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I. The Theme of Charity

There are many different charitable groups in Taiwan. Most of them are founded by various religious organizations. The members of the Buddhist Compassionate Relief Foundation (Tzu Chi Foundation¹) seek to express in their lives the compassion of the bodhisattva Guan Yin. Based in Taiwan but found elsewhere,² the Dharma Drum Mountain³ organization emphasizes the benefits of meditation as practiced in Chan Buddhism along with compassionate actions.

There are also many non-Buddhist charitable organizations in Taiwan. For example, members of the Xing Tian Temple⁴ in Taipei do their charitable work in five areas of focus: religion, culture, education, medical treatment, and general relief. One international Christian charity, World Vision, is well known in Taiwan. Every year World Vision invites volunteers to fast for thirty hours in order to experience what it is like to be starving. The volunteers then may donate money to help refugees in areas of famine. Significant, also, are World Vision's long-term projects helping the native Taiwanese attend school

¹ Chinese transliteration systems differ. In this paper I shall use Hanyu Pinyin, except in instances where a name has already entered the English language in a different form, such as Confucius and Mencius. Well known in Taiwan as the Tzu Chi Foundation (慈濟功德會), in Hanyu Pinyin it would be the Ci Ji Foundation.

² In New York City.

³ 法鼓山.

⁴ 行天宮. This temple is dedicated to Guan Gong (關公), god of war and martial arts and patron of business activities.

to get an education.

Reviewing these and other similar charitable groups, one finds it strange that Confucianism, which plays a major role in official Taiwanese thought, is missing. Where are the Confucian charitable organizations⁵?

We have to clarify an issue in the very beginning of this thesis. That's about the religiosity of Confucianism. There is no doubt that we view Christianity as a religion, but how about Confucianism? Is Confucianism a religion? In response to this question, I suggest Tu Wei Ming's interpretation of Confucianism as a thought system with an "ethicoreligious vision on the inseparability of the Human Way and the Way of Heaven."⁶ Referring to The Doctrine of the Mean, Tu Wei Ming notes, "what Heaven confers is called human nature. Life in accordance with this nature is called the path of duty. Regulation of this path is called instruction."⁷ By declaring that human nature comes from Heaven, The Doctrine of the Mean "asserts that human nature is imparted from heaven, thus affirming the ancient Chinese

⁵ Confucianism becomes a quite complicated term through thousands years' development. Basically, we can divide it into two main strands: intellectual Confucianism (i.e. great tradition), and folk Confucianism (i.e. little tradition). The former is familiar to us for we study it on campus; Latter gradually developed into various customs and folk religions. In this thesis, when we discuss the Confucian example Tan Si Tong, we view him as an example belongs to the strand of intellectual Confucianism. In other words, in this thesis, we make the comparison between the examples of Christianity and intellectual Confucianism.

⁶ Tu Wei Ming, "Forward" to Centrality and Commonality: An Essay on Chung-yung (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1976), xii.

⁷ The Doctrine of the Mean 1 : 天命之謂性，率性之謂道，修道之謂教。

belief in a purposive and caring Heaven as the ultimate arbiter of human affairs.”⁸ Further, the purpose of “instruction” is to regulate human life along the path that was endowed by Heaven. This means that the core of “the path” is neither Heaven nor human but an expression of the “mutuality of Heaven and man”⁹.

Tu also discusses another passage from *The Doctrine of the Mean*: “As long as there are no stirrings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, or joy, the mind may be said to be in a state of equilibrium... This equilibrium is the great root from which grow all human actions in the world,”¹⁰ In his discussion, Tu emphasizes two points concerning this state of equilibrium: first, it refers to the Confucian practice of self-cultivation; second, since the equilibrium is the great root of the world, when the one experiences this original tranquility, one actually experiences ultimate reality in the ontological sense.

In Tu’s interpretation, for the Confucian, the religious person follows a spiritual discipline with the goal of becoming truly human (as distinct from the other animals). One should respond to the “transcendent dimension in our lives” by serving the community. Therefore, Confucian ethics is founded on the relationship of Heaven and the human being, and people shouldn’t talk about Confucian ethics and human nature without reference to this original Heaven.¹¹

⁸ Tu Wei Ming, *Centrality and Commonality: An Essay on Chung-yung*, 7.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁰ *The Doctrine of the Mean* 1 : 喜怒哀樂之未發，謂之中...中也者，天下之大本也。

¹¹ To Tu Wei Ming, *Centrality and Commonality: An Essay on Confucian Religiousness* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1989), page in English version?

Tu explains that the reason for his emphasis on the religiosity of Confucianism is the need to clarify the fact that even though the Confucian scholar might appear to pay more attention to the problems of this world, his life indeed possesses the dimension of Heaven-orientation.¹² Thus, in my comparative study of charity in Christianity and Confucianism, I wish to emphasize that when the Confucian seeks to serve his people and community, he thinks not only about the moral dimension of his actions but guided by Heaven-orientation, he seeks also to experience ultimate reality.

Research Motives. In Taiwan's society there is a general consensus that "All religions encourage people to do good works." Loving people is considered a primary value, no matter what the religion. Christians, for example, seek to follow the commandment of Jesus of Nazareth: "Love your neighbor as yourself."¹³ One response to this commandment is the establishment of charitable organizations to help the poor, the orphaned, the sick, and the imprisoned. Further, in Taiwan, every schoolchild learns the ideals of Confucius (孔子, 551–479 BCE): "As regards the old, give them rest. As regards your friends, show them sincerity. As regards the young, treat them tenderly."¹⁴ A

When Tu talks about "the behavior of community," he means no one live in isolation from the community. See Chapter 3.

¹² Tu Wei Ming, Centrality and Commonality: An Essay on Confucian Religiousness, page in English?

¹³ Matthew 22: 39.

¹⁴ The Analects of Confucius 5.26: 老者安之，朋友信之，少者懷之.

similar teaching is found in the writings of Mencius (孟子, c. 371–c. 289 BCE): “Treat your parents with affection and the people with benevolence. Treat the people with benevolence and all creatures with kindness.”¹⁵ Where, then, are the Confucian charitable organizations that help the poor, the orphaned, and those suffering illness or the effects of natural disasters?

In order to find answers to this question, my thesis will limit its focus to charity as it is found in Confucianism and one other tradition, Christianity. Both Christianity and Confucianism declare that loving people is an important virtue, but whereas Christians have charitable organizations, Confucians don't. What is the cause of this difference?

If we glance only at the surface of charitable actions in both Christian and Confucian communities in Taiwan, we might come to the conclusion that whereas Christians follow the teachings of Jesus, Confucians are not following Confucius. Is this a true conclusion? Or is it rather that something is missing from our view? Perhaps we need to go deeper.

In my thesis, I shall seek to bring to light the missing part of the picture. Both Christians and Confucians do, indeed, practice charity to benefit others, but their respective methods are different and so are the outward effects. Confucians strive to take part in government in order to serve as officials who work to meet the needs of the common people and guide the rulers in caring for the people. Christians are

¹⁵ The Works of Mencius 7.1.45: 親親而仁民，仁民而愛物.

more likely to work apart from government in expressing their charity directly to others. Members of both groups believe that they are following the teachings of their traditions. But, in short, they are guided by very different worldviews.

Charity in Christianity and Confucianism. Since my thesis focuses on the meaning of the term charity, it is essential to understand the origin of the term and what it means in different religious traditions, specifically Christianity and Confucianism. Then we can begin to examine the different ways that the religious idea of charity leads to charitable actions.

There are four definitions of the English word charity in Webster's dictionary: (1) a foundation created to promote the public good; (2) a kindly and lenient attitude toward people; (3) an activity or gift that benefits the public at large; and (4) an institution set up to provide help to the needy. Summarizing these definitions, we can say that charity refers to actions of kindness towards others (especially the needy). This kindness can be expressed by individual persons or by means of a group through its institutions.

How do Confucians and Christians express charity? Let us begin by looking at Confucius and Jesus Christ, who serve as models for their respective traditions.

As mentioned above, Confucius' ideal consisted in giving the aged rest, showing sincerity to friends, and cherishing the young. How

did Confucius himself act to realize his dream? Confucius sought to influence those in power: he spent four years serving as an official in his own country, and then for thirteen years he traveled to other countries trying to convince the rulers to accept his ideas about what makes “a good ruler.”¹⁶ For Confucius and also for his followers, to be an official in government or an adviser to the ruler is the most direct and useful way to do charity. That is why Zi Xia (子夏), a student of Confucius, said, “The student, having completed his learning, should apply himself to be an official.”¹⁷

Following the teachings and actions of Jesus, Christians have a different way of expressing charity. For example, when Jesus was responding to the questions set to him by members of a crowd of Pharisees, Sadducees, and others, a lawyer who had been listening asked him which of God’s laws was most important. Jesus answered that after loving God one should “love your neighbor as yourself.”¹⁸ Like Confucius, Jesus serves as a model for his followers. The gospels are filled with stories where Jesus demonstrates how one can go about “loving one’s neighbor.” He offers aid directly to those in need: feeding the hungry multitude; healing the sick, the lame, and the blind; showing compassion to the social outcast; and so on.

In addition to the examples of behavior offered by Confucius

¹⁶ Szuma Chien, “Confucius,” in Records of the Historian (Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 1974), 1-27.

¹⁷ The Analects of Confucius 19.13: 學而優則仕.

¹⁸ Mark 12: 28-31.

and Christ, each tradition interprets the religious meaning of charity in its own way. The word that is closest to charity in Chinese is ren (仁), a character that is made up of two parts: the radical is the character for “human” and the second part is “two.” So ren suggests feelings and activities that involve the relationship between two people. Sometimes, it is translated as “human-heartedness.” When Fan Chi (樊遲), another student of Confucius, asked his teacher, “What is ren?” Confucius answered, “Love all people.”¹⁹

Actually, ren lies at the core of all of Confucius’ teaching about virtue and the principles of life.²⁰ Loving others is not just a form of good behavior; it is a primary virtue in Confucianism. This is underscored by another disciple, Zeng Zi (曾子), “The doctrine of our master is sincerity and mercy—this and nothing more.”²¹ Zhu Xi (朱熹, 1130–1200), the most important scholar of Confucianism in the Song Dynasty, systematized Confucian ideas. In his view, this sincerity (忠) means “being true to the principles of our nature,” while mercy (恕) is “the benevolent exercise of [the principles of our nature] in respect to

¹⁹The Analects of Confucius 12.22: 樊遲問仁。子曰：「愛人」。

²⁰ Yao Xin Zhong 姚新中, Rujiao yu jidujiao 儒教與基督教 (Confucianism and Christianity; Beijing: Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, 2002), 88.

²¹ The Analects of Confucius 4.15: 子曰：「參乎！吾道一以貫之。」曾子曰：「唯。」

子出，門人問曰：「何謂也？」曾子曰：「夫子之道，忠恕而已矣」。

others.”²² In his interpretation, Zhu Xi seeks to be faithful to Confucius’ understanding of ren.

In summary, Confucius assigns ren the role as leitmotif in all his thought, and he defines the practice of ren as both personal integrity and benevolence to others. Thus, Confucius establishes the framework of ren for his followers.

Confucius talks often about how to realize and express ren, but he seldom discusses its nature. The metaphysics of ren is clarified by Zhu Xi, who sums up the idea of ren as it appears in the Confucian canon.²³ He points to three dimensions of meaning: (1) ren is the quality that gives a person his or her true humanity and it derives from a universal source; (2) ren is a virtue, the invisible motivation for benevolence; (3) and ren is love, practical love.²⁴

When Zhu Xi established a systematic understanding of ren for Confucians, he proposed that the human virtue has its origins in the universe as a whole, which is the origin of all beings. People should exercise ren just as the universe generates and cares for all beings. By first studying and then realizing ren, the human being participates in

²² Zhu Xi 朱熹, ed., Sishu zhang ju ji zhu 四書章句集注 (Explanation of the Four books; Taipei: Daan Publisher, 1987), 72.

²³ Or the Four Books (四書), which he collected and edited: The Analects of Confucius (論語), The Works of Mencius (孟子), The Great Learning (大學), and The Doctrine of the Mean (中庸).

²⁴ Yao Xin Zhong, Confucianism and Christianity, 94.

the ultimate reality that underlies all creation. In other words, ren is the root of all love, and love is the appearance of ren.²⁵ For Zhu Xi, ren has an objective reality quite apart from human beings.

Wang Yang Ming (王陽明; 1472–1529)²⁶ disagreed with this last idea; although he did agree with Zhu Xi that ren derives from the universe. Not only does ren come from the universe, but also the human being comes from the universe. Therefore, the human heart naturally feels ren, without study.

In his way of thinking, ren is a reality that creates both the universe and the human being. So, it is natural that when people express ren, they live in harmony with all that exists. In his view, others are a part of me and I am a part of them, so I will love others as a matter of course.

²⁵ Zhu Xi's disciple Chen Chun (陳淳) further developed his master's idea, "Ren is the root of love. Sympathy causes it to sprout and love makes the bud thrive and blossom" (故仁乃是愛之根，而惻隱則生之萌芽，而愛則又萌芽之長茂已成者也). See Yao Xin Zhong, Confucianism and Christianity, 130 (n. 23).

²⁶ After hundreds of years of decline, Confucianism experienced a revival during the Song and Ming dynasties, especially in the development of metaphysical theory. The main disputation concerned the existence of reason (理). One school, represented by Zhu Xi, insisted that reason has a reality that exists independently in the universe outside the human being. The duty of individual persons is to undergo strenuous self-training in order to acquire reason. The other school, represented by Wang Yang Ming, asserted that reason exists within the human mind, and all that people have to do is to purify the mind, returning it to its original state, in order to access reason. Both the ideas of Zhu Xi and those of Wang Yang Ming have influenced later Confucians, even until today.

Beginning with Confucius and interpreted further by Zhu Xi and Wang Yang Ming, the concept of ren became fully established in Confucian tradition. Ren is the love people have for others. It is part of human nature and is shared with the universe as a whole. When people obey their own nature and exercise it in kindness to others, then they are able to experience union with the universe. This is the highest goal the Confucians desire.

Likewise, ideas about charity have played an important role in Christianity after Jesus, as for example in the teachings of the medieval scholar Thomas Aquinas (1224–1274). Aquinas sought to synthesize Christian theology and Aristotelian philosophy, and in doing so, he lay the foundations for much of modern Christian thought. In his Summa Theologiae, Thomas Aquinas says, “No true virtue is possible without charity.”²⁷ Like Confucius, Aquinas saw charity as the core of all virtues. And he, too, interpreted charity in a deeper way. When Aquinas mentions the word charity, he does not simply mean helping others in need. His understanding of charity is based on the Christian understanding of the Greek word agape.

This term appears already in the earliest Christian writings, among them the letters of Paul of Tarsus. For example, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, he writes, “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have no charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.”²⁸ The Greek word found in the original

²⁷ Quoted in Timothy Jackson’s Love Disconsolled (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 24.

²⁸ I Corinthians 13: 1.

letter and translated here as charity is agape. According to Timothy Jackson, “Agape is the New Testament Greek word for the steadfast love God has for human beings, as well as the love humans are to have for one another.”²⁹ God’s divine love is agape, and it is this same divine power that God bestows on human beings so that they can love one another. Thus, agape has two implications: (1) human beings have to accept God’s agape so that they then receive the ability to love one another; (2) only when a human being receives and then expresses God’s agape can love for the beloved (often expressed as eros, or erotic desire) and love for the friend (philia, or friendship) find their proper forms.

Given this understanding of agape, it is clear why Paul emphasizes charity as the foundation of all the human affections. For the Christian, no matter what the feeling is—eros or philia—it must be influenced by charity in order to keep it in the right way.

Since God empowers us for this purpose, Jesus asks Christians to practice charity to all the people around them. Therefore, it becomes God’s commandment to show agape to one another. Jesus tells his disciples, “I give you a new commandment: love one another; as I have loved you, so you are to love one another.”³⁰

Furthermore, since the human ability to love comes from God’s love, people can best learn from God how to love others. Therefore, God has provided humankind an excellent example in His son, Jesus Christ. Jesus clearly expresses this guidance: he shows his love by

²⁹ Jackson, Love Disconsolated, 11.

³⁰ John 13: 34.

accepting the sinner, by healing the sick, and by dying for all humankind. According to Christian ideas of atonement, Jesus' death is a sin offering. In ancient Jewish tradition, when someone disobeyed God, one could seek reconciliation through giving God a sacrifice. This was called a sin offering. Dying for the sake of others is the greatest act of love.

Of course, Jesus gave his disciples some oral teachings, too. For example, to illustrate that they were to love the stranger as well, he told them the story about the Good Samaritan.³¹ In this story, it is the foreigner who takes the time to help the man who had been beaten by robbers and left for dead, while his own countrymen—a priest and an official of the Temple—actually go out of their way to ignore him lying bleeding in the road.

In his own life and through his parables, Jesus taught his disciples the three traits of agape: (1) unconditional commitment to work for the good of others; (2) equal regard for the well being of others; and (3) passionate self-sacrifice for the sake of others.³² Charity, in Christian thought, is more than helping those in need. It means allowing God to love others through our agency. It affects every aspect of the Christian's life.

Clearly charity is well defined and plays an important role in the worldviews of both Christianity and Confucianism. In order to see more clearly the influence of these traditions on the lives of modern people, I propose to examine and compare the role of charity in the

³¹ Luke 10: 29-37.

³² Jackson, Love Disconsoled, 15.

lives of two modern people: Christian Dorothy Day (1897–1980) and the Confucian Tan Si Tong (譚嗣同, 1865–1898).

Two Examples of Charity. In 1933 Dorothy Day created the Catholic Worker Movement in order to help those who suffered homelessness and terrible poverty in lower Manhattan, New York City. In China, Tan Si Tong dedicated his energies to influencing people in power to act with mercy towards all the people. In reality, Tan tried different ways to improve the lives of his countrymen. Most important, perhaps, was the period of 1895 to 1898, when at the invitation of Governor Chen Bao Zhen (陳寶箴), Tan was in charge of the academic and social education system of Hunan Province. Tan believed that education was the key to improving the life of the people as a whole.

Both Dorothy Day and Tan Si Tong are excellent examples of persons who have put ideas about charity into action. In my thesis, I seek to explain what it is that motivates each of them individually in their practice of charity, as well as in what ways they were influenced by their respective worldviews.

As children of a newspaperman,³³ Dorothy Day and her three siblings all became journalists eventually. In 1916, Dorothy Day decided to quit taking classes at the university in order to take a job and support herself financially. After much rejection, Day finally

³³ Dorothy Day's father, John Day, was a newspaperman whose specialty was the racetrack. He wrote a column for various newspapers most of his life. See Jim Forest, Love Is the Measure: A Biography of Dorothy Day (New York: Paulist Press, 1986), 4.

found a job as a reporter on a socialist daily entitled The Call in New York City. That day Dorothy Day was eighteen. From then on, she never stopped writing throughout her life.

Day became most famous for her column in the newspaper The Catholic Worker. Some of these essays have been collected and published as books: for example, House of Hospitality, On Pilgrimage, and On Pilgrimage: The Sixties.³⁴ In her column, Day introduced her impressive devotion and appealed to her readers to share her passion for charity. In addition, Day shared her opinions about social justice and personal and social duties to care for the poor, along with her anti-war and non-violent beliefs. In reference to World War II she notes: “We must all admit our guilt, our participation in the social order which has resulted in this monstrous crime of war.”³⁵ More specifically on the topic of charity, she writes: “What we would like to do is change the world—make it a little simpler for people to feed, clothe, and shelter themselves as God intended them to do. And to a certain extent, by fighting for better conditions, by crying out unceasingly for the rights of the workers, of the poor, of the destitute—the rights of the worthy and the unworthy poor—we can to a certain extent change the world.”³⁶

Dorothy Day wrote also several books. The most popular one is

³⁴ Dorothy Day, House of Hospitality (Lanham, Maryland: Sheed and Ward, 1939); On Pilgrimage (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1948); and On Pilgrimage: The Sixties (New York: Curtis Books, 1972).

³⁵ The Catholic Worker (February 1942), n.p.

³⁶ The Catholic Worker (June 1946), n.p.

her autobiography The Long Loneliness.³⁷ On the first page of this book, Day cites the words of an English nun, Mary Ward, “I think, dear child, the trouble and the long loneliness you hear me speak of is not far from me, which whensoever it is, happy success will follow...The pain is great, but very enduring, because He who lays on the burden also carries it.” By this, we catch a glimpse of the content of her book and life. Above all, Day shares her experience of searching for inner (spiritual) and outer (social) peace.

A second book by Day is Loaves and Fishes.³⁸ The title refers to the great act of charity when Jesus took seven loaves of bread and a few small fishes and turned them into enough food for a crowd of four thousand people who were listening to his teachings.³⁹ In this volume, Day details the charitable works of the Catholic Worker Movement.

