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The Way to Achieve “This Culture of Ours”: An Investigation Based on the Viewpoints of Pre-Qin Confucianism and Song Confucianism

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Abstract: The concept of wen 文 has multiple meanings, but it plays an exceptionally important role in the development of Confucianism and Chinese philosophical terms. Pre-Qin Confucianism 先秦儒学 and Song Confucianism (Song dynasty Neo-Confucians 宋代儒学/宋代新儒家) are two important representatives in the history of Confucianism. Confucius has insisted that although the heaven is not going to destroy wen, wen must exist in everyone’s xing 性, and only when placed within a community can it develop. In Pre-Qin Confucianism, wen completed the transformation from the long established social political structure of the Zhou dynasty and its corresponding moral principles to the consciousness of consummate conduct and ritual propriety based on human instinct and humanistic rationality. Song dynasty Neo-Confucians inherited this Confucian mission and developed the spirit of wen in their period. They emphasized the necessity of learning classics and then writing articles to get closer to the heart-mind of sages and then to build a cultural community together. Both Pre-Qin Confucianism and Song Confucianism have been applying their viewpoints to achieve a community, which is “this culture of ours” 斯文.

Keywords: Confucius; *Analects*; the *Book of Changes*; Song Confucianism; cultural community



Citation: Lyu, Xin. 2023.

The Way to Achieve “This Culture of Ours”: An Investigation Based on the Viewpoints of Pre-Qin Confucianism and Song Confucianism. *Religions* 14: 1480. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14121480>

Academic Editor: Arndt Büsing

Received: 30 June 2023

Revised: 17 September 2023

Accepted: 24 November 2023

Published: 29 November 2023



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1. Introduction

The concept of wen 文 has played an exceptionally important role in the development of Confucianism. In the Chinese language, “wen” has multiple meanings, including written word, pattern, literature, sign, decoration, refinement, culture, humanity, civilization, etc. When used in Confucian texts, wen is often concerned with politics, society, customs, religion, ethics, as well as the relationship between individual and community. Two instances of wen in the *Analects* serve as foundational uses of the word in the Confucian tradition: Confucius said, “Does not our cultural heritage (wen) reside here in us? [...] Heaven is not going to destroy this culture of ours (wen). 文不在兹乎?天之未丧斯文也。” (*Analects* 论语 9.5) Wen encapsulates both external manifestations of order and internal principles that concern the heart-mind. “Heaven is not going to destroy this ‘wen’” (i.e., the cultural–political order exemplified by rites and music) and “Does ‘wen’ not reside in us?” (i.e., the pursuit of inner moral refinement) illustrate the combination of the internal and external dimensions of wen. This paper follows Peter Bol and Roger T. Ames in translating the primary sense of siwen 斯文 with “this culture of ours”¹ (Ames 2021, p. 315). The reason why this paper chose and agreed with this translation is because the “ours” actually has a worldwide meaning in today’s era. This “ours” refers to a community with a shared future for mankind all over the world. This is also the worldwide significance of Confucianism.

The theories of the Song Confucianists (songru 宋儒) formed another crucial development in the history of the concept of wen. On the one hand, they believed that inner moral cultivation, namely neishengxue 内圣学 (the study of cultivating the inner sage), is the means to achieving the ideal cultural and social order, which they identified with

“siwen 斯文”. On the other hand, the Song dynasty Neo-Confucian conception of siwen 斯文 finds expression through the paradigmatic theme of “the juncture of heaven and the human world” (tianrenzhiji 天人之际), which, in its essence, is concerned with the relationship between individual and community. These transforming developments of the concept of wen added new dimensions to its meaning, giving it a renewed importance in the history of Confucianism.

This paper thus approaches the interpretation of the Confucian concept of siwen 斯文 with textual evidence from two historical periods: the Pre-Qin period, chiefly the *Analects* and the *Commentary on Zhouyi* (the *Book of Changes* 周易), and the Song dynasty Neo-Confucian writings. Wang Guowei 王国维 in his article “Philosophy Discrimination” (zhexuebianhuo 哲学辨惑) has especially emphasized that philosophy is an inherent Chinese learning. In this article, Wang Guowei only discussed the Six Classics 六经 of the Pre-Qin and the theory of Song Confucianism. He said that the theory of the Six Classics in Pre-Qin and Confucianism in Song Dynasty already achieved in-depth philosophical issues (Wang 1993, p. 5). Coincidentally, I agree with this view. The interpretation of “this culture of ours” 斯文 in this paper is also the first choice of these two representatives of Confucianism in the two typical historical periods with the most philosophical depth to discuss wen 文 as a topic with philosophical significance between individuals and communities.

2. The Origin of the Concept of Wen: Zhou Wen and the Society of the Zhou Dynasty

The earliest extant instance of the character wen 文 is found on a clay pot with red writing, excavated at the Taosi site in Xiangfen, Shanxi, and dated to around 2000 BCE. Feng Shi's 冯时 research argues that the character “wen” on this clay pot is intimately connected to the ancient sovereign Xia Yu 夏禹, and that wen was the name of the state of Xia. The Shiji 史记 evidences this theory, for it tells us “Xia Yu had the name of Wenming. 夏禹，名曰文命。” King Yao 帝尧 was thought to be the first champion of wen, while the King Wen of Zhou 周文王 was said to be the inheritor of wen. The first rulers of Xia were equally related to wen, for Yao was thought to embody “the thought of wen” (wensi 文思), Shun “the clarity of wen” (wenming 文明), and Yu “the ordinance of wen” (weming 文命). Wu Xiaofeng 吴小锋 thus theorizes that the legitimacy of the three ancient dynasties' right to rule lies, in fact, in the rule of wen (Wentong 文统) (Wu 2012, vol. 10, p. 64). Confucius exclaims, “Zhou had the advantage of viewing the two past dynasties. How complete and elegant are its regulations (wen)! I follow Zhou.” (*Analects* 论语 3.14) What does it mean for Confucius' to “follow Zhou”?

The precise meaning of wen in the *Analects* is not fixed. The meaning of wen gains a sense of completion when, after several stages of transformative reinterpretations in the Shang and Zhou dynasties, its meaning finds culmination in Confucius' coining of the term siwen. Yin inherited large portions of its governmental structure (wen) from the Xia, whose wen was in turn succeeded by the Zhou. Therefore, for Confucius, wen symbolizes the political organizational structure and governing principles that gradually became established tradition as the rule of ancient Chinese dynasties expanded and became secured.

