Can the subaltern speak?

Chapter 5 Case Analysis IV: A Cross-Tradition Examination–Philosophical Concern with Truth in Classical Daoism It is philosophically interesting and signiï¬�cant to explore the philosophical concern with truth from a vantage point that crosses traditions, instead of looking at it exclusively within one single philosophical tradition (i. e., the Western philosophical tradition). Such exploration can not only enhance our understanding of the nature, scope and characteristics of the philosophical concern with truth but also provide alternative perspectives to our treatment of some of the involved issues. Clearly, the current essay has neither space nor capacity to exhaustively examine all the relevant endeavors in various philosophical traditions. I will focus on the case in the Chinese philosophical tradition. This focus has one more reason: it is especially philosophically interesting and signiï¬�cant to explore the case in Chinese philosophy for the following consideration. As I will introduce below, some scholars argue that the dominant concern in classical Chinese philosophy is the dao ( ) concern which is essentially different from the truth concern and thus that there is no signiï¬�cant truth concern in classical Chinese philosophy. In view of this challenge, I focus further on the case of philosophical Daoism whose dao concern is a trademark of the dao concern of classical Chinese philosophy. Arguably, the exploration of the relation between the truth concern and the dao concern of philosophical Daoism will substantially contribute to our understanding of the nature, scope and characteristics of the philosophical concern with truth. As far as the relation of the current chapter to the preceding chapters is concerned, on the one hand, the discussions in the preceding chapters provide necessary theoretical preparation in several ways to be explained.

On the other hand, as I will argue in the subsequent sections, the examination in the current chapter will not only enhance our understanding of, and illustrate, some relevant points made in the preceding chapters, but also contribute to our understanding and treatment of the philosophical concern with truth in some philosophically interesting connections. In the following, in Section 5. 1, I will give a background introduction regarding the truth concern and the dao concern. This will involve referring to some seemingly plausible observations related to evaluating the due status of the truth concern in Chinese philosophy, presenting some relevant challenging questions, and explaining my strategy of treating what is at issue. In Sections 5. 2 and 5. 3, I examine the relation of the dao concern and the truth concern in classical Daoism. In Section 5. 2, B. Mou, Substantive Perspectivism, Synthese Library 344, DOI 10. 1007/978-90-481-2623-1_5, C Springer Science+Business Media B. V. 2009 125 126 5 Case Analysis IV I focus on Lao Zi's case in the Dao-De-Jing, while in Section 5. 3, I focus on Zhuang Zi's case. In Section 5. 4, I explore the situation of the truth-predicate-like phrases in the classical Chinese language in view of those reï¬, ective points previously made regarding the truth concern in philosophical Daoism. With a due background introduction in Section 5. 1, I will further elaborate my strategy at the end of that section. 5. 1 Truth Concern and Dao Concern It seems that the truth concern, generally speaking, and the truth pursuit, specifically speaking, is a dominant concern and pursuit in the Western tradition while the dao concern, generally speaking, and the dao pursuit, speciï¬�cally speaking, is a dominant concern and pursuit in the Chinese tradition. What is the relation between

the truth concern and the dao concern? Are they dramatically and totally different reï¬‚ective concerns in philosophy? It seems to some authors1 that traditional Chinese philosophy, especially the pre-Han Chinese philosophy, 2 is not concerned with truth. This conclusion has been drawn based on some seemingly plausible observations or claims as follows. (1) It seems to be the dao, instead of truth, that assumes the primary explanatory norm to regulate one central goal of philosophical inquiries in classical Chinese philosophy. (2) In traditional Chinese philosophy, there appears neither conscious investigation of a general deï¬�nitional issue of ‘ What is truth?’ in meta-discourse nor conscious ‘ semantic ascent’ examination of the function, and its philosophical relevance, of the truth predicate (if any). (3) It seems hard to ï¬�nd a uniï¬�ed Chinese character in the pre-Han classical period that would serve as an exact counterpart of ‘ truth’/‘ true’ in, say, English. (4) Some scholars argue that the dominant portion of classical Chinese philosophy is non-sentential philosophy in contrast to what is called ‘ Western sentential philosophy’ and thus not essentially related to those concepts that are intrinsically connected with sentential philosophy like proposition (or semantic content), truth and belief. 3 (5) The signiï¬�cant part and the primary concern of classical Chinese philosophy have been considered to be its moral concern and its ethical accounts; and the moral concern is not with how to understand and capture the impersonal material world but with the ethical constitution in the human society. In this way, there are two different dominant notions of truth in the Western and Chinese philosophical traditions: while the former is a cross-categorical ‘ way-things-are capturing’ or ‘ conformity to reality’ one, the latter is some other notion.

There are three variants of this kind of approach, which distinguish from each other via their distinctive identiï¬�cations of what ' some other notion' means. One is its ' truth-as-pragmatic-notion' variant; this variant deems that it is a pragmatic account of truth (if any) that plays the role. 4 Another is its ' truth-as-a property of persons' variant; this variant takes it that the Chinese tradition, typically, 5. 1 Truth Concern and Dao Concern 127 takes truth as a property of persons and thus ties truth to persons. 5 The third one is its ' truth-as-what really is' variant; this variant takes truth as ' a state of being itself' or as ' existence with the highest value and ultimate meaning'. 6 Based on one or more of the preceding ï¬�ve observations or considerations, some scholars of Chinese philosophy have concluded that there is no signiï¬�cant concern with truth (as capturing the way things are or correspondence with reality) or with semantic truth in classical Chinese philosophy. Let me call this claim ' the thesis of no-truth-concern in Chinese philosophy', or, simply, ' the NTCP thesis' : (NTCP) There is no signiï¬�cant concern with truth (as capturing the way things are) in classical Chinese philosophy. As suggested in the ï¬�rst observation above, it is agreed that a signiï¬�cant concern, or even the central concern, in classical Chinese philosophy is with the dao, whatever the term dao would mean in distinctive movements of thought in classical Chinese philosophy. The NTCP thesis thus presupposes (or, in some cases, implies) a sister claim, the NTCP thesisâˆ— , to the effect that the truth concern and the dao concern are essentially different or even opposing reï¬, ective concerns that render the two major philosophical traditions signiï¬�cantly or even totally different in orientation and agenda. It is noted that these views have been voiced prominently and

