从儒家型企业家的涵义看传统文化的“两创”

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当前，习近平总书记和党中央对于中华优秀传统文化的“两创”工作，即创造性转化与创新性发展的论述，对于我们从事传统文化研究的广大学人而言，指明了一个非常好的研究方向。本文仅从“儒商”的角度切入，讨论传统中国人所期望的“儒商”或是曰儒家型的企业家，究竟包含着哪些意思，进而为当代中国儒家型的企业家的自我成长与塑造提供思想的引导，亦可以将传统文化的“两创”工作落实到实际的社会经济生活之中。

“儒商”一词，究竟起源于何时，暂无确切考证。大体言之，晚明社会出现“富贾何负宏儒”的商儒关系新论，催了“儒商”的观念兴起。如果不纠缠于语言学的实证要求，笔者以为，“儒商”观念大约在晚明时期出现的。而与儒商一词相近的“儒贾”一词则出现于明嘉靖时期，儒商一词则晚至康熙时代。[①]在儒家思想史上，人们往往将子贡视为儒商的典型代表，而范蠡、计然也被视为儒商。而与儒商相对应的两个概念是儒将与儒医，“儒将”是指遵循儒家一套道德观念、又有丰富的军事知识，善于克敌制胜的将军。而“儒医”则指有广博知识，有仁爱之心，不止是停留在医术层面救人的医生，它与庸医、以聚敛钱财为目的的江湖郎中形成了天壤之别。改革开放三十多年来，当代中国人对于“商”的价值认识再次发生变化，特别是近十几年来，人们有感于商人逐利而无所不用其极，带来极大的社会问题，“儒商”的呼唤又再次响起。这表明人们思念有道德、有文化的儒商群体的出现。而当代汉语语境的“儒商”一词，远不止是指商贾一类的人物，实际上是泛指民营企业家群体。因此，今天讨论“儒商”问题，实际上是讨论儒家型的企业家群体如何形成的问题。

儒家型的企业家，其本质是商或者是企业家而不是儒，无论是由儒者去经商、做企业而成功后成为新型的商人或企业家，还是商人、企业家经营成功后向往儒者的身份而让自己的变得有学问的人，他们在本质上都还是商人或曰企业家。因为儒家型的企业家共同的人生使命就是赚钱或者说是创造利润与生产商品。儒家企业家，实际上是指那一类用合乎道义的方式，用知识和智慧去赚钱、去经营企业。他们与一般的商人或企业家或是见利忘义，或是以奸诈获利，或是以勤劳获利的工作方式极不相同。而更为重要的问题是：赚钱或从事企业的一系列活动，特别是以合道的方式赚钱活动本身，能否为这批人的人生提供超越于物态工作的意义，能否让人生获得精神的解脱？这将是讨论当代“儒商”、儒家型的企业家问题时要关注的根本问题。本文尝试从以下三个层次来讨论“儒商”或儒家企业家的问题，并通过此具体问题的讨论来回应当代社会里如何实现传统文化的创造性转化与创新性

① 周生春、杨缨：《历史上的儒商与儒商精神》，《中国经济史研究》2010年第4期。

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发展的“两创”问题，以求教于学界同仁与大家。

一、儒家型企业家的“儒”字的“伦理”涵义 [见英文版第116页，下同]

