**individual/己(Jǐ)**

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"Ji" (己)is a very old Chinese character. It first appeared in the oracle bone inscriptions. The meaning of this word in its word formation is not very clear; it appears in the *Shang Shu* (the earliest history book in Chinese history, 10th century BC), which refers to one's own, mainly indicates the first-person pronouns. In Chinese philosophy, "Ji" plays an important role, and a series of important concepts are related to it. Because the fundamental framework of Chinese philosophy is not a Platonic dual world (the world of Idea and the sensible world). The focus of Chinese philosophy is not on the Idea, or the Form; it emphasizes that there is only one world, "the Dao is not far away from man," and the Dao starts from this side, from yourself. So "Ji" becomes very important in Chinese philosophy. However, the word "Ji" is completely different from the "individual" in the Western sense, and it seems closer to "self", which means "your own pleasure, action, or your personality". In the Chinese cultural tradition, there is no strong sense of the "individual". When Yan Fu (1854-1921) translated Mill's *On Liberty*, he used "Ji" to translate "individual", and stressed that the individual liberty is dependent on the boundary of liberty of others. In Western language，"Individual" is opposite to the "whole", the "universal", and "society"; and in Chinese, "Ji" is mainly opposite to "men", that is, "other people" or "public".

First of all, "Ji" in Chinese refers to "oneself", and its extended meaning refers to "one's own interests, opinions". The *Shang Shu* has a set phrase " to give up one's opinion and follow that of others ", that is, to lay dawn one's own interests or propositions and be obedient to the interests or opinions of others or the public; Furthermore, in Chinese idiom, there is "to deny oneself for public", which is a kind of moral principle，and "Ji" is opposite to "public", and should be overcame for the public. In the *Analects*, there is a saying that "To subdue one's self and return to propriety is perfect virtue." Here, "Ji" also represents one's own interests or one's own opinions, and only by overcoming them，can propriety be restored. This is what benevolence mean. Why we need to overcome our desires? In Zhu Xi (1130-1200) 's view, " If a person has his own body, it will be burdened by his desires." Of course, natural desires have its legitimacy, but too much desire will slip into selfishness; and "the selfishness of human desire", as opposed to "the public of heaven", need to be controlled or even abandoned. Here "Ji" has a stronger negative connotation.

Secondly, "Ji" does not always have negative meaning, and it also expresses the true-self. Thus, a superior man should pursue his own true-self. Confucius said, "What the superior man seeks is in himself, while what the small man seeks is in others." "Seeking in himself" means that a superior man is true to himself, relies on himself, and perfects his own personality. This is also in line with the Confucian tradition of “sage within and king without”. He who appeals to the opinions of the public, submits to everyone's opinions, and loses his autonomy is called a “village worthy” by Confucians, a type of person Confucians have denounced. Wang Yangming (1472-1529) made a special distinction between "true self" and "bodily self". "True self" embodies the noumenon of the heart and achieves his essence.

Thirdly, through "Ji", Chinese philosophy also emphasizes the autonomy and self-sufficiency of the self. Confucius asked," Is the practice of perfect virtue from a man himself, or is it from others?" and the answer is to rely on yourself. Whether a person is benevolent or not depends on oneself and one's own wishes, and this understanding embodies the autonomy of "self". At the same time, it is said in *The Doctrine of the Mean* that "He rectifies himself, and seeks for nothing from others"; to complete various tasks by correcting oneself, "so that he has no dissatisfactions. He does not murmur against Heaven, nor grumble against men." In this way, we rely on our own self-sufficiency, not resenting the heaven. Mencius compared the pursuit of benevolence to archery: "The man who would be benevolent is like the archer. The archer adjusts himself and then shoots. If he misses, he does not murmur against those who surpass himself. He simply turns round and seeks the cause of his failure in himself." First straighten yourself, and then shoot arrows. If you shot an arrow, but didn't hit the target, you must correct your own mistakes and deficiencies by reflecting on yourself. Your self is the true yardstick.

