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**A Christian Embodiment of Neo-Confucian Active  
Mysticism: A Study on Jia Yuming's Spirituality**

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## Abstract

Jia Yuming is one of the most prolific Chinese theologians of the twentieth century. He is often considered a Chinese fundamentalist theologian. This thesis is dedicated to challenging this prevalent understanding and providing a more comprehensive grasp of Jia by looking at his spirituality. It will argue that a more thorough dialogical engagement with Jia's influences from Western Christianity and neo-Confucian mind-heart school can demonstrate a more nuanced picture of him as a mind-heart mystical theologian. We will adopt the approach of comparative theology to examine Jia's spirituality from two perspectives: Jia's Western theological resources and the neo-Confucian mind-heart school. The approach of comparative theology will enable us to reveal the substrata of Jia's way of thinking—neo-Confucian mind-heart mysticism. Through a historical survey of Jia's life experiences and a close reading of his writings, we will clarify Jia's major Western theological resources: the American Holiness Movement, Wesleyan Perfectionism and Quakerism, as well as the neo-Confucian mind-heart school. We will then examine Jia's spirituality, including anthropology, hamartiology, pneumatology and sanctification, in comparison with Wang Yangming's teachings, the latter being the most important representative of the mind-heart school within neo-Confucianism. In doing so, we will reveal in what ways Jia's thinking reflected the holistic and experiential features of Wang Yangming's thought. We will compare Jia's idea of Christ-human (Jidu ren) and the effort of withdrawal and cultivation (tuixiu gongfu) with Wang Yangming's teaching of the totality of equilibrium and harmony (zhong he) and the Confucian way of conscientiousness and altruism (zhong shu zhi dao). Through this comparison the active mystical mind embodied in Jia's spirituality will become clear. We will demonstrate how this active mysticism at the core of Jia's spirituality enabled him to value both spiritual and social dimensions of the Christian life. These characteristics of Jia's spirituality, which showed the unity of the spiritual and the mundane, the individual and the public, will challenge the landscape of Chinese theology. Looking at Jia's theology through the lens of Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder's tripartite typology as well as Alexander Chow's adjusted version in the context of Chinese theology will show that Jia's theology carries not only the type A law-oriented features but also the type C history-oriented inclination. This thesis will argue that it was because of Jia's active mystical mind that his theology can marry the two types of theology. Analysing the complex roots manifested in his theology offers a more comprehensive grasp of Jia and overturns the oversimplified interpretation of him as a fundamentalist. Jia's active mysticism will broaden our understanding of Christian mysticism, which has often been considered as confined to the individual, other-worldly oriented realm. Jia's theological construction, itself a fruit of what may be termed comparative theology rather than simply a contextual theology, will deepen our understanding of the formation of Chinese theology.

## Lay Summary

Jia Yuming is one of the most prolific Chinese theologians of the twentieth century. He is often considered as a Chinese fundamentalist theologian, a definition which focuses on his maintenance of fundamental Christian beliefs such as the virgin birth and keeping a distance from worldly affairs. This thesis is dedicated to challenging this prevalent understanding and providing a more comprehensive grasp of Jia by looking at his spirituality. Through analysing Jia's influence from both Western Christianity and a particular school of neo-Confucianism, this thesis will demonstrate a more nuanced picture of him as a mind-heart mystical theologian. This thesis will follow the approach of comparative theology to examine Jia's spirituality. This approach will enable us to reveal the substrata of Jia's way of thinking—neo-Confucian mind-heart mysticism. Through a historical survey of Jia's life experiences and a close reading of his writings, we will clarify Jia's major Western theological resources as well as the neo-Confucian mind-heart school influence. We will then examine Jia's spirituality through looking at several theological subjects including the doctrines of man, sin, the Holy Spirit, and sanctification, in comparison with Wang Yangming's teachings. Wang was the most important representative of the mind-heart school within neo-Confucianism. In doing so, we will reveal in what ways Jia's thinking reflected the holistic and experiential features of Wang Yangming's thought. We will compare Jia's idea of Christ-human (Ji du ren) and the effort of withdrawal and cultivation (tui xiu gong fu) with Wang Yangming's teaching of the totality of equilibrium and harmony (zhong he) and the Confucian way of conscientiousness and altruism (zhong shu zhi dao). Through this comparison the active mystical mind embodied in Jia's spirituality will become clear. We will demonstrate how this active mysticism at the core of Jia's spirituality enabled him to value both spiritual and social dimensions of the Christian life. These characteristics of Jia's spirituality, which showed the unity of the spiritual and the mundane, the individual and the public, will challenge the landscape of Chinese theology. Examining Jia's theology through the lens of Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder's tripartite typology as well as Alexander Chow's adjusted version in the context of Chinese theology will show that Jia's thought carries features from different types of theology. This thesis will argue that it was because of Jia's active mystical mind that his theology can marry the type A law-oriented theology and type C history-oriented theology. Analysing the complex roots manifested in his theology offers a more comprehensive grasp of Jia and overturns the oversimplified interpretation of him as a fundamentalist. Further, this thesis will propose 'spirituality' as a new aspect for the study of Chinese theology and the use of a Venn diagram based approach to theological classification that allows for theological convergence to supplement Chow's tripartite typology for Chinese contextual theology. Jia's active mysticism will broaden our understanding of Christian mysticism, which has often been considered as confined to the individual, other-worldly oriented realm. Jia's theological construction, itself a fruit of what may be termed comparative theology rather than simply a contextual theology, will deepen our understanding of the formation of Chinese theology.

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Balderton,

England

30 May 2023

**In memorial of my granddad**

## Introduction

*'Work with God with one mind to achieve the goal of saving the world'.<sup>1</sup>*

—Jia Yuming

Jia Yuming (1880-1964) has been widely known as a Chinese fundamentalist theologian whose theology manifests his focus on Christian spiritual development.<sup>2</sup> But the distinctiveness of Jia's theology makes the broadly applied label 'fundamentalist' an oversimplification. What distinguishes Jia's theology from those of his Chinese contemporaries of the twentieth century is his moderate attitude toward the Chinese religio-philosophical tradition and his active participation in the Three-Self Patriotic Movement while holding to biblical inerrancy. There is therefore need for a more nuanced understanding of Jia's theology and his theological method. It is recognised that the motif of life is central in Jia's theology.<sup>3</sup> In his prolific works, Jia systematically demonstrated his concept of salvation. Jia believed that the Bible was concerned with the realization of full salvation.<sup>4</sup> Also, he considered that Philippians 1:21 — 'For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain,' was the most important verse of the whole Bible. Jia believed that it revealed the purpose of Christ's redemptive work and the ultimate goal of a believer's life.<sup>5</sup> According to Jia, 'for me to live is Christ' means exhibiting Christ's life in our experiences. He called

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<sup>1</sup> Jia Yuming, *Shen Dao Xue [Study of Divinity]*. Vol. 3. (Taipei: Gan lan shi ye ji jin chu ban she, 1997), 337-8.

<sup>2</sup> Kwok Wai-luen, 'The Christ-Human and Jia Yuming's Doctrine of Sanctification: A Case Study in the Confucianisation of Chinese Fundamentalist Christianity', *Studies in World Christianity* 20, no. 2 (2014): 145–65.

<sup>3</sup> Scholars such as Kwok Wai-luen and Xie Longyi both pointed out the importance of the theme of life in Jia's theology. See in Xie Longyi, *Jiduren: Jia Yuming de Lingming Shenxue [Christ-Human: Jia Yuming's Spiritual Theology]* (Taipei: China Evangelical Seminary, 2008) and Kwok, 'The Christ-Human and Jia Yuming's Doctrine of Sanctification', 145–65.

<sup>4</sup> Jia Yuming, *Wanquan Jiufa [Full Salvation]* (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Sheng Jidujiao Xiehui, 1949), 52.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

this status being a 'Christ-human' (*Jidu ren*).<sup>6</sup> In this way, the focus of Jia's theology lies in how a Christian can spiritually grow into the state of a Christ-human, which makes spirituality the centre of Jia's theologizing. This thesis offers an analytical study on Jia's spirituality and, through a comparative theological method, probes into the mystical root of the neo-Confucian mind-heart school which profoundly shaped his thinking. Based on this more nuanced grasp of Jia's theologizing, we will situate him among contemporaries of the twentieth century and reflect on his spirituality in the context of Chinese Christianity. From the foundation of these discussions, this thesis will suggest a new dimension in understanding Chinese contextual theology.

According to David Perrin, 'Christian spirituality is the experience of transformation in the Divine–human relationship as modelled by Jesus Christ and inspired by the Holy Spirit. Christian spirituality is appropriated as a lifestyle within all relationships in the broader Christian community as well as in society in general.'<sup>7</sup> If we take this definition as a starting point, Jia's spirituality mainly needs clarification on two major issues. One is the human spiritual nature or the fundamental human capacity to realize spiritual self-transformation. Another is how that spiritual capacity can be developed and embodied in one's daily life. Hence, four theological subjects require examination: anthropology, hamartiology, pneumatology and sanctification. Anthropology serves the basis of spirituality; hamartiology explains the necessity of spirituality; pneumatology and sanctification describe the methods and processes of spirituality. Since one of the essential dimensions of this study consists in exploring the Chinese cultural impact on the formation of Jia's spirituality, we will take into

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<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> David Brian Perrin, *Studying Christian Spirituality* (New York; London: Routledge, 2007), 32.

consideration the form of a spirituality that is rooted in the Chinese culture. Seen from Jia's educational background, Confucian spirituality served as a not completely escapable cultural foundation for his theologizing. Even though Jia's theologizing did not intend on establishing a dialogue between Christian teaching and Chinese culture, his spirituality manifested strong marks of Confucian spirituality, especially the mystical characteristics of the mind-heart school represented by Wang Yangming (1472-1529).

Wang Yangming's teaching on self-transformation featured in Jia's spirituality in a subtle yet profound way. Its influence was not explicit, in the sense that Jia did not mention Wang Yangming directly. This influence might be due to the prevalence of Confucianism within the cultural-linguistic milieu of Jia's day, of which we can find traces in his writing. As we will see in chapter two of this thesis, Jia's argument of the unity of faith, action and knowledge shared great similarities with Wang Yangming's teaching of the unity of knowing and acting (*zhi xing he yi*). The impact of the active mystical mindset embodied in Wang Yangming's thought shaped Jia's way of thinking. This is the way Jia's theologizing showed contextualisation.

Jia's theology was contextual in a different same sense to Chinese modernist theologians like Wu Leichuan (1870–1944) and Zhao Zichen (T. C. Chao, 1888-1979). Theologians like Wu and Zhao formulated their theologies and interpreted Christian thought in the context of Chinese culture *self-consciously*. Their theology is contextual in an explicit way. They took an anthropological approach to Chinese culture and particularly Confucianism when introducing Christian teaching.<sup>8</sup> They

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<sup>8</sup> Bevans demonstrated six types of approaches to different contexts when Christian faith encounter human culture. The anthropological model is one of them. Believers holding this approach believes

tried to find and reveal the truth of the gospel in the context of Chinese culture. Chloë Starr was insightful in defining Chinese theology as that to which Chinese elements are essential. She described Chinese theology as being one of engagement. She focused on Chinese theologians who are ‘more dependent on the particular lens or narrative frame in operation for its force and validity, whether those theologians are engaging with literary or philosophical traditions or the social environment.’<sup>9</sup> To theologies like these, Chinese elements are not just peppered in the text in a superficial way but are decisive.<sup>10</sup> Also, Starr used Ni Tuosheng (Watchman Nee, 1903-1972)’s theology as an alternative example.<sup>11</sup> Nee’s theology was not particularly ‘Chinese’ in this sense because the Chinese cases and examples in his writings were primarily for illustrating Christian teaching rather than determining them. The points in Nee’s theology would still stand if we stripped away his Chinese examples. It would be possible for someone who knows little about Chinese culture or Chinese history to understand Nee’s theology.

The Chinese cultural elements in Jia’s theology are not as explicit as Wu Leichuan’s or Zhao Zichen’s. On the surface, Jia’s formulation of theology seems similar to Nee’s. The primary purpose of the Chinese elements in Jia’s theologizing

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that there is revelation hidden in culture and the goodness of culture can enrich Christian faith in certain ways. It would begin by listening attentively to the culture to discern the presence of God. See in Stephen B. Bevans and Roger Schroeder, ‘You Are Witnesses of These Things’, in *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 2004), 60.

<sup>9</sup> Chloë Starr, *Chinese Theology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 4-5.

<sup>10</sup> Chloë Starr pointed out that Watchman Nee’s theology was not particularly Chinese in this sense because the Chinese cases and examples in his writing were primarily for illustrating Christian messages rather than determine them. The points in Nee’s theology would still stand if we strip away his Chinese examples away. It would be possible for someone who knows little about Chinese culture or Chinese situation to understand Nee’s theology. See in Starr, *Chinese Theology*, 4.

<sup>11</sup> As Ni Tuosheng is widely known as ‘Watchman Nee’ in the West and most of his works are translated into English already under this name. This thesis will use ‘Watchman Nee’ rather than Ni Tuosheng.

was for illustrating the Christian message as well. Jia's approach to Chinese culture is of a counter-cultural or translational model.<sup>12</sup> It is counter-cultural in the sense that Jia believed that the gospel was universally true and the only path to salvation. Therefore, culture, which always contains sinful elements, can be put under the scrutiny of the gospel. Jia's approach is also translational because it regards culture as a vehicle for preaching the Christian message. However, even though the foremost purpose of Jia's theologizing was preaching the gospel to Chinese people rather than building a dialogue between Christianity and Chinese culture per se, Jia's theologizing deeply engaged Chinese culture. Jia's theology is contextual because it was his Wang Yangming influenced understanding of self-transformation that shaped his spirituality. Jia's Chinese mystical mindset was in operation in his formulation of spiritual development. His theology is in nature contextual because it engaged the Chinese way of thinking—specifically, the neo-Confucian active mystical mind. And thanks to this Wang Yangming influenced mystical mind, Jia became a theologian who was distinctive among his contemporaries of the twentieth century. The uniqueness of Jia's spirituality presents a challenge to all the existing typologies of understanding Chinese theologians. One of the major goals of this thesis is to reflect on the way of understanding Chinese contextual theology based on an in-depth examination of Jia's spirituality.

## **Literature Review**

As an influential figure in the arena of Chinese Christianity, many studies have been conducted on Jia Yuming's theology. Kwok Wai-luen, in his *Fandui Heyi !?: Jia*

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<sup>12</sup> The counter-cultural mode and translational mode are two of Bevans' six types of approaches to different contexts when Christian faith encounter human culture. See in Bevans and Schroeder, 'You Are Witnesses of These Things', 47-9.

*Yuming, Jiyao zhuyi yu Heyi yundong de Jiuji* examined the relationship of Jia Yuming as a fundamentalist theologian with the Chinese Church Union Movement.<sup>13</sup> According to Kwok, Jia's tension with the modernist theological camp did not consist in his intention to separate the fundamentalist camp from them, but a different understanding of the foundation of the union of churches in China. For Jia, the ecumenical movement could only develop in China on the ground of the life of Christ, the unity of nation and evangelization of gospel. Kwok's argument challenged the widespread thought that Chinese fundamentalist theologians usually bore a separatist inclination in terms of the ecumenical movement. Kwok's analysis situated Jia in the historical and theological context of the ecumenical movement of China, delineating a shift in Jia's theology. Kwok's work offers this study a sketch of the historical circumstances from which Jia's theology was developed.

Moreover, Kwok analysed Jia's view of sanctification in his 'The Christ-Human and Jia Yuming's Doctrine of Sanctification: A Case Study in the Confucianisation of Chinese Fundamentalist Christianity.'<sup>14</sup> It revealed Jia's strategies of connecting the Christian doctrine of sanctification with Confucianism. This challenged the prevalent thought that fundamentalist theologians would not tend to introduce non-Christian elements into the Christian faith. In his assessment, Kwok demonstrated why Jia had an open mind towards Confucianism and how he tried to blend it with the Christian faith.<sup>15</sup> On the issue of salvation, Jia's formulation embodied a convergence of Christian doctrine and Confucian thought on moral cultivation, and his idea of Christ-

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<sup>13</sup> Kwok Wai-luen, *Fan Dui He Yi!?: Jia Yuming, Jiyao Zhuyi yu Heyi Yundong de Jiuji [Advocating Separatism? Chia Yu Ming, Fundamentalists, and the Difficulties in Chinese Church Union Movement]* (Hong Kong: Tien Dao Publishing House, 2002).

<sup>14</sup> Kwok, 'The Christ-Human and Jia Yuming's Doctrine of Sanctification', 145–65.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

human exhibited a strong moral tendency.<sup>16</sup> From Kwok's point of view, Jia's efforts should be regarded as a constructive interaction between the Christian faith and Chinese culture. Kwok also pointed out that the mystical inclination that Jia adopted from Confucianism hinted toward the potential of the Christian mystical tradition in contextualizing Christian faith in a Chinese cultural environment. However, Kwok only discussed Jia's Confucian influence and mystical tendency in a general way. A more concrete and thorough analysis is needed. This study will go further and investigate the impact of Jia's neo-Confucian mind-heart school thinking on his spirituality and manifest how Jia's spirituality manifested an active mystical mind influenced by Wang Yangming.

What relates closely to Jia's stress on the doctrine of sanctification is his approach to the Bible. Accordingly, in his 'Lingyi yu Zhengjie: Jia Yuming Shijing Fangfa Chutan,' Kwok investigated Jia's hermeneutic and distinguished its main features, which included clarifying the Scripture within itself (*scriptura ipsius interpretes*), thematic interpretation and regarding spiritual cultivation as the ultimate goal for biblical interpretation.<sup>17</sup> By illustrating those characteristics Kwok pointed out that spiritualization was central in Jia's biblical interpretation.<sup>18</sup> Kwok argued that even though the method of spiritualization was considered as 'subjective' or 'free-play,' as opposed to the 'objective' and 'systematic' historical-grammatical method, at least in Jia's case it was in fact determined by his theological perspective and therefore legitimate.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, Kwok employed the theory of intertextuality to

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Wai-luen Kwok, 'Lingyi Yu Zhengjie: Jia Yuming Shijing Fangfa Chutan [Spiritualization and Interpretation: A Study on Y. M. Jia's Hermeneutics],' *Jian Dao*, no. 7 (1997): 191–235.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

demonstrate that it was inevitable for both methods to involve subjective factors in the process of interpretation. Kwok's work indicated the close relationship of Jia's hermeneutics with spirituality and the dominant role of spirituality in his theological constructions. Therefore, a more careful study of Jia's spirituality is needed, for it is the foundation of understanding his theology.

In 'Salvation and Life: A Reflection on Chia Yu Ming's Christocentric Theology' Kwok carefully examined Jia's Christology. Kwok noticed that Jia was an intriguing figure who was theologically under the impact of not only Calvinism from his early school experience, but also the Holiness Movement in the early twentieth century. The starting point of Kwok's study was to discern the theological resources that were alien to Calvinism in Jia's thinking. Kwok noticed some vital variations between Jia's theology and traditional Calvinism. For example, Jia held to the position of Perfectionism in terms of sanctification. He believed that the state of 'Christ-human', or full salvation, is attainable in this life. Calvinism however regards sanctification as a life-long journey, and no one can achieve a sinless state in this life. Through looking into Jia's theology which was built around the centre of soteriology, Kwok pointed out that even though Jia used Calvinist terms such as 'union with Christ' and 'mortification' in his writing and claimed that the centre of theology should be Christ, his theology was not actually Christocentric. Christ was only at the centre of Jia's theologizing for a functional reason. It was dispensationalism that was the overarching framework of Jia's theology. Seen from a dispensational perspective, there is a distinction between the kingdom of heaven (*tian guo*) and the kingdom of God (*shen guo*). The role of Christ was only the centre until He 'hands over the Kingdom to the Father.' Christ only functions as a vital tool

in the process of fulfilling God's plan for all dispensations. Therefore, despite Jia's Calvinist educational background, it was the dispensationalism and the Holiness Movement of the nineteenth century that was Jia's most important theological resources. Kwok believes that the reason why Jia adopted the Holiness theology in his theological construction was because of the poor spirituality and morality of Chinese Christians. The Holiness Movement's pursuit of a 'higher Christian life' and 'full salvation' would be an effective solution to those problems. Kwok's work is helpful in clarifying Jia's major Western theological resources and pointing out the vitally important role of dispensationalism in Jia's theological construction. Even though Jia had a Calvinist educational background, we should not simply regard him as a traditional Calvinist. It is even more accurate to define him as a Chinese Holiness theologian. Moreover, Jia's stress on the realization of full salvation showed the anthropocentric inclination of his theology. The subject that concerned Jia the most was the question of human perfection. Kwok was insightful in considering the characteristics of Chinese Christian spirituality. Individual moral development has been the central concern for Chinese Christians because of the Chinese religio-philosophical tradition, especially Confucianism. To have a more comprehensive grasp of the formation of Jia's theology, apart from his Western theological resources, Jia's Chinese cultural background should be taken into consideration as well. Later in this thesis we will look at Jia's spirituality particularly from the neo-Confucian mind-heart school perspective.

Sze-kar Wan in 'Competing Tensions: A search for May Fourth Biblical Hermeneutics' looked at Jia's hermeneutics.<sup>20</sup> Wan investigated the writings of five Chinese theologians including Jia Yuming and argued that even though their theological stances were different from each other, they all shared a common moral motivation in their exegesis that was shaped by the commentarial tradition of Confucianism.<sup>21</sup> According to Wan, the hermeneutical task within the Confucian tradition was a relational one. That relational feature was firstly shown in the interpreters' intention to construct an ideal past, 'the golden age,' into a relevant as well as practical model for the present. It also meant that the exegetes tried to locate themselves in a long and rich exegetical tradition of the past, which was affirmed by the canonization of the text itself and supported by generations of interpreters' commentaries.<sup>22</sup> Each exegete would find his own legitimate place in this consecutive commentarial tradition through providing a layer of interpretation.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, the main task for the interpreters did not lie in understanding or clarifying the original authorial intention, but in how the readers could relate themselves to this tradition and situate themselves within it and hence live ethical lives.<sup>24</sup> The concern of classical Confucian hermeneutics is moral rather than epistemological. Wan believed that it was due to this heritage that those Chinese theologians adopted the manner of the classical Confucian commentarial tradition, interpreting the Bible with

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<sup>20</sup> Sze-kar Wan, 'Competing Tensions: A Search for May Fourth Biblical Hermeneutics', in *Reading Christian Scriptures in China*, ed. Chloë Starr (London: T & T Clark, 2008), 97–117.

<sup>21</sup> The five Chinese Protestant theologians are Chen Chonggui (1883-1963), Jia Yuming, Watchman Nee (Ni Tuosheng, 1903-1972), Wu Leichuan (1870-1944), and Zhao Zichen (T. C. Chao, 1888-1979).

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

great confidence and considering their own exegesis as canonical.<sup>25</sup> According to Wan's argument, Jia's spiritual articulation can be understood as an embodiment of a Confucian moral reading of the classics. In other words, Jia understood the authority of scripture in a Confucian way. However, even though his hermeneutics exhibited a strong moral tendency and stressed living an ethical life, as a fundamentalist who advocated biblical inerrancy Jia regarded the Bible as the absolute authority and held a reserved attitude towards the contemporary modern culture. In contrast, the Confucian commentarial approach emphasizes the flexibility and relevance of the text to contemporary circumstances, even though within the Confucian tradition it is also critical for commentaries to underscore their adherence to orthodoxy. Admittedly, Wan's viewpoint offers an inspiring perspective to understand Jia's way of theologizing. The emphasis on moral living in the Confucian tradition provides an explanation for the focus of practical holiness in Jia's theology. The relational approach to the Bible made individual spiritual experience, spirituality, a focal point in Jia's theologizing. Yet the Confucian classical tradition (*jingxue*) might not be the only or dominant reason why Jia's exegesis emphasized morality. The Confucian spirituality that shaped Jia's mind would provoke more reflections as well.

Baiyu Andrew Song in his 'Jia Yuming (1880–1964)—A Chinese Keswick Theologian: A Theological Analysis of Christ-Human Theology in Jia's Total Salvation' pointed out what distinguished Jia's theology from other type A law-oriented Chinese theologians as classified by Alexander Chow in his *Theosis, Sino-Christian Theology and the Second Chinese Enlightenment Heaven and Humanity in*

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

*Unity*, was his spirituality.<sup>26</sup> And Jia's spirituality was largely influenced by Keswick teachings.<sup>27</sup> Song considered Jia's spirituality as a Chinese/Confucian expression of Keswick theology rather than a case of Confucianisation of Christianity, since it shared great similarities with Keswick teachings.<sup>28</sup> Song's study carefully examined and summarized Jia's Western theological sources. However, the significance of Jia's Chinese cultural background in his theological construction must be taken into account to understand his theology. This thesis will complement Song's analysis by examining Jia's neo-Confucian roots. It will reveal how the neo-Confucian mind-heart school shaped Jia's way of thinking and how his spirituality embodied a neo-Confucian active mystical mind.

Xie Longyi's *Jiduren: Jia Yuming de lingming shenxue* is a relatively systematic work on Jia Yuming's spirituality.<sup>29</sup> Xie pointed out that the centre of Jia's theology, biblical hermeneutics and his ministry work, lay in the subject of sanctification. For the ultimate goal of individual spiritual growth was to become a Christ-human.<sup>30</sup> According to Xie, the influences that shaped Jia's theological construction included his early Presbyterian education and Chinese cultural background. Xie believed that the journey of sanctification in Jia's theology was progressive. It could be summarized in three stages: the saved one who has been regenerated and justified, the Christian who has been baptized by the Spirit and

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<sup>26</sup> Alexander Chow, *Theosis, Sino-Christian Theology and the Second Chinese Enlightenment Heaven and Humanity in Unity*, Christianities of the World (New York; Basingstoke, New York, NY; Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 143.

<sup>27</sup> Baiyu Andrew Song, 'Jia Yuming (1880–1964)—A Chinese Keswick Theologian: A Theological Analysis of Christ-Human Theology in Jia's Total Salvation', *Journal of Global Christianity* IV, no. 1 (2018): 68–83.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Xie Longyi, *Jiduren: Jia Yuming de Lingming Shenxue* [Christ-Human: Jia Yuming's Spiritual Theology] (Taipei: China Evangelical Seminary, 2008).

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

sanctified, and the overcomer who has become a Christ-human.<sup>31</sup> Xie noticed that this process of spiritual growth was by and large in line with the categories of the order of salvation within the Reformed tradition. Hence, he considered the idea of the order of salvation as the theological foundation of Jia's spirituality.<sup>32</sup> However, Xie described Jia's theology as one that was rooted in the Reformed Calvinist tradition but manifested Eastern Orthodox inclinations. Admittedly, Jia received a Calvinist education and employed several Calvinist terms in his theologizing. However, Kwok's position regarding the role of Calvinism in Jia's theology seems more convincing. Rather than Calvinism, Holiness theology and dispensationalism served as the overarching perspective and foundation of Jia's theological construction.

Xie was accurate in pointing out the similarities between Jia's idea of Christ-human and the Eastern Orthodox view of deification. According to Xie, it was probably due to the subjective characteristics of Eastern Orthodox theology which drew Jia to a manner of spirituality that manifested the idea of deification. However, Xie did not provide any direct evidence for Jia's Eastern Orthodox influence. It was not clear that if Xie was arguing for the Eastern Orthodox influence in Jia's theology. Based on the similarities between Jia and Eastern Orthodoxy, Xie regarded Jia as the 'Chinese Irenaeus.' Moreover, Xie held that Jia's stress on spiritual development was partly attributed to the ultimate concern of the Chinese religio-philosophical tradition of pursuing sagehood.<sup>33</sup> The intention of Jia's theological construction was neither bridging Christianity and Chinese culture, nor employing Chinese cultural concepts to demonstrate Christian teaching. Jia's emphasis on moral development in

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*,336.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*,337.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*,37.

believers' daily lives made his theology in nature a Chinese interpretation of Christian faith, as human nature and moral development are central concerns in the Chinese religio-philosophical tradition. It was because of his Chinese way of thinking that Jia's theology exhibited ideas which can be compared with Eastern Orthodoxy. Xie's conclusion pointed to a significant direction to reflect on Jia's theology. Yet, he only discussed Jia's Chinese cultural background and its relationship with his theologizing very briefly. In this thesis, we will probe into Jia's Chinese mindset in detail and examine how it impacted Jia's spirituality.

The most recent work on Jia Yuming is Wang Delong's *Yi 'Xin' Fei 'Yong' — Jia Yuming Shengping ji Sixiang Yanjiu*.<sup>34</sup> Wang took a historical approach divided into two parts: Jia Yuming's biography and his spiritual theology. The historical data Wang investigated in his work was rich and accurate and especially helpful in understanding Jia's intellectual background and personal connections that provided him theological resources. Specifically, according to Wang, Jia's theological foundation mainly included the Calvinist theology that he inherited in his early school years from 'Old' Princeton Theological Seminary, the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America North, and the British Baptist tradition.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, Wang believed that the mystical inclination of Jia's theology was from the Quakers' influence through his contacts with Gao Shizhu and Li Ji'an when he was working at

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<sup>34</sup> Wang Delong, *Yi 'Xin' Fei 'Yong'—Jia Yuming Shengping Ji Sixiang Yanjiu [Abolishing 'Function' with 'Faith': A Study on Jia Yuming's Life and Thought]* (Beijing: China Social Science Press, 2017).

<sup>35</sup> Wang Delong pointed out that Jia was under the influence of Baptist tradition as well because the theological course he attended from 1901 to 1904 was partly funded by the Baptists. The Baptist denomination here was the English Baptist Missionary Society. The theological institute Jia attended after graduating from Tengchow college was the Gotch-Robinson Theological college (*Geluo shen xue yuan*), which developed from the Theological Institute (*Shengjing xuetao*) and Qingzhou/Tsingchow Theological college (*Peizhen shuyuan*) established by English Baptist Missionaries such as J. P. Bruce and J. S. Whitewright. Also, Jia's *Shen Dao Xue* was pretty much based on Augustus Hopkins Strong (1836-1921)'s *Outlines of Systematic Theology*. *Ibid.*, 194-198.

Lingguang Publishing House (*Lingguang baoshe*). However, Wang did not go into much detail concerning Quaker theology and what aspect of Quaker spirituality had influence on Jia. Jia learned about dispensationalism through the *Scofield Reference Bible* when he and Cheng Jigui were both doing administrative work at the Lingguang Publishing House.<sup>36</sup> Wang's investigation related the formation of Jia's theology to his personal experience and hence offered reliable historical threads to trace Jia's Western theological influences.

In addition, Wang's work was original in that he employed a framework that was different from the most prevalent kind. Instead of categorizing Chinese theologians of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century into Fundamentalists and Modernists, Wang regarded them as faith-oriented and function-oriented camps respectively. The theologians who belonged to the former were those who would not merge the Christian faith with Chinese culture or China's socio-political context intentionally. They held to the fundamental content of their Christian faith. The ultimate purpose of their enterprise lay in Christianizing China. On the contrary, to those who were considered as belonging to the latter camp, the potential of Christian faith in making a contribution to nation-building weighed more than its fundamental doctrines. The intention behind their mission usually was not about the spiritual salvation of the Chinese. They concerned themselves more with worldly affairs.<sup>37</sup> Wang believed that Jia should be treated as a theologian from the faith-oriented category. He argued the foremost task of Jia's theological construction was not simply contextualizing Christianity in China per se. Therefore, it was assumed that the

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 202-208.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 13-15.

Chinese religio-philosophical tradition did not play a significant role in Jia's theological formulation because that was compartmentalised into the function-oriented group. Wang was right that the focal point of Jia's theologizing was for the Chinese people's spiritual salvation. Yet, his innovative paradigm may easily lead to the public dimension of Jia's theology and his Chinese cultural roots being overlooked. While trying to escape the reductionistic fundamentalist-modernist dichotomy, Wang's otherwise helpful categorization remains oversimplified for Chinese theologians. It is problematic to contrast the mission of preaching spiritual salvation to the responsibility of nation building. This study will reveal that Jia's spirituality is an excellent case that challenges this binary. Jia's spirituality concerns not only gospel preaching and spiritual salvation, but also fulfilling the believers' social responsibilities. Wang held that even though Jia did not mean to contextualize Christianity in China and his pursuit went beyond his Chinese context, Jia's concern for spiritual growth accidentally echoed the emphasis of moral cultivation within the Chinese cultural context. However, Wang didn't further his investigation into this harmony. This thesis probes into the deep interaction of Jia's theology with his Chinese cultural background, showing this as not an accidental but an organic harmony.

### **Research Question and Academic Outcome**

As examined above, the current scholarship on Jia Yuming has noticed that spirituality is at the core of Jia's theological construction. Regarding the formation of Jia's theology, scholars tend to understand Jia either from a broad holiness movement perspective or Confucianism in general. Regarding Jia's Western theological resources, through examining Jia's life experiences, it was traced that

Jia's theology was under the impact of multiple theological traditions, including Calvinist Presbyterianism, the American Holiness Movement, the Keswick Movement, and the Brethren Movement. However, despite some scholars such as Wang Delong noticing Jia's close connections with the Quakers in Nanjing, no study has mentioned Jia's engagement with Quaker theology and the reasons behind it. Also, in terms of Jia's Chinese cultural roots, scholars like Kwok have pointed out the Confucian influence in Jia's theologizing. Yet they have not expanded their assessment in detail or discussed how Confucian spirituality, or which branch within Confucian tradition, influenced Jia at length. Sze-kar Wan only mentioned the neo-Confucian mind-heart school very briefly. A more nuanced study is therefore needed. Based on a historical investigation of Jia's life and thoughts, this thesis will clarify Jia's Western theological resources and how they contribute to Jia's theologizing. Our discussion will take into consideration the impact of Quakerism as well, because apart from the American Holiness theology, Jia's engagement with Quaker spirituality can reveal an important feature of mysticism in Jia's spirituality.

Regarding the characteristics of Jia's spirituality, it has been observed, especially in Xie Longyi's study, that Jia's view of sanctification shares great commonalities with the Eastern Orthodox idea of deification. Alexander Chow also pointed out that the idea of the unity of heaven and humanity was a commonly shared theme among Chinese theologians. Even though Xie held that Jia's concern for the theme of moral development and human perfection was rooted in his Chinese religio-philosophical background, no studies have been done on how Jia's Chinese mind shaped his spirituality in detail and how Jia's cultural background was related to the 'Eastern Orthodox mannered' spirituality. Through examining Jia's writing

carefully, this thesis will reveal that the neo-Confucian mind-heart school spirituality and Wang Yangming's approach of self-transformation in particular, profoundly impacted the formulation of Jia's theology. Also, this Wang Yangming-influenced spirituality offers a convincing explanation for the mystical tendency in Jia's spirituality.

In general, 'fundamentalist' is still the most widely used label for Jia when it comes to situating him among contemporaries of the twentieth century. This term can act as a shorthand for some features of Jia's theology such as his adherence to Biblical inerrancy and relatively reserved attitude toward liberal culture of the twentieth century. However, these points are not exclusive to fundamentalism, and so the label does not offer much nuance. Yet, it is more problematic in that it leads to a neglect of some important characteristics of Jia's spirituality. Also, this categorization of Chinese theologians as developed by Wang Mingdao, itself, needs more critical reflections as well. Through analysing Jia's spirituality without taking the fundamentalist-modernist classification perspective, this thesis will show how Jia as a theologically distinctive figure challenged this binary understanding of Chinese theologians. The assessment of Jia's spirituality will point to more reflections on developing a more comprehensive typology in understanding Chinese contextual theology.

The central research question for this thesis is: while Jia is often considered a Chinese fundamentalist or Presbyterian theologian, how can a more thorough dialogical engagement with Jia's influences from Western Christianity and neo-Confucian mind-heart school demonstrate a more nuanced picture of him as a mind-

heart mystical theologian? In answering this question, this thesis will also explore the following subsidiary research questions:

1. To what extent Jia's Western theological resources including Wesleyan perfectionism, the American Holiness Movement, Quakerism and Dispensationalism shaped his mystical spirituality?
2. What aspects of neo-Confucian spirituality is Jia most drawing from in his thinking?
3. In what ways is Jia a mystical theologian who was interested in both the spiritual and the social? How does this change the landscape of Chinese Christian theology?
4. In what ways is comparative theology a helpful methodology alternative to contextual theology?

This study aims to provide a more thorough analysis of Jia's spirituality, not only through the American Holiness Movement and Confucian influences broadly conceived, but through clarifying the impact of specific branches within the holiness tradition and neo-Confucianism. Moreover, this study will draw attention to the long-neglected Quaker influence on Jia and the active-mystical mind embodied in his spirituality under the influence of Wang Yangming's approach of self-transformation. This thesis will therefore offer a more comprehensive and deeper grasp of Jia's theologizing. Furthermore, it will reflect on the prevalent definition of Jia's theological position and challenge the existing typologies for understanding Chinese contextual theology. This thesis will therefore produce the following four academic outcomes: first, it will provide a more nuanced understanding of Jia's spirituality; second, it will

contribute to developing a more comprehensive typology for understanding Chinese contextual theology; thirdly, it will deepen our understanding of the formation of Chinese theology in addition to the approach of contextualisation; finally, it will reveal how Jia's neo-Confucian mystical spirituality can broaden our understanding of Christian mysticism.

### **Methodology**

The analysis of Jia's spirituality in this thesis involves two perspectives. This study will take into consideration both Jia's Western theological influence as well as his Chinese cultural background. To ground the examination of Jia's theological formation from both perspectives, first we will conduct a historical investigation into Jia's life and identify all Jia's connections that would potentially have impact on his theologizing. Yet, this study will be aware of Jia's manner of writing in which he did not necessarily give credit for the sources of his thought whether self-conscious or not, especially his Chinese religio-philosophical background. In most cases, one would not necessarily be self-consciously aware of his or her employment of his or her own cultural elements. Hence, apart from the traditional Confucian classical education that he received in his early years Jia's Chinese cultural influence is mainly discerned through the close reading of his writings and then examined in the light of Wang Yangming's thought.

Having clarified the main theological sources, both Western and Chinese, in the formation of Jia's spirituality, the reflection on his theologizing will involve two perspectives—Jia's Western theological resources and his intellectual formation in the neo-Confucian mind-heart school. Through such an analysis, this study will

reveal the active mystical characteristics of Jia's spirituality and demonstrate how he formulated his Western theological influences in a Chinese way that manifested a Wang Yangming influenced form of self-transformation. To conduct this dual-perspective study, this thesis will follow the approach of comparative theology to examine Jia's spirituality in a retrospective way. Often, comparative theologians employ the approach of comparative theology in a constructive way. Reading and studying scriptures/texts or rituals/practices of two different religious traditions at the same time sheds new light on certain aspects of the question that comparative theologians are focusing on.<sup>38</sup> However, in this thesis, we will use comparative theology as an analytical tool to elaborate on how Jia endeavoured to contextualize his theologizing with a neo-Confucian active mystical mind. This is because Jia's theological construction itself was a fruit of comparative theology rather than simply a contextual theology. Jia's formulation of spirituality is a constructive theological engagement of Christian beliefs with the neo-Confucian mind-heart way of thinking. Examining Jia with comparative theology as a hermeneutical tool reveals the uniqueness of his spirituality that is often neglected and provoke more reflections on different forms of Chinese Christian spirituality.

To reflect on Jia's work of contextualization, we need to pay attention to the twofold vision that was embodied in his spirituality. As a theologian whose primary goal of theologizing was preaching the gospel and full salvation to the Chinese people, Jia did not contextualize the Christian message in an explicit way like Zhao

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<sup>38</sup> The examples of constructive employment of comparative theology can be seen in works such as Catherine Cornille ed. *Atonement and Comparative Theology: The Cross in Dialogue with Other Religions*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2021 Marianne Moyaert, *Interreligious Relations and the Negotiation of Ritual Boundaries: Explorations in Interrituality* (Cham: Springer, 2019). The former focuses on the theological subject of atonement, the latter rituals.

Zichen or Wu Leichuan. Yet, despite having a countercultural and critical attitude toward Chinese culture and believing the universal truth of the Bible, Jia did not keep himself distant from his Chinese cultural heritage either. Whether or not on purpose, he embraced a neo-Confucian mind-heart school way of thinking in the most subtle but deep way. On the one hand, Jia dedicated himself wholeheartedly to his Christian faith; on the other, the neo-Confucian mind-heart school spirituality was built into his thinking. A comprehensive study of Jia's spirituality needs to be aware of his loyalty to both Christian and neo-Confucian systems and the depth of their impact on his thought. Therefore, the approach of comparative theology will be the most suitable one for this study. According to Francis X. Clooney,

Comparative theology—*comparative* and *theological* beginning to end—marks acts of faith seeking understanding which are rooted in a particular faith tradition but which, from that foundation, venture into learning from one or more other faith traditions. This learning is sought for the sake of fresh theological insights that are indebted to the newly encountered tradition/s as well as the home tradition.<sup>39</sup>

Comparative theology has a confessional as well as comparative nature. This approach distinguishes itself from two other disciplines when dealing with two different faith systems: religious studies and theology of religions. Its distinctiveness shows its advantages in undertaking the task of this thesis and the reason why it is the most suitable approach for studying Jia's spirituality. Comparative theology differs from religious studies because it is in nature confessional. A comparatist can stay loyal and committed to his or her own faith background when engaging another, whereas as religious studies scholar crucially keeps an objective perspective. In contrast with Christian theology of religions, comparative theology has more

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<sup>39</sup> Francis X. Clooney, *Comparative Theology: Deep Learning Across Religious Borders* (Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 10.

advantages because of its depth of investigation. Christian theology of religions is similar to comparative theology as a confessional practice. However, the goal of theology of religions consists in evaluating other religions sympathetically and critically from a Christian perspective. It aims to encourage reflections on the relationship of Christianity with other religions. Yet, the mission of comparative theology goes further. It requires a comparatist to explore and understand other religions' texts on a chosen topic within their own traditions.<sup>40</sup> It encourages authentic mutual understandings and facilitates reciprocal inspiration. Kärkkäinen had a very accurate description of comparative theology—a form of 'interfaith theologizing.'<sup>41</sup> The act of comparative theology is an act of hospitality.

'We' are opening our Scriptures for others to read, and 'they' are opening theirs. We are not only talking about how similar or different our theologies of revelation are; we are learning from and contributing to each other by reading together.<sup>42</sup>

Comparative theology does not primarily involve the act of evaluation. It is faith-seeking understanding. While it would be anachronistic to say Jia was explicitly employing comparative theology, it would be accurate to say that Jia's spirituality is essentially the fruit of this kind of interfaith theologizing. The two spiritual traditions, Christianity and Wang Yangming's idea of self-transformation, inspired and transformed each other in the formation of Jia's Christian theologizing.

When doing comparative theology, usually our starting point is the 'intuition of an intriguing resemblance.' And these commonalities would prompt us to put two

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<sup>40</sup> Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, *Doing the Work of Comparative Theology* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2020), 3.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid*, 55.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, 56.

realities, which can be texts, images, practices, doctrines, or persons, side by side. Then, we can examine both over again. Due to the presence of the other, we can understand each of them differently. Hence, we have a fresh comprehension of related matters in a different way too. In doing so, we would uncover a brand-new dimension of ourselves that was in debt to the exercise of comparative theology.<sup>43</sup>

While most scholarship on comparative theology is written by theologians who employ the approach for their own constructive projects, this thesis uses comparative theology as a hermeneutical lens to retrospectively analyse the theology of another theologian. Based on a thorough reading of Jia's writing, we will identify the resemblance between Jia's spirituality and Wang Yangming's thought on self-transformation. Further, we will put Jia's writing on believers' spiritual growth alongside Wang Yangming's teaching on moral cultivation. Before performing the analysis, first, we will clarify that Confucianism does have a spiritual dimension. As a religio-philosophical system, Confucianism exhibits a religious worldview in its cosmological orientations. As Mary Tucker explains, 'This cosmological orientation is realised in the connection of the microcosm of the self to the macrocosm of the universe through spiritual practices of communitarian ethics, self-transformation, and ritual relatedness.'<sup>44</sup> This ultimate cosmological orientation directs every aspect of human life. Confucian spirituality involves different ethical principles and responsibilities for different human relations. It encourages individual self-transformation as well as the communion between humans and the larger universe. Confucian spirituality can be seen as a 'means of integrating oneself into the larger

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<sup>43</sup> Clooney, *Comparative Theology*, 11.

<sup>44</sup> Mary Evelyn Tucker, 'Introduction' in *Confucian Spirituality*, ed. Tu Weiming and Mary Evelyn Tucker (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 2003-2004), 3.

patterns of life embedded in society and nature.<sup>45</sup> P. J. Ivanhoe was insightful in pointing out,

That a transformation of the self-fulfilled a larger design, inherent in the universe itself, which the cultivated person could come to discern, and that a peaceful and flourishing society could only arise and be sustained by realizing this grand design. Cultivation the self in order to take one's place in this universal scheme describes the central task of life.<sup>46</sup>

After defining the meaning of Confucian spirituality, we will examine Jia's spirituality in the light of Wang's thought. In doing so, we will have a fresh understanding of the formation of Jia's theology and reveal the Wang Yangming's influenced active-mystical mind in Jia's spirituality.

Yet, Jia's case also presents some challenges to the approach of comparative theology. To Jia, neither Christianity or Wang Yangming's spirituality was a 'religious other'. They were woven together seamlessly in forming his spirituality. However, Christianity was undeniably the foundational starting point for his comparative theology, even though the neo-Confucian mind-heart school spirituality was an essential part of Jia's cultural background and in no way alien to him. What is noteworthy is that Jia's case is not an example of multiple religious belonging, which tends to regard multiple traditions as relative equals. Jia only considered himself a Christian but never a neo-Confucian mind-heart school practitioner. For example, according to Wang Yangming, the innate knowledge of good (*liangzhi*) exists in every individual, hence, humanity's original nature is good. This teaching obviously contradicts the Augustinian doctrine of original sin that Jia held. The neo-Confucian

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Philip J. Ivanhoe, *Confucian Moral Self Cultivation* (Indianapolis, Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2000), xiv. See Tucker, 'Introduction', 5.

influence was deep in the sense that it was underlying and shaped Jia's way of thinking. For Jia, comparative theology makes sense because Christianity was the foundational mode he operated within while drawing on a neo-Confucian way of thinking for formulating his spirituality. Jia would have considered Christianity his 'home tradition'.

In this thesis, we only extract Wang Yangming's thought from Jia's theological construction and put it side by side with his thought as a 'different faith tradition' because Wang Yangming's thought was not a commonly recognized influence on Jia. Looking at his spirituality from the perspective of Wang Yangming's teaching will especially unveil Jia's neo-Confucian active mystical mind that was operative in his theologizing. Hence, this study on Jia's spirituality will expand the form of doing comparative theology as well. In doing so, we will gain a more comprehensive understanding of Jia's spirituality and his way of contextualization. On the other hand, we can see the deep impact of Wang Yangming's thought as a distinctive mindset on Jia's theologizing. Furthermore, we will reveal the potential of Wang Yangming's spirituality in developing a Chinese contextual theology that emphasizes both individual spiritual salvation and social participation. Finally, our reflections will propose a new dimension when studying Chinese contextual theology.

## **The Structure of the Thesis**

### **Chapter 1**

Chapter 1 will be on the formation of Jia's spirituality. We will offer a historical investigation into Jia Yuming's personal experiences and context, including his early missionary education background, personal mystical experience, working

environment, connections with different Christian denominations, the political changes in his context, and his reactions to those changes. All these factors to varying extents had influence on his theological formulation. A brief review of his education will first clarify the channels of transmission of Jia's Western theology resources. It will also reveal that those theological traditions weigh differently in Jia's theologizing. The prevalent labels of 'Presbyterian theologian' and 'fundamentalist' do not adequately describe Jia's theological position and would veil the distinctive characteristics of Jia's spirituality which we will discuss in the following chapters. Also, we will pay attention to a long-neglected tradition that had a deep impact on Jia's theological construction—Quakerism. Jia's deep involvement in the Quaker circle in Nanjing not only encouraged the mystical inclination in his spirituality but also served as the channel of transmission of the American Holiness Movement theology, tripartite anthropology, and dispensationalism.

Moreover, apart from engaging different Western theological traditions, Jia also appeared as an intriguing figure in his attitude toward the theological debate between the fundamentalist and modernist camps. On the one hand, according to Wang Mingdao's taxonomy, Jia held to fundamental doctrines such as biblical inerrancy like theologians such as Watchman Nee. But, on the other hand, Jia actively strived for establishing Christian spiritual education in China and emphasized the importance of fulfilling Christian's social responsibilities in this world. His concern for the wider society and understanding of the role of believers in restoring the heavenly order to the universe enabled his spirituality to challenge the boundary between fundamentalists and modernists defined by Wang Mingdao.

## **Chapter 2**

Having a grasp of Jia's Western theological connections and his participation in the arena of Chinese Christianity, chapter 2 will clarify how Jia inherited and employed his Western theological resources. Based on our discussion of Jia's theological influence in chapter 1, we will mainly look at Jia's spirituality from four aspects: Wesleyan Perfectionism, American Holiness Movement, Quakerism and Dispensationalism. Through examining these theological elements in Jia's thought, we will reveal Jia's inheritance and, more importantly, his departure from them. Through this chapter, the formation of Jia's spirituality will be clear.

## **Chapter 3**

Further, in chapter 3, we will focus on the dimension of Jia's spirituality and reveal its experiential characteristics. Our discussion will be focused on his tripartite anthropology, pneumatology, hamartiology, and the theology of the cross/sanctification in the light of the ultimate goal of spiritual growth—the state of Christ-human. At the same time, based on the resemblance between Jia and Wang Yangming's writing on individual self-transformation, Jia's spirituality will be investigated in comparison with Wang's teaching on cultivating sagehood. In doing so, the Wang Yangming influenced elements will be identified. Through our analysis, this chapter will argue that Jia's anthropology provided an alternative interpretation of tripartite human composition to the more prevalent teaching of Watchman Nee. Jia's understanding showed a holistic anthropology that was in accordance with Wang Yangming's idea of the unity of knowing and acting. For Jia, the spirit, soul, and body can mutually effect and transform each other. The cause of sinful acts was not an overdeveloped soul as Watchman Nee taught, but a weakened soul. Accordingly, for

Jia, the goal of sanctification consisted in the transformation of all three parts and restoring them to their full capacity, rather than simply restabilising the holy hierarchy. Also, to realize the state of Christ-human, the experience of being baptized by the Spirit is essential. Under the influence of the American Holiness Movement, this idea of the Holy Spirit's work was vitally important in Jia's spirituality. Jia's stress on the experience of 'second blessing' showed his inheritance of Western theological tradition. His positive attitude toward Western theological influence exhibited in his writing about pneumatology at an early stage of his life was different from his position in the 1950s. This also shows that the primary purpose of Jia's theologizing was preaching the Christian message to Chinese people instead of bridging Christianity with Chinese culture.

Although the main purpose of Jia's theologizing was not building a dialogue between Christianity and Chinese culture, it does not mean that Jia did not contextualize Christian message in a profound way. Moreover, this chapter will show how Jia's theologizing required resources outside the Western theological tradition, leading towards a comparative theology approach largely manifested in his neo-Confucian mindset. Regarding hamartiology, Jia interpreted sin in an organic way. Based on his holistic understanding of human composition, Jia believed that the impact of sin was on the whole person. Hence, rather than focusing on 'denying the soul' like Nee taught, Jia emphasized the necessity of transforming the whole person. Jia adopted the idea of selfishness (*si*) to explain the cause, manifestations, and consequences of sin. And he pointed out that selfishness was the main obstacle in the process of sanctification. The concept of selfishness is a key idea in the neo-Confucian understanding of wickedness. Other theologians such as Zhao Zichen,

who were dedicated to bridging the Christian message with Chinese culture, also used selfishness to demonstrate the presence of evil. Yet, Jia's understanding of selfishness also possessed a legal aspect, which means the transgression of God's divine law. This law-oriented interpretation of sin distinguished him from theologians like Zhao. According to Jia, selfishness as a manifestation of partiality was the main root of immorality in neo-Confucianism. Jia adopted the neo-Confucian notions such as petty self (*xiao wo*), a self-centred person, to describe the selfish state. The ultimate pursuit of Jia's spiritual maturity lay in the state of impartiality, which was also the virtue possessed by Confucian noble person (*junzi*). Moreover, Jia's view of sin also involves a public dimension. The corruption of human culture was also a result of human sinful acts. Therefore, Jia's understanding of sin also implies human responsibility for the public sphere and requires believer's social participation.

To overcome the consequences of sin and realize the state of Christ-human, Jia suggested the theology of the cross. Individual experience of the cross was essential in Jia's view of sanctification. Jia used artistic language to describe three aspects of believers' experience of the cross. Due to his adoption of the Augustinian teaching of original sin, Jia's view of sin has a legal aspect. Therefore, according to Jia, we need a bronze/red cross, which is a symbol of Jesus's blood, to gain positional sanctification. After being redeemed by Christ's atoning work, believers should 'carry the silver cross' to obtain an abundant life. The silver cross represents purity and concerns our life. It is a symbol of consecration and enables believers to manifest holiness in their daily lives. The last stage is the experience of the gold cross. The experience of the gold cross means identification with Christ and

obtaining a glorious life. It symbolizes a victorious life. Having the experience of the gold cross is the realization of the state of Christ-human.

