

Investigation of ‘Emptiness *ji qi* 虛空即氣’

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As long as we refer to the concept of ‘*qi*’ in a Confucian context, we should not forget the theory of *qi* established by *Zhang Zai* 張載 (1020-1077). *Zhuang Zai* presented a crucial and controversial argument ‘emptiness *ji qi*’ 虛空即氣 to philosophize the tradition of *Yi Jing* 易經 and to clarify the philosophical foundation of *Yi Jing*’s major subject: ‘correlation’ 交感. In the thought of *Yi Jing*, everything is fundamentally related to each other because of the function of *qi*, not only the connection but also the essence of everything in the world is composed by *qi*. An important interpretation of *Zhang Zai*’s *qi* theory was given by *Tang Chun-I* 唐君毅 (1909-1978), who maintained that if we disregard the position of ‘emptiness’ inherent in *qi* we cannot reveal the approach that *Zhang Zai* used to echo the *Yi Jing* primary doctrine ‘correlation’. ‘Emptiness *ji qi*’ is the core of *Zhang Zai*’s *qi* philosophy, and brings about heated controversy in modern philosophical debate. In this paper, I intend to concentrate on the structure of ‘Emptiness *ji qi*’, examining the meaning of ‘*Ji*’, the nuance of ‘Emptiness’, and the relation between emptiness and *qi*. Through this clarification, I propose to take a new position to evaluate the debates brought about by ‘Emptiness *ji qi*’ in a positive way, then to suggest a Confucian interpretation of beingness from the viewpoint of *qi* philosophy.