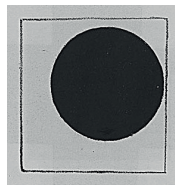


Yin-Yang Theory In Chinese Philosophy and its Contribution to the Implementation of Gender Equality in Vietnam

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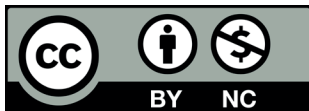
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1. Introduction

The Yin – Yang theory is a type of theory of natural philosophy which was born in the ancient times in China and is also the starting point of Chinese philosophy. Based on the remaining documents, the Yin – Yang theory appeared earliest in the Kinh Dich. The theory of yin and yang was formed on the basis of observing climate phenomena. By the Tay Chu Dynasty, people knew how to use the concept of Yin and Yang to explain the changes in the seasons of the year. They believe that the changes of spring, summer, autumn, and winter are the process of growth of Yin and Yang, and abnormal phenomena in nature are caused by disharmony of Yin and Yang. During the An-Chu dynasty, human thinking developed and reached a level of generalization that brought the concept of Yin and Yang to the height of philosophy. The category of Yin and Yang, from being used to explain phenomena in nature and society, has been abstracted into two basic categories: yin (☯) and yang (☰). The Yin – Yang theory advocates that «Extreme things must be reversed», that is, all things and phenomena are constantly changing and developing. The appearance of the theory of yin and yang demonstrated the development of human thinking at that time, which was considered a simple dialectic in the ancient China. Since its inception until now, the Yin – Yang theory has been one of the important theories, having a great influence on Eastern philosophy. Not long after its appearance, it affirmed its position in society, proving that it is a logical and perfect doctrine. The Yin – Yang theory not only explains the origin and structure of the universe but also contributes to explaining phenomena in social life.

In the history of Chinese philosophy, the Yin – Yang theory has played an essential role in understanding nature and humans. The concept of Yin and Yang is not only a component of philosophy but is also considered an indispensable part of Chinese culture, deeply influencing all areas of life from medicine to art and philosophy thinking. In this context, the link between Yin and Yang theory and gender equality has become an interesting research topic, especially when applied to the Vietnamese context.

Abstract: The Yin – Yang theory in Chinese philosophy is an important component of traditional Chinese culture which has an impact on society by promoting gender equality. It not only emphasizes balance between opposing elements such as men and women, but also encourages respect and appreciation for the roles of both genders in society. In this article, the author will focus on clarifying the content and basic principles of Yin – Yang theory in Chinese philosophy from the perspective of gender equality; the influence of Yin - Yang theory on the implementation of gender equality in Vietnam; contribution of Yin - Yang theory to the implementation of gender equality in Vietnam. Finally, the author made comments and proposed future research directions.

Keywords: Yin-Yang theory; Chinese philosophy; Gender equality.

Vietnam, a country with a rich and diverse culture, is not a stranger to the Yin – Yang theory. From the feudal period to the modern times, the influence of Chinese philosophy has penetrated deeply into the thinking and perspectives of the Vietnamese people. In the context of an increasingly evolving social and political environment, research on how the Yin and Yang theory contributes to building gender equality in Vietnam becomes extremely important and attractive. In this section, we will further explore the Yin – Yang theory in Chinese philosophy and how it has contributed to achieving gender equality in the current Vietnamese society. Through comparing and connecting between classical philosophical values and the needs of contemporary society, we can better see the role and contribution of Yin and Yang theory in the current context and defined future image of Vietnam.

2. Theoretical basis

It can be said that research on yin-yang theory in general and using yin-yang theory to study gender in particular has attracted the attention of many researchers. The author will point out some theoretical basis that have been discussed in the following.