Tan Si Tong is best understood as a Confucian, and there is an old teaching in Confucianism: One should achieve three goals: be a model of virtue for others; be of service to one’s country; and leave behind writings for later generations.⁴⁰ In addition, every Chinese wishing to serve his country as a government official was required to pass a national examination, and the exam consisted of writing a composition on a topic determined by the chief examiner. Because of

³⁷ Dorothy Day, The Long Loneliness (New York: Harper & Row, 1952).

³⁸ Dorothy Day, Loaves and Fishes (Maryknoll, N. Y.: Orbis, 1997).

³⁹ Mark 8: 1-10a. See also the parallel text in Matthew 15: 32-39.

⁴⁰ 立德，立功，立言。A proverb found in Zuo’s commentary to the Spring and Autumn

Annals, the section dealing with the 24th year of Duke Xiang (左傳襄公二十四年).

these two factors, it is no surprise that Chinese Confucians tend to be good writers and to express their ideas and feelings in writing.

In this way, Tan Si Tong was a typical Confucian. In fact, most of his writings are like mirrors, each one reflecting his concerns and opinions at a different period. Thus, his writing covers various subjects, and it hard to generalize about any single theme in his essays.

Still, one feeling is often expressed in Tan's writings, and that is sympathy for others: For example, in one short piece Tan relates a story drawn from his own life. He and his friends were traveling on a boat, when the boat encountered a gale and almost capsized. The pilot of the boat was a teenager. He tried to pull the boat back to safe harbor, but the wind was so fierce that he had difficulty fighting it. The boy did his best to hang on to the hawser, a large heavy cable that is used when mooring or towing a ship. Eventually, however, the muscles of both his hands were torn, exposing the bone. Tan sought to comfort the lad, saying, "Dear boy, don't cry when you see the

bones of your hands, because that means you are still not dead in the river.” Here, we can see how heartbreaking Tan’s consolation was.⁴¹

For this study of charity, Tan’s single most important writing is The Theory of Ren,⁴² composed in 1897, one year before he was executed by the Chinese government for treason. This book presents the basis of his ideas about how to reform China and Chinese society. This he elaborates in terms of philosophy, politics, economics, history, and ethics.

Tan felt strong sympathy for the disadvantaged minorities in his society. Beyond this, he even desired to save the whole world: “Since I, Tan Si Tong, have discovered the key to solving all problems to eliminate suffering, I would like to help not only my countrymen but also the those living in the West, and, indeed, every living being.”⁴³ Tan’s “key” to solving all problems comes actually from the Buddhist

⁴¹ 友人泛舟衡陽，遇風，舟瀕覆，船上兒甫十齡，曳舟入港，風引舟退，連曳兒仆，兒嘯號不釋纜，卒曳入港，兒兩掌骨見焉。北風蓬蓬，大浪雷吼，小兒曳纜逆風走，惶惶船中人，生死在兒手。纜倒曳兒兒屢仆，持纜愈力纜靡肉，兒肉附纜去，兒掌惟見骨。掌見骨，兒莫哭，兒掌有白骨，江心無白骨。“Seeing the Boy Handle the Boat”

(兒纜船並敘), in Tan Si Tong 譚嗣同, Tan Si Tong quanji 譚嗣同全集 (The collected works of Tan Si Tong; Taipei: Chinese World Bookstore, 1977), 461.

⁴² See Tan Si Tong, The Theory of Ren, in The Collected Works of Tan Si Tong, 3-90.

⁴³ 嗣同既得心源，便欲以心度一切苦惱眾生，以心挽劫者，不惟發願救本國，並彼極強盛之西國，與夫含生之類，一切皆度之。“Letters to Professor Ou Yang, 24,” in The Collected Works of Tan Si Tong, 317.

teachings that he was studying at the time. But we shouldn't make the mistake of concluding that his way of thinking is primarily Buddhist. In fact, he mixed his understanding of Buddhism together with a variety of Confucian thought, Western science, and even some Christian beliefs as he developed his own theory, which he calls "the study of human-heartedness" (仁學). Thus the book is his blueprint for universal salvation.

The Symbolism of the King. Perhaps most important for this study are the insights about the religious meaning of charity in Christianity and Confucianism as expressed in the authoritative texts, especially those that influenced and guided Dorothy Day and Tan Si Tong. Here we discover that the two traditions have different, very different, understandings of the king. So although the king is an important symbol in both traditions, Christians see the king (or Christ) in their neighbor, whereas Confucians look to the government as representing this important symbol.

Thus it is that the ideas of charity in Christianity come simultaneously from the Christian views of agape and Jesus' teachings about the "kingdom of God." This includes the idea that serving individuals is one way to serve the "king" (Christ).

For example, Jesus explains just how one is supposed to "love" others. He is talking about the eschaton, a religious term that refers to the end of this world and the beginning of the Kingdom of God. In the last days, the Son of Man (an angel sent by God) will arrive to sit as

king on his throne and govern the entire world. First, all the dead are raised back to life. Next begins the judgment. The king will separate all the people into two groups: the blessed, who will enter and possess the Kingdom of God; and the cursed, who shall suffer in an eternal fire. And what is the difference between the two groups? The blessed are those who showed the king charity: “For when I was hungry, you gave me food; when thirsty, you gave me drink; when I was a stranger you took me into your home, when naked you clothed me; when I was ill you came to my help, when in prison you visited me.”⁴⁴

But the people will ask the king, when did we see you hungry, thirsty, naked, ill, or in prison? And the king will answer, “I tell you this: anything you did for one of my brothers here, however, humble you did for me.”

So, not only are acts of charity required in order to enter the Kingdom of God, the teaching states that there is actually a kind of identity between the king and those who suffer. Jesus thus tells his followers that they can serve the “king” by helping those in need.

When his student asked him the meaning of ren, Confucius provided various answers: for example, “Love all people.”⁴⁵ Another more detailed example is as follows: “When abroad behave as though you were receiving as important guest. When employing the services of the common people behave as though you were officiating at an important sacrifice. Do not impose on others what you yourself do not

⁴⁴ Matthew 25: 31-46.

⁴⁵ The Analects of Confucius 12.22.

desire.”⁴⁶ According to Confucius, the effects of ren are visible when a person displays “respectfulness, tolerance, trustworthiness in word, quickness, and generosity.”⁴⁷ Above all, when Confucius considered about ren, he focused on how one treats others. It is a social virtue, and for Confucius ren is the highest and the most basic of all the virtues. It is, in his view, the ultimate goal a person should pursue.

In other words, a person who expresses ren is Confucius’ ideal. After Confucius asked his students to describe their aspirations, they, in turn, asked Confucius about his own ideal. The master answered: “As regards the old, give them rest. As regards your friends, show them sincerity. As regards the young, treat them tenderly.”⁴⁸ Thus, for Confucius, the one who cares for others is the greatest of all.

What did Confucius do to achieve this ideal? Throughout his life, Confucius did two things: he traveled around to different kingdoms to convince their rulers to accept his ideas about governing the people. Confucius spent thirteen years trying to have a direct impact on government. After that, Confucius returned to his homeland and devoted himself to teaching others his views. It is important to remember that this teaching was his second choice, which his lack of success in the political arena forced on him. Confucius saw himself as an inheritor and protector of Chinese culture, and he believed that preserving that tradition was the duty that divine Heaven (天) had

⁴⁶ The Analects of Confucius 12.2.

⁴⁷ The Analects of Confucius 17.6.

⁴⁸ The Analects of Confucius 5.26.

imposed on him.⁴⁹

Even though Confucius did not say this explicitly, we can see that for him the best way to achieve his ideal was to influence the policies of government. For Confucius, serving the king was equivalent to serving the people.

Following their religious traditions, both Day and Tan were concerned about those in need and did their best to help others. However, Day and Tan expressed these values differently because of their different worldviews. Day identified each person in need of help with the symbolic “king” and thus as a manifestation of Christ, since Christ means “king”⁵⁰ Her acts of charity were thus directed towards her neighbor, especially the hungry and homeless in lower Manhattan. Tan, in contrast, saw serving the actual historical king as the right way to serve people in need. Central to the divergence of their worldviews is the different understanding of the symbolism of the king as developed in Christian and Confucian traditions.

Thus, this study raises the question of the relationship between the practice of charity and the symbolism of the king, at least in Christianity and Confucianism. In many cultures, the king was a living symbol of the Center of the World. In The Sacred and the

⁴⁹ The Analects of Confucius 9.5: “When under siege in Kuang, the master said, ‘With King Wen dead, is not culture (文) invested here in me? If Heaven intends culture to be destroyed, those who come after me will not be able to have any part of it. If Heaven does not intend this culture to be destroyed, then what can the men of Kuang do to me?’”

⁵⁰ Christ is derived from the Greek rendering of Messiah (“the anointed one”), the Hebrew title for the king.

Profane,⁵¹ Mircea Eliade suggests that all peoples traditionally see the world as composed of various realms: for example, that of the humans; that of the ancestors; and that of the gods. In order to communicate with the ancestors and the gods, people often recognize a place of passage or connection, which Eliade calls the Center of the World symbol (axis mundi).⁵² This symbol serves as a point of orientation helping human beings in their relationships with the spiritual sources of their lives. Indeed, everywhere “it seems an inescapable conclusion that the religious man sought to live as near as possible to the Center of the World.”⁵³

A religious symbol, the Center of the World can be represented variously: mountains (which connect heaven and earth), temples (which often look like mountains and are sometimes called the dwelling places of the gods), trees, even rocks can represent this important “place” of communion. In addition, there can be a living Center of the World symbol: the king. Studies of sacred kingship in numerous societies show us that the primal role of the king is to serve the gods by connecting them to the kingdom and its people.

In this thesis, the charitable actions of Dorothy Day and Tan Si Tong provide us with good example of the importance of the symbol of the Center of the World. Each focused on the “king” in an effort to draw closer to the divine reality: Day approached every person in need

⁵¹ Mircea Eliade, The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1959).

⁵² Mircea Eliade, The Sacred and The Profane, 36.

⁵³ Mircea Eliade, The Sacred and The Profane, 43.

as king (Christ), and Tan even died for his emperor. Recognizing the religious nature of charity, Thomas Merton—Christian monk and poet— writes, “Poverty, for Dorothy Day, is more than a sociological problem; it is also a religious mystery.”⁵⁴ As for Tan Si Tong, he gave up his own life, thinking that it lacked meaning if he couldn’t help others.⁵⁵ It would be interesting to examine the relationship between charity and other symbols of the Center of the World as played out in other traditions, such as Buddhism, Daoism, Judaism, and Islam.

Apart from their understanding of the role of the king in bringing peace and prosperity to the kingdom, are there other factors that now influence the Confucian way of expressing charity? Today in Taiwan, it appears that Confucians—not establishing charitable organizations, as we have seen—have also withdrawn from the traditional task of taking part in politics. How can we explain this phenomenon? Zhang Hao mentions a characteristic of Confucian intellectuals when he discusses Tan’s way of thinking; he insists that the literati view “mind reform” as an important way to help people.⁵⁶ His insight provides us with a clue for understanding today’s Confucians. Is it possible that having lost the tradition of actual kingship, they have lost also the motivation to work through government? Perhaps they focus instead on the ancient teaching of

The Great Learning:

⁵⁴ Thomas Merton’s “Forward,” in Dorothy Day, Loaves and Fishes, ix.

⁵⁵ 輕其生命，以為塊然軀殼，除利人之外，復何足惜？ Tan Si Tong, “Forward,” to The Theory of Ren, in The Collected Works of Tan Si Tong, 3.

⁵⁶ Zhang Hao, The Martyr’s Spirit and Critical Consciousness, 136-137.

Things being investigated, knowledge became complete. Their knowledge being complete, their thoughts were sincere. Their thoughts being sincere, their hearts were then rectified. Their hearts being rectified, their persons were cultivated. Their persons being cultivated, their families were regulated. Their families being regulated, their states were rightly governed. Their states being rightly governed, the whole kingdom was made tranquil and happy.⁵⁷

This text declares that the best way to change the world is to begin by changing one's self. Self-cultivation may have taken the place of political action as today's Confucian seeks to realize ren in all aspects of life. This aspect of Confucian charity is worthy of further research.

The Comparative-Historical Method. Employing the comparative-historical method, I examine two different manifestations of charity, which express two different religious worldviews. That means I am doing a kind of comparative study of religion. As originally conceived, the method of "comparative religion" consisted of "placing the numerous religions of the world side by side...deliberately comparing and contrasting them," with the goal of allowing the scholar to "frame a reliable estimate of their respective claims and values."⁵⁸ In other words, one of the purposes of comparative religion in the past was to assess the value of the different religions. That is not my goal in this thesis.

My goal is to describe the views of charity in two different

⁵⁷ The Great Learning 5.

⁵⁸ Louis H. Jordan, Comparative Religion: Its Genesis and Growth (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1905), xi.

religions and how they are expressed in action. There is no desire to evaluate them and chose between them. Therefore I prefer the term comparative-historical method as explained by Ninian Smart: “The comparative-historical method differs from purely historical approaches because it is cross-cultural...[But] the comparative-historical method does not begin from the assumption of the truth or falsity of any one religious position.”⁵⁹ The goal of the comparative-historical method lies not in evaluating what is true or false, or good or bad, in any particular religion. It is purely descriptive.

Therefore, employing the comparative-historical method, I shall draw on historical data in order to focus on the idea and actions of charity in the lives of both Dorothy Day and Tan Si Tong. Looking at what they have in common in their understanding and practice of charity, together with their differences, will show us what is essential in charity as well as what variations are possible.

In my study I will follow the basic pattern exhibited by the comparative-historical study entitled Mysticism, East and West published originally in 1924 by German scholar Rudolf Otto.⁶⁰ This study examines the theme of mysticism as it appears in the lives of two mystics, one Christian and one Hindu.

Rudolf Otto (1869–1937) was a Christian theologian who became interested in other religions. In 1895, Otto received his Ph.D. with a dissertation on the understanding of the Holy Spirit as found in

⁵⁹ Ninian Smart, “Comparative-Historical Method,” in The Encyclopedia of Religion (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 3: 571.

⁶⁰ Rudolf Otto, Mysticism, East and West (New York: Macmillan, 1972).

the theology of Martin Luther. Eventually he became a professor of systematic theology. However, in 1911–1912 and again in 1927–1928, he visited Africa, South Asia, and East Asia. These trips introduced Otto to major religions other than Christianity. He became especially knowledgeable about Hinduism, and so he wrote Mysticism, East and West.

This book, Mysticism, East and West, is a good model for me. From the book's sub-title we can know the goal of Otto's study: "A discussion of the nature of mysticism, focusing on the similarities and differences of its two principal types." The theme explored in Otto's research is mysticism and his historical data is drawn from Christianity and Hinduism. To be more specific, he examines the writings of two mystics: Germany theologian and mystic Meister Eckhart (Johannes Eckhart, c. 1260–1327?) and Sankara (Sankaracarya, c. 700), Hindu metaphysician, religious leader, and proponent of Advaita Vedanta.

In the first half of the book, Otto shows what these two masters of mysticism have in common. Then in part two, he analyses and examines the way in which they differ. In this writing, Otto does not make any judgments about which one is better, or truer. This is a well-known model of the comparative-historical approach to the study of religion, one that I follow in my thesis.

Secondary Sources. Among the many authoritative Christian writings, there are two that have had the most influence on Dorothy Day's understanding of charity: The Bible and the autobiography of

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux.⁶¹ She refers often to Matthew 22: 39 to remind people of Christ's greatest commandment: "Love your neighbor as yourself." In addition, Day frequently cites Matthew 25: 31-46, especially verse 40: "I tell you this: anything you did for one of my brothers here, however humble, you did for me." The text clearly declares the Christian's responsibility to show loving compassion through acts of mercy to those who suffer. And even more, the gospel text teaches that the sufferer is Christ.

In addition, Dorothy Day was a follower of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux (1873–1897) and her teaching called "the little way of spiritual childhood." For Thérèse, God is experienced as the loving and forgiving parent, and we are like children, completely dependent on God in all things. The best way to draw close to God is within the ordinary events of daily life. For Dorothy Day, this meant that her task was to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and shelter the homeless day after day after day.

Since Tan decided that his book's title would be The Theory of Ren, it is clear that he was much influenced by the authoritative Confucian text ascribed to Confucius in The Analects, where Fan Chi asks about benevolence (ren) and the master answers, "Love all people."⁶² For Tan, Confucius' concept of ren is the basis of his own worldview.

But why should people love others? Tan also embraced a

⁶¹ The Autobiography of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux: The Story of a Soul, trans., John Beevers (New York: Doubleday, 1989).

⁶² The Analects of Confucius 12.22.

monistic view of qi (氣一元論), which derives from the theory set forth by Zhang Zai (張載), Confucian philosopher of the Song Dynasty (1020–1077). In his book Bringing Clarity to the Obscurity of Ignorance (正蒙), Zhang Zai declares that all beings in the universe come from one ultimate source: qi (氣). That means that every single being has a direct connection with every other being. No being is truly alone and separate. That is why we should care about others. Accepting this monistic view of qi also led Tan to follow Zhang Zai's belief that in the world all beings have equal value.

In addition to the authoritative religious texts that influenced Dorothy Day and Tan Si Tong, I examine the secondary literature that records and interprets their lives and thought. Among these there are three biographies of Dorothy Day that are particularly useful: William D. Miller's Dorothy Day;⁶³ Love is the Measure⁶⁴ by Jim Forest; and Dorothy Day: A Radical Devotion⁶⁵ by Robert Coles. As the earliest and most detailed account, Miller records Day's life in the form of a chronicle and that is helpful to the reader to grasp the whole of Day's life. Forest's book is a small one that focuses primarily on the important events at every stage of Day's life. It's easy to read but a little too brief. Robert Coles, in contrast, pays more attention to Day's inner life. He also describes in greater depth her feelings and her

⁶³ William D. Miller, Dorothy Day (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1982).

⁶⁴ Jim Forest, Love is the Measure: Biography of Dorothy Day (New York: Paulist Press, 1986).

⁶⁵ Robert Coles, Dorothy Day: A Radical Devotion (Reading, Mass.: Perseus, 1987).

personal characteristics. Further, because Coles tries to present Day's spiritual life, he introduces those who serve as her "spiritual kin." Together, these three biographies provide a good overview of Dorothy Day's life and thought.

In addition to biographies, there are also numerous studies of Day: for example, Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker⁶⁶ by Nancy L. Roberts. The author introduces both Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin (1877-1949), co-founder of the Catholic Worker. She also describes the Catholic Worker Movement. In this book, the author provides practical information, such as circulation numbers of the Catholic Worker and the classification of its contents. But because this book focuses more on the newspaper than on Dorothy Day's other charitable actions, its usefulness for this study is limited.

Just as Dorothy Day quotes Peter Maurin saying, "The surest way to find God, to find the good, is through one's brothers,"⁶⁷ Day herself saw her service to the needy as a spiritual practice with the goal of helping her to know God well. This is also the theme of the book Searching for Christ: The Spirituality of Dorothy Day⁶⁸ by Brigid O'Shea Merriman. The author presents five factors that deeply influenced Day's spiritual life: the historical context, literary influences, monasticism, the retreat movement, friends, and spiritual guides. Merriman concludes that the goal of all Day's actions lies in

⁶⁶ Nancy L. Roberts, Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984).

⁶⁷ Dorothy Day, The Long Loneliness, 171.

⁶⁸ Brigid O'Shea Merriman, Searching for Christ: The Spirituality of Dorothy Day (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1994).

drawing close to Christ. This book is useful for us to understand how Day formed her concept of charity and how she then acted upon it.

When Lin Zai Jue (林載爵) wrote his biography of Tan Si Tong,⁶⁹ he paid more attention to Tan's thought than to his chronological daily life. Thus, Lin briefly and generally introduces to the readers who Tan was, what he did, and what he thought. This book can help us to make an image of Tan rapidly.

Similar to Lin's book but more detailed, A Study of Tan Si Tong's Reformative Thought⁷⁰ by Wang Yue (王樾) discusses both Tan's career and thought but emphasizes more the latter. In his book, Wang defines Tan as a reformer. He shows how Tan came to his view of the need for reform and the goals that he sought. Wang interprets the content of The Theory of Ren and presents Tan's ideas about politics, economics, and social ethics. Finally, Wang also evaluates the meaning and merit of Tan's thoughts and actions.

Xie Gui Wen (謝貴文) focuses on the development of Tan's thought in his thesis, "A Study of the Thought in Tan Si Tong's Theory of Ren."⁷¹ Xie demonstrates in what ways Tan was influenced by

⁶⁹ Lin Zai Jue 林載爵, Tan Si Tong 譚嗣同 (A biography of Tan Si Tong; Taibei: Commercial Press, 1987).

