

Lecture November 04
The Two States of Nature in Global Governance:
The Buddhist Clues

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Contradictions between theory and practice are noticeable in the foreign policy of any government, whether a hegemonic government such as the United States' or the government of a rising power such as China. In this paper, the foundations in political thought of one particular contradiction in US intervention policy and Chinese non-intervention policy is explored and compared. Examining differences in political thought helps explain why the Chinese understanding of intervention, which is influenced by Confucian, Buddhist, and Daoist traditions, usually appears apologist from the perspective of Western thought. This paper argues that American interventionism, which is reliant on Western tradition, is *Lockean* in the selection of targets and *Hobbesian* when enforced. By contrast, Chinese non-interventionism is aligned with the idea of "Dao" (or "Tao") or "the Way" and can thus justify both transcendental non-action and materialist self-strengthening.

A contradiction between theory and practice is manifested in intervention policies. This paper focuses specifically on internal contradiction between the principles based on which Washington and Beijing evaluate whether a state should be subjected to intervention. Such principles include the very different set of principles that guide actions toward such states and the principles that guide how states rule themselves. A realistic view of this kind of contradiction would accept such hypocrisy as easily explained by national interest calculus.¹ However, a more complex approach seems justified as foreign policy leaders are typically believed to act with good reason, and at the very least, argue for public support. In cases where the theory–practice contradiction affects neither policy makers nor their constituency, a concept that is deeper than functional hypocrisy must be the premise of this apparent desensitization.

A loss of sensitivity occurs when individual military interventions mandated by Washington do not comply with human rights norms that the US purports to use to identify failed states that require intervention. In fact, US interventions have resulted in massive civilian casualties and have jeopardized the treasures of civilization. However, this irony does not incur serious self-criticism. Similarly, China's insistence on non-intervention in failed states so that spontaneity may take over the course of

¹ Amitav Acharya, "State Sovereignty After 9/11: Disorganized Hypocrisy," *Political Studies* 55, 2 (June 2007): 274-296; Michael Lipson, "Peacekeeping: Organized Hypocrisy," *European Journal of International Relations* (March 2007), 13, 1:5-34; Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999).

events contradicts Beijing's constant appeal for self-strengthening in domestic governance.² The Chinese government and people's disregard for failing governance in other countries is in contrast with the portrayal of good governance as a triumph of the Chinese Communist Party. To understand the apparent apathy toward the failed state, this study relies specifically on the Buddhist notion of suffering as the nature of "this world" as opposed to that of "the afterworld."

If, as is the case, this basic contradiction does not distress those who sustain it politically or their domestic audience, the contradiction must be perceived as either "natural" or required by the state of nature. The subject of humanitarian intervention presents an excellent opportunity to discuss what the state of nature is or should be; that is, intervention appears easily justifiable in cases where intervention either restores or improves the state of nature depending on the theory. This study argues that the imagined states of nature that desensitize the contradiction in US intervention policy are both Lockean and Hobbesian.³ China can find means to desensitize the contradictions in their non-interventionism through the dialectical relationship between transcendental cosmology/ontology that favors inaction and transcendental epistemology that favors self-strengthening as required by the situation. Dialectics is inspired by Buddhism as neo-Confucian ideology has done for China since the early 20th century. This last note is the topic of this paper.

Contradiction and the State of Nature

One significant contradiction in US humanitarian intervention policy is its militarist tendency. Militarism appears to have driven the fabrication of evidence, torture of prisoners of war (POWs), and looting of treasures in addition to unilateral withdrawal before full restoration of order. The existence of separate principles for the rule of the other and of the self detaches militarist intervention from humanitarianism that prompts interventions. The treatment of other states echoes the idea of Locke, who attributes the failure of the state to its incapacity for democracy

² For a few examples of the familiar slogans in the 21st century, consider "the view of scientific development" (kexue fazhan guan), "do something" (yousuo zuowei), "strive for achievement" (fenfa youwei), and so on.

³ Lee Ward, "Locke on the Moral Basis of International Relations," *American Journal of Political Science* 50, 3 (July 2006): 691–705; J. Peter Burgess, "Ethics of Humanitarian Intervention: The Circle Closes," *Security Dialogue* 33, 3, (September 2002): 261–4; J. Bryan Hehir, "The Ethics of Non-intervention: Two Traditions," in Peter G. Brown and Douglas Maclean eds., *Human Rights and US Foreign Policy: Principles and Applications* (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1979), pp. 121–139; Allen Buchanan, "Internal Legitimacy of Humanitarian Intervention," *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 7 1 (March 1999): 71–87.

and human rights; in the Lockean state of nature, people should be free, equal, and independent.⁴ Failure to conform to this state merits outside intervention. And yet, the norms the US follows to carry out intervention echoes Hobbes' idea because intervention occurs through international relations, and international relation theorists generally adopt Hobbesian anarchy.⁵ The double states of nature within and between states as prescribed by Locke and Hobbes are the plausible mechanisms of thought required to desensitize the contradiction between humanitarianism and militarism.

Political thought pertaining to the state of nature exists in the Chinese classics as well as in its modern derivatives. Perhaps the most widely noted version is the symbiosis of *yin* and *yang*, which refer to the opposite and yet combined characteristics of matter that give rise to each other and evolve dialectically.⁶ In the philosophy of history, this model supports the cyclical view of harmony and chaos taking turns. Cycles are intrinsic to the Buddhist belief. Classic Confucian and Daoist thoughts similarly connect mundane affairs and conditions, which are chaotic, to an amorphous being, which is pervasive, inexpressible, and retrievable through learning. For Daoism and Buddhism, the ultimate being is Dao (or the Way), which equalizes all, and emptiness/nothingness, which transcends all meanings, respectively. For Confucianism, the ultimate being is the kingly way that transcends kinship and space and connects all-under-heaven through benevolence. One shared tenet of all three schools of thought is a combination of self-cultivation and "non-action" (*wuwei*), which allows matters to settle into their harmonious nature.⁷

⁴ Beate Jahn, "The Tragedy of Liberal Diplomacy: Democratization, Intervention, Statebuilding," *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 1, 1 (February 2007): 87-106; Stein S. Eriksen: "State Failure' in Theory and Practice: The Idea of the State and the Contradictions of State Formation," *Review of International Studies* 37 (2011): 229-47; Alexandru Lucinescu, "Humanitarian Intervention, Sovereignty and the UN Charter in the International Liberal Order 3.0.," *Journal of East European & Asian Studies* 1, 3 (May 2010): 401-418.