loudly especially in the West and thus have left many who are not familiar
with Chinese philosophy under the impression that there is no truth concern
in classical Chinese philosophy and that the truth concern in the Western
tradition and the dao concern in Chinese tradition are dramatically different
from each other. Indeed, the philosophical concern with truth has been
considered as one perennial central concern in philosophy. Such a concern
has been traditionally identiï¬�ed as conscious endeavor to explicitly,
directly, and systematically answer various truth-or-' true'-related questions,
' What is truth?' or ' What is the function of the truth predicate?' among
others, in meta-discourse, resulting in various theories or accounts of truth.
Such endeavor that reveals itself in an explicit, direct and systematic manner
is often taken as the deciding indication of the philosophical concern with
truth in a philosophical tradition. Judged by this, the philosophical concern
with truth is viewed as one primary concern throughout the history of
Western philosophy–from Socrates and Plato to contemporary Western
philosophy today. However, measured in the same way, it appears that
classical Chinese philosophy, as the foregoing NTCP thesis claims, is not
concerned with truth; for, in traditional Chinese philosophy, there appears
neither conscious investigation of ' What is truth?' in meta-discourse nor
conscious ' semantic ascent' examination of the function, and its
philosophical relevance, of the truth predicate. From this one might draw one
of the following three conclusions: (1) traditional Chinese philosophy is not
philosophy, if the concern with truth is indeed one identifying characteristic
of philosophizing, and if such a concern should be characterized in the
aforementioned way; (2) the truth-concern thesis is not a global but local

one; it is valid only for Western philosophy but inapplicable to the case of Chinese philosophy; (3) the ' incumbent' understanding of the identiﬁcation and formulation of the philosophical 128 5 Case Analysis IV concern with truth is seriously limited, and some other distinct approaches to the issue of truth have been ignored. Because, at least to many familiar with Chinese philosophy as well as Western philosophy, the ﬁrst alternative conclusion is arguably false, I do not intend to discuss the ﬁrst alternative in this writing. Instead, I focus on the third alternative, which is philosophically more interesting and signiﬁcant, and, in so doing, I also respond to the second alternative. Indeed, the issue addressed in (3) is not trivial or merely the matter of deﬁnition; rather, it is signiﬁcant for three reasons. First, such discussion might lead to doing justice to distinct ways in which the philosophical concern with truth reveals itself in the global context. Second, such discussion would contribute to the idea that different approaches to the issue of truth in different philosophical traditions could seriously learn from, and complement, each other. Third, an examination of the characteristics of the truth predicate in an ideographic language like Chinese might shed light on the relation between the concept of truth and its linguistic expression. Let me straighten up my own position on the issue. I disagree with both of the foregoing theses, the NTCP thesis and its sister claim, the NTCP thesisâˆ— . My view consists of three related points. First, the dao pursuit of classical Daoism is essentially the truth pursuit in the way as captured by the point of the TNG thesis, although the truth pursuit manifests itself in distinctive ways in the Chinese and Western philosophical traditions. Second, the NTCP thesis is thus untenable; that is, the truth

concern via truth pursuit is indeed one signiﬁcant concern in classical Daoism. Third, one signiﬁcant layer of the dao concern, i. e., the truth-pursuing agent layer of the truth concern, as suggested in Zhuang Zi's approach, has made a signiﬁcant contribution to the common truth concern in philosophy. The connection of the three points is this: The second point is based on the ﬁrst point; the ﬁrst point is presupposed in the third point; the ﬁrst and second points are further strengthened and enriched by the third point. My strategy to argue for the foregoing points and respond to the aforementioned different views in this chapter consists of the following related approaches. (1) It is known that classical Chinese philosophy is not a single philosophical school but consists of a variety of distinctive movements of thought; it is neither necessary due to the purpose here nor practical due to the space limitation to examine all of the various versions of the dao concern in different movements of thought throughout classical Chinese philosophy. Rather, I will focus on the relation between the truth pursuit and the dao pursuit in view of classical Daoism as prominently presented by Lao Zi in the Dao-De-Jing and Zhuang Zi in the Zhuang-Zi. For any general claims concerning classical Chinese philosophy not merely cannot ignore the case of Daoism, but rather need to bring it in focus, especially with regard to the issue of the dao-concern. In so doing, I do not pretend to exhaust all the orientations and styles of the dao-concern in classical Chinese philosophy (such as that in Confucianism). (2) More concretely speaking, in Section 5. 2 concerning Lao Zi's case, I start with, and focus primarily on, examining whether or not, and how, the common pre-theoretic ' way-things-are capturing' understanding of truth (or such a

fundamental concern with the ' capturing-and-making-true' dual-directional relation between the subjective and the objective) is prominently and reï¬‚ectively presented 5. 2 Truth Pursuit as Dao Pursuit in the Dao-De-Jing 129 in the reï¬‚ective context of the Dao-De-Jing, no matter how it is expressed via the conceptual and linguistic resources in the classical text. I argue that the dao pursuit of classical Daoism is essentially the truth pursuit in one crucial dimension; this is captured by the point of the TNG thesis that has been discussed in the last chapter: both render the pursuit of capturing the world (the way things, as due objects of studies, are) normative in regulating a strategic goal of philosophical inquiries. I further show how classical Daoism as presented in the Daoist classical texts, the Dao-DeJing, can make its substantial contribution to our understanding of the truth concern in philosophically interesting ways. (3) In Section 5. 3 concerning Zhuang Zi's case, both for the sake of strengthening the case for the relevant points made in Section 5. 2 and for the sake of spelling out some of Zhuang Zi's distinct contributions to the common truth concern in philosophy, I focus on Zhuang Zi's account of the true agent and true knowledge which is related to the truth-pursuing agent aspect of the truth concern. (4) In Section 5. 4, moving from the reï¬‚ective dao-language deliverance of the truth concern in philosophical Daoism onto the folk language deliverance of the folk notion of truth in the classical Chinese language, I examine how the latter bears on the former through a linguistic and conceptual analysis. (5) In the aforementioned ways, my strategy of responding to the opponents' views on the issue is to look directly at the adequacy of the aforementioned seemingly plausible observations on which

the competing views build their cases for the NTCP thesis; I then positively argue for my view on some involved key issues in the foregoing manner, instead of directly criticizing the opponents' views. 5. 2 Truth Pursuit as Dao Pursuit in the Dao-De-Jing It is known that one central strategic goal of classical Daoism is to understand and capture the dao or pursue the dao. Now what is the dao? The dao is not something mysterious beyond the human understanding. The dao, as characterized in the DaoDe-Jing, is primarily the metaphysical dao; Lao Zi characterizes the metaphysical dao as follows. The dao as root is fundamental (the Dao-De-Jing, Chapters 1, 6, 21, 25, 34, and 42); the dao as origin is universal in the sense that it is the origin of all things (op. cit., Chapters 1, 25, 34, 40, and 42); the dao is the one (and one unifying force that runs through the whole universe) in the above two senses; the dao as power is inherent in nature (in each thing of the universe) rather than transcendent beyond and above nature (op. cit., Chapter 42); the dao as source is never exhausted (op. cit., Chapters 4 and 6); the dao as whole is nature (in the above senses combined); the dao as the way of nature is the way of yin-yang complementary interaction to reach harmonious balance (op. cit., Chapters 2, 42, and 77); the dao as the way of existence in time is eternal (op. cit., Chapters 4 and 6); the dao as the way of existence mode evolves itself and keep changing dynamically (op. cit., Chapter 1); the dao as the way of dynamic development is spontaneous and natural (because the dao is nature) (op. cit., Chapters 25 and 34). In this way, the metaphysical dao is not something like the platonic Form beyond and above, but consists in, particular things in the universe; all particular things in 130 5 Case Analysis IV nature, wan-wu (ten-thousand things) (op.