⁷⁰ Wang Yue 王樾, Tan Si Tong bianfa sixiang yanjiu 譚嗣同變法思想研究 (A study of Tan Si Tong's reformative thought; Taibei: Student Books, 1990).

⁷¹ Xie Gui Wen 謝貴文, "Tan Si Tong renxue sixiang yanjiu" 譚嗣同仁學思想研究 (A study of the thought in Tan Si Tong's The Theory of Ren; M.A. thesis, Sun Yatsen University, 1999).

Confucianism, Daoism, Mahayana Buddhism, and other religious traditions. In addition, he looks for particular individuals in each religion who were important to Tan.

Finally, in his book The Martyr's Spirit and Critical Consciousness,⁷² Zhang Hao centers his view on two of Tan's personal characteristics: an inclination towards martyrdom together with a critical view of Chinese tradition. Zhang begins, as do many others, by reviewing Tan's The Theory of Ren. Then he goes on to demonstrate how the ideas in Tan's book helped him form his two distinctive characteristics. But there is a problem in Zhang's book. Zhang never proves his assumptions concerning Tan's personality. Therefore, his conclusions, even if they are correct, seem unsupported.

When we review the studies about Tan Si Tong, we find that all of them have a similar theme: all agree that the only thing Tan cared about was how to save his country and take care of his countrymen. In Tan's The Theory of Ren he sets forth his plan for reform and also the reasons why he believes his reform will work. But no single scholar asks: "Why is it that Tan never sought to find a non-political solution to his country's problems; in other words, why didn't he even try to act independently of government officials?" Indeed, why is it that Tan saw the writing of The Theory of Ren as the primary way to help his country and countrymen? Whom was he seeking to persuade? And last but not least, why did Tan choose to die when the Hundred Days'

⁷² Zhang Hao 張灝, Lieshi jingshen yu pipan yishi 烈士精神與批判意識 (The martyr's spirit and critical consciousness; Taipei: Linking Books, 1985).

Reform (戊戌政變) failed?

The Hundred Days' Reform refers to the year 1898, when Tan Si Tong and others had the opportunity to aid China's young ruler, the Guang Xu⁷³ Emperor (光緒皇帝, 1871–1908), to reform the government. This displeased the Empress Dowager Ci Xi (慈禧太后, 1835–1908), who had long held the reins of power. In the end, the emperor was confined to house arrest; and Tan, together with five of his companions, was executed.

Because of his involvement in this failed restructuring of China's government, there are many discussions about Tan's actual status. Was he a revolutionary or was he a reformer? In Wang Yue's opinion, Tan was a reformer.⁷⁴ Here, Wang presents an interesting idea: Referring to Tan's discussion of the French Revolution, he suggests that Tan would have liked to have been a revolutionary but couldn't, because he believed that his countrymen lacked any true knowledge about democracy. Wang hints that if the Chinese people had been better educated, Tan would have become a revolutionary. Can we accept Wang's interpretation? I am afraid not. Wang's interpretation fails to explain why so many revolutionaries turned up soon after Tan: Sun Yatsen (孫逸仙, 1866–1925), for example. In my view, it was his Confucian worldview that led Tan to depend on political power for the fulfillment of his ideals concerning ren. His thinking, not the

⁷³ Guang Xu means Glorious Succession, the emperor's reign name.

⁷⁴ Wang Yue, A Study of Tan Si Tong's Reformative Thought, 136.

educational situation of his countrymen, decided Tan as a reformer rather than a revolutionary.

Even though no other studies of Tan focus on the question of my thesis—which concerns his way of expressing charity, that is, through political rather than personal or social methods—this does not mean that they are of no use for my study. Especially two ideas of Zhang Hao are insightful. In the conclusion of his book, Zhang presents Tan’s personality as a Chinese intellectual: one is the tendency for idealism, and the other is the consciousness of “we.”⁷⁵ Zhang emphasizes that as a Chinese intellectual, Tan, like others of the literati, was involved in the movement called “mind reform” (思想改造). Generally, Chinese intellectuals have held an mental image of an ideal world. Their theories for improving the world are very much directed towards achieving this ideal. That is what Zhang means when he refers to the idealism of the traditional Chinese intellectual. In his view, this tradition continues to influence today’s Confucian thinkers, who insist that “mind reform” is the premise for reform both in politics and in society as a whole. During the late Qing Dynasty, Tan was typical in this respect. Zhang’s interpretation helps us to understand why Tan wrote his book as a way to help his country and countrymen.

The second characteristic that Zhang mentions is the consciousness of “we.” As an intellectual, there are two images of the self in Tan’s mind: one is the “little self,” or the individual “I”; the other is “big self,” or “we.” Every “little self” should be submerged in

⁷⁵ Zhang Hao, *The Martyr’s Spirit and Critical Consciousness*, 136-139.

the “big self.” According to this view, the meaning of an individual person’s life depends on its being dedicated to a larger “we.” The focus must always be on the group, never on the individual. This ideal helps us to see why it is that Tan never discussed personal or individual suffering but noticed only the problems of society as a whole.

II. Dorothy Day

John Day, the father of Dorothy Day, was a man of Scotch-Irish descent. A lover of whiskey, he was skeptical about religion and disliked foreigners, blacks, and radicals. So it is not surprising that he was deeply disapproving of the direction Dorothy took in her life, both in matters of faith and politics.⁷⁶ But we wish to emphasize here that it is precisely the direction that Dorothy took in her life—in faith and in politics—that made her to be, not someone else but, Dorothy Day.

⁷⁶ Jim Forest, Love is the Measure, 4.

The Life of Dorothy Day. The family lived in San Francisco, when Dorothy was young. She was only nine years old when the notorious earthquake took place there. As a result of this disaster, Day's family lost all their property and her father John lost his job. During the time of crisis itself, Dorothy's mother spent her time organizing their neighbors in order to serve the homeless. We cannot be sure that Dorothy's characteristic of extending care to the needy came from her mother, but certainly Dorothy recalled her mother's actions with pride.⁷⁷

The family did not stay in San Francisco after the earthquake, moving to Chicago where they settled. In her last year in high school, Dorothy Day had the opportunity to learn about "the dark side" of society. Her oldest brother, Donald, got a job on a newspaper called The Day Book, which really did its best to expose working conditions in factories and department stores. Because of this newspaper, Dorothy first learned about the poor conditions of those who were in the lower classes of society. Gradually she became aware of the American labor movement, the political Left, and the labor union known as the Industrial Workers of the World.⁷⁸ In this way, the seeds of her growing political attitude were planted, a perspective that influenced Dorothy Day all her days. From then on, the various dimensions of her life came together around one focus—helping the poor.

Young Dorothy Day spent all of her reading time on articles and

⁷⁷ Ibid., 9.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 16.

other writings from a socialist point of view. One book caused Day to turn her attention to the area of urban poverty. That was Upton Sinclair's novel The Jungle.⁷⁹ This sad story took place in the same city where Dorothy Day was living; what the novel depicted was really a shock to Dorothy and so drew her to frequently take long walks toward the grim West Side of Chicago. There, she envisioned some scenes as the events in Sinclair's story. Those long walks and encounters with the urban poor made Day feel "that from then on my life was to be linked to theirs, their interests were to be mine: I had received a call, a vocation, a direction in my life."⁸⁰

Dorothy Day's desire to help the poor does not mean that she herself wished to be poor. When the family first moved to Chicago, Dorothy felt embarrassed because the family had to live in a shabby tenement apartment. She sometimes passed by her own tenement door and then entered a more impressive one nearby so that her school friends wouldn't see where she really lived. At that time, to the nine-year-old girl, poverty was an embarrassing thing.⁸¹ But over the years as she gained insight through studying various journals and

⁷⁹ Upton Sinclair (1878–1968) was an American novelist and a socialist. Dragon's Teeth (1942), describing the rise of Nazism in Germany, won him the Pulitzer Prize. His novels often focused on exposing the dark side of America's capitalistic society. Among these was his most famous work, The Jungle (1906). The main character in this novel is Jurgis Rudkus, a Lithuanian immigrant who tries to survive the squalor and misery of life in the lower class. But his workplace, Chicago's vast stockyard and slaughterhouse where justice seldom prevailed, brings harm to his family and causes him to end up in jail. Finally, Rudkus commits himself to the struggle for a just social order by joining the Socialist Party.

⁸⁰ Jim Forest, Love is the Measure, 17.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

novels as well as learning from her own personal experience of the poor urban community, Day began to see the poor and poverty in a more positive light.

Dorothy Day was raised in a non-religious family. Her father declared himself an atheist, while her mother hardly said anything about teenage Dorothy's zeal for attending church services.⁸² Actually, Dorothy Day's religious experience began pretty early. She recalls her first awareness of religious feelings, which occurred when she was only seven years old. One rainy Sunday afternoon, she went up to the attic and there she happened across a Bible. This was the first time she had ever encountered the Bible, and she spent quite a few hours reading it. She felt a "sense of holiness in holding the book." She later recounts, "I did not know then that the Word in the Book and Word in the flesh of Christ's humanity were the same, but I felt I was handling something holy."⁸³ Even though Day says she cannot remember precisely what she read that day, it is worth noting that the experience of holiness connected with the Bible remained with her.

From then on, in various places and in the presence of different persons, Day was touched by religious emotions again and again. She got along with a neighbor girl who was pious; the older girl encouraged her to go with her to church. On another occasion, Day saw the woman who lived next door kneeling by her bed in prayer. She felt a kind of envy towards those who were openly and unselfconsciously religious.

⁸² William D. Miller, *Dorothy Day*, 5, 29.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 10.

In Chicago, Dorothy knew a neighbor girl who was a Roman Catholic. Lenore Clancey liked to introduce her religion to Dorothy and told her about saints, angels, and the Virgin Mary. These conversations really moved Dorothy.⁸⁴ Later, the local priest visited the Day's house to invite Mr. Day and his family to attend church services. With her father's permission, Dorothy began to attend worship services in an Episcopalian church. She soon found that she loved the reading of the Psalms and the prayers. Eventually, young Dorothy attended confirmation classes every Monday afternoon; in due course, she was baptized and confirmed.

In spite of the fact that her parents were indifferent as far as religion goes, from early on Dorothy revealed an intense inclination towards religious life: sensitive to all that carries the feeling of holiness and an interest in personal religious experience. Because of this, one expects that she would proceed step-by-step in the same direction. But the real story is quite different: she takes up an altogether different direction, moving away from piety.

Day's identity as a baptized Christian was challenged by her growing social consciousness, especially after she began to read the works of socialists, such as The Day Book and The Jungle as well as miscellaneous other writings. One gloomy Sunday when she was sixteen years old, Dorothy Day proclaimed to her sister Della that she now was "sick and tired of religion" and would cease lecturing Della on the subject. Dorothy firmly refused to return to church when the

⁸⁴ Ibid., 18.

priest again visited her, spending all of one afternoon trying to find out what the trouble was. Day reports, "I was in a 'free' mood and my reading at the time made me skeptical. My belief in God remained firm and I continued to read the New Testament regularly, but I felt it was no longer necessary to go to church. I distrusted all churches after reading the books of [Jack] London and Sinclair."⁸⁵

Day felt a conflict between her religion and her growing social consciousness, and she decided to abandon religion for socialism, because the "church's way of responding to injustice and poverty, she realized, was to be kind to the poor but not to open its doors to them."⁸⁶ From then on, as noted above, Day began to identify with the poor: indeed, she "had received a call, a vocation, a direction in my life" to serve the needy.

In the very beginning, the needy are represented to Dorothy Day by the chief character in The Jungle, Jurgis Rudkus, and those people who live in the urban poverty of Chicago just like Rudkus. Then the category of the needy begins to include the girls who work in stores and factories. When Day was in college she began to care about the whole labor movement. She began to be aware that many people had been marginalized by industrialization. These were the needy, along with the blind, the disabled, the consumptive men, the farmers gaunt with debt, and the mothers weighed down with children at their skirts. All have the same problems: the need for just treatment and the need to be able to get enough material goods to meet their physical needs.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 29.

⁸⁶ Jim Forest, Love is the Measure, 17.

In her view, the best principle for running a society should be “from each according to his ability and for each according to his need.” By this slogan, which Day cited frequently, we can see that for her, the needy are an economically disadvantaged group.

At one point in her life, Dorothy Day believed that “religion would only impede my work,” referring to her vocation to help the poor.⁸⁷ At the same time, Day knew well that the people belonging to most churches were kind in their treatment of the poor and even pursued many charitable actions. But for her, that was not enough. “Who want[s] charity?”⁸⁸ Day queries. She insisted that the only solution to the problem of poverty was to overthrow the injustices found in the social order and create a just society. Fighting for the poor could not, in her view, be limited to providing them with their needs; preserving the dignity of poor people was also essential. This involved among other things fair and equal treatment for all. Therefore, she felt that although the Church provided physical aid to the poor, it failed to confront the malicious social order. According to Day, if the Church refuses to fight for the poor, it is nothing more than an accomplice of the unjust society:

I felt that the Church was the Church of the poor...but at the same time, I felt that it did not set its face against a social order which made so much charity in the present sense of the word necessary. I felt that charity was a word to choke over. Who wanted charity? And it was not just human pride, but a strong sense of man’s dignity and worth and what was due to him in justice, that made me

⁸⁷ Ibid., 19.

⁸⁸ Dorothy Day, Selected Writings (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2001), 39.

resent, rather than feel proud of, so mighty a sum total of Catholic institutions.⁸⁹

Her remarks make it clear that for Day, physical well-being is not the only goal. People need to feel that they are valued by others and treated with respect. They need to live in a society that supports the value of the individual person. These values are linked to Day's basically religious attitude and it is not surprising that eventually she found her way back to the Church.

In the spring of 1917, Dorothy Day participated in a demonstration that took place in Washington, D.C. The demonstrators were protesting the exclusion of women from voting in elections and holding public office. One result of the event was that Day and some of her comrades were confined to a workhouse for thirty days. In the workhouse, Day suffered a deep depression and feelings of loneliness. She felt a loss of personal identity, even though the suffering was her own choice. Finally, she asked for a Bible and received one two days later. At first, Day claimed that she read the Bible only for literary enjoyment, but eventually she admitted that the Psalms were for her a source of joy, just as they had been during her childhood.

From then on, Day's desire to feel God's presence grew stronger and stronger, frequently drawing her "into any nearby Catholic church."⁹⁰ In the winter of 1917, influenced by her friend Eugene O'Neill, Day went into St. Joseph's Church on Sixth Avenue in New

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Jim Forest, Love is the Measure, 41.

York City and there she experienced a sense of being “at home” and deep consolation. This was the new beginning of the rest of Day’s life as a devout Christian.

In short, Dorothy Day abandoned her religion because she assumed that it would impede her service to the needy caught in the snares of an unjust society. But at the same time, she herself really needed religious consolation. Day was eager to care for the deliverance of the needy but she found she could not ignore her own needs.

Charitable Works in the Life of Dorothy Day. The poor evoked numerous emotions in Dorothy Day. She was shocked when she read The Jungle; and she felt sympathy for the people residing in the slums of Chicago when she would take walks there. She was angry at the Church when it failed to solve the problems of poverty. Much of her time she spent puzzling over ways to serve the disadvantaged minorities.

Having discovered that most factory laborers and department store employees were not treated fairly, as a young adult, Dorothy Day devoted herself as a journalist to speak for members of these minority groups. She spent many days standing in the picket lines of various strikes and participating in political demonstrations. Later, in the spring of 1918, she began training at Kings County Hospital in Brooklyn to become a nurse, because she saw “[the poor] are sick and there are not enough nurses to care for them...I’ve got to care for

them.”⁹¹

But as mentioned above, in that period Day still felt nervous about the contradiction between her view of the Church and her socialist ideals. Even so, she began to spend more time in prayer and going to Mass on Sunday mornings, because she “found it is impossible not to pray.”⁹²

On 3 March 1927, Day’s daughter Tamar Theresa was born. Tamar’s birth affected her deeply. Before this, Day had sensed a huge change within herself and she really enjoyed her religious practices. But the birth of Tamar helped Day understand more deeply the love that God is eager to give to His “children.” It was at this time, that she became a member of the Roman Catholic Church. In July 1927, Tamar was baptized first, because as Day informs us, “I wanted my child to believe.”⁹³ And on December 28, Dorothy Day herself was re-baptized.

Her friends did not applause her action, for almost all of them felt that she was betraying their socialist ideals. But Day knew very well that her attraction to religion—and to the Roman Catholic Church—was grounded in her own experience and need. It had totally nothing to do with the debate about the Church’s role in society, that is, whether or not the institutional Church contributed to justice in the world.

After this “conversion” experience in which she returned to her

⁹¹ Ibid., 44.

⁹² Ibid., 61.

⁹³ Ibid., 64.

Christian faith within the context of the Roman Catholic Church, Dorothy Day began to search for a way to combine serving the needy while at the same time following her religious instincts. She knew indeed that a connection exists between Jesus' teaching and socialism. But what would be the best way to bring them together?

From the 30th of November to the 8th of December in 1932, Dorothy Day witnessed an important strike: myriad unemployed workers marched from Union Square in New York all the way to Washington, D.C. It was the second year of the Great Depression, when so many people had lost their jobs. The marchers had one simple demand: jobs so that they could feed their families. The sad thing was that the popular press and public opinion referred to the marches as "a rag-tag of dangerous radicals whose demonstration was evidence of the Red revolution." Little attention was given to the marchers' humble wishes.⁹⁴ For Day, the heart-breaking thing was that the Church kept silent (as usual) when faced with the reality of the jobless marchers; meanwhile, those who shared her concern, her socialist friends, no longer welcomed her company. Dorothy found herself rich in religious faith and social conscience but lacking any community. She felt useless.

Ironically, December 8th is the feast of the Immaculate Conception, a major holy day for Roman Catholics.⁹⁵ But on this day,

⁹⁴ Ibid., 72-73.

⁹⁵ Roman Catholic Christians celebrate the special grace that touched Mary's life beginning already at the moment of conception in her mother's womb. See Jim Forest, Love is the Measure, 75.

it seemed as if the Church's congregations and leadership cared only about the activities taking place within their buildings and could not conceive of how their faith might be connected with the jobless people outside. On this day, Day grieved as she walked into the church of the Catholic University and prayed before the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. She later recalled, "There I offered up a special prayer, a prayer which came with tears and anguish, that some way would open up for me to use what talents I possessed for my fellow workers, for the poor."⁹⁶

Dorothy Day felt that God's response to her prayer was both quick but specific. On the very same day, when she returned to New York City, she found a man waiting for her at her house. It was Peter Maurin,⁹⁷ who introduced her to his vision of a society that fulfilled God's commandments. Further, he told her that her former approach was meaningless. He wanted Dorothy Day to look at history in a new way, focusing not on the rise and fall of great empires but rather on

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Peter Maurin, originally Aristode Pierre Maurin, was French. He and Dorothy Day together founded the Catholic Worker Movement. Day regarded the appearance of Maurin in her life as God's answer to her prayer. As the child of a poor peasant family, Maurin all his life believed in Christian socialism and he thus insisted on making his living by means of his own labor. Eventually, he came to view poverty as a gift from God, and he devoted himself to the movement, which had as its goal the realization of a new social order ruled by God. Maurin likewise believed that God had led him to know Dorothy Day for this purpose. See further, Jim Forest's "Peter Maurin" in *The Encyclopedia of American Catholic History* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1997); William D. Miller, *A Harsh and Dreadful Love* (New York: Liveright, 1973); and Nicholas C. Lund-Molfese, "Peter Maurin, the Distributists and the Nature of Work," in *Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement: Centenary Essays*, Susan Mountin, Phillip M. Runkel, and William J. Thorn, eds. (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001), 298-305.

the lives of the saints. He emphasized that sanctity was at the center of what really mattered, and that any program of social change must emphasize both personal sanctity and human community. Maurin insisted that Christians should be “radical” in the sense of the Latin root of the work: radix, which means “root.” Thus, Maurin interprets the “radical” as “someone who doesn’t settle for cosmetic solutions, but goes to the root of personal and social problems.”⁹⁸ In his view, the root of human poverty and injustice lies in the absence of sanctity and community.

Dorothy Day saw the appearance of Maurin as “the result of my prayers,”⁹⁹ and she was really quite moved by his ideas. In her own experience, the true practitioners of hospitality were the poor, who were always ready to take in others in need. These poor people really understood the meaning of community. Therefore, Day accepted Maurin’s plan, which consisted of three actions to change society: founding a newspaper for clarification of thought; starting a house of hospitality; and organizing communal farms.¹⁰⁰ Later, Day gave these projects a single name, the Catholic Worker Movement, a set of actions to change the world following in the footsteps of Christ and his saints.

