Contemporary Philosophies and Theories in Education 14

Roland Reichenbach
Duck-Joo Kwak *Editors*

Confucian Perspectives on Learning and Self-Transformation

International and Cross-Disciplinary Approaches

Springer

Contemporary Philosophies and Theories in Education

Volume 14

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ISSN 2214-9759 ISSN 2214-9767 (electronic)
Contemporary Philosophies and Theories in Education
ISBN 978-3-030-40077-4 ISBN 978-3-030-40078-1 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-40078-1

This Springer imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG.
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Introductory Remarks

The cultural traditions of East Asian – most importantly Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism – are not well known among Western philosophers of education. The key notions of Confucian and Neo-Confucian philosophy directly concern ideals, processes, and challenges of learning, education, and self-transformation. This very elaborated and differentiated cultural context offers great opportunities for today's understanding of personal and institutional education in a global context.

The issue gathers perspectives from educational philosophers and East Asian specialists from China, Germany, Hong Kong, Korea, Switzerland, Taiwan, the USA, and Vietnam and offers a manifold discussion on educational practice and culture in the East Asian world and its relevance to other regions in the world. The contributions enrich the vocabularies in educational discourse, which have been "West-centered" for a long time, by providing alternative resources and perspectives in educational thinking, offering opportunities for the due recognition of educational thought across a global world.

The retrieval and re-examination of a long-standing tradition of humanism in East Asia, such as Confucianism, does not mean to set East Asian philosophy of education against its Western equivalence. The book rather invites to an intercultural conversation by reflecting modern sensibility and creating a common space for critical philosophical reflection on educational thought and practice.

Contents

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Chapter 1
The Confucian Ethos of Learning: An Introduction

Roland Reichenbach and Duck-Joo Kwak

To give a short introduction to the huge body of Confucian thought on learning and education is a very challenging endeavour. In what follows, we will start with some comments on a core idea of Confucian philosophy of education, the pleasure of learning. Second, we will confront some of the various stereotypes and prejudices that Confucianism is exposed to, especially in Western discourses of education. We then, thirdly, will make some remarks on the person of Confucius, and the notions of Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism. The fourth and fifth parts of this introduction are dedicated to the key educational concepts of the book, learning and self-transformation (or self-cultivation) from a Confucian perspective, yet to some degree with western comparative eyes, since it is our goal to point out the similarities and differences between different cultures of educational thoughts and philosophies, which tend to be often and too quickly pressed into an unfavourable and simplistic East-West-scheme. The sixth and last parts offer an overview of the nine chapters gathered in this book that have been written by East Asian and European authors from seven different countries.

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R. Reichenbach, D.-J. Kwak (eds.), *Confucian Perspectives on Learning and Self-Transformation*, Contemporary Philosophies and Theories in Education 14,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-40078-1_1

1.1 The Pleasure of Learning

Learning, self-cultivation and self-transformation are at the center of Confucian concern and reflection. The *Analects*[1] – attributed to the Chinese philosopher Confucius (551–479 BC) and sometimes regarded as the most important collection of Confucian sayings and ideas – start with a statement on the *pleasure of learning*, a topos of Confucian philosophy: "The Master said, 'Is it not a pleasure, having learned something, to try it out at due intervals?'" (Confucius 1979, p. 59/*Analects* I, 1). Today's pupils and students may not or only seldom share this pleasure. Indeed, what is so pleasurable about being at the school for many years, sitting in the classroom confronted with topics which are neither easy to learn nor promising to be of any use for one's personal life? It seems obvious that the *Analects* do not refer to *institutionalized* learning and education, which are familiar to us today in the most parts of the world. Many classical texts of Confucian philosophy on learning and education are *not* about institutional schooling nor about school curriculum or efficient teaching methods in the classroom; they are rather about the attitude of the individual learner and the process of becoming a mature person.

It may be important to keep this fact in mind when people talk of "Confucian learning culture" or try to explain the high performances of East Asian pupils in high stake international achievement tests. Do East Asian students achieve good results in their scholarly accomplishments because they entertain the Confucian pleasure of learning? That would be great, of course, but it is not likely. Linking descriptive and empirical facts of today's educational world to what was said and written 1000 or 2500 years ago is quite a carefree way to look for an explanation. The Western stereotype of East Asian learners may include features such as eagerness to learn, adaptability, obedience, self-criticism and self-control. But then, where is the pleasure, after all? Or does having such virtues all together automatically bring about a real pleasure of learning? On the other hand, Western learners may be stereotyped as being critical, self-expressive, most often lazy, selfish and, maybe, self-authentic. And once again, where is the pleasure of learning coming from in taking such an attitude, if there is a truth at all in the words of the text? If East Asian students were still under the influence of the thoughts of Confucius, are Western students so of the writings of Plato or Aristotle? Or of Humboldt in the German speaking world, at least? Hardly!

Philosophical and educational *ideas* are not valid in describing educational reality and limited in explaining the findings in educational reality in everyday language, the word *idea* is used in the sense of "thought", "image", "representation", "type" or "kind"", whereas historically *idéa* is a translation of a Greek word the root meaning of which is "to see" (or "having seen"), also referring to the recognition of forms or shapes (Urmson 1967, S. 118). In Plato's work, ideas of forms are always mentioned as: "(1) the objects of intelligence, in contrast to the objects of

[1] The collection was most probably compiled and written in the Warring States period (475–221 BC) and considered to be one of the central Confucian texts by the end of Han dynasty (206 BA–220 AD).

perception; (2) things which truly *are*, in contrast to changing objects, which are in a state of *becoming*; (3) eternal, in contrast to the perishable world of change" (ibid.). When we try to discuss and understand Confucian ideas on learning and self-transformation in their integrity it would be useful to take a Platonic perspective: *ideas as ideals*. Eva Illouz proposed three characteristics for what she calls "successful ideas": (1) they must fit to the social reality, that is to say, they must be able to sufficiently help social actors to understand their life-experiences; (2) they must be able to give (ethical/practical) orientations, especially in domains of life which are regarded to be significant; and (3) they must circulate in social networks and become institutionalized to some degree (Illouz 2008, p. 41). The factual power of educational ideas may rest on these characteristics as well. It seems obvious to us that Confucian educational thoughts have such a power at their disposal, although there is a strong tendency of competing ideas emerging in today's world of education in East Asia which is most successful and has a great impact on its educational reality, such as the shift towards competencies and standardization of curricula.

The *pleasure of learning* can be regarded as a virtue in Confucian thinking; such pleasure cannot be institutionalized and cannot be produced by means of smart pedagogical techniques. The pleasure of learning may be learned, but can it be taught?[2] In the critical periods of his life, Confucius practiced as a free teacher, as we know, a "Master" who would accept particular individuals as his disciples. To be a "disciple" was never a personal right, but rather an honour (cf. Steiner 2005). The features of the master-and-disciples relationship in ancient times have almost nothing to do with our understanding of the teacher-and-students relationships in the modern, institutionalized education system. Additionally, it does not seem politically correct nowadays to use the rhetoric of "mastery", for it sounds in egalitarian. It is nevertheless interesting to note that Confucius, as far as we know, did accept *anyone* as his disciple in principle, regardless of his social class and background: "The Master said, 'I have never denied instruction to anyone who of his own, has given me so much as a bundle of dried meat as a present'" (Confucius 1979, p. 86/Analects VII, 7). But this does not mean that *everybody* had a *right* to be taught by the Master. On the contrary, the potential disciple or learner had to fulfill some preconditions the most important of which was the eagerness for and the love of learning: "I never enlighten anyone who has not been driven to distraction by trying to understand a difficulty or who has not get into a frenzy trying to put his ideas into words", and "When I have pointed out one corner of a square to anyone and he does not come back with the other three, I will not point it out to him a second time" (Confucius 1979, p. 86/Analects VII, 7). The whole educational philosophy from the Confucian perspective is about the learning process and the person of the learner. Confucian says: "In learning the focus is on the learner; in studying the focus is on the subject. In learning something new, a man[3] improves himself" (Lau 1979, p. 44).

[2] In the *Analects*, the expression "learning" is frequently used, the term "teaching" only very few times only (Lai 2016, p. 89).

[3] In classical texts only the masculine (pro)noun is used, representing men-dominated world and world views. Wherever it may be suitable, we will use the feminine (pro)noun as well.

It is important to understand that in the Confucian view the learner's self is not socially isolated and that learning processes are not independent from the social situation. The master says: "If one learns from others but does not think, one will be bewildered. On the other hand, if one thinks but does nor learn from others, one will be in peril" (Confucius 1979, p. 65/Analects II, 15). This means that in studying the world and one's own self the learner improves his or her personality and strengthens his or her personhood. In opposition to the quasi-romantic idea that a "true" interest in studying the world should always be *intrinsically* motivated, the learning process can be changing in quality and motivation; it may be initiated by a problematic situation, extrinsically and involuntary. In this respect, the crucial idea of the learning process from the Confucian perspective can be observed from the conception of three stages or levels of learning and education: "The Master said, 'To be fond of something is better than merely to know it, and to find joy in it is better than merely to be fond of it'" (Confucius 1979, p. 84/Analects VI, 20). We can interpret this as follows: *Knowing* as acquiring knowledge and skills is the precondition of being able to *appreciate* what one has learned (and being fond of), and *loving* what one is learning and/or has learnt is the precondition to be able to *enjoy* oneself with the skills and knowledge one has acquired. One might state, therefore, that enjoying is better than loving, and loving is better than knowing; but this indicates that there is no joy without knowing and appreciation. This Confucian idea is unique and inspiring especially for today's educational culture in which we tend to think the other way around; knowing is to come after loving and understanding. Here we might have a better sense of what the Confucian idea of "pleasure of learning" – called *haoxue* (學)– is all about.[4]

1.2 Stereotypes and Prejudices

The "Confucian self" is not vanishing or drowning in society and its social order, as an old and persistent cliché and stereotype is suggesting. It is also not going ahead; it is not preceding with social order as it is seen in the fiction of philosophical liberalism (cf. Roetz 2006, p. 79). The relationship between society and the (moral) self is rather to be understood in a dialectical manner. On the one hand, it is "undeniable that Confucius advocated a strong paternalism in government and this remained unchanged as a basic principle throughout the whole history of Confucianism" (Lau 1979, p. 36f.). On the other hand, the Confucian self is neither an isolated atom nor just a small wheel in the giant machine of society but, rather, a social entity based on moral autonomy and self-examination: "The gentleman is no vessel" (Confucius 1979, p. 64/Analects II, 12) – meaning that "he is no specialist, as every vessel is

[4] To put it with Chen Lai: "Persons are considered to have a love of learning when they are not concerned about material enjoyment but instead pursue spiritual fulfilment and excellence of character; when they are cautious yet earnest, and when they want to learn from those who know the way" (Lai 2016, p. 84).

designed for a specific purpose only" (ibid., footnote). The educated person[5] has achieved an attitude of solidarity but, in principle, remains for his or her own: "The gentleman enters into associations but not cliques; the small man enters into cliques but not associations" (Confucius 1979, p. 65/Analects II, 12). This attitude of the wise or educated person may be compared today with the ideal of a 'post-communitarian solidarity'. Self respect, moral strengthening, and examination of the self are three core educational aspects of Confucian thought. The central motive of *The Analects* (*Lunyu*) is the return to public decency and morality after (hard work of) contemplation of oneself, the sincere search of one's soul (or heart-mind). This motive is especially pushed forward by Mencius (372–289 BC): "The Way of learning is nothing other than this: searching for the heart-mind that's wandered away" (Mencius 1998, P. 207/*Mencius* VI, 11), and almost two millenniums later by Wang Yangming (1472–1529), most prominent representative of the idealistic wing of Neo-Confucianism.

Confucius can be perceived as a major founder, representative and proponent of secular morality and ethics. Religious topics and questions are encountered with reservation and epistemic modesty, reminding of rather an agnostic than skeptical attitude: "To say to know when you know and to say you don't know when you do not, that is knowledge" (Confucius 1979, p. 65/Analects II, 18). Confucius is neither a preacher nor does he declare his religious beliefs. As Tzu-kung said: "One can get to hear about the Master's accomplishments, but one cannot get to hear his views on human nature and the Way of Heaven" (Confucius 1979, p. 78/Analects V, 13). Wisdom is to "work for the things the common people have a right to and to keep one's distance from the gods and spirits while showing them reverence …" (ibid., p. 84; VI, 22). This particular attitude of Confucius, distant reflection and respect, was much appreciated by early philosophers of European Enlightenment because it supported their view of a "natural" morality without ecclesiastical lecture. Confucius' *Analects* (*Lunyu*) were translated into Latin towards the end of the seventeenth century.[6] As Heiner Roetz pointed out, the Confucian ethics reminds of the capacity to produce judgments at a *post-conventional* level (Roetz 2006, p. 90) in the sense of Lawrence Kohlberg (1981). The educated gentleman or person, one may say, nevertheless belongs to the world as everyone else does, and has to follow societal conventions as all other human beings do; but in contrast to the 'uneducated' or poorly educated person, he or she is able to look at the world and himself or herself from a post-conventional perspective, without preventing himself or herself from following the rules of social order. Therefore, to view the core of Confucian ethics in the mere adaptation to societal conventions, as, for instance, Max Weber did in his sociology of religion (Weber 1993/1920), is not just problematic, but simply wrong. This philosophical prejudice has a long-standing history from the

[5] Confucius invokes the term «an exemplary person» with the term 'educated man' (cf. Lai 2016, p. 88).

[6] The ideas of Confucius became known in Europe in the sixteenth century by reports of missionary Matteo Ricci (1552–1610); in 1687 Father Prospero Intorcetta (1626–1696) translated the writings of Confucius into Latin.

beginning in the European, especially German Enlightenment. The unity of nature and reason was, as Roetz (2006, p. 109) explains, the backbone of early enthusiasm for Chinese philosophy in the eighteenth century, as expressed by Christian Wolff (1679–1754), for instance. Confucian and Neo-Confucian writings were perceived as welcoming examples of panmoralism and holistic world-views which European philosophers of Enlightenment appreciated and interpreted through the lenses of Renaissance philosophy and the ancient Stoa. The holistic world-view was then radically put into question or even destroyed by the critiques of Immanuel Kant, and shortly after by Hegel's dialectic philosophy. The interest in Chinese Philosophy, especially Confucianism, diminished rapidly after this rationalistic turn. Confucius was then primarily regarded as a prototype of *conventional* morality (in the sense of Hegel's *Sittlichkeit* or substantial morality) whereas a more abstract and analytical view of *formal* morality started its triumphal march. In one or another way, philosophers such as Kant, Hegel, Herder, Montesquieu and Nietzsche convicted Confucianism as a sort of dried up philosophy that had no relevance to the new modern narratives of social change and moral progress.

Few Western philosophers found interest in and appreciation for Confucian and Neo-Confucian thinking ever since. An important exception, however, is German existence philosopher Karl Jaspers (1964) who rightly understood how Confucius' philosophy at its core is committed to the ideal of *ethical individuality*, not mere social adaptation. Quite some years earlier than Jaspers, another German philosopher, Georg Misch (1878–1965), argued that the logocentric and rationalistic turn in the Enlightenment thought has led to one-sided world-views which obstructed Western philosophers from relying upon conceptions of more synthetic and holistic thinking of East Asian philosophies (Misch 1950/1926). The tensions between the analytic notions of Enlightenment and synthetic thinking in Romanticism reflect the two major ways of understanding the ideas of human freedom and education for personhood. These tensions are constitutive but not exclusive for modern thinking.

In 2010 Stephen R. Palmquist edited an important volume with the title *Cultivating Personhood. Kant and Asian Philosophy* (Palmquist 2010). The 64 contributions gathered in this book of 845 pages seem to prove that the long-missed discussion between the East and the West has finally started at a level of a more open attitude towards cultural differences. The work of Immanuel Kant, who spoke so negatively about Confucius, from today's perspective in a truly embarrassing and discriminating way (cf. Roetz 2006, p. 109), is discussed in this volume; in many respects, the work is compared and confronted with Confucian philosophy. This mutual interest and sincere attempt to understand philosophies from a cross-cultural perspective is a good sign in today's globalized world, although long delayed. It shows that it is too easy and not fruitful to lead a discussion in the direction where one side reproaches 'Western' philosophers for their racial anthropologies, although this part of history is not deniable, and the other side stipulates that 'Eastern' philosophies mainly stand for traditionalism and conformism. More sophisticated and insightful philosophical discussions are much needed.

Unfortunately, in the case of philosophy of education, such an enterprise is even longer delayed; the cultural traditions of East Asia, most importantly Buddhism,

Confucianism, and Taoism, are still not well known among Western philosophers of education. In contrast to the humanistic tradition in the West, humanistic traditions of East Asia "have been largely neglected by scholars of humanism and historians of education" in the West (Kato 2015, p. 23). But, interestingly enough, the key notions of Confucian and Neo-Confucian philosophies directly concern the ideals, processes and challenges of learning, education, and self-transformation, which can be compared with Western equivalences of liberal education, including, for example, the German concept of *Bildung*. Confucian and Western humanistic traditions have "remarkable similarities" as well as "deep differences" in such as the roles of written and spoken language and the significance of ritual propriety (Kato 2015, p. 31).

The cross-cultural inquiry on educational concepts from the East Asian tradition is an opportunity to the philosophers and practitioners of education for their self-understanding of educational ideas and practices on both personal and institutional levels. This inquiry can be said timely, especially given that the vocabularies in educational discourse today have been dominantly 'West-centred' for a long time, even while the 'globalized' world has become diverse across ethnicities, religions and cultures.

1.3 Confucius, Confucianism, and Neo-Confucianism

"Confucius lived in chaotic times and nobody was able to accept him", the Confucian Liu Xiang (77–6 BC) stated (Roetz 2006, p. 9, translated by R.R.). Confucius (551–479 BC) lived in the Chunquiu-period (722–481 BC) which was characterized by wars; but it can also be described by new political and technical opportunities, an epoch of radical changes in which decisions between the old order and the new order have to be taken (Roetz 2006, p. 10). "Confucius" is a Latinized transcription of "Kongzi" ("Master Kong"), a variation of "Kong fuzi" ("Teacher Kong"). Kong is his family name, and Confucius' name as child was *Qiu*. Born in Lu (today the province of Shandong), Confucius lost his parents early in his life. His parents have been impoverished, as it seems. Biographer Heiner Roetz quotes places in the *Lunyu* which may indicate in what way Confucius has been affected and shaped by his inconvenient origins: "I was of humble station when young. That is why I am skilled in many menial things. Should a gentleman be skilled in many things? No, not at all" (Confucius 1979, p. 97/Analects, IX.6).

Confucius was not able to make his ideas realized during his life time; he was without much success, especially with respect to the implementation of his political ideas, although during the long history of China his moral ideas became more and more significant for China's moral, social and political philosophy. The term *Confucianism*, which is also known as *Ruism*, is highly problematic since it insinuates a unity of many various 'Confucian' philosophies and schools, which up to our times has never existed and still does not exist as an integrated body of thought (Paul 2010, p. 16). Yet, the term Confucianism has become a common convention,

even though everyone would agree it is problematic. Paul (ibid.) suggests that we should differentiate between Confucian philosophy, or Confucianism as a Chinese state-doctrine or ideology on the one hand, and popular Confucianism on the other hand, although there are no clear-cut boarders among the notions of Confucianism understood as tradition, philosophy, religion, governmental approach, educational and humanistic concept and an everyday way of life. Another and useful way of differentiation is to separate (1) Classical Confucianism (*rujia*) from (2) Neo-Confucianism (*xin rujia*) and (3) Modern Confucianism (*dangdai xin rujia; xiandai xin rujia; dangdai xin ruxue*), as Paul suggests (Paul 2010, p. 18).

The major texts of Classical Confucianism are *Lunyu* (or *Analects*), *Mencius*, and *Xunzi*. There are several dozens of rival Neo-Confucian philosophies, the most important exponents of which can be seen in *Zhu Xi* (1130–1200), the school of principle (*lixue*) and in *Wang Yangming* (1472–1529), the school of heart (*xinxue*). These are the rationalistic and idealistic versions of the great Neo-Confucian schools. Philosophically, Neo-Confucianism is the result of a long debate between (classical) Confucianism and Buddhism (which was widely established in China in the Tang dynasty, 618–907) and, in fact, it can be regarded as a form of Chinese *Renaissance*, the "re-birth" of Confucian thought after more than 1500 years. In the Song-Dynasty (960–1279), the most prominent Neo-Confucian at the time, Zhu Xi, selected four texts as a general introduction to Confucian thoughts, namely the *Great Learning* (*Daxue*), the *Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhongyong*), *The Analetcs* (*Lunyu*) and *Mencius*. This selection is known as the *Four Books*; they were used in Ming and Qing dynasties as the official curricula for civil service examinations. Another prominent selection of classical Confucian texts is the so-called *Five Classics* (*Classic of Poetry*, *Book of Documents*, *Book of Rites*, *I Ching* or *Book of Changes*, and *Spring and Autumn Annals*). The study of the *Four Books* for the boys and young men was "arduous and not necessarily intellectually challenging or stimulating"; most time it was probably spent in rote memorization (Gardener 2007, p. xiii). The study was necessary in order for young boys to succeed at the first stage of the civil service examinations, which was carried out at the district level, and then to move on to another level of examination in the provincial capital. If they are successful there, they are qualified to participate in the final level of examinations in the imperial capital. The *Four Books* "were considered sacred texts, for they were the direct words and teachings of the great sages of antiquity, men whose exemplary wisdom and virtues served as an eternal model for the ages" (Gardener 2007, p. xv). One therefore must think of the significance of these books similar to the Bible in the West; its "passages, lines, and terms (…) became part of the *lingua franca* in China" (ibid.). For hundreds of years from 1300 to 1900, examination candidates were expected to demonstrate their mastery of the *Four Books* as well as of *Zhu Xi's* comments on them, and their performances were the result of hard rote learning efforts. Nevertheless, this impressive activity and eagerness should not be directly associated with the idea of the *pleasure of learning* as introduced and emphasized in the *Analects*.

Confucian and neo-Confucian thoughts on metaphysics, ethics, reading and literature, government and the philosophical reflections on the Chinese history of ideas with its heterodoxical system including Buddhism and Taoism do not create a

uniform edifice of ideas; it has rather formed various tendencies within the great community of philosophical scholars whose educational thoughts and world-views can be in one or another way traced back to the name of Confucius. With the new rise of Confucian thinking in the eleventh century at the latest, which was much later named as Neo-Confucianism, Confucian trends became obvious in their differentiation and emphasis. For example, whereas, according to Wing-Tsit Chan (1967), Wang Yang-ming's *Instructions on the Practical Living* represents the major work of the *idealistic* wing of Neo-Confucianism, the *Chin-ssu lu* (近思錄) is the major work of the *rationalistic* wing of neo-Confucianism. "It is no exaggeration to say (…)", Chan stated, that the *Chin-ssu lu* "has been the most important book in China for the last 750 years" (Chan 1967, p. ix). Until the sixties of the last century only a fraction of the Neo-Confucian works has been translated into Western languages.[7] This particular book was written and compiled in 1175 during the Song dynasty (960–1279), almost 17 centuries after the birth of the *Lunyu* (or *Analects*). In *Principle and Practicality; Essay in Neo-Confucianism and Practical Learning*", edited in 1979 by Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom, de Bary writes about the Song dynasty:

> Despite their access to power and the benevolent patronage of Song rulers, the Song Confucians had encountered human limitations in the executing of their grand designs. Last disillusionment and indifference, apathy or despair, Zhu Xi, in the twelfth century, readjusted and reordered his human priorities. The consequence was his intensification of the effort to articulate Neo-Confucian metaphysics and to develop a practical system of spiritual and intellectual cultivation, centering on the ideal of the sage … (de Bary 1979, p. 10)

In this process, Neo-Confucianism developed features with strong resemblances to European Renaissance and its central topics such as "the dignity of man, the immortality of the soul, the unity of truth. Each of these has a close counterpart in the central doctrines of neo-Confucianism. Though the second theme, the immortality of the soul, is expressed in terms quite different from Confucian neo-Confucians had a religious or mystical view of the self as united with all other creatures on this universe in such a way as to transcend its finite limitations. This is found most characteristically in neo-Confucian accounts of the attainment of sagehood as an experience of the realization of the true self, which is based on the doctrine that 'humaneness unites man with Heaven-and-Earth and all things'" (de Bary 1979, p. 10–11). In the Chinese case, de Bary explains, the "reaffirmation of humane values took on a special quality as a reaction *against* Buddhism; but the certain characteristic features of neo-Confucianism showed the influence of Buddhism as well. The net result, then, was a humanistic revival which did not so much result in a decline of spirituality as in a transformation of it" (p. 7). Be it this or another way, it may seem appropriate to say that there is a likeness between the Renaissance return to a classical heritage in the eleventh-century in Europe and the revival and restoration of Confucianism in the twelfth century in China.

[7] The translation of the *Chin-ssu lu*. according to Wing-Tsit Chan, at least, was "imperative"; it has been "long overdue". The translation of 1967 includes many comments by Chinese, Korean, and Japanese scholars. Another reader on (and of) Zhu Xi, called "Further Reflections on Things at Hand", has been published in 1991.

1.4 Learning as Thinking

Among the various insights that today's readers may acquire from Confucian and Neo-Confucian literature, one aspect seems to stand out among others: learning can be considered as a *virtue*, even a *meta-virtue*, as a form of life or a mode of self-formation of the person. It does not seem exaggerating to state that Confucian and Neo-Confucian philosophy is, to a large extent, a *philosophy of learning and self-transformation*. Taken this way, educationalists may be given precious opportunities for critical reflections on today's rather instrumentalist understanding of learning. The Chinese word *xue* (學, xue, learning) plays a major role in the *Analects* (Confucius 1979). There is no doubt that Confucius took "*xue* to be central to be a human person", for it is "the basis and source of becoming a human person", and it is at the same time an „ "instinctive disposition" as well as "reflective (disposition) in that we must go beyond our instincts to learn" (Cheng Chung-yi 2018, p. 57). Confucian and Neo-Confucian thinking include a great variety of insights into the personal, social, and spiritual preconditions, necessities and limits of learning as self-transformation, which, by confirmation and contrast, enrich today's educational discussions. It is inspiring to focus on the parallels between Western humanistic concepts of learning and education, on the one hand, and the thoughts and insights as presented in the Confucian and Neo-Confucian texts, on the other hand. A crucial difficulty is to differentiate between *normative* and *descriptive* aspects or statements, in both Confucian and neo-Confucian notions of and Western humanistic concepts of learning and self-transformation. For philosophers of education, the Confucian insights into the *ethos of learning* might be of more relevance than their insights to the notions of moral philosophy and moral psychology, which are usually attributed to this approach (cf. Ivanhoe 1993; Shun 2010). Yet, the various Confucian concepts of learning are not separable from the basic moral and anthropological orientations of and their corresponding assumptions of Confucian thoughts and world-views.

To some degree, Confucian and Neo-Confucian perspectives on learning and self-transformation can be reconstructed by the concepts of *negativity* and negative morality which are close to the *aporetic* style of Socratic thinking, as presented in the earlier phase of Plato's work. It remains striking that Confucius and Socrates lived at about the same period of time (Socrates 469–399 BC, Confucius 551–479 BC). The parallels and differences between Confucius and Socrates (Plato, respectively) have been an object for quite many inquiries (cf. Kwak 2018; McEwan 2016). It is often neglected that the role of *critique* and critical reflection play a crucial role in "pedagogies" both Socratic and Confucian. Yet, "self-criticism", the capacity to critique and the openness towards criticism from others, is an important aspect in the *Analects* (Confucius 1979) as well as in the *Xunzi*,[8] in which it is

[8] Xunzi is a classical Confucian philosopher (298–220 BC). His name, Xunzi, is also the title of his work (Xunzi 2014). Xunzi has been neglected for a long time, compared to Confucius and Mencius, but the interest in the *Xunzi* as the text has increased much in the last decades in the West.

argued that critique is an necessary element for the development of humaneness and the possibility of self-cultivation (Paul 2010, p. 36).

To be interested in Confucianism is one thing, and how to read the Confucian Classics today is another (Cheng Chung-yi 2018, p. 107). Cheng discusses various ways: "Classicists aim to get at the 'true' meanings of the texts, thus suggest that the reader need to be equipped with the art of philology so as to be able to overcome the great expanse of time that lies between the modern reader and the ancient texts" (ibid.). Classicist or historical approaches, as significant and insightful as they really are, may fail to show the modern relevance of Confucian Classics, an attempt that is followed by some philosophers. By referring to Lao Sze-kwong, Cheng is focusing on such a reading strategy which implies (1) identifying the philosophical problem of the text at stake; (2) reconstructing "the line of thinking, reasoning, and argumentation revealed in the text, which will lead to the answers of the questions, and (3) finally evaluate the effectiveness of the answer by any possible criticism" (Cheng Chung-yi 2018, p. 108f.). Such an endeavor does not promise to be successful only by the exclusive use of an analytical approach. It rather seems that the reader also has to open himself and herself to acknowledge and recognize the relevance of *metaphysical* notions and questions; he or she has to show respect for philosophical ideas in general and a willingness to use his or her imaginative capacity in order to better understand.

The Neo-Confucian idea of "*learning by thinking*" (cf. Reichenbach 2018) is exemplary for the Confucian insights into the meaning of epistemic virtues – most of all modesty in the evaluation of one's own knowledge. It is true that one finds many passages in the *Chin-ssu lu* which suggest that *memorization* is necessary but not enough. In the center of educational progress and perfection lies the occupation with the not yet known:

> We must try to know what we do not yet know, and to correct what is not good in us, however little. This is the improvement of our moral nature. In studying books, search for moral principles. In compiling books, appreciate what ultimate purposes they have. Do not just copy them. In addition, know much about words and deeds of former sages and worthies. This is the improvement of our inquiry and study. Do not relax for a moment. Keep on like this for three years and there will be progress (*Chin-ssu lu*, II, 94, [1967, p. 83])

To a large extent, the passages on learning in the *Chin-ssu lu* are about the right attitude of successful learning, the ethos of learning which includes the learner's confidence, equability, persistence, and, most of all, modesty. The latter can be experienced in the willingness to learn from people with socially inferior status.[9] Thinking of oneself as being mature and experienced will be an obstacle for learning and therefore for moving on to progress in the personal development. Even

[9] "Many people think they are mature and experienced and therefore are not willing to learn from their inferiors. Consequently, they remain ignorant all their lives. Some people regard themselves as the first ones to know moral principles and for them there is no such thing as ignorance. Consequently, they too are not willing to learn from inferiors. Because they are never willing to learn, they think of many things that deceive themselves and others. They are willing to remain ignorant throughout their lives" (*Chin-ssu lu*, II, 98, [1967, p. 94]).

though the ethos of learning is about making progress step by step, not about being too eager or too ambitious, the proper learner learns *as if* he or she would want to become a sage (cf. Chin-ssu lu, II, 65, [1967, p. 67]).

The obstacles in making progress and the difficulties in life are essential to the possibility of self-transformation. *The Chin-ssu lu* can be regarded as one of the very early, if not earliest, documents that highlight the importance of *discontinuity* in learning and the role of discontinuity for personal development[10]: "Difficulties improve a person because they help him discriminate moral values carefully and they make his sensitivity greater. This is why Mencius said, 'Men who have the wisdom of virtues and the knowledge of skill are always found to have experienced great difficulties'" (*Chin-ssu lu*, II, 87, [1967, p. 76]). Great difficulties as well as smaller difficulties put a person in a "disequilibrium" (Piaget 1957), at least in some "cognitive dissonance" (Festinger 1957); it is striking how the insights into these problems and their potential for personal development are expressed in the *Chin-ssu lu*. The willingness and effort to find an equilibrium requires an antecedent state of problem or disequilibrium, and of uncertainty or of a need for a change.

There is one of the most striking insights found in *Chin-ssu lu* ,so fundamental and obvious that it is easily underestimated or almost forgotten in today's pedagogical and didactical theories: learning is a *social*, *not purely individual matter*. The cultivation of the self is a social matter. Here the Socratic or Platonic idea of the *care for the self* and the Confucian ideal of *self-cultivation* seem to have a common ground, which is a surprising common ground (cf. McEwan 2016).

A well-known passage in the *Analects* describes critical students as follows: "The Master said ,Yan Hui was not any help to me, for he always accepted everything I said'" (Confucius 1979, p. 106/*Analects* XI, 4). According to Paul (2010, 2006) Confucius expresses here that learning becomes more difficult, if the learner is not contradicted, if there is no critique, at least from time to time (Paul 2010, p. 46). *Learning is about thinking*: "the source of learning is thought" (*Chin-ssu lu*, III, 6, [1967, p. 90]). A person may be intelligent but is nevertheless not in the business of thinking; another person may be not so bright but still familiar with the practice of thinking and studying.[11] The tight connection of learning and thinking in (rationalist) Neo-Confucian thought requires an effort to look for expressions that fit the experiences of the person: "Whenever in our effort at thinking we come to something that cannot be expressed in words, we must think it over carefully and sift it clearly again and again. Only this can be considered skillful learning. As for Kao Tzu, whenever he came to something that could not be expressed in words, he would stop and inquire no more" (*Chin-ssu lu*, III, 22, [1967, p. 97]). Learning, for many students, is no fun at all, of course, and most students want to avoid the effort of learning and thinking, or agree to learn, as long as it is smooth and easy. This is not a new phenomenon: "Nowadays students study like people climbing a hill. As long

[10] This is an insight which will become popular with the Piagetian tradition in psychology and pedagogy before in the work of Herbart, and later in that of Dewey (cf. English 2013).

[11] "If a person is essentially sharp-witted but does not study, then he is really not sharp-witted" (Zhu Xi 1991, p. 93).

as the path is unobstructed and level, they take long steps. When they reach a dangerous point, they stop right away. The thing to do is to be firm and determined and proceed with resolution and courage" (*Chin-ssu lu*, II, 53, [1967, p. 62]).

There is no doubt that students, in this traditional view, can be divided into at least two groups: students who are disposed of the capacity to struggle and to push themselves forward, and students who do not have enough of this disposition and virtue. "Now as for persons with inferior capacity who wish to pursue learning at leisure and allow it to proceed wherever it pleases – I have never heard that such person can succeed" (*Chin-ssu lu*, II, 92, [1967, p. 82]).

It is important to understand and emphasize here again that the major motive for learning and thinking in the Confucian view is a special kind of *fondness* or *love* (Lai 2016). Most prominently, this core aspect is expressed by Confucius himself:

> To love benevolence without loving learning is liable to lead to foolishness. To love cleverness without loving learning is liable to lead to deviation from the right path. To love trustworthiness in word without loving learning is liable to lead to harmful behavior. To love forthrightness without loving learning is liable to lead to intolerance. To love courage without loving learning is liable to lead to insubordination. To love unbending strength without loving learning is liable to lead to indiscipline. (Confucius 1979, p. 144f./*Analects*, XVII, 8)

The dignity of the person, his or her self-respect and social recognition do, in this view, not depend so much upon achieved competencies as upon his or her efforts (virtues) to change. The language of virtues is richer for it includes the willingness, desires and motivation of persons, not just as a necessary drive to acquire competencies or to act accordingly but as an inherent feature of human practice.

To love to learn means to not primarily follow targets outside the learning process. This reminds of John Dewey's a-teleological theory of learning and education (cf. McEwan 2016), the idea of learning without focusing on a target outside of the process of learning: "Master Ming-Tao said: In learning we must avoid setting up a target. If we go step by step without stop, we will succeed" (*Chin-ssu lu*, II, 74, [1967, p. 69]). In the further notes: "Someone asked, 'In his endeavor, a student should aim at becoming a sage. Why not set up a target?'" and Zhu Xi answered:

> Of course a student should regard a sage as his teacher, but what need is there to set up a target? As soon as one sets up a target, his mind will be calculating and deliberating as when he will become a sage and what the stage of sagehood will be like. Thus from the start in his mind he puts success ahead of effort. (…) If every day we compare ourselves with others this way or that way, it will not do. (…) If one first sets up a target, he will surely get into the trouble of aiming too high or trying short cuts. (p. 70)

In the *Further Reflections on Things at Hand*, Zhu Xi states: "In learning, do not reach for the clouds or overextend yourself. Simply examine words and deeds, and there is your reality" (Zhu Xi 1991, S.74). Ambition and uptightness seem to be regarded as the enemies of true learning. The intention or even obsession to attain the goal of sageness seems to be a perfect way to miss the (implicit) goal.

1.5 Confucian Self-Transformation and the Idea of Bildung

There is a multifaceted history to tell about the development of the canonized work in Confucian thinking, and about its transformations, that is, its "de-canonizations" and "re-canonizations", or the shift away from the *Five Classics* to the *Four Books* in the Song period, a shift which represents a move towards inwardness (cf. Gardener 2007, p. xxii). Zhu Xi, on the one hand, as an earlier Song literatus, was mainly interested in and attracted to the *Analects*, the *Mencius*, the *Great Learning*, and *Maintaining Perfect Balance* (p. xxiii). A "number of the greatest Confucian literati of the Song not only counted Buddhists among their close acquaintances but themselves studied Buddhist teachings". "They were poised for the shift inward" (ibid.). It is a shift from topics of community and governance to more general matters of human nature. Could one call it an anthropological turn?[12]

Zhou Dunyi (1017–1073) promoted Yan Hui as the true student of Confucius (Hon 2010, p. 13). By doing this, Zhou "redefined learning as an individual quest for cultivating the mind", argued Hon (ibid.). This turn is also found in the ancient Greek philosophy, especially Platonic thinking (Platon 1993, 1996) and, in particular, the concept of the "care for the self" (Hadot 1981, 1996; Foucault 1993), as well as in neo-humanistic philosophy (Humboldt 1969). Both, the Confucian and the Platonic turn to inwardness started from a political context, the context of human action. As Hon explains: "A learned person, then, is not just a person of action. He is also a person of the right mind who recognizes the inherent connections among all beings in this universe. This 'inward turning is to make cultivation of the heart/mind the most important part of human learning" (Hon 2010, p. 13). This ideal is also found in the humanistic notion of self-cultivation and self-transformation, for which Wilhelm von Humboldt used the (originally pietistic and theological) term *Bildung* (Koller 1999, Kühne 1976). It is therefore *not* a German specialty or exclusivity, of course, as it is sometimes stated in the educational and cultural discourse, especially in Germany (see Bollenbeck 1996). However, one might not be exaggerating to say that the ideal of *self-cultivation* is most elaborated and sophisticated in Confucian and Neo-Confucian thought (Tu Wei-ming 1979), whereas the concept of the *self* is much articulated and differentiated in humanistic tradition of Germany (Taylor 1989).

The German concept of Bildung "refers to the inner development of the individual, a process of fulfilment through education and knowledge, in effect a secular

[12] Without any doubt there is *positive pedagogical anthropology* in Confucian and Neo-Confucian thought: "Know that human nature is originally good and hold with loyalty and faithfulness as fundamental. This is the way to build up, first of all, the noble part of your nature" (*Chin-ssu lu*, II,70, [1967, p. 68]). The idea of the good nature of all human beings is, nevertheless, embedded in rather the strict conceptions of social conventions. The importance of good relationships and sensitiveness towards status distinctions is crucial: father and son, ruler and subject, husband and wife, old and young, and friend and friend, according to Mencius, had become the five paradigmatic relationships binding Chinese society together. In this context, Daniel Gardener has commented or guessed: "Perhaps because goodness is relationship dependent, Confucius himself, although deeply preoccupied with virtue, never provides a comprehensive definition of it" (Gardener 2007, p. 140).

search for perfection, representing progress and refinement both in knowledge and in moral terms, an amalgam of wisdom and self-realization" (Watson 2010, p. 53f.). It may be important to consider that German Enlightenment (*Aufklärung*) came later in history than French, English and Scottish Enlightenment. The German *Aufklärer*, "men of Enlightenment", could borrow from their neighbors and their earlier achievements, and they "did so selectively to address problems of specific concern in German intellectual life" (Watson 2010, p. 69). The Enlightenment thought in general was characterized by the rise of historicism. Whereas the idea of societal change was widely accepted in the late seventeenth-century and the early eighteenth-century Europe, the German Enlightenment specifically focused on the direction, logic and meaningfulness of the change. Initially, German intellectuals were fascinated by the French Revolution, though later disgusted by the post-revolutionary terror. To them this was a remarkable backlash to the hope for political progress. Without oversimplifying things, one may state that the main difference between the French and German Enlightenment is a different understanding of freedom, due to their different historic experiences before and after the French revolution. Whereas in the early Western Enlightenment period freedom was understood as an outward, definitely political concept, in the later German Enlightenment the predominant understanding of freedom was characterized by rather an aesthetic dimension: not external but internal freedom or not political but spiritual freedom. Even the conception of the so-called *Bildungsstaat* ("state/nation of Bildung"), as proposed by a historicist *Aufklärer*, was mainly an aesthetic idea, that is, "a state whose main ideal was to enrich the inner life of man" (Watson 2010, p. 77). For Wilhelm von Humboldt, Bildung as "education through the humanities" was "the true path to inner freedom" (Humboldt 1969, p. 832).

The shift from a political understanding of the Enlightenment, like the one in France, and also in England or Scotland, to German *inwardness* ("Innerlichkeit"), as realized by the concept of Bildung, can be, at least to a certain degree, interpreted as a desire of German intellectuals to escape from the brutal and whole-disappointing post-revolutionary world to a place where man could seek secular perfection: an escape towards inwardness. The concept of humanist Bildung, therefore, can be criticized as a-political ideal in a discourse environment where the questions and topics of political rights, social justice and societal change were increasingly neglected. That might be one of the reasons why later in history humanist Bildung became entangled with political conservatism and social snobbery (Watson 2010, p. 834).[13]

[13] The notion of Bildung does not however only refer to the process – as the formation or development of a person – but also to the result, the "final shape". Bildung is said to have an "objective" and a subjective aspect. Whereas the former refers to "culture" (as a philosophical, scientific, aesthetic, moral, in short: "reasonable" interpretation of the world, either referred to as Allgemeine Menschenbildung [general human education] or as Allgemeinbildung [broad educational experience]), the latter refers to the in each case specific way of acquiring the objective content of culture (ibid.). Insofar we may say that what groups of humans perceive as culture (ethnicities, nations, communities etc.) is Bildung at the level of the individual.

The notion of Bildung is mostly traced back to Eckhart von Hochheim, known as "Meister Eckhart", who lived from 1260 to 1328 and who was quite an influential theologian and philosopher of the late Middle Ages. The concept of Bildung is of *theological* and *spiritual* origins, not mainly a concept of the Enlightenment rationality as it is sometimes interpreted in rather a reductionist manner. Whenever it comes to the notion of the *self* and the notion of *rationality*, some authors are tempted to make dualistic and simple statements and comparisons between the Eastern and Western thoughts. This may be to keep things simple; it may be politically motivated, or it may be the expression of pure ignorance. It can also be interpreted as revealing a desire to gain certainties in matters of cultural identity and heritage. Whatever the source or motives may be, such dualistic propositions are not convincing, while historically and philosophically untenable. Unfortunately, one easily comes along with such simplistic East-West dualisms and dichotomies.[14] We wonder how the authors were able to develop such "great" overviews and felt so certain in comparing *the* Confucian tradition with *the* Western tradition without any sign of doubt. Doubt, of course, was not invented by René Descartes, it already played a major role in the Socratic tradition, as we all know, and in the *Chin-ssu lu*, one may read: "The student must first of all know how to doubt" (*Chin-ssu lu*, III, 15, [1967, p. 94]).

Neither the Socratic nor the Confucian tradition is a homogenous body of thoughts, insights, inspirations and questions. The one who enters such a tradition comes to be in contact with a *universe*, not just a simple body of anecdotes and phrases; you do not or cannot compare universes. If one were able to compare universes, one would have no doubts and no questions. What is worse is that one could not even start the practice of studying the universe at all. It was said: "People who do not doubt simply have not devoted to concrete practice. If they have concretely practiced, there must be some doubts. Something must be impracticable, and that raises questions" (*Chin-ssu lu*, II, 102, [1967, p. 85]).

Commenting on the Confucian tradition, one should be more or less familiar with the 18 Chinese dynasties and their spiritual, religious and political circumstances. Comments on the Western thinking may as well require pertinent insights in the history of thoughts from the antiquity to the postmodern times. But our lives are too short for such endeavors, of course. We can comfort ourselves with small insights only and with getting in touch with the universe of the not-known. Then again, our ambitions should not be too modest. It is said: "It is very important that a student should not have a small ambition or to be flippant. If his ambition is small, he will be easily satisfied. If he is easily satisfied, there will be no way for him to advance. Being flippant, he will think that he already knows what he does not yet

[14] To give one example: "In Western philosophy, the question of 'What is the Truth?' has taken a centre stage. However, to the Confucian cultures, this question does not occupy a central position. The concept of truth is understood differently between the Western and the Confucian worlds. In the West, truth is knowledge of reality, basically the representations of the world" (Kim Kyung Hi 2004, 118).

know and that he has studied what he has not yet studied" (*Chin-ssu lu*, II, 111, [1967, p. 87]).

In quoting this passage, we implicitly made reference not only to Confucius but also to Socrates. To become educated means to learn what one does not know and understand yet. "We must try to know what we do not yet know, and to correct what is not good in us, however little. This is the improvement of our moral nature" (*Chin-ssu lu*, II, 94, [1967, p. 83]). Knowing about what one is *not* knowing is neither a sign of ignorance nor that of indifference but rather a starting point of learning. To make not-knowing explicit is an expression of thinking and insight. This major feature of a so-called negative pedagogy one does find already in the *Analects* as well as in the Platonic reference to the aporetic side of Socrates. It is striking to witness how, this agnostic and negative wisdom was articulated in both the figures of Socrates and Confucius in Greek antiquity and Chunqiu-dynasty, respectively, among other similarities (and, of course, with important differences, see, F. I. Tweed and Lehmann 2002).

Some familiarity with the discourse of *Bildung* offers opportunities to detect and recognize crucial questions and ideas on the importance of learning in the cultivation of the self as presented in the *Chin-ssu lu*. In the course of the past two centuries there has been a considerable change of the connotational field of the concept of Bildung (Hörster 1995). The genealogical origins of the concept, however, are in medieval mysticism and pietistic theology. Whereas in the eighteenth century Bildung was closely connected to the idea of "humanity" and "perfection" (concepts such as Enlightenment, bringing virtue and spirit together by the idea of Bildung), at the end of the nineteenth century Bildung is understood as a commodity and as a value. Since the mid-twentieth century, in the course of the broad establishment of the social sciences in the educational discourse, there have been attempts to replace the concept of Bildung by such concepts as deculturation, socialization, ego-identity, development and qualification. Thus, the concept of Bildung has also experienced – the periods of trivialization and complete transformation.

The ambiguity and vulnerability of the (original) concept of Bildung has nevertheless not resulted in fully being replaced by its surrogates as suggested by different camps of authors (Pleines 1989, p. 1). Pleines (1971) attempts to systematize the educational meaning of Bildung, which is still convincing today, knowing well that a "premature determination of its meaning or a structural reduction of its original meaning will result in its decline and thereby in the levelling of its originally intended contents" (p. 12). Pleines refers to (1) "Bildung as a valuable commodity which must be strived for", (2) "Bildung as a state of mind", (3) "Bildung as a process of mind", (4) "Bildung as a permanent task" and (5) "Bildung as man's self-fulfilment in freedom". He finally points out Bildung as (6) "educated (gebildet) man and his/her Bildung of reason and heart" (see p. 12–38).

The reader of major Confucian and Neo-Confucian texts learns that the cultivated individual, the learner striving for self-cultivation, is, in this tradition, considered as a unity. It might easily be overlooked that the idea of Bildung is not primarily an analytical notion, at least in its origins, but rather regarded as *mediator* between the "unity of the individual" and the "totality of the world", which is similar to the

(Neo-) Confucian idea of self-cultivation – (Posner 1988, p. 26). This mediation can be viewed as a process or a state (goal) or both. The ideals of educational objectives even in today's discourses, such as responsibility, independence, self determination, and reasonable practice, thus provide the concept of Bildung as self-transformation with its "typical dignity", and make Bildung a regulative idea of general education, while making educational theory "a place of normative understanding within it" (Miller-Kipp 1992, p. 18f.). The constitutive core of the idea of Bildung seems to be so close to the Confucian ideal of the person who learns to care for himself or herself. In whichever way the term of Bildung is used, either as a critical term for judging on practical work or as an "uncritical" term which can be ideologized and utilized, the actual point of reference about the concept of Bildung is the subject as a *self-educating individual* or an individual under education. The "idea of the subject" is the "systematic core of the concept of Bildung, and the question of the subject in the process of Bildung is the fundamental question of Bildung" (ibid. p. 19). Thus, educational theory cannot avoid questions concerning the formation of the subject, not only in the philosophical but also in the psychological and sociological sense.