何谓儒商，何谓儒家型的企业家？其义涵似乎可以先从“儒”字说起。“儒”字，有伦理义涵，有知识义涵。作为伦理层面义涵的“儒”，正如孔子所说：“君子喻于义，小人喻于利。”（《论语·里仁》）儒商、儒家型的企业家必定是那一类“见利思义”的人。冯梦龙《醒世恒言》中有《施润泽滩阙遇友》一篇小说，其中的小商人施润泽（名施复）即是一位“见利思义”的下层儒商。他在一家沿街的屋檐下捡到两锭银子，约六两多，开始心中甚喜，在回家的路上反复思想如何用这银子增加投资，正在回到家门口之前，突然一想，这银子若是富人的，也不打紧，若是客商的，抛妻别子，风餐露宿，将是何等的烦恼！如此一想，便回到原地去等候失主。等了好半晌，肚子都已经饿了，才看到一个后生来寻银子，经过反复勘对，确证是这个后生的，便把这银子还给了他。施复回家后，他妻子问他为什么这么晚才回家，他一五一十地告诉了拾银还银之事，妻子不仅不生气，反而很高兴。小说写到此，作者不禁站出来评论道：“衣冠君子中，多有见利忘义的，不料愚夫愚妇到有这等见识。”施复夫妇是小商人，比一般的君子还强，能够做到“见利思义”，而不是“见利忘义”。可见，儒商之“儒”必然与遵守信义的伦理有关。在当代中国，无论商人也好，还是企业家也好，只要与“儒”字发生关系，就必须遵守儒家为人处事的基本伦理原则，否则不足以称为儒商或儒家型的企业家。

从学术上说，“见利思义”之“义”，在伦理内涵方面是极其丰富的，不同的时代，不同的学派，对“义”都有不同的规定，其抽象的意思是“适宜”、恰好如此，其基本的道德内涵即是符合人类基本的道德共识，如不贪婪，遵守仁、义、礼、智、信五常之规范。传统中国的儒商，大体上在发家之后肯为家乡出资修路铺桥，修建义塾，凡有此种种义举的商人，都可称之为儒商。今天社会中的“义”字，不仅要符合中国传统的基本道德，还要符合当代中国的社会主义道德，即首先要以正当的手段致富，如勤劳致富，而不可以坑、蒙、拐、骗的不正当手段致富，更不能以贩黄贩毒等违法行为致富。其次，要有共同富裕的新理念。因此，当代中国社会中的商人或企业家，在致富之后，还要帮助其他邻里乡亲一同致富，至少要从事一定的慈善事业，如帮助失学儿童、智障儿童，在自己能力所及的范围内从事救灾赈灾的工作。能在此两方面有所作为的人，方可以称其为儒家型的企业家。

更进一步地说，现代儒家型的企业家所有遵守的“义”，不仅是一般意义上的合乎伦理道德的要求，在政治层面还有忠于国家的政治伦理要求。近代中国初期，如薛福成、郑观应等人提出“工商立国”，将工商业者的赢利行为与民族国家的兴衰结合起来。而近代日本自明治维新之后，出现了一大批报国的有知识、有远见商人，像《论语与算盘》的作者涩泽荣一，就是日本的儒家型的企业家。而中国社会则出现了像张謇等一大批儒商或曰是儒家型的企业家。这些儒家型的企业家都有忠于国家的精神向度，他们人生所奉行的道义原则即是富国利民。故今日中国儒家型的企业家，亦当有这种实业报国情怀。

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二、儒家型企业家的“儒”字的“知识”涵义 [116]

在中国传统的语境中，“儒”字一词，还指有知识的人士。中国传统社会后期，儒者的普通义即是今日所言的知识分子。故“儒商”或儒家型的企业家，实际上是指一批有知识有文化的商人或企业家，而不是一般的大字不识一个，只知道赚钱，只是有钱而没知识、没文化的家缠万贯之人；因此，广义的儒商或曰儒家型的企业家，并不一定就是信奉儒家理论或伦理道德学说的学者型商人或企业家。儒商或儒家型的企业家，此处的“儒”字的泛指有知识、有文化的商人，或者说是有知识、有文化的手工业者、企业家。

