

From Six Classics, Four Books and Five Classics to Five Classics and Seven Scriptures—the Development of Confucianism and the Transformation of the Core Confucian Classics System

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China is a country that values classics, so that the classic commentary is one of the most important approaches for the development of Chinese philosophy, especially for the development of Confucianism. During the last 2500 years, Confucianism has experienced the evolved two main paradigms, namely Primordial Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism. The mission of the Contemporary New Confucianism today is to formulate the Third Paradigm.

Confucius and Zhu Zi were the main founders of the First and Second Confucian Paradigm respectively. Both of them regarded the establishment of the System of the Core Confucian Classics as their fundamental work. Confucius established the system of the Six Classics as the foundation of the development of Primordial Confucianism. Zhu Zi reformulated the system into the “Four Books and Five Classics” as the foundation of the development of Neo-Confucianism. This new system of Core Confucian Classics reflected Zhuzi’s perspective and the need of his time, but it is not as relevant to the challenges of the Contemporary New Confucianism during our time. Therefore, I would reformulate the Four Books into these Seven Scriptures: the Enlarged Analects (广论语 including those materials belonging to the same category as the Analects 论语类文献), the Zisi Zi (子思子), the Gongsun Ni Zi (公孙尼子), the Ziche Zi (子车子), the Neiye(内业), the Mencius (孟子), and the Xun Zi (荀子). Thus I would reestablish the system of Core Confucian Classics as that of the Five Classics and Seven Scriptures(五经七典). This new system will be the foundation of the development of Contemporary New Confucianism.