

Tao, Virtue, Benevolence, Righteousness and Propriety: On the Core Values of Shu School

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Abstract: The core concepts of Confucianism were developed over the change of the times by Confucian scholars after Zi Si and Mencius, and have formed their respective structures: The three great principles of “benevolence, wisdom and bravery,” and the self-cultivation model of “benevolence, righteousness and propriety” by Confucius. Following Confucius, Zi Si vigorously advocated the five virtues of “benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and sage.” Mencius initiated the four cardinal virtues of “benevolence, righteousness, propriety and wisdom.” Xun Zi often constructed the collocation of “benevolence and righteousness, rites and music, and loyalty and trustworthiness.” Dong Zhongshu finally developed the five constant virtues of “benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness.” In a simple, clear, practical and feasible way, the core values of Confucianism have won support among the people and have had an impact on Chinese society for more than two thousand years. Being open and inclusive, the connotation of Confucianism took advantage of the strengths of different schools of philosophy in ancient China, and adopted changes from philosophies with positive attitudes. The Bashu area, in the southwest of China, has inherited the tradition of adhering to the Tao (natural order of the Universe) and valuing morality. Shu scholars have creatively built the core values of “the Tao, virtue, benevolence, righteousness and propriety,” and developed a characteristic branch of philosophy above and beyond the Confucian scholars of the Central Plains. This concept stems from Yan Junping of the Western Han Dynasty, promoted by Yang Xiong, developed by Zhao Rui of the Tang Dynasty, Zhang Shangying and Su Dongpo of the Song Dynasty, and Lai Zhide of the Ming Dynasty, then further developed by Liu Yuan and Duan Zhengyuan of the Qing Dynasty, and formed the persistent system of core values of the Shu School. Compared with the values of orthodox Confucianism, the core values of the Shu School have the functions of “a unity of metaphysics and physics” and “a combination of theory and practice,” which remedy the lack of Confucianism’s ultimate concern for ontology and the lack of Taoism’s realistic concern for practicality.

Keywords: Shu school; core values; five conducts; five virtues; Tao, virtue, benevolence, righteousness and propriety

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Chinese scholarship has fine traditions like self-cultivation and real application. In most cases, mature academic studies form essential and applicable core values as well, as they are in the pursuit of comprehensiveness. The philosophers after Lao-tzu and Confucius, had academic thoughts of constructing main purposes, and formed concise core value structures. It is summarized in the *Lv's Spring and Autumn*, "Lao-tzu advocated to use softness to overcome hardness, Confucius advocated benevolence, Mo-tse advocated fraternity, Guan Yin advocated honesty and frugality, Lie Zi advocated a pure heart and few desires, Chen Pian advocated equity among all lives, Yang Sheng advocated to take oneself as first, Sun Bin advocated powerful force, Wang Liao advocated to prepare strategy before battle, and Er Liang attached importance to examining work and summing up experiences after battles."^[1] It can be seen that all the philosophers have their own core connotation and subject spirit, which constitute the important trends and realized the value of the academic theories of all the philosophers. In fact, we find all mature academic theories are the same in this respect when we take an overview of Chinese academic history, and the Shu School is no exception, and thus grew to great renown and influence. The Shu School has a long history of development, ranging from Qilu (Shandong Province) to the Central Plains. It has enjoyed the reputation "The prosperity of the Shu School dominates in China with infinite influence,"^[2] and "the literary works of the Shu scholars are peerless in China."^[3] As an ancient cultural pattern and academic school rich in content, the Shu School is rooted in the land of Bashu. It has a radiation effect on the surrounding areas, even on the Central Plains, and has promoted the prosperity of Chinese traditional culture and academic thought. How can the Shu School have such widespread influence? This is inseparable from its extensive content

and profound core. "Tao, virtue, benevolence, righteousness and propriety," to be revealed in this paper, is the successful construction and important innovation in the respect of value system of the Shu School in history. The formation and construction of core values, of course, may also change with the times, however, reviewing the literature, we can find that the overall spirit, fixed structure, and historical inheritance and innovation represented in core values are relatively consistent and coherent.

1. From Confucius to Dong Zhongshu: Inheritance and evolution of the core values of Confucianism

Confucian value "benevolence, wisdom and perseverance" and "benevolence, righteousness and propriety," with benevolence being the core.



Confucius

Confucius proposed a variety of values, taking “benevolence” as the core, so the understanding in *Lv’s Spring and Autumn* is correct, namely, “Confucius advocated benevolence.” Then, how should we practice benevolence or help to perfect one’s virtue? It says in the *Analects of Confucius Xian Wen*, “There are three respects for a gentleman, which I have not achieved: The benevolent does not worry; the wise have no confusion; the brave are free from fear.” Here benevolence, wisdom, and bravery are arranged in one group. *The Doctrine of the Mean* says, “People have five ethical relationships in common, and there are three virtues to handle these five relationships, namely the monarch and his subjects, father and son, husband and wife, brothers and friends. These are the common ethical relationships among all the people in the world. Wisdom, benevolence, and bravery are virtues to handle these relationships. The reason is the same for the implementation of the three virtues. Confucius said, ‘To love learning is akin to knowledge; To work diligently is akin to benevolence; To know shame is akin to courage. You will know how to self-evaluate if you understand these three points, you will know how to manage other people if you know self-evaluation, and you will know how to govern the world and the country if you know managing other people.’” *The Doctrine of the Mean* regards benevolence, wisdom and bravery as “three great conducts,” and combines benevolence, righteousness and propriety in one group. “A benevolent man can be called a real man. It is the most important to love his parents, it is necessary to value morality and justice, and it is a priority to respect the sages. Thus benevolence and righteousness can find their root in propriety.” “Benevolence, wisdom and bravery” and “benevolence, righteousness and propriety” are the core content of Confucianism. Confucianism “adheres to the Law of Yao and Shun in governing the world, follows the systems of King Wen of

Zhou and King Wu of Zhou, and respects the saint Confucius as the founder of Confucianism” (*the Yi Wen Record of the History of the Former Han Dynasty*). Its ideology finds its roots in the traditions of Yao and Shun, later inherits the thoughts of King Wen of Zhou, King Wu of Zhou, and the Duke of Zhou, and ultimately receives the core ideas of Confucius. Therefore, the system of core values constructed by Confucius had critical effects on the development and evolution of later Confucian schools.

