

Historical Right, Historical Responsibility and Historians

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Abstract

Although it is extremely important, the scope of the historian is a topic that very few people explore in historiography. Using historical right as the characteristic of the historian, this article defines the scope of the historian. Among many different opinions about the content of historical right, this article thinks the right to select and interpret parts of facts to manifest their knowledge and value is the historical right of the historian.

The reason why the historian has the historical right is that the historical facts are too huge to record all of them, and a historian has to write about the essential parts selected from countless facts. The author of this article expresses a different view on the topic about “the historian, who manages official documents to assist in the governing of a country” and thinks the historical right defined by the author is completely different from the official historian’s governing power, which will hinder the execution of historical right. With this view, this article clearly defines the connotation of historical right and clarifies the real characteristic of the historian.

Historical responsibility comes with the corresponding historical right. With the historical right, a historian should bear the responsibility for the history which he manifests. The historical responsibility is not given to a historian by anyone; it is a definite phenomenon generated by the continuous operation of the “grandly unified” causality rule in the dharma-realm. The execution of historical right by a historian is in fact to write the rules in his mind; it is the historical right of a historian.

Generally there are three layers of meaning for the grandly unified historical responsibility: The first is the minor precepts of conduct; the second is the unique causality rule of grand unification; the highest layer is the ultimate origin of causality rule—the eighth *vijnana* Tathagatagarbha. All three layers of the historical responsibility should not be violated when a historian executes his historical right.

According to the characteristic of historical right, this article finds both journalists and media workers are historians in conformity to the characteristic of historical right. Furthermore, everyone and even all sentient beings of ten dharma-realms are historians too. It is because every sentient being of ten dharma-realms is the subject of history; everyone has the historical right to write the rules with one's bodily, verbal and mental deeds, and has no choice but to bear the due historical responsibility; therefore the ten dharma-realms are built. Among the ten dharma-realms, the sages and saints of the four noble dharma-paths are true historians, whereas the sentient beings of the six ordinary karma-paths are false historians. This is a reduced scope of the historian.

Keywords: historian, historical right, historical responsibility, writing the rules, seven noble precepts, five supernatural powers, five insights, grand unification, distortion of the facts, Confucian ethical code, Tathagatagarbha, double standard, balance of power, journalist, media, theory of public opinion

1. Introduction

The scope of history includes all existing facts.¹ Historians collect, read and digest huge amounts of detailed historical data; they construct and interpret the evolution of history. However, historical researches are enormous and complex; with time, more and more historians are needed to participate in research; on the other hand, it seems that historical researches also become endless as time goes by. Liang Qichao, a modern historian, states in *Research Methods of Chinese History*:

For two thousand years, the historical study in our country has been uniquely flourishing as compared to those of other countries. Nevertheless, its writing system was mostly created by those scholars over a thousand years ago. The historical system needed at that time is quite different from that of today. The knowledge of that time was still not divided into subdisciplines. All different fields of knowledge were recorded by history. Therefore, the scope of history was extraordinarily wide. With the passing years, the number of history books has been increasing, even to the extent that no one can read all of them throughout one's entire lifetime. As we live in present days, reading old history books is just like "sifting gold from sand, in which valuable things are often found." Without sand, there would be no gold. However, it is indeed an extremely laborious task to obtain a piece of gold from several decaliters of sand; moreover, not everyone can have the technique of sifting gold. If one goes the wrong way, it will be inevitable that one obtains sand instead of gold. Unfortunately, the current education of history in China is exactly like that.²

Liang Qichao thinks that "all different fields of knowledge were recorded by history." Obviously, in the extremely wide range of historical data, due to the limited space, what is recorded in history should be the knowledge that is beneficial to later generations, rather than those useless data. Liang Qichao further states: "However, it is indeed an extremely laborious task to obtain a piece of gold from several decaliters of sand; moreover, not everyone can have the technique of sifting gold." It is obvious that the historical contents recorded by historians are not all useful mundane wisdom or knowledge. If Liang's statement that "it is indeed an extremely laborious task to obtain a piece of gold from several decaliters of sand" is true, what were recorded by historians is in fact rich in sand instead of gold, and useful wisdom or knowledge is scarcely found. Moreover, if useful wisdom or knowledge is to be found, the readers need to have the technique of sifting gold; without the technique of sifting gold, one would be unable to obtain useful wisdom or

¹ Tsai Lichen, "True History versus New History," *Journal of True Enlightenment*, 3rd issue, True Enlightenment Education Foundation (Taipei), 2009, p. 12.

² Liang Qichao, *Research Methods of Chinese History*, pp. 3-4, *Collected Works of Yinbingshi*, Vol. 10, Zhonghua Book Co. (Beijing), 1988.

knowledge. Worst of all, “it is inevitable that historians obtain sand instead of gold.” In that case, historians bring disaster to later generations by transmitting sand to them.

In the *Methodology of Historiography*, Du Weiyun explains that historians’ statements are sometimes not only useless but even evil, and what they have stated is the beginning of disasters:

Human hatred, as well as wars between countries or ethnic groups, often has its origins in history. When history becomes a propaganda weapon utilized by ambitious people, it will cause great disasters. The 1870 War is due largely to the historical writings of Thiers (L. A. Thiers, 1797-1877). The greater disasters in the world since the 20th century should be ascribed to the historical writings “created” by Treitschke (Heinrich von Treitschke, 1834-1896). Indulging in blind patriotism, with misconceptions about history, historians lead the whole country to accomplish the historic mission. It is extremely rare for historians not to be exploited by ambitious politicians. It is extremely rare not to cause bloody disasters. All historians know is to serve politics; they only know the Marx’s theory of history, which explains all history in terms of class struggle and working conditions; with this approach, it is extremely rare not to induce human hatred or cause human destruction owing to the complete loss of humanity. ... “While reading that Xiang Yu defeated Wang Li, one gets excited with the intention of fighting. On reading that Tian Yannian reproached Huo Guang, one’s attitude becomes perversely aggressive.” Those overstatements in the *Shiji* [Records of the Grand Historian] and the *Hanshu* [Book of Han] produce serious effects, which are really impossible for the original authors to imagine. Achilles and Agamemnon, the typical heroes created in the Homer’s epic poem *Iliad*, have also caused endless problems for the world; learning from Homer, the later bad historians have exaggerated such heroic deeds, making wars happen continuously. It is very unfortunate that valuable history books and other classical literature were destroyed in war; it is even more unfortunate that wars have bought out those history books; worst of all, those history books have become the precursors to war. The world is gorgeous because of history, and the world is also gloomy because of history.³

Du Weiyun cites the modern Western historians, such as Thiers, Treitschke and Marx, to explain that misconceptions about history have caused wars. Du further gives examples of the ancient Eastern historians, such as Sima Qian and Ban Gu, who edited the *Shiji* and the *Hanshu* respectively; their overstatements stir up the readers’ emotions. Another example cited by Du is the ancient Western historian Homer, who exaggerated the heroic deeds of Achilles and Agamemnon, and Homer’s exaggeration made wars happen continuously. Du sighs with emotion that historians “have become the precursors to war.”

³ Du Weiyun, *Methodology of Historiography*, San Min Book Co. (Taipei), 2008, pp. 427-428.

Since the historians of ancient and recent times have so many flaws, modern historians are supposed to be able to correct those flaws. However, this is not true. Tu Cheng-sheng, a modern scholar of history, states in *The Road to New Historiography*:

The “historian” belongs to an occupation classification, or a classification of professional knowledge; on the other hand, “responsibility” belongs to the topic of ethics. Any human should fulfill or abide by his/her responsibility. A historian is also a human. However, we do not talk about “the human responsibility” but discuss “the historian’s responsibility”; obviously, this topic is related to the professional knowledge of “history” or the professional occupation of “historian.”... Because modern historians have long become professional and academic, they are less concerned with the issue of the historian’s responsibility.⁴

Tu Cheng-sheng opines that the “historian” belongs to an occupation classification, or a classification of professional knowledge; however, because modern historians have long become professional and academic, they are less concerned with the issue of the historian’s responsibility. It shows that the content of professional and academic training of modern historiography is worth discussing. Because of being professional and academic, historians are, to our surprise, not concerned with the issue of the historian’s responsibility. Wouldn’t they become people who are not concerned with their own responsibility? How could it be possible that those who are not concerned with their own responsibility are good historians?

Quoting from Herbert Butterfield (1900-1979), a British historian, Du Weiyun states, in his book *Methodology of Historiography*, that there are too many bad histories in the world:

If people wish to gain benefit but not damage from history, they can only hope that good history keeps coming out. The reason why history causes problems is that there are lots of bad histories. It is uncertain whether good history can serve humankind in the same way as science does. Nevertheless, bad history, like science, has the power to destroy humankind. Therefore, Herbert Butterfield strongly advocates the need for history education and research. The main reason is that Butterfield feels that there are too many bad histories in the world. Historians are the ones who should feel ashamed that there are too many bad histories, rather than good ones, appearing in the world.⁵

Whether the historical writings are good or bad depends entirely on historians’ scholarship, quality and sense. Historians know nothing about what their own responsibility is or what they should write about history. How could it be possible that historians do not produce bad histories? As

⁴ Tu Cheng-sheng, *The Road to New Historiography*, San Min Book Co. (Taipei), 2004, pp. 368-369.

⁵ Du Weiyun, *Methodology of Historiography*, San Min Book Co. (Taipei), 2008, pp. 429-430.

stated by Du Weiyun, **Historians are the ones who should feel ashamed that there are too many bad histories, rather than good ones, appearing in the world.** For this reason, what are the basic criteria for a historian to write a good history book? Du Weiyun states in the *Methodology of Historiography*:

The criteria for selecting facts are the most important. All one's inspiration, interest, and natural ability cannot help with the selection of the most significant historical facts. Eastern or Western historians hardly ever talk about those criteria systemically. ... Some people even believe that the process of selecting facts is mysterious and elusive. Therefore, historians select facts without a consistent standard, and this is the key point why historical study cannot achieve a higher level.⁶

In this article, the right of historians to write about parts of facts selected from all facts is called **historical right**.⁷ Historians also recognize that “**the criteria for selecting facts are the most important**” in writing history books. However, **Eastern or Western historians hardly ever talk about those criteria systemically. Therefore, historians select facts without a consistent standard.** Du Weiyun believes that **this is the key point why historical study cannot achieve a higher level.** Indeed, there is good reason to believe Du's words!

Just think: If historians execute their historical right without a consistent standard and are not concerned with their historical responsibility, what professional knowledge do they own to claim to be historians? By what standard are they called historians? Liang Qichao states in the *Research Methods of Chinese History*:

Moreover, the scope of history should be re-defined, taking reduction as expansion.⁸

The scope of history should be re-defined according to the development of historical study. Therefore, the scope of history is either reduced or expanded. The scope of the historian should also be re-defined according to the development of historical study, either reduced or expanded. For this reason, this article attempts to explore why a historian is called historian, as well as the corresponding relationship between the historical right and the historical responsibility of historians, and to reduce or expand the scope of the historian. Hence, this article is entitled “Historical Right, Historical Responsibility and Historians.”

2. Historical Right and Historians

⁶ Du Weiyun, *Methodology of Historiography*, San Min Book Co. (Taipei), 2008, pp. 30-31.

⁷ Tsai Lichen, “True History versus New History,” *Journal of True Enlightenment*, 3rd issue, True Enlightenment Education Foundation (Taipei), 2009, p. 12.

⁸ Liang Qichao, *Research Methods of Chinese History*, p. 29, *Collected Works of Yinbingshi*, Vol. 10, Zhonghua Book Co. (Beijing), 1988.

This article attempts to explore the scope of the historian. The characteristics of the historian should be clarified first. Chinese historians always like to mention the establishment of official historian system and consider it to be one of the important factors in the well-developed Chinese historiography. However, the occupational historical officer is not a characteristic of the historian. The reason is that although there was no historical officer in ancient society, it does not impede the propagation of historical facts. Although the Western society established the official historian system later⁹, historians still existed before the establishment of official historian system, and it does not impede the development and advancement of Western history. In describing the Chinese official historian system, Du Weiyun states:

The Western world did not establish an official historian system to record the world events immediately. ... As for Greeks, who initiated historical study, they had already had a lot of political experiences up to the 7th century BC. It was strange that the Greeks at that time did not think of recording their experiences in written words. They only paid attention to the history provided in epic poems. As a result, Greeks still did not have plentiful records in written words until the 5th century BC. That was the situation at that time, and no wonder Western historians disappointedly said, "At first, the stimulation to record historical events did not come from the interest in the past, the so-called interest in history. The forerunner of historical study was full of surprises; it seemed unlikely that, in the beginning, the duty of the so-called historian has its origins in history." In contrast, the situation in China was entirely different. Since distant ancient times, China had established an official historian system to record the world events immediately, which never happened before. The time when China established an official historian system might not be as early as that told in legends. Cangjie and Jusong, the inventors of Chinese characters, were probably not the ancestors of official historians. However, in the Shang Dynasty or the Xia Dynasty at the latest, China had indeed established an official historian system.¹⁰

Du Weiyun praises that in the Shang Dynasty or the Xia Dynasty at the latest, China had established official historians in different governmental organizations, and the establishment of official historians is occupational and professional. However, from the definition of the historian, although the occupational and professional historical officers are historians, occupationization and professionalization are not the most important characteristics of the historian; it is proved from the fact that there were still historians writing about history although the Western world set up the

⁹ Unlike in China, the Western society did not include the historian in the official system. In this article, the establishment of the official historian refers to the scribe in the royal system or the governmental organizations, or those who write history books with the financial support from the royal family or the government.

¹⁰ Du Weiyun, *Chinese History and World History*, San Min Book Co. (Taipei), 2008, pp. 79-80.

official historian system in a later time. As stated by Western historians: **it seemed unlikely that, in the beginning, the duty of the so-called historian has its origins in history.** It exactly shows that occupationization is not the characteristic of the historian. Liang Qichao even states in the *Research Methods of Chinese History*:

How did the initial history begin? When human beings were gradually forming race groups or tribes, the elder of a tribe often assembled the younger generations, in small groups scattered here and there, sitting around the fire or on the grass; the elder talked about himself, his ancestors' terrifying experiences or brave deeds, etc. The listeners were pleased impressively without getting tired. Touching with peculiar details, some stories were imprinted on the audience's mind and became unforgettable. The stories were told repeatedly and transmitted for generations without stopping. Their deeds then had the quality of history, and hence the saying "oral propagation by ten people becomes historical."¹¹

This indicates that **"oral propagation by ten people becomes historical,"** and the propagation of ancient Chinese history is not entirely dependent on official historians. The establishment of Chinese official historians only shows that Chinese people are particularly enthusiastic about recording political affairs. From the fact that there were still historians appearing in the ancient Western world even without the occupational and professional historical officers, Tu Cheng-sheng's view that **"the 'historian' belongs to an occupation classification"** is not the real characteristic of the historian, but the misconception of modern historians, who give a narrow definition of historian.

Du Weiyun states that, **"since distant ancient times, China had established an official historian system to record the world events immediately."** His view is not entirely correct. It is because the establishment of official historians was mainly to record the events about the emperor family and the dukes. They did not truly record **"the world events."** Even the historical events occurring within the controlled territory of the dynasty at that time could not be recorded completely. For instance, the important inventions in ancient China, such as the gunpowder and the compass, were not listed in the records by official historians. This proves that official historians did not completely **"record the world events."** As for **"immediate records,"** only those events concerned and personally seen or heard by official historians might be recorded immediately; it is also impossible for official historians to **"immediately"** record other things. Du Weiyun's praise for Chinese official historians who have the function of **"immediately recording the world events"** is actually **an overstatement.**

Although writing was inconvenient in ancient times, the words and deeds of the emperor were

¹¹ Liang Qichao, *Research Methods of Chinese History*, p. 8, *Collected Works of Yinbingshi*, Vol. 10, Zhonghua Book Co. (Beijing), 1988.

still especially recorded in great details by official historians, as evidenced by the quotation **“his actions were written down by the recorder of the Left, and his utterances by the recorder of the Right.”**¹² However, the purpose of historical records by historians should be to record those things that possess the nature of knowledge and are valuable to the readers, but not to record emperors and dukes in great details. Liang Qichao states in the *New History*:

The present Chinese historians only dully record that event X happened on a certain day and event Y happened on a certain day. As for why that event happened or what the remote cause and the immediate cause for that event are, the historians can never tell. How did that event affect another event? What was its effect in a later time? Should it come to good or bad fruition? They can never tell. Hence, numerous history books are just like the lifeless figures in wax museums. It merely wastes one’s brainpower to read them. Those Chinese history books are not beneficial to the intelligence of people, but only wasting their intelligence.¹³

Liang Qichao disagrees that history books are only to record things, and he advocates that the causal relationships of events, such as **“How did that event affect another event? What was its effect in a later time? Should it come to good or bad fruition?”** should be written down. In other words, from all facts, historians should select important facts that have the natures of knowledge and value to benefit the readers. If historians just dully record those day-to-day events, what they do is actually not beneficial to the readers, but only wasting the readers’ brainpower.

Historians dully record that **“event X happened on a certain day and event Y happened on a certain day.”** In fact, selecting from countless facts, historians have recorded those facts that they consider to be important. In this way, historians show their right,¹⁴ namely **historical right**, to select special knowledge and value that they wish to inform people. The right of historians to write about the selected parts of facts is the common characteristic to identify the definition and scope of the historian. Because historical right is the common characteristic of the historian, we can identify the definition and scope of the historian from the performance of historical right: **Those who can write about parts of facts selected from varied facts, showing their right to select special knowledge and value that they wish to inform people, are exactly historians.**

Since historical right is the important characteristic to identify a historian, the connotation of

¹² This quotation is from *The Classic of Rites*, Chapter Yu Zao.

¹³ Liang Qichao, *New History*, p. 4, *Collected Works of Yinbingshi*, Vol. 3, Zhonghua Book Co. (Beijing), 1988.

¹⁴ “Power” and “right” are different concepts. In this article, “right” is sometimes used to describe the historical right; it implies that when the historian executes his right, it should be beneficial to the historian himself. Sometimes, “power” is used to describe the historical right; it indicates that while showing his power as a historian, the historian does not know whether or not the execution of his power is beneficial to himself. For smooth writing, either “power” or “right” is used in this article according to its literal meaning without further explaining their differences.

historical right should be clarified without confusion. For example, in the late Qing and early Republican period, Liu Yizheng (1880-1956) wrote *Main Points of Chinese History* covering ten papers on history. In “Historical Right II,” Liu’s explanation about the connotation of historical right is confusing the readers:

The Grand Scribe of the Zhou Dynasty was in charge of rules and legal system; the Grand Scribe and the chief minister had the same job. The eight powers for the emperor to control courtiers and govern the country were all decreed by the Internal Scribe. Historical officers assisted in the fulfillment of the laws and decrees and checked political activities as well as financial accounting. ... They knew everything about the offering of sacrifices to gods or ancestors, rules, tax, decorums as well as customs, and farm work. The power to decide major things, such as salary, rank, punishment, rewards, abolition and establishment, belonged to the head of state and the authorities. The Grand Scribe was in charge of those major things, so was the Internal Scribe. They needed to provide guidance and assistance to the king about all those things, including rank and emoluments, abolition and establishment, the power over life and death, giving and taking, or what was neglected by the king and his inappropriate deeds. The historical officer was only the leader of civil official staff; however, he was in charge of all government decrees. This shows that, in the Zhou Dynasty, the power of the historical officer was higher than everything else.¹⁵

Liu Yizheng claims that **“the historical officer was in charge of all government decrees”**; **“in the Zhou Dynasty, the power of the historical officer was higher than everything else.”** Liu presumes the duty power of the historical officer in the Zhou Dynasty to be the power that the historian should have, neglecting that the purpose and essence of being a historian and a politician are different. Merely because historical officers in the Zhou Dynasty partially shared the governing power, Liu mistakenly thinks that the governing power also belongs to the right of the historian. If sharing the governing power were the right that historians should have, all historians should own the governing power in the governmental system. If the emperor or dukes did not give the governing power to historical officers, they should ask the emperor or dukes to grant them the governing power according to the rule that says: **“the historian, who manages official documents to assist in the governing of a country.”¹⁶** In fact, the power of historical officers to assist in the governing is bestowed by the emperor, but not inherently owned. Therefore, to give or to take away the power are all dependent on the emperor, and historical officers can do nothing about it. In the late Qing and early Republican period, Chen Fuchen (1859-1917) gives the following example:

¹⁵ Liu Yizheng, *Main Points of Chinese History*, Zhonghua Book Co. (Taiwan), 1957, 1st edition Taiwan, pp. 24-25.

¹⁶ This quotation is from “Offices of Heaven,” *The Rites of Zhou*.