Specifically, the term wen had evolved from its sacred usage in the Shang dynasty with “minghao 名号” and “miaohao 庙号” to be used in the titles of the sage-kings in the Zhou dynasty signifying an abstract virtue, as exemplified by King Wen of Zhou. This transformation is evidenced by the fact that the script of wen transformed from the Shang

dynasty character “𠄎” to the Zhou dynasty character “文”, which includes the radical “心” (heart-mind), signifying the embodiment of the moral requirements for a sage-king to be deemed wen. Thought to have been inherited from the ancient sage-kings, the political virtue of wen (wende 文德) reached new heights with the Zhou dynasty establishment of the rite-and-music governance.

Nonetheless, the emphasis of wen changed significantly in the Zhou dynasty political environment. Summarizing the way of the three ancient dynasties, the Shiji 诗经 writes,

The Grand Historian remarks: The government of the Xia dynasty was marked by good faith, which in time deteriorated until mean men had turned it into rusticity. Therefore the men of Shang who succeeded to the Xia reformed this defect through the virtue of piety. But piety degenerated until mean men had made it a superstitious concern for the spirits. Therefore the men of Zhou who followed corrected this fault through refinement and order (wen). But refinement again deteriorated until it became in the hands of the mean a mere hollow show. Therefore, what was needed to reform this hollow show was a return to good faith, for the way of the Three Dynasties of old is like a cycle which, when it ends, must begin over again. It is obvious that in the period between the Zhou and the Qin dynasty, the earlier refinement and order (wen) had deteriorated.²

This shows that the primary sense of wen in the Zhou dynasty is very different from the “ordinance of wen” that characterized the Yin and Shang dynasties and had taken on meanings much more complicated than wen that was used in the naming of the ancient kings. On the one hand, the wen that the rites of Zhou upheld (shangwen 尚文) emphasized “the difference between the lofty and the lowly” (zunbeizhicha 尊卑之差) and the sense of order that permeated all state-ordained rites and regulations. These aspects constituted the outward, behavioral side of wen which was ultimately encapsulated by “the regulations of state rites 礼文”. On the other hand, wen also meant the secular rationality of the Zhou dynastic political order, namely the characteristic “political virtue of wen 文德”, which advocated secular political discourse and moved away from divine narratives. It is important to note that in Chinese political-philosophical terms, especially in the Pre-Qin era, the scope of the government is not limited to the laws and regulations that ensure the smooth functioning of all social sectors, for it also includes rites performed by the state and acts of governance aimed at cultivating the moral development of the general public and at bringing elevating transformations to their customs, as it is captured by the term wenzhijiaohua 文治教化 (governance of wen and transforming through education). The relationship between wen and the notion of a “cultural community” is reflected here. It is through this sense that wen also takes on the meaning of civilization and cultural tradition (modern Chinese sense of the term wenming 文明), where the establishment of much of the Chinese cultural, moral, and political order is thought to have originated with the rule of the ancient sage-kings, and gradually became an important part of the Chinese ethnic psyche and social value orientation.

What is the intellectual motive behind the consistent upholding of the rites-and-music order since the founding of the Zhou dynasty? Guo Moruo 郭沫若 points out that “de 德” is the driving force behind “rites” (Li 礼).³ (Guo 1982, pp. 335–36). While the rites are comprised of all the cultural and political things, de is the all-pervasive spirit and character. On the one hand, wen encapsulates the rite-and-music system (Zheng 2009, p. 91). On the other hand, de forms the spiritual core of wen. Together, the rites and de form the contents of wen when Confucius says, “how complete and elegant are (Zhou’s 周) regulations 郁郁乎文哉!” (*Analects* 3.14) and “how glorious are the elegant regulations (wen 文) which (Yao 尧) instituted 焕乎其有文章!” (*Analects* 8.19). The ideal of wen which Confucius longed for had concrete foundations in the long established social political structure of the Zhou dynasty and its corresponding moral principles and secular rationality.

A speech given by the Duke Xiang of Shan 单襄公 gives us a “list of virtues” (demu 德目) that was popular in his time, which included the virtue of “reverence” (jing 敬), “good faith” (zhong 忠), “trustworthiness” (xin 信), “consummate conduct” (ren 仁), “optimal appropriateness” (yi 义), “wisdom” (zhi 智), and “courage” (yong 勇). He said,

“You must treat Jin Zhou well, for he shall rule over Jin. His deeds show the virtue of wen (wende 文德), and he who has the virtue of wen shall receive the blessing of heaven and earth. He who has the blessing of heaven and earth shall at least rule over a city, and at most rule over all. Reverence is the respectful aspect of wen; good faith is the sincere aspect of wen; trustworthiness is the practical aspect of wen; consummate conduct is the altruistic aspect of wen; optimal appro-

priateness is the decisive aspect of wen; wisdom is the chariot of wen; courage is the commander of wen; education is the provision of wen; being filial is the root of wen; kindheartedness is the kind affection of wen; deference is the capability considerations of wen [...] longitudinal and latitudinal lines of the world never go amiss, for they are the outward sings of wen. The King Wen of Zhou possessed the virtue of wen, and so his rule was ordained by heaven. (*Guoyu Zhouyu II* 国语·周语下)

Evidently, every virtue is defined as a particular manifestation of wen. Various interpreters have commented on the overarching sense of wen as it encompasses all virtues. Wei Zhao 韦昭 notes that wen is the overarching name of all de. Gong 公 is one of its manifestations. The meaning of all eleven de are like so. Wei Zhao 韦昭 also comments that “wen is at the essence [of the eleven de], wende 文德 is found in their essence and nature. 质文，其质性有文德也。” (the *Collection of Annotations to Guoyu, Guoyu-Jijie* 国语集解) by Xu Yuangao 徐元诰 (Xu 2002, p. 89). This encompassing use of wen “has extraordinary methodological implications” (Bai 2007, vol. 177, p. 14). Confucius’ conception of wen was deeply embedded in the de of the Zhou dynasty political order and the system of rites-and-music, two cornerstones of Zhou’s rule 周礼. Confucius said,

“If the people be led by laws, and uniformity sought to be given them by punishments, they will try to avoid the punishment, but have no sense of shame. If they be led by virtue, and uniformity sought to be given them by the rules of propriety, they will have the sense of shame, and moreover will become good.” (*Analects*, 2.3)

The system of de and rites was long established as the framework and background of much of the early Chinese intellectual landscape, from which the hundred-schools-of-thought had sprung. However, nearing the end of the Spring-and-Autumn period, Confucius took a turn in that intellectual-cultural tradition, and introduced profound moral notions symbolized by the Confucian “consummate conduct” (ren 仁) to the understanding of what it means to enact ritual performance (li 礼) and what it is to possess ritual propriety (li 礼).