cit., Chapters 4, 5, 8, 16, 34, 37, 42, 62, and 64), are manifestations of the metaphysical dao with individualized) way of particularized daos within that render them power. The yin-yang (thinking bears on the classical Daoist understanding of the relation between the metaphysical dao and its manifestations in wan-wu, or de ( ) in a broad sense: their relation is essentially yin-yang complementary at the metaphysical level in the sense that the dao and wan-wu are not separate and independent of each other but interdependent, interpenetrating and interactive in regard to metaphysical constitution and function, although the force and existence of the metaphysical dao cannot be simply reduced to the sum of (the forces and existences of) wan-wu. Epistemologically speaking, the metaphysical dao can thus be (partially) captured in our thought and language through capturing wan-wu. 7 The metaphysical dao is thus not something mysterious, which neither metaphysically exists beyond and above nature nor epistemologically goes beyond human understanding. In our pre-theoretic terms, the dao is the universe as nature together with its way instead of something mysterious beyond nature; to pursue the dao is to understand and capture the way things are in nature. It is also important to note that pursuing the dao in the human society does not necessarily imply conforming to a pre-ï¬�xed path; the point is that any path per se that the dao-pursuing agent is currently paving is expected to be in accordance with, or capture, the way things are in nature. Daoism takes pursuing, modeling on, and performing the dao as the fundamental mission of the human being in their reï¬, ective inquiry. As Lao Zi emphatically points out: ' The human being models (fa) him/herself upon earth; earth models itself upon heaven;

heaven models itself upon the dao; the dao models itself upon what is natural' (op. cit., Chapter 25). In this way, the dao pursuit is the most fundamental dao concern of classical Daoism. If my view about the nature and function of the TNG thesis as given in the previous part and my account of the nature and mission of the dao concern of philosophical Daoism are right, the dao-pursuing mission of classical Daoism in the above sense is essentially a kind of truth-pursuit mission which can be delivered in terms of a Daoist way of presenting the TNG thesis as follows: (TNGâˆ—âˆ—âˆ—) The Daoist reï¬‚ective way of presenting the explanatory-reduction version of the thesis of truth centrality as a (strategic) normative goal: Capturing dao (the term ' dao' designates the way things are) is an explanatory norm to regulate and explain one central strategic goal of philosophical inquiries; or, simply: The dao pursuit is an explanatory norm to regulate and explain one central strategic goal of philosophical inquiries. Several explanatory notes are due. First, the distinction between use and mention needs to be paid attention to in this context. The phrase ' the paraphrase-explanatoryreduction version' is mentioned only in contrast to ' the semantic-ascent version' which is a by-default version in the West tradition but whose counterpart can be hardly found in the literature of classical Chinese philosophy. Nevertheless, here 5. 2 Truth Pursuit as Dao Pursuit in the Dao-De-Jing 131 the phrase ' the paraphrase-explanatory-reduction version' is used to refer to what it is supposed to refer to, i. e., its content to the effect that capturing the way things (as due objects of philosophical studies) are is taken as an explanatory norm to regulate and explain one central strategic goal of philosophical inquiries. In this way, what the Daoist

way of presenting the paraphrase-explanatory-reduction version presents is such a content, instead of presupposing the presence of (the counterpart of) the semantic-ascent version in classical Chinese philosophy. Second, one might object: isn't the Daoist understanding of dao so different from some typical or representative understanding of reality or the way things are in the West that the preceding so-called Daoist reï¬‚ective way, (TNGâˆ—âˆ—âˆ—), of presenting the TNG thesis actually talks about something else? As explained in Section 4. 4 of the previous chapter, and as I will further explain in the next section, our pre-theoretic understanding of truth and the TNG thesis themselves do not intrinsically commit themselves to any ad hoc metaphysical account or elaboration of reality (i. e., on what counts as reality), and therefore their metaphysical commitment is minimal in this connection. Rather, the TNG thesis is compatible with, and allows for, various reï¬‚ective ways of presenting it given that these various ways are reï¬‚ective ways of talking about the way things are–the Daoist way of talking about the dao is one of these ways. It is noted that, although, practically speaking, a thesis or account concerning truth (capturing dao) might be put forward together with (or with due implication of) some ontological claims concerning what counts as reality (dao), the thesis or account is actually a combination of a thesis or account of truth itself and an ontological view of what counts as reality (dao), a point to be further explained in Section 6. 3. 1. It is important to notice that, theoretically speaking, a thesis or account of truth cannot be conï¬‚ated with an ontological doctrine of what counts as reality (dao). A Daoist elaboration of (TNGâˆ—âˆ—âˆ—) into a metaphysically-loaded account is not the same as

(TNGâˆ—âˆ—âˆ—) per se but actually the combination of a Daoist way of presenting the TNG thesis via (TNGâˆ—âˆ—âˆ—), which is ontologically neutral concerning what counts as dao, and a Daoist metaphysical account of what counts as dao without conceptually coni¬‚ating each with the other. Third, related to the point of the preceding remarks, it is also noted that we might as well replace the Daoist reï¬‚ective way of talking about the way things are with one Chinese pre-theoretic way of talking about the way things are via such folk phrases). A reï¬‚ective way of talking about qiu-dao ( ) and a as shi-shi-qiu-shi (folk way of talking about shi-shi-qiu-shi, which I will further explain in Section 5. 4 below, are both distinctive Chinese ways of delivering the point of the TNG thesis. Fourth, while Davidson actually subscribes to the paraphrase-explanatoryreduction version of the TNG thesis in an implicit and indirect way, classical Daoism explicitly and directly delivers the point of the thesis through its characteristic dao-pursuing version that captures the crux of the paraphrase-explanatory-reduction version of the thesis. Now one issue emerges: given that classical Daoism's daopursuing strategic goal captures the point of the TNG thesis through (TNGâˆ—âˆ—âˆ—) and thus that the dao pursuit in classical Daoism is the truth pursuit in the way as captured by the point of the TNG thesis, does classical Daoism make any substantial contribution through (TNGâˆ—âˆ—âˆ— —) to our reï¬‚ective understanding of the truth 132 5 Case Analysis IV concern? Now it is time to explore merits (if any) of each of the two characteristic versions of the TNG thesis. Generally speaking, each of the two versions of the TNG thesis has its own merits (and actual or potential disadvantages in contrast to the other's merits). The semantic-ascent

