

'Universism' As the Fundamental Sphere of Chinese Religion : A Model of the Complex Structure of Religion in China

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J.J.M. de Groot's work "Universismus" contains an important suggestion. He points out that 'three teachings'—Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism—share a fundamental sphere common to all Chinese religions, which forms the common values of the Chinese people. He calls this sphere 'Universismus' ('universism' in English). In this paper, following his lead, we will describe the whole structure of Chinese religion, including not only the elite level but also the popular level, by elaborating on the conception 'universism'. This also serves as an attempt to overcome the unfortunate separation of the studies between elite religion and popular religion, in other words, between China's "great tradition" and its "little tradition". The point I wish to stress is that the multiplicity of Chinese religions can be realized as aspectual metamorphoses and variations of 'universism', which is an expression of the complete confidence and belief in the order of this universe and this cosmos. In this paper, we will first re-examine well-known fundamental concepts of Chinese metaphysics, such as *wuwei* and *dao*, some of the not clear, as well as such concepts as *hun, po* (*gui, shen*), *li, xiao*, which express the life-feeling (Lebensgefühl in German) of the Chinese people. The conceptions used by religious or philosophical sects and schools emanate from the common sphere of fundamental values. Paper's next concern is the problem of salvation determined by Chinese religion. We will examine the Neo-Confucian views expressed in "Zhufu", novel written by Lu Xun, and consider how the elite religion come down to the popular level. The same problem also relates to the 'indigenization' of Buddhism. Finally, we will draw atten-

tion to the notion of 'nomos', described as the social tendency to change the general life-feeling into its unique form held by a particular social group. Through these arguments, we will attempt to present a comprehensive model of the structure of Chinese religion.