Research on the formation of yin and yang theory in Chinese philosophy. Up to now, there have been many works discussing the birth of this theory (Jiang, X. 2013); (Liu, G., & An, R. 2021); (Chen, X., et al. 2020); (Hung, R. 2022). Studies all believe that the theory of yin and yang was born to explain natural phenomena and is skillfully applied to explain phenomena in society and thought (Li, C. 2022); (Pfajfar, G., & Malecka, A. 2022). The author believes that the theory of yin and yang was born not because of people's need to explore the natural world but to meet their own psychological needs. In ancient times, people were powerless before natural phenomena, they had a fear mentality. To fill the psychological void, they sought to divide the universe into two extremes: yin and yang. Yin (short) and yang (long) can appear as soon as possible to perform divination. Ancient Chinese people associated long numbers with happiness, victory, and great fortune, and short numbers with sadness, failure, and great evil. Before doing anything important, they draw

lots. If they draw long lots, they proceed. They believe that heaven is positive and earth is negative; The sun is yang, the moon is yin; During the day it is positive, at night it is negative; Everything that is dynamic, formless, outward, upward, warm, bright, strong is positive. As for things that are quiet, shaped, directed inwards, downwards, cool, obscure, and weak, all belong to yin. Obviously, the appearance of yin and yang theory is to meet human psychological needs and its development process has generalized to become philosophical theory.

Research on the relationships of yin and yang theory in Chinese philosophy (Wang, K. 2022); (Zhang, W., Qu, S., & Wang, J. 2020); (Song, W., & Cao, H. (2022)). The authors said that the yin and yang relationship is expressed in nature, society and thought. The authors said that humans and nature have a close relationship with each other, not separate from each other. The existence of one is a condition for the existence of the other and vice versa (Ghorbanizamani, F., et al. 2020); (Wang, R. 2013). In social relationships, research also shows that if people are divided by gender, men are yang, women are yin, but each person also includes both yin and yang. Understanding the law of yin and yang will be the key to solving good relationships in society (Chin, T., et al. 2021); (Tang, S., et al. 2021); (Yin, J., & Shi, S. 2021). The author believes that the theory of yin and yang can be studied in many different fields. However, the relationships in nature, society and thought have common relationships but there are still differences. If the yin and yang theory could explain all general and specific relationships, other theories would not appear. Therefore, the theory of yin and yang is not a universal key to open all gates of nature, society and thought. Once we force ourselves to explain, it is like building a castle entirely out of sand without any other materials.

Research on gender equality in Chinese philosophy (Kim, H. K. 2021); (Cui, Y. 2022); (Evans, H. 2021); (Zhu, X., et al. 2022); (Zheng, J. 2020) believes that in the history of Chinese philosophy, the role of men has always been valued from within the family to society. It is most clearly expressed in the perspective of Confucianism (Tan, C. 2021); (Rošker, J. S. 2021); (Gromkowska-Melosik,

A., & Boron, A. 2023); (Li, Y. 2022); (Yu, L. 2023). Confucian philosophy views the family as the basis of society and sets clear rules and roles for men and women. Men are considered the center of the family and society, while women are often limited to the role of wife and mother and dependent on men. This has created a picture of sexism and gender inequality in Chinese society. They believe that men are often given priority in receiving education and inheriting family property, while women are often limited in accessing knowledge and property. This causes gender discrimination and gender inequality to be reinforced and formed in Chinese society. The author believes that this statement is not complete and does not place the theories in the period in which it was born. The view of respecting men, despising women, and respecting the eldest son in China belongs to culture, not philosophy. Philosophy plays a role in building human consciousness and awareness of gender equality issues. By exploring philosophical principles such as benevolence, justice, and respect for persons, philosophy helps develop a foundation of ethics and values that support gender equality. Philosophy provides analytical and conceptual tools to better understand the causes and effects of gender discrimination.

Research on yin-yang theory in feminist construction (Qing-hua, Z. 2018); (Wang, R. R. 2005). Studies have shown that it is possible that the theory of yin and yang has been abused to a certain extent and women have become victims of sacrifice. The authors state that yin and yang are very flexible and have a dialectical relationship with each other (Zhao, Z. N. 2022); (Chin, T., et al. 2024). They argued that, if each individual is a whole, then yin and yang are not reasons to limit humans. If we think positively about the theory of yin and yang, it will represent progress. The author believes that these studies have viewed the theory of yin and yang through a modern lens to look at the past. The process of interpreting a historical doctrine through a modern lens can lead to misunderstandings. An understanding of the historical, cultural and social context of a particular era can be lost when we apply modern perspectives to the past. Adopting a modern perspective may result in a loss of understanding of the nature and specific characteristics of yin-yang theory. Modern values and perspectives may not be appropriate or appli-

cable to all situations in the past, and forcing them in may result in a loss of honesty and accuracy in understanding history.

