

What Is Philosophy For? —An Interview with Professor Huang Yusheng

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Abstract: This interview takes the academic experience of Professor Huang Yusheng from the Department of Philosophy at Tsinghua University as a thread to explore the fundamental significance and contemporary value of the discipline of philosophy. Professor Huang first reviews the historical context in which he chose to study philosophy, and on this basis, elaborates on the foundational role of philosophy in university education and the cultivation of the university spirit, emphasizing that philosophy lays the groundwork for the scientific spirit and theoretical thinking. In the interview, he also offers a unique insight into approaching philosophical classics: one must “read the classics slowly” to deeply understand the absent questions behind the texts. Professor Huang further criticizes the tendency to marginalize the humanities, stressing that disciplines such as history and literature also possess rigorous narrative logic and truthfulness, and serve as vital sources of imagination and civilizational development. Centering on his core research theme of freedom, he puts forward the proposition that “freedom is relational,” and analyzes the connections between freedom and responsibility, as well as between the individual and the community.

Keywords: philosophy; freedom; university spirit; humanities; rights

Sun Zhuyi: Hello, Professor Huang. Thank you for taking the time to accept this interview. You chose philosophy as your major when you were in university. Our first question is, why did you make such a choice back then?

Huang Yusheng: I chose to study philosophy of my own free will. There were 60 students in my university class, most of whom were assigned to the philosophy major by the school; those like me who chose it voluntarily were in the minority at that time. There are several reasons for this. First, I was originally a science student, but the high school I attended forced science students who were good at mathematics to switch to liberal arts in pursuit of higher college admission rates. The school had drawn a conclusion back then: students who excelled in mathematics were certain to get into key universities by taking the liberal arts college entrance exam. Simply put, everything was geared towards admission rates and the rate of getting into key institutions. Unlike your generation, which can resist such arrangements, we had no choice back then—not even the chance to transfer schools—so I had to switch to liberal arts. Since I loved mathematics and physics, I considered applying to the Department of Philosophy when I learned that it required studying some science-related courses. That’s one reason.

A more intrinsic consideration stemmed from some confusions I had as a child. I grew up in a rural area, which was picturesque, but the countryside was under the collective system at that time. We often suffered from food shortages in the lean season,

almost every year. This was hardly an issue in cities, however, because urban residents had a ration system: each person received about 15 kilograms of grain per month with grain coupons, ensuring basic food and clothing. Farmers were not so fortunate. After producing grain, they first had to hand over the public grain quota, and the remaining was distributed to each household by population, which was almost always insufficient. So I was deeply confused back then: why did the farmers who grew the grain not have enough to eat? When I visited relatives in the city with my parents, I found they had no such worries and could eat rice every day. For rural people like us, eating rice was a luxury. We usually only had thin porridge for every meal. This was my first confusion, tied to hunger.

I had another confusion around 1982, when the rural reform reached my hometown: the collective system was replaced by the household contract responsibility system, which allocated farmland to each household for independent management. To be precise, it was the implementation of the household contract system. After the reform, with the same land and labor force, each household, after paying the same public grain quota as before, had more than enough grain left—not only enough to eat, but even a surplus. This came as a huge shock to me. I remember when I was in high school, I had to go home every week to get rice. My grandmother, who managed the household, would sometimes scold me, saying I shouldn't take too much. If I did, the family's porridge would be even thinner. So every time I went home to get rice, my heart was filled with anxiety. Less than a year after the household contract system was implemented, when I went home for rice again, my mother said, "Take as much as you want, take more." All worries about grain were gone from then on. I felt immense happiness at that time, but it also left me with a question I couldn't understand back then: why was there such a huge difference in grain output with the same land and labor force?

Such confusions stayed with me as I grew up. I asked my father about it, and he told me, "You'll understand when you read more books in the future." Although my favorite subjects at that time were mathematics and physics, when the school forced us to switch to liberal arts, I thought these two subjects could not answer my confusions, but politics and history in liberal arts touched on such issues and were somehow related to my doubts. So I accepted the switch to liberal arts quite calmly, without much resistance. Later, before filling out the college entrance exam application form, a senior who had enrolled in the Department of Philosophy told me that the department offered courses in physics, advanced mathematics, and biology. I thought that was great, so I chose philosophy when I filled out the application.

Sun Zhuyi: Now that we understand your original intention of choosing philosophy as a major, we would like to ask, in your opinion, what significance does the Department of Philosophy hold for a university today?