After Confucius, “Confucianism was divided into eight schools,” “there was the Confucian School of Zi Si, the Confucian School of Mencius and the Confucian School of Sun” (*Han Feizi · XianXue*). Zi Si, Mencius and Xun Zi (namely Sun) are three great Confucianists, who played important roles in promoting Confucian schools after Confucius. Zi Si was the grandson of Confucius, and Mencius studied under a disciple of Confucius. The succession of these Confucianists has formed the “Si-Meng School.” Zi Si inherited the thoughts of his ancestor and formed the “five conducts” (benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and mastery) with “four virtues” (benevolence, righteousness, propriety and wisdom) as the core, which was developed and promoted by Mencius. It says in *Mencius · JinXin Xia*, “Benevolence for father and son, righteousness for the monarch and his subjects, propriety for the host and guest, wisdom for the wise gentlemen and sage man for the natural Law, all are determined by destiny, and one’s nature plays a role as well, therefore, a gentleman never stresses the role of destiny.”^[4] In Zhu Xi’s annotation of Mencius, it says that “Sage man for natural Law, man was a redundant character.” This saying has been verified by newly excavated texts. “Sage man” hereof should be the character of “sage,” namely the virtues of the sage. Mencius named “benevolence, righteousness, propriety and wisdom” the “four

virtues” and “four great conducts” and vigorously promoted them. As Mencius said in his article *Li Lou*, “The essence of benevolence is to serve the parents. The essence of righteousness is to be obedient to elder brothers. The essence of wisdom is to understand the truth of the above mentioned two and not to depart from them. The essence of propriety is to act with respectful attitude.” *Gao Zi Shang* says, “Sympathy for the misfortunes of others is “benevolence,” shame for one’s own ill conduct is “righteousness,” respect for others is “propriety,” understanding of right and wrong is “wisdom.” Our understanding of benevolence, righteousness, propriety and wisdom is not acquired from the external environment, but owned already, and we just get used to ignoring it.” It can be concluded that “benevolence, righteousness, propriety and wisdom” are the core concepts emphasized by Mencius, therefore, they are combined with “sage” and become “five great conducts.” The proposal of Mencius should academically originate from Zi Si, and it was under the criticism of Xun Zi. Its origin can be seen accordingly. *Xun Zi Fei Shi Er Zi*, “A new theory was created based on the old ones, which was named “the five great conducts” ... but they whitewashed their remarks and said solemnly: ‘This is the speech of our teacher of the old generation.’ This was advocated by Zi Si and echoed by Meng Ke.”^[5] According to Xun Zi, “A new theory of five great conducts was created based on the old ones” by Zi Si and Mencius, however, he did not mention the specific conducts, and it is confirmed there should be five conducts. In *Annotations of Xun Zi* written by Yang Liang of the Tang Dynasty, it says, “The five elements are benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and trustworthiness.” Yang Liang wrote that “the five elements” were also named “the five constant virtues” namely benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and trustworthiness. Yang Liang’s interpretation

about “the five constant virtues” originated from that of Zheng Xuan. In *the Annotations of the Book of Music* by Zheng Xuan, “The conducts of the five constant virtues” are described as “the five elements.” In his annotations of *The Doctrine of the Mean of Zi Si*, he made the main theme clear at the very beginning, “The god of wood is benevolence, the god of gold is righteousness, the god of fire is propriety, the god of water is trustworthiness, and the god of earth is wisdom,” implying that the “Theory of Five Elements” proposed by Zi Si was “Five Constant Virtues”. But this saying, more than not, is incorrect. According to existing documents, benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and trustworthiness were collectively called the “Five Constant Virtues,” starting with Dong Zhongshu of the Han Dynasty. In the Warring States period, the four virtues of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom were arranged in one group together with “sage.”^[6] In the newly excavated bamboo slips of the Guodian Chu Tomb, it says in *The Five Elements* that, “The internalized benevolence is called conduct of virtue, while the externalized is called moral conduct; the internalized righteousness is called conduct of virtue, while the externalized is called moral conduct; the internalized propriety is called conduct of virtue, while the externalized is called moral conduct; the internalized wisdom is called conduct of virtue, while the externalized is called moral conduct; the internalized mastery is called conduct of virtue, while the externalized is called moral conduct. The five conducts of virtue are collectively called virtue, while the four moral conducts excluding mastery are collectively named kindheartedness. Kindheartedness is the Tao of mankind. Virtue is the Tao of nature.”^[7] This is similar to the Five Elements in the silk book unearthed in the Ma Wangdui Han Tomb. The only difference is in the sequence of the five elements namely “benevolence, wisdom, righteousness,

propriety and sage.” In the *New Book Six Virtues* written by Jia Yi it says, “There are six directions in the universe, and humans have five moral conducts of benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and sage.”^[8] He still followed the collocation of the core values proposed by Zi Si and Mencius in the Warring States period.

In the late period of the Warring States, as the “Confucian school of Sun,” Xun Zi’s value system had benevolence as the core, namely “benevolence, righteousness, propriety and music.” He told the scholars about the route of study and virtue cultivation, “If one can trace back to the Law of the emperors in the ancient times and examine the original meaning of benevolence and righteousness, it will be the right approach to learn propriety. It is just like when one person holds the leather collar and comb with five fingers, the fur will be naturally smooth. If he does not follow the virtues...he will not achieve his goal. Therefore, if he respects propriety and law, he will be a law-abiding scholar, despite his failure to achieve great perception and eloquence. If he does not respect propriety and law, he will be a law-breaking Confucian scholar despite his great perceptions and eloquence.”^[9] As far as Xun Zi is concerned, “benevolence, righteousness and propriety” are the essential conditions of a refined scholar. He put forward in the chapter of Honor and Disgrace, “Benevolence took the leading position in the law of the emperors in the ancient times in the ruling of the world, and this ruling law was further divided into four parts namely the classic books (*the Book of Songs* and *Shang Shu*), rites and music.”^[10] He included “classic books” as well as “benevolence, righteousness and propriety.” He believed in the previous chapter, “Classic books do not fit in the reality,” “it is just like pounding millet with a dagger and measuring the depth of a river with a finger,” which is absolutely inapplicable. “Classic books” here exist in name only. The focus