#### **Chapter 4**

After revealing the experiential feature of Jia's spirituality and identifying the similarities of his thought with Wang Yangming's moral cultivation, chapter 4 will continue following the approach of comparative theology. We will look at Jia's spirituality from the perspective of the neo-Confucian mind-heart spirituality represented by Wang Yangming to reveal his active mystical mind. Then, we will examine Jia's spirituality against the Confucian cultural context. First, we will clarify that Confucianism operated in Jia's theologizing as a lived reality. As a figure of the new modern Confucian period of the twentieth century, Jia engaged freely with Classical, Han and neo-Confucian spirituality. In his own formulations of spirituality, Jia's engagement with the Confucian tradition, consciously or unconsciously, exhibited a neo-Confucian active mystical mind. This neo-Confucian way of thinking shared great commonalities with Wang Yangming's approach of self-cultivation. For both Jia and Wang, inner revelation is vital. For Jia, it was the life of Christ; for Wang, it was the innate knowledge of the good. Apart from the emphasis on individual spiritual/moral development, both Jia and Wang also pointed to the inseparable connection between worldly affairs and one's inward spiritual growth. Moreover, Jia's spirituality embodies the thematic teaching of Confucianism—the way of conscientiousness and altruism. He endowed his idea of Christ-human—the goal of sanctification, with a Confucian aspiration, which is in line with the Confucian social program taught in the Great Learning. Following this program, a Christ-human will pursue sagehood as an individual and at the same time fulfil one's

responsibilities for family, nation, and eventually contribute to restoring harmony to the universe. For Jia, personal spiritual development and public participation are inseparable. This feature of his spirituality distinguishes Jia from other fundamentalists such as Nee and Wang Mingdao, who solely focused on individual spiritual maturity but avoided explicit social participation. On the other hand, Jia was distinctive from the modernist theologians such as Zhao Zichen and Wu Yaozong, who regarded Jesus as a moral model and emphasized nation building.

Engaging the Confucian spiritual tradition in an organic way, Jia's spirituality embodied a form of Wang Yangming influenced Chinese Christian spirituality, of which mysticism is the core. It stressed not only restoring the image of Christ in individual believers, but also transforming the society and the universe according to the heavenly order. This type of spirituality situates personal spiritual growth in the mundane world. Individual mystical experience, one's direct encounter with God in the process of the effort of withdrawal from the world, serves as the foundation for going back to the world and performing public duties. For both Jia and Wang Yangming, even though the mystical orientation is more fundamental to the process of self-transformation, it is inseparable from their deep concern for society. Even though Jia did not explicitly acknowledge the influence of Wang Yangming's spirituality in his theologizing, his active mystical mind manifested the profound impact of his neo-Confucian cultural heritage and his implicit effort to reconcile his dual identities—Christian as well as Chinese.

## **Chapter 5**

Even though Jia was not the only one who was under the impact of Confucianism, he was still a special figure compared to theologians such as Zhao Zichen, whose

theology also carried a prominent Confucian influence. To make Jia's uniqueness clear, chapter 5 will examine Jia with two prevalent typologies for understanding Chinese theologians: the fundamentalist-modernist mode as well as the Confucian activism-daoist Pietism mode. Regarding the fundamentalist-modernist mode, the story goes that during the early 20th century, under the influence of the fundamentalist-modernist debate in the West, Chinese theologians were basically grouped into two distinctive camps. Fundamentalists such as Wang Mingdao believed the church should hold to fundamental biblical doctrines and not get so involved in socio-political affairs. Theologians from the modernist camp such as Wu Yaozong tended to support the idea of modernization and more politico-social engagement of the church, and opposed the supernatural content in the Bible and creeds of the church, such as the virgin birth.<sup>47</sup> However, the case of Jia Yuming does not fit well in these two groups and therefore challenges this typology and the historiography behind it. On the one hand, Jia firmly maintained the fundamental biblical doctrines, but on the other hand, he exhibited greater interest in socio-political issues as he participated actively in the Three-Self Patriotic Movement. Through investigating his spirituality, this study tries to argue that due to his active mystical way of thinking, Jia's theological position was coherent with his active socio-political involvement. Therefore, this will challenge the dominant judgement that Jia was a fundamentalist.

According to Ralph Covell Chinese theologians of the early 20th century can be categorized into two groups: Confucian activists such as Zhao Zichen - who

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<sup>47</sup> Chow, *Theosis*, 4.

tended to embody the Confucian moral code *Tianming* (Heavenly Mandate) in their lives and actively got involved in dealing with social concerns, and Daoist pietists like Watchman Nee - whose stance was in accordance with the Daoist idea of *wuwei* (the art of nonaction) and tended to withdraw from worldly engagement, only concentrating on individual spiritual growth.<sup>48</sup> However, this mode is not accurate enough in understanding Jia either. Although the development of individual spiritual life was central in Jia's theological formulation, he also emphasized the significance of manifesting one's spiritual life in his or her daily experiences. Jia's theology exhibited not only a transcendental orientation, an immediate encounter with God, but also a deep sympathy toward earthly life. Thus, this study can sharpen Covell's categories by nuancing the connotations of the Confucian activist camp and pointing out an intersection, as represented by Jia Yuming, of those two camps.

Based on the complications of Jia's spirituality revealed in chapter 4 and the challenges his theology presented to those two paradigms, in chapter 5 we will examine Jia's spirituality in a tripartite framework for contextual theology developed by Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder. To situate Jia's spirituality in the context of China, we will take Alexander Chow's adjusted version of the typology as the guide for our reflections. Based on Chow's adjusted theological constants, this chapter will be organized according to the following theological themes: anthropology and Christology; salvation, causation and eschatology; ecclesiology, sociopolitical reality and religio-philosophical heritage. In this way, this chapter will argue that Jia theologized with his active mystical mind and challenged the three categories of the

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<sup>48</sup> Ralph R. Covell, 'The Gospels of Pietism and Revolution—The Daoist and Confucian Contexts', in *Confucius, the Buddha, and Christ: A History of the Gospel in Chinese*, American Society of Missiology Series; No.11 (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1986), 182–205.

tripartite typology as well. He possessed both characteristics of the type A law-oriented theologians as well as the inclination of the type C history-oriented group. Intriguingly, Jia's spirituality showed the features similar with Eastern Orthodox spirituality in several aspects without being under its influence. Looking at Jia's answers to those theological subjects will be helpful in situating Jia among his contemporaries, revealing the distinctiveness of his spirituality and reflecting on the influence of Wang Yangming's thought in shaping Jia's spirituality. The characteristics of Jia's spirituality will challenge the boundary between type A and type C theology. This study will therefore provide some amendments to Chow's typology and propose spirituality as a new constant in studying Chinese contextual theology.

Finally, this thesis will lead to a conclusion that provides a more nuanced grasp of Jia's spirituality. Displaying Jia as a special figure who challenged all the existing typologies, this thesis will offer another vital dimension for understanding Chinese contextual theology and suggest that this be represented by Venn diagrams instead of more rigid typologies. At the end, this thesis will produce more reflections on the form of contextualization of Chinese Christianity.

## Chapter 1. Education and Formation

### 1.1 Early Education at Missionary Schools

Jia Yuming was born in Shandong province in 1880 to a Christian family of two generations.<sup>49</sup> The earliest clandestine missionary activities of Karl Friedrich August Gützlaff (1803-1851) in Shandong were in 1831. Wang Delong has suggested that it was impossible for Jia's family to be Protestant converts and deduced that Jia's ancestors might have been members of some local secret Roman Catholic group. Jesuits and Franciscans were still secretly active in Shandong after the prohibition of Roman Catholicism.<sup>50</sup> Due to the lack of records for the period, Jia's Christian family background remains unclear. Yet it is reasonable to believe that Jia had not received any formal or systematic Protestant theological education prior to his schooling, but that his Christian family background predisposed them to send him to a missionary-established school.

Jia received his education in missionary-established schools in his youth. These experiences built Jia's connections with Calvinist missionaries and laid the foundation for the Calvinist theological aspect of some of his thought. Jia went to the *Wenhua* middle school at Courtyard of the Happy Way (*Ledao Yuan*). Its founder was the missionary Robert McCheyne Mateer (1853-1921) from the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America North (PCUSA), who graduated from Princeton Theological Seminary in America, which was rooted in Calvinism. After graduation, he continued his study at Tengchow college, established by Robert's

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<sup>49</sup> Jia Yuming, 'Yiwei mushi de jianzheng' [A pastor's testimony], *Lingsheng*, no.2 (1937), 46-51.

<sup>50</sup> There were 5020 converts in Shandong by 1842. Williamson, H. R. *British Baptists in China, 1845-1952*, (London: Carey Kingsgate Press, 1957), 7. See Wang, *Yi 'Xin' Fei 'Yong'*, 25.

elder brother Calvin Wilson Mateer (1836-1908), who graduated from Western Theological Seminary in Allegheny, not far from Princeton Theological Seminary.<sup>51</sup> Jia's Calvinist educational background had noticeable impact on his theologizing, although his theology shows synthetic characteristics and carries theological elements from different theological traditions. But elements such as the doctrine of original sin, idea of union with Christ, his view of salvation in which Christ is the centre, all feature in his theological formation through this Calvinistic influence.

Because of theological and personal connections, the two missionary schools Jia attended had a similar curriculum. Jia not only received basic training in Christian theology, but also studied traditional Chinese education in Confucianism, including Confucian classics, history, philosophy, and literature.<sup>52</sup> This curriculum equipped Jia with both knowledge of Christian theology and Chinese culture, especially Confucianism, which deeply shaped his way of theologizing. Moreover, according to Tengchow college's regulation, students needed a strictly scheduled devotional life as well. Attending worship, practicing morning and evening prayers, and evangelising outside of school were all indispensable parts of their formation.<sup>53</sup> This spiritual atmosphere at school planted a desire for holy living in Jia's heart at a young age. Wang Delong pointed out that the combination of intellectual and experiential approaches to studying at Tengchow college had great impact on the

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<sup>51</sup> B. B Warfield (1851-1921), who was a professor at Princeton Theological Seminary worked at Western Theological Seminary in Allegheny for nine years. The Calvinist background of the seminary had impact on Mateer's theological formation.

<sup>52</sup> Wang Yuande and Liu Yufeng, eds., *Wen hui guan zhi [The Chronicles of Tengchow College]* (Weixian: Guan Wen Xue Xiao, 1913). 52-3. See in Kwok, 'The Christ-Human and Jia Yuming's Doctrine of Sanctification', 145-165.

<sup>53</sup> Wang, *Yi 'Xin' Fei 'Yong'*, 33.

formation of Jia's theology.<sup>54</sup> Apart from individual spiritual growth, the school also emphasized the importance for students to serve the public and to dedicate themselves to the area of religious education. Calvin Wilson Mateer said,

The object of mission schools I take to be the education of native pupils, mentally, morally, and religiously, not only that they may be converted, but that, being converted, they may become effective agents in the hand of God for defending the cause of truth.<sup>55</sup>

Seen from his inheritance of Calvin Wilson Mateer's idea, it is not surprising that Jia valued the importance of religious education and public service in Christian spirituality. This influence may be a major reason why Jia taught Christians to fulfil their public duties and dedicated himself to spiritual education throughout his life.

Another missionary that had great impact on Jia was Watson McMillen Hayes (1857-1944), the third chancellor at Tengchow college from 1896. Hayes was also a Presbyterian missionary from the PCUSA and a student of B. B. Warfield. Tengchow college had to close in 1900 because of the Boxer Rebellion. There were only two graduates in that year, one of whom was Jia. Wang Delong believed that Jia and Hayes must have formed a deep friendship, which laid the foundation for his later participation in the North China Theological Seminary.<sup>56</sup>

When Jia worked at the North China Theological Seminary, many colleagues whom he had close contact with were graduates from Princeton Theological Seminary, such as Albert Dodd, Martin Hopkins, Alexander Macleod, and Zhang

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<sup>54</sup> Wang, *Yi 'Xin' Fei 'Yong'*, 39.

<sup>55</sup> Calvin Wilson Mateer, 'The Relation of Protestant Missions to Education', a paper read before the Shanghai Missionary Conference of 1877. Daniel Webster Fisher, *Calvin Wilson Mateer. Forty-Five Years A Missionary in Shantung, China. A Biography* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1911), 128.

<sup>56</sup> Wang, *Yi 'Xin' Fei 'Yong'*, 34.

Xuegong. Calvinism was prominent at the North China Theological Seminary. It is natural to conclude that Jia was impacted by this dominant theological position in his social circle at this point. In 1929, Jia was awarded a Doctor of Divinity degree from Westminster College in Missouri for his accomplishment of writing *Shen dao xue* [Study of Divinity] (1925), a work based on Augustus Hopkins Strong's (1836-1921) *Outlines of Systematic Theology*.<sup>57</sup> In this book, Jia drew on other Reformed sources such as the Westminster Confession of Faith as well to explain God's divine nature.<sup>58</sup> Jia's *Shen dao xue* shared great similarities with Strong's work in terms of its structure. It was organized according to theological themes such as anthropology, salvation etc. Yet, in comparison to Strong's, Jia's had two more sections about spirituality—'the Work of the Spirit' and 'Spiritual Life'.<sup>59</sup> These two additions manifested Jia's originality and his interest in the subject of spirituality. Jia's concern for experience and the role of the Spirit showed his Holiness Movement influence as well as his Chinese way of thinking. The motif of spirituality is a critical dimension of Chinese theology because the Chinese mind values both the mystical and practical aspects of life. We will have more reflections in this regard later in this thesis.

Jia's translation work was proof of his English proficiency. Though Jia received traditional Chinese education, he was diligent in studying English as well. His ability proved to be helpful in his later writing ministry.<sup>60</sup> In his *Shen dao xue*, he even used English several times to demonstrate the meaning of theological

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<sup>57</sup> Hopkins, M.A. 'The Present Situation in North Kiangsu'. *The Presbyterian Survey*, no. 2 (1929): 89. See in Kwok, 'The Christ-Human and Jia Yuming's Doctrine of Sanctification', 145–65.

<sup>58</sup> Jia Yuming, *Shen Dao Xue [Study of Divinity]*, vol. 2 (Taipei: Gan lan shi ye ji jin chu ban she, 1996), 3.

<sup>59</sup> Jia Yuming, *Shen Dao Xue [Study of Divinity]*, vol. 3 (Taipei: Gan lan shi ye ji jin chu ban she, 1996), 115-331.

<sup>60</sup> Xie, *Jiduren*, 46.

concepts, which showed that he saw English as an easier medium in which to explain and supplement the meaning of theological ideas as expressed in Chinese. This ability in English would enable him to navigate and learn broadly from many source texts of Western theology. During his days at Tengchow college, Jia first gained his Bachelor of Arts and then continued his study in theology. After graduation, Jia was ordained as a Presbyterian pastor and served the Xinzhoufu Presbyterian church in Shandong for twelve years from 1904.

In addition to progressing in Chinese classics and theology, it is noteworthy that Jia had some mystical experiences during his school years too, which seem to have profoundly influenced his spiritual formation. The connotation of ‘mystical experience’ here can be understood as the ‘inner and hidden realization of spirituality through a transforming consciousness of God’s immediate presence.’<sup>61</sup> Mysticism is usually conceived in two paradoxical ways—the language of negations (*via negativa*), and the positive language of presence (*via positiva*). The former goes beyond expressions such as words; the latter usually makes use of various forms of illustration.<sup>62</sup> Jia’s experience reflects the paradox of both negative and positive paths. Jia mentioned that he spent a great deal of time praying when studying in Tengchow college.<sup>63</sup> In particular, his experience of an ineffable encounter with God in silence embodied the negative side of mystical experience: When he was twenty, Jia recounted, that he became aware of all his sins and repented for each one in

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<sup>61</sup> Bernard McGinn, ‘Mystical Consciousness: A Modest Proposal,’ *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality* 8, no. 1 (2008), 44.

<sup>62</sup> Carole Dale Spencer, *Holiness: the Soul of Quakerism: an Historical Analysis of the Theology of Holiness in Quaker Tradition* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007), 30.

<sup>63</sup> Jia Yuming, ‘Daogao de Zhenji’ [The Truth of Prayer]. *Lingguang Bao* 1, no. 5 (1950). See in Wang, *Yi ‘Xin’ Fei ‘Yong’*, 36.

front of the Lord while praying at a riverbank at midnight. Then he felt joy in his heart, 'like a man who has put down his heavy burdens. I felt my heart was purified.'<sup>64</sup>

Another miraculous event happened to Jia when he was at Tengchow college. Jia had a serious heart attack right before he started his theology course. Doctors thought that he could only survive for another two years at most. However, Jia prayed and believed that his disease could be cured anyway. The day after, as he expected, Jia recovered completely and went to school. Also, Jia mentioned that his then-fiancée Zhu Dexin prayed for him too. So 'it is obvious that prayers for others are powerful too!'<sup>65</sup> Jia's testimonies of these dramatic experiences show his positive attitude toward the experiential aspect of spirituality.

This experiential characteristic of Jia's spirituality was especially prominent in his personal devotional time. He emphasized the significance of being in union with God, particularly in prayer.

I remember when I was in college, even though my schoolwork was extremely heavy, I would sit in front of the Lord silently in a private room alone. Sometimes I felt my heart was full of joy and my mind was active, sometimes my tears would flow down my face instantaneously, albeit in silence, my heart and mind were in union with Christ. Prayer is not merely about asking for help from the Lord, but more about opening widely your heart towards the Lord, connecting with Him spiritually.<sup>66</sup>

Jia's early school years at Tengchow were the foundation for his later appreciation of mystical experience. The experiential approach of Tengchow's education and stress on students' spiritual growth shaped Jia's personal devotional

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<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

life profoundly. On top of intellectual pursuits, individual spiritual development played a vital part of students' lives. For example, in the morning, students would study from six o' clock till eight, and then they needed to meet in a large schoolroom for prayers.<sup>67</sup> Moral discipline was also an important aspect of the school's focus.

Then each boy's grievances have to be heard and his quarrels examined into and settled. Bad boys have to be exhorted or reproved, and perhaps punished and every possible means used, and that constantly, to make the boys obedient and truthful and honest. We also strive to train them to habits of industry, perseverance, and self-reliance, without which their education will do them no good.<sup>68</sup>

The spiritual environment of Tengchow college enabled him to form a strong appreciation for individual devotional time as well as practical holiness, which featured in Jia's spirituality.

## 1.2 Active Involvement in Quaker Circles

In 1916, Jia started working as a professor at the Bible Teachers' Training School for Women (*Jinling nuzi shenxueyuan*) in Nanjing. The school was the fruit of the ecumenical movement of twentieth century in China.<sup>69</sup> It was founded by various denominations including the American Friends mission (AFO), American Presbyterian Church South, American Presbyterian Church North, Methodist Episcopal Church, Methodist Episcopal Church South, and Disciples of Christ etc. In 1930, Jia became the dean of the school. Jia formed connections with believers from different church backgrounds because of this multi-denominational environment. His active engagement with various denominations already showed his positive attitude toward ecumenism at this point. To him, the spiritual life of Christ mattered the most,

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<sup>67</sup> Fisher, Daniel Webster. *Calvin Wilson Mateer, Forty-Five Years A Missionary in Shantung, China; A Biography*. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1911),138.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*,140.

<sup>69</sup> Kwok, *Fan Dui He Yi!?*, 64.

while belonging to different denominations was not an issue. His cooperation with people from other backgrounds was not superficial. He not only actively sought cooperation with them in work, but also united with them in personal devotional life.

Of the various denominations he cooperated with, his involvement with Quakerism was quite important. In 1920, Jia together with people such as Gao Shizhu (? -1929), the first Chinese Quaker leader in China, established Lingguang Publishing House (Lingguang bao she). Jia was elected as the chair of the Publishing House's committee.<sup>70</sup> Lingguang Publishing House originated in 1919 from a series of special cross-denominational meetings initiated by P. Frank Price (1864-1954), who was a systematic theology professor at Nanjing Theological Seminary from 1912-1941. Jia preached at the meetings tirelessly for two weeks.<sup>71</sup> The attendees were mainly ministers of various denominations from the Christian Council of Nanjing (*Nanjing Jidujiao Xiejinhui*).<sup>72</sup> There were prayer meetings held at Gao's home, and gatherings at the Quaker church every evening.<sup>73</sup> The original location of the publishing house was at Gao's house at Luosi Bay in Nanjing, near the school. Many school events such as graduation ceremonies, were held at the

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<sup>70</sup> Wang, *Yi 'Xin' Fei 'Yong'*, 56.

<sup>71</sup> 'Benxiao Jiwen' [School Report]. *Shenxue Zhi [Theology Records]* 5, no. 2 (1919). See in Wang, *Yi 'Xin' Fei 'Yong'*, 56.

<sup>72</sup> The council was based at No. 1 Hanjia Alley (the Xinde building today) in Nanjing. At the beginning, it was a prayer group initiated by ministers from various denominations, including the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Methodist Episcopal Church, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the Episcopal Church, American Advent Mission Society, and the Society of Friends. It was formally established in 1920. John Leighton Stuart was its first president. In 1922, American Methodist James Harry Blackstone became its leader. The mission of the council was to promote the idea of 'Christian family,' to carry out social services, attract new members and help churches to develop in China. See in 'Christianity in Nanjing,' *Nanjing di fang zhi [Nanjing Local Chronicles]*, The office of Nanjing Local Chronicles Committee, June 29, 2009,

<sup>73</sup> 'Benxiao', See in Wang, *Yi 'Xin' Fei 'Yong'*, 56.

Quakers meeting place. Jia was always asked to arrange and host these activities due to his close interactions with Gao.<sup>74</sup>

The establishment of the Lingguang Publishing House shows not only the close relationship between Nanjing Theological Seminary and the Quakers in Nanjing, but also Jia's deep involvement with the Quaker circle. The years Jia worked at Lingguang Publishing House had profound impact on the formation of his spirituality. Lingguang Publishing House had a distinctive Quaker background. The Chinese term 'Lingguang' means spiritual light, which reveals its connection with Quaker theology clearly, as the notion of inner light or spiritual light was essential to Quakerism since the seventeenth century.

The Quaker group that was active in Nanjing area was mainly Holiness Quakers, who embraced the prevailing Holiness Movement teachings in America. Holiness Quakerism at the turn of the twentieth century manifested some new features that distinguished itself from the original form of Quaker Spirituality in the seventeenth century. As the Holiness Revivals spread in North America in the mid-nineteenth century, Quakerism embodied its Holiness form in this particular theological context. Through the influences of some traveling ministers such as Joseph John Gurney (1788-1847), Quakers became exposed to literature outside their canon. Some of them gradually formed close connections with other Protestant denominations within the Holiness Movement. The Holiness Movement spirituality appealed to Quakers mainly due to its zealous longing for holy living and perfectionism. Carol Spencer also pointed out that Quakers found a parallel in the

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<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

Holiness Movement because women took public speaking roles in both traditions.<sup>75</sup>

Thus, a strong Wesleyan inclination was exhibited in this generation of Quakers.

They adopted the idea of ‘second blessing’ and considered sanctification a second work of grace separate from justification. The traditional Quaker house gathering became the Friends church meeting; preaching, altar calls, emotional congregational singing and public testimonies replaced plain silent worship.

Moreover, in many Holiness Quaker meetings, Wesleyan theology and the works of the National Holiness Association even outweighed the early Quaker works by George Fox (1624-1691) and Robert Barclay (1648-1690).<sup>76</sup> On the other hand, they downplayed some key notions held by early Quakers in the seventeenth century such as the Inward Light.<sup>77</sup> From 1860 to 1895, nearly two-thirds of Quakers in America gradually accepted Wesleyan Holiness teachings and departed from their Quietist tradition of spirituality.<sup>78</sup> Later, the Holiness wing among Quakers became the Evangelical Friends Church in the twentieth century. Driven by evangelistic enthusiasm, the earliest Quaker mission in Nanjing began in 1890.<sup>79</sup> It was initiated by nurse Esther Butler from a Holiness branch of Quakers in America—the Ohio Yearly Meeting. In 1892, a Quaker church was set up in Nanjing.<sup>80</sup> In 1907, the church had its first Chinese pastor - Gao Shizhu (d. 1929).<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Spencer, *Holiness*, 162-3.

<sup>76</sup> Carole Dale Spencer, ‘Quakers in Theological Context’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Quaker Studies*, ed. Stephen W. Angell and Ben Pink Dandelion (Oxford, 2013).

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> Spencer, *Holiness*, 163.

<sup>79</sup> The earliest Quaker mission in China began in 1870s, established by Irish Friends Robert and Mary Jane Davidson in Chongqing, who were sent by the Friends Foreign Missionary Association (FFMA).

<sup>80</sup> John Ormerod Greenwood. *Quaker Encounters*, Vol. 3, (York: William Sessions, 1978), 135. In 1896, Quakers founded a girls’ boarding school and a hospital. Collaborating with Chinese people, later the Quaker mission work was extended to Luhu in Jiangsu province. Moreover, in 1936, an East China Provisional Annual Meeting was established in Nanjing.

<sup>81</sup> Li Ji’an, Jia Yuming, Jiao Weizhen, ‘Dao Gao Shizhu mushi’ [A eulogy for Gao Shizhu Minister], *Lingguang bao* 8, no.3, 52-55.

Holiness Quakers in America in the twentieth century tried to emphasize the absolute authority of scripture and downplayed the notion of the Light within or the Inward Light of Christ. However, Lingguang Publishing House adopted the defining early Quaker idea of spiritual light in their name. Not only did this distinguish them from the Holiness Quakers in America to some extent, but also marked their Quaker identity as well as inheritance of the early Quaker spirituality.

Many of Jia's most important works were published through the press, such as *Xin bian huo* [New Apologetics] and *Shen dao xue* [Study of Divinity] in 1925, as well as *Wushi'er lingcheng jiangti* [Fifty-two Topics concerning the Spiritual Life] and *Xuan dao fa* [Homiletics] in 1930. Also, Jia's articles were often published in the Lingguang newspaper (*Lingguang bao*), which was the main publication of the Lingguang Publishing House. Jia was also deeply involved in most of the Publishing House's devotional meetings. They had gatherings at the Quakers' chapel every evening.<sup>82</sup> Frequent cooperation and interaction deepened Jia's friendship with the Nanjing Quaker circle. Gao Shizu even became Jia's spiritual mentor. In Jia's eulogy for Gao, Jia expressed his high respect for Gao and his spiritual power, knowledge and experience, before acknowledging Gao's deep impact on him:

My respected pastor Gao, indeed, you are the pillar of the Society of Friends and Lingguang publishing House, the spiritual father of the Bible Teachers' Training School for Women, an exemplary pastor in Nanjing, a star among all churches in China, a great minister of our age. The soundness of your spiritual life, the nobleness of your spiritual character, the greatness of your spiritual power, the wideness of your spiritual knowledge, the abundance of your spiritual intelligence, the deepness of your spiritual experience, all made me admire [you].... Our fellowship in the Lord lasted for eighteen years. My life and work benefited greatly from your faithful teaching and

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<sup>82</sup> 'Benxiao' See in Wang, *Yi 'Xin' Fei 'Yong'*, 56.

timely prayer..... Our time on earth is so short and precious, how can I follow your steps and continue your ministry, until the day when I finish the race in this world.<sup>83</sup>

It is notable that Jia agreed with and inherited Gao's thought to a large extent, which also exhibited his acceptance of Quaker spirituality. Apart from Gao, Jia also formed a deep friendship with Li Ji'an (1894-1969), who later became the leader of the Quakers in China after the death of Gao. Like Jia, Li was also a regular attendee to the Quaker devotional meetings held at Gao's home. He was Jia's student at North China Theological Seminary as well. In addition, Robert McCheyne Mateer, Calvin Wilson Mateer, Hunter Corbett, and Watson Hayes, as figures who theologically had impact on Jia at the early stage of his life, were all originally from Pennsylvania, where Quakerism had a long history and profoundly shaped its culture. This indirect cultural influence might be another reason why Jia was in favour of Quaker spirituality.

Jia's deep involvement with Quaker circles indicates that friendship and spiritual commonalities mattered more than strict denominational affiliation to him. Quakers did not have a clear boundary with other Protestant denominations either. Trans-denominational cooperation was quite common at that time. For example, the North China Theological Seminary (*Huabei shen xue yuan*), where Jia was the dean, had a Calvinist background and was founded by Hayes.<sup>84</sup> Yet, the seminary accepted students from a wide range of denominations. Moreover, Jia's friend Li Ji'an,

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<sup>83</sup> Li, Jia, Jiao, 'Dao,'52-55.

<sup>84</sup> Before establishing the North China Theological Seminary, Hayes was the president of Tengchow college, where Jia received his theological education.

as a graduate of this seminary, later became the second Chinese Quaker leader. Jia believed, 'there were neither denominations, nor newness and oldness either. The only thing that matters is whether there is life [in a church] and whether [a church] is spiritual.'<sup>85</sup> Therefore, Jia's close relationship with Quaker circles was not unusual. In general, in the early twentieth century, Holiness teachings were enjoyed across any perceived denominational boundaries.

Seen from both his working experiences and personal connections, Quaker spirituality should be considered as one of Jia's most important Western theological influences. In addition to Quaker spirituality, Lingguang publishing House was also very likely the place where Jia came across other Western theological resources. When Jia was working at Lingguang publishing House, his colleague Cheng Jigui (1882-1940), who was also a regular attendee of Lingguang publishing House's fellowship, was working on translating the *Scofield Reference Bible* into Chinese.<sup>86</sup> Cheng had finished the Scofield Bible correspondence course at the Moody Bible Institute in America. Cheng's work of translation later became the major transmission channel for Chinese Christians to learn the American Holiness Movement. Cheng made great contribution to the spreading of Holiness theology. It is very likely that through the *Scofield Reference Bible* and his

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<sup>85</sup> Jia Yuming, *Wanquan Jiufa [Full Salvation]* (Hangzhou: Zhejiang Sheng Jidujiao Xiehui, 1949), 40.

<sup>86</sup> Wang, *Yi 'Xin' Fei 'Yong'*, 202.

close relationship with Cheng, Jia encountered tripartite anthropology and learned about Dispensationalism, particularly Premillennialism.<sup>87</sup>

Apart from his writing ministry, Jia also devoted himself diligently to building theological education in China. In 1936, together with his colleagues Liao Enrong and Bi Yongqin, he left the Bible Teachers' Training School for Women and established the China Christian School of Spirituality (*Zhongguo Jidujiao Lingxiu xueyuan*) at Houzai Alley in Nanjing. However, in 1937, due to the Japanese occupation of Nanjing, they had to close the school. Jia left Nanjing and moved to Chengdu in Sichuan Province. Yet, his commitment to spiritual education remained unshakable regardless of this turbulent environment. He reestablished the school in 1939 with the support of many churches in Chengdu area at *Lingyan* Mountain in *Guan* county (today's *Dujiangyan*).<sup>88</sup> In 1940, the school moved to Chongqing. In 1945, when the Sino-Japanese war came to an end, Jia decided to go back to Nanjing and restore the school of spirituality. In 1947, a believer, Mrs Zheng, generously donated two houses for the school buildings.<sup>89</sup> Jia also established a church there. The name that Jia chose for the church reflected his favor for the Quaker notion again — *Lingguang* church (*Lingguang tang*), which means spiritual light church.

### 1.3 A Special Figure in the Fundamentalist and Modernist Debate in China

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<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 204.

<sup>88</sup> Xie, *Jiduren*, 57.

<sup>89</sup> In 1949, the school was relocated to Shanghai. It remained open until 1956.

Apart from theological education, Jia was also concerned with modernist theology's prevailing influence around the world. In 1948, Jia was invited to attend the first delegated conference of the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC) in Amsterdam in the Netherlands. The conference was founded and led by the American Bible Presbyterian minister Carl McIntire (1906-2002). The ICCC was also considered by their participants as the twentieth century's reformation movement. The main purpose of the conference was to confront and criticize the modernist theological position. According to McIntire, they believed that there were two theological camps, the modernist and the fundamentalist. The former's ultimate goal existed in building a world church, whereas the latter focused on preparing for a personal as well as visible return of Christ.<sup>90</sup> The ICCC held to a fundamentalist position and founded councils of Christian churches all around the world to address issues such as modernism, modernist forms of ecumenism and opposition to biblical inerrancy and the full truthfulness of the Bible.<sup>91</sup> Jia was even elected as one of their vice presidents at the conference. His deep involvement showed his agreement with the ICCC's fundamentalist principles. This was also in line with his opposition to the modernist theological stance in the context of China.

During the early twentieth century in China, theologians such as Jia Yuming and Wang Mingdao (1900-1991) were seriously concerned about the introduction of Western liberal theology in China, which was in favor of

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<sup>90</sup> Carl McIntire, 'History of the ICCC,' *History of the ICCC* (blog), n.d., <https://www.iccc.org.sg>. Accessed 25.05.2023.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

modernity and rejected all the supernatural elements in the Bible. Theologians like Jia and Wang believed that Christians should adhere to certain fundamental biblical truths such as biblical inerrancy, the virgin birth and Jesus's physical resurrection. Wang was a lay pastor of the independent Christian Tabernacle in Beijing. His opposition to the Western liberal theology led to his sharp criticism of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) in the 1950s, which was mainly led and supported by figures who took more liberal theological stances. Wang Mingdao, based on the fundamentalist-modernist conflict in the context of China, categorized Chinese theologians of the early twentieth century into two groups—fundamentalists, who advocated for fundamental biblical doctrines and did not get so involved in socio-political affairs, and modernists, who were more interested in social affairs and nation building but rejected the supernatural dimension of the Bible.<sup>92</sup> Jia has been widely considered a fundamentalist. However, even though Jia regarded the Bible as the absolute authority and held a reserved attitude towards the contemporary modern culture like other so-called fundamentalist contemporaries such as Wang Mingdao, Jia does not fit well in either of Wang's two categories. On the one hand, Jia acknowledged the absolute authority of the Bible and stressed the importance of biblical knowledge, yet he emphasized the importance of social participation for Christians. Jia's understanding of the Christian life bridged the separation between socio-political and spiritual aspects of

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<sup>92</sup> Wang Mingdao, 'We, Because of Faith,' in *Documents of the Three-Self Movement: Source Materials for the Study of the Protestant Church in Communist China*, ed. Wallace C. Merwin and Francis P. Jones (National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Division of Foreign Missions. Far Eastern Office, 1963), 100.

Christian living in Wang Mingdao's fundamentalist stance. Also, to Jia, holding to the biblical truth serves as the foundation for Christian worldly involvement. Hence, the dimension of individual spiritual growth does not conflict but is inseparable from that of social participation.

Different from Wang Mingdao, Jia's adherence to biblical inerrancy did not lead him to a cynical and pessimistic attitude toward the world. Rather, it went hand in hand with his deep concern for the larger world and obligation to carry out the Christian's social responsibilities in society. According to Jia, all Christians are responsible for reforming the society and restoring godly order to the world. Serving others sacrificially and participating in nation-building are aspects of living out the authentic Christian life. Christian spirituality goes beyond the private realm. Individual salvation is the foundation for bringing human society toward a heavenly direction. 'To family, society, and the world, which is the so-called world of the life, the citizenship of the Kingdom of Heaven (*tian guo*) is not separated, it is to be fulfilled in this world.'<sup>93</sup> Jia also pointed out the influential role the Church could play in contributing to social reform. 'Seen from the phenomena of different countries in the world today, the contribution that Christianity made to the society would be known.'<sup>94</sup>

However, even though Jia like Wu Yaozong emphasized the importance of social participation and political loyalty to the country, his stress on an abundant Christian spiritual life differentiated him from modernists too. Jia did not forsake his belief in fundamental doctrines such

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<sup>93</sup> Jia Yuming, *Shen dao xue [Study of Divinity]*, vol.3 (Taipei: Gan lan shi ye ji jin chu ban she, 1996-97), 337-8.

<sup>94</sup> Jia, *Shen dao xue [Study of Divinity]*, vol.4 (Taipei: Gan lan shi ye ji jin chu ban she, 1996-97), 166-7.

as the virgin birth. He always highlighted that the reason behind Christian moral deeds was to exhibit Christ's life in believers' daily experiences and self-transformation. Thus, Jia did not fit well in either fundamentalist or modernist groups defined by Wang Mingdao. The complexity of Jia's spirituality reflected the disadvantage of Wang Mingdao's fundamentalist-modernist binary categorization. It was due to his organic anthropology, biogenerative way of thinking and the active mystical mind that Jia's spirituality challenged Wang Mingdao's classification. We will have more in-depth discussion regarding these characteristics of Jia's theology in chapter 3 and 4. Seen from Jia's case, it is necessary to rethink the dichotomous classification and provide a more nuanced understanding of Jia—a point we will return to in greater depth in chapter 5.

#### **1.4 Western Theological Resources**

So far, we have briefly discussed Jia's personal experiences. This historical review of Jia's life is for clarifying the sources of his Western theological resources. The difficulties in tracing Jia's Western theological influences consists in the fact that Jia did not necessarily explicitly state the origins of his theological ideas in his writings. Hence, what we can do here is to tease out the evidence for his connections with certain Western theological traditions in his life first. Then, based on the historical records, we can compare Jia's thought with the sources. In this way, we can understand the formation of Jia's spirituality from his education as well as life experience.

In his early years, he formed a wide range of connections with people from various theological backgrounds, such as the American Presbyterian church, both North and South, the Quakers and the Baptists. Even though Jia was under the influence of several Western theological traditions, some of them were manifested much more prominently in his theologizing. In terms of his Western theological influence, Jia is often regarded as either a fundamentalist or a Presbyterian pastor. However, it would be inaccurate to describe Jia's theological formation with either of those labels. Jia was 'Presbyterian' only in the sense that he received education in the Presbyterian missionary school and later was ordained as a Presbyterian pastor and participated in the Presbyterian mission. Because of the influential figures in his school years such as Hayes and his indirect connection with the Calvinist theological tradition of Princeton theological seminary, Jia's theology did carry some Calvinist elements, such as the emphasis on original sin. Yet, the impact of Calvinism did not count as much as that of the Wesleyan Perfectionism, the American Holiness Movement, Quakerism and Dispensationalism. Also, given Jia's active involvement in the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, his deep concern for spiritual education and his support for the leadership of modernist theologians, it would be overly simplified to call him a fundamentalist according to Wang Mingdao's categorisation as well.

Specifically, Jia's belief in entire sanctification showed his inheritance from Wesley's Christian perfection. His deep involvement with the Quaker circle and personal friendship with the Quaker pastor Gao Shizhu explained

the Quaker features in his spirituality, such as the emphasis on the mystical inner revelation in individual spiritual growth. Jia's connection with the Quakers gave him access to American Holiness theology as well.<sup>95</sup> Jia's pursuit for a 'more abundant life' and 'full salvation' shared great similarities with the American Holiness Movement theologies such as Phoebe Palmer's (1807-1874) Altar theology, and William E. Boardman's (1810-1886) idea of 'higher Christian life'. His stress on the experience of spiritual baptism and the importance of human agency in sanctification had some commonalities with the teaching of Oberlin theology, developed by Asa Mahan (1799-1889) and Charles Finney (1792-1875).<sup>96</sup> Jia's loose engagement with different theological traditions and his life-long dedication to the motif of life showed that his interest did not lie in constructing a logically coherent theology, even though he was the first Chinese theologian who wrote books on systematic theology. Rather, his focus was encouraging and developing instructions on Christian spiritual development.

To Jia, knowledge should not be separate from action. Hence, theology is only meaningful when it can lead to spiritual growth. The way of Jia's theologizing showed the most significant feature of Chinese religio-philosophical thinking: the deep concern for a practical method of self-cultivation and the relative absence of concern for philosophical

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<sup>95</sup> Andrew Song suggested that Jia was under the influence of Keswick convention as well. His source of Keswick theology could mainly be through his reading and translating of English works. See in Song, 'Jia Yuming (1880–1964)—A Chinese Keswick Theologian', 83.

<sup>96</sup> Kwok, 'Jiu'en Yu Shengming', 55–93.

methodology.<sup>97</sup> To a Chinese mind, knowledge is only valuable if it can contribute to the realization of humane character or sagehood. Feng Youlan (1895-1990) pointed out this practical and anthropocentric feature of Chinese philosophy,

Because Chinese philosophers pay special attention to the way of becoming 'sagely within,' their methods of self-cultivation (*xiuyang*), that is the so-called 'method of study' (*wenxue*) are very detailed and complete. Although these may not be called philosophy in Western culture, China truly has a contribution to make in this respect.<sup>98</sup>

This is especially true in Confucianism. Due to the central concern of individual spiritual/moral maturity or human perfection, Confucian teachings developed mainly revolving around the theme of self-cultivation. Instructions for moral living were essential in Chinese religio-philosophical thinking. Jia's approach of theologizing is in line with this trajectory. Regarding 'life' as the centre in his theology, Jia valued the practical dimension of Christian faith the most. Theological discussions are only meaningful if they can build up a believers' spiritual life. To Jia, 'Christianity is life.'<sup>99</sup>

A true evangelist must be a Christ-human, who has abundant life and is dedicated to preaching the Word. What he preaches is not simply doctrines. There is the power of life flowing from his spiritual life. He exhibits vividly his experience in the spiritual course in front of people. If an evangelist does not have a mature spiritual life and deep spiritual experience, and only preaches by words not by his life, he cannot be a true evangelist. True preaching is preaching life. Those who do not have spiritual life cannot preach life.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Julia Ching, 'What Is Confucian Spirituality?' in *Confucian Spirituality*, ed. Tu Weiming and Mary Evelyn Tucker (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company), 81.

<sup>98</sup> Feng Youlan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, trans. Derk Bodde (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), 10.

<sup>99</sup> Jia 'Jiaohui.'

<sup>100</sup> Jia Yuming, *Wushi'er lingcheng jiangti* [Fifty-two Topics concerning the Spiritual Life] (Hongkong: The Bell man House Publishers, 1986),5.

For Jia, having true knowledge and living a holy life are two sides of the same coin. Jia's synthesizing of theological elements from several traditions, emphasis on spiritual life, and tolerance of theological divergences with modernist theologians all showed his Confucian praxis-oriented mind. In the following chapter, we will examine Jia's major Western theological resources to see how Jia employed these Western theological resources to formulate his own spirituality.

## **Chapter 2 Employment of Western Theological Resources**

Through our historical investigation in the last chapter, from his personal educational background, life experiences and engagements with multiple theological traditions, we identified a few theological traditions that constituted Jia's main theological resources: Wesleyan Perfectionism, American Holiness Movement, Quakerism and Dispensationalism. In this chapter, we will focus on Jia's 'home tradition' in his process of performing comparative theology—his rootedness within Christianity as he formulated his theology based on the Western theological perspective. Through comparing Jia's thought with each of those theological traditions, we will reveal Jia's inheritance as well as his departure from it. Jia's inheritance manifests his loyalty and commitment to his Christian identity. His adaption of it reflected the underlying encounter and interaction between his 'home tradition' Christianity and his 'other faith tradition'—neo-Confucian active mystical mind. The way Jia employed his Western theological elements and formulated his spirituality manifested in drawing from a neo-Confucian way of thinking. Whether it was intentional or not, the neo-Confucian mindset served as the substrata of Jia's theologizing.

### **2.1 Wesleyan Perfectionism**

Practical holiness featured prominently in Jia's view of spirituality. Based on our historical survey, Jia's theological source can be traced back to the Holiness Movement in mid-nineteenth century America. Jia's three-stage view of sanctification, emphasis on the dramatic experience of spiritual baptism and perfectionist position were all enjoyed broadly within the American Holiness Movement. This movement had deep roots in the Wesleyan idea of 'entire sanctification.' The stress on the ethical and practical dimension of faith is noticeable

in the thought of John Wesley (1703-1791), the father of Methodism. For Wesley, the highest expression of authentic Christian faith is the practical holiness of individual Christians and the church. Doctrinal and propositional definitions come second.<sup>101</sup> The concern for an ethical faith is central in the Wesleyan tradition. Jia's Wesleyan influence is explicit in terms of Christian perfection in this life. Jia stressed that justification and sanctification are both crucial. Justification concerns one's nominal position in front of God; God considers us innocent and adopts us as legitimate children. Sanctification is about the reality or realization of that legal status in one's experience.

As Mr. Wesley has said, 'Genuine Christians must not sin. First, they do not commit habitual sins; secondly, they do not commit deliberate sins; thirdly, they do not commit sins that are caused by the weakness of the flesh. It is clearly stated in the Bible that: 'Those who have been born of God do not sin, because God's seed abides in them; they cannot sin, because they have been born of God.' (1 John 3:9).' Moreover, genuine Christians are not only justified but also sanctified gradually. This sanctified state is attainable in this life.' I have never seen a true Christian who has the life of Christ but does not make any progress day by day in the salvation brought about by Christ until the holy and perfect state.<sup>102</sup>

Jia agreed with Wesley that believers have freedom from deliberate sinning and hence a sinless state is achievable in this life. Although Jia gave Wesley credit for his view of Christian perfection, he departed from Wesley's position in his understanding of entire sanctification. According to Wesley, the Holy Spirit played a vital role as God's agent in our salvation. The Spirit calls humans to respond to God's prevenient grace, repent, and have faith. Yet, humans can respond to God's

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<sup>101</sup> Melvin Easterday Dieter et al., *Five Views on Sanctification* (Grand Rapids, Mich: The Zondervan Corporation, 1987), 12.

<sup>102</sup> Jia, *Wushi'er lingcheng jiangti*, 59-60.

prevenient grace obediently or disobediently. Wesley conjoined the Calvinist doctrine of the individual's total depravity and full dependence on divine grace with the Arminian doctrine of human freedom.<sup>103</sup> Through the work of the Spirit, sinners who respond to God's grace positively can regenerate as new-born in Christ. The moment of regeneration marks the beginning of the journey of sanctification, in which the life of Christ starts forming in believers. The Spirit enables them to realize pure love for God, holiness, and restores the divine image of God to them.<sup>104</sup> However, due to corrupted human nature, Wesley highlighted the presence of two contradicting forces in believers. It is a continuing tendency of rebellion, a systemic illness and weakened will.<sup>105</sup> 'Indeed this grand point, that there are two contrary principles in believers—nature and grace, the flesh and the Spirit—runs through all the Epistles of St. Paul, yea through all the holy Scriptures.'<sup>106</sup> Similar to Wesley, Jia pointed out the human spiritual dilemma after regeneration as well: 'regeneration is when God through the work of the Holy Spirit bestows the new life of Jesus on the human heart. It is the beginning of the Christian's new life and separate from sanctification'.<sup>107</sup> Jia believed that after regeneration, that which impedes the process of spiritual growth is the law of sin. As Jia described, the law of sin (*zui lü*) is in nature an abnormal state of the natural law of the human being, and functions as the engine of sin.<sup>108</sup> That is to say, regenerated believers usually find themselves at a spiritual impasse caused by the co-existence of two different streams of life: one

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<sup>103</sup> Dieter, *Five Views on Sanctification*, 15.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 16-7.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>106</sup> John Wesley, 'On Sin in Believers,' in *The Work of John Wesley*, ed. Thomas Jackson, 14 vols. (London: Wesley Conference Office, 1872; reprint, Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 1978), 5: 146-47. *Ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> Jia, *Shen dao xue* vol.3., 167.

<sup>108</sup> Jia, *Wanquan Jiufa*, 70.

from the first Adam, the other from Jesus Christ, the second Adam.<sup>109</sup> The life derived from Christ can reveal the original state of humans that exhibits the image of God, whereas the one governed by the law of sin tends to veil the truth of spiritual life. Believers are being pulled by two opposing forces and in a constant battle with their old sinful nature. Both Wesley and Jia recognised the plight. Yet it is where Jia departed from Wesley's thinking that is noteworthy. For Wesley, even though he held the doctrine of total depravity and taught that the possibility of sinning would persist, he believed that moment-by-moment victory over sin is possible through the life of Christ implanted in believers by the Spirit. Believers would not be free from the possibility of deliberate sinning in this life, yet they could be delivered from the necessity of wilful transgression of God's will.<sup>110</sup> Therefore, entire sanctification is a remedy for human sinfulness, a deliverance from conflict to a peaceful heart that is fully devoted to love for God and others. Moment-by-moment obedience to God still implies the persistence of human sinfulness. The volitional power that was stained by sin at the fall would never be permanently cleansed. Since humans are creatures of free will, they could always respond to God's grace disobediently. Hence, in Wesley's thinking, entire sanctification does not mean that the sinful nature of humankind is eradicated, and they will no longer fall again. Melvin Dieter is insightful in pointing out that the believer's entirely sanctified heart that is fully committed to the pure love for God and others is not a fixed superior state. Rather, it is always a new stage, a new arena of ethical response to divine will.<sup>111</sup> That is why to Wesley, even though every regenerated believer has the promise to triumph over sin by the Spirit,

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<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>110</sup> Dieter, *Five Views on Sanctification*, 14.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*

they can also drift away from the holiness won by Christ. Therefore, believers should make effort continually every day.

There is no perfection of degrees, as it is termed; none which does not admit of a continual increase. So that how much soever any man has attained, or in how high a degree soever he is perfect, he hath still need to 'grow in grace', and daily adventure in the knowledge and love of God his Saviour.<sup>112</sup>

In Wesley's thought, sanctification is a life-long journey and humans work as God's co-operators to live out the holiness. Wesley's theologizing expressed his zeal for ethical living. Because of maintaining the doctrine of total depravity, Wesley's entire sanctification is embodied as a series of victories over rebellious desires with the concern for falling backwards. The unfixable sinful human nature and the heavy synergistic inclination in terms of salvation make his goal of Christian perfection seem insecure. Jia was more radical in his understanding of entire sanctification.

Like Wesley, Jia maintained the doctrine of original sin and believed Christ alone is the path to salvation. Regarding the relationship between God's sovereignty and human freedom, Jia was very vague and did not mind the doctrinal problem. To him, salvation is solely offered graciously by God, and cannot be found anywhere else. Yet, human response to God's grace is vitally important as well. 'Those who perished, [did so] all because they themselves rebelled and disbelieved, willing to get lost and die. God's gracious calling is genuine.'<sup>113</sup> Jia addressed the tension between Calvinism and Arminianism as well,

Those who hold the doctrine of predestination are called Calvinists, ....., those who believe the position of human freedom are called Arminians. ....Regarding these two positions, even though we

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<sup>112</sup> Sermon, 'Christian Perfection,' *Works* 6:5-6. *Ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> Jia, *Shen dao xue* vol.3., 141.

cannot explain thoroughly, it would be good if it is possible to combine these two and accept both at the same time.<sup>114</sup>

Regarding the relationship of God's sovereignty and human freedom in conversion, Jia's position was very unclear. However, in terms of sanctification, Jia fully affirmed the significance of human agency.

Believers' advancement in sanctification does not rely on their own passive suppression of the old self. It is facilitated by their proactive cultivation..... A person's mind and spirit are transformed unexpectedly in the process of this cultivation.<sup>115</sup>

Cooperating with the work of the Spirit, human effort was the other key factor for individuals to attain entire sanctification. It was where Jia deviated from Wesley's position that is intriguing. For Wesley, even though believers react to God's grace obediently and strive for holiness moment by moment, their sinful nature would not change. The life of Christ that loves God and others formed in believers would always be under the threat of the dormant fallen nature. The potential of sinning would persist. Whereas, for Jia, through consecrating oneself to the will of God continually, as the development of the spiritual life, the whole person would be transformed. As the effects of sin may cast a shadow on the whole person, the light of spiritual life can penetrate each part of the person as well. Eventually, one can be fully transformed into the state in which 'Christ is in me, me in Christ.' Jia called a person manifesting the truth of human spiritual life a genuine/authentic human (*zhen ren*), and pointed out that the *zhen ren* was Jesus Christ.<sup>116</sup> In other words, the ultimate goal of sanctification for believers is to eradicate their sinful nature in this life - in Jia's terms, 'to obliterate the sinful body' (*mie zui shen*).

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<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 132-3.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 70-1.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

...human sin is due to the law of sin; the trigger of the law of sin is the sinful body, which also can be called the old self or self...Since we are already identified with the Lord's death and crucified on the cross with the Lord, 'so that the body of sin might be destroyed' (Romans 6:6), this means that the action of self has disappeared.<sup>117</sup>

Believers should be able to overcome sin and present humanity's original perfect state of holiness.<sup>118</sup> The term 'sinful body' (*zui shen*) here should not be understood as the carnal part of humanity. In Jia's writing it refers to the whole person, including the spirit, soul and body. Specifically, Jia called the sinful body the 'old person' (*jiu ren*), which equalled the self.<sup>119</sup> Therefore, demolishing the sinful body as the last stage of the process of sanctification means completely destroying the old sinful self as well as the law of sin.<sup>120</sup> Jia also described this phase of sanctification as the salvation of the body (*ti de jiu*), which means the transformation of the whole person, spirit, soul and body.<sup>121</sup> Jia is radical in that for him living as a Christ-human, or the state of entire sanctification, is attainable in this life.<sup>122</sup> We will look into the anthropological foundation for this entire transformation in the next chapter when we analyse Jia's holistic anthropology. It was because of Jia's neo-Confucian organic understanding of the human condition, and his emphasis on the connectivity rather

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<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 116-7.

<sup>122</sup> His optimistic vision is fundamentally different, however, to the modernists' perfectionist stance, such as the ideas of Wu Leichuan (1870-1944) on building the Kingdom of God in this world. For Jia, the foundation of ethical living is the life of Christ. The mystical inner revelation that individuals receive directly from God is critical in their spiritual growth and self-transformation. Modernists like Wu did not accept the supernatural aspect of Christianity or the idea of fallen human nature in need of Christ's restoring power. For example, Wu believed that through imitating the moral model of Mozi, whose personality was as loving and righteous as Jesus, people can transform their minds and reform the society. See in Wu Leichuan, *Modi yu Yesu [Jesus and Mozi]*, Zeng Qingbao ed. (Xinbei, Ganlan Publisher, 2015), xiii-lxvi. Jia's trajectory of perfectionism must be distinguished from a modernist interpretation.

than division among the three components of a human, that entire sanctification was possible for him. Rather than Wesley's understanding of Christian perfection as a stage, the entirely sanctified state that Jia pursued is a fixed status. This state of perfection is called a Christ-human, which is the ultimate goal of Jia's sanctification. A Christ-human is a state in which one's reason, desire and character has been fully transformed into the likeness of Christ. For a Christ-human, deliberate sinning would never happen as he or she has the mind of Christ. Moreover, even the possibility of sinning would be removed as well because a Christ-human has taken on divine qualities and has realized the state in which 'to live is Christ'. For Wesley, Christian perfection means the life of Christ keeps winning over believers' sinful nature, and believers can always live out the divine qualities in their lives. The spiritual dilemma, the tension caused by the original sinful nature and the new spiritual life bestowed by the Spirit, would persist. Jia's view was more radical. To him, entire sanctification means the full transformation of the person, whose sinful nature, the life stream that he or she inherited from the first Adam, is completely gone. Human nature is changed essentially. A Christ-human is still a human, but Christized and blended with divine life, and therefore manifests the likeness of Christ in his or her life. Since Wesley's entire sanctification is achieved through moment-by-moment perfection, believers need to stay alert and guard their thoughts to be obedient to the divine will all the time. Hence, Wesley's entire sanctification is a life-long journey in the sense that believers need to watch out and maintain their perfect state at every moment. Wesley described it as growing in 'daily adventures' every day. For Jia, the journey of spiritual maturity is a continual one as well. However, rather than a matter of maintaining, it is a matter of transforming or evolving. Even though the tendency of

sinning still exists and contradicts the divine will after regeneration, the person's mind would be renewed day by day through the effort of surrendering oneself to God. Eventually, at the stage of Christ-human, one's mind would be spiritualised and become an outgrowth of the divine will. Jia expressed his inheritance from Wesley's Christian perfection, however, his theological formulation of entire sanctification departed from the Wesleyan view greatly and carried heavy neo-Confucian characteristics of self-transformation. We will discuss more about Jia's neo-Confucian influence in the following chapters.