The first fruit of the movement was the first issue in May of 1933 of a newspaper called the Catholic Worker. From its inception, the Catholic Worker was consistent with its goal: to prod American

⁹⁸ Jim Forest, Love is the Measure, 76-81.

⁹⁹ Dorothy Day, Loaves and Fishes, 13.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 7.

consciences, insisting on a stance that combined twentieth-century personalism, communitarianism, voluntary poverty, pacifism, and nonviolent activism for social justice.¹⁰¹

Peter Maurin's understanding of personalism was influenced by the personalist movement of French philosopher Emmanuel Mounier (1905–1950). According to Mounier, personalism referred to his view that every human being has a responsibility to take an active role in human history. The results of such action may or may not be clear during the lifetime of the person; and further, the results may be in the spiritual realm as well as in the everyday lives of people. Peter Maurin traced Mounier's idea back to the theology of Saint Francis of Assisi; and he then developed it to become one of the key concepts of the Catholic Worker Movement. There are two important characteristics to Maurin's personalism: First, "the primacy of Christian love should be brought from its position of limbo where human affairs are concerned and infused into the process of history."¹⁰² Thus, at the core of personalism is Christian love. Second, Maurin's "whole message was that everything began with one's self."¹⁰³ This refers to the individual person's sense of himself or herself as an active agent in history. In short, Peter Maurin never failed to encourage others to practice "gentle personalism" by "taking

¹⁰¹ Nancy L. Roberts, Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker, 3.

¹⁰² See William D. Miller, A Harsh and Dreadful Love, 21.

¹⁰³ Catholic Worker (May 1955), n.p.

personal responsibility for the other person in need, instead of shirking it off to someone else or to an impersonal institution.”¹⁰⁴

As for Christian communitarianism, Peter Maurin himself never published a clear definition. Yet as a personalist, Maurin argued against excessive governmental control in the lives of citizens: “Thomas Jefferson says that the less government there is, the better it is. If the less government there is, the better it is, then the best kind of government is self-government. If the best kind of government is self-government, then the best kind of organization is self-organization.”¹⁰⁵ Peter Maurin also accepted the fundamental premise of Christian social ethics that the individual person exists already in community with others. In the Catholic Worker Movement, the core understanding of communitarianism lies in Christian history and thought, especially the belief that all Christians are members of the same spiritual family, just as Jesus viewed all those who do the will of God as his brothers and sisters.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Fred Boehrer, “Diversity, Plurality, and Ambiguity: Anarchism in the Catholic Worker Movement,” Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement: Centenary Essays, 96-97, 103-105. For additional details concerning Maurin’s interpretation of personalism, please consult Mark and Louise Zwick’s “Roots of the Catholic Worker Movement: Emmanuel Mounier, Personalism, and the Catholic Worker Movement,” Houston Catholic Worker (July-August 1999), n.p.

¹⁰⁵ Peter Maurin, “Self Organization,” Easy Essays. Quoted in Fred Boehrer, “Diversity, Plurality, and Ambiguity: Anarchism in the Catholic Worker Movement,” Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement: Centenary Essays, 97.

¹⁰⁶ Mark 3: 31-35 and parallels (Matthew 12: 46-50; Luke 8: 19-21). For further details concerning Christian communitarianism, consult William J. Collinge, “Peter Maurin’s Ideal of Farming Communes,” Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement: Centenary Essays, 385-398; Nancy L. Roberts, Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker, 3-9; and Fred

Both Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin believed that their newspaper was essential to articulate the many important ideas about social justice found in the teachings of Jesus. As a Roman Catholic Christian newspaper, its goal was to publicize these social teachings in order to change every single person and cause the peaceful transformation of society. Day tried to let every reader “know that there are men of God who are working not only for their spiritual but for their material welfare.”¹⁰⁷

Although the newspaper existed independently of the official Roman Catholic Church, both priests and laypeople were invited to take part in its ongoing publication: writing, editing, and producing the newspaper together. In this way, those who put the newspaper together and those who read it developed over the years into a kind of invisible community. Although the newspaper allotted space for people to express their personal opinions, still the heart and soul of the Catholic Worker remained the writings of Day and Maurin.

As the movement’s visionary, Peter Maurin wrote essays that established the philosophical foundations of the Catholic Worker Movement. For example, he explains how a communitarian Christianity stresses the necessity for Christians to live and work together as a community.

Dorothy Day’s column provided the other mainstay of the newspaper. In writing this column, Day shared with her readers much

Boehrer, “Diversity, Plurality, and Ambiguity: Anarchism in the Catholic Worker Movement,” Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement: Centenary Essays, 97.

¹⁰⁷ Dorothy Day, Selected Writings, 51.

of her life, her thought, and her feelings. A study of these essays today reveals the profile of this consistent, passionate, and determined woman. Of course, her outspokenness caused the Catholic Worker and Day herself some problems. But many times, the editors of the newspaper chose to lose subscribers rather than blindly follow public opinion or national policy. For example, in March of 1935 and again in the summer of 1936, Dorothy Day shocked many Christians by expressing her sympathy for the communist rebels who were fighting a fascist government in the Spanish Civil War. Her views about World War II got her into even more trouble. Even her friends in the Catholic Worker Movement began to heckle Day when she continued to oppose the United States entering the war, even after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Many readers wanted her to explain how the United States should deal with Hitler if the country refused to go to war against Germany.¹⁰⁸ Perhaps the most critical moment came in 1951 when Cardinal Spellman ordered Day to change the name of the newspaper, because it expressed support for the communist movement in the United States.¹⁰⁹ Yet no matter how difficult the circumstance, Day kept on writing in the same way.

¹⁰⁸ Jim Forest, Love is the Measure, 98-102.

¹⁰⁹ During the period of the Cold War, Dorothy Day and others of the Catholic Worker Movement were openly opposed to McCarthyism; their sympathy for the communist movement annoyed the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church. In 1949, a small union of gravediggers went on strike against the Archdiocese of New York in their attempt to negotiate better salaries. Cardinal Spellman announced that the strikers were Communist inspired and he refused to meet with them. Day publicly pleaded on behalf of the striking gravediggers, angering Spellman, who ordered her to cease publication or change the name of the newspaper. See Jim Forest, Love is the Measure, 130-132.

The second and third projects belonging to Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin's charitable work consisted of the house of hospitality and communal farming. In Maurin's view, the former comprised a "personalist" action, whereas the latter offered the possibility for communitarian Christianity.

According to Marin, at the core of Christian personalism lies the need for Christians to "have a sense of personal responsibility to take care of our own brother, and our neighbor, at a personal sacrifice."¹¹⁰ In a house of hospitality, "workers" deliver bread, soup, and coffee every morning. In addition, they provide clothes and some shelter for the needy. In 1933 the first house of hospitality was established in Dorothy Day's apartment on Fifteenth Street in New York City, where more and more people came to receive necessary provisions.¹¹¹ Eventually houses of hospitality were set up all over the United States.¹¹² Some critics focused on the liberality of the hospitality: no one was ever turned away. Day and her colleagues fed anyone who showed up and never asked about what or who the person might be: thieves, alcoholics, or loafers came freely. Many people prefer to help the "deserving poor" only, but that was not Dorothy Day's way. For her, anyone who arrived in the house of hospitality became a member of her family, a brother or a sister. She literally believed Peter Maurin's insistence that we are each our "brother's keeper."

¹¹⁰ Dorothy Day, *The Long Loneliness*, 179.

¹¹¹ Just in the fourth year, in 1936, the workers fed an average of 400 people every day, and the number increased to 800 in 1937. See Jim Forest, *Love is the Measure*, 89.

¹¹² Today, there are more than 135 Catholic Worker organizations in the United States.

Furthermore, Day continued to ask, Who caused such people to become “the losers” in society? She herself answers, “We are not content that there should be so many of them. The class structure is our making and by our consent, not God’s, and we must do what we can to change it. We are urging revolutionary change.”¹¹³

For Dorothy Day and the other members of the Catholic Worker Movement, the experience of trying to establish communal farms was rather painful. In Maurin’s view, farming communes and agronomic universities would solve all the ills of the world: unemployment, delinquency, destitution in old age, human alienation, the lack of room for growing families, and hunger. This idea did actually attract some young men associated with the Catholic Worker Movement. In spring of 1935, they founded the first “farming commune” on Staten Island, which can be reached by a short ferry ride across the harbor from downtown Manhattan. The reality was not so wonderful as imagined. In the commune, conflict among various residents appeared almost at once. The fact is that all of the residents who came from the Catholic Worker Movement brought along their old conflicts to this new place; and eventually, these conflicts almost ruined the whole place and the plan.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Jim Forest, Love is the Measure, 91.

¹¹⁴ Perhaps this result was inevitable. The main two groups that make up the Catholic Worker Movement are workers and intellectuals; and there is always a tension between them. In New York City, these two groups were often physically separated and so the conflict remained potential. But when members of both groups moved to the farming commune, they were just a handful of people in close proximity day and night, and so the conflict erupted. For details, see Dorothy Day’s Loaves and Fishes, chapter 4, and William D. Miller’s Dorothy Day, 271-273.

When talking about the problems of farming communes, Dorothy Day sometimes suggested that people seem always to be more interested in eating food than raising it. In communal living, small matters took on huge and divisive significance; suitable people left, and those who remained were often the most difficult to live with.¹¹⁵ She admits, “We might not have established a model community...We aimed high, too high.”¹¹⁶

Compared to the Catholic Worker newspaper and the house of hospitality, the first farming commune was a failure. But Day insisted on some of the benefits: “[Living on the commune] many a family got a vacation, many a sick person was nursed back to health, crowds of slum children had the run of the woods and fields for weeks, and groups of students spent happy hours discussing the green revolution.” Peter Maurin agreed, “At least we were able to arouse the conscience” of many people regarding the need for this kind of communal living.¹¹⁷

Even though this first experience was not so good, in later years other communes were founded in many places, and some of them were quite successful, such as the farms at Altkin, Minnesota; South Lyon, Michigan; and New Burge, New York. Although they were inspired by Maurin’s ideas, the founders of these particular farming communes did not necessarily have any direct connection with Dorothy Day.

¹¹⁵ Jim Forest, Love is the Measure, 93-96.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 96.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

Religious Foundations of Dorothy Day's Charity. How did Dorothy Day evaluate her involvement with the Catholic Worker Movement? Throughout her life, people continued to ask if her charitable activities had any true value. For example, when they saw the house of hospitality, some people argued that it would be better to offer job training or rehabilitation programs rather than provide bread, coffee, soup, and clothes for free to the needy, especially to those who were the "unworthy destitute."¹¹⁸ Even some of those who helped out in the hospitality house attempted to shift the emphasis of the movement from its primary objective of feeding and sheltering the poor to more aggressively organizing sociological solutions to poverty.¹¹⁹ A major criticism concerned the efficiency of the movement, as in the following example:

As a reform, or even radical, movement, the Catholic Worker was exceptionally non-pragmatic, and even ineffectual, in its revolution. In this world's terms, it would look at best odd and at worst foolish when measured by concrete and lasting results. Voluntary poverty has done little to re-distribute wealth in this country. Worker pacifism during World War II decimated support for the movement and certainly did little to restrain the war effort. The agronomic university rarely generated even a subsistence living. And personal responsibility for direct action often left many tasks unattended or carried only by a few. Even cast against their sectarian commitment to a different and separate way, these efforts seem misguided, for they did not provide very well for the sect's own

¹¹⁸ Jim Forest, *Love is the Measure*, 91; and Dorothy Day, *Loaves and Fishes*, 48.

¹¹⁹ William D. Miller, *Dorothy Day*, 275.

needs.¹²⁰

In spite of the criticism, Dorothy Day never changed the nature of her charitable actions: feeding the hungry and sheltering the homeless (at the house of hospitality) while awakening people's consciences (by means of the Catholic Worker) so that they might desire to transform this unjust world. What caused this woman to persist in this way? The answer to this question lies in the religious teachings that inspired her charitable actions.

At one time, an important member of the Catholic Worker Movement, Tom Coddington, tried to influence other members to change the organization. He wanted them to take up a more systematic and sociological approach to improve the lives of poor people. Further, he wanted the organization to have a more visible and active participation in matters concerning the society as a whole. He felt a more "professional" approach would be more efficient for attaining their goals.¹²¹ But for Dorothy Day, whenever she faced criticism that the movement was not efficient enough, she always repeated the same answer: "Love is the measure by which we are judged."¹²² She believed that in the end we will be judged not by what we accomplish but by our motivations. Day even said that she came to "resent, rather than [be] proud of, so mighty a sum total of Catholic institutions [that serve the poor]."¹²³ She did not deny the value of the

¹²⁰ Roger A. Statnick, "Dorothy Day, Citizen of the Kingdom," in Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement: Centenary Essays, 337.

¹²¹ William D. Miller, Dorothy Day, 275.

¹²² Jim Forest, Love Is the Measure, 212.

¹²³ Dorothy Day, Selected Writings, 39.

Church's charity, but believed that real human warmth was lacking.¹²⁴ For Dorothy Day, loving people is the core of the movement, and this leaves no room for the thought of efficiency.

Before discussing further Dorothy Day's conviction that "love is the measure," we should recall Peter Maurin's influence on her thought. It was Maurin who helped Day acquire a new view of human history. From him she learned to understand history not as the rise and fall of great empires but rather as a record of the lives of the saints, those who follow in Jesus Christ's footsteps. In other words, for her, Christ is at the center of human history. In every situation, she tried to use Christ's example and teaching as a guide for her action. This is the basis of Dorothy Day's charity.

Why does Dorothy Day say that "love is the measure" against which all charitable action must be judged? In the first place, she is following Jesus, who said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' Everything in the Law and the prophets hangs on these two commandments."¹²⁵ Jesus insists that love for God and for others is the basis upon which all other religious teachings and laws rest. Thus in Day's view, only in loving God and other people can one become a true Christian. But as a layperson, not a priest or nun, how does one best express love for God?

Paraphrasing the words of the Russian novelist Fyodor

¹²⁴ Ibid., 39-41.

¹²⁵ Matthew 22: 37-40.

Dostoevski, Dorothy insisted that “you learn that the most downtrodden, humblest man is a man, too, and a brother.”¹²⁶ Indeed, she felt that everyone was her brother or sister, and that loving others was her way to express her love for God. Accordingly, she believes that God likes to speak to us in the following way:

I ask you to love me with the same love with which I love you. But for me you cannot do this, for I love you without being loved...So you cannot give me the kind love I ask of you. This is why I have put you among your neighbors: so that you can do for them what you cannot do for me, that is, love them without any concern for thanks and without looking for any profit for yourself. And whatever you do for them I will consider done for me.¹²⁷

Indeed, again and again, as she encouraged her readers to care about their neighbors, Day quotes Maurin’s words that “the surest way to find God, to find the good, is through one’s brothers.”¹²⁸ Thus for her, loving people is the direct way to respond to God’s love.

In loving others, Dorothy Day is also indirectly expressing her love for Jesus. In Matthew 25, Jesus tells the story of the king who welcomes into his kingdom those who loved him: “I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I need clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.” When they heard these words,

¹²⁶ Dorothy Day, Loaves and Fishes, 75.

¹²⁷ Cited from Mark and Louise Zwick’s “Roots of the Catholic Worker Movement: Saints and Philosophers who Influenced Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin,” Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement: Centenary Essays, 69.

¹²⁸ Dorothy Day, Selected Writings, 43.

the people were confused, for they could not remember having served him in these ways. So the king then explains that whenever they showed such love and compassion to others, it was a way of serving him, too. "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."¹²⁹ It is clear to Dorothy Day that here the king represents Christ and she literally accepted his teaching. That's why no matter how people queried about why she "wasted" her time serving drunkards and thieves, she continued unaffected by their criticism.

The second reason for loving people by means of charitable action is to gain the reward promised by Christ: loving others brings about permission to enter and possess God's kingdom. "Then the king will say to those on his right hand, 'You have my Father's blessing; come, enter and possess the kingdom that has been ready for you since the world was made.'" ¹³⁰ The kingdom of God is a symbolic theme found throughout the teachings of Jesus. For example, the very first time that he was preaching in public, Jesus announced the arrival of the kingdom: "The time has come; the kingdom of God is upon you; repent and believe the Gospel."¹³¹ The Greek word translated here as Gospel is euaggelion, literally "the good news." This is the basis of Jesus' teaching: it is the good news about God's presence ruling in our lives and in our world.

What is the kingdom of God like? Is it a place where we go after

¹²⁹ Matthew 25: 35-36, 40.

¹³⁰ Matthew 25: 34.

¹³¹ Mark 1: 15.

we die¹³² or is it a reality that we can experience here and now? The apostle Paul tells his fellow Christians: “the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy inspired by the Holy Spirit.”¹³³ Indeed, it was Jesus who said, “Blessed are they who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”¹³⁴ In Jewish piety at the time of Jesus, heaven was a symbol for God, and here Jesus connects the kingdom of heaven with those who fight for justice in our world.

This does not mean that the needs of the body are unimportant, for Jesus also emphasized the important work of feeding the hungry and healing the sick. But living a just and fair life while seeking God’s presence in our world is the true foundation for human well-being. Jesus also says, “Set your mind on God’s kingdom and his justice before everything else, and all the rest will come to you as well.”¹³⁵ In her life, Dorothy Day kept trying to get closer in her relationship with God. At the same time, she could not take her eyes away from

¹³² Some hold this kind of opinion. For example, Lin Dao Liang (林道亮), a former president of the China Evangelical Seminary, criticized those people who interpret “the kingdom of God” to mean that Christians ought “to be concerned about social justice” as having a misunderstanding. In his view, it is naïve to encourage Christians to take part in any kind of society-reforming movement. He insists that Christians should focus instead on their relationship with Jesus and look forward to attaining God’s kingdom after death. See Lin Dao Liang, Guodu de zhenli 國度的真理 (The truth of the kingdom of God; Taipei: China Evangelical Seminary Press, 1988), 24.

¹³³ Romans 14: 17.

¹³⁴ Matthew 5: 10.

¹³⁵ Matthew 6: 33.

the injustice that she believed was the cause of poverty. Her charity combines both love of God and the fight for justice in this world.

Compassion is the ruling emotion: “The Works of Mercy are a wonderful stimulus to our growth in faith as well as love.”¹³⁶

The third reason that Dorothy Day was motivated to love others is based on the Christian symbolism of the Mystical Body of Christ. The term mysticism refers to religious traditions that seek as their goal union with ultimate reality, which may be imagined in different ways. For Christians, Christ as the incarnation of God is that ultimate reality. Christians believe that in the ritual of baptism the mortal person dies and is reborn in spiritual union with Christ, sharing in all his being. Hence, the apostle Paul identifies the community of the baptized as the body of Christ:

For Christ is like a single body with its many limbs and organs, which, many as they are, together make up one body. For indeed we were all brought into one body by baptism, in the one Spirit, whether we are Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free men.¹³⁷

In 1943 during World War II, Pope Pius XII issued his famous encyclical on the Mystical Body with the expressed purpose of uniting in spirit those divided by politics. His thinking involved his understanding of another important teaching of Jesus, who told his followers to distinguish between their obligations to the state and their obligations to God. Found in all three of the synoptic gospels, the text goes as follow: “Then Jesus said, ‘Pay Caesar what is due to

¹³⁶ Dorothy Day, Selected Writings, 99.

¹³⁷ I Corinthians 12: 12-13.

Caesar, and pay God what is due to God.”¹³⁸ Interpreting this teaching to mean that Christians should separate in their minds political and religious matters, the pope saw the Church as the body of Christ, an overarching unity, which could inspire peace through strict political impartiality. He insisted that the Church should not question or condemn the national loyalty of any one individual Christian, because such scrutiny lies beyond the scope of the Church’s spiritual authority. The Roman Catholic Church should be an “impartial witness to the war.”¹³⁹

The intention of Pius XII was to offer the image of the Mystical Body of Christ as a symbol of unity in a world rent by conflict. Nevertheless, the effect was that one could be a “good” Catholic and a “good” Nazi at the same time.

Dorothy Day’s interpretation was quite different and led her to oppose the Roman Catholic Church’s position in respect to the war. First, she insisted that World War II was “the rending of the Mystical Body of Christ.”¹⁴⁰ In her view, Jesus’ teaching distinguishing what is due Caesar and what is due God did not imply that Christians should be non-political. In fact, by emphasizing that the emperor was not God (during the period of the Roman empire the belief in the emperor’s divinity was more and more emphasized and Christians

¹³⁸ Mark 12: 17 and parallels (Matthew 22: 15-22 ; Luke 20: 1-8).

¹³⁹ Interpretations of the symbolic meaning of the Mystical Body of Christ have undergone change many times in different periods of Christian history. For a summary, consult William T. Cavanaugh’s “Dorothy Day and the Mystical Body of Christ in the Second World War,” Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement: Centenary Essays, 457-461.