⁵ The literature on intervention rarely engages Hobbes on how the use of his notion of inter-state anarchy can justify, or release the responsibility of, false killing in the process of military intervention. Rather, the literature engages Hobbes primarily on the issue of whether sovereignty can be rightly made subject to humanitarian concerns. For a nearly exceptional engagement in the former case, see Iris Marion Young, "The Logic of Masculinist Protection on the Current Security State," *Signs* 29, 1 (Autumn 2003):1-25. In the latter regard, see, for example, John Charvet, "The Idea of State Sovereignty and the Right of Humanitarian Intervention," *International Political Science Review* 18, 1 (1997): 39-48; Mohammed Ayoob, "Humanitarian Intervention and State Sovereignty," *The International Journal of Human Rights* 6, 1 (2002): 81-102.

⁶ Maurice Yolles, B.Roy Frieden, Graham Kemp, "Toward a Formal Theory of Socioculture: A Yin-yang Information-based Theory of Social Change," *Kybernetes* 37, 7(2008): 850-909; Tony Fang, "Ying Yang: A New Perspective on Culture," *Management and Organization Review* 8, 1 (March 2012): 25-50; Peter Ping Li, "Toward an Integrative Framework of Indigenous Research: The Geocentric Implications of Yin-Yang Balance," *Asian Pacific Journal of Management* 29 (2012): 849-872.

⁷ Roger T. Ames, "The Common Ground of Self-cultivation in Classical Taoism and Confucianism," *Tsing-hua Journal of Chinese Studies* 17, 1-2 (December 1985): 65-97; Jay Goulding, "'Three Teachings Are One': The Ethical Intertwinings of Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism," in Xinyan

However, transcendence may sometimes require actions as opposed to meditation to stop the expansion of the power of chaos.⁸ For Confucianism, this is the moment when the civilized world encounters the danger of extinction during barbarian invasion. For Buddhism, it is the sympathy for the majority of people suffering hardship. Neo-Confucianism is particularly keen for a thinking mechanism that will enable a believer of harmony to learn science that exploits, rather than respects nature. Neo-Confucianism relies heavily first on Buddhism to construct a formless and nameless subjectivity that encompasses everything through non-action and second on the enlightened self-understanding that is no longer subject to the material world. This self-understanding includes acting on Great Compassion (da bei) through reform and self-strengthening in a mundane world to ultimately enlighten the unaware commoners and enhance one's own spiritual life.⁹

Neo-Confucianism thus adopts modernity as an intellectual challenge required by the occasion. The challenge of modernity is reduced to adopting a tentative mode of reform that accommodates contemporariness. Learning from Western institutions (e.g., nationalism, liberalism, socialism) and technologies constitutes modern self-strengthening. Learning is essential to the understanding, engagement, and reform of this world. Consequently, the symbiosis of yin and yang continues to guide the view of the world¹⁰ and subsequently leads to an apparent contradiction between the ontological acceptance of the world as one being too transient to be worthy of care and the simultaneous epistemological endeavor to enlighten commoners through self-strengthening. The former sees no need for intervention because everything is of the same characteristics in their ultimate formless existence. The latter views the mundane world as in need of transcendence and consequently, of learning, for the purpose of enlightenment. Transcendental enlightenment presumably exempts the population from indulgence in materiality when learning from the West.

Traditional Chinese attitudes bifurcate into two strands; one strand stresses patience and non-action for chaos to settle down naturally, and the other strand emphasizes self-strengthening to enlighten commoners. Either tendency is familiar to the Chinese. Together, these two strands desensitize the contradiction caused by the

Jiang ed., *The Examined Life—Chinese Perspectives* (Bingham: Global Academic Publishing, 2002), pp 249-278.

⁸ Don Alvin Pittman, *Toward a Modern Chinese Buddhism: Taixu's Reforms* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii press, 2001).

⁹ Khun Eng Kuah-Pearce, "Understanding Suffering and Giving Compassion: The Reach of Socially Engaged Buddhism into China," *Anthropology & Medicine* 21, 1 (February 2014): 27-42.

¹⁰ Rosita Dellios, "International Relations Theory and Chinese Philosophy," in Brett McCormick and Jonathan H. Ping (eds), *Chinese Engagements: Regional Issues with Global Implications*, (Robina, Qld: Bond University Press, 2011), pp. 63-93.

shift between them. Belief in the inevitability of the cycle of harmony and chaos reduces anxiety about the suffering of people elsewhere. The coexistence of the ontology of formless subjectivity and an epistemology of learning desensitizes the contradiction caused by a policy of non-intervention that considers both the failure of others and China's own improvement as necessitated by the states of nature.

The most important contradiction in China's non-intervention policy is that between the belief that China must strive for good governance and success by means of heavy intervention by the state in society and the perception that China should not get involved in failed states and societies elsewhere. Official Chinese sources state that local people must determine local values and institutions.¹¹ External intervention weakens and impairs the local mechanisms required to restore order. Such official indifference reflects the long-held philosophy that harmony and chaos are destined to take turns. Hence, any intervention would be in vain however well-intended or heavily invested. Nevertheless, one essential question remains unanswered: why must China stay in order while others are left in chaos? Two contrasting schools of thought provide the answers.

One answer may be obtained from the common belief in Daoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism that an amorphous nature of being manifests itself in different forms in the mundane world. Whether successful or a failure, governance always eventually reverts to its basic nature. Another answer reminds China of its duty as an agent of enlightenment that must contribute to the transcendence of human suffering. For Confucianism, this means harmonizing all-under-heaven, and for Buddhism, Great Compassion for the suffering, who are unable in their state to appreciate the fact that their subjectivity lies in nothingness. Secular engagement is adopted in the latter case to reform the mundane world and improve the learning of the suffering population.¹² Only through reform, which safeguards the people from suffering and injustice, can the unenlightened population eventually transcend the forms to achieve real universal being.

However, according to Neo-Confucianism, enlightened subjectivity in appreciation of transcendence should be a precondition to engage in self-strengthening, which no one can impose through intervention. The American

¹¹ Hu Jintao, "Build Towards a Harmonious World of Lasting Peace and Common Prosperity," President of the People's Republic of China presented at the United Nations Summit, New York (September 15, 2005); Hu Jintao, "The government's work report," presented to the 18th Party Congress of the Chinese Communist Party on November 8, 2012.

¹² Tu Wei-ming, *Way, Learning, and Politics: Essays on the Confucian Intellectual* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1993); Sor Hoon Tan, "Modernizing Confucianism and 'new Confucianism'," in Kam Louie ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Chinese Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 135-14.

expectation that China would intervene in Sudan, Myanmar, Syria, and elsewhere has been met with self-justified disapproval from China. In a few cases, though, China has either approved or at least abstained from voting and has allowed UN sanctions to be passed under US leadership. However, Chinese acquiescence in these cases depended heavily on the consent of the extant legal regime in the target state or on requests made by relevant regional organizations.¹³ China's adherence to the principle of sovereignty appears to violate the rationale behind the institution of sovereignty in the first place: from the fundamentals of the Westphalia Treaty, it has gradually developed into the protection of human rights. Nevertheless, the task for contemporary neo-Confucians is to think of what they should and could do for China in the face of the suffering of the Chinese population.

