Concluding Remarks

It is evident that each of the ten articles presented above in this monograph is characteristic of its distinctive significance pertaining to the historical development of Western philosophy. At the same time, these papers help to explain the metaphysical macroparadigm shift from the concept of ‘being’ to considering the concept of ‘being’ in terms of the concept of ‘energy’ or ‘energy-being’ in the current discussion of the history of Western philosophy. However, some concluding remarks should still be made, as observed under the following few headings.

Justification of the Book’s Title

As the Preface of this book indicates, it was only an afterthought to adopt “An Emerging Metaphysical Macroparadigm Shift from Being to Energy-Being” as the guiding essay as well as the pivotal title of this work after all the articles were written. One may, therefore, ask: How is the book’s title From Being to Energy-Being: An Emerging Metaphysical Macroparadigm Shift in Western Philosophy appropriately justified?

Overall, the first three papers of this monograph, directly and indirectly, talk about ‘being.’ It is true that the first paper “URAM of Plato’s Theory of Forms and the Problem of Universals concerning Postmodern Relativism” touches upon ‘being’ only indirectly as a universal metaphysical concept. Nevertheless, the second and the third papers, i.e., “St. Augustine’s Concept of God as the All-Present Being for the Present Generation” and “The Meaning and Challenge of St. Thomas’s Metaphysical Concept of God as Ipsum Esse Subsistens Today” patently do. Yet, one may find in the first article a certain gradual tendency in which ‘being’ as a metaphysical macroparadigm is emerging almost imperceptibly amid Plato’s historical formulation of his Theory of Forms. Accordingly, “Plato’s ante-rem realism combined, integrated or established simultaneously the Parmenidean realm of unchanging being and the Heraclitean realm of ever-changing becoming or appearance.”

Indeed, by the time the Divine Energy in Eastern Orthodoxy is mentioned in the fourth paper according to St. Gregory Palamas (c.1296-1359), ‘being’ is established as the universal prevailing metaphysical idea by St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-c.1274). Thomistically,

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1 See p. 14 above.
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God is regarded as the Uncreated Subsistent Being Itself (Ipsum Esse Subsistens) from which all other created beings derive their very existence and find their ultimate reality and meaning. However, the concept of ‘being’ starts to deteriorate soon afterwards. As witnessed in the fifth and sixth papers “Awakening from the Kantian Anti-Supernatural Slumbers” and “Kant’s Naturalistic ‘Religion’ and ‘religion’,” Kant and other prominent philosophers are in serious doubt inter alia about the concept of God as the Divine Being. As it turns out in the modern age of natural science, the sure existence of a supernatural Being cannot be easily verified in accordance with the anti-supernatural philosophy and religion of Kant, the so-called father of modern philosophy.

Subsequently, influenced en masse by the exceptional discovery of high energy physics, depth psychology, the Eastern Orthodox concept of Divine Energy, and the Asian concept of qi or ki, etc., the current post-modern metaphysical macroparadigm shift from ‘being’ to ‘energy’ or ‘energy-being’ begins to emerge, as seen in the seventh paper “An Emerging Metaphysical Macroparadigm Shift from Being to Energy-Being.” As a result, in the eighth article “Christian Faith Encounters New Age Faith in The Celestine Vision: A Brief Comparison between Two Types of Theology of Energy,” we attest to the current emergence of two types of Theology of Energy, each taking ‘energy’ or ‘energy-being’ as its universal metaphysical model of theological explanation.

Finally, in the midst of such a metaphysical macroparadigm shift from ‘being’ to ‘energy-being,’ the ninth article “Re-visiting St. Thomas’ Concept of God as Truth Itself from the Perspective of Qi in the Guanzi’s Four Daoist Chapters” attempts to apply qi, the Chinese concept of ‘energy,’ to re-interpret or re-figure St. Thomas’ concept of God as Truth or Being of Truth Itself. At the same time, the tenth article “URAM of Chu Hsi’s Metaphysical Concept of the Li-Ch’i Universe for the Postmodern World” takes on qi in rethinking the problem of relativism in the post-modern West. Looking back, such an inter-national, inter-philosophical, inter-cultural, inter-religious encounter and dialogue carried out in these two papers is simply a part of the natural progress of the current globalization movement in which Western thought and its Eastern counterpart continue to influence and enrich one another in impressive openness and good faith.