version talks about truth in an economic and convenient way by using a one-word term ' truth' with merely one syllable instead of using some multiple-syllable phrases like '[a certain truth bearer] in accordance with or correspondence to [a certain] fact'. Another merit of the semantic-ascent version is this: what is (or is supposed to be) shared, or something common, stable, deﬁnite, constant, unchanged and universal, in all concrete and particular states of (various truth bearers) capturing or corresponding to the ways things are in the world is highlighted and emphasized in terms of one word ' be true' or ' truth' via such semantic ascent. In the philosophical context, this approach actually reﬂects a general being-aspect-concerned orientation of Western tradition: it tends to focus on the being aspect of an object of study, that is, the aspect of the object that is stable and invariable, unchangeable, deﬁnite and constant–i. e., the being aspect; when what is involved is to capture what is stable, constant and invariable among a number of objects of one kind, this orientation thus tends to focus on what is shared, common and thus universal among them. A reﬂective perspective that is intended to capture such an orientation to look at an object of study or a number of objects that are somehow related might as well be called ' the being-aspect-concerned perspective'. In this way, one can say that, besides the aforementioned consideration for economy and convenience, the semantic-ascent version of the thesis of truth centrality as a (strategic) normative goal more or less reﬂects such a being-aspect-concerned orientation or perspective. If the ﬁrst merit is more or less instrumental in character, the second merit is quite substantial in nature. In contrast, one merit of the paraphrase-explanatory-reduction version is that it delivers the

substantial content of truth pursuit in an explicit, straightforward and illuminative way. Another merit is this: the key phrase, ' capturing the way things are,' not merely delivers the substantial content of truth pursuit but also implies or points to the concrete and particular aspect of truth pursuit. Generally speaking, there is some distinct aspect(s) between the way one thing is and the way another thing is; therefore, generally speaking, the way of capturing the way one thing is different from that way of capturing the way another thing is. One certainly cannot say that this version thus loses sight of, or is inconsistent with, the general and universal aspect of truth pursuit: the phrase ' capturing the way things are' is an abstract and generalization: what is common among many different truth bearers is that they capture the way things are. Notice that the apparent singular term ' way' used in the paraphrase-explanatory-deduction version actually covers both ways: one might as well say that it is used both as a collective noun to cover various particular ways things are and as an abstract term to grasp the general character or shared dimension of all these particular ways of capturing. In this connection, given the speciï¬�ed meaning of '(metaphysical) dao' in classical Daoism as characterized before, the Daoist dao-pursuing way of presenting the TNG thesis, as a variant of the paraphrase-explanatory-reduction version in regard to content, hits the point of 5. 2 Truth Pursuit as Dao Pursuit in the Dao-De-Jing 133 the uniï¬�cation of both ways. If my preceding discussions of the distinction between the two versions of the TNG thesis and of their respective merits in regard to orientation are correct, I consider this as one substantial contribution by Daoism to our reï¬‚ective understanding of the truth concern in

philosophical inquiries. There is one more merit of the paraphrase-explanatory-reduction version that is already brieï¬, y addressed in one note on (TNGâˆ—âˆ—âˆ—): while the semantic-ascent version by default suggests a non-agent thing as a ' truth bearer' like a sentence, statement, belief or proposition, the paraphrase-explanatory-reduction version suggests, or at least is compatible with, the human agent as a primary truth bearer in a certain context to this extent: it is eventually the human agent who ' understands' or ' captures' the way things are in the world and thus who generates, possesses and uniï¬�es various true beliefs and thoughts that she actually has. It is noted that the dao-pursuing is not limited to a relatively stable understanding of the world; it also includes the agent's dynamic understanding and her practicing the understanding going without being against dynamic via her action that is regulated by wu-wei (nature). The point and signiï¬�cance of this merit will be explained in the next section when Zhuang Zi's relevant ideal is discussed. In the following, to further understand and illustrate the truth pursuit in the DaoDe-Jing (that is, how the Daoist classic text raises some reï¬, ectively interesting issues in this connection and how it responds to these issues in some reï¬, ectively interesting ways if any), let me give a case analysis of one passage in the DaoDe-Jing that raises some philosophically interesting issues concerning the truth/dao pursuit. The passage is from Chapter 54 as follows (my translation): Cultivates virtue within oneself as a whole body and it thus becomes authentic (true) [zhen]; Cultivates virtue in one's family and that thus becomes to overï¬, ow; Cultivates virtue in one's village and it thus becomes long-lasting; Cultivates virtue in one's state and it thus becomes

abundant; Cultivates virtue in the world and it thus becomes universal.
Therefore, look at the oneself by virtue of the oneself; Look at the family by
virtue of the family; Look at the village by virtue of the village; Look at the
state by virtue of the state; Look at the world by virtue of the world. How do I
know the world as it is? By virtue of this. As I see it, there are four interesting
points concerning the truth pursuit in this short passage. First, Lao Zi here
both implicitly makes his metaphysical point concerning truth nature as well
as explicitly makes his epistemological point concerning truth means in line
with our pre-theoretic ' way-things-are capturing' understanding of truth. In
the second part of this citation, Lao Zi explicitly raises the issue of how); the
criterion to know the world as it is (he-yi-zhi-tian-xia-zhi-ran or means by
virtue of which one can know that, according to Lao Zi, is to exam- 134 5
Case Analysis IV ine (guan) the object of knowledge (whether it is the
human being oneself or family or state or other things in the world) by virtue
of the way the object is in the world. (Surely, as we have seen above,
Davidson would disagree due to some epistemological difi¬�culties well
known in the Western tradition; nevertheless, for a classical Daoist like Lao
Zi and Zhuang Zi, one can somehow know the world as it is through, say,
joint functions by various knowing organs which are not limited to those
inter-subjective ones like our senses and intellectual mind)8 . In so doing,
with the dual meaning of zhi (knowing as the process of knowledge and
what is known as the result of knowledge), Lao Zi as a matter of fact makes
his metaphysical point concerning truth nature which is to be possessed by
the result of knowing:). the resulting knowledge captures the world as it is
(zhi-tian-xia-zhi-ran Note that, in so doing, Lao Zi does not use any one-