Two Discourses on Buddhist Transcendence

The role of Buddhism in contemporary Chinese foreign policy has been rarely acknowledged because Buddhism has never provided a clear principle of international relations and because the influences of Buddhism on Chinese modernity had already been incorporated into the historical trajectory before the establishment of the People's Republic of China.¹⁴ In actuality, Buddhism has contributed to the understanding and appropriation of modernity in China in ways similar to how it integrated Confucianism and Daoism in Vietnam in the latter's encounter with Christianity and modernity.¹⁵ Confucianism and Daoism are conservative with regard to the use of industrial power in the exploitation of nature. Confucianism and Daoism are likewise uncomfortable with the ideas of individualism, rationality, or competition that come with liberal democracy and market capitalism. Modern thinkers in Vietnam and China intensively consulted Buddhism to reorient the local intellectuals toward modern technology and institutions. By contrast, Buddhist intervention in Japan's

¹³ Chiung-chiu Huang and Chih-yu Shih, *Harmonious Intervention: China's Quest for Relational Security* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2014.)

¹⁴ Erik Hammerstorm, "Science and Buddhist Modernism in Early 20th Century China: The Lif and Works of Wang Xiaoxu 王小徐," *Journal of Chinese Religion* 39 (2012): 1-32; Jiang Tao, "A Buddhist Scheme for Engaging Modern Science: The Case of Taixu," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 29, 4 (2002): 533-552. Nevertheless, Buddhist modernity in China adapts to the context. It has adopted differing forms and acquired differing meanings. See Thomas Borchert, "Worry for the Dai Nation: Sipsongpannā, Chinese Modernity, and the Problems of Buddhist Modernism," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 67, 1 (February 2008): 107-142.

¹⁵ Elise A. DeVido, "The Influence of Chinese Master Taixu on Buddhism in Vietnam," *Journal of Global Buddhism* 10 (2009): 413-458; McHale, Shawn, *Print and Power: Confucianism, Communism, and Buddhism in the Making of Modern Vietnam* (Honolulu: Univ. of Hawaii Press, 2004); Thien Do, "The Quest for Enlightenment and Cultural Identity: Buddhism in Contemporary Vietnam," in Ian Harris (ed.), *Buddhism and Politics in Twentieth-Century Asia* (London: Pinter, 1999), pp.254-283.

coping with modernity and the West was extreme in thought as it undergirded the country's adoption of imperialism in the 1930s.¹⁶

Indigenous access to modernity via Buddhism in East Asia comprises two aspects. The classic aspect is the shared pursuit of transcendence among Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism over individual mundane concerns for immediate interests. Confucian teachings urge self-rectification of the learned class to serve as a model for people all-under-heaven to emulate so as to harmonize the latter into an orderly state. Daoist teachings deconstructed all immediate interests into meaningless eventuality, with the highest respect for nature already in harmony. Buddhist teachings provide an imagined cycle of life that makes everyday sufferings tolerable and the afterworld a place of emancipation. The three teachings are characteristic of the world view and philosophy of life. Nevertheless, the three teachings were all conceived with individuality as a questionable basis of ontological imagination that requires transcendence.¹⁷ The other aspects of Buddhism, namely, reformist and critical, fit its believers into the mundane world whose incessant evolution into varieties is a useful reminder of their actually transient state. This last aspect smoothly connected the believers to modernity and its various progressive claims ideologically, institutionally, and technologically.

Modernity changed the ways of life and rules of political economy. Transcending the dazzling changes in the individual as well as those in national life requires the establishment of an understanding of the principles of modernity. At least two Buddhist approaches are available for the suffering population to rely on and make sense of their suffering: meditation of experiences and letting go through learning.¹⁸ The first approach considers suffering as the result of false feelings or images induced by materialism. This approach is in line, although not completely similar, with the Daoist solution to look beyond or the Confucian solution to wait for order to return. The second approach seeks the reason behind modernity, grasps its essence, and even practices its rules so that modernity would no longer be superior, destined, universal, teleological, rational, or Christian. If modernity is reduced to knowledge of this world,

¹⁶ Robert H. Sharf, "The Zen of Japanese Nationalism," *History of Religions* 33, 1 (Aug., 1993), 1-43; James Hesig and John Maraldo (eds.), *Rude Awakenings: Zen, the Kyoto School and the Question of Nationalism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1995).

¹⁷ Charles Wei-hsun Fu, "Morality or beyond: The Neo-Confucian Confrontation with Mahāyāna Buddhism," *Philosophy East and West*, Vol. 23, No. 3, Philosophy and Revolution (Jul., 1973), pp. 375-396; Timothy Brook, "Rethinking Syncretism: The Unity of the Three Teachings and Their Joint Worship in Late-imperial China," *Journal of Chinese Religion* 21, 1 (1994): 13-44.

¹⁸ Gay Watson, *The Resonance of Emptiness; A Buddhist Inspiration for a Contemporary Psychotherapy* (Delhi: Jainendra Prakash Jain at Shri Jainendra Press, 2001); Kalij Rinpocije, *The Dharma* (Albany: S.U.N.Y. Press, 1986); Mark Epstein, "Forms of Emptiness: Psychodynamic, Meditative and Clinical Perspectives," *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* 2 (1989): 61-71.

the limit of its power would breed the desire for further transcendence. At this transcendent moment, the belief in the afterworld becomes appealing once again. Therefore, Buddhism can encourage learning about modernity in a way that Confucianism and Daoism cannot. However, no consensus has been reached among Buddhist thinkers with regard to this approach. The debate of such thinkers reflected the two different states of nature that could have sneaked into the non-interventionary policy of contemporary China.

The debate centered on the state of nature. Chinese Buddhist thinkers believed that the human world is full of sufferings, but whether or not these sufferings are composed of a violation of the state of nature is debatable. On the one hand, the state of nature is emptiness or nothingness. People of this world should transcend fast-passing attractions to the senses to retrieve and return to the enlightened state of nothingness.¹⁹ On the other hand, the state of nothingness is not the nature of this world. Rather, nothingness is a transcendent place accessible only to those who undergo proper preparation. Accordingly, nothingness can only be reached through hard learning and reform. The latter approach is therefore in need of epistemological rigor.²⁰ Incidentally, a parallel debate ensued in both Japan and China. The Chinese debate began much earlier because of China's failure to adopt modernity during its encounter with the West. Neo-Confucianism was desperate for a solution to the inability of Confucianism to acquire modernity without jeopardizing the Confucian sensibility toward self-rectification and its concomitant aversion to materialism, which modernity seemed to represent compellingly. In this regard, the Buddhist debate on the attitude toward this world is informative.²¹ Accordingly, the sufferings of the failed state in the 21st century appear typical rather than alarming. In comparison, the Japanese debate emerged more recently.²² Ironically, this recent emergence was probably caused by the fact that the seeming success of Japan's modernization project before WWII generated insufficient alert for engaging in critical reflection. However, the project was also imperialist. Finally, Japan's modernization project incurred criticism from critical Buddhism in the 1980s because

¹⁹ John Kieschnick, *The Impact of Buddhism on Chinese Material Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

²⁰ B. Alan Wallace, "Introduction: Buddhism and Science—Breaking down the Barriers," in B. Alan Wallace, ed., *Buddhism & Science: Breaking New Ground* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).