Summing up, one may say that the present work on this history of
Western philosophy commences directly and indirectly with ‘being.’ After the concept of Divine Energy in Eastern Orthodoxy and the notion of ‘being’ in the West are established, the decline of the concept of ‘being’ takes place. In turn, as the metaphysical macroparadigm shift from ‘being’ to ‘energy-being’ or ‘energy’ emerges, two types of Theology of Energy begin to appear. Finally, there are two significant applications of ‘energy’ or qi as a metaphysical idea, conducted in the interest of the current multicultural West and post-modern world at large.

Cohesively, vis-à-vis the rich, relevant contents of the varying articles therein, one may say, therefore, that the title of the book is well justified.

**The Nature of the Present Metaphysical Crisis and its Renewal**

Feeling the grave seriousness and possible repercussion of the present crisis in traditional metaphysics, one may ask: *What is the actual nature of this crisis with respect to traditional metaphysics? How did it happen?*

To begin with, succinctly speaking, traditional metaphysics is convinced that all philosophical knowledge depends ultimately on metaphysics. Simultaneously, all metaphysical knowledge depends on ‘being.’ If the fundamental building block of one’s metaphysics, i.e., ‘being,’ is shaken, one’s whole metaphysics or worldview is thrown in disarray, affecting one’s ultimate meaning, reality, goal, direction, spirituality, and even ethics of life, etc.

Differently said, traditional metaphysics is the study of ‘being’ as the universal all-unifying paradigm (i.e., everything is ‘being’). Affected by Hume’s fork and Kant’s anti-supernaturalism, etc., that scientifically verifiable natural beings, rather than scientifically unverifiable transcendent and supernatural beings, are to be taken seriously only, modern and post-modern minds tend to put behind substantially the whole transcendent and supernatural realms of beings. Therefore, countless people today no longer subscribe to the worldview offered by traditional metaphysics indicating, for example, that all created beings derive from the Uncreated Being and can only find their ultimate reality and meaning in and through such a transcendent Subsistent Being Itself.

Concurrently, to the present cell-phone generation, ‘being’ has

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3 Cf. Ibid., p. 319.
become fundamentally irrelevant, i.e., too abstract, transcendent, static, non-radiating, non-permeating, non-interacting, etc. Thus, the traditional Being-in-beings metaphysics or the worldview consisting of ‘Being, beings, and their intimate, inseparable, awesome relationship’ has extensively become out-of-date today. Apparently, if the traditional metaphysics of ‘Being and beings’ were to be widely accepted again, the concept of ‘being’ had to be fundamentally renewed.

Seeing that no universally accepted replacement is at hand, the present concrete, omnipresent, dynamic, radiating, all-permeating, and interacting concept of ‘energy’ or ‘energy-being’ is proposed by the author. It is inspired by modern high energy physics, depth psychology, the Orthodox concept of Divine Energy, in particular by the more-than-three-millennia Chinese tradition of ‘energy’ or qi. There is no doubt that, with regards to the emerging China, one should esteem its perennial philosophy much more than its current cycle of economic or political standing.

At the same time, as “there is talk at times of the end of metaphysics,”⁴ in a certain desperate search for a universal metaphysical macroparadigm germane to the mentality of the present generation, such a metaphysical concept of ‘energy’ or ‘energy-being’ should be welcome as a time-tested contribution to the renewal of the traditional perception of ‘being.’ In other words, in the midst of the current metaphysical impasse of the concept of ‘being’ awaiting its indispensable renewal, the development of a metaphysics of ‘energy’ or ‘energy-being’ should be given a chance for the possible blessing of many.