Despite the "blurred" definition of Bildung as a "universal topic", if we knew what that is, after all, Bildung will at least in the German speaking world stay "up to date", as long as humans are supposed to be supported and assisted on their way towards some version of the ideal of self-formation. This also implies certain anthropologic presumptions. Ontological and normative definitions of understanding oneself and the world will be up to date, as long as man considers him/herself as a "self-interpreting animal" (Taylor 1985) or as a self-interpreting creature (Fink 1970, p. 193). Any concept of Bildung, or self-cultivation, does necessarily reflect world-views and images of being a person. Educational concepts have always been and are still influenced by the predominant political and cultural situation, which may result in both a euphoric and/or elitist educational discourse (Hörster 1995, p. 46f).

In mass societies, just a few or certain individuals are actually able to become educated as noble men of Confucian ideals or of high ideals of Greek antiquity. It may be that an educational capital so understood will not have any "equalizing" effects on given social structures if "equalization" is its essential topic. Despite any individual acquisitions of education, the unequal distribution of the educational capital and the unequal access to education will result in analogous divisions and differentiation lines and in subtle and less subtle practices of exclusion, as we find them in the fields of economic and social capitals (Bourdieu 1988). Learning as self-cultivation and care for the self may be considered as meta-virtues: the virtue to become virtuous or to become a better person. This fundamental human motivation seems to be highly recognized in most cultures; for it is the only way to escape from indifference, apathy and despair so dominant in contemporary culture.

1.6 Remarks on the Nine Contributions of the Book: An Overview

The retrieval and re-examination of a long-standing tradition of humanism in East Asia, such as Confucianism, does not mean to set the East Asian philosophy of education against its Western equivalence. It could rather be understood as an invitation to an intercultural conversation which may open the possibility of exploring a feasible framework through which we can compare seemingly contrasting philosophies of liberal learning between the Eastern and Western traditions. Stereotyped East-West-dualisms, such as formality versus free-thinking, conformity versus independence or obedience versus autonomy, might be looked at from more differentiated perspectives. Yet it also aspires to ask what makes 'liberal learning' genuinely *liberal* from the view of secular humanism, which may be brought out by a broader concept of an *educational* perspective that is to be shared by traditions of humanism in East and West.

The contributions gathered in this book are written by educational philosophers, on the one hand, and East Asia specialists, on the other. The authors are from seven countries, namely Germany, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Switzerland, Taiwan, and Vietnam. The different cultural and disciplinary backgrounds of the contributors offer a manifold discussion on educational theory and practice in the East Asian world. However, throughout the entire essays, there are two distinct methodological concerns the authors implicitly share. One is a concern with how to view the East Asian concepts and practices of learning in terms of their relevance to contemporary educational cultures and contexts; this is to say, they share a concern for a *self-reflexive modern sensibility*. The other is with how to view the Confucian tradition in terms of its relevance to other regions of the world; that is, *comparative* eyes are assumed. The topics addressed may be recognized as fundamental interests across diverse cultures. And we attempt to give a voice to a set of *long-lasting* and yet *differentiated* cultural traditions of learning and education, thereby creating a common space for critical philosophical reflection on one's own educational tradition and practice.

On the other hand, we editors have decided to give a short introductory comment to each chapter, as matter of format, hoping that it will make the texts easier to access for the readers who are not familiar to the Confucian classical texts and east Asian culture. The comment is supposed to address educationally interesting issues from the comparative perspective, drawing an attention of those who are interested in philosophical thoughts and traditions on the ideas of education as self-(trans) formation from the East and West. What follows is a brief sketch of what the essay of each chapter is about.

In Chap. 2, *Chung-yi Cheng* (Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong) lays out a criticism of modern conceptions of education and then presents a Confucian understanding of knowledge. The four interrelated kinds of knowledge

in this Confucian perspective are further discussed to articulate how learning may be understood as the cultivation of three cardinal virtues, namely, wisdom (*zhi* 智), benevolence (*ren* 仁) and courage (*yong* 勇). The author replies to the skeptical questions to this Confucian view, and defends its modern relevance. He argues that Confucian insights on education could and should be revisited and learned by Chinese people as a vital part of their cultural heritage and by foreign people as a valuable intellectual resources which can be shared globally.

In Chap. 3, *Jeong-Gil Woo* (Kyunghee University, Seoul, Korea) investigates the prototypical Confucian concept of education and the educational relationship according to Confucius' *Analects*. It is marked with characteristics, such as deep respect for the human being, ethics of the relationship and the spirit of dialogue, benevolence (*ren* 仁) and noble men (junzi, 君子) as a goal of education, the correspondence of words and action as a basic principle of educational practice and interaction, and 修己 (self-education and self-transformation) as the ideal form of the educational relationship. In this chapter, there is a particular focus on the dialogical nature of Confucius, which is directly related to the conceptualization of original Confucian education and the relationship as a dialogical one, which may lead one to rethink that Confucian education only advocates a hierarchical and authoritative system. Referring to the original text of the *Analects*, the author focuses on Confucius as an educator and not as manager of an educational project, where he tries to make others into 君子 with his hierarchical authority, but as a companion, motivator, or partner in dialogue as well as a role model in the process of becoming a 君子.

Morimichi Kato (Sophia University, Tokyo, Japan) is interpreting Xunzi's philosophy of rituals in Chap. 4. Ritual is a key concept to understand Confucianism. The *Analects* is full of references to ritual, and learning ritual occupied the central place in the Confucian curriculum (*Analects*, 16, 13). It is this feature that made Confucian humanism quite different from the Western humanism. And yet, until recently, philosophers of education did not pay much attention to it. This is probably due to the still prevalent way of thinking that puts the content before the form, and the mind before the body. The chapter intends to clarify the deeper meaning of Confucian ritual through an interpretation of Xunzi, a Confucian scholar of the third century B.C.E. whose writing, the *Xunzi*, contains a remarkable meta-theory of ritual. The investigation proceeds to show the relevance of ritual for education and morality then and today.

In Chap. 5, *Paulus Kaufmann* (University of Zurich, Switzerland, and Munich, Germany) is analyzing Ogyû Sorai's reflection on the content of learning. According to the Japanese historiographical tradition Confucianism was brought to Japan in the year 284 CE under the reign of emperor Ōjin. In the *Kojiki* (古事記), Japan's oldest historical record, an interesting passage about these events is to be found: "Again King Shō-ko, the Chieftain of the land of Kudara [part of present-day Korea], sent as tribute by Achi-kishi one stallion and one mare. Again he sent as tribute a cross-sword, and likewise a large mirror. Again he was graciously bidden to send as tribute a wise man, if there were any such in the land of Kudara. Therefore receiving the [Imperial] commands, he sent as tribute a man named Wani-kishi, and

likewise by this man he sent as tribute the Confucian *Analects* in ten volumes and the Thousand Character Essay in one volume, altogether eleven volumes." The author argues that in this short narrative Confucian scholars and books are depicted as tributes comparable to other tributes like horses, swords or mirrors. But in contrast to these material tributes, Confucianism was explicitly asked for by the emperor. Kaufmann shows how Confucianism was valued in Japan, in particular, for its educational merits: how the political discourse and the educational system were confucianized and especially the Neo-Confucian texts became the standard texts of instruction in Japan.

Niklaus Schefer (Gymnasium Thun, Switzerland) in Chap. 6 is looking at the ideas of Enlightenment and Freedom in a Confucian Way 萬物一體 (wanwu yiti) and interpreting these philosophical concepts and their educational relevance. For more than 130 years, Abitur or Matura are the terms in different European countries to indicate the general qualification for university entrance or the overall maturity for higher education. Maturity means that one has grown up and is now part of a modern society as a reasonable, free and responsible individual. Being educated (cultured, thus reasonable) and freedom are two central terms in our history of ideas, the author argues. They define the self-concept of modern liberal and democratic societies. Education towards maturity that is committed to Enlightenment is inherent to the project of modernity. With that form of education all civilians are regarded as autonomous and reasonable subjects who can act free and equal within the boundaries of a democratic constitutional state. The changeful history of the past two centuries, however, has shown that the achievements of Enlightenment cannot be considered as secured and everlasting. On the one hand, there was and still is fighting with the enemies of an open liberal society, on the other hand, the movement of Enlightenment is enmeshed in a dialectic development and its impacts may be consequently reversed, also in the sphere of education.

In Chap. 7, *Roland Reichenbach* (University of Zurich, Zürich, Switzerland) is referring to the Confucian notion of the heart-mind and uses it to make remarks on the metaphysics of educational theory. Metaphysical thinking is concerned with questions and hypotheses about (i) the nature of the mind and the world, (ii) the foundations of ethics and aesthetics, and/or (iii) the proper course of moral self-cultivation. When it is questioned whether intercultural discourse on philosophy of education pays off, one can assume that on the basis of respect and care for ideas at least mutual inspiration is possible. In English, the term 'Neo-Confucianism' was used only since the twentieth century. According to John Makeham, it is an "umbrella term" for a philosophical discourse associated with individual thinkers who have been classified as belonging to different schools or sub-traditions since the Song dynasties, particularly "Learning of the Way" (*daoxue*), "Studies of Moral Principles" (*lixue*), and "Learning of the Mind and of the Heart" (*xinxue*) (cf. Makeham 2010, p. xiii). "Heart/mind" or "mind-and-heart" is the English translation for *xin.* The "heart/mind" is a metaphor, the author argues, no more, no less. It seems evident from a metaphorical viewpoint, which Reichenbach is favouring, that the central cultural and scientific concepts cannot be more than metaphors. The

chapter values the heuristic power of the Confucian idea and metaphor of the heart/mind for today's understanding of educational theory and practice.

In Chap. 8, *Nam Nguyen* (Vietnam National University, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam) is presenting a "Vietnamese Reading of the Master's Classic: Phạm Nguyễn Du's Humble Comments on the Analects as an Example of Transformative Learning". Phạm Nguyễn Du's influential text *Humble Comments on the Analects* (*Luận Ngữ Ngu Án* 論語愚按) is an outstanding example of a Vietnamese adaptation and reworking of an East Asian intellectual tradition. In organizing his work, Phạm departed from convention by rearranging the extant chapters of *The Analects* into four "books": "Sage" (*ThÁnh* 聖), "Learning" (*Học* 學), "Official" (*Sĩ* 仕), and "Politics" (*Chính* 政). Moreover, Phạm placed particular emphasis on the "Learning" book, and thus underscored his contention that the classic text had a distinctive relevance and meaning in eighteenth-century Vietnam. Phạm's composition of the *Humble Comments* thus presents a fascinating example of transformative learning in which the author questions his old assumptions about the world and himself, puts forward new propositions, and elaborates these propositions via an original reading of a classic. Through the analysis of Phạm Nguyễn Du's life and his auto-preface to the *Humble Comments*, one can also gain a better view of the picture of Vietnamese reception of Zhu Xi's Neo-Confucianism, or more particularly, of the dictum of "learning for the sake of one's self" (*weiji zhi xue* 為己之學) read in the light of Chu's thought in eighteenth-century Vietnam.

"Self-Cultivation with Brushes: From the Perspective of Graphocentrism" is the title of *Ruyu Hung*'s contribution (Chiai National University, Chiai, Taiwan) for Chap. 9. Calligraphy is, of all Chinese traditional arts, a most fascinating and delicate form that incorporates painting, writing, and seal carving. Through Chinese history, calligraphy symbolises beauty and authority. Emperors in ancient times and rulers of modern era manifest their superiority by writing calligraphy. For members of the literati class, calligraphy does not only represent the power of cultural tradition, but also the beauty of art. More importantly, the practice of calligraphy is taken as a unique way of self-cultivation in morality. The persisting exercise of writing is a way of ethical cultivation of heart and mind. Hung shows that mastery of calligraphy is an essential part of education of the Confucian educated man, *junzi*. This chapter examines the Chinese classical texts on writing calligraphy as a form of self-cultivation from the perspective of graphocentrism. "Graphocentrism" is understood by the author as the notion underpinning Chinese worldview that prioritises writing over speech. On the basis of graphocentrism, the written word is endowed with magical power and is able to affect the natural and the supernatural worlds. The author discusses the holistic view by explicating the traditional discourse on calligraphy.

Finally, in Chap. 10, *Duck-Joo Kwak* (Seoul National University, Seoul, Korea) presents and comments Zhu Xi's Ethics of Reading and combines her reflections with a recovery of humanistic pedagogies of learning. The chapter reconstructs twelfth century Neo-Confucian scholar Zhu Xi's *ethics of reading* to see if it can provide a new possibility of recovering the old practice of reading as a self-(trans)formative event, yet in such a way as to accommodate the post-metaphysical culture

of contemporary liberal education. With a comparative perspective, this attempt is intended to contribute to enriching vocabularies to describe the educationally intrinsic value of the humanities education, which an American literary critic Peter Brooks aspires to with his idea of ethical reading. In this reconstruction, the author will start with Zhu Xi's *new* ideas of (humanistic) learning since his ethics of reading is conceived as the actual way of realizing his ethics of learning. The underlying concern in this chapter is to see whether Zhu Xi's ethics of reading can be newly interpreted as the practice of *self-reading*, which may allow to formulate this old idea of self-cultivation in quest for the Way (*tao*) in new terms: self-cultivation as self-dispossession in favor of the text, or as self-dialogue with the mediating practice of textuality.

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Chapter 2
Knowledge and Virtues: Confucian Education as Life Education and Its Modern Relevance

Chung-yi Cheng

Introductory Remarks
By Roland Reichenbach

The first chapter draws a broad picture of Confucian philosophy and its relevance to educational thought in our time. Professor Chung-yi Cheng, specialist on Confucian philosophy, is contrasting core assumptions of Confucian perspectives with modern and/or Western ideas of education, being fully aware that Confucian philosophy, similar to ancient Greek philosophy (but unlike most modern philosophical conceptions) that presupposes and advocates a tight connection (even inseparability) between knowledge and virtue, as shown in that to Plato virtue *is* a kind of knowledge. By referring to the works and insights of classical Chinese Confucian philosophers – predominantly Confucius (551–479 BC), Mencius (327–289 BC), Xunzi (298–220 BC) – and neo-Confucian philosopher Zhu Xi (1130–1200) as well as Western sociologist Max Weber (1864–1920), linguist and philosopher Noam Chomsky (born 1928) and philosophers such as Bernard Williams (1929–2003), Thomas Nagel (born 1937) and Robert Nozick (1938–2002), Chung-yi Cheng emphasizes the problem of "value subjectivism" which he sees as an accurate description of modern times. The author's request is to (re-)examine Confucian philosophy as a way of challenging and confronting the problematic impacts of a disenchanted world and of highly subjectivized world views by means of a broader understanding of education, called life education. According to this Confucian perspective there is a proper way to achieve "objective values", a journey which has to start with the *self-inquiry* of the learner. This view can be regarded as a *topos* of Confucian educational philosophy. It is not necessarily in contradiction with other insights into the development of individuality and humanity from other

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R. Reichenbach, D.-J. Kwak (eds.), *Confucian Perspectives on Learning and Self-Transformation*, Contemporary Philosophies and Theories in Education 14,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-40078-1_2

cultural backgrounds – such as the Greek antiquity or German idealism – but it is a very original, elaborated and differentiated perspective. In order to understand the way of education, it is crucial to have a sense for different types of knowledge and how they are perceived to be acquired and helpful for the ongoing development of the person. The first kind of knowledge comes from *seeing* and *hearing*! This type of perceptual knowledge has almost been forgotten in modern discourses of educational philosophy and in educational research, as it seems, even though the educational (and philosophical) relevance of the eye and the ear are fundamental and has been studied during many centuries.[1] The second kind of knowledge refers to the understanding of *words*; one may also say or state that this second type of knowledge acquisition concerns the ability of the learner to move in the world of symbolic orders (most elementarily: reading) which one will need to be able to master for critical inquiry, careful thinking and making clear distinctions. The third kind of knowledge means to understand the Way (*dao*) and the virtues of life, and the fourth kind is understanding the heavenly commands (*tian ming*). It is quite obvious that the third and fourth kind of knowledge are hard to understand from a perspective outside Confucian framework and metaphysics. However, Chung-yi Cheng is giving a great effort to make them understandable when it comes to the idealistic assumptions of Chinese and/or Confucian philosophy.

2.1 A Confucian critique of modern education

A stark increase in Hong Kong's student suicide rate recently has been generating hot discussions as well as ringing alarm bells in society, particularly in the education realm. By comparison with the average of 23 student suicides a year between 2010 and 2014, there were 30 student suicides in the first 9 months of the academic year 2015–2016, having four cases happened in 5 days, and 13 of them were tertiary students.[2] So far the situation has still been severe. There may have different causes for students to commit suicide, such as their learning pressure and their lack of emotional resilience to face difficulties. This paper concerns only the educational problem behind, wondering what is going wrong with our education for it cannot teach students to cherish their lives.

[1] The title of a quite recent book by Paul L. Harris, Professor at Harvard University, is called „*Trusting What You're Told. How Children Learn from Others*" (2012, Cambridge, MA, Belknap Press by Harvard University Press).

[2] See Elizabeth Cheung and Peace Chiu, "Students at breaking point: Hong Kong announces emergency measures after 22 suicides since the start of the academic year", in *South China Morning Post* on March 14, 2016, http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/health-environment/article/1923465/students-breaking-point-hong-kong-announces.

Admittedly, the rise of student suicide rate is a global phenomenon and is just the tip of the iceberg that reveals a fundamental problem of today's education.[3] This fundamental problem, from a Confucian point of view, is that today's education is moving towards a wrong direction because of holding a problematic conception of education as knowledge education, where knowledge is construed narrowly as conceptual and propositional knowledge, and accordingly the learning outcome of students can be precisely measured by the mechanism of examination. For the Confucians, education *per se* should be life education, which is to enable one to inquire, explore, cultivate, transform, and realize oneself through learning. Confucius states that learning should aim at improving oneself and thus is for oneself (*wei ji* 為己), but not to impress others nor is for others (*wei ren* 為人) (*Analects* 14.24). After laying out criticism of modern conception of education in this section, I will present the Confucian conception of knowledge, where knowledge is construed broadly as four interrelated kinds in Sect. 2.2. In Sect. 2.3, I will articulate how the learning of these four interrelated kinds of knowledge can turn out to be the cultivation of three cardinal virtues, namely, wisdom (*zhi* 智), benevolence (*ren* 仁) and courage (*yong* 勇), to constitute education as life education. Finally, I will reply to some possible questions to the Confucian view on education, especially how to realize it and show its modern relevance in Sect. 2.4. The Confucian view is, without doubt, a distinctive perspective set in a particular historical and cultural context, so it could not resolve all the education problems today, nor it should replace the modern education model. However, it embodies crucial insights that should be revisited and learned by Chinese people as a vital part of their cultural heritage and could be globally shared by foreign people as valuable intellectual resources.

Contemporary education has long been criticizing for moving in a wrong direction. For example, Noam Chomsky criticized one prevailing model of present-day education, which sees education as a vessel for containing water. "That's what we call these days 'teaching to test': you pour water into the vessel and then the vessel returns the water." However, "it's a pretty leaky vessel, as all of us who went through school experienced, since you could memorize something for an exam that you had no interest in to pass an exam and a week later you forgot what the course was about."[4] For Chomsky, the model of liberal education, which emphasizes the cultivation of students' intellect and active learning, as articulated by John Henry Newman should revive. In contrast, the most severe problem of contemporary education, from a Confucian standpoint, lies in a problematic conception of education

[3] As to having an upward trend in the suicide rate of tertiary students in the United States, see an recent report by Matt Rocheleau on "Suicide rate at MIT higher than national average", in *Boston Globe* on March 17, 2016, https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2015/03/16/suicide-rate-mit-higher-than-national-average/1aGWr7lRjiEyhoD1WIT78I/story.html.

[4] Noam Chomsky, "How America's great university system is getting destroyed", in *Alternet* on February 28, 2014, http://www.alternet.org/corporate-accountability-and-workplace/chomsky-how-americas-great-university-system-getting.

as knowledge education, where knowledge is construed narrowly as conceptual and propositional knowledge. This conceptualization of knowledge is taking natural science as a model; only those can be verified or falsified possess epistemic quality and thus are qualified to be called knowledge. Along with the explosion of knowledge in the twentieth century, especially scientific knowledge and its departmentalization and professionalization, education then being orientated towards teaching students different pieces of knowledge through different academic subjects. A corollary of this is that test or examination is widely adopted as a measurable mechanism to know whether students learned is 'true' or 'false.' Also, knowledge in this sense is objective, transmittable and thus teachable.

Conversely, values, meanings, morals, and even what sort of life one should be committed to are all subjective, non-transmittable and thus not teachable. Although educators, schools, and universities would not bluntly deny the importance of value, moral and life education, it is dubious that they are empty talk and already losing in actual practice. Here value subjectivism plays a vital role to foster knowledge education and to diminish, if not terminate, value, moral and life education. Max Weber characterized value subjectivism as one of the essential features of modernity, which is the result of "the disenchantment of the world."[5] That said, humans in modern times have given up a teleological view (or in religious terminology, a God's plan) of the universe, so that all beings are deprived of their *telos* as well as their intrinsic value and remained as mere facts. The split of fact and value (or the fact/value dichotomy) leaves value to be defined by humans on their own. So everyone can define her values, and human's rationality can no longer universally justify value. Using Weber's words again, humans have lost their value rationality; all values one valuing or choosing are non-rational, if not necessarily irrational, and what human rationality can do is only instrumental, to calculate or figure out how best to satisfy a set of things one wants and values.[6] If Weber portrayed modernity in a right way, it is equal to set up a difficult task for any attempt to restore or strengthen value, moral and life education, and this paper is of no exception. We will be back to this challenging task in the last section. Suffice here to say that value subjectivism is one of the culprits that consolidates knowledge education as the core of today's education and erodes value education as the peripheral.[7]

It is pretty clear that there will be a disaster if students are only taught with different pieces of knowledge but without the ability to reflect on life, to distinguish good from evil, and to address problems and difficulties of life. As a result, student

[5] See Max Weber, "Science as a vocation", in *From Max Weber: essays in sociology*, translated by H. H. Gerth and Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958).

[6] See Max Weber, *The Theory of social and economic organization*, translated by T. Parsons (New York: The Free Press, 1947), 155; 104–180.

[7] See Yuan-kang Shih (石元康), "Xiandai shehui zhong jiazhi jiaoyo wei he shiwei (Why value education decline in modern society?) 現代社會中價值教育為何式微?", in *Cong zongguowenhua dao xiandaixing: dianfan zhuanyi?* (*From Chinese culture to modernity: a paradigm shift?*) 從中國文化到現代性:典範轉移? (Taipei: Dong Dai Tushu 東大圖書, 1998), 151–169.

suicide is just the tip of the iceberg. Indeed some educators have already spotted the possible dangers lying in today's education, but it seems that they cannot find a way to reinstall value, moral and life education on the status quo. That is why almost all life education programs appeared are organized by non-school organizations. When we surf the web pages of these programs and look into their philosophies of life education, some commonalities can be easily found, namely, to develop student's skills and knowledge necessary for effective decision making or making healthy choices, and to develop student's strategies for communication, negotiation and building relationships with others.[8] Any quick comments on them without the details of implementation will be superficial and unjust, but the wording such as "skill", "knowledge", "strategy", "decision making", and "choice" looks somewhat strange to the Confucian perspective and seems still not getting rid of the problematic conception of education as knowledge education.

2.2 Four Interrelated Kinds of Knowledge

The modern Chinese term for "knowledge" is *zhi shi* 知識 but *zhi* 知 is a bit different from *shi* 識 in ancient Confucian texts. The character *zhi* 知 is ambiguous, refers to knowledge, perception, understanding, appreciation, and administration, while *shi* 識, meaning primarily "to retain what one has seen in one's mind," but both of them are often translated as "to know" and "knowledge" in this context. An integral part of the Confucian conceptualization of education as life education is its unique understanding of knowledge. Accordingly, it is hard to imagine a good life without knowledge, but knowledge itself should not be narrowly understood as knowing concepts and propositions, for one living merely in a world of concepts and propositions is hard to imagine as well. Therefore, knowledge should be construed broadly as four interrelated kinds, and their learning should be fully immersed in and thus beneficial to one's life, leading to the cultivation and transformation of oneself.

The first kind of knowledge is knowledge attained from what one saw (*jian* 見) and listened (*wen* 聞). In the *Analects*, Confucius comments those who possess much more knowledge by widening their seeing and listening are of secondary (*zhi zhi ci* 知之次) (*Analects* 7.28). The commentator Yang Bojun (楊伯峻) interprets "secondary" and "primary" as attributing to different learners, and even Confucius considers himself as a secondary learner who has to attain knowledge through widening his seeing and listening.[9] Yang made such an interpretation because there is another passage in the *Analects* states that "those who are born with knowledge are the highest" and that "next come those who attain knowledge through study"

[8] For example, see the official webpage of a life education program in New Zealand, http://www.lifeeducation.org.nz/schools.html; and another one in Australia, http://lifeducation.org.au/.

[9] See *Luyu yizhu* (*Translation and Commentary of the Analects*) 論語譯注, translated by Yang Bojun (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju中華書局, 1980, 2nd edition), 74.

(*Analects* 16.9).[10] However, it is also reasonable to apply "primary" and "secondary" not only to learner but also to what is known. The knowledge of what one saw and listened is of secondary, for it can merely enable one to be a knowledgeable person. By comparison, the knowledge of the way (*dao* 道) and virtues (*de* 德) of one's life is of primary, for it can enable one to explore one's way of life and cultivate one's virtues to live up to the way.

Knowledge attained from what one saw and listened first involves perceptual knowledge. In ancient Confucianism, Xunzi does have a particular interest in analyzing perceptual knowledge. According to him, sense organs such as eyes, ear, mouth, nose, and body are called "heavenly faculties" (*tian guan* 天官) that can differentiate between things or matters one encountered. For example, "form, color, and pattern are differentiated by the eyes," "notes, tones, high, low, tunings, pipes, and other strange sounds are differentiated by the ear" (*Xunzi* 22.81–83),[11] and so on. Each of these faculties operates separately; it is one's heart/mind (*xin* 心), the "heavenly master" (*tian jun* 天君), which serves to collate (*zheng zhi* 徵知) all that heavenly faculties perceived to form unified perception. Xunzi also discusses the conditions of making correct or wrong perceptual knowledge and concludes that to get correct knowledge one must keep one's heart/mind in excellent condition and that is to keep it in emptiness, single-mindedness and stillness (*xu yi er jing* 虛一而靜) (*Xunzi* 21.167–185). For Xunzi, however, the ultimate goal of heart/mind is not perception, as it is only the necessary level of knowledge, but is to know the Way (*Dao*) of humans and the universe that is the highest level of knowledge.

Besides perceptual knowledge, knowledge attained from what one saw and listened also involves all sorts of knowledge one learned from listening to the teaching of teachers and reading books. So, different academic subjects students learned in school nowadays can fall within it. What is crucial here is that how students can get a genuine understanding of what they have learned. Students usually take what they knew as secondhand, repeating at best what teachers have said, during the early stage of learning. For the Confucians, students should have to transform their knowledge from the state of secondhand into firsthand, through the process of active inquiry, so as not to fall short in getting genuine understanding. Firsthand knowledge, as Mencius puts it, is what one wishes "to find it in oneself" (*zi de* 自得), and "when one finds it in oneself, one will be at ease in it; when one is at ease in it, one can draw deeply upon it; when one can draw deeply upon it, one finds it source wherever one turns." (*Mencius* 4B.14)[12]

In the same vein, Confucius supplements that what we knew through visuals (*shi* 視) and audios (*ting* 聽) can lead us to a more profound observation (*guan* 觀) and investigation (*cha* 察) that can eventually enable us to penetrate phenomena and achieve a higher level of knowing—the underlying meaning of what we saw and

[10] I borrow the translation from D. C. Lau. *The Analects,* translated by D. C. Lau (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1979), 165.

[11] I follow here the numbering of chapters and lines in *Xunzi: the complete text*, translated by Eric. L Hutton (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014).

[12] I borrow the translation from D. C. Lau with slight modification. *Mencius*, translated by D. C. Lau (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1979), 177.

listened.[13] Consider, for example, students A and B are good friends, and they always sit together in the classroom. One day when the teacher sees they sit separately, this visual in fact invites her to observe further and investigate whether there is something like a quarrel happened between them. Thereby what she sees in this visual will no longer be a mere fact but extending to the underlying meaning of it. Take Confucius watching the flowing water as another example, Mencius explains it as follows, "Flowing water is such that it does not go further forward until it has filled all the hollows. A noble person, in his pursuit of the Way, does not get there unless he achieves a beautiful pattern." (*Mencius* 7A.24)[14]

In sum, knowledge attained from seeing and listening can be not only mere facts we encountered or concepts and propositions we learned from teachers and books but also the underlying meaning of them if we adopt a more in-depth way to see, observe and investigate. This in-depth way later is called by Southern Song (1172–1279) Confucian Shao Yong and Cheng Hao as "observation of things" (*guan wu* 觀物) and developed by Zhu Xi as "investigation of things" (*ge wu* 格物) with the result of "acquisition of knowledge" (*zhi zhi* 致知).[15] Zhu Xi further elaborates the way as the personal embodiment of what has been learned (*ti yan* 體驗).[16] It is because when one can reveal the underlying meaning of what one saw and listened, a resonance is sure to occur between one and what one learned, fully awakening one to the meaning as if it becomes part of the one's self.

The personal embodiment of what one has learned is salient to the humanities generally, where we should and often do prioritize meaning as a higher level of knowledge. Works in the humanities, as Robert Nozick succinctly delineates, "respond to value as value, to meaning as meaning,"[17] and therefore "are intended to be vehicles whereby the audience does so, they have to be experienced directly."[18] In contrast, one may cast doubt on whether the personal embodiment of knowledge is also applicable to the learning of scientific knowledge, as meaning (or value) traditionally has not been the preserve of natural sciences, which concern only to discern and uncover the unifying principles underlying diverse phenomena. However, consider, for example, a student is fully engaged in doing her laboratory experiment, being careful and concentrated, it is very likely that she would embody the meaning of seeking the truth. Using the words of Bernard Williams, she would be able to apprehend the significance of "accuracy" and "sincerity," that said, "you

[13] In the *Analects*, Confucius said, "Look at the means one employs, observe the path one takes and examine where one feels at ease. In what way is one's true character hidden from view?" (*Analects* 2:10) I borrow the translation from D. C. Lau with slight modification. *The Analects*, 13.

[14] I borrow the translation from D. C. Lau with slight modification. *Mencius*, 297. An explanation of Confucius' art to looking at water can also be found in *Xunzi* (28. 122–142).

[15] See Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi yulei* (*Conversations of master Zhu*) 朱子語類 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju中華書局, 1986), 286–293.

[16] Ibid, 284.

[17] Robert Nozick, *Philosophical explanations* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1981), 621.

[18] Ibid, 623.

do the best you can to acquire true beliefs, and what you say reveals what you believe."[19] With this in mind, we shall fully understand why Confucius so emphasizes the importance of holding a sincere attitude to know, as he teaches Yan Yuan, "To say what you know when you know and to say what you do not when you do not, that is knowledge." (*Analects* 2.17)[20]

The second kind of knowledge in the Confucian conception of knowledge is the knowledge of understanding words (*zhi yan* 知言). The Chinese term *zhi yan* is issued from the *Mencius*, meaning literally "to know the underlying logic and reason of words," so likely refers to the knowledge (or the ability) of rational thinking and reasoning in this context. Mencius of his day is famous for refuting what he considered as distorted, immoderate, deviant and evasive words, and he believes that it is necessary to do so to safeguard righteousness (*Mencius* 2A.2). In the *Xunzi*, rational thinking is called "deliberation" (*lu* 慮), which is an ability of the heart/mind to reflect on and choose among different emotional dispositions (*Xunzi* 22.12–15). Moreover, it is also called "the knowing ability" (*zhi* 知 and *neng* 能) to draw proper connections (*tong* 通) and unifying categories (*tong lei* 統類) of things (*Xunzi* 8. 541–542). Xunzi claims that it is the rational ability the sage kings can categorize things, making inference among different categories, and finally string all categories and things together to invent a whole set of ritual propriety (*li* 禮) so as to guide people on how to behave appropriately to others, heaven, earth, and myriad things in the world in everyday life.

In the world of thought in ancient China, the knowledge of rational thinking was less discussed and studied in formal and abstract ways; later Mohist School and the School of Names were few exceptions, and most others addressed it in practical and concrete contexts. As noted, in the *Analects*, Confucius contends that if the coming hundred generations succeed the true spirit of Zhou's ritual propriety (*Zhou li* 周禮), although there would have additions and abridgments due to changing circumstances, one still can know them (by inference) (*Analects* 2.23). In another passage, it states that rational thinking is useful even to answer a question of which we do not know at all (by kept hammering at the two sides of the question). (*Analects* 9.8) Confucius also requires his students can come back with the other three corners of the square when he has pointed out one (*Analects* 7.8). Plus, when Duan Muci (Zi Gong) asked by Confucius to compare himself with his companion Yan Yuan, he confessed his inferior to Yan because he can only understand two when being told one thing but Yan can understand ten (*Analects* 5.9). All these clearly show that one has to nurture one's rational thinking in daily life, in particular in the learning of the first kind of knowledge. Indeed, if one can enhance one's knowledge attained from reading and listening to the higher state of firsthand knowledge and personal embodiment, as mentioned before, rational thinking is already implied.

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[19] Bernard Williams, *Truth and truthfulness* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002), 11.

[20] I borrow the translation from D. C. Lau with slight modification. *The Analects*, 15. The emphasis of holding a sincere attitude to know can also be found in other passages, including 13.3, 19.25.

The knowledge or the ability of rational thinking can also help a student to organize, coordinate and integrate what she has learned. As to different sorts of knowledge, students should learn as many as possible; in other words, to expand the breadth of their learning (*bo xue* 博學). It is because only if one is knowledgeable can one cope with the complexities of life. However, the idea of the breadth of learning is not just a matter of getting many broken pieces of knowledge; it should also involve a process of integration; a process to sublimate our learning from the breadth to depth, where rational thinking will play a crucial role. Thereby Confucius is proud of himself as having a single thread to bind all those learned together (*yi yi guan zhi* 一以貫之)(*Analects*: 4.15, 15.3). In *the Doctrine of Mean*, it states that the process of integrating different pieces of knowledge requires rational thinking to exhibit critical inquiry (*shen wen* 審問), careful thinking (*shen si* 慎思) and clear distinction (*ming bian* 明辨). Through these exhibitions, one can significantly sharpen one's rational thinking.

Undoubtedly, the learning of the first and second kind of knowledge in a proper way as discussed are already beneficial to the formation of one's character. As a consequence, one will be educated to be knowledgeable, rational and sincere. In this sense, the learning of them is comparable to the conception of liberal education in the west. Still, it is indirect and not enough to achieving self-cultivation the very nature of education from a Confucian perspective, and what we need here is the third kind of knowledge that is the knowledge of the way (*dao* 道) and virtues (*de* 德) of life. To attain this kind of knowledge, one has to make a reflexive inquiry into oneself. That said, one has to ask oneself why one is fond of intellectual inquiry, wishing to be well-educated. It is not uncommon to get a practical answer that because knowledge can make life better. But what a "good" life is? For the Confucians, this question if asking sincerely and seriously is an existential worry (*you* 憂) about how to find one's way in learning to be fully human; it is also the key to start exploring the way of life, however. Confucius said, "A noble person worries about the way, not about poverty" (*Analects* 15.32).[21] To take a step further, one will be aware of the truth that this worry is in effect one's conscious and conscientious effort to achieve self-transcendence, transcending the non-ideal state of life, and that this effort is an awakening of self-love. Then one will be able to conceive one's self-love as the imperative that humans, in contrast to animals, should authentically comprehend that they have to live up to their ontological role or their nature (*xing* 性)—to be engaged in the process of learning to be fully human. So, self-love is not selfish or egoist love, instead it is a benevolent love and altruistic love. It is a benevolent love because once people awake to their self-love, they can no longer bear the suffering of a meaningless life. Also, it is an altruistic love because if one is sensitive to one's suffering from being unable to live a good life, this sensitivity should also extend to others. Here we reach the motif of Confucius' teaching—benevolence

[21] I borrow the translation from D. C. Lau with slight modification. *The Analects*, 157.

(*ren* 仁). In the *Analects*, we find Zengzi interprets his master's motif as a noble person (*jun zi* 君子 and *shi* 士) should take benevolence as his obligation (*Analects* 8.7).

To know to be benevolent as the way and the essential virtue of life is to know that being benevolent is right and not being that is evil, the knowledge of benevolence, therefore, is the knowledge of moral normativity, and it serves as the core moral judgment of Confucianism. It is worth noting that this moral knowledge is not merely rational; it is sentimental as well, for benevolence can serve as both moral reason and moral sentiment (for Confucianism, a reason/sentiment dichotomy is dubious). Also, the knowledge of benevolence is not mere epistemic; it is practical that warrants the unity of knowing and acting. When one "knows" being benevolent is right one is simultaneous "liking" (*hao* 好) that and "acting on" (*xing* 行) that. Hence, benevolence is a subject not only of knowledge but also of virtue. In the *Analects*, Confucius laments that rare are those who know virtue (*zhi de* 知德) (*Analects* 15.4) and he urges people to be fond of virtue (*hao de* 好德) as of beauty in women (*hao se* 好色) (*Analects* 9.18, 15.13). Yan Yuan, whom Confucius regards as the most talented student, is highly praised by Confucius for not lapsing from benevolence in his heart/mind (*Analects* 6.7).

There were many divergent interpretations of benevolence by Confucian followers, among them, Mencius and Xunzi are two different representatives. In short, Mencuis adopts an approach of practice from "inside out" while Xunzi adopts an approach of practice from "outside in." Mencius regards benevolence as the feeling of compassion (*ce yin* 惻隱) that is a sprout of human's heart/mind sparking off by the sufferings of others and emphasizes the necessity of extending it gradually from family to people and then to living creatures (Mencius 6A.45). Xunzi regards benevolence as a particular sort of meaning that a related sort of ritual propriety like filial piety embodied and through performing the related sort of ritual propriety one can gradually understand it. These two different interpretations both bear significant implications for the method of teaching students the knowledge of benevolence. On the one hand, teachers can teach students the knowledge of benevolence by arousing their compassionate feeling, using situations happened in daily life or mentioned in the Confucian classics like the Mencius's famous example that one seeing a small child on the verge of falling into a well. Also, teachers can teach students to observe the related sort of ritual proprieties, such as filial duty and reverence for the elderly, to know or embody benevolence as their underlying meaning on the other hand.

In comparison with the first and second kind of knowledge, the knowledge of the way and virtues of life (the knowledge of benevolence) is of the highest level, for it should subsume the other two kinds of knowledge under the true spirit and ultimate goal of education that is the self-understanding, self-cultivation, self-transformation, and self-realization of students. What is unfortunate is that this true spirit has been fading out of today's education.

Finally, the fourth kind of knowledge is the knowledge of the heavenly (*zhi tian* 知天), and it indeed is the extension of the third kind of knowledge. The Chinese term *tian* 天 is often translated as "Heaven" and 'heavenly," bearing three primary

meanings in this context. The first is the holistic name of all beings, including heaven, earth, humans, animals, and myriad things; in other words, it is the whole realm of beings. The second is the heavenly command (*tian ming* 天命) that imparts an ontological role or nature to all beings. The third is an explanatory source of something that could not be brought about by humans and what happens without anyone is causing it, and thus often related to the term *ming* 命, meaning "destiny" or "luck." These three meanings contribute differently to the content of the knowledge of the heavenly.

Why after learning the way and virtues of life, students still have to know the knowledge of the heavenly? Since all humans are born within the web of life, namely, family, community, state, culture, history, and the universe, no one is an atomic self. Therefore the self-realization of one necessarily involves an understanding of "the other." One's meaning of life has to be identified with and located in its relationship with the meaning of others. An inquiry into one's self and an inquiry into beings (or Being) are in effect two sides of the same coin. This point is well taken and pressed by Thomas Nagel as a human disposition termed "religious temperament": "A disposition to seek a view of the world that can play a certain role in the inner life."[22] Nagel also remarks, "It is important to distinguish this question from the pure desire for understanding of the universe and one's place in it. It is not an expression of curiosity, however large. And it is not the general intellectual problem of how to combine an objective conception of the universe with the local perspective of one creature within it. It is rather a question of attitude: Is there a way to live in harmony within the universe, and not just in it?"[23]

Confucians do have an answer to Nagel's question, and the key to that answer lies in one's reflexive inquiry into one's nature and heart/mind of benevolence, as Mencius puts it, "By fully developing one's heart/mind, one knows one's nature. Knowing one's nature, one knows Heaven. It is through preserving one's heart/mind and nourishing one's nature that one may serve Heaven." (*Mencius* 7A.1)[24] To fully develop one's heart/mind means to extend one's benevolent love gradually towards parents, people, living creatures, and even non-living creatures, and by doing so one can achieve a one-bodily experience with all what one loved (Mencius 7A.4),[25] as clearly articulated by Ming (1368–1644) Confucian Wang Yangming in his famous article "Inquiry on the great learning" (*Daixuewen* 大學問).[26] This one-bodily

[22] Thomas Nagel, "Secular philosophy and the religious temperament" in *Secular philosophy and the religious temperament: essays 2002–2008* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 4.

[23] Ibid, 5.

[24] I borrow the translation from Irene Bloom with slight modification. *Mencius*, translated by Irene Bloom (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 144.

[25] Mencius said, "All the ten thousand things are there in me. There is no greater joy for me than to find, on self-examination, that I am authentic to myself. Try your best to treat others as you wish to be treated yourself, and you will find that this is the shortest way to benevolence."(*Mencius* 7A.4) I borrow the translation from D. C. Lau with slight modification. *Mencius*, 287.

[26] Wang Yangming said, "Forming one body with Heaven, Earth, and the myriad things in not only true of the great person. Even the mind of the small person is no different. Only she herself makes

experience is often called "the unity of humans and Heaven" (*tian ren he yi* 天人合一). Having this experience, one will then comprehend that there exists endless creativity (*sheng sheng* 生生) as demonstrated by all beings in the world as a harmonious whole and that humans' nature and heart/mind of benevolence originated in it. It is not necessary to consider this comprehension as a kind of mystical experience. Rather, this is a transformation of one's worldview from viewing the world as an expression of things into viewing the world as an expression of the meaning or value of creativity. And such a transformation is of course not the product of merely rational argumentation and justification but an authentic belief predicated upon one's personal and practical experiences of being benevolent to "the other." The first sentence of the *Doctrine of the Mean* states, "What Heaven (*Tian*) imparts to humans is called human nature. To follow our nature is called the Way (*Dao*). Cultivating the Way is called education."[27] Accordingly, the knowledge of the heavenly, concerning the first and second meaning of the term *tian*, involves not only to know the interconnectedness lies between humans and the universe but also to know it is the human ontological role to reveal and appreciate this interconnectedness.[28]

Concerning the third meaning of the term *tian*, the knowledge of the heavenly involves further to know how to deal with the problem of destiny or luck, something that could not be brought about by humans and happened without anyone is causing it. To know destiny or luck conceptually is simple and straightforward but nothing more than an empty talk to us, for we all know there is always something entirely beyond our control. However, once something beyond our control happened to us,

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it small. Therefore when she sees a child about to fall into the well, she cannot help a feeling of alarm and commiseration. This shows that her benevolence (*ren*) forms one body with the child. It may be objected that the child belongs to the same species. Again, when she observes the pitiful cries and frightened appearance of birds and animals about to be slaughtered, she cannot help feeling an 'inability to bear' their suffering. This shows that her benevolence forms one body with birds and animals. It may be objected that birds and animals are sentient beings as she is. But when she sees plants broken and destroyed, she cannot help a feeling of pity. This shows that her benevolence forms one body with plants. It may be said that plants are living things as she is. Yet even when she sees tiles and stones shattered and crushed, she cannot help a feeling of regret. This shows that her benevolence forms one body with tiles and stones. This means that even the mind of the small person necessarily has the benevolence that forms one body with all. Such a heart/mind is rooted in her Heaven-endowed nature, and is naturally intelligent, clear, and not clouded." *Wang Yangming quan ji* (*Complete Works of Wang Yangming*) 王陽明全集 (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshe, 1992), 968. I borrow the translation from Wing-tsit Chan with slight modification. *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, translated and compiled by Wing-tsit Chan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 660.

[27] I borrow the translated from Wing-tsit Chan with slight modification. *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, 98.

[28] In the *Doctrine of the Mean*, it states, "Only those who are absolutely authentic can fully develop their nature. If they can fully develop their nature, they can then fully develop the nature of others. If they can fully develop the nature of others, they can then fully develop the nature of things. If they can fully develop the nature of things, they can then assist in the transforming and nourishing process of Heaven and Earth, they can thus form a trinity with Heaven and Earth." I borrow the translation from Wing-tsit Chan with slight modification. *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, 108–109.

we would unlikely accept that. Consider, for example, a car accident happened that took one's legs; one would certainly "complaint against Heaven and blame people" (*Analects* 14.35). So, how come one says one know what bad luck is. For the Confucians, only when one strives utmost efforts to do what one ought to be but experiencing something is not in control, can one "honestly know" (*zhen zhi* 真知) that no way one is immune to the impact of luck on the constitution of one's self and life. Moreover, this real understanding of luck is of great significance to the course of self-cultivation in two ways. First, it can enable us not to pass the buck when we fail to fulfill what we ought to do. When a person is not doing what she ought to be, it is herself to take up the responsibility but no luck; she should not blame luck for blocking her "to do" right things as "doing" right things is entirely in her hand, though whether or not she would succeed in doing the right things is subject to luck. Second, it can enable us to be at peace (*an zhi* 安之) with our contingent enemies, for luck whether good or back is not in our control but how should we deal with it is getting back to our control. Using the example of a car accident again, although one cannot change the fact that an accident happened to take one's legs, one can change what the fact meant to oneself. Here we see how the knowledge of the heavenly together with the knowledge of the way and virtues of life, constitute the Confucian philosophy of education as life education.

2.3 Three Cardinal Virtues

Similar to ancient Greek philosophy and unlike modern Western philosophy, Confucian philosophy advocates the inseparability of knowledge and virtue. The learning of the four kinds of knowledge indeed implies the cultivation of three Confucian cardinal virtues, namely, wisdom (*zhi* 智), benevolence (*ren* 仁) and courage (*yong* 勇). *Zhi* 智 often carries the meaning of wisdom while *zhi* 知 carries the meaning of knowledge, but they sometimes are interchangeable. To learn the first two kinds of knowledge is sure to enable one to be a "knowledgeable" person, but one will further to be a "wise" person only when learning the last two kinds of knowledge that can subsume all one learned into the course of self-cultivation and self-transformation. Furthermore, one can also nurture the virtue of benevolence through learning the last two kinds of knowledge. Finally, to enable one to hold steadfastly to live a good life, one needs to be courageous to remove obstacles in one's path. The virtue of courage in a fundamental sense is about the strength of our physical life, which can be trained somehow by physical education. Traditional Confucian education did include physical education in its six arts curriculum, such as archery and chariot driving. However, Mencius remind us that the great courage (*da yong* 大勇) that can enable one to go forward even against thousands and tens of thousands people is the companion of righteousness and the Way (*Mencius* 2A.2). In other words, we can nurture this great courage only through learning the last two kinds of knowledge.

Still, there is much to elaborate on the interrelationship among three cardinal virtues, just as the one lies among the four kinds of knowledge. As Confucius puts it, "A person of virtue is sure to be the author of reasonable sayings, but the author of reasonable sayings is not necessarily virtuous. A benevolent person is sure to possess courage, but a courageous person does not necessarily possess benevolence." (*Analects* 14.4)[29] That said, a knowledgeable person is not necessarily benevolent and courageous. It is not uncommon that a knowledgeable person would feel superior to the ignorant others and her arrogance would then obstruct her from being benevolent to others. It is also not uncommon that a knowledgeable person would escape from a difficult situation even that is a moral call if knowing the difficulty is dangerous or unlikely solvable. Similarly, a courageous person is not necessarily benevolent and knowledgeable. However, a benevolent person is necessarily knowledgeable and courageous because the virtue of benevolence warrants the virtues of intellect and courage to help its realization. Consider, for example, a benevolent person without knowledge would harm others because of her ignorance, and without courage, she might not offer help to others in a severe situation because of trembling with fear. What this means is that the virtue of benevolence is the all-in-one virtue, which not only warrants the nurture as well as the unification of other virtues but also brings them to advancement.