3. The Wen of Heaven and the Wen of the Human World

Wen in the history of Pre-Qin takes on the meaning of social-political and cultural order, which needs to be analyzed and comprehended from the perspective of the rites-and-music system established at the beginning of the Zhou dynasty and from the perspective of the rites-and-music civilization, for the de 德 and rites 礼 system is the origin and background of the concept of wen. However, Confucius lived at a time when the rites-and-music system was nearing its end and the de and rites system was on its final course of decline. What creative transformation does Confucius bring to wen in his pursuit of “how complete and elegant are [Zhou’s] regulations (wen 文)!” (*Analects* 3.14)?

Wen in its symbolic sense, as it is used in words including character (wenzi 文字), writing (wenshu 文书), transforming wen through education (wenjiao 文教), ritual code (liwen 礼文), civilization (wenming 文明), and culture (wenhua 文化), embodies the meanings of order, rules, and norms. For example, “patterns of heaven” (tianwen 天文) implies order and rules in the movements of the sun, moon, stars, and the seasons, while “patterns of the human world” (renwen 人文) is considered to be the ideal norms and rules that give order to human relationships and conduct. Confucius was the first to develop this strand of thought. The *Analects* record an episode where Confucius was surrounded by Kuang militia:

The Master was put in fear in Kuang. He said, “After the death of King Wen, was not the cause of truth lodged here in me? If Heaven had wished to let this cause of truth perish, then I, a future mortal, should not have got such a relation to that cause. While Heaven does not let the cause of truth perish, what can the people of Kuang do to me?”

The Master said, “Heaven produced the virtue that is in me. Huan Tui—what can he do to me?”

Cui Shu 崔述, in his *Zhusi Kaixinlu* 洙泗考信录, comments that the two passages “seem to be reports of the same event, while the two reporters recorded what they learned individually. 似一时之言, 而记者各记所闻”. Confucius asked rhetorically, “does not culture heritage reside here in us?” with a great sense of mission and went on to invoke the relationship between “heaven” and “this culture of ours” to give expression to the humanistic side of Confucian philosophy. Confucius said, “heaven has produced the virtue that is in me 天生德于予”, showing his confidence in having received the mandate of heaven. When Confucius lamented “heaven is not going to destroy this culture of ours 天之未丧斯文” he emphasized the inherent relationship between heaven and siwens and that it would not be threatened by imminent danger posed by the people of Kuang. In this light, the siwen that Confucius much approves of should be interpreted within the larger frame of the relationship between heaven and earth. That is to say, there exists a hidden and inherent connection between the human order and the laws of heaven.

In the *Analects*, Confucius’ understanding of wen is not limited to its external representation in Liyue (rituals such as rites and music 礼乐). Instead, Confucius posits “ren” as the refinement of an inherent moral consciousness in human nature. Therefore, wen encapsulates both external manifestations of order and internal principles that concern the heart-mind. The dual aspects of wen implies that the pursuit of inner moral refinement necessarily finds concrete expression in the virtuous actions that are given in the order of external ritual behaviors, which is intrinsically a communal affair. Confucius seldom discussed abstract topics such as “human nature and the way of Heaven 性与天道.” Apart from the above two examples, the *Analects* also rarely mentioned wen in the sense of culture (wenhua 文化) or civilization (wenming 文明). The above analysis of passages from the Zihan and Shu’er chapters of the *Analects* has already hinted to a considerable extent that Confucius’ discussion of wen continued to deepen and develop, i.e., to further explain wen and “this culture of ours” from the perspective of the juncture of heaven and the human world.

Further, the recently excavated *Mawangdui Silk Manuscripts* 马王堆帛书 reveal a very close connection between Confucius and the *Commentary on the Book of Changes*. The *Commentary on the Book of Changes* 周易 is the intellectual legacy of Confucius, his seventy disciples, and their later followers. Its content is precisely the expansion and deepening of Confucian philosophy on its theory and vision on the juncture of heaven and the human world. The *Book of Changes*, especially its Commentary 传, has long been an important resource for the Confucian school to reflect on and discuss historical and cultural awareness, civilization, and culture. Within this book, the part that discusses wen is relatively abstract. It emphasizes the meaning of wen as principle and order, while also opening up new perspectives on heaven and human (tianren 天人) as well as patterns of heaven (天文 tianwen) and patterns of the human world (renwen 人文). This can help us further grasp and understand the philosophical value of wen in Pre-Qin Confucianism.

There are a total of six appearances of the term “wenming 文明” (the clarity of wen) in the *Commentary on the Book of Changes*. In this work, wen primarily refers to order and regularity, while ming 明 means manifestation, clarity, and universalization. Therefore, “clarity of wen” implies the process by which order, organization, standards, and rules gradually become universally accepted values. The Bi 贲 chapter of the *Tuanzhuan* discusses patterns of heaven (tianwen 天文) and patterns of the human world (renwen 人文) in connection, “The strong and the malleable interweave and intersect, such is the patterns of heaven. Bring clarity to wen to bring about lasting order in the human world, such is the patterns of the human world. Discern the changes in time by observing the patterns of heaven. Observing the patterns of the human world, to exert beneficial influence that help accomplish all affairs under heaven. 刚柔交错, 天文也; 文明以止, 人文也。观乎天文, 以察时变。观乎人文, 以化成天下。” The notion of “to exert beneficial influence that help accomplish all affairs under heaven 化成天下” underscores the formation of human societal order through the observation and understanding of the interweaving and

intersecting wen of heaven. The notion of a structured and coherent order is rooted in the principled and dynamic interplay of rigidity and flexibility that is manifested in the turnings of celestial bodies. The *Commentary* clearly supports the view that the principles that guide a well-ordered human society must be grounded by the abstract principles that govern the movements and transformations of the natural world. Therefore, both patterns of heaven and patterns of the human world take on meanings including order, rules, and law-like principle. While the “regulations” (wen 文) in the previously discussed “How complete and elegant are its regulations (wen)” refers to the patterns of the human world, i.e., the ethical and moral order stipulated by the rites-and-music system, the *Commentary on the Book of Changes* clearly seeks to ground this ideal human order upon the way of heaven. Conversely, this is also why Confucius attaches great importance to wen, or more precisely, “the wen of Zhou” (zhouwen 周文).

Philosophies of the hundred-schools-of-thought converge on the “investigation on the juncture of heaven and the human world”. In the chapter Tianyun (The Way of Heaven 天运) of *Zhuangzi* 庄子:

Anciently, Shun asked Yao, saying, ‘In what way does your Majesty by the Grace of Heaven exercise your mind?’ The reply was, ‘I simply show no arrogance towards the helpless; I do not neglect the poor people; I grieve for those who die; I love their infant children; and I compassionate their widows.’ Shun rejoined, ‘Admirable, as far as it goes; but it is not what is Great.’ ‘How then,’ asked Yao, ‘do you think I should do?’ Shun replied, ‘When (a sovereign) possesses the virtue of Heaven, then when he shows himself in action, it is in stillness. The sun and moon (simply) shine, and the four seasons pursue their courses. So it is with the regular phenomena of day and night, and with the movement of the clouds by which the rain is distributed.’ Yao said, ‘Then I have only been persistently troubling myself! What you wish is to be in harmony with Heaven, while I wish to be in harmony with men.’ Now (the Way of) Heaven and Earth was much thought of of old, and Huang-Di, Yao, and Shun united in admiring it. Hence the kings of the world of old did nothing, but tried to imitate that Way.

