the discipline of an intellectual, the humane sensitivity of a self-conscious human being, and the commitment to truth that provides both motivation and orientation.” Cornille (2013: xii) also reminds us that “mutual respect and openness to the possibility of learning from the other” undergirds interreligious
dialogue. Both Carter and Cornille point to the fundamental strength by which Legge works on his *Lunyu*. In seeking the ultimate truth dialogically and intertextually via his source and target cultures, Legge has transformed ‘Ruism’ and ‘Christianity’ through the way he connects them and entered a further stage of personal quest. It is a quest which concerns the possibility of turning the unknown or inconceivable into elements of universal truth and divinity, thereby renovating the way in which we understand the world and humanity, while stimulating fresh explorations into our shared history, experience and values. It therefore spells out new prospects of humankind’s spiritual emancipation.

In relation to his interreligious translatorial quest, Legge’s emphasis on universal love also reveals further meanings to us. When examined in the dialogue between Ruism, Mohism and Christianity, as Legge shows, Ruist *ren* manifests its core value of self-transcendence for achieving impartial care for all humankind, corresponding to Christian teaching on *agapé*. Reading Legge in our present global context, his interpretation of *ren* as perfect virtue and universal love invokes yet another interreligious vision that centres on the significance of empathy and compassion in the convergence of contemporary religious traditions. As Cornille (2008: 143-46, 153-65) points out, interreligious empathy is marked by one’s transposition into the mental life, feelings and belief of the other; it involves affective and cognitive movements, with sympathy, experience and imagination as its conditions. Viewed in this light, the virtue and universal love in Legge’s translation of *ren* not only suggests his inner empathy towards the religious elements in both Ruism and Mohism, but also invites us to re-imagine *ren* as an indication of charity and commiseration, relevant and unifiable to the fundamental ethics in many other traditions. As Carter (2012: 99-108) notes, Christianity and Buddhism find their common purpose of salvific faith through the joined manifestation of *agapé* as love
and *karuṇā* as compassion, in that both notions highlight self-transcendence and selfless devotion to the wellbeing of others. In this sense, Legge’s recognition of *ren* as universal love paves the way for a fuller realisation of Ruist virtue in our current world, from within the heart and mind of intercultural religious persons and through their communion with the connected high mission of wide-ranging belief systems.

Moreover, by interpreting God in accordance with the Ruist commentarial tradition and through its interreligious connection with Christianity, Legge shows that theology can be built from Ruism and from the Sino-Christian dialogue. From a theoretical perspective concerning the theistic development in interreligious dialogue, Legge’s work opens up the possibility of understanding the meaning of God in the interaction of two or more traditions, rather than strictly within a single religion like Christianity. As I have shown, God in Legge’s view is relative to all persons and religions. Referring to *Tian, Di* and *Shangdi* in Ruist literature as the Chinese expressions of God, Legge confirms Ruism’s commonality with Christianity, Judaism and Islam in their identification of God as the Supreme Ruler. Furthermore, Legge’s systematic employment of Zhu Xi’s commentaries compels us to grasp Zhu anew and recognise him as both a philosophical commentator and theological thinker in and beyond an imperial Chinese context. Legge’s dialogue with Zhu Xi permits us to envision the attributes and image of God through Zhu’s vocabulary of higher nature, the principle of Heaven, the Great Ultimate and the Way. Interweaving Zhu’s notions with Christian themes on sin, transcendence and the soul’s moral nature, then, Legge reformulates the language of creation, salvation, soteriology and even the Trinity in new ways, reaching out on to a more expansive spectrum of universal human religiousness.

On the fourth level, Legge’s work suggests important nineteenth-century trends of correlating religion with science through understanding the histories of and
relation between Chinese learning and Western knowledge. Evolving from the Jesuit tradition, as Elman (2005) has noted, the nineteenth century witnessed a larger scale of Sino-Western collaboration on introducing Euro-American science into China and the Chinese intellectual tradition into the West. I have discussed how Legge attempted to reconcile religion with influential scientific discourses current in the nineteenth century. Legge’s affinity with Müller on promoting comparative philology and the ‘science of religion’ reveals his conscious self-positioning as a professional sinologist. In his *Chinese Classics*, Legge uses the Chinese commentarial tradition to define the *Daxue* as an example of ‘moral science’, while relating the *Lunyu* to the *Daxue* and the highest principle of Ruist learning through Zhu Xi’s synthesis. The tension between religion and science prompted Legge to reinvigorate religion as a principal value in conjunction with his sinological concerns.

Following the above context, Legge’s *Chinese Classics* have wider implications for the continued dialogue between religion and science in our modern period. Acting as the testimony of his personal belief in ancient Chinese monotheism, Legge’s work also indicates a systematic way of recognising Ruism as a body of knowledge in association with the history of Western theology, ethical learning and science. Here, we should be aware of the limitations in the West’s historical contact with Asian traditions, in particular on the question of the reconcilability between religion and science (see, for example, Lopez 2012). In general, however, we should admit that the reciprocal learning between the Jesuits, Protestants and Asian scholars in history has undoubtedly contributed to the harmonisation between science and religion, and to the progress of East–West mutual understanding. Legge’s revisionist account and occasional criticism of Kongzi’s teaching point to his reflection and transformation in striving to apprehend Ruism more completely. In this regard, we can view Legge’s *Lunyu* and *Chinese Classics* as the exemplar for synchronising religion with science.
based on Sino-Western exchanges. By extensively investigating Chinese and Western sources from the far past to the contemporary, Legge shows us the possibility to embody faith with the pursuit of knowledge in his creative negotiation between the classical and the modern.

Finally, I want to point out that friendship is another significant but often underappreciated dimension in Legge’s dialogue with Ruism. As we have seen, Legge (1893: x) acknowledges in his revised ‘Preface’ that he “has to thank many friends” for helping him achieve his project, and he conjoins this statement with his appreciation of Zhu Xi, who Legge refers to as his intimate interlocutor on Kongzi’s teaching. Legge worked with Müller on his Sacred Books of China. In translating Ruist texts, too, Legge received the assistance of Wang Tao, with whom he developed an enduring friendship. All these facts suggest that Legge’s quest for divine truth is not merely based on textual research, but also deriving from interacting with his friends. According to Carter (2012), one’s dialogue with friends of different traditions can be deemed as a religious quest; this model values religious understanding through one’s spiritual contact and engagement with others. Carter signals the potential of using ‘friendship’ as the focal point in approaching Legge’s vision. In Legge’s case, the appreciation of friendship marks the inception of learning by associating with different persons and accommodating diverse academic perspectives, however contradictory they might appear. Friendship animates the activities of intercultural understanding, where all the intellectual inquiries are participants and playing equally important parts.

What Legge’s Lunyu fundamentally teaches us is the importance of holding the sense of relevance in our encounter with and commitment to others, because their presence empowers us to think higher, bigger and more liberally, in the course of which we learn to remove the self–other dichotomy by turning the mores, morals and
sentiments of others into our existence, our being. In our globalised twenty-first century, China and the West may still be considered as quite different in social and political terms. Yet in terms of religion, dialogism and intertextuality, Legge has lit up the way for cementing and deepening the connection between China and the West, telling us how the differences between the two can be interculturally and spiritually elevated to the point of worldwide oneness, realisable and achievable in our concomitant search of a better future for all humankind.
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