Emperor Wu of Han set up an official position, the Grand Scribe, whose authority was higher than that of the prime minister. Sima Tan was appointed as the Grand Scribe. Because of his father's official position in the past, Sima Qian held the post of Grand Scribe, and his authority was far more superior to that of Gongsun Hong, Wei Qing, etc. Later, Sima Qian became embroiled in the Li Ling affair and was put in prison. I understand that the official position of the historian is nothing at all.¹⁷

Chen Fuchen states that the Grand Scribe was an official position set up in the Han Dynasty and its authority was higher than that of the prime minister. Sima Qian held the post of the Grand Scribe and his authority was far more superior to that of Gongsun Hong, Wei Qing, etc. However, because of becoming embroiled in the Li Ling affair, Sima Qian was ousted from power immediately and sentenced to castration. Hence, Chen Fuchen sighs with emotion: **I understand that the pride of the official historian is totally destroyed to nothing! (I understand that the official position of the historian is nothing at all.)** From the above example, it shows that the power of historical officers to assist in ruling the country is granted by the emperor and their power is not the historical right. Liu Yizheng regards the historical officer's governing power granted temporarily by the emperor as the characteristic of right that historians should have. Liu confuses the historical right with the governing power; he also misunderstands the essence of the historian.

Assisting in government affairs is not the right of historical officers; even the right to write history books is not exclusive to the historical officer either. Liang Qichao states in the *Research Methods of Chinese History*:

In ancient times, only historical officers could write about history. The personal writing of history started from Confucius. However, Confucius was not a historian, as I have told that before. Although Sima Qian was a historical officer, his books were actually personal writings. We can prove this point by examining the propagation origin mentioned in the bibliography of his daughter's son, Yang Yun (referring to "Bibliography of Yang Yun" in the *Hanshu*). After Sima Qian's book appeared, many successors followed his example, such as Chu Shaosun mentioned in the *Hanshu*, Feng Shang in the *Seven Epitomes*, sixteen persons including Liu Xiang in the *Houhanshu* and the *Shitong* [Generality of Historiography], and Jia Kui in the *Tongzhi* [Comprehensive Records]. Almost all of them were not historical officers.¹⁸

In ancient times, historical officers were granted the exclusive right to write about history by the

¹⁷ Chen Fuchen, edited by Chen Depu, *Collected Writings of Chen Fuchen*, Vol. 1, Zhonghua Book Co. (Beijing), 1995, p. 564.

¹⁸ Liang Qichao, *Research Methods of Chinese History*, p. 16, *Collected Works of Yinbingshi*, Vol. 10, Zhonghua Book Co. (Beijing), 1988.

authorities. Nevertheless, historians own the historical right, which cannot be taken away or forbidden forever by the all-powerful emperor. In China, Confucius was the earliest, most famous one who privately wrote history books and executed the historical right. Confucius was not an historical officer, yet he wrote the *Spring and Autumn Annals* of his own free will to express his political views.¹⁹ Although Liang Qichao admits that the *Spring and Autumn Annals* is like a history book, he opines that the *Spring and Autumn Annals* is a classic but not a history book. Confucius is not a historian because the contents of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* violate the fundamental principle of seeking the truth in writing history books.²⁰

Liang Qichao opines that the *Spring and Autumn Annals* is a classic but not a history book because Confucius wrote the *Spring and Autumn Annals* to express his values about “**cover-ups for relatives and sages.**” However, Zhang Xuecheng advocates that “**the six classics are all history,**” which means that the six classics are the true records of laws and institutions about how to “govern a country,” and the six classics are also historical data.²¹ Hence, from the viewpoints of either that Confucius tried to express his values about “**cover-ups for relatives and sages**” or that the six classics are all true records of how to govern a country, the *Spring and Autumn Annals* can, in fact, be classified as historical data for historical research. The fact that Confucius privately wrote the *Spring and Autumn Annals* clearly explains that historical right is the right of historians to record facts but not the power to assist in politics.

Liang Qichao cites many historical facts that history books are not written by historical officers. It proves that the right to write about history cannot be restricted by the political power. The right to write about history is the characteristic of historian’s right and the criterion for indentifying the historian. Hence, **the true historical right is to write about parts of facts selected from all facts, showing their knowledge and value. To execute the historical right is the most important characteristic of the historian. Whether a historian is an occupation or whether a historian**

¹⁹ It is cited from the *New History*: “**The writing of *Spring and Autumn Annals* by Confucius is a way to express his political views. In an era without freedom of speech, political views could not be directly expressed; therefore, Confucius expressed his political views under the guise of writing a history book.**” Please refer to *New History*, p. 26, Liang Qichao, *Collected Works of Yinbingshi*, Vol. 3, Zhonghua Book Co. (Beijing), 1988.

²⁰ It is cited from *Research Methods of Chinese History*: “**As exemplified above, only with the subjective purpose of “cover-ups for relatives and sages,” one reverses the facts to fit the ruler’s need. ... Similarly, many other records which are untrue, incomplete, and uneven are too numerous to list. Therefore, the scholars specialized in the New Text Confucianism of the Han Dynasty commented that *Spring and Autumn Annals* is a classic rather than a history book. We cannot but agree with their viewpoint.**” Liang Qichao, *Research Methods of Chinese History*, p. 32, *Collected Works of Yinbingshi*, Vol. 10, Zhonghua Book Co. (Beijing), 1988.

²¹ What is the original intention of Zhang Xuecheng by stating that “the six classics are all history”? Scholars have different opinions on Zhang’s statement. Someone opines that “the six classics being all history” means: the six classics are also historical data; some others say that the six classics are the true records of laws and institutions about how to govern a country by the late kings, and therefore the six classics are also historical facts. This article adopts the viewpoint that the six classics are historical data.

shares the political power is not the characteristic of the historian.

Some scholars think that “historical right” is the right of historians to be in charge of an organization and to collect varied historical data of the central government. For instance, Wang Fan-sen states:

Speaking of “historical right,” ideally, we should allow historians to be in charge of an organization and to collect varied historical data of the central government. In addition, we should also establish historical institutes in every province to collect historical data about local people. Being independent, historians can write history books that are fully concerned with the history of people.²²

To directly collect historical data through governmental organizations is the “ideal” of historical study. However, such an “ideal” is not the right that historians surely have, nor is it the characteristic of historians; furthermore, it is not something that historians can accomplish. Chen Fuchen states in his article “Independent History”:

On reading the three chapters in the *Shiji*, namely “Equalization,” “Rivers and Canals,” and “Biographies of Usurers,” I feel the free flow of sentiments in the writings, and the author is candid with high aspirations. Generally, those writings talk about the people’s livelihood and their financial profit and loss. However, compared to the Western historians in terms of statistics, the Grand Scribe [Sima Qian] falls far behind, which is a flaw in his historical writings. ... It is because the Western people are close to the king; they can hear each other’s voices; politicians are especially familiar with the likes and dislikes of people as well as public sentiments; accordingly, Western historians can have more information to write about history books. In China, people have become less righteous since the Qin Dynasty. Although the population censuses are not devoid of records, the data are hidden as they used to be. Although the products are not devoid of checks, the data are unreliable as they used to be. The government officials take advantage to do evil things and line their own pockets. Given the circumstances, if one wishes that the Chinese historiography could meet the same statistical standards as the Western historiography, **it is certainly beyond the Chinese historians’ capability.²³**

Chen Fuchen opines that Western historians normally can get the accurate government statistics. The ruling class in Western countries is closer to the people and therefore very familiar with the people’s conditions or their sentiments. In China, the economic statistics of successive dynasties are not lacking; however, due to the different political culture, the census records are hidden and the

²² Wang Fan-sen, *Chinese Historians and Historiography in Modern Times*, San Lian Book Co. (Hong Kong), 2008, p. 40.

²³ Chen Fuchen, edited by Chen Depu, *Collected Writings of Chen Fuchen*, Vol. 1, Zhonghua Book Co. (Beijing), 1995, p. 563.

statistics of product checks are not reliable. Therefore, Chinese historians cannot possibly obtain statistics as accurate as in Western countries. For this reason, we know that it is not the characteristic of the historian's right to obtain the official historical data, which are available only under suitable political environment. Even if historians can collect the various administration data of the central or local government in a later time, therefore achieving the "ideal" of obtaining valuable historical data, such an "ideal" is often interfered by other factors. For example, the scholar Song Xueqin states:

Skipping this point, there are still some intentional actions by individuals; even some official conference records are not entirely true. In their researches, many historians have found the following facts: some high-ranking officials feared that the future scholars would use their records to write papers; therefore, they were unwilling to keep written records of the true motivation behind their certain actions, and sometimes, only high-sounding formulas were recorded. The situations of documents are complex, and the documents of the modern Chinese history are even more complicated for the researchers. Under the special political background, continuous political movements for several decades have had great influence on the formation and contents of documents after the new China was founded. There are lots of untrue records in the archival material. During political movements, many cadres' explanations and self-examinations did not come out of their free will; sometimes, they had no choice but to say a lot of insincere words, which are inconsistent with the historical facts. It was also quite often that people counterfeited historical material to confuse right and wrong.²⁴

From the above findings in historical researches, it proves that to obtain the official historical data is one thing, but whether the official historical data are truly reliable is another. **Some official conference records are not entirely true** because some high-ranking officials were **unwilling to keep written records of the true motivation behind their certain actions, and sometime, only high-sounding formulas were recorded.** Even during political instability, **many cadres' explanations and elf-examinations in political movements did not come out of their free will; sometimes, they had no choice but to say a lot of insincere words, which are inconsistent with the historical facts.** It is also quite often that people counterfeit historical material to confuse right and wrong.

Hence, we can understand that to obtain the official statistics and documents is not necessarily the right available to historians. Historians must have permission from the ruling class to obtain the official historical data. Even if historians can obtain the official historical data and documents, they still have to select true and reliable historical data from those obtained to write about history. Therefore, historical right, which represents the characteristic of the historian, is still the right of

²⁴ Song Xueqin, *Modern Historiography in Evolution*, Academy Press (Beijing), 2008, pp. 228-229.

historians to select and record facts, but not the right or resources granted by external political organizations. If historians are dependent on the right or resources granted by the external political organizations, it would mean that historians themselves must be restricted by external factors, which will affect their performance of historical right eventually. In the *Main Trends in History*, Barraclough (Geoffrey Barraclough, 1908-1984) describes the restriction coming from such dependence:

But the new and more sophisticated techniques now in use, the closer integration and official sponsorship of research, and the consequent demand for funds to meet the growing expenditure on machines and man-power, have rendered historians far more susceptible than at any time in the past to governmental control. ...but it is evident that there are opportunities for more insidious pressures today, particularly as (in Butterfield's words) 'a well-run state needs no heavy-handed censorship', but is perfectly capable of binding 'the historian with soft charms and with subtle, comfortable chains'.²⁵

Barraclough describes that the present data of historical research are becoming more and more enormous, and therefore high amount of funds are extremely needed for computer machines and massive manpower to process huge data. To meet this high expenditure, it is extremely necessary to have financial sponsorship from the government, which also **has rendered historians far more susceptible than at any time in the past to governmental control.** This restriction phenomenon exists not only in the totalitarian government, but even if in “**a well-run state which needs no heavy-handed censorship,**” the government is still **perfectly capable of binding “the historian with soft charms and with subtle, comfortable chains.”** Hence, historians' expectation that the ruling class can help them to obtain statistics, historical data, documents, and research grant is actually contradictory to the historical right of historians to “write about history independently.” Therefore, obtaining official historical data and resources is not the historical right of historians.

From Song Xueqin's and Barraclough's descriptions, modern historians have noticed that their own historical right is easily restricted by external factors. Historians used to falsely believe that they had the power to “counterbalance the king with historical lessons.” In fact, whether or not historians can “counterbalance the king with historical lessons” depends on the attitude of the king. Historians do not have any power to counterbalance the king. The modern scholar Lei Jiaji states in *The History of Ideas in Medieval Historiography*:

Strictly speaking, “to counterbalance the king with historical lessons” is the most incisive idea in the ideology of “governing a country with historical lessons.” The subjects to be counterbalanced include not only the undisciplined king but also those disloyal courtiers

²⁵ Geoffrey Barraclough, *Main Trends in History*, Holmes & Meier Publishers Inc. (New York), 1991, p. 211.

who are in full power and against the law. **The balance of power is originally a political issue.** Those who plan for the country's good cannot counterbalance or punish the undisciplined king and disloyal courtiers on a legal basis, and it is a pity of the Chinese politics and government. **Without success, they had no choice but to utilize the abstract "heaven" to counterbalance the king. After the heaven failed to counterbalance the king, they had no choice but to counterbalance the king with "historical lessons." Without success again, they had no choice but to practicably "counterbalance the king with family rules" (i.e. ancestor's family rules) or "counterbalance the king with teachers." Changing their ways from abstract to concrete, they still failed to counterbalance the king eventually; conversely, the king took advantage of them.**²⁶

Indeed, the balance of power is a political issue, but not an issue of historical right. In fact, historians have no enough right to counterbalance the king's power. Moreover, in the practice of historiography, historians do not have any power to "counterbalance the king with historical lessons." Therefore, **they still failed to counterbalance the king eventually; conversely, the king took advantage of them.** For this reason, to take the balance of political power as part of historians' power is really confusing the essence of historical right. It also shows the drawback that some individual historians crave the governing power.

From the above discussions, it is known that the historical right of historians to select and record facts is entirely different from the right to obtain historical data and resources from government organizations or the power to assist in governing a country; even worse, they are essentially contradictory and interfering with each other. Hence, we can clearly identify the connotation of historical right without any confusion.

Historical right is also referred to as "an a priori decision of the historian" by some scholars. However, it is not a good term because this definition does not show the corresponding relationship between right and obligation of the historian. Du Weiyun states in the *Methodology of Historiography*:

Secondly, the historian's notice of an event depends on an a priori decision of the historian but not the event itself. Among all wars, the right to take notice of the Battle of Hastings in 1066 lies in a thought from the historian.²⁷

Indeed, Du Weiyun has noticed the characteristic of the historian's right. To record a certain war selected from numerous wars is **the historical right that lies in a thought from the historian.** It is inappropriate that Du Weiyun describes "an a priori decision" of the historian as the characteristic

²⁶ Lei Jiaji, *The History of Ideas in Medieval Historiography*, Student Book Co. (Taipei), p. 376.

²⁷ Du Weiyun, *Methodology of Historiography*, San Min Book Co. (Taipei), 2008, p. 27.

of the historian's right. The reason is that the terminology concept of "an a priori decision" is too neutral, abstract, and academic to show the significance that the historian should be responsible for his/her "decision," and it will certainly lead to the result as stated by Tu Cheng-sheng: "**Because modern historians have long become professional and academic, they are less concerned with the issue of the historian's responsibility.**" The execution of right must bear its corresponding responsibility. Hence, it is appropriate to say **the right that lies in a thought of the historian to select and record events** is the "historical right," whereas it is inappropriate to call it "an a priori decision."

Lastly, we have to point out the difference between "historical right" and "historical insight"²⁸. Du Weiyun states in the *Methodology of Historiography*:

The so-called "historical insight" is the historian's powers of observation, namely the historian's ability to select facts. The historian should have the insight to select the most significant facts to make them historical, and discard those of no significance. This is the difference between a great historian and a general one. At this time, the historian is a painter, but not a photographer; a painter selects the appropriate scenes from all those before his eyes, rather than takes all of them.²⁹

"Historical right" refers to the right of the historian to select and record facts, whereas "historical insight" refers to the historian's ability to execute the right. Hence, right and ability are different, and this is precisely the difference between historical right and historical insight. If a historian owns only historical right, he/she is not necessarily a competent one. In addition to historical right, a historian should also have historical insight to become a faultless, good historian. Without basic historical insight, one would be a bad historian. Concerning how to become a faultless, good historian, it is the main topic which will be further discussed in this article.

3. Historical right and historical responsibility

Right and obligation are two different aspects of a single entity: anyone who owns the right must bear the due responsibility and obligation. It is the common sense of modern people that rights come with obligations. However, in the field of historical study, historians always neglect the idea that rights come with responsibilities. Historians own the historical right to select and record parts

²⁸ Historical insight was first seen in the statement of Liu Zhiji of the Tang Dynasty in reply to the question of Zheng Weizhong, Director of Board of Rites (Confucian). Liu Zhiji stated: "**A talented historian must have three special abilities; such a person is rarely found in the world; therefore, the talented historian is rare. The three special abilities are talent, knowledge, and insight.**" Please refer to the *Old Book of Tang*, Vol. 102, "Biography 52, Liu Zhiji." The above quotation is from the *New Corrected Version of the Old Book of Tang*, Appendix 4, edited by Yang Jialuo, Tingwen Book Co. (Taipei), p. 3173.

²⁹ Du Weiyun, *Methodology of Historiography*, San Min Book Co. (Taipei), 2008, pp. 29-30.

of facts. But what is the corresponding historical responsibility? How should a historian execute the historical right to fulfill his due historical responsibility? Those relevant topics are found in many historiographic writings; however, they all lack a system of consistency and implementation, and hence valid conclusions cannot be reached.

In Sima Qian's mind, the writing of the *Shiji* was to “**explore the boundaries of nature and humankind, understand thoroughly the changes from past to present, and establish a school of thought,**”³⁰ which also became the goals for the later Chinese historians. “**To explore the boundaries of nature and humankind**” means that historians try to explore whether the operation rules of the great nature are closely related to how virtuously the king governs his people and what the boundaries of interrelations between them are. Hence, Confucius wrote the *Spring and Autumn Annals* to “**judge the right or wrong in the history of the past 242 years and set up examples for the world; his purpose of criticizing emperors, dukes, and senior officials was only to establish a benevolent government.**”³¹ Following the example of Confucius, Sima Qian also commented on whether the words and actions of historical personages were in accord with the rules of the great nature. Historians execute their historical right to comment on historical events and this is precisely the historian's **writing of the rules—to write the rules of right and wrong or good and evil.**

“**To understand thoroughly the changes from past to present**” means that historians should thoroughly understand the evolutionary process of history from past to present. “**To establish a school of thought**” is Sima Qian's belief that the writing of the rules by historians is in accord with the objective, consistent rules of justice of nature, and the perfect writing of the rules by historians is unsurpassed by the six schools of pre-Han philosophy, namely Yin-Yang philosophy, Confucianism, Mohism, Logicianism, Legalism, and Taoism; therefore, historians can establish an independent school of thought other than the six schools. For this reason, Sima Qian wrote the *Shiji* in the hope of becoming a school of thought and surpassing the six schools. In Sima Qian's autobiography, there is an article “**On the Essential Ideas of the Six Schools**”³² commenting on the advantages and disadvantages of the six schools. Sima Qian thought that the six schools have their own advantages and disadvantages respectively, and they cannot clarify the theory that the operation rules of the great nature are closely related to how the king governs the people. Therefore, only historians can surpass the six schools and establish an independent school of thought. The later historians often set themselves a goal to “**establish a school of thought**”—to establish one's own school of thought,

³⁰ This quotation is from “A letter to Ren An” written by Sima Qian.

³¹ This quotation is from the *Shiji [Records of the Grand Historian]*, Vol. 130, “Autobiographical Afterword of the Grand Historian.”

³² This quotation is from the *Shiji [Records of the Grand Historian]*, Vol. 130, “Autobiographical Afterword of the Grand Historian.”

which is different from those of other historians; what they mean seems different from that of Sima Qian.³³

However, the later historians often disagree that the writing of the rules should be the historian's mission. For example, Liang Qichao states in the *New History*:

Xinshi Shi [Liang Qichao] says: I do not understand why Chinese historians **take the writing of the rules as their only vocation**. I do not understand why Chinese historians **take the writing of the rules as the only specialty**. I do not understand, based on what kind of principle do Chinese historians judge the world events from past to present and dare to be arrogantly proud of their writing of the rules? Some historians have stated: **"The writing of the rules, based on the meanings of *Spring and Autumn Annals*, is to distinguish right from wrong or good from evil, to execute the right of judgment, and to praise or criticize personages of a hundred generations**. The good writing of rules is good history; otherwise, it is bad history." Well, the above statement is untrue! **The writing of rules in the *Spring and Autumn Annals* is not to praise or criticize personages**. The ancients already passed away and their bones have been decayed. How could it be possible that Confucius took the trouble to praise or criticize the ancients one by one? The writing of *Spring and Autumn Annals* by Confucius is a way to express his political views. **In an era without freedom of speech**, political views could not be directly expressed; therefore, Confucius expressed his political views under the guise of writing a history book.³⁴

Liang Qichao expresses his doubt: Why can historians write the rules? Why can the writing of the rules be **the only vocation or specialty** of historians? Based on what kind of principle do historians judge the world events from past to present and dare to be arrogantly proud of their writing of the rules? The past historians stated that **"the writing of the rules, based on the meanings of *Spring and Autumn Annals*, is to distinguish right from wrong or good from evil, to execute the right of judgment, and to praise or criticize personages of a hundred generations."** Liang Qichao criticizes that their statements are groundless at all. Liang opines that, in an **era without freedom of speech**, Confucius' writing of *Spring and Autumn Annals* was only to express his political views. The reason behind is that the rules of right and wrong or good and evil mentioned in the *Spring and Autumn Annals* are not the true law of causality. Because Liang Qichao's query is very powerful, most of the later historians agree with him. However, historians

³³ There are many historians who hold this view. For example, both Du Weiyun and Zhang Xuecheng hold the same view; therefore, citing from Zhang Xuecheng, Du Weiyun states: **"Because historians can 'detail what others neglect, disagree with what others agree, pay attention to what others do little, and ignore what others are overcautious about,' they can write about history and their writings become a school of thought."** Please refer to *Methodology of Historiography*, Du Weiyun, San Min Book Co. (Taipei), 2008, p. 36.