Also, in the Chapter Dasheng (The Full Understanding of Life 达生) of *Zhuangzi*:

Bian-zi said, ‘Have you not heard how the perfect man deals with himself? He forgets that he has a liver and gall. He takes no thought of his ears and eyes. He seems lost and aimless beyond the dust and dirt of the world, and enjoys himself at ease in occupations untroubled by the affairs of business. He may be described as acting and yet not relying on what he does, as being superior and yet not using his superiority to exercise any control. But now you would make a display of your wisdom to astonish the ignorant; you would cultivate your person to make the inferiority of others more apparent; you seek to shine as if you were carrying the sun and moon in your hands. That you are complete in your bodily frame, and possess all its nine openings; that you have not met with any calamity in the middle of your course, such as deafness, blindness, or lameness, and can still take your place as a man among other men—in all this you are fortunate. What leisure have you to murmur against Heaven?’

These two passages from the *Zhuangzi* contain a message that is similar to the *Commentary on the Book of Changes*, as they both emphasize that the natural order represents the assumption and foundation upon which human social political system is to be discussed. Wen in this passage also takes on the meaning of natural order (or patterns of heaven in the *Commentary*).

The concept of the clarity of wen proposed in the *Commentary* contains profound meanings in terms of order and sacredness. Moreover, the “gua 卦”, “yao 爻”, “xiang 象”, “shu 数”, “yan 言”, and “ci 辞” mentioned in the *Book of Changes* are all different forms of wen. For example:

The sage surveyed all the complex phenomena under the sky. He then considered in his mind how they could be figured, and finding semblances (xiang 象) that could represent their character and form, used such signs (xiang 象) to represent them. [...] The sage appended his explanation to each line of a diagram, to determine the good or evil indicated by it. Hence these are called yao 爻. The most thorough mastery of all the complex phenomena under heaven is represented by the diagrams. The greatest stimulus to all motion under heaven is given through the explanations. 圣人有以见天下之赜，而拟诸其形容，象其物宜，是故谓之象……系辞焉，以断其吉凶，是故谓之爻。极天下之赜者，存乎卦；鼓天下之动者，存乎辞。（Xici I 系辞上）

The Yi makes clear the past and teaches us to discern matters in future; it makes manifest what is minute and brings to light what is obscure. In the beginning, things were distinguished from one another in accordance with their names. Discerning various things, giving accuracy to words and expressions, attaching correct and definite explanations to [each gua and yao], the Yi is complete. The names it gives to things are refined, the categories it devises are comprehensive. Their scope reaches far, and the explanations attached to them are complex but elegant (wen). 夫《易》，彰往而察来，而微显阐幽，开而当名。辨物，正言，断辞，则备矣。其称名也小，其取类也大。其旨远，其辞文。（Xici II 系辞下）

Dao is marked by changes and movements, and hence we have the lines. These lines are grouped in distinction of one another, representing the myriad things. The myriad things are intermingled with one another, forming a complex state of affairs (wen). Things and affairs (wen) are never the same with one another, necessitating good fortune and bad. 道有变动，故曰爻。爻有等，故曰物。物相杂，故曰文。文不当，故吉凶生焉。（Xici II 系辞下）

The concepts of “xiang 象”, “yao 爻”, “gua 卦”, and “ci 辞” in the *Book of Changes* 周易 are concrete manifestations or forms of wen, and even the *Book of Changes* itself can be seen as a kind of wen. With the help of these concepts, the *Book of Changes* opens up space for philosophical reflection. The *Book of Changes* claims to be “broad and all-encompassing 广大悉备,” because its sixty-four gua establish an all-encompassing set of basic patterns for understanding the universe and society, patterns of heaven and patterns of the human world. The *Commentary on the Book of Changes* also makes it possible to understand the guayao 卦爻 and passages in the *Book of Changes*. From another perspective, the *Book of Changes* and its *Commentary* have also become a model for wen—a literary classic that can comprehensively bring together the cultural order and the natural order, or “investigate the juncture of heaven and the human world.” As such, it can be said that “The Yi is a book whose subject matter is to look into the beginnings of things and affairs, in order to discern their ends. 《易》之为书也，原始要终，以为质也”。

4. Concrete Ways of Realizing “This Culture of Ours”: The Theory of Song Dynasty Confucians

The above analysis has shown that during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, there was a lively environment of discourse among thinkers of the hundred-schools-of-thought. By philosophizing the concept of wen in connection with the “wen of heaven” and “wen of the human world”, Pre-Qin Confucians attached great philosophical importance to the term wen. With the flourishing of the study of the classics (jingxue 经学) in the Han dynasty, the notion of wen veered towards referring to the classics. Subsequently, the prosperity of Tang dynasty literature shifted the focus of wen towards literary aspects such as rhetoric and poetry, and its value was admired mostly by literary figures. Following the Classical Prose Movement, Song dynasty literature shifted from an emphasis on form to free expression, while the Song dynasty intelligentsia were renowned internationally for their Confucian studies, and Neo-Confucianism gradually moved towards the center stage of Confucianism. Liu Shuxian 刘述先, a contemporary New-Confucian, divides the history of Confucian philosophy into three periods: Pre-Qin, Song-Ming, and the contemporary

era. As such, the prominent status of Song-Ming Neo-Confucianism in the history of Confucianism is self-evident.

The conceptual relationship between wen and cultural community needs to be recognized in the *Analects* of Confucius, which is based on the different semantics of wen in different contexts. It is partly evidenced by the foremost position of wen in Confucius' four teachings "wen 文, xing 行, zhong 忠, xin 信" (*Analects* 论语 7.25) and serves to prove that wen is central to the forming of a civilized society through cultural and moral education. People can only grow into cultural beings through education. Only in this way can we achieve the spiritual civilization of the entire society. It is not difficult to see that Confucius emphasized culture and education by teaching "wen 文, xing 行, zhong 忠, xin 信", which is also an ideal expression of wanting to build a social and cultural community.