Research on gender equality in career choice (Rocha, V., & Van Praag, M. 2020); (Mozahem, N. A., et al. 2020); (Howe-Walsh, L., et al. 2020). Studies have analyzed trends and fluctuations in the career choices of men and women, including their distribution across different occupations and changes over time. The research focuses on identifying factors that influence the career choice decisions of men and women, including family, educational, social, cultural and personal factors. Studies have also examined gender disparities in career choices and pointed out their causes and consequences (Mirin, A. A. 2021); (Bernardi, K., et al. 2020). Research focuses on the challenges and opportunities that men and women face when choosing a career, including discrimination, income differences, balance between work and family life, and access to resources and career opportunities. The research also focuses on evaluating the effectiveness of policies and measures to promote gender equality in career choices, as well as proposing policy solutions to minimize gender disparities in the field. This. The author believes that it is necessary to distinguish between gender equality and gender equality in choosing a career. In fact, there are many jobs that are suitable for women but not suitable for men and vice versa. For example, women will do better than men in raising children in preschools, whereas operating submarines under the sea requires more men than women.

The theory of Yin and Yang emphasizes balance and harmony between opposing elements. Applying this principle will ensure that both men and women have equal opportunities and conditions to develop. Harmony in yin and yang theory is used to apply in areas such as education, labor and management to ensure that there is no gender discrimination. Applying the principles of Yin and Yang theory helps create a fair and gender-balanced social environment, while promoting development and prosperity for all people in Vietnam. Yin and Yang theory often emphasizes multidimensionality and flexibility in thinking and action. Applying this principle can encourage diversity and creativity in solving issues related to gender equality in Vietnamese society and culture. In addition, the yin and yang theory promotes cooperation, it creates a social environment in

which both men and women can participate in working together. The value of understanding from the Yin and Yang theory helps eliminate gender stereotypes to minimize discrimination in Vietnamese culture. Research into practical aspects and the applicability of Yin and Yang theory in promoting gender equality in Vietnam will be mentioned. Besides, the author will also suggest future development and application directions.

3. Research methods

The article aims to clarify the Yin – Yang theory in Chinese philosophy and its contribution to the implementation of gender equality in Vietnam, providing discussions on these issues. To well carry out the research goals and tasks, the article carried out historical rigor, comprehensiveness, multi-dimensionality and considering it in the development process of Confucianism as well as Vietnamese history.

When researching the Yin – Yang theory in Chinese philosophy and its contribution to achieving gender equality in Vietnam, the author approached the research issue from a dialectical philosophical perspective; history of philosophy to analyze and explain the contents.

At the same time, the following specific methods are used:

Historical - logical method: The article uses this method to review and evaluate the Yin – Yang theory in Chinese philosophy in the era in which it was appeared in order to sequence the scientific issues raised by the article. On the basis of historical data, we can draw the regularity of its movement and development.

Method of collecting information and documents: The author collected documents such as books, newspapers, and magazines in Vietnam and other countries about the Yin – Yang theory in Chinese philosophy and its contribution to the study of yin and yang in Chinese philosophy. And its contribution to achieving gender equality in Vietnam to prove its assertions.

Analysis and synthesis method: The article used this method to analyze the Yin – Yang theory in Chinese philosophy and its contribution to the implementation of gender equality in Vietnam. On that basis, generalize and synthesize assessments.

4. Research Questions

To research the topic of the Yin – Yang theory in Chinese philosophy and its contribution to achieving gender equality in Vietnam, the article proposed the following three questions:

Why Yin and Yang theory in Chinese related to achieving gender equality?

How does the Yin – Yang theory in Chinese philosophy influence the perception of gender equality?

How to apply the Yin and Yang theory to promote gender equality in Vietnamese society?

5. Research Content And Discussion

5.1. Research content

Content and basic principles of the Yin – Yang theory in Chinese philosophy. The Yin – Yang theory is the result of the Chinese people's long process of reflecting and generalizing the practice. The explanation of initial phenomena is just a matter of drawing lots from short (yin) to long (yang). In the process of formation and development, the Yin – Yang theory is considered the two basic forces that govern the entire natural and social world. The manifestation of that influence is the way of heaven and the way of human being, from the most basic to the most complex. The Yin – Yang theory believes that all phenomena are always contradictory but unified, constantly moving and changing to develop and perish. In yin there is yang, in yang there is yin, it is the connection and impact between two opposites.