²¹ Justin R. Ritzinger, "The Awakening of Faith in Anarchism: A Forgotten Chapter in the Chinese Buddhist Encounter with Modernity," *Politics, Religion & Ideology* 15, 2 (2014): 224-243.

²² Jamie Hubbard and Paul Loren Swanson, eds., *Pruning the Bodhi Tree: The Storm Over Critical Buddhism* (Honolulu: Hawaii University Press, 1997).

the philosophy of nothingness was believed to have caused disaster to both Japan and its Asian neighbors during WWII.

The philosophy of nothingness, which legitimized Japan's imperialist pursuit of the World History Standpoint during WWII, argues forcefully that the subjectivity of Japan was nothingness, where all, namely the West and the East, should have co-existed. Although the World History Standpoint dissolved the hierarchy of the West over the East, according to critical Buddhism,²³ it also privileged the imagined non-place of Japan as claimed by the philosophy of nothingness to the effect that both the West and the East could be sacrificed mercilessly in this philosophical annihilation. Moreover, critical Buddhism detects that this privileged place coincides with Japanese Shinto's worship for Amaterasu in the sense that both are about the origin and premise of world history. These principles do not rely on knowledge, experience, or even facts and together established an exclusive claim on Japan's superiority. The philosophy of nothingness formulated by Nishida Kitaro is significantly indebted to the Buddhist concept of Zen.²⁴ Clothed with Buddhist thought, soldiers of the imperialist government lost worldly feelings toward the victims of their violence. In short, the sense of responsibility is particularly weak in the Zen philosophy. The rules for entering, taking, and destroying a mundane place as well as getting rid of it are obscure or arguably unnecessary. Consequently, the will to annihilate and the will to transcend have become indistinguishable.

Original Enlightenment and Silence in the Chinese Debate

The Chinese debate is of a different nature because the Chinese authorities during the late Qing and Republican periods had never been fully able to group their society and people into any coherent modernization project as Japan did.²⁵ The responses were uncoordinated and slow as well as insincere. The suspicion toward a perceived materialist (i.e., inferior, Western civilization) continued to support the imagined self-respect preserved for the thoroughly demoralized Chinese system. Nevertheless, the consensus was that something had to be done to rescue the nation

²³ Jacqueline Stone, "Some Reflections on Critical Buddhism Jacqueline," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 26, 1/2 (Spring 1999): 159-188.

²⁴ James Hesig and John Maraldo (eds.), *Rude Awakenings*.

²⁵ Takeuchi Yoshimi (1910-1977), an influential critic of Chinese literature sympathetic to the Kyoto School, firmly believed that China's incapacity for modernization actually reflects an amorphous subjectivity that powerfully protected China from cultural subjugation to Western civilization in ways that Japanese modern thoughts failed to. Takeuchi Yoshimi had apparently incorporated the desired Shinto spirit into Chinese-ness. Christian Uhl, "Displacing Japan: Takeuchi Yoshimi's Lu Xun in Light of Nishida's Philosophy, and Vice Versa," *Positions* 17, 1 (2009): 207-237.

from perishing completely. The typical formulation, which was first indoctrinated in Zhang Zhidong's "Chinese Essence, Western Practice" (zhong ti, xi yong),²⁶ lingered on through the 21st century in the very notion of "the China model."²⁷ However, why would a materialist build-up that would eventually be useless be necessary in the first place if these efforts would ultimately be transcended in a state of grand harmony? This concept is especially confusing if "essence" remains in a harmonious world and "practice" involves struggle. This confusion led to the debate on whether essence and practice comprise one thing. Alternatively, essence and practice should be regarded as separate formulations.

The basic difference between essence and practice is the route through which one could reach the state of transcendence. One route is through enlightenment, assuming that the state of transcendence is the state of nature cloaked by all kinds of distractions. Relying on one's own effort is thus critical to retrieve the mind to trace one's origin. Away from the origin, Confucianism and Buddhism appear to be in a state of loss. Learning is important in the modern world. However, according to the School of Enlightenment, the real seed of transcendence is concealed internally. Nevertheless, without being conscious of one's internal source of transcendence, one's learning in the external world could only lead to loss of direction or rampant materialism.²⁸ The state of enlightenment is therefore not related to the external artificial world. Rather, it is ultimately about withdrawal from the external world or from epistemology. Nothingness is the assumed and normatively targeted state of nature. As the targeted state of nature, enlightenment can consciously overcome loss in this world. Likewise, as the assumed state of nature, nothingness enables learning and practice to have a basis so as to avoid drifting away from the origin.²⁹

The School of Enlightenment believes that essence and practice come from the same mind. The mind is where all reasons and phenomena are generated. Essence and practice are absolutely equal in the context of an individual's learning; yet, the mind is inexpressible, formless, and pervasive. Such origin is rather similar to the formulation of nothingness based on the Kyoto School. For both schools of thought, the mind has no beginning or end and is therefore perpetual. Its original state is one of

²⁶ Daniel H. Bays, *China Enters the Twentieth Century: Chang Chih-tung and the Issues of a New Age, 1895-1909* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1978).

²⁷ The debate on the China model has produced a huge literature in both English and China in the 21st century. For a reference to the earlier debate on essence and practice, see Joseph Fewsmith, "Debating 'the China Model'," *China Leadership Monitor* 35 (2011), <http://www.hoover.org/publications/china-leadership-monitor/article/93636>, accessed May 22, 2014

²⁸ Kwok Leung, "Chinese Culture, Modernization and International Business," *International Business Review* 17, 2 (2008): 184-7.

²⁹ Ina Johnson, "The Application of Buddhism Principles to Lifelong Learning," *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 21, 2 (2002): 99-114.

grand harmony that encompasses all that is transient and permanent. The unity of seeming opposites in the original mind ensures one's capacity to possess all possible knowledge and all necessary functions; this condition makes Buddhism and science intrinsically compatible.³⁰ With enlightenment, one is allowed to see through the bewildering world and is exempt from being reduced into materialism when learning science. Without enlightenment, learning and practice would lead to anxiety because the population would only see the varieties and differences in passing phenomena and would desire to pursue more phenomena aimlessly. The population would eventually drift away from the original mind.