## **2.2 The American Holiness Movement**

Apart from demonstrating sanctification as a process, Jia also emphasized it as an instantaneous crisis. In this regard, Jia's thought showed more American Holiness Movement influence. Wesley's pursuit for Christian ethical living, his stress on the subjective meaning of Christ's atonement and idea of Christian perfection all impacted the American Holiness Movement. They were not only promoted within the Methodist circles but also enjoyed popularity beyond it. Advocates among the Holiness Movement became more interested in the experience of 'second blessing' or 'second conversion' as a definitive moment that marks a higher level of Christian life. This crisis is often called the experience of the baptism of the Spirit. The promotion of dramatic spiritual experience and the emphasis on human agency in sanctification were not exclusive to the Methodist circles but accepted broadly. Asa Mahan and Charles Finney, representatives of the Oberlin theology, also attached great importance to the experience of 'second conversion', that of the baptism of the Spirit. According to Mahan, as a definitive moment it is distinct from conversion and signifies a higher level of spiritual maturity, 'the baptism of the Holy Ghost, .....to be

sought and received by faith in God's word of promise, on the part of the believer, *after* he has believed.....<sup>123</sup> Finney, who left Calvinism and embraced a Pelagian position, advocated for the possibility of attaining a higher Christian life with a 'second spiritual crisis' as well. For him, one only becomes sinful by committing sins. He abandoned the doctrine of original sin and believed that the 'fallen nature' does not exist.<sup>124</sup> In conversion, the Holy Spirit takes the initial action and quickens one's spirit. Subsequently, in the process of sanctification, the Spirit only intervenes in one's spiritual growth as a persuasive power.<sup>125</sup> It is individual's choice to obey God's law and practice holiness. For Finney, individuals have sufficient ability to make moral choice and live out holiness in their lives.

Under the influence of Finney's Oberlin theology and Wesleyan Perfectionism, William E. Boardman (1810-1886) greatly popularized the idea of 'full salvation' in the 1860s through his work *The Higher Christian Life*. He explains:

The first and great fact is that of full salvation through full trust in Jesus. This fact needs no proof. It is at once the provision and the demand of the gospel, and is of course the privilege and duty of all.....The apostles and primitive Christians generally enjoyed it from the day of Pentecost onward.<sup>126</sup>

In his work, Boardman abandoned sophisticated theological argument and highlighted the experiential dimension of Christian faith with plain language. In 1875, Hannah Whitall Smith (1832-1911) published *The Christian's Secret to the Happy Life*, which enjoyed great success. Smith in her work taught that in the process of sanctification, the power of sin could be removed and the soul would find peace and

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<sup>123</sup> Asa Mahan, *The Baptism of the Holy Ghost* (New York: W. C. Palmer, Jr., 1870), 13. See in Kwok 'Jiu'en Yu Shengming', 55–93.

<sup>124</sup> Keith J. Hardman, *Charles Grandison Finney, 1792-1875* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1987), 332.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, 355.

<sup>126</sup> William Edwin Boardman, *The Higher Christian Life* (New York: Sheldon & Co, 1859), 45.

a higher Christian life, and happiness is attainable in this life.<sup>127</sup> Both Boardman and Smith stressed the significance of human effort in spiritual development and dramatic spiritual experience. Yet they both showed hesitation for the possibility of entire sanctification in this life. Boardman and Smith's teaching on a higher Christian life contributed greatly to the spreading of holiness thought and later significantly impacted the Keswick movement in England.

Much more dramatic and passionate than Boardman and Smith's teaching, in the Methodist circle, Phoebe Palmer (1807-1874), a female lay Methodist leader, developed her 'altar theology' based on Wesley's teaching on Christian perfection and greatly popularised practical holiness. She emphasized the idea of entire consecration, faith and confession. According to Palmer, based on Scripture, Christ was the sacrifice for our sins and the altar upon which we should fully offer ourselves in consecration to God. She believed that despite the existence of our habit of sinning and self-will, the state of entire sanctification, the divine promise of fullness of spiritual life could be attained by every believer through the act of consecration. As long as believers present themselves on the altar, the sanctifying efficacy of Christ as their altar will enable them to love and obey God.<sup>128</sup> The point where Palmer departed from Wesley's teaching was her emphasis on entire sanctification as an instantaneous crisis and would happen as a 'second blessing' distinct from regeneration,

Just so soon as you come believingly, and make the required sacrifice...When the Saviour said, 'It is finished!' then this full salvation was

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<sup>127</sup> George. M Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 75.

<sup>128</sup> Melvin Easterday Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 1996), 23-4.

wrought out for you. All that remains is for you to come complying with the conditions and claim it...it is already yours. If you do not now receive it, the delay will not be on the part of God, but wholly with yourself.<sup>129</sup>

Palmer emphasized the distinction between experiences of conversions and entire sanctification, human agency/faith in acquiring the experience of 'second blessing,' the importance of being baptised by the Spirit as an individual experience, and the necessity of giving public testimony for retaining the experience.<sup>130</sup> The Tuesday Meetings held at Palmer's home make great contribution to the promotion of the holiness teaching. There was a tendency of deemphasizing any theological definition and overemphasizing the validity of subjective experience as the standard of Christian life. Despite adopting lots of Wesley's statements, Palmer's teaching departed from Wesley's and became more radical in many ways. Rather than regarding entire sanctification as a life-long process and growth like Wesley, Palmer focused her attention on definitive moments. The experience of Christian perfection as the beginning of a holy Christian life rather than the culmination of spiritual maturity is the focal point of her teaching. To maintain this practical holiness in life, believers should surrender themselves to God continually.<sup>131</sup> This act of submission can substantiate the objective holiness in individual lives. For Palmer, taking the action of faith, fully submitting oneself to God, constitutes the fulfilment of the divine promise in us. In this regard, she seemed to mix the act of faith and the assurance of faith.<sup>132</sup> The immediacy of entire cleansing anticipated at the moment of full

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<sup>129</sup> Phoebe Palmer, *Faith and Its Effects: or Fragments from my Portfolio* (New York: Published for the Author at 200 Mulberry St., 1854), 52f. See in Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*, 24.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>131</sup> *The Devotional Writings of Phoebe Plamer*, ed. Donald W. Dayton, 'The Higher Christian Life' Sources of the Study of the Holiness, Pentecostal, and Keswick Movements (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc.), 30.

<sup>132</sup> Dieter, 40.

consecration gave rise to the tendency of pursuing evidential spiritual power like signs and wonders. In line with Palmer's teaching, Jia also paid great attention to key moments of dramatic spiritual experience and stressed the importance of the act of faith—consecration, in attaining full sanctification.

Jia believed, in accord with the pursuit of a higher Christian life, that there were three phases of Christian life: life, abundant life and more abundant life.<sup>133</sup> Accordingly, in terms of sanctification, there is positional sanctification (*di wei cheng sheng*), daily life sanctification (*sheng huo cheng sheng*) and full sanctification (*wan quan cheng sheng*).<sup>134</sup> Believers can only enter the first stage of positional sanctification by relying on the blood of Christ. 'Believers themselves cannot be sanctified by their own deeds, it is all because of being identified with Christ. In other words, it is all because of his or her relationship with Christ.'<sup>135</sup> He also held that believers ought to proceed to embody this legal sanctification in their own experience. In other words, daily life sanctification should follow positional sanctification. They should manifest the character of Christ and exhibit holiness in their everyday practice. Specifically, the key step to realize holy living is the act of consecration (*xian*), which means that believers should fully deny their selfish desires and surrender themselves to the Lord and let the Lord govern every aspect of their lives. They should live a life of consecration and no longer live for themselves but for the Lord.<sup>136</sup> Apart from the teaching of the act of consecration in realizing

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<sup>133</sup> Jia, *Shen dao xue* vol. 3, 107. Jia, *Wanquan jiufa*, 213-8.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 216, 254.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 250.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 252-3.

entire sanctification, like Palmer, Jia also favoured immediate dramatic spiritual experience, signs and wonders.

For Jia, sanctification is a developmental process that comprises three stages, as well as a crisis that marks the beginning of a higher stage of holiness. Jia emphasized the work of the Spirit when expounding on the instantaneous aspect of sanctification.

It is instantaneous when a person is saved; it is also instantaneous for a believer to become the Lord's through consecration; it is still instantaneous to die within the Lord's death. It is an instantaneous death rather than a gradual one..... It all depends on the work of Holy Spirit.<sup>137</sup>

For Jia, sanctification as a crisis is crucial not only because it is a defining moment that initiates the adjustment of a person's spiritual dislocation, but also because it is a miraculous experience of the Holy Spirit itself. Jia's emphasis on the beginning of each sanctifying stage shows his interest in dramatic and subjective experiences, something also reflected in his many testimonies on his mystical experiences. Jia gave emphasis to the extraordinary power of prayer and the immediacy of the divine response.

Once when I was very ill, I went into a room alone and locked the door. I started praying and made up my mind that I would not leave that room unless I got well. I prayed for two hours and my disease was cured. Thus, my faith was strengthened since then. I learned from that experience of faith that when I prayed for something, surely my request would be answered by the Lord, as long as I asked in faith without any doubt in my heart. It worked every time.<sup>138</sup>

Moreover, Jia counted immediate miraculous divine revelation as not only essential to building up his faith but also a critical source of his theologizing.

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<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 254-5.

<sup>138</sup> Jia 'Yiwei,' 46-51.

Jia recalled that a dream of Mrs. Jia had greatly deepened his understanding of the meaning of the cross. Signs of the cross in different colors are also a use of the positive language of presence (*via positiva*), an embodiment of mysticism.

When Mrs. Jia was still alive, one day in a sign she saw an angel holding five crosses and showing her one by one. The first one was black, which indicated that humans were polluted by sin deeply and they died because of taking the cruel penalty. The second one was red, which indicated that Jesus shed His blood and sacrificed Himself. The third one was white, which indicated that believers' sins were all cleansed by the Lord's blood. The fourth was yellow, which indicated authority, power and glory. A sentence was written on the last one, 'If I'm not wholehearted towards the cross, I am not willing to live.' Indeed, if we are not fully experiencing the Lord's cross and do not dedicate ourselves to the Lord's cross, we are not truly willing to live.<sup>139</sup>

Among all kinds of dramatic spiritual experiences, in accordance with Palmer, Jia gave special emphasis to the experience of spiritual baptism (*ling xi*), which was distinguished from the experience of conversion, and its great power of cleansing sins. According to Jia, the experience of being baptized by the Spirit is indispensable in spiritual growth and realization of full sanctification. It is a crisis that marks a higher Christian life and available to every believer.

Unfortunately, there are many believers who talk about the way of regeneration all the time, but do not pursue the grace of spiritual baptism. They do not know this spiritual gift, and spiritual power is the gift which believers should have and must have. It is also the achievement which the Holy Spirit would like to produce and will make.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Jia, *Wanquan Jiufa*, 151.

<sup>140</sup> Jia Yuming, *Shen dao xue*, vol.3, 233.

Jia's understanding of the term 'spiritual baptism' followed the Wesleyan and Holiness Movement usage. According to Jia, the experience of the baptism of the Spirit is interchangeable with the experience of being filled with the Spirit and manifestation of various spiritual gifts.<sup>141</sup> For Jia, being baptised by the Spirit means being fully sanctified and the realization of entire sanctification. 'Being baptised by the Spirit and sanctification are witnesses to each other. ...The state of entire sanctification is the state of being filled by the Spirit'<sup>142</sup> Human effort played a crucial role in attaining this experience. Like Palmer, the act of consecration is essential in having the dramatic personal experience of entire sanctification. To obtain the experience of spiritual baptism, Jia pointed out, adopting Palmer's phrase— one needed to 'consecrate oneself onto the alter.'

To have spiritual baptism, the most important steps are: 1. Empty one's mind—getting rid of all the sinful pollution...removing all prejudice and hinderances 2. Make full consecration—consecrating the empty mind, body and spirit on to the alter completely.3. Pray genuinely, ... Asking with the heart of sincerity. Father God must be happy to bestow the believer with spiritual gifts 4. Be faithful and obedient...If we can fully consecrate, depend and obey, the experience of being filled with the Spirit and spiritual baptism will come unexpectedly.<sup>143</sup>

To Jia, the wonderous spiritual experience is the evidence for authentic faith. Spiritual baptism is promised for all believers. Acting upon the divine promise in faith to attain spiritual baptism is every believer's responsibility.<sup>144</sup> Palmer also believed that when believers experience such a crisis, it was their responsibility to give personal testimonies and help others to obtain the same experience.<sup>145</sup> Jia inherited

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<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 233.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 234.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 244-5.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 245.

<sup>145</sup> Phoebe Palmer, *The Way of Holiness* (New York: Palmer & Hughes, 1867), 52ff. See in Dieter, *Five Views on Sanctification*, 40.

Palmer's position and greatly valued the significance of individual testimony in evangelising and spiritual maturity. For Jia, authentic experience of God has the power of building up one's faith. Jia's viewpoint in this regard was well reflected in the principle of the *Lingguang* newspaper. The *Lingguang* newspaper was widely appreciated by its readers for Jia and Gao's exegetical articles, which usually put emphasis on believers' testimonies and spiritual growth.

It is most welcomed to share individual experiences in Christ instead of conversion stories. The most ideal content is the genuine experience of walking in Christ. It is able to build up servants under the guidance of the Spirit.<sup>146</sup>

As Jia was the chair of the Publishing House's committee, the mission that the Publishing House conveyed also reflected Jia's vision. Jia and the Publishing House both regarded personal spiritual experience as another primary basis of authority in the Christian life apart from the Bible. Scripture and individual spiritual experience mutually intertwined with each other serving as the foundation of faith.

Jia's stress on spiritual crisis as a key moment of believers' spiritual development, especially the experience of the baptism of the Spirit, his confidence in the possibility of entire sanctification in this life, his emphasis on the indispensable human act of faith—consecration in the process of attaining full sanctification, and his embrace of the miracles and wonderful spiritual experience can all find their roots in the American Holiness Moment. In line with Wesleyan Perfectionism, the idea of entire sanctification

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<sup>146</sup> 'Tougaozhe qingzhuyi' [Attention for the contributors]. *Lingguang* bao, no.5 (1923). See in Wang, *Yi 'Xin' Fei 'Yong'*, 57.

promoted among the Holiness Movement accentuated the crucial nature of human effort. For Finney, if humans pay enough attention to practicing holiness and make sufficient effort, they can obtain holiness. Yet, there is always a chance to backslide if they are not careful. Therefore, more effort and commitment are always needed. For Palmer, believers need to keep consecrating themselves on the altar of Christ to stay sinless. Because of the permanent distinction between human soulish desires and the divine will, believers should forsake their own wills and subject themselves to God moment by moment. Both approaches implied the importance of being mindful or denying self. Jia's understanding of entire sanctification is more radical in this sense. Even though in the process of sanctification, Jia also taught to deny one's selfish wills and surrender oneself completely to God. However, once one attained full sanctification—the state of Christ-human, there is no need for the act of self-denial anymore. A Christ-human has the mind of Christ and lives like Christ. Jia's understanding of entire sanctification dissolved the tension between the tendency of sinning in human nature after regeneration and the divine will. The realization of entire sanctification does not mean that spiritual power triumphs over human sinful nature completely, but an entire transformation of the whole person. The human will is spiritualised and blended with the divine will, hence no mindfulness is required anymore. A Christ-human naturally lives out holiness because 'to live is Christ.' Jia's view of perfectionism allows no backsliding at this stage. The perfect state of Christ-human is a fixed state. For him, the journey of sanctification is a process of transformation and only develops in

a spiral. And it is Jia's neo-Confucian mind-heart influence and his Chinese bio-generative way of thinking that made his view of entire sanctification even more optimistic than the Holiness Movement one. We will discuss Jia's notion of Christ-human at length later in the following chapters.

### 2.3 Quakerism

Jia's encounter with Quakerism was another factor in his appreciation of mystical spiritual experience. As shown in the historical survey, Jia had chance to immerse himself in Quaker spirituality through his frequent personal contact with Quaker circles. Historically, mysticism is at the heart of Quaker spirituality. Although the Chinese Quakers mission was originally founded by Holiness Quakers from the Ohio Yearly Meeting in America, Chinese Quakers' spirituality could be an embodiment of the convergence of both Holiness and early Quaker teaching. What made Chinese Quakers different from their American holiness counterparts was their inheritance of and stress on the notion of Spiritual Light from early Quakerism. For early Quakers, represented by Fox, the inner light means the inward revelation of Christ's will and presence. It can guide and bring the life of Friends into union with Christ and each other. Fox regarded the inner light of the living Christ as the foundation of faith and relied on it completely. The importance of the living Christ within even outweighed the Bible.<sup>147</sup> Friends were optimistic about human nature precisely because of their conviction of the inner light. Carol Spencer argued that Quakerism is essentially a

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<sup>147</sup> Inner (or Inward) Light', in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford University Press, 2014), <https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/acref/9780199659623.001.0001/acref-9780199659623-e-2943>. accessed 23 May 2023.

holiness movement and perfection is central to their theological commitment.<sup>148</sup> They believed that sin could be completely removed and the new-born person would be guided by the Spirit and bestowed the strength to overcome sins. Yet for early Quakers, there were no ideas such as ‘second blessing’ and different stages of sanctification, even though their understanding of spiritual growth was developmental as well. The only watershed was the moment of new birth.<sup>149</sup>

The notion of Inner Light is frequently mentioned in Jia’s writing, although its meaning differs from the early Quaker version in that he did not adopt universalism. For Jia, one receives the true light (*zhen guang*) only when regeneration happens, which serves as the sign of new spiritual life. Both Jia and the Quakers pointed to the significance of direct inward revelation and the transforming power of the spiritual light (*ling guang*). As Robert Barclay emphasizes, ‘the testimony of the Spirit is that alone by which the true knowledge of God hath been, is and can be only revealed’ while inward revelation was ‘absolutely necessary for the building up of true faith...’<sup>150</sup> And this immediate revelation can come in various forms. ‘which revelations of God by the Spirit, whether by outward voices and appearances, dreams, or inward objective manifestations in the heart.....’<sup>151</sup> Jia’s heavy dependence on dreams, wonders and experience of personal immediate encounter with God was in line with the Quaker’s favour toward immediate revelation. For Jia, subjective inward revelation was, if not more, as trustworthy as the Scripture. As we

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<sup>148</sup> Tousley, Nikki Coffey, 'Sin, Convincement, Purity, and Perfection', in Stephen W. Angell, and Ben Pink Dandelion (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Quaker Studies* (Oxford: OUP, 2013).

<sup>149</sup> Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 156.

<sup>150</sup> Robert Barclay, *Apology for the True Christian Divinity: Being an Explanation and Vindication of the People Called Quakers*. (Birmingham, UK: Friends Book Store, 1880), 28.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

mentioned before, dreams, wonders and inner mystical revelation served as a crucial source of his theologizing. The Quaker stress on inner immediate revelation must have at least reinforced Jia's attention to mystical experience in spiritual development.

On the foundation of the transforming power of the spiritual light within, Jia shared with Quakers common ground in the conviction of entire sanctification. However, in comparison to the Quaker state of perfection, Jia's idea of Christ human seems more radical. The Quaker understanding of entire sanctification contains the possibility of sinning. According to Barclay, the perfect state was attainable in this lifetime and believers could be kept from transgressing God's law and fulfil God's commandments by the work of Spirit through revealing the law of the Spirit of life.<sup>152</sup>

In whom this pure and holy birth is fully brought forth, the body of death and sin comes to be crucified and removed, and their hearts united and subjected to the truth; so as not to obey any suggestions or temptations of the evil one, but to be free from actual sinning and transgressing of the law of God, and in that respect perfect; yet doth this perfection still admit of a growth; and there remaineth always in some part a possibility of sinning, where the mind doth not most diligently and watchfully attend unto the Lord.<sup>153</sup>

The Quaker view requires Friends to give great attention to avoiding spiritual backsliding. And Barclay also pointed out the difference between Christian perfection and divine perfection.

That by this we understand not such a perfection as may not daily admit of a growth, and consequently mean not as if we were to be as pure, holy, and perfect as God in his divine attributes of wisdom, knowledge, and purity; but only a perfection proportionable and answerable to man's measure, whereby we are kept from transgressing the law of God and enabled to answer what he requires of us.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>152</sup>*Ibid.*, 229, 231.

<sup>153</sup>*Ibid.*, 229.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 231.

Even though both Jia and the Quakers believed that the penetrating power of the life of Christ within can transform the whole person from within and enable them to be obedient to God's will perfectly, Jia's view of perfection is bolder than the Quaker's. The Quaker state of perfection is still within the human limit and therefore has the potential danger of falling. It can also be lost if not careful enough. Whereas Jia's Christ-human is a deified human. He or she is still human but possesses divine qualities. A Christ-human is not essentially the same as Christ but a Christized human. Hence, a Christ-human can not only avoid transgressing the divine law but also live like Christ. Again, the reason why Jia went beyond Quaker perfectionism was his neo-Confucian holistic way of thinking, which showed obvious Wang Yangming influence. For Jia, the light of Christ as the true spiritual light can have great impact on the human mind and eventually transform the human mind completely. A person whose soul is spiritualized is someone whose reason has been baptized by the Spirit and become spiritualized. His reason must have been largely transformed and has spiritual knowledge and intuition. It is all due to the spiritual light having shined within his or her soul and enlightened his or her mind.<sup>155</sup> We will discuss the dynamics between reason and spirit in Jia's thinking at length in the next chapter.

#### **2.4 Dispensationalism and Premillennialism**

It is reasonable to believe that through his personal connection with Cheng Jigui and the *Scofield Reference Bible* that Cheng was translating at Lingguang Publishing House, Jia learned about dispensationalism and premillennialism. Dispensationalism

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<sup>155</sup> Jia, *Wanquan Jiufa*, 75.

played a crucial role in Jia's theological construction. Kwok was insightful in pointing out that it was dispensationalism that decided the overall structure of Jia's theology. Even though Jia claimed that Christ and His redemptive work should be the centre of Christianity, however, his theology was only Christocentric in a functional sense. Christ is crucial only because he played a vital role in fulfilling God's plan for all dispensations. Eventually, Christ will hand over the kingdom of heaven to the Father for the realization of the kingdom of God. In this way, Christ only serves as an indispensable tool in building the scheme of full salvation rather than the centre in Jia's theology. It was dispensationalism that served as the overarching structure of Jia's other theological components. Jia constructed his theology revolving around the framework of dispensationalism as well as the theme of spiritual growth.<sup>156</sup> Kwok's analysis is very helpful for understanding the importance of dispensationalism in Jia's theologizing.

According to Jia, from Genesis to Revelation, human history includes seven dispensations: the dispensations of innocence, conscience, human government, promise, law, grace, and the dispensation of the millennial kingdom. The first five have passed and we are in the sixth stage. The last is yet to come.<sup>157</sup> Jia also pointed out that the whole Bible, the seven dispensations, all pointed to realization of the kingdom of God. In the process of realizing the kingdom of God, human history needs to go through four stages: the prepared kingdom—the nation of Israel, the mysterious kingdom—the Church, the millennial kingdom—the realization of the kingdom of heaven, and the completed kingdom—new heaven and new earth.

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<sup>156</sup> Kwok, 'Jiu'en Yu Shengming', 55–93.

<sup>157</sup> Jia Yuming, *Shengjing Yaoyi* [The Essential Meaning of the Bible] (Hong Kong, The Bellman House, 1982) 39.

Eventually, Christ will hand over the kingdom of heaven to the Father, the kingdom of heaven will be combined into the kingdom of God.<sup>158</sup> At this point, God's salvation is finally completed. As the development of believers' spiritual life was the central motif of Jia's theologizing, and he regards the whole Bible as about the realization of full salvation, he interpreted the seven dispensations from the perspective of the stream of life as well. Jia held that the stream of human life started flowing from being created in genesis to the end of revelation. Jia used seven trees to symbolize different stages of human spiritual life. The first one is the tree of life, which means the innocent life of the first humans. It had the image of God and the spiritual life bestowed by God. The second one it is the tree of knowledge of good and evil. It described the sinful condition after the fall. Humans lost their spiritual life. The third is the life of the fig tree. It represents the life of the Jews, who were under the law and only saw the shadow of salvation. The fourth is the life of the grape vine. It symbolized the life we gained through Christ's salvific work. The fifth is the life of the olive tree. It is a symbol of abundant life after the day of Pentecost. However, Jia pointed out, believers at this stage do not necessarily manifest holiness in their lives. The outward person could still be dark. The sixth is the life of the palm tree, which means one has put the self on the cross and lived out a victorious life. The destination of the stream of human spiritual life is the tree of life again. Believers' original pure spiritual life would be finally fully restored.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 37-8.

Regarding the eschaton that human history moves toward, Jia took the position of premillennialism. He believed that the second coming of Jesus will happen before the millennium and the premillennialist position is based on the Bible.

First, the disasters at the eschaton are the evidence. This world will not become more and more peaceful but more and more miserable. The Bible has said that the second coming of the Son would happen when the disasters have passed...Second, the impurity of faith is the evidence. Today, there are so many Christians who do not consider the Bible true...Third, the sequence of resurrection is the evidence. The Bible says we resurrect according to an order. First is Christ. Those who belong to Christ will resurrect at his second coming. Fourth, Christ's sovereignty over the kingdom is the evidence. The dispensation of the millennial kingdom does not mean the spread of the church but the arrival of the kingdom of God, in which Christ is the king. Fifth, Christ's warning is the evidence. The Lord Jesus warned the disciples several times that they should stay watchful for His second coming. ...If Jesus will come after the millennial kingdom, then we don't need to wait watchfully anymore.<sup>160</sup>

Jia also criticized what he understood as the position of postmillennialism, especially for what he saw as their unrealistic anticipation that the world can become perfect through social reform progressively.<sup>161</sup> Based on his belief in the eschaton from the premillennialist perspective, Jia did not have a positive expectation for the world near the end times. Often theologians holding premillennialist position would have a pessimistic view toward the world and therefore are hesitant in participating in worldly affairs. Watchman Nee and Wang Mingdao were representatives in this regard. They focused on individual spiritual maturity and avoided social participation. However, Jia was a rare case among them. On the one hand, Jia believed in the signs of the end times were present, such as disasters and all kinds of social ills. He

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<sup>160</sup> Jia, *Wanquan Jiufa*, 42.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

did not believe in the power of social reform to transform society and restoring godly order to the world. However, different from his premillennialist contemporaries, as we have seen in the last chapter, Jia showed a positive attitude toward social participation. Spiritual education, alongside his writing ministry, was his life-long dedication. As Chloë Starr pointed out, the establishment of the Chinese Christian Institute of Spirituality was the culmination of his work as an educator.<sup>162</sup> Apart from spiritual education, Jia also became involved in the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, became one of its six vice presidents, and claimed his full support for the leadership of modernist theologian Wu Yaozong. Also, Jia expressed in his writings in multiple places that fulfilling social responsibilities in every human relation is crucial for Christians. Jia emphasized the duties a Christian should perform for the nation: obey the government, obey the nation, have a patriotic heart, pray for the nation, and strive for the national welfare.<sup>163</sup> Jia also highlighted Jesus' sacrificial character in terms of serving the public and nation,

[We] should know that the significance of sacrifice is growing and prosperity. Jesus has the best metaphor.... [The sacrifice] is a loss on the one hand, yet a gain on the other. Seen from another aspect, it was because of his sacrifice that the nation was liberated and obtained glory, and people's hearts were touched as well. The loss of one person is insignificant; the gain of society is what matters. Is its value not as weightier as the weight of Mount Tai?<sup>164</sup>

In Jia's spirituality, fulfilling public responsibilities and serving others are as essential as individual spiritual growth. Making contributions to nation-

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<sup>162</sup> *A Reader in Chinese Theology*, trans. Chloë Starr (Waco: Baylor University Press), 132.

<sup>163</sup> Jia, *Shen dao xue*, vol.4, 179-80.

<sup>164</sup> Jia Yuming, Xia Fangcai, 'Editorial: The Power of the Cross', *Faith and Action Special issue* [Shelun: Shi zi jia de nengli], [Xin Xing Te Kan], no.2(1935), 50-52.

building is inseparable to individual spiritual maturity. The mundane and the spiritual are inseparable. We will pay more attention to this neo-Confucian holistic feature of Jia Yuming's spirituality in chapter 3 and chapter 4, when examining Jia's thought from the neo-Confucian perspective, which is the 'other faith tradition' in Jia's task of doing comparative theology. Suffice it to say here that public participation was so vital to Jia that the meaning of one's spiritual life would not be integrative if he or she did not perform their worldly duties to others or the nation. Jia's position toward Christian's worldly involvement seems to contradict to his premillennialism and distinguished him from other Chinese premillennialists such as Watchman Nee, Wang Mingdao and John Sung. However, if we look at Jia's spirituality from the neo-Confucian mind-heart school perspective, Jia's positive attitude toward social involvement was determined by the state of Christ-human. Jia's idea of Christ-human manifested a form of Wang Yangming-influenced Christian spirituality. Its holistic approach of self-transformation unified individual spiritual growth with worldly participation. To Jia, the life of the Christ-human is essentially an outgrowth of the life of Christ. A Christ-human should manifest the likeness of Christ and have the mind of Christ. Therefore, it is a natural responsibility for believers to serve their neighbours and their nations. They should care for and sustain God's creation like God. Despite holding the premillennialist eschatological view, Jia's neo-Confucian mindset enabled him to ground Christian spirituality *in* the world. It is fair to say that Jia's neo-Confucian mindset served as the substrata of his theologizing and enabled

him to reconcile his negative understanding of the eschaton with the positive attitude toward social participation.

## **2.5 Engaging Western Theological Resources with A Neo-Confucian Mind**

In this chapter, we looked at Jia's theological formulation in the light of his Western theological resources. Through conducting this comparative study, we revealed Jia's inheritance as well as departure from those Western theological traditions. Jia claimed his Wesleyan influence in terms of the belief in Christian perfection. However, Jia's understanding of entire sanctification went beyond the Wesleyan view. For Wesley, believers can only avoid deliberate sinning but not the possibility of sinning. Jia was more radical in that he held that the sinful body can be completely eradicated. The Wesleyan state of full sanctification was a result of moment-by-moment effort and contains the possibility to sin, whereas Jia's was a fixed holy state where a fully sanctified believer, a Christ-human, would manifest the mind of Christ. Seen from the American Holiness Movement perspective, Jia's spirituality showed lots of commonalities with holiness teachings, such as the emphasis on the dramatic experience of the baptism of the Spirit as a 'second blessing', the importance of subjective spiritual experience, the stress on the act of concertation and human effort in realizing entire sanctification, the power of signs and wonders, and the necessity of doing public testimony. Yet, the holiness approaches to full sanctification all implied, on the anthropological level, a division between human and divine will that can never be dissolved. Believers were always put under the potential danger of spiritual backsliding. Hence, in practice, the act of denying self is crucial. The holiness state of entire sanctification is a situation where divine and human wills were restored to a godly hierarchy: divine will triumphed over the human will and

maintains absolute authority. Jia's interpretation departed from this understanding. For Jia, sanctification is a process of self-transformation, on the foundation of the life of Christ within, the divine and human nature will blend together. For a Christ-human, his or her life would be an outgrowth of the life of Christ. An entirely sanctified person, his or her mind would be completely spiritualized and transformed. The contradictory power of human sinful nature would be completely removed. So, Jia's idea of entire sanctification does not involve a denial of the self, because the self is already a Christ-sized self. Entire sanctification for Jia means 'to live is Christ.'

Jia's emphasis on the penetrating power of the spiritual light of the life of Christ was in line with the Quaker teaching. Like Quakers, Jia regarded inward revelation as important as the Bible. Mysticism is at the core of both Jia and Quaker spirituality. The spiritual light is not only revelatory, but also transformative. Both Jia and the Quakers described the process of individual spiritual growth a transformation from within on the basis of the spiritual light. The Quaker holistic understanding of sanctification echoed Jia's radical interpretation of entire sanctification. Yet, Quakers were still hesitant to claim the possibility of a deified state like that of a Christ-human. Quakers stressed that the perfection state of sanctification is still confined to the human measure and has possibility of falling. Jia went further and interpreted the state of full sanctification into a spiritually deified state. A Christ-human is still a human but can manifest divine qualities. Jia's optimistic view of entire sanctification was based on his holistic understanding of human composition. Although Jia held a tripartite anthropological position, his emphasis on connectivity among the three components rather than division enabled him to hold the doctrine of original sin as well as the optimistic view of entire sanctification. We will discuss Jia's anthropology

and its significance in his spirituality in the next chapter. Jia's Quaker connection is often a neglected element of his Western theological influence. Apart from the obvious theological concept such as the spiritual light that Jia inherited from the Quaker tradition, given Jia's deep friendship with pastor Gao, it was likely that Quaker spirituality also impacted Jia's way of theologizing as well. Quakerism is, according to Jon R. Kershner, 'at least theoretically, a noncreedal religious expression that prioritizes the experience of the adherent as essential to an efficacious faith.'<sup>165</sup> A low view of doctrine, church and outward profession of faith makes Quaker spirituality more flexible and sensitive to the socio-cultural context where it evolves. Quaker mystical spirituality, especially its profound dependence on direct inner revelation, encouraged Jia to break the boundaries of denominations and embrace cooperation with people from different theological background.

Dispensationalism and premillennialism were another theological element that Jia learnt from the West. Like Kwok pointed out, they played vital roles in Jia's theological construction. Jia's other theological elements such as Christology were all subjected to the premillennialist framework. However, through taking into consideration of Jia's spirituality, particular his emphasis on the cruciality of Christian public responsibility and social participation, we noticed a contradiction between Jia's attitude toward worldly affairs and his premillennialist eschatology. On the one hand Jia, did not believe that through the power of social reform we can restore heavenly order to the world. Yet, he encouraged believers to fulfil their responsibilities in all forms of social relations and become the pillars of society. In this regard, Jia's neo-

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<sup>165</sup> Jon R. Kershner, *Quakers and Mysticism: Comparative and Syncretic Approach to Spirituality* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), 1.

Confucian mindset and his idea of Christ-human, rather than premillennialism, was the foundational factor that impacted Jia's theologizing.

Through comparing between Jia's theology and his Western resources, we revealed that even though Western theological elements were important to Jia's theologizing in the sense they constituted the theological ingredients, the way he formulates his spirituality and the focal point of his spirituality were decided by his Chinese mindset, as further discussed in the next chapter—namely, the holistic anthropology and, the bio-generative way of thinking and the unity of spiritual and mundane. One of the most important reasons why Holiness theology such as Wesleyan perfectionism interested theologians like Jia was due to their ethical orientation that was in harmony with the Confucian way of self-cultivation/self-transformation. One of the greatest contributions that Wesley made to the development of Christian theology was his emphasis on the subjective and moral dimension of Christianity. For Wesley, true Christianity is to 'have the mind of Christ,' which is reflected in pure love for God and others.<sup>166</sup> Wesley related love to law. He believed that the satisfaction of the 'royal law of love' taught by Jesus Christ in the New Testament in the Sermon on the Mount also fulfilled the moral obligations of the Ten Commandments. That is to say, he linked the fulfilment of the law more to believers' sanctification than justification. For Wesley, it is crucial that Christ's atoning work on the cross means that His life become ours at our new birth.<sup>167</sup> The atonement has an experiential and subjective aspect, and this dimension is pivotal to Wesley's theologizing and his perfectionist position.

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<sup>166</sup> Sermon, 'The Almost Christian,' *Works* 5:21, 22. See in Dieter, *Five Views on Sanctification*, 27.

<sup>167</sup> Melvin Easterday Dieter, 'The Wesleyan Perspective,' in *Five Views on Sanctification* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1987), 24-7.

Similarly, for Jia, even though he took the position of substitution theory and stressed the legal meaning of Christ's redemptive work on the cross, the subjective/experiential side of atonement rather than its objective/legal side interested him more. Both Wesley and Jia interpret atonement from an anthropological and experiential perspective. Thus, the subject of sanctification became the centre in both Wesley and Jia's thinking. For Wesley, Christianity is all about having 'the mind of Christ.'<sup>168</sup> True Christianity manifests itself in believers' practical holiness. Sanctification is embodied in loving actions. Salvation is ethical and practical:

[It is] not barely, according to the vulgar notion, deliverance from hell, or going to heaven; but a present deliverance from sin, a restoration of the soul to its primitive health, its original purity; a recovery of the divine nature; the renewal of our souls after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness, in justice, mercy, and truth.<sup>169</sup>

The true freedom of the Christian is to love like God. Wesley summarised the meaning of freedom, 'Nothing higher and nothing lower than this.....love governing the heart and life, through all our tempers, words, and actions.....Christian perfection is purity of intention, dedicating all the life to God. It is giving God all our hearts.'<sup>170</sup> Like Jia, Wesley's focal point is not only on the importance of what God does for us through Christ, but also on what God does in us.<sup>171</sup>

Kwok's comment on Jia's way of theologizing is true: Jia transformed theological arguments into theological experience.<sup>172</sup> Revolving around the motif of

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<sup>168</sup> John Wesley, Sermon, 'The Almost Christian' in *The Works of John Wesley*, ed. Thomas Jackson, 14 vols. (London: Wesley Conference Office, 1872), 5:21-2. See in Dieter, 'The Wesleyan Perspective,' 27.

<sup>169</sup> Wesley, 'A Father Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion', 8:47.

<sup>170</sup> 'Plain Account,' Works, 11:401. See in Dieter, *Five Views on Sanctification*, 27-8.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>172</sup> Kwok, 'Jiu'en Yu Shengming', 55-93.

life, the experiential and practical dimension of Christianity outweighs strict theological articulation in Jia's theologizing. Jia theologized with his spiritual experience.

The best and incomparable approach of studying theology, is to practice the truth with spiritual footsteps. Authentic theology is neither theory nor teaching.... Humans cannot understand the crucial meaning of regeneration unless they have been regenerated. Individuals cannot deeply comprehend the wonderful signification of justification and sanctification and what is authentic theology unless they have experienced justification and sanctification. Theologizing comes from believers' spiritual experience and the experience of salvation. If theological scholars themselves do not practice the doctrines they study, how can they become theologians who live out the truth?<sup>173</sup>

This showed again that what interested Jia most was not building a logical systematic theology but developing instructions on and encouraging Christian spiritual development. In accordance with his idea of the unity of faith, knowledge and action, true theological knowledge is a reflection of deep spiritual experience, and practical holiness demonstrates genuine theological understanding. Jia's approach of theologizing manifested again the practical and anthropocentric feature of his Chinese way of thinking. Knowledge and action are not separable. Knowledge is only valuable when it can contribute to one's moral/spiritual self-transformation or human perfection. Therefore, to Jia's Chinese mind, blending theology with spiritual experience was not a problem. Because for him, true theology must be a manifestation of deep spiritual experience. Theology and practical holiness in life form a unity. In the next chapter, we will look at Jia's spirituality

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<sup>173</sup> Jia, *Shen dao xue*, vol.1, 35.

including his tripartite anthropology, pneumatology, hamartiology and theology of the cross with particular attention paid to its neo-Confucian influence.

### Chapter 3 Jia's Experiential Spirituality

On the foundation of our historical investigation of Jia's theological background, we clarified his adoption of Wesleyan perfectionism, the American Holiness Movement, Quakerism and dispensationalism. Through comparing Jia's theology with his Western theological resources, we argued that even though Jia's theological formulation was under the influences of different Western theological trajectories, it was his neo-Confucian way of thinking that determined his way of theologizing. As I suggested in the last chapter, the holistic anthropology, the bio-generative way of thinking and the unity of spiritual and mundane differentiated Jia's thought from his Western predecessors and enabled Jia's spirituality to bear characteristics of a neo-Confucian approach of self-transformation. This chapter will look at Jia's spirituality in detail in comparison with his underlying neo-Confucian influence from Wang Yangming's thought. We will examine his tripartite anthropology, pneumatology, hamartiology, and theology of the cross in the light of the ultimate goal of his spirituality, which was the realization of human perfection, the state of Christ-human (*jidu ren*). In doing so, it will also reveal the distinctiveness of Jia's spirituality in comparison with his contemporaries.

#### 3.1 A Chinese Experiential Spirituality of Holiness and Action

Language like 'tripartite anthropology' and 'entire sanctification' do not sound unique in the arena of Chinese theology. Most famously, Watchman Nee (1903-1972) also believed that humans are constituted by three components: the spirit, the soul and the body.<sup>174</sup> However, Jia's theologizing offers an alternative understanding of

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<sup>174</sup> Watchman Nee, *The Spiritual Man*, trans. Stephen Kaung (New York: CLC Publications, 1968), 21-3.

tripartite anthropology in contrast to Nee's prevailing teachings. Nee believed that the overdevelopment of the soul was the main consequence of the fall of humanity. The overdeveloped soul is the biggest obstacle to tackle in the process of spiritual growth. For him, the main task of sanctification is to 'deny the self' and subject the soul and body to the governing of the spirit. Hence, one can restore the holy hierarchy of the three parts—the spirit, soul and body. For Nee, reestablishing the original godly order of the three components is the goal of sanctification. A person who denies his or her own soulish will completely and follows the spirit's leadership is called a 'spiritual man.' Nee's tripartite anthropology shows a negative view on human intelligence and body. It also stresses the division between the three parts. This view of anthropology contains potential danger. It is likely to lead to a mystical impasse, where either subjective assumption takes a dominant role or believers slip into the mire of nihilism.

However, for Jia, the dynamics among the three parts are different. Jia puts stress on the connection and interaction among the spirit, soul and body. Even if he uses the same language of 'denying self,' his approach of sanctification is distinct from Nee's. Rather than aiming at simply restoring the holy hierarchy of the three parts—the spirit, soul and body, Jia's approach to human perfection involves the transformation of each part through mutual impact among the three. The emphasis on the overriding position of the spirit among the three does not lead to neglecting the importance of interactions between them. The realization of holy living requires interdependent cooperation among the three parts of human composition. The inner revelation in the spirit will spiritualize the reason, which is the main function of the soul. Human reason will rationalize spiritual wisdom. The body will take actions

according to a human godly will. None of the three parts is deniable. In this process of reciprocal interaction, all of them will be transformed into their full capacity. Jia's anthropology regards human composition in an organic way. As we will discuss in further detail later in this chapter, Jia's holistic approach is embodied by his teaching of the 'unity of faith, knowledge and action' (*xin zhi xing he yi*), which very clearly echoes one of the most well-known precepts of Wang Yangming (1472-1529) in the Chinese cultural context, the 'unity of knowledge and action' (*zhi xing he yi*). The relatedness of faith, knowledge and action makes Jia's anthropology holistic. The close connectivity in practice among the spirit, soul and body is the anthropological foundation for Jia's idea of full salvation.

Not only Jia's anthropology but also his hamartiology shows a neo-Confucian influence. In relation to his holistic understanding of human composition, Jia's interpretation of sin exhibits an organic inclination. The impact of sin penetrated the whole person. Consequently, all three components were weakened. Different from Nee's teaching, Jia believed that rather than overdeveloping, the soul got weakened by sin as well. In terms of the root of sin, Jia, like other Chinese theologians such as Zhao Zichen, employed the idea of selfishness (*si*), which is vitally important in neo-Confucian tradition in explaining immorality, to interpret sin. Jia's neo-Confucian cultural root played a significant role in his theologizing.

Displaying the Chinese holistic understanding of the human condition and wickedness does not blur the Western theological influence in Jia's theologizing. Under the influence of the Holiness Movement theology and Dispensationalism, Jia's spirituality highlighted the role of the Holy Spirit in the process of spiritual

development. Having the experience of spiritual baptism, like ‘second blessing,’ is indispensable in one’s spiritual growth. To Jia, dramatic experience of the Spirit is available to all believers. What is noteworthy is that Jia chose to use English words when expounding on his pneumatology. This approach manifests the great Western influence in Jia’s theology. Also, in the early twentieth century, the priority of Jia’s theologizing consists in preaching the gospel to Chinese people without necessarily interpreting Christian teaching with Chinese culture elements.

Based on this holistic tripartite anthropology, Holiness pneumatology, and organic hamartiology, Jia developed his experiential theology of the cross. For Jia, it is essential for believers to have subjective experience of the cross to grow into the likeness of Christ. In the process, inner revelation matters as much as the scripture. Reliance on inward revelation, wonders and the pursuit of human perfection - the state of Christ-human, makes Jia a mystic. Thanks to his emphasis on the interrelatedness among the three parts in spiritual growth, Jia’s holistic anthropology prevents his spirituality from falling into the danger of anti-intellectual inclinations and a pessimistic attitude toward the secular dimension of the world like Nee. Even if personal spiritual growth is the focal point in Jia’s theologizing, his spirituality is not confined to the individual realm. Jia even highlighted the importance of civic responsibilities and the necessity of participating in worldly affairs in the process of sanctification. Jia’s approach dissolves the binary of personal and public distinction. His public concern and active involvement in the Three-Self Patriotic Movement also distinguishes him not only from pessimistic mystics, but also active modernists.

Clearly, Jia cannot be easily pigeonholed as simply another holiness theologian like Nee, nor focused simply on national salvation like modernists Zhao Zichen or Wu Yaozong. He offers a unique and creative experiential spirituality which negotiates both extremes. In the next few sections, we will explore these points in greater depth.

### **3.2 A Holistic Tripartite Anthropology**

Clarifying Jia Yuming's anthropology is the first step in understanding his spirituality.<sup>175</sup> Christian spirituality is usually embodied in one's way of life or experience of self-transformation in relation to God. Theological anthropology provides a fundamental perspective to understand 'what it means to be human.'<sup>176</sup> Both spirituality and anthropology concern a person's existential questions. Spirituality elucidates the orientation, pattern and process of a person's spiritual growth. Anthropology, at a more basic level, expounds on the origin, destination and activities of a human being in the light of God. Anthropology played a vital role in Jia's thinking. He adopted Wesleyan Perfectionism and the ethical and practical dimension of salvation was the focal point of his theologizing. Anthropology is closely connected to his idea of Christ-human, the ultimate goal of a believer's self-transformation. Jia believed that 'apart from theology proper, anthropology should be the most crucial subject that scholars should focus on.'<sup>177</sup> Jia followed the Augustinian and Calvinist approach to address the questions pertaining to humanity,

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<sup>175</sup> Jia Yuming did not clarify from whom he inherited the tripartite anthropology. Scholars have different opinions on this question.

<sup>176</sup> Kevin Vanhoozer, 'Human being, individual and social,' Colin E. Gunton, ed, *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 158–88.

<sup>177</sup> Jia, *Shen dao xue* vol.2, 109.

as Calvin said, ‘without knowledge of God there is no knowledge of self.’<sup>178</sup> For Jia, knowing God is the first step to knowing humankind. We can only understand ourselves in our relationship with God, for God created humans according to His own image.

Before discussing human composition, Jia clarified the distinctiveness of human beings among all creatures. Firstly, the way God created humans is unique. Jia quoted verses from Genesis to prove,

According to the history of creation, with regard to plants and animals, God says ‘Let the water bring forth.....’ (Genesis 1:20), or ‘Let the earth put forth.....’ (Genesis 1:11,24). Yet, regarding humans, [God] said ‘Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness,’ moreover, ‘then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and then man became a living being.’ (Genesis 2:7), the difference between humans and other creatures can be seen from this.<sup>179</sup>

Furthermore, Jia distinguished humans’ outstanding capabilities in comparison to other creatures. First, humans have the talent of comprehension by intuition (*wu cai*). Other creatures are only capable of sensing the environment they are living in but lack self-knowledge and the ability to speculate. Hence, their way of life has never changed. In contrast, humans are able to progress in their knowledge through education. Moreover, conscience (*liangxin*) and the ability to repent are unique to humans. Animals can only follow their nature. Also, only humans have a moral mind (*daode xin*) and are able to judge good and evil. In addition, religious thoughts (*zongjiao sixiang*) are humans’ distinctive feature, which makes it possible for them to know God. According to Jia, the essential difference between human beings and

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<sup>178</sup> John Calvin, *Institute of the Christian Religion*, ed. John MacNeil and trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), book1, ch.1, section 2, 37.

<sup>179</sup> Jia, *Shen dao xue*, vol.2, 113.

other creatures consists in that humans have a spiritual nature (*ling xing*), which connects humans with the spiritual realm and enables them to communicate with God.<sup>180</sup>

Jia demonstrated human composition based on the doctrine of God. On the one hand, as God is holy, righteous and good, and humans resembled the truth/nature of God (*ben xiang*), hence the original nature of humanity is pure and flawless as well. It was because of this original nature that humans were able to communicate with God.<sup>181</sup> On the other hand, since God is a triune God, correspondingly, humans are also constituted by three parts—the spirit, the soul and the body.<sup>182</sup> Humanity's tripartite constitution was just like God's 'triune life mechanism' (*shengming de jigou*). Jia quoted Paul's words in 1 Thessalonians 5:23, 'May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.'<sup>183</sup> Jia believed that humans in their original state embody the glory of life.<sup>184</sup>

Humans were created according to the image of God (*xing xiang*), which was an image that humans had not had, namely, the true image of holiness, justice, benevolence and goodness. That was the original human nature, which was not contaminated by sins. Or it can be called innocent moral nature, which is the portrait of God. [Humans were created] according to not only the image of God, but also the model (*yang shi*) of God. The image and model of God mean different things. The image is the nature of God's character, the model is the mechanism of God's life. God's life is trinitarian, His life is the life of the triune God.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*, 113-5.

<sup>181</sup> Jia, *Wanquan Jiufa*, 59, 162.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>183</sup> Jia, *Shen dao xue*, vol.2, 115.

<sup>184</sup> Jia, *Wanquan Jiufa*, 162.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*

Because of God's triune mechanism of life, Jia believed that humans are constituted by three parts: the spirit, the soul and the body.

In fact, humans are those who are made up of three elements - spirit, soul and body. Regarding their physical appearance, [that aspect of them] is called the body; seen from that they have consciousness and desires as the foundation for bodily lives, [that aspect of them] is called the soul; with regard to that they have spiritual talent and spiritual ability and are able to communicate with the spiritual realm, [that aspect of them] is called the spirit. Therefore, [as] the body is part of the earth, it belongs to the earth; [as] the spirit is part of heaven, it belongs to God; [as] the soul is the intermediate and connecting point between matter and spiritual nature, it is humans' wonderful ability of living. That humans have the three elements of spirit, soul and body is not different from that the holy temple has three layers, therefore, [they] can be the residence in which God dwells.<sup>186</sup>

Admittedly, Jia believed that the spirit is the most critical part among the three, as humans are supposed to communicate with God through the spirit. Once one's spirit has been regenerated, the person would obtain eternal life, which is the life of Christ, and come into communion with God. As long as one's spirit is saved, the whole person is saved as regeneration of the spirit marks the beginning of eternal life.<sup>187</sup>

Among human's three parts, spirit, soul and body, the spirit is the main component. Once the spirit has been saved, one's heart has the true light and is not dark anymore. His spirit communicates with the spirit of God. ....His spirit has regenerated and has spiritual life. This spiritual life is the life of Christ, as 'When Christ, who is your life' (Colossians 3:4),.....Jesus said, 'Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and does not come under judgement, but has passed from death to life.'(John 5:24) Also he said, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.' (John 11:25-26) Humans gaining eternal life is not something after death, rather, it is a matter of

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<sup>186</sup> Jia, *Shen dao xue*, vol.2, 116.

<sup>187</sup> Jia, *Wanquan Jiufa*, 73.

this life.....Eternal life begins with regeneration, a person who has regenerated, is a person who has entered into immortality.<sup>188</sup>

Even though Jia held to trichotomism in understanding human composition, he put significant stress on the relationship or connections between the three components as well. This was distinctive in that, apart from expounding on the nature and function of each part at length separately, Jia always explicated them in relation to one another within the scheme of salvation. The spirit, the soul and the body are three different parts, yet they work together forming human life. The cooperation among the three parts is indispensable in one's proceeding in spiritual growth. Jia's stress on the overriding position of the spirit among the three does not lead to neglecting the significance of necessary interactions between the three.

In the process of realizing full salvation or entire sanctification, which is a complete salvation/sanctification covering all three parts—the spirit, the soul and the body, the salvation of each part is naturally related to that of the other two. According to Jia, God's process of creating humanity has already demonstrated the interrelation among the three parts. As Jia explained, firstly, God made the human body with the dust of the ground, then he endowed him with spiritual life. When the body met the spirit, the soul came into being. The soul connects the spirit with the body, transmitting spiritual messages to the body as well as delivering carnal effects to the spirit.<sup>189</sup> Accordingly, based on this tripartite anthropology, Jia illustrated the process of full salvation as three steps—salvation of the spirit, soul and body. He indicated that every stage was not independent from the other two.