Huang Yusheng: If we trace the origin of the university, we will understand that philosophy is the foundation of any university. In the Middle Ages, when universities first emerged, all teachers and students were believers, and their main research focus was theology. However, Christian theology is the product of the encounter between

philosophy and religious belief. Without philosophy, Christian theology would never have come into being, so a university must have a Department of Philosophy—it is the foundation of the entire university. Although universities today have changed drastically from their original form, disciplines that did not exist in the early universities, such as engineering, have later become the mainstream majors as latecomers surpassing the former. Modern science is based on mathematics and physics, which were originally included in the Department of Philosophy in early universities. Both in terms of origin and theory, philosophy is the foundation of natural science. More importantly, I believe that for science itself, a good university cannot do without philosophy because philosophy is essentially the most fundamental theoretical science and the basic way of engaging in theoretical thinking. As I told you in class, philosophy not only observes and understands the world through (definable) concepts, but also lays the foundation for this way of conceptual thinking, upon which all sciences are built. That is why I have repeatedly said that philosophy is the mother of the scientific spirit. Therefore, if a university does not have a Department of Philosophy, it will be difficult to have an authentic scientific spirit here; even if it exists, it is likely to gradually fade away and degenerate into a pragmatic craftsman's mindset. Such a university may develop rapidly in certain stages and disciplines, but it will lack a lasting scientific spirit. Thus, philosophy has always been a foundational discipline of the university and a guardian of the scientific spirit. For any comprehensive university, philosophy is its cornerstone.

Sun Zhuyi: As a professor in the Department of Philosophy, you engage in philosophical research while also teaching philosophy courses. We would like to ask how you view and handle the relationship between philosophical research and philosophical teaching? Also, what is your opinion on the current curriculum design for the philosophy major?

Huang Yusheng: In fact, philosophy is a rather special science. I believe it has two ways of communication: one is written communication, through which we can convey what we are researching and thinking about. But philosophy also has another important way of communication: on-site communication. What is on-site communication? It is a face-to-face way for the communicator to convey ideas to students and the audience, a way I also call teaching through personal example. The difference between philosophy and other sciences is that although it is a conceptual system, the problems this system aims to address are not only limited or empirical things, but also non-empirical or absent things. In fact, these absent things are more easily indicated and their absence presented through on-site communication. There is a philosophical term called presence; the on-site teaching method is precisely to bring the absent things into presence on the spot and communicate them. Therefore, I do not think there is a great contradiction between teaching and research for philosophical work. If one engages in in-depth research or philosophical thinking, it will also drive one to carry out on-site communication. I believe that after writing an article, teachers in the Department of Philosophy will have a strong desire to lecture on it. After I finish an article, I am eager to find any occasion to present it to an audience. This is what makes philosophy different from other sciences. When scientists make a new discovery, they usually

publish it in an academic paper and are not necessarily eager to communicate it with others on-site. So I believe the relationship between philosophical research and teaching is not disjointed or opposed, but coherent. Of course, the teaching load should not be too heavy—a view I believe is shared by most teachers in the Department of Philosophy—because philosophical thinking requires leisure. Leisure does not mean being idle, of course (laughs), but being able to arrange time more calmly and freely, and to think about problems with greater ease. This is a special requirement of philosophy, and indeed of all theoretical sciences, which need sufficient calmness.

Sun Zhuyi: What do you think college students today need to pay attention to if they want to learn philosophy well?