Decline and Renewal of Western Civilization in the History of Western Philosophy

As the development of Western philosophy and its civilization are inextricably intertwined, one may further ask: How can the present monograph contribute to the renewal of Western civilization, since many articles seem to touch on the decline of the Western civilization? First of all, it must be frankly stated that, according to the observation of many well acknowledged historians, all noteworthy civilizations of the world tend to go through the historical cycle of beginning, rise, decline, and perhaps even renewal. Sadly speaking, some civilizations have never attained the necessary renewal, i.e., having been unable to recover from

their untoward decline in their philosophical and cultural sphere.

Second, it must be clarified that there is no intention of the author to put down Western civilization in any way. It is true that, in light of Christian faith and reason, several articles in the present monograph have boldly pointed out the philosophical problems of this traditionally Christian civilization, such as modern scientific naturalism, rationalistic anti-supernaturalism, extreme subjectivism on the one hand, and post-modern foundationless relativism, ethical nihilism, and the problem of ‘being’ on the other. Together, these philosophical problems interconnectedly hint at the unfortunate decline of Western civilization. Notwithstanding, this conclusive stance has only been reaffirming what Oswald A. G. Spengler (1880-1936), Arnold J. Tonybee (1889-1975), Pope John-Paul II (1920-2005), Pope Benedict XVI, and Richard Tarnas, etc., did unanimously and unflinchingly state before.

Third, based on his years of reflections, and above all, his deep conviction of the immense inspiration and resilience which Christianity can offer, the author daringly expresses his suggestions as regards the renewal of Western civilization. These propositions are spelled out in the last four articles, in response to what the Western mind has gone through in the first six papers. Succinctly, in terms of ‘being’ and ‘energy-being,’ “An Emerging Metaphysical Macroparadigm Shift from Being to Energy-Being” (the seventh article) points out the general metaphysical road through which the West has been journeying and heading.

Simultaneously, as the West opens its door to the developments of high energy physics, depth psychology, the concept of Divine Energy, as well as the Asian idea of \( qi \), etc., the author briefly introduces a Christian version of Theology of Energy as he compares it with the New Age’s counterpart (in the eighth article). Moreover, as a proposal for renewing St. Thomas’ concept of God as Truth Itself, the Daoist perspective of \( qi \) is concretely recommended and handled accordingly (in the ninth article). Lastly, in the best interest of the post-modern metaphysical and cosmological search for truth, Chu Hsi’s metaphysical concept of the \( Li-Chi \) universe is brought in as a real possibility in the final paper.

One may thus say that various articles of this book are put together for a crucial purpose, i.e., with respect to the history of Western philosophy this work may become an eye-opener as regards the Christian renewal of Western civilization. Without exaggeration, such a renewal can no longer be ignored and delayed. To be sure, the effective renewal of
such an awesome civilization may subsequently affect not only the entire Europe, but also the whole human family as well, unprecedentedly so.

**Some Constructive Suggestions for Renewing Western Civilization**

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) asked, “Is ‘being’ a mere word and its meaning a vapor, or does what is designated by the word ‘being’ hold within it the spiritual destiny of the West?”

In the final analysis, this metaphysical question posed by Heidegger is no small challenge at all to Christians and non-Christians alike today, amid the current decline of Western civilization as well as Christianity as a whole in the West.

Indeed, if the correct answer to this taxing question is that ‘being’ is a mere word and its meaning a vapor, then, the whole Western civilization up to now would have been built on vapors. Consequently, the whole civilization would be fundamentally volatile, illusory, unreal, uncertain, undependable, murky, empty, worth little. As a result, Western civilization had to be totally abandoned or de-constructed, to be re-built on something solid, non-vaporous. However, if the accurate reply to Heidegger’s question is that ‘being’ does hold within it the spiritual destiny of the West. Then, what is needed both for the well-being of the West and its spiritual destiny is the proper, judicious renewal of the concept of ‘being.’