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<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

Thus, the soul is in the middle of spirit and body, transmitting spiritual affairs to the body, and bodily affairs the spirit, hence it serves as the medium between spirit and body. When one's spirit has been saved, even though it is not impossible that the soul and body remain free from that influence, this influence is not able to enable the person to have a completely refreshing change.<sup>190</sup>

Also, reason, as one of the most distinctive abilities of humanity, is not only the main faculty of soul, but also closely related to the spirit and body. 'Human reason has a relationship with spirit, soul and body respectively.'<sup>191</sup> With regard to its relationship with body, reason depends on the function of the human brain. Due to the depravity of human natural brain power after the Fall, reason only operates in a sinful way. 'Because of the corruption of human flesh, not only is the brain power disabled, but also its function became abnormal. It is unavoidable that an abnormal brain power has impact on the whole body and entire person. Even desires and habits have changed because of that.'<sup>192</sup> Moreover, since the soul is the main part of one's morality and conscience, the condition of the soul would naturally influence the operation of reason. As the soul is contaminated by sin, it is inevitable that humans would be narrow-minded and self-centred while reasoning. 'Since the soul has been damaged and corrupted by sins, human thoughts are not pure, wills are not strong, and ideas are not correct either.'<sup>193</sup> As for the spirit, if one is not regenerated, then abilities of reasoning would be confined by one's natural talent and lack of spiritual guidance. 'Once the spirit has communicated with the Spirit of God, one's spiritual talent would manifest its effects. At this moment, there are the functions of spiritual nature within one's reason.'<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>191</sup> Jia, *Shen dao xue*, vol.2, 327.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*

When it comes to salvation of the soul, Jia described a bidirectional process, spiritualizing of the human reason (*lixing lingxinghua*) on the one hand, and rationalizing of the human spirit (*lingxing lixinghua*) on the other hand.<sup>195</sup> He believed that once believers' reason was baptized by the Spirit through their spirit, their reason would be spiritualized, namely, their reason would be enlightened by the Spirit and, as a result, operate according to divine truth. Yet, even though spiritualized reason would keep its essence and keep existing and functioning as human reason, it would go beyond that and become more developed, capable and flexible.<sup>196</sup> Jia emphasized that in that process the spirit and reason would make use of and influence each other mutually.<sup>197</sup>

There are two kinds of humans who are led by the soul. One of them is controlled by a natural soul. Surely, he cannot but use his reasonable talent of the soul, relying on his own judgement and assessing the circumstances. The other is governed by a spiritualized soul. Namely, reason is baptized by the Spirit and spiritualized, hence one becomes a person whose reason is spiritualized. His reason will suddenly have a huge change. It will obtain spiritual knowledge and spiritual tuition, as the spiritual light has shone in his soul and illuminated his reason.<sup>198</sup>

For Jia, that one's soul has been saved does not simply mean that the soul has been denied or even disabled. Rather, it is more accurate to say that the soul has been transformed. A spiritualized soul is not antagonistic to orders from the spirit anymore. Its reason, will, and volition would naturally obey the truth of God. It functions more efficiently in the correct way.

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<sup>195</sup> Jia, *Wanquan Jiufa*, 74-75.

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.* 75.

Moreover, Jia believed that the salvation of the body was integral to accomplishing a full salvation and it would happen in this life also, just like the salvation of the spirit and soul.<sup>199</sup> The salvation of the body means not only the redemption of the body at Christ's Second Coming, but also the embodiment of perfect holiness in one's daily experience, echoing the salvation of the spirit and soul.<sup>200</sup> For Jia, denying the possibility of the physical or experiential dimension of salvation is neglecting the truth and underestimating the significance of the scheme of salvation. God has planned to save the whole person of His believers, even though not every believer would experience this salvation in its full sense.<sup>201</sup> The goal is to restore humanity's original holy image of God, which requires the perfect state of all three parts. Hence, only when salvation is realized in all three parts, can a person in his or her life realize the state of 'Christ is in me and I in Christ' and become a 'Christ-human.'<sup>202</sup>

This state of full salvation in the sense of human experience means a complete transformation of self. According to Jia, a believer's life should be composed of three elements: faith (*xin*), action (*xing*) and knowledge (*zhi*).<sup>203</sup> Moreover, faith, action and knowledge should form a unity (*xin xing zhi he yi*)—they are supposed to build up one another in reciprocal causation.<sup>204</sup>

A faithful person cannot but put what he or she believes into practice; if one's action can be seen, then he or she must have gained spiritual knowledge from his or her spiritual experience. If one has spiritual knowledge, his or her faith would become more steadfast and grow; if

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<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, 260.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, 261.

faith progresses, one will have more perseverance in action and make progress in the course of spiritual growth. In such an incessant circle, the bigger faith becomes, the more vigorous the action will be; the more experience [one has], the more knowledge will increase.<sup>205</sup>

Seen through the lens of comparative theology, Jia's language of the unity of faith, action and knowledge would naturally remind anyone in the Chinese cultural context of one of the most well-known precepts in Wang Yangming's teachings—the unity of knowing and acting (*zhi xing he yi*) for Jia's '*xin zhi xing he yi*' is almost identical to Wang's '*zhi xing he yi*.' The unity of knowing and acting manifests the experiential feature of Wang's understanding of moral cultivation. 'In all the world, nothing can be considered learning that does not involve action.'<sup>206</sup> The experiential characteristics of Jia's theology would find resonations in Wang's teachings on self-transformation.

According to Jia, faith should contain knowledge and practice and is usually presented as an active spiritual life; action should be faithful as well as reasonable; and true knowledge only happens in spiritualized human reason.<sup>207</sup> Hence, in an existential sense, the functions of human spirit, soul and body are intertwined with one another. Living a more abundant life — a life manifesting a unity of faith, action and knowledge, requires interdependent cooperation among the three parts of human composition. Wang emphasized the natural connection between one's mind and practice as well. Wang's thoughts provide a neo-Confucian foundation from the Chinese cultural context for Jia's holistic anthropology.

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<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, 263.

<sup>206</sup> Wang Yangming, *Instructions for Practical Living, and Other Neo-Confucian Writing*, trans. Chan Wing-Tsit (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963), 100.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, 263.

According to Wang, knowledge and the transformation of one's mind are inseparable from practice.

No one really learns anything without carrying it into action.....Can merely taking about it in a vacuum be considered learning? To learn archery, one must hold out the bow, fix the arrow to the string, draw the bow, and take aim.....In all the world, nothing can be considered learning that does not involve action. Thus the very beginning of learning is already action.<sup>208</sup>

A person whose mind is without obstructions is naturally able to obtain the state of unity of knowing and acting. For Wang, not being able to carry out good actions is simply due to not having knowledge. There should not be a distinction between knowing and acting. Wang's disciple Xu Ai thought that knowing and acting was separate for there were people who understood the virtue of filial piety but were not able to put it into action. Wang's response is penetrating.

The knowledge and action you refer to are already separated by selfish desires and are no longer knowledge and action in their original substance. There have never been people who know but do not act. Those who are supposed to know but do not act simply do not yet know.....Smelling a bad odor appertains to knowledge, while hating a bad odor appertains to action. However, as soon as one smells a bad odor, he has already hated it. It is not that he smells it first and then makes up his mind to hate it. ....I have said that knowledge is the direction for action and action the effort of knowledge, and that knowledge is the beginning of action and action the completion of knowledge. If this is understood, then when only knowledge is mentioned, action is included, and when only action is mentioned, knowledge is included. The reason why the ancients talked about knowledge and action separately is that there are people in the world who are confused and act on impulse without any sense of deliberation of self-examination, and who thus only behave blindly and erroneously...There are also those who are intellectually vague and undisciplined and think in a vacuum. They are not at all willing to

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<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

make the effort of concrete practice...If we understand the motive, then a single word [either knowledge or action] will do.<sup>209</sup>

He pointed out that the fundamental problem of failure in action lies in that innate knowledge of good (*liang-xin*) being blocked by selfish desires.

Virtuous actions should happen as simply and easily as seeing a beautiful colour and naturally loving it. Knowledge and action are one in nature. In particular circumstances, they are the embodiments of the Principle of Nature of mind. Knowledge naturally entails action and action naturally includes knowledge. It was only for showing people who went astray the right path that ancient sages talked about knowledge and action separately.

Wang in his precept of the unity of knowing and acting dissolved the distinction between knowledge and action and revealed that they are in nature one. Not only did Jia adopt Wang's language but also his teaching of the unity of faith, knowledge and action reflects the similar holistic view of human perfection. Even though to Jia humans are composed of three parts and the spirit is the overarching one, by demonstrating an indivisible relationship among the three in the process of realizing full salvation, Jia showed that none of the three parts are separable. The close connectivity among the three is the anthropological foundation for Jia's idea of full salvation.

Jia was not the only one who adopted a tripartite anthropology among his contemporaries. A comparison between Jia and one of his contemporaries sheds some light on the feature of his trichotomism. Under the influence of Keswick trichotomists such as Andrew Murray (1828-1917) and the Quietist devotional writer

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<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, 10-1.

Jessie Penn-Lewis (1861-1927), Watchman Nee also adopted a trichotomous anthropology. Yet, Nee's view differentiates itself from Jia's in that Nee had a much more negative view of the soul and body and pointed to the distinctions among the three parts. According to Nee, a human is composed of three parts: the spirit, the soul and the body. The spirit is the organ through which humans communicate with God and contains spiritual life. Therefore, the spirit is supposed to be the governor of the soul and the body. The soul contains faculties of reason, volition and emotion and should serve as a mediator between the spirit and the body. It transmits the revealed spiritual knowledge from the spirit to the body. The body should be the lowest part among the three. It is the physical component related to actions.<sup>210</sup> However, not only did the body sin at the Fall, but also the soul was tempted as well. Nee especially highlighted that it was because of the soul's urge for pursuing wisdom and knowledge, or even spiritual knowledge, that the soul sinned.<sup>211</sup> As a result, the soul overdeveloped and became the dominant part among the three. Thus, humans can only think and act according to their own desires and ignore the will of God.<sup>212</sup> Believers receive spiritual life from the Holy Spirit at regeneration, and at that moment they become capable to receive God's revelation through their spirit. However, as the soul has already overdeveloped, naturally, they still tend to follow their own will instead of God's. According to Nee, regeneration is the moment when a person receives the new life of Christ from God.

The concept of regeneration as found in the Bible speaks of the process of passing out of death into life... We must note carefully that new birth imparts God's life to the *spirit* of man. Inasmuch as Christ

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<sup>210</sup> Watchman Nee, *The Spiritual Man*, trans. Stephen Kaung (New York, NY: CLC Publications, 1968), 181.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, 46-47.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, 47-48.

has atoned for our soul and destroyed the principle of the flesh, so we who are joined to Him participate in His resurrection of life. We have been united with Him in His death; consequently it is in our spirit that we first reap the realization of His resurrection life. New birth is something which happens entirely within the spirit; it has no relation to soul or body.<sup>213</sup>

Nee is different from Jia in his understanding of the impact of regeneration. The new birth that happens in one's spirit has no direct influence on the other two parts. Due to the powerful dominance of the soul in the whole person, one would naturally remain a person who is governed by the soul.<sup>214</sup> Only when the soul is willing to deny and surrender itself completely to the spirit, can the spirit lead the whole person. That is to say, after regeneration, the three parts would still function separately. Nee's stress on the denial of the self underscores the absolute division among the three components.

.....yet the soul is not now our life-spring. We are no longer living in it, we are no longer drawing from it and living by it; we use it. When the body becomes our life we live like beasts. When the soul becomes our life we live as rebels and fugitives from God—gifted, cultured, educated, no doubt, but alienated from the life of God. But when we come to live our life in the Spirit and by the Spirit, though we still use our soul faculties just as we do our physical faculties, *they are now the servants of the Spirit*, and when we have reached that point God can really use us.<sup>215</sup>

For Nee, even after regeneration, the soul should never take part in leading the person and should only function as a secondary tool. A spiritual man (*shu ling ren*), in Nee's terms, should remain under the absolute leadership of the spirit all the time, otherwise there would be a danger for them to

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<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>214</sup> Nee adopted the idea of three types of Christians from Penn-Lewis: the 'spiritual man,' dominated by the Holy Spirit of God in his or her spirit; the 'soulish man,' who was governed by soul, namely, intellect or emotions; and the 'carnal man,' who was driven by flesh. See in Jessie Penn-Lewis, *Soul and Spirit* (Fort Washington, Pa.: CLC Publications, 2014), 21-22.

<sup>215</sup> Watchman Nee, *The Normal Christian Life* (Wheaton: Tyndale House, 1985), 264.

backslide into the old self-centred sinful way of life. Nee even contrasted intellectual activities with spiritual wisdom, as reasoning is one of the soul's main abilities.

When one tries to increase his knowledge by doing mental gymnastics over books without waiting upon God and looking to the guidance of the Holy Spirit, his soul is plainly in full swing. This will deplete his spiritual life. Because the fall of man was occasioned by seeking knowledge, God uses the foolishness of the cross to 'destroy the wisdom of the wise.' Intellect was the chief cause of the fall; hence, in order to be saved one must believe in the folly of the Word of the cross rather than depend upon his intellect.<sup>216</sup>

Nee's anti-intellectual inclination shows his inheritance of Quietist mysticism from Penn-Lewis. His absolute dependence on the direct spiritual revelation and suspicion of human intellect made him a Quietist mystic. Whereas, in Jia's thinking, as believers progress in spiritual maturing, their reason would be transformed over time, as the soul and body are not independent from the impact of regeneration in one's spirit. In Jia's words, as mentioned before, this process is called spiritualizing of the human reason. Guidance from spiritualized reason is in line with divine wisdom and would not put one in danger of being self-centred or soulish in Nee's language. Although both Nee and Jia are trichotomist, the dynamics of the three parts in their anthropology are different. For Nee, a 'normal Christian' (*zheng chang ji du tu*) is also called a 'spiritual man.' Such a person is led by the spirit alone. Namely, the three components should function strictly in hierarchy, the spirit, the soul and the flesh. The process of sanctification only means to correct a person's old way of operating, the soul being the leader, and restore the

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<sup>216</sup> Nee, *The Spiritual Man*, 47.

original godly order of the three parts— spirit, soul and body. The nature of soul and body will not be refreshed. In fact, the change brought about by sanctification only concerns their status and their relationship with the spirit. They will be in a subordinate position. The influence between the spirit and soul should only be one-way one, from the former to the latter. To release the spirit and follow its leadership, one must go through the path of ‘breaking the outward man.’<sup>217</sup> His single emphasis on the necessity of brokenness of the soul/self and denial of self-motivation could be problematic. If one refuses to take any actions without spiritual guidance from the spirit, a pessimistic attitude will dominate his or her life. Or a person could get stuck in his or her ‘spiritual dark night’ and foment a passive attitude toward life.<sup>218</sup> But for Jia, mutual impact between the spirit and the soul is critical in one’s spiritual growth. Even though inner direct revelation matters as much as the Bible in growing faith, human reasoning remains trustworthy and reliable. There is no need to have a completely broken self to follow the leadership of the spirit. One’s spirit and soul are different but inseparable from each other. When speaking of the self, Jia referred to the whole person. ‘The self is my biggest enemy, the traitor in my spirit, the evil one’s tool, the idol of human

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<sup>217</sup> Watchman Nee, *The Release of the Spirit* (New York: Christian Fellowship Publishers, 2000), 23-5.

<sup>218</sup> For Nee, every regenerated believer would experience a certain period of time called ‘dark night’, when one has forsaken the self, but God has not revealed anything in his or her spirit yet. ‘But the difficulty with many of us is that dark night. The Lord graciously laid me aside once in my life for a number of months and put me, spiritually, into utter darkness. It was almost as though he had forsaken me, almost as though nothing was going on and I had really come to the end of everything. ...., It will seem as though nothing is happening; as though everything you valued is slipping from your grasp, there confronts you a blank wall with no door in it. ...., Lie quiet. All is in darkness, but it is only for a night. It must indeed be a full night, but that is all’. See in Nee, *The Normal Christian Life*, 264-5.

life.<sup>219</sup> Even though Jia was talking about the negative impact of the interrelatedness of the three parts here, this reveals that the self is not simply confined to the realm of soul. The possible fusion of one's soul/self and the spiritual life of Christ that dwells in one's spirit is the anthropological foundation of Jia's ideal of Christ-human. A Christ human would display not only the absolute obedience to God's will, but also the beauty of his or her spiritualized reason, affection and moral deeds. Due to his stress on the interrelatedness among the three parts, Jia's anthropology prevents his spirituality getting caught in the pessimistic impasse of the mystical trajectory, like Nee. The holistic feature of anthropology is in harmony with his perfectionism in spirituality.

### 3.3 Holiness Pneumatology

According to Jia, the foundation for spiritual growth consists in communication with the Holy Spirit, who resides in the spirit. Understanding the person of the Holy Spirit properly is the starting point of one's spiritual growth.

Regarding believers' communication with the Holy Spirit, we should first pay attention so that the Holy Spirit is not simply a kind of spiritual ability of God, or spiritual power. He is a person. ....Saints and the Holy Spirit can communicate intimately indeed. If the Holy Spirit is not a Person, then it would be hard to explain this.<sup>220</sup>

Seen from the anthropological perspective, the tripartite composition makes it possible for believers to have immediate communication with God. Jia believed that

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<sup>219</sup> Jia, *Wanquan Jiufa*, 132.

<sup>220</sup> Jia Yuming, *Lingxiu Rike*[*Daily Devotional Lectures*] (Taipei: Gan lan ji jin hui chu ban she, 1994), 102.

our spirit, soul and body were made in accordance with the structure of the holy temple, which has three layers. When God created humans, He separated a special place in us for the residence of the Holy Spirit. What is noteworthy is that Jia used three English prepositions while describing how the Holy Spirit relates to us. First, the Holy Spirit stays *with* us, (John 14:16). This means the Holy Spirit will help us at any time. Secondly, the Holy Spirit is *upon* us. (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8). This refers to that we can display the power of Holy Spirit in our lives. Finally, the Holy Spirit is *in* us. (John 14:17) This points out that we are the Holy Spirit's residence. Therefore, Jia emphasized, the Holy Spirit should have absolute authority over the whole person. 'He is the master in our heart rather than a guest; He is the priority rather than the inferior; He should employ us rather than be at our disposal.'<sup>221</sup> Jia's use of English words in his writing is intriguing. To him, preaching the Christian message is of paramount importance. Rather than trying to explain the concept of the Holy Spirit, which was foreign to Chinese culture, with language that is familiar to Chinese people, he chose to employ English prepositions. Jia's approach here perhaps indicates that the foremost task of his theologizing did not consciously consist in interpreting Christianity in the context of China with Chinese cultural elements, or making Christian faith seem compatible with Chinese culture. Instead, Jia's mission, at least in the early twentieth century, was expressing Christian teaching as a true message. Moreover, using English in his writing also shows his active attitude to embracing Western culture to some extent. To him at this point English is the best carrier of the precise truth of God.

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<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

As a dispensationalist, Jia laid special stress on the importance of the Holy Spirit, particularly in realizing entire sanctification. He pointed out that the biggest ministry and merit of the Holy Spirit is that He is the witness to Jesus (John 15:26). That is why He is called the Holy Spirit of truth (John 1:17; 16:13). Moreover, Jia believed that since it is now the dispensation of the Holy Spirit today, when the power of the Holy Spirit is particularly prominent, His main and special ministry consists in sanctifying believers. This includes three steps: enabling us to be regenerate, teaching us the truth, and assisting us to become holy.<sup>222</sup>

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is to complete God's gracious salvation in the human heart. He bestows the life of God through Jesus Christ on humans and makes transformation happen in the human heart. So, humans can have a new heart, new character, and new life. This life will keep growing until it is holy and good.<sup>223</sup>

The work of the Holy Spirit is the foundation for individual spiritual maturity. To obtain the state of entire sanctification, Jia emphasized that believers must have the experience of spiritual baptism (*ling xi*).

Unfortunately, there are many believers who talk about the way of regeneration all the time, but do not pursue the grace of spiritual baptism. They do not know this spiritual gift, and spiritual power is the gift which believers should and must have. It is also the achievement which the Holy Spirit would like to produce and will achieve.<sup>224</sup>

The idea of spiritual baptism in Jia's thinking can be understood as a 'second blessing' in one's spiritual development. It happens after regeneration in the process of pursuing entire sanctification. It marked a more advanced stage of believer's spiritual experience. Jia pointed out that having the experience of spiritual baptism is

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<sup>222</sup> *Ibid*, 105.

<sup>223</sup> Jia Yuming, *Shen dao xue*, vol.3, 127.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, 233.

different from the disciples' experience of the Holy Spirit in John 20:22, where they just received the Holy Spirit but were not filled with spiritual power by the Holy Spirit. That is why Jesus told them in Luke 24:49 that 'I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.' Jia believed that the experience of the Holy Spirit that the disciples had before Pentecost should be differentiated from that which they had afterwards. It is only after Pentecost that they were filled by the power of the Holy Spirit. Since then, they had a share of God's character, 'their body, heart and spirit were all penetrated and filled by the Holy Spirit' <sup>225</sup>

Jia believed that since we are living in the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, which is also called the dispensation of the Pentecost, we should live differently from those who lived before Pentecost.<sup>226</sup> Also, Jia stressed that the experience of spiritual baptism is not confined to mature believers but is available to everyone.

Some people said that believers who gained this gift of spiritual baptism must have been those who had noble spiritual morality. How dare ordinary believers have this extravagant hope? They did not know that every believer can obtain this spiritual gift...At Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came, were not all the people, man, women, old and young, baptized by the Spirit and filled by the Spirit?<sup>227</sup>

Moreover, according to Jia, Jesus also experienced the baptism of the Spirit, which is different from the baptism of water. Jesus set an example for our spiritual experience. 'The Son of God, born from the Holy Spirit through the virgin girl, after being baptized by the water in the Jordan River, was also especially baptised by the

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<sup>225</sup> Jia also quoted many verses from the Bible as the evidence for the spiritual baptism: Act 1:4, Act 11:15-16, 1 Corinthians 12:13, Titus 3:5-6, Luke 1:15, Act 2: 4, Act 6:3, Act 11:24, etc. See in Jia, *Shen dao xue*, vol.3, 234-5.

<sup>226</sup> Jia, *Shen dao xue*, vol.3, 236.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, 238.

Spirit. He is not only the representative of us, but also the exemplar for us.’<sup>228</sup>

Further, Jia believed that since Jesus saw heaven was open after the Spirit descended and alighted on Him in Matthew 3:16, every believer who experienced spiritual baptism should have a dramatic spiritual experience like this.<sup>229</sup>

Also, after Jesus was baptised by the Spirit, he clearly heard the voice from heaven saying ‘This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased’ (Matthew 3:17). This manifests that not only believers’ eyes were brightened, but also their spiritual ears were opened suddenly, as long as they were baptised by the Spirit. So, they can hear the good news from heaven.<sup>230</sup>

Even though Jia pointed out that this spiritual gift of spiritual baptism is from God, ‘The origin of spiritual gift is the triune God,’ believers also need to make effort and prepare themselves to obtain it.<sup>231</sup> According to Jia, there are four steps. First, ‘empty the mind.’ To have a clear mind, believers should repent and get rid of all the pollution of sin. Forsaking our own prejudices and desires is vital.<sup>232</sup> This is because the main obstacle believers face in the process of sanctification is selfishness, which we will discuss at length in the next section. Second, ‘sacrifice everything.’ This means to present one’s empty body, soul and spirit onto the alter at God’s disposal. Thirdly, ‘pray genuinely.’ Because God said, ‘How much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!’ (Luke 11:13) Fourth, ‘trust and obey.’ Since one believes the fact that he or she has already received the Holy Spirit, then they should follow the will of the Spirit and let Him complete His ministry freely.<sup>233</sup> Jia also summarised the experience of being filled by the Holy Spirit into six

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<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*,239.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*,240.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*,244.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*,244-5.

acts: 'thirst, come, drink, trust, flow, glorify.' Believers should pursue the experience of spiritual baptism like they are thirsty for water, and then they approach God and receive God's gift. The more they experience the Spirit, the fuller their life becomes. Eventually, if they aim at glorifying God, they will obtain the gift of being filled by the Holy Spirit.<sup>234</sup> This spiritual journey described by Jia greatly underscored human agency in the process of realizing entire sanctification.

Based on the individual communication with the Holy Spirit, since our spiritual life shares the same origin, believers can naturally communicate with each other spiritually as well. The work of the Holy Spirit lays the foundation for our fellowship as well. Jia pointed out that though we are from different countries, have different cultural backgrounds, and are in different social statuses, as long as we regard Jesus as our eldest brother and follow the will of our heavenly Father, we are brothers and sisters in the spiritual realm and there is no difference between us.<sup>235</sup> Further, Jia emphasized that because we share the same spiritual life, we should observe the command of love. The love of believers originated from the love of God. As the heart of God is love, every individual who is born from God should regard God's heart as his or her own heart.<sup>236</sup> God's spiritual life and love to others should naturally flow from within.

Seen from our discussion above, because Jia was a dispensationalist, the Holy Spirit played a critical role in his spirituality. The work of the Holy Spirit features in different stages of believer's spiritual development. The spirit is the foundation for

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<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, 245.

<sup>235</sup> Jia, *Lingxiu Rike*, 109.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

regeneration, the indispensable assistance in sanctification, and the necessity in achieving entire sanctification. The dramatic experience of spiritual baptism is the prerequisite for the realisation of human perfection. For Jia, since we are living in the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, the state of being filled by the Spirit is attainable for every believer. Like his contemporaries such as Watchman Nee, Jia's pneumatology shows a great influence from the theology of the American Holiness Movement. His emphasis on believers' experience of the spiritual baptism as a 'second blessing,' dramatic experience of being filled by the Spirit, and the pursuit for entire sanctification all shows great similarities with the Holiness teachings of his day. Moreover, Jia's exposition on the Holy Spirit shows his positive attitude toward adopting Western culture while preaching Christian teaching to Chinese people. Particularly, his using of English words to aid theological explanation demonstrates the influence of Western theology in his theologizing. After clarifying Jia's understanding of the human condition and the foundation of spiritual growth, next we will discuss Jia's view on sin as the hinderance to obtaining full salvation.

### **3.4 An Organic Hamartiology**

The holistic characteristics of Jia's tripartite anthropology made him understand sin in an organic way and distinguished his hamartiology from the view of his contemporaries like Nee. Both Jia and Nee adopted the Augustinian view of original sin. They understood sin as violation to God's divine law and emphasized the legal meaning of sin. However, in terms of the impact of sin, Jia tended to demonstrate its influence on the whole person rather than mainly focusing on the soul. Moreover, Jia elucidated on the cause, manifestations, and consequences of sin as well as the main obstacle in the process of sanctification by adopting the concept of selfishness

(*si*), which was a vital idea in neo-Confucianism when understanding wickedness. Jia's view of sin is different from the neo-Confucian one in that it stressed the legal implications of sin as a trespass upon God's law and total corruption of human nature. Yet, his illustration of selfishness as the root of sin and as the main hindrance during sanctification, shows a neo-Confucian understanding of the cause of immorality. Jia described human sinful state with the idea of petty/small self (*xiao wo*), a person of self-centredness or partiality. This is very similar to the Confucian concept of *xiao ren* (small or vulgar person), who is morally uncultivated and selfish, and the opposite of *junzi* (noble person). And Jia's pursuit for sanctification is in line with the virtue of impartiality as the neo-Confucian goal of moral cultivation too. Jia's understanding of sin highlights human responsibility for the corruption of the world and the public concern of Jia's spirituality.

### 3.4.1 God's Divine Law

First, Jia pointed out that the original cause of sin did not consist in God. Rather, humans should take full responsibility for their fall.<sup>237</sup> Jia believed that Adam as the original man (*yuan ren*) had extraordinary capabilities and was fully aware of his duty to obey God. However, his betrayal began with disbelief due to selfishness and pride.

Regarding our original ancestor's transgression, even though it was related to Satan, the biggest cause was that humans indulged in their own fault, as it was not true that because of Satan's spell humans were forced to sin. Rather, due to [their] personal desires and emotions, they were willing to betray God and committed sins. Are they not pitiable?<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> Jia, *Shen dao xue* vol.2, 142.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

Why is sin offensive to God? Jia believed that sin should be understood in light of God's law. Jia's understanding of sin is in accordance with the teaching of Augustine. It has a legal and moral meaning. God's law shows His character, and on the negative side, it reflects human sins. 'To talk about the sin of humans, [we] cannot but talk about God's law and its nature first.'<sup>239</sup> The law should be the principle for human behavior. Jia classified God's law into three categories: the law of nature (*ziran lü*), the law of morality (*daode lü*) and the law of freedom (*ziyou lü*). The first one regulates the operation of the natural world and is the object of science. The second concerns human natural judgement of right or wrong. It is not only recorded in the stone tablets and scripture, but also embedded in the human heart. It is a moral embodiment of the divine image in humanity.

God created humans according to His own image. [Humans] were endowed with the highest divine disposition and innate heavenly goodness (*tian liang*). There is a natural unwritten law inserted in the human heart. It can distinguish between right and wrong, good and evil, just like God. If this divine image did not disappear due to sinful desires, then this moral law does not need to be stated repeatedly or reenacted. (Romans 2:14-16)<sup>240</sup>

Thus, according to Psalm 119: 96, all creatures which have reason come under the law of morality.<sup>241</sup> Since humans are capable of judging right and wrong, they are responsible for their sins. The third law is the highest among the three laws.

This law of freedom is that the spirit, soul and body are all set free in Christ. This means having the freedom of the Son, the freedom in the truth, the freedom of walking in the light, and the freedom of walking

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<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, 154.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*

in the will of God. Moreover, it is the freedom in the spirit. There are no laws to prohibit spiritual affairs.<sup>242</sup>

The law of freedom goes beyond the law of morality. It is based on Christ's redemptive work. Jia's understanding of sin emphasized the total depravity of human nature and their inability to reach God. Hence, humanity is in desperate need of divine help. According to Jia, 'God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law,' (Galatians 4:4) and Christ as the representative of all humanity, the second Adam, has already satisfied the law with absolute observance to God's law and atoning work on the cross, 'For Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes' (Romans 10:4). Therefore, 'All the laws have been fulfilled in Christ, thus, since believers are in Christ, they are not under the law anymore, rather, [they] are under grace.'<sup>243</sup> In Jia's view, believers have been transferred from the reign of law to the power of grace, also known as the law of the grace of Christ (*Jidu en lü*). He described it as 'a law which is not a law' (*fei lüfa de lüfa*). The first 'law' designates the law of Christ, the second the law of morality. Jia based his differentiation between the two laws on Paul's words, 'though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law.' (1 Corinthians 9:21)<sup>244</sup> Here Jia showed his influence from Cyrus Ingerson Scofield (1843-1921) and Dispensationalism. Jia believed that grace is higher than the law of morality. Also, he put grace and law in opposition to each other.

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<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*

As stated by Dr. Scofield, the reason why grace transcends the law is that the law is God's order, whereas grace is God's request for humanity. The law judges humans' sin, grace forgives humans' sin. The law curses sinners, grace redeems sinners. The law makes humans die, grace gives humans life. The law seals human mouths in front of God, grace enlightens to praise in front of God. The law keeps humans away from God, grace draws them close to God. The law says to hate your enemies, grace says to love your enemies. The law [teaches] salvation by working, grace [teaches] salvation by grace. The law condemns the righteous as guilty, grace justified sinners as righteous. The law requires humans to justify themselves, grace means that through Jesus sinners became justified. The law [teaches that] sheep sacrifice for the shepherd, grace [teaches that] the shepherd forsakes his life for the sheep. The law [teaches] gaining blessings because of merits, grace [teaches] gaining blessings as a gift. In a word, it is impossible to realize a perfect state and have eternal life by relying on the merits of law. It is only through Jesus' merits that [we] can have full salvation and gain glorious life.<sup>245</sup>

According to Jia, humans are fully responsible for their sinful behaviors, and the three types of God's laws have provided principles for every dimension of human life. In the light of these criteria, human sins can be defined clearly. All the human words, actions, as well as thoughts that violate God's laws are called sins.<sup>246</sup>

Regarding sins, there are two categories: original sin (*yuan zui*) and individual sins (*ben zui*). Original sin came into the world since the ancestors betrayed God and ate the forbidden fruit. Everyone after the ancestors inherits a sinful nature.

The original sin is that human nature has deviated from the heavenly nature of the original man. They do not obey God's law and are not able to do good. This evil nature is passed on to their descendants from generation to generation.<sup>247</sup>

Thus, humanity's godly nature has been damaged and becomes evil. No one is exempt from this corruption. In addition, there are individual sins

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<sup>245</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.

committed by each person. Any behavior or thought that does not conform to God's law falls into this category.<sup>248</sup>

As long as humans are under the reign of sin, they are separate from God. Jia described the division between humans and God as three walls, sinful customs (*zui su*), sin (*zui nie*) and the law of sin (*zui lü*).<sup>249</sup> Sinful customs are the periphery of sin. It refers to the sinful environment in which we live. Often local culture or customs are the first obstacle for conversion. Jia mentioned, for example, that ancestor reverence has become a moral obligation for Chinese people. It seems to be immoral for them to not offer sacrifices to ancestors (*ji zu*).<sup>250</sup> This kind of culture has become a barrier and hinders people to accept to Christian teaching. However, even though someone has left a sinful custom, he or she could still be far away from God's salvation. To reconcile with God, the sin of humanity, which is the second wall, must be dealt with. This wall concerns people's legal position in front of God. The only way to do away with the sin of humanity is to rely on Christ's blood and cross. Also, Jia pointed out that having faith in Christ is the only way to demolish this wall.

Admittedly, the wall of human sin is extremely high, and it separates humans and God. And no one can pull down this wall. All the religions in the world are unable to tear down this wall, even though they have tried every way, taught different forms of ascetic practices, and made all kinds of effort. After trying for ages, all ended up being discouraged and frustrated, and only sighed helplessly.<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, 179.

<sup>249</sup> Jia, *Wanquan Jiufa*, 67.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*

For Jia, the way for humans to obtain salvation cannot be replaced by any other religions or moral systems. Removing the wall of sin was also called cleansing sinful pollution (*chu zui wu*). After dealing with the wall of sin and gaining a holy position in God's eyes, the next step is to break away from the third wall — the law of sin. This is the second wall separating humans from God. The law of sin is the cause of human sins. Believers cannot live a victorious life without tearing down this wall.<sup>252</sup> According to Jia, as long as these three walls are removed, one can reach the situation of demolishing the sinful body (*mie zui shen*), namely, the state of Christ-human.

### 3.4.2 Selfishness

Regarding the cause of sin, Jia believed that it was due to selfishness (*si*) that humans sinned. And his teaching shows a holistic understanding of sin compared with Nee's. According to Jia, all kinds of human sins can be understood as a particular expression of selfishness, and sin has permeated the whole person. Jia highlighted that even though many sinned because of bodily desires, the body itself was not the cause of sin. The constant battle between bodily desires and the spirit does not mean that the human body is sinful. If that was the case, according to Jia, then God would become the root of sin, as God created human bodies directly or indirectly.<sup>253</sup> Humans cannot blame God for their sinful physical desires. We should not blame or despise the body for its lust either. Bodily sin is just a manifestation of selfishness. Also, selfishness is not just confined to the soul alone. For Nee, selfishness is mainly reflected in the soul. Yet for Jia, the three components are all

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<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, 71-2.

<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.

involved. Selfishness has multiple expressions when one's environment varies. It needs to be existentially understood. Jia expounded on selfishness in relation to individual affairs. For example,

Those who are filled with the selfishness of physical desires, they are lustful towards beautiful appearance, and greedy towards food. Those who are filled with selfishness of ambitions, they are avaricious towards worldly possessions, and covetous towards power...if one only has a heart of egoism and disregards others, then all kinds of desires will rise inevitably, such as not fearing God, not loving people, indulging in desires and emotions, and committing all manner of crimes.<sup>254</sup>

It was selfishness that let sin enter the world as well. Our ancestor was enticed and committed sin because of self-interested desires: 'your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' (Genesis 3:5)

Consequently, For Jia, above all, humans lost their spiritual life. 'The true image in the human spirit turned dark.'<sup>255</sup> Because of death in the spirit, the entire person was affected. '[Their] wills are weakened, desires polluted, eyes of the heart blind, and spiritual power lost. [They] became dead people in sin.'<sup>256</sup> The connection among the three parts of human composition features in Jia's hamartiology. For Jia, the impact of spiritual death concerns every component of a person. Jia is different from Nee in believing that one's soul and body would not stay free from the direct influence of spiritual death. The soul in particular will not overdevelop and dominate the person due to the lack of rule from the spirit. Rather, the soul and body would be damaged and weakened and therefore became much less capable. As a matter of course, one's bodily death would follow the spiritual one. The power of death would

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<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, 169.

<sup>255</sup> Jia, *Shen dao xue* vol.2, 148.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*

extend to the physical aspect of human life. Humans would suffer from illness and the temporality of their life. 'Their strong bodies became short-life temporary products, which are feeble and age everyday.'<sup>257</sup> Since humans lost their spiritual life, they became under the authority of sin. Thus, sinful desires dominate the whole person. 'Everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin' (John 8:34) Jia quoted. The last consequence of Adam's fall concerns his descendants. Everyone after Adam inherited his evil nature and original sin.<sup>258</sup>

Nee mainly explained the influence of sin on the three distinct components of human composition. But Jia spoke of the influence of sin in an organic way. According to Jia, after the Fall, the human condition can be described in the following four dimensions: the self (*zi wo*), the inborn self (*lao wo*), the old self (*jiu wo*) and the petty self (*xiao wo*).<sup>259</sup> The first one refers to the person who has not had Christ. It is the embodiment of human selfishness. The second one refers to the person whom we inherited from Adam. This inborn self is also called 'the old Adam' (*lao yadang*). It committed sins in the first Adam and therefore is under the death penalty. 'Humanity became a sinner in Adam, a person who died in sins.'<sup>260</sup> Seen from corrupted human nature, one can be called an old self. The Old self is an old person (*jiu ren*). Jia pointed out three places in the Bible where humans are referred to as '*jiu ren*.' For example, 'You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to clothe yourselves with the new self, created according to the likeness of God in true

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<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>259</sup> Jia, *Wanquan Jiufa*, 132-4.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

righteousness and holiness' (Ephesians 4:22-24). This old self is the main obstacle in one's path of growing into the image of Christ. The petty self is the person who is ignorant of the existence of God and others, and so lives a narrowminded and self-centred life. 'This petty self only knows oneself and does not know the existence of God; only knows oneself and does not know other people, only knows the body, and does not know the spirit...The centre of his life and work is no more than himself, everything is for himself.'<sup>261</sup>

Jia's understanding of the cause of sin shares great similarities with Wang's neo-Confucian viewpoint in this regard, even though Wang is different from Jia in believing that the nature of humanity is originally good. According to Wang, the fundamental issue with humans consists in the existence of selfishness. Selfishness has veiled the original sagely mind of humanity. In terms of self-transformation, like Jia, Wang stressed eradication of selfishness (*si*). In Wang's essay 'Pulling up the Root and Stopping up the Source,' he pointed out the root of evil in the world and indicated that the ultimate goal for moral cultivation is recovering the original perfect sagely mind.

Now the mind of everybody is at first not different from that of the sage. Only because it is obstructed by selfishness and blocked by material desires, what was originally great becomes small and what was originally penetrating becomes obstructed. Everyone has his own selfish view, to the point where some regard their fathers, sons, and brothers as enemies. The Sage worried over this. He therefore extended his humanity which makes him form one body with Heaven, Earth, and all things, to teach the world, so as to enable people to overcome their selfishness, remove their obstructions, and recover that which is common to the substance of the minds of all men.<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.

<sup>262</sup> Wang, *Instructions for Practical Living*, 118-9.

Therefore, the only path towards recovering the penetrating sagely mind is to ‘overcome selfish ideas and restore principle’ (*sheng si fu li*).<sup>263</sup> However, Wang did not clarify the origin of selfish desires. Their ontological ground is not clear. Only embodiments of selfishness are observed in concrete situations. Even though Wang did not use the word ‘sin’ to refer to individual sins and only referred to them as various manifestations of selfishness, both Jia and Wang grasped and elucidated selfishness/the root of evil in a tangible and experiential way.

Even though Jia regarded selfishness as the root of sin as well as the fundamental problem of humanity like Wang, it is noteworthy that his understanding of sin and selfishness has a critical aspect that is absent in Wang’s. In Jia’s thinking, sin and selfishness carry a legal meaning, the violation of God’s divine law. Human disobedience stresses the completely corrupted nature of humanity and their need for divine grace, Christ’s redemptive work, from God. This contrasts neo-Confucians like Wang Yangming who only talked of selfishness as an obstacle for an individual to become a noble person (*jun zi*).<sup>264</sup> Average people, who are considered selfish, are preoccupied with their individual needs and desires whereas noble people strive for the welfare of others and even the universe. ‘The Chinese word *si* means, in its most fundamental sense, ‘partial’; hence, *zi si* means ‘partial’ to oneself. The opposite of *si* is *gong*, ‘impartial.’...The goal of the sage is to expand away from the narrowness of the self into the broader process of nature.’<sup>265</sup> Hence, for Wang, humans are not born sinful/evil and are able to eradicate selfishness without any

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<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>264</sup> Chan Wing-tsit, trans., *Reflections on Things at Hand: The neo-Confucian Anthology* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), 39-42, 163. See in Chow, *Theosis*, 117.

<sup>265</sup> Brian Bruya, ‘Emotion, Desire, and Numismatic Experience in René Descartes, Zhu Xi, and Wang Yangming,’ *Ming Qing Yanjiu* (2001):57. See in Chow, *Theosis*, 117.

help from outside. The different implication of selfishness in Jia and Wang's thinking shows an opposing perception of human nature.

Seen from the comparison between Jia and Wang's understanding of selfishness, Jia's view of sin shows influence from both the Augustinian doctrine of original sin and neo-Confucian understanding of immorality. Regarding the cause of sin, Jia's interpretation is in general in line with the neo-Confucian position. Jia pointed out that it was because of the partial ends desired by the self (*zi wo*) that humans transgressed God's law. 'The indulgence of the whole humanity was caused by nothing but the action of self. The misery of human life was due to no more than the corruption of self. The biggest tragedy of all humanity was simply because of the activities of self.'<sup>266</sup> Jia also described this self-centred and partial state as the petty self (*xiao wo*), which is in accordance with the neo-Confucian idea of small person (*xiao ren*). If one is not aware of the existence of anything else including God apart from oneself, one is living in a manner of the petty self. The sinful and selfish state of a human is mainly embodied in not knowing God and not caring for others. The petty self is a person of ignorance and partiality, the opposite of the neo-Confucian pursuit of impartiality.

Jia believed that not only does humanity suffer from Adam's fall, but the spiritual realm as well as the natural world are affected as well. God was pleased by His creation. However, because of humanity's failure, He had to initiate his redeeming and restoring work. 'As humans indulged in sin unexpectedly, God would never have a peaceful time in his heart with this world, which is full of sinful

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<sup>266</sup> Jia, *Wanquan Jiufa*, 132.

corruption, sorrow, sadness, illness and death.<sup>267</sup> Also, angels felt sorry for humans as well. ‘Humans are part of the spiritual realm as well. In this realm, since one part failed, how could it not impact the entire realm?’<sup>268</sup> In addition, nature suffers from all kinds of natural calamities because of the Fall too. Seen from the immediate impacts of sin on different dimensions of the world, the world is an organic whole, and humans are the medium between the divine and nature. Apart from their own corruption, humans are responsible for the depravity of the world as well. Because of this organic connection with the world, in addition to individual salvation Jia taught that humans are obligated to societal reform and nation building as well. In other words, their spirituality also has public, world-related goals. His concerns for the broad human society differentiate himself from pessimistic mystics like Nee, whose attentions are confined to the personal spiritual realm. Thus, Jia’s spirituality concerns not only individual spiritual growth and the relatedness of their life to God, but also the dimension of social responsibilities as well. His view of sin is in accordance with his life-long devotion to Christian spiritual education and participation in the Three-Self movement.

Jia’s hamartiology echoes his holistic tripartite anthropology in that all three parts of human composition are impacted by spiritual death at the Fall. Jia can be distinguished from Nee in thinking that, as a consequence of human spiritual death, the soul was weakened instead of becoming overdeveloped. Also selfishness, the root of human sins, is not just confined to the realm of soul. Rather, it overshadows the whole person and has its

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<sup>267</sup> Jia, *Shen dao xue* vol.2, 149.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid.*, 150.

multiple expressions in varying situations. Again, Jia's elucidation of sin shares great commonalities with Wang's thoughts on wickedness. Both of them consider selfishness the cause of human evil and comprehended it in a tangible way. Since selfishness needs to be understood existentially, believers need to make efforts in every individual affair to overcome its affects. In addition, as humans are responsible for not only the depravity of humanity, but also for the corruption of the world, apart from personal spiritual growth, Jia's spirituality also underscores one's social responsibilities and the neo-Confucian pursuit of impartiality. In accordance with his hamartiology, Jia's approach of sanctification is also an experiential one with concern for public life.

### **3.5 An Experiential Theology of the Cross**

To deal with human sins, the embodiment of selfishness, progress in spiritual growth and to fulfil their social responsibilities, Jia stressed the importance of holy living. Sanctification is the focal point of his theologizing. From the believer's perspective, the only way to grow into the likeness of Christ is to have subjective experience of the cross. 'The depth of our experience of the cross decides how far we have run in our spiritual courses and how mature our life has developed.'<sup>269</sup>

The cross plays a crucial role in Jia's theologizing. He developed his spirituality based on his theology of the cross. For Jia, salvation is the central theme of the whole Bible. 'What the Bible teaches, is only things that concern our salvation,

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<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

for the whole Bible is talking about a full salvation.<sup>'270</sup> Jia interpreted the Bible from an anthropocentric perspective. Christian faith is essentially about God's saving scheme for humanity. Jesus accomplished His redemptive work on the cross, hence the cross indicates Jesus' death and resurrection, 'it is the centre of salvation.'<sup>271</sup> The cross, the paramount tool that God used in redemption, serves as the foundation and core of Christian faith and life.

First of all, the cross is the centre of the Bible. 'The red line of Jesus' blood is throughout the whole Bible from the beginning to the end', 'If there were no cross, there would be no Bible.'<sup>272</sup> Believers should be able to see Jesus's sacrifice in every page of the Bible. Also, the cross is the centre of salvation. Christ's death and resurrection weighs the most in salvation. And the cross shows His death on the one hand, it manifests His resurrection on the other. 'It can even be said that salvation is the cross. Where there is the cross, there is salvation. If there was no cross, there would be no salvation.'<sup>273</sup> In addition, the cross is the centre of the believers' life. Christ's redemptive work on the cross reconciled humanity with God and liberated us from the reign of sin. After we become God's legitimate children through Christ's work on the cross, we need the cross to help us grow into the image of Christ as well. Only the power of the cross can transform us into a Christ-human. 'In our life that was redeemed, transformed and dead, the holiness and glory of his life can be displayed.'<sup>274</sup> Apart from individual spiritual growth, the cross is also the centre of ministry. Jia emphasized that the focal point of preaching should be on the cross, as

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<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

the cross bears the message of Christ's death and resurrection instead of worldly knowledge. Jia quoted, 'May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.'

(Galatians 6:14) Finally, the cross is the centre of the full kingdom. Jesus is not only the centre of the church on earth, but also the centre of the kingdom to come. 'As a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will.' (Ephesians 1:10-11)

'This cross is also the centre of the universe, as it is the ladder in Jacob's dream, which is the meeting point between the heaven and earth.'<sup>275</sup> It is Christ's victory on the cross that did away with the enmity between humans and God. In terms of the divine-human relationship, according to Jia, the cross bears two dimensions of meaning, horizontal and vertical. The vertical dimension displays the union between God and humanity in spirit. This union is a mystical yet wonderful dynamic between divine and human life. Because of the Fall, humans became enemies to God and human life had nothing to do with divinity. Yet, thanks to Christ's redemptive work on the cross, our spiritual life can be restored. What Christ has achieved on the cross reconciled and connected humans to God in a mystical way. 'Christianity is life and the experience of life. What Christ bestowed on us essentially is life...Thank God! We got to communicate with God through Jesus' cross, as the communication of the cross is the communication of life.'<sup>276</sup> It was because of the

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<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*, 142-3.

success of the cross, that divine life was poured into human life. In Jia's term, 'divine life is in human life.'<sup>277</sup> Christ will form in believers' hearts. The life of Christ will become our life.<sup>278</sup> On the foundation of the existence of divine life in human life, 'human life is in divine life.'<sup>279</sup> This state means that human life manifests divine life. Namely, holiness should be displayed in every aspect of human lives. 'Practically, that human life is in divine life means that I am in Christ.'<sup>280</sup> Furthermore, since divine life is in human life, and human life is in divine life, divine and human life actually merge with each other.

It is better to say that human life became divine life than saying divine life and human life communicate with and influence each other. Like Paul said: 'it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me.' He also said, 'for whom I am again in the pain of childbirth until Christ is formed in you.' This is that divine life became human life; human life—spiritual life became divine life...We can look at how Jesus is in nature both God and human...therefore, it indicates that divine life is in our life, also our life is in divine life...Even though it is odd that human life becomes divine life, this has been substantiated in believers' spiritual life.<sup>281</sup>

The horizontal dimension shows the reciprocal faith and love between God and humans. Yet, these interactions happened in sequence. They were firstly initiated by God alone. The first step is that God loved humans, 'We love because he first loved us.' (1 John 4:19) 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.' (John 3:16) God's love for humans is the foundational aspect of this connection. For a relationship requires mutual

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<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*, 143.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>279</sup> *Ibid.*, 144.

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*

involvement, humans' response is indispensable as well. 'This wonderful salvation originated from God and was substantiated by humans' faith.'<sup>282</sup> This faith is called saving faith. Humans having faith in Christ completes this interaction. Yet this connection is just a basic relationship. A more advanced connection consists in God's faith and humans' love. 'For in him every one of God's promises is a 'Yes.' For this reason it is through him that we say the 'Amen,' to the glory of God.' (2 Corinthians 1:20) God is faithful to us. On the other hand, once believers have experienced God's love and faithfulness, it is natural for them to have a loving heart towards God. Love is a manifestation of faith. 'Only deep faith produces deep love.'<sup>283</sup> Furthermore, the deepest kind of divine-human relationship dwells in God's love out of his faithfulness and humans' faithfulness out of their love. God loves the world, yet He favoured some of his disciples in particular.<sup>284</sup> This kind of disciple pleases God and gains favour in His eyes. Hence, they are His beloved ones. From the human perspective, if one loves God deeply, one's faith must be deepened as well, therefore, one can rest in God. Resting in God means submitting everything to God. A person will rely on God completely and find the deepest satisfaction in Him rather than anywhere else. 'For I know the one in whom I have put my trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that day what I have entrusted to him.' (2 Timothy 1:12) This state of connection is being in union with God.<sup>285</sup> This intimate and

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<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.*, 146.

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*

wonderful union of Christ's and human life was called the 'rein of love and the rope of grace.'<sup>286</sup>

The cross not only has dealt with the hostility between humanity and God and has restored the loving divine-human relationship, but also plays a critical role in an individual's daily spiritual life. According to Jia, the cross mainly has three aspects of function. They are in accordance with the aforementioned three walls that separate humans from God. Each aspect deals with one wall—the aspect that cleansed sinful pollution, the aspect that removes sinful behaviours, and the aspect that demolishes the sinful body. The first one justifies sinners, the second sanctifies them, and the third makes them overcomers. To obtain a full salvation, a salvation of spirit, soul and body, one must go through all three of them in sequence.<sup>287</sup> However, each individual's experience of the cross could be in different depth.

What kind of Christians we are as believers, all depends on what kind of experience of the cross we have. As our experience of the cross can be shallow or deep, our [spiritual] life can be big or little, high or low. The spiritual path that believers have walked throughout their lifetime is nothing but experiencing the cross, or experiencing that Jesus has died for me, or that I have died with Jesus...[I] hope that, brothers and sisters in the Lord, you will use your spiritual eyes and observe to what extent you have experienced the cross. Our experience of the cross is actually not the same.<sup>288</sup>

Jia illustrated believers' experience with three kinds of cross with different textures and colors. The most fundamental and basic was described as a bronze cross. Believers obtain their legitimate position in front of God by

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<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>287</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

trusting the bronze cross of Christ. It is the cross that deals with our sin and reconciles us with God. It is made of bronze because it symbolizes the cross in the court of the tabernacle.

The cross in the court of the tabernacle is bronze according to its spiritual meaning. The bronze alter means that Jesus was judged for our sins...in the court of the tabernacle, not only were the altar and washing basin bronze, but also the bases of linen hangings around the court were bronze. (see in Exodus 27:8-19) This shows that it was on a bronze cross in the court that Jesus was judged for us, received the judgement that should be bore for sins, and undertook our penalty.<sup>289</sup>

Also, since Jesus has shed his blood on the cross for us, the color of this bronze cross is red.

Jesus shed his precious blood for me on this cross, his blood is different from that of cattle and sheep, it flowed out from his immeasurable loving heart..... A genuine Christian, who is a saved believer, must have experienced the Lord's precious blood.<sup>290</sup>

Believers' experience of his red bronze cross should be trusting and confessing all of our sins in front of the Lord. Since the Lord has already taken the death penalty for us, so we can be justified. In terms of Jia's view of sanctification, this stage of experience is called positional sanctification. In terms of spiritual growth, as long as one has put faith in the bronze cross of Christ, he or she has reached 'the stage of a true Israelite,<sup>291</sup> which means one has gained the life of Jesus and been saved. Having a share of Jesus' life differentiates believers from non-Christians, for Christians have already been regenerated, 'raised us up with him and seated us with him in the

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<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*, 147-8.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

heavenly places in Christ Jesus' (Ephesians 2:6). Jia called this stage of maturity 'the Lord lives in me.' However, even though believers have been set apart by their new life, in practice, they could still look like non-believers. In order to see a transformation in one's way of living and gain an abundant life, a deeper experience of the cross is needed.

The second step of experiencing the cross is called carrying the silver cross. This phase of experience should follow the action of trusting the bronze cross. Jia described this as 'experiencing the further salvation that we have obtained in the Lord.'<sup>292</sup> According to Exodus 26, the bases of the upright frames of the tabernacle were silver.

In this sanctuary, it seems that we can see a silver cross. The emphasis of this cross is redemption (*jiu shu*), which means that Jesus has paid the ransom for everyone of us. Israelites paid their ransom with silver, five shekels apiece (see in Numbers 3: 47). This indicates the ransom that Jesus has paid for us.<sup>293</sup>

Thanks to the silver cross, we are delivered from the reign of death. The silver cross is white. The white silver was not paid for the wages of sin, but for our sinful body. It does not concern our legal position in front of God but our spiritual life. Now we are redeemed and belong to God rather than ourselves. And carrying the silver cross means making the effort of sanctification, being willing to sacrifice for the Lord, removing selfishness and loving our neighbors.<sup>294</sup> The result of carrying the silver cross is identification with the death of Christ, which will remove our evil desires and

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<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

enable us to manifest holiness in our lives. Carrying the silver cross is daily life sanctification from an individual perspective. In Jia's term, this stage of life is called 'I live in the Lord,' and is an abundant life. In spite of this holy way of living, one's self has not died with the Lord on the cross yet. Hiding in the Lord is not enough. To gain full salvation, one still needs to go further.