The relationship between wen and the cultural community is also evident in the Song dynasty. "Wen-governance 文治" is the hallmark of Song political culture. The Song dynasty Neo-Confucian scholars were a cultural community which aimed to guide policy making with Confucian principles and exert greater influence on the formation of a civilized society bound by a common moral pursuit. Further analysis of Song dynasty Neo-Confucian theories on the Confucian spirit of "this culture of ours" reveals that the Song Confucian's pursuit of inner sageliness and outward kingliness (neishengwaiwang 内圣外王) formulated rich methodological approaches to the cultivation of individual spiritual temperament and personal self-cultivation, emphasizing the importance of continuous effort on the part of the individual. Therefore, on the one hand, Song Confucianism theories on wen not only emphasized the relationship between wen and dao to highlight the social and ethical-practical significance of wen. On the other hand, they also focused on how to achieve wen, namely through the study of ancient classics, for individuals need to apply themselves in "learning" (xue 学), intimating themselves towards the dao of the sages through concrete practice, in order to achieve inner sageliness and outward kingliness on the subjective level, so that the communal and social wen order, as well as the Confucian "this culture of ours" community can be achieved.

It is said in the *Analects* that those who desire to learn can be called wen:

Zi Gong asked, saying, "On what ground did Kong Wen get that title of Wen?" The Master said, "He was of an active nature and yet fond of learning, and he was not ashamed to ask and learn of his inferiors! On these grounds he has been styled Wen". (*Analects*, 5.15)

Cheng Yi and Cheng Hao are two towering figures in the development of Confucian thought in the Northern Song. Among the two, Cheng Yi's advocacy of learning (xue 学) corresponds to Confucius and Mencius in the past and served as an important foundation for Zhuxi's subsequent development. For Cheng Yi, the key to wen lies in learning. Bol believes that the Northern Song intelligentsia used the concept of wen to define learning. But words of Cheng Yi further demonstrate an interplay between wen and learning. Volume 5 of the *Ercheng Yishu* 二程遗书 says:

The accomplishments of a successful essay have certain observable forms, but this is merely an accomplishment on the practical aspect of things. However, the work that makes possible such an accomplishment is one's sageliness. (Cheng and Cheng 2004, p. 79)

During the period of the Hundred Schools of Thought, Confucius' concept of siwen 斯文 was often associated with the rites of Zhou and ceremonial practices. Fingarette believes that ceremonial practices are at the core of Confucius' "sacred" teachings (shengxue 圣学). As ceremonial practices are manifestations of human nature formed through the accumulation of experience, the practice of ritual ceremonies can help perfect human nature within the context of society as a whole. Through proficient practice of ceremonial behavior as they are required by the various roles that make up human society, individuals can ultimately achieve a state of acting in harmony with the dao of the mean and radiate a magical charm, which is what being both ordinary and sage-like means "the secular as sa-

cred”(jifanersheng 即凡而圣)⁴ (Fingarette 1972). The state of attainment of the sage is the sacred radiance that human nature emits through the practice of ceremonial customs in the mundane world.

In the social, intellectual, and political environment of the Song dynasty, Cheng Yi believed that politics and academics could be treated as two separate issues. Even in the event of political disorder, learning the teachings of the sages is still one's duty because learning these teachings is the process of an individual's understanding of morality. For the Neo-Confucian thinkers, moral discourse constitutes an intellectual space that is independent from the politics of the day. With this notion, they sought to set aim at rejuvenating “correct leaning on their own” outside state politics, albeit being continuously suppressed by the state.⁵ (Bol 2008, p. 129)

Song dynasty Neo-Confucians cherished the concept of “bringing beneficial transformation in the general public through moral teaching” (jiaohua 教化), but its legitimacy requires the support of classical texts. Zhu Xi emphasized the importance of the Four Books, especially the notion of “rejuvenating the general public” (xinmin 新民) in the Daxue chapter of the *Liji*, emphasizing the way to help each individual rejuvenate their inherent moral nature. The importance attached to the Confucian classical texts by Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi was indeed a way of corresponding to Confucius' dao of the sage, which is to become sage-like through learning. In fact, this is also a way to reconstruct and pass on the Confucian “this culture of ours” through the thought and methods of Neo-Confucianism. “In the study of classics, one must not limit oneself to the interpretation of the text, one must learn to discern the character and manner of the sages.” (Cheng and Cheng 2004, p. 284). Learning the words (text) of the sages to approach the heart-mind of the sage. Song dynasty Confucians' pursuit of “this culture of ours” thus has a trail to follow.

Zhang Zai 张载 also emphasized the connection between learning and the Confucian concept of siwen, his emphasis being that “dao can be passed on” (Dao-kechuan 道可传):

Confucius said, “Heaven is not going to destroy this culture of ours (wen), what can the people of Kuang do to us?” Now as we wish for our achievements to reach all under heaven, we must cultivate as many scholars as we can. Then dao can be passed on. (Zhang 1978, p. 271)

Zhang Zai's comment on Confucius aims to highlight the timeless principle behind his sayings:

Those who say that dao has perished with the death of Confucius knows not the fact that dao is found in writings more ancient than Confucius himself. The principles of dao are imperishable, regardless of what words and sayings are left behind. 语道断自仲尼，不知仲尼以前更有古可稽，虽文字不能传，然义理不灭。 (Zhang 1978, p. 278)

In the Fanyu Xu chapter of the *Zhengmeng*, Zhang Zai's disciple Fan Yu 范育 praises the limitlessness of heaven and earth and offers words of great admiration for how the “sayings” (yu 语) and “words” (yan 言) in Zhang Zai's *Zheng Meng* are in accordance with the universal order that permeates all under heaven:

Alas, dao is a singular unchanging entity that is everlasting and everywhere. Speaking of matters up high it details principles lofty and illuminous; speaking of matters down low it discerns practical matters in all shapes and sizes; speaking of grand matters it reaches that which has no gap; speaking of minute matters it grasps that which has no sign. Should there be any matter that such words finds obstruction and fails to reach, then they would be false in the judgment of the principle. And so, the words of the *Zhengmeng* are such that it suppresses that which is too tall; lifts up that which is too low; gives substance to that which is empty; makes passage wherever there is obstacle; forms unity with those that are scattered; and makes disperses those which have been bound together. Its principle matter is to establish a standard that is appropriate and righteous to the utmost [...] there is nothing which it does not encompass, nothing which it

does not detail to its furthest end, nothing so great that it does not cover, nothing so small that it overlooks. As such, words of the Zhengmeng reach the utmost of what words can do, and dao has come to be among us. The sage has resurfaced, and the uninterrupted continuity of siwen is preserved. (Zhang 1978, p. 6)