³⁴ Liang Qichao, *New History*, p. 26, *Collected Works of Yinbingshi*, Vol. 3, Zhonghua Book Co. (Beijing), 1988.

still do the same as usual³⁵; that is, they still “**distinguish right from wrong or good from evil, execute the right of judgment, and praise or criticize personages of a hundred generations**”; they have not shown any improvement until now; even Liang Qichao himself would naturally praise or criticize personages to write the rules. This is because when Liang Qichao criticized Confucius or other historians, Liang would also naturally “**distinguish right from wrong or good from evil, execute the right of judgment, and praise or criticize personages of a hundred generations**”; what he did also belongs to the writing of the rules, and is never beyond the scope of writing the rules.

Liang Qichao and other historians clearly understood that the historian is not a judge or legislator, and that he should not do the judge’s or the legislator’s job. However, why did they still unavoidably do the judge’s job to “**execute the right of judgment**” and to “**distinguish right from wrong or good from evil**” to write the rules? What they did is even beyond the scope of the judge or the legislator³⁶. In fact, **to write the rules is to manifest the rules and values by historians’ execution of historical right with their words and deeds. Hence, historians’ writing of the rules is precisely the clear manifestation of historical right.**

Liang Qichao expresses his doubt: “**Is the writing of the rules the only vocation?**” The historical right is a right but not a vocation. Therefore, although the writing of the rules is not necessarily a historian’s vocation, historians still can write the rules. Liang Qichao further expresses his doubt: “**Is the writing of the rules the only specialty?**” The historical right is a right, and therefore it is not a job that is done according to one’s ability. Hence, the job of writing the rules is not necessarily the historian’s specialty. However, historians still **dare to be arrogantly proud of their writing of the rules** based on their historical right.

The reason why people strongly denounce the historian’s writing of the rules is in fact what is questioned by Liang Qichao: “**Based on what kind of principle do historians judge the world**

³⁵ For example, Du Weiyun states: “**It is almost inevitable to judge personages by moral standards.** Unless we forget what we have learned, it is impossible not to seek goodness and justice in our life. Once involved in goodness and justice of life, it becomes the moral judgment. However, the judgment of biographers and historians is absolutely different from that of judges (especially the judges who can give the death penalty). A judge in court decides whether a defendant or a plaintiff is guilty of a crime or not, whereas **biographers and historians have no right to judge people guilty or not guilty and cannot praise or criticize people.**” Du Weiyun, *Methodology of Historiography*, San Min Book Co. (Taipei), 2008, p. 298.

Although Du Weiyun states that historians “**have no right to judge people guilty or not guilty and cannot praise or criticize people,**” “**it is almost inevitable to judge personages by moral standards.**” Therefore, Du still praises or criticizes historical personages very often in his writings. This shows that although historians agree with Liang Qichao’s query, they still do the same as usual.

³⁶ The legislation content by legislators is usually about the relationships between right and obligation, yet not within the scope of morality and truth-seeking. However, the content of writing the rules by historians usually falls within the scope of morality and truth-seeking. Therefore, the scope of the rules written by historians surpasses that of legislation made by legislators.

events from past to present and dare to be arrogantly proud of their writing of the rules?” In other words, while historians are executing their historical right, by what criteria do they “distinguish right from wrong or good from evil, execute the right of judgment, and praise or criticize personages of a hundred generations?” Tu Cheng-sheng states: “A historian is also a human.” “However, we do not talk about ‘the human responsibility’ but discuss ‘the historian’s responsibility’.” Since historians have the historical right to “execute the right of judgment,” they should also bear the due historical responsibility. Since historians recklessly criticize the historical personages, as well as judge right and wrong or good and evil with unsurpassed authority, they should also bear the due historical responsibility. Hence, historians should also accept the criticism or the debate on the writing of the rules from other historians, who also “execute their right of judgment.” Therefore, historians, no matter who comments on others or whom are commented on by others, and no matter how they **dare to be arrogantly proud of their writing of the rules**, should all bear the due historical responsibility and accept the final judgment according to causality of the dharma-realm.

Hence, what should be explored in historiography is to identify that the historical right comes with the historical responsibility. It is not to say that historians should not own the historical right because they always ignore the historical responsibility. In other words, what Liang Qichao should query and advocate is not that whether historians can “execute the right of judgment, and praise or criticize personages of a hundred generations,” or that *Spring and Autumn Annals* is a classic but not a history book. On the other hand, Liang Qichao should advocate that **historians have the historical right to “execute the right of judgment, and praise or criticize personages of a hundred generations”**; however, they should bear the historical responsibility corresponding to their historical right. **Historians have the right of “distinguishing right from wrong or good from evil” to write the rules; similarly, they should bear the historical responsibility of writing the evil rules.** In an era without freedom of speech, Confucius still privately wrote history books, using the historical right to write the rules. As we are now in an era of speech freedom, how could it be possible that historians have no historical right? How could it be possible that historians do not write the rules?

Hence, we should not query the historical right of historians who “**dare to be arrogantly proud of their writing of the rules**” and “**distinguish right from wrong or good from evil, execute the right of judgment, and praise or criticize personages of a hundred generations.**” What we should query is: **Historians “dare to be arrogantly proud of their writing of the rules”**; after the execution of their historical right to “**distinguish right from wrong or good from evil, execute the right of judgment, and praise or criticize personages of a hundred generations,**” what kind of historical responsibility should historians bear? How should historians execute their historical

right so that they have well fulfilled their historical responsibility? Therefore, we will explore some basic principles for executing the historical right. Concerning the complete discussions about the historical right and the historical responsibility, they are beyond the coverage of this article and will be left to those scholars who are interested in this topic for follow-up studies.

The basic principles for historians to execute the historical right are to completely observe the seven noble precepts, namely, no killing, no stealing, no sexual misconduct, no false speech, no harsh speech, no divisive speech, and no idle talks.³⁷ Those historians who can completely observe the seven noble precepts are claimed to be **wise historians**³⁸, whereas those who cannot are **unwise historians**. The seven precepts are not only the rules that should be obeyed by Buddhist believers but are also the universal morals compatible with the worldly laws as well as the legal principles. While executing their historical right, historians usually neglect the following idea: Although the subjects historians write about are long before and cannot reappear to defend themselves or their descendants fail to do so, historians still should observe the seven noble precepts, which are consistent with the law and the legal principle; otherwise, they commit the sin of crime-nature that violates the seven noble precepts³⁹ and even have to receive the penalty of the worldly law. For example, the criminal law stipulates that one who makes the public insult to the dead or commits a crime of defamation against the dead offends the criminal law and ought to pay the penalty.⁴⁰ Hence, while executing the historical right, historians must bear the corresponding historical responsibility of the seven noble precepts; this is the most fundamental principle. It is worth noting that historians usually record historical facts with written words, and therefore, they ought to first abide by the four good verbal deeds of the seven noble precepts while discussing and writing about historical facts. The *Ekottara Agama*, Vol. 12, states:

(The Buddha states:) How should the wise discourse on it? Thus, the wise accomplish the four verbal deeds. What are the four? Thus, the wise neither speak falsely nor persuade others to speak falsely. The wise are not pleased to see others speak falsely. This is the way the wise protect their speech. Moreover, the wise do not have idle talks, speak

³⁷ Please refer to the *Samyukta Agama*, Vol. 37, *Sutra 1044*.

³⁸ Observing the seven noble precepts is a passive condition for becoming a wise historian, because there are higher levels of historical responsibility that should be followed. The historical responsibility of observing the seven noble precepts still falls within the scope of the karma-paths; being not thorough, observing the seven noble precepts can only increase the chance of rebirth in the good paths, but cannot avoid falling into the evil paths; one still cannot attain the wisdom of liberation and ultimate Buddhahood because it violates the liberation wisdom and the ultimate-reality wisdom of achieving Buddhahood. This topic will be further discussed in this article.

³⁹ The sin of crime-nature means that it damages or offends other sentient beings' interests; it belongs to the dharma-nature of the causality law in the dharma-realm, but not a law set up by anyone.

⁴⁰ The Criminal Code of the Republic of China, Article 312: "A person who publicly insults a deceased person shall be punished with detention or a fine of not more than 300 yuan. A person who commits the offence of defamation of a deceased person shall be punished with imprisonment for not more than one year, detention, or a fine of not more than 1000 yuan."

harshly, or cause conflicts among people. The wise do not persuade others to have idle talks, to speak harshly, or to cause conflicts either. In this way, the wise accomplish the four verbal deeds.⁴¹

The Buddha states that, while discoursing, the wise should accomplish the four good verbal deeds, namely, no false speech, no idle talks, no harsh speech, and not to cause conflicts among people. Owing to space limitation, this article cannot have detailed discussions on each of them. In brief, when historians execute their historical right to record history, not to speak falsely is basically to record facts with the same criteria. Historians should not have a double standard to distort facts and literal meanings. For example, from past to present, there are often historians criticizing Confucius because the “**cover-ups for the king and sages**”⁴² in his writing *Spring and Autumn Annals* are a double standard.⁴³ The double standard had led to the result that the ancient Chinese history is full of false historical records that are “**untrue, incomplete, and uneven,**”⁴⁴ and therefore, reliable history is hardly available. Hence, those wise historians who well fulfill the historical responsibility will definitely not have a double standard; they will surely **neither speak falsely nor persuade others to speak falsely; they are not pleased to see others speak falsely.** However, in modern society with information fully available, the double standard of “**cover-ups for the king and sages**” is still found in many history books, making people **not pleased** at all. For example, Chang Yu-fa records the Nanjing Massacre of December, 1937 in his book *A Historical Sketch of the Republic of China* as follows:

On December 13, the Japanese army occupied Nanjing and killed nearly 300,000 Chinese people, including soldiers and civilians. (Hisao Tani, the commanding officer of the 6th Division of Imperial Japanese Army, was responsible for the massacre and sentenced to death after war.)⁴⁵

Next year (June, 1938), the 1938 Yellow River flood caused more deaths. However, that event is recorded in the same book as follows:

On June 5, the Chinese army retreated westwards from Kaifeng city. To stop the further

⁴¹ *Taisho Tripitaka*, Vol. 2, p. 608.

⁴² The concept of “**cover-ups for the king and sages**” talks only about “the cover-ups for those kings who are capable and virtuous”; in fact, purely based on their own judgment, the historians cover up for sage kings, sages, their teachers, their close relatives, even those who are friendly and giving them benefits, and so on.

⁴³ The modern scholar Zhao Meichun states: “**Therefore, although the ancient Chinese historians consistently held that historical records should reflect the objective reality as truthfully as possible, it is inevitable that history books are not in accord with the facts because double standards have become the guiding principle for the writing of history books.**” Please refer to “Double Standards in Historical Criticism in Ancient China,” Zhao Meichun, *Journal of Lanzhou University* (Social Sciences), No. 24, Lanzhou University Press (Lanzhou), 1996, p. 82.

⁴⁴ Liang Qichao, *Research Methods of Chinese History*, p. 32, *Collected Works of Yinbingshi*, Vol. 10, Zhonghua Book Co. (Beijing), 1988.

⁴⁵ Chang Yu-fa, *A Historical Sketch of the Republic of China*, Linking Publishing Co. (Taipei), 2001, p. 392.

attack of Japanese army and prevent its advance southwards, the dike of the Yellow River at Huayuankou, in the north of Zhengzhou city, was blown up. The Yellow River was diverted east-southwards, through Zhongmou county, Zhuxian town, Weishi county, and Taikang county, into Anhui and Jiangsu provinces, inundating several ten counties of eastern Henan province. The Japanese advance was held back.⁴⁶

Chang's book only describes the course change of the 1938 Yellow River flood without any description about the flood victims. It seemingly shows that the Yellow River flood only caused the course change of the Yellow River, but not any damage to people's lives or properties; however, the flood had the effect of **holding back the Japanese advance**. The Yellow River flood **inundated several ten counties of eastern Henan province and held back the Japanese advance**. It seems that no people were living in the several ten counties of eastern Henan province outside the Japanese army, or no one was affected by the flood. This is the false record made by Chang Yu-fa. According to the investigation records by international organizations, the approximate number of deaths caused by the 1938 Yellow River flood is 870,000.⁴⁷ It is alleged that over ten million people were left without food or shelter.⁴⁸ If the event of nearly 300,000 deaths in the Nanjing Massacre is tragic and should be recorded in history, how could it be possible that the event of more than 800,000 drowned people in the 1938 Yellow River flood, which inundated Henan, Anhui, and Jiangsu provinces, is not tragic and not recorded? If the event that a small number of **the Japanese army whose advance was held back** should be recorded, how could it be possible that more than 800,000 people dead and more than ten million people's properties damaged are not recorded? In the same history book, the author executes his historical right with a double standard. The big difference between the recorded contents and factual situations is precisely the false speech. Such a double standard, a phenomenon that makes people **not pleased**, is still found in many modern historical writings. Therefore, modern history books are not always reliable. The double standard in history books belongs to the false speech made by unwise historians, and it makes wise historians

⁴⁶ Chang Yu-fa, *A Historical Sketch of the Republic of China*, Linking Publishing Co. (Taipei), 2001, p. 394.

⁴⁷ According to the records by Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations, there are 870,000 deaths. Refer to <http://www.fao.org/docrep/005/y3918e/y3918e06.htm>, downloaded on 2009/10/21.

In addition, according to the investigation by Han Qitong and Nan Zhongwan, the number of deaths is 325,589, and the number of fleeing people 1,172,639. Refer to *The Merits and Faults of A Thousand Years—1938 Yellow River Flood*, Qu Changgen, Lanzhou University Press (Lanzhou), 2003, p. 263. In this article, the official statistics from Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations is adopted.

⁴⁸ The "1938 Yellow River flood": "Twelve million people were left homeless, without food or shelter." Refer to *Dictionary of Chinese Revolutionary History*, edited by Ma Hongwu, Wang Debao, Sun Qiming, China Archives Press (Beijing), 1988, p. 301.

The "1938 Yellow River flood": "Over ten million people were left without food or shelter." Refer to *China Encyclopedia*, Huaxia Publishing House (Beijing), 1991, p. 682.

"Yellow River": "The number of flood victims is about 12.5 millions." Refer to *Iwanami: An Encyclopedia of Modern China*, Iwanami Shoten Publishers (Tokyo), 1999, p. 273.

The above data sources are from the Japanese version of Wikipedia, "1938 Yellow River flood."

not pleased.

The Buddha continues that the wise should perform the three good bodily deeds of the seven noble precepts. The *Ekottara Agama*, Vol. 12, states:

(The Buddha states:) How do the wise accomplish the three bodily deeds? Thus, the wise contemplate their bodily deeds and do not offend others. Furthermore, the wise neither do the killing nor persuade others to do the killing. They are not pleased to see others do the killing. The wise neither do the stealing nor persuade others to do the stealing. They are not pleased to see others do the stealing. The wise have no sexual misconduct either. When they see other attractive females, there will be no thought arising in their mind. The wise do not persuade others to have sexual misconduct either. They will regard those attractive females as their family members like mother, elder or younger sisters, and their mind is tranquil. In this way, the wise accomplish the three bodily deeds, and this is the way the wise behave.⁴⁹

The Buddha states that the wise would contemplate the bodily deeds and would not offend others. That is, the wise will not kill sentient beings or persuade others to kill sentient beings. They are not pleased when they see others kill sentient beings. Besides, they will neither do the stealing or robbery nor persuade others to do the stealing or robbery. They are not pleased when they see others do the stealing or robbery. The wise will not have sexual misconduct. When they see other attractive females, they will not have an improper desire. They will not persuade others to have sexual misconduct either. Even if they see attractive females, the wise will regard them as their family members like mother or sisters without any defiled thought; their mind is tranquil and devoid of lust. In this way, the wise accomplish the three good bodily deeds, which are called the conduct of the wise.

Usually, historians cannot carry through the good bodily deeds of not persuading others to do the killing, stealing or sexual misconduct. They are even pleased about those bad deeds. Here we only cite an example and further discussions of the rest items are omitted due to space limitation. For instance, the amateur historian Wells (Herbert George Wells, 1866-1946) expresses the following idea in *The Outline of History*:

My political idea is an open intent to expedite the abolition of those disgusting, wasteful, and evil things—nationalism and war, to end this or that empire, and to establish a world empire.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ *Taisho Tripitaka*, Vol. 2, p. 608.

⁵⁰ Indirectly cited from Xiao Chang, "In Lieu of a Preface—An Exceptional Person and A Remarkable Book," *The Outline of History: Being a Plain History of Life and Mankind*, Herbert George Wells, trans. by Wu Wenzao, Xie Bingxin, Fei Xiaotong, Rive Gauche Publishing House (Taipei), 2006, p. 12.

Wells was not affected by the thoughts of nationalism or Eurocentrism.⁵¹ Because he personally saw the cruelty and suffering of the First World War, Wells wrote *The Outline of History* in the hope of spreading the historical view of peaceful coexistence from the perspective of all mankind. However, in his mind, Wells did not follow through the logic consistency of “no killing”; without self-awareness, he was even pleased about the promotion of war, which he hated. Wells expected to establish “**a world empire.**” Then, how to make the present existing countries disappear and establish the only **world empire**? The only answer is probably the war, of which Wells wished for the abolition.

It is because ambitious people will inevitably start a war in the name of **establishing a world empire**, on the excuse of abolishing “the possible wars”; in fact, they are fighting for **the power of governing the world**. If there are ambitious people who agree with Wells’ view and start the war, Wells has to bear the historical responsibility of “**instigating wars to kill sentient beings.**” In *The Outline of History*, Wells praises that a “great” people took up the idea of world dominion:

For some generations Alexander the Great was for mankind the symbol and embodiment of world order and world dominion. He became a fabulous being. ... Then the idea of world dominion was taken up by another great people, a people who for some centuries exhibited considerable political genius, the Romans; and the figure of another conspicuous adventurer, Caesar, eclipsed for the western half of the old world the figure of Alexander.⁵²

Wells praises not only “**Alexander, who started many wars, as a portent of world unity,**”⁵³ but also the Roman empire, which fought wars endlessly, as **a great people**. This shows that Wells regards an empire (which wins wars, with huge territory under the control of an emperor), rather than the human life and happiness, as the highest value. These are the rules and value which Wells wrote while executing his historical right. Hence, although Wells wrote from an all-mankind perspective, he expected to “**establish a world empire**”; from his words and deeds, we can see that Wells should bear his historical responsibility because he executed his historical right and instigated the possible imperial wars. Even if no one has followed his idea to start the world war until the present, Wells still has to bear the historical responsibility because he spread the wrong idea of world unification wars, which are harmful to the humankind. This shows that Wells still did not follow through the logic consistency of no killing regardless of his hatred of war; he had executed

⁵¹ In Lieu of a Preface—An Exceptional Person and A Remarkable Book,” Xiao Chang introduces *The Outline of History: Being a Plain History of Life and Mankind*: “**This book is devoid of the pedantry of serious historical writings and free from the narrow-minded view of nationalism or Eurocentrism (to some degree) sooner than many books of that age.**” Please refer to *The Outline of History: Being a Plain History of Life and Mankind*, Herbert George Wells, trans. by Wu Wenzao, Xie Bingxin, Fei Xiaotong, Rive Gauche Publishing House (Taipei), 2006, p. 14.

⁵² H.G. Wells, *The Outline of History*, Vol. 1, Garden City Publishing Co. (New York), 1961, pp. 298-299.

⁵³ H.G. Wells, *The Outline of History*, Vol. 1, Garden City Publishing Co. (New York), 1961, p. 276.

his historical right in such a way that makes people **not pleased**.

Wells' idea of "**a world empire**" is probably rooted in the Christian idea of "**a divine world dominion**":

... Christianity, which must now play a large part in our history, and which opened men's eyes to fresh aspects of the possibility of a unified world,⁵⁴ ... But behind the Pope was the assembly of the cardinals, priests, and a great number of highly educated officials, who **never**, even in the darkest and wildest days, **lost sight altogether of the very grand idea of a divine world dominion**, of a peace of Christ throughout the earth that St. Augustine had expressed. Through all the Middle Ages that idea was the guiding influence in Rome.⁵⁵

Wells thinks that **Christianity opened men's eyes to fresh aspects of the possibility of a unified world**. However, men's expectation is not necessarily **a unified world**. If men's expectation is only **a unified world**, every European country should have supported but not opposed Germany, which started the World War II and wished to unify Europe; why should Wells intend to **expedite the abolition of those disgusting, wasteful, and evil things—nationalism and war?**

From *The Outline of History*, we can see that the idea of "**a world empire**" expected by Wells is rooted in Christianity. Christians believe that God is the only true god, whereas the gods of other religions are not; hence, only a unified world under the only true God can guarantee the world peace. If Wells' idea of "**a world empire**" is rooted in Christianity, and ambitious people start wars in the name of Wells' theory, Wells and those Christians who led Wells to have this idea should all bear the historical responsibility of instigating wars.