The Yin – Yang theory is the foundation for the development of philosophy and natural science as well as the development of medicine in China. Yin and yang are two atmosphere that interact in nature and are the source of lightning, sunshine, rain, thunderstorms, etc. The Yin – Yang theory holds that there is nothing in heaven and earth that does not contain the two elements of yin and yang, these two elements coexist in one phenomenon, they fight with each other, they imply each other. The operation of the four seasons of the year is also due to the rise and fall of yin and yang and all things must follow its order, such as the phenomena: cold is yin, hot is yang; moist is yin, dry is yang; night is yin, day is yang, the four seasons change, events and phenomena also change, so people must rely on that rule to

operate society. All things and phenomena in the universe develop and change due to the transformation of the rule of yin and yang. Heaven and earth are not separate from each other, so there is thunder and rain, with thunder and rain, plants and trees sprout. When heaven and earth change, the seasons of the year are born, when there are seasons of the year, things adapt and transform to create their own characteristics. Things that flourish will return to their original state, but the sun and moon are always in a state of balance and shine forever. All things in the universe exist in a certain cycle. The length or shortness of the cycle is determined by the yin and yang balance of the things. The sun reaches its peak and then sets, the moon becomes full and then wanes, and the water in the lake sometimes fills and dwindles depending on the season. As for the climate, when it gets cold, it gets hot, when it's sunny, it rains a lot, when things leave, they shrink, and when things come, they expand. There is nothing in all things in heaven and earth that prospers but does not decline, is high but not low, goes away but does not return. All things continue to evolve, change, develop, and when they reach their peak, they will reverse, people call it «Extreme things must be reversed».

The Yin – Yang theory holds that the history of human society is also governed by the Yin – Yang theory. All phenomena in society will disappear. People in society cannot escape this rule. In nature, males and females combine their essence to produce all things; In society, the king collaborates with the people to establish a country. In society, there exist relationships such as king - citizen, father - son, friends, brothers, spouses, etc. These relationships may be opposing, but they will not cancel each other out, but coexist. The rule of governors should not overpower society due to its rise and fall. Governors need to maintain social balance and expand the cycle. The division of yin and yang in society is as follows:

Yin	Yang
Weak, soft, heavy, feminine, false, people, opaque, quiet, evil, negative, dead	Strong, hard, light, masculine, governors, ruler, clear, vibrant, good, positive pole, live

The Yin – Yang theory also believes that the wife is yin and the husband is yang, so the wife's position is in the home and the husband's position is in society. The Yin – Yang theory explains that in a family there is a husband and a wife, a father and children. When the children grow up, the parents become old and weak. Everything comes together and dissolves, there is birth and death. If everyone recognizes these rules, they will not be hot-tempered or angry, but will live in natural rule. The Yin – Yang theory holds that women are yin, men are yang, and accordingly, jobs are clearly defined as follows: work inside the house is yin, work outside the house is yang; Jobs that require little health are yin, jobs that require a lot of health are yang; Work that requires skill is yin, work that does not require skill is yang; Work that requires perseverance is yin, work that requires haste is yang. The division of labor by gender in the form of Yin and Yang is a very clear and progressive division. To be suitable for work, the Yin – Yang theory also focuses on education. To delineate gender work, based on the Yin – Yang theory, it is also said that women need to be educated to do family work such as: housework, embroidery, sewing; beautify; keeping happiness. For men, it is necessary to educate them to do things outside the family such as: create material wealth to bring home to the family; earn money; building. The view that men build houses and women build family is completely consistent with the gender division of labor at that time.

The basic principles of the Yin – Yang theory is expressed as follows: Yin and Yang theory emphasizes balance and harmony between Yin and Yang. Both of these elements need to exist and work together to create balance and harmony in nature and society, interact with each other to create transformation and growth. This interaction takes place not only in nature but also in every aspect of human life; the principle of balance: everything can be achieved through the balance between Yin and Yang. When these two aspects work together in harmony, a complete thing will be created. The principle of change, the Yin – Yang theory does not consider the world as a fixed state but places it in constant movement. This transformation is often driven by the interaction between Yin and Yang; The Yin – Yang theory emphasizes the

combination and opposition between Yin and Yang. This combination creates diversity and richness in nature and society.