¹⁴⁰ Catholic Worker (November 1949), 2.

were sometimes persecuted for not worshipping the emperor), the text could mean that no ruler, and no government, was beyond criticism. This interpretation encourages Christians to worship God and keep a critical eye on the actions of their governments.

Further, Dorothy Day even goes beyond the immediate Church in her understanding of this symbolism. Because all people in the world are potential members of the Body of Christ, no one person should deny his or her relationship with others and live in isolation. So, too, Day says, “We are bowed down with (Christ) under the weight of not only our own sins but the sins of each other, of the whole world. We are those who are sinned against and those who are sinning. We are identified with Him, one with Him. We are members of His Mystical Body.”¹⁴¹ As a Christian, Day insisted that it was her duty to serve those in any kind of need, no matter what the problem: material want, spiritual emptiness, or even political oppression.

The symbolism of the Mystical Body of Christ also supported Day’s belief in the personal nature of charity. As individual members of the Body of Christ, Christians must follow Christ’s example: “It was the spirit of personal responsibility...that held the answer to social problems. Christians ought not to think in terms of what the State or the Church should do, but of what they could do themselves.”¹⁴² Both Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin understood this individual

¹⁴¹ Dorothy Day, From Union Square to Rome (Silver Spring, Md.: Preservation of the Faith Press, 1938), 12. See also William T. Cavanaugh’s “Dorothy Day and the Mystical Body of Christ in the Second World War,” Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement: Centenary Essays, 462.

¹⁴² Dorothy Day, Selected Writings, xxvi.

responsibility as part of Christian personalism.

When talking about the Mystical Body of Christ, Day emphasized the importance of grace: charity is not the product of human effort but rather a fruit of the grace of Christ, whose Spirit works within people. Each person is a “tool” that the Holy Spirit takes up and uses to love other people. For Day, charity is not social work; it is spiritual discipline. “This work of ours toward a new heaven and a new earth shows a correlation between the material and the spiritual, and, of course, recognizes the primacy of the spiritual...Hence the leaders of the work, and as many as we can induce to join us, must to go daily to Mass, to receive food for the soul.”¹⁴³ Daily participation in the sacramental life of the Church allows the spirit of God to guide the Christian in charitable living.

So the Eucharist is the linchpin that connects Dorothy Day and her work to God’s living power. This sacrament symbolizes that God’s grace is available to all who desire it and that it is found everywhere in the world (even in the humblest things, such as food and drink): At the Last Supper, Jesus “took bread, and having said the blessing he broke it and gave it to them, with the words: ‘Take this; this is my body.’ Then he took a cup, and having offered thanks to God he gave it to them; and they all drank from it. And he said, ‘This is my blood, the blood of the new covenant, shed for many.’”¹⁴⁴ In the Gospel according to John, the symbolism of the last supper is interpreted further. Jesus is the heavenly manna. This refers back to the story of

¹⁴³ *Catholic Worker* (February 1940), 7.

¹⁴⁴ Mark 14: 22-24 and parallels (Matthew 26:20-29; Luke 22: 14-23).

the Israelites, ancestors of the Jews, who survived in the desert because God nightly sent down bread (manna) for them to eat. John emphasizes that our spirits need spiritual food (Christ's spirit) as much as our bodies do (manna, or bread). "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."¹⁴⁵ By participating in the Eucharist daily, Dorothy Day received this spiritual food. She felt that as a member of the Mystical Body of Christ she also harbored within herself the Holy Spirit, guiding her and sanctifying her works. Indeed, because of this sacramental foundation, all of her charitable actions were the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Only the individual person can receive the Holy Spirit in the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist. God needs people, individual persons, in order for God's love (agape) to enter into the world and in this way transform it into God's kingdom. That's why Peter Maurin oftentimes said, "Charity is personal. Charity is love."¹⁴⁶

In addition, if the true meaning of charity is loving others, this means that getting rid of poverty is not the primary goal anymore. And, of course, the action shouldn't be evaluated according to standards of efficiency.

But there could be still another question: As a Christian, how does one know what one should do and how to do it? Dorothy Day's answer was pithy, "Do what comes to hand. Whatsoever thy hand

¹⁴⁵ John 6: 53.

¹⁴⁶ Dorothy Day, The Long Loneliness, 179.

finds to do, do it with all thy might. After all, God is with us.”¹⁴⁷ This she learned from the French saint, Thérèse of Lisieux. According to Thérèse, “no act, however apparently insignificant, is without meaning when done [with] the awareness of God’s loving presence.”¹⁴⁸ Thérèse named her own understanding of how to be a Christian the Little Way. It is “the way of absolute abandonment of ourselves to the love and mercy of God, trusting that God will sustain us in all that we are and do.”¹⁴⁹ She felt that she could be a tool of God in the world. Since she was a tool, she should surrender herself and obey God’s will in all things, big and small. Dorothy Day shares her understanding of the life of the saint when she says, “[Thérèse] died saying, ‘Love alone matters.’ She died saying that she did not regret having given herself up to love. Her secret is generally called the Little Way...she called it little because it partakes of the simplicity of a child, a very little child, in its attitude of abandonment, of acceptance.”¹⁵⁰

Dorothy Day wondered how it was that St. Thérèse could surrender herself so completely to God’s will? “What kind of a saint was this who felt that she had to practice heroic charity in eating what was put in front of her, in taking medicine, enduring cold and heat, restraint.”¹⁵¹ The answer lies in Thérèse’s conviction that God is

¹⁴⁷ Dorothy Day, Selected Writings, 64.

¹⁴⁸ James Allaire, “Roots of the Catholic Worker Movement: Saints and Philosophers who Influenced Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin. Saint Therese of Lisieux inspired Dorothy Day,” Houston Catholic Worker, 16/3 (1996), 2.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Dorothy Day, Therese (Springfield: Templegate Publishers, 1979), 154.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., viii.

present even in life's most trivial moments, that is, in those areas of life that seem obscure or meaningless. For her, God does not reserve Himself for the great and momentous but stays close to people in their daily lives. The Little Way provides an ordinary discipline by means of which all can become saints. Day agrees, "We are all called to be saints, St. Paul says...we might get used to recognizing the fact that there is some of the saint in all of us."¹⁵² Day followed St. Thérèse's Little Way, seeking to express the love of God in "what comes to hand."

Just as for Thérèse "love alone matters," for Dorothy Day, "love is the measure." Charity—actions that are grounded in God's love flowing through the Christian—is not just social work. For Dorothy Day acts of charity are part of her own spiritual discipline. Further, at the center of all of her charitable work lies her faith that "After all, God is with us."

III. Tan Si Tong

The Life of Tan Si Tong. Born in Liuyang (瀏陽), near Changsha (長沙), the capital of Hunan Province, Tan Si Tong (1864–1898) grew up in a typical Confucian intellectual's family. His father, Tan Ji Xun (譚繼洵), belonged to the scholar gentry and served as governor of Hubei Province. Educated from the age of five to follow in

¹⁵² Dorothy Day, Selected Writings, 102-103.

his father's footsteps, Tan studied the Confucian canon with hopes of passing the state examination and becoming a government official.¹⁵³ This environment and education provided Tan with a system of principles designed to dictate his way of life, his ideas, and his beliefs. Tan was in training to lead the life of a typical scholar-official (士大夫).¹⁵⁴

Tan did not realize his father's expectations. He never succeeded in passing the state examinations, even though he spent more than ten years trying to achieve this goal.¹⁵⁵ When he failed the first time at the age of eighteen, his father was very disappointed in him and so pushed him to study harder and harder. This growing pressure angered Tan so much that he wrote the word Preposterous! in the textbook to express his resentment.

Confucian tradition since the time of Zhu Xi emphasizes the Four

¹⁵³ Tan Si Tong, "The Short Memoir of a Thirty-Year-Old" (三十自記), in The Collected Works of Tan Si Tong, 205. See also Wang Yue, A Study of Tan Si Tong's Reformative Thought, 20.

¹⁵⁴ Lin Zai Jue, Tan Si Tong, 3. Shi (士) means scholar and daifu (大夫) means government official. In Chinese society prior to the republican revolution (1911), these people occupied a higher status and were looked up to by the common people. The life of a scholar-official should reflect the words of Zi Xia (子夏), "The student, having completed his learning, should apply himself to be an official" (The Analects of Confucius 19.13: 學而優則仕).

¹⁵⁵ In "The Short Memoir of a Thirty-Year-Old," Tan Si Tong mentions this experience: "[I]took part in the state examinations six times in ten years" (The Collected Works of Tan Si Tong, 206). In another place he says, "[I] took part in the state examinations nine times in ten years, and three times nearly succeeded" (Lin Zai Jue, Tan Si Tong, 6).

Books: the Analects of Confucius, the Works of Mencius, The Great Learning, and The Doctrine of the Mean. Compared to the Four Books, Tan preferred the writings attributed to Mo Zi (墨子). Above all, he was drawn to Mo Zi's idea of all-embracing love as well as the teachings on human equality and the emphasis on the practical application of such ideals.¹⁵⁶

Actually, the greatest calamity in Tan's life was not his failure in passing the state examinations. When he was twelve, Tan traveled with his mother to Beijing in order to visit his elder sister, who had contracted diphtheria. Soon Tan, too, was infected; he fell into a coma for three days during which time he nearly died. While he was sick, his elder sister died. Then, during the next four days Tan's mother and his elder brother both died one after the other. This "three deaths in five days" depressed Tan very deeply. The experience had a profound influence on his later life; not only did no one come to comfort the young boy, but also, from then on, his father's concubine was abusive towards him.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ Wang Yue, A Study of Tan Si Tong's Reformatory Thought, 25.

¹⁵⁷ When Tan was 26 years old, he recalled his earlier life, "I suffered miseries when I was teenager. There were three deaths in five days. My relatives and friends passed away year by year" (少更多難，五日三喪，惟親與故，歲以凋謝). See Lin Zai Jue, Tan Si Tong, 3.

Further, in the forward to The Theory of Ren, he comments, "I suffered the loss of my family members frequently ever since I was a teenager. This pain was unbearable. I nearly died several times, but in the end I survived" (吾自少壯，遍遭綱倫之厄，涵非其苦，殆非生人

所任受，瀕死累矣，而卒不死). See The Collected Works of Tan Si Tong, 3. When Tan

Suffering this great loss, Tan's reaction was one of commitment to help others: "From then on, I began to devalue my own life more and more. I thought that apart from serving others my life was useless."¹⁵⁸ Perhaps some may find it may be hard to image a teenager arriving at this kind of conclusion (to serve others and ignore himself) when encountering such pain. However, whatever real reaction Tan had at that time, the rest of his life, indeed, demonstrates that he paid nearly all of his attention to the needs of others—other people, his society and country as a whole—before thinking of himself. Therefore, we should accept his statement that this suffering aroused his motive for charity.

In 1877 when Tan Si Tong was 13, he traveled with his father from Beijing to Liuyang to visit his mother's grave. There he met Tang Cai Chang (唐才常, 1867–1900), who would become his closest friend. The two young men shared the same hobby of martial arts and the same idealistic desire to save the world. For the rest of Tan's life, Tang's appearance pops up everywhere.¹⁵⁹

was 25 years old, his dearest brother Tan Si Xiang (譚嗣襄) died suddenly; and then the next year saw the death of his dear nephew. These events deepened his sadness, too.

¹⁵⁸ 由是益輕其生命，以為塊然軀殼，除利人之外，復何足惜？Tan Si Tong, "Forward" to The Theory of Ren, in The Collected Works of Tan Si Tong, 3-4.

¹⁵⁹ Tan saw Tang as his one and only true friend: "For the past twenty years I have had one friend who would die for me as I would also for him—Ba Cheng" (二十年刎頸交，絨丞一人而已). See Wang Yue, A Study of Tan Si Tong's Reformatory Thought, 25. Ba Cheng was Tang Cai Chang's childhood name. The two young men frequently worked together, as for

Both Tan and Tang were attracted to the Chinese martial arts. In fact, among Tan's ancestors there were many men who were famous for their skills as martial artists.¹⁶⁰ Tan himself seems to have been quite good at martial arts: "When I was young, my fighting skills were not bad; when I grew up, I was good at archery and especially enjoyed horse riding."¹⁶¹ Not only was Tan a skilled martial artist, when he was still a teenager he made friends with some famous "knight-errants."¹⁶² In addition to teaching him to better his martial skills, these men also taught him the values and behavior of chivalry. Tan sometimes even viewed himself as a knight-errant: "I liked to draw my sword and roar, 'Do you want to test the many chivalrous bones in this body?'"¹⁶³

example when Tan took charge of the reform movement in Hunan Province. In the end, when Empress Dowager Ci Xi had Tan executed, Tang grieved publicly, vowing to avenge his death. Two years later (in 1900), Tang led his own army in revolt against the government; but he, too, failed. About to be executed, he wrote a poem in which he says, "I offered the only thing I have, my seven-foot-long body and my blood sprinkled on the palace in memory of my old friend" (七尺微軀酬故友，滿腔熱血澆皇宮). Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Lin Zai Jue, Tan Si Tong, 3.

¹⁶¹ 幼嫻技擊，身手尚便，長弄弧矢，尤樂馳騁。See Lin Zai Jue, Tan Si Tong, 5.

¹⁶² The most famous knight-errant (俠) was Dadao Wangwu (大刀王五). There are still many legends about him circulating today. Basically, he was a folk hero who carried a huge knife on his back to help the needy and punish the wicked. The common people called him "the righteous knight-errant." See Wang Yue, A Study of Tan Si Tong's Reformatory Thought, 23.

¹⁶³ 拔劍欲高歌：有幾根俠骨，禁得揉搓！"Gazing on the Ocean Tides from Afar" (望海潮), in The Collected Works of Tan Si Tong, 277.

Why was it that Tan described himself as a man of chivalry? In Chinese folk tradition, the ethics of chivalry (俠義倫理) offer an alternative to the moral system of the scholar-official. One important trait of this ethics is that chivalrous behavior must always be on the side of justice.¹⁶⁴ In the words of Li De Yu (李德裕), a prime minister during the Tang Dynasty, “Justice cannot be realized without the help of the knight-errant; and the knight-errant is not truly a man of chivalry unless his actions are in the service of justice.”¹⁶⁵

Tan Si Tong quite understood this ethical system and admired it: “Any aspiring young man should take for himself as models both Chen She (陳涉) and Yang Xuan Gan (楊玄感) and prepare himself to be in the service of a sage. He can then face death without regret. If this is not possible, then he should seek to become a knight-errant, in which case he can represent the multitude, expressing what they want and encouraging people to be brave. That is also a good way to correct the evils in society.”¹⁶⁶ Tan knew that the duty of the man of chivalry was

¹⁶⁴ Kang Wan Ling 康婉玲, “Tang Dai xiayi wenxue yanjiu” 唐代俠義文學研究 (A study of the chivalrous literature of the Tang Dynasty; M.A. thesis, Feng Chia University, 2002).

¹⁶⁵ Li De Yu, “Hao xia lun” 豪俠論 (A discussion of the knight-errant) in Quan tang wen 全唐文 (Collected writings from the Tang Dynasty). See further Kang Wan Ling, A Study of the Chivalrous Literature of the Tang Dynasty, 95.

¹⁶⁶ 志士仁人求為陳涉楊玄感，以供聖人之驅除，死無憾焉。若其機無可乘，則莫若為任俠，亦足以伸民氣，倡勇敢之風，是亦撥亂之具也。Tan Si Tong, The Theory of Ren,

to help the disadvantaged minority and speak for them. He even identified the ethics of the knight-errant as ren: “There are two schools of Mo Zi. One is chivalry, which I call ren...The other involves investigating the root of things (格致). This I call knowledge. Whether ren or knowledge, the scholars of today should not ignore either one.”¹⁶⁷ As mentioned above, Tan respected Mo Zi for his teaching about all-embracing love and human equality. In Tan’s view, loving people is the highest moral dictate for any person. Those who adhere to the teachings of Moism (墨家) practice mercy by means of their chivalrous actions, so for Tan this is ren, or human-heartedness. When he learned martial arts from Dadao Wangwu and when he was friends with Tang Cai Chang, he was practicing the martial techniques and the corresponding attitudes of the knight-errant.

No matter how attractive the life of the knight-errant was to Tan, it was in a traditional Confucian family that he lived, after all. His father’s strong expectation that Tan pass the state examinations caused the father to seek out good teachers for his son, again and again. When Tan Si Tong was nine, he met his first important teacher,

in The Collected Works of Tan Si Tong, 61. Chen She (deceased 208 BCE) was the first man to call the people to rebel against the emperor of the Qin Dynasty. Yang Xuan Gan (deceased 613 CE) was the first nobleman to respond when the common people sought to overthrow the emperor of the Shui Dynasty.

¹⁶⁷ 墨有兩派，一曰「任俠」，吾所謂仁也...一曰「格致」，吾所謂學也。仁而學，學

而仁，今之士其勿為高遠哉！ See Tan Si Tong, “Forward” to The Theory of Ren, in The Collected Works of Tan Si Tong, 3. In Tan’s day, scholars used the expression “investigating the root of things” for the science and mathematics of the West.

Ouyang Zhong Hu (歐陽中鵠, 1849–1911). Ouyang held great respect for a famous scholar of the Ming Dynasty, Wang Fu Zhi (王夫之, 1619–1692). He talked a great deal about Wang to Tan, and as a result, Tan received a new idea of cosmology: it was referred to as the theory of the relationship between Dao and objects (道器論).¹⁶⁸ But it's obvious that this cosmology could not have been easy for a nine-year-old boy to comprehend. Tan really began to understand Wang Fu Zhi's thought when he was twenty-five and studied with another important teacher, Liu Ren Xi (劉人熙, 1844–1919). Liu was an expert on the thought of Wang Fu Zhi, who interpreted the cosmology of Zhang Zai. Tan said that he was not aware of the weakness of the scholarship during his age until he met Liu. From then on, his eyes were opened and he saw how deep was the thought of Zhang Zai and how refined was Wang Fu Zhi's interpretation.¹⁶⁹ Thus, it was from Zhang Zai that Tan borrowed a monistic view of qi (氣一元論) as he himself developed a theory about why it is necessary and possible to love all people.

In Tan's day, Chinese intellectuals could no longer ignore the existence of the Western countries. Each one was forced to choose whether or not to accept Western influence. Tan Si Tong's reaction to

¹⁶⁸ For details concerning this cosmology, please consult "Religious Foundations of Tan Si Tong's Charity" (below).

¹⁶⁹ 始識永嘉之淺中弱植，俶覩橫渠之深思果力，聞衡陽王子精義之學。See "Letters to

Liu Song Fu, 1" (致劉淞芙書一), in The Collected Works of Tan Si Tong, 376.

Western culture was complex and varied. Until he was twenty, he insisted that Chinese culture was superior in every aspect to all others.¹⁷⁰ But during his twenties, this attitude gradually changed. He began to admit the value of certain forms of Western knowledge, primarily science and technology. During this period, he even criticized those Chinese intellectuals who refused to learn about the empirical sciences.¹⁷¹

It was also during this period that Tan met his third important teacher, the British missionary John Fryer (1839–1928).¹⁷² Although John Fryer was not among the teachers sought out by Tan's father,

¹⁷⁰ Tan Si Tong, "Views on the Management of World Affairs" (治言), in The Collected Works of Tan Si Tong, 103-109. Tan wrote this essay when he was 21 years old.

¹⁷¹ Tan Si Tong, "Notes from the Studio of the Chrysanthemum-Inkslab's Shadow," (石菊影廬筆識), in The Collected Works of Tan Si Tong, 213-241. This is a collection of Tan's writings before his thirtieth birthday. Concerning his changed attitude towards Western knowledge, consult Zhang Hao's The Martyr's Spirit and Critical Consciousness, 71-86.

¹⁷² John Fryer (傅蘭雅 Fu Lan Ya) played an important role helping Chinese intellectuals learn about Western culture and knowledge. Fryer served in the translation department of the Chinese government, translating hundreds of scientific books into Chinese. He founded a private college for the study of science (格致書院), a scientific journal (格致匯編), and a book publishing company (格致書室) to make scientific knowledge available to scholars generally. See Liu Guang Ding 劉廣定, "Fu Lan Ya: shi jiu shi ji kexue chuan ru zhongguo de gongchen" 傅蘭雅—十九世紀科學傳入中國的功臣 (John Fryer: a meritorious statesman introduces science in nineteenth-century China), Science Monthly, 142 (October 1981), 10.

the importance of Fryer to Tan was not less than his other teachers. When Tan Si Tong was 29, he met John Fryer for the first time in Shanghai. Later he visited him again twice.