The Confucian scenario of an ideal life constituted by knowledge and virtues is "learning to be the sage and worthy" (*xue wei sheng xian* 學為聖賢). But this is not common to present-day people. If considering the Confucian notion of sage as similar to the notion of the moral saint in the western context, it will be particularly undesirable. Susan Wolf characterized the moral saint as one being completely committed to moral interests and skills and cannot "in general, encourage the discovery and development of significant non-moral interests and skills,"[30] and thus "will have to be dull-witted or humorless or bland."[31] Accordingly, the Confucian sage is not the moral saint, for the Confucian view on the way and virtues of life (*dao de* 道德) is richly construed of which morality in the modern sense is only a part of it. Take Confucius himself as an example, he is intellectually curious to learn all sorts of knowledge and can integrate them in depth; he is morally engaged in practicing ritual propriety so as to behave in a proper way; he is also aesthetically fond of music and poetry; and more importantly he can merge all these into his life. By doing so, Confucius claims that the study of the *Odes* (A Collection of poems) could have multiple achievements (*Analects* 17.9). Firstly, we can learn intellectually at the minimum "the names of birds and beast, plants and trees" used in poems, and can extend our learning to examine the real stories and sentiments of all walks of people represented in them. Secondly, we can stimulate our imagination aesthetically by an apt quotation from poems, not to say poems of Confucius' days were

[29] I borrow the translation from D. C. Lau with slight modification. *The Analects*, 133.

[30] Susan Wolf, "Moral saints", in Roger Crisp and Michael Slote ed., *Virtue ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 81.

[31] Ibid, 82.

songs. Finally, we can cite poems to serve moral, social and political purposes, such as tactfully expressing our grievances against others and making political points for diplomacy.

Also, the Confucian sage is the perfection of a benevolent person. And to be benevolent is not merely to be moral as one extending one's benevolent love or concern to others is tantamount to build up a meaningful connection with others. As a result, those one loved will indeed constitute one's self. So, being benevolent to others is to cultivate oneself to be a "great person" (*da ren* 大人) with a "great self" (*da wo* 大我). In contrast, one who is egocentric and selfish is living like a "small person" (*xiao ren* 小人) with a "small self" (*xiao wo* 小我). On this point, Tu Wei-ming is true to define the Confucian quest for self-transformation as a communal act,[32] and that the self is an open system that realization "involves the establishment of an ever-expanding circle of human-relatedness."[33] However, his emphasis on the self as a center of relationships and thus the ever-expanding circle of human-relatedness is a concentric one may lead to unnecessary misunderstanding. It is because, for one's great self, its central or essential identity may no longer be oneself. One may value any part of one's great self as higher and vital than oneself, such as parents may consider their children as much more valuable than their own lives. All in all, the Confucian sage as Mencius puts it, is nothing to do with the moral saint but is good (*shan* 善), trustworthy (*xin* 信), beautiful (*mei* 美), great (*dai* 大), sagely (*sheng* 聖) and spiritual (*shen* 神) (Mencius 7B.25).

2.4 Concluding Remarks

To discuss the Confucian conception of education as life education is intended to offer a criticism of as well as an alternative to present-day education. Therefore, it is inevitably to face questions about how to realize the Confucian insights in our education model. Before suggesting some answers, I have to confess that I come up with them as a philosopher, not an educator, so whether they are viable is subject to scrutiny especially by specialists in education. Hopefully, they will not be proved as something merely idealistic and not practicable; otherwise, our education seems to be unavoidable to fall off the edge of a cliff.

First of all, we have to re-conceptualize education for life education, but not to offer a new academic subject called "life education" and define its learning outcomes in the school curriculum. The point is that life education should be the leading and regulative idea of education. No doubt we still have to teach various academic subjects at school and educate our students about the ability of independent thinking. However, all these goals need to become under the idea of education

[32] See Tu Wei-ming, *Confucian thought: selfhood as creative transformation* (Albany: SUNY, 1985), 113.

[33] Ibid, 14.

per se is life education. With this in mind, we should be aware that what is essential in education is not what curriculums, syllabi, and courses can cover but what students can discover in both the realms of knowledge and virtue. Here some existing modes of learning, such as research-based learning, are not necessarily opposed to the conception of life education, given that they are designed to get students engaged in the process of active inquiry so that students can demonstrate their capability of observation and investigation. But they fall short in fulfilling the nature of the life education enterprise that is the self-inquiry into the way of life.

How to spark off students' self-inquiry if we are not going to establish a new academic subject on it? Traditional Confucian education may give us a clue to the answer. Historically, Confucians are mainly educated to practice ritual propriety and study the Confucian classics to learn and develop their "efforts" (*gong fu* 工夫) for self-realization. Now it seems impossible to revive totally, if not partly, the practice of ritual propriety, so the learning of the Confucian classics remains particularly important. In Zhu Xi's "Method of reading" (*Dushufa* 讀書法), it states that the learning of the Confucian classics, if adequately adopting both the philosophical and existential approaches, is not only an intellectual exercise but also a spiritual one.[34] That said, students can find the teachings (about the meaning and value of life) stated in the Confucian classics are personally relevant to themselves, and what they have learned will gradually become something they can look for in themselves. In sum, studying the Confucian classics can generate and nurture the virtues of the learner.

Still, we have to consider some practicalities of how to put it in action. First, how to make the learning of the Confucian classics a compulsory study for students but being avoided it to be alienated as a "learning-to-test" subject. Second, it is necessary to have competent teachers to guide students in reading the texts not only intellectually but also existentially.[35] Admittedly, it is impossible and not necessary to requires teachers as competence as Confucius, Mencius, and Xunzi, what we need to require them is their familiarity with, embodied experiences of, and enthusiasm for the learning of the Confucian classics to inspire students. In this regard, we can invite reputable Confucian scholars to help train the trainers. Finally, one may cast doubt on whether the Confucian classics are useful in non-Chinese context as they are too culturally laden. To promote the study of the Confucian classics would be particularly helpful in the Chinese context that includes not only Mainland China but also those East Asian countries that have long been influencing by Confucianism,

[34] See Chung-yi Cheng, "Modern versus tradition: are there two different approaches to reading of the Confucian classics?", *Education Philosophy and Theory*, 2016, Vol. 48, no. 1, 106–118.

[35] Xunzi pressed this point as follows, "In learning, nothing is more expedient than to draw near to the right person, Rituals and music provide proper models but give no precepts. The *Odes* and *Documents* contain ancient stories but no explanation of their present application. The *Spring and Autumn Annals* is terse and cannot be quickly understood. However, if you imitate the right person in her practice of the precepts of the noble person, then you will come to honor these things for their comprehensiveness, and see them as encompassing the whole world. Thus, in learning, nothing is more expedient than to draw near to the right person." (*Xunzi* 1.159–167)

and maybe elsewhere too, as most of the texts already have English translations. Besides using translations, the teaching of the classics of other civilizations could also serve the goal of life education to a certain extent, for the Confucian insights into the way and virtues of life should be something commonly shared and covered though articulated distinctively.

Now let us turn to discuss the philosophical question as mentioned at the beginning to end this paper. That is whether any attempt to promote life education could respond effectively to the possible challenge posed by value subjectivism that Max Weber characterized as one the main features of modernity. Value subjectivism is in some ways an accurate description of our situation today as liberals hold true that one should be free to define what a good life is on one's own. However, it is hard to imagine that we can live in a world of many self-defined, different and even contradictory values. So, there has been a countervailing tendency to strive for seeking commonalities or consensus on value. How to explain this seemingly contradictory phenomenon? We may use Confucian philosophy again to argue that the objective values disenchanted by modern people as Weber puts it are the top down values (from God or a teleological worldview) that inevitably be the constraints of our liberty. For the Confucians, the right way to achieve objective values should be bottom up, first to discover and issue values from our subjective heart/mind, then to recognize them as our intersubjective nature, and then to believe them authentically as something objective in the universe. This way is also the underlying logic of the Confucian life education to emphasize the necessity of self-inquiry that is nothing to do with indoctrination.

Chapter 3
Educational Relationship in the *Analects* of Confucius

Jeong-Gil Woo

Introductory Remarks

By Roland Reichenbach

In the view of Confucius philosophy (of education), becoming a good person and develop an ideal moral character are to be pursued for its own sake and "with complete indifference to success or failure" (Lau 1979, p.12)[1]: "Unlike religious teachers, Confucius could hold out no hope of rewards either in this world or in the next" (ibid.). It is important to state that the agnostic position of Confucius, the lack of any religious authority as legitimation of education and government does not lead to an underestimation of the meaning of rituals and traditions in Confucian thought. Whereas the traditional nature and conservative attitudes of Confucianism are often stressed in educational discourse, it would surely be wrong to think of Confucian educational philosophy as a mere legitimation of the request for obedience and perpetual social order. In reading the *Analects* it becomes much more convincing to understand one of the outstanding features of Confucius' thought in the awareness of what is appropriate and that this may change with the time (Lau 1979, p. 49).

In his contribution, Jeong-Gil Woo investigates the concept of education and the educational relationship according to Confucius' *Analects*. Professor Woo focuses on the "dialogical nature" of *Analects*, which he sees as being "directly related to the conceptualization of original Confucian education and the relationship as a dialogical one". These insights may lead us to rethink the concept of Confucian education which often is exclusively presented to advocate "a hierarchical and authoritative system". Emphasizing the original text of the *Analects*, Jeong-Gil Woo demon-

[1] Lau, D. C. (1979). Introduction. *In Confucius, The Analects (Lün yü).* Translated with an introduction by D.C. Lau. New York: Penguin, pp. 9–55.

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R. Reichenbach, D.-J. Kwak (eds.), *Confucian Perspectives on Learning and Self-Transformation*, Contemporary Philosophies and Theories in Education 14,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-40078-1_3

strates that Confucius "does not appear as a manager of an educational project (...) but as a companion, motivator, or partner in dialogue as well as a role model in the process of becoming a sage" (君子).

This contribution reminds us to distinguish between educational practices in the past as well as the present, which are called "Confucian" or are explained by a so-called "Confucian culture", on the one hand, and the study of Confucian ideas and the meaning of education. There are good reasons to mistrust the appropriateness of attributing the term "Confucian" to ill-conceived educational thinking and – even more – dubious educational practices such as the dogmatic request for brainless obedience.

3.1 Preliminary Remarks

This study aims to investigate the prototypical Confucian educational relationship as manifested in Confucius' *Analects*. Through conceptualizing it, I will try to provide a groundwork for the Confucian understanding of education and its educational relationship. Before taking up the main subject, let me make a few remarks in regards to the necessity, scope and limitations of the present work.

To begin with, it is necessary to have a topographic overview on the research regarding the topic of the *educational relationship*. In the case of European pedagogy, particularly in the modern German pedagogical tradition which can be divided into three areas of "Geisteswissenschaftliche Pädagogik, Kritische Erziehungswissenschaft and Empirische Erziehungswissenschaft" (Krüger 1999: 11f; Biesta 2011, 2015), there is a broad consensus about Wilhelm Dilthey's statement, a founder of German Geisteswissenschaftliche Pädagogik, that "the science of education can only begin with the description of educator in his relationship to the pupil" (Dilthey 1974: 190). Each school of thought has continued to develop it despite their differences in perspectives and approaches to education (cf. Kron 1971; Lippitz and Woo 2008). It has also been reported that the modus of educational relationship in modern pedagogy can be categorized in terms of "intentionality, communicativity and responsivity" (Waldenfels 2000; Woo 2008a). There has certainly been a long history of educational relationship from various philosophical traditions before the appearance of modern theories about it. For example, we can see a contract-based educational relationship in Rousseau's work *Emile*. Other classical theories include a representative-creature relationship originated from the creator-creature asymmetry of the medieval concept of Christianity, the liberator-prisoner relationship by Plato with a focus on the responsibility of the educator needing to emancipate prisoners out of the cave of ignorance and prejudice, as well as the obligation to lead them towards the *idea,* and the dialogical relationship illustrated and practiced by Socrates reflected in Socratic Maieutics. As of late, the most distinctive model of educational relationship in the twentieth century is the between-ontology of humans (Ontologie des Zwischenmenschlichen) by M. Buber, which is known as "dialogue pedagogy" (Woo 2012a, b). In addition, symbolic interactionism by G. H. Mead, stimulus-response relationship in behaviorism and even

Luhmann's Systems Theory can also be considered within the boundaries of theories on educational relationship.

In comparison to the European landscape of pedagogical relationship sketched above, educational relationship as a separate topic for research in the East Asian pedagogy has still not been actively excavated. Confined within the boundaries of publications in Korean, English and German, there are only two publications under the keyword, "educational relationship". Kim (2003), for instance, characterizes educational relationship with four keywords from a broad Confucian perspective: (A) 得天下英才, (B) 師弟同行, (C) 教學相長, (D)青出於藍.[2] Shin (2005) proposes the concept of ren(仁) as an essential component of the Confucian educational relationship and conceptualizes it in its historical, social and educational contexts. There have also been studies on the concept of the Confucian teacher according to the *Analects*, even though these are not directly related to the idea of educational relationship (Kim 2002; Park 2002; Ryu 2005; Ko 2011). And cultural studies as well as critical reflections on the educational phenomenon (for instance, "King-Master-Father Trinity") observe everyday educational life in Confucian culture (Kim 2008; Woo 2008b). It is important to note that the number of studies that compare modern Confucian pedagogy with Socrates' has increased this century (Greenholtz 2003; Yu 2005; Murphy and Weber 2010; Peters 2015).[3] In a broad sense, all of these studies can be categorized as research on the educational relationship, even though most of them do not address this topic directly, due to the fact that, in its essence, Confucian ontology is a theory of coexistence, and, as a result, potentially impact pedagogy in general. Nevertheless, it seems necessary to pay more attention to it as a meaningful theme for educational research in order to achieve a systematic refinement of modern Confucian pedagogy.

Secondly, the low interest in educational relationship in East Asian studies, specifically in the case of Confucian pedagogy, also leaves room for an antithetic interpretation. One of the core concepts of Confucianism is ren(仁, benevolence), which is not solipsistic or personal, but rather relational and social in its essence. Whether it may be metaphysical, ontological or ethical in its nature, every philosophical discussion on ren(仁) belongs to a category for a theory of the human relationship. In addition to ren(仁), other core concepts of Confucianism, such as 禮(ritual), 信(trust), 忠(loyality), 恕(reciprocity or forgiveness) or even 五倫(five moral disciplines), are also about the dynamics among humans. Their descriptions and definitions imply the purpose and role of education as well as the principles for educational

[2] Each of them means: (A) He can get from the whole kingdom the most talented individuals, and teach and nourish them. (B) Both the teacher and the student are travelling the same path together. (C) Teaching and learning help each other. (D) Blue comes from the indigo plant but is bluer than the plant itself. The student has surpassed his or her teacher.

[3] There is also research on the characteristics of Confucian communication based on general theory of human relationship (Yum 1988; Chen and Chung 1994; Park 1994; Xiao and Chen 2009; Lee 2009). Studies with focus on East Asian traditional culture, even though not from pedagogical viewpoint, but from the science of communication can be seen in Kincaid (Ed.)(1987) *Communication Theory* and Oliver (1971) *Communication and Culture in Ancient India and China.*

practice in each social context. In other words, all human relationships in Confucianism, or discourses in Confucianism can theoretically be considered pedagogical in their nature. In this sense, the simple statement of Shin that "Confucianism in itself is pedagogy" (Shin 2012: 31) is not an exaggeration. For this reason, the low interest in educational relationship does not necessarily mean that Confucianism is not really interested in it. Rather, it means that there has been implicit agreement there is no need to distinguish educational relationship as a separate theme for educational studies due to the fact that theories regarding educational relationship have existed from the very beginning and have always been embedded as an axiom in all studies on Confucian pedagogy.

Thirdly, the *Analects* of Confucius is a good example for this. It is well known that Confucius focused on the problems that existed in human relationships in the *Analects* (Kim 2013). In this sense, Confucianism is also called "philosophy of ren(仁)" (Shin 2012: 167). Ren(仁), visually portrayed in its glyphic combination (人[person] + 二[two] = 仁[humanity or benevolence]), symbolizes the human relationship as well as the essence of pedagogy. Nevertheless, Confucius does not present any systematic concept of ren(仁) in the *Analects*. In other words, many of his thoughts about human relationship and educational relationship are premised in his philosophy; but topology of ren(仁) is not given in the *Analects*. This can be compared to Buber's definition of education, which is, from the perspective of Buber, originally not definable.[4] Another possible explanation was suggested by Shin who understands "ren(仁) as a huge situation logic" (Shin 2012: 209). According to him, ren(仁) cannot be reduced to a single system because it is dependent upon situations and contingencies. What is important to remember in the context of this present inquiry is that a certain fundamental concept of educational relationship, whether it is definable, systemitizable or not, is in the original Confucianism. In this regard, it is meaningful to take a look into the original text of Confucianism in order to reconstruct the concept of its unique educational relationship.

Fourthly, I want to confine my inquiry to the text of the *Analects*, which I consider to be, as mentioned above, the most effective and fundamental way of identifying a Confucian prototype of education and educational relationship. As the history of Confucianism has been more than 2500 years and its development covers a wide variety of theories and culture, Confucianism cannot be connoted just as *Confucian*. Though Confucianism was originally founded by Confucius, Confucianism has appeared in philosophy, religion, politics and pedagogy with various focuses in its historical and social contexts, sometimes with a focus on a historical Confucius or a historically interpreted Confucius, and at other times, on a reconstructed Confucius or even a localized, politicized and modernized Confucius (Yao 2006: 30–34). Confucianism, which can also be classified into either of "philosophical insight, political ideology or storehouse of popular values" (Liu 1996: 111), has been developed both separately and together in its long history. According to Chang, who radically proposes the "distinction between Confucian values and Confucianism"

[4] "Doing of non-doing, image of finger-raising in the air, questioning glance" (cf. Woo 2012a: 581).

(1997: 129), Confucianism as a political ideology is hard to be completely free from criticism since it has historically caused social-political problems as politicians misunderstood or misused it in trying "to superimpose a governmentally convenient hierarchy onto an essentially un-hierarchical philosophical system." (Chang 1997: 129) What we can identify from the history of Confucianism, is that there are numerous versions of Confucianism. In this sense, it is neither possible nor meaningful to put the various versions of Confucianism under a single umbrella and to portray a homogeneous image of *the Confucian* educational relationship (Kim 2003).

Fifthly, it is necessary to take note of a historiographic character of the *Analects*. The *Analects* is certainly the unrivaled source of Confucianism, which entails Confucius' thoughts and actions. The dialogue that unfolds in the form of questions and answers allows us to get an impression, as if we were on the spot listening to the real voice of Confucius. However, it is undeniable that the *Analects* was not written by Confucius himself, but was written or even edited by his disciples and disciples of disciples across different times of the Chinese history. (Creel 1960: 111; Fingarette 1966: 53) In addition to this so-called "Confucius problem" (Yu 2005: 174), when we consider the historiographic uncertainty and various versions of the original *Analects*, we are obliged to acknowledge a certain hermeneutical limitation and openness in reading the *Analects* (cf. Kim 2013: 34; Son et al. 2010: 313f).

Lastly, I want to make it sure that this study tries to avoid the possibility of making a dichotomy between the East and the West, Asia and Europe or the Orient and the Occident for the following two reasons. The first has to do with the risk of discordance between terminology and connotation, which is inevitably accompanied by a perspective of cultural dichotomy. Such an approach tends to be led into a certain violence which ignores the boundaries and the individual characteristics of different cultures. It functions as a huge brutal machine, which castrates cultural diversities within the boundaries of Asia or the East, or of Europe or the West. The so-called dilemma of appellation found in any comparative research between the East and West is a critical error caused by not being sensitive enough to this dichotomous machine,[5] which is directly related with the second reason. Namely, the direct comparison between the pedagogies of East Asia and Europe, which have different

[5] For example, see Tweed and Lehmann (2002). This study is based on the dichotomy of Western and non-Western, naming them as "Western and Chinese". On one side, the authors say that they are well aware of the risk of "cultural labels." But on the other hand, they happen to reach an unwanted fictitious narrative of cultural groups called "culturally Chinese and culturally Western" which does not really exist, or, at the very least, incredibly ambiguous in its identity. With a similar dichotomy, Yum (1998) presents a certain typology of East Asian vs. North American orientation which seems to end in a culturally ambiguous grouping or unscientific culture-determinism. It is true that these studies contributed to a wider understanding of East Asian culture regarding education in its ostensible dimension. However, it is necessary to note that the cultural phenomena of East Asia is, like in the case of other cultures, the result of long and complex interactions of various elements beneath the surface of a culture or even between heterogeneous cultures (cf. Chang 1997: 110). As Kwak correctly comments on a similar case of careless treatment of the East-West dichotomy, we "need to be informed by more of cultural history and philosophy to avoid a too simplistic and modernist prejudice" (cf. Kwak 2015: 756).

historical backgrounds and cultural-philosophical traditions independently developed, is not possible. It is true that we can come up with a certain set of similarities or differences on a superficial level, and these can inspire us for comparative stories. However, in order to perform a meaningful comparative research, one is required a careful consideration on the framework as a fundament in advance. In this sense, I will concentrate on the *Analects* of Confucius in reconstructing the original Confucian understanding o education and its implied educational relationship.

3.2 Characteristics of Educational Relationship in the Analects

3.2.1 Humans(人) in Ren(仁, Humanity or Benevolence)

The first characteristic of Confucian education seen in the *Analects* is its deep respect for the human being. The text seems to have a more ordinary and profound concern about human beings than any other form of Human-isms.

> When his stables caught fire, the Master hurried back from court and asked, "Was anyone hurt?" He did not inquire after the horses. (*Analects*, X-17) / Zilu asked how to serve the spirits and the gods. The Master replied, "Not yet being able to serve other people, how would you be able to serve the spirits?" (*Analects,* XI-12). / Fan Chi inquired about authoritative conduct (ren 仁), and the Master said, "Love others." He inquired about realizing (zhi 知), and the Master said, "Realize others."(*Analects*, XII-22) / The Master said, "It is the person who is able to broaden the way (dao 道), not the way that broadens the person."(*Analects*, XV-29)[6]

What is remarkable in the quotation above is that original Confucianism does not presuppose a blind respect for afterlife or any coercion for a belief in a transcendental entity. What we can see from the *Analects* is that Confucius regards humans to be the most prominent beings in the world. He had precedence for his neighbors over any form of spiritual being in the afterlife. He put a high value on the understanding and knowing of human beings and that people were the starting point and at the same time the destination of the Way(道, tao). The original Confucianism, as such, is more of a secular humanism, which can be called the "this-worldly, practical humanism" (Fingarette 1966: 55), than a traditional religion based on a certain transcendental absoluteness. Humanism, in this sense, is more or less about human love. As Confucius' answer to Fan Chi's question about the definition of ren(仁), "love others (love human)", which may initially sound highly abstract, is so simple and normal at the same time. We expect neither a perfect systematic philosophy nor a profound religiousness. Rather, we can reiterate the fact that Confucianism, which

[6] Unless otherwise noted, the English quotations from the *Analects* marked in form of "(the *Analects*, Roman numeral – Arabic numeral)" as well as phonetic transcription of words in this article are from the translation of Ames & Rosemont (1998). We have also consulted the Korean translation by Kim (2013).

has lasted for about 2500 years, originated with the very simple philosophy of human love. Respect for human dignity is indeed not an exclusive property of Confucianism. However, without it, neither Confucianism nor Confucian pedagogy could arise. Without it, both of them would be meaningless. Because, just as a *human* broadens the Way(道, tao), not the other way around, educational practice is performed *by and for* people. Not educational practice or activity itself, but a human being is the main concern in the business of education.

3.2.2 Ethics of Relationship and Spirit of Dialogue

A prominent characteristic of the *Analects* is that most of the work consists of dialogues. In fact, it seems to have something to do with its formation as a text. It is well known that Confucius did not leave any writings of his own. The *Analects* is a posthumous work written or edited by his disciples, as is the case with the Christian New Testament. However, unlike the latter, in which descriptions on the protagonist and stories around him take most parts, the *Analects* mainly consists of short dialogues. It is full of dialogical reports in the form of questions and answers between Confucius and his disciples. However, this is not a common way of documenting a person's thoughts and achievements. The fact that the *Analects*, considered as Confucius' biography, is full of dialogical anecdotes, demonstrates that he was a character who was open to dialogues. It is worthy to note that most dialogues in the *Analects* were initiated, not by Confucius, but by his disciples, which implies that Confucius maintained an open mind to his disciples as well as to dialogue itself (Han 1996: 178; Shin 2012: 267). In other words, to his disciples Confucius was neither an orator nor a lecturer, but a dialogist. The spirit of dialogue is directly related to his philosophy, which respects the human-centered relationship.

> Those who are accommodating and do not lose those with whom they are close are deserving of esteem. (*Analects*, I-13)/ The Master said, "In going astray, people fall into groups. In observing these divergencies, the degree to which they are authoritative (ren 仁) can be known (*Analects*, IV-7). / The Master said," Excellent persons (de 德) do not dwell alone; they are sure to have neighbors. "(*Analects*, IV-25) / Master Zeng said," The exemplary person (junzi 君子) attracts friends through refinement (wen 文), and thereby promotes authoritative conduct (ren 仁) (*Analects*, XII-24). / Zigong asked, "Is there one expression that can be acted upon until the end of one's days?" The Master replied, "There is shu 恕: do not impose on others what you yourself do not want." (*Analects*, XV-24)

In identifying the qualities of a leader, Confucius above refers to his relationship. In trying to understand the errors of a person, he relates them to his social network. In mentioning virtue(德), he reminds his disciples of their neighbors. According to Confucius, friendship is essential for the noble man(君子) for his self-cultivation of 文 (wen, literature) and 仁 (ren, humanity). In addition, he bears relationship with others in mind as he refers to 恕 (shu, reciprocity or forgiveness) as the only practical virtue of life. To put it briefly, a human is, for Confucius, a relational and social being in its essence. According to the *Analects*, whether it is 仁 or 恕 or other

virtues for social practice, every ethical principle of Confucianism is rooted in the major anthropological and ontological premise that humans are relational and social beings. What is remarkable is that there is no distinction between ontology and ethics in the *Analects*. As seen in Shin's comment, "the core idea of the *Analects* is integrated in the concept of *ren*(仁)" (Shin 2005: 155f), human beings in the original Confucianism is continuously *with-others*. The Confucian ontology is not about individuals, but about their coexistence. In this sense, Confucian ontology automatically implies an ethics of co-existence. Or it rather can be said that Confucian ontology is an ethics itself. From this viewpoint, the discussions on education and an educational being in Confucianism can be reduced to the theories of educational relationships and ethics. Thus we can say that at the basis of these discussions, there is always an ongoing dialogical spirit.

3.2.3 Action Rather than Words

Though the *Analects* is based on the spirit of dialogue and is structured in such a way, this dialogue is not the same as the pragmatic usage of language or communication in general. As mentioned above, Confucius' spirit of dialogue is an ontological and ethical fundament of his philosophy of education. To be more precise, it is a foundation for human relationships and coexistence. But, as to a dialogue as a pragmatic usage of language, Confucius repeatedly expresses his skepticism in regard to its superficiality, and gives even a caution against the risk of linguistic communication.

> The Master said: "It is a rare thing for glib speech and an insinuating appearance to accompany authoritative conduct (ren仁)." (*Analects*, I-3) / Someone said, "As for Yong, he is an authoritative person (ren仁) but is not eloquent. " The Master said, "What is the use of eloquence? ... I cannot say whether or not he is an authoritative person, but what need is there for eloquence?" (*Analects*, V-5) / Abolish the 'music' from the state of Zheng and keep glib talkers at a distance, for the Zheng music is lewd and glib talkers are dangerous (*Analects*, XV-11). / The Master said, "Clever words undermine excellence (de 德). If one is impatient with the details, great plans will come to naught." (*Analects*, XV-27) / One stands to be injured by friends who are ingratiating, who feign compliance, and who are glib talkers (*Analects*, XVI-4).

Clearly, Confucius does not put much emphasis on language, specifically spoken language. For Confucius, language is nothing but an instrument for an expression (*Analects*, XV-41). In other words, language is just a functional medium for transmitting one's intention. Language itself, when not accompanied by its content or intention of speaker, is nothing but insincere speech or useless flowery drivel. According to Confucius, "glib talkers" undermine virtues(德) and will have a negative effect on others. Therefore these people should be to be kept away. If this is the case, what content is supposed to fill the bowl of linguistic expressions? It is one's action. Confucius advises that language should be accompanied by the doing of the

one who speaks. He stresses 言行一致, namely, the correspondence of one's words with one's actions.

> The Master said, "The ancients were loath to speak [loath speaking] because they would be ashamed if they personally did not live up to what they said." (*Analects*, IV-22) / The Master said, "The exemplary person (junzi 君子) wants to be slow to speak yet quick to act (*Analects*, IV-24) / The Master replied, "An authoritative person is slow to speak (ren 認) ... When something is difficult to accomplish, how can one but be slow to speak?" (*Analects*, XII-3) / The Master said, "Exemplary persons would feel shame if their words were better than their deeds." (*Analects*, XIV-27)

According to Confucius, words and actions are of different value. Words should be used in a passive way, while actions should be done actively.[7] Words without action are looked down upon. Rather, silence is better than being oratory without action, and silence stands out more when it is accompanied by action.[8] If this is the case, how can we fill the emptiness of words and how can we act? "How could authoritative conduct (ren, 仁) be at all remote? No sooner do I seek it than it has arrived." (*Analects*, VII-30).[9]

[7] The distrust in language or what Bollnow called "hostility towards language" (Sprachfeindlichkeit) is actually not an exclusive characteristic of Confucianism. Regardless of European or Asian philosophy, this tendency has marked an important part of mainstream philosophies. Bacon's "Idola Fori" would be the most famous example in European philosophy. 以心傳心 (Communication from heart to heart) and 拈花微笑 (smiling and twirling a flower) in Buddhism and 道可道非常道 (When 道 called 道, it is not 道 anymore) in Lao-tsu's *Tao-Te-Ching* are comparable examples in Asian philosophy (cf. Bollnow 1966: 11; Lee 1994: 13–24).

[8] The Master said: "I can speak with Yan Hui for an entire day without him raising an objection, as though he were slow. But when he has withdrawn and I examine what he says and does on his own, it illustrates perfectly what I have been saying. Indeed, there is nothing slow about Yan Hui!" (*Analects*, II-9)

[9] A few authors have hypothesized that Confucius' lecture, namely warning against glib speech and stressing on the correspondence of words and action has influenced how East Asian people communicate. According to Yum's research, East Asian people prefer to communicate passively and indirectly, and they communicate with dual (private and public) identities because of the *Confucian* tradition (Yum 1998). This research seems to assume that the general attitude of East Asian people, which Yao calls "Asian backwardness in communication" (from Yao 2006: 37), has something to do with the *Confucian* tradition. It has also been reported that important elements in the human relationship, such as the "face" (Cheng 1986), "關係kuan-hsi" (Chang and Holt 1991), "感應gan-ying, 眞 sincerity" (Xiao and Chen 2009) have been rooted in this *Confucian* tradition as well. On a similar note, Tweed and Lehman (2002) insist that East Asian students have a certain way of studying and learning, which is, according to the authors, related with Confucianism. However there needs to be a more critical investigation for these hypothetical assertions: namely, which Confucianism do they mean when they refer to *Confucian* tradition? Should the history of 2500 years be generalized with a single adjective *Confucian*?

3.2.4 *Ren(仁), Fundament of Human Relationship*

Ren(仁) is not an object of speaking but that of doing and realizing. Ren(仁) is a certain fundament which lies beyond a linguistic definition, while being the principle of every doing in human relationship. Ren(仁) in this sense implies abstractness and concreteness at the same time, which can be characterized as follows.

The first characteristic of ren(仁) in the *Analects* is centered on relationships and altruism. Although the subject who practices ren(仁) is the I, the focus and purpose of this action is for others and relationship.

> Fan Chi inquired about authoritative conduct (ren 仁). The Master responded, "As for authoritative conduct – to reap one's successes only after having dealt with difficulties can be called being authoritative." (*Analects*, VI-22) / Authoritative persons establish others in seeking to establish themselves and promote others in seeking to get there themselves. Correlating one's conduct with those near at hand can be said to be the method of becoming an authoritative person. (*Analects*, VI-30)

The characteristic of ren(仁), namely, the focus of relationships and altruism, is manifested as various expressions of "禮"(*li*, ritual propriety) in social relationships,[10] as "孝弟"(a sense of filial and fraternal responsibility) in family relations (*Analects*, I-2), and as "忠 and 恕" (*Analects*, IV-15) in the relationship of ruler and the ruled. In particular, the 禮 has a broad scope in its application in social relationships.[11]

Although it is true that the concept of ren(仁) is relavant to the detailed aspects of everyday life, Confucius does not seem to have conceived more of it than as a relational idea. In a particular scene, he describes the noble man(君子, *junzi*), as personalhood of ren(仁), where we can notice that he had a certain transcendental foundation in mind.

> The Master said, "If indeed one's purposes are set on authoritative conduct (ren 仁), one could do no wrong." (*Analects*, IV-4) / The Master said, "If at dawn you learn of and tread the way (dao 道), you can face death at dusk." (*Analects*, IV-8) / The Master said, "Exemplary persons (junzi 君子) in making their way in the world are neither bent on nor against anything; rather, they go with what is appropriate (yi 義)." (*Analects*, IV-10) / The Master sighed, saying, "No one appreciates me!" Zigong replied, "Why doesn't anyone appreciate you, sir?" The Master said, "I don't hold any ill will against tian 天 nor blame

[10] "I have never failed to instruct students who, using their own resources, could only afford a gift of dried meat. (*Analects*, VII-7) / When dining in the presence of someone in mourning, the Master would not eat his usual portions." (*Analects*, VII-9)

[11] The Master said, "Deference unmediated by observing ritual propriety (li 禮) is lethargy; caution unmediated by observing ritual propriety is timidity; boldness unmediated by observing ritual property is rowdiness; candor unmediated by observing ritual propriety is rudeness. Where exemplary persons (junzi 君子) are earnestly committed to their parents, the people will aspire to authoritative conduct (ren 仁); where they do not neglect their old friends, the people will not be indifferent to each other." (*Analects*, VIII-2) On the relation between 仁 and 禮 in the *Analects*, please see Li (2007) who proposes that "we should understand *li* as cultural grammar and *ren* as the mastery of a culture." According to him, "society cultivates its members through *li* toward the goal of *ren*, and persons of *ren* manifest their human excellence through the practice of *li*" (Li 2007: 311)

> other people. I study what is near at hand and aspire to what is lofty. It is only tian who appreciates me!" (*Analects*, XIV-35)

Ren(仁) is identified above as an epistemological criteria for right and wrong and as a lighthouse for the noble man(君子) when the days seem lonely. It is in connection with a certain absoluteness of the symbol 天(heaven, tian). Ren(仁) implies 道 (the Way, tao) sometimes, while presenting itself as 禮(ritual) at other times. In this sense, the statement "Set your sights on the Way (dao 道), sustain yourself with excellence (de 德), lean upon authoritative conduct (ren, 仁), and sojourn in the arts." (*Analects*, VII-6) shows a semantically multilateral dimension of ren(仁).

3.2.5 The Noble Man(君子) and the Master-Disciple Relationship

The ideal image of the teacher in the *Analects* is a noble man(君子). 君子 is described, in some cases, as a secularized image of the sage(聖人), literali (士) in other cases; he is also contrasted with a 小人(petty person).[12] Similar to the case with ren(仁), Confucius does not give a clear definition of 君子 in the *Analects*. Nevertheless it seems to be clear that 君子 is inseparable from ren(仁).

> Wherein do the exemplary persons (junzi 君子) who would abandon their authoritative conduct (ren 仁) warrant that name? An exemplary person does not take leave of their authoritative conduct even for the space of a meal. When they are troubled, they certainly turn to it, as they do in facing difficulties. (*Analects*, IV-5)

Similar to the case with ren(仁), the concept of 君子 is opaque as well. In fact, both concepts seem to have a circular argument. Even though we perceive a certain philosophical depth in the logic that a person of ren(仁) is a noble man(君子), the tautological argument is not completely free from skepticism of whether it can resonate in our everyday life. What is more interesting in the context of the present study is not Confucius' abstract explanation of personality and qualities of the noble man, but of Yan Hui's appraisal of his master.

> Yan Hui, with a deep sigh, said, "The more I look up at it, the higher it soars; the more I penetrate into it, the harder it becomes. I am looking at it in front of me, and suddenly it is behind me. The Master is good at drawing me forward a [one] step at a time; he broadens me with culture (wen 文) and disciplines my behavior through the observance of ritual

[12] The Master said, "I will never get to meet a truly efficacious person (shanren 善人) – I would be content to meet someone who is constant." (*Analects*, VII-26). / Scholar-apprentices (shi 士) cannot but be [can be nothing but] strong and resolved, for they bear a heavy charge and their way (dao 道) is long. Where they take authoritative conduct (ren 仁) as their charge [When they act authoritatively conduct as their disposition], is it not a heavy one? (*Analects*, VIII-7) / Exemplary persons (junzi 君子) cherish their excellence; petty persons cherish their land. Exemplary persons cherish fairness; petty persons cherish the thought of gain. (*Analects*, IV-11) / Exemplary persons (junzi 君子) understand what is appropriate (yi 義); petty persons understand what is of personal advantage (li 利) (*Analects*, IV-16).

> propriety (li 禮). Even if I wanted to quit, I could not. And when I have exhausted my abilities, it is as though something rises up right in front of me, and even though I want to follow it, there is no road to take."(*Analects*, IX-11)

In reality, Yan Hui's appraisal is more of an ode. It is rather an anthropological and educational reflection of ren(仁) than a metaphysical or ethical conceptualization of it. What we can see in Yan Hui's admiration is his emphasis on moral virtue of the obligations lying between master and disciple, and their ethical practice which is generated from the dynamics of the relationship itself. In his admiration, we can see that it was neither an obligatory principle for disciples to respect and obey the teacher. Rather, when someone resonates in ren(仁), namely when his life is closer to the noble mam(君子), he is already a respectful teacher for others without their knowing it. This is the moment when he becomes a figure of respect, admiration and learning for others. This is the reason why the statement, otherwise known as 正名論(rectification of names), "The ruler must rule, the minister minister, the father father, and the son son." (*Analects*, XII-11), should not be misunderstood as a deterministic theory of social class or a closed social ethics. As the noble man(君子) is not born but made by education and self-discipline, the teacher is not a teacher from the beginning. The teacher is not a proper noun of someone or of a certain vocation, but refers to a definition of a dynamic relationship that someone has with others. The name(名) in 正名論 does not refer to an innate name of someone, but to a relational vocation. Yan Hui showed his true admiration for his master because Confucius was such a person of ren(仁), not because he happened to be in a master-pupil relationship in which he was obliged to follow. In the same context, the disciple or pupil is not fixed eternally to stay in the role of the disciple. Confucius' attitude towards his disciples and his dialogical didactics with them in the *Analects* appeared different and diverse in his responses according to the personal character or maturity of his educational partner (Park 2002: 62). In addition, we can observe that the nature of Confucius' relationship with a few of his disciples has changed over time. Confucius considered them not as pupils, but as partners in their poetic dialogues and sometimes even as a kind of teacher for Confucius himself.[13] When reflecting upon Confucius' *Analects*, the name and the role of the master and the disciple, namely the character of their educational relationship is not fixed. The possibility to be a master is open to anyone, but only when he has the following qualities:

1. A person who pursues the pleasure of learning and exercising (*Analects*, I-15)
2. A person who reviews the old and is ready to study the new (*Analects*, II-11)
3. A person who is ready to learn from others and to correct himself (*Analects*, VII-22)
4. A person who is open to everybody who wants to learn, regardless of his origin and social status (*Analects*, VII-29)

[13] The Master said: "Zigong, it is only with the likes of you then that I can discuss the Songs! On the basis of what has been said, you know what is yet to come" (*Analects*, I-15). / The Master said, "You [Zigong] are not his match; neither you nor I are a match for him." (*Analects*, V-9)

5. A person who is humble in competence and knowledge, with both emptiness and richness in mind and is warm and tolerant to others (*Analects*, VIII-5)
6. A person who is inspired by and follows ren(仁) and makes progress everyday (*Analects*, VI-7; *Analects*, IX-21)

When Confucius grieves over one of his favorite disciples Yan Hui's death, saying "Heaven abandoned me! Heaven abandoned me!", we find Confucius, not as a Master but as a colleague, a person as well as a friend who sought for ren(仁) together with us. In this sense, educational relationship for Confucius seems to be more than an asymmetrical relation where one person is teaching and another learning. It was a relationship in which both were the master and the disciple at the same time, finding pleasuring through learning(學), pursuing ren(仁) together, and trying to practice 禮(ritual propriety) together. This *togetherness* does not mean that the master and the disciple should experience every situation of teaching and learning from the same perspective. It implies that each participant in the practice has to exert his every effort to reach the educational goal on his own way, within the boundaries of Confucius' educational guidelines portrayed in the *Analects*. When Confucius meets Yan Hui as a partner of poetic dialogue, he is willing to acknowledge his disciple to be a noble man(君子), who is possibly better than himself, and shows his respect to this new young master; it is this very moment when an educational relationship suggested in the *Analects* comes to fruition.

3.2.6 Education Without Indoctrination; 修己 *(Self-Cultivation)*

The goal of Confucian education is the noble man(君子). However, this education, according to Confucius' thoughts in the *Analects*, is not a project of making others into the same noble man(君子). In mentioning the qualities of the noble man(君子) in the *Analects*, Confucius does not mean others (or you) as someone that he addresses, but rather he is addressing himself (the I).

> Through self-discipline and observing ritual propriety (li 禮) one becomes authoritative in one's conduct. If for the space of a day one were able to accomplish this, the whole empire would defer to this authoritative model. Becoming authoritative in one's conduct is self-originating – how could it originate with others? (*Analects*, XII-1) / But if not able to be proper in their own conduct, how can they demand such conduct from others? (*Analects*, XIII-13) / Don't worry about not being recognized by others; worry about not having any reason for them to recognize you. (*Analects*, XIV-30)

As shown above, the subject of Confucian education is the I; but its object is also the I. In other words, the noble man(君子) is not the goal of my teaching toward you, but an educational vision of the future, in which I myself want to reach. It is indeed desirable that many people are to make their efforts to attain the goal of becoming the noble man. However, the Confucian philosophy of the noble man neither aspires to a totalitarian philosophy that everybody needs to follow, nor a justification for

indoctrination or coercion in the name of education. We need to remember that the *Analects* does not begin with the "pleasure of teaching" but with the "pleasure of studying and learning." The fact that Confucius mentions in the following sentences not a "spirit of disciple", but "pleasure through visiting a friend" and when he says "calmness in oneself is a beautiful quality of the noble man(君子)" shows how important it is that Confucius regards the aesthetics of 修己(self-cultivation) in the *Analects*.[14] In this sense, it would be necessary to explore the concept of education in the *Analects* from a different viewpoint. In other words, while modern European pedagogy began with a didactical idea and has concentrated on teaching in its process of development, education conceived by Confucius in the *Analects* was close to 修己(self-cultivation), namely self-discipline or self-education. 修己 means teaching oneself, which is nothing but learning by himself or cultivating themselves. When questioned about 君子, Confucius answers it with the following response:

> Zilu asked about exemplary persons (junzi 君子). The Master replied, "They cultivate themselves by being respectful." "Is that all?" asked Zilu. "They cultivate themselves by bringing accord to their peers." "Is that all?" asked Zilu "They cultivate themselves by bringing accord to the people." (*Analects*, XIV-42)

Confucius does not show any interest in making others into a noble man(君子). Rather, he shows how 修己(self-cultivation) is possible in social relationships in order to be a noble man(君子) and what kind of educational meaning and influence it has. Whether it is in a "ruler-ruled relationship or in a father-son relationship" (*Analects*, XII-11) or, though Confucius does not mention, in a master-disciple relationship, the only thing they commonly pursue is the very 修己(self-cultivation). 修己 is needed for both individual inner peace and social order, in the form of social and political education.

> If people are proper (zheng 正) in [their] personal conduct, others will follow suit without need of command. But if they are not proper, even when they command, others will not obey. (*Analects*, XIII-6) / If their superiors cherished the observance of ritual propriety (li 禮), none among the common people would dare be disrespectful; if their superiors cherished appropriate conduct (yi 義), none among the common people would dare [to] be disobedient; if their superiors cherished making good on their word (xin 信), none among the common people would dare be duplicitous. (*Analects*, XIII-4)

Without the prerequisite of 修己(self-cultivation), neither the realization of ren(仁) and 禮(propriety), nor the achievement of Confucian goal of the sage(聖人) and the noble man(君子) is possible. 修己 is the core principle which identifies the characteristics of the Confucian educational relationship sketched in the *Analects* and the values that both the master and disciple should pursue. However, the emphasis on 修己 does not mean that teaching is impossible and meaningless. In addition, Confucius says that he always tries to fulfill his responsibility as a teacher.

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[14] "Having studied, to then repeatedly apply what you have learned – is this not a source of pleasure? To have friends come from distant quarters – is this not a source of enjoyment? To go unacknowledged by others without harboring frustration – is this not the mark of an exemplary person (junzi 君子)?" (*Analects*, I-1)

> The Master said, "How would I dare [to] consider myself a sage (sheng 聖) or an authoritative person (ren 仁)? What can be said about me is simply that I continue my studies without respite and instruct others without growing weary." (*Analects*, VII-34) / The Master said, "Do I possess wisdom (zhi 知)? No, I do not. But if a simple peasant puts a question to me, and I come up empty, I attack the question from both ends until I have gotten to the bottom of it."(*Analects*, IX-8)

Confucius is here thematizing a didactical sincerity and responsibility of a teacher's. This is a part of 修己(self-cultivation), which every teacher has to expand. Without the practice of 修己, the teacher would not be able to personally reach the ideal of the noble man(君子), undesirably resulting in the teacher being reduced to a social and political demagogue. If this is the case, what is the 修己(self-cultivation) for the learner? Confucius suggests that it is one's "passion to learn, activeness of expression and inquiring mind for knowledge." (*Analects*, VII-8) When 修己 is practiced from both the sides of the educational relationship, namely both the teacher and the student, and when they are in harmony, then the meaning and function of the Confucian educational relationship can be fulfilled.

3.3 Epilogue

In this study, I investigated the original Confucian concept of education and, the nature of its educational relationship according to Confucius' *Analects*. Through this, we can draw out a few characteristics of them. They are: human centeredness as a fundamental orientation of *education*, ren(仁) as a social philosophical basis of education, the noble man (君子) as a Confucian educational goal, and the correspondence of words and action as the basic principle of educational practice and interaction. What have been discovered, or particularly emphasized in the present study, is the fact that Confucius' educational thoughts and practices in the *Analects* are based on his dialogical spirit. In fact, Confucius himself was a person who was open to the dialogues with his disciples. It is important to identify the misunderstanding that Confucian education advocates only a hierarchical and authoritative constellation of education. Based on this analysis, we can understand that the Confucian educator does not mean to be a manager of an educational project, trying to actively command others into the noble man(君子) with a hierarchical authority, but as a companion, motivator as well as role- model in the process of becoming the noble man(君子), because 君子 as a goal of education is not an object of making, but an ideal of 修己, namely self-education and self-transformation for everybody in the educational relationship. From the scene in which Confucius acknowledges his disciple to be better than himself and shows his authentic respect for his disciples, we can confirm that 修己, which Confucius himself suggested as the highest level of didactics, is not a vague expression. Although its forms and intensities vary in accordance with the individual maturity of one's partner and his situations, the teleological destination for the participant within an educational relationship is the interactional 修己, namely, 修己 in each other and with each other. 修己 in this

sense is not a lonely effort of isolated individuals, but an educational phenomenon which arises within the educational relationship. *Education without indoctrination* conceived as a Confucian concept of education is only possible in this context.

On the other hand, a criticism can be raised that the concept of education as a dialogue cannot be generalized as Confucian education. In other words, it says that such a concept of educational relationship may be a romantic understanding, which can only be applied to a confined elite group of people in the *Analects*. In fact, it is well known that the main concern of the dialogues in the *Analects* is a desirable governance of the people, for the people. Sharing rulership among themselves, Confucius and his disciples exchanged questions and answers, and discussed politics and education. According to the historical research of Park (2002), they were neither advocators for *jus sanguinis*, nor guardians of a class society. What they shared was a political and educational good will, and their dialogue was based on the dichotomy of the ruler and the ruled, of educator and the educated, or of a subject and an object of education. This allows for the concept of *education as dialogue,* in the *Analects* to be understood as a confined meaning because it is not a dialogue between everybody and for everybody, but a dialogue only within a certain elite group of people. A further study is needed on the question of whether and how the possibly romantic motives captured in the dialogue in the *Analects* can be generalized for education in general or for contemporary education. In this regard, the historical fact that Confucius showed his philosophy of "有教無別," namely "In instruction, there is no such thing as social classes" (*Analects*, XV-39), in an era when blood-connection was still a crucial criterion for social-political power is also to be taken into consideration for a modern understanding of the original Confucian concept of education and educational relationship.

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Chapter 4
Ritual, Virtue, and Education: An Interpretation of Xunzi's Philosophy of Ritual

Morimichi Kato

Introductory Remarks
By Duck-Joo Kwak

Ritual has been one of important topics in the fields of anthropology and religious studies, but not in the field of educational studies until quite a recent time when the body becomes a focus of educational interests. Before, school rituals were simply considered to be a medium of indoctrination, fixing youngsters into a set of behaviors mechanically and repetitively. They were defined merely in terms of their disciplinary power *as* domination. But, with the flourishing of educational scholarship from the post-structuralist perspective on the body triggered by Foucault's idea of disciplinary power, the educational function of rituals seems to be newly explored and examined: ritual practice as the formation of man, as opposed to the domination of man.