Enlightenment can provide the type of creativity that would enrich this world and still contribute to transcendence through the presentation of non-materialist modernity. On the contrary, science in itself can never be the route to reach the transcendent mind. The phenomenon and the cosmology therefore belong to two distinct levels. Self-rectification is essential to moving an individual from pre-enlightenment to enlightenment. Sheer learning, however, cannot because it would confuse the mind. As the Sage acquires scientific learning, the subjectivity of China as a nation would be saved. At such important moment of revival, commoners would see how it would be possible for China, which now possesses the power of science and technology, to use such knowledge in a non-violent, non-exploitative, and non-expansionist manner.³¹ Demonstration of transcendent modernity should further enlighten the West; this makes neo-Confucianism a categorically different norm from the Buddhism-informed World History Standpoint of imperialist Japan. Nevertheless, this neo-Confucian philosophy, which has become popular again in the 21st century, is heavily indebted to Buddhist engagement with modernity.

Practice and essence are not two separate processes. Instead, creativity and retrieval are two sides of one coin. The same mind therefore has two doors: one open to the transient world and the other open to the transcendent world.³² The first door paves the way for neo-Confucianism to acquire the enlightening message on the importance of improving one's standing in this world, where Chinese and Western knowledge are similar in terms of their common belonging to the transient world. Something significant in the transient world emerges in this formulation. The Confucian Sage has to rely on self-subduing (*ziwo kanxian*) to the transient world to

³⁰ Donald S. Lopez Jr., *Buddhism and Science: A Guide for the Perplexed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

³¹ Martin Jacques, *When China Rules the World: The End of the western World and the Birth of a New Global Order* (New York: Penguin Books, 2009).

³² Sébastien Billoud, *Think Through Confucian Modernity: A Study of Mou Zongsan's Moral Metaphysics* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2011); N. Serina Chan, *The Thought of Mou Zongsan* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2011).

speak to and save the suffering commoners and the world.³³ The Sage has to learn scientific knowledge to breed the seed of enlightenment in the consciousness of the masses. Despite the exclusion of science from the transcendent world, the Buddhist notion of Great Compassion inspired neo-Confucianism into the long route of scientific learning to retrieve the origin.

In sum, Buddhist thoughts inspired neo-Confucianism in at least four different ways, with specific regard to the latter's adaption to modernity. First, Buddhism provided the Confucian Sage with an imagined link to a pervasive universe where self-rectification required by Confucianism acquired a broad scope of influence, such that a constantly self-rectified Sage is no longer only a model to be emulated by others but also the mind of the universe to claim an all-encompassing spirit. This condition means that the Sage can actively engage this world and present himself in science and democracy. Second, Buddhism provided both the notion of "transcendent origin" and that of "this world" so that accessing this world through learning science does not affect the capacity for transcendence but might even enhance such capacity if the Sage decided to engage this world. Third, the Great Compassion that Buddhism exhibits to commoners transformed the society into a modern state, which is a legitimate goal in Confucianism. Nevertheless, the paramount duty of the Sage is the retrieval of the mind to transcend the limit of the self and its materialist pursuit; without a constantly rectified self, learning would be useless if not harmful. Lastly, the achievement of Buddhist enlightenment ultimately lies in everyone's own mind, where the hierarchical value in Confucianism is reconciled with egalitarianism sanctioned by modernity.

In contrast to the School of Enlightenment, the School of Silence in China adopts a similar strategy that was later used by critical Buddhism to deconstruct the philosophy of nothingness.³⁴ The School of Silence worries that practice would corrupt the mind if essence and practice are symbiotic as alleged by Enlightenment scholars; critical Buddhism interprets the relationship as one that signifies totalitarianism which coincides with nothingness. Contrary to the idea of Enlightenment, the School of Silence argues that no nature in the original state is

³³ Sub-negation is the popular translation of the notion of *ziwo kanxian*. Self-subduing, however, better connotes the Sage's decision to momentarily sacrifice his transcendence for the sake of awaken the population. See Stephen c. Angle, *Sagehood: The Contemporary Significance of Neo-Confucian Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Wing-Cheuk Chan, "On Mou Zongsan's Idealist Confucianism," in Qingsong Shen and Kwong-loi Shun (eds.), *Confucian Ethnics in Retrospect and Prospect* (Washington D. C.: The Council for Research in Value and Philosophy, 2008), pp. 171-184..

³⁴ Jamie Hubbard and Paul Loren Swanson, eds., *Pruning the Bodhi Tree*; Steven Heine, "After the Storm: Matsumoto Shirō's Transition from "Critical Buddhism" to "Critical Theology," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 28, 1-2 (Spring 2001): 133-146; Jacqueline Stone, "Some Reflections on Critical Buddhism," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 26, 1-2 (Spring, 1999): 159-188.

enlightened because the duty of transcendence is only possible after knowledge of this world is learned. The pursuit of knowledge in this world breaks silence and thus makes silence thinkable. Essence and practice have to be separate to preserve the incorruptibility of essence for transcendence. Reaching such essence is the next step that follows learning rather than the first step before learning. Knowledge of this world can enlighten commoners to the need for reform and breed the seed of transcendence outside this world. On this particular point, the School of Silence was the harbinger for the emergence of critical Buddhism. Both are wary of the likelihood that nothingness promotes unilateralism. For neo-Confucianism, however, the enlightened state exists in every human being. Silence thinkers did not believe in any universal enlightenment that could take over individual sites and facilitate transcendence.

Silence thinkers emphasize authentic Indian Buddhism³⁵ and contend that it used to be reform-oriented considering that commoners constituted a significant portion of the believers. However, Buddhism exported to China was primarily the religion of the well-to-do stratum, whose interpretation turned it into a conservative thought. Despite the evolution of neo-Confucianism toward self-strengthening, the learning of the Enlightenment thinkers eventually corrupted the mind and extinguished the seed of transcendence in the self-involving elite. Silence thinkers engaged in knowledge-based reform of the world based on knowledge. Learning is a critical component in the Silence thinking;³⁶ the mind is able to grasp the rules of this world by accepting Western science and modernity. Rationality and truth come not from the mind but from breaking up incorrect knowledge and proceeding to behavioral adjustment that leads to reform. Although this attitude toward knowledge and science is conducive to the need for self-strengthening, neo-Confucianism is hostile toward the Silence thinking. For Confucianism, the ultimate task is the restoration of the Chinese nation and the mind's control of science. By contrast, the Silence thinking questions the existing order and encourages reform. Learning is perceived as a necessary evil for Enlightenment and a necessary good for Silence.

In sum, the incorporation of modernity into one's life should not be the end of learning. Modernity is a means to achieve transcendence albeit in different sequences depending on the school of thought adopted. For the School of Enlightenment, transcendence is the original and ontological state to be restored, whereas for the School of Silence, transcendence is a desired ontology to be accessed by crossing the

³⁵ Chuan-wei Yuan, "Indian Studies in Modern China (1900-1989), *China Report* 25, 2 (May 1989): 175-180.