Fourth, "Ji" is a starting point for moral behaviour. An important concept in Confucianism is "extending one's kindness". Mencius said, the expanding of a ruler’s kindness will suffice for the care and protection of all in the world, and if he does not expand it, he will not be able to protect his wife and children. The concept of "extending one's kindness" is even considered to be the fundamental difference between humans and animals. On this basis, a golden rule of morality has been developed: "Not to do to others as you would not wish done to yourself ". Underlying this is a methodology of Chinese philosophy, "extending one's own feelings to others", that is, not starting from the Idea, from the Form, but from one’s self. Confucianism always emphasizes that "the Dao is not far away from man." Here "Ji" is a starting point, to understand others by knowing oneself, and to establish norms for others' behaviour by your own behaviour. In *The Doctrine of the Mean*, it is said that "When one cultivates to the utmost the principles of his nature, and exercises them on the principle of reciprocity, he is not far from the Dao. What you do not like when done to yourself, do not do to others." Here, doing something according to your own heart is called "loyalty", and doing something by considering the feelings of others is called " reciprocity ". In this sense, "Ji" is a standard for understanding the world. "Ji" has the ability to judge what is universally desirable. Don't apply what you don't want to others. "Ji" is a way of universalization. The procedure is based on the universalizing what you don't want, a mechanism of reciprocity between oneself and others, and this is the basis of moral judgment, a Confucian method.

Fifth, Confucianism emphasizes "cultivation of self", that means "cultivating one's moral character". Confucian philosophy regards morality as a process of self-cultivation, and the important thing is to keep "cultivating oneself." Zi Lu, one of Confucius' disciples, asked how to become a superior man. Confucius said: "The cultivation of himself in reverential carefulness." "And is this all?" said Zi Lu. "He cultivates himself so as to give rest to others." "And is this all?" again asked Zi Lu. Finally, Confucius said, "He cultivates himself so as to give rest to all the people. He cultivates himself so as to give rest to all the people - even Yao and Shun were still falling short of this." In the Chinese philosophical tradition, morality is not a choice of free will, but a process of self-cultivation. The improvement of morality starts with the cultivation of oneself, improving continuously, and eventually reaching the perfect realm of oneself. "Cultivating oneself" is a process of moral improvement, a process of self-improvement, and at the same time, it is also a foundation for other actions. "Give rest to others " is a political goal, that is, to make people peaceful; if there is an example of effective imitation, then it can calm people.

Finally, in the process of "cultivating oneself", "learning" plays an important role. Confucianism emphasizes "learning for oneself", and learning is also a process of "cultivating oneself". In the *Analects*, " Confucius said, "In ancient times, men learned with a view to their own improvement. Nowadays, men learn with a view to the approbation of others.” In other words, the ancient superior men learned for their own cultivation, for improving themselves and for perfecting themselves; and “modern” people's learning was "only to make him to be able to talk", to show off in front of others, or to "be pleasing to others", thus forgetting that the ultimate goal of "learning" is "self-cultivating".

The emergence of "individuals" in Western philosophy has its own logic. In Aristotle's "Categories", "individual" is opposed to "universal", "individual" is the first substance, the foundation of all things, and what it opposes is the Platonic Idea. As far as Christianity is concerned, "individuals" embodies equality before God. "Individuals" are very different from any role they play in a society. They are separated from any social customs and show their universal characteristics. In Protestantism, "individuals" exhibits a new, internal, self-confirming characteristics. In Hegel’s terminology, “individuality” is a notion which combines universality with particularity. It is not a simple “individuality”, and it is a kind of actuality, which contains differences in itself. Hegel even thinks that Jesus is the embodiment of this "individuality". In modern society, individuals represent equal, independent, and free subjects. In political philosophy, the individual is the subject of rights; and in morality, the individual is the subject of autonomy.

Mill's *On Liberty* establishes the rights of the "individual" at the political level, and he talks about the rights of thought/speech, and the liberty of behavior and their boundaries. Yan Fu was not familiar with the concepts related to individualism when he translated *On Liberty*. Although there are two Chinese characters refer to "freedom", there is no specific concept of individual freedom in Chinese. Therefore, when Yan Fu translated this book into Chinese, and it was titled as *The Boundary Between the Right of Publics and the Self.* The "Ji" here follows its traditional meaning in Chinese philosophy and, at the same time, refers to the individual; while the "Public" refers to others and the society.