Tan received two benefits from his knowledge of Fryer: First, because of Fryer's many translations he was able to read and systematically study numerous scientific books. Second, Fryer gave him a copy of a book by Henry Wood (1834–1908) that had as its Chinese title: The Way to Heal the Mind and Prevent Illness (治心免病法).¹⁷³ The former helped Tan to open his mind to Western culture and the latter led him to notice the workings and power of the mind, the understanding of which played a central role in The Theory of Ren later on.

Tan met John Fryer for the third time when he was 32, at which time he also got to know Liang Qi Chao (梁啟超, 1873–1929) and Kang You Wei (康有為, 1858–1927). The acquaintance of these three men eventually resulted in one of the more world-shaking events in late nineteenth-century China.

How was it that Tan Si tong had the opportunity to associate with such various scholars? Perhaps he ought to thank his father for

¹⁷³ This was a translation of Wood's Ideal Suggestion through Mental Photography. After reading this book, Tan was very much interested in the power of thinking and also Christianity. See Tan Si Tong, "Letters to My Teacher Ouyang Bian Jiang, 22" (上歐陽瓣薑師書二十二), in The Collected Works of Tan Si Tong, 316-320. See further Zhang Hao, The Martyr's Spirit and Critical Consciousness, 65-66.

pushing him to take part in every state examination over a period of ten years. Even though he failed the tests, he met good teachers and traveled all over China.¹⁷⁴ On those long journeys, Tan not only met different intellectuals but also witnessed the various sufferings that the common people faced. He was very angry at what he saw, and he blamed the government:

The jar (ying) has no grain (su).
The sack (nang) has no rice (mi).
The house is empty but for its four walls
And the people are starving to death.
Starving to death? Who cares!
Poppies (minang, also “rice-sack”) could be food.
Fields of poppies (yingsu, also “jar of grain”) have been
Planted for thousands of miles.
But the poppy (nang) is not rice (mi);
The poppy (ying) is not grain (su).
The people are feeble and sick.¹⁷⁵

In this poem, Tan satirizes the government for neglecting its duty. Both yingsu and minang mean poppy. But if we divide yingsu into its two component characters—ying and su—then the meaning is “jar of grain.” Minang is similar. When it is divided into mi and nang, it means “bag of rice.” So here, Tan blames the officials¹⁷⁶ who ordered the farmers to plant fields of opium poppies instead of food. But

¹⁷⁴ “I took part in the state examinations six times in ten years...I traveled thousands of miles, in total, eighty thousand miles. If I had a rope this long, it could encircle the globe.” Tan Si Tong, “The Short Memoir of a Thirty-Year-Old,” in The Collected Works of Tan Si Tong, 206.

¹⁷⁵ “Song of the Poppies” (罌粟米囊謠), in The Collected Works of Tan Si Tong, 462.

¹⁷⁶ See “Letters to My Teacher Ouyang Bian Jiang, 22” (上歐陽辨臺師書二十二), in The Collected Works of Tan Si Tong, 316-320.

without grains and rice what can the people eat? So it was that his travels awakened in Tan Si Tong compassion for the suffering of the common people and this motivated him to seek out a way to serve his country.

In 1894, the First Sino-Japanese War broke out. It lasted only a year, but when a modernized Japan easily gained victory over China, it was clear that the Qing Dynasty was weak and vulnerable. This event was a huge shock to many Chinese intellectuals; among them, Tan.¹⁷⁷ He describes his reaction to this national disaster as one of “wordless heartbreak.”¹⁷⁸ It was then that he decided to “give up everything apart from concentrating my mind on study and thinking about this deep and painful wound.”¹⁷⁹ At this time, Tan thoroughly abandoned his old ideas about the superiority of Chinese culture and opened his mind to embrace various kinds of knowledge and different ways of thinking, especially from the West.

As Tan Si Tong reached his thirtieth year, he felt that it was about time to end his studies and begin serving his country. But what could he do? For a traditional Confucian intellectual, being a government official was the most direct and convenient way to serve one’s country and its people. But Tan had never passed the prerequisite examinations that would have qualified him for such a

¹⁷⁷ Zhang Hao, The Martyr’s Spirit and Critical Consciousness, 17.

¹⁷⁸ “Letter to Bei Yuan Zheng” (報貝元徵書), in The Collected Works of Tan Si Tong, 389.

¹⁷⁹ “Letters to My Teacher Ouyang Bian Jiang, 2” (上歐陽瓣薑師書二), in The Collected Works of Tan Si Tong, 297.

post. What other path could he follow? During this period, he tried to begin his first charitable action: he developed the plans for establishing a private school in his home province. He also wrote many articles and letters trying to convince his friends that it was time for change.

In July of 1896, Tan Si Tong had a new opportunity to fulfill his ideal of serving the people. His father donated money to the state, and in return, Tan Si Tong was offered an official position as alternate magistrate in Jinling (金陵). Thus, Tan began his only one stint as an official bureaucrat in the Chinese government; it was a short and bitter experience. Because he did not get the position by his own merits but rather through his father's donation, Tan's colleagues ignored him and made clear their disdain for him.

Meanwhile, as Tan faced his colleagues' disregard, he remembered the idea that the power of the mind could transform reality. In other words, in his view, the right kind of education was the foundation for any kind of reform. Therefore, he began to compose his most important work, The Theory of Ren. This book became his guidebook for improving his country.¹⁸⁰

The unfortunate experience of official life ended in September of the next year, when Tan Si Tong resigned the position. Soon thereafter he received an invitation from the governor of Hunan Province, Chen Bao Zhen, to take charge of and administer the academic and educational system throughout Hunan Province. This opportunity

¹⁸⁰ Wang Yue, A Study of Tan Si Tong's Reformatory Thought, 37.

rekindled hope in Tan's heart. But the result was the opposite of what he worked for. The reform movement, under his leadership, was shut down within one year. This was due to the opposition of local scholars, who did not want change.

During this period, not only were intellectuals trying to figure out the causes of China's problems and how to treat them, the young emperor, Guang Xu, was also focusing on the same issues. Therefore, in 1898 the Guang Xu Emperor issued an imperial edict entitled "Definite National Policy" (明定國是詔), in which he declared the beginning of a stated-supported reform movement. In this edict, he encouraged intellectuals and officials to provide their suggestions for reform and to recommend talented people to help the government. As a result, Tan was recommended to the emperor by Xu Zhi Jing (徐致靖), the father of his friend Xu Ren Zhu (徐仁鑄). Thereupon, the emperor sent Tan Si Tong a letter in which he commanded him, "Come to the capital without delay!"

On 20 July 1898 the spirited young man arrived in Beijing, his heart filled with great expectations. The emperor welcomed him and conferred on him together with three other men—Yang Rui (楊銳, 1875–1898), Liu Guang Di (劉光第, 1859–1898), and Lin Xu (林旭, 1875–1898)—both title and position: Grand Council Secretaries of the Fourth Rank (四品卿銜軍機章京).¹⁸¹ Basically, they focused on

¹⁸¹ There were nine ranks of officials in the Chinese imperial government. The lowest was the

modernization (Westernization) of the educational system and the state examinations as well as removing from state employment sinecures (that is, positions involving title and salary without actual work). This they achieved without consulting the members of the Grand Council.

During the Qing Dynasty, the Grand Council (軍機處) was an important policy-making body. Originally in charge of military affairs, gradually it became the emperor's personal cabinet. But no matter how important it was, the Grand Council remained an informal policy-making body in the inner court. The members of the council were twofold: Some were ministers (軍機大臣), who advised the emperor; the others were administrative secretaries (軍機章京), who carried out the imperial edicts.

Arriving in Beijing Tan felt optimistic that finally he could contribute to the improvement of his country. But soon Tan learned that the situation was more complex than he imagined. The reformers were in the middle of a power struggle between the young emperor and the faction that controlled the Grand Council, which rejected any reforms that involved acceptance of Western influence. Guang Xu sought to act without the council by working with the reformers alone; the council would not accept this and appealed to the Empress

ninth rank (九品) and the highest rank was the first (一品). Generally, administrative secretaries belonged to the fourth rank. Because the Grand Council was the privy council of the emperor, Guang Xu could give position and title to Tan, even though Tan had never qualified for an official position.

Dowager to intervene.

On 29 July Yang Rui received a note from the emperor saying, “I have lost my throne. I order Kang You Wei and you four together with your associates to save me as soon as possible.”¹⁸² On 3 August, Tan tried to convince Yuan Shi Kai (袁世凱, 1859–1916), who was a colonel in command of 7000 soldiers in Tianjin (天津), to rescue the emperor, but Yuan betrayed him to the Empress Dowager Ci Xi. The emperor was confined to house arrest in the Forbidden Palace, where he stayed until his death in 1908. The Empress Dowager ruled in his stead as regent. This event is referred to as the Coup of 1898 ((戊戌政變)).

Loyal to country and to emperor, Tan felt helpless. His efforts to save the emperor and serve the people had failed. On 7 August, Ci Xi commanded the arrest of Kang You Wei for treason, but both Kang and Liang had already fled to Hong Kong and Japan respectively. Tan’s decision differed from that of his colleagues. He stayed in his house and waited his arrest, no matter how his friends (including Dadao Wangwu) sought to persuade him otherwise. Tan Si Tong had studied the revolutions of France and the United States, and he believed that revolution required sacrifice: “There is no success in a country’s reform movement without some bloodshed. Because in China no one has yet sacrificed his life for our reforms, the country

¹⁸² 朕位幾不保，命康與四卿及同志速法籌救。Liang Qi Chao, “Biography of Tan Si Tong”

(譚嗣同傳), in The Collected Works of Tan Si Tong, 523.

remains weak and vulnerable. So I want to be the first to offer up my blood for my country”¹⁸³

On 28 September 1898, Tan Si Tong was publicly executed. His life, much like a meteor—bright but short—suddenly ended.¹⁸⁴

Charitable Works in the Life of Tan Si Tong. Tan Si Tong does not write much about his private life. Therefore, we only know his public charitable actions. And these are threefold: The first one is his writing of The Theory of Ren; the second charitable action is work to reform the educational system in Hunan Province; and the third is his act of self-sacrifice for the failure of the Guang Xu Emperor’s reform movement.¹⁸⁵

The desire to help others began, as mentioned above, when as a boy he survived diphtheria but rapidly lost three members of his family to this disease. Still, it was not until China lost the First Sino-Japanese War that desire was turned into action: he wrote The Theory

¹⁸³ 各國變法，無不從流血而成，今日中國未聞有因變法而流血者，此國之所以不昌也。有之，請自嗣同始。Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ There were five other persons executed at the same time as Tan for the same reason. They were Yang Rei, Liu Guang Di, Lin Xu, Yang Shen Xiu (楊深秀, 1849–1898), and Kang Guang Ren (康廣仁, 1867–1898). They are often referred to as the Six Gentlemen of the Hundred Days’ Reform (戊戌六君子).

¹⁸⁵ Why do we view these three events as charity? Because we believe that in each case Tan was influenced by Confucian teachings about the intellectual’s duty to love others. See “Religious Foundations of Tan Si Tong’s Charity” (below).

of Ren. Liang Qi Cao describes Tan's reason for writing this book: "[Tan] wanted to synthesize science, philosophy, and religion in order to develop a theory that would be of use in the lives of all people."¹⁸⁶ As Liang points out in his forward to Tan's Theory of Ren, "The intended purpose of The Theory of Ren was to integrate the world's wisdom in order to save its people."¹⁸⁷

This was an important idea for Tan. He believed that the book itself would benefit humankind. According to Zhang Hao, this is based on the Chinese belief that was generally accepted at the time that any kind of reform must begin with "thought transformation" (思想改造).¹⁸⁸ This means that social change has as its foundation the change in the way that all the members of the society actually think. That's why Tan always emphasized the power of thought in his book.

The Theory of Ren has two basic parts. The first part is his philosophy of reform; and the second part consists of his ideas about specific issues, primarily in politics and social ethics. In this book Tan draws on numerous sources from Buddhist, Christian, and Chinese traditions as well as modern science.¹⁸⁹ Summarizing his thought, one

¹⁸⁶ Liang Qi Chao 梁啟超, Qing Dai xueshu gailun 清代學術概論 (A general introduction to the scholarship of the Qing Dynasty; Taipei: Commercial Press, 1994), 151.

¹⁸⁷ Liang Qi Chao, "Forward," The Theory of Ren, in The Collected Works of Tan Si Tong, 515.

¹⁸⁸ Zhang Hao, The Martyr's Spirit and Critical Consciousness, 136.

¹⁸⁹ "Anyone who likes to study the theory of ren should first study books about Huayen [the Avatamsaka school of Buddhism], Chan Buddhism, and Faxiang [the Yogachara school of Buddhism]. In addition, one should study the Christian New Testament along with Western

finds that he refers to three qualities of ren: interconnectedness; ongoing and eternal renewal; and equality (仁—通—日新—平等).¹⁹⁰ According to his view, ren is both the origin of the whole universe and the power that motivates all ethical action. As the source of the universe, ren is both material and eternal; it neither increases nor ceases to exist. Instead, it simply acts through concentration and dispersion. All things on earth come into being as concentration of ren; they die when ren disperses. Here Tan Si Tong substitutes the term ren for Zhang Zai's interpretation of qi.

Since the world comes into being because of ren's concentration, all things are interconnected (通): "The very first meaning of ren is interconnectedness."¹⁹¹ Tan emphasizes that whereas the human

mathematics, natural sciences, and social sciences. From Chinese tradition, one should focus on The Book of Changes, the Spring and Autumn Annals, the Analects of Confucius, the Book of Rites, the Works of Mencius, and the writings of Zhuang Zi and Mo Zi, as well as the Records of the Historian. Finally, there are the writings of Tao Yuan Ming, Zhou Mao Shu,

Zhang Heng Qu, Lu Zi Jing, Wang Yang Ming, Wang Chuan Shan, and Huang Li Zhou" (凡

為仁學者，於佛書當通華嚴及心宗、相宗之書，於西書當通新約及算學、格致、社會

學之書，於中國當通易、春秋公羊傳、論語、禮記、孟子、莊子、墨子、史記及陶淵

明、周茂叔、張橫渠、陸子靜、王陽明、王船山、黃梨洲之書). Tan Si Tong, "Forward,"

to The Theory of Ren, in The Collected Works of Tan Si Tong, 3-4.

¹⁹⁰ Lin Zai Jue, Tan Si Tong, 35-40; Wang Yue, A Study of Tan Si Tong's Reformative Thought, 51-61.

¹⁹¹ 仁以通為第一義. "Definition number 1," The Theory of Ren, in The Collected Works of Tan Si Tong, 6.

being perceives reality through the lens of a separate self, in fact, humans are all interconnected and constantly influence each other. Moreover, because all come from the same source, we should do our best to communicate with others and work towards realizing the harmony of the universe.

Based on this understanding, Tan develops his two other main ideas. The first one is the idea of equality: “The manifestation of interconnectedness is equality.”¹⁹² All things have equal value because they have the same origin. Therefore, if we really want to communicate with others, we must treat them as our equals. The second idea describes reality as eternal and continually renewing itself. The universe continually undergoes concentration and dispersion, renewing daily all that exists. Tan suggests that this is a model for human life: “As described in the Book of Changes (易經), the law governing the universe’s movement is one of ongoing transformation, never stillness. The four seasons follow each other in time without any pause. As heaven acts, so too should humankind.”¹⁹³

Grounded in these ideas about reality, Tan continually offered his opinion of politics. If all of the people on earth are born equal, how is it possible to treat people differently? “The only way to realize

¹⁹² 通之象為平等. “Definition number 7,” *ibid.*

¹⁹³ 夫大易觀象，變動不居，四序相宜，匪用其故。故天以新為運，人以新為主. “Letter to Bei Yuan Zheng” (報貝元徵書), in The Collected Works of Tan Si Tong, 387.

equality is to abolish all discrimination.”¹⁹⁴ And in his view, the biggest example of discrimination in China is the relationship between the monarch and his subjects. Tan Si Tong has a theory about the origin of kingship:

In the beginning of human history, there was no such relationship as that of the monarch and his subjects. All were citizens. Because the people did not have the ability or the time to take care of others, they elected one person to be the ruler. The word elected means that it is not the ruler who chooses his people. The people select him...Since the ruler is selected by the people, they can also depose of him. The ruler serves the people, and the duty of the official is to help the ruler in this work.”¹⁹⁵

It is clear from this quote that for Tan the source of the king’s power lies with the people. They elect the ruler; therefore, the ruler is subject to them. Theoretically, Tan even went so far as to suggest that the system of a single ruler ought to be banished altogether: “If the monarchy were to be abolished, then the people would all be treated as equals, regardless of their prior status. This would lead to the establishment of both truth and justice in society, and the gap between the rich and the poor would disappear. The entire country

¹⁹⁴ 無對待，然後平等。“Definition number 21,” The Theory of Ren, in The Collected Works of Tan Si Tong, 7.

¹⁹⁵ 生民之初，本無所謂君臣，則皆民也。民不能相治，亦不暇治，於是共舉一民為君。夫曰共舉之，則非君擇民，而民擇君也...夫曰共舉之，則且必可共廢之。君也者，為民辦事者也；臣也者，助民辦事者也。The Theory of Ren, in The Collected Works of Tan Si Tong, 56.

would be like one big family; and every countryman, a family member.”¹⁹⁶

In addition to abolishing the system of one ruler, Tan criticized the traditional, Confucian social ethics, which prescribes five relationships (五倫): that between ruler and subject (君臣); that between father and child (父子); that between older and younger brother (兄弟); that between husband and wife (夫婦); and that between friends (朋友). In his view, this model dictating the appropriate human relationships should be abandoned except for the relationship between friends.¹⁹⁷ The reason for this assertion is the same as that for his political views: the hierarchal model violates the equality inherent in the principle of ren. Only the relationship between friends is based on equality and should be retained. His view of social relationships was quite radical in his time: “The son is a son of

¹⁹⁶ 君主廢則貴賤平；公理明則貧富均。千里萬里，一家一人。 The Theory of Ren, in The Collected Works of Tan Si Tong, 85. The interesting thing we should notice here is that even though Tan insisted that the system of the monarchy should be abolished, he could not explain what system he would support in its place. He just emphasized that the right way to save the country was through a reform led by intellectuals (士). Consult Wang Yue, A Study of Tan Si Tong’s Reformative Thought, 79-80.

¹⁹⁷ Tan Si Tong, The Theory of Ren, in The Collected Works of Tan Si Tong, 19. The teaching of the five relationships is elaborated in The Works of Mencius 3.1.4.8: “There is affection between father and son; there is justice between ruler and subject; there is difference of duty between husband and wife; there is the proper order between elder and younger; there is loyalty between friends” (大父子有親，君臣有義，夫婦有別，長幼有序，朋友有信).

Heaven, and the father also is a son of Heaven. The father does not get the status of father by his own efforts, but rather from Heaven.

Therefore, son and father should be equal.”¹⁹⁸ Not only does he see father and son as equals, perhaps even more astonishing is his conviction and men and women have equal value:

“The attitude that evaluates the male higher than female is the most revolting and indecent rule...both male and female share in the essence of the universe and have the same limitless virtue. They are equal.”¹⁹⁹

Having offered a simple introduction to Tan Si Tong’s The Theory of Ren, the next question to consider is as follows: What kind of success did this charitable action have? It is clear that this book did, indeed, influence some people in the years that followed Tan’s death, the most famous of them being Mao Ze Dong (毛澤東).²⁰⁰ Mao Ze Dong refers to Tan’s book many times in his letters to friends. Further, he shared many of Tan’s ideas, especially “the power of the mind.” Perhaps it is too bad that Tan felt that the book alone was not

¹⁹⁸ 子為天之子，父亦為天之子，父非人所得而襲取也，平等也。 The Theory of Ren, in The Collected Works of Tan Si Tong, 65.

¹⁹⁹ 故重男輕女者，至暴亂無禮之法也...苟明男女同為天地之菁英，同有無量之盛德大業，平等相均。 The Theory of Ren, in The Collected Works of Tan Si Tong, 19.

²⁰⁰ Zhang Hao, The Martyr’s Spirit and Critical Consciousness, 137-138. In addition to Mao, Tan and his book influenced many revolutionaries during the late Qing Dynasty. See further, Li Ze Hou 李澤厚, Zhongguo jindai sixiangshi lun 中國近代思想史論 (A history of modern Chinese thought; Taipei: Storm & Stress Publishing, 1990), 222.

enough without some kind of corresponding action, otherwise he might have saved his life rather than sacrifice it as a way to support reform.