The deepest experience of the cross is identification on the gold cross with Christ in His death. This means that one's sinful body has been destroyed. Thus, a person can enter full salvation. Since the inner sanctuary was overlaid with pure gold and the gold shows the power of the King, the experience of the gold cross symbolizes a victorious life. This gold cross is yellow, which displays God's glory.<sup>295</sup> Experiencing this dimension of the cross means entering the stage of entire sanctification. Jia called this 'lives of righteousness in the Lord.' Jia interpreted the meaning of 'righteousness' through making creative use of the structural feature of Chinese characters.

'Righteousness' is Jesus' name...As the Chinese character 'yi' (righteousness, 義) is composed by two characters: 'lamb' (*yang*, 羊) and 'I' (*wo*, 我). 'Lamb' can mean God's lamb, Jesus Christ is God's lamb, [the lamb] and I became one. The character 'righteousness,' on the one hand means that the righteousness of Jesus is manifested in me. 'For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin.' This reveals His righteousness even more. Namely, if it were not for my sins, Jesus' righteousness would not appear that great and perfect. His righteousness is showed not only in my sins, but also in my righteousness..... 'Righteousness' is the lamb and I, which means that I am Christized. Therefore, the true meaning of this character 'righteousness' is that Jesus' life has embodied in my life, or that my life has become Jesus' life, which means that I become righteousness, the righteousness of God's righteousness. (*yi zhong zhi yi*). The reason why I can become God's righteousness, the righteousness of God's righteousness, entirely consists in that I am in

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<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.

union with Christ and live in the Lord. A me who is in union with Christ and living in the Lord, is a me who has become righteousness, the righteousness of God's righteousness in me.<sup>296</sup>

According to Jia, once one has experienced the gold cross, one is a Christ-human. A Christ-human lives a Christized life, which is a life that is 'to the measure of the full stature of Christ' (Ephesians 4: 13).<sup>297</sup> Jia is radical in holding a perfectionist view that the goal of his spirituality goes beyond simply exhibiting the absolute leadership of spirit *over* self. To him the state 'living is Christ' is attainable. The death of self on the gold cross is in effect only the death of the old sinful self, who was dominated by selfishness. Hence, identification with His death on the cross does not mean degradation or elimination of self. What the gold cross does is to enable a thorough transformation of self. Based on Jia's holistic anthropology, since one's spirit, soul and body are all closely interrelated, a completely transformed self is a fusion of soul/self and the spiritual life of Christ. The disappearance of old self does not equal eradication of self. Rather, it means that one has been transformed into a new person, a genuine self (*zhen wo*) or a lamb self (*yang wo*) in Jia's term, who is as perfect as Christ. The fundamental reality of a genuine self is the life of Christ.<sup>298</sup>

In Jia's theologizing, there is no difference between that one has become the likeness of Christ and that one's self has been replaced by the character of Christ. When one is identical with Christ in terms of holiness, there is no distinction between self and Christ anymore. A Christ-human is

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<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.*, 283.

not someone whose self/soul is simply led by the spiritual life of Christ/spirit. Rather, a Christ-human's life is an outgrowth of Christ's life from within. This is the biggest difference between Jia's idea of Christ-human and Nee's notion of spiritual man. A spiritual man is one whose spirit acts as the ruler of the whole person and the soul and body function under the spirit's authority. It is the three parts working together *in a hierarchy* that guarantees a person's holy living. One's soul would not be transformed essentially by spiritual life. Whereas, a Christ-human functions organically. The impact of Christ's spiritual life penetrates every component of a person and restores them into their best forms. Rationalized spirit, spiritualized reason, and a holy body, each performs its own functions in their full capability in a godly way. In this way, the three parts can cooperate with each other inseparably, smoothly and harmoniously. Moreover, a Christ-human has not only a personal dimension as a genuine self or lamb self, but also a public or civic dimension as a great self (*da wo*). In accordance with his aforementioned concerns for the human society and fulfilment of social responsibilities, on the other side of the elimination of selfishness, Jia's idea of a more abundant life also includes fulfilling civic duties in the world.

A genuine Christian...is not who is unworldly (*chu shi*) and does nothing (*wu wei*). Even though Christian mindset and behaviours are beyond the world, they are not unworldly and inactive like Buddhists... [Christians] make effort in worldly affairs while having a spirit that transcends the world. One cannot be a person who is able to save the world without becoming a person who goes beyond the world. [The extent that] Christians can fulfil civil responsibilities is incomparable to ordinary citizens. The reason is that their work in the world is done with the spirit beyond the world.<sup>299</sup>

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<sup>299</sup> Jia, *Lingxiu Rike*, 305-6.

A great self, the embodiment of the social aspect of a Christ-human, is a selfless person who dies or lives for the Lord through dying or living for others. Like Jia said, ‘one lives in this world for nothing but glorifying God,’<sup>300</sup> having a servant and selfless heart towards the world outside of the self is an indispensable part of Jia’s spirituality. The social dimension of Jia’s spirituality distinguishes him from his contemporaries whose attitude toward the society and worldly affairs was passive and pessimistic such as Nee. Jia’s spirituality is unique in that individual spiritual growth is its focal point and inward revelation plays a critical role in one’s faith development; and yet the ultimate goal of his spirituality – the state of Christ-human, should be realized *in* the world. It dissolves the contradiction between being spiritual and being worldly. Therefore, it would be fair to call Jia an active mystic.

In this chapter we have looked at Jia’s anthropology, pneumatology, hamartiology and theology of the cross. Jia’s view of human composition is holistic. He believed that one’s spirit, soul and body interrelate to and cooperate with each other intimately. Therefore, the impact of sin shadows the whole person since the Fall. The soul did not overdevelop but weakened by sin. However, due to the connections between the three parts, at regeneration, the power of the spiritual life of Christ penetrates every part of a person as well. Hence, the three components can mutually transform each other into their full capacity. To Jia, the goal of sanctification is a complete transformation of the whole person, full salvation. Such a thorough

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<sup>300</sup> Jia, *Wanquan Jiufa*, 285.

transformation cannot happen without the work of the Holy Spirit. As a dispensationalist, Jia held that we are living in the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, where the power of the Spirit is the most prominent. And the work of the Spirit laid the foundation for our entire sanctification. On the human side, we should strive for spiritual growth and the experience of spiritual baptism, which marks a higher level of spiritual life. No one can obtain the state of entire sanctification without having the experience of being filled by the Spirit. Jia's emphasis on having dramatic experience of the Spirit as a 'second blessing' in believers' spiritual development showed his influence from the American Holiness Movement of his day. Also, his using of English words while clarifying the relationship between the Holy Spirit and believers shows that his understanding of theological concepts was shaped by Western theology. His embracing of Western teaching here as a source of clarity is different from his attitude toward Western influence at a later phase of his life.

Further, from the individual perspective, to gain entire sanctification, believers should have personal experience of the cross. Once one has obtained the state of perfection, he or she is a Christ-human. A Christ-human's spirit, soul and body all operate in their full capacity and cooperate with one another in harmony. The state of Christ-human is wonderful for it is the realization of the perfect image of Christ. It is not anti-intellectual as it displays the cooperation of spiritualized reason and rationalized spirit. Also, for Jia, individual spiritual growth is not just confined to the personal realm, fulfilling public duties is also an essential part. Jia's spirituality offers an

alternative understanding of tripartite anthropology and entire sanctification to the prevailing view of Nee's.

So far through employing the hermeneutical tool of comparative theology, we have revealed the distinctiveness of Jia's tripartite anthropology and entire sanctification. Even though Jia inherited theological ideas from the West and dedicated himself to preaching spiritual salvation of individual souls, he understood and formulated those theological elements with a Chinese mind. In the process of his theologizing, an encounter happened between Jia's neo-Confucian active mystical mind and his Christian theological resources. Jia engaged his Christian beliefs with the mystical mind-heart manner of thinking in a constructive way. The neo-Confucian organic way of thinking transformed the Christian theological interpretation of the human condition and sanctification. It presented them in a form that highlighted the connectivity among the body, soul and spirit as well as the public responsibility of individuals. Jia's experiential theology, as an expression of comparative theology, reflects a neo-Confucian way of self-transformation. We will examine Jia's spirituality in light of Wang's view of moral cultivation in the next chapter.

## Chapter 4 Jia's Spirituality in Confucian Perspective

In the last chapter we viewed Jia's spirituality through his anthropology, hamartiology, and theology of the cross. Jia's holistic view of anthropology distinguished his trichotomism from the more well-known account of Watchman Nee. Jia's stress on the connectivity between spirit, soul and body highlighted that selfishness as the root of sin is not confined to the soul as Nee believed. Rather, all three components have been weakened. Since the three parts are closely interrelated, the power of the spiritual life of Christ can penetrate every dimension of human composition after regeneration. Therefore, a person can be fully transformed into the perfect image of Christ - a Christ-human, whose spirit, soul and body cooperate with one another intimately in their full capacity. Jia also described this state of holy living as the unity of faith, knowledge and action (*xin zhi xing he yi*). This is almost identical to Wang Yangming's teaching of the unity of knowing and acting (*zhi xing he yi*).

Not only does Jia's holistic anthropology show remarkable commonalities with Wang's idea of unity between knowledge and action, but his teaching on self-transformation is also in line with Wang's on cultivating sagehood. As we saw in the last chapter, Jia's approach to personal spiritual growth was mystical but not anti-intellectual. It puts stress on subjective experience of the cross but without a pessimistic or indifferent attitude toward worldly public affairs. It addressed the matter of individual holy living without neglecting the dimension of civic responsibility.

In this chapter, we will examine Jia's spirituality from the perspective of Confucian spirituality. For Jia, we must appreciate that the absolute holy state of

Christ-human had an indispensable civic dimension to be realized *in* this world. This state dissolves the binary of personal and public distinction. Hence, it is fair to say that Jia was an active mystic. Interestingly, Jia's mystical as well as active approach to self-transformation can also be found in the Confucian cultural context, for example, in Wang's teachings of the totality of equilibrium and harmony (*zhong-he*). In this chapter, we will undertake the approach of comparative theology to demonstrate how the neo-Confucian active mystical mind shaped Jia's theologizing,

#### **4.1 Confucian Spirituality as Lived Reality in Jia's Theologizing**

Confucianism is at once philosophical thought, a political system, ethical teachings or even a religious worldview. It has all these dimensions. The concept of spirituality is readily seen in discussions about Western institutional religions such as Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, as the term spirituality is often associated with a personal god or spirits. Yet, recently, it has appeared in study of Hinduism and Buddhism. Julia Ching argued spirituality is not merely a dimension of Confucianism, it is essential.<sup>301</sup> As all the other Chinese philosophical traditions, Confucianism bears remarkably pragmatic characteristics. Feng Youlan (1895-1990) penetratingly comments on Chinese thinkers' characteristics in general:

Chinese philosophers for the most part have not regarded knowledge as something valuable in itself, and so have not sought knowledge for the sake of knowledge; and even in the case of knowledge of a practical sort that might have a direct bearing upon human happiness, Chinese philosophers have preferred to apply this knowledge to actual conduct that would lead directly to this happiness, rather than to hold what they considered to be empty discussion about it. For this reason the Chinese have not regarded the writing of books purely to establish doctrines, as in itself a goal of the highest importance. Most Chinese philosophic schools have taught the way of what is called the

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<sup>301</sup> Ching, 'What Is Confucian Spirituality?', 82.

‘Inner Sage and Outer King.’ The Inner Sage is a person who has established virtue in himself; the Outer King is one who has accomplished great deeds in the world. The highest ideal for a man is at once to possess the virtue of a Sage and the accomplishment of a ruler, and so become what is called a Sage-king, or what Plato would term the Philosopher-king.<sup>302</sup>

The pursuit of sagehood - becoming a virtuous man inwardly and restoring heavenly order to the world externally, is central to Confucianism. As Julia Ching pointed out, it is not possible to understand Confucianism without taking into consideration the method of self-cultivation, management of relationships and even mystical experience. Confucian teachings reveal a life of contemplation and activity.<sup>303</sup> Therefore, the dimension of spirituality is at the heart of Confucianism. Spirituality ‘provides expression for the deep yearnings of humans for relatedness to these ultimate concerns,’<sup>304</sup> and

Confucian spirituality requires discipline and practice along with spontaneity and creativity. Confucian spirituality establishes different ethical responsibilities for specific human relations, deepens subjectivity in its method of self-cultivation, and celebrates communion of cosmic and human forces in its ritual connections. It aims to situate human creativity amidst concentric circles of inter dependent creativity from the person to the larger universe.<sup>305</sup>

However, as Confucianism is not a static ideological system but an ever-evolving practice, Confucian spirituality manifests in multiple forms as well. Over thousands of years, Confucianism has gone through different historical stages and has been in a continuous state of transformation. The forms of Confucian spirituality Jia weaved into his theologizing also show variety.

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<sup>302</sup> Feng, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, 2.

<sup>303</sup> Ching, ‘What Is Confucian Spirituality?’, 82-94.

<sup>304</sup> Tucker, ‘Introduction’, 3.

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.*

As a figure of the new modern Confucian period, Jia's spirituality was in debt to Classical, Han and neo-Confucianism. As the Western powers opened the door of the Qing empire and with the influx of Western philosophy and technology, Confucians in this new context developed a modern form of Confucianism. In the twentieth century, facing the anti-traditionalist challenge that Confucianism was the root cause of corruption and collapse in society, a group of Confucian scholars strived to revive Confucian tradition in the modern age. Modern New Confucianism was born. The representatives of this period were scholars such as Xiong Shili (1885-1968), Liang Shuming (1893-1988), Feng Youlan (1895-1990), and Qian Mu (1895-1990). Their studies followed the major veins of neo-Confucianism from the Song-Ming era, yet integrated new intellectual/religious elements of their day. For example, Xiong followed the teachings of the mind-heart school represented by Wang Yangming and engaged frequently with Buddhism at the same time, especially the Consciousness Only tradition (*Wei-shi zong*). To him, the mind/heart is the source and substance of the world, the ultimate reality, which is humanity (*ren*). Whether or not social reformation can succeed, depends on the realisation of mind/heart. There is no separation between knowledge and acting, as mind/heart functions not only cognitively but also effectively.<sup>306</sup> As their contemporary, Jia shared the same sympathy toward the Confucian tradition throughout his writings. His

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<sup>306</sup> Yao Xinzong, 'Confucianism and Its modern Relevance', in *An Introduction to Confucianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 253.

inheritance of Confucianism was like these figures in the sense that he was also under the dominant influence of Song-Ming neo-Confucianism.

What is intriguing is that in the Qing dynasty from 1861-1895, facing the foreign oppression, Confucian reformers strived to save the nation and to fight against Western power through learning from the West. They initiated the *Yang wu yun dong* (Western Affair Movement/Self-Strengthening Movement) and followed the idea of *Zhong xue wei ti, xi xue wei yong* (Chinese learning for essence, Western learning for application). The Confucians sought to learn from and harness Western technology to subdue foreign influence and strengthen the Confucian society. Whereas for Jia, the way of his theologizing showed an approach of '*Xi xue wei ti, Zhong xue wei yong*' (Western learning for essence, Chinese learning for application). The Western learning here refers to Christianity, and Chinese learning to Confucianism. Having preaching the gospel to China and saving individual souls as his goal of theologizing, Jia formulated his theology in a Confucian way. Taking the approach of comparative theology as our hermeneutical lens would enable us to see how Jia moulded the Christian messages with his Confucian mind.

The thriving of neo-Confucianism in the Song and Ming period can be traced back to the voices of scholars such as Han Yu (768-824) in the Tang dynasty. Han argued the need to regain the lost transmission of the Way from the sage-Kings Yao and Shun. Confucians had remained quiet amidst the prominent influence of Buddhism and Daoism during the Wei-Jin period.

Moreover, the activities of Zhou Dunyi (1017-73), Shao Yong (1011-77), Zhang Zai (1020-77), Cheng Hao (1032-85) and Cheng Yi (1033-1107), the 'Five Masters of the early Song period,' began the renaissance of Confucianism.<sup>307</sup> The new understanding and interpretation of Tang and early Song Confucians in response to the challenge presented by Daoism and Buddhism brought about neo-Confucianism as an alternative shape of Confucianism to its earlier forms. Zhu Xi (1130-1200) established the comprehensive system of neo-Confucianism and the orthodox transmission of Confucian tradition from Confucius to Han Confucianism, and to the Song dynasty by syncretising and systemizing the thought of all his predecessors. He developed systematic Confucian doctrines on crucial subjects such as the Heavenly Principle (*tian-li*), principle (*li*), material force (*qi*), human nature (*xing*), humanity (*ren*) and the investigation of things (*ge-wu*).<sup>308</sup> In general, Zhu believed that to attain sagehood one needed to exhaustively investigate things outwardly in the world. Zhu Xi's work made a large contribution to the formation of the dominant state of the school of Principle (*li-xue*) for the next 800 hundred years. It was not until the influence of the scholarship of Wang Yangming that the other major neo-Confucian school - the mind-heart school (*xin-xue*), became as prominent as the school of Principle in the intellectual landscape of the Ming dynasty.

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<sup>307</sup> Zhou Dunyi (1017-73), Shao Yong (1011-77), Zhang Zai (1020-77), Cheng Hao (1032-85) and Cheng Yi (1033-1107) were called the Five Masters of the early Song period.

<sup>308</sup> Yao Xinzong, 'Evolution and Transformation- A Historical Perspective,' in *An Introduction to Confucianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 38.

Wang's approach was different from Zhu Xi's in that he held that everyone could become a sage as all have the innate knowledge of the good. In comparison to Zhu's elite route that emphasizes acquiring true knowledge of multiple things in the world and the importance of receiving proper education, Wang's approach is from the bottom up, as sagehood should be sought within. Also, Wang's approach possesses a mystical dimension in the sense that for him the innate knowledge of the good is identical to the Heavenly Principle. In general, Jia's spirituality showed remarkable similarities to Wang's approach and even borrowed and transformed Wang's idea of the unity of knowing and acting into a Christian approach of spiritual growth, the unity of faith, knowing and acting. Moreover, Jia's notion of Christ-human displayed its neo-Confucian root in the the totality of equilibrium and harmony (*zhong-he*). It manifests a neo-Confucian active mystical mind influenced by Wang's path to sagehood.

Mainly following Wang's approach of self-transformation does not mean that Jia was not indebted to Zhu Xi's school of Principle and earlier forms of Confucianism. For example, Jia inherited the idea of humanity (*ren*) from Classical Confucianism, which was developed in the period of the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States, when thinkers were debating responses and solutions to the contemporary social and political chaos. The virtue of humanity is the core of Confucius' teachings and acts. To Confucius, humanity means loving others, which should be demonstrated through conscientiousness and altruism. A man of humanity is called a sage. As we shall see in section 4.3, the way of conscientiousness and altruism

(*zhong-shu zhi dao*) shaped Jia's spirituality profoundly. In the pre-Qin formation era of Classical Confucianism, apart from Confucius, there were also other Confucian masters who made great contribution to the development of Confucianism. Mencius was one of them and considered himself a true follower of Confucius. Based on Confucius' thought, Mencius contributed to the development of Confucianism's approach to self-cultivation. As Mencius believed in the innate goodness of human nature, his approach naturally focused on unveiling and cultivating goodness in the human heart. This approach became dominant later in the Confucian tradition and laid the foundation for an optimistic view toward human moral transformation in Confucianism in general.<sup>309</sup>

In addition to Classical Confucianism, the heritage of Han Confucianism can be identified in Jia's spirituality. Han Confucianism took shape in the Han dynasty through the accommodation of Classical Confucianism to the new social and political environment. For Jia, fulfilling one's duties in different aspects of society and contributing to restoring the heavenly order of the universe was an essential part of personal spiritual growth. The idea of the unity of heaven and human (*tian-ren-he-yi*) features in his spirituality. Dong Zhongshu (179BC-104BC) made a great achievement by developing the Han form of Confucianism and making it the state orthodoxy. In accordance with the teachings of Classical Confucianism

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<sup>309</sup> Mencius' belief in human's original goodness represents the mainstream position of Confucianism on the subject of human nature. However, Xun Zi, also a representative of the Confucian masters in the era of Classical Confucianism, held the opposite view. He considered himself a true follower of Confucius as well but believed that human nature was originally evil.

on virtue, a humanistic approach to governing the state and the importance of learning, Dong further emphasized mutual interactions between Heaven and humans. He established a thorough system of Confucian doctrines, which included the metaphysical, spiritual, political, social, and moral dimensions of Confucianism. By developing the idea of the unity of heaven, earth and humans, Dong endowed human behaviour with a 'theological' meaning. Humans should act according to the heavenly mandate and fulfil their responsibilities to achieve peace and harmony in the universe.

As seen above, Confucian spirituality took multiple shapes as Confucianism underwent transformations over thousands of years. In this study, we mainly consider Confucianism as a lived reality, as Jia engaged it in an organic way. It is noteworthy that Jia did not adopt a systematic and consistent method when he was engaging the Confucian worldview. As we can see, Jia freely weaved various forms of Confucian spirituality into his thinking. The Confucian mindset shaped the way Jia crafted his theology. His writings are not just peppered with Confucian terms or examples on the surface to demonstrate Christian teaching. Rather, Confucian spirituality contributed to his way of perceiving Christian faith as well as theologizing. Reviving Confucian tradition per se was not Jia's intention, yet the ethos of Confucian spirituality did display its robust life in his thinking.

Specifically, we will analyse Jia's approach to obtaining the state of Christ-human in comparison with Wang's idea of the totality of equilibrium and harmony. Moreover, we will look at the Christian's role in society in Jia's theologizing in light of

the Confucian social program. The relationship between Jia's focus on individual spiritual growth and active social participation in his thinking will be explored theologically. By doing so, the Confucian cultural root of Jia's active mystical approach will emerge.

#### **4.2 Christ-human - A Confucian Active Mystical Mind**

For Jia, the state of Christ-human is 'Christ is in me and I am in Christ,' where one's old self has died, and one has been transformed into a genuine self or lamb self, who manifests the reality of Christ's life. A Christ-human or genuine self, who has no selfish desires, will show the unity of faith, knowledge and action in his or her life. To realize this state of genuine self, one's old sinful self needs to be dealt with thoroughly. The critical act in doing away with one's old self, namely the sinful body (*zui shen*), is consecration (*xian*). According to Jia, to embody the legal position of sanctification and holiness in individual daily life, believers need to surrender themselves fully to the Lord.<sup>310</sup> In practice, they need to deny their own desires derived from the root of selfishness. Once their minds are free from the pollution of selfish wills, they can serve the Lord wholeheartedly and live for the Lord rather than themselves. In anthropological terms, the power of the spiritual life of Christ would transform all three parts of human composition. The state of Christ-human means that one's spirit, soul and body cooperate inseparably in their godly forms. Once the original holy state

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<sup>310</sup> Jia, *Wanquan Jiufa*, 252-3.

of mind is restored, a believer would have a spiritualized soul and exhibit the likeness of Christ in practice.

Jia's idea of this original godly state of mind to a large extent resembles Wang's description of sagely mind. According to Wang, if one can maintain a sincere state of mind and unite knowledge and action in every particular thing in his or her daily life, then the original substance has been revealed. This fundamental reality of mind is called the totality of equilibrium and harmony (*zhong-he*). It is the ultimate pursuit of Wang's self-cultivation.

When the original substance of nature is restored, there will be equilibrium and harmony...When equilibrium and harmony exist in perfection, a proper order prevails in the universe and all things attain their full growth and development. That is the full development of nature and the fulfilment of destiny.<sup>311</sup>

The totality of equilibrium and harmony describes the state when one's mind is luminous, in which the Principle of Nature/Principle of Heaven is revealed. It demonstrates the creativity of a sagely mind, or the Mind. A person who has attained the totality of equilibrium and harmony has a balanced mind. A balanced mind does not have any partial thoughts. Partiality is a result of attachment to certain things, and the root of attachments is selfishness. Only when one's selfishness is completely removed can a person's thoughts be clear and impartial. In this way, his or her mind is identical with the Principle of Heaven, and therefore can react to everything in a sagely way, which is the realization harmony.

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<sup>311</sup> Wang, *Instructions for Practical Living*, 84.

A genuine self in Jia's teaching can be understood as a person who has a balanced mind. Once the root of selfishness, which used to dominate his or her mind and drive desires and actions away from God's will, has been removed, one's mind would be restored back to the original impartial and holy state of Christ-human. Thus, one can react to the world in a godly way. In this sense, the state of Christ-human is implying a state of the totality of equilibrium and harmony. The freedom from pollution of selfishness is realization of equilibrium; and the practical holiness displayed in one's life is manifestation of harmony.

In terms of practice, the effort of consecration, denying one's selfish desires and surrendering completely to the Lord, is to reach a state of equilibrium, where one has no partial thoughts. As long as no selfish desires are aroused anymore, one will obtain a tranquil state of mind. Thus, his or her mind will become identified with the spiritual life of Christ, and their lives would manifest holiness. That is to say, the state of harmony is obtained. Jia in his *Daily Devotional Lectures* explained at length how to surrender to the Lord completely in order to gain a tranquil state of mind, which serves as an indispensable step in spiritual growth. Jia stressed the importance of withdrawal from the world in order to communicate with the Lord intimately. Jia called this the effort of withdrawal and cultivation (*tui xiu gong fu*).

Jia expounded on the effort of withdrawal and cultivation from four angles: the efforts of withdrawal (*tui*), hiding (*cang*), quietness (*jing*) and waiting (*hou*). For Jia, withdrawal from the world's turmoil is critical and necessary in spiritual growth. Jesus

has set an excellent example in withdrawing from the world to the wilderness before starting his ministry.

Believers have always paid attention to the effort of withdrawal, which means that [they] realize the lowness of spiritual life, weakness of spiritual power, lack of spiritual ability and deficiency of spiritual gifts, so [they] withdraw from the occupation of worldly affairs to the Lord's hidden place and seek spiritual gifts and ability.<sup>312</sup>

The effort of withdrawal allows believers to shift their focus of life from mundane trivial matters to God alone, in whom they can find endless spiritual wisdom to build them up and help them grow into God's selfless servants. Withdrawal from the occupation of worldly affairs and freedom from attachment to the world has presented a state of equilibrium in Wang's terms. According to Wang,

I said, 'I still do not understand the meaning of equilibrium.' The teacher said, 'It must be personally realized in one's own mind. It cannot be explained in words. Equilibrium is nothing but the Principle of Nature.' 'What is the Principle of Nature?' 'One recognizes it when he has gotten rid of selfish human desires.' 'Why is the Principle of Nature called equilibrium?' 'Because it is balanced and impartial.' ... 'Only when all such selfish desires as the love for sex, wealth, fame, and so forth in one's daily life are completely wiped out and cleaned up, so that not the least bit is retained, and the mind becomes broad in its total substance and becomes completely identified with the Principle of Nature, can it be said to have attained equilibrium before the feelings are aroused and to have acquired the great foundation of virtue.'<sup>313</sup>

When no partial feelings or thoughts are aroused, one's mind has reposed, and one has attained a mentality of preactivation or nonactivation (*wei-fa*).

This is the state of equilibrium. That is to say, the act of withdrawal in Jia's

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<sup>312</sup> Jia, *Lingxiu Rike*, 175.

<sup>313</sup> Wang, *Instructions for Practical Living*, 52.

thinking, like Wang, is for realizing a state of preactivation. His pursuit goes beyond the state of tranquility.

To Jia, a reposed state of mind is just part of spiritual development. He pointed out that Moses is the person in the Old Testament who benefited the most from the deepest spiritual experience in his days of withdrawal.

Moses had already been well versed in knowledge in Egypt when he was young, yet he was not qualified for the mission to lead millions of people to leave Egypt. In order to train Moses and make him accomplish the mission, God certainly will not exempt him from being built up in a special way....From this experience of tranquility, Moses indeed benefited greatly in terms of spirituality. Greater than what he had learned in Egypt and the palace....The highest and most beautiful value of withdrawal is the spiritual knowledge of God (*ling-zhi*), spiritual communication (*ling-jiao*)[with God] as well as the spiritual capability and power (*shen neng shen li*) from God, with which [believers] can accomplish God's ministry.<sup>314</sup>

Seen from Moses's example, the experience of withdrawal is an essential step on the course of spiritual growth. To become God's capable servant, having a quiet experience away from the turbulences of the world is far more critical than having a decent secular education. It is even the 'source' of spiritual power. Jia used Elijah in the Old Testament as an example.

Elijah, the great man of faith, indeed has done things that shook heaven and earth. [He was] able to fetch water and fire from the heaven. During the season when the truth was hidden and the people in authority were corrupted, he unleashed light to the society and nation. The reason why he had such great abilities, is nothing more than his earlier effort of hiding in the Kerith Ravine.....It is this 'hide' that was the source of his power.<sup>315</sup>

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<sup>314</sup> Jia, *Lingxiu Rike*, 181-2.

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

Jia believed that prayer is powerful. Prayer as an act of hiding and withdrawal is essential in Jia's spirituality. Jia believed the act of prayer is a natural exhibition of human's spiritual nature. 'Praying and worshiping God is natural to humans; they are like a heavenly sound that originates from human's spiritual nature....'<sup>316</sup> Prayer shows the non-neglectable connection between humans and God. Prayer is so critical that it is like the breath of one's spiritual life.<sup>317</sup> It is the evidence for having spiritual life. 'All the believers who have spiritual life will pray, those who do not pray do not have spiritual life.'<sup>318</sup> Jia pointed out that the greatest benefit of prayer for believers is that prayer is a helpful time of withdrawal and cultivation.<sup>319</sup> Jia described the act of praying as entering a secret room. 'When believers are praying, the key is nothing but entering a secret room. With the door closed, there is no more disturbance, no more worldly affairs and stress, so believers can focus on communicating with the Lord.'<sup>320</sup> Regarding a 'secret room,' it means a visible room as well as an invisible one. A visible one can be a small room at home or any quiet place. For example, the solitary place where Jesus went when He was praying is a visible room. An invisible one refers to the state of mind where we are only concentrated on God. Jia emphasized, 'If we are not in the secret place that is in our heart, even when we are in a visible secret room, this room is not secret after all.'<sup>321</sup> Having the tranquil state of mind is the key in praying. This tranquillity is for the two aspects of praying: talking to God and God talking to us. Therefore, during prayers, we need to not only tell God about our needs, but also listen to God with our spiritual

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<sup>316</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>319</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

<sup>321</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

ears. ‘However, while praying, lots of people only pray with their lips but not their ears. This means their prayers do not have any purpose.’<sup>322</sup> Clearing our mind and trying to listen to God’s responses during prayer is vital. And waiting for God in silence is the prerequisite for getting God’s answers.

If we would like clear answers to our prayers, we must wait before God quietly and piously. Because the time when we are waiting for God in silence, is when we are having God’s deepest love. At that moment, even though we are not talking, we are communicating with God in secret. Therefore, God will respond to what we ask for.<sup>323</sup>

Jia regarded Jesus’s prayer in Gethsemane as the best example of praying and used it to demonstrate the proper way of praying. ‘The greatest exemplar of praying should be our Lord. The whole life of our Lord is a reaction to prayer.’<sup>324</sup> The act of hiding features in the Lord’s prayer as well. Jesus prayed in a secret place, where even the closest disciple was not allowed to follow. Also, Jia quoted Hebrews 5:7 to demonstrate the importance of concentration and sincerity in praying. Because our Lord is so close to the Father, when He was praying, he cried fervently. If we pray as genuinely as our Lord, we should feel the same way. We would burst into tears when we realize how great our sins are, how evil the devil is, and how deep our heavenly Father’s love is.<sup>325</sup> Also, Jia emphasized the importance of being consistent in praying like Jesus. We should pray continually throughout our life. Moreover, when we get answers from God in our prayers, we should forsake our own desires and only follow God’s will.

Our Lord, thank you for so many predecessors who communicated with you intimately. They set examples for us in praying. Moreover,

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<sup>322</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

<sup>323</sup> *Ibid.*, 159.

<sup>324</sup> *Ibid.*, 173.

<sup>325</sup> *Ibid.*,

our Lord Jesus also taught us deeply with his words and acts. Father, please grant us the power of prayer as well, so we can compare with the older generation. Amen.<sup>326</sup>

Praying and waiting for God in silence as an effort of withdrawal here does not simply mean remaining in complete passivity and isolation, it is a process of spiritual development as well as preparation for communication with God. Jia pointed out that the effort of withdrawal is for ‘opening spiritual ears’ (*ling'er de kaitong*), ‘refinement of faith’ (*xinxin de xialian*), ‘exhibition of the power of God’ (*shenneng de biaoqian*) and ‘advancement of spiritual virtue’ (*lingde de shenzao*).<sup>327</sup> Jia emphasized that it is for the purpose of going forward (*jin*) that believers withdraw. Withdrawal is ‘not advancing, to advance’ (*bu jin zhi jin*).<sup>328</sup> Staying away from the world does not mean wandering in nothingness. Rather, believers should go to the hidden place of God, reflecting on themselves deeply in front of the Lord. This is the act of hiding.

Wherever people meditate and hide, if [they] are not hiding in the hidden place of the Lord, their effort is in vain. Only when [one is] genuinely in front of the Lord, hiding in the hidden place of the Lord, making effort diligently to reflect on oneself, learning the spiritual lessons on self-cultivation according to the Lord’s teachings, communicating with the Spirit closely, chatting with the Spirit intimately, knowing, pleasing, loving and conforming to the Father and Lord, until one’s mind goes beyond the empirical world and is completely spiritualized, like Paul being caught up into the third heaven and hearing hidden words that are unspeakable, the transformation of their morality and mind is ineffable.<sup>329</sup>

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<sup>326</sup> *Ibid.*, 173-4.

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.*, 183-4.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.*, 177.

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid.*, 186.

The ineffable characteristic of the experience of hiding and direct communication with God make Jia's approach mystical. Yet, Jia's understanding of hiding indicates that the effort of nonactivation is just preparation for activation.

Jia in his hymn *Tranquility and Silence before the Lord* described the unspeakable experience of hiding in the secret place of God.

Today I remain tranquil and quiet before the Lord,  
 communicating silently through the spirit,  
 unbosoming everything in my heart without hiding.  
 Today I remain tranquil and quiet before the Lord,  
 relying on His merciful arms and seeing His pleased face,  
 greatly blessed and favoured without any worries and concerns.  
 Today I remain tranquil and quiet before the Lord,  
 Surrendering everything to Him and longing for His help,  
 greatest joy, comfort and peace.  
 Today I remain tranquil and quiet before the Lord,  
 silence is loud and the unspoken is pronounced,  
 I heard the secret of the spiritual realm with my own ears.<sup>330</sup>

Hiding in the hidden place of God is for communicating with God and gaining a completely spiritualized mind. With such a mind, one can accomplish the Lord's ministry *in* the world. Going beyond the empirical world is for returning to the world with a transformed mind. Hence, Jia's approach is not only mystical, but also active. Here, the inseparable connection between withdrawal and 'going forward' is in line with Wang's teaching on the unity of nonactivation and activation (*yi-fa*).

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<sup>330</sup>Jia Yuming, 'Zhu Qian Jing Mo [Tranquillity and Silence Before the Lord]', *Ling Guang [Spiritual Light]* 8, no. 4 (1930): 2–3.

Wang's approach is mystical due to its stress on this inner tranquility and denial of any thoughts that are aroused by self-desires. However, it does not slip into absolute passivity or nothingness. This tranquility is to provide a peaceful environment for the mind to operate in its full capacity. The state of tranquility lays the foundation for the state of activation. Wang said,

Only when the mind attains equilibrium at all times can it be said to have a great foundation, and only when it attains harmony at all times can it be said to be following the universal way. Only those who are perfectly sincere can establish the great foundation for humanity.<sup>331</sup>

Based on a tranquil mentality where no selfish desires are aroused, the mind can operate in its full capability and respond freely to the world according to the standard of the innate knowledge of good. This is the state of activation. It manifests the relatedness of the mind to the world. Removing obstructions of the world is for fulfilling the ultimate goodness in the world. The relationship between equilibrium and harmony is like that between knowledge and action. There are distinctions, but in practice equilibrium and harmony are in nature one. The state of equilibrium will naturally lead to the state of harmony. The idea of the totality of equilibrium and harmony is inspiring when understanding Jia's idea of Christ-human in practice.

Jia's act of surrendering oneself to the Lord and denying oneself is for attaining a mentality of nonactivation. Seen from Jia's teachings on the effort of withdrawal and hiding, in the state of pre-activation or nonactivation, the self would not be led or affected by , sin and the law of sin anymore, and has

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<sup>331</sup> Wang, *Instructions for Practical Living*, 51.

absolute tranquility. However, this tranquility does not mean that the self is completely disabled and broken. Rather, it only means a serene state of mind that is free from the noise of selfish obsessions and therefore is impartial and peaceful, and ready to submit itself to the Lord. Furthermore, on top of nonactivation, Jia's approach surpasses denial of one's thoughts and absolute quietness as Nee and Quietists pursued. For Jia, the state of 'it is no longer I who live,' a state of tranquillity or equilibrium, is the foundation of 'it is Christ who lives in me,' a life manifesting the likeness of Christ or, the life of Christ-human.

For both of Wang and Jia, nonactivation of selfish ideas is for the purpose of activation of the mind. Wang is penetrating in explaining the unity of nonactivation and activation.

Activity and tranquility may refer to the mind's engaging in something or nothing, but innate knowledge makes no distinction between doing something and doing nothing.... Activity and tranquility appertain to the time when the mind comes into contact with things, whereas in the original substance of the mind there is no distinction between activity and tranquility. ....Is there any doubt that there is activity in tranquility and tranquility in activity?<sup>332</sup>

The innate knowledge of good as the substance of mind would never change and be aroused by things in the world. Therefore, when there are no obstructions on the mind, the mind remains tranquil all the time. The activation of the mind is that a tranquil mind reacts to the world spontaneously in accordance with the standard of the innate knowledge of good. In the light of Wang's teaching, a Christ-human can be understood as

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<sup>332</sup> *Ibid.*, 136-7.

one whose mind is free from the obstruction of selfishness and responds to the world spontaneously according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. For Jia, when believers consecrate themselves to obey the Lord and discard all their selfish desires, the life of Christ will naturally be embodied in their lives. Like equilibrium and harmony form a unity, once selfishness is wiped out, the divine and human life will merge. Seen from the perspective of the totality of equilibrium and harmony, the unity of nonactivation and activation dissolves the tension in Jia's theologizing between denying self in quietness and participating in worldly affairs. These two trajectories do not contradict each other but form a unity in realization of the state of Christ-human.

It is on the surface odd, and so particularly noteworthy, that in his effort of withdrawal and cultivation, Jia developed a mystical approach with a public dimension. Jia stressed that 'Keeping quiet and tranquil in front of the Lord Jehovah is the most critical thing in the effort of withdrawal and cultivation. It requires the effort of self-reflection and observing everything with spiritual eyes.....'<sup>333</sup> Here Jia's approach is in line with the Quaker tradition of silence at worship as well. Once they have a tranquil mindset, believers can employ their inner spiritual wisdom to observe and examine not only themselves inwardly, but also the world outwardly. Jia showed his public concern here. While looking at the world with spiritual eyes, believers should fulfil their public responsibilities. To Jia, evangelizing and performing

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<sup>333</sup> Jia, *Lingxiu Rike*, 188.

civil responsibilities are part of individual spiritual growth. It is a ‘heavenly duty.’ (*tian zhi*)

When my Lord Jesus saw the corrupted and dark Jerusalem, [he] could not help but cry for it, why? If we sit silently and think deeply, looking outwardly with spiritual eyes, what would we think about this world? .....Cannot [I] realize the heaviness of our responsibilities and therefore rise vigorously and go and fulfil my heavenly duty?<sup>334</sup>

For Jia, even if one remains in quietness, the world should not be separate from one’s mind. More accurately, staying away from worldly affairs is for understanding them more clearly with penetrating spiritual wisdom. Jia emphasized that the reason why believers should withdraw from the world was to wait for the Lord and gain strength from Him. ‘Generally, when the servants of the Lord withdraw [from the world] and come to God, hiding and cultivating themselves, they cannot but long for God wholeheartedly, simply waiting in front of Him.’<sup>335</sup> The effort of nonactivation is for the end of fulfilling heavenly duty in the world.

For Jia, inward immediate communication with God goes beyond the personal realm. Believers should not only reflect on themselves and get rid of selfish desires, but also observe the world outwardly at the same time. The act of withdrawal and hiding is for not only individual spiritual perfection, but also for fulfilling heavenly duty in public. Advancing is the purpose of withdrawal. Like Wang’s teaching that the mentality of nonactivation/preactivation cannot be separated from that of activation, Jia’s approach dissolves the binary between the so called spiritual and worldly

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<sup>334</sup> *Ibid.*, 191.

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.*, 194.

realms, and the break between personal and communal dimensions. In Jia's theologizing, the interrelatedness between the individual and public dimensions shows a holistic Confucian worldview, where there is no cleavage between heaven, earth and humans, and a unity of immanence and transcendence. The state of Christ-human manifests its inseparable connection with God through individual mystical spiritual experience, and it expresses Jia's deep concerns for the world through the necessity of fulfilling social responsibilities to save the nation. Personal spiritual growth and performing public services form a unity in the state of Christ-human. Seen from a Confucian perspective, the state of Christ-human embodies a Confucian sagely mind, which has attained perfect personhood as well as dedicated itself to bringing the peace and harmony to every corner of the world.

The unity of individual spiritual growth and fulfilling public duty in the world in Jia's theologizing captures the central theme 'inner-sage outer-king' (*nei-sheng and wai-wang*) of Confucianism, which has been dominant in Confucianism since Confucius himself. Confucius pointed out the oneness of individual sagehood and public duty in *The Analects*.

Tzu-lu asked about the qualities of a true gentleman. The Master said, He cultivates in himself the capacity to be diligent in his tasks. Tzu-lu said, Can he not go further than that? The Master said, he cultivates in himself the capability to ease the lot of other people. Tzu-lu said, Can he not go further than that? The Master said, He cultivates in himself the capacity to ease the lot of the whole

populace. If he can do that, could even Yao or Shun find cause to criticize him?<sup>336</sup>

A noble person should naturally extend his or her love and care to others and society. The ideal of Confucianism is to achieve ultimate peace in the world. One should not stop progressing and limit himself or herself to personal matters. Also, caring for others and the public is an essential part of self-cultivation. Serving others and fulfilling duties in society are also ways of cultivating oneself. Individual moral transformation and performing public responsibilities are in nature one. Confucianism in general emphasizes the connection of the individual microcosm of self to the macrocosm of the larger world in the process of practicing moral cultivation and public services.<sup>337</sup>

Individual self-cultivation is the centre of Confucian spirituality. Also, it is the departure of the journey to carry out public services and realize harmony in the society. Tu Wei-ming chose the word ‘anthropocosmic’ to describe the relationship between humans and cosmos in Confucianism.<sup>338</sup> Individual moral development is never isolated and independent from public affairs, for individual and family are small units that form the society. Revealing the inner heaven-endowed nature and cultivating human perfection/sagehood is the foundation for fulfilling one’s heavenly duty in achieving a flourishing and prosperous society. As Mary Evelyn Tucker wrote, ‘The cultivation of virtue

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<sup>336</sup> Confucius, *The Analects of Confucius*, trans. and annotated. Arthur Waley. (New York: A Division of Random House Inc, 1989), 191-2.

<sup>337</sup> Tucker, ‘Introduction’, 3.

<sup>338</sup> Tu Weiming, *Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), 10.

in individuals is the basis for the interconnection of self, society, and the cosmos.<sup>339</sup>

Accordingly, in Jia's spirituality, personal spiritual development is inseparable from loving and serving others. Jia described the Christian life as an altruistic life. He quoted 1 Corinthians 10:24 'Do not seek your own advantage, but that of others.'<sup>340</sup> Genuine Christians should not live for themselves, but for the Lord. To live for the Lord, one should imitate Jesus and live a selfless life like Him. Hence, living for the Lord is living for others.<sup>341</sup>

If [Christians] living in the world cannot bring benefit to the world, are they not living in vain? Just like Jesus's ministry when he was alive, it was nothing but striving for the world's benefit. [He] even abandoned his life for righteousness without any hesitation. Hence, any believer who has had the character of Christ are practicing humanity (*ren-dao*). [They should consider that all people] are my kin and bound together, and show a serving, helpful and sacrificial spirit, extending [the realm] of self and living for the society.....This 'selflessness' (*wu-wo*) is not the negative and inactive selflessness that transcends the world in Buddhism, rather, it is the positive 'selflessness' that means loving others and the Lord, and practicing altruism. Loving the Lord and others like this is truly loving self.<sup>342</sup>

Here Jia contrasted the idea of selflessness in Buddhism with that in his teaching and emphasized the world-oriented meaning of the term in his theologizing. Jia's interpretation of the term selflessness carries significant Confucian value. The Chinese term *wu* has been variously translated as

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<sup>339</sup> Tucker, *Confucian Spirituality*, 4.

<sup>340</sup> Jia, *Lingxiu Rike*, 24.

<sup>341</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>342</sup> *Ibid.*, 24-5.

nothing, non-being or indeterminate.<sup>343</sup> Yet Jia interpreted it from the perspective of removing selfishness and endowed it with an alternative implication—sacrificing. In Jia’s teaching, *wu* represents sacrificing or abandoning. On the other hand, *wu* also signifies indiscriminate here. It shows the Confucian notion of universal love (*bo-ai*). One should extend his or her love outward and dedicate oneself wholeheartedly to serving and loving others. The value of one’s life should be found in *this* world. Jia even adopted the Confucian phrase ‘[all people] are my kin and bound together’ (*bao yu wei huai*), which originated from the verse ‘All people are my brothers and sisters, and all things are my companions’<sup>344</sup> (*min wu tong bao, wu wu yu ye*) in the Northern Song neo-Confucianist Zhang Zai (1020-1077)’s essay *The Western Inscription (Xi Ming)*. According to Zhang Zai, material force (*qi*) is the Great Ultimate (*tai ji*) and the original substance of the world. Therefore, the universe is one. Myriad things in the world are just different manifestations of one substance. In terms of practice, as ‘Heaven is my father and Earth is my mother.....that which fills the universe I regard as my body and that which directs the universe I consider as my nature,’ a virtuous person should identify him or herself with Heaven and Earth and therefore embrace and love everything in the universe as his or her own body. Although ontologically Jia did not hold a naturalistic view like Zhang Zai, he appropriated the phrase *bao yu wei huai* at the level of Christian ethics. In Jia’s theologizing, as Chinese people are all part of God’s one

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<sup>343</sup> See in Liu, JeeLoo. *Neo-Confucianism: Metaphysics, Mind, and Morality* (Hoboken, New Jersey: Wiley-Blackwell, 2018), 39.

<sup>344</sup> "30. Chang Tsai's Philosophy of Material Force" In *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* edited by Chan Wing-Tsit (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 497.

creation and belong to one nation – China, Chinese Christians need to love others and serve or even sacrifice themselves for the society. A Christian would identify himself or herself with Christ and love and care for others like Christ loved and sacrificed Himself for us. Hence, Jia’s spirituality displays remarkable characteristics of Confucian ethics. For him, individual spiritual growth and fulfilling public duty are in nature one.

### 4.3 Christians in This World— A Manifestation of Confucian Moral and Social Programs

The unity of individual spiritual growth and fulfilling public duties in Jia’s spirituality displays the way of humanity (*ren*) of Confucianism. Jia adopted the Confucian term practicing humanity (*shi xing ren dao*) to illustrate a genuine Christian life (*ji du tu de zhen sheng huo*).<sup>345</sup> *Ren* has been translated as humanity, humanness, benevolence, and love etc. It is the most critical virtue and the core of Confucianism. Xinzhong Yao has a brilliant interpretation of *ren* (仁). ‘*Ren*’ deals primarily with how people relate to each other, as shown by the combination of the two parts of the character, ‘two’ (二) and ‘humans’(人).’<sup>346</sup> *Ren* concerns both self and others. In the *Analects*, Confucius summarized the way of humanity with two dimensions: conscientiousness (*zhong*) and altruism (*shu*).

Confucius said, ‘Shen, there is one thread that runs through my doctrines.’ Tseng Tzu said, ‘Yes.’ After Confucius had left, the disciple asked him, ‘What did he mean?’ Tseng Tzu replied, ‘The

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<sup>345</sup> Jia, *Lingxiu Rike*, 24.

<sup>346</sup> Yao Xinzhong, ‘Ritual and Religious Practice’, in *An Introduction to Confucianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 213.

Way of our Master is none other than conscientiousness and altruism.<sup>347</sup>

In general, Confucianists throughout history all agreed on the basic meaning of *zhong* and *shu*. According to Zhu Xi's clear definition, *zhong* means 'the full development of one's [original good] mind'; and *shu* means 'the extension of that mind to others.'<sup>348</sup> As two aspects of Confucian humanity, *zhong* concerns self and *shu* others. Both are essential in Confucian moral cultivation. Jia identified having the character of Christ with practicing humanity in the world. And he elaborated that performing humanity specifically means imitating Christ and sacrificing oneself for others. Although Jia replaced the original Confucian teaching with Christian teaching, his approach to interpreting '*shi xing ren dao*' was still in line with the Confucian way of conscientiousness and altruism (*Zhong shu zhi dao*). For Jia, practicing humanity concerned both oneself and others, and personal spiritual growth integrated loving others like Christ.

Seen from the Confucian perspective, Jia's theologizing abides by the Confucian way of conscientiousness and altruism. Removing selfishness, revealing the life of Christ, and becoming a Christ-human is pursuing the spirit of *zhong*; imitating Christ's love for others and serving the public with an altruistic mind is an embodiment of the virtue of *shu*. Like Confucius's teaching on humanity, Jia's idea of Christ-human has two aspects as well - individual self-transformation and loving others like Christ. Although Jia put

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<sup>347</sup> "2. The Humanism of Confucius" in *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* edited by Chan Wing-Tsit (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 27.

<sup>348</sup> *Ibid.*

stress on the significance of the effort of withdrawal, Jia's spirituality bears an outstanding Confucian humanistic tendency. Admittedly, Jia is fundamentally different from Confucianists in believing that the original human nature is evil and that it is because of Christ instead of humans' own work that believers gain new life and therefore are able to obtain human perfection. His spirituality, on the level of both individual spiritual development and public services, highlights human effort in realizing the state of Christ-human to a large extent.

Jia's idea of Christ-human fits easily into the Confucian expectation of *junzi*, who has been rendered as a noble man, a superior man, an ideal man, a gentleman, a princely man, or a person of virtue. Moreover, as the state of Christ-human is realization of perfect personhood, it is also worth comparing the concept of Christ-human with the Confucian aspiration of sage (*sheng ren*). Etymologically, the term *junzi* literally means son of the ruler. However, in the *Analects*, apart from a few cases, *junzi* refers to a morally superior man who does not gain his nobility by a high hereditary status.<sup>349</sup> A *junzi* should be a man of humanity (*ren*), who embodies the way of conscientiousness and altruism in his life. A *junzi*, who has made great achievements in moral-cultivation, is supposed to translate the highest good into his daily life. Hence, he is distinguished from a *xiao ren* (small man or vulgar person), who is morally uncultivated. In *the Analects*, the expectation

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<sup>349</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

for a *junzi* is on a spectrum. On a basic level, a *junzi* should be free of violence, sincere and not speak in a vulgar way.<sup>350</sup>

There are three principles of conduct which the man of high rank should consider specifically important—that in his deportment and manner he keep from violence and heedlessness; that in regulating his countenance he keep near to sincerity; and that in his words and tones he keep far from lowness and impropriety.<sup>351</sup>

Furthermore, a *junzi* should not only care for his own moral cultivation, but also strive to restore the way of humanity in the world— establishing a harmonious and peaceful society. He is obliged to fulfil his value in this world through being a moral example, regulating his family, and contributing to state governing.

The philosopher Tsang said, ‘Supposed that there is an individual who can be entrusted with the charge of a young orphan prince, and can be commissioned with authority over a state of a hundred *li*, and whom no emergency however great can drive from his principles—is such a man a superior man? He is a superior man indeed.’<sup>352</sup>

The philosopher Tsang said, ‘The officer may not be without breadth of mind and vigorous endurance. His burden is heavy and his course is long. Perfect virtue is the burden which he considers it is his to sustain; is it not heavy? Only with death does his course stop; is it not long?’<sup>353</sup>

Beyond the state of *junzi*, the ultimate goal of Confucian moral cultivation is achieving sagehood. A Confucian sage is someone whose virtue and intelligence have reached the utmost and who can embody humanity thoroughly in daily life. Confucianists believed that it is possible for anyone to become a sage. ‘Chiao of Tsao asked Mencius, saying, ‘It is said, all men

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<sup>350</sup> Yao, ‘Ritual and Religious Practice,’ 214.

<sup>351</sup> Confucius, *The Analects*, 209.

<sup>352</sup> *Ibid.*, 210.

<sup>353</sup> *Ibid.*, 210-1.

may be Yaos and Shuns; Is it so?' Mencius replied, 'It is.'<sup>354</sup> Yet, it is noteworthy that prior to the period of neo-Confucianism, only sage-kings of antiquity like Yao and Shun and Confucius were called sages. Whereas, for most neo-Confucians, everyone should aim to become a sage, and sagehood is a realistic result of self-cultivation. They reconfirmed and elaborated on the optimistic aspiration of moral transformation.<sup>355</sup>

Master Lien-His [Chou Tun-I] said: The sage aspires to become Heaven, the worthy aspires to become a sage, and the gentleman aspires to become a worthy....The way of the Sage is to be heard through the ear, to be preserved in the heart, to be deeply embraced there to become one's moral character, and to become one's activities and undertaking when it is put into practice. Those who are engage purely in literary expression are vulgar people.<sup>356</sup>

The state of Christ-human fits in the aspiration of *junzi* in the sense that becoming a Christ-human does not only concern one's personal spiritual growth, but it also has a public dimension as well. To make great achievements in spiritual development, one needs to extend love to others and the society and fulfil his or her responsibilities in this world. Moreover, like neo-Confucianists, for Jia, the perfect state of personhood is achievable. It is possible for every believer to become a Christ-human and display the ultimate goodness in his or her character in daily life like a sage.