Huang Yusheng: I believe learning philosophy well requires “digging into” philosophical classics through slow reading, and gradually accumulating the ability to read and understand classic texts with the help of teachers. Philosophical classics are extremely difficult to read; even though you have been exposed to them for many years, you still find them not easy to comprehend. Why are philosophical classics so hard? Because philosophy touches on the most fundamental and profound questions, which require a set of concepts for analysis, discussion, deduction and guidance—especially rigorous analysis and deduction of the relationships between propositions. But philosophy is not merely a deduction of the relationships between concepts and propositions. In *Philosophy Navigating Between Being and Nothingness*, I mentioned that philosophy is concerned not only with what is present, but also with what is absent. This is a key reason why philosophy is hard to understand. What is present is easier to grasp: it is either a fact or something that can be defined by logical concepts. But the ultimate orientation of philosophy is toward what is absent, which can never be presented merely through concepts. The difficulty of reading philosophical classics lies not only in the complexity of their concepts, but more in understanding the absent things they involve. This process requires painstaking and slow effort. However, once you truly understand a great classic, you will find your philosophical competence improved by leaps and bounds—including your ability of conceptual imagination, comprehension, analysis and problem diagnosis. With the ideological perspective gained from understanding this classic, you will find it much easier to read other classics written before or after it. This is what it means to connect the past and the present through profound understanding. In this sense, truly understanding one classic means you can more easily approach all others, no longer struggling with incomprehension from start to finish. That is why I often tell you to make the effort: even if it takes one, two or more years to truly understand a great classic, most difficulties in reading all philosophical classics will be largely overcome. This is my advice for your philosophy learning. Only when you systematically understand a classic work can you be said to have truly entered the realm of philosophy. When I was at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, I ran a study group on Kant’s philosophy for five years, conducting text discussions sentence by sentence and paragraph by paragraph through slow reading. The goal was not only to understand the text literally, but to grasp the core question that a certain passage in the text addresses. In-depth reading of

classics requires the guidance of teachers, who generally have research on the entire work. Therefore, when reading a certain passage, teachers can help students understand the author's intention by placing it in the context of the whole work. In hermeneutic terms, as guides, teachers have already completed a sufficient hermeneutic circle of the work—a circle of understanding from part to whole—so they can guide students to more accurately grasp the true meaning of a sentence or a passage.

Sun Zhuyi: Our next question is about your views on the humanities today.

Huang Yusheng: I believe the humanities share one thing in common with philosophy: they are both the foundation of the university. We tend to think that compared with natural sciences or mathematics, the humanities are “soft”, with unclear standards of right and wrong, and thus far from truth. Consequently, such disciplines are naturally considered less important in universities. In fact, this is a misunderstanding of philosophy and the humanities. Why do I say that? As I explained earlier, philosophy is built on the rigorous definition, analysis and deduction of concepts. History and literature also have their own rigor. Let's start with history: it seems that historical narration can be arbitrary, and the history narrated in different eras is different, leading to the view that “history is a little girl who can be dressed up at will”. This view only sees the surface. In reality, historical narration has its own internal logic; all narration is in fact understood within historical narration, or even our entire objective world is narrated through history. For example, natural science seems to be highly formulized and objective, but these formulas are actually established in the course of history. Before these formulas existed, people's understanding of the world was completely different. All scientific formulas and theorems are themselves products of historical narration in history; they can be regarded as a way for scientists to narrate the world discovered in a certain historical context. Scientists narrate the world with formulas, which are in fact conceptual relational expressions discovered or proposed in historical narration. Just as scientists find a way to narrate the world in one era, historians find a way to narrate history in another. All sciences are also a form of historical narration of the world. To form a narrative system, historical narration, like science, must be required to have internal narrative logic. Historiography in one era narrates history in such a way, and of course other narrative methods will be revealed, but we cannot say that such a narrative method is arbitrary and subjective—it should also be objective. Therefore, as a humanistic discipline, history is the same as other natural sciences in this regard: it seeks a narrative method appropriate to its era.

As for literature, some views hold that it is even more arbitrary. For example, it seems that novelists write novels on a whim. But I think literature should be viewed from the perspective of the logic of imagination. Literature, including the creation of literary works, is a science full of imagination. The imagination in literature is not entirely the same as that in natural science. Natural science engages in imagination through concepts, which I call theoretical imagination, and the development of this imagination is related to literature. Literature expands and enriches people's imagination in all aspects, which is extremely important for science. We often think that science does not need imagination; for example, some hold that philosophy is a rigorous

science that does not require the full imagination of art. This is a completely wrong idea. Natural science and philosophy rely on theoretical imagination; without it, no science can make breakthroughs, and this kind of imagination is actually related to literature and art. The importance of literature and art lies in that they enrich, cultivate and stimulate human imagination in all fields. In this sense, we cannot say that literature, as well as humanistic disciplines such as philosophy and history, are far from truth. Like natural sciences, they are a form of narration of things, only with different narrative methods. Therefore, I believe that for science, the generation and enrichment of imagination cannot be separated from the humanities. In a sense, imagination also cannot be separated from religion. Religion itself requires immense imagination, opening the door for humans to various worlds that are unimaginable through scientific narration alone. Thus, I think the gradual marginalization of the humanities in universities calls for reflection. A good university should not marginalize the humanities. The humanities are the sciences that explore the margins of the world. Literary imagination in an era touches the margins of that era, and philosophy has always been a science that explores the margins of the world—here we discuss the origin of the world, the foundation of all things, and the abyss of human nature. But these humanities that explore the margins of the world cannot be marginalized, and a good university should not allow the times to marginalize them.