This essay is exactly in this direction in its attempt to trace the inherent nature of ritual back to the ancient view of it in the east Asian tradition. Kato tries to examine the Confucian theory of ritual as formulated by the ancient philosopher called Xunzi from the third-century BC in China; he was sometimes considered as the third of the three great classical Confucians (after Confucius and Mencius), known to the east Asian readers more for his misanthropic view that human nature is basically ugly or evil. Kato attributes our long disfavor of ritual as an educational topic to the modernist prejudices rooted in the prevalent dualism between the mind and the body, between the inner and the outer, and between reality and appearance. According to him, as a way of recovering our bodily nature and identity for the conception of the educated person, ritual as the heritage of pre-modern culture needs to be revisited from the post-modern perspective.

In fact, in Confucian tradition of humanistic education, ritualistic practice was considered one of the two main pedagogical approaches for self-cultivation; the

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R. Reichenbach, D.-J. Kwak (eds.), *Confucian Perspectives on Learning and Self-Transformation*, Contemporary Philosophies and Theories in Education 14,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-40078-1_4

other was to read classical books. What is ritual (禮, *li*) in the Confucian sense, then? First, it refers to institutionalized forms of rites, which people usually tend to take as a tradition, i.e., periodic or celebratory rites of royal courts or ancestral worship ceremonies as a set of formal procedures. Second, Confucian ritual (*li*) more commonly means some patterns of overt behavior of actions that are instructed on the way we carry our bodies and make physical gestures, as well as a set of specific rules of conducts that prescribes our *role-performances*, roles such as a king, a father, or a son. Lastly, *li* can be described as a set of more general rules of conduct that govern one's *personal relationship* with others, such as reciprocal respect, loyalty or good faith, which is almost synonymous to what we call today *moral* norms of action (Han 2001, 16). The reason this ritual tends to be negatively considered in modern education by most of liberal educators in the east Asian countries has to do with its authoritative demand to obey on the part of youngsters without raising any questions, since it is not exaggeration to say that Confucian education was traditionally all about obeying to the rituals, i.e., learning how to obey or conform to rituals in one's actions at the every corner of one's life.

However, Kato explores Xunzi's meta-theory of ritual, which has become unfamiliar to the most of contemporary modern educators. According to Kato's reformulation of Xunzi's theory, ritual is rather about (1) the (performative) *founding* of an order to remove a chaos by dividing things among people and controlling their desire, which has a political function as shown in establishing the state. It is also (2) to nurture our desires through arts (i.e., six arts of rituals, music, archery. riding, calligraphy and mathematics) that direct our senses to their appropriate objects, the value of which the members of the state share to form a community. Ritual is also to differentiate social roles or status between the lord and the subordinates, man and woman or the elderly or the young in their formal manners. Lastly, ritual has an ontological function with its three roots, while tying and disconnecting between heaven and earth, ancestors and the present generation, and lords and subordinates in the formation of the symbolic schemes of the world.

Kato introduces many educationally interesting aspects of ritual understood in the Confucian tradition, such as its relation to virtues, ethics and religion, or a comparative perspective on it with Aristotle's view of habituation. But, as I indicate above, what seems to be educationally controversial about ritual for modern educators would be its problematic relation to discipline. Kato mentions by passing in this essay that ritual is not a discipline since, unlike discipline, ritual requires a comprehensive knowledge of the classics about how the sage followed the rituals; for the Confucian sages, ritual practice was an ultimate point of learning. But in my view, Confucian ritual was also *a way of discipling* young generation. The difference between the ancient 'discipline by ritual' and its modern equivalent lies in their views on the way (or the aspect) in which the discipline functions in the formation of self. While the ancient ritual effects youngsters in such a way as to make them *voluntarily* obey to the order founded by the repetitive performance of ritual, modern ritual forces them to obey in the form of self-domination. I think that both (ancient) ritual and (modern) discipline involve our conducts or the behaviors of our

body that is visible in the public domain, while effecting the formation of our self-relation. It may be said that the effect that the former makes is in its nature ontological, the latter political. Thus, we may even conclude that, while the former encourages us to cultivate oneself in the form of self-caring or self-overcoming, the latter in the form of self-controlling or self-efficacy.

This tentative comparison leads us into such educationally productive questions as what follows: What is the educational merit of ritual from the ontological perspective?; Can ritual be newly valued as a way of educating youngsters today? Catherine Bell, American anthropologist, summarizes several features common to all forms of ritualization: (1) strategies of differentiations through formalization and periodicity, (2) the centrality of the body, (3) the orchestration of schemes by which the body defines the environment and is defined in turn by it, (4) ritual mastery, and (5) the negotiation of power to define and appropriate the hegemonic order of the society (1992, 220). I think all these features are true of Confucian rituals. And her characterization stimulates us to reconceive it for its pedagogical possibility for the education of young people today; they often find themselves having trouble in responding to even *legitimate* authorities, which seems to be required to live their lives at all in an intelligible manner.

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4.1 Introduction

Ritual (禮) is one of the key concepts of Confucianism. The importance of ritual has been acknowledged throughout the history of Confucianism (Chan 2012; Fan 2012; Lo 2012; Zhang 2012). Ritual was a litmus test for distinguishing Confucianism from other schools in China, such as Mohism and Daoism. The importance of ritual for education distinguished the Confucian humanistic tradition from its Western counterpart (Kato 2014, 2016).

This does not mean that ritual is an exclusive product of Confucianism. The importance of ritual has been acknowledged by other world religions too. Even Zen Buddhism, which gives the impression of absolute liberty from custom, observes strict ritualistic procedures (Robson 2014).

Our modern life also retains many ritualistic elements, such as Christmas, New Year, and wedding and funeral ceremonies to name a few. Rituals punctuate our calendar and distinguish places. Moreover, schools are full of rituals. However, educational studies have not paid enough attention to this fact, treating ritual as if it were a special subject reserved for anthropology.

The reason for this neglect is a prejudice against ritual in modern society (Delkeskamp-Hayes 2012; Solomon 2012). This prejudice is nourished by a

dualism that separates mind from body, inner from outer, and reality from appearance. This dualism is connected with another dualism that separates the modern from the old and the civilized from the primitive.

Yet, with the demise of such prejudice in postmodern thought, ritual merits attention not only in anthropology but also in the field of philosophy of education. Indeed, recent years have seen the emergence of studies that examine the role of ritual for human cultivation. Further, Chinese and Western scholars are now shedding new light on Confucian ritual (Goldin 1999; Solomon et al. 2012; Kline and Tiward 2014).

This article intends to contribute to this trend. It has chosen Xunzi (荀子) as the subject. Xunzi was a Confucian scholar of the late Warring States period who was active in the middle of the third century BCE (Knoblock 1988). The *Xunzi*, the book attributed to him, contains many passages that concern ritual. He is selected not because he expanded the rules of rituals (for this, Zhu Xi offers more detailed information in his treatise on family ritual (朱子家禮)) but because he (probably for the first time in history) offered an elaborate meta-theory of ritual: He explained the fundamental characteristics of ritual and showed why ritual was necessary. He also expanded upon the role of ritual in moral education.

This article consists of the following parts: Part 1 examines four major features of Xunzi's meta-theory of ritual, which are expanded upon at the beginning of his discourse on ritual. This is the longest part, because we pick up on these features separately. Part 2 examines the place of ritual in Xunzi's educational theory as expressed in his discourses on learning and self-cultivation. Part 3 considers the relationship between ritual and virtue by examining Xunzi's discourse on human nature. Part 4 compares the Aristotelian theory of virtue with Xunzi's theory of ritual and considers the nature of the relationship between them.

The article closes by briefly considering the implications of this study regarding the role of religion in education.

4.2 Part 1: Xunzi's Meta-theory of Ritual

Xunzi's contribution is not limited to the fact that he gave an important role to ritual in his political, ethical, and educational theories. More important is that he gave a theoretical foundation to ritual (Machle 2014). In other words, his philosophy can be considered as a meta-theory of ritual (Berkson 2014).[1] The beginning of Chapter 19 of the *Xunzi* is the finest example of it. Let us examine the four main features of this theory.

[1] It is interesting that many of the characters of rituals, which Engelhardt (2012) and Cherry (2012) mention without reference to Xunzi, were already formulated by Xunzi.

1. Ritual and the state

Chapter 19, titled "Discourse on Ritual (禮論)," begins with a consideration of the origin of ritual, which runs as follows:

> T1: From what did ritual arise? I say: Humans are born having desires. When they have desires but do not get the objects of their desire, they cannot but seek some means of satisfaction. If there is no measure or limit to their seeking, then they cannot help but struggle with each other. If they struggle with each other then there will be chaos, and if there is chaos then they will be impoverished. The former kings (先王) hated such chaos, and so they established ritual and *yi* (義)[2] in order to divide things among people, to nurture their desires, and to satisfy their seeking. (Xunzi 2014, p. 201)

Former kings established ritual in order to avoid the chaos that is caused by humans driven by desires. There are many points worth considering in the text cited above, such as the role of former kings, the function of division, and the nurturing of desires, which we will examine later. However, we must first consider the relationship between ritual and the state (国). Even though Xunzi does not use the word "state" here, he uses it often in related contexts.[3] It is the origin of the state that is at stake here.

The term "state" does not refer to a simple aggregation of people, a kind of herd of human animals, how good-natured they may be. Rather, it requires a certain order. Xunzi maintains that this order was established by ritual. Ritual is not a product of the state, as we tend to think. Rather, the state is a product of ritual.[4] It is made possible by a ritual that divides things among people and controls desires.

Here lie the roots of Xunzi's criticism of the Mohists as well as of a version of Confucianism represented by Mencius and the *Great Learning*. For them, the goodness of human nature is the basis of the state. If individuals are good, then the state is bound to be good. This is especially true of rulers. The first paragraph of the *Great Learning* expresses this thought in a clear and concise manner.

> T2: The ancients who wished to manifest their clear character to the world would first bring order to their states. Those who wished to bring order to their states would first regulate their families. Those who wished to regulate their families would first cultivate their personal lives. Those who wished to cultivate their personal lives would first rectify their minds. Those who wished to rectify their minds would first make their wills sincere. Those who wished to make their wills sincere would first extend their knowledge. The extension of knowledge consists in the investigation of things. (Chan 1963, p. 86)

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[2] *Yi* can be translated as "righteousness" or "justice" that is based on social distinction. In this sense, it is nearer to the Greek concept of *dike* or *dikaiosyne* than to the modern egalitarian concept of justice.

[3] See, for example, Chapter 10 ("Enriching the State") and Chapter 16 ("The Strong State") (Xunzi 2014).

[4] On the role of ritual in creating social reality, see Iltis 2012. Interestingly, anthropology of ritual comes to a similar conclusion (Rappaport 1999, p. 138).

For the *Great Learning*, there is continuity from the individual to the state, or from the ethical to the political. The ethical precedes the political temporally and logically.

For Xunzi, on the other hand, the political precedes the ethical. A political order of the state, which is established by former kings, comes first. Left alone, human nature and morality would remain powerless.

In Chapter 23, "Human Nature is Bad (性悪)," Xunzi, in his polemic against Mencius, asserts:

> T3: So, ritual and *yi* and proper models and measures are produced from the artifice (偽)[5] of the sage (聖人); they are not produced from people's nature (人之性). (Xunzi 2014, pp. 103–105)

Masao Maruyama, a famous Japanese political philosopher, in his influential book on the intellectual history of the Tokugawa period, called Sorai (1666–1728), an important Confucian scholar, the "discoverer of politics." Maruyama here meant one who distinguished political philosophy from moral philosophy and insisted on the precedence of the former over the latter (Maruyama 1974, p. 83). However, it is important to keep in mind that a similar discovery of politics had already taken place in the thought of Xunzi, for whom (as for Sorai) ritual played a major role. In fact, Sorai valued Xunzi highly and wrote a treatise titled *Reading Xunzi* (読荀子), one of the earliest treatises on this book in Japan (Sorai 1975, pp. 14–141).

Another point that deserves special attention in T3 is that Xunzi sets artifice (偽) against (human) nature (*xing* 性) and emphasizes the importance of the former over the latter. This may be the reason Xunzi used the controversial phrase "Human nature is bad." This phrase does not mean that human nature is evil. It simply means that, left alone, human nature remains insufficient and powerless. Nature requires the powerful intervention of artifice. The pattern of thought that sets artifice against nature is similar to the Greek thought that sets skill (*techne*) and convention (*nomos*) against nature (*phusis*). And yet, there is a big difference. Greek philosophers, without exception, placed supremacy with nature and assigned a secondary place to *techne* and *nomos*. Both *techne* and *nomos* had to orient themselves to nature, which served as the standard and the model. Compared with this, the position of Xunzi that gives artifice precedence over nature is very unique in the history of thought. In the West, it was only after the seventeenth century that the precedence of making (*facere*) over the natural became a controversial theme in the work of thinkers like Giambattista Vico (Mondolfo 1969).

2. Ritual, desire, and the origin of art

The first paragraph of "Discourse on Ritual" cited above (T1) also emphasizes human desires as the origin of ritual (Neville 2014). It is therefore appropriate to proceed to an examination of the relationship between ritual and desires.

[5] Here I follow Goldin (1999) and adopt the translation of 偽 as "artifice" instead of "the deliberate effort" of Hutton.

The examination may look quite familiar at first glance because controlling or subduing desires is a well-known theme in the Western history of moral and educational thought. The Greeks assigned a special virtue for this: *sophrosyne* or temperance. Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics discussed this theme. In the course of history, it has become a hackneyed and trite theme represented by the stern face of a Stoic philosopher. In a contemporary society dominated by liberal ideals, a society characterized by the precedence of justice to other forms of virtues, temperance has become a matter of personal taste, i.e., diet. There is probably no political theory that focuses on this theme except, perhaps, in the fields related to health insurance policy.

Seen from such a point of view, Xunzi's thoughts seem quite familiar. And yet, reading the original text further, we find that Xunzi is pointing at a quite a different direction.

First of all, when he talks about desires, he does not mean crude bodily desires related to food, drink, and sex. He instead covers diverse fields related to the senses. And, when dealing with the subject of food, he is far from providing general dietary advice. This is shown in the second paragraph of Chapter 19, which runs as follows:

> T4: Thus, ritual is a means of nurture (養). Meats and grains, the five flavors and the various spices are means to nurture the mouth. Fragrances and perfumes are means to nurture the nose. Carving and inlay, insignias and patterns are means to nurture the eyes. Bells and drums, pipes and chimes, lutes and zithers are means to nurture the ears. Homes and palaces, cushions and beds, tables and mats are means to nurture the body. Thus, ritual is a means to nurture. (Xunzi 2014, p. 201)[6]

We are witnessing here the origin of arts. They are related to the diverse senses: taste (culinary arts), smell (cult of incense burning), sight (fine arts), hearing (music), and touch (architecture and furniture). Each art is meant to nurture the desire proper to each sense, such as the desire to taste, the desire to smell, etc.

Thus, ritual nurtures desire through arts that direct the senses to their appropriate objects. These objects have values that the members of a state share. Participation in a ritual ceremony, one in which foods are offered, perfumes burned, painting and sculptures displayed, music performed, and furniture provided, establishes a community (a state) that is different from a mere aggregation of human animals.

3. Ritual and differentiation

Following T4, Xunzi insists that nurturing goes together with differentiation:

> T5: The gentleman not only obtains its nurturing, but also loves its differentiations (別). What is meant by "differentiations"? I say: It is for noble and lowly to have their proper ranking, for elder and youth to have their proper distance, and for poor and rich, humble and eminent to each to have their proper weight. (Xunzi 2014, p. 201)

Ritual not only unites people, but also differentiates them. The unity produced by ritual is the unity in differentiation.[7]

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[6] See also Chapter 10, "Enriching the State" (Xunzi 2014).

[7] This feature is also stressed in Chapter 10, "Enriching the state" (Xunzi).

It is this feature that makes ritual very complex. This is what makes ritual unpopular, too, as it contains a kind of formality inherited from feudalism.

However, such differentiation nonetheless exists. Many European languages, with the notable exception of English, use two expressions for the second person singular, such as "vous" and "tu" or "Sie" and "du." In Japanese, 22 versions of the second-person singular may be counted in a dictionary of synonyms (Shibata and Yamada 2002). Even in English, probably the most egalitarian language, there are still many ways to express respect for an elder, a teacher, or a boss. This is also a matter of relevance in the educational context: Should we remove such formalities from school or should they be retained? The answer probably lies in the direction of accepting the educational power of ritual differentiation without contradicting our egalitarian aspirations (Bell 2012). We will not go into this question now. Instead, we will proceed to think more deeply about the idea of unity in differentiation.

4. Three roots of ritual

The idea of unity in differentiation is not limited to social relationships. Indeed, it extends to space and time and establishes cosmological and historical dimensions. This is testified to in an important passage concerning the three roots (三本) of ritual.

> T6: Ritual has three roots. Heaven and Earth are the root of life. Forefathers and ancestors are the root of one's kind. Lords and teachers are the root of order. Without Heaven and Earth, how would one live? Without forefathers and ancestors, how would one have come forth? Without lords and teachers, how would there be order? If even one of these three roots is neglected, no one will be safe. And so, ritual serves Heaven above and Earth below, it honors forefathers and ancestors, and it exalts lords and teachers. These are the three roots of ritual. (Xunzi 2014, p. 202)

The term "*ben*" (本), translated here as "root," originally means "the root of a big tree" (the Chinese character for "tree" being 木). From this it has also obtained a broader meaning, such as "origin" and "beginning" (Todo et al. 1988, p. 583). In T6, the metaphor of a plant seems quite appropriate. A tree can stand firm because of its roots, which are invisible. Without the root, a tree cannot exist. At the same time, without the visible parts of a tree, the root will remain unknown: the root will become a true root only when a complete tree grows from it. Thus, there is a mutual reference between a visible tree and the root. Ritual, like a tree, presupposes Heaven and Earth, forefathers and ancestors, lords and teachers. However, at the same time, ritual makes them visible; that is, ritual allows them to truly be what they are. Xunzi goes even further, remarking that it is only through observing the appropriate form of ritual that the harmonious union of Heaven and Earth can be maintained.

> T7: By ritual, Heaven and Earth harmoniously combine;
> By ritual, the sun and the moon radiantly shine;
> By ritual, the four seasons in progression arise;
> By ritual, the stars move orderly across the skies;
> By ritual, the greatest rivers through their courses flow;
> By ritual, the myriad things thrive and grow. (Xunzi 2014, pp. 204–5)

Ritual has the dual function of connection and division. Ritual connects Heaven, Earth, and Man through the service that Man offers to Heaven and Earth. At the same time, ritual sets Heaven as Heaven and Earth as Earth. Through ritual, Heaven and Earth are recognized as the sources of life and clearly distinguished as such. In this sense, ritual establishes and maintains the threefold relationship between Heaven, Earth, and Man.

Ritual also connects ancestors with the present generation. And, through this act of connection, ritual sets them apart. In this dual function of connection and division, the span of time that we call "history" comes forward. Ritual establishes and maintains history.

Finally, ritual connects lords with subordinates, and teachers with disciples. At the same time, ritual distinguishes the former from the latter, giving honor and precedence to the former. In this act, ritual establishes and maintains the state, aligning the political community with social order.

Thus, the three roots of ritual are not some kind of preexisting material. Rather, they become roots only through the founding act of ritual.

Heidegger, in his *Origin of the Work of Art*, emphasized that a work of art does not simply represent a given world but establishes and founds a world that consists of Heaven, Earth, and Man (Heidegger 1980, pp. 1–72). It is this aspect that makes art truly creative. This thought of Heidegger seems to fit well with Xunzi's thoughts about ritual. Ritual is the original creative event (Heidegger's *Ereignis*). It opens up the horizon in which Heaven and Earth meet Man, where ancestors and the living are tied together, and social order is established.

4.3 Part 2: Ritual and Learning

Given the importance of ritual in Xunzi's thoughts, we can easily infer that it played a crucial role in his theory of learning. Indeed, it did. The discourse named "An Exhortation to Learning (勸学)" (Chapter 1), testifies to this.

In the beginning of this chapter, Xunzi exalts the powerful effect of learning in a famous passage:

> T8: Blue dye derives from the indigo plant, and yet it is bluer than the plant. (Xunzi 2014, p. 1)

Xunzi then stresses the role of "things (物)" for learning:

> T9: The gentleman is exceptional not by birth, but rather by being good at making use of things. (Xunzi 2014, p. 2)

This expression may sound like the creed of modern educational theory, i.e., that we should learn from things instead of from words.[8]

[8] See, for example, "the education of things" in Rousseau's *Emile* (Rousseau 1967, p. 247).

However, for Xunzi, there is no dichotomy between things and words. Rather, things include words: they are what surround us in various senses. Shortly after the just-cited text, Xunzi adds:

> T10: Therefore, the gentleman is sure to select the village where he dwells, and he is sure to associate with well-bred men when he travels. This is how he avoids corruptions and draws near to what is correct. (Xunzi 2014, p. 3)

However, the "things" that are most conducive to learning are classics and (above all) ritual:

> T11: Where does learning begin? Where does learning end? I say: Its order begins with reciting the classics (誦経), and ends with studying ritual (讀禮). Its purpose begins with becoming a well-bred man (士), and ends with becoming a sage (聖). (Xunzi 2014, p. 5)

In this passage, ritual corresponds with "becoming a sage," just as reciting the classics corresponds with "becoming a well-bred man." This is an extraordinary assertion. Xunzi continues:

> T12: And so learning comes to ritual and then stops, for this is called the ultimate point in pursuit of the Way and virtue (道德之極). In the reverence and refinement of ritual, the balance and harmony of music, the broad content of the *Odes* and *Documents*, the subtleties of the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, all things between Heaven and Earth are complete. (Xunzi 2014, p. 5)

In order to come to this "ultimate point" of ritual, mere memorization of the classics is not enough. Such haphazard knowledge only produces a vulgar (or, rather, petty) *ru* (小儒) (Xunzi 2014, p. 6).

How, then, can one escape from being a petty *ru* and become a great *ru* (大儒)?[9] The answer lies in having a proper teacher.

> T13: In learning, nothing is more expedient than to draw near to the right person. Rituals and music provide proper models but give no precepts. The *Odes* and *Documents* contain ancient stories but no explanation of their present application. The *Spring and Autumn Annals* is terse and cannot be quickly understood. However, if you imitate the right person in his practice of the precepts of the gentleman, then you will come to honor these things for their comprehensiveness, and see them as encompassing the whole world. Thus, in learning, nothing is more expedient than to draw near to the right person. (Xunzi 2014, p. 6)

The relationship between teacher and ritual is expounded upon in Chapter 2, "Cultivating One Self (修身)," as follows:

> T14: Ritual is that by which to correct your person. The teacher is that by which to correct your practice of ritual. If you are without ritual, then how will you correct your person? If you are without a teacher, how will you know that your practice of ritual is right? (Xunzi 2014, p. 14)

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[9] I take the term "a great *ru*" from Chapter 8, "The Achievement of the Ru" (Xunzi 2014, p. 52). The contrast between a petty *ru* and a great *ru* comes from the *Analects* 6, 11, which uses the terms "a petty person *ru* 小人儒" and "a gentleman *ru* 君子儒." According to Shirakawa and Kaji, "a petty person *ru*" refers to a shaman in charge of funeral ceremonies and "a gentleman *ru*" is an intellectual who is a master *ru*. A gentleman *ru* was not just a performer of rite but was a teacher of rite who understood their theoretical and historical background (Shirakawa 1991, pp. 72–81; Kaji 1990, pp. 56–58).

Through these passages, we can discern why, for Xunzi, learning and self-cultivation culminates in ritual. Ritual is not discipline. Discipline need not be accompanied by a comprehensive knowledge of the classics. Ritual, on the other hand, requires erudition. It has a basis in a thorough knowledge of Confucian scriptures, such as *Odes*, *Documents*, and *Spring and Autumn Annals*, the subtle meanings of which must be taught personally by an exemplary teacher.

At the same time, Xunzi emphasized the moral character of ritual. Indeed, ritual is "the ultimate point in pursuit of the Way and virtue." This leads to a further consideration.

4.4 Part 3: Ritual and Virtue

We may now consider the relationship between ritual and virtue. This relationship is expressed in the words "this [ritual] is called the ultimate point in pursuit of the Way and virtue" (Xunzi 2014, p. 5). How should we interpret the relationship between the two?

This is a problem that is not specific to Xunzi but to the entire corpus of Confucian literature. In the *Analects*, for example, ritual and benevolence (*ren* 仁) seem to be closely related, even though the exact nature of their relationship is not clear. In the *Mencius*, on the other hand, ritual is described as one of the four cardinal virtues together with benevolence, righteousness, and wisdom (Mencius 1970, p. 83). Xunzi differs from Mencius in assigning a privileged place to ritual: it is not just one of the virtues but is the "ultimate point of Way and virtue."

Now, the primacy of ritual should be understood with respect to its foundational character. If, as Xunzi asserts, ritual is not just a product of the state but establishes the relationship between Heaven, Earth, and Man, between ancestors and descendants, and between the elder and the younger, it is natural to think that it also establishes virtues.

The clearest example of this is the virtue of filial piety. Filial piety is not just a feeling that children have toward parents. Such an incipient feeling, important as it may be, is not yet virtue. In order for it to be elevated to the status of virtue, it must acquire a specific form. This is provided, among others, by funeral ritual (Yearley 2014). Funeral ritual, which, by the way, occupies the greatest part of Xunzi's "Discourse on Ritual," not only provides a specific occasion for collective mourning but also establishes and commemorates the blood relationship that binds the present generation with the past generation.

In a similar sense, other virtues, too, can be traced back to their ritual origin. Benevolence toward others would be awkward and blind without the element of ritual that gives it proper form and orientation (Chan 2012). And righteousness requires social distinction that is established by ritual. In short, ritual provides a concrete form, orientation, and context without which no virtue in a strict sense is possible. Ritual, in this sense, not only gives birth to virtues but also nurtures them.

This is an important point that separates Xunzi from Mencius (Ivanhoe 2010, 2014; Lau 2010; Van Norden 2010). According to Mencius, human nature is good, and natural feelings are the origin of virtues. For Xunzi, on the other hand, natural feelings alone do not lead to virtues. There is so much self-centeredness in our natural feelings, such that, left alone, they would lead to conflict and confusion. This is the reason why former kings invented ritual. This thought, expanded upon in Chapter 23, titled "Human Nature is Bad," is fundamental for understanding Xunzi's theory of moral education. (We have already treated this theme briefly in connection with the precedence of artifice over human nature.) Xunzi not only rejects metaphysical speculation about human nature but also does not assign any value to the cultivation of the inner self, such as meditation in the Zhu Xi School. Instead, Xunzi places educational value on the "things" that surround us. Ritual is most conducive to moral education because it was specifically developed by former kings to educate people. To resume the argument we developed previously, ritual is the artifice par excellence.

The difference between Mencius and Xunzi was a watershed in Confucian moral and political theory. Whereas the followers of Mencius engaged themselves in the problem of cultivating the self, the followers of Xunzi, such as the Legalists and Sorai, directed their interests toward law and political organization (Kato 2014, 2016).

The history of Confucianism would be poorer if one of these two branches were neglected.

4.5 Part 4: Comparison with Aristotle

Until now, we have tried to reconstruct the meaning of Xunzi's extraordinary assertion that ritual is "the ultimate point in the pursuit of the Way and virtue." Hopefully, we have been able to show how this assertion makes sense to Xunzi. Does it still make sense to those of us living more than two thousand years after him? The answer is most probably "no." Most of us probably think that ritual might have played an important role in the past but has already finished playing its role, having been replaced by moral theory or ethics. Against such a view, I would like to contend that ritual is still important, not because it can replace ethics but because it can support our moral life by supplementing it with an element of the body that we tend to overlook.

In order to argue this, I have chosen Aristotle as a point of reference. The reason is that we can find in Aristotle's ethical theory features that show some affinity with the ritual theory of Xunzi. The comparison between Aristotle and Xunzi can invite us to reflect on the hidden relationship between ethics and ritual.

Aristotle was a founder of ethics in the sense that he was the first person to invent the word *ethike* to denote a branch of practical science. This word derives from the

common word *ethos*, which had the meaning of "habit." For Aristotle, all virtues (not only ethical virtues like courage but also intellectual virtues like prudence) are *hexis*, dispositions acquired through habituation. This habituation, however, is not arbitrary but is enabled and encouraged by a community (*polis*) that shares the same values and the same way of life.

For Aristotle, morality is not a matter of innerness. Rather, it is intertwined with the network of a community with its rich tradition. Thus, an individual has to learn appropriate acts in different phases of life. These acts cannot be directed by the mechanical memorization of rules. Rather, it requires experience that can discern an appropriate way toward an appropriate person at an appropriate time. As Aristotle argues in Book 6 of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (Aristotle 1894), this experience, which is elevated to the status of practical knowledge, is called *phronesis* (prudence). The possessor is called the *phronimos*.

Aristotle's moral theory presents an interesting similarity with Xunzi's theory of ritual. Both admit an existing order of norms of action. These norms were established in the mythical past by lawgivers or former kings, and they have been inherited and cherished by certain communities. These norms cannot simply be set down by rules or memorized mechanically. Rather, they are context-dependent and require the interpretation and advice of a *phronimos* or teacher. Both Aristotle and Xunzi emphasize the importance of using the right measure (means) in the actual application of norms.[10]

And yet, there is also a difference: Aristotle talks about ethics, whereas Xunzi talks about ritual. Even though both ethics and ritual are context-bound, ritual is more context-bound than ethics. It is bound to a ritual ceremony that takes place in a particular place at a particular occasion. The context of ethical action is wider and looser. In this sense, ethics requires more individual judgment than ritual. This may create the impression that ethics is superior to ritual.

The impression of the apparent superiority of ethics may be further enhanced if we think that, historically, ethics came after ritual. It seems as if ritual completed its historical role when it was succeeded by ethics. (Some people might add that ethics, too, was replaced by liberal proceduralism.) However, things may not be so simple.

We will not discuss here this questionable assertion on the progress of history. Postmodern thinkers, such as Lyotard (1979) and Vattimo (1989), have already unveiled the weakness of such a position. We will instead point out that what seems to be a weakness and demerit of ritual, namely its context-bound character, can also be considered its strength and merit. In as much as it is bound to a specific context, such as funeral and many kinds of religious ceremonies, ritual requires a definite form of bodily composure and movement. We can think, for example, of dance performed within a religious ceremony. It requires a certain form transmitted from predecessors. And yet, it is never mechanical in the sense of something learned by simple memorization. Rather, it is an art that requires practice under the guidance of a teacher. Behind this importance of form in ritual lies wisdom that every thought

[10] Aristotle 1894, Book 2; Xunzi 2014, p. 55, p. 206.

and emotion requires a form and a mind requires a body. If we forget this and place too much importance on the content, the content is bound to evaporate. If we place too much importance on the mind, the body will betray the mind.

The case of Aristotle is quite interesting in this connection. As a thinker who criticized Platonic ideas, Aristotle had a keen sense of the temporal, contingent world of men. And yet, he did not pay much regard to the body in his ethics. This is strange because the concept of the *ethos* requires habituation. And this habituation is never a matter of mind alone but pertains to mind and body together. Perhaps, Aristotle was still too Platonic to assert expressively the important role of the body in our moral life. This is the point at which Xunzi's theory of ritual can be helpful. It can teach ethics to pay more regard to the body, without which the talk of virtues runs the risk of becoming mere speculation.

We should, of course, not forget that there is also a danger on the side of ritual: the danger is that form can lose its content (its original thought) and become rigid and oppressive. This may be the reason why "ritual" evokes a negative response, even among many East Asians. And yet, it would be a great pity to discard ritual altogether on the basis of its negative consequences. This is the point at which ethical deliberation can come to help.

In sum, ritual and ethics are not exclusive alternatives. Rather, they can and should complement each other. Ritual reminds us of the importance of the form and the body that can be ignored easily by ethics. Ethical deliberation and judgment, on the other hand, may occasionally guard ritual from becoming mechanical, rigid, and even inhuman.

4.6 Closing Remarks: The Role of Religion in Education

Finally, we would like to point out that there is one more benefit to studying Xunzi: it reminds us of the role of religion in education.

By religion, we do not mean a creed in a transcendent entity named "God." It means, rather, the unity in separation that we observed in Xunzi's theory of ritual. Ritual separates Heaven, Earth, and Man, and at the same time, it unites them. Ritual separates generations and at the same time unites them. It binds together and at the same time separates social groups. This binding is the etymological meaning of religion that comes from the Latin re-ligare (to bind) (Derrida and Vattimo 1998). This character of religion is important in our world, characterized by the domination of man over nature, the hubris of modern rationality toward tradition, and the ever-growing disparity between different social groups.

Ritual may teach us to envision education in a larger context in which the mutual dependence between man and nature, between past and present, and between different social groups plays an important role. At least, it can hint at this direction.

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Chapter 5
Ogyū Sorai on the Content and Intent of Learning

Paulus Kaufmann

Introductory Remarks

By Morimichi Kato

The culture of the Japanese islands of Japan, as of any other country, is characterized by its geographical location. Japan is separated by sea from Mainland China and the Korean peninsula. Today, in the age of globalization, the geographical distance seems almost none existent. But in former times, it was immense. It took generations for the mainland culture to reach Japan. Confucianism is no exception. When it arrived in Japan, more than 700 years had passed since the death of Confucius.

This distance is important to understand Japanese culture, be it literature, painting, calligraphy or religion. On the one hand, the distance produced a strong sense of yearning. Books, calligraphies, or paintings from China were very rare and were sold at enormously high prices. Thus, the culture of Mainland China was often regarded as the absolute authority. On the other hand, the distance allowed much space for the free play of imagination. For example, Japanese calligraphy began to have its own development when, due to the closure of the borders, the Chinese original stopped to be imported. Japanese art history is full of such examples. It is also the case with Confucianism.

As Kaufman shows clearly, Japanese Confucianism had its own, original development during the Edo period. As in China and Korea, Zhuxi philosophy served as the official doctrine. But Zhuxi philosophy with its strong metaphysical trait could not satisfy the heart and mind of many Japanese intellectuals who were more concerned with practical and concrete matters. This led to the emergence of a variety of Confucians schools, one of which is the school established by Sorai.

Sorai, a well-known scholar of his age, went into oblivion in modern Japan. It was after the Second World War that his philosophical impact regained new

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R. Reichenbach, D.-J. Kwak (eds.), *Confucian Perspectives on Learning and Self-Transformation*, Contemporary Philosophies and Theories in Education 14,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-40078-1_5

appreciation. In 1952, Maruyama Masao, an influential political theorist, wrote *Studies in the Intellectual History of Tokugawa Japan,*[1] in which he exalted Sorai as the first political thinker of Japan. Also Kobayashi Hideo, the most famous literary critic in modern Japan esteemed Sorai highly, not as a political philosopher but as a humanist and philologist who paved the way to Motoori Norinaga, another intellectual giant of the Edo period who played a decisive role for the formation of the Japanese humanistic tradition.[2] The high appreciation of Sorai by Maruyama and Kobayashi, both very influential intellectuals of postwar Japan, led to the rehabilitation of Sorai in Japanese intellectual history. And yet, Sorai still remains unknown outside Japan.

Seen from the "orthodox" stream of Confucianism, Sorai may look heterodox. But this seemingly heterodox philosophy definitely contributes to the variety and richness of Confucianism. Kaufman's paper can serve as a suitable introduction to it.

According to the Japanese historiographical tradition Confucianism was brought to Japan in the year 284 CE under the reign of emperor Ōjin.[3] In the *Kojiki* (古事記), Japan's oldest surviving historical record, we find the following interesting passage about these events:

> Again King Shō-ko, the Chieftain of the land of Kudara [part of present-day Korea], sent as tribute by Achi-kishi one stallion and one mare. Again he sent as tribute a cross-sword, and likewise a large mirror. Again he was graciously bidden to send as tribute a wise man, if there were any such in the land of Kudara. Therefore receiving the [Imperial] commands, he sent as tribute a man named Wani-kishi, and likewise by this man he sent as tribute the Confucian Analects in ten volumes and the Thousand Character Essay in one volume, – altogether eleven volumes.[4]

In this short narrative Confucian scholars and books are depicted as tributes comparable to other tributes like horses, swords or mirrors.[5] But in contrast to these material tributes, Confucianism was explicitly asked for by the emperor. Confucianism must thus have been regarded as particularly valuable for Japan or, at least, as very useful for the ruling clan. The second surviving Japanese chronicle, the *Nihonshoki* (日本書紀) finalized only 8 years after the *Kojiki* retells the events in a bit more detail and adds the following sentences:

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[1] Studies in the Intellectual History of Tokugawa Japan, trans. by Mikiso Hane, (University of Tokyo Press, 1989).

[2] Morimichi Kato, "Humanistic tradition in East Asia", Zeitschrift für Pädagogik, 60, 96–108.

[3] Peter Kornicki and others suppose a much later date for the events reported in this passage; see Peter Kornicki, *The Book in Japan: A Cultural History from the Beginnings to the Nineteenth Century* (Leiden; Boston: Brill. 1998), 278–9; cf. Hall, John Whitney and Delmer M. Brown, *The Cambridge History of Japan. Vol. 1: Ancient Japan* (Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 170.

[4] Basil Hall Chamberlain, *The Kojiki: Records of Ancient Matters* (Rutland, VT: Tuttle, 1981), 313.

[5] Kiri Paramore discusses this treatment of Confucianism as cultural capital in the first chapter of *Japanese Confucianism – A Cultural History* (Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 16–40.

> In spring in the second month of the sixteenth year Wani[-kishi] arrived. Prince Uji no Waki Iratsuko took him as his teacher. He learned various classics from Wani. There were none of them he could not master. Wani became the first keeper of the imperial books.[6]

Confucianism is here associated with a specific canon of books and with the ability of Confucians to teach these books to the ruling elite. In Japan Confucianism was thus from its import onwards particularly valued for its educational merits. The *Daigakuryō* (大学寮), probably the first educational institution for the instruction of middle and lower class officials at court, was founded in the seventh century and had accordingly a mainly Confucian curriculum.

Confucianism's status as a teaching for the elites was not unchallenged, however. The same *Nihonshoki* tells us that Buddhism was introduced approximately 150 years after the arrival of Confucianism in Japan.[7] This new teaching is said there to be 'amongst all doctrines the most excellent', but unknown to 'even the Duke of Chow and Confucius'.[8] We thus already find a hint in this early chronicle of Buddhism's alleged superiority that was to become the standard evaluation in the following centuries. After an early phase of Buddhist-Confucian coexistence, medieval Japan was dominated by a Buddhist paradigm. William LaFleur suggests that medieval Japan can even be *defined* by saying that in that epoch 'the basic intellectual problems, the most authoritative texts and resources, and the central symbols were all Buddhist'.[9]

Confucianism never completely disappeared, however, and still played some role in the education of the court as well as in Buddhist monasteries. Especially Zen monks studied the Confucian texts that entered Japan from Song China (960–1279). These texts were not the classical texts of the Han- and pre-Han dynasties, but belonged to the Neo-Confucian current predominant in China at that time. Neo-Confucianism had integrated Buddhist and Daoist elements into the Confucian teaching and was, therefore, more appealing to the clergy. The Buddhist predominance ended, however, when a central government headed by the Shōgun was established in Edo in the year 1600. The political discourse and the educational system were confucianized (again) and especially the Neo-Confucian teachings became the standard texts of instruction in Japan.

The transition from a Buddhist to a Confucian paradigm was not sudden, however. This can be seen from the fact that Hayashi Razan (1583–1657), the main Confucian tutor of the first three Shōguns and head of the Confucian Academy *Shōheikō* (昌平郷), was still obliged to wear the Buddhist tonsure and only his son and successor Hayashi Gahō was allowed in 1691 to let his hair grow.[10] Temples for

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[6] The translation is adopted from Paramore, *Japanese Confucianism*, 16; see also W.G. Aston, *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697*, vol. 1, 262–3.

[7] Ibid., vol. 2, 65–7.

[8] Ibid., 66.

[9] William LaFleur, *The Karma of Words: Buddhism and the Literary Arts in Medieval Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 9.

[10] John W. Hall, "The Confucian Teacher in Tokugawa Japan", in *Confucianism in Action*, edited by David S Nivison and Arthur F Wright (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959), 43–44 and 51.

the veneration of Confucius were then built, moreover, and schools with an exclusively Confucian curriculum were founded.[11]

The emancipation of Confucianism from Buddhism is also apparent in the emergence of the Neo-Classical School (*kogaku* 古学) of Confucianism, a current that criticized Neo-Confucianism precisely for its integration of Buddhist elements and promoted a return to the ancient texts and institutions instead. The first writers to argue in this vein were Yamaga Sokō (1622–1685) and Itō Jinsai (1627–1705), but I will focus in this paper on Ogyū Sorai (1666–1728), probably the most influential protagonist of the Neo-Classical School. Sorai's rejection of Neo-Confucianism that he saw as a Buddhist degeneration of the original Confucian teaching can be clearly seen in his understanding of learning.

Sorai defines 'learning' in his lexicographical work[12] *Clarification of Names* (*Benmei* 弁名) as "studying the way of the early kings".[13] The way of the early kings in turn "lies in poetry (詩), historiography (書), rites (禮), and music (樂). These subjects are the 'Four Teachings' or 'Four Arts' (四教 or 四術)".[14] In this passage Sorai adopts the classification of the Four Arts poetry, historiography, rites and music from the *Book of Rites* (禮記). At some other passages in his work he refers to the classification of the Six Arts rites, music, archery, charioteering, calligraphy and mathematics from the *Rites of Zhou* (周禮) instead. As Sorai uses both classifications in his works we see that his emphasis does not lie on the individual arts but on their *formal characteristics* as arts. He describes these characteristics in more detail in another passage from the *Clarification of Names*:

> Each of the Six Arts includes 'things' (物); these are the detailed instructions (節度) for completing virtues. By constantly practicing them for a long time, one further improves what is thereby preserved. This is what is called things coming to us (*kakubutsu* 格物). When we first receive instruction, 'things' are not part of the self. This might be compared to people from afar coming to visit us here. This means that we need not overtly exert ourselves. Therefore we say 'things came to me'. Here, 'kaku' (格) means 'to come'. When we realize aspects of the teachings in ourselves, then our understanding is naturally clarified. This is what is meant by 'knowledge being perfected' (到知). […] The ancients spoke of 'knowledge being perfected' in reference to the clarity of understanding first attained once we have embodied things through our person.[15]

The first thing to observe in this passage is that the adequate objects of learning are ancient *practices* that lead to the mastering of an art or to the completion of a

[11] On the difficulties of Confucianism to spread among the samurai, see Hiroshi Watanabe, *A History of Japanese Political Thought, 1600–1901* (Tōkyō: I-House Press), 77–101.

[12] For more on this genre, see John Allen Tucker, "Chen Beixi, Lu Xiangshan, and Early Tokugawa (1600–1867) Philosophical Lexicography", *Philosophy East and West* 43, no. 4 (1993): 683–713. I will argue later in this essay, however, that Sorai's explications cannot be understood as lexicography in a limited, linguistic sense.

[13] *Ogyū Sorai*, edited by Yoshikawa Kōjirō (henceforth *Ogyū Sorai*), *Nihon shisō taikei* 36 (Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten, 1973), 164 and 249.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid., 179 and 253; John Allen Tucker, *Ogyū Sorai's Philosophical Masterworks: the Bendō and Benmei* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006), 330.

virtue. *Arts* are for Sorai technical abilities in a broad sense including mathematics and artistic skills. *Virtues*, on the other hand, are understood by him as individual dispositions that lead to more general patterns of behaviour that cannot be subsumed under one of the traditional arts.[16] For Sorai the content of learning was not theoretical but practical. As the early kings did not create theories about the world but practical methods for achieving technical skills, Confucians shall learn and transmit these methods and not engage in idle theorizing.

Constant practice nevertheless leads to knowledge, according to Sorai. In order to explain this kind of knowledge Sorai's re-interprets two of the most important notions of Neo-Confucianism, namely *gewu/kakubutsu* (格物), usually translated as the "investigation of things", and *zhizhi/chichi* (到知), usually translated as "perfection of knowledge". Sorai stresses that both terms do not describe any intentional activity on the side of the Confucian student, but describe natural and passive processes. Knowledge, according to Sorai, is gained naturally while learning a practice not by harsh discipline or theoretical reflection. He criticizes the Neo-Confucian author Zhu Xi accordingly:

> Most particularly, he [Zhu Xi] did not fathom that what the *Great Learning* calls "investigating things" actually means "practicing tasks" and becoming proficient in them. Thereby a person will naturally grasp those tasks, and knowledge arises.[17]

The practices that Sorai considers to be the content of learning comprise skills such as composing poetry and prose, calculation, music, archery and calligraphy as well as more abstract virtues such as the abilities to recognize able officials, to lead military operations and to adopt ancient institutions to modern circumstances. These practices involve knowledge and are thus *intellectual* activities. The intellectual activities that Sorai is interested in are limited to the production of specific tangible outcomes, however. To see more clearly what such activities are for Sorai it is helpful to compare Sorai's account with the Greek conception of *techné*. Aristotle understands *techné* as an intellectual virtue that enables a person to bring about a desired result.[18] A frequent example is the physician who has a clear conception of health, who has acquired sufficient experience to recognize its lack in a patient, and who can cure an illness, because he knows what will cause health in a particular case.[19] A *techné* can therefore be a sophisticated intellectual ability, but it is always limited to the realm of contingencies and opinions about causal connections.[20] Aristotle therefore distinguishes *techné* from the more comprehensive ability to see

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[16] See *Ogyū Sorai*, 48 and 212; Tucker, *Ogyū Sorai's Philosophical Masterworks: the Bendō and Benmei*, 180.

[17] *Ogyū Sorai*, 167–168 and 250.

[18] Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* 1140a1–23; in: *The complete works of Aristotle: the revised Oxford translation*, ed. by Jonathan Barnes (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984). We should notice that the term "techné" underwent significant changes in Ancient Greek philosophy; see Richard Parry, "Episteme and Techne", in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, 2014, http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2014/entries/episteme-techne

[19] See Aristotle's presentation in *Metaphysics* I. 981a; in: *The complete works of Aristotle*, 1984.

[20] See Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* 1139a6-14, in: *The complete works of Aristotle*, 1984.

what constitutes happiness (*phronesis*), from an intuitive understanding of first principles (*nous*), from scientific knowledge gained through deduction (*epistemé*) and from wisdom (*sophia*), a theoretical knowledge of the world that combines the intuitive grasp of principles with logically inferred truths about them.[21] In the Greek conception, philosophy is usually connected with *sophia* and is believed to enable insight into the unchangeable nature of things.[22] For Sorai, however, *sophia* or wisdom, is the privilege of the ancient sages.[23] As Yamaga Sokō, one of the other prominent members of the Neo-Classical movement, Sorai clearly distinguishes between the intellectual capacities of the early sages and those of ordinary human beings. Both agree that only the sages are able to grasp the principles (理) of all things.[24] Sorai explains in more detail that the sages possessed extraordinary virtues such as intelligence (聡), clarity (明), insight (叡), and wisdom (智) by which they were able to perceive the natures of men and things.[25] It is thus their outstanding intellectual abilities that make the sages what they are. Only the sages were able to fully comprehend the nature of all things and to use this knowledge to create the intellectual tools that later humans have to employ. This is also true for the moral knowledge that is achieved by *phronesis* according to Aristotle's account of the intellectual virtues.[26] Sorai argues:

> If one judges on moral matters one has to rely on the [understanding of] justice of the early kings and render one's judgement accordingly. If one does not know the justice of the early kings [and tries to judge on moral matters], it is as if one tries to cut a thing with one's empty hands.[27]

The intellectual activities of ordinary human beings are, accordingly, *heteronomous* in the sense that they have to rely on the superior intellectual capacities of the early sages. As Sorai believes that the appearance of the early sages was a unique historical event, later generations cannot hope to become sages and are, therefore, necessarily limited in their intellectual capacities. It is important to remember,

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[21] See Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* 1139b14-18, in: *The complete works of Aristotle*, 1984.

[22] See Aristotle's identification in his *Metaphysics* I.2 982b12-15; in: *The complete works of Aristotle*, 1984); see also Otfried Höffe, Rolf Geiger, and Philipp Brüllmann, *Aristoteles-Lexikon* (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner, 2005), 569.

[23] See *Ogyū Sorai*, 58 and 215, 63 and 216 (*Benmei*). I deal with the consequences for Sorai's conception of philosophy in my article "Ogyū Sorai and the End of Philosophy". In: *What is Philosophy? Themes and Issues in China, Japan, India, and the Islamic World*, edited by Elena L Lange and Raji C Steineck (Leiden etc.: Brill, 2018.)