³⁶ Jacqueline Stone, *Original Enlightenment and the Transformation of Medieval Japanese Buddhism* (National City, CA: The Kuroda Institute, 1999).

divide between essence and practice. Therefore, the epistemological function of learning is necessary for the School of Silence but not for the School of Enlightenment. For the latter, learning is important because Enlightenment is the guarantee for neo-Confucianism to save the Chinese nation via learning without being absorbed by materialism.

Enlightened Non-interventionism and Transcendent Modernity

Understanding China's reservation toward the restoration of order in failed states and the aggressive concern for China's own state of governance requires a level of appreciation deeper than that provided by the usual interpretation embedded in the mainstream international relations theory. If China were a typical state that practiced self-help under anarchy, it would not have adhered to a rigid principle regardless of the suffering of the failed state's population or its own national interest.³⁷ Buddhism considers suffering to be a characteristic of this world that reduces failed states to normalcy. According to the School of Enlightenment's point of view, transcendence cannot be achieved by merely engaging this world. Neo-Confucianism's re-appropriation of enlightenment to make sense of learning acknowledges the possibility and rationale of learning. However, learning would be futile if the mind is not consciously prepared to be in transcendental unity with heaven.³⁸ The Sage could decide to reach commoners out of his Great Compassion for their suffering by displaying his scientific learning and engagement with modernity. Unfortunately, neo-Confucianism's predilection toward learning has not prescribe any mode of scientific method for commoners.³⁹ In addition, the return to the original mind is ultimately the duty of commoners. This thought could have been the political barrier to China's adoption of interventionism; Great Compassion provided no method, and the local mind of the failed state's leadership could not be made ready by China for the transcendental purpose.

³⁷ Zhongying Pang, "China's Non-Intervention Question," *Global Responsibility to Protect* 1 (2009): 237-252.

³⁸ Tu Weiming, "The Ecological Turn in New Confucian Humanism: Implications for China and the World," *Daedalus* 130, 4 (Fall, 2001):243-264; Yu Jiyuan, "Xiong Shili's Metaphysics of Virtue," in Chung-ying Cheng and Nicholas Bunnin, *Contemporary Chinese Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 127-146.

³⁹ Wing-Tsit Chan, "Neo-Confucianism and Chinese Scientific Thought," *Philosophy East and West* 6, 4 (January 1957): 309-332; Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

China's own fate was the paramount concern of both neo-Confucianism and Buddhism.⁴⁰ However, the thinking of the original silence that urged scientific learning by all means alienated neo-Confucianism. The School of Silence did not contribute to the contemporary interventionary tendency of the global governance regime because it was critical of the unjust or lack of equality in its spirit. This spirit of reform fell outside the scope of global governance that sought a top-down re-establishment of order. The Silence thinkers were likewise critical of the indiscriminate application of rules that ignored reality. Knowledge of local conditions was presumed to be more important than liberalistic values dominating most of the global governance regimes. Despite its rational pursuit of knowledge of this world, the Silence thinking fell on deaf ears of neo-Confucianism. The latter dreads the assumption that no transcendence exists in the original state and frowns at the belief that transcendence could be reached through reform and re-ordering informed by a correct grasp of the materialist world.

In a nutshell, the political thought that served as the foundation of China's self-strengthening originated from the apprehension of neo-Confucianism toward a perceived reality constituted by the decline of the Chinese nation, the breakdown of traditional Confucian values, and the failure of the Sage's teaching on harmony and self-rectification. Neo-Confucianism lacks a link to modernity that could make sense of the materialist pursuit seemingly prevailing under modernity. The Buddhist Enlightenment thinking inspired neo-Confucianism to envision the route toward modernity because Enlightenment thinkers believe in the original state of transcendence and contend that learning could continue without losing control of the mind. In the traditional Confucian state of nature, self-rectification is the only correct way of life. In the past, although self-strengthening involved physical training, it did not encourage materialism. In the Enlightenment state of nature, modernity is unnecessary and intervention in failed states where the mind was lost is particularly unwise. Modification through Great Compassion allowed neo-Confucianism to re-appropriate enlightenment for its pursuit of modernity. In the Silence state of nature, knowledge is the foundation for finding the route to transcendence, and intervention would only be proper if knowledge, rather than value, was acquired. No one could achieve transcendence on behalf of the local population in need of correct knowledge.

From the perspective of Chinese political thought, American interventionism does not come from enlightened self-understanding embedded in transcendence

⁴⁰ Xue Yu, *Buddhism, War, and Nationalism: Chinese Monks in the Struggles Against Japanese Aggressions (1931-1945)* (Oxon: Routledge, 2005)

because of its inherent and value-laden teleology that seeks to transform anything local. Rather, the American call for intervention appears to stem from a mundane desire for material dominance and is a source of chaos in itself. China invariably finds evidence to support this impression in the Hobbesian style of unrestrained use of military force and abuse adopted by the US in its interventions, which are undoubtedly parallel to barbarian invasion. This situation prompts a reaction in the form of calls for self-strengthening, which the Chinese have come to accept as their duty so that China may serve as a lesson to the rest of the world. Neo-Confucianism intends to prove that power politics can be transcended and that harmony can be restored. However, for other countries, learning must come from self-understanding of internal conditions. Pushing learning from outside destroys the route of return to the mind, which ensures that learning does not proceed for the sake of learning itself. This caution against intervention applies to Enlightenment that begins with the restoration of the local subjectivity/mind as well as to Silence that embarks on the acquisition of localized knowledge and localized behavioral adaptation. The same caution can be used to criticize China on the rise, though, as if materialist power subdues the mind of the Chinese authorities.⁴¹

The national implication of the return to mind at the individual level is most obvious in China's emphasis on always finding solutions to problems through abiding by national conditions. As long as one believes that enlightenment is possible only via return to the mind, intervention is, by all means, a false prescription. China's appeal for respect for national conditions to justify both the rejection of external intervention in China and the avoidance of China's intervention in other countries' domestic politics has become common. For instance, a Chinese diplomatic message from the Arabian delegation states that:

In today's world, changes are turning the heaven and the earth upside down. Whatever ism, system, model, or line one takes has to pass the test of time and practice. Tens of thousands of varieties exist between the national conditions of each country. There is no such thing in the world as the best,

⁴¹ This leads to the adoption of the strategy of shaming by the self-perceived victim of China rising as during the 2014 maritime dispute, for example, Le Hong Hiep analyses on behalf of Vietnam to conclude that "the most important thing Vietnam can do now is to name and shame China internationally." Le Hong Hiep, "Chinese Assertiveness in the South China Sea: What Should Vietnam Do," *The National Interest* (15 May, 2014). <http://nationalinterest.org/blog/the-buzz/chinese-assertiveness-the-south-china-sea-what-should-10468>. access May 22, 2014.

omnipotent, and synchronic model of development. There is at best the road of development fittest to the national conditions of the country.⁴²

The Chinese consciously appeal to traditional political thoughts in viewing the world. The Daoist notions (tiptoes do not sustain long standing, big steps do not sustain long walking, self-referencing does not sustain far sight, self-righting does not sustain reasons, self-exaggerating does not sustain achievement, and self-promoting does not sustain leadership) cited by Chinese international relation watchers are on the track of neo-Confucian Enlightenment.⁴³ Another Daoist insight, “strong things turn old,” was utilized as a disincentive for stretching over borders. Various mundane strategic concerns, side products, and windfall profits could be conceived by a specific portion of the policy circle each time. However, the reasonableness of non-intervention is the long-held belief.