Just think: Both Christianity and Islam believe in an only true God. Nevertheless, Jesus and Allah are considered to be different and cannot live with each other. As a result, religious wars between Christianity and Islam have occurred. From the facts of historical evolution, the only God, or the only empire or emperor, is precisely the source of the world wars, but not a guarantee of peace. Therefore, the writers of such religious doctrines should also bear the historical responsibility of religious wars. If there are Western historians who fall into the ideas of "**a world empire,**" "**a great people,**" or "**a divine world dominion,**" they are making errors that violate the Buddha's teachings of "**neither persuading others to do the killing nor being pleased to see others do the killing**"; to directly or indirectly kill a large number of humans and innocent animals must be the wrong historical notion of incorrectly executing the historical right; they have not well fulfilled their historical responsibility and are **unwise historians**.

⁵⁴ H.G. Wells, *The Outline of History*, Vol. 1, Garden City Publishing Co. (New York), 1961, p. 417.

⁵⁵ H.G. Wells, *The Outline of History*, Vol. 1, Garden City Publishing Co. (New York), 1961, p. 531.

There are unwise Western historians who cannot follow through the Buddha's teachings of **"neither persuading others to do the killing nor being pleased to see others do the killing."** How about the Eastern historians? As cited in the introduction section of this article, Du Weiyun criticizes that **"the blind patriotism," "the misconceptions about history,"** and **"the historic mission"** of Eastern and Western historians are often the beginning of wars. Du detests the historians' attitude that **"all they know is to serve politics."** Nevertheless, is it possible for modern Eastern historians not to fall into such a mistaken view? Du Weiyun states in his book *Chinese History and World History*:

The Chinese history has its origins in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, which is full of the thought of how to govern a country, also with the idea of grand unification. **The meaning of grand unification in the *Spring and Autumn Annals* is a noble ideal of peace.** Under a natural geographic environment, the Chinese people has lived together with the same culture for several thousand years because they are influenced by the idea of grand unification in Chinese history. **Almost all Chinese historians follow the meaning of grand unification. Depending on that idea, a unified China had frequently existed since the Qin and Han Dynasties.** Due to the unification, the war disasters were reduced and living things could recover gradually. **If the situations of the Spring & Autumn and Warring States Period had remained unchanged, would China have split up for several thousand years like the conflict situations between those major European powers? The peace of China comes from the unification of China, which results from the nourishment of the meaning of grand unification in Chinese history. There has been no nourishment of such a unification concept in Western history, and therefore a unified Europe had split up. Due to the breakup of Europe, war disasters have occurred endlessly.**⁵⁶

The above quotation has a lot of misconceptions, which will not be further discussed one by one in detail due to space limitation. We will only explore those views that are relevant to Wells' misconceptions about history. In Du Weiyun's opinion, **"the meaning of grand unification in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*"** is precisely "the meaning of territorial unification"; therefore, the statement that **almost all Chinese historians follow the meaning of grand unification** means that they all follow the idea of "territorial unification"; even more, Du opines that Chinese historians had made it possible that **a unified China had frequently existed since the Qin and Han Dynasties.** If Du's statements were true, Chinese historians would have to bear the evil karma of **"persuading others to do the killing"** for all the wars caused by the Chinese dynasties to unify their territories. What is meant by "territorial unification"? The territory of every dynasty or empire in the world can never stay the same, nor is any land forever owned by a certain dynasty or empire. Even more, a

⁵⁶ Du Weiyun, *Chinese History and World History*, San Min Book Co. (Taipei), 2008, p. 168.

dynasty or empire itself only lives temporarily and can never exist forever. How is “**grand unification**” defined in terms of territory size? All these topics have never been explored by Du Weiyun.

Du Weiyun further explains: **If the situations of the Spring & Autumn and Warring States Period had remained unchanged, would China have split up for several thousand years like the conflict situations between those major European powers? The peace of China comes from the unification of China.** In other words, Du praises that Emperor Ying Zheng conquered six states by means of war, and it resulted in the “**peace of China.**” In Du’s opinion, the “grand unification” of territory is the most important and final guarantee of peace. Hence, Du Weiyun agrees that Ying Zheng, as well as Liu Bang, conquered other states by means of war to expand territory. Du believes that this is “**the meaning of grand unification in the *Spring and Autumn Annals,*” “a noble ideal of peace.”**

Nevertheless, is the connotation of “**grand unification in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*”** really like what Du has said? We can refer to the *Three Ways to Harmonize Humans with Heaven* by Dong Zhongshu, a great scholar of the Han Dynasty. Dong states as follows:

The grand unification in the *Spring and Autumn Annals* means the constant principles of the world, the general rules from past to present. Nowadays, masters give different teachings, and people talk differently. All the hundred schools of thought have their own ways and means, with different aims. As a result, the authorities cannot hold the same principles; the legal systems have been changed very often, and the subordinates do not know what to observe. I humbly suggest that different schools of thought other than the six arts of Confucius be strictly prohibited. After the perverse teachings are eliminated, the same principles can be applied to the governing of a country with clear legal systems, and people know what to follow.⁵⁷

Dong Zhongshu explains the meaning of “**grand unification in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*”** as the invariable truth of the world operations (**the constant principles of the world**), namely the rules that are interlinked and run through the changing things from past to present (**the general rules from past to present**). In fact, the definition of “**grand unification**” is precisely the operation rules of the great nature mentioned in Sima Qian’s attempts: to “**explore the boundaries of nature and humankind, understand thoroughly the changes from past to present.**” It is not like the hundred schools of thought that are different from each other. In other words, the “**grand unification in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*”** refers to the causality law of the dharma-realm operation; it is universal, identical, consistent, unique, and without any distinction. It has nothing to

⁵⁷ This quotation is from the *Hanshu [Book of Han]*, Vol. 56, “Biography of Dong Zhongshu.”

do with the “**grand unification**” in the expansion of political territory.

Based on Dong Zhongshu’s explanation of “**grand unification in the *Spring and Autumn Annals***,” Liu Che⁵⁸ “dismissed the hundred schools and revered only Confucianism.” Due to Liu’s extreme interpretation, the Chinese academic thoughts had been restricted for a very long period of time. This shows that Du Weiyun has distorted “**the meaning of grand unification in the *Spring and Autumn Annals***.” Originally, the “**grand unification**” talks about the operation rules of the great nature, which has nothing to do with the size of political territory. However, the expansion of territory is misinterpreted as the peaceful “**grand unification**”; if the territory is not expanded, it would not be the peaceful “**grand unification**,” and one should expand territory by means of war to achieve the most possible “**grand unification**.” Hence, Du Weiyun has distorted the original meaning of “**grand unification**” in such a way that makes him an unwise historian with false speech.

Based on his explanation of “**the meaning of grand unification in the *Spring and Autumn Annals***,” Du Weiyun wishes that China is an empire with huge territory. The Western historian Wells wishes that there is “**a world empire**,” “**a great people**” or “**the sacred sovereignty over a unified world**,” namely the only empire for all mankind with global territory. Both Du and Wells mistakenly think that the larger territory would lead to a more peaceful world and the smaller territory a less peaceful world. These two historians, Eastern and Western respectively, all distort the essence of peace. Originally, the essence of peace is “not to do the killing” and has nothing to do with the territory size; however, they all misinterpret that peace is related to the territory size and seems irrelevant to the killing of war. In this way, they distort the basic principles of the mundane world, violating not only the historical responsibility of “**neither persuading others to do the killing nor being pleased to see others do the killing**” in the seven noble precepts but also the historical responsibility of “**no false speech**.” They are all unwise historians, who have not well fulfilled their historical responsibility.

Because Du Weiyun and Wells are of the same opinion on the “**grand unification**,” Du should agree that “**the meaning of grand unification in a world empire**” by the Western historian Wells is more wonderful than “**the meaning of grand unification in the *Spring and Autumn Annals***.” If one of the present Western powers started a war, attempting to follow the examples of Ying Zheng and Liu Bang to conquer the world by means of war, to establish “**a world empire**” and create the most peaceful “**grand unification**” with largest territory, wouldn’t Du Weiyun agree on it? In fact, the territory size has nothing to do with peace. Both Ying Zheng and Liu Bang had already achieved the “**grand unification**” as praised by Du Weiyun. But why such a “peaceful”⁵⁹ “**grand unification**”

⁵⁸ In feudal history, Liu Che is customarily called Emperor Wu of Han.

⁵⁹ After Ying Zheng or Liu Bang had expanded the territory, it did not bring peace to the people. For example, in the 32nd

couldn't be maintained without destruction? It is because peace has nothing to do with the territory size but is related to people's ambition or whether the dynasty government is beneficial to the people. No matter how large the territory is, if an emperor cannot **“govern and guide the country with correct dharmas,”**⁶⁰ it will definitely be impossible for the empire to maintain stability with long existence. “To govern and guide the country with correct dharmas” is not the main topic of this article, and therefore further discussion is omitted.

To all appearances, both the two historians cited above advocate peace and no killing, but actually, neither of them can follow through the beliefs of true peace and no killing. Instead, their opinions have the nature of promoting wars and killing. When these two scholars are compared, Wells admits that to establish **“a world empire”** is his **“open intent.”** Basically, he is honest, and therefore he only makes the mistake of not following through the principle of no killing. Du Weiyun not only fails to follow through the principle of no killing but also distorts the connotation of **“grand unification in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*”**; therefore, Du commits false speech that distorts the literal meaning and makes the mistake of slandering Confucius. In addition, Du makes a false statement that **“there has been no nourishment of such a unification concept in Western history,”** misleading people into thinking that the “grand unification” of “territory expansion” is a noble, peaceful concept, which only exists in China. In fact, the “grand unification” of “territory expansion” is not a noble or peaceful but barbaric concept, which is also an ambitious thought generally existing in both Eastern and Western worlds. This is also the false speech committed by Du Weiyun. Hence, Du is supposed to bear the historical responsibility which is more severe than that of Wells.

To summarize, the reason why these two historians violate the principles of the seven noble precepts is that they have a double standard. That is, the two historians take their own position that is **related to name-and-form**⁶¹ to write history books. Without transcending the relationship

year of the reign of Ying Zheng, because of the prophecy that “the northern tribes will annex the Qin,” Ying Zheng dispatched troops, about 300,000 men, north to attack the barbarian tribes, and captured the Henan region. (Please refer to *Shiji [Records of the Grand Historian]*, Vol. 6, *Annals of the First Emperor of Qin*.) After becoming the emperor, Liu Bang defeated Zang Tu and Li Chi, attacked Chen Xi, and annexed Han Xin. Only the scale of war was reduced, yet it did not bring the true peace.

⁶⁰ “To govern and guide the country with correct dharmas” means that the Wheel-Turning Sage King governs the country with correct methods; people are reformed and observe the precepts; the country becomes rich and people are peaceful as well as happy. For example, the *Dirgha Agama*, Vol. 18, states: “But you should govern and guide the country with correct dharmas, be righteous, and not allow illegal acts in the country. Do no killing in person, and persuade others to have no killing, no stealing, no sexual misconduct, no divisive speech, no harsh speech, no deception, no idle talks, no greed, no jealousy, and no erroneous views. This is how I govern the country.” (*Taisho Tripitaka*, Vol. 1, p. 119)

⁶¹ “Relationship to name-and-form” refers to the group scope established according to the relationship to mind-dharma (name) and material (form). For example, the relationships to parents, children, clans, etc. are the group relationships established according to the physical body and blood relationship. The relationships to parties, nations, etc. are the group relationships established according to the mind-dharmas of value, idea, identity, etc. Concerning the discussions about

related to name-and-form, it is impossible to avoid contradictions of logic. Namely, based on the relationship related to name-and-form, the interests and position of different small groups, such as races, ethnic groups, regions, parties, and cultures, are established. To expect the maximum interests of one's own small group will surely reduce the interests of other groups. The interests of different groups are mutually incompatible and a double standard that benefits only oneself but not others is applied. According to a double standard that is contradictory to each other, the unwise historians write about history, which is certainly a **false historiography** that does not well fulfill the historical responsibility,⁶² but not a **true historiography** that well fulfills the historical responsibility.⁶³ Concerning the contents and differences between true historiography and false historiography, they are beyond the scope of this article, so further discussion is omitted.

The modern scholar Zhao Meichun opines that the concept of “**cover-ups for the king and sages**” is a double standard that will inevitably lead to contradictions; however, from the perspective of defending the Confucian ethical code, it is consistent. Zhao Meichun states in the article “Double Standards in Ancient Chinese Historical Criticism”:

Thus, to write according to facts and to distort facts (such as cover-ups for the king and relatives) are superficially contradictory and incompatible to each other. Nevertheless, they are essentially all to defend and serve the feudal rule. Both to write according to facts for providing later generations with historical lessons as a mirror and to distort facts for defending the Confucian ethical code are all to achieve this common goal, and they are not contradictory. ... Under the premise of defending the Confucian ethical code, to write according to facts and to distort facts (such as cover-ups for the king and relatives) become consistent. Except that, they are unavoidably contradictory to each other. Hence, the application of double standards often places historical criticism in a dilemma.⁶⁴

Zhao Meichun opines that **both to write according to facts and to distort facts (such as cover-ups for the king and relatives) in ancient Chinese history are essentially all to defend and serve the feudal rule, and they become consistent under the premise of defending the Confucian ethical code.** That is, Zhao Meichun thinks that both to write according to facts and to distort facts are all to “**defend the feudal rule,**” and they “**become consistent under the premise of defending the Confucian ethical code**”; therefore, they are not contradictory. Nevertheless, this is not true. From the examples cited above, it seems not contradictory that Du Weiyun distorts the

“relationship to name-and-form,” please refer to “True History versus New History,” Tsai Lichen, *Journal of True Enlightenment*, 3rd issue, True Enlightenment Education Foundation (Taipei), 2009, pp. 25-38.

⁶² Please refer to “True History versus New History,” Tsai Lichen, *Journal of True Enlightenment*, 3rd issue, True Enlightenment Education Foundation (Taipei), 2009, p. 42.

⁶³ Same as above.

⁶⁴ Zhao Meichun, “Double Standards in Ancient Chinese Historical Criticism,” *Journal of Lanzhou University* (Social Sciences), No. 24, Lanzhou University Press (Lanzhou), 1996, p. 84.

facts to defend the “Confucian ethical code” and the “feudal rule” of Ying Zheng and Liu Bang. However, Du uses the *Spring and Autumn Annals* as an instrument to “defend the feudal rule” at the expense of distorting “the meaning of grand unification in the *Spring and Autumn Annals*.” As a result, Du’s statement brings discredit to the Confucian ethical code, making Confucius become a politico who advocates wars to expand the territory. Is Confucius really a warmonger who advocates such an idea? We further cite a dialogue between the scholar of the Han Dynasty Dong Zhongshu and Liu Fei (King Yi of Chiang-tu):

For a while, the king asks Dong Zhongshu, “King Goujian of Yue conspired with senior officials, Xie Yong, Wen Zhong and Fan Li, to attack the state of Wu. Eventually, the state of Yue annexed the state of Wu. Confucius praises that there are three virtuous men in the reign of Shang Tang. I also think that there are three virtuous men in the state of Yue. Duke Huan of Qi resolves his doubts by asking Guan Zhong, and I resolve my doubts by asking you.” Dong Zhongshu responds, “I am not wise enough to answer your great question. I have heard that, long ago, the Lord of Lu asked Liuxia Hui, ‘I intend to attack the state of Qi. How do you think of that?’ Liuxia Hui answered, ‘No.’ After returning home, with a worried look, Liuxia Hui said, ‘I have heard that one should not ask a virtuous man about attacking other countries. What a shame to hear those words!’ **One even feels ashamed only because of being asked about wars, let alone using tricks to attack the state of Wu.** For this reason, there was no virtuous man in the state of Yue. A kind-hearted person will correct his deeds but not seek his own interests, and he clearly understands the natural law without caring about his own merits. **Hence, as a Confucius’ follower, even a junior disciple will feel ashamed of talking about the Five Hegemons because they prefer tricks and forces to love and justice.** Anyone who talks only about tricks is not qualified as a disciple of Confucius. The Five Hegemons are more capable and virtuous than the other dukes; however, if they are compared to the Three Kings, the Five Hegemons are likened to military persons and the Three Kings to beautiful jade.” The king replies, “Well said!”⁶⁵

Dong Zhongshu’s answer clearly expresses his idea that, as a Confucius’ follower, even a junior disciple also feels ashamed of talking about the Five Hegemons because they prefer tricks and forces to love and justice. In contrast, Du Weiyun, who regards himself as a Confucius’ follower, thinks that the *Spring and Autumn Annals* agrees with Ying Zheng and Liu Bang about conquering territory by means of war. Judging from his viewpoint, Du is probably unqualified to be even a junior disciple of Confucius. As a Confucius’ follower, Du Weiyun distorts the *Spring and Autumn Annals* in such a way that slanders Confucius, the founder of Confucianism. Du has

⁶⁵ This quotation is from the *Hanshu [Book of Han]*, Vol. 56, “Biography of Dong Zhongshu.”

committed the evil deed of dishonoring his patriarch teacher. The ethical code emphasized by Confucianism has been destroyed due to Du's improper speech. This shows that, unlike what Zhao Meichun states, **“to defend the feudal rule”** and **“to defend the Confucian ethical code”** cannot **“become consistent.”**

In fact, **“to defend the feudal rule”** and **“to defend the Confucian ethical code”** by **distorting facts (such as cover-ups for the king and relatives)** are often contradictory and incompatible. It is because that during the changes of trends or dynasties, **“the Confucian ethical code”** of **“defending the feudal rule”** is that the victor is the law, a saint, or a sage, and the loser is the outlaw, a rebel or an enemy. All the officials of the old dynasty are regarded as disloyal courtiers, while those who surrender to the enemy become “patriots.” Throughout Chinese history, there are numerous “patriots” who changed their coats and went with the tide. Those historical facts show that, under the common operation of **“defending the feudal rule”** and **“defending the Confucian ethical code,”** it is more important for some people **“to defend the feudal rule”** than **“to defend the Confucian ethical code.”** The Confucian ethical code is not the goal to be defended, but the excuse of regaining the benefits of **“the feudal rule.”** Therefore, in a new age for the purpose of **“defending the feudal rule,”** it is not surprising that Du Weiyun violates the **“the Confucian ethical code”** to distort the *Spring and Autumn Annals* and slander Confucius.

The Confucian ethical code, which is established based on the relationship to name-and-form, with the three cardinal guides and the five constant virtues, regards “defending their respective lords” as the highest value. However, the Confucian ethical code of “defending their respective lords” applies only to an extremely limited range of the three cardinal guides and the five constant virtues related to name-and-form. How could it possibly be the constant rules of the great nature that operates universally? The Confucian ethical code, which Chinese historians are trying to defend, is only a temporary one of the feudal rule; how could it possibly be in accord with the constant rules of the great nature?⁶⁶ Hence, historians who **have the double standard of distorting facts (such as cover-ups for the king and relatives)**, in fact, cannot possibly attain the achievement of **defending the Confucian ethical code**. Also, it makes them become unwise historians and feel guilty about their historical responsibility. Then, how can one become a wise historian, who does not feel guilty about his historical responsibility while executing his historical right? The levels of historical responsibility will be further discussed in the next section.

4. The levels of historical responsibility

⁶⁶ The proposition about “Confucian ethical code and nature” is a topic of debate in the Wei-Jin dynasties, but not the core subject of this article, and therefore, further discussion is omitted.