In terms of actual living, Jia interpreted the character of Christ with the Confucian way of conscientiousness and altruism. Although the spiritual life

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<sup>354</sup> Mencius, *The Works of Mencius*, trans. James Legge (New York: Dover Publication, Inc, 1970), 424.

<sup>355</sup> Yao, 'Ritual and Religious Practice,' 216.

<sup>356</sup> Zhu, Xi, Lu Zuqian. *Reflections on Things at Hand: The Neo-Confucian Anthology*, trans. Chan Wing-Tsit (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), 35.

of Christ-human transcends this world and therefore does not belong to this world, a Christ-human should make effort toward worldly affairs and fulfil his or her civic duty in this world.<sup>357</sup> Jia's elaboration of godly living is in accordance with the Confucian moral and social programs in realizing the ultimate Confucian ideal—restoring heavenly order to the world. Specifically, there are the following steps: practicing self-cultivation (*xiushen*), family regulation (*qi jia*), state governing (*zhiguo*) and bringing peace to the world (*ping tianxia*). The *Great Learning*, as one of the most authoritative texts in the Confucian tradition, demonstrates the interconnection between individual self-cultivation and communal responsibilities and gives instructions for practicing humanity.

The ancients who wished to manifest their clear character to the world would first bring order to their states. Those who wished to bring order to their states would first regulate their families. Those who wished to regulate their families would first cultivate their personal lives. Those who wished to cultivate their personal lives would first rectify their minds. Those who wished to rectify their minds would first make their will sincere....When the will is sincere, the mind is rectified; when the mind is rectified, the personal life is cultivated; when the personal life is cultivated, the family would be regulated; when the family is regulated, the state will be in order; and when the state is in order, there will be peace throughout the world.<sup>358</sup>

According to the *Great Learning*, the root of accomplishing everything in the world is having a virtuous heart. Hence, before doing any other things, one should rectify his or heart first. Without cultivating oneself, he or she would not succeed in any other matters. Once having a cultivated heart, one should go beyond individual realm and care for others and the society.

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<sup>357</sup> Jia, *Lingxiu Rike*, 306.

<sup>358</sup> "4. Moral and Social Programs: The Great Learning" *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, trans. Chan Wing-Tsit (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 85.

Although personal moral cultivation serves as the foundation for everything else and is the most urgent matter one needs to attend to, humans should find the ultimate value of their life in the society through restoring the harmonious order to the world.

For Jia, on top of individual spiritual growth, Christians are also naturally responsible for the salvation of family, society, and nation. Although individual spiritual maturity is central and most critical, it should not be restricted to the private realm but should be extended outward. Based on the salvation of self, the salvation of family, society and nation should follow like ripples on water. Jia viewed the role of believers in the world from a Confucian communitarian perspective. It is the 'saint's heavenly duty' (*sheng tu de tian zhi*) to lead their family and nation to the Lord.<sup>359</sup> Jia explained Christians' public responsibilities at length following the Confucian social programs taught in the *Great Learning*. Towards every unit of the society, believers have specific responsibilities to fulfil. Family, as the most basic unit of the society, should be one of the main scenes of believers' lives. 'Parents, brothers and sisters are supposed to reunite in the heavenly home, that is true peace and happiness.'<sup>360</sup> Every family should become a house church, where the whole family can worship the Lord together every day.<sup>361</sup> On top of that, one should pay attention to family education. 'Family education is the foundation of all the other kinds of education...it is irreplaceable.'<sup>362</sup> One

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<sup>359</sup> Jia, *Lingxiu Rike*, 286.

<sup>360</sup> *Ibid.*,

<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.*, 288.

<sup>362</sup> *Ibid.*, 289.

should 'rectify one's mind and cultivate one's character' (*zheng xin xiu shen*) to set an example for children. In addition, Jia emphasized that prayers are critical as well.<sup>363</sup> Jia described the role of believers in a family as a bright lamp. He quoted Matthew 5:15, 'People do not light a lamp and put it under the bushel basket; rather, they put it on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house.'<sup>364</sup> For Jia, a godly family environment is indispensable for children to grow into adults who will make contribution to the society later.

I pray that the Lord make all the Christian families become new families that possess freedom, light, happiness and blessings, and that the Lord makes all the male and female young believers have access to spiritual and moral cultivation in a family, so in the future, they can shine the light in the society for the Lord.<sup>365</sup>

Moreover, church as the body of Christ in this world, is another essential dimension of believers' lives. Jia believed that the foundation of the growth of the church is having spiritual life. One would not be a good seed unless he or she has the lively spiritual life of Christ. To harvest spiritual fruit, one needs to have an altruistic character that is always willing to sacrifice one's genuine self (*zhen wo*) for building the heavenly kingdom.<sup>366</sup> 'Our primary obligation as Christians for the church is to consider ourselves as a good seed which can be sowed again and again and nurtures the growth of the church in an endless succession.'<sup>367</sup>

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<sup>363</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>364</sup> *Ibid.*, 290.

<sup>365</sup> *Ibid.*, 292.

<sup>366</sup> *Ibid.*, 293.

<sup>367</sup> *Ibid.*, 292.

In addition to building up the church from within, believers need an outward approach to reach their neighbours and the lost. Believers as individual constituents of a neighbourhood should fulfil their public responsibilities: to become a moral/spiritual example as well as to lead the community to the Lord. 'It is our heavenly duty to lead relatives and friends to the Lord. If we do not fulfil this duty, we will receive God's judgement that 'I will condemn you for their sin of indulgence' (See Ezekiel 33:8 and 1 Timothy 5:8).<sup>368</sup> Apart from leading people to the Lord, it is even more vital to bring the lost back to the church. 'In Jesus's mind, looking for the lost sheep is more urgent.'<sup>369</sup> Apart from the spiritual aspect, believers also need to have a dedicative heart toward church in a practical way. For example, one need to take into consideration the church's financial needs and to be willing to make contribution according to his or her own ability. Also, providing others out of genuine love when they are in need is vital, as it was taught by the Lord that 'I give you a new commandment, that you love one another.' (John 13:34)<sup>370</sup> Jia's expounding of believers' obligations to the church is based on two foundations. One of them is spiritual that in Christ we are one. 'For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink one Spirit.' (1 Corinthians 12:13)<sup>371</sup> Believers should love each other as the Lord commanded and grow with help from one another to grow into the likeness of Christ. One the other hand, Jia saw believers as members of a community

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<sup>368</sup> *Ibid.*, 293-4.

<sup>369</sup> *Ibid.*, 294.

<sup>370</sup> *Ibid.*, 297.

<sup>371</sup> *Ibid.*, 298.

and having inseparable connection with their neighbours. Just like a Confucian noble person, a Christian should extend his or her love outward and lead others to the Lord.

Then Jia moved on to the level of society and stressed the vital role of Christians in restoring the heavenly order. He elaborated the functions of their role at length. Jia believed that the relationship between believers and the society is like that between light and the world. Jia quoted ‘You are the light of the world.’ (Matthew 5:14)

It means that the Lord is the sun of righteousness, is the light. As disciples relate and belong to the Lord, they became a reflector, which reflect the Lord’s righteous sunlight into this dreary and dark society. Therefore, the relationship between disciples and society is like that of the light and society.<sup>372</sup>

Believers as the light of the society can abolish moral darkness and show people the righteous way. Also, since the source of light is Jesus, this light is the light of life. Hence, through reflecting the light of Christ’s life, believers can lead away from death and into life.<sup>373</sup> Apart from being the light, Jia also pointed out that believers function as salt in the society. Firstly, they can reform the society as salt can change corrupted taste; secondly, believers can preserve virtues of the society like salt keeps food fresh and protects them from corruption; thirdly, believers should have the function of cleansing like salt; lastly, as the Lord taught ‘Have salt in yourself, and be at peace with one another,’ (Mark 9:50) , believers should bring peace and harmony to

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<sup>372</sup> *Ibid.*, 299.

<sup>373</sup> *Ibid.*

the society as well.<sup>374</sup> Jia believed that it was fundamental for believers to have the character of light and salt to become a respected example in the society, and therefore bring the enlightening truth to people. Jia illustrated the prominent impact of believers on the society by highlighting the relationship between believers and society.

When our Lord was teaching on the mountain of the Beatitudes, regarding the relationship between disciples and the society, he said ‘you are a city on a hill.’ It means that from the perspective of the Lord’s salvation, the relationship of the disciples who have been saved to the society is nothing else but a city on a hill.<sup>375</sup>

Jia stressed that the role of believers in the society should be active and prominent, which echoes well with his teaching on individual spiritual development. Believers should never isolate themselves from worldly affairs for the sake of their own spiritual growth, and even the effort of withdrawal is ‘not advancing, to advance.’ The public dimension is always an essential part of Christian life. According to Jia, believers’ lives should never be hidden but open and above-board. They should be reliable to the vulnerable and respectable to the masses.<sup>376</sup> Being a city on a hill also means that believers should be capable to point out the righteous way for those who go astray and direct the society toward the truth of the universe and provide piercing answers to people’s confusions.<sup>377</sup> Jia’s understanding of the role of Christians in the society is a virtuous exemplar, pillar and reformer, who would lead the society to restore its moral order. Moreover, the most critical

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<sup>374</sup> *Ibid.*, 300.

<sup>375</sup> *Ibid.*, 301.

<sup>376</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>377</sup> *Ibid.*, 302.

mission for them is to evangelise the society. 'Then you shall have the trumpet sounded loud; ....., you shall have the trumpet sounded throughout all your land.' (Leviticus 25:9) Jia pointed out that the most effective way to spread God's words was not by simply speeches, rather, it was believers' noble deeds in the world that are the most convincing means.

.....it is not just spread by mouth and tongue, rather, [spreading the Gospel] consists in Christians' daily speech and behaviours in society, which have an awakening voice and make people grasp the saving power of the Gospel. Just like John the Baptist, who addressed himself 'the voice of one crying out in the wilderness.'<sup>378</sup>

For Jia, believers' moral deeds and engagement in public are for the purpose of establishing a harmonious and peaceful society that abides by Christian moral values, one the other hand, they are for being the witness to God's words and leading people to the true knowledge of God.

According to Jia, even though Christians are spiritually the citizens of the heavenly kingdom and do not belong to this world, they should embrace their citizenship of their own nation and love their nation genuinely. These two identities do not contradict but mutually supplement each other. The spiritual life of Christ and the believers' heavenly citizenship serve as the foundation for Christians being good citizens in the world. It is not possible to be a person who can save the world without being a person who transcends the world (*chao shi jie de ren*). 'The reason why Christians can fulfil their civic obligations so well that non-Christian citizens would not be comparable is that their worldly work is all driven by their transcendental mind.'<sup>379</sup> For Jia,

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<sup>378</sup> *Ibid.*, 302-303.

<sup>379</sup> *Ibid.*, 306.

being a dutiful citizen is part of being a faithful believer. Since believers have been delivered from the snare of sin and their minds have been liberated from sinful desires, they should not commit sins deliberately in their lives. Also, as the life of Christ has abided in believers and its power would penetrate the whole person, their mind would be spiritualized, and they cannot ignore the impact of God's will anymore. To articulate his point, Jia adopted terms freely from the Confucian cultural context and endowed them Christian implications. 'A Christian's' character and behaviours must not deviate from their powerful conscience (*liang xin*). As this conscience is in accordance with the heavenly principle (*tian li*), following the conscience is observing the heavenly principle.'<sup>380</sup> A believers' spiritualized mind was referred to as 'conscience' and God's perfect law 'the heavenly principle.' However, the original meanings of the two terms that Jia adopted are quite different in the context of Confucianism. The term *liang xin* was firstly developed by Mencius and became one of the most critical notions in his teaching of the original goodness of human nature. In Mencius teaching, conscience means inherent knowledge and action that does not require learning and consideration.

Mencius said, 'The ability possessed by men without their having acquire it by learning is innate ability, and the knowledge possessed by them without deliberation is innate knowledge. Children carried in the arms all know to love their parents. As they grow, they all know to respect their elder brothers. To have filial affection for parents is humanity, and to respect elders is righteousness. These feelings are universal in the world, that is all.'<sup>381</sup>

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<sup>380</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>381</sup> '3. Idealistic Confucianism: Mencius' In *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* edited by Chan Wing-Tsit (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 80.

Jia is radically different from Mencius in believing that human's original nature is sinful, and we are desperately in need of the salvation from God. Whereas Mencius held that human nature was originally good. Humans naturally know the heavenly way, so they do not need to learn it from the outside. Later, the idea of conscience became the core of Wang Yangming's philosophy of the innate knowledge of good (*liang zhi*). Wang inherited Mencius's notion of *liang xin* and developed a metaphysical explanation for the mind. According to Wang, the original state of humanity was perfect. He believed that the innate knowledge of good is the defining substance and fundamental reality of mind. 'Innate knowledge is where the Principle of Nature is clear and intelligent. Therefore, innate knowledge is identical with the Principle of Nature.'<sup>382</sup> According to the standard usage of 'principle' established by the Cheng-zhu school of neo-Confucianism, principle means norm, standard and pattern. Everything has a particular principle. A specific principle decides and reveals the nature and purpose of a thing. It defines what a thing ought to be and how they should exist and grow properly. Moreover, there is the Principle of Nature, or Heavenly Principle (*tian li*), which unites multiple principles and defines the order of the universe.<sup>383</sup> The Heavenly Principle is the ultimate truth. For Wang, since the innate knowledge of good is identical to the Heavenly Principle, the innate knowledge of good is the standard of everything and able to make moral judgements. Chung-ying Cheng is insightful in explaining the innate

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<sup>382</sup> Wang, *Instructions for Practical Living*, 152.

<sup>383</sup> Liu, *Neo-Confucianism*, 6. Chen Chun, *Neo-Confucian terms explained*, trans. edited. Chan Wing-Tsit (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 112.

knowledge of good, 'It is the disposition of the mind to recognize and grasp good, and, therefore, the power to judge good or bad as a course of action. It is naturally the essential character inherent in the mind.'<sup>384</sup> Therefore, the Heavenly Principle is not outside of the human mind, it is mind (*xin ji li*). The implication of the term *tian li* in Jia's thinking is different from the neo-Confucian meaning of the word. In neo-Confucianism, *tian li*, the ultimate truth, is impersonal or transpersonal, whereas in Christianity God is a Person.

Apart from the fact that Jia employed Confucian language comfortably in his theologizing, his thinking shows a Confucian mindset that the highest good is none other than that human mind becoming completely identified with the ultimate truth of the universe. For example, according to Wang Yangming, human's ultimate pursuit exists in revealing their original innate knowledge of the good, and once the innate knowledge of the good becomes clear in one's mind, the Heavenly Principle would be embodied in his or her actual living. For Jia, since the power of the spiritual life of Christ penetrates every part of a person, a believer's spiritualized mind should dominate the whole person. Hence, believers should show the likeness of Christ and exhibit holiness in their lives, observing God's perfect law. Jia's teaching radiates his appreciation of the ideal of the unity of heaven and human in the Chinese cultural context (*tian ren he yi*). Humans are not isolated individuals but deeply interconnected with heaven and earth.

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<sup>384</sup> Cheng Chungying, *New Dimension of Confucian and Neo-Confucian Philosophy* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), 410.

Realizing perfect personhood also includes caring for the universe, restoring and sustaining the heavenly order in the world. Being citizens of both the heavenly kingdom and worldly nation, believers should love their nation genuinely and fulfil their civic responsibilities. 'In this age when church and state are separate, we Christians are citizens of not only nation but also religion. Therefore, we cannot but have duties needed to be fulfilled towards both state and church.'<sup>385</sup> Believers should imitate exemplars from the Bible such as Daniel, Nehemiah and Paul, who had an altruistic heart and made sacrifice for their nations.<sup>386</sup> Praying for the nation like Moses, Aaron and Daniel is the believer's most basic responsibility. Considering the context of China, Jia suggested that believers should strive for the nation's welfare from both negative and positive aspects. Given the moral and cultural corruption of the nation and suffering of the people, Christians are obligated to 'light up the darkness, eliminate their superstitions, rescue them from their evil custom, save them from their sins and suffering.'<sup>387</sup> On the other hand, thousands of tasks need to be done to rebuild the nation. Jia pointed out, above all, leading people to the Lord is the foremost mission. Besides, we need to support philanthropic work to improve the quality of people's lives. It is also necessary to develop education to improve people's intellectual level.<sup>388</sup> Every Christian should take part in and contribute to the nation

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<sup>385</sup> Jia, *Lingxiu Rike*, 309.

<sup>386</sup> *Ibid.*, 307.

<sup>387</sup> *Ibid.*, 311.

<sup>388</sup> *Ibid.*

according to their own abilities and social status, because striving for the benefit of the nation is the believer's heavenly duty.

Jia's Confucian active mystical mind and the oneness of individual spiritual development and fulfilment of public responsibility in Jia's theologizing, explains well his active participation in national salvation activities, in which he cooperated with people from a broad range of denominations. For example, in 1932, Jia participated in founding a society called 'the Chinese Christian saving the nation by faith and action group of ten,' (*Zhonghua Jidutu xinxing jiuguo shirentuan*). It is a group of Christians dedicated to saving the nation by uniting Christian faith and practice during the Sino-Japanese war. The organizer was Zhang Zhijiang (1882-1966), who was the general of the northwest army of the Nationalist Army (*Guo min dang*) and committee member of the National government. 'General Jiang.... initiated the Chinese saving the nation by faith and action group of ten, [in order to] assist churches around China, revive heavenly ministry so as to fulfil the hope of saving people's hearts and to stay committed to the earnestness of national salvation.'<sup>389</sup> Jia, together with Zhang Zhijiang and five other people, was elected as a committee member of the preparatory office of the group. Jia, Li Tianlu and Zhang Zhijiang were also appointed to draft the outline for the group.<sup>390</sup> The mission of 'the group of ten' shows

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<sup>389</sup> 'Jidutu Xinxing Jiuguo Shirentuan [The Chinese Christian Saving the Nation by Faith and Action Group of Ten]', *Hangzhou Qingnian [Hangzhou Youth]* 15, no. 9 (n.d.): 1.

<sup>390</sup> *Ibid.*

Jia's integration of civic responsibility into personal spiritual salvation. Jia in *Xin Xing Te Kan* [Faith and Action Special issue] wrote,

It was all due to the presence of the idea of self (*wo*) in everyone's heart that evil, wars and massacre happened to this world. The consequences of ignoring public welfare in order to seek selfish benefit and conflicts of interest are sins like wars and massacres; Christians living in this heinous era should set an example and make their position clear that the motive to trust Jesus is not simply for the purpose of individual salvation, rather, is to imitate Jesus's character and cry for the movement of salving people's hearts and restoring the world's order, and to urge people to realize the truth. [Christians] should also have the great spirit described in Galatians 2:20, 'I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me,' the meaning of 'no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me' includes the spirit of self (*zi wo*), genuine self (*zhen wo*) and great self (*da wo*). Self - the old self being crucified with the Lord on the cross; genuine self - not controlled by selfish desires of flesh and not tempted by anything, it is that Christ living in me; great self - broadening the range of life by giving up and sacrificing self. [We] should know that the significance of sacrifice is growing and prosperity. Jesus has the best metaphor. A grain of wheat that falls into the earth and dies can grow and bear fruit. It is thus clear that forsaking life is gaining life. Even though the body of a selfless patriot has been sacrificed, his spirit would not die but remain forever. [The sacrifice] is a loss on the one hand, yet a gain on the other. Seen from another aspect, it was because of his sacrifice that the nation was liberated and obtained glory, and people's hearts were touched as well. The loss of one person is insignificant; the gain of society is what matters. Is its value not weightier than the weight of Mount Tai?

A person born in this world should not live and die without a purpose but should do things beneficial to people. [Christians] should have the heart of 'if anyone in the world suffered hunger, it was as if I starved him; if anyone in the world were drowned, it was as if I drowned him,' and have the spirit of making unremitting efforts to strive for self-perfection and 'with deference and prudence, to the state of one's depletion; being dedicated to a task and sparing no effort until the end of one's life' (*ju gong jin cui, si er hou yi*) like a burning candle, which would not stop shining the light and take a break until it melts down and dies out.<sup>391</sup>

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<sup>391</sup> Jia Yuming and Xia Fangcai, 'She Lun: Shi Zi Jia de Neng Li [Editorial: The Power of the Cross]', *Xin Xing Te Kan* [Faith and Action Special Issue], no. 2 (n.d.): 50–52.

For Jia, getting rid of selfishness is the foundation for extending one's love to others and caring for public welfare. Just like in Confucianism, self-cultivation is the foundational step for regulating family and serving the state. In order to make contribution to building a peaceful society, one needs to do away with the old self and develop a great self that has selfless love for others like Jesus. On top of individual spiritual and moral development, Christians need to fulfil their public obligations and strive for becoming a moral example in the society and regulating the society according to godly order. Jia elucidate the meaning of loving others and obligatory social responsibility by referring to Mencius's teaching in *Li Lou II*, 'Yu thought that if anyone in the kingdom were drowned, it was as if he drowned him. Chi thought that if anyone in the kingdom suffered hunger, it was as if he famished him. It was on this account that they were so earnest.'<sup>392</sup> Jia from a Confucian perspective interpreted the necessity and urgency of fulfilling social responsibilities for Christians. Abiding by the Confucian value of 'sacrificing life for righteousness' (*she sheng qu yi*) taught by Mencius, for Jia, the realization of one's value in this world weighs more than one's life. In addition, Jia also quoted the precept 'with deference and prudence, to the state of one's depletion; being dedicated to a task and sparing no effort until the end of one's life' (*ju gong jin cui, si er hou yi*) from the *Later Chu Shi Biao*, believed to be by Zhu Geliang (181-234), who was the imperial chancellor of the state of Shu Han during the Three Kingdoms period. This phrase is a widely used portrait of a committed statesman persevering to

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<sup>392</sup> Mencius, *The Works of Mencius*, 335.

serve the state to the utmost. Again, it shows the Confucian central theme 'inner sage outer king' (*nei sheng and wai wang*). It is the manifestation of a sagely mind to dedicate one's life to serving his king and state – 'Perfect virtue is the burden which he considers it is his to sustain; is it not heavy? Only with death does his course stop; is it not long?'<sup>393</sup> To Jia, being loyal and making contribution to one's own society and state constitutes an essential dimension of Christian life. Holy living and imitating the character of Jesus Christ in Jia's theologizing needs to be understood within a Confucian cultural context. Jia endowed the state of Christ-human with a Confucian aspiration. Embodying the righteous way, serving and benefiting other people, and fulfilling one's duty for the state should be an indispensable part of a meaningful Christian life. Jia's argument shows a strong spirit of the forementioned Confucian way of conscientiousness and altruism.

#### **4.4 Jia's Spirituality in Confucian Perspective**

In this chapter, Wang Yangming's neo-Confucian self-transformation as part of Jia's cultural context has offered us an inspiring perspective to understand Jia's spirituality. Based on the commonalities shared by Wang and Jia's teachings, looking at Jia's spirituality in light of Wang's thoughts reveals a neo-Confucian active mystical mind in Jia's theologizing. Inner revelation plays a critical role during self-transformation for both Jia and Wang. For Jia, it is the spiritual life of Christ that dwells in believers' spirits; for Wang, it is the innate knowledge of good inherent in the human mind. Also, both of their

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<sup>393</sup> Confucius, *The Analects*, 210-1.

spiritualities are dedicated to restoring the original perfect human state. The goal of their spirituality consists in human perfection. For both, the barrier that veils the human mind and covers the ultimate truth within them is their selfishness. For Wang, the original sagely state of mind could be restored if selfishness is removed. For Jia, selfishness is the cause of the Fall. In the process of sanctification, one needs to 'carry the silver cross and remove selfishness' and sacrifice oneself for God. When one is identified on the cross with Christ in His death, and the selfish sinful body is completely destroyed, one will attain the state of Christ-human. In the process of getting rid of selfishness, the effort of withdrawal and cultivation is the most critical step. It requires believers to repose their mind and stay in the state of tranquility in order to communicate with God intimately. This act of nonactivation is like Wang's state of equilibrium, where there are no selfish desires anymore in one's heart. To realize the state of equilibrium, one needs to set his or her mind completely on attaining sagehood and abandon all selfish will. According to Wang, this state of tranquility is ineffable. This is the language of negations (*via negativa*), which is always seen in mysticism. Yet, Wang's mystical inclination does not lead his spirituality to absolute nothingness. The experiential characteristic of his approach exhibits the relatedness of the mind to this world. The only way to clear out selfishness in mind is to make the will sincere while investigating things. One needs to monitor every single thought and rectify incorrectness in every situation. Only in the experience of daily affairs can one's will be made sincere. Genuine self-transformation would not happen without subjective experience

*in the world*. Like Wang, Jia's mystical inclination does not cause pessimism or nihilism, yet it serves as an indispensable foundation for an optimistic pursuit for human perfection. Jia's effort of withdrawal and cultivation emphasizes the importance to distance oneself from worldly obsessions and remain in quietness, yet at the same time, one should wait for the spiritual wisdom/revelation from the Lord inwardly and observe the world with spiritual eyes outwardly and embody practical holiness in the world as well. For both Jia and Wang, this tranquil state of mind is not the goal but an aspect of and preparation for the state of activation. Seen from Wang's teaching of the totality of equilibrium and harmony, Jia's approach of attaining the state of Christ-human manifests a Confucian mystical active mind. There is seemingly a contradiction in Jia's spirituality: on the one hand, he taught to withdraw from worldly affairs and stay quiet and focus on individual spiritual growth, for spiritual life is the centre of Christianity; on the other hand, Jia devoted himself to theological education and participated in the Three-Self movement. However, in a Confucian mystical active mind, the world and worldly affairs are not separate from one's inward spiritual growth. Staying away from obsessions with the world and focusing on personal spiritual development are to bring heavenly order to the society and nation. The status of Christ-human must be realized *in* the world by fulfilling one's heavenly duty.

Jia developed his idea of Christ-human in the Chinese socio-cultural context and endowed Christ-human with a Confucian aspiration. Believers should not only manifest the image of Christ but also, in the socio-political

environment of China, display the character of a Confucian sage. Jia's spirituality embodies the thematic teaching of Confucianism—the way of conscientiousness and altruism. Removing selfishness and becoming the likeness of Christ individually serves as the foundation of extending love to others and care for the society with an altruistic mind. Further, Jia elaborated believers' heavenly duties in this world, which are in line with the Confucian social program taught in the *Great Learning*. One needs to cultivate his or her own mind to care for others in a virtuous way. In order to restore the heavenly order to the nation, one needs to be a good example and contributor in family, church, and society first. Jia devoted a great many writings to individual spiritual life growth and spiritual education and gaining the life of Christ is always the heart of his teaching. Yet, participating in public affairs and fulfilling one's values in this world are never absent from his thinking and personal life. Jia's theology is never simply 'spiritual' in a narrow sense, like Watchman Nee's spirituality as confined to the development of the spiritual life in the individual realm. Or to be more precise, Jia's spiritual theology has a broader meaning to being 'spiritual', and so contains a worldly dimension. It shows solicitude for the broader society and the universe. As in Confucianism, where rectifying one's heart is the basis for regulating the society, for Jia nurturing one's spiritual life is the foundation for serving the public and restoring the Heavenly/godly order to the world. Jia's thinking shows the interrelatedness between the individual and public dimensions and a holistic Confucian worldview. In a Confucian

active mystical mind, having an abundant spiritual life and being a pillar of the society are one.

As a result of engaging the heritage of neo-Confucianism in an organic way, the active mystical mindset embodied in Jia's theologizing formed a Wang Yangming influenced type of Chinese Christian spirituality. It is an expression that describes every aspect of human life in relation to God, including the approach of spiritual maturity, fulfilling different ethical responsibilities for human relations and social duties, and mystical experience as a direct encounter with God. It accentuates subjectivity in the process of the effort of withdrawal and cultivation and stresses the connectivity between human beings and the world. Personal spiritual development is situated amidst the mundane world as the centre of a concentric circle, which is fuelled by the life of Christ and extends outwards through fulfilling worldly responsibilities. This form of spirituality aims to restore the image of Christ in individual believers as well as to transform society and bring the world back to its heavenly order. It reveals the interactions between humans and the surrounding environment and presents deep yearnings for intimate relatedness to God Himself mystically and the universe, His creation, pragmatically.

It was Wang's approach rather than Zhu Xi's that Jia was mainly leaning on because mysticism, the immediate experience of encounter/union with God, is the heart of Jia's spirituality. Jia believed the essence of Christianity is the life of Christ, which dwells *within* every believer. As the

inward spiritual life of Christ is the beginning of and foundation for the believers' journey of self-transformation, the mystical union with God serves as the core of Jia's spiritual theology. Wang's belief in the existence of the innate knowledge of good, which is identical to the ultimate truth - the Heavenly Principle, and his teaching of searching for and revealing sagehood *inwardly* echo well with Jia's emphasis on subjective experience and mystical inclination. In contrast, Zhu's method of outward exhaustive investigating of things mainly relies on the human effort of learning and access to education. This elite approach does not allow any room for mysticism to play a significant role. Also, Wang's more bottom-up method of self-transformation makes it possible for everyone to attain sagehood. It is in accordance with Jia's optimistic perfectionist view in terms of sanctification. Moreover, for both Jia and Wang, the mystical inclination and worldly orientation are two sides of the same coin even though mysticism is more fundamental. A tranquil state of mind that retreats from mundane concerns is for the purpose of participating in worldly affairs with a spiritually and morally transformed mind.

It is noteworthy that Jia was not alone in being under the influence of the Confucian tradition and in emphasising the importance of believers' public duties and social participation. Theologians such as Wu Leichuan (1870-1944) and Zhao Zichen, also deeply engaged their Confucian heritage in their theologizing and put stress on the mission of transforming society.<sup>394</sup>

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<sup>394</sup> A significant shift happened to Zhao Zichen's theological view after Zhao was imprisoned by the Japanese in 1937. Zhao's position discussed here mainly reflects his thoughts before that captivity experience.

Both also believed that there was no distinction between individual salvation and reformation of society. However, rather than the bottom-up approach of Wang Yangming, Wu and Zhao both took a top-down approach which leans more on the other major branch of neo-Confucianism in Zhu Xi's method. Both Wu and Zhao believed that a certain kind of social reconstruction was foundational for individual salvation. Personal moral/spirituality depends on structural reform. For Wu, economic reform was the most essential. For Zhao, education reform was the key. It is worthwhile juxtaposing Jia's approach with Wu and Zhao's to acquire a more nuanced understanding of Jia's theologizing. Wu believed that the kingdom of God was the centre of Christianity. He believed that Christians/churches who focused on the salvation of individual souls throughout history had missed the point of Jesus' teaching and neglected the most essential task—reforming society and realising the kingdom of God on earth. To achieve this goal, Wu suggested several steps to transform the society: land reform, economic control, rural construction, and moral education.<sup>395</sup> Economic reform serves as the cornerstone in building God's kingdom. Reasonable redistribution of wealth is the foundation for improving morality in the society. Wu showed his Confucian influence in holding that good circumstances lead to moral goodness, which would guarantee good governance by the leaders of the country.<sup>396</sup> In Wu's thinking, the reason why individual salvation and social transformation is inseparable is different from Jia's, as for Wu the latter

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<sup>395</sup> Starr, *Chinese Theology*, 147.

<sup>396</sup> *Ibid.*, 153.

serves as the foundation for the former. Whereas for Jia, social transformation is part of and a natural result of the salvation of individual souls.

Zhao's theology also had a strong this worldly orientation. For him, the foundation for bringing about the kingdom of heaven is the love of God. Jesus the saviour, who lived a morally flawless life and sacrificed himself on the cross, redeemed humanity by showing the love of God, which was originally created within us yet had been long forgotten by us. Humans should follow Jesus as a perfect moral example and act like Jesus. Therefore, living out the perfect image of Christ in this world is essential in individual moral transformation as well as social reform. For Zhao, the salvation of individual souls is for the reconstruction of the society. And reconstruction of Chinese society is an indispensable part of the realization of the kingdom of heaven on earth, where both Chinese and the West form a universal spiritual fellowship.<sup>397</sup>

Both Wu and Zhao believed in humanity's ability to imitate the perfect moral example of Jesus and to fulfil their duties in social reform. In terms of sanctification, both of their approaches are of humanistic monergism. For them, humans do not need anyone outside or divine power to help them obtain salvation. It was their position on hamartiology that decided their approaches. Wu considered sin as structural and therefore contended that economic and social reform was central in the realization of the kingdom of

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<sup>397</sup> Chow, *Theosis*, 75-6.

heaven. For Zhao, sin means selfishness. It was noteworthy that Zhao's understanding of selfishness is fundamentally different from Jia's, even though they adopted the same Chinese term 'zi si.' The term 'si' in Chinese can carry a Buddhist meaning. In Buddhism, humans should forsake self-attachment and then start to have altruistic love and compassion toward all beings.<sup>398</sup> Moreover, the Buddhist understanding of *si* suggests detachment from all the beings of the sentient world as well. Self, like other beings in this world, is ultimately devoid of meaning. *Si* is also an essential concept in neo-Confucianism. For example, Wang Yangming's understanding of *si* is drastically different from the Buddhist one. From a Buddhist point of view, the substantiality of self is deniable whereas in general neo-Confucians like Wang believed in the reality and value of this world including self.<sup>399</sup> Ontologically, humans and the world are 'one body' in the sense that we share the same ultimate Principle with the world—the heavenly principle. In humans, it is called the innate knowledge of good or the original nature (*benxing*). The belief in the connectivity between humans and the world requires humans to take care of the welfare of others and the world. However, as our physical body subjects us to the impact of impure *qi*, which constitutes our bodies, our true nature, and the innate knowledge of good, which reveals our oneness with the world, is obscured. Consequently, we fail to know the underlying fundamental connections between us and others and became

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<sup>398</sup> Bhikkhu Buddhadasa, 'Interfaith Understanding in the Buddhist-Christian Dialogue,' *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, vol.9 (1989), 234.

<sup>399</sup> Philip J. Ivanhoe, *Oneness: East Asian Conceptions of Virtue, Happiness, and How We Are All Connected* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 48.

alienated and self-centred.<sup>400</sup> Zhao's interpretation of selfishness distinguishes itself from both abovementioned traditions. For Zhao, selfishness means forgetting the original source of happiness—the love of God and focusing on one's own interest. It is an intellectual ignorance rather than a fundamental problem in human nature. Consequently, humans lost their 'Christ consciousness,' the original good personality of God that was created within us. Therefore, what humans need to do is recover the original goodness through following Jesus Christ's selfless example that radiates the love of God.<sup>401</sup> Jia distinguished himself from Wu and Zhao because of his adoption of the Augustinian-Reformed position of hamartiology that human nature was completely depraved. For Jia, humans are helpless sinners and need Christ's atonement and substitutionary work on the cross. The salvation of individual souls, the spiritual life of Jesus Christ is the foundation for moral improvement and social reformation. For Jia, active social participation is indispensable as it is a natural result of individual spiritual transformation. Although on the surface, Jia, Wu, and Zhao all strived for the fulfilment of worldly responsibilities and making contribution to social reformation, the discrepancy in their theologizing is striking. It was because of Jia's approach of comparative theology that his spirituality integrated the dimension of social participation into individual spiritual maturity. To a neo-Confucian active mystical mind, there is only differentiation rather than separation between personal spiritual development and social

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<sup>400</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>401</sup> Chow, *Theosis*, 77.

transformation. Emphasizing the unity between the private and public and regarding personal spiritual maturity as the foundation for caring for the wider society, Jia's mind-heart way of thinking allowed him to pay attention to both individual spiritual salvation as well as restoring the heavenly order to the larger universe. Comparative theology as Jia's way of theologizing enabled him to formulate his spirituality with both mystical and active dimensions.

Looking at Jia's spirituality through the comparison with Zhao and Wu's has revealed the uniqueness of Jia's theologizing in the context of Chinese theology. Jia's spirituality needs to be understood in a more nuanced way. In the next chapter, we will examine Jia's spirituality with two of the major rubrics of classifying Chinese Protestant theologians—the fundamentalist-modernist and Confucian activist-Daoist pietist categorizations, as well as the tripartite framework for Chinese contextual theology developed from Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder to seek a more comprehensive understanding of Jia and reflect on the evolving typology of Chinese theology.

## **Chapter 5. Understanding Jia in the Context of Chinese Theology**

### **5.1 The Two Major Modes of Classification of Chinese Protestant Theologians**

The characteristics of Jia's spirituality we discussed in the last chapter make him a figure of special interest. His Wang Yangming influenced spirituality, which values both the spiritual and the social, distinguished him from his contemporaries such as Nee, Zhao Zichen and Wu Leichuan. To have a more nuanced grasp of Jia, in this chapter, we will situate him in the context of Chinese theology and adopt three frameworks for classifying Chinese Protestant theologians of the twentieth century to analyse Jia: the fundamentalist-modernist mode, the Confucian activist-Daoist pietist mode and the tripartite typology developed from Stephen B. Bevans, Roger P. Schroeder and Chow's work.

Although widely known as a fundamentalist, Jia did not fit into either the fundamentalist-modernist mode developed in the debates between theologians such as Wang Mingdao and Zhao Zichen, or the Confucian activist-Daoist pietist mode formulated by Ralph Covell. Jia is widely considered one of the representatives of the fundamentalist theologians of his day. The meaning of these two categories were under influence from both fundamentalism in America as well as China's unique religio-social context. In Jia's context, modernist theologians understood God as the Father of all humans. They described the divine-human relationship in a humanistic way. They emphasized the social and moral implication of Christology. Jesus was portrayed as a perfect moral example. His incarnation, teaching, healing, and death on the cross were all interpreted as a manifestation of his love toward and a call for a love among humans. Also, they downplayed or even denied the truthfulness and relevance of the virgin birth, miracles, substitutionary atonement and physical

resurrection. Accordingly, the core of the Christian mission became social service that aimed at transforming the world into the kingdom of God.<sup>402</sup> Moreover, given China's particular socio-political situation and the challenging financial status of the church, Christians were to seek cooperation with the government or non-Christians to carry out their public responsibilities. According to Zhao, who was a representative of the modernist theologians,

The fact must be recognized that the church in China is too poor to carry on separate and independent social or economic projects for the betterment of the life of the people around it.....it must enter into cooperation with the government or other non-Christian groups for social service or even economic enterprise....the second thing that the Church can do is to educate its members in social and economic problems constantly creating in them an earnest desire to be socially minded and to participate in activities that contribute to the social and economic welfare of the community....to be a Christian, one must be socially active or of some concrete service to the public, given without material compensation.<sup>403</sup>

On the contrary, fundamentalists were usually considered as those who maintained fundamental beliefs such as the virgin birth, the absolute authority and revelatory nature of the Bible, and Christ's physical resurrection. Also, they held that the church should keep a distance from worldly affairs, and believers should stay away from political participation. Moreover, due to their concern about the spread of the social gospel and fast growing of social projects at the cost of evangelistic activities, the fundamentalists also stressed the doctrine of original sin as the cause of all social evils.<sup>404</sup> Jia's spirituality challenges these categorisations, as he bears

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<sup>402</sup> Yao Xinzong, 'The Fundamentalist Movement Among Protestant Missionaries in China, 1920–1937' (Boston University, 2000), 58-9.

<sup>403</sup> Zhao Zichen, 'The Future of the Church in Social and Economic Thought and Action', *The Chinese Recorder (1912-1938)*, September 01, 1938, 437.

<sup>404</sup> Yao, 'The Fundamentalist Movement Among Protestant Missionaries in China, 355.

qualities of both. Theologically it is fair to consider him a fundamentalist in the sense that he held all the traditional fundamental doctrines and believed that the foundation of the church is the life of Christ, though that is hardly unique to fundamentalists as defined above. Yet, he distinguished himself from theologians like Watchman Nee and Wang Mingdao in that he actively sought cooperation with believers from a wide range of denominations and actively took part in social affairs. Rather than holding a pessimistic attitude toward the world and dedicating himself solely to personal spiritual development, he emphasized believers' public responsibilities toward the society and nation. For him, there is no division between personal and public dimensions in one's spiritual growth, for they are essentially one.

From another point of view, Ralph Covell believed that Chinese theologians of the early twentieth century can be classified into two groups based on their social and political involvement - Confucian activist and Daoist pietists. Figures from the former group such as Zhao deeply concerned themselves with the current social and political situations in the world and devoted themselves to fulfilling their social and political duties. Their earnest engagement with the world and people from a wide range of Protestant denominations and even other religions showed a Confucian aspiration of fulfilling the Heavenly Mandate (*tian ming*) in mundane life and making a contribution to restoring the Heavenly Order to the world. In contrast, the latter group adopted the Daoist idea of non-action (*wu wei*), so they tended to withdraw from the world and focus themselves on individual spiritual transformation and pursuing a tranquil state of life, which manifested a Daoist serene and restful attitude toward the universe. The state of Christ-human, which displays a state of totality of equilibrium and harmony embodies the oneness of non-action and action. The effort

of withdrawal and hiding, as the foundation of acting, has presented a Daoist serene state of mind. Yet, the mentality of preactivation is a preparation for the state of action. There is distinction but no division between these two states of mind. Jia's approach contains not only the Daoist mystical and quiet characteristics but also the relatedness of the mind to the world. Jia's spirituality as a case of Wang Yangming influenced Chinese Christian spirituality presents a challenge to both modes and requires a wider scope for understanding Jia's theologizing. In the next section, we will take Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder's tripartite framework as well as Alexander Chow's adjusted version as guides for reflecting on Jia's spirituality.

## **5.2 A Tripartite Typology for Chinese Contextual Theology**

In comparison to the two older modes of classification, Bevans and Schroeder's paradigm is useful in understanding the ways Christian teaching has been communicated and transmitted in the diverse contexts of global mission.<sup>405</sup> Their typology has the advantages of providing a guiding framework to clarify Jia's responses to different theological questions without being trapped by certain labels such as 'fundamentalist,' often used to describe Jia's theological position. Given Jia's context of theologizing, which includes the socio-political situation of twentieth-century China and his Chinese cultural background, it is helpful to adopt Chow's updated version of the tripartite typology which has more relevance to Jia's neo-Confucian mindset.

Bevans and Schroeder presented their tripartite classification in *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today*. Their reflection on the missionary nature

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<sup>405</sup> Chow, *Theosis*, 9.

of Christianity was indebted to Andrew Walls' insights on the church. According to Walls, the church has a missionary vision by nature. The church has transformed itself for the purpose of missionary outreach through varying forms of presentation of faith in different times and cultural contexts. But Christianity has kept its 'essential continuity,' by which it remains itself.<sup>406</sup> Even though there were various forms of Christianity developed in different languages and cultural contexts, certain *constants* remained and defined the missionary nature of Christianity. According to Walls, they were the constant of Christology and the constant of ecclesiology. No matter how Christian faith manifested itself in a particular context, Christianity has always been rooted in its faith in Jesus Christ and committed to the church as the Christian community.<sup>407</sup>

Apart from Walls's two constants, Bevans and Schroeder contributed another four: eschatology, salvation, anthropology, and culture. Eschatology shows how the church understands itself and its mission over against the future, which will impact the role the church plays in the world and the way it carries out Jesus's mission. What shapes different stances on eschatology is the church's understanding of the nature of salvation. How does the gospel save the world? What will salvation bring to the world? Will it transform the world or turn us against it? Another essential element that defines the missionary Christian faith is the understanding of humanity. The degree to which humanity is considered corrupt and able to 'establish 'points of contact' with revelation' decides how the church evangelizes. The final constant is the attitude toward culture. Regarding it as a helpful resource for evangelizing or as

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<sup>406</sup> Bevans and Schroeder, 'You Are Witnesses of These Things', 33.

<sup>407</sup> *Ibid.*

an obstacle that needs to be transformed or even destroyed. This makes a significant difference to the shape of the church's missionary work.<sup>408</sup>

While these six categories remain the same, according to Bevans and Schroeder their content will depend on differences in time and space. This feature has broadened the scope of Bevans and Schroeder's method when studying contextual theology. Their approach can reveal the uniqueness of individual theologies of different contexts by allowing them to give their own answers to the six questions. Also, this approach allows room for shifts in one's thinking due to the changes that happened to his or her contexts. Although Bevans and Schroeder's six constants/questions were not developed from the context of Chinese Christianity, it is still relevant and beneficial to adopt it in our study on Jia. For like other twentieth century Chinese theologians, Jia's theologizing incorporates reflection on the Western theology of his day in the context of China and carries in part the rich theological heritage of Western missionaries. Also, the six constants can provide multiple aspects to look at Jia's thoughts theologically, take into consideration the influence of his religious and cultural environment, and allow for the shifts in his theologizing in the later stage of his life due to socio-political changes in his society.

Having questions based on the six constants in mind, Bevans and Schroeder made constructive use of the typologies formulated by Cuban American theologian Justo L. González and German liberation theologian Dorothee Sölle and developed their own tripartite typology. Both González and Sölle outlined three types of

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<sup>408</sup> *Ibid.* Bevans and Schroeder summarised the six constants into six questions: 1. Who is Jesus and what is his meaning? 2. What is the nature of the Christian church? 3. How does the church regard its eschatological future? 4. What is the nature of the salvation it preaches? 5. How does the church value the human? 6. What is the value of human culture as the context in which the gospel is preached?

theology. In *Christian thought Revisited: Three types of Theology*, González named his three paradigms in a rather neutral way: type A, type B and type C theology, which correspond to Sölle's three categories. Sölle, in her *Thinking about God: An Introduction to Theology*, described the three general types of theology as 'orthodox/conservative,' 'liberal' and 'radical/ liberation theology.'<sup>409</sup> According to González and Sölle, all of the three types of theology have been influential to the Western church throughout its history, though their level of influence may vary. Based on González and Sölle's contribution, Bevans and Schroeder adopted González's simple names of categorization, type A, type B and type C theology. Furthermore, employing their six theological constants, Christology, ecclesiology, eschatology, salvation, anthropology, and culture as a guide, Bevans and Schroeder proposed their own tripartite typology and reflected on the missionary nature of Christianity.

In general, type A theology takes Christian mission as 'saving souls and extending the Church.' In terms of contextualization, it has a 'countercultural' or 'translational' attitude. The foundation of this type of theology is the belief that our first ancestors' sin is the cause of evil in this world. The only way to human salvation is Christ's blood on the cross, as the penal substitution for our sins because it satisfied God's divine law. Hence, type A theology has a distinct legal feature. The mission of type B theology lies in 'discovering the truth.' The model of type B theology in dealing with cultures is 'anthropological' or 'synthetic.' This type of theology views human culture in a positive way and believes that the truth could be

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<sup>409</sup> Dorothee Sölle, *Thinking about God: An Introduction to Theology* (London: SCM Press; Philadelphia: Trinity Press International, 1990), 7-12.

found in human history and cultures. The salvific work done by Christ is mainly for illuminating humanity and calling the world to go back to its original godly order. Type C theology treats mission as ‘commitment to liberation and transformation.’ It is characterized by ‘history’, in the sense that everything takes place according to God’s plan and is guided toward God’s purpose. ‘History in type C theology was part of God’s plan from the beginning and not a result of a fall from some eternal state of perfection or contemplation.’<sup>410</sup> *González* believed that Irenaeus was the person who best articulated this type of theology. According to Irenaeus, Adam and Eve sinned, and humanity became hostage to Satan. However, God has participated in human history with his ‘two hands’— the Son and the Holy Spirit. He has freed humans from the servitude of Satan through Jesus’s work of recapitulation, which made it possible for us to grow into God’s full likeness. When it comes to contextualization, type C has a positive version of the ‘countercultural’ model, which is called the ‘praxis model.’ Type C theology recognized the importance of culture in the sense that culture shapes moral values and human behaviours. Yet, it needs to be confronted, purified and perfected by the gospel as well, as it is a human creation enslaved by sin. Therefore, social involvement and actions are vital for Christians from a type C perspective. The most common approach that type C theologians (especially liberation theologians) took was to act in accordance with gospel values and then review the effect of those actions both practically and theologically. Then, based on these reflections, they will act again in a wiser and more effective way. Social engagement and action is vital in the process of type C theologizing.

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<sup>410</sup> Bevens and Schroeder, ‘You Are Witnesses of These Things’, 62.

Based on Bevans and Schroeder's work, Alexander Chow adjusted and applied this tripartite typology to reflect on Chinese Christianity in the context of the two 'Chinese Enlightenments,' begun by the May Fourth Movement in the early twentieth century and the program of Four Modernizations in the 1980s.<sup>411</sup> Chow examined the representatives of each type of theology in the landscape of Chinese contextual theology. He identified Watchman Nee and his pursuit of the spiritual man as a case of law-oriented type A theology and regarded the more academic and philosophical figure Zhao Zichen as a representative of the truth-oriented type B theology. What is noteworthy is that Chow pointed out that type C theology was underrepresented in the history of Chinese contextual theology.<sup>412</sup> According to Chow, Ding Guangxun's cosmic Christ was the only major embodiment of the history-oriented type C theology in the context of China. Chow was insightful in arguing that the two older ways of classifying Chinese theology only focused on Chinese Christianity with origins in Western Protestant missionary work, whereas the tripartite typology here made room for dialogue with other Christian traditions like Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy. He roughly mapped tripartite theology with the categories of earlier classifications: type A would cover fundamentalists and Daoist pietists, and type B would represent modernists and Confucian activists. What is noteworthy is that type C is still to a large extent untested in the context of China. Type C would be particularly useful when reflecting on Chinese contextual theology with an awareness of the common belief of human perfectibility found in Chinese traditional thought like Confucianism and Pure Land Buddhism. In fact, type C,

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<sup>411</sup> Chow, *Theosis*, 23-9.

<sup>412</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

represented by Eastern Orthodox theology and its doctrine of deification or *theosis*, is much more compatible with the positive anthropology and optimistic attitude toward moral transformation or sagehood in traditional Chinese culture such as Confucianism and Buddhism.<sup>413</sup> Based on his re-examination of representatives of each type in the context of the two ‘Chinese Enlightenments,’ Chow revealed three major themes commonly shared in Chinese theology: sin, synergy and union.<sup>414</sup> Facing challenges caused by societal issues and conflicts between the doctrine of original sin and the optimistic view of the human condition in Chinese culture, theologians tried to mediate between seemingly divergent identities: Chinese and Christian. On the foundation of Bevans and Schroeder’s original typology, Chow’s version adjusted the six theological constants and provided three more new constants that are common and distinctive in Chinese contextual theology: causation, socio-political reality, and religio-philosophical heritage. As they were based on Chinese theological thinking, they are more relevant when examining Jia’s Wang Yangming influenced spirituality.

Seen from the prevalent understanding of Jia as a ‘fundamentalist,’ he can be roughly classified into the law-oriented type A group. Jia has been broadly considered as a fundamentalist or theologically conservative theologian for his commitment to the fundamental beliefs of Christian faith, such as the virgin birth, the absolute authority and revelatory nature of the Bible, and Christ’s physical resurrection. These doctrines were universal and unchangeable to Jia. Also, Jia believed that Christ was the only path to salvation and without God’s grace and

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<sup>413</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>414</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

Jesus's redemptive work on the cross, no one could gain access to salvation. Jia's theology therefore carries an obvious legal aspect. And even though his social participation was active, Jia believed that salvation could not be found in the social transformation of this world but only in the eternal life of Christ. The mission of saving souls and building up the church remained central in Jia's theologizing.

However, given our analysis in the previous chapters, we have revealed that even though Jia did not acknowledge the neo-Confucian influence in his theologizing explicitly, his active mystical mind showed the profound impact of his neo-Confucian cultural roots and the implicit effort to reconcile dual identities. Jia's neo-Confucian active mystical mind challenges the label of 'fundamentalist' in the context of China. To gain a more nuanced understanding of Jia, we will examine Jia's theology following Bevans and Schroeder's tripartite typology and Chow's updated version. According to Chow's adjusted theological constants, this chapter is organized into the following sections: anthropology and Christology; salvation, causation and eschatology; ecclesiology, socio-political reality and religio-philosophical heritage. Looking at Jia's answers to these theological subjects is helpful in situating Jia among his contemporaries, revealing the uniqueness of his theology and reflecting on the usefulness of Wang Yangming's thought in developing Chinese contextual theology.

### **5.3 Anthropology and Christology**

We have discussed Jia's anthropology in chapter 3 and noticed that Jia held a holistic tripartite anthropology. Jia's understanding of human composition accords with type A theology because he argued that there are separate parts which form a person while the spirit has the overarching position. However, Jia's anthropology

goes beyond the type A position as well. Its stress on the connections among the different parts of human composition allows for a more positive grasp of the human condition.

Jia believed that humans are constituted by three parts: spirit, soul and body. He believed that God created humans according to the model (*yang shi*) of Himself. It is because of God's triune mechanism of life that humans are made up of three elements. Spirit is the most important among the three, by which humans can communicate with God. Body is the physical aspect of human and belongs to the earth. Soul is the meeting point between the spirit and body. Jia's emphasis on the overarching role of spirit and the inferior status of body showed the influence of western Neoplatonic dualism. This feature of anthropology is in line with the type A theology proposed by Bevans. The type A anthropological position finds its origin in the Augustinian doctrine of original sin that humans are completely corrupt, and they are born sinful. They are in a helpless state and desperately need God's help. From a type A perspective, humans are composed of two opposite parts: body and soul. From a Neoplatonic point of view, body is matter and therefore inferior to the soul. It only has negative influence on the soul. What humans need is to escape from the impact of the body and become spiritual. In contrast, soul is spiritual and good. It should transcend the material body so people may attain liberation.<sup>415</sup> This kind of dualistic position regarding human composition became dominant in the West and went beyond the Western world. Bevans also pointed out that its influence can also be found in a tripartite type of anthropology. Watchman Nee's tripartite anthropology is an embodiment of the heritage of dualism in the context of China. His attitude of

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<sup>415</sup> Bevans and Schroeder, 'You Are Witnesses of These Things', 45-7.

complete denial of the body, the pursuit of the absolute authority of the spirit over the whole person, and the stress on strict separation between the function of body, soul, and spirit all showed the impact of western dualism.