To the Song dynasty Neo-Confucians, sages do not merely belong to history. When dao arrives at an opportune moment, sages can resurface. In Fan Yu's eyes, it is implied that dao finds a renewed embodiment in his mentor Zhang Zai. The Song dynasty Neo-Confucians generally took it upon themselves to receive dao from ancient classics and ensure the continued passing on of dao. The Song Confucian scholars were deeply devoted to "this culture of ours", which must ultimately be manifested in tangible ways. Zhang Zai's interpretation of the term clarity of wen in the *Book of Changes* unifies the inner and outer aspects of wen. Chapter Dayi of the *Zhengmeng* 正蒙篇 states:

Optimally appropriate words and deeds are moral conducts that are universal to all under heaven. Taking this into account, the effect of the beneficial provision of the great person thus becomes wide-ranging; and the clearness of wen becomes conspicuous for all under heaven. (Zhang 1978, p. 51)

"De", which is the inner moral virtue of a person, is indispensable to "the clarity of wen of all under heaven". Since before the unification of the Qin dynasty, the meaning of "wende" has been in constant transformation and was consistently upheld by subsequent Confucian thinkers via the spirit of "this culture of ours". Jingde-dadao 经德达道 brings together the natural order of heaven and earth and the moral order of the human world, both subsumed under the frame of "all under heaven" (tianxia 天下). This notion has rich and significant political and philosophical implications.

Regarding the "wende 文德" of the "kun 坤" hexagram, Zhang Zai said in the *Hengqu Yishuo* that the de of platitude and compliance is not isolated, for "it possesses wisdom bright and grand, containing the clearness of wen, and is capable of taking up the affairs of a king. 其知光大, 含蕴文明, 可从王事者也" (Zhang 1978, p. 81) The kun hexagram represents an inward virtue. Wende emanates outwards from within. It is an internal state that embodies civilized literacy. When the inner value reaches a certain level, it will naturally "come to know illumination and greatness", to the point where it can handle affairs of state. This fully demonstrates the spirit of "inner sageliness and outer kingliness" (neisheng-waiwang 内圣外王) of Song dynasty Confucianism.

During the Southern Song period, the articles of Ouyang Xiu and Su Shi were exemplary articles favored by most scholars, but Zhu Xi did not blindly follow this popular predilection. Zhu Xi believed that his contemporaneous literati merely took joy in studying the rise and fall of things past and did not devote enough effort to self-cultivation when writing. They only "recited poems, drank, and made jokes to pass their days 以吟诗饮酒戏谑度日。" (Li 1986, p. 3113). In his criticism of Su Shi, Zhu Xi said in his letter Response to Lü Bogong, "Su's teachings range widely from human nature and the ordinance of heaven to the principles of politics, ... they ruin people's natural potential and corrupt customs." (Zhu and Zhu 2010, Book 21, p. 1428). The Confucian scholars of the Song Dynasty practiced "inner sageliness and outer kingliness" on a personal level. Those who fail to do so, compounded with openly discussing a variety of philosophical topics, were met with severe criticism, for they were seen as a corrupt influence on society. How is one expected to influence those around her if she does not make sufficient effort to cultivate herself? Aristotle famously said in *Politics* that human beings are by nature political animals, who naturally want to live together (Aristotle 2003, p. 4). Therefore, the connection between the individual and her social and political community is ubiquitous. We cannot underestimate the impact of personal demeanor on the wider society. Compared with artificial, unsubstantiated impression of inner refinement, moral behavior that arises from natural inner cultivation and refinement has a starkly different impact on other individuals, one's surrounding community, and wider society. For Song Confucianism, each individual is inherently a member that constitutes siwen. Therefore, the accomplishment of siwen requires

inner, spontaneous cultural cultivation and a spirit of *wende* on the part of each person. The profound meaning of “personal *wen* makes transformative achievements” (*renwen-huacheng* 人文化成) is that good spiritual temperament on the part of the individual can naturally influence the cultural demeanor of society.

Zhu Xi explained whether *wen* has harmful effects on *dao* through counterexamples. Zhu Xi talked about his own reading experience and recalled that he also used to like the literary style of the works of Qu Yuan 屈原, Song Yu 宋玉, Tang Le 唐勒, and Jing Cuo 景差. What they wrote was similar to the writings of Su Shi, namely, *wen* that were off the path of *dao*. Although they might please the reader, upon reflection they only evoke feelings of “sadness” (*beichou* 悲愁) and “wild self-indulgence” (*fangkuang* 放旷), and such works would indeed harm the heart-mind if read consistently. He wrote:

Is *wen* and *dao* the same, or two different things? If there are objects that exist independently of *dao*, then writers could write in any manner that pleases them without doing harm to *dao*. [...] There was a time when I much admired the works of Qu Yuan, Song Yu, Tang Le, and Jing Cuo. As I reflected upon them, I came to see that although their writings are greatly embellished, they evoke only the feelings of sadness and wild self-indulgence. Reading such works everyday would transform oneself with them and do great damage to one’s heart-mind. [...] Not to mention that while Su Shi writes much about subjects ranging from human nature to the principles of politics, their contents go no further than the writings of Qu, Song, Tang and Jing. Learners of *dao* may well be pleased by their writings, but the benefit of reading such works last no more than a day, and its damage could be lasting. When its damage reaches the marrow of one’s bones, the effect can hardly be reversed on one’s own. Cases of them ruining people’s natural potential and corrupting customs are far more than a few. (Zhu and Zhu 2010, Book 21, p. 1428)

In this passage, Zhu Xi’s emphasis of *wen* is on the substance that *wen* is used to convey. “Use *wen* to convey *dao*” (*wenyizaidao* 文以载道) Su Shi’s *wen* is ornate and superficial. Its content “does great harm to the heart-mind 大为害心”. Zhu Xi’s direct criticism of the *wen* of the two Su brothers is also directed against Buddhist and Daoist tendencies, which is characteristic of the disagreement between different schools of thought and of the Song Confucianism scholar-officials. This is also a manifestation of the Song Confucian scholar-officials’ wish to achieve the ideal of “this culture of ours” society from personal to communal, from individual to collective.

5. “文以载道: Using Wen to Convey Dao” and “文便是道 Wen Is Identical to Dao”: Confucian Classics as Siwen

One basic consensus of Confucianism is that the teachings of the sage kings are recorded in the Six Classics (*liujing* 六经), which were edited and transmitted by Confucius himself, making it the prime example of “using *wen* to convey *dao*”.