In the above discussions, we have briefly described some situations that unwise historians execute their historical right, **dare to be arrogantly proud of their writing of the rules**, yet violate the seven noble precepts and do not well fulfill their historical responsibility. It is well said by Tu Cheng-sheng that “**a historian is also a human.**” Since a historian is also a human, one of many ordinary people, a historian must bear the same responsibility for causality as ordinary people when he violates the seven noble precepts without well fulfilling his historical responsibility. What kind of responsibility for causality that a historian must bear? The *Ekottara Agama*, Vol. 44, states:

At that time, the World-Honored One told all *bhiksus*: “There are sentient beings who practice killing and spread killing; **they plant the seeds of sin that will cause them to be reborn in hell, hungry ghost, and animal realms.** If they are reborn in the human realm, they will have an extremely short lifespan. The reason for this is that they killed other sentient beings. If there are sentient beings who steal others’ belongings, **they plant the seeds of sin that will cause them to be reborn in the three evil paths.** If they are reborn in the human realm, they will always be impoverished, not having enough food or clothing. It is all due to stealing. Robbing someone of his possessions is simply taking his life. If there are sentient beings who love and crave sexual activities, **they plant the seeds of being reborn in the three evil paths.** If they are reborn in the human realm, their families are not virtuous and commit stealing as well as sexual misconduct. If there are sentient beings who speak falsely, **they plant the seeds of sin that will cause them to be reborn in hells.** If they are reborn in human realm, people will despise them and no one believes their words. The reason for this is that they spoke falsely in their previous lives. If there are sentient beings who speak divisively, **they plant the seeds of sin that will cause them to be reborn in the three evil paths.** If they are reborn in the human realm, their minds are always unstable and they feel worried all the time. The reason for this is that they spoke untrue words to different people. If there are sentient beings who speak harshly, **they plant the seeds of sin that will cause them to be reborn in the three evil paths.** If they are reborn in the human realm, people will defame or often love to verbally abuse them. The reason for this is that they did not speak correctly. If there are sentient beings who cause conflicts among people, **they plant the seeds of sin that will cause them to be reborn in the three evil paths.** If they are reborn in the human realm, they will often meet the hateful, with their family members separated. The reason for this is that they caused conflicts among people in their previous lives.⁶⁷

The above sutra states that, if there are historians who **practice killing and spread killing**, as stated by Du Weiyun (**When history becomes a propaganda weapon utilized by ambitious**

⁶⁷ *Taisho Tripitaka*, Vol. 2, p. 785, p. 786.

people, it will cause great disasters), they simply **plant the seeds of sin that will cause them to be reborn in hell, hungry ghost, and animal realms**. After death, they will fall into hells to receive the karmic retribution of killing. After finishing their karmic retributions in hells, they will receive subsequent retributions in hungry ghost and animal realms for many lifetimes. The sinful karma of instigating killing is equivalent to that of killing. The reason is that the instigator is the chief plotter and the one who performs the crime is a joint offender; both of them belong to an inseparable accomplice structure; therefore, the chief instigator and the abettor all commit the sinful karma of killing. If they are reborn in the human realm after finishing their retributions in the three evil paths, **they will have an extremely short lifespan**. Why? It is because **they killed other sentient beings**, whose lifespan was shortened. It is probable that the evil karma of the three bodily deeds, due to severely damaging sentient beings, will lead to rebirths in the three evil paths. We will not further discuss them in detail. This is the historical responsibility of causality that historians should bear if they improperly execute their historical right.

If historians have double standards to speak falsely, speak divisively, speak harshly, and cause conflicts among people, resulting in severe damage to sentient beings, they commit the evil karma of the four verbal deeds and will certainly fall into the three evil paths in their future lifetimes. If they are reborn in the human realm after finishing their retributions in the three evil paths, people will despise them and no one believe their words; it is because they, as historians in their previous lives, had double standards and could not record things in an equal, impartial way, but with many cover-ups. If they are reborn in the human realm, their minds are unstable and they feel worried all the time; they will often meet the hateful and their family members cannot live together; it is because they, as historians in their previous lives, had double standards and covered up evil things; it means that they are pleased about unfair things; it means that they are unfair and in opposition to the victims; it means that they plant the seeds of hatred and opposition between them and the victims in the future lives. If the contemporary historians cannot impartially record historical facts, but agree on unfair things, and do not give moral support to the victims or possible victims in the future, they create causes and conditions that if they suffer in their future lives, they will not gain moral support from others; therefore, their minds are unstable and they feel worried all the time. Because such causal retributions are extremely complex, they are just briefly described as above.

From the discussions above, we can see that, in this article, the historical responsibility that historians should bear while executing their historical right is not that given by anyone. Instead, it is the causality law truly existing in the dharma-realm, which gives historians the historical responsibility that they must bear while executing their historical right. Since historians are to execute the historical right and write the rules, which is **“to distinguish right from wrong or good from evil and to execute the right of judgment,”** and **dare to be arrogantly proud of their**

writing of the rules, they should believe that in the dharma-realm, there do exist a unique law, which causes sentient beings to be reborn up and down among the six paths. If historians do not believe that there exists the unique causality law in the dharma-realm, why should they write the rules and **dare to be arrogantly proud of their writing of the rules**? Hence, if historians **dare to be arrogantly proud of their writing of the rules**, they should first believe the existence of the causality law. Historians should also believe that in the dharma-realm, the causality law is equally applicable to everyone, including emperors, kings, generals, ministers, and even historians themselves, who write the rules. No one can escape from the causality law in this world of “**grand unification**,” which is the truly impartial “**meaning of grand unification**.”

The dharma-realm has the unique causality law, which exists at a much higher level than the seven noble precepts. The seven noble precepts are only a part of the causality law. There are still countless precepts of conduct also belonging to the causality law. Hence, the causality law exists at a much higher level than the seven noble precepts. This shows that, as mentioned above, historians should thoroughly observe the seven noble precepts; this is only a basis for historians to well fulfill their historical responsibility without making mistakes, but not the highest standard by which historians execute their historical right. The *Dirgha Agama*, Vol. 14, states:

(The Buddha told all *bhiksus*:) “**What are the minor precepts of conduct? The ill-informed ordinary people only give truthful praise according to what they have seen. They praise the Buddha: ‘Sramana Gautama eliminates the killing, gets rid of the killing, renounces knives and sticks [punishments], feels ashamed, and has compassion for everything.’ These are the minor precepts of conduct.**”⁶⁸ ... For example, other *sramanas* and Brahmins receive believers’ offerings of faith, practice dharmas that obstruct the Way, and live on erroneous livelihood; they might foretell that this country will win and that country is inferior, or that country will win and this country is inferior; judging from the face, they tell people’s fortune and talk about the rise and fall of things. Sramana Gautama does not commit such deeds. **All *bhiksus*! These are minor conditioned things of keeping precepts, according to which those ill-informed ordinary people praise the Buddha.**” The Buddha told all *bhiksus*: “**There is the other dharma, which is the profound, wondrous, and great dharma of bright light. Only sage or saint disciples can praise the Tathagata with these words. What is the profound, wondrous, and great dharma of bright light? With this great dharma, the sage or saint disciples can praise the Tathagata. Based on different ideas, all *sramanas* and Brahmins have stated the views about the past, the views about the future, and countless varied views; all their views fall within the sixty-two views.**”⁶⁹

⁶⁸ *Taisho Tripitaka*, Vol. 1, p. 88.

⁶⁹ *Taisho Tripitaka*, Vol. 1, p. 89.

The above sutra lists the precepts of conduct that the Buddha observes, including the seven noble precepts of bodily and verbal deeds, not to drink wine, not to use perfumes or wear garlands, not to go to see entertainments, not to sit on a high seat, not to eat at the wrong time, not to accept gold or silver, not to live on erroneous livelihood, not to talk about the rise and fall of countries, etc., all of which belong to **the minor precepts of conduct** in the mundane world. Because it is a long sutra, only excerpts concerning the precept of no killing, not to live on erroneous livelihood, and not to talk about the rise and fall of countries, etc. are cited for reference in this article. The Buddha further states: **These are minor conditioned things of keeping precepts, according to which those ill-informed ordinary people praise the Buddha.** The Buddha continues: **There is the other dharma, which is the great dharma of bright light that is more profound, wondrous than keeping the seven noble precepts and other precepts of conduct. Only the sage or saint disciples can praise the Tathagata with these words. What is the profound, wondrous, and great dharma of bright light? That is, with this great dharma, the sage or saint disciples of the Buddha can praise the Tathagata—to praise that the Tathagata, with this dharma, categorizes all *sramanas*' and Brahmins' views about the past, views about the future,⁷⁰ and countless varied erroneous views, all of which are based on different non-Buddhist ideas, into the sixty-two views; with this dharma, the Tathagata surpasses the sixty-two views.**

According to the above sutra, the causality law stated by the Buddha has three levels of different importance: (1) **the minor precepts of conduct**, including the seven noble precepts and other precepts of conduct, (2) the causality law of grand unification, and (3) the root origin of the causality law. Among them, the root origin of the causality law is precisely the profound, wondrous, and great dharma of bright light, the everlasting eighth *viññana* Tathagatagarbha, which is also the criterion for whether a being is the historical subject or not.⁷¹ Without the everlasting eighth *viññana* Tathagatagarbha, there would be no causality law of grand unification, and the minor precepts of conduct would not exist. Hence, the eighth *viññana* Tathagatagarbha of each sentient being records his/her own good and bad karmic deeds as they really are, and the Tathagatagarbha is the dharma of highest level in the dharma-realm. The causality law of grand unification is at the next lower level and the minor precepts of conduct at the third lower level because they are all contained in the

⁷⁰ The views about the past refer to the erroneous views, based on the actual realization by the supernatural power of knowing previous lives, that “the self world” and “the material world” are permanent or impermanent. The views about the future refer to the erroneous views, not based on the actual realization by the supernatural power of knowing previous lives, but entirely on imagination and conjecture, that “the self world” and “the material world” are permanent or impermanent. Please refer to “A Further Discussion on the Fourteen Questions of Identification in the *Agama Sutras*,” Lin Weizen, *Journal of True Enlightenment*, 1st issue, True Enlightenment Education Foundation (Taipei), 2007, pp. 79-85.

⁷¹ Every sentient being has the eighth *viññana* Tathagatagarbha, which makes every sentient being equal and become the historical subject altogether. Therefore, the existence of the eighth *viññana* Tathagatagarbha is the criterion for whether a being is the historical subject or not. Please refer to “True History versus New History,” Tsai Lichen, *Journal of True Enlightenment*, 3rd issue, True Enlightenment Education Foundation (Taipei), 2009, pp. 25-38.

Tathagatagarbha entity with different levels of importance. Hence, the historical responsibility for violating the minor precepts of conduct has already been described as above. The historical responsibility for violating the causality law of grand unification is more serious than that of violating the minor precepts of conduct, and the historical responsibility for violating the root origin of causality, the existence of Tathagatagarbha, is the most serious.

The three levels of the causality law correspond to the three kinds of facts having the nature of value and knowledge in historical study: (1) the karmic deeds of a single event, (2) the historical rules, manifested by the karmic deeds and the dharmas of name and form, and (3) the fact about the real existence of Tathagatagarbha, which transcends the name and form.⁷² Among them, the third kind of fact about the real and permanent existence of Tathagatagarbha has the greatest knowledge and power in the dharma-realm. The second kind of fact, the dharma-nature of causality law manifested by the Tathagatagarbha, has less knowledge and power. The first kind of fact, the karma of a single event, has the least knowledge and power.

Hence, due to His compassion for sentient beings, the Buddha usually expounded, with the secret meaning⁷³ hidden, the profound, wondrous, and great dharma of bright light, the eighth *vijñāna* Tathagatagarbha, lest unwise sentient beings might defame or deny the Tathagatagarbha at will and fall into the evil paths in their future lives. It is because defaming the Tathagatagarbha is committing the serious sin of demolishing the root origin of all mundane and transmudane dharmas, a sin that makes sentient beings unable to gain the greatest knowledge and power. Therefore, the real existence of the eighth *vijñāna* Tathagatagarbha is the highest historical responsibility that all wise historians should uphold, and unwise historians should be very cautious not to defame or deny the Tathagatagarbha in order to avoid the most serious causal retributions.

According to the dharma-nature manifested by the eighth *vijñāna* Tathagatagarbha, the Tripitaka with the twelve divisions expounds on the causality law of grand unification, which transcends all *sramanas*' and Brahmins' sixty-two views, and is the historical responsibility of the second lower level or the highest level that wise historians should uphold. If one is ignorant and defames or denies the Tripitaka with the twelve divisions, or advocates that Mahayana is not the Buddha's teaching, one commits the most serious sin because his/her defamation prevents sentient beings from recognizing the greatest knowledge and power, and he/her will suffer from the retributions which are more serious than those of violating the seven noble precepts in their immeasurable future lifetimes. The causality law or the existence of the eighth *vijñāna*

⁷² Please refer to "True History versus New History," Tsai Lichen, *Journal of True Enlightenment*, 3rd issue, True Enlightenment Education Foundation (Taipei), 2009, pp. 58-61.

⁷³ Concerning the citation and explanation for why the eighth *vijñāna* is "expounded skillfully in a hidden way," please refer to "A Further Discussion on the Fourteen Questions of Identification in the *Agama Sūtras*," Lin Weizen, *Journal of True Enlightenment*, 1st issue, True Enlightenment Education Foundation (Taipei), 2007, pp. 77-78.

Tathagatagarbha expounded in the Tripitaka with the twelve divisions is the study guide that explains the true reality of the dharma-realm and leads sentient beings to liberation and actual realization of the ultimate reality with the attainments of ultimate wisdom and ultimate liberation. Therefore, defaming or denying the Tripitaka with the twelve divisions is also causing great damage to sentient beings' benefits of attaining liberation and wisdom of ultimate reality, and one has to suffer from the retributions which are more serious than those of violating the seven noble precepts.

The seven noble precepts are only the minor precepts of conduct at the most basic level of historical responsibility. Therefore, observing the seven noble precepts is only a basic requirement for someone to become a wise historian; it belongs to one of passive conditions.⁷⁴ The active conditions for wise historians are to follow the historical responsibility of all levels and know their order of priority. In general, it is not contradictory to follow the historical responsibility of different levels. However, in certain special situations, we see contradictions. The basic guiding principle is: If one observes the seven noble precepts but violates the historical responsibility of higher levels, one is still an unwise historian but not a wise one. It is because one tries to save a little only to lose a lot and has not well fulfilled his historical responsibility after all. If one follows the higher historical responsibility but violates the lower one, one is a wise historian, but it needs to be carefully examined according to actual cases. Because there are a lot of complex situations, which cannot be fully explained in this article due to space limitation, they will be left to follow-up studies.

However, there are still many examples of such unwise historians, who defame or deny the Tripitaka with the twelve divisions and have to bear the historical responsibility of suffering from extremely serious retributions. For instance, Du Weiyun states in the *Methodology of Historiography*:

From previous research results, modern Chinese scholars summarize some general principles for identifying fake books, and they are highly valuable references. According to Liang Rengong [Liang Qichao], those general principles are listed as follows: ... (7) If both two books record one same event with absolute contradictions, either one of the two, or both two, must be forged. For example, in the *Nirvana Sutra*, the Buddha states, "From this day on, the disciples are not allowed to eat meat." In the *Lankavatara Sutra*, the

⁷⁴ This topic is related to the value system of the root of morality. Those who observe the seven noble precepts still belong to the six ordinary karma-paths of the ten dharma-realms; hence, their historical responsibility is categorized as "the historical responsibility of karma-path" because they are still not liberated from transmigration, and therefore cannot be called the wise. Only those who are in the four noble dharma-paths with actual enlightenment can be called the wise, and their historical responsibility is categorized as "the historical responsibility of dharma-path." This portion involves the root of morality and will not be discussed in this article due to space limitation. Concerning the relevant contents of karma-paths and dharma-paths in the value system of the ten dharma-realms, please refer to "A Brief Discussion on the Root of Morality Based on the *Agama Sutras*," Chen Chienyuan, Tsai Lichen, *Journal of True Enlightenment*, 2nd issue, True Enlightenment Education Foundation (Taipei), 2008, pp. 61-78.

Buddha states, “In all sutras, such as the *Hastikaksya Sutra*, the *Angulimaliya Sutra*, the *Nirvana Sutra*, and the *Mahamegha Sutra*, I do not allow eating meat.” There is a general consensus that the *Nirvana Sutra* is stated by the Buddha several hours before His death. Since the *Hastikaksya Sutra*, etc. have stated the same thing, why is “from this day on” said in the *Nirvana Sutra*? Also, since the *Nirvana Sutra* is the last sutra stated by the Buddha, why is the same thing cited in the *Lankavatara Sutra*? It is obvious that at least one of the *Nirvana Sutra* and the *Lankavatara Sutra*, or both of the two, must be forged.⁷⁵

Du Weiyun cites the general principles for identifying fake books by Liang Qichao; it shows that Du agrees with Liang. Liang and Du express their doubts: Since the *Lankavatara Sutra* states that the Buddha has taught His disciples “not to eat meat”⁷⁶ in the *Hastikaksya Sutra*, etc., why does the Buddha say again in the *Nirvana Sutra*, “From this day on, I do not allow my sound-hearer disciples to eat meat”⁷⁷? In addition, the *Nirvana Sutra* was stated by the Buddha shortly before His death; at the time when the Buddha expounded the *Lankavatara Sutra*, the *Nirvana Sutra* has not existed yet. How could it be possible that the quote from the *Nirvana Sutra* is cited in the *Lankavatara Sutra*?

In fact, the general principles for identifying fake books proposed by Liang Qichao and Du Weiyun are based on the following three erroneous premises: (1) it is easy to save sentient beings, who learn things quickly; there is no need to repeat the same teachings; (2) the audience of the Buddha’s teachings remain unchanged; (3) the Buddha is inferior to ordinary mortals. Due to the erroneous premises, they reach a wrong conclusion. In contrast, the truths are as follows:

(1) It is not easy to save sentient beings except a few ones of sharp capacity. In fact, it is extremely difficult to teach sentient beings and the same teachings must be repeated. For this reason, the Buddha states in the *Lankavatara Sutra*, “**In all sutras, I do not allow eating meat.**” Because it is extremely difficult to teach sentient beings and the rationale why not to eat meat must be taught repeatedly, the Buddha repeats His teachings earnestly again and again in different sutras, even shortly before His death. Such examples are many. For instance, the Buddha also set up the practice of “eating in a single session,” namely, taking only a meal a day, sitting to eat, and no more eating

⁷⁵ Du Weiyun, *Methodology of Historiography*, San Min Book Co. (Taipei), 2008, pp. 172-173.

⁷⁶ The *Hastikaksya Sutra*, Vol. 1: “**The Buddha says, ‘Manjusri! If there are bodhisattvas who wish to understand thoroughly this *dharani* phrase, they should do pure practice, but not to eat meat, apply oil over feet or go to places full of people. Always feel compassion for sentient beings. Don’t be an impure practitioner with incorrect practices to read this sutra or read this sutra at impure places.’**” (*Taisho Tripitaka*, Vol. 17, p. 787)

The *Lankavatara Sutra*, Vol. 8: “**Mahamati! In all sutras, such as the *Hastikaksya Sutra*, the *Angulimaliya Sutra*, the *Nirvana Sutra*, and the *Mahamegha Sutra*, I do not allow eating meat.**” (*Taisho Tripitaka*, Vol. 16, p. 563)

⁷⁷ The *Mahaparinirvana Sutra*, Vol. 4: “**Virtuous man! From this day on, I do not allow my sound-hearer disciples to eat meat. While receiving believers’ offerings of faith, you should visualize this food as your son’s meat.**” (*Taisho Tripitaka*, Vol. 12, p. 386)

after rising from the seat. However, the *bhiksus* needed active encouragement to follow the practice of “eating in a single session” because one practices Buddhism of one’s own free will, unlike in the army where one acts by order. The *Madhyama Agama*, Vol. 51, states:

Venerable Bhaddali again rose from his seat three times, uncovered his right shoulder, placed his palms together facing the Buddha, and said, “World Honored One! I cannot endure the practice of eating in a single session. Why? If I eat in a single session, I cannot work together with others and will feel upset and regretful. World Honored One! Hence, I cannot endure the practice of eating in a single session.”⁷⁸ ... Therefore, Venerable Bhaddali did not attend the summer retreat, hiding himself from the World Honored One. Why? It is because he did not learn the precepts or the World Honored One’s varied wondrous dharmas.⁷⁹

According to the above quotation, Bhaddali insisted on not accepting the Buddha’s teaching of “eating in a single session,” and consequently, he **did not attend the summer retreat, hiding himself from the World Honored One**. Perhaps, Bhaddali is a special case who insisted on not accepting the Buddha’s teaching at that time. Nevertheless, this also shows that the practice of liberation all depends on the practitioner’s own free will; what the Buddha could do is only to give encouragement; even before His death, the Buddha still expounded again the benefits of eating in a single session.⁸⁰ Hence, it is very common and natural that the Buddha repeatedly expounded the teaching of “not eating meat” in many sutras. From the discussion above, we can see that Liang and Du are totally ignorant about the Buddhist practice. How could they, as laymen, identify whether the sutras are authentic or not based on the erroneous premise?

(2) The Buddha always gave appropriate teachings to different audiences. After the Buddha expounded a certain sutra, how could He not repeat the essential meanings and important teachings to different sentient beings at different places? For example, the *Lankavatara Sutra* was spoken in the Castle of Lanka⁸¹, which is on the summit of Mt. Malaya on the seashore of the great ocean, and the *Angulimala Sutra* at Sravasti⁸², the *Hastikaksya Sutra* asked by Sariputra and Manjusri at

⁷⁸ *Taisho Tripitaka*, Vol. 1, p. 746.

⁷⁹ *Taisho Tripitaka*, Vol. 1, p. 746.

