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Thoreau and China

Henry David Thoreau is fairly familiar with Chinese philosophy. His most famous work *Walden* (1854) also contains quotations of Confucianism. In *Walden*, he strongly promotes the idea of simplicity of life and a spiritual reform within society. Thoreau's contemporary fellowmen were attached to materials enjoyment, he criticized this phenomenon repeatedly and tried to emphasize the spiritual development. In this paper, I would like to establish the spiritual bond between Thoreau and China. Firstly, I will focus on how Thoreau acquired Chinese philosophy. Secondly, I will introduce and analyze a column "Ethnical Scriptures" he edited in the Transcendentalist magazine *The Dial*. He edited and published two relative articles: "Saying of Confucius" and "The Chinese Four Books." Thirdly, I will investigate the quotations in *Walden*. Through investigation of textual analysis of *Walden*, his edition of *The Dial* and the contemporary social milieu, I conclude that Thoreau is deeply influenced by Chinese philosophy and his hidden impetus is to transform 19th-century contemporary materialistic society into a spiritual and moral one.