The rationale behind each of China’s decision on non-intervention or the use of intervention in a particular manner differs according to context. The literature cites the Bible of Change (Yi Jing) as saying that “the excited dragon regrets” (for flying too high to keep on) to caution against the wish to expand influence. Despite the inconsistency of the policy of non-intervention in certain situations, such as in Somalia in 1992 and in East Timor in 1999, the two cases that China painstakingly explained as exceptional upon giving China’s consent, China has deliberately tied its own hands by discursively ruining the legitimacy of China to become interventionist in the future. The constant return to classic wisdom conveys two messages: that China has to become stronger and that China has to avoid stretching. For the mainstream thought on international relations, the entire point of becoming strong is to expand. Accordingly, Chinese non-interventionism, together with alleged self-restraint, must be logically culpable.

Western versus Buddhist States of Nature

Western critiques that usually find Chinese non-interventionism as theoretically culpable and practically laughable can be broken down into two major categories: normative and scientific. The normative category points to China’s lack of sympathy

⁴² Wang Zefei, “Jianchi buganshe nei zheng, zhongguo bu shu li” (Sticking with non-intervention in internal politics, China would not be beaten on reason) (April 27, 2012), <http://big5.fmprc.gov.cn/gate/big5/www.fmprc.gov.cn/zflt/chn/zfgx/t926892.htm> accessed May 25, 2014.

⁴³ Zhang Lihua, “zhongguo chuantong wenhua jiazhi guan yu minzurentong” (Chinese Views of Traditional Cultural Value and National Identities) (January 8, 2014) <http://www.rwwhw.com/Rjwh/Mzsj/2014-01-08/11811.html> accessed May 30, 2014.

for the suffering of people in need of help under the circumstances of civil war, suppression, and incapacity to supply basic needs. The scientific category attends to the strategic calculus of China's non-involvement to reflect at best very mundane interests pursued by everyone else. The two modes of critiques overlap on the observation that China relies on local corruption and dictatorship to promote its own interests. China's rebuttal to normative criticism is rather relaxed and conveys the simple message that intervention would eventually be useless if local conditions cannot breed a local resolution. The Chinese Academy of Social Science presents the typical Chinese logic of non-intervention not as lack of care but as one of appealing to national conditions. This is why China should seriously consider the limit of even its own experiences for the rest of the world.

...Chin's support for Africa to choose its own road of development reflects the most sincere attitude. China has never pointed to Africa one direction or another as for its choice of political system. Neither has China determined its close relationship with Africa according to the ideological position. Some African countries suggest to "look to the East" or to learn the Chinese "model of development." China is willing to exchange governing experiences with them while indicating that the most important lesson of choosing the road of development should be to fit in one's own national conditions. China's modesty is seemingly incomprehensible to the Western countries, but is increasingly appreciated among the African countries. By adhering to the principle of non-interventionism, China stands on the reason.⁴⁴

The politics of global governance accordingly sees one state of nature as opposing another state of nature. The American vision of the state of nature emphasizes equality, freedom, and the independence of individuals. In Chinese Confucian thought, the state of nature involves chaos and harmony taking turns spontaneously in accordance with the Way and, in Buddhist thought, either Enlightenment or Silence. Intervention is unnecessary and would be harmful if the local mind or local knowledge is not present to exercise transcendence. The Chinese approach to investing in local infrastructure and the ruling elites' well-being embodies the principle of non-intervention in the hope that eventually, the elites' capacity to act with tolerance and affect material improvement would restore the general order. China has shown its willingness to facilitate negotiation between local rivals.

⁴⁴ Wang Zefei, "Sticking with non-intervention in internal politics, China would not be beaten on reason."

Considering that the philosophy of harmony opposes division, China typically receives disputing parties in turns in Beijing to create an atmosphere for peaceful settlement.

Non-intervention in human right violations points to a weak conception of human rights from the perspective of the Lockean state of nature; from the perspective of the Hobbesian state of nature, non-intervention amounts to an alliance between the non-intervening state and the target state. Both traditions are important references in the consciousness of Western intellectuals. The West regards Chinese non-intervention with anxiety; from its human rights perspective, China constitutes a failed state.⁴⁵ China could also ally itself with those states that, according to US intervention policy, should rightly be treated as an enemy within an anarchical international system.⁴⁶ In such an intellectual environment, a political thought that explains the rationales of Chinese non-interventionism equals an apologist excuse for its negligence of humanity.

Scientific criticism focuses on the structural imperative for China to adopt non-intervention regardless of the value, policy, or principle by which China abides. Such presumably factual criticism contends that non-intervention is not an act arising from any transcendent wish but is a reflection of sheer incapacity to compete with the West or pursuit of national interest at the expense of local human rights.⁴⁷ However, scientific criticism is perhaps asking too much perhaps. The impact of political thought is rarely on the immediate policy choice. Rather, it is an orientation to either motivate a certain direction or constrain the range of options. The political belief shifts the population's focus away from specific concerns and distracts them. Both China's self-strengthening cycles in modern and contemporary history and Chinese leaders' reiteration that a rising China will not turn into a hegemonic power are statements of transcendence; a rising power under firm control of the mind looks

⁴⁵ Dennis M. Tull, "China in Africa: European Perceptions and Responses to the Chinese Challenge," *SAIS Working Papers in African Studies* (Washington D. C.: African Studies Program, The Johns Hopkins University, Paul H. Nitze School Advanced International Studies, 2008); Mike Hodel, "The Scramble for Energy: China's Oil Investment in Africa," *The Journal of International Policy Solutions* 9 (Spring 2008): 50-54.

⁴⁶ Krister Karlsson, "China & Peacekeeping: Contributions to UN Peace Operations from 2000-2010 and the Theory of Offensive Realism," *Minor Field Study Report* (Uppsala: Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University (Spring 2011).