Chinese-character counterpart, if any, of the one-syllable-word in Western phonetic languages (say, ' true' or ' truth' in English)–as a semantic-ascent linguistic means of indicating truth nature–to deliver his insight concerning the truth/dao pursuit. This is one point that this essay is intended to make: the truth concern, generally speaking, and the truth pursuit, speciï¬�cally speaking, are not necessarily related to any ad hoc semantic-ascent linguistic means whose meaning depends on its due paraphrase explanation. Second, it is interesting enough to note that the Chinese character zhen ( ), whose current usage in contemporary Chinese language has made it become a by-default one-character Chinese counterpart of English term ' truth' or ' true', does appear in the ï¬�rst statement in the cited passage: ' Cultivates virtue within oneself and it]'; the other thus becomes genuine [xiu-zhi-yu-shen qi-de-nai-zhen occurrence of the character zhen in the Dao-De-Jing is in Chapter 21: '[Dao] Deep and far off, there is the essence within; The essence is highly authentic (true) [qi], and there is evidence within.' Now what is at issue is how jing-shen-zhen to understand and interpret the meaning of zhen in the above contexts. It seems that zhen is open to two distinctive interpretations in the above contexts. One way is to interpret zhen as a noun-like expression meaning what really is. 9 Another way is to interpret zhen as a predicate meaning reaching or capturing the way things are. It is arguably right that the latter interpretation provides better explanation than the former does for several considerations. First, grammatically speaking, it is clear that zhen functions as a predicate expression, instead of a noun-like expression, in the above two ï¬�rst-order reï¬, ective contexts; they are used to assign a certain attribute to the subjects. Second, it is also clear that

the latter interpretation is most close to, or almost the same as, its basic modern sense (i. e., capturing or ï¬�t fact or reality), while there is an obvious gap between the former interpretation and the basic modern sense; the former interpretation thus owes us an explanation of why there is such a substantial meaning gap between the alleged sense of zhen here and its basic modern sense. Third, the latter interpretation is much in accordance with the fundamental mission of the dao pursuit (to understand and capture the dao as the way things are) of the Dao-De-Jing. Indeed, the logical subject of zhen, or the zhen bearer, in these two cases is neither the linguistic sentence or statement nor the propositional content of thought or belief; but, at least in the context of the Daoist classic Dao-De-Jing, it is arguably right to say that zhen is used to indicate something like reaching or capturing (a high level of) the way things are. In the case of Chapter 5. 2 Truth Pursuit as Dao Pursuit in the Dao-De-Jing 135 54, only when virtue is cultivated within oneself [via wu-wei], the alleged virtue genuine virtue, a kind of becomes virtue, which, one can say, means shang-de (high level of spontaneous virtue) (cf. the Dao-De-Jing, Chapter 38) and which is thus a kind of the way the genuine human virtue is. In the case of Chapter 21, the dao as essence and power of wan-wu ' highly' reaches the very way the nature is, which is the dao. In this way, although the ancient usage of the term zhen here is distinctive from its primary modern usage as a counterpart of ' true' and ' truth', what it delivers is essentially along the same line as what our pre-theoretic understanding of truth is to deliver, that is, (the truth bearer) reaching or capturing the way things are. To this extent, it is not implausible or too odd to translate the two occurrences of zhen in the Dao-De-Jing into '

true', instead of ' genuine' in the former case and ' authentic' in the latter case. It is noted that the thesis of the dao pursuit as the truth pursuit of capturing the way things are is established on the basis of examining the nature of the dao pursuit and its relation to our pre-theoretic understanding of truth, instead of being based on what zhen means in the Dao-De-Jing. Therefore, even if the former interpretation of zhen is correct, that would not constitute a refutation of the thesis. Nevertheless, as discussed above, it is arguably right that the latter interpretation provides better explanation of the meaning of zhen in the context of the Dao-De-Jing that is in accordance with the pre-theoretic understanding of truth. Third, another interesting issue concerning the truth pursuit raised in the passage is that of the truth of human morality. From Lao Zi's point of view, the human morality in terms of human virtue, as indicated by the term de used in the narrow sense in the Dao-De-Jing, is not something like ï¬�xed ï¬, oating entity that can be imposed upon the moral agent from outside but is cultivated ' within and through). In accordance [the moral agent] oneself as a whole body' (xiu-zhi-yu-shen with the broad sense of de referring to manifestations of the metaphysical dao, or individualized daos, in particular things, de as human virtue is the manifestation of metaphysical dao in human beings regarding morality, which renders human beings having ' power'. In this sense, from Lao Zi's Daoist point of view, it is not only that the truth of a moral judgment, say, ' Mary is a moral person with virtue', has its objective basis that consists in its capturing the way the moral agent is in regard to her cultivated virtue within and through herself as a whole body. But it is also that the truth of the moral agent's virtue itself has its objective basis that consists in its following

or ' modeling itself on' (fa) (Chapter 25) the dao in the way of wu-wei (a Daoist way of presenting the point of capturing the way things are in this context). (It is noted that the latter insight above actually provides a due basis for explaining how it is possible for human virtue to possess truth, an issue that is induced by]' in his ï¬�rst Lao Zi's idea '[human virtue] thus becomes true [qi-de-nai-zhen statement of the cited passage, as mentioned in the preceding second point.) In this way, Lao Zi's dao-pursuing approach does not exclude but intrinsically includes the moral-truth pursuit in the above sense. Fourth, the foregoing second and third points are actually related to another interesting issue concerning the truth pursuit in philosophy, i. e., the issue of eligible truth bearers, as already more or less addressed in the preceding discussions of the two points. The crux of the issue is this: given that truth nature consists in capturing the 136 5 Case Analysis IV way things are, whether due (primary) truth bearers can be only such mental things with conceptual contents as thoughts and beliefs and their linguistic expressions like sentences and statements or can also be other human things like human virtue and the human agent herself as a whole, and how those aforementioned truth-bearer candidates if any are related. Lao Zi indirectly makes his positive point concerning this issue as he favorably talks about both kinds of truth bearers. Let me further address the issue of the human agent as a truth bearer in the next section where I discuss how another important classical Daoist philosopher, Zhuang Zi, explicitly addresses the issue in his account of the true agent and true knowledge. Before moving onto the subject of the next section on Zhaung Zi's account, let me give a brief summary of the central point that I have

