China is not just a country; it is a subcontinent comparable in size to Europe, surrounded by high mountains in the west and the south, a desert in the north, and the Pacific Ocean in the east. Within today's China proper, however, there is little impassable terrain separating one part from another. Ever since Neolithic days, which, generally speaking, lasted until the end of the third millennium B.C., cultural exchanges among regions had resulted in noticeable Chinese characteristics across all of China, although a number of local archaeological traditions were still distributed in major regions, such as the Yellow River Valley, the Yangtze Valley, the coastal region, and the high plateau loess of the Manchurian wooded land. The Chinese geographic conditions allowed the emergence of both a universal state and a multistate system, alternating or even combining at different levels. The state of Shang in the late second millennium B.C. evolved politically from that of a chieftain leadership into a prototypical monarchy. The Shang system was a vague pattern of zoning that consisted of the royal domain, subordinate tributaries, and foreign countries.

Such a "zoning system" was later institutionalized in the Chou kingdom, which followed the Shang and dominated the core region of what was then China, that is, the Central Plain in the Yellow River middle valley. The name of the Central Kingdom therefore became a synonym for China. The Chou feudal network was organized in a hierarchy of vassal states that originated from the Chou garrisons commanded by Chou princes. The political net-work of power delegation was deliberately made identical with a network of kinship by which the rulers of the Chou states, including the king and the rulers of the vassal states, were all Chou scions. The rulers of other satellite states who were drawn into the orbit of the Chou kingdom were made relatives of the Chou through complicated patterns of matrimony at various levels of the Chou state's hierarchy. Thus, in the Chou period China was shaped into a nation, a nation of Hua-Hsia.

The Chou structure also constituted a hierarchy of zoning, just as its Shang predecessor. The Chou royal domain was the center, surrounded by the Chou vassal states and then the non-Chou states scattered along less favorable peripheries, beyond which were the "barbarians," whom the Chou addressed with derogatory titles. Beyond the barbarians were people whom the Chou regarded as insignificant and, therefore, nearly nonexistent. The tien-hsia or the world under heaven, was a world under the Chou order, a "civilized" world. An idealized model is pictured by ancient scholars as a pattern of concentric squares. The center is the royal domain directly managed by the royal court. Surrounding the central zone are several other zones—the Yu-Kung said there were five, while in the Chou-li, it is said, there were nine. Vassal states located in each zone, it is also said, maintained distinctive relationships with the center. The closer these states were to the center, the more obligations of submission were expected. States of the inner zones served as garrisons to guard the royal domain. The ones in intermediate zones were the buffers between China and the peripheries. The farthest peripheries were zones that were only remotely related to China and were thus regarded as foreign and even barbarian. Hence, the interstate relationships in ancient China were visualized as hierarchically differentiated ones within a universal state. From the Chinese point of view, the internal and the external zones ought to have had a clear demarcation; yet, in a relative sense, the people in the external zones were considered to be a part of the internal
zones if they were to become culturally assimilated or politically incorporated.\(^5\)

**The Mandate of Heaven**

This system of a universal state was the embodiment of the political ethics of the "Mandate of Heaven." From the time the Chou dynasty was being founded, the Chou leaders, for the sake of establishing legitimate succession to replace the culturally superior Shang state, had claimed that the Heavenly God made a judgment upon the conduct of state rulers and shifted the Heavenly Mandate from the Shang to the Chou. The moral implication of receiving the endowment of the Heavenly Mandate based on the verdict of God is indeed an extremely crucial break from that of the old tribal deities who were worshipped by various nations in pre-Chou days. The Chou Heavenly God and his associates were the ones who transcended the old function as protectors to adopt the role of a judging god. The Chou tien-hsia was to be governed with a mandate that could also be taken away if the Chou ruling house failed to fulfill its mission as recipient of the Heavenly Mandate. The universal state of Chou, then, was the embodiment of an ethical expectation.