Constructively speaking, in the humble opinion of the author, the renewal of Western civilization should, thus, begin with ‘being’ as the unmistakable, most universal metaphysical concept in all of Western philosophy. Noticeably, if this single most fundamental building block of Western metaphysics is shaken to its foundation and be treated as “a mere word and its meaning a vapor,” then the rest of the entire building including the whole of Western philosophy, culture, religion, society, civilization, as well as their theory of knowledge, spirituality, ethics, direction, goal, aspiration, etc., would vaporize accordingly and result in untold jeopardy. Therefore, the renewal of Western civilization had to start with the renewal of the intuitive concept of ‘being’ amid its present chaos. This is precisely where the concept of ‘energy-being’ or ‘energy’ may come in, at least as a timely suggestion for serious consideration.

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5 Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, translated by R. Manheim (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 1959), p. 42. As this is a huge challenge to us, it is vital to list here also its original German text: “Ist das ‘Sein’ ein bloßes Wort und sein Bedeutung ein Dust, oder birgt das mit dem Wort ‘Sein’ genannte das geistige Schickal des Abendlandes?” Martin Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, dritte unveränderte auflage (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1966 [1953]), p. 32.

6 Ibid.
In the renewing of ‘being,’ the first priority right afterwards should be the renewal of the perception of the transcendent Divine Being Itself. If this traditional idea of God is re-figurated or re-interpreted in terms of ‘energy-being’ or ‘energy,’ we would discover that the traditionally personal, loving, and almighty Divine Being is very much also immanently concrete, dynamic, omnipresent, permeating, interactive, reaching out to share Himself with all created beings, ceaselessly so.7

“If universal history as a whole proceeds from the One to the One,”8 it would be exactly what countless people today are duly excited about, i.e., the One could be immensely accessible to each of us living from moment to moment between the two ultimate poles, in concept, experience, and even interaction. Such an intimate relationship with the One, then, is what the renewal of the transcendent, remote, non-permeating, non-radiating, non-interactive concept of the Uncreated One or Divine Being would, among others, bring forth to us. We would discover, all of a sudden, that this most personal, transcendent One, Subsistent Being, Divine Light or Energy-Being is transradiantly present everywhere, permeating, and surrounding us, inviting, expecting, and awaiting our trusting interaction and participation in Its omnipresent immanence and out-of-this-world nature. Just as the obsolete prompting of the Uncreated Being may have predominantly caused the conceptual decline of the Subsistent Being in Western civilization,9 the unparalleled renewal of the comprehension of this Being would re-figurate the traditional understanding of God and the civilization inextricably associated with Him, even as never before.

Simultaneously, such a renewal of ‘being’ should include the traditional conception of man. Hence, the human being would be understood as the human energy-beings. In his or her continuous interaction and participation in the Divine Light, a human energy-beings would not only be filled with immense Divine Energy of the Divine Light alone. He would also become an amazing radiator of Its Divine Energy, ineffably helping this Divine Light to divinize, Energize, and Heavenize the whole of creation, including the entire global village and its peoples.

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7 Cf. John Cheng, A Comparative Study between St. Thomas Aquinas’s Concept of Ipsum Esse Subsistens and the Concept of Qi in the Guanzi’s Four Daoist Chapters (Toronto, Ontario: Grace Institute Press, 2009), pp. 151-216.
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nations, families, institutions, etc. At the same time, the Church would be perceived as the principal, unsurpassed Body and Channel of this Immense Light, inexhaustibly overflowing with the breathtaking Energies of the Creator, eagerly serving and filling the whole human family as well as the complete cosmos with His incredible Energies of transforming light, life, love, joy, wisdom, peace, goodness, and faithfulness, etc.