⁸⁰ The *Mahaparinirvana Sutra*, Vol. 27: “Virtuous man! Moreover, those who have less desire are: For example, there are monks who stay in deserted places, sitting straight and proper without lying down, either under the tree or in the cemetery, or at the open places, wherever there is the grass to sit on. They beg for food and feel satisfied immediately after having the food. Eating in a single session, not more than a meal a day, they only keep three garments, the ragged garment, and the down-wadded garment. This is called having less desire.” (*Taisho Tripitaka*, Vol. 12, p. 527)

⁸¹ The *Lankavatara Sutra*, Vol. 1: “**At one time, the Bhagavan stayed in the Castle of Lanka, which is situated on the peak of Mount Malaya on the seashore of the great ocean.**” (*Taisho Tripitaka*, Vol. 16, p. 514)

⁸² The *Sutra of the Buddha’s Teaching on Angulimala*, Vol. 1: “**At one time, the Bhagavan dwelt in the Jetavana Vihara at Sravasti.**” (*Taisho Tripitaka*, Vol. 2, p. 510)

Rajagriha⁸³, the *Mahamegha Sutra* asked by Bodhisattva Great Cloud Secret Store at Rajagriha⁸⁴. The audiences all belonged to the Mahayana bodhisattvas; the Buddha still did not forbid the sound-hearer disciples to eat meat. It was not until the Buddha spoke the *Nirvana Sutra* among the twin sal trees at Kusinagara⁸⁵ that He forbade all disciples to eat meat, including the sound-hearers. This has shown that different sutras were spoken under different situations at different places. Since the Buddha gave teachings under different situations at different places, how could He not repeat the teachings to different sentient beings? Hence, we can see that Liang and Du seem unaware of the different causes and conditions of the Buddha's preaching, how could they identify whether the sutras are authentic or not based on the erroneous premise?

(3) The Buddha is not inferior to ordinary people, but far superior to all sentient beings. Leaving aside the wisdom attained by bodhisattvas, it is even impossible for Du Weiyun and Liang Qichao to imagine the wisdom of First Fruition attained by sound-hearers. Du and Liang are ordinary mundane intellectuals who have not understood or realized the true Buddhist wisdom, yet they wrongly criticize and misjudge the authentic sutras. They are also unwise historians, who seriously violate the historical responsibility and wrongly execute the historical right. The *Nirvana Sutra* is the last dharma-teaching of the Buddha. But it does not indicate that the Buddha could not know or cite in advance the contents of His last dharma-teaching. Even the ordinary mundane people can make out their last wills and testaments in advance. How could it be possible that the Buddha, with perfect wisdom, was unable to foreknow the contents of His last dharma-teaching? The Buddha even foretold His death three months in advance. How could He be inferior to ordinary people and not foreknow the contents of His dharma-teaching three months later? How could it be possible that the Buddha could not foreknow His essential teachings in other dharma assemblies? All the sutras were spoken by the Buddha. If the Buddha could not foreknow His teaching contents, wouldn't it be that the Buddha's wisdom is inferior to that of mundane ordinary people? The Buddha had said that **"in all sutras, I do not allow eating meat,"** indicating that this is an important teaching. How could it be possible that the Buddha would not talk about this teaching only in the *Nirvana Sutra*? Hence, it is very common and natural that in the *Lankavatara Sutra*, the Buddha cited in advance the teaching in the *Nirvana Sutra*. This is a basic principle and common sense of mundane ordinary people. However, Liang and Du seem to lack common sense and are full of doubts; how could they identify whether the sutras are authentic or not based on the erroneous premise? Furthermore, **in the *Nirvana Sutra*, the Buddha states, "From this day on, the disciples are not allowed to eat**

⁸³ The *Hastikasya Sutra*, Vol. 1: "At one time, the Buddha was staying at Mt. Grdhrakuta, near Rajagriha." (*Taisho Tripitaka*, Vol. 17, p. 781)

⁸⁴ The *Mahamegha Sutra*, Vol. 1: "At one time, the Buddha was staying at Mt. Grdhrakuta, near Rajagriha." (*Taisho Tripitaka*, Vol. 12, p. 1077)

⁸⁵ The *Mahaparinirvana Sutra*, Vol. 1: "At one time, the Buddha was staying among the twin sal trees on the shore of the Ajiravati River, at Kusinagara, the birthplace of the great worthy." (*Taisho Tripitaka*, Vol. 12, p. 365)

meat.” The Buddha formally forbade all disciples, including sound-hearers, from eating meat. In those sutras spoken prior to the *Nirvana Sutra*, the Buddha only forbade bodhisattvas to eat meat. The Buddha’s teachings about no meat eating in different sutras are not contradictory at all. Liang and Du are totally ignorant about those facts. What they said is arbitrary criticism and violates the historical responsibility of historians with the abuse of their historical right.

From the brief analysis above, we can see that the methods for identifying the authenticity of sutras proposed by Liang and Du are ineffective, wrong and ridiculous. They fall into the trap of conjecture and imagination about the Buddha’s teachings to sentient beings. Moreover, the *Nirvana Sutra* and the *Lankavatara Sutra*, which are defamed by Liang and Du, are two of the magnificent sutras in which the Buddha expounds the existence, natures, and functions of Tathagatagarbha. Sentient beings of the Three Realms can possibly obtain the ultimate wisdom and benefits from both of the two sutras in the future. Hence, the groundless defamation of sutras by Liang and Du violates the highest responsibility of causality law in the Three Realms. In fact, the Buddha has already expounded four main teachings in the *Dirgha Agama* about the effective methods for identifying the authenticity of sutras,⁸⁶ but unwise historians are still unwilling to believe the Buddha’s words. Concerning the exploration of how to identify the authenticity of sutras, it is not the main topic of this article, and therefore further discussions are omitted.

In addition to the three levels of the historical responsibility mentioned above, namely the minor precepts of conduct, causality law, and the root origin of causality law, historians will also bear the historical responsibility of different severity according to the different levels of subjects that they have commented on. If historians perform evil bodily, verbal, and mental deeds on any level of historical subject in the ten dharma-realms⁸⁷, they will commit sins of different severity according to the level of that historical subject. This is about the levels of historical responsibility. For example, the sin of killing a person is more severe than that of killing an animal; the sin of killing parents is more severe than that of killing common people. These are the levels of historical responsibility. For the same reason, performing evil bodily, verbal, and mental deeds on sages and saints in the four noble dharma-paths⁸⁸ will bear more severe historical responsibility than on sentient beings in the six ordinary karma-paths; the higher dharma-realm level of sentient beings one performs evil deeds on, the more severe sin one commits. It is because sages and saints in the

⁸⁶ Please refer to the *Dirgha Agama*, Vol. 3, Chapter 2, *Sutra of the Account of Travels*.

⁸⁷ The ten dharma-realms means that, based on virtues, wisdom, and merits and virtues, sentient beings are classified into ten category levels (in descending order): Buddha, bodhisattva, *pratyekabuddha* [solitary realizer], *arhat*, deity, *asura*, man, hungry ghost, animal, hell being. Please refer to “A Brief Discussion on the Root of Morality Based on the *Agama Sutras*,” Chen Chienyuan, Tsai Lichen, *Journal of True Enlightenment*, 2nd issue, True Enlightenment Education Foundation (Taipei), 2008, pp. 65-78.

⁸⁸ Sages and saints of the four noble dharma-paths refer to those who have actually realized the Three-Vehicle Bodhi; for example, the Buddha, real bodhisattvas, *pratyekabuddhas* [solitary realizers], and *arhats*.

four noble dharma-paths always truthfully expound the causality law of the dharma-realm and its root origin. If one slanders sages and saints, one will destroy the sentient beings' correct faith in the liberation dharma and the ultimate-reality dharma expounded by sages and saints, causing great damage to sentient beings' benefits; therefore, one bears extremely heavy historical responsibility. Even so, unwise historians still violate this historical responsibility very often. For example, Shi Yinshun states in *The Origin and Development of Early Mahayana Buddhism*:

There is such a common mentality in the Buddhist world, and therefore they unconsciously spread the Buddha's achievements of practice in His previous lives, those respectable, laudable, very touching, and great deeds. Those deeds of the Buddha include all the "great virtues and magnificent achievements" of famous kings, renowned courtiers, Brahmins, monastic deities, etc. in ancient India, or the rare and commendable virtuous deeds of Indian folklore, such as stories about common people, demons and deities, or birds and beasts (perhaps from myths, and probably with some Persian or Greek elements). Those legends of the Buddha's great deeds in His previous lives summarize the essential parts of Indian national virtues and spirits, which are manifested as lofty and perfect virtues through the Buddhist concepts. Only such a perfect man can become a perfect, ultimate Buddha, who surpasses all sentient beings in the world.⁸⁹

Shi Yinshun believes that the Buddhist circles would "unconsciously" attribute all the "great virtues and magnificent achievements" of famous kings, renowned courtiers, Brahmins, monastic deities, etc. in ancient India to the Buddha, and therefore "they spread the Buddha's achievements of practice in His previous lives." In other words, Shi Yinshun holds that the Buddha himself did not have such "great virtues and magnificent achievements"; simply because the Buddha's followers missed the Buddha, they "unconsciously" stole others' "great virtues and magnificent achievements," which were attributed to the Buddha; with false speech, they invented the *Jataka Tales Sutra*. Hence, Shi Yinshun opines that in the whole Buddhist circles, no matter whether they are ordinary people, sages or saints, any Buddhist follower who agrees to and preaches the *Jataka Tales Sutra* violates the precepts of no stealing and no false speech; moreover, Shi Yinshun also implies that Buddha Sakyamuni expounded the *Jataka Tales Sutra*, in which the Buddha not only steals others' "great virtues and magnificent achievements" and attributes them to the Buddha himself, but also makes false speech. Shi Yinshun is a monk who specializes in academic research but does not have the wisdom of actual enlightenment. The Confucian view of "cover-ups for relatives and sages" has had undue influence over the Chinese academic researches; therefore, Confucianized⁹⁰ Shi Yinshun thinks that all the Buddha's followers

⁸⁹ Shi Yinshun, *The Origin and Development of Early Mahayana Buddhism*, Zhengwen Publishing Co. (Taipei), 1994, pp. 124-125.

⁹⁰ Confucianization refers to the phenomenon that Confucianism pays attention only to the human dharma-realm and

would also have invented sutras in a dishonest way like Confucians’ “**cover-ups for relatives and sages.**”

In fact, Shi Yinshun does not understand at all that Buddhism does not have the double standard of “**cover-ups for relatives and sages.**” Only Confucianism has “**cover-ups for relatives and sages**” to distort facts. Do we have evidence that Buddhism does not have the double standard to distort facts? The *Madhyama Agama*, Vol. 11, states:

At that time, King Mandhata told all senior officials, “If Brahmins, lay Buddhists, senior officials, and people ask you, ‘What were King Mandhata’s last words right before his death?’ All of you should answer as follows, ‘Having gained control of Jambudvipa, King Mandhata was not satisfied and passed away. Having gained seven jewels, King Mandhata was not satisfied and passed away. Having had a thousand sons, King Mandhata was not satisfied and passed away. The jewels raining down for seven days, King Mandhata was not satisfied and passed away. Having gained control of Aparagodaniya, King Mandhata was not satisfied and passed away. Having gained control of Puravideha, King Mandhata was not satisfied and passed away. Having gained control of Uttarakuru, King Mandhata was not satisfied and passed away. Having seen the assemblies of celestial beings, King Mandhata was not satisfied and passed away. With complete enjoyments of the five senses, namely sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch, King Mandhata was not satisfied and passed away.’ If Brahmins, lay Buddhists, senior officials, and people ask you, ‘What were King Mandhata’s last words right before his death?’ All of you should answer as such.”⁹¹ ... Therefore, the World-Honored One said, “Ananda! **Do you think that King Mandhata in the past was a different person? Do not think so. You should know that it was me.** Ananda! At that time, I benefited myself and others. I benefited many people. Feeling sympathy for the world, I pleaded for righteousness, benefit, stability, and happiness for the sake of the celestial and human beings. At that time, I spoke the dharma which was not ultimate or ultimately pure; the pure practice was not ultimate; I finished the pure practice which was not ultimate. At that time, I was not free from birth, aging, sickness, death, crying, sadness, and worry, nor was I liberated from all sufferings.”⁹²

In *The Sutra of the Four Continents III, King Corresponding Section, Madhyama Agama*, the

therefore has evolved into a blind belief that negates the existence of other dharma-realms except the human dharma-realm, leading to the restriction of dharma-realm. However, the phenomenon of Confucianization is not limited only to the believers in Confucianism, but is also a phenomenon of tunnel vision occurring in modern historiographic development. Please refer to “True History and New History,” Tsai Lichen, *Journal of True Enlightenment*, 3rd issue, True Enlightenment Education Foundation (Taipei), 2009, pp. 30-38.

⁹¹ *Taisho Tripitaka*, Vol. 1, p. 495.

⁹² *Taisho Tripitaka*, Vol. 1, pp. 495-496.

Buddha narrates that He was once a Wheel-Turning Sage King, King Mandhata, who established the only empire in the whole continent of Jambudvīpa (having achieved the open intent of Wells), owning the largest territory. However, King Mandhata **was not satisfied** and further conquered the continents of **Aparagodaniya, Puravideha, and Uttarakuru** in succession (having surpassed the open intent of Wells). Even the Lord Shakra of the Trayastrimsas Heaven allowed King Mandhata half of the throne, and they ruled the Trayastrimsas Heaven with equal power. However, still not satisfied, King Mandhata wished to oust Lord Shakra, **“seize the other half throne, and become the free and unrestrained king of the heavenly and human realms.”**⁹³ With the greedy mind to seize the whole throne of Lord Shakra, King Mandhata then fell back into the human realm and passed away shortly.

In the above Jataka Tales about the Buddha, its writing of the rules carries the following meaning: King Mandhata loves all the people and animals, rules the four continents, and does no killing; **“he ruled all the lands including the ocean, not by means of knives and sticks [punishments], but by virtuous teachings and orders, making people peaceful and happy.”**⁹⁴ Therefore, his virtues rivaled those of Lord Shakra and could ascend to the Trayastrimsas Heaven. Nevertheless, even though his virtues could protect the people of the four continents and make them peaceful and happy, if only for the sake of his power, his virtues are still within the scope of the human dharma-realm and inferior to those of the Trayastrimsas Heaven. Caring only about the peace and happiness of the people in the four continents but not about his own power is a good deed of no greed and one’s virtues surpass those of the human realm. If one rules the four continents only for the sake of showing one’s power and has the bad deed of greed, one’s virtues are only the same as those of an ordinary king in the human world even though his virtues are great enough to protect the people of the four continents. Hence, King Mandhata said before his death that he killed himself due to his greed for power (**being not satisfied and passed away**). Lastly, the Buddha said: **Do you think that King Mandhata in the past was a different person? Do not think so. You should know that King Mandhata was me. Ananda! I was so eager to benefit myself, others, and also many people. I pleaded for the mundane righteousness, benefit, stability, and happiness for the sake of the celestial and human beings. At that time, I spoke the dharma-teaching which was not ultimate or ultimately pure; the pure practice was not ultimately devoid of the greed for the desire-realm, nor did I ultimately finish the pure practice. At that time, I was not free from the sufferings of birth, aging, sickness, death, crying, sadness, and worry, nor was I liberated from all sufferings.**

It is worth noting that in the statement **“at that time, I spoke the dharma which was not**

⁹³ *Taisho Tripitaka*, Vol. 1, p. 495.

⁹⁴ *Taisho Tripitaka*, Vol. 1, p. 494.

ultimate,” “speaking the dharma” means that King Mandhata showed the causality law recognized in his mind with his bodily, verbal, and mental deeds, namely the writing of the rules—writing the causality law. Therefore, the rules written by King Mandhata’s words and deeds are: The larger the territory, in which one rules more sentient beings, the greater one’s virtues. Although such a rule is correct, it is incomplete because one does not know the whole picture of the causality law. If only for the sake of one’s power and fame, though one’s virtues are great enough to protect the people of the four continents, one is still within the scope of the human dharma-realm. In contrast, anyone who is a sincere almsgiver without expecting anything in return and performs the ten wholesome deeds, even though he is not a king of the human realm, can be reborn in the desire-heavens. Hence, a selfish king of the human realm is actually inferior to a commoner who practices the ten wholesome deeds in the king’s country. Therefore, King Mandhata said, **“At that time, I spoke the dharma which was not ultimate.”**

In the Buddhist sutras, there are many examples describing that the Buddha narrates His imperfectness and mistakes in His previous lives.⁹⁵ It shows that the Buddha, as the founder of Buddhism, sets an example by self-examining His imperfectness and mistakes in His previous lives without any cover-up; He does not have the double standard of **“cover-ups for relatives and sages.”** Since the Buddha, as the founder of Buddhism, could narrate His imperfectness and mistakes as they really had been in His previous lives, how can all the Buddha’s followers not record things as they really are? Hence, the concepts and ways of recording historical facts in Buddhism and Confucianism are entirely different. In Buddhism, one’s own mistakes are recorded as they really are, and there is no double standard; yet in Confucianism, it has the double standard of **“cover-ups for the king and sages.”**

Not only did the Buddha record His imperfectness and mistakes as they really had been in His previous lives, but the ancient Indian non-Buddhist practitioners at that time also had the capability to examine the contents, within a certain range, of the *Jataka Tales Sutra* narrated by the Buddha. For example, Yang Yuwen cites an example:

⁹⁵ In the *Dirgha Agama*, Vol. 5, the *Maha Govinda Sutra* states: “At that time, the Great Steward [*Maha Govinda*] had great virtue and power. However, he could neither speak the ultimate way to his disciples nor enable them to have the ultimate pure practice or to reach a stable hidden place.” It shows that the Buddha had been the Great Steward with the seven-king great appearance in His past lives; nevertheless, there was still something which the Great Steward was incapable of. (*Taisho Tripitaka*, Vol. 1, p. 34) The *Ekottara Agama*, Vol. 13: “Could it be that the great king Landlord at that time was another person? Do not think so. Why? The great king Landlord at that time was exactly me. For a period of 70,000 years at that time, I offered enough clothing, food, bedding, and medicine to that Buddha. After that Buddha’s death, for another period of 70,000 years, I made offerings again to the Buddha image and relics, burned joss sticks, lit lamps, and hanged silk banners and shrouds, without deficiency. At that time, with this merits and virtues, I asked for the blessings in births and deaths, instead of seeking liberation.” The Buddha talked about his faults that in his past lives, he asked only for the worldly blessed rewards instead of seeking liberation from births and deaths. (*Taisho Tripitaka*, Vol. 2, pp. 610-611)

There are too many examples to list all of them.

Now, let's have a discussion from the viewpoint of the Agama sutras. In the *Ekottara Agama*, Section 28, Sutra 4 (*Taisho Tripitaka*, Vol. 2), there was a non-Buddhist named "Brahmacarin Deer-Head." He was very proficient not only in the Brahma sutras but also in the five insights of Brahmanism. Judging only from a piece of bone, he could tell the gender of a deceased person and whether the cause of death was due to disease or violence. One day, the Buddha came down from Mount Grdhrakuta to the Great Fear cemetery outside the great city of Rajagriha. In the cemetery, the bones of the dead were everywhere. Because Brahmacarin Deer-Head had bragged about his high level of proficiency all around, the Buddha picked up a piece of skull bone and asked him about the sex of the dead person, what the cause of death was, where the dead person was reborn, etc. Brahmacarin Deer-Head answered the first several questions correctly and the Buddha also agreed on his answers.⁹⁶

Concerning the Yang Yuwen's citation, we have to correct some of his points first. Firstly, it is incorrect for Yang to state that Brahmacarin Deer-Head is good at "the five insights of Brahmanism" because Brahmanism has only, or at most, the "five supernatural powers" (heavenly eye, knowing previous lives, heavenly ear, knowing others' minds, and unimpeded bodily action) but not the "five insights" [*pancavidya*, also commonly known as five sciences]. The five insights refer to the five kinds of "insight," namely the insight about inner self, the insight about logic, the insight about language, the insight about medicine, and the insight about arts and crafts. The five insights are greatly different from the five supernatural powers. Nevertheless, if two of the five supernatural powers, namely the power of heavenly eye and the power of knowing previous lives, can be called "insights," the two should be based on "the insight about inner self"—one has actually realized the eighth *vijnana* Tathagatagarbha and understands that the causality law never fails, or although without actual realization of the insight about inner self, one still can understand the relationships of causes and effects as they really are.⁹⁷ The other three supernatural powers, no matter how ultimate they are, cannot be called "insights." Without the wisdom of actually realizing the eighth *vijnana* Tathagatagarbha (the insight about inner self) as their premise, the power of heavenly eye and the power of knowing previous lives could not be called "insights." Hence, Brahmanism does not have the five insights but only has, at most, the five supernatural powers. In terms of the contents of the five supernatural powers, Brahmanism has only the five supernatural powers, but Buddhism has not only the six supernatural powers⁹⁸ but also the insight about

⁹⁶ Yang Yuwen, "Lecture on Non-discrimination and the Two Truths," *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal*, Vol. 19, Chung-Hwa Institute of Buddhist Studies (Taipei), 2006, p. 7.