非常有意思的是，在先秦道家学派庄子的作品中，专门从拥有知识的角度讨论了何者为“儒”的问题。《庄子·田子方》篇云：

> 儒者冠圜冠者，知天时；履句履者，知地形；缓佩玦者，事至而断。

这是先秦时代对儒者作为知识人士的一个基本规定，意思是说，真正的儒者必定是上知天文，下知地理，而且有正确地运用自己所有的知识做出正确判断的人。这一要求其实是非常高的，我们今天的大学教授也没有几个能配得上这个知识义上的儒者的称号。按照这一理想型的儒者的要求，在我们今天这个知识与信息爆炸的社会里，能够称之为儒家型企业家的人，一定是要通晓商业知识、管理知识、还要知道基本的法律与不同地区的风俗习惯，否则无法成为一个真正的儒家型的企业家。因此，儒家型的企业家的“儒”字，绝非是一个附庸风雅、舞文弄墨的象征性符号，而是一个切切实实的内在知识素养的要求。像今日一些著名的民营企业家，拥有极广博知识的企业家，只是他们不是以传播知识、生产知识为自己人生的职志而已，而是把自己所拥有的知识，甚至可以说是企业经营的智慧为变现为金钱或自己所领导的企业的利润，以创造更多、更好的物质产品与就业机会，并以此方式来服务社会、造福社会，为人类做贡献。当然，像日本的大企业家稻盛和夫，不仅成就了巨大的实业，而且也在著书立说，阐发经营之道，这样的商人或企业家，就不仅仅是儒商或儒家型的企业家了，更可以说“商儒”或企业家型的儒者了。

从中国社会的历史来看，由儒而商，然后又由商致富后再回到儒者的队伍之中，也不乏其人，先秦时代的墨子是小手工业者，他以此为生计，但他后来又成为大学者，并形成了可以与孔子及其弟子们构成的儒家相抗衡的墨家学派，可以说是古典的“儒商”或商儒的代表性人物。而且，他的弟子中大多数人也都是有知识的工商业者。因此，墨家团体实际可以说是一批有知识的古典“儒商”或儒家型的企业家群体。而在晚明时代，泰州学派的王艮就是由儒而商，后又由商而儒的。泰州学派的很多成员可以说是中国前近代时期最早的儒商群体。因此，从“儒”字的知识义来说，儒商与商儒之间也并非有一条不可逾越的鸿沟。而作为现代的儒商或儒家型的企业家，其实还负有技术创新、知识创新的重大历史使命，像微软、苹果公司里等国际大牌的企业，就是通过他们的新技术在逐渐改变着人类的生活。故今日的中国社会，需要有一大批这样类型的“儒商”，或曰儒家型的企业家的历史性人物，以自己特殊的身份与智慧，参与并推进中国传统文化的创造性转化与创新性的发展，从而让中华民族为当今的世界做出更大的贡献。

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三、当代儒家型企业家群体的生存与工作伦理 [117]

儒有大儒、小儒之别，儒商或曰儒家型的企业家，亦有大儒商、小儒商与大儒家型企业家与小儒家型企业家的分别，然无论大小，都必需是兼备道德与知识二义的商人或曰企业家，方可称之为儒商或儒家型的企业家。儒商、儒家型的企业家虽有大小之别，然而他们仍然是商人或企业家。商人或企业家的天职是通过商品的交换与生产而谋取利润，这正如知识人士的天职是拥有知识、传承文化、创新或创造知识，官员的天职是掌握好政治权力并正确地行使政治权力，以保持一个良序的社会及其正常的运转。现代汉语中的儒商之“商”，实际上已经并非仅指商人，而是可以泛指从事经济工作的企业家，在当代中国社会的语境中主要是指民营企业家。当代中国的“儒商”，即是当代中国社会里有道德、有担当、有丰富知识与正确经营之道的民营企业家。而国有企业的领导本质上是官员，很难以“儒商”来指认。民营企业家的生存之道，就是通过企业或商业的行为来营利，从而养活自己，造福社会。民营企业家的本质与天然的使命，或者说他们的天职就是通过商品交换与商品生产来创造利润，用中国传统哲学的话来说，是通过“正德”的方式来实现“利用、厚生”的目标。