What makes Jia's anthropology distinctive from Nee's tripartite view is his holistic position. Jia put stress on the connections and possibility of mutual influence among the three components. The regeneration of spirit can spiritualize the soul and body; the soul can rationalize spiritual wisdom; and the body will live out the holiness of the spiritualized reason. This reciprocal relationship makes it possible for humans to achieve the perfect state of holiness—the state of a Christ-human. The holistic feature of Jia's anthropology enables Jia to hold a much more positive view of the human condition and laid the foundation for his stance of perfectionism. This relatively positive view of human condition makes Jia an exception among type A theologians who usually do not believe that human perfection is achievable in this life.

In addition, even though Jia's definition of sin shows a strong legal meaning which is in line with the type A stance, his understanding of sin also carries features of the type B theology.<sup>416</sup> Like other law-oriented theologians of the twentieth-century such as Wang Mingdao and John Song, Jia adopted the meaning of sin which emphasized humans' corrupted nature and their helpless state in terms of attaining salvation without divine help. Chow pointed out that May Fourth theologians such as Zhao Zichen challenged the type A view of sin and defined sin as *zisi* or selfishness.<sup>417</sup> According to Zhao, humans sinned because they only focused on

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<sup>416</sup> The representatives of Type B theologians in the context of China are Zhao Zichen at the earlier stage of his life, Wu Leichuan and Wu Yaozong.

<sup>417</sup> Chow, *Theosis*, 117.

pursuing their own happiness and forgot God's character of love. Selfishness means that one is only interested in his or her own matters and ignores others' needs. For Wu Leichuan, sin means self-love and lack of public awareness. Individuals are only sinful when they are obsessed with their own interests and forget about the greater society. For type B theologians, sin does not mean the trespasses of God's divine law. Humans are not born guilty and do not have a completely corrupted nature. Rather, they can make selfless decisions and benefit the wider society.<sup>418</sup> For Jia, on the one hand, he contended that sin can only be understood considering God's divine law: 'To talk about the sin of humans, [we] cannot but talk about God's law and its nature first.'<sup>419</sup> On the other hand, like those truth-oriented theologians, Jia chose to use the idea of selfishness in his interpretation of sin and believed that a selfish heart (*222ix in*) is the root of sin.

Then where does the origin of sin (*zui nie*) lie? It only exists in the selfish human heart. Due to the selfish heart, humans are self-interested and self-favouring and regard themselves as supreme. They even attribute things that should be attributed to God to themselves. Therefore, [selfishness] is the mother of all sinful actions...Self-interest is the truth of all evil...the selfish heart is the beginning of temptation.<sup>420</sup>

As discussed in chapter 4, even though the meaning of selfishness in Jia's thinking as a fundamental problem of human nature is different from that in Zhao's and Wu's definition as an intellectual failure in knowing God, Jia's idea of selfishness does contain an intellectual dimension as well. This aspect can be described as a state of self called the petty self (*xiao wo*), which means one is not aware of the existence of anything else except oneself.

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<sup>418</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>419</sup> Jia, *Shen dao xue* vol.2., 150.

<sup>420</sup> *Ibid.*, 169-70.

This petty self is someone who only knows themselves and does not recognize the existence of God; who only knows 'me' and does not know others.....All of his activities are confined to the realm of self..... How can it be broadened and made to live for God and others?<sup>421</sup>

This interpretation is very close to Zhao Zichen and Wu Leichuan's. All of them considered sin as a lack of social awareness. The Chinese character *si* means partiality. This is the opposite of the idea of impartiality (*gong*), which is the pursuit of a Confucian sage. Chow pointed out, due to their Confucian sensibilities, type B theologians usually had their focus on social relationships over the individual.<sup>422</sup> What makes Jia distinct from other type A and similar to type B theologians is his pursuit for impartiality, a stress on the importance of social relationships. Yet, for Jia, different from the type B position, social relationships do not weigh more than individual spiritual development. Based on his Wang Yangming influenced spirituality, Jia in his theologizing not only accentuates subjectivity like type A theologians, but also deepens the connectivity between individuals and the greater society. Fulfilling one's public responsibilities is a natural extension, or simply an indispensable aspect of individual spiritual growth. Therefore, it is fair to say that Jia's anthropology is a combination of type A and type B theology due to his inheritance of the missionaries' Augustinian doctrine of original sin as well as Wang Yangming's spirituality.

Because of his adoption of the Augustinian position of original sin, Jia's view of Christology is in line with type A too, which carries a strong legal feature. Type A theologians usually take the position of substitution theory, which emphasized the

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<sup>421</sup> Jia, *Wanquan Jiufa*, 134.

<sup>422</sup> Chow, *Theosis*, 117.

legal aspect of Christ's redemptive work. Tertullian was the one who employed the word 'satisfaction' for the first time, which may have originated from its use in Roman Law. It could mean either making amend for failure in achieving obligations or even receiving punishment.<sup>423</sup> González believed that the idea of law featured Tertullian's thinking, hence law also became the main characteristics of the theological form, the type A theology, that Tertullian represented.<sup>424</sup> Later this doctrine was further developed and popularized by the work of Anselm of Canterbury. For Anselm, the ultimate reason for Jesus's incarnation was to die on the cross for us. Only Jesus who was sinless and perfect could satisfy God's judgement and make right Adam's offenses to His divine law. The satisfactory and substitutionary nature of Jesus's death is vital in understanding Christ's redemptive work. Jesus's saving work was objective that it was done once and for all. A person is only saved when he or she repents and confesses Jesus as their only saviour.<sup>425</sup> Regarding the nature of Christ's redemptive work on the Cross, Jia adopted the position of substitution. According to Jia, humans are born as sinners, as they inherited guilt from their ancestors Adam and Eve who broke God's divine law and were condemned. Because God loves us, He sent Jesus as the second Adam into this world. Jesus as a perfect human was punished and died for us on the Cross and therefore satisfied God's law. And God graciously transmitted the merit that Jesus earned on the Cross to us. So, whoever believes in Jesus Christ will be justified by His redemptive work and become righteous in front of God again. Theologians who hold this kind of Christology usually have a negative attitude toward the context of religious pluralism.

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<sup>423</sup> Bevens and Schroeder, 'You Are Witnesses of These Things', 39.

<sup>424</sup> Philip Jenkins, *The New Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 22.

<sup>425</sup> Bevens and Schroeder, 'You Are Witnesses of These Things', 39.

For them, Christ alone is the saviour and there are no other possibilities in any other religions/cultures to find salvation. This is true in the case of Jia as well. In line with this position of Christology, type A theologians usually acknowledge the existence of natural revelation in Roman 1:18-20. Yet they believe that due to human's corrupted nature, humans are incapable to respond properly to natural revelation and make things right with God. The only way to obtain salvation is through God's special revelation, which is Christ. Jesus Christ is the only path to salvation. Jia followed this trajectory and believed that even though natural revelation contains the knowledge of God, due to human incapability and the incompleteness of natural revelation, it is impossible for humans to gain salvation in natural religions.

Humans cannot know the truth of God through normal revelation (*putong qishi*) after all. Although natural religions are established by humans, they contain God's revelation as well. Despite being human ways, they contain the way of God too. It is difficult indeed for humans to resort to natural religion to clearly understand the way of God because natural revelation is not complete and human ability to know God is defective.<sup>426</sup>

However, regarding religions other than Christianity, despite believing in the irreplaceability of Christ as the only path to salvation, Jia did not hold a completely negative attitude.

Regarding other religions, some missionaries were not concerned and did not pay them any attention. They knew neither the doctrines of each religion, nor the truth in each of them. They simply bitterly rebuked their mistakes and did not realize that each religion has doctrines that make sense and truth that they keep. We should investigate with full attention and draw on their advantages and offset their weakness to direct them to the path of truth and to step onto the right track.<sup>427</sup>

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<sup>426</sup> Jia, *Shen dao xue* vol.1., 59.

<sup>427</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

Jia valued the wisdom in other religions and held a sympathetic attitude toward them, especially Chinese religions or philosophy. For him, the mission is to Christianize China and keep the Chinese religio-philosophical heritage as well.

We Chinese people are people of religious thought. The mind of following and fearing the heavenly mandate has been revealed in the superior -subordinate relationship between ruler and subject. It has been passed on from generation to generation, and has nearly become an inherited nature, or our so-called religious belief of China, which is better than all other countries' in the world. We also believe that God is the father of all creatures, who is 'the creator of nature and the origin of heaven and earth.'<sup>428</sup>

Jia noticed the prominence of the idea of the unity of heaven and humanity in the Chinese mind and was optimistic about the Chinese culture's potential to be a nourishing environment for the growth of Christianity. He believed that the notion of the unity of heaven and humanity does not contradict but accords with Christian belief. This is probably why Jia's theologizing manifested a bio-generative mind that is rooted in Chinese culture.

In addition to the substitutionary meaning of Christ's work on the cross, Jia also emphasized the transforming nature of it, which is usually seen in type C theology. Type C theologians tend to consider Christ's work an incarnation redemption. According to God's original plan, Jesus became flesh as the second Adam. He lived a perfect life as a recapitulation of Adam's trial and changed human history. Jesus was sentenced to death and tricked Satan. By his resurrection, He conquered Satan and set humanity free from the devil's captive. On this foundation of Jesus's new life, humans are able to grow into the likeness of Christ. This aspect

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<sup>428</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

of Christology is closely linked to the type C characteristic of Jia's view of salvation that we will discuss in the following section.

#### **5.4 Salvation, Causation, and Eschatology**

How one understands the human condition decides the theological view of salvation. Jia's adoption of the Augustinian doctrine of original sin is to a large extent in line with the type A view of salvation. However, at the same time, Jia's view of salvation challenges the type A position through his optimistic view toward human perfection, and through his public concern.

According to type A theology, as humans are helplessly sinful and doomed to be punished, they can only be saved through Christ's redemptive work on the cross. Due to the influence of the satisfaction theory of atonement, salvation in a type A theology is usually understood to be spiritual and for individual souls to avoid punishment. Jia's experiential theology of the cross, especially its the first two phases, shows its commonalities with the type A view of salvation. The process of salvation in Jia's theologizing involves both justification and sanctification. For Jia, the whole Bible is about God's salvation scheme for humanity. In his wiring, different colours of the cross stand for different stages of salvation. Jesus and his redemptive work on the cross serve as the centre of salvation. Jesus's 'red bronze cross' has offered us positional sanctification. So, our debt is paid and we are legally justified in front of God. The following step is 'carrying the silver cross,' which Jia described as 'experiencing the further salvation that we have obtained in the Lord.'<sup>429</sup> This means willing to deny one's selfish desires and subject oneself to the Lord. This means a

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<sup>429</sup> Jia, *Wanquan Jiufa*, 148.

continual effort to live a holy life. Moreover, Jia went further than most of the type A theologians and held an optimistic attitude toward the possibility of human perfection. For Jia, one would not obtain full salvation without experiencing the 'gold cross.' This stage is the realization of entire sanctification, which is also called the state of Christ-human.

Although the state of Christ-human is the goal of individual spiritual development, due to Jia's neo-Confucian influence, it includes a public dimension as well. For Jia, salvation is essentially personal but naturally involves a communal aspect. Jia's view of salvation manifests a holistic tendency. Bevans believed that in type A theology perspective, salvation is personal in two senses: due to the notion of individuality that emerged with modernity, salvation only happens to individuals and is out of their own will. Also, salvation is limited to the spiritual dimension and would not go beyond the individual realm. This kind of view of salvation does not necessarily involve a public sphere that includes structural, political, societal, or cosmic renewal.<sup>430</sup> John Stott was insightful about the fact that spiritual salvation would certainly have an impact on human physical and mental health as well as socio-political liberation. However, he pointed out that we cannot regard human health and societal changes as the result of salvation, which God has offered humans in Christ. Stott emphasized that even though Christians have duties to the society, spiritually and socio-politically, 'reconciliation with man is not reconciliation with God, nor is social action evangelism, nor is political liberation salvation.'<sup>431</sup>

However, Jia's Wang Yangming influenced spirituality dissolved this distinction

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<sup>430</sup> Dorothee Sölle, *Thinking about God: An Introduction to Theology* (London: SCM, 1990), 102-3. See Bevans and Schroeder, 'You Are Witnesses of These Things', 44-5.

<sup>431</sup> John Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (London: Falcon, 1975), 100. *Ibid.*, 45.

between individual spiritual development and social transformation. For Jia, even though social reform itself is not salvation, fulfilling one's value in the society and building harmony social relationships should be natural results of individual spiritual salvation. Personal spiritual transformation includes a public dimension. Without accomplishing social responsibilities, one's individual spiritual growth is not properly integrated. A Christ-human is also a Confucian moral example and undertakes the ambitions and aspirations of Confucian sage. God did not offer social changes as our salvation, but believers should make contribution to helping human society move in a godly direction toward restoring the heavenly order to the universe.

Jia's view of salvation not only challenges the type A position, but also carries some features of type C theology. His idea of spiritual development and growing into the state of Christ-human, is close to the Eastern Orthodox notion of deification. Attaining and developing life is the focal point of Jia's spirituality. Jia emphasized multiple times in his writings that Christ is the new origin of our life.

Just as we had our old life in the first Adam, a life tainted by sin, we have new life in the second Adam, Christ. The stream of the old life originated from Adam, the stream of new life is originated from Christ. There is no spiritual life outside of Christ, 'Christ is our life.' When one becomes related to Christ in life, [one] would gain new life and become a new person.<sup>432</sup>

Jia's stress on the organic connection between the life of humanity as a whole and the life of Adam and Christ makes the feature of type C theology prominent in his thoughts. For Jia, humans live in corporate solidarity with the first Adam, who was the head of humanity, hence we all share Adam's old sinful nature. Yet through Christ's saving work on the cross, He became our new head and the source of life.

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<sup>432</sup> Jia, *Wanquan Jiufa*, 263.

According to Irenaeus, the main forefather of type C theology, the whole humanity sinned not because of their inheritance of the original sin but because Adam as the head of humanity sinned, so we all sinned through his sinful act and Satan took the whole humanity captive. It was through Christ's recapitulation that He won the victory over the devil, liberated us from Satan, and became the new head of humanity.

Hence, we can gradually grow into the likeness of God. Jia's articulation here is very similar to the type C position, particularly the Eastern Orthodox position of recapitulation.

He is born for the sake of the crowd, He is called the Son of Man, who is the Son of humanity, the Son of the crowd, He is born for the whole crowd. His life is not private, not the individual's, but the crowd's. He is the Son of Man, the Son of the crowd, who should be offered to the crowd. He is the life stream of the genuine person. (*zhen ren*) He is the Son of God, the circulator of spiritual life. Therefore, the life of God amidst human life becomes the life of the genuine person.<sup>433</sup>

For Jia, salvation is also about the transformation of human life, it is a salvation of humanity. It is fair to say that his salvation is based on Christ's redemptive incarnation. 'The reason why Jesus Christ came into this world, became flesh and instilled God's life into human life is to transform human life into the life of God.'<sup>434</sup>

Since God became incarnate, humans can gain God's life and become a Christ-human. This reciprocal interaction between divine and human life during sanctification shares great similarities with the Eastern Orthodox view of deification.

Because Jesus is the Son of God and he became the Son of Man, [he] instilled God's life into human life; because he is the Son of Man and also the Son of God, he can transform human life into the life of God. The perfect morality of the Son of God is contained and infused in the Son of Man, the truth of the Son of Man manifests the Son of God. [The stream of life] from the Son of God to the Son of Man and

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<sup>433</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>434</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

from the Son of Man to the Son of God, is the greatest and most significant success.<sup>435</sup>

Xie Longyi also pointed out that Jia's view of sanctification carries the 'top down as well as bottom up' characteristics of Eastern Orthodox theology.<sup>436</sup> Yet, for Jia, even though it is possible for humans to achieve the perfect state of Christ-human, a strict difference still exists between humans and God in their nature. Humans cannot become completely divine but can only grow into a God-like human state. For Jesus Christ, his divine and human nature co-exist but are not mixed with each other.

His divine and human nature do not mix into one nature, the divine nature is still from God, human nature remains human. They exist on their own respectively, .....However, his divine and human characters actively cultivate each other, to accommodate his divine nature to the capacity of human nature and to enable human nature to manifest the divine life.<sup>437</sup>

As for humans, a Christ-human is still essentially a human, who shows the likeness of Christ and lives a life that 'only shows Christ but not me.' However, since Christ-human is a Christized *human*,<sup>438</sup> it is fair to understand Christ-human as a deified human, who exhibits divine character. The divine essence has been blended into human life.

The life of our Lord Jesus is a life of incarnation. The reason why God became flesh is for us to become the word. It means that humanity is transformed into the word and the word is embodied into humanity. Humanity and the word, the word and humanity, become wonderfully inseparable. Namely, the word is human, and humanity is the word. It is no different from the incarnation of Jesus.<sup>439</sup>

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<sup>435</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>436</sup> Xie, *Jidu Ren*, 363.

<sup>437</sup> Jia, *Wanquan Jiufa*, 13-4.

<sup>438</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>439</sup> Jia, *Lingxiu Rike*, 221.

Apart from the characteristics of deification, Jia's view of salvation also shares a similar view of history with Eastern Orthodox theology. Jia stressed the participation of God in human history and the transforming power of Jesus's death to the world. Interestingly, he also indicated the significance of Jesus's blood to the whole humanity even though he held to the doctrine of election. To his neo-Confucian mind, the pragmatic dimension of Christian faith weighs more than doctrinal systemisation.

Even though Jesus's death was from his side, no matter one believes [in him] or not, [Jesus] died for them. Among all humanity in this world, there is no one who does not benefit from Jesus's sacrifice, such as through the culture of the world, women's liberation, the holiness of labourers, the happiness of equality, or philanthropy. None of them was unaffected by Jesus's death for humanity. With Jesus's blood, the barrier between ten-thousands of people and God was removed. [Jesus's blood] also has the great power of reforming and transforming the world. It enabled the world to gain endless happiness because of Jesus's sacrifice. Jesus died for humanity indeed, and more for me.<sup>440</sup>

Here Jia argues that in some sense God's salvation is to do with the whole of humanity, including Christians and non-Christians. God through Jesus's death enabled all humanity to restore the heavenly order to the world and transform society toward perfection. Humans work together with God to achieve God's great plan. This argument shows a strong tendency toward the theology of history. Jia's type C inclination, care for the whole humanity and concern for the society, is in line with his neo-Confucian way of thinking. The fulfilment of social responsibilities in the world and restoring the heavenly order to the society are natural aspects of believers' spiritual development. From the perspective of Wang Yangming influenced

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<sup>440</sup> Jia, *Wushi'er lingcheng jiangti*, 82.

spirituality, caring for and sustaining the universe is an essential part of the individual spiritual journey. Therefore, for Jia, Christianity should naturally drive social reformation and benefits the transformation of the world pragmatically.

It is important to note that Jia's view of salvation bears both type A and type C characteristics. His view of salvation highlights not only the objective legal meaning of Christ's redemptive work on the cross for our sins, but also the subjective spiritual and moral change in individuals. Xie Longyi also commented that Jia's spiritual theology of Christ-human held to the Reformed position of atonement as well as reflected the view of deification in Eastern Orthodoxy. And it is a theology of redemptive incarnation.<sup>441</sup> Xie reflected on the reason why Jia's theology shows Eastern Orthodox characteristics briefly from a Chinese cultural perspective. Xie is insightful in pointing out that Eastern Orthodox theology tends to be more personal in comparison with the objective character of Reformed theology. And this more subjective tendency echoes with the humanistic orientation and pursuit for moral cultivation in Chinese philosophy.<sup>442</sup> Jia did not quote any Eastern Orthodox theological resources or mention any specific theologians that could be identified with these themes, such as Irenaeus, in his writings. The Eastern Orthodox similarities in style of Jia's theology are unlikely to come from any direct influence from Eastern Orthodox theology, as there is no trace of it in his biography. The similarities come from his neo-Confucian active mystical mindset that we discussed in the last chapter. Both Eastern Orthodox and neo-Confucian spirituality hold a

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<sup>441</sup> Xie, *Jidu Ren*, 345.

<sup>442</sup> *Ibid.*, 332.

positive position regarding human nature and their potential to become perfect. Also, with regard to the process of self-transformation, they both greatly value human effort. Different from Western theologians who held the Augustinian pessimistic view of human nature, Eastern Orthodox thinkers trust individual free will and its capability to make responsible choices. In the process of deification, what humans need to do is to respond to God's grace freely. The cooperation between divine and human wills features in Eastern spirituality. This theme of synergism corresponds to the idea of the unity between heaven and earth in Confucian tradition and is similar to the humanistic approach of neo-Confucian tradition in self-cultivation.<sup>443</sup>

Rooted in the neo-Confucian cultural context, Jia's spirituality also exhibits the theme of synergism, which is one of the main features of type C theology.

God has His grace, I have my obligation. On my end, [if] I have exhausted my ability, God would do what he will do. [If] I have not tried my best, God would do nothing either. Regarding spiritual affairs, there is spiritual law. As long as [we behave] according to the spiritual law, [we would be able to] gain spiritual grace, develop spiritual life and become a spiritual person.<sup>444</sup>

For Jia, in the process of spiritual growth, human effort plays a vital role in cooperating with the divine guidance. As discussed in the last chapter, to realize the state of the union of equilibrium and harmony, neither human work nor God's revelation is dispensable. Believers need to withdraw from obsession with worldly affairs and go and hide in the secret place of God. Once they have paused their mind and jettisoned their selfish desires that veil their hearts, the divine revelation will shine within. The immediate encounter with God will spiritualize one's eyes. With

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<sup>443</sup> The phrase the unity of heaven and human (*tian ren heyi*) in Chinese originated from a shamanistic origin. It described a primeval experience, human being possessed by the spirit or spirits. Julia Ching, *Chinese Religions* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1993), 5. See in Chow, *Theosis*, 124.

<sup>444</sup> Jia, *Wanquan Jiufa*, 192.

spiritual wisdom from God, believers can go back to the world and actively live out holiness. The aspect of withdrawal shows the necessity of divine help and the action of advance highlights the significance of human agency. Jia was not alone in holding a synergistic view of sanctification among Chinese theologians. The idea of cooperation between heaven and humanity is a common way of thinking rooted deeply in the Chinese mindset. This synergistic tendency is shared by many Chinese theologians of the twentieth century. Chow is insightful in pointing out the fact that historically, the rationalistic comprehension of causality has seemed alien to the Chinese mind. ‘The problem was found in the absence of any mechanical view of causation like the Western ‘A causes B.’ The Chinese mindset has historically tended to be much more organic or, better, bio-generative with ‘*ben* (origin) producing *mo* (end).’<sup>445</sup> The mechanical way of causality distinguishes the entities of cause from those of effect, whereas the bio-generative mind emphasizes that the end is an outgrowth of the origin. That is to say, the end and the origin form a continuum and they share the same essence. This model of thinking is well represented by the Chinese aphorism *Tiansheng, rencheng* (Heaven engenders, humanity completes), which reveals the relationship of cooperation, where Heaven initiates and humanity follows the will of Heaven.<sup>446</sup> Under the impact of this bio-generative way of thinking, many Chinese theologians formulated a synergistic approach.

Moreover, according to Chow’s study, all three types of theologians in China exhibited the theme of synergism in their theologizing in different ways. Within the

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<sup>445</sup> Chow, *Theosis*, 120.

<sup>446</sup> *Ibid.*, 120-1.

type A category, salvation is considered as initiated by God graciously and responded to freely by human agents. For example, Watchman Nee stressed the importance of believers' efforts in actively pursuing a 'higher Christian life' through continually denying and surrendering oneself. For the theologians of the type B model, they tend to place more emphasis on human agency. Zhao Zichen, on the basis that humans share the same good nature *imago Dei* imparted by God with Jesus, since Jesus manifested the love of God perfectly, through our constant effort, we can realize a morally perfect status as well. Even though this approach seems to solely highlight the work of human agents, as humans are regarded as carrying divine qualities like Jesus, it still manifests a synergistic tendency of 'Heaven engenders, humanity completes.' As for type C theology in China, Ding Guangxun's theology as the main representative case showed its stress on the cooperation between God and humans in history. Humans, together with God, as his cocreators work as individuals and as a whole society, bring the world toward perfection according to God's great plan.<sup>447</sup> Seen from the three types of theology in the Chinese context, Jia seems to be an interesting theologian who challenged the boundaries between different groups.

As a law-oriented theologian, Jia is similar to Nee in emphasizing God's gracious redemptive work as the initiator of human salvation and stressing the importance of human effort in pursuing holiness and a more abundant life. Moreover, although Jia is different from Zhao Zichen in retaining Jesus's divine essence and acknowledging the difference between Christ's two natures, like Zhao Zichen, Jia held an optimistic view toward the human ability to become perfect and live out the

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<sup>447</sup>*Ibid.*, 122-3.

love of God. The idea of Christ-human suggests a deified human state. The human will can be spiritualized by the divine will to such an extent that the two of them are not separate anymore. Regarding the state of Christ-human, it is not accurate to use either synergistic or monergistic to describe the divine and human relationship. The state of Christ-human is the realisation of Wang Yangming's unity of equilibrium and harmony. It is truly an embodiment of the unity between Heaven and Humanity.

Additionally, Jia's view of salvation certainly shares some commonalities with Ding's type C formulation as well. Jia broadened the significance of Jesus's death from the elected to the whole of humanity. Jesus's blood benefits not only Christians but also non-Christians. God's redemptive work is the foundational step toward bringing human society toward a godly direction. All Christians should take part in building and reforming the society. The true meaning of individual spiritual life is to be found in social participation and sacrificial service for others.

To family, society, and the world, which is the so-called world of the life, the citizenship of the Kingdom of Heaven (*tian guo*) is not separated, it is to be fulfilled in this world. In the future, when the Kingdom of God (*shen guo*) comes, universal harmony [will be achieved] in the world, ..... There is no doubt that this is because of the great power of the saving gospel, yet the effort of the people of the spiritual realm is indispensable as well. They have godly ability, godly strength, godly authority, godly intelligence, and work with God with one mind to achieve the goal of saving the world. .... How honoured we believers are that we can make contribution to and serve faithfully the Kingdom of God, and participate in Jesus's heavenly mission on earth, and wait for the realisation of the glorious Kingdom.<sup>448</sup>

According to Jia, in the process of bringing about the perfection of human society, human agents play a vital role in cooperating with God on earth. Human agency is indispensable in realizing God's plan—the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

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<sup>448</sup> Jia, *Shen dao xue* vol.3., 337-8.

However, the perfection of human society in Jia's writing has a different meaning from Ding's. For Jia, the perfection of the Kingdom of God (*shen guo*) will not come through simply social reform. It is not an ideal society that we should expect in this life. It will only happen after the realization of *tian guo*, which is the Kingdom of Christ. The church today is the invisible Kingdom of Heaven on earth. It will not become real until Christ's second coming and becoming the King. Jia's vision of the perfect human society is to do with his view of eschatology. Jia held fast to the position of dispensational premillennialism.

The belief that Jesus would come before the millennium is based on the Bible. It is firstly proved by the great tribulation. This world would not become more and more peaceful, but more and more miserable..... According to the position of postmillennialism, the world can become perfect through gradual reform. Those who hold this view did not notice the situation in this world nor the obvious words in the Bible. The Bible says that the time when Christ comes is when morality is the most corrupted and evil the most rampant.<sup>449</sup>

According to Bevans, eschatology usually contained two aspects: *eschaton*, the goal of human history which concerns humanity as a whole; and the *eschata*, death, judgement, heaven, and hell, which explains the destiny of individuals.<sup>450</sup> In general, type A theology has a futuristic orientation. Eschaton is when the final judgement will happen, and the righteous will be saved and the rest damned. And this judgement is in the future yet could happen at any time. Due to this futuristic vision, believers (Bevans used Dispensationalists and fundamentalists as examples here) who hold type A theology are usually motivated by the nearness and urgency of the end time in evangelising to save souls.<sup>451</sup> Jia's premillennialist perspective would make him a

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<sup>449</sup> Jia, *Wanquan Jiufa*, 42-3.

<sup>450</sup> Bevans and Schroeder, 'You Are Witnesses of These Things', 42.

<sup>451</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

typical type A theologian. Seen from the premillennialist perspective, Jia was not optimistic about the near future of the world and the establishment of an ideal society. For him, we should not hope to progressively transform the world with our own strength and see a new world in our lifetime. The premillennialist position normally does not imply a positive attitude toward social participation. Therefore, those who held this position, such as Watchman Nee, mostly had a pessimistic attitude toward the world and tended to avoid worldly affairs. Their spirituality is usually confined to the individual realm.

However, what distinguishes Jia from other premillennialists is his stance that in the process of growing into the likeness of God, the perfect state of Christ-human, believers should also actively fulfil their public responsibilities and strive for social reform to make the world a better place. Jia not only anticipated final 'deification' for individuals, but also acknowledged the transforming power of human effort in human history. This stress on growth and development for both individuals and the whole of humanity also showed an inclination toward type C eschatology. Type C eschatology takes history seriously and considers the eschatological fullness not as the end of a dispensation and inauguration of another but a transformation of history and the realization of God's original plan for humanity to become the likeness of God.

Although this teaching seems contradictory with his premillennialist view, it is compatible with his neo-Confucian shaped mind. For Jia, the realization of social values in this world as an essential part of individual spiritual growth is necessary. Human effort is vital in achieving God's plan, 'yet the effort of the people of the spiritual realm is indispensable as well.'<sup>452</sup> Given Jia's dispensational view, here Jia

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<sup>452</sup> Jia, *Shen dao xue* vol.3., 337-8.

was not strictly talking about the necessity of human contribution in building the Kingdom of Heaven. Yet, seen from the neo-Confucian perspective, Jia's seemingly self-contradictory argument exhibits his bio-generative way of thinking. As believers have attained the spiritual life of God, especially in the state of Christ-human, their spiritualized wills are essentially an outgrowth of the divine will. That is why they can 'work with God with one mind to achieve the goal of saving the world.'<sup>453</sup> If God is loving and caring towards the world and prepared a full salvation for humanity for the purpose of realisation of the Kingdom of God, believers should share the same mindset and take action.

Due to His character as human with a divine nature, and God with a human nature, [He] became one with us, deified Christ-human. He is our Emmanuel, God in man. We are members of His body, humans are in God. This unity of heaven and humanity, union of God and humanity, is the realization of the wonderful, glorious salvific political purpose.<sup>454</sup>

It is not because we can gradually transform the society to perfection that believers should sacrifice themselves for others and fulfil their social duties. Rather, it is because we should love and serve others like God loves us. Jia's neo-Confucian bio-generative way of thinking enabled his spirituality to go beyond the framework of premillennialism and regard humans as co-operators in God's scheme of salvation and cocreators of human history.

In addition to the subject of sanctification, as for calling, it is inaccurate to say that Jia rigidly adhered to divine monergism.

Without exception, those who perished, did so all because they themselves rebelled and disbelieved, and were willing to get lost and die. God's gracious calling is genuine.<sup>455</sup>

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<sup>453</sup> *Ibid.*, 337-8.

<sup>454</sup> Jia, *Shengjing yaoyi*, vol.5, 1835.

<sup>455</sup> Jia, *Shen dao xue* vol.3., 141.

Also, he said that, ‘our salvation does not rely on our limited ability, nor does it depend on an individual’s weak will, it is all because of God’s almighty power, His everlasting love and his endless grace.’<sup>456</sup> For Jia, our salvation is solely offered graciously by God, we cannot gain it from anywhere else. Yet, we do have freedom to turn it down and lose it. Kwok Wai-luen also pointed out that Jia’s theology has an Arminian tendency. Many dispensationalists under the influence of the nineteenth century Holiness Movement in America stressed the importance of human effort in the process of attaining practical holiness and ended up Arminianizing Calvinist theology. Jia was no exception.<sup>457</sup>

Jia himself would not have minded a judgement from a denominational perspective as such. He briefly discussed the tension between God’s sovereignty and human free will. For him, both Calvinist and Arminian explanations make sense and they both have advantages in different areas. Therefore, in practice, they are both acceptable and would benefit each other.

Through the ages, many theologians tried to reconcile the two issues, combining the sovereignty of God and human freedom into one, bringing them into conformity. However, [they] all ended up realizing their incapability. .... Those who held the doctrine of predestination are called Calvinists, ....., those who believed the position of human freedom are called Arminians. ....Regarding these two positions, even though we cannot explain thoroughly, it would be good if it is possible to combine these two and accept both at the same time. ....When preaching, Calvinists can become believers from the Arminian school, and adopt their language...Arminians can become Calvinists when praying...the sovereignty of God and the freedom of human are two aspects of the truth of salvation.<sup>458</sup>

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<sup>456</sup> *Ibid.*, 140.

<sup>457</sup> Kwok, ‘Salvation and Life,’ 88.

<sup>458</sup> Jia, *Shen dao xue* vol.3., 132-3.

Jia's understanding of the divergence between Calvinist and Arminian shows that he has no interest in reconciling the two views in a philosophical sense. He was aware of the vagueness in his own articulation. Yet, it does not bother him that this doctrinal conflict remains. What he chose to pay attention to is the practicality of both positions in different arenas. Jia appreciated the vigorous attitude and motivative action from the Arminians in seeking salvation and holiness on the one hand and valued the Calvinist emphasis on God's gracious sovereignty on the other. His downplaying of doctrinal clarity and stress on the praxis dimension shows the priority of moral cultivation that features in the Confucian cultural tradition. Doctrinal coherence can be compromised when it needs to serve the purposes of evangelizing and cultivating a godly/sagely mind in practice. However, in terms of sanctification, because Jia had a biogenerative mind, a spiritualized human mind is like having the mind of Christ. Therefore, both God's absolute sovereignty and human freedom can be preserved. The tension can be reconciled.

### **5.5 Ecclesiology, Socio-political Reality and Religio-philosophical Heritage**

The church, which is the witness to God and preaches God's full salvation plays a vital role in Jia's theologizing. According to Jia, the church is the organization that has the life of Christ. Essentially, it is not a social group, nor a human society, but a living entity, which is the body of Christ.<sup>459</sup> The church is the united body of all regenerated believers. For type A theologians, the church is the only agent of faith in Christ. Jia's understanding of the church in terms of its nature is in line with the type A position. Bevans used Avery Dulles's Models of the church as a guide and laid out

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<sup>459</sup> Jia, *Shen dao xue* vol.4., 123-4.

five basic theological visions of the nature of the church: institution, mystical communion, sacrament, herald and servant.<sup>460</sup> The institution model emphasized the church's external and hierarchical aspects. The church as a mystical communion views itself as a community united mystically in Christ. The church as sacrament is a model between the first two, considering church as an instrument of divine and human unity in the world. The herald perspective focuses on individual transformation, and the servant perspective stresses the aspect of social reform.<sup>461</sup> Bevens believed that a type A theology would feel most comfortable with the institutional model among the five, as even though some Protestants have a low-church perspective, they care very much about the church's hierarchical structure, policy and legal condition both inside and outside the church. Bevens's description of Type A characteristics is mostly true in Jia's case. Jia did point out the importance of the structure of the church being organized and biblical. He adopted the hierarchical structure of the Western church. According to Jia, Christ is the head of the church. He is the life and origin of the church. Among the congregation, who should all be regenerated and baptized believers, there should be church clergy, including deacons, elders, pastors, and presbyters.<sup>462</sup> However, Jia's vision of the church is not limited to the external aspect. For Jia, what weighs more than the visible institutional structure of the church is its invisible spiritual reality. Jia underscored the difference between visible and invisible church. The visible aspect refers to church members and their family. Though they may be many in number, there will be nominal Christians among them. The invisible church consists of those who have

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<sup>460</sup> Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church* (Garden City, N.Y.: Image Books, 1974). See in Bevens and Schroeder, 'You Are Witnesses of These Things', 41.

<sup>461</sup> Bevens and Schroeder, 'You Are Witnesses of These Things', 41.

<sup>462</sup> Jia, *Shen dao xue* vol.4., 123-8.

gained the life of Christ. The life of Christ is the foundation of the church. He also pointed out that different denominations exist which hold different beliefs such as the Roman Catholic church, Anglican church and Presbyterian church. Despite doctrinal mistakes in some denominations like Roman Catholicism, there are still true Christians in those churches. Because it is the individual relationship with Jesus that matters in salvation rather than denominational belonging.<sup>463</sup> This position that emphasizes spiritual life and mystical union in Christ, lays the foundation for Jia's cooperation with believers from different backgrounds and his attitude toward the ecumenical movement.

Jia is similar to Watchman Nee and Wang Mingdao in believing the foundation of union is the life of Christ. Wang and Nee were more radical because they both opposed denominationalism. For example, Nee insisted that there should be only one local church in one place. Jia understood the foundation of true ecumenism as having the same faith in fundamental truth such as the belief in Jesus's divine nature and having the same spiritual life of Christ. Without satisfying these two conditions, any form of unity would be superficial.<sup>464</sup> Whether one has the spiritual life of Christ is the ultimate criterion. His bio-generative way of thinking determined his mild attitude toward ecumenism. Jia especially pointed out that the idea of adjustment of controversies (*qi wu guan*) is vital in achieving ecumenism in China.

As for religions, Chinese people have a view of adjustment of controversies (*qi wu guan*). For example, despite the teachings of Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism being different, eventually they can be reconciled with each other and become one. This idea of reconciliation is not irrelevant to the future of the church of China. Have we not seen that different churches within the Chinese mission area have been gradually becoming united? Have we not seen that

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<sup>463</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

<sup>464</sup> *Ibid.*, 136-7.

churches from both Southern and Northern provinces have been planning for ecumenism? Churches that share the same characteristics and have compatible beliefs have practiced ecumenism and become one church.<sup>465</sup>

The idea of adjustment of controversies originated from *Zhuangzi*. It means that heaven, earth, and humans share the same essence and everything in the universe are in nature one. ‘Heaven, Earth, and I were produced together, and all things and I are one.’ This bio-generative way of thinking is why the ‘three religions’ (*san jiao*), Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism, can coexist in harmony and become mutually complementary for thousands of years. Chinese people tend to pay attention to the commonalities among things instead of the differences. Therefore, for Jia, while the life of Christ is present, some doctrinal divergence is tolerable. The existence of denominations is not a problem.

In addition, ecumenism was acceptable because it was also for the purpose of realizing national independence and evangelism.<sup>466</sup> The church should act on its social responsibilities and participate in nation building.

The only heavenly duty for Christianity is to reform the society and save their countrymen. Seen from the phenomena of different countries in the world today, the contribution that Christianity made to the society would be known. .... Today [the relationship] between the church and society is so close. Needless to say, the importance of their relationship, the big amount of the opportunities, and the beauty of the influence.<sup>467</sup>

Compared to other type A theologian like Nee and Wang Mingdao, Jia’s understanding of the church’s responsibility has a social dimension. Apart from saving individual souls, reinforcing the church’s good influence in the public sphere

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<sup>465</sup> *Ibid.*, 190-1.

<sup>466</sup> Kwok, *Fan Dui He Yi!?*, 133.

<sup>467</sup> Jia, *Shen dao xue* vol.4., 166-7.

as a natural extension from individual spiritual maturity, is critical as well. The necessity of the church to fulfil its social values in the world also softened Jia's attitude toward ecumenical movement.

The strong national sentiments and sense of social responsibility manifested in Jia's thought challenges Bevans's opinion about type A theology in terms of their flexibility in accommodating themselves to cultural environment other than the European or American contexts. Jia underscored that knowing and making good use of the characteristics of certain context is vital in church building and gospel preaching. Bevans argued that as type A theology favoured the church institutional, and institutions are usually reluctant in reforming or promoting any changes, it was more challenging for type A churches to accommodate themselves to any foreign cultures other than European or American cultures. For most missionaries in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,

To become a Christian was to become a member of the church, and to become a member of the church was to become a European or an American. This was the case both in 'high' institutional churches like Roman Catholicism and in 'low' congregationalist Protestant churches as well.<sup>468</sup>

In this sense, type A theology is the opposite to the principle of the 'three-self' proposed by Rufus Anderson and Henry Venn.<sup>469</sup> Jia not only highlighted the importance of the church's duty in nation-building, but also joined the Three Self Movement in China. The issue of independence is one of the matters that concerned him the most:

The meaning of independence is that believers strive to take responsibilities, seek the Lord, and become independent relying on the Lord.....The church of China will not make a fruitful achievement

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<sup>468</sup> Bevans and Schroeder, 'You Are Witnesses of These Things', 42.

<sup>469</sup> *Ibid.*,

and grow into complete flourishing until it becomes independent within the Lord.<sup>470</sup>

For Jia, Christianity is not necessarily connected with a certain kind of church structure or culture. It is the life of Christ that is the foundation for Christian faith. Even though China is not where Christianity first came into being, Chinese culture as well as the character of Chinese people can contribute to the preaching of the gospel worldwide. Moreover, for Jia, a Christianized China would even be able to make contribution to overcoming the problems that Western Christian countries were facing and see the arrival of the Kingdom of God.

My hope for the church in China, is not just that our nation becomes a Christianized China. Have we not seen that many so-called Christian countries in the West have only the [Christian] name without the reality?.....Their reality and appearances are just the consequences of being secularized and materialized. ....The true Christian nation is the one where there is no one in the country who does not bear in mind Christ's teaching and has not received Christ's life. Seeing the realization of the Kingdom of God and the prophesy that the prophet Isaiah said 'See, they will come from afar' (Isaiah 49:12) in China is the greatest goal of the Christianization of China.<sup>471</sup>

For Jia, the only way to achieve the goal of the Christianization of China is to make use of Chinese culture and take into consideration the Chinese people's way of thinking and China's socio-political situation. Jia encouraged the church in China to accommodate the character of the Chinese people.

[If] leaders of the church should know the national character of Chinese people, China's national condition, environment of the day, mentality and habits etc., they would find the secret of success in building the church and preaching salvation.<sup>472</sup>

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<sup>470</sup> Jia, *Shen dao xue* vol.4., 195.

<sup>471</sup> *Ibid.*, 198.

<sup>472</sup> *Ibid.*, 192.

For Jia, to become a Christian does not mean to become a Westerner. There is no doubt that it is possible for Christian faith to thrive in China. Embracing Chinese culture is a prerequisite for Christianity to succeed there. According to Robert Schreiter, culture has three dimensions. It is a set of ideas, such as beliefs, codes of conducts and worldviews. Therefore, it can provide its people a grid by which they can interpret the world and live their lives. Also, culture is a form of behaviours or rituals, such as celebrating Thanksgiving in the United States, shaking hands as a kind of greeting and keeping certain culturally comfortable distance from people whilst having a conversation. Through their performance the people of a particular culture are bound together and form a community. In addition, there is a material aspect of culture, such as a unique language, food, music, etc.<sup>473</sup> According to Bernard Lonergan, culture can be regarded as either classicist or empiricist.<sup>474</sup> From a classicist perspective, culture is considered normative, universal, and unchangeable. The standard culture is the culture of the West, and it has reached its final form in Western modernity. Whereas, from the empiricist perspective, culture is understood as a set of values that represent a way of life. Hence, culture is not permanent but just a particular form of life that gives meaning and direction for people's lives. No culture can be regarded as more advanced than others.<sup>475</sup> Bevans believed that even though there were some exceptions, type A theology usually held a classicist perspective of culture, where Christianity is always bound with Western

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<sup>473</sup> Robert J. Schreiter, *The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and the Local* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1997), 29. Schreiter mentioned Jens Loenhoff, *Interkulturelle Verständigung. Zum Problem grenzüberschreitender Kommunikation* (Oplade: Leske und Budrich, 1992), 144. See in Bevans and Schroeder, 'You Are Witnesses of These Things', 47.

<sup>474</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (London: Dartman, Longman and Todd, 1972), xi. *Ibid.*,  
<sup>475</sup> *Ibid.*,

culture.<sup>476</sup> What is Christian is assumed to be Western and vice versa.<sup>477</sup> Yet in the case of Jia, though he took a type A theology position and insisted that Christ is the only path to salvation, he had an empiricist perspective of culture. For him, Christian faith cannot be accepted and develop unless it is interpreted and understood in the Chinese way of thinking.

Bevans has demonstrated the following six types of approaches to different contexts when Christian faith encounters human culture. The *translation mode* positively considers culture as a vehicle of transmission for the gospel message. Yet, the culture itself is not regarded as revelatory. The *anthropological model* believes there is revelation hidden in culture and the goodness of culture can enrich Christian faith in certain ways. The praxis model is usually seen in the contexts of societies that fight for liberation. Christian faith is usually interpreted and employed for social movements. The *synthetic model* seeks the most adequate forms of Christianity in cultural contexts through actively looking at successful examples of other cultures. It accepts the mutual enrichment between Christianity and particular contexts. The *transcendental model* trusts in the ability of individuals to bring out inspiring Christian thoughts in certain cultural contexts. The *counter cultural model* values the importance of culture but has a suspicious attitude toward the prevailing culture in its context. It believes that culture should be examined and corrected by the gospel, which is considered universally true. Bevans believed that type A theology usually

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<sup>476</sup> Bevans gave the following examples: 'Gregory the Great called for basic respect of Anglo-Saxon traditions; Saints Cyril and Methodius were noted for their cultural sensitivity; the 1659 statement of the Propaganda Fide was extremely far-sighted; there were the 'experiments' of de Nobili in India, Valignano, Ricci and de Rhodes in Asia, and some Latin American missionaries approached the indigenous cultures with some toleration.' *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>477</sup> *Ibid.*

held a counter-cultural position, which deems that culture should be judged and criticised by Christian teaching and is not meant to enrich the gospel.<sup>478</sup>

It is fair to say that Jia's approach to culture bears both characteristics of the counter cultural model and translation model. Jia is counter-cultural in the sense that he believed that the gospel is universally true and the only way leading to salvation; culture, which always contains sinful elements, as the first wall separating people from God should be put under scrutiny by Christian beliefs. According to Jia, the first step toward salvation is to distinguish and leave sinful customs. Sinful customs are the periphery of sin. It includes other religions, sinful customs and rituals that drive people away from God.<sup>479</sup> Also, Jia pointed out the danger of modern liberal culture and its by-product of liberal theology.

There are people within Christianity who are engrossed in science and philosophy. [They] denied the fundamental truth of the Bible. Among everything that the Bible talks about, if not resolved by science, they do not regard it as real. Therefore, I really hope that there are many believers whose faith has a strong foundation and who have a mature spiritual life. They can rise in due time and become a firm rock in the tide of new thought.<sup>480</sup>

Yet at the same time, he did recognize the fact that culture is vitally important in evangelizing and developing Christianity in China. Jia did not purposefully interpret Christian teaching with Chinese cultural ideas or try to build a dialogue between Christian faith and the Chinese religio-cultural heritage like Zhao Zichen. But Jia's theologizing exhibited his Chinese way of thinking. The active mystical approach manifested in his spirituality shows his Wang Yangming influenced self-transformation. His pursuit of the Christ-human accords with the idea of the unity of

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<sup>478</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>479</sup> Jia, *Wanquan Jiufa*, 68.

<sup>480</sup> Jia, *Shen dao xue* vol.4., 196.

heaven and humanity, which shows the Chinese bio-generative mind. Intentionally or not, in this sense, Jia's approach to culture follows the *translation model*.

### 5.6 Situating Jia in the Context of Chinese Theology

So far, we have examined Jia's spirituality through the lens of Bevans and Schroeder's tripartite framework and Alexander Chow's adjusted typology. Through reflecting on Jia's answers to several theological motifs that developed from Chinese contextual theology by Chow - anthropology, Christology, salvation, causation, eschatology, ecclesiology, socio-political, and religio-philosophical, we realized that Jia is a theologically unique figure among his contemporaries in twentieth century China. Seen from the typology that Chow developed in the context of China, Jia's spirituality exhibits characteristics of different types of theology, which challenge the label 'fundamentalist' broadly applied to him. His adherence to the fundamental doctrines of the Augustinian tradition, such as the idea of original sin, makes him in many ways a type A theologian. However, seen from the neo-Confucian perspective, his active mystical mind and bio-generative way of thinking enabled his spirituality to carry some Eastern Orthodox features, which are usually found in type C theology.

It is helpful to use Chow's table of tripartite typology for Chinese contextual theology here to clarify Jia's uniqueness among others.

	Type A	Type B	Type C
Prototype	Tertullian	Origen	Irenaeus
Chinese Proponents	Watchman Nee; Wang Mingdao; Song Shangjie	Wu Leichuan; Zhao Zichen (early)	Zhao Zichen; Ding Guangxun

		Wu Yaozong	
Key Theme	Law	Truth	History
Christology	Person: high Work: substitution	Person: low Work: exemplar	Person: high Work: transform
Ecclesiology	Institutional	Mystical	Servant
Eschatology	Futurist; Individual	Realized; Individual	Inaugurated; Holistic
Salvation	Individual	Social/National	Holistic
Anthropology	Negative	Positive	Positive and Negative
Causation	Synergism	Humanistic Monergism	Synergism
Socio-political	Countercultural	Anthropological	Praxis
Religio- philosophical	Exclusive	Pluralist	Inclusive/Pluralist

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Regarding the key themes, Jia's spirituality covered all three theologies, type A, B, and C: law, truth, and history. Given that Jia's Christology and anthropology both have a strong legal meaning, while he also held a futurist eschatology, it is fair to regard law as one of the critical motifs in his theologizing. Also, in his discussion of salvation and the mission of the church, Jia frequently mentioned the Confucian pursuit of the unity of heaven and humanity and affirmed the value of the Chinese religio-philosophical tradition. Even though he did not take a pluralist approach and

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<sup>481</sup> Chow, *Theosis*, 163.

held to the indispensability of Christ as the only access to salvation, Jia did have a sympathetic attitude toward Chinese culture. He would not have denied the existence of truth in Chinese culture. Moreover, intentionally or not, his theologizing essentially shows a neo-Confucian way of thinking. In addition, the theme of history is prominent too. For Jia, it is believers' responsibility, as part of their individual spiritual development, to care for the whole universe as God's co-creators. Because of Christ's redemptive and transformative work on the cross, humans are enabled to participate in achieving God's plan for the world.

Christ is the centre in Jia's view of full salvation. He had a high Christology and believed that Christ's redemptive work is substitutionary. He paid our debt and gained a legally justified position for us in front of God. There is no other access to salvation other than Christ. Christ as God's special revelation is irreplaceable. Apart from this type A understanding of the nature of Christ's work, Jia also emphasized the transformative effect of Christ's redemption, which shows a type C inclination. Jia frequently stressed the significance of Christ's death in human history and its transformative nature. Because of Christ's death and resurrection, humans can enter Christ's recapitulated human history and are enabled to grow into His likeness. They became God's co-creators in human history as well.

As with Christology, Jia's ecclesiology shows type A, type B, and type C characteristics. For Jia, the church is in nature the body of Christ. It is a spiritual entity. There is differentiation between the visible and invisible church. Externally, the biblical structure of the church is crucial. Internally, the life of Christ is the foundation of the church. However, different from most type A theologians, Jia did not reject denominationalism and held a mild attitude toward ecumenism. He believed

cooperation with Christians from different denominations is possible despite the doctrinal divergence. His bio-generative mindset and view of adjustment of controversies (*qi wu guan*) softened his attitude toward doctrinal mistakes and enabled him to focus on the commonalities rather than differences among different churches. Moreover, Jia's strong national sensibilities made him pay attention to the church's public role as well.

Regarding eschatology, Jia held a premillennial view like most type A theologians in China. However, type A theologians usually tend to have a pessimistic view of the world and hesitated to participate in worldly matters. Jia is different because he valued the transforming power of human effort and encouraged Christians to take responsibility for nation building. His active this world-oriented position seems contradictory to his premillennialist stance. Yet, seen from the neo-Confucian perspective, since believers share the same divine qualities with God, especially in the state of Christ-human, we should love like God loves us. This bio-generative way of thinking enabled Jia to go beyond the premillennialist pessimistic view about the destiny of this world. As God's co-workers, humans are encouraged to take part in God's work on earth and work out His great plan in human history. Jia's neo-Confucian mind makes it possible for type A and type C to coexist in Jia's theologizing.

It is distinctive that Jia's view of salvation carries both type A and type C features. The nature of salvation is firstly objective and legalistic. Christ's death on the cross paid for our sins and justified us before God. But for Jia salvation's subjective meaning cannot be neglected. Christ's death and resurrection brought about spiritual and moral changes in individuals. The ultimate goal of our full

salvation is to achieve the perfect state of Christ-human. Jia's idea of Christ-human shows similarities with the Eastern Orthodox view of deification, which is a typical element of the type C theology. In addition, Jia also discussed the significance of Jesus's death for the whole of humanity. It has the transforming power to change human history and restore godly order to the world. As God's co-workers, humanity should make effort to achieve God's plan as well. It is highly unlikely that this type C view of history was from an Eastern Orthodox influence. It is no doubt compatible with Jia's Wang Yangming influenced mind. Caring for and sustaining the heavenly order of society is an inseparable dimension of individual spiritual growth.

In terms of the human condition, Jia is in line with the type A Augustinian position. He held a negative view of human nature and considered humanity totally corrupted. However, in comparison with other tripartite anthropological views such as Nee's, Jia viewed human composition in a more organic way. Instead of focusing on the division between the three components, he emphasized the connections and mutual impact among them. Rather than stressing the necessity of denying the influence of body and soul in the process of spiritual growth, he highlighted the beneficial dynamics among the three. Based on the possibility of reciprocal transformation, Jia adopted the perfectionist position. Besides, like type B theologians, Jia made use of the notion of selfishness in interpreting the idea of sin. His discussion manifested the Confucian pursuit of impartiality and negation of partiality. Therefore, it is only fair to say that on the matter of the human condition, Jia's theology carries not only the negative understanding of human sinful nature held by type A theology, but also the positive attitude to human perfection claimed by type B theology.

Like both type A and type C theologians in the context of China, Jia shows the tendency of synergism in his theologizing. He believed in God's grace toward humans in salvation. Also, he admitted that it is possible for humans to reject God's offer. In terms of sanctification, humans should make the effort to realize practical holiness in their lives and pursue the perfect state of a Christ-human. The process of spiritual development embodied the Chinese notion of 'Heaven engenders, humanity completes.' However, Jia's idea of Christ-human, can only be properly understood from a neo-Confucian perspective. According to Jia, the state of Christ-human is where a person is Christified. In this state, the divine will and human will blend. A Christ-human is still a human, but he or she has already taken on divine qualities. Based on a holistic anthropology, in the process of sanctification, the three components will transform each other. One's reason is spiritualized, and spirit is rationalized. It is a state of 'Christ is in me and I in Christ.'<sup>482</sup> Therefore, it is not accurate to say that the divine and human will are working together when they are already inseparable, since cooperation still implies division. Wang Yangming's idea of the unity of equilibrium and harmony explains this Christified state very well. The unity of equilibrium and harmony describes the outgrowth of the life of Christ from within. Human life and divine life form an organic continuum.