⁴⁷ Adaora Osondu, "Off and On: China's Principle of Non-Interference in Africa," *Mediterranean Journal of Social Science* 4, 3 (September 2013): 225-234; Mordechai Chaziza and Ogen S. Goldman "Revisiting China's Non-Interference Policy towards Intrastate Wars," *Chinese Journal of International Politics* 7, 1(2014): 1-27; Johan Lagerkvist, "China's New Flexibility on Foreign Intervention: Seeking Global Clout, China's Position on Sanctity of Sovereignty Evolves," *YaleGlobal* (May 29, 2012), <http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/content/chinas-new-flexibility-foreign-intervention> accessed May 25, 2014; Ian Taylor, "China's Oil Diplomacy in Africa," *International Affairs* 82, 5 (September 2006): 937-959.

beyond the materialist world. If such a wish for transcendence does not show consistently in China's alleged non-interventionism because of immediate urgency, complication, or interlude of sheer opportunism, it will still show in the aftermath that renounces certain interests or power gains to reify transcendence over materialism.

The fact is that China can still intervene under various disguises, assist in Western intervention in a soft and harmonious manner, and remain acquiescent at selected interventions while being critical of others. In most of the situations where China decided not to intervene, the domestic policy debate nevertheless hears pro-intervention positions that are at least considered legitimate if not eventually accepted. Despite China's effort to remain discursively consistent, the incapacity of ontological and epistemological standpoints to either directly guide *ex ante* policymaking or provide useful *ex post* explanation of policy behavior is apparent. This incapacity makes the mainstream international relations theory of power and interest particularly attractive to those who view China's non-interventionism as hypocritical and the Buddhist interpretation as apologist. However, the power of scientific explanation should and can still be extended to situations where policy assessment proceeds in the aftermath to make any earlier act of intervention inconsistent and reluctant in the long run. How a particular notion of national interest is invoked, re-invoked, and revoked in policymaking is not the concern of the current international relations theory that looks exclusively to consistency.

For a student of international relations theory, selecting non-intervention or revoking an act of intervention is usually based on the consideration of national interest even though the initiation of intervention could be simultaneously inspired by normative concerns. The Buddhist perspective explains how an act of intervention is revoked even though remaining interventionary is presumably more in line with the national interest. International relations theories need to explain situations where remaining interventionary and keeping out are both reasonable depending on how national interests are calculated. More specifically, the question of how non-intervention remains a reasonable option to Chinese foreign policymakers calls for an answer so that intervention would always demand painstaking justifications. The School of Silence, along with critical Buddhism, undergirds the suspicion that intervention is in danger of resulting to over-involvement because materialism may ruin the alternative route leading to transcendence. In response to the Western criticism of China renouncing the responsibility to protect its people suffering from human rights deterioration, the prevailing suspicion among Chinese commentators is almost always about the purpose of Western intervention becoming infamously reduced to the materialism of power and interest.

Enlightenment and Silence refer to entirely opposite formulations of the state of nature, but both are suspicious of Western intervention. For Enlightenment thinkers, local subjectivity has to be the premise of any reform. Western intervention that installs local leadership in a culturally estranged institution would easily fail such subjectivity, without which the return to mind could not proceed and materialism would follow. For the School of Silence, reform and knowledge are intrinsic to the capacity of transcendence. Hegemonic intervention to enforce norms of global governance defies the possibility of local knowledge, which is the foundation to reflect upon the materialist world. Buddhist thoughts on the state of nature thus make non-intervention a permanently legitimate policy position. It will similarly keep alive a critical and self-critical component to cope with any country's intervention on any pretext. In short, non-intervention is a naturally provided policy, but it does not always prevail. The point is not how it fails to constrain intervention at a particular point but how non-intervention is a constantly available and intuitively proper alternative as well as a critical perspective to be incurred regardless of wherever and by whomever intervention occurs.

Non-interventionism is therefore not entirely non-interventionary. It proceeds in internal and external cycles. On one hand, the cycle is composed of great sympathy, reform, and opportunism, which are all epistemological and can either be Enlightenment- or Silence-oriented. On the other hand, it also involves patience, withdrawal, and restoration of local subjectivity, which reflect ontological premises embedded in the original as well as desired transcendence. According to the School of Enlightenment, one can go ahead with learning modernity only after retrieving the ontologically original state of Enlightenment. In comparison, the School of Silence urges learning because breaking silence would be the only route to establish a transcendent ontology of silence. Likewise, interventionism is never entirely interventionary; thus, all acts of intervention are also cyclical. Militarist intervention and cold-blooded withdrawal call for the Hobbesian state of nature to make sense. These perspectives are in contrast with the Lockean state of nature that prompts intervention.

Conclusion: Practicing Buddhism without Being Aware

On May 4, 2014, the memorial day of the May 4th Movement of 1919, Chinese President Xi Jinping gave a speech on “The Core Value of Socialism” in Peking University. The May 4th Movement symbolizes China's quest for modernity taking place in an anti-Confucian discourse. Later generations have found solid Confucian

strings in the movement that wished for the substitution of modernity for Confucianism. In Xi's speech, he not only reiterated the spirit of the movement—patriotism, progress, democracy, and science—but also cited all kinds of Confucian values from Confucian classics. Interestingly, he then enumerated the three Buddhist transcendental stages, namely, seeing mountains as mountains, seeing mountains as non-mountains, and seeing mountains again as mountains. The second stage is the transformational stage in which the mind is no longer affected by the outside world. The third stage refers to the transcendental stage in which the mind enjoys but is raised beyond the outside world. Xi further encouraged students to rely on the values which the Chinese population “practices without the consciousness of practicing them” (yong er bu jue).⁴⁸ The last remark relates to the third stage and is therefore parallel to the Enlightenment discourse, where the core values of socialism cannot lie in socialism because it is still the consciously applied slogan in the official language. The unconsciousness of naturally using values in daily life connects this world to a transcendental mind no longer entangled with materialism or socialism. “Buddhism” was not mentioned in Xi's remarks, making Buddhism a completely hidden perspective.

Hope for self-transformation and aversion to other-transformation can coexist among Chinese without causing anxiety. The pursuit of transcendence prepares the Chinese to hold the self-image that their self-transformation would not commit materialism and that other-transformation cannot help but be materialistic. Ironically, once the principle of non-intervention confirms the mind of transcendence, intervention could become acceptable again. This line of thinking can be further applied to the mounting calls for Chinese intervention. These calls take place in the global governance agenda, and China's unease about intervention would probably be reduced in the future. Nevertheless, intervention could be very harmful to the pursuit of transcendence over materialism such that Chinese leaders, academicians, and the media consciously resort to Enlightenment as a self-reminder against interventionism. The hidden but powerful Buddhist influence in the Chinese state of nature ironically restricts the Western criticism of non-interventionism from receiving any sophisticated review and revision.

⁴⁸ He actually used the Buddhist dictum to express a kind of Confucian advice because he meant to urge each to adhere to each's value without being affected by the circumstance.
http://news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2014-05/05/c_1110528066.htm accessed May 26, 2-14.