Sun Zhuyi: We have a few professional philosophical questions to ask you. Your philosophical research has always focused on the issue of “freedom”—what is the reason for this?

Huang Yusheng: Through the history of philosophy, we will find that the core question concerned by modern philosophy is freedom, but the ancient Greeks did not discuss freedom at the birth of philosophy. This confused me: how did modern philosophy’s focus on freedom emerge? I initially attached great importance to the issue of freedom from the perspective of the history of thought; but for more than a decade now, I have been discussing it at the level of first philosophy. This is because I have found that this issue is not only the core question of philosophy, but also the most fundamental one—all other philosophical questions can be discussed around freedom. For example, from the perspective of practical philosophy, especially ethics, the ethical world is incomprehensible without freedom—that was my initial understanding of the importance of freedom. But in the past ten years, I have found that freedom is not only the foundation of ethics, but even the foundation of ontology. Ontology is the theoretical part of first philosophy as a foundational science, which discusses the question of Being. However, I have found that discussing the question of Being is precisely based on the question of freedom. Why? Because the question of Being is actually a question concerning what is absent. In Aristotle's words, beings come to presence, but that which brings beings to presence—i.e., that which makes “beings as beings”—does not itself come to presence (Aristotle 1072a20–25). Yet it is precisely this absence that makes the presence of beings possible. The question is: why do we pay attention to and inquire about what is absent? If we were merely necessary beings, we would only be a link between things; we would not step out of this link, and thus would

not pay attention to what is absent. To be a merely necessary being means to be limited by the world. The past is gone, the future has not yet come; we are only present beings, merely emerging and existing as a link in a chain of necessity. We are the cause of some effects, but those effects have not yet come for us, so in reality we are only present in the here and now. This means that all surrounding things are merely correlates of our lack, only things that can fill our current deficiencies and relieve our immediate urgency—thus all such edible and usable things are present. From this perspective, we would not pay attention to or inquire about what is absent. In other words, if we were merely beings in an ecosystem of lack, we would only be interested in things that can relieve that lack—and what relieves lack is what is present. Therefore, if we were merely natural beings of lack, we would not pay attention to anything absent; yet we do pay attention to and inquire about what is absent, about the origin of things. To be a being of lack is to be a being in a chain of necessity. This shows that we have the ability and have stepped out of necessity, no longer existing merely as a link in nature—otherwise, we would not pay attention to what is absent. And to step out of necessity means that human beings are free; we have an autonomous and self-sufficient side, not merely a side of lack. As non-lacking, autonomous beings—i.e., as free beings—we are able to inquire about what is absent. Therefore, in ontology, the question of freedom should be the first to be inquired into.

In the course of discussing freedom, I have found that it is closely linked to time, history and society. Why do we have time and history? Why do we have society? In my works, I have made an important distinction: a social community is different from an ordinary group, and the fundamental point of distinction is that animal groups are based on one-way relationships, while our social communities are based on autonomous reciprocal relationships. It is only when human beings construct such autonomous reciprocal relationships that we form genuine ethical relationships, and thus form society and such autonomous reciprocal relationships presuppose freedom. Therefore, society is premised on freedom. In fact, time and history are also premised on freedom. I will not elaborate on this here. That is why I take freedom as the starting point for thinking about all problems. Although some previous philosophies, especially German philosophy, also regarded freedom as the core of philosophy, they did not provide an argument or a concrete demonstration of why freedom is the core. The work I am now trying to do is to demonstrate the foundational status of the question of freedom in ontology.

Sun Zhuyi: You once put forward the proposition that “freedom means relation” in your “Principled System of Freedom”, but there is also a view today that “freedom means a state in which the individual is detached from relations”. What is your opinion on this?

Huang Yusheng: Let’s discuss this—can you think of any state where you enjoy freedom while being detached from relations?

Sun Zhuyi: When I’m lying flat (a state of passive withdrawal from social life).

Huang Yusheng: A person lies flat, detaches from the group, and keeps a distance from it, right?

Sun Zhuyi: Yes, a state of solitude isolated from the outside world.