is still on benevolence, righteousness, propriety and music.^[11] In the thought of Xun Zi, benevolence and righteousness are still the top priority. In the chapter of Military Forces, it says, “When you talk about military affairs, you often regard benevolence and righteousness as the key. A benevolent man loves his people, and a righteous man follows the law. So, how can they fight with each other?”^[12] In the chapter of *Original Evil of Human Nature*, it says, “The emperor Yu was sagacious, as he applied benevolence and justice. Then, there is truth knowable and achievable.”^[13] Law is propriety. It says in *Encouraging Learning*, “The Rites and the Classic of Music only indicate rough moral standards,”^[14] therefore, it can be concluded that “benevolence, righteousness, propriety and music” are the core values of Xun Zi. In the chapter of *Da Lue*, there are interpretations about these four values, “Benevolence is fraternity for people, so that people can be close to each other. Righteousness is sensibility, so that it can be put into practice. Propriety is appropriateness, so that people can succeed. There is a place for benevolence to settle down and there is pass in and out for righteousness. Benevolence will not be itself in the true sense if it is settled down in the inappropriate place. Righteousness will not be itself in the true sense if it does not get in and out from the appropriate pass. If people do not bestow insensible favors, it will not be the real benevolence. If people understand the reasons but dare not to follow, it will not be the real righteousness. If there is a system established but the ruler fails to keep a harmonious and coordinated relationship among people, it will not be the real propriety. If the harmonious and coordinated relationship is not expressed, there will not be music. Therefore, benevolence, righteousness, propriety and music have consistent goals. A gentleman coped with benevolence based on righteousness, then benevolence was created. He followed righteousness based on propriety, then

righteousness was created. He came back to grasp the fundamental principle of propriety, then he completed the details, thus propriety was created. After he was proficient in these three, he got to the right law.”^[15] Benevolence, righteousness, propriety and music are supplementary to each other, and “law” was formed later. The core values of Xun Zi have the connotation of “law, benevolence, righteousness, propriety and music.”

Since the Warring States period, with the disputes between states and the prevalence of alliance and non-alliance strategy, generations of Confucian scholars have attached great importance to “loyalty and trustworthiness.” In the chapter of *Ruling by Justice and Ruling by Force*, Xun Zi promoted the status of “loyalty and trustworthiness,” as well as stressed “benevolence and righteousness.” “If the ruler achieved loyalty and trustworthiness, and manifested benevolence and righteousness, all the talents will be gathered.”^[16] The collocation of “benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and trustworthiness” was fixed by Dong Zhongshu of the Western Han Dynasty. He attached much weight to “trustworthiness,” in *Bloom in the Spring and Autumn Dynasty · King Zhuang of Chu*, it says, “Spring and Autumn Annals shows esteem for propriety and trustworthiness,” in *Han Book · Biography of Dong Zhongshu*, it says, “The significance of Spring and Autumn Annals lies in respect for trustworthiness and overlooking treacherousness.” As a result, “sage” was replaced by “trustworthiness,” the “five conducts” namely “benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and sage” of Mencius were transformed to “benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and trustworthiness,” and “the five constant virtues namely benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and trustworthiness” were built.”^[17] He believed that these five virtues constantly worked and they were the regular rules for as long as there

was heaven and earth (“constant virtues”), therefore, they were called “five virtues.” After the Wu Emperor of the Han Dynasty promoted the cultural policy of “expelling all schools of philosophers, only keeping the six classic books of Confucianism dominant namely *Book of Songs*, *Shang Shu*, *Yi Li*, *Book of Music*, *Book of Changes*, and *Spring and Autumn Annals*, “benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and trustworthiness” had become the core elements in the Chinese value system with an impact on China for more than two thousand years. To deify “Five Virtues,” Dong Zhongshu further associated “Five Virtues” with the philosophy of *Yin-Yang* and the five elements. From his point of view, humans had the conduct of five virtues and the universe had the truth of five elements, which interacted with each other. Therefore, he matched the five virtues with the five conducts. In *Bloom in the Spring and Autumn Dynasty · Generation Among Five Elements*, it says, “As the basis of farming, the East had the property of wood and referred to officials in charge of farming. They advocated benevolence, those who introduced the classic books and understood the five elements provided guidance to the emperors, following their virtues and remedying the disadvantages... The South had the property of fire and referred to Sima. Sima advocated intelligence and wisdom, and recommended virtuous and intelligent people to the emperor. These people had astronomical knowledge. Before the aura of the heaven appeared, and the bud of things emerged, they could clearly discover the key to survival and success, and great order throughout the land and the source of unrest... The Center had the property of earth and referred to Junguan. They advocated credibility and integrity. As he was born humble, he got up early and worked late day and night. He encouraged the intention of the emperor by citing ancient deeds... The West had the property of gold and referred to Dali Situ. Situ advocated righteousness. An official died for

the monarch while an ordinary person died for his father. There was distinction of rank and status among people, and they died for their own career... The North had the property of water and referred to Sikou, who was in charge of law enforcement. Sikou advocated propriety. There were fixed positions for monarch and subject, and fixed respect for seniority. Dong Zhongshu interpreted “five constant virtues” with “five conducts,” and interpreted “natural law” with “humanity.” He not only mystified social ethics, but also endowed them with absolute authority, so that he completed the process of moral philosophy and ultimate ethics which was unfinished by the school of Zi Si and Mencius.

2. Develop a new style: The construction of the core values of the Shu School

The ancient Shu School, bred on the Bashu land, and has core values of its own, namely “Tao, virtue, benevolence, righteousness and propriety.” According to existing literature, the systematic construction of this fixed collocation started with Yan Zun in the Han Dynasty. In *The Purpose of Ethics · Man with Highest Virtue Does Not Manifest It Formally*, it says, “The Tao is the origin of all the things in the world, virtue is the beginning of all the things in the world, god is the master of the heaven and the earth, supreme harmony is the ancestor of the heaven and the earth. The Tao varies in depth, virtue varies in thickness, god varies in clear and turbid, and harmony varies in height. The clear is the heaven, while the turbid is the earth. *Yang* is male, while *Yin* is female. People have two sides of debit and credit, receipt varies in quantity, nature varies in coarse and fine, life varies in length, emotion varies in good and evil, meaning varies in big and small. People fall into different categories, namely villain and gentleman. They are further divided into Taoist, the virtuous, the

benevolent, the righteous, and person of propriety. I would like to know what are their different behaviors for their different titles. Zhuang Zi said, ‘A person with nothingness and enlightenment is named a Taoist. A quiet person with nothingness is named a virtuous person. A person loving everything and granting infinitely is named a benevolent person. A person with righteousness is named a righteous person. A person politely declining and observing harmony is named a person of propriety. These five kinds of people live a long life.’^[18]

