

**Welcome** to the website that explores and applies to the human condition the writings and philosophical perspectives of Dr. Ralph Siu. The International Society for Panetics founded by Dr. Siu is closing its doors, and opening these wonderful works of Dr. Siu to interested scholars, academic institutions, and interested parties.

A distinguished American author, scholar, military, and civil servant, Ralph Gun Hoy Siu was born in Honolulu, Hawaii, in 1917 and died in Washington, D.C., in 1998. Siu's lifelong creation is a diversely original synthesis of Eastern and Western philosophy, shaped by insights that are both witty and humble. His practical aim was to better understand our world in ways that enable us to recognize the causes of humanly inflicted suffering as a way to then help alleviate it.

This website reveals and celebrates the research and writings contained in the Ralph Siu Papers at the Ward M. Canaday Center for Special Collections at the University of Toledo in Ohio, a university renowned for its East-West cultural focus. A finding aid for the Siu Papers is available online at

[http://www.utoledo.edu/library/canaday/HTML\\_findingaids/MSS-237.html](http://www.utoledo.edu/library/canaday/HTML_findingaids/MSS-237.html)

By exploring this website and the original documents in the Siu Papers we hope you will discover an original approach to humanity's ageless questions and quandaries. We hope, too, that you in turn use these materials to advance the human discourse.

This website is organized by topics and themes. Topics include philosophical writings by Siu and his associates, while themes identify human endeavors seen in Siu's "panetic" perspective. He coined the term "panetics" to describe a new discipline that integrates knowledge about how suffering is inflicted and alleviated. (Based on the word *paneti*, meaning "to inflict" in Pali, the ancient language of the Buddha)

## **Siu's Essential Writings**

Siu's works include four trilogies, blending philosophical and practical wisdom.

### Tao-Time Trilogy

*The Tao of Science, An Essay on Western Knowledge and Eastern Wisdom.*

*The Portable Dragon.* A Westerner's guide to the I Ching.

*Ch'i. A Neo-Taoist Approach to Life.*

### Management Trilogy

*The Craft of Power.*

*Transcending the Power Game. The Way to Executive Serenity.*

*The Master Manager*

### Panetics Trilogy

*Less Suffering for Everybody. An Introduction to Panetics.*

*Panetics and Dukkha. An Integrated Study of the Infliction of Suffering and Reduction of Suffering.*

*Seeds of Reflection. Word Clusters for Meditation on the Infliction and the Relief of Suffering.*

### Harmony Trilogy

*Unifying Theory of the Human Organism and Behavior.*

*Cheerfulness.*

*Shaping One's Own Life. A Socratic Anthology of Perennial Questions.*

Among these twelve scholarly and reflective volumes, Siu's *Cheerfulness* may at first seem the most surprising/novel. But in its spirit and its insights it captures Siu's essentially optimistic and engaging persona. Siu wrote that "cheerfulness is probably the closest to the perfect state of well-being attainable under an actual set of circumstances," for it is "the agreeably exuberant vibrations spread over the broad expanse, generating waves of cheerfulness in every creature responsive to its effervescent grace." Just reading that thought may make you cheerful! But there is witty perspective on every page. Siu wrote that he suspected "the irreversible decline of a civilization is not signaled by economic failure or political crisis, but with the collapse of cheerfulness."

## **Siu's Life and Times**

By way of introduction, Ralph Siu obtained his Bachelors degree (1939) and Masters degree (1941) from the University of Hawaii, and Ph.D. degree (1943) in biochemistry from the California Institute of Technology. He then entered the United States Army Quartermaster Corps and headed a team of researchers that developed new "jungle type" fabrics, clothing and equipment. As the Quartermaster Corps' Director of Laboratories and Chief Scientific and Technical Director for more than a decade (1948-62), Dr. Siu spearheaded numerous critical projects, including pioneer efforts on irradiated food – a key component of President Eisenhower's Atoms-For-Peace program.

Around 1968, Dr. Siu was named civil servant of the year, and was thereafter appointed by President Johnson for directing the newly created National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice. From 1957 to 1980, Dr. Siu produced several books, published by editors like MIT Press or John Wiley & Sons Inc. Most notable among them are *The Tao of Science*, and *The Craft of Power*.

In 1968, MIT Press published Siu's *The Man of Many Qualities: A Legacy of the I-Ching*, which, in 1971, was published under the title *The Portable Dragon*. This book offers examples of the 64 changes in I-Ching with illustrations from Western literature. In 1968, Siu also became Associate Administrator of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration with the Department of Justice under the supervision of Attorney General Ramsey Clark. He was then made director of the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice and became an honorary member of the United States Military Police Corps. In 1969, Siu retired from government service to become a private consultant, but continued to write and lecture.

After retirement, Dr. Siu wrote articles and books on the synthesis of East-West psycho-philosophical thought. The 1970s and 1980s saw the publication of many articles such as "Chinese Baseball and Public Administration," "Work and Serenity," and "America and the Future of Man," as well as four books: *Ch'i: A Neo-Taoist Approach to Life*, *The Craft of Power*, *Transcending the Power Game*, and *The Master Manager*.