19世纪德国哲学家马克斯·韦伯（Max Weber）在其《新教伦理与资本主义精神》一书中，对现代资本家创业活动的内在精神给出了哲学的解释，他认为，基督新教对于那些从事工商业的人来说，实质上是通过自己的牟利、创造利益的活动来实现人生来世的救赎。韦伯将这种新教徒的牟利、创造利润活动的内在道德合理性称之为是新型资本家的“天职”（Calling）。因此，作为当代中国企业家群体的古典称谓——儒商，除了要遵守一般的社会伦理与法律之外，还要有适宜于他们从事经济活动的特别企业伦理或曰商业伦理，从而为他们的企业或商业活动提供内在精神合理性的支持。在当代中国社会的语境里讨论“儒商”或曰儒家型的企业家问题，不仅要求企业家们遵守公共的道德，不赚昧心钱之外，还要为他们的合法合理的经济活动提供一套适当的企业伦理，从而为他们的经济工作提供内在的人生意义与指引。

近代中国的儒家型企业家，有感于中国的积贫积弱，曾提出过“工商救国”“实业救国”的理想。今天中国的儒家型企业家，被选为政协委员、人大代表，亦给他们提供政治的出路，并通过政治的出路为他们提供人生的意义。如果从学术的角度看，当代中国的儒家型的企业家，实际上并没有解决他们个人的人生意义问题。很多有钱而没有政治之势的儒家型的企业家或商人，他们往往根据自己的人生经验、经历选择了不同的宗教信仰作为自己的人生精神归宿，并没有把企业或商业的本职活动作为他们自己的安身立命的职业场所，并从他们自己的经济活动中获得超越的精神意义。因此，当代中国的知识界与政府界，如何能为新型的民营企业家们提供一套具有普遍适应性的职业与人生的伦理，引导他们积极向上？这应该是当代“儒商”问题讨论与研究中需要正视并逐步加以解决的深刻的理论问题。今天的中国，一些民营企业家将自己的资产转移到海外，或者直接移民到海外，这个中的原因很复杂，不可一概而论，但从民营企业家群体的内在精神追求来说，他们普遍缺乏属于自己群体的精神动力或曰工作伦理，应该是深层次的原因。他们除了赚钱，获得一官半职然后更好的赚钱之外，并没有从赚钱的活动中获得精神解脱的意义，不像少数知识分子还能有一种为学术而学术，为真理而学术的抽象精神动力在人的灵魂深处支撑着他们。当代中国的“儒商”们能够理直气壮地说：“为赚钱而赚钱”“赚钱是人的天职”吗？我不知道有没有，这可能需要深入的社会调查。即使有，这种生存伦理

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或曰工作伦理，恐怕既不为中国社会的主流意识形态所允许，也不为广大百姓所认同，甚至也不为众多的“儒商”们自己所接受。当代中国社会“儒商”们的生存伦理或曰工作伦理究竟是什么，他们工作成就的精神意义究竟是何在？能否从中国传统的文化中寻找到，或者是从当代的中国文化中寻找到？这是需要我们共同思考与探索的时代问题之一。这也将是中国传统文化创造性转化与创新性发展时代课题之一。

结语 [118]

中国古代有“三不朽”的理论，其言曰：“太上有立其德，其次有立其功，其次有立其言。”在古代社会里，能够立德的人多为圣人或圣王，立功者多为将军或文士，立言者多为文人。在今天的中国社会里，“三不朽”的理论其实可以广泛适应于社会上任何有志之士的精神需求。当代的曰儒家型的企业家们可以通过企业的成功，造福一方，既可以说是立德，亦可以说是立功。而成功的儒家型企业家，如果他有时间丰裕，且有创作的兴趣与能力，亦可以著书立说，实现“立言”之梦。当代中国各级政府部门，也在为这些人广开人生实现自己志向之路，不断吸收企业家为政协委员、人大代表。除此之外，我们的社会还应该更加开放一些，让一些优秀的儒家型企业家进学校、上讲坛、当兼职或客座教授。这样，我们所呼吁的“儒商”现象就不只是停留在口号上，而是落实于制度之中，这样，中国当代的“儒商”群体就可能朝向更加健康的方向发展。而中国传统文化的创造性转化与创新性发展就将在民营企业家的群体里落到实处，并为当代中国社会的健康发展提供精神与文化方面的贡献。

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Exploring the Connotations of Confucian Businessmen in the Innovative Development of Traditional Culture

Wu Genyou

The initiative of innovative transformation and development of traditional Chinese culture proposed by the CPC Central Committee led by General Secretary Xi Jinping sheds some light on relevant academic studies. In light of this initiative, this paper discusses the connotations of traditional *Rushang* (儒商), or Confucian businessmen, to guide their self-development in modern China and thus help the initiative to be productive in practice as well.