This is amendment and supplementation of the opposition theory of five virtues mentioned in *Lao-tzu*, “Monarch of past dynasties promoted virtue after the Tao was lost, promoted benevolence after virtue was lost, promoted righteousness after benevolence was lost, and promoted propriety after benevolence was lost,” as well as correction of the opposite states of Confucianism and Taoism. Yan’s theory constructed the core values of the integrated “Tao, virtue, benevolence, righteousness and propriety” of Yi, Confucianism and Taoism. The construction of this system is developed and derived from heaven and earth, *Yin* and *Yang*, male and female, thick and thin, nature and life, emotion and meaning, god, and harmony. It came down in one continuous line with the construction of the Three Primordial Sovereigns: Fuxi (Emperor of Heaven), Shennong (Emperor of Earth), and Huangdi (Emperor of Humans).

Besides Yan Zun, the scholars of the Shu School, with intensive study and classifications, mostly adopted this system, for example, *Discourse of Four Scholars* about Virtue written by Wang Bao of the Han Dynasty, “The monarch of keen intelligence and excellent judgment respected and promoted ethics, fulfilled ruling with benevolence, required people to learn the classical six arts and to be familiar with rites. He frequently issued wise imperial edicts, encouraged recommendations of outstanding and virtuous talents and seeking Taoists.”^[19]

In *Fayan · Wendao* written by Yang Xiong, it says, “Law should be applied to guide people’s behaviors, virtue should be applied to win the hearts of people, righteousness should be applied to help people establish appropriate relationships, propriety should be applied to help people learn rites. All of them are laws of nature. They jointly constitute a whole, and cannot play the roles if they are fragmented.”^[20] The five constant virtues, namely the Tao, virtue, benevolence, righteousness and propriety, are regarded as a must for one’s self-evaluation. In Volume IV *Wen Shen*, “Tao, virtue, benevolence, righteousness and propriety are involved in everything.”^[21] In *Tai Xuan Jing · Xuan Chi*, it says, “The rule of the formation and operation of the universe is called the Tao. Following the moral order in the world is called virtue. Showing fraternity to various groups of people is called benevolence. Examining appropriate situations when confronted by an enemy is called righteousness. Upholding and implementing law, virtue, benevolence and righteousness is called achievement.”^[22] Based on the “five constant virtues” of Dong Zhongshu, scholars added “Tao and benevolence” to construct “seven virtues.” In *Ju Qin Mei Xin*, it says, “Blessed by the god and trusted by the people, the ruler should practice Tao, virtue, benevolence, righteousness, propriety and wisdom.”^[23]

Later Zhao Rui of the Tang Dynasty gave a complete interpretation of the significance and their interrelationships “law, virtue, benevolence, righteousness and propriety” as well as “wisdom and trustworthiness” from the perspective of human action. He also said in *Chang Duan Jing · Liang Cai*, “After law, virtue, benevolence and righteousness are determined as the principles of conducts, the world will be ruled in the right way.”^[24] In *Ding Ming*, it says, “Therefore, there are concepts of law, virtue, benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and trustworthiness. What is the Tao? The

Tao is the rule that people must follow. When one person is sitting, he knows what he will do; when he is traveling, he knows where he is going; when he is coping with a problem, he knows the conditions he depends on; when he is acting, he knows when he should stop. This is law. There is another saying that the Tao is the rule that people must obey, so that everything will not get lost in their principles. What is virtue? Virtue is people play their respective roles. Benevolence is selfless fraternity gaining benefit and removing evil. There is another saying that benevolence is a caring heart. Sympathy and compassion develop into benevolence. Righteousness is appropriateness, and the boundary line between right and wrong, affirmative and negative is righteousness. There is another saying that righteousness is people acting appropriately in everything, and establishing achievements by reward for good and punishment for evil. Propriety is some certain codes that people must practice, and there must be difference between senior and junior, young and old. Wisdom is the knowledge people acquire, to be used for judging gain and loss and right and wrong. Trustworthiness is people’s commitment. It is trustworthiness to regard the willingness of the supreme commander as the standard.”^[25]

Zhang Shangying of the Song Dynasty carried on the basic theoretical thinking of Zhao Rui, and it says in Volume I, *first chapter origin* of *Huang Shi Gong Su Shu*, “Tao, virtue, benevolence, righteousness and propriety should be regarded as a whole. Tao is what people should obey. Virtue makes everything get what they want. Benevolence is represented in affection, sincerity, respect and humility. People should show generousness, compassion for everything to make them exist naturally and comfortably. Everything in the world should grow and develop in the appropriate integration of nature. Righteousness is to reward the good and punish the evil. People should make

everything comfortable through appropriate arrangement, to achieve their aspirations. Propriety is the natural order of human relations. People should strictly abide by it.”^[26] Zhang Shangying’s inheritance of Zhao’s doctrine is clear, but he had promoted and upgraded it in the respect of the specific expression and interpretation of the five virtues. Even in the chapter layout of *Su Shu*, we can see his inheritance and respect for the core values of Yan Zun and Yang Xiong namely, “Tao, virtue, benevolence, righteousness and propriety.” Chapter I is *Origin*, namely Yan Zun’s theory “virtue is the origin of everything.” Chapter II is *The Right Tao*, namely Yan Zun’s theory “the Tao is the root of everything.” Chapter III is *Ambition of Talent*, namely Confucian school “benevolence and filial piety is the base of everything,” Chapter IV is *Virtue-rooted and Tao-aimed*, namely “Tao-guided and virtue-acquired” of Yang Xiong and Zhao Rui. Chapter V is *Righteousness-followed* (namely “righteousness is appropriateness” of Yang Xiong and Zhao Rui. Chapter VI is *Propriety*, namely “propriety refers to appropriate behavior,” “people should act according to etiquette just like they walk in shoes” of Yang Xiong and Zhao Rui.