endeavored to make in this section. As explained in the previous chapter, through an explanatory reduction of the truth property to what the term 'truth' is used to really talked about along the lines of our pre-theoretic understanding of truth, the paraphrase-explanatoryreduction version of the TNG thesis hits the point in regard to exactly what counts as an explanatory norm to regulate one central strategic goal of philosophical inquiries. In so doing, the explanatory-reduction version of the TNG thesis has another significant role in capturing a due cross-tradition understanding of the nature and scope of the truth concern in different philosophical traditions: it would help us identify and characterize the truth concern in Chinese philosophical tradition in view of classical Daoism. Although the trademark version of the TNG thesis is its semantic-ascent version especially in the Western tradition, and although the semantic-ascent version does have its merits, the paraphrase-explanatory-reduction version of the thesis is more illuminative and to the point in one crucial aspect. The dao pursuit of classical Daoism is essentially the truth pursuit in general terms, though it is presented in classical Daoism in a distinct way. To further understand and illustrate the truth pursuit in the Daoist classic text Dao-De-Jing, I have then given a case analysis of one passage from Chapter 54, which, as I see it, explicitly or implicitly makes some philosophically interesting points concerning the truth pursuit in philosophy. 5. 3 Zhuang Zi on True Agent and True Knowledge: An Account of Truth-Pursuing-Agent Dimension of Truth Concern In the preceding section, when I give a general characterization of the dao concern as the truth concern of philosophical Daoism and a case analysis of one passage of the Dao-De-Jing, both discussions end with one point that is

somehow related to Zhuang Zi's account of truth-pursuing agent, which in my opinion constitutes one signiﬁcant contribution by Daoism to our understanding of the truth concern. Before looking at Zhuang Zi's account on this issue, to have a due understanding of it, one needs to ﬁrst understand Zhuang Zi's general methodological strategy,) methodological stratwhich might as well be called ' things-equality' (qi-wu egy. This is a kind of objective perspectivism, 10 which consists of two signiﬁcant and related points, as I see it. 11 (1) Each thing has its various aspects, and one

5. 3 Zhuang Zi on True Agent and True Knowledge 137 can take a ﬁnite perspective [as a working perspective] to look at one aspect: one can look at its this aspect, from a this-aspect-concern perspective, and sees it as a this, and one can also look at its that aspect, from a that-aspect-concern perspective, and sees it as a that. Its metaphysical foundation is this: various aspects, the this aspect and the that aspect, ontologically depend on each other; various perspectives, the this-aspect-concern perspective and the that-aspect-concern perspective, thus actually complement each other. (2) For the purpose of looking at the connection of various aspects of a thing and/or of having a comprehensive understanding of the thing, Zhuang Zi also encourages us to look at things from a higher point of view that transcends various ﬁnite points of view; in this way, those different aspects cease to be viewed as opposite or incompatible but complementary. That is, Zhuang Zi emphasizes a global or holistic understanding of the world that transcends various local perspectives (at least in one's background thinking), though it is totally legitimate or even is expected for one to take a certain local perspective as working perspective depending on one's purpose and focus.

With the understanding of these two strategic methodological points of Zhuang Zi's objective perspectivism, one can effectively understand Zhuang Zi's substantial approaches to various issues including the current issue under examination: one might as well say that the latter constitute implementations and illustrations of the former. In the following, to enable the reader to have a close look at Zhuang Zi's original narrative account of the true agent and true knowledge, I ﬁrst make the citations of some relevant passages from Inner Chapter 6 " Da-Zong-Shi" of the Zhuang-Zi with certain needed paraphrases in bracket parentheses; and then I give an interpretation of Zhuang Zi's relevant points in the context of Daoism and of his whole thought, especially in view of his general methodological strategy to look at various issues as characterized above. Now let us take a close look at how Zhuang Zi makes his point in the text. 12 The one who knows what Heaven [Tian] does and what the human does has reached the utmost. The one who knows what Heaven does live with the Heaven. The person who knows what the human does use the knowledge of what one knows to support the knowledge of what one does not know, and one thus completes one's natural span of life without dying young half way [completely following the dao without failing half way]. This is knowledge at its greatness. However, there is one diﬁﬁculty. Knowledge must have what it waits for [as its objective basis] and be then applicable, and what it waits for is changeable. How can I know that what I call ' Heaven' is not really the human, and what I call ' the human' is not really Heaven? [The key to overcome this diﬁﬁculty is this.] One needs to ﬁrst become a true agent [zhen-ren] and thus has one's true knowledge [zhen-zhi] [that would be

sensitive to what is changeable]. What is meant by a ' true agent'? The true

agent in ancient times did not reject [but were sensitive to] what is little, did

not brag about achievements, and did not scheme things [against being

natural]. A man like this would not regret it when missing something and

would not be complacent when having achievements. A man like this would

not feel frightened when climbing the high places, would not feel soaked

when entering the water, and would not feel hot when going through ï¬�re.