These classics are preserved, practiced, and passed on by Confucian scholars. The title of Six Classics, given to the collection of six ancient texts, had not yet come to circulation during Confucius’ time. For the term “Six Classics” first appeared in the Tianyun chapter of the *Zhuangzi* 庄子. The “Six Arts” (*liuyi* 六艺) mentioned in the *Rites of Zhou* 周礼 refer to the arts of ritual ceremony, music, archery, charioteering, writing, and mathematics. The *Yiwenzhi* of the *Hanshu* records that “The writings of the Six Arts are such that the Book of Music brings harmony to one’s mind, and is the outward expression of consummate conduct (*ren* 仁); the Book of Songs teaches proper uses of words, and represents the uses of optimal appropriateness (*yi* 义); the Book of Rites gives clarity to proper conduct, and since proper conduct is thus clearly observed, it needs no further explanation; the Book of Documents helps one become informed in a broad range of subjects, and is the means to great understanding; the Spring and Autumn Annals helps one make well-reasoned judgment, and is the mark of trustworthiness.” (Ban 1962, p. 1723). This shows that the terms “Six Arts” and “Six Classics” are interchangeable.

Through the continuous efforts of Confucius and the Confucian school, the “Six Arts” became classics, establishing the tradition of classics studies (later termed “continued transmission of dao”) (daotong 道统), exerting an unparalleled and profound influence on the history of Chinese thought and culture.

The term “using wen to convey dao” is often used by later scholars to summarize the literary theory of the Tang and Song dynasties’ “Classical Prose Movement” (Zhu 2019, p. 28). However, the phrase was first coined by the founder of Song Confucianism, Zhou Dunyi 周敦颐. Zhou Dunyi used the term “conveying dao” (zaidao 载道) to discuss wen, as stated in his Tongshu 通书:

Using wen to convey dao is like using a cart to carry goods. Makers of carts work decorations onto the wheels and shafts, and so writers also bring refinement to their writings, both in hopes that others would find pleasure in the use of their works. But if I should make embellishments to objects that are not to be used, then my work becomes hollow, bringing no real benefit. The same is true for a cart that carries no good, or a piece of writing that does not convey dao. What use do they have, regardless of how embellished they are? (Zhou 2009, p. 35)

The use of words and phrases is a skill, whereas dao and de are the substance [of a writing]. Being truthful in its substance, and having been written by an author of great skill, a piece of writing is of such beauty that readers would find pleasure in reading it. Finding pleasure in reading such a piece of writing, one would pass it on to others. When persons of noble mind learn from such a writing and put his understanding into practice, education is complete. Therefore, it is said that “sayings with poor literary form do not travel far”. (Zhou 2009, p. 36)

The Southern Song scholar Zhu Xi had always respected Zhou Dunyi’s scholarship and moral character. He also attached great importance to Zhou’s view on wen. In agreement with Zhou, Zhu Xi argued firmly against the notion that all writings are the same, for writings which do not carry dao is the same as a cart with nothing in it (Li 1986, p. 2410). No matter how embellished, neither provides any real benefit. In other words, for Zhou Dunyi and Zhu Xi, “using wen to convey dao 文以载道” is likened to “using a cart to carry goods 车以载物”. Although “sayings with poor literary form do not travel far, 言之无文, 行之不远”, the role that “sophisticated literary form” (wenci 文辞) needs to play is to “pursue dao and de 务道德”. To “pursue dao and de”, one must learn Confucius’ moral teachings. Zhou Dunyi also said, “Only Confucius has reached such height and breadth in his daode. His teachings alone have brought infinite transformations. Indeed, he is at one with heaven, earth, and the four seasons!” (Zhou 2009, p. 40). The most difficult thing for humans to obtain is “dao and de”, for “Between heaven and earth, dao is the most revered, and de is the noblest of all. Zhou believes that moral principles are what make a person exceedingly distinguished, and that the proper use of wen to provide moral education and his theory of “using wen to convey dao” are two sides of the same coin.

Based on Zhou Dunyi’s theory of “using wen to convey dao” and other reflection on wen by Northern Song Confucian scholars, Zhu Xi emphasized the state of “wen is identical to dao” (wenbian shidao 文便是道):

Writings produced by sage-like rulers of the three ancient dynasties were all delivered from this heart-mind, and thus their writings were dao. (Li 1986, p. 3319)

The wen in the phrase “wen is identical to dao” does not refer to all forms of writing, but rather to the exemplary carriers of Confucian “this culture of ours”, namely the writings of the sages during the three ancient dynasties. The purpose of Zhu Xi’s advocacy of the classics and his formulation of the system of the Four Books was to ensure the preservation of the writings of the sages.

In this sense, wen and dao have already become highly integrated. Zhu Xi elevated the concept of wen to an unprecedented level and believed that wen meets his standards only when it is integrated with dao. Regarding the relationship between wen and dao, Zhu

Xi's most famous metaphor is found in his work Lunwen 论文 in the *Zhuzi-Yulei*. He writes the following:

Dao is the root of writings (wen), while writings (wen) are the branches and leaves of dao. Should a piece of writing spring from dao as its roots, then it is dao also. (Li 1986, p. 3319)

Roots cannot be seen, but leaves can. This can also be compared to Zhu Xi's description of the concept of "already expressed and not yet expressed" (yifaweifa 已发未发) in his theory on the art of cultivation. Wen and dao are as inseparable as the roots and leaves of a tree. However, fallen leaves eventually return to the roots, thus wen and dao form a reciprocal and symbiotic relationship.

What does Zhu Xi mean by "all of them are dao 皆道也"? Whether it is wen, which is the outward expression of dao, or dao, which is the root and essence of wen, they are both dao. Therefore, the emphasis of this passage by Zhu Xi is on the relationship between wen and dao, which is one of emergence, mutual exchange, and symbiosis. Of course, the prerequisite for this type of wen is that it must come from dao, and the writings produced during the three ancient dynasties that Zhu Xi admired were written in this way. Writings with dao and de, insofar as they are in accordance with dao, regardless of their stylistic merits, all meet the standard of wen in the sense of "wen is identical to dao".

There was a time when the classics first came to be. The creation of the Six Classics was the result of the sages' "producing wen" (weiwen 为文). The Book Annotations on Chapter and Sentence of the Four Books 四书章句集注 and Jinsilu 近思录 were the result of Zhuxi's producing wen. This is a kind of way to practicing siwen in Song Confucianism.

Classics are born at the inception of a certain mindset. The authors of the "Six Classics" left behind the texts as a result of the sages' "writing." The authors of classical texts, that is, the ancient sages, wrote the Six Classics because it flowed naturally from their heart-minds. However, there is still one issue, dao is not produced by writings. It exists naturally and spontaneously, whereas the Six Classics are "texts" (wenben 文本), which are human-made objects. If wen is identical to dao, is there an irreparable gap that cannot be explained? Ming Dynasty scholar Chen Baisha 陈白沙 explicitly proposed the theory of Six Classics Dross 六经糟粕论. The turning point of Confucianism in the Ming Dynasty is a complex issue in the history of Confucianism. But why does it need to emphasize so much that Song Confucianism's positive promotion of "Using wen to convey dao" and "wen is identical to dao"? This is why Song Confucianism can continue the call for siwen of Pre-Qin Confucianism. The emphasis on siwen and the invention of ideas by Song Confucians is a positive promotion of the inheritance. This positive effect benefits every individual Confucian.