In poems as well as in history, the Chou princes were reminded repeatedly that the Heavenly Mandate never was given permanently to any incumbent ruling group and that the God of Heaven would manifest his will explicitly through the wishes and conduct of the ordinary people, who reflected this judgment. In other words, the Mandate of Heaven was actually reflected in the mandate of the people, who, of course, were the people of the Chou tien-hsia, excluding the barbarians and foreigners. This basic assumption of judgment, especially judgment by the people, remained throughout Chinese history fundamental to its political ethics.\(^6\)

The Chou system, which started in the last decade of the thirteenth century B.C., collapsed in the eighth century B.C. Although the Chou royal court nominally survived about five more centuries, China was virtually divided into a score of contending entities, most of which descended from the former Chou vassalages, while some came from non-Chou states. This period of several competing states, known in history as the Spring and Autumn period, was followed by the Warring States period, in which seven major states strove to unify China. A multistate system thus replaced the Chou universal order until one of these competitors, the state of Ch'in, defeated the other states to reunite China in 221 B.C. Many of the concepts that developed in the modern international community, such as the balance of power, diplomatic manipulation, collective security, and interstate conferences and treaties, also developed in China during the ancient Spring and Autumn period.\(^7\) Nevertheless, the shadow of the Chou universal state survived the advent of the Chinese multistate system, manifesting itself in the distinction that persisted between the Chinese tien-hsia and the foreigners in the peripheries of China, and in the belief that the primary concern of any ruling house should be the welfare of its subjects because of the demand of the Mandate of Heaven.

Those states of the former Chou tien-hsia, even though they were contenders among equals, generally regarded themselves as members of a big "family," since their ruling houses were originally related by blood or matrimony. Therefore, state affairs were treated in a familial manner. Interstate treaties normally included sentences regarding family business—such as the prohibition against shifting from one heir apparent to another or allowing concubines to usurp the position of the principal wife—together with concerns over boundaries, mutual aid in times of need, water rights, and tariff courtesies. The state rulers, similar to the European royal houses, addressed each other as cousins, brothers, uncles, and nephews. However, the order of seniority among relatives was even more carefully and rigidly observed, since in the Chou feudal system, which combined with the kinship structure, ranking of orders indeed carried out the function of ranking of authorities.\(^8\)
During the Spring and Autumn period, the Chou king mainly played a nominal role in interstate affairs. An overlordship, titled a 
Pa, usually the strongest state among the equals, organized the Chou states into an alliance with the pretext of defending the
Chinese from the non-Chou powers, which were called barbarians
and among which the most noticeable were the southern states of
Chu and Wu. Ironically, after centuries of confrontation, cultural
influences and economic exchanges finally incorporated these bar-
barians into the world of Chou China. By the Warring States
period these states, together with those of the Central Plain,
formed a larger Chinese world in which each state struggled to
reach supremacy and become master of an even larger unified
China. Among themselves, however, they still regarded the peo-

dles in peripheries as barbarians. The zoning structures presented
previously were expandable in that the concept of the Central
Kingdom actually experienced expansions during the Spring and
Autumn and Warring States periods. 9

Interstate agreement was not just based on trust by the commu-
nal spirit of fellow aristocrats but also was guaranteed by oaths
sworn in the name of the Heavenly God, other deities of nature
such as mountains and rivers, and the ancestors of the participants.
The rituals of such a state cult had to be conducted with utmost
sincerity and seriousness. 10 Mutual trust derived from common
faith, therefore, was essential for holding the interstate relations-
ships in functional order. This common faith was much like a
moral expectation, although a systematic construction of an ethical
system was yet to come.

Therefore, at the dawning of civilization in China, there existed
the notions that a judging God of Heaven directed his mandate
to the rulers, that the people were the ones who reflected the
will of this God, that the Chinese states belonged to a common
community of the Chou order in which the rulers of individual
states were related as cousins, and that trust founded upon faith
was essential in maintaining such an order. Although these notions
did not yet comprise an ethical system, they formed the basic
materials that Confucius would later use to lay the cornerstone
for the construction of such a system.

The Foundations of Confucianism

Confucius (551–479 B.C.) lived during the Spring and Autumn
period. As a descendent of a declining aristocratic household,
Confucius was a marginal personality whose heritage came from
both aristocrats and commoners. Though most commonly hailed
as the first teacher in China, he should also be given the credit
for having heuristically reinterpreted the values in the code of
conduct of the old aristocracy and having conscientiously universal-
ized these values into an ethical system.