Little is known about the exact origin of the concept *Rushang*. Roughly, in the late Ming dynasty, a new discourse on the relationship between businessmen and scholars occurred, which held that a wealthy businessman is not inferior to a learned scholar. This discourse was followed by a social awareness of becoming *Rushang*. *Rushang* was first termed *Rugu* (儒贾), which came into use during the reign of Emperor Jiajin (r. 1522–1566) of the Ming. Its present name *Rushang* dates back to the reign of Emperor Kangxi (r. 1662–1722) of the Qing dynasty.[1] In the history of Confucianism, Zigong 子贡 (520–456 BCE) and Fan Li 范蠡 (536–448 BCE) were usually considered two representative Confucian businessmen.

After over thirty years of reform and opening up, modern Chinese attitudes toward business have changed again. In the past decade, especially, there has been again a call for businessmen with good education and moral integrity, in the face of tremendous social problems caused by some businessmen's unscrupulous pursuit of profits. However, today the word *Rushang* means far more than businessmen; rather, it refers to private entrepreneurs in general. Therefore, the thesis of this paper will actually center on how the group of Confucian entrepreneurs is formed.

The essence of *Rushang* is not that of scholarship but still that of businessmen because their aim is to produce products and make profits. Nevertheless, they are so called because they, quite different from those who either sacrifice honor for profits or make money through hard work, run their business and make money morally with their knowledge and wisdom. This presents a very important question: Can they achieve their spiritual freedom by managing their life and business that way? Surely, this is a fundamental question concerning the discussion of the contemporary *Rushang*. In view of this, the paper attempts to discuss the topic from the following three perspectives and as a response to how to implement the initiative development of traditional Chinese culture in contemporary China.

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1 Zhou Shengchun 周生春 and Yang Ying 杨缨, "Confucian Businessmen and Their Spirit in History" [历史上的儒商与儒商精神], *Researches in Chinese Economic History* [中国经济史研究], no. 4 (2010): 152–158.

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The Ethical Meaning of *Ru* in *Rushang* [Refer to page 91 for Chinese. Similarly hereinafter]

To discuss the connotations of *Rushang*, we can start from the meaning of the word *Ru*. Traditionally, the word has meaning in both ethics and knowledge. Confucius said, "The gentleman sees righteousness; the mean man sees profits" (*Analects*, 4:16). Therefore, in the ethical sense, *Rushang* are those who always keep in mind what is righteous in the face of profits. Shi Runze, a character in *Lasting Words to Awaken the World* [醒世恒言] by Feng Menglong 冯梦龙 (1574–1646), is such an example. Although he is a lower stratum *Rushang*, he keeps good faith and does even better than a gentleman. In contemporary China, *Rushang* should also follow the basic ethical principles of Confucianism; otherwise they do not deserve the appellation.

Academically, the word righteousness (*yi* 义) has been defined by various schools in different ages and has profuse ethic connotations. It has an abstract meaning of being appropriate or proper, and its core moral connotation refers to human beings' basic moral consensus, such as non-greediness and compliance with the Five Constant Virtues, namely benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and faithfulness. Traditionally, most *Rushang* would build roads and bridges or establish tuition-free schools for their hometowns after they made a fortune. However, today, the word righteousness should mean not only traditional morality but also the modern ethics of socialist China. In this sense businessmen or entrepreneurs should first seek fortune by lawful means, instead of by swindling or drug and pornography trafficking. Secondly, they should always hold on to the ideal of common prosperity. That is, in modern China, wealthy businessmen or entrepreneurs should engage themselves often in helping their fellow neighbors to get rich together, doing charity work or offering disaster relief services whenever they can. Only those who meet the two requirements can be called *Rushang*.