[24] See Tahara Tsuguo 田原嗣郎 et al. (eds.). *Yamaga Sokō* 山鹿素行 (henceforth *Yamaga Sokō*), *Nihon Shisō Taikei* 日本思想体系 32 (Tōkyō: Iwanami Shoten, 1970), 11; see also Gerhard Leinss' translation *Yamaga Sokōs "Kompendium der Weisenlehre" (Seikyō Yōroku) : Ein Wörterbuch des Neoklassischen Konfuzianismus im Japan des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1989), 18; and *Ogyū Sorai*, 150 and 244 (*Benmei*).

[25] See *Ogyū Sorai*, 63 and 216; see also 76 and 221; 195 and 258 (all from *Benmei*).

[26] In this regard Sorai differs from Sokō; see *Yamaga Sokō*, 11.

[27] *Ogyū Sorai*, 76 and 221 (*Benmei*).

however, that the early kings are human beings according to Sorai.[28] Their outstanding intellectual virtues are not due to their belonging to a different species or to a revelation by spirits or gods. Sorai seems to believe instead that the sages appeared in a peculiar archaic state of humanity. In this state no "standards for cognition and valuation existed"[29] and human beings possessed a very poor language that could only refer to things that had a concrete form.[30] The sages were thus privileged by the primitiveness of their historical position and were able to see the world in its original state. At other places of Sorai's work it looks as if the sages received a heavenly mandate to create social institutions. Once these institutions reached their mature form, there was no need for further sages.[31] But whatever the reason for the intellectual superiority of the sages may be, it is clear that they differ from ordinary human beings "like heaven differs from earth",[32] according to Sorai.

Proceeding from this specific account of learning Sorai severely criticizes the opinions of other Confucian writers. He accuses the Song-Confucian thinker Zhu Xi (1130–1200) and his own contemporary Itō Jinsai (1627–1705) for having left the way of the ancients. "These two teachers", he indignantly notices, "simply advocated studying to become a sage."[33] The wisdom of the sages is out of reach for ordinary human beings, however, and it is, according to Sorai, presumptuous to try to become a sage oneself. The correct way of learning that he defends rather "makes faith in the sages primary".[34] Later Confucians like Zhu Xi and Itō Jinsai lost this faith and believed they could become sages themselves. Sorai describes their intellectual activity as mere "speculation" (臆度),[35] as an arbitrary use of their "own wisdom" (自智),[36] or as "personal wisdom and shallow vision" (私智浅見).[37] Sorai claims to use a more objective method that relies on the wisdom of cognitively superior beings, the ancient sage kings. For Sorai the ancient kings' institutions are the only worthwhile object of study and contemporary scholars should completely rely on the transcendent wisdom manifested in these creations.

Sorai's claims imply that the content of learning must be primarily historical. In his work *Master Sorai's Responsals* (*Sorai sensei tōmonsho* 徂徠先生答問書) Sorai says accordingly that learning mainly consist in "observing widely and being pervasively familiar with realities" and that, therefore, learning "achieves its

[28] *Ogyū Sorai*, 67 and 218 (*Benmei*).

[29] Hiraishi Naoaki 平石直明, "Soraigaku no Saikōsei 徂徠学の再構成," *Shisō* 思想 766 (1988).

[30] *Ogyū Sorai*, 40 and 209 (*Benmei*).

[31] *Ogyū Sorai*, 68 and 218 (*Benmei*).

[32] See *Ogyū Sorai*, 54 and 213 (*Benmei*); see also James McMullen, „Ogyū Sorai and the Definition of Terms", *Japan Forum* 13, Nr. 2 (2001): 252–53.

[33] *Ogyū Sorai*, 165 and 249; Tucker, *Ogyū Sorai's Philosophical Masterworks: The Bendō and Benmei*, 314.

[34] *Ogyū Sorai*, 169 and 250; Tucker, *Ogyū Sorai's Philosophical Masterworks: The Bendō and Benmei*, 319.

[35] *Ogyū Sorai*, 168 and 250 (*Benmei*); see also 28 and 205–206 (*Bendō*).

[36] *Ogyū Sorai*, 169 and 250 (*Benmei*).

[37] Ibid.

ultimate form in history."[38] He thereby follows the Confucian *ru* tradition according to which scholarship does not aim at producing new insights or interpretations, but is dedicated to the transmission of the traditional arts.

The ancient arts did not survive in their genuine form, however, so that the Confucian scholar must recover them by studying the ancient texts that describe them. Sorai therefore says in his *Outline of the Classics, the Books of the Masters and the Books of History* (*Keishishi yōran* 経子史要覧) that "the Way of the former kings has been recorded and handed down in the *Six Classics*. The *Six Classics* expound poetry, historiography, rites and music."[39] To study history one must, therefore, master philology. It is well known that Sorai stressed the difficulties in reading the ancient texts. Sorai blames Han and, in particular, Song scholars together with their Japanese successors for underestimating the exegetical difficulties and for reading the ancient literature as if it was written by contemporaries. He thus says that "later scholars viewed ancient phrases through contemporary phrases and viewed ancient words through contemporary words."[40] Sorai expresses his own method in contrast to the anachronistic reading of later Confucians in a letter to Asaka Tanpaku (1656–1737), a historian of the Early Mito School:

> As a middle-aged man I acquired the collected works of Li Panlong and Wang Shizhen, and read them. All the books contained many ancient words which I could not understand. Therefore, I made up my mind to read ancient literature. I made a vow that my eyes would not concern themselves with the literature of Eastern Han or afterwards […] I started with the *Six Classics* and ended at the Western Han; I finished and began again. I read it over and over without stopping. Thus I continued for a long time, and I mastered them to the extent that they came naturally to my mind. The meanings of the words were revealed in their contexts, and there was therefore no further need for annotations and commentaries. […] When I then turned my head and looked at the interpretations of later Confucians, I saw mistakes and misinterpretations everywhere.[41]

This passage shows Sorai's indebtedness to Li Panlong (1514–1559) and Wang Shizhen (1526–1590). These Ming poets propagated a return to ancient literature just as the Japanese scholars from the Neo-Classical movement did. All of them emphasize the necessity to master the vocabulary and grammar of the ancient language in order to understand the ancient texts. Only these texts transmit the

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[38] Shimada Keiji島田慶次 (ed.). *Ogyū Sorai zenshū* 荻生徂徠全集 (Tokyo: Misuzu Shobo, 1973), vol.1, 432–433.

[39] This passage also shows that Tucker is not precise in translating 詩書禮樂 as the *titles* of four of the six classical books; see Tucker, *Ogyū Sorai's Philosophical Masterworks: The Bendō and Benmei*, 312–313. Sorai is talking here about the *content* of these books; see Richard H. Minear, "Ogyū Sorai's Instructions for Students: A Translation and Commentary," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 36 (1976): 11.

[40] *Ogyū Sorai*, 170 and 251 (*Benmei*); see also ibid. 34 and 207 (*Bendō*) as well as 190 and 256 (*Gakusoku*): "Space is like time; time is like space. Thus, if we see old words in terms of today's words, or today's words in terms of the ancient words, then in both cases they will be gibberish"; the translation is Minear's; see "Ogyū Sorai's Instructions for Students," 16.

[41] The letter is quoted and translated in Olof G Lidin, *The Life of Ogyū Sorai a Tokugawa Confucian Philosopher* (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1973), 99–100. I adopted Lidin's translation with a few stylistic changes.

traditional arts appreciated by all Confucians and one can only come to know these arts by carefully studying the language that is used to describe them. It is, therefore, interesting to notice how Sorai characterizes the process of getting acquainted with ancient literature. The earlier quote has revealed that reading is not a mere extraction of meaning for him, but a process of internalization. Sorai describes this process accordingly as an appropriation, or, as we have seen, as a 'thing's becoming ours' (*gewu*/*kakubutsu* (格物)).[42] This process is described in more detail in the entry on learning in the *Clarification of Names*:

> The four teachings have their methods. Learning poetry involves recitation; historical prose requires reading; rites and music require practice. In spring and autumn, students should be taught rites and music; in winter and summer, they should learn poetry and prose. If over the months and years, students follow yin and yang correctly in nourishing and cultivating these subjects, they will attain a centrality of ease and satisfaction so that they can cherish them, cultivate them, relax with them, and enjoy them. Quite naturally, their virtues will be established and their understanding clarified through them. Students must practice these subjects, master them, and then after a while they will be transformed (化). Such was the ancients' method of teaching. The *Analects*' remark 'to broaden the self with literature and to restrain it by rites' refers to this approach to learning.[43]

As in his letter to Tanpaku, Sorai stresses in this passage the importance of habituation and the need for repetitive training in order to internalize the content of learning. Poetry must be recited again and again, prose must be read over and over, and rites and music must be exercised persistently in order to manage these arts. This practice must also correspond to the movements of yin and yang to be most efficient. Learning must thus be in harmony with changes in nature, only then will the student be happy with what he is doing. Sorai claims that this pedagogy was also inherited from the ancient sages. He thus not only focusses on the institutions of the ancient sage kings as the *object of learning*, but also adopts their *methods of teaching*. In this he differs, according to his self-perception, from most of his contemporaries in Japan and from the Song- and Ming-Confucians in China. He criticizes their method of merely lecturing on the Confucian Classics and their focus on theory instead of teaching through performances. Sorai thus says in the *Policy for Great Peace* (*Taiheisaku* 太平策):

> The teaching of the sages consists in teaching by practice, not in explaining principles. […] No man ever learned the principles of anything without making it a part of his body. Thus a good teacher is not tied to any fixed method of instruction, but considers how his pupil may be brought to understand the matter, and, by showing him one aspect of it, allows him to work out the remainder for himself. Then the pupil's knowledge is the product of his own mind, and, being his own, can be applied by him.[44]

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[42] See *Ogyū Sorai*, 179 and 253 (*Benmei*).

[43] *Ogyū Sorai*, 164 and 249; the translation is adopted from Tucker, *Ogyū Sorai's Philosophical Masterworks: The Bendō and Benmei*, 313.

[44] *Ogyū Sorai*, 455–456; the translation is adopted with minor changes from McEwan, *The Political Writings of Ogyū Sorai*, 134–135.

The content of learning that was established by the ancient sages is practical and it can, therefore, only be appropriated through practice. The last passage stresses, moreover, that the intent of learning is to enable the student to *apply* the knowledge he acquires. By reciting ancient poetry, for example, the student learns to compose poetry himself and by reading ancient prose the student learns how to write texts in beautiful Chinese. It is interesting to notice, however, that a method of the ancient sages, i.e. the activity we shall practice, and its practical outcome sometimes differ, according to Sorai. Whereas we have to train horse-riding to become good horse riders, the performance of rites strengthens one's individual abilities in a more indirect way.

The student is thus transformed by the education he receives, but this transformation is understood by Sorai very differently from how it was interpreted by the Chinese and Japanese Neo-Confucians. For Sorai the transformation is neither a moral refinement, nor a gain of theoretical knowledge. It is a practical transformation that leads to new practical capacities, i.e. to new *techné*. It can best be compared to learning a new language. This capacity in its most mature form manifests in flawless performances that are spontaneous and do not need much reflection on what one is doing. Sorai, therefore, describes this kind of learning not only as a transformation of one's mind, but also as a change of the student's body.[45]

Such a transformation of a person by learning is not, according to Sorai, an end in itself. The cultivation of the self must be socially useful. The early king's way was created "in order to pacify and stabilize the people"[46] and everybody's education is thus subjected to this general aim. Learning is meant to give everybody his place in society and enable him or her to fulfil this position as good as possible.

I believe that this idea also helps us to solve a problem mentioned by James McMullen.[47] McMullen wonders about the "appropriate focus and method of study" for Sorai. On the one hand Sorai focuses on objective institutions, but, on the other hand, he says that through constant study and faith one can "attain the mind of the early kings". This latter description sounds a lot more subjective and seems to directly contradict other passages in Sorai's work. We have seen, however, that for Sorai the sages created a system where everybody finds a place that suits his intellectual capacities. The institutions of the early kings are therefore the *framework* that must be filled by people with certain intellectual capacities. These people will be specialists *in certain areas* and understand the principles that dominate this area. Insofar they partake in the wisdom of the ancient sages. They do not see the system as a whole, however.

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[45] See also Sorai's remark in *Master Sorai's Responsals* in Shimada Keiji 島田慶次 (ed.). *Ogyū Sorai zenshū* 荻生徂徠全集 (Tokyo: Misuzu Shobo, 1973), 431; and *Ogyū Sorai*, 70 and 219. Also compare what Sorai says in the *Clarification of Names* on virtue (徳) as a property of the body; see *Ogyū Sorai*, 50 and 212.

[46] *Ogyū Sorai*, 164 and 249 (*Benmei*).

[47] See his "Reinterpreting the Analects – History and Utility in the Thought of Ogyū Sorai," 131–134.

Sorai thus draws a picture of a society where everybody has a role to play. Normal human beings should not engage in trying to understand the system as a whole. Everybody shall develop his own abilities by learning instead and the superior intellectual capacities of the ancient sages guarantee that all these abilities will sum up as a harmonious whole. This picture, again, marks Sorai's clear rejection of Neo-Confucianism and the Buddhist influence that Sorai detects in it:

> Master Zhu, in explaining *gewu*/*kakubutsu* in terms of exhausting principle, did not fathom, in particular, that the expression "exhausting principle" was meant as praise for the sages for composing the *Book of Changes*. How could it possibly be a task of which students are capable? The principles of all below heaven cannot be completely exhausted. […] Now, there are forms of enlightenment (*satori*) in even the minor ways and arts. Indeed, for any particular task, there is an enlightenment experience. For any single detail, there is an enlightenment experience. Enlightenment simply means that a person suddenly fathoms what they had previously not. But how can anyone have an all-encompassing enlightenment?[48]

Sorai here criticizes the idea that there are practices that can lead to an all-embracing understanding of reality. Sorai detects a commitment to such practices in Buddhism as well as in Neo-Confucianism. He does not deny that learning, especially reading the ancient classical texts, leads to new intellectual capacities. These intellectual capacities are only partial enlightenments, however, and do not lead to an awareness of one's unity with the universe, as Neo-Confucians believe.[49] There is no unity of Heaven and humanity, according to Sorai.[50] All we can hope for is a harmonious society where everybody has his role to play. Learning is necessary to find one's role in such a society, but it does not help us to transcend our historical, human existence.

We may thus conclude that Sorai abandoned the idea that self-cultivation could serve to make everybody a perfect human being, a sage. For Sorai, the process of learning can still be characterized as a form of self-cultivation, but the aim of this process is now merely to become a valuable member of the social system that has been created by the historical sages in Chinese antiquity. One of Sorai's greatest contributions to Confucian thought is, therefore, his re-interpretation of the content and intent of learning.

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[48] *Ogyū Sorai*, 167–168 and 250 (*Benmei*); see also Tucker, *Ogyū Sorai's Philosophical Masterworks: The Bendō and Benmei*, 317.

[49] See, for example, Xinzhong Yao, *An introduction to Confucianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 216–23.

[50] This is what constitutes the modernity of Sorai's thought according to Masao Maruyama, *Studies in the Intellectual History of Tokugawa Japan* (Princeton University Press: University of Tokyo Press, 1974), 69–113.

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Chapter 6
Enlightenment and Freedom in a Confucian Way

萬物一體 (wanwu yiti) – A Philosophical Concept and Its Educational Relevance

Niklaus Schefer

Introductory Remarks
By Roland Reichenbach

"Enlightenment" and "freedom" are terms most often attributed to British and Continental philosophy of eighteenth and nineteenth century, and do not seem to play a central role in East Asian thought and philosophical tradition. But what at first sight seems to be obvious can, in fact, be deeply mistaken. First, one might argue that *all* philosophical attempts are in the business of Enlightenment and freedom, in their very special way, at least. The search, care and love for truth is always an "enlightening" undertaking and not a matter of mere trust in whatsoever authority; and, second, the nature and significance of (human, personal) freedom can be understood in a much broader sense than just as a political topic, even though all practices and forms of freedom will have some impact on the possibilities and limits of the political domain of life and community. It is the attempt of Niklaus Schefer's contribution to show how European traditions of thought can conceptually be stimulated by and take profit from East-Asian philosophies, namely Confucian, Daoist and Buddhist traditions. Modern experiences with freedom, he argues, have had an ambiguous impact on human associations in the past. The dominant – and now rapidly decreasing – role of (European) Enlightenment has been criticized with good reasons. Then how to understand the ideal of an autonomous and rationally motivated subject in our time? What role does it play in a world where the democratic forms of life and governing are under pressure by strong nationalist and even ethnocentric movements? Schefer's aim is to expand the horizon of thought by bringing in the additional aspects of the terms of the enlightenment and freedom, stemming from Chinese philosophy and pedagogics. He has therefore chosen to exemplarily present and highlight the term 萬物一體 (wanwu yiti), the literal meaning of it

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R. Reichenbach, D.-J. Kwak (eds.), *Confucian Perspectives on Learning and Self-Transformation*, Contemporary Philosophies and Theories in Education 14,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-40078-1_6

being “ten thousand things (are) one substance”. It appears rather evident that such a poetic term does not follow from any rationalist position of Continental philosophy, but this does not mean that such term lacks any rationale, of course. On the contrary, the historic analysis of the term (wanwu yiti) and the manifold use of its meaning, Schefer is convinced, helps to elucidate and enhance the understanding of the concepts of enlightenment and freedom, and, further than that, even promises to provide fruitful insights in pedagogical thought and practice as well as didactical considerations of everyday school.

For more than 130 years, Abitur or Matura are the terms in different European countries to indicate the general qualification for university entrance or the overall maturity for higher education.[1] Maturity means that one has grown up and is now part of a modern society as a reasonable, free and responsible individual. Normally the age when you achieve the maturity is similar to the legal age granting all the rights and duties in the social and political life.

So, enlightenment (i.e. being educated, cultured, thus reasonable) and freedom are central terms in our history of ideas. They define the self-concept of modern liberal and democratic societies. In the project of modernity inheres an education towards maturity that is committed to enlightenment. With that form of education all civilians are regarded as autonomous and reasonable subjects who can act free and equal within the boundaries of a democratic constitutional state.

The changeful history of the past two centuries however showed us, that the achievements of enlightenment cannot be considered as secured and everlasting. On the one hand there was and still is fighting with the enemies of an open liberal society, regardless of whether they belong to the right or left wing. On the other hand the movement of enlightenment is often enmeshed in a dialectic development and its impacts consequently reversed, even in the sphere of education[2] with new forms like edutainment.

The concept of freedom is similarly ambiguous. In the public discourse, politicians tend to use it emphatically, mystifying and conjuring it as an absolute value, even though absolute freedom and autonomy are a problematic hypothetical construct in philosophy. In reality, our civil liberties are more and more limited due to our needs for security.

So much for a very short inventory of these two concepts in the Western context. My aim now is to expand our horizon by bringing in additional aspects of the terms of enlightenment and freedom, stemming from Chinese philosophy and pedagogics.[3]

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[1] cf. Das Schweizer Gymnasium – Köpfe. Ziele. Positionen, pp. 20–36.

[2] See for example: Th. Adorno/M. Horkheimer: Dialectic of Enlightenment (1944) or E. Erdmann: Ethos der Moderne. Foucaults Kritik der Aufklärung (1990).

[3] I use the same method as the French philosopher and sinologist François Jullien who tries to elucidate Western paradigms with the comparison to Chinese thinking (see e.g. F. Jullien in: Dirk Baecker/François Jullien: Kontroverse über China, pp. 7–29 or F. Jullien (2005), pp. 9–12). I admit that one could come to similar conclusions with the study of European thinkers as e.g. Spinoza, Bruno, Eckhart, Nicholas of Cusa as well.

I therefore choose exemplarily the term 萬物一體 wanwu yiti, meaning literally 'ten thousand things (are) one substance/body'.[4]

In what follows, I hope to elucidate how this strange term serves as a helpful enhancement of our familiar understanding of enlightenment and freedom. In the first part I will look on the conceptual history of this phrase. I continue by illustrating the secret correlation between the phrase and the concepts of freedom respectively enlightenment. In the last part I will try to sum up how this could enrich our occidental perspective.

6.1 The Conceptual History of 萬物一體 wanwu yiti – Ten Thousand Things One Substance

Ideas have their history. Concepts have it too, legible in different texts. But concepts of another language and culture, especially if that culture is far away from the own, are hard to understand. There is often no or hardly any common denominator. I am not fond of the theory of radical incommensurability, so despite the difficulty, I try to build a bridge to the orient by telling some stories of the conceptual history of the term wanwu yiti, sounding strange to Western ears.[5]

'萬物一體 wanwu yiti – ten thousand things one substance/body' has its ancestors in the ancient Chinese philosophy. 萬物 wanwu (myriad things) means the diversity of empirical objects in our world and is a phrase that belongs to the common vocabulary of the Chinese language. In the tradition of Daoism the term appears 14 times in the classical text of the Daodejing 道德經, and even 99 times in the famous Zhuangzi. The occurrence in the Confucian tradition is however poor: Confucius 孔子 or his pupils do not use the phrase 萬物 wanwu in the Analects 論語 Lun yu, Mencius 孟子 only one time. So, the term is not originally Confucian.

Zhuangzi writes in his second chapter: '天地與我並生, 而萬物與我為一 tiandi yu wo bing sheng, er wanwu yu wo wei yi', meaning: "Heaven and Earth and I were born together and the myriad things are one with me."[6]

And the above mentioned unique passage when Mencius uses the term wanwu in chapter 7A4 sounds similar**:** '萬物皆備於我矣. wanwu jie bei yu wo yi' meaning: the myriad things exist in myself.[7]

But the original root of the phrase goes back to a Buddhist monk Seng Zhao僧肇 (384–414) who lived in the fifth century. In the fourth chapter of his main work

[4] According to certain translations I use "substance" for ti 體. I am aware that this term is not really fitting. "body" is also an important meaning of the Chinese term. The German term "Wesen" as a synthesis of "Lebewesen" (animal) and substance would be more accurate.

[5] For an overview of the conceptual history, see e.g. Lutz Geldsetzer/Hong Han-ding, 1998, pp. 63–71 and K. Shimada, 1987, pp. 49–51, pp. 142–145 and 168–171.

[6] cf. Zhuangzi (2008) p. 58; W.-t. Chan: Source Book (1973), p. 186.

[7] cf. W.-t. Chan (1973), p. 79 with his translation: "All things are already complete in oneself."

Zhao lun you find following quotation: 天地與我同根, 萬物與我一體 ‘tiandi yu wo tong gen, wanwu yu wo yi ti’, meaning: “Heaven and Earth and I have the same root, the myriad things and I are one substance.”[8] This formula was shortened to the four syllable phrase 萬物一體 wanwu yiti.

So the idea of the communion of all things, especially the union between inner world (= I) and outside world (myriad things), is not only a typical fundament of Buddhism, but also a constant familiar and well-known notion in the ancient world of China. It is comparable with the classic term 天人合一 tianren heyi (heaven and men are united).

Seng Zhao himself preceded Zen Buddhism (or with the Chinese term: 禪 Chan Buddhism). Consequently the famous passage quoted above was taken by the collections of so called Koan dialogues (Chinese: 公案 gong an) (see The Blue Cliff Record (碧巖錄 Biyan lu) ch. 40 or The Book of Serenity (從容録 Congrong lu) ch. 91).

Since all three relevant philosophical traditions (Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism) are intertwined, the term also found its way into Neo-Confucianism. The standardization of the Confucian classics for civil service exams – renewed in the Song dynasty – was crucial and constitutive for this ideology that shaped the intellectual world of China from the tenth century until the beginning twentieth century. Although the Neo-Confucian orthodoxy openly and radically criticized Buddhism, the subliminal influence by Buddhist metaphysics and the practice of meditation is obvious.

Cheng Hao 程顥 (1032–1085), a famous philosopher in the Song dynasty, founded an important part of his ethics on the term wanwu yiti.[9] And in the Lu-Wang school, an idealistic version of the Neo-Confucianism, this concept was used on and on, above all in Wang Yangming’s 王陽明 (1472–1529) chuanxilu傳習錄, where the explicit term is used more than a dozen times. I would like to illustrate the use of this term in the field of practical philosophy, defining the central virtue of humanity (or benevolence) 仁 (ren) in the Confucian ethics. The quote comes from the passage ‘Pulling up the root and stopping up the source’:

> 夔司其樂, 而不恥於不明禮, 視其夷之通禮, 郎己之通禮也。蓋其心學純明, 而有以全其萬物一體之仁, 故其精神流貫, 志氣通達, 而無有乎己之分, 物我之間: 譬之一人之身.
>
> For the learning of their mind was pure and clear and had what was requisite to preserve humanity that makes them and all things form one body.[10] Consequently their spirit ran through and permeated all and their will prevailed and reached everywhere. There was no distinction between the self and the other, or between the self and the things.[11]

[8] cf. Seng Zhao, Zhaolun 涅槃無名論第四 (0159b20); see also W.-t. Chan (1973), pp. 343–356.

[9] cf. K. Shimada (1987), pp. 48–51.

[10] The underlined passages are the crucial terms you can read in the Chinese original text and in the English translation.

[11] Wang Yangming, chuanxilu ch. 142; cf. W.-t. Chan (1973), pp. 120–121. For more information, see I. Kern (2010), pp. 208–224.

Also the heterodox philosopher Li Zhi 李贄 in the late Ming dynasty uses the term six times in his Book to burn (焚书 fen shu).[12]

The following dispute in the beginning seventeenth century is interesting too: In the debate with Christianity which Jesuit monks tried to spread in China the term wanwu served to criticize the Western worldview. The Buddhist Feiyin Tongrong 費隱通容 (1593–1679) writes: Li Madou (Matteo Ricci (1552–1610, former leader of the Jesuit) attempts with his blinded thoughts of a rational mind to distinguish the ten thousand things (wanwu) and is unable to experience the one substance (yiti).[13]

During the eighteenth century the Neo-Confucian ideology focuses back onto the original text sources of the ancient Confucianism. Trying to reconstruct the primal content of Confucianism the scholars remove the multilayered systems of interpretation of the last 2000 years. Hereby the phrase wanwu yiti loses its significance. Dai Zhen 戴震 (1724–1777), one of the most famous philosophers of the Qing dynasty, analyses the relevant concepts on the basis of original texts of Confucius and Mencius. He thereby follows a more empiric or materialistic method. The only time he uses the term in his work "An Evidential Study of the Meaning and Terms of the Mencius" (Mengzi ziyi shuzheng) 孟子字義疏證 is in a quotation of the Song philosopher Lu Xiangshan 陸象山 (1139–1193).[14] He exploits the citation to criticize Lu's interpretation. But Dai Zhen does not realize that Lu himself quotes Mencius with the passage I introduced earlier, by the way: Mencius who Dai Zhen sees as a big classic authority.

And finally Kang Youwei 康有為 in his Datongshu 大同書, the crucial text in late nineteenth century's political philosophy, uses only one time a similar quotation.

These episodes conclude my short and incomplete history of the term wanwu yiti.

6.2 The Secret Correlation Between wanwu yiti and the Concept of Freedom Respectively Enlightenment

When I was telling stories about the use of this phrase, there was apparently no connection to the idea of freedom. So what is that secret correlation?

I will start with explaining the idea of freedom along western standards. The rights of liberty are constitutive for a liberal social order. Accordingly freedom of action granted for a major person is the aim of educational efforts. This freedom is not absolute, but embedded into the social frame and social or moral duties.

[12] cf. P. Grimberg (2014).

[13] cf. Iso Kern (1992), pp. 188–193.

[14] cf. Dai Zhen: Mengzi ziyi shuzheng, ch. 14; Tai Chen (1990), p. 93: see 【陸子靜云:「收拾精神, 自作主宰, 萬物皆備於我, 何有欠闕!當惻隱時, 自然惻隱; 當羞惡時, 自然羞惡; 當寬裕溫柔時, 自然寬裕溫柔; 當發強剛毅時, 自然發剛強毅。」王文成云:「聖人致知之功, 至誠無息。其良知之體, 皦如明鏡, 妍媸之來, 隨物現形, 而明鏡曾無所留染, 所謂『情順萬事而無情』也。『無所住(以)〔而〕生其心』, 佛氏曾有是言, 未為非也。明鏡之應, 妍者妍, 媸者媸, 一照而皆真, 即是『生其心』處; 妍者妍, 媸者媸, 一過而不留, 即『無所住』處。」】.

Moreover the idea of freedom is necessarily tied to an acting person, with freewill and a sense of responsibility. Synonyms are autonomy or independence. This view is rooted in the tradition of the movement of enlightenment, especially in the tradition of Kant.[15] The philosopher Peter Bieri makes an analytic disambiguation in his work 'The Craft of Freedom' (Das Handwerk der Freiheit 2001) and defines – within the paradigm of compatibilism – freedom as conditional or limited. Only within given conditions (e.g. of natural and social laws) freewill and free acting make sense. Unconditional freedom is equivalent to caprice and hazard. That is why freewill and practical reason cannot be brought in line with unconditional liberty.

Coming back to the Asian culture, I will first mention an estimation of the German philosopher G.F.W. Hegel. He criticized China in general, but especially the conditions in the Qing dynasty being a social system without any idea of progress and personal freedom.[16] On the basis of our familiar pattern of thought, his judgement of the Chinese society in the beginning nineteenth century is certainly correct. But we have to question if freedom can only be understood in this (western) way. My assumption is that exactly in the term of wanwu yiti can be found another fundamental aspect of freedom. It is thereby not about the freedom of an acting person, but the experience of freedom by melting with the environment, by overcoming personal limitations. Merging with the entire world means letting loose of one self and feel free. In contrast to the conditional freedom of acting and decision making, you can see an unconditional and infinite freedom of non-acting. The Chinese expressions used in this regard are not only 自由 zi you (self + cause: self-determination) but also 自在 zi zai (easy, unconstrained, spontaneous), 解 jie (liberation, solve, separate) or 無 wu (without, free from). It is precisely this feeling of freedom that may evolve from the insight that 萬物一體 wanwu yiti (the myriad things are finally one substance/body). This feeling is a peculiar manifestation of freedom that is just as existential as free hand. In a simple comparison the western concept of freedom may be called positive (in the sense of doing and acting), the Chinese instead negative (in the sense of non-acting, but feeling).[17] This conceptual differentiation is used since the eighteenth century in the western philosophy.[18] Whereas positive freedom can be described as 'free for' and self-determined action, negative freedom means to be 'free from' and independence or unconstraint.[19]

[15] See for example I. Kant: Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals (1785) or Critique of Practical Reason (1788).

[16] cf. G.F.W. Hegel, Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte, see also J. Spence: Chinas Weg in die Moderne (2008), pp. 172–173.

[17] I am aware, that this distinction is too simple and sweeping. If you look closely to Western concepts of freedom, you realize that autonomy is not only freewill but also means duty and responsibility. I also omit essential contributions of the existentialistic philosophy on freedom.

[18] See for example I. Kant: Critique of Pure Reason (1781) B 427, I. Berlin: Four Essays on Liberty (1969) or Ch. Taylor: What is wrong with negative liberty? (in: Philosophical Papers 2, 1985).

[19] This ascription (the Western tradition focuses on positive freedom, the Eastern on negative) is not precise and far too simple. On a closer look, the Western discussion always embraces a personal entity in both meanings of freedom. But the possibility that negative freedom could also mean the overcoming of being a subject seems not familiar to the Western tradition.

You find an explicit connection between freedom and wanwu yiti in the following quotations of the Chinese philosophy:

The first example is Linji 臨濟 († 866/867, jap. Rinzai), famous Zen-teacher. His school is most important in the Zen-culture in Japan. In the collection of his teachings (Linjilu) he says:

> 即今目前孤明历历地听者, 此人处处不滞, 通贯十方, 三界自在, 入一切境差别, 不能回换。[…] 随处清净, 光透十方, 萬法一如。
>
> The one who at this very moment shines alone before my eyes and is clearly listening to my discourse—this man tarries nowhere; he traverses the ten directions and is freely himself in all three realms. Though he enters all types of situations with their various differentiations, none can confuse him. […] Everywhere is pure, light illumines the ten directions, and 'all dharmas are a single suchness'.[20]

The term is not exactly the same as wanwu yiti, but you recognize the same structure and similar meaning.

The second example is Wang Yangming. He refers to Cheng Hao's definition of humanity (as forming one body with the myriad things) and puts it in the context with an episode told about Confucius:

> 然而夫子汲汲遑遑,若求亡子於道路,而不暇於煖席者,寧以蘄人之知我、信我而已哉?蓋其天地萬物一體之仁,疾痛迫切,雖欲已之而自有所不容已,故其言曰:「吾非期人之徒與而誰與?」[…]嗚呼!此非誠以天地萬物為一體者,孰能以知夫子之心乎?若其遯世無悶,樂天知命者,則固無人而不自得,道並行而不相悖也。
>
> And yet the Grand Master was extremely busy and anxious, as though he were searching for a lost son on the highway, and never sat down long enough to warm his mat. Was he only trying to get people to know him and believe him? It was rather because his humanity, which regarded Heaven and Earth and all things as one body, was so compassionate, keen, and sincere that he could not stop doing so even if he wanted to. This is why he said, "If I do not associate with mankind, with whom shall I associate?" […] Alas! Aside from those who truly form one body with Heaven and Earth and the myriad things, who can understand the Grand Master's intention? As to those who escape from the world without being troubled and are happy with their nature and know their destiny, they can be at ease with themselves wherever they may be, and see no contradiction between parallel courses of action.[21]

Let us move now to the second item, the enlightenment. It speaks for itself that Chinese thinkers use the phrase wanwu yiti in an educational and enlightening sense. The limited and hence selfish personal perspective is judged by every big Chinese philosophical school as prejudging, dazzled and ignorant.[22] I suppose the reason for this fundamental character lies in the probably most famous concept of

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[20] See "The Record of Linji", translated by Ruth Fuller Sasaki, p. 13 and Linji (1996), pp. 67–68; cf. http://info.stiltij.nl/publiek/meditatie/leraren/_historisch/linji-sasaki.pdf. For more information, see W. Bauer (1989), pp. 239–247 and H. Dumoulin (1985), pp. 190–216.

[21] Wang Yangming, Chuanxilu ch. 182; Instruction of Practical Living, p. 170.

[22] I. Kant (in Critique of Pure Reason) defines the process of epistemic enlightenment above all in the analytic differentiation between thing in itself and phenomenon (we cannot grasp the metaphysical notion of the thing in itself, but are limited to the empiric perception of the phenomenon). In contrast to this technique of enlightenment the term wanwu yiti is rather synthetic and describes in a different way the necessary conditions of knowledge.

Chinese philosophy 道 dao, meaning the Way of Nature. Confucian and Daoist scholars agree that the aim of every creature, humans included, is to find its dao that is part of 天道 tiandao, the universal Way of Heaven.

So, the phrase wanwu yiti is actually a plea for enlightenment (明 ming), not remaining caught in the limited personal view of things. The interesting differentiation of the Chinese concept of enlightenment consists in the idea that in its centre there is not the person and its intelligence. Accordingly becoming enlightened is not about learning to think independently and critically, nor maturity or autonomy. In fact wanwu yiti leads to empathy or a collective consciousness of fraternization with all forms of existence. On this path, sticking on the own reason and personal mind could be obstructive. This position is clearly expressed in Zen-Buddhism, but also in the idealistic tradition of Neo-Confucianism. Again I will try to illustrate my assumption with exemplary quotations:

Let us start with Cheng Hao 程顥 (1032–1085), a prominent scholar of the Song dynasty, who writes:

> 医书言手足痿痹為'不仁', 此言最善名状。仁者以天地萬物為一體, 莫非己也。认得為己, 何所不至? [⋯] 故『博施濟眾』乃聖之功用。仁至難言, [⋯] 這是由近取諸身, 以明仁體。
>
> A book on medicine describes paralysis of the four limbs as absence of *ren* 仁 [humanity]. This is an excellent description. The man of *ren* regards Heaven and Earth and all the things as one body. To him there is nothing that is not himself. Since he has recognized all things as himself, can there be any limit to his humanity? […] Therefore, to be charitable and to assist all things is the function of a sage [wise man 聖之]. It is most difficult to describe *ren*. […] The hope was that by looking at it this way, we might get at [or: enlighten 明] the substance of humanity.[23]

In this passage you can see the connection between the oneness of all things, humanity, the principal virtue in the Confucian ethics, and the need of enlightening.

The second example is again a quotation of Wang Yangming:

> 故夫為大人之学者, 亦惟去其私欲之蔽, 以明其明德, 复其天地萬物一體之本然而已耳.
>
> Thus the learning of the great man consists entirely in getting rid of the obscuration of selfish desires in order by his own efforts to *make manifest* his clear character, so as to restore the condition of *forming one body with Heaven, Earth, and the myriad things*, a condition that is originally so, that is all.[24]

Instead of exercising self-critical thinking, our acquainted pursuit of knowledge (致知 zhi zhi) and investigation of things (格物 ge wu), competences like self-care (修身 xiu shen), rectification (正心 zheng xin), honesty or authenticity (誠意 cheng yi) as techniques of self-cultivation have priority.[25]

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[23] Cheng Hao, yishu 2A:2a-b; see W.-t. Chan (1973), p. 530.

[24] Wang Yangming: Inquiry on the Great Learning, in: W.-t. Chan: Source book in Chinese Philosophy, p. 660.

[25] All terms are quoted from the classic text Da Xue. *Da Xue* was originally the 42nd chapter of the Liji 禮記 (Book of Rites), one of the five classic works of Confucianism. The title Da Xue means: Education (Learning) for the adult and contains moral education and introduction into social order.

Before concluding I would like to return to Hegel's diagnosis of the Chinese culture. We came across the difference between the concepts of freedom and enlightenment comparing the western and the Chinese culture. But what could be the cause for that difference? It might be possible that the above mentioned negative form of freedom and the enlightenment as a relativization of individuality are just consequences of the fact that the Chinese people constantly lacked political rights and still do. Sociological and historic studies show how the monarchic system of Chinese dynasties since the Han (206 BC–220 AD) used the humanistic character of Confucius' philosophy and its Neo-Confucian interpretation to hide the strong and often brutal hierarchy of the government.[26] But the opposite argumentation is also imaginable: The nature of the ancient Chinese philosophies includes already this concept of wanwu yiti and its implications. So this fundament may have made the Chinese people calm and helped them to endure inequality and authoritarian regimes.

Another (rather Marxist) argument against the enlightening character of wanwu yiti might be that the unison of everything could hide the unfair distribution of goods and save the power of the rich and mighty people. Indeed they can use or abuse the term in order to disguise injustice and exploitation. Instead of that the term should make us all, and above all the privileged people, more sensitive and empathic with all the form of existences.

6.3 Conclusion: How to Enrich Our Familiar Perspective

Towards the end of my article, the question I am asking is: What can we conclude from these considerations in regard of pedagogics.

My analysis tries to demonstrate that two crucial concepts of the modern understanding of education: (a) the aim of *freedom* and independence to be attained by (b) the process of *enlightening* (out of the self-inflicted immaturity) have a quite different focus and context in the Chinese culture.

First I think that it is helpful to modify quasi axiomatic concepts of our world view and to scrutinize our often implicit or unconscious Eurocentric positions. Of course I do not want to deconstruct our cultural values: (a) vouch for a liberal system, and (b) the pursuit of knowledge and truth, but to complement them with two also precious educational attitudes: (a) vouch for a infinite feeling of freedom and (b) the insight into the relativity of ourselves as rational and independent subjects and our democratic rights and duties.[27]

Only since the eleventh century, the work got importance and was standard subject of the civil service exams.

[26] cf. Wolfgang Ommerborn, Der Neokonfuzianismus im Kontext der Geschichte des Konfuzianismus, in: Jinsilu – Aufzeichnungen des Nachdenkens über Naheliegendes (2008), pp. 258–260 and pp. 267–268.; François Billeter: Contre François Jullien, p. 19 and pp. 26–27.

[27] I admit that such thoughts are not totally new and original. Philosophers like Jean-Luc Nancy tried to expand the western understanding of enlightenment and freedom. See ‚singulär plural sein'

Both points can evolve as a basis for ecological unison and help living more sustainably and modestly. They can diminish hyperactivity and propensity to consume by meditative serenity and mindfulness.

I think that such a supplement can give valuable impulses for an educational concept of personal development and self transformation in a contemporary school.

You may ask how such an abstract thought could be implemented into the daily scholar business. I will give four exemplary hints:

– In subjects like philosophy, theory of knowledge, religious studies or life skills these concepts can be treated in regular classes, because contents like philosophical and religious concepts of freedom and knowledge belong to their curricula. Meditative exercises may help to be aware of the so called negative idea or feeling of freedom. Those exercises may also be a complement to the traditional focus on cognitive abilities taught in lessons.
– Contents like sustainability, e.g. in geography, ethics or political studies invite to heighten the awareness of unison and global responsibility. This could be improved by exercises like learning to walk on a lonely path through a garden or through nature in general. In such a practice the thought wanwu yiti can actually be realized and experienced.
– These contents may also imply didactic techniques of instruction. The Chan way of teaching comprehends (at first sight) weird methods: e.g. shouting, giving absurd answers, hitting with a fly whisk or dust whisk. Let us listen to a strange dialogue between Master Linji and some monks:

上堂。僧問:「如何是佛法大意?」師豎起拂子。僧便喝。師便打。又僧問:「如何是佛法大意?」師亦豎起拂子。僧便喝，師亦喝。僧擬議，師便打。

師乃云:「大眾, 夫為法者, 不避喪身失命。我二十年在黃蘗先師處, 三度問佛法的的大意, 三度蒙他賜杖。如蒿枝拂著相似, 如今更思得一頓棒喫。誰人為我行得?」

時有僧出眾云:「某甲行得!」師拈棒與他。其僧擬接，師便打。

The master took the high seat in the hall. A monk asked, “What about the cardinal principle of the buddhadharma?”

– The master raised his whisk. The monk shouted. The master struck him. Another monk asked, “What about the cardinal principle of the buddhadharma?” Again the master raised his whisk (拂子 fuzi). The monk shouted. The master also shouted. The monk faltered; the master struck him.
– Then the master said, “You of the assembly, those who live for dharma do not shrink from losing their bodies or sacrificing their very lives. Twenty years ago, when I was with my late master Huangbo, three times I asked him specifically about the cardinal meaning of the buddhadharma, and three times he favored me with blows from his stick. But it was as if he were patting me with a branch of mugwort. How I would like now to taste another dose of the stick! Who can give it to me?”

(Diaphanes 2004) or ‚Das gemeinsame Erscheinen. Von der Existenz des ‘Kommunismus’ zur Gemeinschaftlichkeit der ‘Existenz’, edited by Joseph Vogl: Gemeinschaften (Suhrkamp 1994).

– A monk stepped forward and said, “I can.” The master held out his stick to him. The monk tried to take it; the master struck him.”[28]
– It is also transmitted that Wang Yangming instructed his disciples with similar practices in order to awake them out of the habitual way of thinking.[29] Of course those methods transformed in modern life have definitely to accept the principles of non-violence. But I think there are possibilities to complement our familiar rational and verbal didactics with methods of surprise, tension and surrationality.

In chapter 280 of the Instructions for Practical Living the following dialogue between a student and his master Wang Yangming is a humorous example of his form of teaching:

一友問功夫不切。先生曰:「學問功夫,我已曾一句道盡,如何今日轉說轉遠,都不著根!」對曰:「致良知蓋聞教矣,然亦須講明。」先生曰:「既知致良知,又何可講明?良知本是明白,實落用功便是;不肯用功,只在語言上轉說轉糊塗。」曰:「正求講明致之之功。」先生曰:「此亦須你自家求,我亦無別法可道。昔有禪師,人來問法,只把麈尾提起。一日,其徒將其麈尾藏過,試他如何設法。禪師尋麈尾不見,又只空手提起。我這箇良知就是設法的麈尾,舍了這箇,有何可提得?」少間,又一友請問功夫切要。先生旁顧曰:「我麈尾安在?」一時在坐著皆躍然。

“A friend asked why one’s effort is not earnest. The Teacher said ‘I have already covered everything about the task of learning in one sentence. How is it that the more you talk about it, the more you are off the mark, and none of what you say touches the root of the matter?’
The friend replied, ‘I have heard your instructions on the extension of innate knowledge. But it requires elucidation.’
The Teacher said, ‘If you already know what the extension of innate knowledge is, how can it be *elucidated*? From the beginning innate knowledge is clear. The thing to do is to exert effort earnestly and concretely. Otherwise, the more one talks about it, the more muddled it will become.’
‘My request is precisely on the elucidation of the effort to extend innate knowledge.’
The Teacher said, ‘You have to find the way yourself. I have no other method to offer. Once there was a Zen master. When someone came to him to ask about the Law of the Buddha, he merely raised a *dust whisk* (麈尾 chenwei). One day his followers hid his dust whisk to see what other schemes he would resort to. [When someone asked him about the Law] he looked for the dust whisk but could not find it, and merely raised his empty hand. This innate knowledge of mine is the dust whisk of my scheme. Aside from it, what can I raise?’
A little later, another friend asked about essentials of the task. The Teacher looked to the side and asked, ‘Where is my dust whisk?’

[28] cf. R. Fuller Sasaki (2008), pp. 5–6, Linjilu 二十七, 二十八。
[29] cf. K. Shimada (1987), p. 157.

Those present were excited and happy."[30]
Let these didactic examples speak for themselves.
Finally, wanwu yiti is a challenge to try to "see the whole picture". In a time of progressing rationalization (Max Weber) and differentiation you find the strategy of atomizing items in order to measure and evaluate them exactly both in science, economics and public services organized by the principles of New Public Management. But this dogma creates its own dominant logic (e.g. rational choice) so that a holistic perspective (like wanwu yiti) is endangered, though indispensable. That's why I plea for the use of wanwu yiti even in the field of school administration, educational theory or quality management.

After presenting these four examples how to use wanwu yiti in regard of pedagogics I would like to warmly recommend you a form of self-cultivation as a precious educational content that leads to overcome our traditional values of utilitarian rationality, self and individuation. The contemplative technique of wanwu yiti may be a charming, but also indispensable addition to the western actionistical concept of freedom and enlightenment. Perhaps, these ideas may be too romantic. Granted, but in the sphere of education and instructing young people isn't this more inspiring than administrational pragmatism?

As a pleasant ambiance for a wanwu yiti exercise I suggest the environment of a Chinese garden with its typical peacefulness and inward-looking perspectivity.[31] In contrast to many European garden styles, the main principle of Chinese landscaping is to copy the whole nature in a petit area of a garden. You don't enjoy the garden by looking at it from a balcony but by promenading around through the asymmetric site with its almost naturally formed pieces of stones, creeks and trees.[32]

While slowly walking around, you possibly feel free, unburdened and easy, you may experience that heaven and earth, the myriad things and you are all the same and feel enlightened, or as Zhuangzi 莊子 combined with Wang Yangming 王陽明 would say: 天地萬物與我爲一體 tiandi wanwu yu wo wei yiti.

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[30] Wang Yangming, Instructions for Practical Living, p. 224.

[31] See e.g. Marianne Beuchert: Die Gärten Chinas, pp. 237–250.

[32] see also the comments of the German philosopher Wolfgang Welsch in: Blickwechsel – Neue Wege der Ästhetik (2012), pp. 158–169.

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Chapter 7
"When the Heart-Mind Is Lost…" Remarks on the Metaphysics of Educational Theory

Roland Reichenbach

Introductory Remarks
By Duck-Joo Kwak

I think Reichenbach's paper can be read as a good introduction to the western readers who are not much familiar with (Neo-) Confucianism or East Asian thoughts on education, and yet who have mysterious curiosity about it. For it provides us with a comprehensive perspective on why and how one should be interested in Confucian idea of education or comparative studies on educational thoughts between East and West. What is valuable about this essay is that it aspires after the discovery of a common ground between the two traditions without necessarily assuming the possibility to find it. The author is well aware of the fundamental differences between the two traditions in their metaphysics and ontology, let alone in their epistemological views of the world. But he invites us to examine the metaphysical assumptions that underlie Confucian educational thoughts, centering around the ideas of education, morality, learning or cultivation, presumably hoping to see something common or something new for each tradition to learn from the other.

The key concept the author sets up for himself to examine in this essay is the Confucian concept of 'heart-mind(心)'. It is one of the most important concepts in Confucian philosophy of education, distinct from the western concept of the mind. This choice the author made for his inquiry does not seem to come as a matter of convenience. He seems to think that the Confucian concept of heart-mind may be conceptually resourceful for our educational thinking by providing us with a way of overcoming the scientific approach to the concept of mind, which is analytic in the sense that it defines the mind as consisting of different independent functions such as cognition, emotion, desire, disposition, inclination, motivation and so on. In Reichenbach's view, the Confucian concept of heart-mind presupposes the holistic

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R. Reichenbach, D.-J. Kwak (eds.), *Confucian Perspectives on Learning and Self-Transformation*, Contemporary Philosophies and Theories in Education 14,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-40078-1_7

view of the self, which "can link between judgement and action"; he always finds something missing between them under the western view of the mind. In the Confucian mindset, or east-Asian mindset in general, the heart is not only the site of sensations and experiences but also that of monitoring and guiding one's daily life. So the Confucian sense of heart-mind as an embodied intentionality is the source of our inner power in forming or cultivating the self with a sense of motivational direction. In connecting this notion in connection to the Confucian philosophy of self-cultivation, Reichenbach characterizes the Confucian sense of heart-mind as the source of our *readiness (or desire) to learn* to be good or virtuous; here our capacity for self-cultivation is ascribed to the heart-mind. This means that our heart-and-mind is already presupposed to have a *normative* orientation in it, not a cold-blooded agency as a neutral inspector, as in Descartes.