The foundation of Confucian ethics is the concept of jen, which
is variously translated as “love” or “benevolence” or “humanism.”
None of these translations, however, conveys the full connotation
of jen. The English word “love” is too “outer-oriented” to define
jen, which is basically a virtue, in the sense of total inner excel-

ence. 11 The word jen, before the Confucian definition, had ap-
peared as a descriptive term to mean “true manly beauties,” or
“perfect virtue.” 12 Thus, the etymological connections may lead
to a concept of jen as an essence of the human being that in a
societal setting is manifest as care for others. Nevertheless, it is
an inner-based, even inner-endowed virtue, instead of a visible
behavior or an aspect of an interpersonal relationship. Jen is not
necessarily related to a consequence; rather, it is an intrinsic
characteristic in which its manifested behavior or norm of behavior
is only secondary. That concept which is related to consequences
is the Confucian li, closely related to jen. The distinction between
jen and li, interestingly, is parallel to that between the Greek
“ethics” and the Latin “moral,” as Terry Nardin has correctly
pointed out. 13

As Confucius repeatedly argued in the Analects, jen should be
the guiding force of any political or social choice or decision.
Confucius commended the leader Kuan Chung for having fulfilled
the principle of "jen" when he made the state of Ch'i the first overlordship in the Spring and Autumn period, effectively organizing the Chinese states into an alliance that prevented warring among its members. Confucius argued that because of Kuan Chung's success in unifying the Chinese states, the Chinese world was saved from the intrusions of the barbarians and thus the Chinese way of life was preserved. Therefore, Chinese society was culturally redefined as a civilization instead of a political system. It should be noted, however, that Confucius did not intend to reserve his high principle of ethics for the Chinese world only. The same standards of behavior, such as sincerity and honesty, should be observed even in a foreign country as well.

In a time of drastic social changes, Confucius preferred that certain social norms be maintained so there would be at least some order and stability. Thus he insisted that the titles of the power holders and their legitimate functions ought to match. A ruler, for example, should be both a legitimate ruler and an actual ruler. A minister, meanwhile, should obey an order issued by the ruler to discharge the mission related to his office. In one case when a usurper had murdered the ruler of the state of Ch'i, Confucius seriously advised his own ruler, the Duke of Lu, to take punitive actions against the Ch'i strongman even though the state of Lu was much weaker than Ch'i. His proposal was not adopted. Confucius nevertheless demonstrated that Lu, or any other state, had moral obligations to uphold certain ethical principles; violation of the sovereignty of another state, in this case, was regarded as a lesser consideration.

Confucian ethical values on interstate affairs are well reflected in the critical historical works produced in the Confucian era. Historical events were judged in accordance with criteria set forth in the Confucian ethics, which were largely an idealized reconstruction of the Chou order. Among the criteria used by the scholars were three categories relating to interstate affairs: the respect for the superior status of the Chou royal house, the observance of the legitimacy of authorities at different levels and of their mutual relationship, and the distinction between Chinese and foreigners.

The first category, respect for the Chou royal house, was viewed as confirmation of a universal order under the Chou leadership. The supreme position of the Chou was not to be challenged. This, of course, was an idealized order, posed as a condemnation of any division of the Chou China by former vassal states. Any interstate meeting that was nominally presided over by a royal representative was hailed as legitimate, while those that were not attended by a royal representative were regarded as illegal. The action of the overlords (Pa) Duke Huan of Ch'i and Duke Wen of Chin, both of whom had rallied all the Chinese states to form an alliance in order to reestablish the Chou order, received highest praise from the Confucian scholars as defenders of the Chou system. In theory, the Chou order was not to be challenged and no exceptions were to be found within the realm of China. Therefore, even the calendar, in Confucian scholars' opinion, was to be decided and issued by the royal court on behalf of the entire world of China.

The second criterion, the existence of a hierarchical differentiation within the Chou system, held that the vassal states should be subordinate to the royal house. Likewise, the roles of individuals within the feudal hierarchy should be coherent with their status. Deviation from this principle was often criticized. Usurpation of power received harsh disapproval. On the other hand, if a ruler became tyrannical, armed forces of other states who invaded to depose the unpopular ruler were given praise for having served a just cause.