In *The Preface of Works Collection of Ouyang Xiu* written by Su Dongpo, it says, “People should act according to propriety, music, benevolence, and righteousness, to conform with the great Tao of the universe.”^[27] There is “the great Tao of the universe” above “propriety, music, benevolence, and righteousness.” In *Works Collection of Fan Wenzheng* (*Fan Zhongyan*), it says, “He (Fan Wenzheng) was so eager for benevolence, righteousness, propriety, music, royalty, trustworthiness and filial piety, just like a man who is hungry for food, and he could never forget about it. It was just like the heat of fire and the wetness of water. It was part of his nature.”^[28] “Benevolence, righteousness, propriety, music, loyalty, trustworthiness and filial

piety” were determined by his nature. The nature is the Tao, while the character is virtue, in which the value judgments of “law, virtue, benevolence, righteousness, and propriety” are implied. In *Confucians Maintain Predecessor’s Achievements*, it says, “The sages have no intention to conquer the world, for example, hundreds of valleys merge into rivers and oceans, and all kinds of birds and beasts gather around kirins and phoenixes. How can the rivers and oceans, and kirins and phoenixes reject such confluence and gathering? Da Yu fought the flood and eliminated the worries of generations, transforming gullies into fertile soil and mulberry fields and transforming uncivilized people into civilized people in dress and hat. After Xie took the position of Situ, enlightenment was implemented and after Houji became the official in charge of agricultural matters and taught people to cultivate crops, the common people ate grains. His virtues became popular among the people. Tang of the Shang Dynasty and King Wu of Zhou saved poor people and founded long-lasting states of benevolence and virtue, therefore, the common people went to pay respects to them. These three sages were so great that their people insisted on their ruling despite the fact that they politely declined. They felt that they had more responsibility to keep good governance of the states and clarify education to help their people cultivate good habits. These sages conquered the world and maintained the states with these virtues. The states were run by ten generations, while the people did not betray. Is there any other reason? The Kingdom of Zhou became weak in power, and all the vassal states went on punitive expeditions. If people’s mistakes cannot be corrected with benevolence and virtue, the strategy of resourcefulness will be applied to win. If the state cannot be overturned with resourcefulness, force will be applied to seize the power. In the reign of the First Emperor of Qin, there was no social order at

all, and the whole world was corrupt. Nobody knew that there should be benevolence and righteousness. Liu Bang (founder of the Han Dynasty), led the uprising as an ordinary civilian, and conquered other states within five years. Although he slowly applied benevolence and righteousness to rule the state, the officials he appointed respected and advocated resourcefulness and bravery and power, and greatly promoted political trickery and resourcefulness. Therefore, they won the battles time and time again, and they gained land and goods after capture. After the world was pacified, it was Liu Bang's pity that there was no strategy for him to enjoy the achievements, maintain the state and pass down to his descendants. Unfortunately, the warriors and advisors were not talents who could maintain achievements with their emperor. So, Lu Gu remonstrated with the emperor, 'Your majesty conquered other states by force, but how can you expect to run the state by force again?' Shu Suntong advised, 'It is hard for us to attack an enemy with a group of Confucian scholars, but they will play a critical role in maintaining the achievements with us.' As a result, they started to consider the appropriate guidelines like propriety and music in all ages."^[29] "These three sages were so great that their people insisted on their ruling despite the fact that they politely declined," which refers to the issue of "the Tao." Afterwards, "Yu" "Qi" and "Ji" (the emperors) ran the states with "Tao and virtue," and "Tang" and "Wu" (the emperors) won the world with "benevolence and righteousness." "Benevolence and righteousness" were destroyed and abandoned in the Qin Dynasty, while they were recovered by Liu Bang, who restored his political domination with "propriety and music." Su Dongpo was narrating the history. Meanwhile, he was expounding the transformation rule of "law-virtue-benevolence and righteousness-propriety and music."

Su Ziyou made comments on the *Biography*

of Lao-tzu in *Ancient History* "Confucius educated people with benevolence and righteousness, and ran the state with propriety and music. As there were endless changes with benevolence, righteousness, propriety and music, he said, 'I adhered to the Tao consistently'. If there was no fundamental principle to adhere to, he would apply the virtues separately. In Yi, it says 'metaphysics refers to things void and spiritual, while physics refers to things specific and material.' In Yu, it says 'A gentleman is accomplished in benevolence and righteousness while a villain is good at seeking material wealth.' Confucius called himself 'common sense understood, then the Tao studied'. In daily life, *Book of Songs*, *Shang Shu*, *Yi Li*, *Book of Music* were applied. That is the reason why a gentleman has a good understanding of the Tao, while a villain is committed to seeking material wealth. By understanding the Tao, a gentleman can adhere to one principle despite changes. By understanding the core of material, a villain can maintain material wealth. This is what Confucius means. As Confucius was very careful and considerate, he presented the material with the Tao hidden. Therefore, the ones sensible to the Tao are accomplished while the ones insensible are confused. By comparison, Lao-tzu assumed himself deep in understanding, so he presented people with the Tao and neglected material, so that the ones sensible to natural laws are accomplished while the ones insensible cannot find access to it. Both Confucius and Lao-tzu are committed to the study of the Tao, the only difference lies in the sequence of their implementation."^[30] Confucius paid more attention to practice, so he educated people in benevolence, righteousness, propriety and music, and left the Tao there to wait for the people with keen intelligence. By comparison, Lao-tzu was detached, and distained to mention material, so he was in pursuit of metaphysics instead of physics. Su Ziyou also said in *Annotations of Lao-tzu*, "The top-level

sage would abandon intelligence” and “Confucius managed the state with benevolence, righteousness, propriety and music, while Lao-tzu abandoned these principles, probably that is the difference between them.” In Yi it says, “Metaphysics refers to things void and spiritual, while physics refers to things specific and material.”

Confucius had deep consideration for later generations, so he presented the material world and hid the Tao, so that the ordinary people could understand how to maintain their material wealth rather than get confused by the Tao, and they could further act as gentlemen. Those who had a better understanding about natural law could get closer to it and grasp the core. Lao-tzu acted in the opposite way, being committed to expounding the Tao. Although it is hard to describe the Tao in words, it is easy to describe the similar ones. The masters distinguished the truth from the false, while the benighted ones adhered to the false ones, and trapped in the big mistakes. There were lots of scholars who got access to the Tao, guided by Lao-tzu, while the ones who pursued Confucius’ studies suffered from no access to the Tao. Both sages educated people in different ways.”^[31] The thinking patterns of Su Ziyu are similar. He made annotation at, “Life is the mastery of nature,” “life is the wonder of nature. Nature can be described in words, while life cannot.” In Yi, it says, “The extreme truth is life.” The sages started with seeking the limit of truth and ended with restoring nature through seeking the limit of nature. The sages handle everything with benevolence, righteousness, propriety and music. This must be the reason for the application of benevolence, righteousness, propriety and music... the gentlemen acted after they understood the reason, this is seeking the limit of truth... sages were not obscured by the material, with clear characters they did not achieve understanding of truth with deep thinking, and handled everything in an

appropriate way, this is seeking the limit of nature... the lives of gentlemen and the nature had the core that they handled everything without thinking about themselves but entrusted their lives, this is restoring nature.”^[32] He mentioned that besides “benevolence, righteousness, propriety and music” there was also “truth,” “nature” and “life.” Truth was the Tao, while nature and life were virtue. Therefore “Tao, virtue, benevolence, righteousness, propriety and music” are the important framework and content of Su Zhe’s thought.