⁹⁷ For example, there are great *arhats* or great *pratyekabuddhas* [solitary realizers] with three insights and six supernatural powers.

⁹⁸ The six supernatural powers refer to the five supernatural powers plus the power of the extinction of vexations; it is because all vexations can be completely extinguished only in Buddhism.

heavenly eye, the insight about knowing previous lives, and the insight about the extinction of vexations. Namely, Buddhism has the three insights and the six supernatural powers, which surpass the five supernatural powers of Brahmanism. With the event of Brahmacin Deer-Head cited by Yang Yuwen, we can prove that Brahmanism has only the power of heavenly eye and the power of knowing previous lives rather than the insight about heavenly eye and the insight about knowing previous lives. The *Ekottara Agama*, Vol. 20, states:

At that time, the World-Honored One came out of the abode of peace and went downhill from Mount Grdhrakuta. Together with Brahmacin Deer-Head, they gradually traveled to the Great Fear cemetery. At that time, the World-Honored One picked up a skull, gave it to the Brahmacin, and said, "Brahmacarin, you know a lot about astrology and medicine, can treat varied diseases, understand the six paths, and also know the causes and conditions of people's deaths." ... At that time, the World-Honored One further picked up a skull, gave it to the Brahmacin, and asked, "Male or female?" At this time, the Brahmacin knocked at the skull again, and told the World-Honored One, "This is a female skull." The World-Honored One said, "Very good indeed! It is exactly like what you said. What kind of disease did this person die of?" The Brahmacin knocked at the skull again, and told the World-Honored One, "She died during a delivery." The World-Honored One said, "Why did she die during a delivery?" The Brahmacin knocked at the skull again, and told the World-Honored One, "This woman was exhausted and **starved to death.**" The World-Honored One said, "Where was this woman reborn after her death?" At this time, the Brahmacin knocked at the skull again, and told the World-Honored One, "**This woman was reborn in the human realm after her death.**" The World-Honored One said, "**For those who starve to death, they are supposed to be reborn in the three evil paths but not good paths.**" At this time, the Brahmacin knocked at the skull again, and told the World-Honored One, "That woman **died with strict observance of complete precepts.**" The World-Honored One said, "Very good indeed! Just like what you said, that woman died with strict observance of complete precepts. The reason for her good rebirth is that, for those men or women who die with strict observance of complete precepts, they will be reborn in the two paths, the heavenly or human realm."⁹⁹

With his power of heavenly eye, Brahmacin Deer-Head knew that the woman **starved to death and was reborn in the human realm.** If these two events were described in this way, it would seem to write the causality law that "one who starves to death will be reborn in the human realm." However, such a description is not in accord with the true causal relationship and it wrongly writes the rule. Therefore, in disagreement with the Brahmacin Deer-Head's statement which is

⁹⁹ *Taisho Tripitaka*, Vol. 2, pp. 650-651.

not in accord with the correct causal relationship, the Buddha then pointed out that **“for those who starve to death, they are supposed to be reborn in the three evil paths but not good paths.”** This is the correct causality law. Brahmacerin Deer-Head rechecked that event with his power of knowing previous lives and found that woman had undertaken the precepts, so she did not steal or feel resentment before starving to death. Therefore, Brahmacerin Deer-Head rewrote the rule as **“that woman died with strict observance of complete precepts,”** which is in accord with the correct causality law, and the Buddha also agreed. Hence, Brahmacerin Deer-Head had only the power of heavenly eye and the power of knowing previous lives rather than the insight about heavenly eye or the insight about knowing previous lives because he did not know the true causal relationships and could only guess. Yang Yuwen’s statement that **“Brahmacarin Deer-Head answered the first several questions correctly and the Buddha also agreed on his answers”** is not in accord with the sutra. In fact, Brahmacerin Deer-Head did not answer correctly, and the Buddha did not completely agree on his answers. This shows that the non-Buddhist Brahmin did not correctly know the causal relationships and therefore had ignorance.

From the above dialogue between the Buddha and Brahmacerin Deer-Head, we can see that when the Buddha narrated the past events of His previous lives, the non-Buddhist Brahmins with the five supernatural powers at that time had the capability to examine whether the Buddha’s narrations are correct or not. Because there were many practitioners with the five supernatural powers in ancient India, all the practitioners had to honestly face all the historical facts. This was the case, and during the propagation process of Buddhist sutras, no one in all Brahma or other non-Buddhist sutras has ever queried that the Buddha had stolen others’ achievements in the Jataka tales. To our surprise, Shi Yinshun, without any supernatural power or documental evidence, publicly slanders all the noble or ordinary Buddhist disciples who keep the precepts for having **“unconsciously”** stolen the Persian or Greek legendary myths as the Buddha’s **“great virtues and magnificent achievements.”** This also means that he slanders the Buddha for lying in the Jataka tales and stealing others’ **“great virtues and magnificent achievements.”** In Yang Yuwen’s citation, non-Buddhists with the five supernatural powers, such as Brahmacerin Deer-Head, and the Buddha can mutually verify the correctness of past events. Yang’s citation just proves the following fact: Shi Yinshun falsely states that the Buddha and His noble or ordinary disciples all committed false speech by lying about, inventing, and spreading the fake sutras as well as stealing others’ **“great virtues and magnificent achievements”**; in fact, Shi Yinshun lies blatantly and commits the evil deed of dishonoring his patriarch teacher. Shi Yinshun’s slander about the Buddha and His followers, who keep the precepts, violates the highest level of historical responsibility.

In previous discussion, we have pointed out that Liang Qichao and Du Weiyun are ignorant about the correct methods for identifying sutras, and therefore they defame the true Buddhist sutras

as fake ones. On the contrary, Liang and Du did not have any comment on fake sutras, and Shi Yinshun even groundlessly slanders the whole Buddhist world for stealing others' **“great virtues and magnificent achievements.”** Such unwise historians have violated the historical responsibility of a higher level than that of the seven noble precepts. According to the causality law of **“grand unification”** inherently existing in the dharma-realm, if unwise historians do not repent their sins before their death, they will certainly receive longer karmic retributions with greater suffering. The causality law, which states that good is rewarded and evil is punished, as well as the levels manifested by their retributions of different severity, is the historical responsibility that all historians cannot escape and must bear.

5. The expanded or reduced scope of the historian

As discussed above, we have confirmed that the historian is characterized by executing his historical right to select and write about parts of facts, namely writing the rules with his words and deeds. Since the historical right is the characteristic of the historian, this article will use this characteristic of right, by which one **dares to be arrogantly proud of his writing of the rules**, as the criterion for a historian, and the scope of the historian is expanded or reduced as it should be. Du Weiyun suggests “a system that can record world events immediately” in his book *Chinese History and World History*:

History must be written based on historical data. The most direct historical data is the immediate recording of an event by the persons involved or people at the same period when that event is happening. The immediate records by the persons involved are rarely seen, and therefore the records by people at the same period become extremely valuable. For several thousand years, only the Chinese official historian system can record world events immediately. Enormous quantities of direct historical data are preserved. It is the most important system in the field of historical study. For the new historiography of the future world, to establish a world official historian system should be a top priority.¹⁰⁰

Du Weiyun wishes to establish a world official historian system to record world events immediately. If we observe the things done by the historian while executing his historical right—to select facts and **dare to be arrogantly proud of his writing of the rules**, it is found that the job of the journalist is in perfect accord with the things done by the historian and also meets the goal of **“recording world events immediately”** stated by Du Weiyun. We can observe what the main job of a journalist is. For example, Li Liangrong states in his book *An Introduction to Journalism*:

Facing new situations and problems everyday, the journalist has to analyze series of new

¹⁰⁰ Du Weiyun, *Chinese History and World History*, San Min Book Co. (Taipei), 2008, p. 239.

situations and problems, making judgments and choices. The abilities to analyze things and make judgments are the most important qualities of the journalist.¹⁰¹

From the above description, we can see that the journalist **analyzes** parts of facts selected from many new facts everyday, **making judgments and choices**. What the journalist does is no different at all from that of the historian who selects parts of facts from those in the distant past. They all write about parts of facts selected from many facts and **dare to be arrogantly proud of their writing of the rules**. The only difference is that the historian **is proud of his writing of the rules** from events in the distant past and the journalist **is proud of his writing of the rules** from the events that have occurred very recently. Hence, the journalist has been called “a historian” previously. For instance, Peng Jia-fa describes the journalist as follows in his book *Basic Journalism*:

The general people have two extreme views on the image of the journalist. For instance:

– **Making a lot of friends, getting along well with everybody, a master of both the pen and the sword, able to communicate with people of both high and low status, speaking for the people, defending somebody against an injustice, acting independently, full of the sense of mission, resourceful, a well-informed source, a vanguard of the nation, a historian, a literary man, a moralist, a reformer, a person who records things, a witness, having foresight, the most reliable person, someone who serves the readers.**

– **Boasting, lying, unlearned and incapable, a cultural villain, an uncrowned king, praising government officials too much, a troublemaker, a repairer, a manufacturer, butchery.**¹⁰²

The above quotation describes the very diverse images and deeds of the journalist. The journalist is like **a historian, a literary man, a moralist**, etc, which gives a seemingly positive image. However, those terms such as **boasting, lying, unlearned and incapable, a cultural villain**, including **a manufacturer** who makes news, describe the negative image of the journalist. Why is that? As discussed above, **“historians select facts without a consistent standard.”** Similarly, the journalist, like the historian, is also devoid of a consistent standard to execute the historical right. Therefore, the images of historians are highly diverse, which invites criticism from other historians. Being a historian, the journalist also cannot avoid criticism. Hence, Liang Qichao’s query about that historians **dare to be arrogantly proud of their writing of the rules** is also applicable to the journalist. Li Liangrong states:

The science of journalism provides us with a good thinking mode of discovering or finding out news and the basic skills in journalism. However, In the science of Journalism, it does not have a value system or reference system by which we can observe, understand reality and evaluate the right and wrong, the advantages and disadvantages, the honor and

¹⁰¹ Li Liangrong, *An Introduction to Journalism*, Fudan University Press (Shanghai), 2001, p. 2.

¹⁰² Peng Jia-fa, *Basic Journalism*, San Min Book Co. (Taipei), 1992, first edition, p. 23.

dishonor, or the good and evil of facts. This kind of value system must be learned from other disciplines, such as political science, legal science, economics, philosophy, or literature, and from social practice.¹⁰³

From the above description, the journalist is simply a historian, and therefore in the same predicament as the historian: **it does not have a value system or reference system by which we can observe, understand reality and evaluate the right and wrong, the advantages and disadvantages, the honor and dishonor, or the good and evil of facts;** the journalist is in the same predicament as **“the historian, who selects facts without a consistent standard.”** The journalist is also a historian, also executes his historical right, and propagates his writing of the rules to the public; however, similar to the historian, the journalist lacks a value system to evaluate facts, and therefore facts are selected **“without a consistent standard.”** Because journalists **dare to be arrogantly proud of their writing of the rules,** they also have to bear the historical responsibility of **“grand unification”** in the same way as historians do. Therefore, the journalist should be included in the expanded range of the historian.

Tu Cheng-sheng’s view that **the “historian” belongs to a classification of professional knowledge** is also not correct. Because the historian who writes history books, as well as the historian who immediately records news, executes his historical right **“without a consistent standard”** unavoidably, how could the historian **belong to a classification of professional knowledge?** Hence, neither the historian who writes history books nor the historian who records news immediately is professional.

From the above expanded scope of the historian, it is known that since the journalist, who records news with written words, is a historian, anyone who records facts with sound or image should also belong to a historian. Du Weiyun expresses his view that the historian should also write about history with sound or image:

It is hardly convincing that the historian uses his imagination to create the historical scenes which can be seen or heard by the readers, even though those scenes are based on a large amount of data. Usually, the more realistic the scenes are, the more distant they are from the truth. Therefore, it is necessary to present those histories that can be really seen or heard by the readers. No matter they are photographs or paintings, those historical personages’ pictures presented in historical records are the most realistic.¹⁰⁴

Du Weiyun’s view that **it is necessary to present those histories that can be really seen or heard by the readers** is a bright idea and in agreement with the expanded scope of the historian.

¹⁰³ Li Liangrong, *An Introduction to Journalism*, Fudan University Press (Shanghai), 2001, p. 2.

¹⁰⁴ Du Weiyun, *Methodology of Historiography*, San Min Book Co. (Taipei), 2008, p. 328.

The historian describes historical events with **historical imagination**¹⁰⁵ to write about history, executes his historical right, and in the meantime, creates history by recording history. The mass media nowadays, including newspapers and advertisements, using written words, pictures and printed papers as the media, or radio, using sound as a medium, or television, cable television, internet television, the movies, etc., using sound and moving pictures combined as the media, are all using written words, sound, pictures, etc. as the tools of **historical imagination** to describe events and write the rules. Therefore, the mass media workers are also historians, and this is the further expansion of the scope of the historian. The images of the mass media are also diverse and sometimes are negative:

(1) The protectionist viewpoint in the 1930s: it regards the media as the “carrier,” whose influence is direct and powerful. The readers are the passive victims, and they, especially the adolescents, are the “masses” who are easily manipulated by the media information. Therefore, the responsibility of the media education is to protect the public, inoculate them, and develop their immunity.¹⁰⁶

The media are regarded as the “carrier,” and the readers are the passive victims. It also shows that the media workers are in the same predicament as “**historians, who select facts without a consistent standard.**” Hence, the mass media workers are also historians, and there is no doubt about it. However, is the expanded scope of the historian limited to the media worker? It is not necessary so. The American scholar Walter Lippman (1889-1974) states in his book *Public Opinion*:

But the most interesting kind of portraiture is that which arises spontaneously in people's minds.¹⁰⁷ ...He is learning to see with his mind vast portions of the world that he could never see, touch, smell, hear, or remember. **Gradually he makes for himself a trustworthy picture inside his head of the world beyond his reach.**

Those features of the world outside which have to do with the behavior of other human beings, in so far as that behavior crosses ours, is dependent upon us, or is interesting to us, we call roughly public affairs.¹⁰⁸

Lippman describes the **portraiture which arises spontaneously in people's minds**, and this is a fact that one recognizes the external world through the six *vijnanas*, namely eye-vijnana,

¹⁰⁵ Concerning historical imagination, Du Weiyun states in *Methodology of Historiography*: “The historian can ‘project’ himself into history and use his ‘imagination’ properly. Many events in history are separate and discontinuous, which is due to incomplete data. In fact, a continuous history extending for several thousand years does not exist. Its continuity comes from the historian’s imagination, which is a constructive approach to historiography.” Please refer to *Methodology of Historiography*, Du Weiyun, San Min Book Co. (Taipei), 2008, p. 210.

¹⁰⁶ Edited by Lucie Cheng, Lo Shiao-Nan, *Critical Media Literacy*, Cheng Chung Book Co. (Taipei), 2009. p. 11.

¹⁰⁷ Walter Lippman, *Public Opinion*, Macmillan Co. (New York), (1922, 14th print 1954), p. 8

¹⁰⁸ Walter Lippman, *Public Opinion*, Macmillan Co. (New York), (1922, 14th print 1954), p. 29.

ear-vijnana, nose-vijnana, tongue-vijnana, body-vijnana, and Manovijnana [the consciousness], and **he makes for himself a trustworthy picture inside his head of the world beyond his reach**. In fact, this **trustworthy picture** is established and recognized by people, who select parts of facts from the **public affairs** of the external world. Therefore, with their words and deeds, people **dare to be arrogantly proud of their writing of the rules**, just like the King Mandhata. Since all people themselves are the historical subject, they are actually historians and also select parts of facts within their reach for them to care about, recognize and act. Also, people **dare to be arrogantly proud of their writing of the rules** with their bodily, verbal, and mental deeds. Naturally, they have to bear the historical responsibility for their bodily, verbal, and mental deeds.

Is the historian limited only to humankind? What should the complete scope of the historian be? The complete scope of the historian actually includes all sentient beings in the ten dharma-realms. Namely, as the historical subject, all sentient beings¹⁰⁹ have the historical right to write about the causality law in their minds with their bodily, verbal, and mental deeds. Therefore, all sentient beings are historians and have to bear their historical responsibility. Since all sentient beings are the historical subject, they certainly have the historical right, with which they **dare to be arrogantly proud of their writing of the rules**. Therefore, under the causality law of “grand unification,” for those who still dare to slander sages and saints, misinterpret the meanings, **serve only politics**, have double standards, etc., without fear of falling into the three evil paths, they all **dare to be arrogantly proud of their writing of the rules** with their bodily, verbal, and mental deeds. Hence, all sentient beings are historians, who **dare to be arrogantly proud of their writing of the rules**, and there are different kinds of historians. Next, the different kinds of historians are further explored.

Liang Qichao queries the historian: **Based on what kind of principle do Chinese historians judge the world events from past to present and dare to be arrogantly proud of their writing of the rules?** The reason why the historians in the six ordinary karma-paths **dare to be arrogantly proud of their writing of the rules** is that they all lack actual realization and are arrogant, and therefore, they become unwise historians, who **inevitably obtain sand instead of gold**.¹¹⁰ For

¹⁰⁹ Please refer to “True History versus New History,” Tsai Lichen, *Journal of True Enlightenment*, 3rd issue, True Enlightenment Education Foundation (Taipei), 2009, pp. 27-30.

¹¹⁰ In the six ordinary karma-paths, there are sentient beings who keep the seven noble precepts, other precepts of conduct, or even the precepts that accompany *samadhi*, yet they still belong to unwise historians. For example, in Brahmanism, there are *sramanas* who have attained the *samadhis* of form-realms or formless realms. Nevertheless, they cannot understand the root origin of the dharma-realm—the existence of the eighth *vijnana* Tathagatagarbha, and will inevitably fall into the states of feeling the terror inside or outside; therefore, they cannot actually realize the wisdom of pure dharma-eye with the elimination of self-view. For this reason, those who cannot actually realize the liberation fruition of pure dharma-eye will inevitably violate the highest historical responsibility, and therefore they all belong to unwise historians. Concerning the contents and explanation of feeling the terror inside and outside, please refer to *The Correct Meanings of the Agama Sutras*, Vol. 4, Venerable Pings Xiao, True Wisdom Publishing Co. (Taipei), 2006, pp. 1037-1043.

example, Du Weiyun states in *Chinese History and World History*:

For instance, Shi Yi, often cited in many books, is a learned and knowledgeable historical officer. He once said, “Those who are not of our clan must be not of the same mind as us.” ... How could it not be the brilliant wisdom coming from erudition?¹¹¹

Du Weiyun praises that Shi Yi’s statement, **“those who are not of our clan must be not of the same mind as us,”** is the brilliant wisdom coming from erudition. However, is the statement that **“those who are not of our clan must be not of the same mind as us”** the brilliant wisdom coming from erudition? The quotation that **“those who are not of our clan must be not of the same mind as us”** is from the *Zuo Zhuan*, the 4th year of the reign of Ji Heigong¹¹² in the Lu State:

In the autumn, Duke Cheng of Lu came back from the Jin State. The duke wished to be in alliance with the Chu State and betray the Jin State. Ji Wen said, “No! Although the Jin State is tyrannical, we should not betray it. The Jin State is a strong country; its officials are harmonious; it is situated close to us; all dukes are obedient to it; therefore, we should not be disloyal to it. The *Shi Yi’s Records* states that ‘those who are not of our clan must be not of the same mind as us.’ Although the Chu State is strong, it is not of our clan and will not be friendly to us.” Then, Duke Cheng of Lu abandoned his attempt.¹¹³

The statement that **“those who are not of our clan must be not of the same mind as us”** means: The royal families of the Lu State and the Jin State have the same family name “Ji” and therefore are **“of our clan.”** But the royal family of the Chu State is surnamed “Mi”¹¹⁴ but not “Ji” and therefore is not **“of our clan.”** Hence, the statement that **“those who are not of our clan must be not of the same mind as us”** writes the rule as follows: **those who are not of the same clan will not love each other.** This is exactly clanism, which is based on different clan names. The attitude of clanism is even more narrow-minded than that of “racism”¹¹⁵ or “nationalism.”¹¹⁶ Such an unwise and narrow-minded view is praised by Du Weiyun as **the brilliant wisdom coming from erudition.** This shows that Du’s erudition and brilliant wisdom are the same as those of Shi Yi.

¹¹¹ Du Weiyun, *Chinese History and World History*, San Min Book Co. (Taipei), 2008, p. 87.

¹¹² It is exactly Duke Cheng of Lu.

¹¹³ This quotation is from the *Zuo Zhuan*, the 4th year of the reign of Duke Cheng of Lu.