In the third criterion—the distinction between Chinese and foreigners—culture was posited as the defining standard, rather than race. Assimilation of foreigners by the Chinese was approved while the opposite was not. Interestingly, large and powerful states, such as Chu in the south, that were not only foreign but also challengers of the Chou world were regarded as barbarians.
in the Spring and Autumn period, while in every aspect thorough assimilation had gradually brought them into the Chinese world as full-fledged members of the interstate community in the Warring States period. The northern peoples, most of whom were nomads and pastoralists, remained barbarians throughout ancient Chinese history and would never be absorbed into the Chinese system. Nevertheless, Confucius did not rule out the possibility that a foreigner could be "civilized" and insisted that a number of ethical standards should prevail also in foreign lands. China should serve as a model for barbarians to civilize themselves. The Confucian scholars in their comments on history, therefore, condemned foreign intrusion into the Chinese world. Meanwhile, they considered it natural that the Chinese way of life and the sovereignty of the Chinese state need not be extended into foreign land unless the foreigners voluntarily accepted Chinese culture.31

These three principles remained in the Chinese history of the imperial dynasties as important guides, to be used by the Chinese to design their foreign policies.

Justice and the State

Mencius (ca. 370–296 B.C.), who also lived during the Warring States period, extended Confucianism in several aspects. One of his significant contributions was the integration of the concept of *i* with Confucian *jen* to create a new fundamental notion of the Confucian system. Probably taking a hint from Mencius’s *i*, Mencius repeatedly redefined *i* as an innate virtue, with which a human being is born. Mencius argued that *jen* and *i* were both aspects of human nature. However, his *i* did stand as a rather others-oriented virtue, in contrast to a self-oriented virtue. Although he denied that he held *i* as different from *jen*, he related *jen* to a mentality of general compassion, and *i* to a consciousness of shame.31

Although this interpretation deviated considerably from that of Motzu’s thought, Mencius still could not erase the connotation of the social context of *i*.34 It should be noted, however, that Mencius gave *i* a content of social norm that served as a guide for human behavior because he interpreted it as analogous to a *lu* (road and path). To love one’s own parents, he argued, is *jen*; to pay respect to an elder is *i*.35 It becomes obvious that the former is spontaneous behavior while the latter results from socialization. Therefore, *i* probably should be regarded as social justice, rather than as righteousness.

To Mencius, state and interstate affairs were to be judged in terms not only of *jen* but, more often, of *i*, justice. Justice should be given even more precious weight than one’s own life, if one is compelled to make a choice between them.36 A sense of compassion (*jen*) and a sense of shame (*i*), according to Mencius, were innate in human nature and required conscientious nurturing. People often lost these natural characteristics and became vulnerable to the corrupting influence of desire and lust because they did not consciously attempt to preserve them.37

*Jen* and *i* appear to have been personal ethical concerns. Mencius, however, used these two ethical virtues as criteria to judge politics. The idealized king should be a sage and the idealized utopia was to be a state, the goal of which was realization by practice of these principal virtues. A state at least should give its
who served the government in order to accomplish such goals were, in Mencius’s opinion, spoilers and blighters who should be punished rather than rewarded.  

Throughout Mencius’s arguments, public and private ethics, and the social and personal aspects of a moral life, were not differentiated. Therefore, a virtuous personality should be the fundamental requirement expected from capable leadership. Thus, a good character and good capabilities were closely related. This deontological proposition of Mencius left a long-lasting impact on Chinese political theories.

The entire Confucian system of ethics as refined and extended by Mencius is crystallized in The Great Learning, one of the four classics of the Confucian tradition. The authorship of The Great Learning is generally attributed to the grandson of Confucius, though this is not certain. Essentially, The Great Learning appears to have been a guidebook for Confucian students to appreciate gradually the connections between various items of virtues. The primary objects of self-cultivation consist of a triad, i.e., bringing the human virtues back to their original purity, loving the people, and maintaining a conduct that is perfectly good. The first and the third objects are ostensibly repetitions of the same issue. The first, however, may be what an individual may achieve alone, while the third goal is an elevation of personal virtue to the highest level of collective virtue by passing on to others the achievements of living a personally virtuous life.