Additionally, Yang Shengan of the Ming Dynasty, maintained the thought of Taoism in *Suo Yu*. After the codes of benevolence and righteousness were established, the Tao and virtue disappeared. After the standard of “propriety and law,” the natural “pure simplicity” scattered.”^[33] Lai Zhide later inherited the tradition with integration of Confucianism and Taoism and consolidation of law, virtue, benevolence, righteousness and propriety from Yanzun of the Shu School, “Advocate Tao and virtue, practice benevolence and righteousness, learn from all schools of philosophers, study the classical six arts.”^[34] After that, Liu Yuan of the late Qing Dynasty, founded the “Liu School,” Duan Zhengyuan of the Republic of China founded the society of Tao and virtue. All the Bashu scholars were devoted to the study of the three regions namely Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, highlighting law, virtue, benevolence, righteousness, propriety and music and combining Confucian spirit and Taoist cultivation.

It can be concluded that the Shu people consciously applied the five virtues of “Tao, virtue, benevolence, righteousness, and propriety” in a complete and systematic way. It was coherent and involving when scholars applied and interpreted these virtues from Wang Bao, Yan Zun and Yang Xiong to Zhao Rui and Zhang Shangying. It is clearly remarkable that the core values of the Shu

School were consistent and developed. It was the combining of Confucian and Taoist of the Shu people that there was the collocation of “law, virtue, benevolence, righteousness, and propriety.” Yan Zun was a master of *Da Yi*, *Lao-tzu* and *Chuang-tzu*, while Yang Xiong was proficient in Confucianism and Taoism, and wrote *Tai Xuan* and *Fa Yan*. Zhao Rui was accomplished in different schools of philosophy, while Zhang Shangying had a good command of the three schools. All of them are representatives of the Shu School’s miscellaneous and integrated content of different schools.

3. The application of “law, virtue, benevolence, righteousness, propriety” by scholars in other regions

In other literature, “Tao, virtue, benevolence, righteousness, propriety” are mentioned, in addition to Bashu literature. But the literature was later than that of Yang Xiong and Yan Zun, or at the same time with them. Some were too extensive lack of original core values. Several examples are discussed here.

In *GuiGuZi · NeiJian*, it says, “To do things in the world, a sage discussed everything with his first hindsight, which was derived from Tao, virtue, benevolence, righteousness, propriety, music, idea and strategy. First, he referred to *Book of Songs* and *Book of History*, made a comprehensive analysis of advantages and disadvantages, and finally decided to take the position or to resign. To cooperate with others, he must use his power internally. To quit the position, he must use his power externally. It is necessary to obtain clear theory and method to deal with big issues.”^[35] The concepts of Taoism (law and virtue), Confucianism (benevolence, righteousness, propriety and music) and political strategists (strategy) stand side by side. Despite the fact that Su Qin and Zhang Yi studied under *GuiGuZi* of

the Chu State, the book *GuiGuZi* did not originate from the early Qin Dynasty. This book was not available in *Records of Han*, the quote of *GuiGuZi* in *Shuo Yuan* is not available in this book today, so in *Complete Library of Four Branches of Literature*, it adopts the saying in *Bi Cong*, written by Hu Yinglin, a scholar of the Ming Dynasty, and believes that “there were thirty-one articles of *Su Qin* in *Records of Sui*, and ten articles of *Zhang Yi*. The essence of these two books namely *Su Qin* and *Zhang Yi* were assembled here in the East Han Dynasty, and they were included in *GuiGuZi* as well.” Guan Chen, according to annotation of HuangfuMi about *Sui Zhi*, believed that, “*GuiGuZi* must be a book written after the Dynasties of Wei and Jin.”^[36] *GuiGuZi* may have been completed during the East Han Dynasty or after the Dynasties of Wei and Jin, in any event, it should be later than *Dao De ZhiGui*.

In the preface of *the History of the Northern Dynasties*, it says, “(Li) had seven sons, born by Princess Fengting, daughter of Wang Xie of Pengcheng, who were named Tao, virtue, benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness.”^[37] Here, the integration of the concepts of Confucianism and Taoism was only applied for naming, without any reference to a formal value system.

Influenced by the Bashu culture, Li Quan, a scholar of Longxi, during the Tang Dynasty, says in *Tai Bai Yin Jing*, “Scholars usually applied Tao, virtue, benevolence, righteousness, propriety, music, loyalty, trustworthiness, poetry, book, classic, biography, zi, and history.”^[38] He seemed to arrange “Tao, virtue, benevolence, righteousness, propriety” of the Shu School together with “music, loyalty, trustworthiness” and literature forms “poetry, book, classic, biography, zi, and history” in one group, to construct more extensive core values and a broader cultural system. But this confusing collocation, with concept, system and literature mixed together,

cannot be regarded as core values.

Zhang Shuo, in charge of the compilation of *San Jiao Zhu Ying*, in the reign of Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang Dynasty, had integrated the core values of Confucianism and Taoism. In the *Song of Grand Ceremony of Worship of Heaven in the Tang Dynasty*, it says, “There are three aspects of significance for the worship, while there were seven strategies for the emperor, namely Tao, virtue, benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, trustworthiness in the literature. Those who conform to are named holy philosophers, while those who go against are named the perverse.”^[39] Zhang Shuo claimed that it was quoted from literature. Actually, it was quoted from other scholar’s articles. Probably he was under influence of literature similar to *Dao De Zhi Gui*, *Tai Xuan*, *Fa Yan* as well as *GuiGuZi*.