The influence of the Yin - Yang theory on the implementation of gender equality in Vietnam. According to the 2023 Global Gender Gap Report published by the World Economic Forum, Vietnam, with a score of 71.1% and a global rank of 72nd, continues its gradual progress towards gender parity. It has progressed by 2.3 percentage points since 2007 (score 68.9%) when it was first covered. As compared to the last edition, it has advanced by 0.62 percentage points as well as 11 positions in rank. While the 2022 edition reported no female ministers, there are now 11.1% women ministers, driving up the parity score on the Political Empowerment subindex from 13.5% to 16.6%. Viet Nam's sex ratio at birth has been one of the country's lowest-performing indicators and it suffered further setbacks, worsening the Health and Survival parity by 0.4 percentage points to 94.6%, which is among the lowest in the world. On Educational Attainment, Viet Nam is at 98.5% parity. There is also full parity in the share of women as technical workers, and women earn 81.4% of men's estimated earned income. Labour-force participation parity is at 88.1%, though only 25.6% of the senior officials are women. Overall, Viet Nam is at 74.9% parity on the Economic Participation and Opportunity subindex.

This result is thanks to the government's attention and leadership in gender equality work, and the substantive involvement of the political system and social organizations to promote gender equality. Up to now, local governments have developed plans and implemented the National Strategy on gender equality. The system of legal documents and policies continues to be improved towards ensuring the principle of gender equality. Programs and projects on gender equality are promulgated and implemented, ensuring feasibility and clarifying responsibilities and resources. Many legal documents related to the field of gender equality have been developed and amended, contributing to ensuring and promoting gender equality, preventing and responding to gender-based violence. Since 2016 onwards, Vietnam has organized a month of action for gender equality and pre-

vention and response to gender-based violence every year. The organization is increasingly diverse, creating special highlights, attracting the attention and response of the entire society, contributing to raising awareness of gender equality in order to change behavior. Not only does it promote propaganda and education on social security and gender equality policies, the month of action is also an opportunity to enhance the dissemination of knowledge and skills to protect and prevent violence and abuse for women and children through competitions to learn about the law, compose, and stage plays on the topics of gender equality and gender-based violence. Along with that, many activities to support victims, women, and children in difficult circumstances were also organized.

However, it is also necessary to recognize the limitations in gender equality work to come up with specific and clear solutions to overcome them. The gender ratio at birth in 2023 is 112 boys/100 girls, demonstrating gender imbalance and gender inequality at birth, thereby leading to the ideology of «respecting men over women» and many other beliefs. This makes the fight against gender inequality still quite difficult. That also causes progress towards gender equality in the world as well as in Vietnam to be slower than expected. The view that there will be no gender equality without men's participation in family work and ending violence against women and girls has been taken by the Vietnamese government. Local governments have continuously organized and implemented so that all people can understand and follow.

The contribution of Yin - Yang theory to achieving gender equality in Vietnam. Promoting balance and similarity between men and women is crucial for promoting a fair and progressive society. In society, gender exists and conflicts with each other, but they cannot cancel each other out. Instead, they complement each other to build a progressive society. Therefore, this opposition requires understanding and respect, and both genders need to be evaluated based on appropriate scales. Evaluation needs to be scientifically, objectively, and comprehensively based on the abilities and contributions of each gender. In order to promote the establishment of a civilized society for women, every country must create an equal environment so that each

gender can play their role and position. Overall, gender equality has different roots and backgrounds, but both emphasize balance. Both emphasize integration and harmony to create a fair society.

The Yin - Yang theory emphasizes the balance and opposition between yin and yang in nature and in all aspects of society. In gender equality, the goal is to create balance, eliminate gender opposition, and create conditions for fairness and progress for all. Men and women, from one perspective, are two forces of attraction and push, these two forces have coordinated together harmoniously to create a diverse and powerful environment. That environment creates favorable conditions for each individual to develop and perfect themselves. We also need to emphasize gender equality and gender parity. If gender equality is a choice, then gender parity is a compulsion. Gender equality is a condition that stimulates development, while gender parity is the cause that inhibits social development. Gender equality requires respect and encourages the participation and contribution of all people, regardless of gender. The correlation between the Yin and Yang theory and the value of gender equality are in the fact that both aim for balance, perfection, respect for diversity and sustainable development in a society.