In The Great Learning, therefore, an individual is expected to move consciously and conscientiously step-by-step toward a perfect tien-hsia of tranquility and happiness. These steps are the acquisition of discernible knowledge, the development of intellectual sincerity, the rectification of emotion and sentiment, and, finally, the cultivation of a balanced personality. Once such self-cultivation is accomplished, one should serve as an example in the kinship group so that the kinsmen may be all brought to moral accomplishment. Since a state is a congregation of kinship groups,
revealing an anticipation of a universal order to arise at some later

time. The unification of China by the end of the Warring States

period indeed fulfilled the expectation of the emergence of such

a universal order. From then on, the Chinese often believed that

the tien-hsia, with China as its center, was universal and that not

only state boundaries within China would appear meaningless but

there would also be no clear-cut boundaries throughout the entire

tien-hsia. Instead, there would be only a gradually fading relation-

ship between the center and the peripheries as distances from the

center increased—again, a spatially and culturally arranged

continuity. A hierarchy of differentiated relationships was thus the

trademark of this sinocentric interstate order.

The Sinocentric Hierarchy

The very first serious test of the sinocentric concept was the

relationship between China and Hsi'ung-nu during the Han dynasty

(206 B.C.—A.D. 220). Just as China was being unified in the third

century B.C., in northern Asia the nomadic Hsi'ung-nu empire

arose on the vast stretches of the steppe lands. The Hsi'ung-nu

pulled in various other tribes from along the northern border of

China to form a confederation that constituted a serious challenge

to Chinese supremacy in East Asia. A complex of fortifications

was built by China to fend off the nomadic intruders, the famed

system known as the Great Wall. Ever since the founding of the

Han dynasty, China and the Hsi'ung-nu seesawed back and forth

along this line, which demarcated the separation between the

farming and the nomadic cultures. After the first defeat suffered

by China in the reign of the Han founding emperor, the Han court

established a policy of pacification by sending a Chinese girl, who

some say was an imperial princess, to marry the Great Shangyu,

the Hsi'ung-nu emperor. It was wished that a matrimonial bond

between these two competing powers would reduce the tensions

that might lead to conflict. A Chinese courtier who advised
adopting such a policy said, "A son-in-law shall not assault the father-in-law." In addition, trade along the borders was routinely conducted to benefit both sides. In Emperor Wu's reign (140–87 B.C.), however, China launched a series of successful attacks along the north, and war continued for years.

During the next imperial reign, in 81 B.C., there was a debate on the issue of the state monopoly on the production and sale of salt and iron for the sake of increasing revenues to fund the costly Hsi'ung-nu wars. The hawkish side, mainly the minister of finance and his colleagues, argued that the universal empire of Han should maintain the role of common master of all the peoples in the tien-hsia; that the unruly Hsi'ung-nu should be subjugated in order to achieve peace throughout China; that exchanges of valuable things between China and foreign countries should be appreciated as an influx of wealth to the central land; and that effective border defense with possible punitive expeditions against the Hsi'ung-nu should be taken as the best guarantee for peace and prosperity in and around the Chinese world. In other words, they argued that a universal state of the tien-hsia should leave no one out of its system. Speculation on the existence of a larger world order, as proposed by Tsou Yen, of which China made up thus far one-ninth, was cited by the minister as the reason that expansion of the contemporary world would be necessary to reach the ultimate universal world of the entire true tien-hsia. It should be noted that the argument presented by the minister was built upon the assumption that a universal order would be reached by pushing to the limits of the tien-hsia and that, therefore, the peripheries of the current world order had to be absorbed into its center.

On the other side of the debate, the Confucian scholars argued that peace was once preserved along the border by having matrimonial ties between Chinese and the Hsi'ung-nu leaders; that the Chinese world was self-sufficient and did not need the useless, luxurious items being imported; that there ought to be an order of priorities among public policies; that concerns for the livelihoods of the Chinese should surpass any other considerations; that the well-being of the people in China or near to China should outweigh that of distant peoples; and, finally, that the best policy to convince those from afar to willingly subordinate to China would be the fulfillment of the government obligation to provide the Chinese people with good livelihoods. The dovish position, therefore, represented Confucian concepts of good government and the establishment of a universal order by making internal peace and prosperity a model that would attract foreigners to join and participate.\(^4\)

The arguments presented by both sides were more polemical than constructive. Nevertheless, they shared one common theme, namely, that there had been or ought to be a universal state with China as its center. Although the Confucian scholars opposed having limited resources wasted on warfare, their emphasis on the improvement first of the governance of central China proved that they did not rule out an expansion of the Chinese order. Confucian scholars differed most with their opponents in their view that the universalized order of the Chinese world should be a cultural order and that the only way to accommodate an expansion should be by means of an outward radiation of cultural influences. A very Confucian mentality, indeed.