Further on, embracing Christ as the ever living Alpha and Omega of all creation, a human energy-being, in particular a Christian, would once again become a vibrant spearhead, helping Christ and His Church to lead the entire evolving universe back to the One, as he should. In the prophetic words of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955): “As soon as we realize that there is an organic relationship between our busyness as elements and the success of the world that bears us — as soon as a God awaits us in his own person at the top of the tower that, held up by him, we can build if we unite [with God and with each other] — then, indeed, we find the impulse to live, the essential joy of living.”

At the same time, Arnold Toynbee sums up the whole Christian utopia succinctly: “It is Man’s task to execute, within the time that God allot s to him on Earth, a human mission to do God’s will by working for the coming of God’s Kingdom on Earth as it is in Heaven.” Such an amazing consequence is, for instance, what this promising renewal of Western civilization would eventually bring to the West and even the rest of the world. Without doubt, the renewed Christian West would reach out once again with unmatched confidence in assisting the ever transradiant Creator to Christianize or Energize humanity and the whole creation.

A Contribution to the Development of the Fu Jen School of Thought

Briefly, the Fu Jen School is a scholarly attempt by varying scholars to re-interpret indigenously — in terms of Chinese philosophy and culture — St. Thomas Aquinas’s scholastic philosophy, especially its transcendentals of truth (verum), goodness (bonum), beauty (pulchritudo), and holiness (sanctitas). Following the incultural direction anchored by various distinguished Fu Jen Catholic University scholars, such as His Eminence Cardinal Paul Yü Pin (1901-1978), Most Rev. Archbishop Stanislaus Lo Kuang (1911-2004), Rev. Mgrs. Gabriel Ly, and Prof.

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Bernard Li, etc.,\textsuperscript{12} this is a noteworthy school of thinking founded in 2005 by Prof. Bernard Li for the blessing of many in Taiwan and elsewhere internationally.\textsuperscript{13} Reflectively, a question of interest arises here, the answer of which might become a momentous guidance for the author’s or anyone’s future dedication to the Fu Jen School: \textit{How does the present book contribute to the future development of the Fu Jen School?}

Well, the first paper on Plato points out \textit{inter alia} the origin of the Thomistic transcendentals, connecting the Fu Jen School uniquely with this ancient Greek philosopher. As an ever elderly and ever valuable patron of the value philosophy championed by the Fu Jen School, Plato would reinstate that eternal values like truth, goodness, beauty, and holiness are not what post-modern foundationless \textit{post-rem} Sophists think. Rather, as the four preeminent pillars of the Fu Jen School, these transcendentals are eternal \textit{ante-rem} universals which would have existed even if there were no minds to know them. In our search for perennial values, these transcendentals are unchangingly there, awaiting patiently our eventual discovery or re-discovery of their everlasting existence.

In the second paper, the example of St. Augustine shows us that truth, goodness, beauty, and holiness, like the all-present God, are omnipresent, ever welcoming our increasing participation with open hands. As St. Augustine’s own personal ferocious struggle for these transcendentals is so similar to that of the modern or post-modern man, his concluding conversion experience can positively become a vital case for the Fu Jen School to further study in the strenuous process of reaching out to this skeptical, foundationless, \textit{post-rem} generation.

In the next article, St. Thomas Aquinas, in his metaphysical endeavours, awesomely equates the concept of Subsistent Being Itself as Truth, Goodness, and Beauty Itself. This paper advocates also Jacques Maritain’s fourfold wisdom, i.e., metaphysical wisdom, theological wisdom, mystical wisdom, and beatific wisdom.\textsuperscript{14} On the whole, such a balance between metaphysics and mysticism should inspire the Fu Jen School to develop the experiential part towards the transcendentals which


\textsuperscript{13} Prof. Bernard Li is also the current President of Fu Jen Catholic University and Dean of Fu Jen Academia Catholica.