The Chinese were greatly shocked when they suffered defeat at the hands of the Japanese in the First Sino-Japanese War. Tan Si Tong and many other intellectuals realized that study and discussion were no longer adequate to the situation; they needed to do something to strengthen their country. Immediately after defeat in 1895, Tan wrote to his teacher Ouyang Zhong Hu, inviting him join him in a plan to reform the country. Tan's goal was to overthrow the traditions of China with Western knowledge: "I carefully inspected the change of the world in recent decades, trying to figure out the law that governs change. Then I examined this in ancient texts and consulted with many wise scholars. As a result, I realize the trend of the world will not be changed by our ancient traditions. Therefore, I must be the first man to announce this new trend and write a blueprint for giving up our old traditions and reforming our country in the Western way."²⁰¹ His blueprints included plans for building new schools, abolishing the Confucian state examination system, establishing local assemblies, organizing a new army and navy, reforming the tax

²⁰¹ 詳考數十年之世變，而切究其事理，遠驗之故籍，近咨之深識之士...因見於大化之所趨，風氣之所溺，非守文因舊所能挽回，不恤首發大難，畫此盡變西法之策。"Letters to My Teacher Ouyang Bian Jiang, 2" (上歐陽瓣薑師書二), in The Collected Works of Tan Si Tong, 297.

system, and so forth.²⁰² Realizing the difficulty of accomplishing all his plans at once, Tan chose to begin with the most important one, the building of new schools and the modernization of education. He sought to found a college of mathematics in his hometown of Liuyang. The plan got the support of both Ouyang Zhong Hu and Tang Cai Chang, who collected donations from their friends and eventually established a College of Mathematics (算學館). This is the first fruit of Tan's charity and this fruit had a huge influence on developments elsewhere in China.²⁰³

In October of 1895, Chen Bao Zhen was made governor of Hunan Province. As a new governor, Chen viewed the modernization of Hunan as his main responsibility, and he hoped also that Hunan could become a model for all of China. To this end, Chen invited Tan Si Tong to take charge of planning Hunan's modernization. Tan viewed this as a great opportunity to realize his ideas as outlined in The Theory of Ren, so he accepted the governor's invitation and in November of 1897 returned to live and work in the capital of his home province, Changsha.

Education still was his primary focus at this time. In addition to establishing modern schools for children, he established various educational organizations for the general public: a College for Political

²⁰² Ibid. See also Wang Yue, A Study of Tan Si Tong's Reformatory Thought, 34.

²⁰³ According to Tang Cai Chang, "Xiang Province was a new beginning for China; Liuyang was the new beginning for Xiang Province—it was the beginning of all the new beginnings" (湘省直中國之萌芽，瀏陽直湘省之萌芽，算學又萌芽之萌芽). Ibid. Xiang (湘), a river that flows through Hunan Province, is sometimes used to refer to the province as a whole.

Science and Economics (時務學堂); a Society for the Study of Politics and Economics (南學會); as well as the Xiang News, (湘報), a newspaper published by the society.²⁰⁴

The college for Political Science and Economics was a school, where young people could learn about Chinese political thought (the Confucian canon of classics) as well as the history and content of Western constitutions and governments. This school was quite successful. Among other things, Tan invited Liang Qi Chao to be a leading lecturer. Liang was very famous and popular among the youth at that time and his presence attracted many young people to the school. Liang and Tan also used this school as a platform to gain a wide audience for their critiques of the Qing Dynasty and their ideas for reform. Quickly, this college became the model for other modern schools.

The Xiang News was issued first in 1898. It provided reformers and revolutionaries a place to state and broadcast their ideas about the future of the country. The goal of this paper was to enlighten the intellectuals in general.

Tan hoped to use the Society for the Study of Politics and Economics to form a local assembly, which would have a function

²⁰⁴ The College of Political Science and Economics was originally founded in 1897 by Wang Xian Qing (王先謙, 1842–1918), who then handed it over to Tan's management. The Society for the Study of Politics and Economics likewise was founded in 1897; and its newspaper, the following year. Both were started by Tan Si Tong and his colleagues. Wang Yue, A Study of Tan Si Tong's Reformative Thought, 39.

similar to that of a parliament, or legislative body. So he asked that current issues concerning Hunan be discussed first in this assembly where some kind of decisions would be made. By means of this society, Tan also kept in touch with various local groups and communicated with them. This assembly then became the center of the reform movement in Hunan.

Perhaps the success of Tan's efforts is indicated by the strong backlash of his opponents. Within a few months, the reform movement was already receiving much attention. The atmosphere in Hunan Province was radically changed because of the many aggressive advances made for a brand new future. Thus, the more traditional and established local authorities began to resist and fight the changes. They forced a polarization in the reform movement itself. Liang was asked to leave Hunan, and eventually, Tan was forced to face the fact that the movement was paralyzed by opposition.

Already in 1897 Kang You Wei, Liang Qi Chao, and Tan Si Tong had met in Shanghai for the first time to talk over how to develop their reform plans for the future step by step.²⁰⁵ Afterwards, Tan and Liang went to Hunan Province to take part in the governor's reform movement there. Before these developments, in May of 1895, Kang had organized a group of intellectuals who together petitioned the emperor to reconsider the decision to make peace with Japan; at the same time, they appealed to the emperor to make up his mind to modernize China. In addition to the petition, Kang wrote a persuasive

²⁰⁵ Lin Zai Jue, Tan Si Tong, 28.

letter to the emperor underscoring the importance of reform. Many of the high-ranking officials were annoyed and angered by Kang's efforts. Nevertheless the ruler's teacher Weng Tong Hao (翁同龢, 1830–1904) recommended Kang to the emperor saying, "[Kang] You Wei's ability is a hundred times greater than mine."²⁰⁶ Therefore, the Guang Xu Emperor met together with Kang You Mei, and this resulted in the emperor issuing the imperial edict that called for national modernization. Then, just as mentioned above, the summons came from emperor inviting Tan to join in planning this reform.

What followed was really a huge plan for reform, including the following: the modernization of education, which included establishing a national university (京師大學堂); changing the content of the state examinations to include studies of history, geography, and economics; economic development, such as establishing a bureau of mining, a bureau of railways, and building many factories; political reform, such as transforming the imperial state into a constitutional monarchy; modernization of the military, which included techniques drawn from Western countries, for example, abolishing the use of bow and arrow and learning how to use new weapons. There was even the intent to make Confucianism the national religion.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁶ 有為之才過臣百倍。Quoted in Xiao Gong Quan 蕭公權, Zhongguo zhengzhi sixiang shi 中國政治思想史 (A history of political thought in China; Taipei: Linking Books, 1989) 2: 731.

²⁰⁷ See further, Guo Ting Yi 郭廷以, Jindai zhongguo shi gang 近代中國史綱 (An outline

Arriving in the capital, Tan Si Tong was impatient to begin work. Soon, however, the actual political environment around the emperor became clear. It was only nine days after Tan arrived that the emperor wrote that he was losing his crown and called for help; soon thereafter, he was confined to house arrest. Many of the reformers fled; others were executed. Thus the so-called Hundred Day's Reform came to an end, suddenly.

Tan Si Tong chose to die rather than flee, and this decision has left a question for later generations. Even more confusing is the fact that Tan, in addition to opposing the system of monarchy, had even condemned sacrifice for the emperor as meaningless: "Not only is the ruler one of the people, he is the smallest one...Therefore, it's reasonable to die for a cause but there is no sense in dying for the ruler."²⁰⁸ In spite of these strong words, when Tan heard that the emperor was imprisoned in the Forbidden Palace and that the Empress Dowager had commanded that he himself be arrested for execution, Tan chose to submit and die. His last words, saying that a revolution requires this kind of sacrifice and that he was willing to make the sacrifice himself, seem hard to understand completely.

Perhaps Tan Si Tong's last action can only be understood as the loyalty of the subject to the ruler, the traditional feeling that guided Confucian scholars for centuries. In this view, the king lies at the

of modern Chinese history; Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1989), 305-307.

²⁰⁸ 君亦一民也，且較之尋常之民而更為末也...止有死事的道理，決無死君的道理。The Theory of Ren, in The Collected Works of Tan Si Tong, 57.

center of the world, connecting the land and its people to Heaven. It is only through the king that the blessings of heaven reach humankind. Is it possible that in spite of all his modern thinking, Tan Si Tong was still at heart a traditional Confucian, whose deepest commitment lay in this symbolism: help the people by serving the ruler?

Religious Foundations of Tan Si Tong's Charity. Reviewing the life of Tan Si Tong, Zhang Hao sums up Tan's core characteristics: moral sensibility, a sensitivity to the interconnectedness of all levels of reality, and religious consciousness.²⁰⁹ The moral sensibility is based on the Confucian training that guided Tan always to think about what he could do for others.²¹⁰ The sensitivity to the interconnectedness of all levels of reality gave him the desire to act on his charitable thoughts.²¹¹ Together, his thinking and his feeling both led him in the same direction, one that was basically spiritual, thus giving him a religious consciousness.²¹²

Zhang Hao further interprets Tan Si Tong's "religious consciousness" as a response to the traumatic experiences of Tan's youth: when Tan was a teenager and nearly died of diphtheria, losing then so many members of his family to the illness, he underwent some kind of religious awakening.²¹³ These experiences made Tan doubt the value of life: What is the value of a life that can suddenly

²⁰⁹ Zhang Hao, *The Martyr's Spirit and Critical Consciousness*, 35-55.

²¹⁰ *Ibid*, 35.

²¹¹ *Ibid*, 42-45.

²¹² *Ibid*, 55.

²¹³ *Ibid*, 47-55.

and arbitrarily be cut off? This thinking then forced him to find a way to see value and meaning in his own life. His search was guided at the time mostly by Confucian teachings and cosmology; and he found in this tradition the conviction that life has meaning only if it is lived for the sake of others.

According to Mencius, the human being is actually defined by his or her nature as a charitable and righteous being: “That whereby humans differ from the lower animals is but small...Humans are not merely capable of doing righteous and charitable actions; they are actually guided by the inner compulsion to act righteously and charitably.”²¹⁴ His understanding of the innate nature of humanity became fundamental in later Confucian thought. Thus, one can only be a true human being by expressing one’s inner inclination towards charity and one’s inner sense of justice (仁義). The most important thing is that the ability to be charitable and just both come from the divine (Heaven) and are inherent in all human beings. Thus it is that Mencius says, “Charity, righteousness, propriety, and knowledge are not infused into us from without. We are certainly furnished with them. And a different view is simply owing to want of reflection.”²¹⁵ The goal of all striving for knowledge and goodness is simply to restore one’s original nature. “The way of knowledge is nothing other than

²¹⁴ The Works of Mencius 4.2.19: 人之所以異於禽獸者幾希...由仁義行，非行仁義也。

²¹⁵ The Works of Mencius 6.1.6: 仁義禮智，非由外鑠我也，我固有之也，弗思耳矣。

recovering the natural mind.”²¹⁶

Therefore, the Confucian practice of charity is more than practical ethics with social goals; it has religious meaning. This is what is meant by saying that Tan Si Tong has a religious heart. The modern Confucian master Xu Fu Guan (徐復觀, 1903–1982) had a good interpretation for this:

Ethics includes all of the mind, the self, the family, the country, and the whole world in its embrace...All these things—self, family, country, and world—belong to the cosmic order (理), as so, too, does the mind. Each has a connection with the personal life, so the individual person has responsibility for all of them.²¹⁷

For a Confucian, the only way to achieve self-realization is to take responsibility for one’s self and all others. By doing so, one fulfills also one’s religious duty, which comes from Heaven.²¹⁸ Thus it becomes clear that Tan Si Tong was not simply a moral man but truly a religious one. He was guided by ultimate concerns.

For Tan Si Tong ren has both ethical and cosmological connotations. Since all things in the world come from ren, they all have mutual relationships with each other. This is Tan’s understanding of the cosmic nature of ren. Thus, Tan develops his ethics of ren one step further. In his opinion, we surely feel love for

²¹⁶ The Works of Mencius 6.1.11: 學問之道無他，求其放心而已矣。

²¹⁷ Xu Fu Guan 徐復觀, Zhongguo sixingshi lun ji 中國思想史論集 (Collected essays on the history of Chinese thought; Taibei: Students Books, 1979), 20.

²¹⁸ *Ibid*, 149.

others because we all have the same origin and we are involved constantly and continually in intercommunication with others.

Liberating one's self is not simply liberating one's self but liberating all humankind also. Liberating all humankind is not simply liberating all humankind, but liberating also one's self. How can we say this? Living in the mountains practicing spiritual discipline to clean the mind's source—that is what we call liberating one's self. But, in fact, the mind's source does not exist alone; rather it is connected to all minds...Therefore, when one mind is cleaned, all minds are cleaned. Is there anything greater than this kind of practice that leads to the liberation of all?²¹⁹

If we realize that, in fact, we cannot separate ourselves from others, then we know also that we really love ourselves only when we love others.

Wang Yu identified Tan's interpretation of ren as a "monistic view of ren" (仁一元論).²²⁰ Clearly, Tan's view of ren is influenced by Zhang Zai's monistic view of qi.²²¹ Although Mencius defined Confucian charity as having both religious and moral meanings, he never explained how charity could have both cosmological and moral meanings. It is not until Zhu Xi and Zhang Zai that theories about the

²¹⁹ 度己，非度己也，乃度人也；度人，非度人也，乃度己也。何以言之？今夫空山修證，潔治心源，此世俗所謂度己者也。然心源非己之源也，一切眾生之源也...心源一潔，眾生皆潔。度人大於此者？The Theory of Ren, in The Collected Works of Tan Si

Tong, 89.

²²⁰ Wang Yue, A Study of Tan Si Tong's Reformatory Thought, 51-52, 57.

²²¹ Zhang Hao also shares this view that Tan's idea of ren is inherited from Zhang Zai's monistic view of qi. But Zhang Hao does not use the term "monistic view of ren." See Zhang Hao, The Martyr's Spirit and Critical Consciousness, 89-129.

cosmological context of ren appear.

Already Zhu Xi suggests that ren is the love that people have for each other and that it is part of human nature that is shared with the universe as a whole. Then, this idea was further developed in Zhang Zai's monistic view of qi.²²² According to Zhang, the universe is composed of qi, the totality of which he calls the Great Emptiness (太虛). Two opposing and complementary forces—the yin (陰) and the yang (陽)—interplay and cause continual transformation of the qi. Although there is constant movement and change within the universe, it remains always in a state of harmony. Thus it is also called the Great Harmony (太和). Everything in the universe thus results from the condensing of qi; while the dispersal of the qi restores the original Great Emptiness. Thus, in this view, birth and death are nothing more than the gathering and scattering of qi.

In Zhang Zai's opinion, human suffering arises from that fact that people are not aware of this reality; instead, they experience the world from the point of view of separate selves. Thus, their actions lead to the destruction of the Great Harmony and cause suffering. To reverse this process, one must restore the original unity of Heaven

²²² For the content of Zhang Zai's monistic view of qi, consult Zhang Hao, The Martyr's Spirit and Critical Consciousness, 91-94; also Jin Chun Zhi 金春植, "Zhang Zai qihualun zhi yanjiu" 張載氣化論之研究 (The structure of Zhang Zai's theory about qi; M.A. thesis, Zhengzhi University, 1999), 61-65.

and the human being (天人合一).²²³ This expression, which means that the human and the divine become one, belongs to the language of mysticism, that is, union with ultimate reality. Mysticism is one way that human beings experience the divine; hence, it is a type of revelation. Any tradition that includes this goal must be regarded as a religious tradition.

Zhang Zai's interpretation of human suffering, its cause and its cure, is grounded in mysticism. Tan Si Tong accepts this view and suggests the same goal when he says that the "gentleman" will seek the universal harmony: "Thus we comprehend that all things in the universe are combined together into a unity. If the mind takes its natural path, all goes well; but if the mind is corrupt, nothing good can happen...So it is that the gentleman will truly seek out the universal harmony."²²⁴

The way to attain this goal of uniting the human being with Heaven, in Zhang's view, involves an expansion of the human conscience. The mind has two faculties for knowledge: one is the ability to know the world through empirical cognition (聞見小知); the other is the ability to know what is good and what is evil, or conscience (天德良知). By "expanding the conscience" (大其心), one

²²³ Zhang Hao, The Martyr's Spirit and Critical Consciousness, 92.

²²⁴ 是知天地萬物果為一體，心正莫不正，心乖莫不乖...此君子之所以貴乎和也，中和所以濟陰陽之窮也。Tan Si Tong, "Notes from the Studio of the Chrysanthemum-Inkslab's Shadow," in The Collected Works of Tan Si Tong, 247-248.

overcomes the false sense of separateness that leads to suffering: “You will know that...there is nothing that exists that is separate from you yourself if you expand your conscience. That’s why Mencius said, purify your mind and then you will know both the nature of Heaven and the human being.”²²⁵

It is on this cosmological basis that Zhang Zai develops his ethics. Clearly compassion and acts of charity follow when the human being’s conscience expands and the false sense of separation among beings begins to diminish. “My human nature belongs to the source of all things and not to me alone. Therefore, I must help others gain a foothold in this world, if I myself want to have a foothold here. I must love all others, if I wish to love any one person. And I cannot succeed alone without the success of others.”²²⁶ When one enlarges his or her conscience, then he or she will perceive how we are all really connected with one another, and from this, one gains the will and then ability to love others. This is the implication of Zhang Zai’s monistic view of qi.

Zhang’s monistic view of qi is the model for Tan’s monistic view of ren. And for Tan, his theory of ren provided him the foundation on which to stand and practice charity. Following in the train of such major Confucian thinkers as Mencius, Zhu Xi, and Zhang Zai, Tan Si

²²⁵ 大其心則能體天下之物...無一物非我。孟子謂盡心則知性知天以此。Zhang Zai,

Bringing Clarity to the Obscurity of Ignorance. Quoted in Zhang Hao, The Martyr’s Spirit and Critical Consciousness, 92-93.

²²⁶ 性者，萬物之一源，非有我之得私也...立必俱立...愛必兼愛...成不獨成。Ibid., 94.

Tong simply emphasized the role of ren in a monistic view of reality.

The next question concerns Tan Si Tong's way of expressing his worldview: why did he choose to write The Theory of Ren as a way of practicing charity? Already in The Great Learning one learns that the beginning of all positive development begins with the individual person's mind: Begin by making one's own mind both sincere and just. Then discipline the self and regulate the family. Finally, govern the country properly and attain thus a perfect and wonderful world.²²⁷ The starting point for the scholar who desires to serve others is, thus, acquisition of knowledge: this is expressed by means of two terms, investigating the root of things (格物) and extending knowledge (致知). In other words, begin by examining each reality in its basic nature and continue the study until one gains the complete picture. But as mentioned earlier, later Confucians emphasize the two kinds of knowing: empirical understanding and moral conscience. In Zhang Zai's opinion, empirical knowledge is a tool that helps us expand moral conscience. This expansion then allows for first-hand experience of ultimate reality. So one should not pay overly much attention to empirical knowledge or it will cease to be a tool and

²²⁷ This process, viewed as the proper way to achieve the ideal world, was usually designated by means of the following eight verbs: study, extend knowledge, be sincere, be just, cultivate self, bring into order, restore, and make peace (格致誠正修齊治平). The terms are drawn from the eight steps described in The Great Learning. See Lin Bao Chun 林保淳, Jingshi sixiang yu wenxue jingshi 經世思想與文學經世 (The thought and literature of statecraft; Taipei: Wenchin Publishers, 1991), 39.

become instead a shackle that binds.²²⁸ Actually, sincere thinking (誠意) and a righteous mind (正心) must dominate the process of self-realization.

There are two meanings when we say that sincere thinking and a righteous mind take the leading role in the Confucian's self-realizing procedure. First, it is the conscience in the person's mind that is the basis of a just state and a tranquil world.²²⁹ Already Mencius points to the bonds that exist between the individual person and the world: "There is a common saying, 'World, country, family.' That means the world's basis is the country, the country's basis is the family, and the family's basis is single person."²³⁰ This suggests that the macrocosm reflects the microcosm—what happens on the small human scale has universal repercussions: "The world will be happy and tranquil if each person is affectionate with his or her family members, and if the young respect their elders."²³¹

For a Confucian, the process of improving the self and the world takes place gradually over time. In other words, the precise way to improve society is to rectify one's thought and mind on a daily basis. So Zhang Zai interprets another saying, "In respect to learning, the officials should learn about statecraft, and the gentleman scholar

²²⁸ Zhang Hao, *The Martyr's Spirit and Critical Consciousness*, 92.

²²⁹ Zhang Hao interprets this idea in a short sentence, "To sum up in a word, politics should be the broadening scope of personality." Zhang Hao, "The Interpretation of Confucian Ideas about Statecraft beginning with the Song and Ming Dynasties until the Present," Quoted in Lin Bao Chun, *The Thought and Literature of Statecraft*, 39.

²³⁰ *The Works of Mencius* 4.1.5.