Another case to illustrate the long-lasting impact of ancient Confucian ethics on international politics is the debate that occurred over the relationship between the Northern Sung China (A.D. 960–1127) and the Khitan-Liao (A.D. 916–1125). Ever since the early middle ages, namely the Sui (A.D. 581–618) and T'ang (A.D. 618–907) periods, China had been forced to face the reality of several strong neighbors. They were the newly converted Islamic nations in central Asia, such as the Tu-chueh and the Uighurs, and the powerful Tibetan empire, which received Indian cultural influence via the spread of Buddhism.\(^5\) For relations with the latter, there existed a bilateral treaty to settle border disputes and maintain the channels of communication—the first treaty on truly equal terms between China and a neighbor.\(^6\) China had entered
an international community in which it could no longer take for
granted its dominant position.

The founding emperor of the Sung dynasty reunited China
after the prolonged period of civil wars and disunion known as
the Five Dynasties (A.D. 907–979), when several contending states
competed for the claim of the imperial court. The conditions
during the Five Dynasties resembled those of the Spring and
Autumn and Warring States periods. It is no surprise, therefore,
that many of the interstate relationships were shaped by copying
the patterns set in ancient China, essentially creating another
period of a multistate system in Chinese history.44

As China became reunited, the internal multistate system
ceased to prevail. Nevertheless, when Sung China looked beyond
its borders, it saw that it was only one state among several in
East Asia. In the west, right on the border of the western provinces,
arose the Tangut kingdom. In the southwest, a small kingdom
ruled much of the mountainous regions west of the upper stream
of the Yangtze River. To the north, a powerful kingdom of nomadic
pastoralists, called the Khitan, had extended its stretch of steppe
homeland to occupy a good part of the northern territory of
China. Beyond the Khitan, Korea rose as a power in the Far East
and an important balancing factor between China and its northern
neighbors.45 Once in such a new multistate system, China had to
reconsider its sinocentric mentality, formed in ancient China and
reinforced in the Han period.

The Khitan was an especially significant partner with which
the Sung had to deal. Originating in the Manchurian woods, the
people of this formerly pastoral economy adapted well to the
steppes and developed a formidable cavalry. Taking advantage of
Chinese internal disturbances during the Five Dynasties, the Khitan
played the Chinese states off against each other in order to win
the concession of a sizable area along the present Hopei and
Shansi provinces in the north. The process of cultural advancement
proceeded in the Khitan from the combination of two influences:
that of the steppeland culture and that of the Chinese who had
remained when the Khitan took over. Thus, in the Sung court,
the advisers noted well the fact that the Khitan had in its territory
Chinese human resources, a knowledge of how to organize a
Chinese civil service, and, at the same time, a nomad-based military
advantage. These advisers reminded the court that China should
not consider the Khitan to be merely another barbarian along
the northern peripheries.46 The Sung strategists suggested three
approaches to dealing with the Khitan. The first and most preferred
policy was to have an effective defense along the border provinces.
The key words used were: “forcefully fending the intruders away;
yet no more pursuance as they withdraw.” The second-best strategy
was to negotiate for peace by sending generous gifts annually and
marrying imperial princesses to the Khitan chieftains. The third
and least desired option was to launch large-scale campaigns to
penetrate the enemy’s territory.47 Obviously, because the Sung
people fully realized the disparity of military strength between
China and the Khitan, the last option was not used until the very
end of both the Northern Sung and the Khitan dynasties in 1124.

For a long period, there was no formal diplomatic relationship
between China and the Khitan, although trade was continuously
carried out and only sporadic conflicts interrupted a de facto truce.
In 1004, the Khitan launched a massive invasion. After a major
confrontation, a stalemate was reached and a treaty signed in that
same year. The treaty established a prolonged period of general
peace that lasted for more than 150 years, broken only occasionally
by minor confrontations. Interestingly, the wording of the treaty
closely resembled that used in the treaties of the Spring and Autumn
period, including sentences regarding such things as boundaries and
mutual respect, and ending with an oath invoking the deities and
spirits of ancestors to guarantee observance of the obligations.
Meanwhile, China promised to give to the Khitan two hundred
thousand pieces of silk and one hundred thousand teals of silver.
What was not included in the official treaty was the establishment
of a sworn brotherhood between the two emperors whereby the Sung emperor was considered an elder brother and the Khitan emperor a younger (the Khitan acknowledged the seniority of the Sung emperor due to consideration of the actual age difference between these two rulers at the time the treaty was signed). It should be noted that such a brotherhood was not merely court protocol. In later correspondence and other occasions of contact the terms of an elder-younger brother relationship and an uncle-nephew or aunt-nephew relationship were carefully and explicitly taken into consideration in order to regulate privileges and obligations as would exist between true kinsmen.48