it dearly holds in terms of Maritain’s four levels of wisdom. As the present generation is increasingly hungry for supernatural mystical experience, the experienceable dimension of metaphysics becomes eminently imperative in the future advancement of the Fu Jen School. Again, the article on St. Gregory Palamas’s distinction between God’s Essence and Energy helps us to understand that God — being Truth, Goodness, Beauty, and Holiness Itself — is perennially both partakable and impartakable. In this light, the traditional transcendentals treated consciously or subconsciously by many as belonging only to the unapproachable transcendent realm would, suddenly, become profusely accessible to ordinary folks. All in all, such a distinction should guard the Fu Jen School from strictly upholding pure, abstract, non-experienceable transcendentals, guiding this incultural school at the same time to avoid teaching sheer pantheism in the cultivation Christian mysticism.

In addition, as materialism, rationalism, atheism, agnosticism, scientism, hedonism, etc., tend to permeate the whole fabric of our global village today, the fifth paper on Kant would be a well-timed inspiration to the Fu Jen School in its efforts to awaken people from the Kantian anti-supernatural slumbers. As we know, the whole Chinese and non-Chinese worlds are still heavily clouded by Kant’s more-than-two-century-old anti-supernaturalism even today.

In a similar vein, the sixth paper warns us not to fall prey to Kant’s naturalistic Religion and religion. As a faithful defender of Catholic truth, goodness, beauty, and holiness, the Fu Jen School should make it a crucial part of its mission to remind people not to treat Christianity as a naturalistic religion, having little or nothing to do with supernatural truths and transcendent realities. It is vital to remember that the Christian religion and the supernatural mysteries which it traditionally espouses have been divinely revealed and solemnly reaffirmed by the Magisterium.

As the next paper indicates, a metaphysical macroparadigm is gradually shifting from ‘being’ to ‘energy-being’ today in the West as well as in various Westernized parts of the world. Hence, the Fu Jen School should take on qi — the broadest Chinese metaphysical concept — in its future inculturations. As we know, the Western concept of ‘being’ and the Chinese counterpart of qi are simply two distinct yet comparable ‘universal metaphysical macroparadigms’ in their historical

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traditions. Therefore, to reach out effectively to the Chinese people, it becomes only natural to be using varying qi terms in order to be in tune inculturally with this qi populace.

In addition, for the theological inculturation of the Fu Jen School using the Chinese concept of qi, it may be essential to be aware of the two types of Theology of Energy put forward in the eighth paper. Evidently, one type is explicitly faithful to the Catholic Church and the other is adversely devoted to the anti-Christian New Age movement. Hence, this Catholic school of inculturation would be steered clear from all un-called-for entanglements with the acutely anti-Catholic New Age.

Finally, as the last two papers demonstrate, it is quite necessary for the Fu Jen School to continue re-visiting many important scholastic concepts in terms of qi and other major Chinese cultural concepts. As such, both scholasticism and Chinese culture are so rich culturally. Yet, at the same time, they can become immensely enriching towards one another spiritually. In this age largely marked by technical mastery of the world and globalization itself, this Chinese inculturation of scholasticism, as well as scholastic inculturation of the Chinese heritage, are done, therefore, in the best interest of the global village philosophically and theologically, as much as culturally and spiritually.

Further Discussions and Explorations

Indeed, there are many other questions which may need to be addressed and explored much further, both now and in the future, with regards to the ten articles presented above and the various vital issues sprung forth. Meanwhile, the author find the following three topics quite appealing and conducive to being able to address some of the questions unanswered, i.e., a comparison between ‘being’ and qi, this Theology of Energy in the renewal of Western civilization, and the Fu Jen Qi Theology in the future development of Chinese civilization. If it is indeed possible, perhaps a book should be written on each theme in the future development of the present Philosophy and Theology of Energy or Qi.

18 Cf. John Cheng, A Comparative Study between St. Thomas Aquinas’s Concept of Ipsum Esse Subsistens and the Concept of Qi in the Guanzi’s Four Daoist Chapters, pp. 217-282.
19 Cf. Ibid., pp. 151-216.