

## Author's Preface

The nineteen lectures in this book were undertaken after I completed *Material-Nature and Xuan Metaphysical Principles* [*Caixing yu Xuanli* 才性與玄理], *Buddha-Nature and Prajñā* [*Foxing yu Bore* 佛性與般若], *Moral Mind and Moral Nature* [*Xinti yu Xingti* 心體與性體], and *From Lu Xiangshan to Liu Jishan* [*Cong Lu Xiangshan dao Liu Jishan* 從陸象山到劉戡山]. After writing these books I had begun to make a summation of the philosophies of different periods in China, and the lectures are the result of this summation. They were delivered in 1978 to graduate students of the Department of Philosophy at National Taiwan University. They were not originally intended as a book, but the students thought that if they compiled the lectures from tape recordings and notes, such a book could serve other students as a guide to the vast and elusive subject of Chinese philosophy. The task of transcribing and compiling the tapes was shared by six students, Chen Po-cheng 陳博政, Hu Yi-hsien 胡以燦, Ho Shu-ching 何淑靜, You Huey-jen 尤惠貞, Wu Deng-tai 吳登臺, and Lee Ming-huei 李明輝, with Hu Yi-hsien making the greatest contribution. [They also provided the original footnotes.—Translator] I was deeply moved by their efforts. I did some light editing of the manuscript to make it clearer. Because the lectures were not originally intended as a book, the present results are perhaps more informal and lively than they would otherwise have been, making it easier for the reader to gain an understanding of Chinese philosophy.

In this account I have provided a general framework and broad contours, avoiding going into great detail. For a more detailed account, I suggest that the reader go to the books listed above. Readers will there find that all the points made in the lectures are based on evidence. A summation whose statements are groundless can seldom be a fitting one and would not even deserve the name of a summation. Rather, it would be like a surface shimmer or a fleeting shadow, superficial, riddled with errors, and unreliable. Once a broad overview of Chinese philosophy has been given, the philosophical principles of each period will become clear and the questions that they raise will also be revealed. Hence the [original Chinese] sub-title of the volume: *A Brief Account of Chinese Philosophy and the Questions it Entails*, “brief account” describing the nature of existing principles, and “entails” pointing to the path of future development. By carrying on the past and opening up the future, we may see that the life of wisdom is being continued endlessly.

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