In *On Yuan Qi*, the fifth and sixth chapter of *Yun Ji Qi Qian*, Zhang Junfang says, “The five concepts of Tao, virtue, benevolence, righteousness and propriety are inseparable, those separable do not belong to these five concepts. The Tao is trustworthiness, in the center, named Tao of the Yellow Emperor. Virtue is wisdom, in the north, named virtue of the Black Emperor. Benevolence is human, in the east, named benevolence of the Blue Emperor. Righteousness is time, in the west, named righteousness of the White Emperor. Propriety is legal matters, in the south, named propriety of the Red Emperor. These five concepts were named the great Tao by the Three Emperors, while they were named the constant Tao by the Five Sovereigns. They have the same meaning despite being given different names.”^[40] In *Chronicles of Huayang · Chronicles of Shu*, it says, “There was no posthumous title for the emperors at the very beginning, but their shrines were named Blue, Red, Black, Yellow and White Emperors.”^[41] Therefore, it is the historical tradition of the Shu people to follow the “Five Sovereigns” system. Taoism was founded in Bashu,



Three Emperors and Five Sovereigns

absorbing many concepts of the Bashu culture in its doctrine, like the Three Emperors “Emperor of the Heaven, Emperor of the Earth and Emperor of the Human.” The spirit and belief system of Taoism was established, namely First Three Emperors(Fuxi, Nuwa, and Suiren), Second Three Emperors(Fusui, Nuwa and Zhurong), and Third Three Emperors(Fuxi, Nuwa and Shennong). *Yun Ji Qi Qian* borrowed the concepts of the Bashu Culture like “Five Sovereigns” and “Five Elements” and understood them thoroughly.

Su Shu written by Zhang Shangying interprets “Tao, virtue, benevolence, righteousness, propriety” in a systematic way. Although it says that Zhang Liang studied under the old man on the bridge, namely Huang Shi Gong, in the Western Han Dynasty, this book is not the works of the Western Han Dynasty. In *Jun Zhai Du Shu Zhi* written by Yao Gongwu, it says, “*Su Shu* has no system with

numerous and jumbled content, so it is consisted of theories of other classic books.”^[42] Huang Zhen of the Southern Song Dynasty, argues more systematically in volume V and VI of *Huang Shi Ri Chao*, “*Su Shu* consisted of six chapters, namely *Origin*, *Right Law*, *Ambition of Talent*, *Virtue-rooted and Law-aimed*, and *Righteousness-followed Propriety*. It adheres to the theory that the five concepts of law, virtue, benevolence, righteousness and propriety should be regarded as a whole, but the detailed description and argumentation are missing with insufficient truth. It is not the book that Huang Shi Gong gave Zhang Zifang. Zhang Shangying talked nonsense and quoted from Lao-tzu, “Monarch of past dynasties promoted virtue after Tao was lost, promoted benevolence after virtue was lost, promoted righteousness after benevolence was lost, and promoted propriety after benevolence was lost,” which is exactly contrary to the theory of the five concepts. Even in the epilogue, he said, “During the chaos in the Jin Dynasty, some people robbed the tomb of Zhang Zifang and found the book *Su Shu* in a jade pillow,” how ridiculous it is! It is lucky that such nonsense words are from Zhang Shangying who people distained and gave little attention.”^[43] It says in *Complete Library of Four Branches of Literature* of the Qing Dynasty, “There has been nobody who believes in what Zhang Shangying said. It says in *Ting Yu Ji Tan* written by Du Mu of the Ming Dynasty, “From the Jin Dynasty to the Song Dynasty, there has not been any other scholar who had similar record as Zhang Shangying,” so it should be fake. In *Bi Cong* of Hu Yinglin, it says, “The biggest problem of this book lies in scattered spirit and nonsense,” it is just a book of the plainest truth of Taoist and Confucian classics. Zhang Shangying liked to study the principles of Chan Buddhism, so this book included his sayings and behaviors. As for the annotations, they have similar sayings as the main content. It can

be concluded that the annotations were prepared by Zhang Shangying himself.”^[44] Zhang Shangying was from Xinjin of Shu.

In *Da Zang Bing Di San Shu*, Volume VI of *He Dong Ji* written by Liu Kai, it says, “The Tao of sages does not lie in the additions and deletions of *Book of Songs*, *Shang Shu*, *Yi Li*, *Book of Music*, *Book of Changes*, and *Spring and Autumn Annals*. People need to think deeply what the classics deliver, including Tao, virtue, benevolence, righteousness, propriety, music, penalty and politics. When the time is appropriate, people practice and advocate them and when time is inappropriate, people are responsible for maintaining the classics of the sages to prevent the classics from becoming lost. Why should people purposely make annotations?”^[45] Here “law and virtue” (Taoism), “benevolence, righteousness, propriety and music” (Confucianism) and “penalty and politics” (Legalists) are consolidated out of the consideration of ethical philosophy rather than establishing a system of core values.

In Volume VII of *Ming FaGaiKe Shu*, it says, “Legal system is the last measure for state management, created in the turbulent times. Emperors adopt Tao and virtue, sovereigns apply benevolence and righteousness, monarchs adopt propriety and music, overlords adopted loyalty and trustworthiness. The above measures are inapplicable to the declining state, so a legal system is applied to coping with the problems, if it is too strict, people will betray and become rebels, if it is too loose, people will become traitors, both will lead to decline again.”^[46] Here the concepts and measures of “law and virtue” (Taoism), “benevolence, righteousness, propriety and music” (Confucianism) and “loyalty and trustworthiness” (Legalist) as well as “exiles” (legal system to cope with decline) are placed in the same category, which is out of the consideration of chaos governance rather than establishing a system of core values.

In *Yi Dui*, Volume 14 of *Xiao Chu Ji*, written by Wang Yucheng, it says, “The ancient people dwelled in the caves and ate raw animal flesh and drank the blood, there is neither system for monarch and his officials, father and son, husband and wife, young and old, nor the concepts of law, virtue, benevolence, righteousness, propriety, music, penalty, and politics, and people were born and passed away unconsciously. At that time, all the people in the world lived a life in the same way. Fuxi, Shennong, the Yellow Emperor understood the Tao and started to teach people to cultivate crops, cook food, make clothing and tools, and domesticate cattle and horses in the way of the Tao of the emperor. Shaohao, Zhuanxu, Gaoxin and Tangyu established and promoted the system of monarch and official, father and son, husband and wife, and young and old in the natural law of the sovereign. In the Dynasties of Xia, Shang and Zhou, the rulers advocated Tao, virtue, benevolence, righteousness, propriety, music, penalty, and politics in the natural law of monarch. After three generations, the vassal states promoted the natural law of overlord like Duke Huan of Qing Kingdom, Duke Wen of Jin Kingdom.”^[47] Here it is an objective narration of history, the concepts of “the Tao of emperor, sovereign, monarch and overlord” developed and evolved with the changes of the times. “The Tao of emperor” is defined as “Tao, virtue, benevolence, righteousness, propriety, music, penalty, and politics,” which is out of consideration of state governance, a measure rather than the core values.