¹¹⁴ The *Shiji [Records of the Grand Historian]*, Vol. 40, “House of Chu”: “Wuhui’s son Luzhong had six sons, all born by Caesarian section. The first son was called Kunwu; the second son Canhu; the third son Pengzu; the fourth son Hui ren; the fifth son adopted the ancestral surname Cao; the sixth son Jilian adopted the ancestral surname Mi, from whom the royal family of Chu descended.”

¹¹⁵ Racism refers to the discrimination based on minute differences among human races. For example, the belief that whites are superior is exactly racism.

¹¹⁶ Nationalism refers to the discrimination based on different national identities. For example, different races of people can ignore the differences in race or language and jointly form a nation-state based on a sense of national identity. Because of different national identities, nationalism is formed.

Nevertheless, Du Weiyun further states:

Nowadays, advancements in scientific technologies in the 21st century have made it a small world. However, the prejudices of nation-states or ethnic groups are still everywhere in the world. Hatreds between nation-states or ethnic groups are endless and wars commonly seen. It will cause the extirpation of humankind very soon.¹¹⁷

Du Weiyun states that the reason why **hatreds between nation-states or ethnic groups are endless** is that **the prejudices of nation-states or ethnic groups are still everywhere in the world**. However, the most serious and narrow-minded prejudice of nation-states or ethnic groups is precisely “clanism,” which is the erudition and brilliant wisdom praised by Du himself. Writing such a self-contradictory rule is exactly the personal historical right executed by an unwise historian, who **obtains sand instead of gold and dares to be arrogantly proud of his writing of the rules**. The unwise historian, who proposes the view that “**those who are not of our clan must be not of the same mind as us,**” can only actually realize the six *vijnanas*, namely eye-*vijnana*, ear-*vijnana*, nose-*vijnana*, tongue-*vijnana*, body-*vijnana*, and Manovijñāna, and fall into the erroneous views of the six *vijnanas* without self-awareness. Also, due to arrogance, Du mistakenly thinks that the narrow-minded, ill-informed, and ignorant “clanism” is **the brilliant wisdom coming from erudition**, that is, his view cannot be elevated to the high level of absolute objectivity in the whole history.

The erudition and brilliant wisdom claimed by wise historians are greatly different from those of unwise historians. With **positivism**, wise historians directly perceive and actually realize¹¹⁸ the ultimate reality of equality in the dharma-realm. With the positivist professional knowledge, wise historians **judge the world events from past to present** and execute their historical right with equality mind as well as without arrogance. The *Samyukta Agama*, Vol. 49, states:

For those who can equally perceive the border of the world, it is called the practice of sages and saints, reaching the other shore of the world.¹¹⁹

The sutra states: for those who can perceive and understand the border of the sentient world and its equality, their words and deeds are called those of sages and saints, and they can reach the other shore of the world, namely attaining liberation. What is the border of the sentient world (**the border of the world**, namely the complete scope of the historical subject)? That is, only those who are able to correctly understand that all sentient beings of the ten dharma-realms are the historical subject

¹¹⁷ Du Weiyun, *History in A Changing World*, Peking University Press (Beijing), 2006, p. 49.

¹¹⁸ Direct perception and actual realization refer to the verification by the present states without any mistake. The *Treatise on the Stages of Yoga Practice*, Vol. 15: “There are three kinds of direct perception: (1) which is not what is not directly experienced, (2) which is not what has been contemplated or should be contemplated, and (3) which is not the confused states. (*Taisho Tripitaka*, Vol. 30, p. 357)

¹¹⁹ *Taisho Tripitaka*, Vol. 2, p. 359.

can be possibly called wise historians; on the other hand, those who are unable to correctly understand the scope of the historical subject must be unwise historians. After understanding the scope of the historical subject, one needs to further perceive and understand the equality between historical subjects. In other words, people with the view that **“those who are not of our clan must be not of the same mind as us”** only observe the inequality of the six *vijnanas*, and hence the sense of identity among different clans must be different. Therefore, their bodily, verbal, and mental deeds are not those of sages and saints, but are those of ordinary mortals in the cycle of births and deaths.

What is the equality of the historical subject? There are two layers of meaning. The first layer is that sound-hearers or solitary realizers observe the impermanence, suffering, emptiness, and no-self of the sentient being’s physical body (form-dharma) and name body (mind-dharma). Although the body and the mind of a sentient being are not of my clan, they are similarly impermanent, suffering, empty, and no-self, and will be annihilated to death eventually. No matter how large a country or its territory is, it will also be annihilated finally because the Earth will come to an end one day. Hence, one can also have compassion for those sentient beings that are not of my clan. Sentient beings are busy making a living in order to survive in a world of scarcity. People have already suffered great hardship. Why would they attack each other only because of clanism, racism, or nationalism? Why don’t people just love each other, live harmoniously, and progress together towards the liberation state of the eternal, unchanging nirvana in which Tathagatagarbha exists independently?

For the same reason, like humankind, the sentient being’s body and mind in the animal path are also impermanent, suffering, empty, and no-self; including the sentient beings of the six paths, their bodies and minds are all impermanent, suffering, empty, and no-self; they will be annihilated eventually and enter the liberation state of the eternal, unchanging nirvana some day. Hence, with positivism, one personally verifies that one’s body and mind are impermanent and no-self; one must be annihilated eventually and will **“become the non-arising dharma in one’s future life.”**¹²⁰ This shows that the changing and unchanging causality rules written by sound-hearers or solitary realizers are precisely **the brilliant wisdom coming from erudition**. Hence, sound-hearers or solitary realizers are **liberated historians with liberation wisdom**.¹²¹ What they state is that **“for**

¹²⁰ *Taisho Tripitaka*, Vol. 2, p. 84.

¹²¹ Liberated historians are, in fact, not limited only to sound-hearers or solitary realizers, but bodhisattvas of the Shared Teaching or the Distinct Teaching who have not actually realized the wisdom of ultimate reality can also be included. For example, bodhisattvas of the Shared Teaching or the Distinct Teaching who have actually realized the liberation fruition, the Four Pairs or the Eight Grades, yet have not attained the wisdom of ultimate reality, also belong to liberated historians. Among them, practitioners of the Stage Toward First Fruition have not truly realized liberation of pure dharma-eye, but they obey positivism and have the four objects of the unailing pure faith in Three Jewels (Buddha, dharma, and sangha); therefore, they will definitely observe the seven noble precepts as well as other higher historical responsibility and will not be arrogant to violate the highest historical responsibility. Because it is not possible for them to fall into the three evil paths again, having been liberated from the three evil paths, they can also belong to wise

those who are not of our clan, their minds are equal to ours; all are arising and ceasing.” Being **equal, arising and ceasing**, people should love, pity, and respect each other, and progress together towards the liberation state of nirvana; therefore, people will not be fettered by clanism, racism, or nationalism, and will certainly be liberated from the mundane transmigration. Hence, we can see that the rules written by Shi Yi and Du Weiyun are sand rather than gold, fetters rather than liberation, evil rather than good, ill-informed rather than erudite, and of no wisdom rather than brilliant wisdom.

The second layer of equality is that Buddhas and bodhisattvas observe the following rules: the sentient being’s physical body and name body are arising, ceasing, and impermanent; however, the impermanent, arising-and-ceasing body and mind (name and form) can be reborn after annihilation, be annihilated after rebirth, and be reborn again after annihilation; in such a way, sentient beings are arising and ceasing from generation to generation unceasingly and endlessly. With **positivism**, Buddhas and bodhisattvas personally verify that every sentient being has its own permanent, neither-arising-nor-ceasing Tathagatagarbha, which does really exist. This shows that the changing and unchanging causality rules, as well as the existence of their root origin, written by Buddhas and bodhisattvas are really **the brilliant wisdom coming from erudition**.

Buddhas and bodhisattvas see the equality among sentient beings: (1) the equality that every sentient being’s body and mind (name and form) are arising, changing and ceasing, and (2) at the same time, beyond the body and mind, the equality that every sentient being has the eighth *vijnana* Tathagatagarbha, which is neither arising nor ceasing and permanently exists. Therefore, **the unconditional great kindness** (which is not dependent on the arising-and-ceasing conditioned dharma) and **the great compassion based on the same entity** (the eighth *vijnana* Tathagatagarbha, which every historical subject has) arise in their minds. All Buddhas and bodhisattvas wish to save all sentient beings, and help all attain the wisdom of liberation from impermanent births-and-deaths, all attain the wisdom of ultimate reality, the neither-arising-nor-ceasing Tathagatagarbha entity, and progress together toward **the way to Buddhahood**. Based on the whole dharma-realm, executing the historical right to write the rules of complete historical subjects to become sutras is exactly the historical view of the whole dharma-realm that includes all historical subjects. Hence, the equality of “**the unconditional great kindness and the great compassion based on the same entity**” realized by Buddhas and bodhisattvas surpasses and encompasses all that observed by sound-hearers and solitary realizers. Therefore, Buddhas and bodhisattvas are **truly wise historians with the wisdom of ultimate reality**. Those with the wisdom of ultimate reality must have the liberation wisdom. What they state is that “**for those who are not of my clan, their minds are equal to ours; all are neither arising nor**

ceasing,” which differs from but surpasses that of Shi Yi, sound-hearers, or solitary realizers.

From the above analysis, we can see that, from another perspective, Tu Cheng-sheng’s view that the historian **belongs to a classification of professional knowledge** is also correct. The reason behind is that the liberated historians and the truly wise historians personally realize the border of the world and perceive the equality of all historical subjects, which is the brilliant wisdom from erudition. Hence, one **judges the world events from past to present based on positivism, writes the rules proudly** with the bodily, verbal, and mental deeds of equality without arrogance, completes the pure practice with liberation from the fetters of the Three Realms, and even attains Buddhahood to save all sentient beings. In this way, one who attains the wisdom of liberation and the wisdom of ultimate reality is precisely the historian with **professional knowledge**, whereas the rest are not professional historians. Hence, sages and saints of the four noble dharma-paths are truly wise historians. Concerning the professional historian¹²², further discussion is omitted due to page limitation.

To summarize, if selecting and recording parts of facts to write the rules is taken as the characteristic of the historian’s historical right (no matter whether the recorded contents are gold or sand, morally good or evil, beneficial to people or not, in accord with the causality rule or not, and liberated or fettered), not only those who write history books or do research in history but also all people are historians; all sentient beings of six paths and Three Realms are historians; all sentient beings of the ten dharma-realms are historians. That is, as a historical subject, any sentient being is a historian. This is the expanded scope of the historian.

When historians execute their historical right to write the rules, what they write should be gold but not sand, morally good but not evil, beneficial to people, in accord with the causality law of “grand unification,” liberated but not fettered, and in accord with but not against the ultimate reality. In that case, only sages and saints of the four noble dharma-paths, who actually realize the wisdom of equality, are **true historians**; for sentient beings of six ordinary karma-paths, no matter whether or not they write history books or do research in history, the rules written with their bodily, verbal, and mental deeds are just wrong and false, and therefore they are all **false historians** rather than **true ones**. This is the expanded or reduced scope of the historian.

6. Conclusion

The scope of the historian is often neglected by the historian himself. As a result, when the historian himself expands the scope of the historian, he is not self-aware of what he is doing. For

¹²² Concerning the discussion on the professional historian, please refer to “True History versus New History,” Tsai Lichen, *Journal of True Enlightenment*, 3rd issue, True Enlightenment Education Foundation (Taipei), 2009, pp. 51-64.

instance, in the *Research Methods of Chinese History*, Liang Qichao states that **“oral propagation by ten people becomes historical.”** Liang’s view shows that facts believed to be true are passed on by word of mouth and people who orally propagate those facts are all historians; moreover, those who privately write history books are also historians. This way, the scope of the historian is expanded. Another example is that Du Weiyun suggests “establishing a system that can record world events immediately” and writing about history with sound or image. Du’s suggestion also expands the scope of the historian to journalists and mass media workers. Nevertheless, Liang Qichao and Du Weiyun are not self-aware that they are expanding the scope of the historian.

The above discussion shows that the historian is always not aware of the scope of the historian or aware of when he/she has already expanded the scope of the historian. Quite often, the historian does not know about what he/she should do either. For instance, Lu Chien-lung describes the new cultural historians¹²³ as follows:

They all have many writing skills. The writing skill is often changed before the previous one becomes old hat. Their every history book presents a new world. This is a fox-like academic personality, which is exactly a way of writing about history that most of the domestic historians lack. Those new cultural historians develop a lot of cultural styles, which happen again and again. They present cultural concepts in a plural form. Their every history book is a small but complete demonstration of the cultural concept. By contrast, domestic historians define the cultural world as a single and only one. They talk only about the “history of Chinese culture” or boast about the “history of Taiwanese culture.” It seems that there is only one cultural style from past to present, and only one set of national culture. This is a change of cultural thought, a new experience of writing about history that domestic historians have never thought of.¹²⁴

Lu Chien-lung disagrees that the domestic historiographic circles **define the cultural world as a single and only one, and only one set of national culture.** Indeed, the nation-state is changing and unstable, and naturally, its culture is also variable accordingly; it is impossible for its cultural style to be **a single and the only one.** However, the historiographic circles should not embrace the new cultural history that has **a lot of cultural styles, which happen again and again.** The new cultural history should not be wrongly regarded as the core and constant rule of the historical study; otherwise, it would make historians become fashionistas. It is because “culture” is the worldly customs that are shared and accepted by people at a particular time, and is always changing. Even though we can understand its situations in our minds and make the past culture “reappear,” we

¹²³ The new cultural history refers to the “cultural turn” in historical research, which is different from the traditional cultural history.

¹²⁴ Lu Chien-lung, “Reading Guidance I: A Narrow-Minded Person vs. Other People’s Advice”, pp. ix-x, edited by Chen Chien-shou, trans. by Dai Lijuan, Xie Bohui, etc., *The Birth of Historians*, Shih-Ying Publisher (Taipei), 2008.

would only gain an understanding of different events. Although we also gain knowledge, it belongs to that of lowest value in the three kinds of knowledge in historical study. Historians expend effort in accumulating huge amounts of impermanent history books, but can only gain the knowledge of lowest value and wait to be forgotten in history when the fashion changes. What a pity to waste this human life which is hard to get! Why don't historians expend the same effort to personally realize the true reality of the dharma-realm with positivism, to verify the rule of "grand unification" as well as the real existence of its root origin, and to gain the permanently unchanging knowledge of the dharma-realm? Isn't that a wise practice that allows one to comfortably and effectively **sift gold from sand** without wasting one's life?

Historians do not know that the wisdom they should seek has three layers of meaning. They even falsely believe that wisdom comes from the operations of power, because the past Eastern dynasties controlled people's thoughts with royal power and "dismissed the hundred schools and revered only Confucianism," or because of the historical phenomenon that the Western Roman Curia controlled science with authority and supported "geocentrism." For instance, Huang Chin-shing describes the postmodernist view as follows:

Michel Foucault further explains: Truth is not outside power either, unlike humanistic fantasies about truth, which comes from free spirits, solitary contemplation, or special talent. Truth is a thing of this world; by virtue of multiple forms of constraint, it is linked to the operations of power. Each society has its "régime of truth," its general politics of truth: that is the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth, the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true."¹²⁵

Foucault (Michel Foucault, 1926-1984) falsely believes that the knowledge which is temporarily regarded as "truth" in history is the real "truth," and therefore he advocates that "**truth is not outside the power either.**" In fact, the ultimate "truth"—the permanent existence of the eighth *vijnana* Tathagatagarbha entity—is the power outside the human strength; it has the strong power that is beyond human strength and pervades the universe and life. **Unlike humanistic fantasies, nor coming from free spirits, solitary contemplation, or special talent,** this strong, pervasive, and grandly unified power can be verified, without falling into imagination, by different people with **positivism**. The second-level truth does not come from power either, but comes from the unchangeable facts in the phenomenal world; it is commonly recognized without any doubt by all the mundane wise. Anyone who violates the mundane truth commonly recognized by the

¹²⁵ Huang Chin-shing, *Postmodernism and Historical Research*, San Min Book Co. (Taipei), 2006, p. 37.

mundane wise has to bear the due historical responsibility for his false speech. Those historians who emphasize the “**régime of truth**” seek only the temporary “**régime**” but not the eternal “**truth**”; they will be weeded out eventually in history and have to bear their due historical responsibility after death. Hence, postmodernist historians only know about the mundane power, but unaware of their corresponding historical responsibility of descending into the evil paths in their future lives, which is unchangeable forever. How could their historical studies be called knowledge? Their historical studies focus on the temporary power and will be weeded out eventually; how could their historical studies have any power?

To reflect on the past in the light of the present, where have all those who, like Sima Qian, aspire to “**explore the boundaries of nature and humankind, understand thoroughly the changes from past to present, and establish a school of thought**” gone? Even Sima Qian could not correctly know what the historian should do. No wonder scholars nowadays know only about seeking the impermanent changes of thoughts, customs, culture, etc., but unaware that they should pursue the unchanging rule and its root origin. Speaking of the causality law, there must be a cause prior to its effect in terms of temporal sequence, like the proverb “Plant pears for your heirs,” which is a definite phenomenon of the mundane causality law. Because Sima Qian could not correctly know the border of Three Realms or the complex causal relationships of sentient beings’ karmic retributions through past, present, and future lifetimes, how could he “**explore the boundaries of nature and humankind**”? If one seeks only to understand thoroughly the changes from past to present, yet unaware of pursuing the unchanging rule and its root origin among all the changes from past to present, one’s wish to “**understand thoroughly the changes from past to present**” is nothing but fantasy or conjecture. The historian then seeks to “**establish a school of thought**,” but how would this new school be different from the six schools criticized by Sima Qian? In contrast to the historian’s aspirations claimed by Sima Qian, the true historian states: **to explore the boundaries of fetters and liberation, understand thoroughly the changes as well as the unchanged, and establish the meaning of grand unification instead of a school of thought.**

Historians of all times are always ignorant about the scope of the historian, nor are people aware that they are historians and therefore ignore historical study; this is a blind spot that makes it difficult for historical study to advance. Historians know nothing about the historical right or the due historical responsibility; this is a major reason why historical study is trapped in great disorder. Unaware of the difference between true and false historians, one has no idea what an example to historians is, and how could one follow the example? Hopefully, all historians can be cautious about executing the historical right so that they can avoid the historical responsibility of falling into the three evil paths; also, all historians can verify the highest knowledge of historical study and fully attain the liberation wisdom and the wisdom of ultimate reality to become true historians.

Lastly, this article has reached the following conclusions:

1. The right of the historian to interpret parts of facts selected from varied facts to show their natures of knowledge and value is called historical right. The historical right is the common characteristic of the historian.
2. Historical right and governing power are different. The power of the Chinese historical officer to assist in governing a country is not the characteristic of the historian. Only through the permission granted by the emperor can the Chinese historical officer assist in the governing of a country, which is not the historical right.
3. Obtaining the official historical data and resources is not the true historical right of the historian. Historians' expectation that the ruling class can help them to obtain statistics, historical data, documents, and research grant is contradictory to the historical right of historians to "write about history independently."
4. The basic principle for historians to execute the historical right is precisely following through the seven noble precepts, by which they are qualified as **wise historians** who well fulfill the historical responsibility. For those who cannot follow through the seven noble precepts to well fulfill the historical responsibility, they belong to **unwise historians**.
5. "To defend the feudal rule" and "to defend the Confucian ethical code" by distorting facts (such as cover-ups for the king and relatives) are often contradictory and incompatible with historical facts.
6. The historical responsibility is not given to a historian by anyone. Instead, it is the causality rule of "**grand unification**" truly existing in the dharma-realm, which gives historians the historical responsibility that they must bear while executing their historical right. No one can escape from the causality law.
7. There are three layers of meaning for the historical responsibility: (1) **the minor precepts of conduct**, including the seven noble precepts and other precepts of conduct, (2) the causality rule of grand unification, and (3) the root origin of the causality rule. Among them, the existence of the root origin of the causality rule is at the highest level, the causality rule of grand unification the second lower, and the minor precepts of conduct the lowest.
8. The journalist is also the historian and should be included in the expanded scope of the historian. The media workers are also historians, and this is the further expansion of the scope of the historian. All people are historians, which is the more expanded scope of the historian. All sentient beings of the ten dharma-realms are historians, and this is the complete scope of the historian.

9. The false historians, who are unwise and still in the cycle of births and deaths, state that “those who are not of our clan must be not of the same mind as us.” Sound-hearers and solitary realizers, who are **liberated historians** with liberation wisdom, state that “for those who are not of our clan, their minds are equal to ours; all are arising and ceasing.” All Buddhas and bodhisattvas, who are **truly wise historians** with the wisdom of ultimate reality, state that “for those who are not of my clan, their minds are equal to ours; all are neither arising nor ceasing.” Liberated historians and truly wise historians are the **true historians**.
10. “**To explore the boundaries of nature and humankind, understand thoroughly the changes from past to present, and establish a school of thought**” are the things mistakenly believed by false historians. In contrast, “**to explore the boundaries of fetters and liberation, understand thoroughly the changes as well as the unchanged, and establish the meaning of grand unification instead of a school of thought**” are the things that true historians should do.