In the second half of the essay, the author attempts to sketch out the intellectual history of the Confucian concept of heart-mind in neo-Confucian tradition, which arose in the twelfth century, China. Here he covers four key Neo-Confucian thinkers: Hong, Xiangshan, Zhu Xi, and Wang Yang-ming. One of the key questions that these thinkers were concerned with was the nature of heart-and-mind and its relation to human goodness; for how to view the former was considered to determine how we can become morally good or good human beings. Unfortunately, the details of the argument in this part may not be that easy to follow, especially to those who do not have background knowledge on neo-Confucianism. Yet the discussion seems to leave us a few interesting yet puzzling questions about the Confucian notion of heart-mind.

First, I wonder how much we can take seriously the *normative* nature of the Confucian sense of heart-mind, especially for so-called postmodern contemporary education. Neo-Confucian culture of education is traditionally notorious for its moralizing power; it tends to impose a very strict set of moral norms upon young children; this has become the main target of criticism by progressive teachers in most of East Asian countries.

Yet, secondly, I can see why western educators can be enthusiastic about the Confucian concept of heart-mind and how it could benefit them in their educational thinking, given the prevalent concept of the mind in the West, where problem-solving *intelligence* or skill-like *competence* is highlighted as one of the main educational goals there days. In fact, those capacities of the mind are easily replaceable by a well-made machine of artificial intelligence to be developed. Thus, it seems urgent for us educators to newly conceive the nature of human mind in such a way as to redeem our educational practice as a uniquely *human* practice. This metaphysical inquiry of Reichenbach on the Confucian concept of heart-mind may be seen as a bold attempt to do this, seeking conceptual resources for a new notion of the uniquely human mind.

Thus, thirdly, it brings us back to the normative nature of the Confucian notion of heart-mind and makes us rethink of it. It is true that a strong normativity or strong imposition of moral norms could violate young people's legitimate right to choose to be good; the imposition could deprive young people of the chance to choose to be good *from within*, and thereby prevent them from enjoyment in cultivating their desire to learn to be good. But a weak normativity still may be necessary for young

people to engage in the practice of self-cultivation in the first place. So the question is then: How can we lead our young people to cultivate this weak normativity in them in the form of self-cultivation. I think the author’s attempt to reformulate the Confucian idea of heart-mind in contemporary educational terms has a lot to offer in triggering our thoughts on the task.

7.1 Preparatory Notes: Learning to Search

There are some sayings that one needs to hear only once and then never forgets. Possibly one doesn’t know for a long time why they seem so important. In my case, a statement by Mencius was such a sentence: “When their dog or chicken is lost, they go look for it, but when their heart-mind is lost, they don’t bother” (*Mencius*, VI A, 11). It’s difficult to surpass the beauty, simplicity, and depth of the comment in my opinion. And then comes this mysterious term the “heart/mind”. The link between heart and mind pleases pedagogues. That’s clear. But it disappoints the analysts and the scientists, when philosophical or even spiritual interest is lacking. Those who lend credence to blunt clichés, for instance, crediting so-called “Western thinking” in general as being “analytical” and “East Asian” thought as “synthetic” or “holistic”, will have little difficulty in attributing the concept of heart/mind to Eastern or Chinese thoughts. And naturally many will then say *xin* (心) or *xinxue* (心學) is truly impossible to translate.

Yet the theoretical and practical price for the thesis of untranslatability is relatively high. We must not even discuss this notion with each other. In the German-speaking region there are also the advocates of untranslatability, even in the field of philosophy of education (*Bildungsphilosopie*). Then one will glibly insist that “*Bildung*” cannot be translated for the reason that the term is found in no other language. But at the same time it will be maintained that the concept is central to the German understanding of culture as well as its studies in education. Yet anyone who has even selectively experienced different languages and cultures knows that the claim of special semantic paths and postures may be an indicator of cultural bigotry and sometimes reveals a lack of intercultural experience, mistakenly considered as a real linguistic difference. Let’s then assume that “*Bildung*” is truly very important. Why should Germans alone be able to grasp this? Why not the Frenchmen, Japanese, and Mexicans as well? And let’s assume that the attribution of concept of the heart/mind (*xin*) is of universal importance. Wouldn’t it be a great shame that only the Chinese could understand this? As I read about ‘lost chickens and dogs’ in the German-language version, I naturally naturally notice that a beautiful connection exists between *xin* and *Bildung*: „Wenn einem Menschen ein Huhn oder ein Hund verloren geht, so weiss er, wie er sie wieder finden kann; aber sein Herz geht ihm verloren, und *er weiss nicht, wie suchen*. Die *Bildung* dient zu nichts anderem als dazu, *unser verloren gegangenes Herz zu suchen*“ (*Mencius* VI A 11 / 2012, p. 204; emphasis being the author’s). In English, it says: “The way of learning is nothing more than to seek after this lost mind-and-heart” (*Mencius* VI A 11).

In my opinion, this passage is notable from several standpoints. First, *Bildung* and *xinxue* are more or less equated. Second, the problem, according to Mencius, does not consist primarily in not *finding* but in not knowing "*how to search*". Third, *Bildung* does not promise to *find* the lost heart but to "*be able to search it further*". This is a magnificent formulation, and we wish that contemporary planners and politicians would be able to recognize and understand it. The Jewish poet Elazar Benyoetz's volume of verse is entitled "Finding makes the search easier" ("*Finden macht das Suchen leichter*", Benyoetz 2002). If the seeker could be sure that he would find his quest, how effortless the search would be! But *Bildung* consists of learning to search, a view that is "interesting", yet stands in diametric opposition to the superficial "philosophy" of today's global discussion about competences. This is also the reason why I am interested in Confucianism; I am seeking for something there which I may not find. Yet it seems to me that many in the field of educational science run after chickens and dogs, and are not concerned about the connection of learning and education with the heart/mind. The loss will no longer be mourned because they are no longer aware of it; which is a real loss.

7.2 Comments on the Metaphysics of Educational Thought

Metaphysical thinking concerns itself with questions and hypotheses about (i) the nature of the mind and the world, (ii) the foundations of ethics and aesthetics, or even (iii) the proper course of moral self-cultivation (see Ivanhoe 2010, p. 260). When a person asks if intercultural discourse on *Bildungsphilosophie* may pay off, one can assume based on respect and care for ideas (see Noddings 1992) that mutual inspiration is at least possible. However, I agree with Ivanhoe that the commonalities between the occidental and oriental symbols of thought, especially in regard to Confucianism and even more in Neo-Confucianism must be much greater, "… it is possible to arrive at what John Rawls calls an 'overlapping consensus' (…) on important ethical issues based upon different and irreconcilable initial assumptions, metaphysical or otherwise" (Ivanhoe 2010, p. 260).

In English, the term 'Neo-Confucianism' was used only when we reached the twentieth century. According to John Makeham, it is an "umbrella term" for a philosophical discourse associated with the individual thinkers who have been classified as belonging to different schools or sub-traditions since the Song dynasty in China, particularly schools of "Learning of the Way" (*daoxue*), "Studies of Moral Principles" (*lixue*), and "Learning of the Mind and of the Heart" (*xinxue*) (cf. Makeham 2010, p. xiii). If the concept of heart/mind in the following is of interest, this occurs with the background insight that there is no homogenous "school of

the heart/mind” and there is no need to be one. “Heart/mind” or “mind-and-heart” is the English translation for the Chinese word *xin*(心).[1]

The term heart/mind is a metaphor and it is no more or no less. And it will often be argued vehemently by its apologists that the term should be merely a metaphor. Still it is evident from a metaphorical viewpoint (*e.g.*, Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Blumenberg 1999) that any central cultural and scientific concepts cannot be more than metaphors. Metaphors have an ornamental function; but they also serve to promote the understanding and knowledge of scientific topics. Without a metaphorical style, the topics would remain more diffuse and beyond the reader’s grasp. Some important metaphors of educational thought and self-transformation can be a starting point in exploring ideas that link the East and West. The images and metaphors of *balance, center*, *being centered* and “*being oneself*”, *true self*, *agreement*, *congruence, accordance, correspondence* of the world and myself, heaven and myself,[2] and the over-arching enlightenment metaphor of *clarity* and being *clouded* (obscured) are great examples for such a study.

On the other hand, metaphysical questions are not *en vogue* at all in today’s discourse on educational theory. Traditional metaphysics mainly concerns ontological questions, *i.e.*, existential issues and the characteristics of things and ideas. Critical metaphysical thinking of the Orient shows how unconvincing their “methods” look today. Yet many scientists, above all those in social sciences, are not conscious of how obvious it is for them to presuppose and accept certain metaphysical positions, taking them for granted without any challenge. Some may “operationalize” their central concepts quite arbitrarily, such as *Bildung,* education, or skill, and use them in a loose and unreflected manner for their empirical purposes. Their assertions about the existence of things and ideas accompanying the concepts are never substantiated.

Thus, we may have to thank the tradition of transcendental philosophy for its criticism of metaphysics. It does not reject metaphysical questions as absurd or unworthy of a response but concedes at least, referring back to Immanuel Kant, that metaphysical issues always impose themselves on us, even if they cannot be answered definitively. The human being is regarded here anthropologically as “*animal metyphysicum*”. From this perspective, metaphysic’s critique of knowledge thus places its focal priority less on existential issues (ontology) than on those of knowledge and recognition (epistemology).

A convincing educational theory has no choice but to be driven by metaphysics, and this includes the critical recognition of transcendental preconditions of the concepts at stake, such as learning and education, as well as cultivation, personality, morality and character. These are not observational terms but must always be developed and interpreted. In addition, there are varying strategies or philosophical

[1] Gardener explains that “in the Chinese tradition the character [for *xin*] refers to both the source of intellect and understanding and the center of emotions and feelings” (Gardener 2007, p. 14, footnote), whereas *xinxue* stands for learning of the heart/mind.

[2] “Heaven” is usually understood as a “generic term” for the “right way” (see Hu Hong, 14,18).

"methods" to deal with the underlying concepts of educational theory, such as speculation, dialectics, hermeneutics, phenomenology, or analysis.

The discourse on educational thought can also ask about (i) the motives behind the desire for knowledge as critical recognition metaphysics, (ii) employed philosophical methods for the comparison of different cultures, or (iii) establishing, describing, and understanding comparable epochs and commonalities and differences. This all belongs to the strategies of critical epistemology. One may agree with Philip Ivanhoe that the concept of heart/mind, which he especially discussed regarding the philosophy of Lu Jinyuan, potentially exceeds cultures and epochs. The holistic philosophy reflected in it is appealing to today's discourse in education. The way it was discussed on the heart/mind looks like what we can emulate.

In short, "when it comes to ethics and aesthetics," according to Ivanhoe, "it makes a considerable sense to think of the mind in terms of 'heart/mind'a combination of cognition, emotion, and volition. It is worth noting that many individual movements within modern Western aesthetics or ethics are based on defending one or more of these three aspects of the heart/mind over others" (Ivanhoe 2010, p. 260).[3]

7.3 The Notion of Heart/Mind

Among others ideas, the heart/mind is a very prominent concept of neo-Confucian philosophy from the Song to Qing dynasties in China. It emphasizes "the emotive nature of Confucius' self-cultivation" (Lu 2014, p. 60). The term *xin*, most often translated as heart/mind, is originally understood as a physical organ, "but (…) it should refer to the functions and potency of the emotive heart and the cognitive mind" which are thought of as "analytically dualistic but functionally holistic" (Lu 2014, p. 61).[4] "Heart" is simultaneously the name of the vital organ and the metaphor for life and lifestyle, particularly in regard to sensitive aspects. But the fact that the heart is also the organ of thought may also make sense from a Western perspective; speaking of "*Herzensbildung* (sensitivity, actually "formation of the heart")" in humanistic and neo-humanistic pedagogy discourse, of "*Kopf, Hand, Herz*" (mind, hand, heart) attributed to Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, which is not to be found in his works…, or even the *"habits of the heart"* in the famous essay of Tocqueville (Tocqueville 1987) as well as the current example of "emotional intelligence" (Daniel Goleman), shows how the idea of mind/heart is deeply anchored in various names and facets within diverse cultural spaces and traditions. Yet Confucian and neo-Confucian thinkers are pioneers and role models in addressing this term. The heart

[3] "The Confucian tradition and Chinese thought in general have been much more attentive to this deep connection between ethics and aesthetics. (…) Literati like Lu Jinyuan placed tremendous emphasis on arts like calligraphy, painting, and composition" (Ivanhoe 2010, p. 262).

[4] "The unique graphic composition of *xin* clearly shows that 'thinking' actually is not merely a cognitive function, which is indicated by the *xin* graph for the fontanel, but also an emotive expression at once, which is represented by the *xin* graph for the heart" (Lu 2014, p. 61).

from this perspective is the physical site of human motives, wishes, and customs: "Of the various parts of the body, *xin* (…), the organ of the heart, is particularly important, because it is viewed as the site of what we would describe as cognitive and affective activities. *Xin* (the heart/mind) can have *yu* (desires, tendencies) in that it can be drawn to certain things; it also has *qing* (emotions, feelings) and can take pleasure in or feel displeasure at certain things" (Shun 2010, p. 179).

The heart is not only the site of sensations and experience but also the site of monitoring for the direction one's own life in the lights of superior social goals and ranks in the existence of all things. "One capacity that is particularly important for Confucian thinkers is its capacity to set directions that guide one's daily activities as well as one's life as a whole" (Shun 2010, p. 179). Yet the seemingly abstract principle of the heart/mind "materializes" in the specific practices of everyday life. Here the concern and care for the heart/mind is closely related to the ancient Greek idea of self-reliance (see Kwak 2018).

Understanding the concept of heart/mind from a purely psychological standpoint and interpreting it that way is surely a mistake and disproportionate. It is also possible to explain the relevant aspects of the concept in philosophical terms. The revisited commentaries by Shun shows this. The orientations of heart/mind are understood as "*zhi*" (…) (goals, intentions):

> *Zhi* can refer to specific intentions or general aims in life such as the goal of learning to be a sage. *Zhi* differs from *yu* (desires, tendencies) in that, whereas *zhi* pertains specifically to the heart/mind, *yu* can pertain to the heart/mind or to other parts of the body such as the senses. Also, while *zhi* involves focusing the heart/mind in a way that guides one's actions or one's life in general, *yu* involves tendencies that one may choose to resist rather than to act on (Shun 2010, p. 179).

The differences addressed here are as interesting as terminologies when they are of practical importance; the goals of the person are necessarily congruent with their intentions, not necessarily with their tendencies or dispositions. It's a very different "psychology" which the Neo-Confucian concept offers us here. Yet the heart/mind is not only characterized as competing push-pull forces but also as thinking and thoughts, *yi*:

> "*Yi* can refer to one's thoughts or opinions, as well as one's inclinations, which involve one's wanting to see certain things happen or one's thinking of bringing about certain things" (…); "Unlike *yu*, (…) *yi* is something one is aware of as part of one's thoughts, which pertain to the heart/mind. On the other hand, *yi* is in a less directed state than *zhi* in that, while *yi* can be just a thought in favor of something without one's actually having decided to act in that direction, *zhi* involves one's actually forming the intention to so act" (Shun 2010, p. 179).

The impoverishment in our era's psychological language also tends to generate extremely vague terms. It speaks of "cognitive processes" in which pure "events" within the human brain "run off". Basically, the concept of heart/mind can be understood as the "missing link" between judgment and action, comprehending within it motivation, will, or other forms of inner process. The gap between judgment and action is of major interest in the Kohlbergian tradition (see Oser and Althof 1992; Garz 2006). Various models have been proposed to understand this gap. Somehow

the analytical approach has always turned out to be insufficient at the end of the day; knowledge, judgment, motivation, inclination, and action form a down-to-earth nexus, a stable or less stable unity which is either calm or clearly imbalanced, which we one analyze or explain convincingly with the tools of scientific psychology. Going back the old concept of the heart/mind concept does not necessarily mean pursuing our romantic motives. Rather it means to recognize that we must guard against the urge to separate the self or the learning process into two seemingly sharply distinguishable elements. Ultimately, one cannot escape from the metaphysics of *Bildung* and the self. But what is this heart/mind? We cannot really know this; yet we can attribute its possibility or capability to an authority that we consider vital. The heart/mind is a capability to form both *yi* and *zhi*. It has "the capacity to reflect on one's life and reshape one's life accordingly" (…); "this capacity for self-cultivation is ascribed to the heart/mind" (Shun 2010, p 179).

7.4 Hu Hong, Lu Xiangshan, Zhu Xi, Wang Yang-ming

The following section brings the concept of the heart/mind into contact with an array of insights from the Neo-Confucian tradition.

7.4.1 Hu Hong

According to Makeham, Hu Hong (1105–1161), author of *Zhiyan (Understanding Words)* "was the first scholar of the *daoxue* (道學) movement whose overall stress lay on the importance of the concept of the heart/mind (*xin*, 心), which he took to be the governing principle of the nature (xing, 物 as well as the thinking force within each human being" (Makeham 2010, xvi). For Hu, the heart/mind transcends the human condition; it is eternal, representing cosmic principles (Makeham 2010, xvi; cf. van Ess 2010).[5] Hu Hong's interpretations of *Mencius* (7A.1) "He who has exhausted his heart/mind knows his nature. Knowing his nature, he knows heaven" (Mencius 7A.1) is crucial. The "heart" beats in close harmony with the "right way". Van Ess, the German translator of the *Zhiyan*, stresses in detailed comments that Hu Hong wanted to understand the meaning of the heart in explicit opposition to the prevailing Chinese Buddhism of the time. The latter held that the heart played the role of producing illusions, the illusion of the world which hindered the recognition of the truth.[6] To Hong, the relationship is to be turned around: "The heart alone is

[5] "There is (…) a superhuman heart/mind working in the world" (van Ess 2010, p. 113). "(…) both the heart/mind and nature have to be understood as words for cosmic principles which extend far beyond the human condition" (van Ess 2010, p. 114).

[6] To Hu Hong Buddhists were egoistical because they want to escape from the cycle of death and life (van Ess 2010, p. 117). "The Buddhists in secret do not know how to serve heaven, whereas in

the site where truth is recognized” (van Ess 2009, p. 229). In the last paragraph of the first chapter of *Understanding of Words*, Hu Hong writes: “What heaven has conferred is the nature. The nature of man is the heart/mind” (Hu 1987, 4; cit. van Ess 2010, p.111). This “anthropological reduction” stresses the point, that consciousness and thinking are the core elements which constitute the human condition (van Ess, *ibid.*).[7]

But one tends to read the following passage from Hu Hong: “Those who lead the Way in learning increase their skills daily. The skills of those who advance in virtue decline daily. Those who no longer rely on themselves but on heaven lose their abilities.” (*Zhiyan*, 2,16; Hu 2009, p. 26). Here, as van Ess formulated it, the human and heavenly spheres coalesce, *first* those who must no longer promote their virtues in harmony with the heavens (the right way) and therefore must no longer gain further skills but can let the heavens govern (van Ess 2009, p. 226). It is also clear to Hong that the heart/mind is concerned only with existing things, that is, “things at hand” (see *Chin-ssu lu*, Zhu Xi and Lü 1967).[8]

The dualism between specifics and abstractions as well as between particulars and generalities, less typical of Oriental insights, never appears here. It is not considered solving or causing problems of learning and education. The difference is taken as something analytically, acceptable:

> What is meant by the heart/mind is the nature of being capaciously intelligent and having consciousness. This is nothing other than the ears and eyes having the power to see and hear. Between heaven and earth it penetrates old and new without perfection or decay. In men and other living beings, however, it has a beginning and an end in accordance with the body and with *qi*. Once one has understood that the pattern is the same but that the [two] parts are different, what need is there for a theory that the heart/mind is not subject to life and death – a view which merely serves to startle students (Hu 1987, p. 333; quoting from van Ess 2010, p. 113).

7.4.2 Zhu Xi (1130–1200)

Zhu Xi too recognized a “transcendent heart/mind which does not die and which penetrates history” (van Ess ibid., p. 113). Yet the know-how and the love of learning stand at the center of Zhu Xi’s learning philosophy. It always deals with

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public they do not know how to order (*li*) things (…) To serve heaven and to order things, this is the great enterprise of a Confucian” (Hu 1987, p. 41, quotation from van Ess 2010, p. 118).

[7] Hu Hong’s (pedagogical) anthropology is neither positive nor negative, but basically neutral. Hu cites Mencius: “When Mencius said that the nature was good, he used the word only as an expression of sighing admiration, not with the opposite meaning to ‘bad’” (Hu 1987, p. 333).

[8] “What exists is visible because it coalesces. We call it existing because by means of our eyes we know that it exists. Therefore we call non-existing what is dispersed so that it cannot be seen. What is real and ‘can be trampled under the feet’ [*Zhongyong*; Legge 1879-: 389]”. We call it existing because by means of our heart/mind we know that it exists. Therefore what is irrelevant and cannot be trampled under the feet we call non-existing” (Hu 1987, quoting from van Ess 2010, p. 111).

the specifics of learning, thus the title *Chin-ssu lu, Reflections on things at hand.* The *Chin-ssu lu* anthology, which Zhu Xi has published with Lü Zuquian, whose family, by the way, was acquainted with Hu Hong's, is the first compilation of the sayings from the five great masters of neo-Confucians of the eleventh century. Zhu Xi didn't support Hu Hong's radical rejection of Buddhism. In particular, Buddhism concerns the question of meditation that Zhu Xi practiced in his youth, which yet was rejected by the neo-Confucians. Zhu Xi's accommodation turned out to be an important factor later to become the undisputed leader of neo-Confucianism during the Song dynasty. The sectors of philosophy, religion, and ideology blurred during the establishment of Neo-Confucianism (see van Ess 2009, p. 202). Without compromise in teachings, the success of this newly reinforced thinking tradition of neo-Confucianism would have been very much less distinct.

The differences between Zhu and Hu Hong are more important than they may seem at first glance. They concern the understanding of the essential concepts:

> For Zhu, heavenly norms are not, as Hu Hong thought, an abstract ideal that is extremely difficult to approach due to one's inborn human desires. On the contrary, heavenly norms belong to man's inborn nature whereas human desires develop only due to the negative effects of inappropriate socialization, bad habituation, or physical problems such as imbalanced mixture of *qi* (van Ess 2010, p. 119).

While Buddhism tends to pass over suffering during life, Confucianism devotes itself entirely to life. Hu Hong, as other Confucians, criticized Buddhists for their withdrawal from active life and their rejection of the ordinary world (Schirokauer 1986, p. 488). From the political revivalists movement, Hu Hong had developed neo-Confucianism into a sort of "civil religion" (van Ess 2009, p. 202) whose "supreme goal was to renew the world through training by wise teachers" (*ibid.*). The proximity to the idea of philosopher kings in Plato's *Politeia* (Plato 1992) is apparent here. The difference between Hu Hong and Zhu Xi concerns their understanding of openness to the world and the priorities of tasks in the learning process. Van Ess says:

> Zhu Xi disapproved of the idea that in order to act humanely one first had to study and to recognize the structure of humaneness (…). He thought that humaneness was already an inherent aspect of human nature. Hu Hong, however, was convinced that the central task of man was to use his heart/mind and to learn before he could act in a humane way (p. 121).

Zhu Xi rejected some of Hu Hong's doctrines. He particularly distrusted intuition and highly valued reflection and fine nuances all the more. Finally, students after Zhu Xi faced the task of completing the sequences shown in the *Daoxue* (The *Great Learning*), which emphasizes "to extend knowledge, to make the thoughts sincere, and to rectify the mind" (Schirokauer 1986, p. 492). He also believed that the so-called Hunan School had a big problem in balancing the importance of tranquility and action. Major differences between Zhu Xi and Hu Hong arose over their views on the mind and human nature. Indeed, the two aspects do not stand in a simple relationship to each other. Zhu Xi particularly criticized the view that the mind is the state of sensation, while nature represents the state before feelings are aroused in us. For Zhu Xi, "the mind is present in both states, and both are found in

the ordinary world of experience. In the tranquil state, when the feelings are not yet aroused, mind and consciousness are present” (Schirokauer 1986, p. 493). Precisely this situation is considered important for self-cultivation. Emotions are the expression and function of nature, and, according to Zhu Xi, the mind has the function to orient nature and sensitivity, and to bring them into harmony with one another.

Without being able to go into details on the nuances and critical points here, it can be said in agreement with Schirokauer that the theory of Zhu Xi is more complex than that of Hu Hong. Without doubt, Hu Hong is viewed as the loyal follower of Mencius, while Zhu Xi makes more direct reference to Confucius. On the other hand, Hu Hong had a knack for terse and “high suggestive statements” that, Schirkauer believes, “invite reflection but are open to misinterpretation”. “A debate”, he suggests, “might have forced him to greater precision” (1986, p. 496). Yet it never came to that, unfortunately. While Zhu Xi was able to spread his ideas on self-cultivation convincingly at the same time with great success, the importance of Hu Hong should nevertheless not be underestimated. “Hu Hong left open certain possibilities in neo-Confucianism and to the degree that his sayings have stimulated present day philosophers, he has helped to fuel neo-Confucian discourse in the 20th century as he did in the 12th”, Schirokauer writes the recognition of him (Schirokauer 1986, p. 497).

7.4.3 Lu Xiangshan (1139–1192) and His Disciples

There are also important and dramatic differences between Lu Xiangshan (Lu Jinyuan) and Zhu Xi. Lu’s criticism of Zhu may remind one of our latitudes of romantic criticism of enlightenment, perhaps gladly supporting Charles Taylor (1996) in his being able to say something coarse, that romance and enlightenment could be understood as both the sides of the same coin. Lu believed Zhu Xi’s interpretation of Confucian or neo-Confucian learning theory and its philosophy of life to be “excessively complex, highly speculative, and over-intellectualized.” It “threatened to lead people astray” (Ivanhoe 2010, p. 259). Lu’s criticism of Zhu Xi’s rationalist interpretation of Confucianism was picked up later by Wang Yangming and led into an independent orientation of neo-Confucian thought. Viewed today, the latter possesses intensely romantic motives.[9] The culture of ‘attentiveness’ or ‘mindfulness’ that experiences a renaissance today can largely be traced back to Lu Xiangshan. According to Lu, moral education is based on “a critical attentiveness to one’s responses and reactions to the affairs of one’s own life while working to eliminate an excessive concern with oneself. Rather than being focused on theoretical understanding, self-cultivation is primarily driven by a kind of reflective practice

[9] “Lu Jinyuans’s original insights waited for and were taken up by Wang Yangming. In the process, Wang transformed Lu’s initial vision into his own distinctive philosophy” (p. 260).

aimed at coming to see and appreciate the fundamental ethical goods that all human beings desire" (Ivanhoe 2010, p. 264).

Regarding its metaphysical understanding, Lu supported the idea that the principles of heart/mind and those of the world could coincide in a harmonious manner. He claims that "The heart/mind was the unique site where a full understanding of the world could take place; it is where all principles can come to consciousness and be known" (Ivanhoe 2010, p. 253). The heart/mind here is not primarily an individual trait or skill but rather something divided among all humanity that remains the same in a supra-contextual and supra-historical sense.[10] We have it explained here as a metaphysical version of *common sense*. Perhaps one could say that the Neo-Confucian metaphysics is oriented to the world; it is not purely immanent but concerns the meaning of "transcendence of immanence". Confucian common sense, which comes into play in the concept of heart/mind, is the condition of avoiding self-deception in personal lifestyle. It is less a skill than a readiness to learn.

Lu's influence is important with regard to this understanding. In her article on the "Four Masters of Mingzhou", Linda Walton describes the transmission and innovations among the disciples of Lu Jiuyuan (1139–1192), namely Yang Jian (1141–1226), Yuan Xie (1144–1224), Shu Lin (1136–1199), and Shen Huan (1139–1191). Of interest in this context is Yuan's discussion of the relationship between the "*human* heart/mind" (*renxin*) and the "*moral* heart/mind" (*dioxin*) which is also called "*original* heart/mind" (see Walton 2010, p. 283). Walton quotes Yuan who says:

> The heart/mind that all people have is called the human heart/mind. The moral heart/mind is the good heart/mind (*liangxin*…). When the human heart/mind is in peril, it is difficult to achieve equilibrium. When the moral heart/mind is obscured, then it is difficult to be clear. What is called moral heart/mind is just this heart/mind's recognition of moral principle (*daoli*…). The human heart/mind daily comes into contact with things and is easily seduced by things… If moved by joy or anger, or enticed by wealth and rank; or if moved by sound and color, how can [the heart/mind] not be imperiled? (cited by Walton, ibid., p. 283).

Walton shows at this point that Yuan's understanding of the heart/mind is placed between the view of his teacher, Lu Jiuyuan, and that of Zhu Xi. While the human heart/mind and its moral equivalent are viewed as identical by Lu Jiuyuan, Zhu Xi draws a clear line between them. Yuan tries to show its connection in saying "I believe that the purpose of study is to obtain the original heart/mind and nothing more" (Yuan, quoted by Walton ibid., p. 285). We can reformulate this by borrowing the phrasing of Wilhelm von Humboldt (1968/1785) on educational thought, that the study of the world brings human beings to themselves. Or we can put even more pathetically as he had expressed it originally: "Simply because both his thoughts and actions are only possible thanks to a third party, only thanks to imagination and development of something (whose actually differing matter is to be non-human in the world), he tries to seize as much of the world as he possibly can to link us as closely as he can to himself" („*Bloss weil beides, sein Denken und sein Handeln*

[10] See Ivanhoe 2010, p. 254.

nicht anders, als nur vermöge eines Dritten, nur vermöge des Vorstellens und des Bearbeitens von etwas möglich ist, dessen eigentlich unterscheidendes Material es ist, Nicht-Mensch, d. i. Welt zu seyn, sucht er, soviel Welt, als möglich zu ergreifen, und so eng, als er nur kann, mit sich zu verbinden“ (Humboldt 1968, p. 283).

Yet Walton’s analysis also shows that the common sense of the “Four Masters of Mingzhou” as a philosophical group who may have been much less than what later commentators and thinkers “inclined toward regional narratives of intellectual history” have seen or presented (Walton ibid., p. 290). Comparable or common is the focus on the heart/mind and the clarification of one’s own situation and motive. A sincere desire should help to avoid self-deception. Central to this school of thoughts is their metaphysics of the true self. “The sincere person is someone who possesses the will to return to the true, natural, self” (Nuyen 2010, p. 630–1). In the *Doctrine of the Mean* we find the claim “that one’s true self is the moral self” (*ibid*., 631). Equating the true self with the good and moral self is obviously a problematic assumption that we face in humanistic psychology and its authenticity discourse in the twentieth century. Given this premise, “the sincere person who is true to his or her natural self is *ipso facto* a moral being. Something like this interpretation is also evident in Wang Yang-ming’s account of sincerity in his commentary, *Inquiry on the Great Learning*” (p. 632).

7.4.4 Wang Yangming (1472–1529)

Wang Yang-ming’s *Instructions on the Practical Living* represents the major work of the *idealistic* wing of neo-Confucianism, whereas, according to Wing-Tsit Chan, the *Chin-ssu lu*[11] (texts collected by Zhu Xi [1130–1200] and Lü Zuqian [1137–1181]) is the major work of the *rationalistic* wing of Neo-Confucianism. In ontology or metaphysics, the two neo-Confucian thinkers view *li* (the principle of order, 理 or 禮) differently. In Confucianism, all forms of manners and behavior are signified with *li* (理)and they can cover both unusual rituals and ceremonies as well as “lesser” everyday habits.[12] “For Wang and most neo-Confucians, everything is constituted by some combination of *li* and *qi*. *Li* (…) refers to the way a thing or state of affairs ought to be. When things or states of affairs are not in accord with *li*, they are deemed deviant” (Tien 2010, p. 296). However, as Tien states, both Wang

[11] Zhu Xi and Lü Tsu-Ch’ien (1967) and Zhu Xi (1991).

[12] Hence *li* can be translated as propriety, usage, custom, etiquette morality, and behavior norms. Yet Zhu Xi among the neo-Confucians held *li* to connote a somewhat differently imbedded meaning. According to the *Stanford Encyclopedia*: “*Li* is inherently perspectival. Zhu adopts metaphors of the grains in wood, the lines in jade, the “veins” in a leaf, the lines in marble, and even the texture of beef, to stress that *li* are manifested immanently rather than abstractly, and thus are to be sought concretely by observing phenomena in the world, not by pure, disengaged, abstract ratiocination. Moreover, *li* are never presented in their putative optimal pure form. They always appear conditioned by the degree of purity of the *qi* through which they are manifested and of the environing conditions”.

and Zhu distinguish between the universal *li* (or "heavenly *li*") and the "manifested *li* of particular, individualized things or events" (Tien 2010, p. 296).[13] *Li* not only structures things and objects but also thinking, the intellect, and language. This allows human beings to understand and deal appropriately with things and situations which confront them. As noted in Humboldt's formula of understanding of the world and oneself, learning about the world is learning about the self; To understand the *li* of the outer world helps to relate *li* to the inner world, *i.e.*, the intellect and character. Tien says:

> Even though all things possess the same universal *li*, the individualized *li* that are actually manifested are determined by their *qi* endowments. That is why different things are said to have different *li*. Bricks, bamboo chairs, boats, and carts all differ from each other because their *qi* endowments differ, so the *li* that they manifest also differ (Tien 2010, p. 299).[14]

However, Wang's metaphysics are not, despite what many modern authors claim, the essence of Berkeley's ontological idealism "which claims that the physical word exists only as an appearance to or expression of heart/mind" (Tien 2010, p. 299). In accordance with other interpreters, Tien summarizes Wang's understanding of *li* and heart/mind in six points. In his view, Wang claims:

1. "that one should not search for *li* in the external world because such a search would prove terribly ineffective" (…);
2. "that one should leave open "the possibility that *li* exists both in the heart/mind and in things" (…);
3. "that one should not engage in such a search, because all the *li* are already present in the heart/mind (…), which is why Wang advocates *monitoring one's responses to things and events of the world; the alternative he offers is not navel gazing but an engaged self-scrutiny as one perceives, responds, and acts in the world*" [emphasis R.R.] (…);
4. "that every *li* that exists in the external world is also present in the universal *li* of the heart/mind" (…)
5. "that *wu* are the content or objects of thought, and hence, also in the heart/mind" (…); and
6. "that while the external world is dependent for its existence on the heart/mind of humanity, the clear intellect of human beings, as the most rarefied form of vital energy, is also ontologically dependent on the external world" (Tien 2010, p. 305–306).

[13] "*Qi* is the stuff of which the universe is made. It exists in various grades of purity. Although all things possess all the *li* of the universe within them, because of the impurity of the *qi* of which they are composed, some *li* are obstructed. Different combinations of *li* and *qi* are what account for the differences between things" (Tien 2010, p. 297).

[14] According to Wang, the heart/mind or consciousness is always so-to-speak intentional: "Whenever one thinks, there must be something about which one thinks. That about which one is thinking is the *wu* or 'object of thought'. The *wu* are the content of one's thoughts. (…) *Wu* constitutes the locus of one's attention and is where one's heart/mind is directed" (Tien 2010, p. 303).

This reconstruction results in Wang Yangming being classified as a “non-reductionist, naturalist, cognitivist, moral realist” (Tien 2010, p. 308) “What sets Wang apart from other Neo-Confucians is his account of the process by which an irreducible moral property can affect the senses” (*ibid*.).

Wang is a *moral realist* because he believes that there are “moral facts or properties in the world of the sort required to render our moral judgments true and that the existence of these moral facts or properties is constitutively independent of human opinion” (p. 308). He is a *cognitivist* “because he believes that moral judgments are able to be true or false and can be the result of cognitive access to the facts that render them true of false” (*ibid*). And finally Wang is a *naturalistic non-reductionist*: “Given that Wang Yangming and most Neo-Confucian philosophers believed that there is a corresponding *li* for property, whether moral or non-moral, then not just Wang Yangming but all Neo-Confucian philosophers would appear to be moral naturalists. For Wang and other Neo-Confucians, *li*, whether moral or non-moral, is both causal and detectable by the senses” (p. 308). Whereas neo-Confucian philosophers did not divide things into the ‘natural’ and ‘non-natural’, they can be regarded as naturalists, “insofar as one considers *qi* to be ‘natural’, and given that *li* is never found apart from *qi,* one can conclude that moral properties are also ‘natural’” (p. 309).

Wang Yangming’s idea of education is the extension of pure knowing. The concept of pure knowing (liangzhi […]) is idealism that one today can also call a romantically graceful concept of an inner awareness that should be termed both cognitive and affective – an ability to come into contact with the *li* of the heart/mind and the universe. This permits distinguishing spontaneously between the right and the wrong. Pure knowing should be part of everyday practice. This alone would enable us pure knowing.[15] “Pure knowing naturally knows”, Wang said, “which is in fact quite easy. But often one cannot extend one’s pure knowing to the utmost. This shows that it is not difficult to know but difficult to act” (Wang, quoted by Tien 2010, p. 311). Knowledge then becomes real or correct (*zhenzhi* […]), if it is linked with action. Knowledge without action is not only inferior knowledge but, according to Wang, basically no knowledge at all: “There have never been people who know but do not act. Those who are supposed to know but do not act simply do not know” (Wang Yangming, quoted by Tien 2010, p. 312). This makes it clear that Wang is using the term for action in a very broad sense: “‘*Action’ for Wang includes the ‘acts’ of thinking, feeling, intending, and doing*” (Tien 2010, p. 312, footnote 32; emphasis R.R.).

Such thinking suggests, to put it a bit brutally, that one has nearly arrived at the lyrics of contemporary discourse on skills. Yet the appearance is naturally deceptive. Wang’s philosophy, even if one views it critically, is immune to vulgar pragmatism.

[15] “Extending one’s pure knowing means to apply successfully the pure knowing to the matters of one’s daily life. Since one cannot extend one’s pure knowing if self-centered desires are obstructing it, the extension of pure knowing is contingent on first eradicating self-centered desires in relation to specific items of knowledge. Only after the pure knowing is extended can one attain real knowledge” (Tien 2010, p. 311).

7.5 The Search for the Heart/Mind

Confucian metaphysics is not really pushy. Confucius comes across as agnostic and pursues an epistemological modesty. There are powers that, if you fail to understand, can at most be named. Confucius did not explain in the *Analects* what heaven meant, but his comment on the effective power of heaven recurred again and again.

> Heaven could regulate the workings of nature such as the procession of the seasons [17.19], determine whether a person has wealth and honor [12.5], or even whether the culture of the past should persist in a later age [9.5] (Lu 2014, p. 65).

> Heaven has the power to endow virtue in someone like Confucius [7.23] (…) and set him on the path to sagehood [9.6].
> Heaven can cast a curse on people, including Confucius [6.28; 11.9]
> It can be offended and appeased [3.13].
> Heaven cannot be deceived [9.12],
> The will of Heaven should be held in awe [16.8].
> In its totality, heaven appears to be some sort of transcendental power that is much larger than the human individual, yet somehow it is immanent and operative in the human realm. Confucius was hesitant to discuss it, but heaven operates in a way that is accessible to human understanding (Lu 2014, p. 65).

One can only refer to certain things or matters. "On matters that one cannot discuss, one must remain silent" (Wittgenstein 1993, p. 85). Confucius and Wittgenstein do not appear far apart from each other on the ethics of silence. There are matters that are known. And, for the other things, read the corresponding parts of the *Analects* (2.17): "Yu, shall I tell you what it is to know. To say you know when you know, and to say you do not know when you do not, that is knowledge" (Confucius 1979, p. 65). However, for Confucius, "the line that demarcates known and unknown, as well as what can be known and what cannot, is not self-evident. Not only does it vary from individual to individual, but at a more profound level, it may mark the limit of human knowledge itself" (Lu 2014, p. 71). And his view on the meaning of knowledge about ignorance (*i.e.*, lack of knowledge) is entirely Socratic: "The known is always recognized in the presence of the unknown, which may not be consciously acknowledged" (*ibid.*) (…); "we may still be unaware of our known ignorance when we think we actually know what we know which is made possible because of our ignorance. Thus knowledge and ignorance are ontologically interdependent" (p. 72).

What can be said about the heart/mind after all? Simultaneously a great deal and very little and almost everything and nothing. But, regarding the search for the heart/mind, something negative can be mentioned, because the chickens and hounds are too few for us and because it violates humanism that wants to see people lacking any metaphysics. Confucianism can be viewed critically as teaching pure immanence, but in our closer reading, especially if the heart/mind remains focused, shows that the dualism of immanence and transcendence is basically lifted. Besides the dramatic and courageous search for the heart/mind, there is also the joy of learning, which is prominently discussed in the *Lunyu*:.. "Is it not a pleasure, having learned

something, to try it out at due intervals” (1.1) (1979, p. 59). However, for enjoyment and this pleasure, it is necessary to know and become engaged with the world: “To be fond of something is better than merely to know it, and to find joy in it is better than merely to be fond of it” (Confucius 1979, p. 84; [*The Analects*, 6.20]). Feeling good, being oneself, and finding the balance do not contradict the search for the heart/mind; “A man’s true character reveals itself when he is feeling at ease” (Lu 2014, p. 73). The so-called true self is found in the self-fulfilling joy of learning, since “pure joy is self-sufficient and autonomous by virtue of its subjects being so in the first place” (*ibid.*).[16] And the learning traditions does not contradict the search for one’s self. “Tradition and particular others with whom one has a relationship influences the substance of the self, but the heart-mind has the capacity to reflect on and criticize these influences, to the point where a person can totally reject the social order and seek to live outside it” (Wong 2014, p. 193).[17] The Confucian ethic does not exhaust itself in justifying the need to take over moral motivation as an adaptation to society, as was promptly maintained.[18] Despite the orientation toward the figure of the wise man, it did not concern a hero ethic. Yet the question would still be raised for whom the search for the heart/mind is reserved. Wong says: “If in fact the achievement of robust virtues requires long and hard training, supported and guided by others who have taken similar paths before, and if (…) people cannot engage in such training until they have the material security that enables them to take their minds off the sheer task of survival, then it is no mystery at all why there are no such traits in societies structured to achieve very different goals” (Wong 2014, p. 194–5).

7.6 Final Considerations

One needs not to agree with Confucian or neo-Confucian cosmology to be inspired by the concept of the heart/mind. Basic questions and basic positions on educational thought can be recognized and distinguished for the discourse on educational theory as well as for educational practice of importance within our degrees of latitude. A few aspects or viewpoints of the various schools of heart/mind are mentioned.

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[16] This stands in a certain opposition to Daoist teaching: Joy is not an intrinsic value to be pursued in Daoism (see Lu ibid., p. 74): “The experience of joy, for instance, is to be avoided by Zhuangzi’s (…) philosophy of non-attachment, as it is considered to be equally detrimental as sorrow to one’s well-being” (*ibid.*). “Whereas Confucius seeks to feel at ease with his true self and in his communion with his fellow human beings, Zhuangzi can only find peace in the impersonal passage of time and the unpredictable unfolding of events alien and external to his mind-heart” (Lu 2014, p. 74).

[17] See *Analects* 18.5–18.6).

[18] “Thus Confucian ethics both recognizes the profound influence that tradition and one’s relationship with others have in shaping and constituting the person, but also maintains the possibility of the self’s critically reflecting on and controlling the effect of these influences, especially as they bear on developing the ability to reliably judge and act on what is appropriate for the situation at hand” (Wong 2014, p. 193).

(a) *Finding out what is correct and good as well as who one is coincide in a certain sense*. This humanist idea with a supporting philosophical anthropology of it is represented today by scholars including Charles Taylor (1996).
(b) "Theoreticians of the heart/mind" are undecided about the *status of working with the world*, particularly in studying and promoting "objective" *knowledge as well as love of learning*. Zhu Xi's rationalist variant and Wang Yangming's idealistic view confront each other as great neo-Confucian schools in this regard. These differences too have conspicuous parallels within our educational discourses.
(c) At variance are views regarding the *connection between knowledge and action*. In a manner of speaking, this issue has been a topic of ethics and education since Socrates.
(d) *The heart/mind has a balancing and functioning task to fulfill*. The human being makes mistakes when he has lost the balancing and he may need someone to help to find it again. Education and pedagogy, development and leadership have a complementary role here.

The Confucian and neo-Confucian lessons on the concept of the heart/mind allow us to recall a language and a way of thinking that doesn't shy away from accepting the limits of expression without concluding: A thought that cannot be expressed is also nonessential. Education as a form of understanding the search for the lost heart, according to Mencius, will indeed fail to lead us to a definition that manages to convince academics or scientists in education. Yet it is an expression of knowledge and an experience that presents enrichment and encouragement even outside the sphere of Chinese culture more than 2000 years later.

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Chapter 8
A Vietnamese Reading of the Master's Classic: Phạm Nguyễn Du's *Humble Comments on the Analects* – As an Example of Transformative Learning

Nam Nguyen

Introdutory Remarks
By Ruyu Hung

Nguyen Nam's article "A Vietnamese Reading of the Master's Classic: Phạm Nguyễn Du's *Humble Comments on The Analects* – As an Example of Transformative Learning" deliberately demonstrates and examines the career and thoughts of the eighteenth century Vietnamese scholar Phạm Nguyễn Du. As Nam argues, the contribution of Phạm Nguyễn Du's life and work lies on his view of "learning for the sake of one's self" and his unconventional arrangement of the Confucian classic – the *Analects*. The issue of "learning for the sake of one's self" has been a recurrent theme captivating the mind of Confucian scholars. It is also the beginning of the process of Phạm Nguyễn Du's learning. Nam uses Mezirow's "Ten Phases of Transformative Learning" as an interpretive tool to present the development of Phạm Nguyễn Du's thought. The first phase is "the disorienting dilemma" which is intertwined with the purpose of learning. Should learning be the learning for the sake of one's self or for the sake of others? This question is raised due to the widely-cited dictum of Confucius: "Learners of the ancient time learned for the sake of [cultivating] themselves; nowadays learners learn for the sake of [pleasing] others" (古之學者為己,今之學者為人。)("Xianwen 憲問", *Analects*, 14:24). Yet, what does it mean by learning for the sake of cultivating oneself and by learning for the sake of pleasing others?

Nam uses the contrasting view of Bùi Huy Bích – a contemporary scholar with Phạm Nguyễn Du – to elaborate on this point. Bùi Huy Bích published excerpts of Confucian texts and made a very clear statement about the aim of the compilation, which was to help scholars to prepare for the imperial examination. Bùi Huy Bích in the preface of the complied publications distinguishes "learning for the sake of argumentation" from "learning for the sake of examination" (科舉之學). As Nam

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R. Reichenbach, D.-J. Kwak (eds.), *Confucian Perspectives on Learning and Self-Transformation*, Contemporary Philosophies and Theories in Education 14,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-40078-1_8

explains, “learning for the sake of argumentation” (義理之學) (p. 99) is “learning for the sake of one’s self” whereas “learning for the sake of examination” is “learning for the sake of others”.

Furthermore, Phạm Nguyễn Du relates these two kinds of learning to two types of moral characters in the *Analects – ru* as *junzi* (the noble person) (君子儒) and *ru* as *xiaoren* (the petit person) (小人儒). The differentiation of learning is thus related to the evaluation of moral personalities. The differentiation of learning and moral personalities is indeed an age-old view that can be found in the *Xunzi* (Sturgeon 2011a). In the Chapter 1 of *Xunzi* is the statement: “Learners of ancient time learned for the sake of themselves; learners of nowadays learn for the sake of others. A *junzi* learns to cultivate himself; a *xiaoren* learns to show off.” (古之學者為己, 今之學者為人。君子之學也, 以美其身; 小人之學也, 以為禽犢。) Overall, Phạm Nguyễn Du’s view as Nam articulates can be summarised as follows: the noble person learns for the sake of self-improvement as well as argumentation. In contrast, the petit person learns for the sake of [pleasing] others and [passing] examination. “Learning for the sake of one’s self” has become the most important motto for Confucian scholars or followers. The final end of the Confucian learning is the realisation of an ideal personality or becoming a sage.