[He would not be restricted by apparent limits but transcend them with his

vision.] Such is the knowledge by which one can climb all way up on the

course of the dao. . .. 138 5 Case Analysis IV The true agent in ancient

times . . . regarded knowledge as product of time and de as what is based on

. . .. [For the true agent] To regard knowledge as product of time means that

he needs to respond to situations and changes as if he could not keep from

doing it. To regard de as what is based on is as if the one with two feet needs

to walk on one's way to climb a hill, and the true agent makes his diligent

efforts to do so . . .. The person who is called a ' true agent' renders Heaven

and the human in accord instead of overcoming each other. Indeed, given

that the English term ' true' is used here in line with our pre-theoretic

understanding of truth, it does not appear immediately plausible to talk

about ' the true agent' or translate zhen-ren into ' the true agent'. For, after

all, we usually consider the bearer of truth to be such mental things as

thoughts and beliefs or their linguistic expressions like sentences and

statements. (I guess that, with this consideration as a presupposition, some

translations avoid translating the term zhen in zhen-ren here into ' true' but

some terms else, such as ' authentic' or ' genuine'.) However, with the

foregoing analysis and clariﬁcation of the point of the TNG thesis via its paraphrase-explanatory-reduction version, and if my account there is correct, one thing is certain: given that the truth (nature) as delivered in our pre-theoretic understanding of truth consists in (the truth bearer) capturing the way things are, it should be neither implausible nor odd to talk about ' the true agent' when ' true' is along the line of our pre-theoretic ' way-things-are capturing' understanding of truth. For it indeed makes sense to say that the subject (or even the primary subject in a certain sense to be explained below) of capturing the way things are is the human agent, or the thinking creature, instead of some non-thinking thing. 13 But, at this point, two further questions emerge. First, does Zhuang Zi' talk about (mention) zhen-ren in the sense of zhen that delivers the pre-theoretic ' way-things-are capturing' understanding of truth? Second, given that it is plausible or does make sense to interpret Zhuang Zi's talk about zhen-ren into the talk about ' the true agent' in this context, is there any serious reﬂective need or any theoretic signiﬁcance to highlight the conception of the true agent as Zhuang Zi does? Or is this just a kind of insigniﬁcant, though innocent, rhetoric saying? As for the ﬁrst question, it is arguably right that, in this context, Zhuang Zi relates ' true knowledge' with ' the true agent' and uses zhen in both case along the same line with the basic pre-theoretic ' way-things-are capturing' understanding of truth, that is, capturing the way things are (the way Heaven, the human, etc. are). For the dao pursuing is the fundamental mission of a zhen-ren, whether she is spontaneously or reﬂectively fulﬁlling this mission; and the dao pursuing is simply the Daoist version of the way-things-are capturing. One might object in this way:

it is how such a person (zhen-ren) acts that deï¬�nes what is zhen (that is, the notion of zhen here is a subjective-agnet-concerned existential notion of truth as a property of zhen persons in the sense that a true person is true to herself); zhen-zhi is thus predicated on zhenren. There is one serious difi¬�culty with this kind of ‘ metaphysical’ or existential understanding of zhen in interpreting classical Daoism. If how a true person acts and what she knows simply deï¬�nes what is true, an immediate question is this: what is the (metaphysical) identity condition of such a true person by which a true person distinguishes herself from other kinds of persons? If one does not intend to mystify but demystify the identity condition of a true person, one has to admit that such an identity condition is at least logically (and arguably metaphysically) prior to how 5. 3 Zhuang Zi on True Agent and True Knowledge 139 she does and what she knows. Isn't such an identity condition intrinsically related to her (capacity of) capturing the dao [in more metaphorical terms, her following and ï¬, oating with (or what xiao-fa means) the dao instead of the dao ï¬, oating with her]? In this way, at least in the context of classical Daoism, the claimed ‘ metaphysical’ notion of truth, if it is reï¬, ectively interesting, needs to be understood on the basis of the cross-categorical ‘ way-things-are capturing’ understanding of truth; in this sense, the latter is primary while the former (if any) secondary. With the foregoing explanation, I thus intentionally translate zhen in zhen-ren into ‘ true’ in the following sense to deliver one point of Zhuang Zi's account: the bearer of the truth nature, or the subject of capturing the way things are (i. e., capturing the dao), can be and is, the human agent in a certain sense, and this kind of the truth bearer and other kinds of the truth bearer (the

propositional content of belief or its linguistic expression) are about the same kind of truth property that is in accordance with our pre-theoretic ' way-things-are capturing' understanding truth, instead of two different kinds. The second question above is more reï¬, ectively interesting: is there any serious reï¬, ective need or any theoretic signiï¬�cance in highlighting the conception of the true agent as Zhuang Zi does? My answer is yes. I think this is exactly where Zhuang Zi's account of the true agent and true knowledge would make some signiï¬�cant contribution to our understanding of the truth concern in philosophy. One crucial claim of Zhuang Zi's account in regard to the relation between the true agent and true knowledge is this: ' One needs to ï¬�rst become a true agent [zhen-ren] and thus has one's true knowledge [zhen-zhi]'. The point of Zhuang Zi's claim and its signiï¬�cance needs to be placed in the textual context and in view of his whole thought. The passages around the claim show that Zhuang Zi addresses some related metaphysical and epistemological issues in that context. First, metaphysically speaking, the object of knowledge is changeable; true knowledge of the object thus needs to be regarded as product of time in accordance with change of the object; but it is the human subject, instead of thought or its linguistic expression as the deï¬�nite and stable result of previous knowing process, who can be directly sensitive and respond to situation and change. Second, epistemologically speaking, it indicates how to achieve knowledge at its greatness that is comprehensive and holistic (say, uniï¬�ed knowledge of both Heaven and the human, coordinated knowledge of various aspects of the object). It is the human subject, instead of piecemeal individual beliefs and their linguistic

expressions per se, who can autonomously and creatively transcend the limitations of piecemeal individual beliefs and their linguistic expressions and unify her various individual beliefs into a holistic, comprehensive and coordinated understanding of the way things are. 14 Thus she can overcome some epistemological difi¬�culties that can be hardly overcome by looking at piecemeal individual beliefs and their linguistic expressions. In this sense, to this extent, and for the sake of achieving true knowledge that captures various aspects of the changing world in a holistic way, one needs to ï¬�rst become a true agent who can be sensitive and respond to situation, change and complexity (or the changing, dynamic and becoming aspect of the thing as the object of knowledge). In this way, through his conception of the true agent and his account of the relation between the true agent and true knowledge, Zhuang Zi actually captures and 140 5 Case Analysis IV highlights the pragmatic, becoming, dynamic dimension/aspect/layer of the truth concern involved in philosophy of language, metaphysics and epistemology. One reason that Zhuang Zi's point is signiï¬�cant is this. (1) From the point of view of philosophy of language, his point calls our attention to, or emphasize, the pragmatic dimension of the linguistic truth bearer that involves the speaker's intention and her situated uses, instead of the semantic dimension alone. (2) From the point of view of metaphysics, his point calls our attention to, or emphasize, the becoming aspect of the object of knowledge, instead of the being aspect alone, for the sake of a holistic understanding of various correlative aspects of the way things are. (3) From the point of view of epistemology, his point calls our attention to, or emphasize, the dynamic layer, instead of the stable layer alone, of the whole

process of capturing the way things are; in this way, Zhuang Zi emphasizes a holistic understanding instead of piecemeal knowledge alone. 15 Through his conception of the true agent, Zhuang Zi's view can thus enlarge and enrich the reï¬‚ective concept of correspondence (with reality) as traditionally treated. 16 One might ask: isn't it not merely innocent but also more conceptually effective to talk about the propositional content of a belief or its linguistic expression alone as the truth bearer? Does Zhuang Zi indiscriminately render absolutely superior the order of ï¬�rst becoming a true agent and then achieving true knowledge? Indeed, Zhuang Zi does not directly provide his response to such reï¬‚ectively interesting questions in the text. Nevertheless, one can base on the point of Zhuang Zi's general methodological strategy in treating various reï¬‚ective issues (as given at the outset of this section) and the basic point of Daoist thought about the metaphysical dao (as characterized in the previous section) to provide a reasonable elaboration of the due implication of his general methodological strategy to the current issue. As emphasized above, the crux of Zhuang Zi's claim needs to be placed in the textual context and his whole thought which would help us identify for which sake and for what purpose Zhuang Zi takes a certain perspective. From the foregoing discussion, one can see that Zhuang Zi intends to capture the pragmatic dimension of the belief or linguistic truth bearer, the becoming aspect of the object of true knowledge, and the dynamic layer of the process of capturing the way things are. The fact per se that one actually focuses on the becoming aspect and takes a becoming-aspect concerned perspective as one's working perspective does not imply that one would deny other eligible perspectives as eligible. It also

