

**He** 和 (諧) (harmony/harmonious; peace; concord): The notion of *he* is one of the central ideas of the Chinese philosophical tradition, which both embodies the ancient Chinese thinkers' (descriptive) understanding of the fundamental structure of the universe (including the human society) and delivers their (prescriptive) expectation for the ideal situation of the human society (harmonious brotherhood). This idea is intrinsically related to the other two basic ideas of the Chinese tradition: one is the *yin-yang* way of thinking as suggested in the *Yi-Jing*; the other is the classical thesis of *tian-ren-he-yi* (the unity of heaven and the human). The idea of *he* denies neither distinctions nor the interaction of contraries but points to their harmonious balance when they are complementary in character, as stressed by the *yin-yang* way of thinking. The thesis of *tian-ren-he-yi* provides the metaphysical foundation of *he* by highlighting the metaphysical unity and unification of heaven and the human. There are two related emphases of the reflective idea of *he*: one is on the harmonious unification between human beings and their natural environment; the other is on the harmonious brotherhood and friendship among all the members of the human society while maintaining the distinctions between individuals. The former is elaborated by Lao Zi in the *Dao-De-Jing* as he highlighted the ultimate unifying power of the *dao* among the human, earth and heaven (see Ch. 25). The latter was well delivered by Confucius in the *Lun-Yü* via such plain but insightful sentences as: "Morally superior persons (*jun-zi*) harmonize while having their distinctions [distinct identities, approaches, etc.]" (13.23), "When *li* 禮 is practiced, harmony is most valuable" (1.12), and "All within the four seas [throughout the world] are brothers" (12.5).

**Literature:** Guo, Qi. "The Formation of the Philosophical Category *He* in Chinese History," in *Bulletin of the Institute of Chinese Literature and Philosophy* 16 (2000), Taipei: Academia Sinica, 451-66. (In Chinese). Li, Chenyang. "The Confucian Ideal of Harmony," *Philosophy East & West* 56:4 (2006), 583-603.