However, there is a certain ambiguity about the end of learning, or about the ends of two types of learning. On the one hand, the learning of *xiaoren* are “learning for the sake of others,” “learning for examination,” and “learning for showing off”. On the other hand, the learning of *junzi* are “learning for the sake of one’s self,” “learning for argumentation,” and “learning for self-cultivation.” Learning for the sake of others is belittled because learning is taken a mere tool to pass examination and to achieve fame and wealth. In contrast, learning for the sake of one’s self is to self-cultivate, self-improve. However, the difference between these two types of learning cannot be simply taken as that between learning as the end in itself and learning as the instrument. It is certain that a *xiaoren* takes learning as a means to obtain benefits. Yet isn’t it a benefit for the *junzi* to learn to obtain knowledge to improve himself? With respect to the learning of the *junzi*, the situation could be more complicated and profound. Learning for a *junzi* is a method as well as the end. It is the process and the end of life. To be a *junzi,* a noble person, learning is not only a means for attaining the external goal. More importantly, learning is essential to living. Learning is an internal part of living. To live is to learn, to self-improve, and self-cultivate. This is what we can read in the *Yi Ching* (the *Book of Change*, 易經): “The motion of the Heaven is ceaseless. The *junzi* likewise never stops improving himself.” (天行健,君子以自強不息) (Sturgeon 2011b). More important is the content of a *junzi’s* learning. The knowledge a *junzi* learns should be practical and liveable, personal and embodied. The knowledge is not for examination but for life. Nam translates the knowledge that a junzi aims for as “the learning for the sake of argumentation” (義理之學). The meaning of the two-character term 義理 is indeed complicated. 義 means righteousness or justice whereas 理 means principle, idea or truth. A *junzi* is able to persuade by making logical reasoning. The point is that he must apprehend the true and righteous ideas to make convincing arguments rather than glib talk. By reading Nam’s article, we may conclude that the ideal

learning model in Confucianism is exactly the lifelong learning. Learn to live and live to learn.

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8.1 Introduction

Although much ink has been spilled on the subject of Confucianism in early modern Vietnam, there are many aspects of this important topic that remain poorly understood. How did Vietnamese literati receive and adapt Neo-Confucianism? How were the Confucian classics read to meet the particular needs of Vietnamese intellectuals living in a society structured by civil service exams? What do the lives and careers of individual Vietnamese Confucians reveal about the broader picture of Confucian practices in Vietnam?

In this contribution, I consider these questions by examining the career of Phạm Nguyễn Du 范阮攸 (1739–1786) and his *Humble Comments on the Analects* (*Luận Ngữ Ngu Án* 論語愚按, hereafter *Humble Comments*), a commentary on Zhu Xi's Neo-Confucian thought. I contend that Phạm's life and his composition of the *Humble Comments* can be analysed as a form of transformative learning. As first defined by Jack Mezirow (1923–2014) in the middle of the 1970s and then developed by other scholars, the theory of transformative learning has become popular in North America, and is "gaining the interest of scholars in Europe, Asia, and Africa". (Jarvis and Watts 2012, 201). The application of transformative learning theory to the case of Phạm's life and his *Humble Comments* allows a better understanding of his intellectual evolution and distinctive understanding of the Confucian dictum of "learning for the sake of one's self". This paper begins with an overview of transformative learning theory, followed by a brief biography of Phạm Nguyễn Du. As we examine the *Humble Comments*, traces of Zhu Xi's *Collected Comments on the Analects* (*Lunyu jizhu* 論語集注, hereafter *Collected Comments*) become observable, providing us with an example of the Vietnamese reception of Neo-Confucianism. This paper will make the case for the *Humble Comments* as an instance of transformative learning, as reflected in Phạm's struggles to escape his intellectual and social predicaments and gain true knowledge. Finally, the Confucian dictum of "learning for the sake of one's self," as advocated in the *Humble Comments*, will be reappraised to indicate the its validity in the contexts of contemporary education.

8.2 "Transformative Learning" – An Overview

The theory of "perspective transformation" was first put forward in 1975 by Jack Mezirow, an American sociologist and professor of adult and continuing education. (Jarvis and Watts 2012, xiii). Mezirow was inspired in part by the experiences of his wife, Edee, who returned to school as an adult. (Lawrence and Cranton 2015, 1). Mezirow's framework would later be developed into what is now known as transformative learning, a theory of why and how human beings persistently struggle to better comprehend their world and cultivate a more critical outlook.

"Frame of reference" is a foundational concept in the theory of transformative learning. This term has been defined as "the meaning structures of assumptions and expectations that frame an individual's tacit points of view and influence their thinking, beliefs, and actions." Each frame of reference has two dimensions, known as "habits of mind" and "points of view". Understood as habitual means of thinking, feeling, and acting effected by cultural, political, social, educational, and economic assumptions about the world of the subject, habits of mind can turn into a person's viewpoints, or in other words, they "get expressed in a specific point of view" (Jarvis and Watts 2012, 196). Transformative learning has been defined by Mezirow and others as a process "leading to a deep shift in perspective during which habits of mind become more open, more permeable, more discriminating, and better justified." (Cranton 2006; cited from Kroth and Cranton 2014, 3). The deep shift in question is also known as a perspective transformation, or paradigmatic shift, and this often proceeds

> …[T]hrough a series of cumulative transformed meaning schemes or as a result of an acute personal or social crisis, for example, a natural disaster, the death of a significant other, divorce, a debilitating accident, war, job loss, or retirement. (Taylor 2008, 6).

Going beyond the initial experiences that Mezirow observed through the specific case of women's re-entry programs in community college, the perspective transformation is clearly "not limited to women and appears even in traditional cultures characterized by *Gemeinschaft* social relationships." (Mezirow 1978, 55). Scholars in the field have also pointed out that transformative learning can take place in any situation in which adults are learning, including "formal settings, informal settings, and in independent, autodidactic settings." (Kroth and Cranton 2014, xv). Moreover, transformative learning is not exclusively a form of individual learning, as it can also include group learning processes and certain forms of social change (Jarvis and Watts 2012, 201).

Mezirow's well known "ten phases of transformative learning" are summarized in the chart below (Table 8.1).

As these ten phases are well suited to Phạm Nguyễn Du's life and his composition of the *Humble Comments*, they are employed as an *interpretive* tool to present the development of Phạm's thoughts. In its turn, Phạm's case can serve as an exemplary narrative to be added to the repertoire of stories of transformative learning. Using the ten phases listed in this chart, a careful analysis of Phạm's life and his preface to the *Humble Comments* illuminates the process of reception and adaptation

Table 8.1 Mezirow's ten phases of transformative learning

Phase 1	A disorienting dilemma
Phase 2	A self-examination with feelings of guilt or shame
Phase 3	A critical assessment of epistemic, sociocultural, or psychic assumptions
Phase 4	Recognition that one's discontent and the process of transformation are shared and that others have negotiated a similar change
Phase 5	Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions
Phase 6	Planning of a course of action
Phase 7	Acquisition of knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans
Phase 8	Provisional trying of new roles
Phase 9	Building of competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships
Phase 10	A reintegration into one's life on the basis of conditions dictated by one's perspective

Adapted from Kitchenham (2008, 105)

of Zhu Xi's Neo-Confucianism in eighteenth-century Vietnam in general, and Phạm's transformative learning process in particular.

Phạm Nguyễn Du: A Widower Confucian in Eighteenth-Century Civil-war Torn Đại Việt Phạm Nguyễn Du 范阮攸lived in a time of chaos and civil strife. He was born and grew up in the divided kingdom of Đại Việt, which had split into rival northern and southern realms during the seventeenth century. Over the course of his life, Đại Việt would be torn by rebellions and civil war, culminating eventually in the conflagration known as the Tây Sơn war (1771–1802). As an intellectual living amid war and political and social upheaval, Phạm Nguyễn Du 范阮攸 was a Confucian who longed for an imagined earlier golden age of peace and order.

Originally from Nghệ An (a province in todays' central Vietnam, known for its intellectual traditions as well as the rebellious spirit of its residents), Phạm Nguyễn Du was first known as Phạm Huy Khiêm 范撝謙; he later used the names Hiếu Đức 好德 and Dưỡng Hiên 養軒, while often writing under the literary name of Thạch Động 石洞. Renowned for his cleverness as a youth, Phạm was recruited to serve in the Imperial Diary Office of the Lê-Trịnh 黎鄭 Court, which ruled the northern realm of Đàng Ngoài (literally "outer region"). Phạm passed the Metropolitan Examination in the 40th year of the reign of Cảnh Hưng 景興 (1779), when he was 40 years old, and was promoted to the Hanlin Academy and Historiography Institute.[1] A loyalist to the Restored Lê dynasty, Phạm considered all anti-Lê-dynasty powers (including the leaders of the Tây Sơn uprising) to be usurpers, and maintained this conviction despite considerable evidence that the Lê dynasty was corrupt and in decline. According to the *Records on Nghệ An* (*Nghệ An ký* 乂安記) and *Comprehensive Study of the Metropolitan Graduates through the Dynasties* (*Lịch triều đăng khoa bị khảo* 歷朝登科備考), Phạm was serving as the official in

[1] In his preface to the *Humble Comments on the Analects*, Phạm also indicated that he was reinstated into the Hanlin Academy as commissioner in 1778.

charge of Nghệ An province in 1786 when he learned that the Tây Sơn had seized Phú Xuân, the capital of Đàng Ngoài's southern rival. Faced with this alarming news, he left for Thanh Chương – Nam Đàn, intending to recruit soldiers to fight against the Tây Sơn. But he fell ill and died before he could put his defence plans into action (this brief biography of Phạm Nguyễn Du is based on "Phạm Nguyễn Du and His *Records of a Broken Heart*" in Phạm 2001, 5–6).

Beyond socio-political events, Phạm's worldview was deeply affected by personal tragedy. In 1772, while serving in the Ministry of Personnel, Phạm received the sad news that his wife of 13 years, Nguyễn Thị Đoan Hương 阮氏端香, had passed away at the age of 29. Just 16 years old at the time of her wedding, Đoan Hương joined Phạm in a marriage that was happy but often interrupted by his civil service duties. The death of Phạm's wife was a devastating loss, and grief-stricken he mourned her with 14 eulogies, 49 parallel couplets, and 34 sorrowful poems. These writings were later arranged chronologically in a collection titled *Records of a Broken Heart* (*Đoạn trường lục* 斷腸錄) (Phạm 2001, 38–39). This collection reveals much about Phạm's emotional inner life; yet it also reflects his thoughts about learning and the purposes of knowledge. On the heels of this personal tragedy, Phạm also underwent an intellectual crisis that would change him forever. Rereading the *Analects* and writing commentary on it apparently helped Phạm to reorganise his life around the goal of Confucian enlightenment, and to overcome the above-mentioned difficulties standing in his way.

8.3 The "Humble Comments on the Analects" and Zhu Xi's "Collected Comments"

Phạm Nguyễn Du wrote the *Humble Comments on the Analects*[2] between 1778 and 1780, while serving as a court official. The connection between his work and Zhu Xi's *Collected Comments* (*Lunyu jizhu* 論語集註) is shown in the title of Phạm's text. Phạm was obviously familiar with Zhu's *Collected Comments*, as he mentioned it in his description of the composition of his *Humble Comments*. "At first I read the main text until becoming intimately familiar with it," he wrote, "then [I] elaborately examined the *Collected Commentaries*, and later carefully went through other Confucians' explanations" (Phạm Nguyễn Du's "Preface" to the *Humble Comments*). Phạm's attitude toward Zhu Xi's work is consistent with the Confucian notion of "Study of Principle" (*Lixue* 理學), as practiced by Lê dynasty literati in eighteenth-century Vietnam (Zhang 2008, 22–26). In his *Collected Comments*, Zhu employed the phrase "humble comment" (*yu'an* 愚按) about 20 times in total throughout the work when introducing his commentaries on specific chapters of the

[2] For its analyses, the paper relies on the handwritten copy preserved in the Institute of Han-Nom Studies (Hanoi), call number VHV 349/1–2, reproduced as Phạm 2011; and as part of Phạm 2013, 817–1001.

Analects (Chinese Text Project). By borrowing this phrase, Phạm was indicating his admiration and intellectual debt to Zhu Xi's Neo-Confucian philosophy. At the same time, however, the *Humble Comments*' distinctive attempt to re-interpret Zhu Xi's ideas can be glimpsed in Phạm's annotations to the original text, and especially in the unusual organizational structure he adopted.

After carefully studying every chapter of the *Analects* in its extant form, Phạm decided to take another step in his autodidactic process: writing comments on the classic. But instead of following the original work's structure, Phạm radically changed the way the chapters were originally arranged. He explained this as follows:

> At the risk of being too bold, I have classified its chapters into categories for convenient review. [Based on my classification] the work generally has four books, twenty-three categories, and 493 chapters. In each chapter, my "humble comments" are added below the original main text. Thus, I have named this work *Humble Comments on the Analects*.

By reorganizing the *Analects* into four books called "Sage" (*Sheng* 聖), "Learning" (*Xue* 學), "Official" (*Shi* 仕), and "Politics" (*Zheng* 政), the *Humble Comments* signalled its author's intent to seek new interpretive insights from the classical text (Phan 2006). The relationship between these four books has been construed by modern Vietnamese scholars as an attempt to emphasize the dictum of "Sageliness within, kingliness without" (*neisheng waiwang* 內聖外王) (Đinh 2012, 459–460). The dictum stands as an expression of the Confucian principle of self-cultivation (Zhang 2008; Chu 2009, 47), and Confucian literati can only take office and assume their social responsibilities based on this foundation. Phạm proceeded to break down each of the four topics into sub-topics to further explore a wide array of issues presented through the chapters that record both the Master's and his disciples' words. The chart below summarizes the resulting organizational structure of the *Humble Comments* (Table 8.2).

At the end of each "book", Phạm Nguyễn Du summarized his thoughts on the focal topic in a section called "General Statements" (*Tổng thuyết* 總說).[3] Because of the central importance of these statements to the overall goals of the *Humble Comments*, some discussion of each of them is in order.

In his "General Statements on the Sage," Phạm recapitulated the line of argumentation in the Book of Sage in three main points. First, he emphasized that the image of the Sage reassembled and reconstructed from various chapters of the *Analects* was a model worthy of emulation. Second, although the Sage had lived thousands of years earlier, Phạm believed that he remained accessible to contemporary readers thanks to his recorded words. Last but not least, Phạm maintained that learning the Way of the Sage was indispensable, because it was both cosmologically immense and humanly pragmatic. For Phạm, this dual quality of the Way—its simultaneous relevance to the entire universe and to the everyday reality of human beings—was precisely what made it so appealing as a model:

> This Book solemnly selects factual records of the auspiciously virtuous Sage from the *Analects*. There are one hundred and five chapters, classified into four volumes, by which

[3] For the original texts of the four "General Statements," see Appendix B at the end of the paper.

Table 8.2 The Structure of the *Humble Comments on the Analects* by Phạm Nguyễn Du

Book	Category	Number of chapters
Sage (Thánh 聖, 105 chapters total)	Knowledge (Học vấn 學問)	7
	Dignified manner (Uy nghi 威儀)	7
	Residing, dressing and eating (Cư xử, phục thực 居處服食)	9
	Coping with human affairs and being exemplary to people (Ứng sự phạm vật 應事範物)	30
	Dealing with changes/disasters (Xử biến 處變)	7
	Judging people (Thủ nhân 取人)	26
	Talking about sages (Thuyết thánh 說聖)	8
	Commenting on sages (Nghị thánh 議聖)	10
	Appendix: Disciples' Records of the Transmission of the way through sages (Môn nhân ký quần thánh đạo thống 門人記群聖道統)	1
Learning (Học 學, 202 chapters total)	Extension of knowledge 1 (Trí tri 致知)	28
	Extension of knowledge 2	27
	Appendix: Disciples' sayings (Môn nhân ngôn 門人言)	3
	Practicing with vigour 1 (Lực hành 力行)	39
	Practicing with vigour 2	39
	Practicing with vigour 3	19
	Appendixes:	
	Disciples' sayings	19
	Disciples' records (Môn nhân ký 門人記)	1
	Filial and fraternal (Hiếu đễ 孝弟)	10
	Appendix: Disciples' sayings	5
	Social intercourse (Giao tế 交際)	6
	Appendixes:	
	Disciples' sayings	5
	Disciples' writings for their students	1
Ethically responsible scholar or official (Sĩ 仕,45 chapters total)	Upper ethically responsible scholar/official (Thượng sĩ 上仕)	11
	Middle ethically responsible scholar/official (Trung sĩ 中仕)	18
	Appendix: Disciples' sayings	6
	Lower ethically responsible scholar/official (Hạ sĩ 下仕)	8
	Appendix: Disciples' records	2

(continued)

Table 8.2 (continued)

Book	Category	Number of chapters
Politics (Chính 政, 141 chapters total)	Self-rectifying (Chính kỷ 正己)	25
	Observing people 1 (Quan nhân 觀人)	28
	Observing people 2	28
	Ritual and music (Lễ nhạc 禮樂)	28
	Appendixes:	
	Disciples' sayings	1
	Disciples' records	1
	Governing people (Lâm dân 臨民)	27
	Appendixes:	
	Disciples' sayings	1
	Disciples' records	2

> [the commentator] wants his readers to submissively respect and admire the Sage as if he majestically comes out before [them]. Admiring [the Sage] from a distance, one will have an object worthy of honour; getting closer to him, one will have an object to model after. One's heart-and-mind relies on and turns towards [the Sage] as if a traveller has his home, an archer has his target; as if artisans look around and respectfully listen to their grand master, or as if the myriad beings all together gaze at and simultaneously are supported by the sun and moon, heaven and earth. Neither distracting thoughts nor wishful thinking dare to germinate; nor does one dare to rush to wrong paths or heresies. Alas! Being born a few thousand years later, as for those who pursue the Sage's remaining words, the superior direct their thought to the mysterious, seeking the help of Confucianism [as a medium] to enter Chan (Zen) Buddhism[4]; the inferior feel content with their official salary, flowing into the degradation without knowing it. Who knows the refined of the Way of the Sage can match with the movements of the limitless and the supreme ultimate, and its unrefined does not go beyond the tangibility of the daily common sense, ritual and music, criminal law and government decrees. The far expansion of the Way spreads over the endless space of the past and present universe, but its near range dwells within the scope of [human activities, such as] coming-in or going-out, actions, eating and drinking.

By positioning the "Book of Learning" after his discussion of the Sage, Phạm continued his discourse on the model of the Sage, drawing readers' attention to what he saw as its defining feature. By modelling oneself on the Sage, Phạm argued, one was acting not simply to improve and complete one's own learning, but also to improve and complete the learning undertaken by others. Phạm's "General Statements on Learning" reads in part,

[4]This reminds us of the relationship between Chan (Zen) Buddhism and Song Neo-Confucianism.

> (…) [One should remember] three points on which Zengzi examined himself,[5] and four things that Yan Yuan avoided when subduing his self[6]; [these points are:] preserve what you have attained, and pursue what you have not yet been able to achieve; polish and cleanse your heart-and-mind; [and], socialize with humanity to approach what is called "Uprightness." Alas! At present in responding to humans and other beings, there is nothing other than the constancy of daily moral human relations. What we have on the pages is the heritage of the Master, and all are the instructions to practice the knowledge one has earned. From admiring the Worthy to admiring the Sage, *from completing one's self to completing other human beings*—Confucians' learning is completely comprehensive. (Emphasis mine.)

For Phạm, the concept of learning flowed naturally into the idea of ethical and responsible service to society, since serving as an official allowed one to move from self-improvement to facilitating other people's efforts at self-improvement. In "The Book of the Official," Phạm analysed the ideographic content of the Chinese character for "official", noting that its two integral components, "scholar" and "human," constitute the two poles that serve to define the essential meaning of official service. In Phạm's words, "without being 'scholar' and 'human', it is truly impossible to be an 'official.'"[7] To be a good official, moreover, one must constantly strive for self-cultivation. Below is an excerpt from the "General Statements on the Official":

> If directing one's aspiration to the upper rank, one may end up in the middle one; if directing one's aspiration to the middle rank, one unavoidably attains the lower; moreover, if setting one's aspiration to the lower, how can one practice the obligations of the subject, acting according to the humane way, and moving within heaven and earth?

Having linked self-cultivation to the ideal of ethical service, Phạm turned in his fourth and final book to the discussion of "politics," or the actual practices of governance. For Phạm, the ideal of the self-cultivated official was linked to two other Confucian concepts: the notion of rectification, and the idea of governing according to "the Mean." Here he offered his own gloss on the well-known claim put forward in the *Analects* that "to govern is to rectify" ("Yan Yuan" 顏淵, 12:17).[8] For Phạm, the goal of "rectifying" the practices of a state or royal court to bring them into line with Confucian principles could only be realized if the officials involved were truly committed to their own rectification through self-improvement. As Phạm put it in his "General Statement on Politics":

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[5] Zengzi 曾子 said, "Every day I examine myself on three points: whether if I may have been unfaithful when transacting business for others; whether if I may have been insincere when interacting with friends; and whether if I may have not practiced what I have learned." (*Analects*, "Xue er").

[6] When Yan Yuan 顏淵 asked about benevolence, the Master said, "To subdue one's self and return to propriety" (*keji fuli* 克己復禮). Yan ventured to ask about the steps of the process. The Master responded, "Do not look at what is inappropriate to propriety; do not listen to what is inappropriate to propriety; do not speak what is inappropriate to propriety; and do not take any action that is inappropriate to propriety." (*Analects*, "Yan Yuan").

[7] The original reads, 夫「仕」字從「士」從「人」, 蓋非士非人, 誠不足以言仕也。

[8] The original reads, 政者, 正也。

> The Book of "Politics" collects the great teachings of the Sage as well as his disciples' sayings and records regarding politics, one hundred and forty-one (141) chapters in total. Based on the meaning of each chapter, this book classifies them into four categories, "Self-rectifying," "Observing people," "Ritual and Music," and "Governing people." On the basis of the idea "to govern is to rectify," the immensity of politics is contained within these four categories, and is rooted in the rectification of the self. Hence, all sagely kings of the ancient past who were "discriminating, uniform in the pursuit of the rightness, and sincerely holding fast the Mean" took self-rectification as the foundation of justification.

Regarding the present structure of the *Analects* simply as the result of randomly collected and diverse written records by and on the Sage into seemingly casually named books that, in general, did not mean much to readers, Phạm Nguyễn Du took it upon himself to rearrange and classify the chapters into specific topics that would have maximum benefit for the learning purposes of the readers. In this way, Phạm aimed to make his reorganization of the *Analects* serve and underscore his emphasis on the primacy of self-cultivation and "learning for the sake of one's self":

> Do contemporary readers of the *Analects* essentially want to search for the Sage's instructions, being absorbed in contemplation [of them], experiencing them for themselves, applying them in the universe in order to pursue the [ideal of] "learning for one's self"? Or do they necessarily want to base themselves on the [current] order of books and chapters, trying to figure out some meanings from this meaningless order, while getting bogged down in its tiny details? If people wish to explore the sage's instructions by contemplating and quietly appreciating them, by experiencing them within their own bodies, and by applying them in practice in order to pursue the "Learning for the sake of one's self," then they should understand this work as an effort at self-teaching, undertaken by me, Thạch Động.

Phạm's rearrangement of the *Analects*' chapters into specific topics proved influential. By the early twentieth century, the use of the Romanized alphabetic script as a method of writing Vietnamese had largely displaced the Chinese writing system in Vietnam. To preserve "traditional" values against Western influence, Confucian classics were progressively translated into Vietnamese by the means of the Romanized script. In 1922, the *Analects* was translated for the first time into Vietnamese and printed in Romanized script by the translator Dương Bá Trạc (1884–1944). An anti-colonialist Confucian educator and one of the co-founders of the Free School of Tonkin (Đông Kinh Nghĩa Thục 東京義塾), Dương Bá Trạc followed in the footsteps of Phạm Nguyễn Du when classifying the chapters into categories. (Dương 1922). Five years later (1927), Lương Văn Can (1854–1927), also a co-founder of the Free School of Tonkin, produced his own translation of the classic, and classified its chapters into 16 categories (Ôn 1927). Thus, the creative and critical rearrangement/classification model set by Phạm Nguyễn Du for the *Analects* in the eighteenth century lived on through the practice of a later generation of scholars in early twentieth-century Vietnam. To understand the enduring appeal of this model, a closer investigation of Phạm's text is in order—especially those parts of it which suggest the author's transformative learning approach.

8.4 The "Humble Comments" as an Example of Transformative Learning

In lieu of a thorough analysis of the entire *Humble Comments*, this paper will focus on Phạm's preface. As we will see, this part of the text can be viewed as Phạm's attempt to mix autobiography with Vietnamese Confucian discourses. Understood in this light, the preface can tell us a great deal about Phạm's transformative learning process.

Phạm opened his preface by recalling the negative impacts of the pressure of preparing for the civil service examination as a teenager. The examination system was often considered a means for people to climb the ladder of success, bringing honour and wealth not only to the successful candidate, but also to his relatives. For Phạm, this state of affairs placed enormous strain on exam candidates. In a later poem, he recalled encountering an entourage of seven boats carrying the relatives of a high-ranking official, and noted that "When a man is appointed as Minister Duke, a hundred of his people are honoured—All are begotten under our Confucian ink brush" (Phạm 2001, 132–34). The pressure to succeed through the examination was thus put on men's shoulders very early in their childhood, and Phạm was no exception.

Although he read the *Analects* during his early adolescence, Phạm confessed that his initial reading of the classic was very superficial, as he concentrated mainly on "the sounds and meanings of its words" and thus failed to "apprehend its significance." Merging in with the secular trends of his time, Phạm directed his learning to the "syntactic and semantic analysis [of the ancient writings]" for about 25 years. During this long period, he occasionally referred to the *Analects*, but only as a way to show off his erudition. As he explained, "Although I used the book from time to time, it was only to glean and collect bit by bit for the sake of memorization, so in the event that anyone asked, I would have the resources to expound as needed." However, Phạm's learning style would change dramatically after he passed the Metropolitan examination and took up responsibilities in the Hanlin Academy and Historiography Institute. Finding himself in the new and unfamiliar role of state official, Phạm became anxious about his "ignorance" of the substance and meaning of good governance. In this time of difficulty, which might be labelled as the first and second of Mezirow's ten phases of transformative learning, Phạm returned to the Master's work as a source of intellectual consolation. As he wrote, "One night, thinking of the *Analects*, I took it out and read it."

Like the Sixth Patriarch Hui Neng 慧能, who became enlightened upon hearing a line from the *Diamond Sutra* (Yampolsky 1967, 133, note 41),[9] Phạm found himself awakened when reaching the sentence "Being at the age of forty or fifty, but not yet making oneself heard of" from the *Analects*. Originally written in the book "Zi

[9] The original reads, 應無所住而省其心。

Han" 子罕 (9:23),[10] the sentence is part of the Master's saying which Zhu Xi, in his *Collected Comments*, takes as a way "to alert people, to urge them to exert themselves in learning in a timely fashion."[11] Taken out of its original context, the cited sentence seems to be concerned solely with a man's career and reputation. However, when reread in context and in association with Zhu Xi's comments, it conveys an encouragement for learning. For Phạm, this sentence offered a way to make new connections among one's career, reputation, and learning.

To illustrate these connections in his preface, Phạm mentioned the case of the Song Confucian Xu Heng 許衡 (also known as Xu Luzhai 許魯齋, 1209–1281) as an example of self-reflection and determination to change after recognizing mistakes. He may well have read Xu's biography ("Luzhai xue'an 魯齋學案") in the *Records of Song-Yuan Scholars* (*Song Yuan xue'an* 宋元學案), since he cited forty-year-old Xu's regretful words for having "taught and learned impetuously" (*shoushou menglang* 授受孟浪).[12] In the first part of Xu's biography, the boy Xu asked his teacher, "For what purpose do we learn?" (*Dushu hewei* 讀書何為) The answer he got was simply: "To take the imperial civil examination" (*Qu kedi er*取科第耳). Of course, what the teacher said did not satisfy his pupil. Later in life, Xu also became a teacher with a number of students. His intellectual outlook changed radically after his visit to the Neo-Confucian Yao Shu 姚樞 (1201–1278), from whom he learned the Cheng brothers' and Zhu Xi's thoughts. Returning to his school, Xu told his students that what he had previously taught them was not right and should be abandoned, and that they should have a new beginning, starting with Zhu Xi's *Elementary Learning* (*Xiaoxue* 小學), which, in the eyes and words of modern scholars, shows the need "to take responsibility for, to define, and to shape one's self in the context of foregoing environmental factors and relationships." (de Bary et al. 2008, 404). Xu Heng's story, as narrated in Phạm's preface is also a case of transformative learning which encouraged the author to thoroughly review his approach to, and understanding, of learning.

The story of Xu in the preface neatly frames the third and fourth phases of Phạm's own transformative learning process. His rereading of the *Analects* could be seen as the process of the third phase—defined as the "critical assessment of epistemic, sociocultural, or psychic assumptions" undertaken by an individual who has achieved a long-cherished goal (in Phạm's case, passing the imperial examination and taking office), only to discover that the achievement does not bring fulfilment.

[10] The entire chapter reads, "The young generation is awesome. How can we know that the coming generation will not be equal to the present one? But if a person at the age of forty or fifty has still not been heard of, he should not be in awe of either." (後生可畏, 焉知來者之不如今也?四十、五十而無聞焉, 斯亦不足畏也已.)

[11] The original reads, 以警人, 使及時勉學也。

[12] In "Luzhai xue'an", the phrase originally reads as 昔者授受,殊孟浪也.

Having examined Xu Heng's radical change in his orientation towards learning, Phạm considers his own circumstances:

> Comparing my case with that of Luzhai pursuing the Way, I am still one year younger than him. From now until my old age there remains quite a significant amount of time. Shouldn't I endeavour to move forward, and follow in the footsteps of those who acquire knowledge from predicaments in which they find themselves?

With the comparison of his case to Xu Heng's, Phạm clearly arrived at the fourth phase, in which he recognized that "[his] discontent and the process of transformation [were] shared" with others who "[had] negotiated a similar change" with him. Noteworthy here is Phạm's use of the concept of *khốn tri/kunzhi* 困知 (acquiring true knowledge from predicaments) in describing his circumstances.

8.5 Out of Predicaments with True Knowledge

To better understand how *khốn tri/kunzhi* is comprehended in the *Humble Comments*, we turn to Phạm's comments on a particular chapter of the *Analects*. In Chapter 9 of the Book "Jishi 季氏", the Master reviewed four types of people endowed with different learning capabilities. The chapter in question has inspired various interpretations (and thus various translations) for this specific sentence, *kun er xue zhi you qi ci ye* 困而學之又其次也. Below are some examples of how this has been rendered:

J. Legge: "Those who are *dull and stupid*, and yet compass the learning, are another class next to these."[13]
D. C. Lau: "Next again come those turn to study after having been *vexed by difficulties*" (Confucius 1979, 140).
S. Leys: "Next again come those who learn through the *trials of life*" (Confucius 1997, 83).
Ames and Rosemont: "Something learned *in response to difficulties encountered* is again the next highest." (Confucius 1998, 199).
D. K. Gardner: "Those who learn it but *with difficulty* are next" (Gardner 2003, 41).
E. Slingerland: "Those who *find it difficult to understand* and yet persist in their studies come next" (Confucius 2003, 196)
R. Eno: "Next are those who study it only *in circumstances of duress*" (Eno 2015, 92).[14]

Although different from one another, the above-cited translations can be sorted into three groups, depending how each of them interpret the keyword *kun* 困. The first group takes it as an innate characteristic of the learner, such as "dull and stupid"

[13] The original reads, 孔子曰:「生而知之者, 上也; 學而知之者, 次也; 困而學之, 又其次也; 困而不學, 民斯為下矣。」.James Legge translates this as follows, "Those who are born with the possession of knowledge are the highest class of men. Those who learn, and so, readily, get possession of knowledge, are the next. Those who are dull and stupid, and yet compass the learning, are another class next to these. As to those who are dull and stupid and yet do not learn—they are the lowest of the people." (Chinese Text Project 2017)

[14] All emphases mine.

(Legge). Close to the first group, the second understands *kun* as the learner's cognitive ability (Slingerland). But the most common rendering treats *kun* as difficult environments and/or conditions in which the learner acquires new knowledge. It is also worth mentioning that the same translator may have different interpretations of *kun* depending on the context. Below is Legge's translation of a passage from the *Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhongyong* 中庸), in which he interpreted *kun* differently,

> Knowledge, magnanimity, and energy, these three, are the virtues universally binding. And the means by which they carry the duties into practice is singleness. Some are born with the knowledge of those duties; some know them by study; and some acquire the knowledge *after a painful feeling of their ignorance*. But the knowledge being possessed, it comes to the same thing.[15]

Similarly, *khốn/kun* as a key concept in the *Humble Comments* might convey various meanings depending on the context. Unlike what we have seen in the preface, in which *khốn/kun* should represent difficult circumstances, Phạm's comments on Chapter 9 of "Jishi" provide us with a different interpretation:

> Human beings possess four ranks of material nature, but they are all people (*dân/min* 民) who hold fast to the law and love virtue. Thus, those who have difficulties but still learn can reach the status of those whose knowledge is inborn. Without learning, the transformation of material nature appears impossible. Falling into difficulties but not learning, one will forever be trapped in difficulties. Thus, although named "the people," they are not part of "the people" in reality.[16]

Readers familiar with Neo-Confucianism can easily recognize the terminology employed in Phạm's comments, such as his reference to the concept of "material nature" (*qizhi* 氣質). Imperfect and incomplete (and thus needing refinement), "material nature" is also known as "human psyches and temperaments," (Bell 2008, 80), and placed in opposition to the "original nature" (*benxing* 本性), the perfect and good nature preserved in human sub-consciousness. (Lee K. H. 2010; Lee S. H. 2010, 129–53). As for the "original nature", through Phạm's comments, it can be identified as the nature of Heavenly pattern (*tianli zhi xing* 天理之性), another vital Neo-Confucian concept. Based on Confucius' belief that "men are nearly alike by nature" and Mencius' theory of "humans beings are good by nature," Phạm believed the following:

> At the beginning, both the noble person and the petty person have the nature of heavenly pattern. Protecting the pattern, one will ascend and become the noble person; losing the pattern, one will descend and turn to be the petty person. When the least bit of difference has occurred, heaven and earth automatically become apart.[17]

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[15] The original reads, 知仁勇三者, 天下之達德也, 所以行之者一也。或生而知之, 或學而知之, 或困而知之, 及其知之, 一也。Emphasis mine. (Chinese Text Project 2017.)

[16] The *Humble Comments*, Book of "Learning", vol. 7; the original read, 人有四等氣質, 然均之秉彝好德之民。故困而學可以至於生知。變化氣質非學不能也。困而不學, 乃終於困, 名曰民而實非民矣。

[17] The original reads, 君子小人其初皆具天理之性。保其理則上而為君子。失其理則下而為小人。毫釐一分, 天壤自隔。

Furthermore, the "material nature" in Phạm's comments is subsequently linked to the "people," a move which has its origin in the *Classics of Poetry* (*Shijing* 詩經). The poem titled "Zhengmin 烝民" from this collection reads,

Heaven, in giving birth to the multitudes of the people,	天生烝民、
To every faculty and relationship annexed its law.	有物有則。
The people possess this normal nature,	民之秉彝、
And they [consequently] love its normal virtue.	好是懿德。

Chinese Text Project (2017)

Based on this poem, Phạm talks about people under heaven who by their "original nature" should be able to "hold fast to the law and love virtue." This also reminds us of Zhu Xi's concept of "Heaven's people" (*tian min* 天民) who are all the same in possessing the commiserating mind-and-heart (Hon 2012, 16). However, this potential equality turns out to be almost impossible in practice, due to differences among their "material natures." In this case, Phạm obviously follows Zhu Xi's line of thought on the uneven endowments of material nature that result in the unequal learning capabilities seen in human beings. Commenting on the same chapter of "Jishi," Zhu Xi explains,

> *Kun* 困 means that there is something obstructed. The passage indicates that since people's material natures are not the same, there exist these four ranks in general. Yang [Shi, 楊時] said, "From being born with the possession of knowledge, learning and getting possession of knowledge to getting possession of knowledge with difficulties due to personal imperfection, although their material natures are not the same, their [acquired] knowledge is identical. Hence, the noble man only treasures learning as precious. Thus, being entrapped in difficulties by imperfect material nature but not learning accordingly is regarded as inferior.[18] (Chinese Text Project 2017)

Thus, Phạm's willingness to put himself "after *kunzhi* people" can be construed as his self-identification with those who were born with limited "material nature" and acquired knowledge from the difficult circumstances in which they found themselves. This realization was undoubtedly a critical landmark in his life. Having achieved this insight, Phạm decided to "abolish learning for the purpose of the civil service examination", and instead began carrying the *Analects* with him day and night. This was the fifth phase of transformative learning ("Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions"), and the beginning of Phạm's new journey of "learning for the sake of one's self."

[18] The original reads, 困, 謂有所不通。言人之氣質不同, 大約有此四等。楊氏曰:「生知學知以至困學, 雖其質不同, 然及其知之一也。故君子惟學之為貴。困而不學, 然後為下。」

8.6 The "Humble Comments" and "Learning for the Sake of One's Self"

During Phạm Nguyễn Du's lifetime, a series of "abridged" (*tiết yếu* 節要) Confucian texts, including the Four Books and Five Classics, emerged. The series' compiler was Bùi Huy Bích 裴輝璧 (1744–1818), a high-ranking official and contemporary and acquaintance of Phạm Nguyễn Du. Bùi abridged not only the Four Books and Five Classics, but also Neo-Confucian works, such as the *Great Compendia of Nature and Principle* (*Xingli daquan* 性理大全). As the purpose of this series was to help Confucian students prepare for the civil service examination, it was widely reprinted several times by various printing houses throughout the nineteenth century. A preface to the series found in the first book of the *Abridged Four Books – The Great Learning* (*Tứ thư tiết yếu – Đại học* 四書節要——大學, reprinted in 1850) confirms that the series was designed to help candidates in their preparation for the exam (*tiện ư quyết khoa nhi dĩ* 便於決科而已). The preface also distinguishes "learning for the sake of argumentation" (*nghĩa lý chi học* 義理之學) from "learning for the sake of the examination" (*khoa cử chi học* 科舉之學). According to the preface,

> Learning for the sake of the examination and learning for the sake of argumentation are not the same. Learning for the sake of argumentation moves from erudition to simplicity, whereas learning for the sake of the examination focuses only on simplicity. Therefore, the latter takes the entirety of the classics and their commentaries and abridges them.[19]

Another preface printed in the first book of the *Abridged Five Classics – The Classic of Documents* (*Ngũ kinh tiết yếu – Thư kinh* 五經節要——書經, reprinted in 1842) stated,

> Learning for the sake of the examination concentrates on the comprehension of the script, often abridging and simplifying it to prioritize memorization and preparation for the examination.[20]

Solemnly printed in large-size characters at the beginning of every subset in this popular series, the perception communicated in the prefaces of the differences between the two learning styles must have reflected a common belief in elite Vietnamese circles at the time. Moreover, the popularity of the abridged series was evidence of the tendency of "learning for the sake of the examination" in society. Led partly by Bùi Huy Bích's series, this tendency undoubtedly went against what Phạm Nguyễn Du was aiming at, namely "learning for the sake of one's self."

For Phạm Nguyễn Du, the two contrasting forms of learning reflect the mindsets of two differing personalities. Commenting on Chapter 6:13 of the *Analects*, "You

[19] The original reads, 科舉之學與義理之學不同。義理之學必自博而之約, 科舉之學則主於約。故取經傳之全而節之。

[20] The original reads, 科舉之學專於理會文字, 往往節而約之以優記誦、備決科。

should be a *ru* 儒 scholar after the style of the noble person, and not after that of the petty person,"[21] Phạm Nguyễn Du states that,

> After Confucius and Mencius, people who learn to become Confucian are numerous; but since their mindsets are false and not genuine, consequently their learning is only for the sake of reputation and fortune, and is not based on [the improvement of] the self to serve magnanimous affairs. In general, seeking knowledge turns people into the noble person, when being anxious [for reputation and fortune] changes people into the petty person. The tiny space existing in the contention between the principle and the temperament entails the difference between the two types of the noble person and the petty person.[22]

In a poem titled "Presented to Tồn Am" (Ký trình Tồn Am 寄呈存庵), Phạm addressed a statement on his purpose of learning directly to Bùi,[23]

[Learning] for the sake of one's self, one has modelled oneself on the examples of Confucius and Mencius;	為己既能希孔孟
Finding oneself at a right time, one should not be ashamed with Gao Yao and Kui.[24]	逢辰應不愧皋夔

Even though the context of this admiring poem remains unknown, it was certainly no accident that Phạm chose to offer a critical commentary on the goal of learning when learning for the sake of the examination had already become a trend. For Zhu Xi, even though the sages and worthies had numerous discussions on the objective of learning, none of them were as essential as Confucius' oft-cited dictum, "Learners of the ancient time learned for the sake of [cultivating] themselves; nowadays learners learn for the sake of [pleasing] others."[25] Based on the Master's dictum, the phrase "Learning for the sake of one's self" became one of the most central themes for Neo-Confucians. Zhu Xi even employed it as an important criterion to identify who should be included in his circle of fellow scholars. An advocate of this spirit, Phạm would base his learning agenda on Zhu Xi's tradition.

Having established the new goal for his learning, Phạm Nguyễn Du undertook to devise a concrete agenda, which he tried to realize through a rereading of the *Analects*. As described in the preface, having resolutely abandoned "learning for the

[21] "Yong ye 雍也" (6:13) of the *Analects*: 子謂子夏曰:「女為君子儒, 無為小人儒。」

[22] The original reads, 孔孟之後, 世之學為如者多矣, 惟其立心偽而不真, 故其學只為名譽利祿, 不於自己分上事。蓋為學則同於君子而操心則入於小人, 所爭理欲一毫之間, 遂有君子小人兩樣之別。

[23] Tồn Am is the literary name of Bùi Huy Bích. The poem is in the collection called *Anthology of Poetry from the Imperial Việt* (*Hoàng Việt thi tuyển* 皇越詩選), also compiled by Bùi.

[24] Gao Yao was the legal officer of the legendary emperor Shun, who also appointed Kui as the music master.

[25] The original reads, 子曰:「古之學者為己, 今之學者為人。」("Xianwen 憲問", *Analects*, 14:24). Zhu Xi's original line reads, 其說多矣, 然未有如此言之切而要者 (*Collected Commentaries*).

examination" (*cử tử học* 舉子學), Phạm read the *Analects* in three stages. First, he read the main text repeatedly until becoming intimately familiar with it (*shoudu* 熟讀). The term *shoudu* employed in this specific context is actually also a key term in the *Conversations with Master Zhu, Arranged Topically* (*Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類), especially in the sections on reading. According to Zhu Xi, becoming intimately familiar with a text means the reader taking it into their heart-and-mind, an embodiment process that requires both physical experiences of and deep reflections on the focal subject. As stated in *Conversations with Master Zhu:*

> Generally speaking, in reading, we must first become intimately familiar with the text so that its words seem to come from our own mouths. We should then continue to reflect on it so that its ideas seem to come from our minds. Only then can there be real understanding (Zhu 1990, 135).[26]

Using this specific term, Phạm clearly shared the same thoughts with Zhu Xi, as the first stage of his reading method implied direct contact with and independent understanding of the text without assistance from any intermediary.

In the second and third stages of his reading, Phạm reread the *Analects* with the help of the *Collected Commentaries*, and later, in consultation with the annotations made by other Confucian scholars. This appears similar to the method described in *Conversations with Master Zhu,* which recommends reading commentaries only after the attainment of intimate familiarity with the text. In Zhu Xi's words, the order should go as follows: "At the moment I'm not even speaking about the recitation of commentaries; let's simply recite the classical texts to the point of intimate familiarity (Zhu 1990, 138)."[27]

The way Phạm studied the *Analects* was thus very much in line with Zhu Xi's reading method. According to Zhu Xi, if people do not read a classical text in this manner, their understanding of it will remain superficial: "the words will be hollow and learning will not be for their own sake, as is now the case with those preparing for the examinations." (Zhu 1990, 156).

Besides the *Humble Comments*, Phạm Nguyễn Du's thoughts on "learning for the sake of one's self" are also well presented in a poem entitled "Bequeathed to

[26] The original reads, 大抵觀書先須熟讀, 使其言皆若出於吾之口; 繼以精思, 使其意皆若出於吾之心, 然後可以有得爾。

[27] The original reads, 而今未說讀得注, 且只熟讀正經. As a breakthrough, the first and direct reading of a text requires great effort, and the consultation of commentaries should only come later. Zhu Xi reminds us that, "You must take the classical text and read it till you've become intimately familiar with it. Savor each and every word until you know its taste. If there are passages you don't understand, ponder them deeply, and if you still don't get them, then read the commentaries—only then will the commentaries have any significance" (Zhu 1990, 155).

Phạm Lập Trai, Who Passed the Imperial Examination in the Same Year as the Author"[28] (Di đồng niên Phạm Lập Trai 遺同年范立齋). The poem reads:

Memorizing well the remainder [of the teachings of the sages],	記誦得緒餘
Holding fast to them but losing their true subtleties,	攀持失真妙
People are remote in time and space from the thoughts of Confucius and Mencius,	悠悠孔孟意
And [the thoughts of the masters] increasingly become vague and unclear to them.	日望益幽渺
[Following such a learning method], people will ruin their intention,	以此壞心術
Run into the apertures of fame and gain,	走入聲利竅
And even until their death, remain unaware of its danger.	到死不自覺
This is both regrettable and mournful.	可嘆復可悼
I am glad that at your young age,	我喜君年髫
Through learning, you already found the gist [of the teachings].	學已見大要
Various schools of thinkers have discussed [the classics] in succession,	百家談紛紛
As a mixed assembly of disciples in chaos.	雜進徒擾擾
As gem-like stones, they can be thousands though,	雖累千碔砆
But can any small piece of preciousness be found among them?	何如一寸寶
Why don't we go back to the essence [of the teachings],	曷不反精義
Probing [into the texts], gradually analysing and understanding them?	探討漸剖瞭
When the latent has been revealed and honoured,	蘊蓄既寵遂
It will expand, exposing its depth and vastness.	克擴自汪浩
Confucians of the Song and Yuan dynasties had gone ahead,	宋元諸儒先
Closing the door and carefully studying [the classics].	閉門事講究
[Traveling on] the great road, one really looks up [to the high hill].	景行實在仰
All of the profound teachings can be examined	微訓皆可考
And traced back up to their sources.	淵源遡以上
The effects [of this learning method] are not small, indeed.	功用良非少
If the cause of truth does not perish,	斯文苟不喪
With it, one can rise again from decline and failure.	相與起衰倒

The last two lines in the poem are unmistakably based on Chapter 9.5 of the *Analects*. In that chapter, the Master remained fearless when facing threats because he confidently considered himself the embodiment of this culture.[29] Similarly, Phạm

[28] Lập Trai 立齋 is the literary name of Phạm Quý Thích 范貴適 (1760–1825), who passed the civil service examination and earned the title "presented scholar," *jinshi* 進士, at the age of 19 in 1779. Like Phạm Nguyễn Du, he was uncooperative with the Tây Sơn. The poem can be found in Tồn Am Bùi Huy Bích. (2007). *Hoàng Việt Thi Tuyển*. Hà Nội: Trung tâm Nghiên cứu Quốc học - Văn học Publisher, pp. 1044–1049.

[29] The chapter reads, "The Master was put in fear in Kuang. He said, 'After the death of King Wen, was not the cause of truth lodged here in me? If Heaven had wished to let this cause of truth perish, then I, a future mortal, should not have got such a relation to that cause. While Heaven does not let the cause of truth perish, what can the people of Kuang do to me?'" (Chinese Text Project 2017)

placed himself in a comparable position of a follower of the Way, who had learned and experienced the Sage's teaching, holding fast to and finally practicing it in his life. The poem nicely summarizes the last five phases of Phạm's transformative learning process, whose starting point is "Learning for the sake of one's self."

8.7 "Learning for the Sake of One's Self" in Modern Contexts

Determining the precise contexts of all Confucius' sayings, made thousands of years ago, remains an impossible task. In his discussion of the difficulties of contextualizing Confucian classics, Tu Wei-Ming mentions the dictum of "learning for the sake of one's self" as an example of this arduous task,

> The challenge all members of the scholarly community who are actively involved in comparative studies must face is whether or not, in principle, we can really understand such a deceptively simple Confucian statement as "learning is for the sake of the self" out of context. The answer, unfortunately, must be in the negative. We cannot know what it means if we do not situate it in its proper context. (Tu 1985, 54).

However, besides their efforts in reconstructing the contexts of the sayings, people often try to read the Master's words into their contemporary contexts. It is not difficult to see that both Zhu Xi and Phạm Nguyễn Du advocated "learning for the sake of one's self" on similar grounds, working against the socio-educational evils of their times, which were learning exclusively for the sake of the civil service examination, for personal career-advancement and interest, and nothing else.[30] As pointed out by de Bary, Zhu Xi's thoughts started and ended with the goal of "learning for the sake of one's self." (de Bary 1991, 31), and the same is true of Phạm Nguyễn Du. They both read, understood, and carried Confucius' dictum into their contemporary contexts.