Further, righteousness may also mean being loyal to and benefiting the country. This is the requirement for *Rushang* in political ethics. In early modern China, Xue Fucheng 薛福成 (1838–1894) and Zheng Guanying 郑观应 (1842–1922) proposed the idea of building China with industry and commerce, calling for the industrialists and businessmen to combine their profit-making with the fate of the country. In response to their proposal, a multitude of such *Rushang* sprang up, one of whom was Zhang Jian 张謇 (1853–1926), a famous industrialist in the late Qing dynasty. In Japan, there were also a large number of knowledgeable and farsighted businessmen who dedicated themselves to the service of the country after the Meiji Restoration in 1868, and Shibusawa Eiichi 渋沢栄一 (1840–1931), the author of *Analects plus Abacus*, was one of them. All *Rushang* mentioned above showed their dedication to their country, and the principle of morality that they followed is to enrich the country and benefit the people. There is no doubt that contemporary Chinese businessmen and entrepreneurs should also cherish such kind of ideal and serve the country with industry and commerce.

The Intellectual Meaning of *Ru* [92]

In traditional Chinese context, the word *Ru* can also be used to refer to a person of knowledge (today's intellectual or scholar). Therefore, in a wider sense, *Rushang* may not be restricted to scholar-type businessmen or entrepreneurs who believe in Confucianism or Confucian ethics but all businessmen, handicraftsmen, and entrepreneurs if they are knowledgeable.

Interestingly, in the "Tian Zifang" [田子方] of the *Zhuangzi*, there is a special discussion on what kind of knowledgeable person characterizes *Ru*: "Those who wear round hats know the seasons of heaven; those who wear square shoes know the shape of earth.[2] And those who loosely

2 According to the ancient Chinese cosmogony, heaven is round and earth is square.

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gird themselves with semi-circular jade pendants settle matters well." According to this statement, in a society like today's with a wealth of knowledge and information, a true *Rushang* must have a thorough understanding of business, management, laws, and various local customs. The word *Ru* is not a symbol of being arty or pedantic but a real requirement for the intrinsic knowledge of the businessmen or entrepreneurs. Some famous private entrepreneurs possess extensive knowledge, although they do not take creating and spreading knowledge as their mission. What they engage themselves in is turning their knowledge into profits, and therefore making contributions to the society by quality products and job opportunities. However, as a great Japanese entrepreneur, Kazuo Inamori 稻盛和夫 not only made great achievements in business, but also wrote books, discussing the ways of business management. An entrepreneur like this has gone far beyond what a *Rushang* covers; rather, he can be called a business scholar or entrepreneurial scholar.

In Chinese history, there was no lack of the type of people who were first scholars, then successful businessmen, and later again great scholars. Among them, Mozi in the pre-Qin period can be said to be a typical example. He was a handicraftsman before he became a great scholar again. Later, he even established the Mohism that contended with Confucianism represented by Confucius and his disciples. Most of Mozi's followers were also learned businessmen. Another example is Wang Gen 王艮 (1483–1541) of Taizhou School in the late Ming dynasty, whose followers were the earliest group of *Rushang* in pre-modern China. Therefore, in terms of the meaning of *Ru*, there is no unbridgeable gap between business scholars and scholarly businessmen.

Moreover, in modern times, *Rushang* are usually entrusted with a historical mission of knowledge and technology innovation, among whom Bill Gates of Microsoft and Steve Jobs of Apple Inc. are good examples. They are changing people's life with their new techniques. Today, China also needs a large number of such kind of *Rushang* who, with their aspiration and wisdom, devote themselves to promoting the creative transformation and innovative development of the traditional Chinese culture and, thereby, help the Chinese nation contribute even more to the world.