Huang Yusheng: Not participating in society or various communities, staying at home with the door closed, and not communicating much with family members—in such a state, people seem to be regarded as having escaped from relations. First, I want to clarify the proposition that “freedom means relation”. Freedom means that each of us exists in an undetermined state—that is, our existence is not completely determined by nature or others, nor completely limited by God; our existence is always in a situation where there are other possibilities. If there are no other possibilities for our existence, it means we are in a state of closure, in necessity. Therefore, freedom first means that we step out of closed necessity, and there are always other possibilities for our existence. In other words, my existence is open and always already open because of freedom. Precisely because I am always open with other possibilities, I can establish active and autonomous various possible relations with other people and other things. And because the existence of others is open with other possibilities, they can establish autonomous reciprocal relationships with me. If the relations between us and other beings outside ourselves are determined, then the relations between people, and between people and all things, are in a determined state. Such determined relations are all external relations—relations of determination and being determined prescribed by the chain of necessity, not reciprocal relations originating from the determined and the determined themselves. In this sense, if and only if we step out of closure and necessity—i.e., if and only if we are free—can we establish autonomous reciprocal relationships with others, and can we place things in various possible relational contexts to define them, thus establishing various complex functional and non-functional relations with things, including various conceptual relations. This means that stepping out of the chain of necessity because of freedom makes the world we live in a world full of various possibilities, and therefore we will develop various possible relations. Even if we abandon various possibilities, this is also establishing a relation—a relation we choose to establish. It is precisely because we are free that we can and will establish various relations; in this sense, I say freedom is relation.

Then, does freedom mean the danger of withdrawing from relations and becoming detached from them? Yes, but this needs to be discussed at two levels. Withdrawing from some relations does not mean negating relations themselves. Let’s take the family as an example. Traditionally, when we return home, we have to greet the elders, perform various etiquettes, and fulfill various responsibilities to siblings and relatives. This is a warm relational role of family ethics, a relation required by traditional society. Some aspects of such ethical role relations may be an excessive burden for the individual from today’s perspective. For example, in the past, people had to greet their grandparents and parents when they got up in the morning; after work in the evening, they had to interact with the elders with a pleasant and even obedient expression and posture, bearing all their expectations and demands. There are many such burdensome things. Withdrawing from such excessive burdens is a healthy form of relational

withdrawal. Each individual should return to themselves; everyone has their own world, and their joys and sorrows are their own feelings. We neither need to bring our negative emotions home, nor need to make our already heavy hearts heavier for the sake of our relations with other family members. I think such a withdrawal is a social progress. It leaves each individual with their own space and reduces the original excessive burden on each person. This is true not only for families, but also for work units. The oriental corporate culture popularizes the concept of “regarding the company as home”, and the culture of working overtime is prevalent. In such an environment, people will feel that they are out of place if they do not work overtime, because everyone else is doing it. Such social relations bring too many excessive burdens. Withdrawing from such relations and returning to the life that each individual deserves should be supported from the perspective of the theory of freedom, and it will also bring a healthier state.

On the other hand, however, there are certain social responsibilities that each of us needs to bear. Precisely because we are free, we have corresponding responsibilities to others—such as recognizing, respecting and safeguarding the freedom and dignity of others. This is a non-functional responsibility, a responsibility that every free being needs to bear for each other, which I call ontological responsibility. Therefore, it is not the case that we can close the door and ignore the outside world, turning a blind eye to our responsibilities to others entirely. We have corresponding responsibilities not only to our family, but also to strangers in society and the community; to bear these responsibilities, we cannot completely withdraw from relations. We can withdraw from functional relations, especially those that cannot justify themselves, but we cannot withdraw from the ontological relations between free beings—even in the name of freedom. Although we do not need to bear too many unnecessary burdens, we still need to bear the most basic responsibilities based on ontology, which is also the basic ethical warmth between people. If we do not even bear the most basic responsibilities, human relations will be extremely cold. I believe that freedom does not support shirking the most basic responsibilities to others or withdrawing from the most basic reciprocal relations.

Sun Zhuyi: We notice that besides first philosophy, you have always been interested in political philosophy, and you published *The Metaphysics of Right* in 2019. We would like to understand how you view the concept of right, and the relationship between freedom and right, in the context of political philosophy.