Seen from our discussion so far, the goal of Jia's theologizing is to preach God's scheme of salvation to Chinese people. Yet he did not engage Chinese culture in an anthropological way like Zhao and held to the fundamental theological positions such as the doctrine of original sin. This shows his Chinese mind in the way he formulated his theological ideas, the synthetic character of his theology, and

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<sup>482</sup> Jia, *Wanquan Jiufa*, 85.

his deep concern for the future of China and Chinese people. In terms of access to salvation, Jia is countercultural. He critically reflected on Chinese culture and Chinese society from the perspective of the gospel. For example, he rejected the ritual of ancestor reverence even when he was fully aware it was a moral obligation for Chinese people.<sup>483</sup> No matter how vital it was in Chinese culture, Jia regarded it as a cultural barrier between humans and God and taught people to forsake it. At the same time, Jia also recognized the value of Chinese culture such as the reverence for the mandate of heaven in Confucianism. He believed that the primitive idea of God in Chinese culture is pointing to the Creator God of Christianity. Valuing the religio-philosophical heritage in Chinese culture, Jia emphasized the necessity of making constructive use of Chinese culture while evangelising. That is why the neo-Confucian mind is seamlessly weaved in Jia's theological formulation. For Jia, theologizing cannot be divorced from the context of Chinese culture. Also, Jia's sympathetic attitude toward culture and different religions enabled him to take a mild position regarding ecumenism. His Wang Yangming influenced spirituality encouraged him to participate in active nation building.

Through examining Jia's thought with Chow's framework, it turned out to be challenging to situate him under any of the three categories. Jia shared lots of commonalities with type A theologians due to his adherence to fundamental beliefs. However, having 'life' and spiritual growth as the central theme of his theologizing, Jia's theology shows a strong type C inclination. It is highly unlikely that Jia had any Eastern Orthodox influence per se. The reason why he can marry the type A law-

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<sup>483</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

oriented theology with the history-oriented type C theology is the neo-Confucian mystical mind.

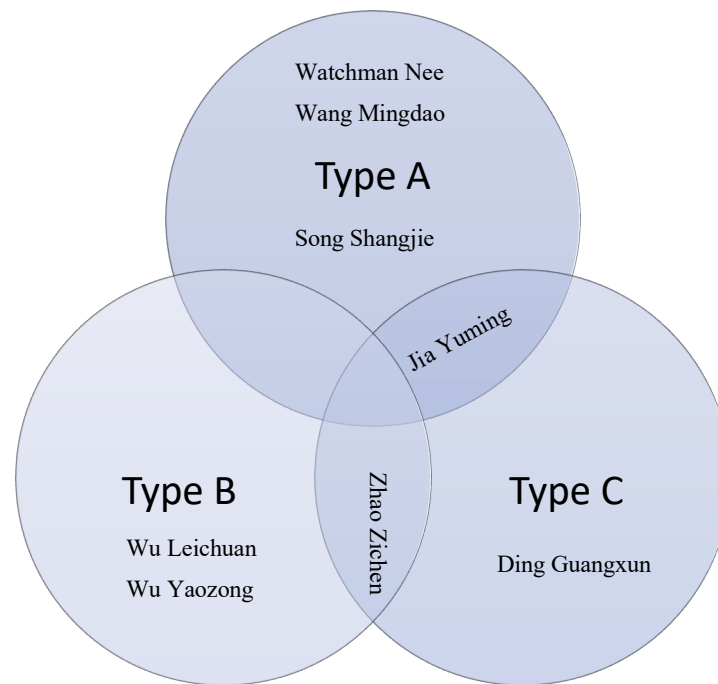
### **5.7 Spirituality as A New Constant in Reflecting on Chinese Theology**

As seen above, we discussed Jia as a special figure whose theology showed both type A and type C characteristics. Jia's theology embodied the possibility of an overlap between those two types of theology. Admittedly, any typologies only work as a guiding framework. They map out the landscape of Chinese theology. And 'types' are only defined in the sense that they are ideal types that represent the features of a certain category most. Chow also pointed out that he allowed for different theologians to be situated in one type but leaning into one of the others as well. Therefore, based on Chow's work and the distinctiveness of Jia's theology, we can make a supplement to Chow's typology.

First, as the characteristics of Jia's theology combined features of two theological types, the case of Jia suggested a possibility of convergence among the three types. Hence, along with more rigid typologies, we can present the landscape of Chinese theology as Venn diagrams. The advantage of the typology is that it can precisely present one's theological answers to a theological constant and make it easier to do comparison study between different figures. However, due to the clear division among different types, it is also easy to cause neglect toward some key theological features or mis-categorisation through reductionism. Venn diagrams can not only present theological distinctive theological types, though not as detailed as the rigid typology, but also highlight the theological convergences among different types and allow room for more potential theological combinations. Also, it would not confine our understanding of a theologian to any certain type before doing in-depth

study. Replacing definitive cognitive divisions with visual overlapping/transition regions can help us to have an open mind when looking at a theologian.

Preoccupations can easily lead to neglect on key theological characteristics. For example, Jia's type C inclinations can only be made prominent when we situate him in the area of type A+C. Moreover, as a Venn diagram allows for the co-existence/combination of different types, it can present shifts in one's theological view and so better accommodate the realities of intellectual history. Zhao Zichen is usually considered as a type B theologian for his early theological position. A strict typology only presents one phase of Zhao's typology. Whereas, with a Venn diagram, we can situate him in the transition region between type A and B. We can point out the dynamics of his thinking and have a full picture of his theological position. In addition, the transition areas in the Venn diagram provide the potential areas that we can explore in the arena of Chinese theology and alternative aspects we can reflect on when we are studying a theologian defined by a certain type. The typology and the Venn diagram can complement each other in different ways. Employing both would help us to clarify responses to specific subjects and compare different theological answers. Also, in this way we can grasp a better macroscopic view of a certain theological landscape and understand each figure with a view of development.



Apart from the need for a Venn diagram to work alongside a typology, through our study on Jia, we realized that ‘spirituality’ should be added to the typology as another key theological constant when looking at Chinese theology. In this thesis we adopted David Perrin’s definition of spirituality, ‘Christian spirituality is the experience of transformation in the Divine–human relationship as modelled by Jesus Christ and inspired by the Holy Spirit. Christian spirituality is appropriated as a lifestyle within all relationships in the broader Christian community as well as in society in general.’<sup>484</sup> Spirituality is an essential dimension of Chinese Christianity for it is the heartbeat of Chinese Christian theology. This is another reason why we chose the angle of spirituality to examine Jia. Spirituality concerns the experiential and practical dimension of Christianity. It can reveal believers’ understanding of themselves in relation to God and the spiritual and moral standard of their lives. It is a crucial expression of their deep concern for their existence and yearning for relatedness to

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<sup>484</sup> Perrin, *Studying Christian Spirituality*, 32.

the ultimate truth - God. Spirituality is a comprehension of human life as Christians *in* this world. It provides explanations and guidance for being an individual as well as being a member of the wider society. Spirituality also goes beyond the mundane dimension and situates humans in God's gracious salvation. It endows meaning to human lives in relation to God and liberates humans from the narrowness of their worldly living. Spirituality as a form of living broadens and deepens our lives through our relationship with God.

Theological response to the theme of spirituality is vital in studying Chinese theology. Only the approach of spirituality can reveal the underlying and unconscious, often hidden, mindset of Chinese people. This is because the Chinese mind is a mind of spirituality. Spirituality, as defined above, is to do with not only the mundane, but also the relatedness of the mundane to the ultimate truth. The Chinese mind always manifests its spiritual character with its deep yearning for relatedness of every aspect of life to the ultimate truth and ethical way of living in daily life. Mysticism and practicality are at the core of the Chinese mind. The mystical and ethical orientations have been embodied in different Chinese religio-philosophical traditions and expressed well by the three religions (*san jiao*): Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism. Their influence is deeply woven into the fabric of Chinese culture and profoundly shaped Chinese people's mindset for thousands of years.

Chinese mysticism can be categorized into three types: first, the Daoist writings by Laozi and Zhuangzi, which represent a quietist and naturalistic approach. Cosmological theories and longevity practices are usually associated with this mystical tradition. The second type is the ecstatic experiences described in the *Chuci*

and in Shangqing Daosim. It strived for an active encounter with the deities and immortals. The third type is represented by Buddhism, both translated and indigenous forms, practiced as a kind of mysticism that emphasized meditation.<sup>485</sup> These basic types laid the foundation for other embodiments of mysticism in Chinese ideological history. Seen from the historical development of these mystical traditions and the dynamics of their interaction, several themes kept recurring throughout history in different traditions: Dao, the dualistic structure of human nature, the continuity of body and mind that leads to an integration of various practices, and human perfection.<sup>486</sup> What is noteworthy is the Chinese understanding of the relationship between the body and mind. To a Chinese mind, there is no radical distinction between body and mind, yet they are not simply one and the same either. They are different ideas but not understood as fundamentally different in nature. Maxime Kaltenmark's comment is true,

Chinese terminology reflects subtle differences between states of a more or less ethereal quality, but of one and the same principle lying at the foundation of all the complex functions of man. The gross conditions of the body are as much included as are its finer essences and the higher mental states which make up holiness.

This then is the reason why one can say that the Chinese do not make a clearcut distinction between what we call body and mind. Their outlook is in general much more oriented toward life as an organic whole and ongoing process.<sup>487</sup>

This is especially true in Jia's anthropology. His organic understanding of the human condition laid the anthropological foundation for his active mystical spirituality. The unity of faith, knowledge and action values not only the individual and spiritual

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<sup>485</sup> Livia Kohn. *Early Chinese Mysticism: Philosophy and Soteriology in the Taoist Tradition*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 162.

<sup>486</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>487</sup> Maxime Kaltenmark, "La mystique taoïste," In *La mystique et le mystiques*, ed. A. Ravier (Paris: Desdee de Brouwer, 1965), 655.). *Ibid.*, 170.

dimension of human life, but also the social and mundane. Because of the emphasis on connectivity and possibility of mutual transformation among the body, soul and spirit, the perfect state of humanity, the Christ-human, can be achieved in this life. Mysticism has multiple embodiments in Chinese culture. Each of the three religions has their own mystical branches. For example, the neo-Confucian mind-heart school is often considered as the mystical wing of neo-Confucianism, as distinguished from the principle school. There are countless folk religions that manifest mystical features. Briefly speaking, no matter in which religious tradition, in Chinese culture, mysticism is usually reflected as the following characteristics: organic anthropology, a tranquil state of mind, and the immediate encounter/connection with the ultimate truth.

In addition to mysticism, practicality, the realization of sagehood or ethical living, is the other essential characteristic of the Chinese mind. This ethical orientation is particularly prominent in Confucianism. The Confucian ethical living is based on its cosmological orientation. Humans, through cultivating individual morality, fulfilling social responsibilities in the community and ritual practicing, should live in the connection of the microcosm of the self to the macrocosm of the universe. The goal of integrating every aspect of human life into the heavenly order that is embedded in the wider society and universe motivates humans to dedicate their lives to moral/spiritual self-transformation.

Spirituality, as a theological constant in studying Chinese theology, can reveal one's understanding of the Christian life. Based on our analysis of the underlying characteristics of the Chinese mind, the response of Chinese theologians to the theme of spirituality can be roughly summarised into three forms: mysticism-oriented

spirituality, moral ethics-oriented spirituality and love-oriented spirituality. The three forms are phrased as 'X-oriented' because it only means that mysticism, moral ethics or the love of God are the most essential aspect of a certain form of spirituality. With one of these three being the fundamental orientation, a spirituality could carry other aspects as well. Seen from the Venn diagram, there are possibilities of mixed types of spirituality as well. For example, Jia's spirituality would be a combination of mysticism and love-oriented spirituality. If we map the three forms of spirituality with the categories of the tripartite theology, type A usually manifests a mysticism-oriented spirituality, type B a moral ethics-oriented spirituality and type C a love of God-oriented spirituality.

The mysticism-oriented spirituality has its focus on the vertical relationship between individuals and God. The immediate encounter and interaction with God and inward revelation are the foundation of Christian living. Individual lives should revolve around the core of the divine-human relationship. Watchman Nee's spirituality is a representative of this form. It shows a binary way of thinking, such as the strict division between the spiritual and the mundane and separation between human's body, soul, and spirit. The meaning of being spiritual in Nee's thinking only suggests individual spiritual maturity. The scope of this form of spirituality is narrow and confined to the personal realm, in Nee's own words, the 'normal Christian life.' For Nee, believers should strive for a normal life in which one completely denies the self and subjects the soul to the leadership of the spirit which follows the divine will. When the soul is broken, the natural person is not in dominance of the whole person anymore, and the power of the spirit can govern the whole person according to the guidance of the Spirit. A fully spiritualized person is called a 'spiritual man.' 'The

spiritual man is one whose spirit dominates and who has a highly sensitive intuition. It is qualified to perform its functions because its quietness is undisturbed by the mind, emotion and the will of the soul.<sup>488</sup> Emphasizing the importance of absolute authority of the spirit, Nee on the other hand held a very negative attitude toward the soul and was suspicious about its natural capabilities as well. 'How true it is that the self always operates independently of the will of God, for it loves to serve Him according to what it in itself deems to be good.'<sup>489</sup> All natural human capabilities, such as reason, could become (usually are) obstacles in living a holy and spiritual life. To Nee, inner spiritual revelation by the Spirit served as the sole guidance for the Christian life. The quietist approach caused an anti-intellectual tendency. The potential danger of nihilism and human arbitrary assumption made Nee's teaching problematic. Moreover, the separation between the spiritual and the mundane, the single focus on personal spiritual growth and the premillennialist eschatological position made Nee have a pessimistic attitude toward worldly affairs. Chloë Starr's comment on Nee's theology was true. It was not particularly Chinese because his Chinese cases and examples in his writing were primarily for illustrating Christian teaching rather than determining them. The points in Nee's theology would still stand if we strip his Chinese examples away. Anyone who is not familiar with Chinese culture and Chinese situation would have difficulty to understand Nee.<sup>490</sup> Moreover, the rigid division among the body, soul, and spirit and separation between the spiritual and the social was very alien to the Chinese mind, which tends to understand the human condition in a holistic way and accentuate the significance of

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<sup>488</sup> Nee, *The Spiritual Man*, 94.

<sup>489</sup> *Ibid.*, 185.

<sup>490</sup> Starr, *Chinese Theology*, 4.

individual spiritual growth *in* the world. It is fair to say that Western theological influence such as Keswick and Quietist theology was much more prominent in Nee's theologizing than his Chinese culture roots.

If the mysticism-oriented spirituality emphasizes the vertical dimension of Christian life, then the moral ethics-oriented spirituality highlights the horizontal. This form of spirituality mainly draws ideas from the sociocultural context and stresses believers' worldly responsibilities for the larger society. Living a Christ-like moral life and contributing to social reform or nation building are essential in this form of spirituality. Wu Leichuan and Zhao Zichen at early stages of their lives formulated this kind of approach. Neither Wu nor Zhao considered sin as a fundamental problem in human nature. For Wu, it was a structural problem in society. For Zhao, it was the intellectual failure in forgetting the love of Christ and selfishness. Both interpreted sin from their social context. Wu responded to the uneven distribution of wealth and suggested social reform, especially economic reform. Zhao noticed moral collapse and the loss of traditional values such as Confucianism in the society. Both proposed to imitate Christ either as a social reformer or moral exemplar to overcome evil in the society. Their humanistic approaches and optimistic view of human nature were both rooted in Confucianism. Wu and Zhao's form of spirituality reflected the praxis dimension of the Chinese mind and showed their deep concern for the larger society. The active involvement in society manifests the transformative power of human effort and embodied the love of God in this world. However, the downplaying of the spiritual in this form of spirituality establishes the connection between God and humanity as only on a moral level. Believers can only unite with Christ through their action of following Him as an example in their ethical living. Zhao and Wu's

spiritualities are fairly narrow and limited to a certain historical context. They are helpful in reflecting on and addressing social issues in their particular context but bound to lack of spiritual depth.

Love-oriented spirituality is a form that can be symbolized by a cross. It takes both width and depth into consideration. This approach not only anchors Christian life with its spiritual/mystical connection with God but also situates spiritual living *in* this world. Mystical interaction with God and social involvement are both essential. This form of spirituality emphasizes Christians as God's co-creators who work with God and realize His purpose in human history. It not only points to the issues that need tackling in this world but also reminds us of the significance of our roles from a broader perspective of God's plan. The most essential aspect of this kind of spirituality is the understanding that God is love and Christians should love like God and partake in His creative process in the universe. In the context of Chinese theology, Ding Guangxun's (1915-2012) spirituality is a showcase of this form. Ding interpreted Jesus as 'Cosmic lover.' He is the carer and sustainer of the universe. Ding downplayed the subject of Christ's atonement but laid stress on the theme of incarnation. The idea of 'Cosmic Christ' featured in Ding's theology. The cosmic Christology is the foundation for his love-oriented spirituality. This type of Christology was seen since the first-century church and embodied in Irenaeus's theology. The two natures of Christ as human and God was not its focus like in Latin Western thought. Based on certain Johannine and Pauline passages, it interpreted Jesus as the Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer of the cosmos. Irenaeus developed the recapitulation theory of atonement in *Against Heresies*. Adam was the federal head of humanity. Through Adam's disobedience, humanity sinned and received death.

However, through Christ's incarnation, the relationship between God and His creation changed. Christ, as the second Adam, 'recapitulated' humanity in Himself.<sup>491</sup> Therefore, through the obedience of Christ the new Adam, God, the Creator, reconciled the created order to Himself. Moreover, Ding also drew from Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1981-1955) and pointed out that instead of explaining sin as individual rebellious acts against the divine will, we should understand it as 'the antithesis of God's creative work—an uncreative work.'<sup>492</sup> In an evolutionary manner, Teilhard highlighted the broadened meaning of salvation. It is to do with every aspect of God's creation rather than solely humanity. It is not an anthropocentric soteriology, salvation is the process in which all the cosmos grows and converges into the Cosmic Christ—the 'Omega Point.'<sup>493</sup> Ding saw the advantage of Teilhard's evolutionary theology to address the challenges of his day in the context of China. Ding went through challenges and criticism from Wang Mingdao in their debate and was accused as being an 'unbeliever.' This antagonistic situation reflected the theological tension among Chinese Christians who held different theological positions. In addition, after the establishment of the communist government in 1949, Christianity needed to figure out its continued survival and future in an environment where communism and atheism became the dominant ideologies. A distinction between Christian believers and non-Christians naturally existed. Confronting those challenges, what Ding noticed in Teilhard's thought that was helpful was that the evolutionary theological view situated Christian and non-Christian together in the

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<sup>491</sup> Chow, *Theosis*, 93.

<sup>492</sup> Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, 'Fall, Redemption, and Geocentrism,' in *Christianity and Evolution*, ed. René Hague (London: Collins, 1971), 40-41. See in Chow, *Theosis*, 92.

<sup>493</sup> *Ibid.*

process of God's work.<sup>494</sup> It does not focus on the distinction between believers and unbelievers, between the church and the atheist state, the elect and the lost. Rather, its concentration lies in the process of realizing cosmic perfection. Christ is no longer just the saviour for the church but the Creator and Sustainer of all God's creation. People of other religions, atheists, as well as the communist government are all part of God's work. Teilhard's theology,

Makes the transition from a theology which revolves around belief and unbelief, which is limited to the idea of salvation—a narrower kind of theology—to a recognition of the greatness, glory, holiness and grace of the triune God, and sees God's work of creation, redemption and sanctification in the universe.<sup>495</sup>

The idea of cosmic Christ situates humans, Christians and non-Christians, all in a broader vision and reconciled all conflicts with the love of God. Holding this form of spirituality on the foundation of the love of God, it is logical for Ding to encourage unity with non-Christians and the communist government. According to Ding, people should not focus on the motif of human sinfulness and the exclusivist view of soteriology. Rather, they should see the common ground Christians share with non-Christians — we were all sinned against. In the context of China, all people are under the threat of 'imperialism, bureaucratic capitalism and feudalism.'<sup>496</sup> Despite non-Christians not being Jesus' followers, they reflect other aspects of God's creative work in the universe. Christians as God's co-creators in the universe should work and cooperate with others to realize love, peace and justice in the society. In this way, Ding also reconciled his dual identities—churchman and statesman. This

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<sup>494</sup> Chow, *Theosis*, 92-3.

<sup>495</sup> Ting Guangxun, 'Inspirations from Liberation Theology, Process Theology and Teilhard de Chardin', in *Love Never Ends: Prayers by K.H. Ting*, ed. Janice Wickeri (Nanjing: Yilin Press, 2000), 192-222. See in Chow, *Theosis*, 93.

<sup>496</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

approach shows its spiritual depth in its emphasis on the loving and cooperating human-divine relationship and the role of believers as co-creators in the developing cosmos. Also, it is highly sensitive to the context and requires active social participation. This form of spirituality is motivated by the love of God and encourages us to partake in worldly affairs with a broader spiritual perspective. It emphasizes not only the mystical dimension of Christianity — the process of God's creative work, but also the practical aspect of individual moral ethics. This approach shares great similarities with the bio-generative Chinese religio-philosophical mindset. It concentrated itself on self-cultivation to fulfil one's role in the larger universe. Individual moral perfection and flourishing of human society are both inherent in the grand universal scheme.

As a bold experiment of type C theology in the context of China, Ding's love-oriented spirituality echoed the Chinese mind deeply in that it concerns both mystical and practical aspects of Christian spiritual life. However, as Chow pointed out, although through his Cosmic Christology and the idea of the sinned against Ding tried to soften the tension between Christians and non-Christians, the Communist leadership and the church, ironically, this approach caused more division than unity in the Chinese church. Admittedly, Ding's attempt was theologically thought-provoking for the bio-generative way of thinking his spirituality shared with the Chinese mind. Yet, given there are many theologically conservative Christians in China, Ding's theology has not been accepted broadly especially among house churches and has been criticised as heretical. In addition to Ding's theological experiment, there is another case of love-oriented spirituality, which has been not only much more well received by Chinese Christians, both inside and outside of the

state-sanctioned churches, but also manifests the characteristics of the substrata of Chinese way of thinking, being both mystical and practical — Jia's active mystical spirituality.

## Conclusion

### More Than A Chinese Fundamentalist

Through employing comparative theology as a hermeneutical lens, this thesis has examined Jia's spirituality from two perspectives - his Western theological resources and the neo-Confucian mind-heart school, revealing that Jia is a mind-heart mystical theologian rather than merely a 'fundamentalist.' The category of fundamentalist as defined by Wang Mingdao in early twentieth century China is a narrow concept for dealing with the debate between two theological camps. According to Wang, fundamentalists are those who held to fundamental doctrines such as virgin birth, physical resurrection, and the revelatory nature of the Bible for example, with the Church concentrating on the spiritual salvation of individual souls and staying away from worldly affairs. The opposing group was modernists, who were called 'non-believers' by Wang. They usually emphasized Jesus's character as a moral exemplar and did not accept any supernatural elements of the Bible. Due to their deep concern for society, modernists often actively participated in social reform and showed great support for modernity. While many scholars have regarded Jia as a fundamentalist for his adherence to fundamental doctrines and suspicion toward modern culture, he would not fit into Wang Mingdao's fundamentalist category due to his positive attitude toward social participation. Jia not only taught in the Bible Teachers' Training School for Women and North China Theological Seminary, but also dedicated his life to establishing the Chinese Christian Institute of Spirituality. Moreover, Jia emphasized the transformative power the church could perform in reforming human society and the incumbent responsibilities Christians should fulfil in nationbuilding.

In addition to the dimension of social participation, theologically, Jia as a mind-heart mystical theologian also challenged the label of fundamentalist. According to Wang's position, Christians/fundamentalists should solely focus on the aspect of individual spiritual maturity in a narrow sense. However, Jia's active mystical spirituality allowed him to not only hold to all the beliefs typically associated with a fundamentalist such as the virgin birth, the absolute authority and revelatory nature of the Bible, and Christ's physical resurrection, but also enabled him to express his deep concerns for the wider society. Jia stressed the necessity for believers to fulfil their public responsibilities toward the society and nation, rather than holding a pessimistic position and confining themselves to the individual spiritual realm. Jia's spirituality manifests a holistic neo-Confucian mind-heart worldview, where there is no division between personal and public dimensions, no separation between spiritual and mundane spheres. Rather than a Chinese fundamentalist, it is more accurate to consider Jia a mind-heart mystical theologian for his active mystical spirituality.

### **Navigating Western and Chinese Sources with A Neo-Confucian Active Mystical Mind**

Through comparing Jia's theology with his Western theological sources and Wang Yangming's teaching of self-transformation, we have revealed Jia's inheritance of and departure from his Western theological resource and his underlying neo-Confucian active mystical mind that determined the way he theologised. Jia engaged his Western theological resources with a neo-Confucian mystical mind. The formation of Jia's spirituality loosely integrated theological elements from Wesleyan perfectionism, the American Holiness Movement, Quakerism and dispensationalism.

Despite drawing broadly from Western theological resources, Jia's work was not simply synthesizing his resources but making constructive use of them according to his mind-heart mystical mind. For example, it was very likely that the bio-generative mind was the main reason why Jia was drawn to Quaker spirituality and adopted Quaker ideas such as 'spiritual light' and 'true light' in his writings. The stress on the spiritual light within in Quakerism also shows a mystical bio-generative way of thinking. According to Barclay, a completely perfect state was attainable in this life as well.<sup>497</sup> The Quakers' optimistic view of human nature and sanctification was due to their belief in the transformative power of the inner light within every individual. The inner revelation brought about by the spiritual light serves as the foundation for building up one's faith and spiritual maturity. Jia formulated a Christian spirituality that embodied neo-Confucian active mysticism. Wang Yangming's mind-heart approach of self-transformation featured in Jia's mystical spirituality, which distinguished him from his Western predecessors as well as his Chinese contemporaries. It was the holistic anthropology, bio-generative way of thinking, and the unity of spiritual and mundane that determined the manner of Jia's theologizing.

Confucianism as a lived reality played an essential role in Jia's theologizing. Confucian spirituality shaped Jia's theologizing in a subtle but profound way. As an ever-growing tradition, Confucianism developed many forms of spirituality. The pursuit of sagehood, becoming a noble person inwardly, and restoring the heavenly order to the larger society outwardly, remain central to Confucianism. Jia lived in the new modern Confucian period and so was indebted to Classical, Han, and neo-Confucianism. What is noteworthy is that Jia did not have a systematic method when

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<sup>497</sup> Barclay, *Apology for the True Christian Divinity*, 231, 229

he was engaging Confucianism. He engaged Confucian spirituality in an organic way, which determined how he both perceived the Christian message and theologized. Confucianism was embodied into an active mystical mind in Jia's spirituality. Even though Jia did not tend to bridge Christianity with Confucianism per se, his spirituality did manifest a robust life of Confucian spirituality. Jia's theologizing is a form of contextualization in which the Confucian holistic way of thinking was decisive in formulating Western theological resources.

Under the impact of the American Holiness Movement, Jia was one of the Chinese theologians who adopted a tripartite anthropology. However, Jia's interpretation provided a holistic version as an alternative to the more broadly known version of Watchman Nee. Nee heightened the rigid division among the three components of this anthropology. It was the soul that sinned first. Because the spirit lost its leadership over the whole person, the soul overdeveloped and became the major cause of human sins. The body was therefore completely driven by sinful physical desires. Hence, in terms of sanctification, Nee taught believers to deny the self, which resides in the soul, and completely surrender one's own will to the spirit. Nee's goal of sanctification consists in restoring a godly hierarchy: the spirit, the soul and the body. The restoring of the leadership of the spirit is at the cost of a broken self/soul. Jia was different in that he laid the stress on the connection among the three parts. Although Jia was a trichotomist like Nee, it was his neo-Confucian holistic anthropological view that influenced the formulation of his tripartite anthropology. Jia emphasised the unity of faith, knowing and

action. This idea shared great similarities with Wang Yangming's teaching on the unity of knowing and acting.

For Jia, the power of sin weakened the whole person including the soul. As a result of the Fall the soul lost its full capacity, rather than becoming overdeveloped. In terms of the power of regeneration, the soul and body were also affected. Spiritual wisdom spiritualises reason; reason will rationalise the spiritual message, and the body will take action in a godly way. In the process of sanctification, the three parts transform one another reciprocally. According to Jia, the self is not confined to the realm of soul. Therefore, the purpose of sanctification in Jia's thinking was the holistic transformation of the whole person rather than simply restoring a holy order. The division between the three parts only exists in an abstract way. None of them can operate properly without relying on the other two. This inseparable relationship allows for Jia's stress on the mystical spiritual encounter with God. Yet, due to his stress on the interrelatedness among the three parts, Jia's anthropology keeps his pursuit for inner revelation from the potential danger of arbitrary assumption and pessimistic impasse. On the other hand, Jia's holistic view of human composition was in accordance with his perfectionist position in sanctification. The possibility of the fusion of the human soul and the spiritual life of Christ, serves as the anthropological foundation for the realization of the perfect status of Christ-human. A Christ-human will still be a human but display a glorious divine quality.

In line with his organic anthropology, Jia developed his three-stage sanctification to achieve the goal of full salvation –the state of Christ-human. In line with the pursuit of a 'higher Christian life' taught by William E. Boardman, Jia pointed to the necessity for believers to strive for a 'more abundant life.' According to Jia, the process of spiritual growth includes three phases: the justified life, sanctified life and victorious life. In terms of sanctification, there is positional sanctification, daily life sanctification, and full sanctification. The cross plays a central role in this process. Believers cannot rely on their own effort but Jesus's blood to enter the first stage. According to Jia, this stage is called carrying the bronze cross, which is red because it is a symbol of Jesus's blood. We as sinners who inherited original sin must rely on Jesus's blood to pay our ransom and gain a legal position in front of God. Jia inherited the Augustinian doctrine of original sin. So, Jesus's redemptive work has a strong legal meaning. Further, Jia emphasised that believers should strive to live out holiness in their daily lives. This step was called carrying the silver cross. The silver cross concerns the development of our spiritual life. Believers should exert themselves and rid themselves of their selfish desires. The act of consecration is key. Believers should forsake their own selfish wills and surrender themselves completely to God. The goal of this stage is to destroy our sinful body and obtain an 'abundant life.' Moreover, Jia adopted Wesleyan perfectionism and therefore stressed that we should go further and pursue the deepest experience of the cross, or carrying the gold cross. The gold cross symbolizes the glory of God and a victorious life. This is the

realization of full salvation as the ultimate goal of Jia's doctrine of sanctification. Anthropologically speaking, it is the state of Christ-human. Jia believed that the 'more abundant life' is available to every believer.

Jia's idea of Christ-human shares great commonalities with Wang Yangming's teaching on totality of equilibrium and harmony. According to Jia, the state of Christ human means that one's spirit, soul and body cooperate with each other inseparably in their full capacity. One's thought would be spiritualized, and mystical spiritual wisdom rationalized. No selfish desires would arise. Full salvation is obtained once this godly state is restored, and one can exhibit the likeness of Christ, love others with a selfless mind, and participate in the world in a godly way. This perfect holy state largely resembles Wang Yangming's description of a sagely mind. According to Wang, the original fundamental reality of the mind is called the totality of equilibrium and harmony. When one can stay in a sincere state of mind, where no selfish desires arise, one can unite his or her knowledge and action in every moment and the original substance - the innate knowledge of good, has been revealed. The totality of equilibrium and harmony is the ultimate pursuit of Wang Yangming's spirituality.

To make progress in spiritual growth and realize the state of Christ-human, Jia emphasized the effort of withdrawal and cultivation. The purpose of withdrawing from worldly concerns is to gain a tranquil state of mind. When the mind has reposed, that person has reached a mentality of preactivation/nonactivation, where there are no more partial thoughts and

desires. This quiet state of mind is the state of equilibrium. Only in this tranquil state of mind can an immediate encounter with God happen. Yet, having this mystical experience is not the final goal of Jia's spirituality. The mystical encounter with God and the reposed state of mind are both foundations for returning to the world. This ineffable experience will spiritualize the mind, so he or she can go back to the world as a transformed person. For Jia, hiding in the secret place of God is for going back and doing God's ministry *in* the world. In Wang Yangming's terms, this is the state of activation. For both Jia and Wang Yangming, the state of tranquility lays the foundation for the state of activation. They are inseparable. Seen from the perspective of Wang Yangming's idea of the totality of equilibrium and harmony, the unity of preactivation and activation dissolved the tension between the quiet mystical mentality and active social participation. With his underlying Wang Yangming influenced mystical active mind, Jia developed a mystical spirituality with a public dimension. In Jia's theologizing, individual spiritual growth, fulfilling one's social responsibilities and contributing to nation building all form a unity in the realization of the state of Christ-human. Jia's mystical active spirituality shows an anthropocosmic view of the relationship between individuals and the larger universe. Personal spiritual growth is not the goal but the departure point to performing public duties. Seen from the perspective of Confucianism, revealing a person's heaven-endowed nature and their individual moral cultivation serve as the foundation for carrying out heavenly responsibility, which means restoring the heavenly order to society. Similarly, for Jia, personal spiritual maturity is the basis for

the interconnection of self and others, and the flourishing of society. The formulation of Jia's active mystical spirituality is an embodiment of the Confucian moral and social program.

Jia contextualized Christian spirituality with the Confucian way of conscientiousness and altruism which is the thematic teaching of Confucianism. For Jia, living out positional sanctification in daily life and realizing the 'more abundant life', in other words, becoming a Christ-human, is striving for the spirit of conscientiousness (*zhong*). Imitating Christ's love for others and sacrificing oneself to serve the public with a selfless mind is the virtue of altruism (*shu*). In accordance with Confucian teaching on humanity, Jia's theologizing on the state of a Christ-human shows two inseparable aspects as well: personal spiritual self-transformation as well as loving others like Christ. Jia endowed the character of a Christ-human with the virtues of a Confucian nobleman. Believers should dedicate themselves to removing the partiality of their mind and pursue the virtue of impartiality. Removing selfishness and becoming like Christ individually is the basis for extending love to others and care for the wider society.

Engaging Confucian spirituality in an organic way, Jia formed a Wang Yangming influenced spirituality which manifests a neo-Confucian active mystical mind. Mysticism is the core of Jia's spirituality. Mystical communication with God and the experience of spiritual baptism are the foundation for spiritual growth. According to Wang Yangming, everyone has the innate knowledge of good and therefore the potential to become a sage.

This optimistic attitude of the active mystical mind toward attaining sagehood probably encouraged Jia to embrace the perfectionist view in terms of sanctification. Having the life of Christ inwardly as the basis for self-transformation and social participation, this bottom-up approach allows for every believer to obtain full-salvation, or the state of a Christ-human. This form of spirituality describes every dimension of human life in relation to God, including individual communication with God, fulfilling one's ethical responsibilities in all kinds of social relationships, and restoring the heavenly order to the wider society. It values not only subjectivity in the effort of withdrawal and cultivation but also connectivity between individuals and the world in public participation. It aims to transform individuals into the likeness of Christ as well as restore heavenly order to the society. It encourages interactions between humans and the surrounding environment and expresses the deep yearning for immediate encounter with God Himself and pragmatic relatedness to His creation. Jia's theology is never merely 'spiritual' in a narrow sense like Watchman Nee's. Nee's spirituality is mainly concerned with how to become a 'spiritual man' and was limited to the realm of the individual. In Jia's thought 'being spiritual' has a broader meaning. Apart from personal spiritual development, Jia's spirituality also contains a public dimension and shows a Confucian holistic worldview. In the active mystical mind, having a 'more abundant life' and being a pillar of the society form a unity.

### **The Mind-heart Mystical Theologian**

Embodying a Wang Yangming influenced spirituality, the uniqueness of Jia is found in the way he challenges the two major rubrics classifying Chinese Protestant theologians: the fundamentalist-modernist framework formulated by Wang Mingdao and the Confucian activist-Daoist pietist categorizations developed by Ralph Covell. As we discussed above, because of Jia's active mystical mind, the spiritual and the social form a unity in his spirituality. Therefore, Jia not only held to fundamentalist positions defined by Wang Mingdao but also showed his deep care for the wider society and worldly participation. Jia is a special figure who possessed both 'fundamentalist' and 'modernist' characteristics. Seen from Ralph Covell's categorization, Chinese theologians of the early twentieth century can be classified into two groups based on their social and political involvement—Confucian activist and Daoist pietists. The Confucian activists were this world-oriented and devoted themselves to nation building and their contemporary socio-political situations. They concerned themselves deeply with fulfilling the Heavenly Mandate (*tianming*) in mundane life and contributing to restoring heavenly order to the society. In contrast, the Daoist pietists tended to withdraw from worldly affairs and focus themselves on individual spiritual development. Their pursuit for a tranquil state of life showed a serene and passive Daoist attitude toward the universe. However, neither the category of Confucian activists nor that of Daoist Pietists defines Jia accurately. Jia's idea of a Christ-human reflects a state of totality of equilibrium and harmony, which unifies action and non-action. From the perspective of a Christ-human., there is only distinction but no division between these two states of mind. Jia's spirituality possesses not only the Daoist mystical and quiet orientation but also Confucian care for the world. Jia's case suggests another potential type for Ralph Covell's typology.

Even though Jia encouraged public participation, he was by no means a social activist. Therefore, apart from the types of Confucian activist and Daoist pietist, a neo-Confucian 'active pietist' type represented by Jia could be added into his typology. With a new type added, we can have a more comprehensive understanding of Chinese theologians of the twentieth century and see more potential for neo-Confucian mind-heart spirituality in developing Chinese contextual theology.

Moreover, we reflected on Jia's spirituality through the lens of Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder's tripartite framework as well as Alexander Chow's adjusted version in the context of Chinese theology. We looked at Jia's responses to the theological constants that developed from Chinese contextual theology by Chow, anthropology, Christology, salvation, causation, eschatology, ecclesiology, socio-political, and religio-philosophical. According to Chow, Chinese theologians can be roughly classified into three types: the law-oriented type A, the truth-oriented type B and the history-oriented type C. Through our analysis, we noticed that Jia was a special figure among his contemporaries in twentieth century China. The uniqueness of his theology which was shaped by the neo-Confucian active mystical mind challenged the boundaries between different types of theology. Jia has been widely considered as a 'fundamentalist' and therefore a type A theologian for his adherence to fundamental doctrines of the Augustinian tradition such as the idea of original sin. However, based on our comparative study between Jia's and the neo-Confucian mind-heart spirituality, we revealed that in many aspects Jia's thought carried inclinations comparable to Eastern Orthodoxy, which were usually found in the type C theology. Jia, with his neo-Confucian mystical mind, bridged the type A and type C

theology. Jia's spirituality as a showcase of the combination of law-oriented and history-oriented theology, reflected again that the label 'fundamentalist' is confusing and misleading. It only describes Jia's theological position partially and veils the more essential character of his theological formulation—the active mystical mind and bio-generative way of thinking.

The bio-generative way of thinking made mysticism the core of Jia's spirituality. To a neo-Confucian mystical mind, the ultimate spiritual pursuit consists in the human mind becoming completely identified with the truth of the universe. The inner knowledge of the good, which is the heavenly endowed good nature which exists in every individual, is essentially an outgrowth of the Heavenly Principle. Therefore, to attain sagehood, humans need to seek within and unveil the original good nature, which is covered by selfishness. When all selfish thought is removed and the mind gains a tranquil state, the ultimate truth will become clear in our mind. For Jia, the believer's spiritual life is essentially an organic continuum of Christ's spiritual life. The effort of withdrawal and cultivation is vital. Only when all the noise in our mind caused by selfish desires are removed, can we hear the inner revelation from God and have a Christ-sized mind. The reason we can have the mind of Christ is because our spiritualized mind is an outgrowth of the divine will. The idea of 'Christ is in me and I in Christ' that Jia pursued described a deified state where the divine will and human will blend together. The mystical spiritual divine will is revealed within and rationalized and expressed by human reason. A Christ-human remains a human, but he or she has already taken on divine qualities. The thought of deification reflected in Jia's spirituality is essentially in line with the Chinese mystical way of thinking.

In the process of sanctification, Jia's approach accentuates the importance of human agency. However, it is not accurate to use either synergistic or monergistic terms to describe the divine and human relationship in Jia's thinking. Chow was insightful in pointing out that the Chinese notion of 'Heaven engenders, humanity completes' was often embodied in Chinese theologians' thinking. Jia was no exception. Yet, for Jia, in the process of sanctification, when believers are striving for holiness in their daily lives they are not just *cooperating* with the divine will, because the divine will is only distinguished but not separated from them. Jia's emphasis on 'Christ is in me' described a mystical deified state that can only be grasped by Wang Yangming's idea of totality of equilibrium and harmony. Because that whole person is Christized from within, he or she can live out the likeness of Christ. The state of Christ-human is truly an embodiment of the Chinese idea of the unity between Heaven and Humanity.

Moreover, even though Jia held a futurist premillennial view of eschatology, rather than having a pessimistic view of the world, he showed an active attitude toward social participation and deep care for the world. He valued the transforming power of human effort in nation building and highlighted the importance of believers fulfilling their worldly duties. It was the neo-Confucian active mystical mind and the bio-generative way of thinking that determined Jia's this-worldly orientation. To a neo-Confucian active mystical mind, performing public duties and returning to the world is a natural dimension of individual spiritual growth.

Thanks to the mystical bio-generative way of thinking, believers' divine qualities shine from within. Believers are Christized humans who carry out God's plan *in* this world. As Christ lives in us, we love like Christ loves us. This bio-

generative mindset enabled Jia to theologize beyond the premillennialist framework and to regard humans as God's co-workers in this world. Therefore, it is critical for believers to participate in God's work on earth and work out His great plan in human history. This is despite the premillennialist framework that the world is approaching to a depressing period before the eschaton. This deep concern for the wider society may partly explain the shift in Jia's attitude toward the ICCC in the 1950s.<sup>498</sup> For Jia, who had a type C history-oriented mind that was highly sensitive to the changes happening in his own socio-political context, it was more important for him to fulfil his responsibilities as a Chinese citizen and contribute to the independence of the Chinese church. Also, his support for the modernist theologian Wu Yaozong in the 1950s also indicated his commitment to his duty as God's co-worker to support the development of Christianity in China. In comparison with completing the heavenly duty initiated by God on earth, the theological divergences were tolerable for Jia. It was the socio-political context that motivated Jia's cooperation with the modernist theologians. Jia's neo-Confucian active mystical mind as well as his bio-generative way of thinking reconciled his conviction of total depravity with the idea of full salvation, the premillennialist eschatology with his this-worldly orientation, and the theological discrepancies with the future of the church in China. It is fair to say that Jia was a truly mind-heart mystical theologian. Based on the substrata of Jia's way of thinking—neo-Confucian mind-heart mysticism, he constructed an active mystical Christian spirituality. The spirit of Jia's spirituality can be best expressed by his own words— 'work with God with one mind to achieve the goal of saving the world'<sup>499</sup>

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<sup>498</sup> Yet the complex socio-political context of the 1950s could be another factor behind Jia's change of attitude toward the ICCC.

<sup>499</sup> Jia, *Shen dao xue* vol.3., 337-8.

## Chinese Spiritual Theology for Christian Mysticism

In the Venn diagram we developed in Chapter 5, Jia's theology can be situated in the transition region between the type A and type C theologies, which means it bears characteristics of both types of theologies. Regarding the subject of spirituality, Jia's thought is a combination of mysticism-oriented as well as love-oriented spirituality. Here we can call Jia's spirituality an active mystical spirituality. The reason why we did not name Jia's spirituality a mysticism-love-oriented theology is that the terms 'mysticism,' 'moral ethics' and 'love' are just the main orientations of each form of spirituality. In line with each orientation, the specific essential concepts in each form can be flexible. Also, the words 'mystical' and 'active' can grab the essence of Jia's spirituality the most. It was essentially mystical because mysticism is at the core of Jia's spirituality. Inner revelations from the Spirit and the reposed state of tranquillity were foundational for attaining a spiritualized mind. Jia's approach is active as well. With a spiritually transformed mind, believers can return to the world and take actions to fulfil the divine will *in* the mundane. Jia's spirituality manifests its spiritual depth in its emphasis on the inward spiritual life as an outgrowth of the life of Christ. Based on his holistic tripartite anthropology, through the experience of the baptism of the Spirit and effort of withdrawal and cultivation, the three parts can reciprocally transform each other into their full capacity—the realization of the state of Christ-human. Apart from salvation of individual souls, Jia's spirituality also concerns the prosperity of God's creation and His love for the created. In this way, it exhibits the width in the social dimension. A Christ-human is still a human but has the mind of Christ, therefore, he or she can love and cocreate with God to fulfil God's gracious plan in human history.

Jia's spirituality demonstrated the potential of the neo-Confucian mind-heart mystical approach in developing a Christian active mysticism. The definition of the term mysticism is very complicated in that throughout the history, mysticism had varying meanings depending on its historical contexts. Julia A. Lamm pointed out that the concept of mysticism was a modern construct that scholars use to identify, categorize or explain certain perceived ways of being religious or forms of religiosity. Its root can be found in ancient Greek terms 'mystery' (*mysterion*) and 'mystical' (*mystikos*).<sup>500</sup> Michel du Certeau (1925-1986) pointed out *la mystique* can be dated back to the early seventieth century. It was used for marginalizing certain religious movements such as Quietism. It was not until the turn of the twentieth century that 'mysticism' started breaking away from its negative meanings, which were given by the eighteenth-century Enlightenment philosophers represented by Immanuel Kant. William James (1842-1910) and Evelyn Underhill (1875-1941) started to employ this term as a tool to describe and define certain 'types' of religious experience. After the 1980s, due to the popularity of the approaches of post-modern criticism, the study of Christian mysticism received more attention. Mystics and their works were carefully read and appreciated for their contribution in revealing the periphery of Christian thought and spirituality.<sup>501</sup> Mysticism, lacking a substantial meaning, has always been considered as something personal, marginal, subversive and even heretical. Nowadays, the term mysticism seems to go to the other extreme, it has become so commonplace as to mean anything. It is almost interchangeable with words such as 'religion,' 'piety,' or even 'faith.' Again, this situation shows mysticism as an often

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<sup>500</sup> Lamm, Julia A. 'A Guide to Christian Mysticism' in *The Wiley-Blackwell Companion to Christian Mysticism* Edited by Julia A. Lamm. Chichester (West Sussex, 2013), 2.

<sup>501</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-3.

slippery and empty category. However, Bernard McGinn's definition is still a helpful description. 'Christian mysticism is a special consciousness of the presence of God that by definition exceeds description and results in a transformation of the subject who receives it.'<sup>502</sup>

Seen from McGinn's definition, it is fair to regard Jia's spirituality as mystical. The inner revelation of the Spirit is foundational for individual spiritual growth. The experience of immediate encounter with God is as crucial as the Bible in faith building. And Jia did have some ineffable experiences that had profound impact on his faith such as his conversion experience at the riverbank. For Jia, the inward spiritual revelation and miracles both have transformative influence on individual spiritual maturity. Moreover, it is also noteworthy that in McGinn's definition, by the words 'a special consciousness,' 'exceeds description' and 'a transformation of the subject who receives it' he implied some other characteristics of Christian mysticism. If mysticism is a special consciousness, it would not be a constant spiritual practice but only happens as unpredictable events. It is beyond description and therefore can have an anti-intellectual tendency. And its transformative impact is only confined to the individual realm. Jia's spirituality obviously challenged McGinn's understanding. First, admittedly, Jia recognized the importance of having dramatic experience such as the experience of the baptism of the Spirit, which would usually happen instantaneously. However, Jia also stressed the effort of hiding and staying in a tranquil state of mind and receiving God's spiritual revelation. For Jia, immediate interaction with God should be an essential and regular spiritual practice for

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<sup>502</sup> Bernard McGinn, *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism*, vol.3: *The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism—1200-1350* (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 26. *Ibid.*, 4.

believers. Also, even though Jia described his mystical experience as unspeakable as well, the ineffable feature is not all beyond description. For Jia, the inner spiritual revelation should be rationalized by human reason and so one can have a spiritualised mind and take actions in a godly way. Jia's holistic anthropology and his emphasis on the dynamics among the three components prevented the danger of the anti-intellectual tendency. Moreover, Jia's spiritual transformation goes beyond the realm of individuals and concerns the larger society as well. For Jia, personal spiritual development and fulfilling social responsibilities are inseparable. In addition, Jia's spirituality does not fit into the general historical judgement on mysticism either. The unity of personal spiritual growth and social participation was the opposite of being personal. The necessity of participating in worldly affairs and contributing to nation building and his encouragement for believers to become pillars in the society overturned the thought that mystics and their experience are marginal in the society. Jia's active social participation and supportive attitude toward the communist leadership and the state-sanctioned church was constructive and optimistic about the future of the church in China.

Testing McGinn's definition and the popular understanding of Christian mysticism in the case of Jia's spirituality reveals the uniqueness of Jia's mystical approach and the potential of his thought to enrich Christian mysticism. With the special characteristics of his spirituality, Jia's spirituality refined our understanding of Christian mysticism and endowed it with the neo-Confucian mind-heart meanings in the Chinese cultural context. It reflects the paradoxical ways of expression of mysticism. Jia employed the language of negations and confirmed the unspeakable aspect of mystical experience; he also adopted positive language of presence such

as dreams, colours and the symbol of cross to illustrate spiritual message. Moreover, Jia's spirituality, because of his organic understanding of human condition, also accentuates the value of human reason. For Jia, the reposed mind is the preparation for acting. Individual piety only finds its full expression in social participation *in* the world. Inner spiritual revelation only delivers the divine will when it is rationalized and lived out. Due to his mind-heart approach, the totality of equilibrium and harmony, Jia's mysticism naturally combines the spiritual and social dimensions. It enriched the expression of mysticism with its stress on rationality and world-oriented practicality. It is a spirituality that is based on the inward life of Christ and the spiritual revelation of the Spirit. It emphasizes restoring the image of Christ in individuals but also transforming society according to the divine order. It situates believers and their spiritual growth in the mundane. The effort of withdrawal from the world and the action of participating in worldly affairs form a unity. Subjective spiritual development is inherent in the realisation of God's divine will in the larger universe. Jia's spirituality demonstrated the shape the cross: it is vertically deep for its holistic anthropological view and the idea of Christ-human; it is horizontally broad for the unity of individual spiritual growth and social participation, and deep love and care for God's creation.

### **Comparative Theology as An Alternative to Contextualization**

Through employing the approach of comparative theology, we have revealed the substrata of Jia's spirituality—the neo-Confucian active mystical mind. This method enabled us to see another form of theologizing in the context of Chinese Christianity apart from contextualization. As Bevans pointed out, the contextualization of theology is a theological imperative. There is no 'theology' but only 'contextual

theology,' in that every attempt to comprehend the Christian faith is done in a particular context.<sup>503</sup> Contextual theology as a theological expression always reflects elements from the context where it is developed, such as the cultural tradition and social issues. Chinese contextual theology is pretty much the result of theologians' effort in reconciling their dual identities as both Chinese and Christian in a certain historical context. Theologies developed in early twentieth-century China reflected theologians' responses to the context of modernity. Christians under the influence of the May Fourth Movement, needed to confront the imported ideas of democracy and science, as well as the rising suspicious attitude toward all religions and traditional values. Addressing the issues raised in this context, theologians such as Zhao Zichen theologized through making constructive use of Confucianism in a translational mode and highlighted the rational and moral value of Christianity in saving a nation. After the establishment of the communist government in 1949, Christianity needed to answer new questions raised in a changed context. How to survive under the leadership of an atheist government and wash off the foreign label of Christianity as a Western religion became more urgent issues for Christians to deal with. In response to the conflict between Christians holding different theological positions and the tension between the communist state and the church, Ding chose to adopt ideas from process theology and evolutionary theology and proposed to perform 'theological reconstruction' (*shenxue sixiang jianshe*).<sup>504</sup> Both Zhao and Ding's examples illustrated the approach of contextualization as an immediate reflection on and response to tangible socio-political and cultural issues in the

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<sup>503</sup> Stephen B. Bevans, *Models of Contextual Theology* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2002), 3.

<sup>504</sup> Philip L. Wickeri, *Reconstructing Christianity in China: K.H Ting and the Chinese Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2007), 347. See in Chow, *Theosis*, 34.

context. This approach manifests a way of theologizing that is engaging and practical. Its proactive spirit and flexibility are helpful in providing Christian solutions to contemporary challenges and reflecting on Chinese Christians' on-going tension caused by their dual identities in the ever-changing social environment of China.

Jia's approach is distinguished from his contemporaries above in that he carried out contextualization in a more subconscious way. Or we can call Jia's way of theologizing an example of the comparative theology approach. Even though Jia also responded to the pressing subjects of his context such as the influence of modern culture and the danger of 'new theology' in the early twentieth century, addressing the issues in society was not the main momentum of his theologizing. Drawing on the method of comparative theology in this thesis has allowed us to see another trajectory in formulating Chinese theology other than purposefully responding to the motifs posited by a certain context. It enabled us to reveal the interaction between Jia's subconscious way of thinking and Christian teachings. Backed up by a historical investigation, using comparative theology positioned our focus on the characteristics of Jia's Chinese active mystical mind and the profound impact it had on his theologizing. It was because of his holistic anthropology, biogenerative way of thinking and active mysticism that were all rooted in the neo-Confucian mind-heart spirituality, that Jia's theology embodied a combination of type A and type C theology. This approach is less proactive but more reflective. Through a comparative theological exploration, we can gain deeper understanding of Chinese Christians' underlying way of thinking. With the realization that the Chinese mind is deeply concerned for mysticism as well as practicality, we have a more comprehensive grasp of Chinese Christian spirituality. In sum, we are left with a

more profound appreciation of the spectrum of Chinese contextual theology by recognizing Jia's Wang Yangming influenced spirituality, which signals to us the potential of manifold expressions of Chinese spirituality in the development of Chinese contextual theology.

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