The Yin-Yang approach encourages cooperation and collaboration between men and women in solving gender-related issues, from discussing gender roles in the family to promoting consensus, agreement between genders in achieving an equal society. This method encourages the sharing of experiences and learning between men and women, from sharing experiences about parenting to learning from each other about how to address gender issues. Approaching the Yin - Yang theory can help build a balanced and harmonious mindset about gender, from understanding and respecting opposition to promoting balance and harmony between men and women in all aspects of life. New methods and approaches from the Yin - Yang Theory can provide a new and profound perspective on gender equality in Vietnam, helping to promote progress and development in building a fair and equitable society. Lasting. The Yin - Yang theory brings new perspectives and new methods in ensur-

ing gender equality in Vietnam, by encouraging balance, harmony, respect for diversity and cooperation between men and women.

5.2. Discussion

There is an opinion that the Yin – Yang theory is one of the causes of gender inequality that has lasted for thousands of years in the history of China and other affected countries (Hong, LK 1976). In this study, the author believes that the Yin – Yang theory was born in association with a certain historical period. The division of labor by gender is the first form in the flow of social division of labor in China. If we carefully study the Yin – Yang theory, we will see the progress of this theory from education to the division of labor. Gender inequality in society is not due to the Yin – Yang theory but due to the will of the authorities when applying it. Besides, ideologists especially political thinkers, have tried their best to give their views to explain society in a way that is beneficial to the governors. The author believes that the motive leading ideologists to bend the Yin – Yang theory is the desire for governors to appreciate and use their theory.

There is an opinion that the capabilities of people in society are completely different, while jobs require the same knowledge and skills of workers (Ebbinghaus, B. 2021). Some other opinions say that inequality is acceptable when that inequality benefits the most vulnerable (Nyiwul, L. 2021). The author believes that although people exist in society, they are different in intelligence, physique, appearance, etc., but they have a close relationship with each other to create a lively society. Although the genders contradict each other, if this contradiction is resolved, it will become a driving force for development. To survive, people must work and produce. In the process of labor, humans have transformed from species-like humans to human-like humans. To produce materials and meet the requirements of the social division of labor, each person must choose a suitable job. This viewpoint is completely consistent with the Yin – Yang theory that I presented above. We also need to distinguish between building an equal society and building a society parity. The Yin – Yang theory holds that each human being that has both yin and yang. An equal society is

a fair society, all people, regardless of gender, have equal opportunities to develop. We cannot do the same job and build many evaluation criteria to ensure gender equality.

Some opinions emphasize that in Vietnam, the Yin – Yang theory contributes to achieving gender equality by dividing work between men and women. The Yin – Yang theory celebrates harmony and balance between opposites. The Yin-Yang theory contributes to the construction of gender equality by creating a theoretical and socio-cultural basis that encourages balance, respect and cooperation between men and women in all areas of life and work. The author believes that the Yin – Yang theory helps people realize the necessity of building gender equality to establish a civilized society as an inevitable rule. To do that, it is necessary to educate and train people based on their interests and abilities. It should be noted that the social division of labor is a condition for achieving true gender equality. Citizens in society who work but are not prohibited by law are noble and must not compare jobs to determine high and low. The Yin - Yang theory believes that when there is one job, there is another job and, in the end, no job exists independently of other jobs.

Conclusion

The Yin – Yang theory is not only an indispensable component of traditional Chinese culture but also a valuable source of inspiration for the development and progress of modern society. This theory has helped open a new perspective on gender equality, encouraging balance and harmony between men and women not only in work but also in all aspects of life. By respecting and appreciating the roles of both men and women, the Yin-Yang theory has contributed to eliminating gender barriers and encouraging consensus and cooperation between the genders in society.

In Vietnam, applying the principles of the Yin - Yang theory can help promote the advancement of gender equality in all fields, from education to labor and politics. By understanding and accepting the values of both genders, we can build a society where everyone has equal opportunities and rights, contributing to the comprehensive and sustainable development of the country. With

a deep understanding and application of the Yin – Yang theory, Vietnam can continue to promote gender equality at the center of social development, promoting the country's progress and prosperity towards sustainable and progressive development.

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