In *Shuo Fei Yi* written by Zeng Zigu, it says, “People failed to accord with the law of nature, so the sages appeared and governed the world in the principles of Tao, virtue, benevolence, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom. People started to follow these principles, and they lived a comfortable life and maintained coordinated and harmonious relations with each other. In western China, there

was a remote place where the evil Buddhists took advantage of the weak Han Dynasty and promoted false reasoning and scandals.”^[48] In the debate of Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism, Zeng’s School stressed the “benevolence, righteousness, propriety and wisdom” of Confucianism, and “law and virtue” of Taoism, but demoted Buddhism as “false reasoning” and “scandals.”

In Volume 25 of *Er Cheng Yi Shu*, it says, “Lao-tzu said, ‘Monarch of past dynasties promoted virtue after Tao was lost, promoted benevolence after virtue was lost, promoted righteousness after benevolence was lost, and promoted propriety after benevolence was lost,’ then Tao, virtue, benevolence, righteousness, and propriety became separate from each other.”^[49] To criticize the theory of Lao-tzu, Cheng Yi integrated the five concepts for the purpose to include them in “truth,” which was his core concept. This proposal also appears in *Yao Shi Ke Yu*, “The good deed of Yao and Shun is contrary to the evil deed of Jie and Tuo. Lao-tzu said, ‘Monarch of past dynasties promoted virtue after Tao was lost, promoted benevolence after virtue was lost, promoted righteousness after benevolence was lost, and promoted propriety after benevolence was lost,’ then Tao, virtue, benevolence, righteousness, and propriety became separate from each other.’ So, Tao, virtue, benevolence, righteousness, and propriety became five parts separately.”^[50]

In *MengZi Jing Yi* written by Zhu Xi, it says, “Mencius said, ‘A person had four beginnings just like he has four limbs.’ He was born with four limbs, and he would not be regarded as a normal man without any limb. There is no sequence of these four limbs. Lao-tzu said, ‘Monarch of past dynasties promoted virtue after Tao was lost, promoted benevolence after virtue was lost, promoted righteousness after benevolence was lost, and promoted propriety after benevolence was lost,’ then

Tao, virtue, benevolence, righteousness, and propriety became separate from each other, and propriety usually was the first in the chaos due to lack of loyalty and trustworthiness.’ It can be seen from such a statement that he did not understand the real meaning of Tao, virtue, benevolence, righteousness, and propriety. He said that propriety usually was the first in the chaos due to lack of loyalty and trustworthiness, suggesting later generations that propriety was not significant. Emperors in the ancient times developed propriety from daily behaviors of people. How can it be regarded as one concept of lightest significance?”^[51] The aim of this article is to refute the theory of Lao-tzu, rather than establishing a system of core values.

In Volume 20 of *Si Bian Lu Ji Yao* written by Lu Shiyi of the Qing Dynasty, it says, “Talent selection was different from talent cultivation, as the former focused on those who were proficient in poetry, fu, ci, and qu, while the latter focused on law, virtue, benevolence, righteousness, propriety, music, poetry, and classic books. Therefore, the emperors of the ancient times only attached importance to talent cultivation instead of talent selection.”^[52] Here the concepts for the purpose of teaching were listed simply as “Tao, virtue, benevolence, righteousness, propriety, music” and “poetry, and classic books,” without more in-depth interpretation of meaning.

Scholars outside Bashu did not establish systematic interpretations for “Tao, virtue, benevolence, righteousness, propriety,” which is not a purposeful construction of core values, despite that they mention these five concepts in one group. From literature, it is evident that Bashu scholars included these five concepts in one group and provided overall and systematic interpretations for the concepts, thus constructing a value system, which was adhered to throughout their whole lives.

4. Conclusion

In the structure of the core values of the Shu School, “Tao” and “virtue” take the leading role, and “benevolence,” “righteousness” and “propriety” act as principles for action. In this academic system, there are values and significance from the following perspective.

First, the harmony and unity of Taoism and Confucianism are realized. Lao-tzu promoted Tao and virtue, but denounced benevolence and righteousness. Confucius attached importance to benevolence, righteousness, propriety and music. Each has emphasis and bias, while the Shu School combines both, which is the reflection of coexistence of different religions and a complementary cultural atmosphere of different schools of philosophers.

Second, the unity of metaphysics and physics is realized. In *Yi*, it says, “Metaphysics refers to things void and spiritual, while physics refers to things specific and material.” Tao develops in a void while material things are tangible. Benevolence, righteousness, propriety and music are daily practice. The natural and intangible state is the ultimate target for Taoists. Lao-tzu proposed, “Human behaviors must follow the law of earth, the earth must follow the law of the universe, the universe must follow the law of Tao, and Tao runs with nature.” Confucius seldom mentioned life and the natural Tao, Mohists disagreed with born destiny, instead, they advocated ghosts and gods. The Shu School combines metaphysics and physics, to correct the bias problems of the above schools, to be better implemented and promoted.

Third, it is the combination of theory and practice, of principles and actions. Tao and virtue attach importance to theory, while benevolence, righteousness and propriety pay more attention to practice. Law and virtue will be negated without the support of benevolence, righteousness, propriety

and music, and without Tao and virtue, benevolence, righteousness, propriety and music will become vulgar. The Shu School combines both, with benevolence, righteousness, propriety and music developing with the philosophical basis of Tao and virtue, and the theory of Tao and virtue of practical values.

The structure of “Tao, virtue, benevolence,

righteousness and propriety” of the Shu School is the best template of “the unity of knowledge and action.” It is the effective way for ultimate care concern for Confucianism’s lack of noumenon and Taoism’s lack of daily practice, to seriously explore this value system, and is of great theoretical significance and realistic value for changing the flashy style of study and the impetuous mode of society.

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