6. Conclusions: "This Culture of Ours" Community

When Confucius traveled to the state of Zheng 孔子适郑, he lost himself with his disciples and compared himself to a homeless dog (Sangjiagou 丧家狗). The profound meaning of this allusion has been talked about to this day. Confucius mocked himself but did not give up hope. The reason for this is because he himself is precisely wen 文, but the career of wen is not something that a person can accomplish. Only in the community can people learn and feel the most primitive spirit of wen.⁶ (Ishii 2014, p. 84).

In essence, wen represents the emergence of order out of an incomprehensible state of chaos. The "wen of heaven" denotes the principled revolution of celestial bodies, whereas the "wen of the human world" stands for the various kinds of order that separate humans from other animals. In a narrow sense, humans created systems such as writing and language (wen); in a broader sense, the Confucian conception of human "civilization" (wenming 文明) is also identified with a universal order that is manifested by all principled movements in the universe.

This paper has looked at the meaning of wen in the Pre-Qin period and in the writings of Song Confucians. While Confucius reinterpreted wen based on his understanding of the wen of the Zhou dynasty and the Six Classics, the Song Confucians developed the

concept of wen further based on their interpretations of Confucius' writings. The notion of heaven (tian 天) has played an important role in both of these transformative periods. Just as Confucius believed that the wen of the Zhou dynasty was under the protection of heaven when he said, "Heaven is not going to destroy this culture of ours (siwen) 天之未丧斯文也." (*Analects* 9.5). Before this sentence, Confucius made a hypothesis, "if Heaven had wished to let this cause of truth perish, then I, a future mortal, should not have got such a relation to that cause 天之将丧斯文也, 后死者不得与于斯文也". Obviously, what Confucius was actually saying was so how can we talk about this Siwen 斯文 again after the death of King Wen? Is not the culture of ours revived and passed on here today? This is exactly the meaning of "the text is not in this 文不在兹乎". The Song Confucians believed that the inner sage-like moral cultivation (neisheng 内圣) is at one with the "principles of heaven" (tianli 天理) that governs the movements and transformations of external objects. Some aspects of their theories are no doubt the product of contemporary social and intellectual discourse particular to their time, but "the relationship between heaven and the human world" (tianrenguanxi 天人关系) features prominently throughout the history of the concept of wen.

Song Confucian scholar-officials generally wanted to translate the teachings of wen into concrete and practical policies that could help bring beneficial transformations to the general public. Unlike dao, which is invisible and has no form, siwen as the ideal state of good governance is pursued in the form of a tangible order and harmony that is found in all aspects of society. Therefore, for scholar-officials such as Zhu Xi, the purpose of siwen is to bring about beneficial changes in the general public with the use of a well-considered concept. Partly reacting to the political discourse of his time, Zhu Xi also stressed the belief that sovereigns do not become sages merely by ascending to power but must also strive to become sage-like through his own inner moral cultivation, before he can assume the authority of a sage. Until then, Zhu Xi argued that a ruler must adhere to the principles and institutions set down by ancient sages, in order to preserve a siwen (political principles and order) that is at one with dao.

From an individual's perspective, siwen is a never-ending practice. It asks us to learn to take up our role as humans living among a myriad of things under heaven, as humans do not rule over the entire universe. "Consummate conduct is an empathetic kindness towards all others. 仁者爱人" and "a consummate person is one who does not distinguish herself against others. 仁者浑然与物同体" are shared beliefs among Confucians of all periods in terms of how best to understand and interact with other people. Confucians generally believe that the potential tendency to act consummately is part of each individual's inherent nature, and the ideal state of affairs is achieved when everyone realizes and exhibits such a potential. If individuals are able to spontaneously exercise empathetic kindness in their everyday dealings with other people, a siwen 斯文 community would be formed.

Siwen is a conception of culture and civilization that is unique to China. Zhu Xi cleverly compares dao 道 to the roots of a tree and wen to its leaves. It is apt to also think of the growth rings of the tree trunk as the repeated efforts by generations of Confucians to strive towards the ideal of siwen through the rise and fall of different customs, institutions, and regulations (wen), making the tree ever stronger as they give renewed strength to a living tradition.

Funding: This research was funded by Youth Project of The National Social Science Fund of China, grant number 23CZX015.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Notes

- ¹ Roger T. Ames has pointed out that wen means the written word, patterns, culture, refinement, and King Wen. See also 文化 wenhua. Culture, enculturation. He said, "on the bronzes, wen occurs in the context of sacrifices as a term of respect for the ancestors as 'the noble and virtuous.' As a proper name, it refers to King Wen of the Zhou dynasty whose name is then used ubiquitously in the canonical literature to allude to the responsibility for intergenerational transmission of 'this culture of ours'(siwen 斯文)." (Ames 2021, p. 315).

- 2 Translation taken from Burton, W. (1993) with minor revisions of my own (Watson 1993, p. 118).
- 3 The rulers of the Zhou dynasty were responsible for the coining of the term “de”, for the concept of de was a novel intellectual element that is not found in documents written before the founding of Zhou. See Guo, Moruo, Guo Moruo Quanj, Lishibian (Guo 1982, pp. 335–36).
- 4 Fingarette pointed out, Confucius “is a holy vessel” (Fingarette 1972, p. 79). He said, “Confucius wanted to teach us, as a corollary that sacred ceremony in its narrower, root meaning is not a totally mysterious appeasement of spirits external to human and earthly life. Spirit is no longer an external being influenced by ceremony; it is that that is expressed and comes most alive in the ceremony. Instead of being diversion of attention from the human realm to another transcendent realm, the overtly holy ceremony is to be seen as a the central symbol, both expressive of and participating in the holy as a dimension of all truly human existence.” (Fingarette 1972, pp. 16–17) The study of cultivating the inner sage of Song Confucianism strengthened this consciousness.
- 5 I agreed with Wood, Alan T’s point that for Song Confucians, “the idea that they had recovered correct learning on their own, independently of the state of politics, and that it had survived and spread despite the court’s repeated attempts to suppress it, was clear evidence that the kind of learning essential to morality could not be equated with the political system.” (Bol 2008, p. 129).
- 6 Ishii Tsuyoshi believes that the community of wen is not a group that emphasizes standardization. Just gentlemen seek harmony but not uniformity 和而不同, and the community of wen is a community that can accommodate individual differences. (Ishii 2014, pp. 74–84).

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