Huang Yusheng: My greatest interest is in first philosophy, and my main work to this day is discussing issues of first philosophy. Last year, I organized a time research group, specializing in the study of time. The question of time is one of the most difficult problems in first philosophy, and it is closely linked to the question of freedom. However, in the course of studying first philosophy, I have always paid attention to political philosophy. My starting point for paying attention to political philosophy is the confusions I mentioned at the beginning. Political philosophy and first philosophy seem disjointed, two unrelated fields, but my work is precisely to connect first philosophy and political philosophy, to unify these two focuses. I published two books in 2019: one was *Philosophy Navigating Between Being and Nothingness*, my research on first

philosophy, and the other was *The Metaphysics of Right*. They seem unrelated on the surface, but a deep understanding will reveal that the ideas in *The Metaphysics of Right* are based on *Philosophy Navigating Between Being and Nothingness*—they are connected.

Political philosophy is not a purely empirical science; in the empirical field, politics involves the legitimacy of behavior, and a series of questions such as how we can achieve fairness and build a just society, and the core of all these is the question of Right. This involves a question of the transformation from ancient to modern times. When the ancients constructed a state or a community, the most important question they faced was justice—for example, Plato discussed justice in *The Republic*. How should we understand justice? The ancient way of solving this problem was to understand justice through understanding the “highest good”; *The Republic* establishes the justice of the city-state and the individual by discussing the Idea of the Good. Only by understanding the Good itself can we understand what is just for the city-state, and only by establishing the justice of the city-state can we establish the justice for the individual. Modern philosophy has witnessed a great turn: it understands the justice of the community through understanding the individual rights of human beings. Why do human beings have rights? Each of us is different as an individual, and even the differences between us can be huge: great differences in physical strength and intellectual capacity, great differences in family background and regional origin. There are also huge differences in culture, tradition and customs between different communities. Why do people with so many differences possess the same rights? This needs to be demonstrated. Modern philosophers spent a long time inquiring into and demonstrating this, and I believe it was not until Kant that the universal demonstration was completed. However, no one has systematically done this work in the Chinese-speaking world. For more than a hundred years, although we have learned a lot in the process of studying Western learning, no scholar in the Chinese-speaking world has truly conducted in-depth inquiry and systematic demonstration on the issues of freedom and right themselves. My book *The Metaphysics of Right* is an attempt to complete this work in the Chinese-speaking world. On the basis of acknowledging Locke’s work, I attach great importance to Kant’s work, but I have rewritten and reconstructed Kant’s demonstration of right.

The demonstration of right is also a demonstration of human dignity, because human dignity is embodied in our possession of these rights. If and only if our rights are recognized and respected can we use these rights to develop ourselves and defend our interests. Because when we establish various relations with others, we naturally have various interest relations, and what kind of interest claims are legitimate and what are not must ultimately be based on the rights each of us possesses; otherwise, we have no way to defend our interest claims. On the other hand, if we do not have these rights, or if these rights are deprived, our dignity and corresponding interests may be harmed. Therefore, for any community, discussing the question of right is extremely important. This is one of the reasons why I discuss political philosophy—it involves how we can develop toward a more civilized direction. Going back to what I said at the beginning: why did the rural reform change the situation from not having enough to eat to having more than enough overnight? The most fundamental reason is that the management

right of land was returned to each individual. With such a right, everyone would arrange the management method according to their own plans, hobbies and interests, and human initiative and enthusiasm would naturally be brought into play. Compared with land for which people have no independent management right, everyone will work harder to manage land for which they have independent management right—this is human nature. Human beings are essentially free, which determines that human existence and action require autonomy and a space of rights. Only when this right is returned to me can I realize that the land for which I have the right is closely related to me, and only then can I have the initiative and enthusiasm to manage it. For the land for which I have the right, I can anticipate how much effort I put in and how much reward I get, so that my enthusiasm can be truly mobilized. Without rights, we cannot and will not independently arrange these resources, and thus cannot create more wealth. Therefore, in my theory of right, I believe that right has foundational significance for social development, and it is well worth our philosophical inquiry and demonstration.

Sun Zhuyi: Alright, thank you very much, Professor Huang. This concludes our interview.

Huang Yusheng: You're welcome. Thank you.

Note: This interview was conducted by the interviewer, a member of the Student Union Publicity Team, with Professor Huang Yusheng during her studies at the Department of Philosophy, Tsinghua University. The interview took place in Room 216, Meng Minwei Humanities Building, Tsinghua University, on the afternoon of June 16, 2023.

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