In 1986, an article appeared in the *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* written by Siu titled, "Panetics: The Study of the Infliction of Suffering." It was at this point that Siu introduced the world to Panetics, the study of the infliction of suffering that uses the "dukkha" as a way to measure suffering. Siu believed that "if suffering were quantified it would not be ignored as a factor in decision making." As the article's abstract stated: After analyzing the unceasing mutual inflictions of suffering by practically everyone and the neglect of this pervasive and degenerating human deficiency by the academic community, I urge the immediate creation of a new and vigorous academic discipline, called *panetics*, to be devoted to the study of the infliction of suffering. The nature, scope, illustrative contents, and social value are outlined. The *dukkha* (the Pali word for "suffering") is proposed as a semiquantitative unit of suffering to assist in associated analytical operations.

In 1991, the International Society for Panetics was founded by Ralph Siu and some sixty scientists, physicians, business leaders, scholars, artists and writers from several countries, among which such notable people Kenneth Boulding and Johan Galtung. The Society is dedicated to the study and development of ways to reduce the infliction of human suffering by individuals, corporations, governments, professions, social groups and other institutions. It issued a journal, *Panetics*, and it sponsored the annual Ralph G. H. Siu Memorial Lecture in Washington, D.C., featuring a prominent speaker on a subject of concern to life's mysteries and moral challenges. Past speakers have included Peter Caws, University Professor of Philosophy, Richard Shifter, former Assistant Secretary of State for Human rights and Humanitarian Affairs, and Josef Rotblat, President of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs and a winner of the Nobel Prize for Peace.

In the words of Anthony Judge, who masterminded and was responsible for the *Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential*, Siu was an early pioneer in

creating a bridge between Eastern and Western cultures", and "is an exemplar of lifelong dedication to complex issues having fundamental humanitarian implications."

### ***Siu's Originality***

Ralph Siu was fond of citing Eastern wisdom to explain Western events, and one of his favorite examples involved the Chinese Premier Zhou En-lai. Ralph said, with a knowing smile, that in the 1970s a French journalist asked Zhou what he thought of the French Revolution. Zhou's reply: "It's too early to tell." In Zhou's Eastern perspective, which measures time in millennia, the French Revolution that had occurred a mere two centuries ago must have seemed a recent event. And in many ways its results certainly are inconclusive. So it is with Panetics, Ralph Siu's focal achievement in a commanding synthesis of Eastern and Western thought. Ralph himself once told a Washington Post reporter that with Panetics "it usually takes at least a generation for a new idea of this magnitude to catch on."

But it is not too early to tell that Ralph Siu has been profoundly successful in his lifelong East-West synthesis. He visualized it. He explained it. He wrote and wrote about it. And, above all, he lived it. A conversation with Ralph, about anything from intellectual fashions to irradiated foods, would, at some point, involve the Ying and Yang and the Tao. And the process Ralph used to achieve this cultural harmony never varied. It involved two actions as opposite and seamless as the Ying and Yang. Ralph would "subsume and resonate." It was Ralph's way of thinking; his way of life.

And Cullen Murphy, Managing Editor of *The Atlantic Monthly*, caught some of this infectious joy when he wrote, after several conversations with Ralph, that should cheerfulness ever be quantified, the way suffering is measured by the Dukkha, the unit of measure for cheerfulness should be called "the Siu." To discover just how apt Murphy's nomination is, all you need do is sample Ralph's delightful work on "Cheerfulness". The chapter titles alone are cheering. They include "Subsuming and Resonating," "Harmonious Genesis," and "Beaming on the Just-Rightness." Ralph concludes that genuine cheerfulness "may be regarded as a reverberation of limitlessness" that he likens to "resonance with the Tao" in shared sublimity. This gentle discourse is rich with Ralph's always felicitous and surprising turns of phrase such as his appeal to "rejuvenescence" and "internalizing the instinctive art of nondoing." As we read on, we discover that cheerfulness depends on harmony, and harmony depends on understanding.

Ralph was both an Eastern sage and a Western scientist, and this Ying-Yang balance constantly informed his thoughts about cheerfulness. In other writings about Panetics, Ralph has identified organized religions as a major cause of suffering. Religious leaders not only inflict suffering—the Spanish Inquisition was one of Ralph's favorite examples—but they also create fears among the faithful about eternal damnation.

In "Cheerfulness", Ralph confronted this situation with a chapter on "Dying" that shows the harmonious relationships between life and death. The thought of death, Ralph wrote, "pervades the life of the average Westerner as a chronic unease" that "make it difficult for

any cheerfulness to surface in the doleful community." Ralph urged that death "is to be taken matter-of-factly in stride and one should not get all worked up in trying to outsmart it." Besides, Ralph adds, "If there is such a thing as a Hereafter, then authentic cheerfulness when departing this world is also eternal cheerfulness in entering the next."

In the final chapter of "Cheerfulness", titled "Mellowing in Tune with the Tao," Siu concluded that "All of us are born with considerable potential for resonating with creatures and things far beyond the human concentric to the farthest reaches of the universe. The deeper into this realm of the Tao that the self empathetically extends, the more enriched is the person's texture of life."

Ralph quoted the English artist and social reformer John Ruskin, who wrote that "There is religion in everything around us, a calm and holy religion in the unbreathing things of nature, which man would do well to imitate." Then Ralph added: "It is easy not only to imitate' this religion in everything around us,' as Ruskin suggests, but also to be a genuinely cheerful part of it. All we need to do is to relax naturally and resonate freely."

*"Ralph was a genuinely cheerful man. Reading his works, in this website and beyond, we can come to understand why. We can "subsume and resonate." He has shown us the way."*

-- William Lanouette

*Chairman and Past President of The International Society for Panetics.*