In short, one would expect the Sung-Khitan relationship to have been a deviation from the sinocentric mentality. But by maintaining, on the one hand, a rather fraternal structure, Sung China still argued that the non-Chinese sector of the international order was to stay out of the universal Chinese state because of its cultural distance from central China, while on the other hand, in adopting the typical Chinese kinship terminology, it injected an all-Chinese *gemeinschaft* spirit into the international relationship—the fusion of private and public ethics as discussed previously.

In later dynasties, especially the periods of the Ming (A.D. 1368–1644) and the Ch’ing (A.D. 1644–1911), a tributary system that included trading and the exchanging of gifts brought numerous smaller satellite states of East Asia into the orbit of the Chinese empire.49 The pretext for developing such a tributary system, nevertheless, was to fulfill the concentric sinocentric patterns of zoning as raised in this paper. It should be noted that although there were economic transactions prevalent in the tributary system, China was seldom on the gainful side because of costly expenses associated with such practices. Economic considerations were secondary to the goal of confirming Chinese supremacy.50 The Ming and Ch’ing dynasties rarely dispatched troops into the tributary states and in even fewer cases annexed their territories.

Occasionally, China intervened militarily in disputes between tributary states, or in the domestic affairs of a certain tributary state on issues such as succession to the throne by an illegitimate son.51 On the whole, however, China seemed content in the role of supervisor of an order of *Pax Sinica*, which was always described in terms of an ancient universal state of the Chinese empire and around which were zones of other lesser states, each of whom held a relationship with China differentiated according to its history and its cultural and spatial distance from China. Beyond the world of Chinese order were those states and those peoples who need not belong to the sinocentric order. They were to be left outside Chinese influence, as was China to be left alone by these distant nations, or barbarians.

Sinocentrism actually survived to the end of imperial China.52 During the Opium War, the Chinese still tried to convince the British that China was self-sufficient to such a degree that trade with outsiders was totally unnecessary. When the British insisted on entering Canton City, the Chinese officials were puzzled as to why the foreigners who belonged to another world would want to stay in China. Even as the war flared up, Chinese scholars still insisted that a self-examination on the moral governance of Confucian ethics should be more important than preparation for combat strategy. All this survived until China was dragged into a new world by a British gunboat, and a new global multistate system developed in which Confucian deontological ethics on state and international affairs were set aside to allow China to shield itself from the cannonball shot from the gunboat.

NOTES

2. Ibid., 24–27.
3. Ibid., 151–53.
10. Ibid., 83–86.
12. Ibid., 75.
15. Ibid., XIII: 19; XV, 5.
16. Ibid., 22.
17. Confucius himself was considered the author of a chronicle titled “The Spring and Autumn,” from which the historical period receives its name. The authorship of this chronicle remains disputed. Nevertheless, two commentaries, known as the “Kung-yang” and the “Ku-liang,” were composed by Confucian scholars.
19. Ibid., 389ff.
20. Ibid., 404ff, esp. 407.
26. Ibid., VI: i, 10.
27. Ibid., VI: i, 8.
28. Ibid., I: ii, 5.
29. Ibid., I: i, 4.
30. Ibid., I: i, 5–6; II: i, 2.
31. Ibid., I: ii, 2.
32. Ibid., VII: ii, 2.
33. Ibid., I: ii, 6; I: ii, 8; V: ii, 9.
34. Ibid., IV: i, 14; VI: ii, 9.
37. Ibid., chaps. 6–10.
39. Ibid., IV: ii, 1.
40. Ibid., IV: i, 5.
41. For arguments of both sides, see Yen-T‘ieh-Lun (The discourses on salt and iron), Chungua gsu-pu-pei-yao edition (Taipei, 1934), passim.
46. Ibid., 46–48.
49. Fairbank, The Chinese World Order, 63–89.
50. Ibid., 90–111.
51. Ibid., 165–79.
52. Ibid., 1–4.