The Work and Survival Ethics of Contemporary *Rushang* [93]

A businessman or an entrepreneur's mission is to gain profit by producing and exchanging commodities, just as an intellectual's mission is to acquire, inherit, and innovate knowledge and culture, or an official's mission is to maintain the good order of the society by properly exercising his or her authority. However, a *Rushang* is a businessman or an entrepreneur who runs a business, whether big or small, with morality and knowledge. The Chinese word 商 (*shang*) has already far extended its original meaning from businessman to all those entrepreneurs who engage in economic work, but in contemporary China, *Rushang* does not refer to the leaders of state-owned enterprises; instead it specifically refers to those private entrepreneurs with morality, sense of responsibility, and profound knowledge, as the leaders of state-owned enterprises are actually government officials in essence and can hardly be called *Rushang*. For the private entrepreneurs, their way of surviving is to earn money through their business management and hence benefit the society. From the point of view of traditional Chinese philosophy, they are achieving their goals of making a fortune and benefit the people by practicing respectable virtues.

Max Weber (1864–1920), a German philosopher of the nineteenth century, provided a philosophical explanation of the inner spirit of modern capitalists in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. He believed that, according to the teachings of Protestantism, those entrepreneurs are actually seeking redemption through profit-making activities. Weber named the inner morality reasonability of these profit-making activities the "Calling"

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of the new class capitalists. Therefore, to discuss *Rushang* in modern China, besides those general social moralities, we need to build an appropriate ethics system for businessmen to provide guidance to their lawful business activities and help them find the meaning of life.

In modern China, some *Rushang*, having witnessed the enduring impoverishment and long-standing debility of the country, proposed the ideals of saving the country by engaging in industry or saving the country by engaging in commerce. However, from an academic point of view, for the majority of *Rushang* in contemporary China, their meaning of life has remained an unsolved problem. Some wealthy private entrepreneurs or businessmen, seeing no access to politics, would turn to seek their spiritual home from religious beliefs rather than settle down and get on with their pursuit in their enterprises or pursue their spiritual transcendence from their economic activities. Nowadays, some private entrepreneurs transfer their property abroad or even emigrate. This phenomenon may be attributed to many reasons, but a profound one is that among those private entrepreneurs there is a widespread lack of their own spiritual drive or work ethic.

If the contemporary *Rushang* do business only for the sake of money and hold to the belief that to earn is human, their behavior would be intolerable to both the Chinese mainstream ideology and the Chinese public and would even be unacceptable to the majority of the *Rushang* group. Therefore, whether from an academic or a political view, it is of significance to build up a widely applicable ethics system for the new class of private entrepreneurs so that they can be effectively guided in their business and life. This is a profound theoretical issue that needs to be envisaged in the study of the contemporary *Rushang* group. However, what should be included in the ethics system to be built? Where does the spiritual meaning of their work lie? Can we find the answers in traditional or contemporary Chinese cultures? All these questions are the questions of the time that deserve our attention and also concern much of the creative transformation and innovative development of traditional Chinese culture.

According to the view of the Chinese ancients, there are Three Immortalities (三不朽): the sage or sage king that can establish morality, the general that can establish merits, and the literate that can establish words. In today's China, the thought of Three Immortalities is still applicable to any person of noble aspirations. Following this thought, *Rushang* can make efforts to run business well and bring benefit to the local people and economy. In so doing, they can be said to be establishing morality and merits. A successful *Rushang* with the interest, ability, and time can also achieve the goal of establishing words by writing books and setting up a theory. The government departments at all levels are trying to make them have easier access to political affairs by admitting them as deputies to the National People's Congress or representatives of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. It would certainly be much better if our society should have a more open attitude toward *Rushang* by allowing those outstanding ones to give lectures or even to serve as adjunct or visiting professors in educational institutions. Only in this way can we say what we have done for *Rushang* no longer remains in words but in institutions and practice, and *Rushang*, as a group, will grow in a more positive direction. The creative transformation and innovative development of traditional Chinese culture will be properly implemented in them, making its spiritual and cultural contributions to the sound development of the Chinese society.

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