²³¹ *The Works of Mencius* 4.1.11.

should learn about worthy aspirations.’ The meaning of this sentence is that we should teach the officials about statecraft and teach those who desire to be officials to rectify their aspirations first. How does one rectify their aspirations? Teach them about the various relationships that exist between them and others.”²³² Since every Chinese official was a “gentleman” before becoming an official, it is clear that the priority for a Confucian intellectual (that is, the official) was to have correct aspirations. Only then was the goal of serving the country achievable.

Second, conscience is not a passive object but an active subject. Ren is actually a creative force that empowers the human being to practice charity and so realize him or her self.²³³ The Doctrine of the Mean clearly presents this idea.

What Heaven confers is called human nature. Life in accordance with this nature is called the path of duty. Regulation of this path is called instruction. The path may not be abandoned for an instant. If it could be abandoned, it would not be the path...As long as there are no stirrings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, or joy, the mind may be said to

²³²“凡學，官先事，士先志。”謂有官者先教之事，未官者使正其志焉。志者，教之大倫而言也。Zhang Zai, Bringing Clarity to the Obscurity of Ignorance (中正). Quoted in Yu Ying Shi 余英時, Song Ming lixue yu zhengzhi wenhua 宋明理學與政治文化 (Song and Ming Dynasty Neo-Confucianism and political culture; Taipei: Asian Culture Press, 2004), 185. The saying (凡學，官先事，士先志) is from the Book of Rites, in the chapter introducing the goals of education.

²³³ Yao Xin Zhong, Confucianism and Christianity, 88, 90; and Zhang Hao, The Martyr’s Spirit and Critical Consciousness, 105, 113.

be in a state of equilibrium. When those feelings have been stirred and they act in their due degree, there ensues what may be called the state of harmony. This equilibrium is the great root from which grow all human actions in the world, and this harmony is the universal path that they all should pursue.²³⁴

Human nature has its source in the divine (Heaven); therefore, each person has within something of the divine. If people allow this divine nature to lead them, everything will be according to the will of Heaven. Only one thing is needed to help this happen and that is education: regulating the path of duty.²³⁵ In addition, according to the author of The Doctrine of the Mean, if human beings display their feelings (which they inherit from Heaven) properly, the whole universe will function smoothly.

Now, it is clear why Tan Si Tong paid so much attention to the power of the mind: “The power of the mind is stronger than the universe. Even something so huge as heaven and earth can be made, destroyed, or reformed by the mind. The mind can do what it likes to

²³⁴ The Doctrine of the Mean 1: 天命之謂性，率性之謂道，修道之謂教...喜怒哀樂之未發，謂之中。發而皆中節，謂之和...致中和，天地位焉，萬物育焉。

²³⁵ See further, Qian Mu 錢穆, Cong zhongguo lishi lai kan zhongguo minzuxing ji

zhongguo wenhua 從中國歷史來看中國民族性及中國文化 (Analyzing the characteristics and culture of the Chinese from the perspective of Chinese history; Taipei: Linking Books, 1999), 90-91.

do.”²³⁶ Even time is affected by this power: “We could do amazing things that will have their influence for millions of millions of years if we have the power that lies in the mind’s source.”²³⁷

Personal morality is the foundation of family, country, and world, because the power of the mind is the same energy that determines the existence, destruction, or transformation of the entire universe. This is the Confucian understanding of the importance of the mind. So, “mind reform” is a critical way to change society and country. And the best way to achieve “mind reform” is by means of education. Indeed, Confucius spent all of his all time teaching his students, as soon as he realized that the opportunity for him to participate in political reform was lacking. Thus, it is also clear why ancient Confucian teachings encouraged intellectuals not merely to be models of virtue for others and serve the state but also to leave behind writings to guide and educate future generations on the right path—the path of duty. Having read the good teachings and books that reform one’s mind, the individual person can then be the proper basis of family, country, and world. At the same time, rectifying the aspirations of others can help to move the world in right way. In Confucian tradition, writing books, such as The Theory of Ren, is

²³⁶ 心之力量，雖天地不能比擬。雖天地之大，可以由心成之、毀之、改造之，無不如

意。 “Letters to My Teacher Ouyang Bian Jiang, 22” (上歐陽瓣薑師書二十二), in The

Collected Works of Tan Si Tong, 319.

²³⁷ Ibid.

clearly one way to do charity.²³⁸

More difficult to comprehend is the final act in the life of Tan Si Tong: why did he decide to sacrifice himself as part of the Hundred Days Reform. In what way did he see this action as a natural culmination of his life of charity?

Tan surely was not so naïve as to believe that the cultivation of the mind is the only way to solve problems in world. That's why the The Theory of Ren consisted of two separate parts.²³⁹ No matter how perfect his theory was, Tan knew he had to practice it in the real world. That's why Tan accepted Chen Bao Zhen's invitation to manage the reform movement in Hunan Province. Now we have to ask the critical question: in The Theory of Ren, Tan very clearly states his

²³⁸ Some scholars will argue that Tan's understanding of the mind actually comes from Confucianism together with Buddhism and Christianity. But in this thesis, we do not emphasize the influences of Buddhism and Christianity for two reasons: First, some scholars like to emphasize the role of Buddhism on this idea, but I doubt this point because Tan only studied Buddhism with Yang Wen Hui (楊文會, 1837–1911) at the same time as when he was already writing The Theory of Ren. It's hard to imagine that a scholar would base his theories on something that he was just beginning to study. It's true that Tan uses many Buddhist terms, and even ideas, but only in a supporting role, just as he used certain Christian terms. Second, the idea of the mind's power is inherent already in Confucianism, as we demonstrate. We need not find another source for Tan's view.

²³⁹ Even though Confucians believe in the effects of mind and personal morality, they still have to face the various challenges of reality, especially in difficult times. Therefore, in addition to the emphasis on mind, certain Confucians stress concrete issues. Tan, living in a time of political crisis, paid much attention to pragmatic issues, such as education and economics, in the second part of The Theory of Ren. Still, this follows the presentation of his philosophy in the first part. This is typical of Confucian intellectuals when they seek to do charitable action: begin with theory and then go on to practical considerations. See Yu Ying Shi, Song and Ming Dynasty Neo-Confucianism and Political Culture, 419-422; and Lin Bao Chun, The Thought and Literature of Statecraft, 40-42.

repudiation of monarchy; therefore, how could he act in what seems to be a completely opposite way to his words and die for his king?²⁴⁰ This leads us to discuss a third idea in Confucianism that influenced Tan.

In The Theory of Ren Tan Si Tong expresses himself as a radical intellectual, who vows to do away with all social and political hierarchies because he insists on the equality of every person. Here we see his early agreement with Mo Zi's view of non-discriminating love for others. Clearly when Tan takes this stance, he stands among the people as a whole. But when Tan Si Tong considers how to realize his theory of ren, we see him switch his identity from one of the common people to that of the gentlemen (士). Thus, he emphasizes the importance of education saying, "The first step of reform should begin with the gentleman. And the transformation of the gentleman begins with reforming the state examinations."²⁴¹ For Tan, gentlemen scholars played a major role in both society and the country.²⁴² Where

²⁴⁰ Did Tan die for the sake of the emperor or did he die for the goal of reform? The question is a source of debate. Most scholars have the view that Tan did not die for the emperor but for his ideals of reform. Others simply criticize Tan as inconsistent, saying one thing and doing another. For details about this debate, see Wang Yue, A Study of Tan Si Tong's Reformative Thought, 8-9.

²⁴¹ 欲議變法，必先自士始。欲自士始，必先變科舉。"Letter to Bei Yuan Zheng" (報貝元徵書), in The Collected Works of Tan Si Tong, 407. We should know that in Tan's time, education was rarely for the common people. Those who received an education still belonged to the class of gentlemen.

²⁴² When Tan discussed with Liang Qi Chao the problems in the mining and railroad businesses, he mentioned that if the "ignorant multitude" resisted their reforms, he would try

did the gap between Tan's thought and practice come from? What is it that caused Tan to vacillate between his democratic and his elitist personas?

Actually, Tan's elitism is also an inheritance grounded in Confucian tradition.²⁴³ Indeed, this elitism goes back to Confucius, who saw in the "good" kings of the earlier Zhou Dynasty the model for his time. The Doctrine of the Mean makes the role of the ruler central: "To no one but the Son of Heaven [the emperor] does it belong to order ceremonies, to establish institutions, and determine the written characters."²⁴⁴ As for those who wish to contribute to the work of the ruler, they must have an official position: "Do not concern yourself with matters of government unless they are the responsibility of your office."²⁴⁵ In other words, you have to take part in the state system if you want to be concerned with matters of government. More precisely, for Confucius, some affairs were to be decided by the king and by no one else. Indeed, the king serves as the center of the country

to enlighten or even "quell them." By this, we get a hint of how Tan—in spite of his ideals—actually felt about the common people. See Wang Yue, A Study of Tan Si Tong's Reformative Thought, 79, 100.

²⁴³ For example, the belief that the main objective of education was to create gentlemen (士) was the consensus of the Confucians in the Song Dynasty. Gentlemen were designated to administer the state. Yu Ying Shi calls this view "elitism." See his Song and Ming Dynasty Neo-Confucianism and Political Culture, 193.

²⁴⁴ The Doctrine of the Mean 28: 非天子，不議禮，不制度，不考文.

²⁴⁵ The Analects of Confucius 14.26: 不在其位，不謀其政.

connecting it to ultimate reality.²⁴⁶

A dialogue between Mencius and one of his disciples makes this point:

Kun Chun Yu said, “Is it the rule that males and females shall not allow their hands to touch in giving or receiving anything?” Mencius replied, “It is the rule.” Kun asked, “If a man’s sister-in-law is drowning, shall he rescue her with his hand?” Mencius said, “He who would not so rescue the drowning woman is a wolf. For males and females not to allow their hands to touch in giving and receiving is the general rule; when a sister-in-law is drowning, to rescue her with the hand is a peculiar exigency.” Kun said, “The whole kingdom is drowning. How strange it is that you will not rescue it!” Mencius answered, “A drowning kingdom must be rescued with the right principles (道), as a drowning sister-in-law has to be rescued with the hand. Do you wish me to rescue the kingdom with my hand?”²⁴⁷

What works for rescuing the individual person in a crisis is not the same as what is needed to rescue the kingdom. In the first instance, an appropriate technique is all that is required. But the kingdom needs more: it requires the Dao (道). Mencius said, “There are now princes who have benevolent minds and a reputation for benevolence, while yet the people do not receive any benefits from them, nor will they leave any example to future ages; all because they do not put into practice the ways of the ancient kings (王之道).”²⁴⁸ According to

²⁴⁶ Sa Meng Wu 薩孟武, Rujia zhenglun yanyi 儒家政論衍義 (The Confucian view of politics; Taipei: Dangda Publisher, 1982), 45.

²⁴⁷ The Works of Mencius 4.1.17.

²⁴⁸ The Works of Mencius 4.1.1.

Mencius, the right way to rescue the drowning kingdom is by means of the Dao as it is practiced by the wise king. Indeed, “Never has any one fallen into error, who followed the Dao of the ancient kings.”²⁴⁹

Now, we comprehend why Zi Xia said, “The student, having completed his learning, should apply himself to be an official.” For Confucius, only the official should be concerned with matters of government; and for Mencius, it takes a wise king to rescue the kingdom. So, any Confucian intellectual desiring to serve his society and country should take part in the system of government as an official in support of the king. In other words, trying to serve the people as a whole with one’s own abilities (the hand of one person) is the false way.

As a traditional Confucian intellectual, Tan Si Tong could not help but think about how to serve people through the established framework of the state, even when he sought to transform it. And so he also must evaluate the scholar official, or gentleman, higher than any commoner.

Following Mencius’ teaching, he sought to persuade various rulers how to follow and practice the Dao—the truth as he saw it. So we see he answered Chen Bao Zhen’s invitation to serve in Hunan; and then later, he did not hesitate to answer the Guang Xu Emperor’s summons. It seems that Tan could not act without the support of a superior. Maybe we could say that Tan had no choice, because he was a traditional Confucian. Since the Confucians viewed the political way

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

as the right way to do charity—and the king (or in this case the emperor) was still the center of the political reality—so Tan viewed Guang Xu’s failure as the failure of his charitable action. In our opinion, Tan did not die for the emperor, but he died because he felt he had failed in his greatest goal: saving the country. No matter how much he might argue that reform ultimately required the abolition of monarchy, he sought to achieve this goal with the help of the monarch. Perhaps this is “the gap separating thought and practice” in Tan’s own time.

IV. Concluding Reflections on Charity

Although Dorothy Day and Tan Si Tong were so different in many dimensions of their lives, they also had something very important in common: they both dedicated themselves to do charity for religious reasons. In their writings, they express frequently their passionate concern for those in need. They also express their compassion in action: Dorothy Day spent most of her life serving the hungry and the homeless in lower Manhattan; Tan Si Tong sacrificed his life in an attempt to try to persuade the ruler to reform China and take care of the common people.

This thesis stresses the motivations and understandings that guide their acts of charity—the religious traditions that help shape their lives. More than once Dorothy Day says that she did charity not only for the needy but also for God; for Tan, charity is an essential aspect in the self-realization process that leads to participation in a universal harmony. For both of them, their ideas of charity come from their religious traditions. Dorothy Day claims that we should love others because God commands us to do so; moreover, we cannot ignore those who are hungry, homeless, and poor, because every single one is a part of the Mystical Body of Christ.²⁵⁰ (Even non-Christians are potentially members of that Body and must be treated the same.) As for Tan, he insists that we cannot avoid our duty to our neighbors, because all of us come from the power of ren (mercy, kindness, benevolence), which creates the universe; and we exist in close relationship to all others whether we recognize it or not. Both concepts, that of the Body of Christ and the monistic view of ren, have their origins in religious experience—Christian and Confucian.

Although both Dorothy Day and Tan Si Tong did charity by following the teachings of their religions, their actions were totally different. Dorothy Day paid all her attention to the individual person in need; and she especially focused on the physical needs of others. She followed the commandments of Jesus literally, satisfying the hungry, the thirsty, the naked, and the homeless. All of these activities fit quite well the image of charity that is common today. But

²⁵⁰ Corinthians 12: 13. “For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.”

when we review the charitable actions of Tan Si Tong, they do not so easily correspond to our contemporary image: he seeks to help the individual person, but not directly. This is the main difference between the charity of Dorothy Day and Tan Si Tong, and this difference has its foundation in a divergence of the original idea of charity as found in Christianity and Confucianism.

As a Christian, Dorothy Day viewed every other human being as her brother or sister, according to early Christian teaching in the New Testament. Following the example of Jesus,²⁵¹ the early Christians called each other brother and sister. Furthermore, Jesus himself always emphasized the importance of focusing on the individual person in need: “Whatever you did for one [my emphasis] of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.”²⁵² Christian charity is thus particularly understood as one person aiding another.

In contrast, Tan Si Tong viewed charitable actions in the opposite way. In Confucianism, the focus is on the relationship among individual persons rather than on the individual person per se. As example, Qian Mu says, “When the Chinese talk about being human, they do not talk about individual persons, but rather about human relationships...Only when people know how to get along with others

²⁵¹ “Whoever does the will of God is my brother, my sister, my mother.” Mark 3: 35 and parallels (Matthew 12: 50; Luke 8: 21).

²⁵² Matthew 25: 40.

does the individual person become truly human.”²⁵³ In other words, when Confucians consider charity, their perspective is that of considering the needs of the whole group—family, society, country, and world. That is why Mencius differentiates “rescuing a drowning person” from “rescuing the drowning kingdom.” The first can be done simply by the technique of offering a hand to the one drowning; but in the second case, something more is needed: the Dao of the wise king. Since the goal here is not to rescue the individual person but all people together, one must first seek to understand and then follow this way of the wise king and then follow it. That’s why Confucius, Mencius, and also Tan Si Tong all spent so much time and energy trying to convince the rulers to take their suggestions.

When Jesus talked about helping others—even the humblest brother or sister—he also talked about the rewards of this charity: entering and possessing the Kingdom of God. In this teaching about the kingdom, Jesus depicts himself as the Son of Man. In Jewish tradition, the Son of Man is an angel sent by God to rule as king over all nations with the help of the saints. The question is how to become a saint and participate in the kingdom? The text makes it clear: serve those in need and you serve the king and in this way only can one enter the kingdom. This teaching confirms the value of the individual person, because each one is actually identified with the king. That’s

²⁵³ 中國人講人，不重在講個別的個人，而更重在講人倫...要能人與人相處，才各成其

為人. Analyzing the Characteristics and Culture of the Chinese from the Perspective of Chinese History, 23.

why Dorothy Day did not need to be active in politics or the government. Her entire focus was on the needs of the individual person, and thereby also on the needs of her king.

The religious symbol of the Kingdom of God provides Dorothy Day with the motivation to do charity. As mentioned above, we borrow the theory of Mircea Eliade about the Center of the World (axis mundi): the center of the world symbol represents a possibility of communication and travel among all levels of reality. As one kind of axis mundi symbol, the king serves God by connecting God to the kingdom and its people. Every time Dorothy Day helped another person, she was also serving her king; and through serving her king, she experience closeness to God. That's why Day viewed her charity as a religious practice.

Eliade's interpretation of the center of the world symbolism also helps us understand the Confucian idea of charity. The Chinese emperor was a traditional king, receiving his mandate to rule from the divine. Tan Si Tong tried to fulfill the meaning of his life by serving people because only in this way could he also become one with the divine: Heaven and the human being united as one (天人合一), the ultimate goal in Confucianism. Since the Confucians view politics and government as the right way to do charity and the king is the center of all politics and government, then serving the king becomes the best way to do charity. Therefore, it is clear why Tan Si Tong and his Confucian contemporaries were so eager to keep in touch with their king, and even more, why Tan was willing to die to show how serious

was his intent to support his king to reform the nation. In addition, the king offered not only the right way to do charity but also the key to religious practice; in this way, the king provides the intermediary linking Tan to Heaven.

On the one hand, Dorothy Day served the common people as a means to serving her king. On the other hand, Tan Si Tong served his king so as to benefit the people. For them both—Dorothy Day and Tan Si Tong—the king was the intermediary as they sought to come into close relationship with the divine.

In Taiwan today, we are used to viewing charity more along the same lines as the way Dorothy Day did. This standard is apparent in many charitable organizations, such as the Tzu Chi Foundation, Dharma Drum Mountain, Xing Tian Temple, and World Vision. But we are unable to find similar organizations founded by the Confucians. It's easy to claim that Confucianism lacks charitable practice and is just a system of thought. However, in this thesis we demonstrate that there are two critical factors that must be examined in order to understand the absence of Confucian charities in Taiwan: first, the meaning of charity as a religious phenomenon; and second, the possible ways to realize charity.

Charity always means religious practice. It is more than the strong helping the weak. Dorothy Day often said, "Who wants charity?" And here she means that no one wants to feel that they are weak and obligated to receive pity from the strong.

In Christianity, the idea of charity is linked to the Greek word agape, which means divine love. In this monotheistic religion, human

beings are creatures who must accept God's agape in order to love others properly. God loves each person and when the person shares God's love, he or she participates in God's realm. In short, as mentioned above, charity, in Christian thought, is more than helping those in need. It means allowing God to love others through our agency.

Nor does the Confucian view charity as simply taking care of the needy. Zhu Xi interprets ren as "being true to the principles of our nature" and "exercising benevolence [the principles of our nature] in respect to others." The source of benevolent action lies in "the principles of our nature." Further, Zhang Zai and Wang Yang Ming interpret ren as the love that people have for others. It is part of human nature and is shared with the universe as a whole. So charity is not a duty or a job; it is the right way to fulfill the meaning of our lives by following the principles in our nature. In the Confucian view, we need to love others so that the ren, which is inside of each person, can be communicated to others.

Recognizing the true meaning of charity, we then can think about the second factor: what are the possible ways of realizing charity? The comparative-historical study of charity in Christianity and Confucianism demonstrates that there is more than one way. Christians emphasize working apart from the government; whereas Confucians see an essential role of the government is charity.

Of course, at the end of the nineteenth century as the Chinese began to feel the need to change their political system, a new challenge confronted Confucian scholars: how to serve the people

through the king when the monarchy itself was part of the problem. Today both Taiwan and China have completely different political systems: where is the symbol that unites all levels of reality and provides a center to human life—the axis mundi for today and tomorrow?

Perhaps the answer is not yet forthcoming; still, understanding how important charity is in Confucianism reminds that we must never think that charity is expressed in only one way. In addition, examining charity in two such different religious contexts underscores the ancient adage: Don't judge a book by its cover. Different manifestations of charity can have much in common on a deeper level. In our thesis, we wish to take up this stance and do our best to understand various religions and their teachings with an open mind. We believe that this approach can be really helpful as we examine the practice of charity in Taiwan.

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