does not imply that one has an inadequate guiding principle that renders one's current working perspective absolutely superior while the other eligible perspective ineligible or absolutely inferior. 17 Generally speaking, Zhuang Zi is certainly not so unintelligible that he could fail to realize the being aspects of things: a thing always keeps its own certain identity at any stage of its changing process before, or unless, this thing turns into something else; changes do not happen in chaos but follow certain ways, and the dao is considered as one fundamental and unifying way throughout the universe. Speciï¬�cally speaking, in the cited passages where Zhuang Zi gives his account of the true agent and true knowledge with emphasis on the pragmatic, becoming and dynamic aspect involved in the truth concern, it is arguably correct that Zhuang Zi implicitly presupposes the presence of the semantic, being and relatively-stable dimension/aspect/layer involved in 5. 4 From Dao-Language Deliverance of Truth Concern to Folk Language Deliverance 141 the truth concern. Moreover, both Zhuang Zi's own reï¬‚ective practice and his general ' thing-equality' methodology are not merely compatible with, but consistently suggest, the idea that, for another sake, one needs to ï¬�rst have one's true knowledge [zhen-zhi] and thus become a true agent [zhen-ren]: given the wisdom-generating role and character-cultivating role played by one's true knowledge (including moral knowledge as well as intellectual knowledge), one needs to ï¬�rst achieve or resort to true knowledge for the sake of becoming a true agent. In so doing, one is able to have a (more) comprehensive understanding of the world and cultivate oneself in a right direction and with an adequate guidance. Zhuang Zi's own teachings per se would help people fulï¬�ll this.

In sum, one important implication of Zhuang Zi's ' thingsequality' methodological strategy in treating the issue of the truth/dao concern is this: given that the dao-pursuing enterprise has the stable and dynamic aspects, the unchanging and changing aspects, and the being aspect and becoming aspect, they are metaphysically equal in the sense that they metaphysically depend on each other and are yin-yang complementary; the becoming-aspect-concerned perspective and the being-aspect-concerned perspective in our journey of pursuing truth/dao are methodologically equal in the sense that both are relevant, indispensable and yinyang complementary for a holistic understanding of the issue. In this way, Zhuang Zi's contribution also lies in his general methodological insight that can be extended or applied to how to look at the relation between various dimensions, and their related projects, of the truth-concern enterprise in philosophy. My positive account of truth, to be elaborated in the last chapter, is related to my interpretative understanding of, and thus partially inspired by, Zhuang Zi's general methodological insight. In sum, Zhuang Zi's contribution to the truth-concern enterprise in philosophy can be dual: one is his substantial contribution to the project that is concerned with the truth-pursuing agent dimension of the truth concern; the other lies in his general methodological contribution to how to look at the relation between various dimensions of the truth concern. 5. 4 From Dao-Language Deliverance of Truth Concern to Folk Language Deliverance of Pre-Theoretic Understanding of Truth The linguistic expression of reï¬‚ective points concerning truth pursuit in the Dao-DeJing is not isolated from, but relates to and reï¬‚ects the general characteristics of the linguistic expression of the folk notion of truth in the Chinese linguistic

community. Therefore, an examination of some characteristic features of the truth predicates or the truth-predicate-like phrases in the classical Chinese language can enhance our understanding of the philosophical concern with truth in classical Daoism, speciﬁcally speaking, and in classical Chinese philosophy, generally speaking. The reader might note that I use the plural form of ' the truth predicate', i. e., ' the truth predicates' to talk about the identity of the truth predicates in the classical Chinese language. It is true that there is no one single Chinese character in the classical Chinese that can systematically serve as the exact counterpart of, say, the English 142 5 Case Analysis IV truth predicate ' true'. However, there are multiple predicates or predicative phrases, which more or less perform the equivalent functions of, say, the English truth predicate. This is one prima facie complication with which my subsequent discussion begins. 18 As indicated at the outset of this chapter, one reason that some think that there appears to be no concern with truth in classical Chinese philosophy is that one can hardly ﬁnd one single Chinese character in the classical Chinese language as well as in the Chinese philosophical classics that systematically serves as the exactly or even roughly synonymous counterpart of, say, the Greek or English truth predicate. 19 Nevertheless, it would be quite superﬁcial to judge whether or not people in another tradition have the pre-theoretic understanding of truth through examining whether or not, in their folk linguistic expressions, they have this single systematic counterpart. Though I do not plan to conduct the detailed philological examination in this connection, one thing is certain: there were various multiple-character folk expressions in the classical or pre-modern folk Chinese that have been used

to express the pretheoretic understanding of truth. 20 The shared pre-theoretic idea of those various folk expressions in the classical Chinese, though appearing naive and plain, is this:)21 to pursue (seek or capture) what it (this) is (or, the way the thing is) (qiu-shi or to pursue the way things are (ze-shi), as literally suggested by such folk : ' to pursue/capture what this is based on the expressions as shi-shi-qiu-shi (: ' to pursue the way things are'). 23 One can way things are')22 or ze-qi-shi (identify two key Chinese terms, or their cognates, that essentially appear in all those folk expressions: one is the term shi ( ) which means what this is (the way the thing is) or shi ( ) which means the way things are, and the other the term qiu ( ) or ze ( ) which means pursuing/seeking/capturing or ï¬�tting. 24 There is another relevant linguistic fact concerning the Chinese linguistic expressions of truth. A Chinese truth predicate and its noun/adjective cognate share the same linguistic form. For example, one can use the same Chinese multiple-character compound shi-shi-qiu-shi either as a truth predicate or as a noun (for instance, as a truth predicate in ' What you said should shi-shi-qiu-shi; as a noun in ' We should take shi-shi-qiu-shi as our goal in examining this matter'). In other words, when a linguistic expression of truth (and its notion) shifts grammatical status, it is supposed to maintain the same semantic content which is explicitly given jointly by the senses of the multiple characters of the compound. I will address some interesting implications of this linguistic feature of the Chinese lingu