Although still trying to reconstruct the socio-political and cultural contexts of the tradition of "learning for the sake of one's self" (Kuang 2012, 27–37), modern scholars seem more interested in its potential impact on contemporary society (if it were to be widely taught and embraced). Bian Shiying believes that Confucian "learning for the sake of one's self" has nothing to do with vulgar individualism that is now popularly understood as striving egoistically for the benefit of oneself. On the contrary, it is the need to morally cultivate and perfect the self which is the core of strong human relationships. (Bian 2005, 124).

Based on the same understanding, Li Can feels the urgency to recover and strengthen the tradition of "learning for the sake of one's self" in order to fight

[30] Here is Zhu Xi's description of what was happening in his time, "But in today's world what fathers encourage in their sons, what older brothers exhort in their younger brothers, what teachers impart to their students, and what students all study for is nothing more than to prepare for the civil service examinations" (de Bary 1991, 32).

against utilitarianism, as well as the need to revivify it to reinforce the interactive effects of the "college humanistic quality education model." Li even goes further, and criticizes the abuse of multimedia in college teaching that can weaken the thinking abilities of the student, and suggests that the tradition of "learning for the sake of one's self" could be a way to reduce the overdependence of college teaching and learning on multimedia sources—one that can enhance the proactivity of the learners (Li 2015, 49; 2010, 17–20; 2011, 122–25).

Huang Jianhua and Wang Derong examine the principle in connection with Zhu Xi's *Learning Regulations of Bailudong Academy* (*Bailudong shuyuan xuegui* 白鹿洞書院學規). As Zhu Xi's Academy took the principle of "learning for the sake of one's self" as an integral part of its spirit, it emphasized three key issues: the cultivation of morality, the pursuit of the self-improvement of virtues, and the realization of an ideal personality. Like Xiao Qunzhong and other Chinese scholars (Xiao 2002, 5–9; Li 2008, 77–80), Huang and Wang see this traditional moral education trend as advantageous in modern society, because it can contribute to training a healthy personality, constructing a harmonious social environment, improving the self-consciousness and initiative of the moral subject, and removing utilitarian and instrumentalist tendencies from modern education. (Huang and Derong 2012, 18–21).[31] Other scholars, such as Zhou Zhixiang and Zhu Hanmin, also study Zhu Xi's perception of the tradition of "learning for the sake of one's self," concluding that for Zhu, this tradition is both the goal and foundational principle of learning, and that the purpose of Zhu's interpretation of the *Great Learning* (*Daxue* 大學) is to theorize and systematize the tradition, as well as to implement it in his annotated text (Zhou and Hanmin 2011, 34–39). The principle is also studied in relation with Kant's concepts of moral self-discipline and freedom. (Wen 2006, 63–70).

Since the tradition/principle of "learning for the sake of one's self" has travelled far beyond national boundaries, it has been practiced and studied not only within China, but also in other countries in East Asia. In Korea, the eminent Neo-Confucian Yi Hwang李滉 (1501–1570, more widely known as Yi T'oegye 李退溪), had his understanding of the tradition linked directly to the study of the heart-and-mind (*simhak* 心學), which was systematized in the Study of Principle (*lihak* 理學) and centred on Substance-Function (*cheyong* 體用). (Lee K. H. 2010; Lee S. H. 2010, 165–90). Studying the influence of the Cheng brothers' interpretation of the principle "learning for the sake of one's self" on Korean educational philosophy, Jang Jing Ho focuses on the case of Yi T'oegye, and concludes that the revivification of this tradition could be used to counter certain problems in contemporary education, such as egoism, commercialism, and the worship of money. (Zhang 2002, 75–78).

The case of Phạm Nguyễn Du suggests that the notion of "learning for the sake of one's self" is both similar to and different from these latter-day attempts to revive the term as a principle of learning. Among Phạm's many elucidations of the dictum, his comments on Chapter 9:30 ("Zi Han子罕") of the *Analects* are worth considering. Here he stated:

[31] There are a number of essays written in the same vein, such as Pang 2010, 8–9.

> When understanding that learning is for the sake of one's self, one will be able to put forth one's strength conscientiously; hereafter one can believe in right principles with firmer sincerity[32]; hereafter one can stand erect in the middle without inclining to either side[33]; hereafter one can suit one's actions to changing conditions. The attainment of this level is already the sage's affair.[34]

For Phạm, "learning for the sake of one's self" is the foundation of the long process of becoming a sage. With the right motivation, he believed, a person will invest all efforts into the perfection of the self and knowledge. Self-cultivation and knowledge learning are thus processes that require the learner to use critical observation and analysis to verify the truthfulness of what he has learned. Only in such conditions can the learner accept and live up to the verified "right principles with firmer sincerity." This critical mind helps to prevent any biases, helping the follower of the Way to "stand erect in the middle without inclining to either side." Standing unbiased subsequently allows the sage-to-be to act flexibly according to any given circumstances when holding fast to his right principles. This depiction of this lifelong learning process can serve as advice that is universally applicable to anyone who sincerely wishes to become more morally cultivated, intellectually improved, and socially engaged. Thus, besides reading the dictum into contemporary contexts and employing it as a way to fight against egoism, commercialization, corruption, and other negative practices in modern education, Phạm's thoughts on the motto "Learning for the sake of one's self" presented in his *Humble Comments* can inspire us with suggestions of how to live this motto to the fullest.

8.8 Conclusion

As a theory of adult learning, transformative learning theory allows us a deeper look into the intellectual life of Phạm Nguyễn Du and his *Humble Comments*, helping us to identify Phạm's deep shift in perspective from "learning for the sake of others" to "learning for the sake of one's self." His transformative learning process was a long-running attempt to find true knowledge in the predicaments and circumstances in which he found himself. Although his chosen path to Confucian sagehood was long

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[32] Chapter 19.2 ("Zizhang 子張") from the *Analects* reads, "Zi Zhang said, "When a man holds fast to virtue, but without seeking to enlarge it, and *believes in right principles, but without firm sincerity* (信道不篤), what account can be made of his existence or non-existence?" (Chinese Text Project 2017; emphasis mine).

[33] The *Doctrine of the Mean* (*Zhongyong*) records a conversation between Confucius and Zilu 子路 on energy (*qiang* 強), in which the Master states, "The superior man cultivates a friendly harmony, without being weak. How firm is he in his energy! He *stands erect in the middle, without inclining to either side* (中立而不倚). How firm is he in his energy!" (Chinese Text Project 2017; emphasis mine).

[34] The original reads, 知學為為己, 則能切實用力, 然後能信道愈篤, 然後能中立不倚, 然後能達權與變。至是已為聖人之事矣。

and difficult, Phạm was determined to take it. By intensively reading the *Analects* in the light of Neo-Confucian philosophy and in the context of civil-war-torn eighteenth-century Vietnam, Phạm completed what would later be formalised as Mezirow's ten phases of the transformative learning procedure. Powerful and encouraging, Phạm's story is an example of how a pre-modern Vietnamese member of the literati could read a Confucian classic and adapt Neo-Confucianism to the socio-cultural and historical conditions in which he lived.

Viewed in this light, Phạm's career and work offer a valuable perspective on the question of whether and how Confucian tradition(s) of learning can contribute to the acquisition of knowledge and self-cultivation in the information age. Phạm's agenda of "learning for the sake of one's self" does not mean egoism; instead, it reflects the quest for self-improvement as a means to promote positive social change. Phạm urged the learner not to blindly believe in and dogmatically repeat what she has learned, but to experiment and draw out meaningful lessons from her own experience. Moreover, the unconventional organization of *Humble Comments* reflects Phạm's commitment to the ideal of independent and creative thinking. Phạm's work thus offers us an opportunity to see Confucianism as a vibrant literary and philosophical tradition—a tradition that many in Vietnam and elsewhere have used to reflect critically on some of the most pressing issues of our contemporary era.

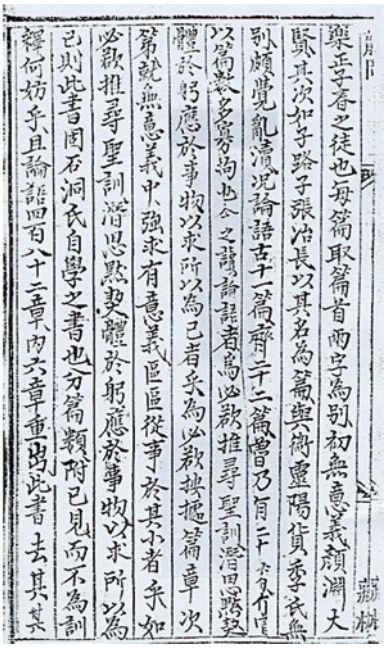
Appendices

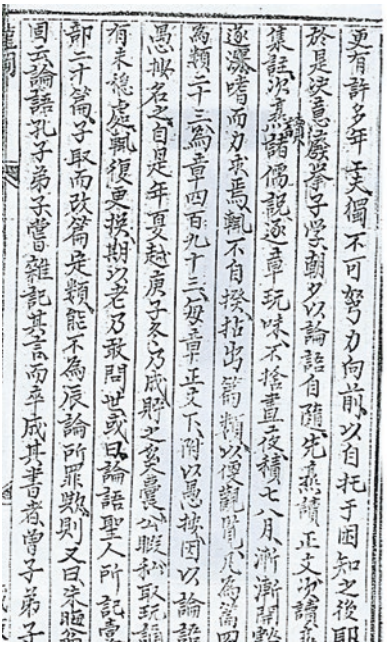
Appendix A

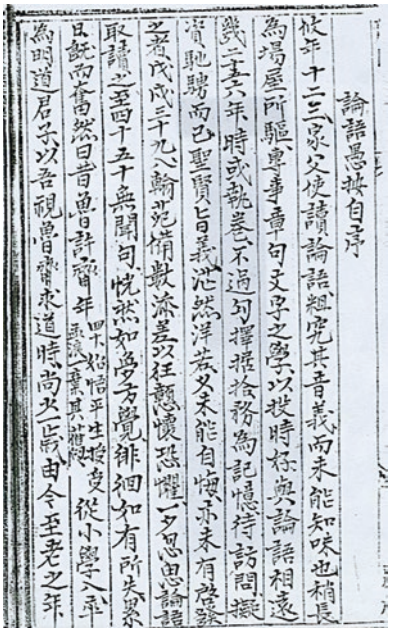
Phạm Nguyễn Du's

"Preface" to the *Humble Comments on the Analects.*

(from *Luận Ngữ Ngu Án* 論語愚案, preserved in the library of the Institute of Han-Nom Studies, Hanoi, Vietnam, VHV.349/1–2)







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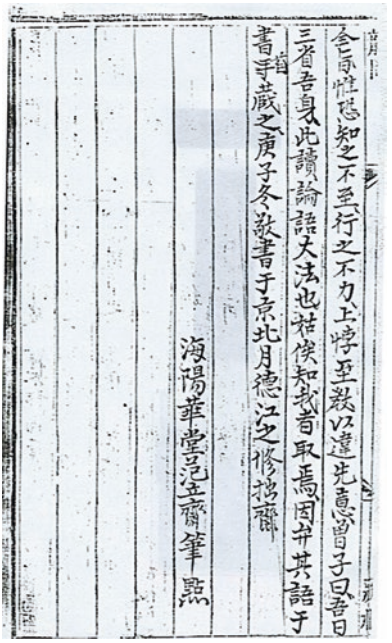
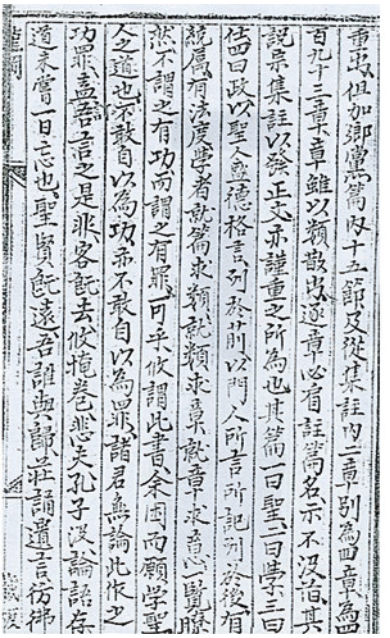
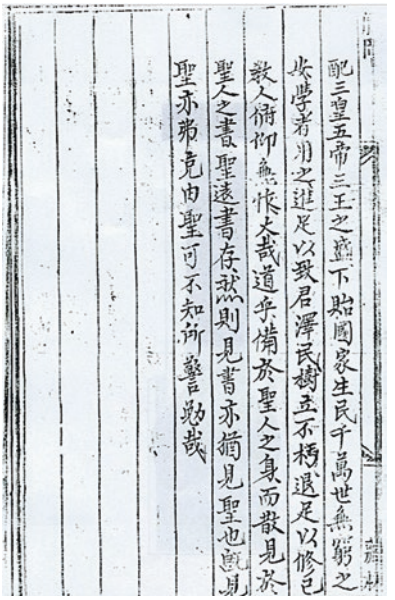
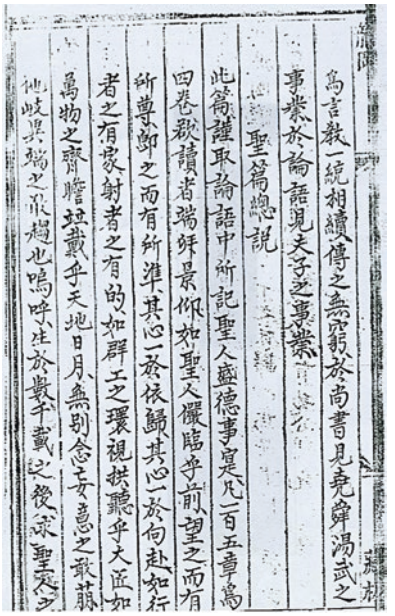




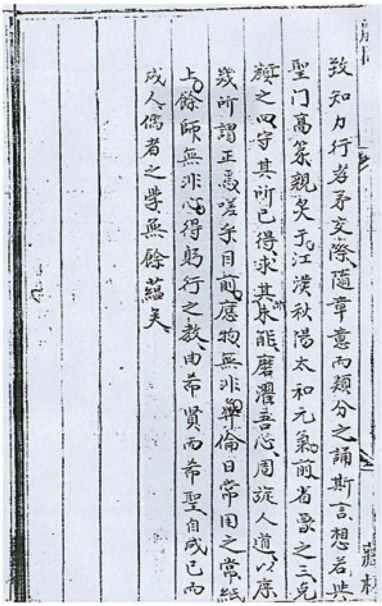
Appendix B

"General Statements on the Sage"

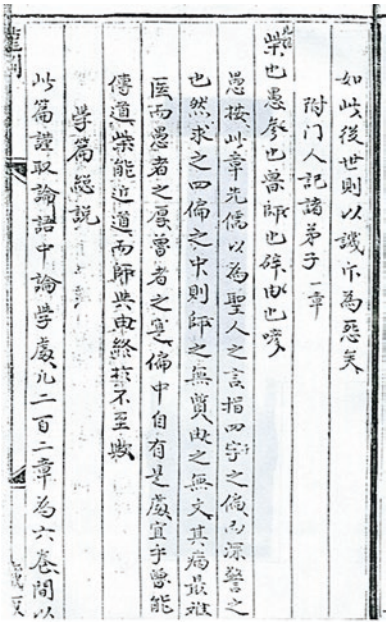




"General Statements on Learning"



致知力行若矛交際隨章意而類分之誦斯言想若共
聖門高弟親炙于江漢秋陽太和元氣前者歌之三兄
擬之以守其所已得求其未能磨濯吾心周旋人道以庶
幾所謂正惡嗟乎目前應物無非舉倫日常用之常紙
上餘師無非心得躬行之教由希賢而希聖自成己而
成人儒者之學無餘蘊矣



如此後世則以識亦為惡矣
附門人記諸弟子一章
祟也愚參也魯師也辟由也喭
愚按此章先儒以為聖人之言指四字之偏而深警之
也然求之四偏之中則師之無實由之無文其病最難
医而愚者之厚魯者之實偏中自有是處宜乎魯能
傳道祟能近道而師與由終於不至歟
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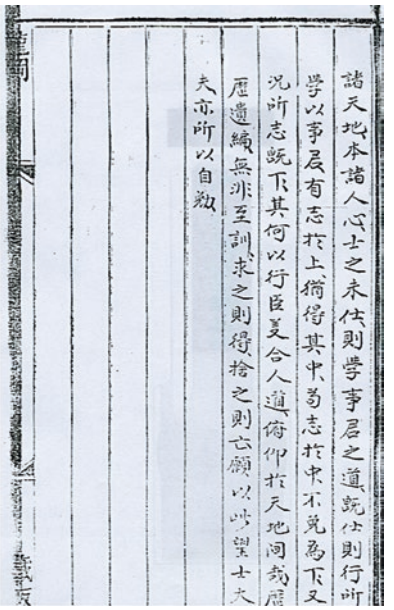
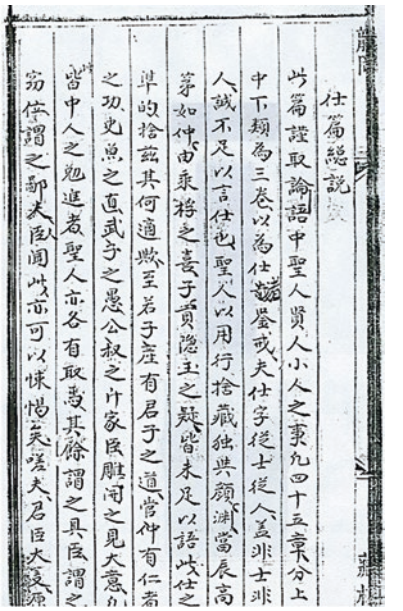
"General Statements on Official".





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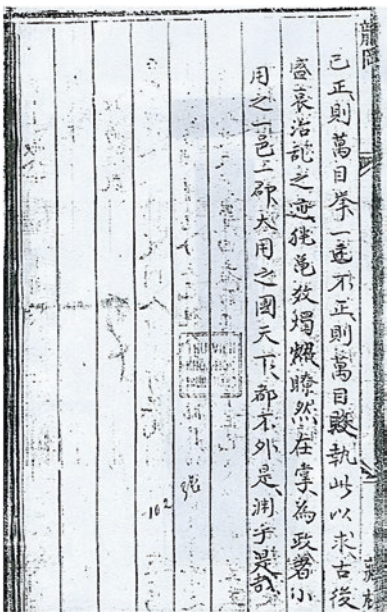

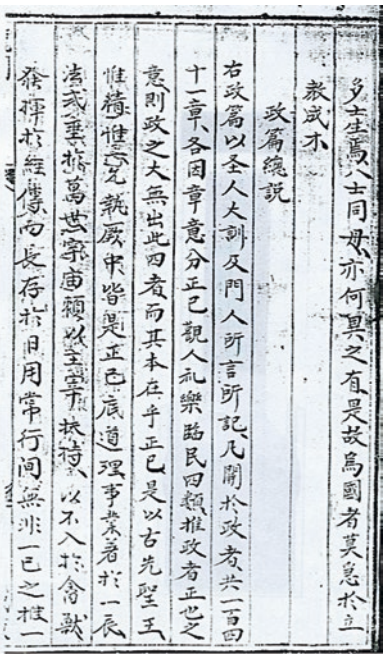

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Chapter 9
Self-Cultivation with Brushes: From the Perspective of Graphocentrism

Ruyu Hung

Introductory Remarks
By Duck-Joo Kwak

Writing calligraphy still may be practiced at the school in most of east Asian countries. I just wonder how it is adapted to the modern school curriculum. It was one of common practices at the school when I was young in Korea. To think of it, we as elementary school kids had a lesson for it in either an ethics class or a language class, not in an art class. This means that writing calligraphy may be commonly considered as a pedagogical medium for *moral* education rather than arts-education or aesthetic education in the east Asian culture of Confucianism. But is it adequate to take and apply it that way for contemporary youngsters in modern schools? If this is the case, how should we take the sense of 'moral' in moral education there? Or if writing calligraphy is a practice for moral cultivation, what does 'moral cultivation' means here? This is exactly what Hung seems to address in this interesting essay.

Hung introduces two main approaches we often find in the traditional teaching and learning for calligraphy writing. First, we are supposed *to imitate* the ancient masterpiece as accurately as possible, obeying some particular rules to be fixed in advance. The educational importance of imitation lies in *modelling* the past masterpiece by making careful copies of it even with the imitation of the imagined writer's bodily movement. Second, the learner is supposed to practice it *repeatedly* for quite a while. Diligent and persistent repetitions of practice are crucial to becoming a skillful calligraphy writer. The admiration for those who practice again and again with laborious undertaking is quite common in a calligraphy class. Hung claims that the goal of these two approaches is to "help calligraphy apprentice to incorporate the model work technically and the personhood morally" since the approaches is to shape and strengthen the body and to concentrate the mind. In fact, the educational

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R. Reichenbach, D.-J. Kwak (eds.), *Confucian Perspectives on Learning and Self-Transformation*, Contemporary Philosophies and Theories in Education 14,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-40078-1_9

imposition of the strict formality of learning to write calligraphy is all about leading the apprentice *into the spirit* of what the ancient master was doing in writing calligraphy. It is not simply about writing or picturing the words, but also about getting inside of (or imagine) what it is like the master's having written the calligraphy then as a way of cultivating the body and the mind at the same time. This *very process* of writing itself has powerful educational effects upon the apprentice, such as concentration, keeping oneself in peace and tranquility, putting one's attention on the inner self, as well as posing a right posture with a straight back and a proper angle of the right arm. As Hung explains, it is quite similar to the way we have aesthetic experience in appreciating artworks, even if it comes with the acquisition of craftmanship in calligraphy-writing.

Then why is it described as a way of *moral* cultivation rather than *aesthetic* cultivation in the Confucian tradition? According to Hung, in writing calligraphy we are supposed to pursue the Dao(道) of one's own, as the principle of the nature, and the reaching of the dao in writing calligraphy is regarded the same as the accomplishment of morality.

Thus, however it may be called, ethics (of the good) and aesthetics (of the beautiful) do not seem to have been much distinct from each other in the east Asian tradition of Confucianism. But there is some danger in this Confucian conflation of the two, due to its moralizing force when it is applied to its actual practice of teaching and learning for calligraphy-writing. When I was young, a class for calligraphy-writing was not fun at all because the outcome of my writing was under constant evaluations, as if it had been the direct reflection of my moral character. That is, the outcome of my writing was judged to be the reflection of my morality by teachers; it was a scaring experience to us as young children. This is exactly what Hung claims as problematic in following the Confucian philosophy of education for calligraphy-writing. Rather choosing to follow the Daoist philosophy of naturalism, Hung finds a more proper way of placing calligraphy-writing for self-cultivation; it is to be considered *as* a form of art, rather than a form of moral education, or as a way of self-cultivation without moralizing. It sounds like a better formulation to be applied to the contemporary curriculum of modern schools. For such Daoist virtues as being spontaneous, being natural, or being integral to oneself, which were seen as good artistic norms for calligraphy-writing, appeals to our modern sensibility as the ideal or purpose of arts education.

In many respects, Hung's essay encourages us to reconceive calligraphy-writing as a good practice to be recovered for liberal education today for self-cultivation, especially when the slogan 'arts education for all' is on the verge of spreading around the globe. In the Chinese or east-Asian tradition, written words are considered to contain magical power in it, Hung says. The magical power seems to refer here to a power to trigger imagination within us, which takes us into the old worlds of the sages through the embodied symbols of writing. So the ancient practice of writing calligraphy can be a good way of motivating our youngsters to cultivate their sense of self-respect by giving them a chance to meet and explore their inner selves via the old and unfamiliar worlds.

The last note about the conceptual distinction between craftmanship and art, which I find fascinating to find from the educational perspective. In the east Asia, arts have been thought to be closer to craftmanship in the sense that it is critical for us to imitate masters from the past, while in the West, arts, at least since modern romanticism, are all about seeking the originality of the individual artist. The former is more concerned with the formation of moral character, and the latter with the creation of something new. Would it be too much for us to aspire after the combination of both in pursuing arts-education as a form of liberal education?

9.1 Introduction

Calligraphy is, of all Chinese traditional arts, the most fascinating and delicate form that incorporates painting, writing, and seal carving. Through Chinese history, calligraphy symbolises beauty and authority. Emperors in ancient times and rulers of modern era manifest their superiority by writing calligraphy. For members of the literati class, calligraphy does not only represent the power of cultural tradition, but also the beauty of art. More importantly, the practice of calligraphy is taken as a unique way of self-cultivation in morality. The persisting exercise of writing is a way of ethical cultivation of heart and mind. Mastery of calligraphy is an essential part of education of the Confucian educated man – junzi (君子). In what sense is the Chinese way of writing understood as more than a medium that communicates the writer's thought and emotions? How does the process of writing work to raise a moral and virtuous junzi? What are the possibilities and problems of writing calligraphy as a particular way of cultivation and perfection of the self?

The aim of this contribution is to unpick the meaning of Chinese brush-writing as self-cultivation in terms of graphocentrism (Hung 2018). By graphocentrism I mean the notion underpinning Chinese worldview that prioritises writing over speech. On the basis of graphocentrism, the written word is endowed with magical power and is able to affect the natural and the supernatural worlds, which is underpinned by the Confucian and Daoist bents. Nature, spirit, man and language are seen as a unity. The holistic view is hidden in the traditional discourse of calligraphy that takes the development of the bodily skill as the cultivation of the mind, and vice versa. The Chinese view takes education as a dynamic process of coordination of the body and the mind. Through practising calligraphy, one improves skills in writing and personal character. In the Confucian vein, practising calligraphy particularly is a means of enhancing moral character. Yet I question the Confucian bent of taking aesthetic evaluations for moral judgments. The Confucian tradition is insufficient in explicating the lacuna between aesthetics and morality. Without denying the function of brush-writing as a certain discipline of the body and the mind, I argue that the Daoist approach enables calligraphy aesthetically and educationally meaningful, and thereby incorporates 'artfulness' and 'naturalness', which, in my view, is the ultimate goal of Daoism.

9.2 Brush Writing in the Confucian Tradition

In Chinese the way of writing calligraphy is called 書法 (shufǎ), meaning the method and the rule of writing. Writing handsome calligraphy has long been believed to be a characteristic of an educated person in Chinese culture. It does not only tell the artistic quality of a Confucian educated person, but also the moral quality. It has been believed that the improvement of artistic abilities simultaneously betters the moral personality. Therefore, learning to write beautiful calligraphy is a way of self-cultivation.

The belief that the aesthetic quality of a calligraphy work corresponds to the moral value of the calligrapher has its philosophical root in Confucianism. As Confucius says, 'Aspire after the Dao. Be devoted to the dé (goodness). Comply with rén. Wander the arts' (*The Analects*, Shù Er, 7:6; my translation).[1] These four professions are the requisites in Confucius' mind for a junzi to engage. In other words, a junzi, or a Confucian educated human being, must have excellence in following the Dao, moral virtues and arts. The arts, as written in the Confucian classic *Rites of Zhou* (周禮), are the six arts including rituals, music, archery, riding, calligraphy and mathematics. The six arts form the outline of the Confucian liberal education curriculum programme (Ni 1999). A junzi must be well advanced in the six arts (including calligraphy) and good at following the Dao, the goodness and the virtue of rén. The way one behaves is inseparably related to the way one practises the arts, e.g. writing calligraphy, and vice versa. Thus practising calligraphy as representative of the arts is fundamental to the cultivation of a junzi in Confucianism. The process of learning to write is a means of cultivation of a junzi whereas the end of creating beautiful calligraphy is a performance of a junzi. The mastery of calligraphy is one of the necessary skills for cultivating a junzi. The Confucian aesthetics and the Confucian morality are inseparable and intertwined in this sense.

Let us take a further inquiry. How does learning to write beautiful calligraphy improve the human moral character? How does one accomplish oneself to 'wander the arts' (遊於藝, yóu yú yì)? 'Wander the arts' (遊於藝, yóu yú yì) means 'playfully wander the arts'. The word 'yóu' refers to 'playfully wander' which is a state of freely moving and enjoying. 'Playfully wander the arts' means freely and joyfully playing with arts. Chan (1963, p. 31) translates '遊於藝' as 'Find recreation in the arts' whereas Legge (1861) translates it as 'Let relaxation and enjoyment be found in the polite arts'. How can a junzi playfully and freely wander the arts? A junzi can playfully wander the arts because one masters the arts. A junzi can take recreation in arts by creating graceful arts and using artistic tools without any difficulty. In order to use artistic tools effortlessly, one must make many exercises, meaning relentless and repeated practices. Practising calligraphy is not a simple activity of setting down words. In my view, the process of learning to write incorporates a double discipline of the body and the mind. The double discipline of the

[1] 志於道, 據於德, 依於仁, 游於藝。(論語, 述而, 7:6).

body and the mind is a mutual process, which is underpinned by the Chinese holistic worldview.

With respect to the discipline of the body, one has to be able to use the writing instruments well, which is not easy to achieve. There are four utensils of writing calligraphy, which are the brush, the paper, the inkstone and the inkstick. These four utensils do not appear at the same time in the history. Among them the brush could be the writing instrument firstly invented at around 300 BC. The appearance of paper was the latest in the first century at the period of Eastern Han Dynasty. These four instruments are indispensible means for writing Chinese calligraphy. Together they were given the name of 'Four Treasures of the Studio' (文房四寶, wén fán szì baŏ) at the Southern and Northern Dynasties (420–589 CE) (Long 1987).

Practising Chinese calligraphy is not an aimless, arbitrary and unplanned hand movement. There are a lot of preparations and disciplines. The first procedure is to prepare the ink by grinding an ink stick on an ink stone. Ink sticks are usually round or square sticks made of pine soot and other ingredients. Ink is produced by mixing the soot and the water while the soot is extracted by repeated, constant and circular actions of grinding of the stick. The circular and slow motion of grinding of hands is 'almost a sacred rite' (Yen 2005). During the quiet process of grinding, one is composed, tranquilised and concentrated. The exquisiteness is revealed in Yen's description as follows: 'As one grinds the ink, the gaze normally focuses on the repetitive circular motion of the hand and the ink stick, slowly, sedately and hypnotically. The sound of the pine-soot ink stick rubbing on the stone fills the ears, smooth and uninstruisive, pure and humming' (2005, p. 114). This stage of preparation is nearly a rite of serenity and purification, the effect of which is similar to meditation and works through all senses: 'the visual, the acoustic, the olfactory and the kinetic'. Moreover, 'It is a process that purifies sight, smell, hearing and motion … [and] thoughts …' (Yen 2005, pp. 114–115). The lengthy process of producing ink purifies the mind of the calligrapher and has one focusing only on the task of brush writing.

After the ink as well as the mind/body of the calligrapher is prepared, one is finally ready to write. During the process, one must obey some particular rules. Each Chinese character is composed of several strokes. To write characters in a correct way, one must follow the conventional order of brushstrokes from top to bottom, from left to right. In addition to the stroke order, in writing calligraphy one must be attentive and careful to give a character balance, force and harmony. Handsome handwriting is one of the requisites for literate Chinese – an emblem of the officials' sophistication (Kraus 1991). In the past long history, there has been a corpus of literature on the skills and method of writing calligraphy. Ancient calligraphers advise apprentices about how to hold the brushes, how to keep balance when writing, how to choose the best instruments, etc. For example, Lady Wèi (衛夫人, 272–349 CE) of the Eastern Jin (東晉, 317–420 CE) in her work *The Picture of Ink Brush* (筆陣圖) gives a detailed description of seven methods of writing and suggestions about selection of four instruments (Huá 1997, pp. 19–21). Calligraphers have to give every detail in relation to writing with great attention. Overall there are conventional rules for calligraphers to obey. I call the conventional rules the Codes

of Calligraphy. The first code is to imitate the masterwork when initiating the learning process. The second code is to practice repeatedly and relentlessly.

Within the tradition of calligraphy education, imitation is the most important way of learning calligraphy. Much literature on the ways of writing calligraphy pinpoints the imitation of scripts of the former calligraphers. As the Southern Sòng (1127–1279 CE) poet Jiang Kwéi (姜夔, 1155–1211 CE) puts it, 'The apprentices of calligraphy do nothing but trace … the masterworks of the ancients' (Hua 1997, p. 361).[2] The Míng dynasty (1368–1644 CE) painter and official scholar Xìe Jìn (解縉, 1369–1415 CE) also writes in his *Whims in Spring Rain* (春雨雜述) that, 'The way of learning calligraphy… depends most greatly on the imitation of the ancients' writing' (Hua 1997, p. 461).[3] The Ching dynasty literate Ju Lyŭ Cheng (朱履真, n.d.) also in his *The Key to Calligraphy* (書學捷要) (Hua 1997) stresses the importance of imitation when learning to write calligraphy. Ju says, 'The main point of learning calligraphy consists in the modelling' (Hua 1997, p. 561).[4] Ju systematically proposes six basic things of mastery of calligraphy including temperament, natural endowment, the method of holding the brush, modelling, diligence, and connoisseurship.[5] Writing as imitation is to model the past masterpieces. For a novice who is at the beginning stage of learning to write with brushes, one must try hard to make careful copies of masterpieces. The more similar the copy appears, the more skilful the learner becomes.

An apprentice needs to make great efforts to model each stroke of the masterworks with precision and accuracy. One has to pay attention to every bodily movement. Constant repeated practice is absolutely necessary. According to the second code, an apprentice needs to do repeated practices, again and again. Only after one spends much time in numerous times of repeated practices can one develop remarkable skills in calligraphy. As Su Shì (蘇軾, 1037–1101 CE), one of the most renowned artists, poets, painters and calligraphers in Sòng Dynasty, writes, only when a practitioner uses out of a pile of brushes and to exhaust a pond of water does he be a master calligrapher like Wáng Xizhi (王羲之, 303–361 CE) or his son Wáng Xiànzhi (王獻之, 344–386 CE) (Hua 1997, p. 288).[6] What is more, Su adds, only if one wears out of brushes of a thousand pens and uses out of more than ten thousands of inksticks can one achieve the degree of masters like Chang Zhi (張芝, n.d.–192 CE) or Sŏ Jìn (索靖, 239–303 CE).[7] The extravagant volume of use of brushpens and inksticks indicates that the persistently repeated practices as well as laborious undertaking are essential to the acquisition of virtuosity in calligraphy.

[2] 唯初學者不得不摹…皆須是古人名筆…(姜夔: 續書譜) (華正人. 1997. p. 361).

[3] 學書之法…大要須臨古人墨跡。(解縉: 春雨雜述) (華正人. 1997. p. 461).

[4] 臨摹用工, 是學書大要。(朱履貞, 書學捷要) (華正人. 1997, p. 561).

[5] 書有六要:一氣質。…二天資。…三得法。…四臨摹。…五用功。…六識鑒。(朱履貞, 書學捷要) (華正人. 1997, p. 568).

[6] 筆成冢, 墨成池, 不及羲之即獻之。(蘇軾, 論書) (華正人, 1997, p. 288).

[7] 筆禿千管, 墨磨萬錠, 不作張芝作索靖。(蘇軾, 論書) (華正人, 1997, p. 288).

The ultimate goal of the action of imitation and repeated practices is to help the calligraphy apprentice to incorporate the model work technically and the personhood of the master morally because imitation and repeated practices mould and strengthen the body and concentrate the mind/spirit. A successful apprentice is able to produce characters similar as much as possible to those of ancient masters visually. In doing so the apprentice demonstrates one's acquisition of the writing techniques of masters on the one hand. On the other, to acquire the master's techniques one embodies the master's postures, propensities and characters as well. Learning calligraphy is thus a double learning from the past masters.

Underpinning the pedagogical Code of Calligraphy is the holistic worldview, which takes the body and the mind as one and the culture and the nature as a unity. Concerning the wholeness of the body and the mind, the process of practising includes a series of self-demanding acts such as concentration, keeping oneself in peace and tranquillity, keeping oneself from distracting thoughts, putting one's attention on the inner self, the body, and the brush, etc. The complex and repeated exercises prepare one's mind and body to write.

Regarding the unity of the culture and the nature, practising calligraphy at mastery level can be seen as an act of following the Dao. In the Chinese tradition, the concept of Dao signifies the fundamental principle, the process and the reality of the universe. The Daoists and the Confucianists both take the following of the Dao to be natural, to act spontaneously. Calligraphy as an art related to writing is certainly a cultural achievement. Although the process of learning calligraphy takes great effort, once the mastery skills are acquired, the masters write graceful and beautiful calligraphy naturally and spontaneously. Thus practising calligraphy is a way of being harmony with the nature, with the principle of Dao. As the literary critic of Ching Dynasty Liú Xīzaǐ (劉熙載, 1813–1881 CE) says: 'Calligraphy is written out of the nature' (Huá 1997, p. 666).[8] The holistic view paves the way for the further intertwinement of morality and aesthetics, meaning that writing upgrades one's mind, thought, moral character, personality and artistic ability to a higher level for its (1) steeling the mind and the body of the calligrapher and (2) engaging the calligrapher with the Dao.

In the first place, as discussed, the very long process of repeated practices disciplines the body and the mind of the calligrapher. According to Yú Shìhnán (虞世南, 558–638 CE), a calligrapher must compose oneself by making oneself in peace and tranquillity and free from distracting ideas and disturbances to write beautifully, gracefully, and decently (Hua 1997). The Emperor Tàizong (598–649) of Táng Dynasty expressed a similar view in his essay *Keys to Writing* (筆法訣) (Hua 1997). The process of practising calligraphy is at the same time a process of refining the taste and improving the moral character. It has been a popular belief that the process of practising calligraphy is able to discipline and cultivate the self aesthetically and morally. Therefore, calligraphy is seen as an essential part of the education of the Confucian educated man – junzi.

[8] 書當造乎自然。(劉熙載, 藝概) (Huá 1997, p. 666).

In the second place, the connection between morality and arts has already been noted by Confucius. As he states: 'Aspire after the Dao. Be devoted to the dé (goodness). Comply with rén. Wander the arts' (*The Analects*, Shù Er, 7:6; my translation). There are four significant goals for a junzi to pursue: Dào, dé, rén and arts. The Dào is the principle of the nature. As Wáng Xizhi wrote, the Daoist master advised him about writing: 'The chì (force) of the calligraphy must reach the Dao. It is identical with the order of the chaos.' (Huá 1997, p.34)[9] In the ultimate state of writing, the calligrapher is united with the Dao. In this state, the calligrapher does not only reach the Dao, but also accomplishes one's morality. The integrity and decency of a junzi will be manifest in one's artistic performances as well as in moral characters. The way one behaves is connected with the way one practises the arts including writing calligraphy, and vice versa. The characteristics of a junzi's aesthetic performances and those of one's moral practice are common and consonant. The concepts like upright, courteous, wise, benevolent, trustworthy, harmonious, pure, mild, moderate, peaceful, firm, balanced and excellent are generally used to describe the personal character and calligraphy (Ni 1999). In this vein, the Confucian aesthetics and the Confucian morality are understood as inseparable and intertwined.

The belief in the intertwinement of aesthetics and ethics holds sway through the Chinese literary history. The highly respected calligraphers are the moral role models like Yán Zhenqing (顏真卿, 709–785 CE) and Liŭ Gongquán (柳公權, 778–865 CE). They must have virtues that are valued as promoting individual and collective goodness from the perspective of Confucianism. Yán and Liŭ, for example, show their unyielding faithfulness and piety to the emperors. The problem is: what if one writes beautiful calligraphy but shows no moral excellence? Can't a villain produce stunning handwriting?

The thirteen century calligrapher Zhaò Mèngfŭ (趙孟頫, 1254–1322 CE) was one of the most influential artists for his extraordinary achievement in Chinese painting, poetry, seal carving and calligraphy. His works were highly appreciated by the Emperor Rénzong of the Yuan dynasty. Yet he was castigated by many critics over hundreds of years. The Ming dynasty art collector Chan Chŏu (張丑, 1577–1643 CE) criticises Zhaò's calligraphy to be 'too delicate, coquettish and flirtatious' to be 'decent and integrate'.[10] Another renowned calligrapher in Ching dynasty Fù Shan (傅山, 1607–1684 CE) also depreciated Zhaò's works as 'villainous'. In contrast, the calligraphy of the former artists of the Jìn dynasty (晉朝, 265–420 CE) and Táng Dynasty (唐朝, 618–907 CE) were highly valued as decent and righteous (Fu 2002).[11] Yuán dynasty was built by the Mongol conquers who

[9] 書之氣, 必達乎道, 同混元之理。(王羲之, 記白雲先生書訣) (Huá 1997, p. 34).

[10] 明代張丑的《清河書畫舫》中云:「子昂書法, 溫潤閑雅, 遠接右軍正脈之傳; 第過妍媚纖柔, 殊乏大節不奪之氣, 似反不若文信國天祥書體清疏挺竦, 其傳世《六歌》等帖, 令人起敬起愛也耶!」.

[11] 《霜紅龕集》, 卷四·五言古, (作字示兒孫):「貧道二十歲左右, 於先世所傳晉唐楷書法, 無所不臨, 而不能畧肖。偶得趙子昂(香山詩)墨蹟, 愛其圓轉流麗, 遂臨之。不數過而遂欲亂真。此無他, 即如人學正人君子, 只覺觚稜難近, 降而與匪人遊, 神情不覺其日親日密, 而無爾我者然也。行大薄其為人, 痛惡其書淺俗, 如徐偃王之無骨, 始復宗先人四五世所學之魯公而苦為之。然腕雜矣, 不能勁瘦挺拗如先人矣。比之匪人, 不亦傷乎!」.

were foreigners to Chinese. Many Chinese loyalists insisted that, it could not be more conspicuous to see Zhaò's 'treachery and obsequiousness' in his calligraphy (Kraus 1991).

Strictly speaking, the criticism of Zhao's writing for its lack of decency and integrity is not appropriate as an aesthetic judgment but rather as a moral judgment. Zhao was a descendant of the royal family of Song dynasty but he served the emperor of Yuán dynasty (1271–1368 CE). Zhaò was thus thought to be unfaithful to his own nation and therefore, a mean person. The bitter art criticisms of Zhaò's calligraphy were indeed projections of judgments about his moral characters.

I do agree that practising calligraphy may improve personality in many aspects like patience, temperament, diligence, etc. because writing is such a fatigue and consuming task. Nonetheless, it is one thing to take the activity of writing as an exercise of tempering oneself and another to say that the outcomes of writing represent one person's ethical performances. Facing the 'pretty' handwriting of the mean people like Zhaò, the ancient critics turn to the Daoist aesthetics for the criterion of judgement. The Daoist values are simplicity, spontaneity, naturalness, and truthfulness. The Ming Dynasty literati Fù acknowledges the charm of Zhaò's works but makes the following statement about good calligraphy: 'Rather be dull than be clever; rather be ugly than be charming; rather be broken than be slippery; rather be straightforward than be arranged' (Fu 2002; Ni 1999, p. 25).[12] Fù reluctantly admits that, aesthetically, Zhaò works are charming but, morally, his works cannot achieve the supreme moral value of the Dao because his handwritings are too pretty and too pandering. The Daoist values spontaneity, naturalness, truthfulness and sincerity. Zhaò's pretty writing was considered to be 'unnatural' that does not fit in the Daoist standard.

9.3 Writing Calligraphy as Tuning in Dao

In the Confucian tradition calligraphy is moralising, which is problematic. However, calligraphy as a form of art can be seen as means of cultivating the educated human being – not merely for meeting the Confucian standard, but from the perspective of Daoism. The learning process of calligraphy can be divided into two phases. The former one can be seen as taking Confucian spirit whereas the latter one embraces the Doaist insight. At the initiative phase, an apprentice needs to take great efforts to master the skills and the codes. During this phase, one pays much attention to every detail related to writing and keeps repeated practices. The preparation takes time and energy. As an intentional and telic practice, the process of hard-working learning calligraphy is in accordance with the spirit of Confucianism. The founder of the Confucianism – Confucius – spent 14 years to journey through different states

[12] 寧拙毋巧, 寧醜毋媚, 寧支離毋輕滑, 寧真率毋安排。(傅山, 霜紅龕集; 作字示兒孫).

to look for opportunities. Visiting governors of different states, Confucius hoped that his ideas about politics, ethics, society, and humanity would be taken into consideration for policy-making. He was trying so hard to pursue dreams of cosmopolitanism. In spite that he had been rejected many times, Confucius as a person embodied the active spirit of diligence and persistence. The constant and earnest effort and defiance of hardship is what Confucius admires: 'The sage and the man of perfect virtue – how dare I rank myself with them? That I strive to become such without satiety, and teach others without weariness – this much can be said of me.' (*The Analects, Shu Er*, 7:34; Legge 1861)[13] Confucius is never tired of learning and teaching. In contrast, he is always enthusiastic for learning and teaching. Thus he keeps pursuing self-cultivation, self-improvement and self-enhancement. Confucius portraits himself as follows: 'He is simply a man, who in his eager pursuit of knowledge forgets his food, who in the joy of its attainment forgets his sorrows, and who does not perceive that old age is coming on?' (*The Analects, Shu Er*, 7:19; Legge 1861).[14] This is the spirit that we discover in repeated practices of calligraphy practitioners. As the calligrapher master Wáng Xizhi says, to be skilful in writing one has to practise for 'countless times' (不得計其遍數也).

After one acquires good skills in writing (and ethical virtues as well), practicing calligraphy is considered to be in harmony with Dao. To be in harmony with the Dao is to do things spontaneously, naturally, and unintentionally, that is in the state of being unconstrained and carefree. The state of being united with Dao can be shown in the graphic forms of characters and the inner peace of the calligrapher. In contrast with the aesthetic/moral values of unrighteousness, balance, equilibrium, and stableness cherished by Confucian artists, the Daoists value naturalness, unpretentiousness and inconspicuousness. Therefore, in the above mentioned comments, we can see why Fù highlights dullness, ugliness, disunity and straightforwardness as artistically better than cleverness, pleasingness, slipperiness and calculation because the qualities of dullness, ugliness, disunity and straightforwardness are more natural. How does the calligrapher express the Daoist aesthetic qualities in writing? There are two important techniques in writing which just express Daoist flavour. They are 'edge-hidden' (cángfeng藏鋒) and 'blank-retention' (líubái留白) (Goldberg 2004; Hua 1997; Liu 2010; Yen 2005).

Firstly, 'edge-hidden' (cángfeng) is one particular brush technique. There are two broad kinds of techniques when the brush is held to contact the paper: 'edge-hidden' (cángfeng) and 'edge-exposure' (lòfeng露鋒). 'Edge-hidden' is a calligraphic technique meaning that the tip or the edge of the brush is hidden in the middle part of the stroke. Besides, when the brush contacts with the paper, the brush must be held upright rather than slanted from the side. In that case, the written words will look powerful and strong. This is the so called natural way of writing. As Tsài Yong (蔡邕, 133–192 CE) says: 'Calligraphy is generated from the nature. There is nature and so be ying and yáng. There is ying and yáng and so be the topos.

[13] 若聖與仁, 則吾豈敢?抑為之不厭, 誨人不倦, 則可謂云爾已矣。(論語述而, 7:34).

[14] 其為人也, 發憤忘食, 樂以忘憂, 不知老之將至云爾。(論語述而, 7:19).

The top and the tail [of the stroke] are hidden; the power is pregnant in the character. The exertion of writing [is as much as] the magnificence on the graphic forms.' (Hua 1997, p. 6; my translation)[15] 'Edge-hidden' has been claimed as the rightful and proper way of using the brush taken by master calligraphers over different dynasties, such as Wáng Xizhi (王羲之, 321–379 CE), Xú Hào (徐浩, 703–782 CE), Yán Zhenqing (顏真卿, 709–785 CE), Jiang Kwéi (姜夔, 1155–1211 CE) and many others. In contrast, 'edge-exposure' is a technique that the tip or the edge of the brush is shown on the stroke, which is criticised as 'ill',[16] 'poor',[17] 'soft' and 'eccentric'.[18] As mentioned, in Chinese culture there is a wide-spread belief about the intertwinement of morality and aesthetics. How a human being behaves morally is considered to correspond to what one expresses artistically. Concerning the brush technique, 'edge-hidden' (cángfeng) reflects 'the traditional Chinese idea about the proper bearing of a gentleman (junzi), a man with noble character.' (Yen 2005, p. 105) More importantly, a junzi does not show off one's talents. Therefore, one's humble and reserved character is more similar to the quality of 'edge-hidden' (cángfeng). The quality of modesty, humbleness, keeping from being conspicuous is what Daoists value.

As for 'blank-retention' (líubái), it is a technique of leaving the blank space between lines and characters when writing or painting. Literally 'líu' means 'to retain', 'to reserve' or 'to leave'. 'Bái' literally means 'white'. The word is also used to refer to 'void', or 'blank'. Simply speaking, líubái is to leave space blank, not to fill the vacant space with ink. Since the ink is black, the part of the paper that is not coated with black ink, not blackened is white as well as blank. In Chinese arts, the blank is not left randomly or arbitrarily on the picture or in the text. Proper retention of blank on paper is a highly artistic and skilful technique, based on great artistic, aesthetic and moral ability. The proper blank is able to communicate more profound and deep meaning than words or images visible in ink. Visually the blank is to make a space, an interruption or a disconnection between the black line, blocks or characters. Yet the discontinuity produces new meaning between intervals. As Goldberg (2004, pp. 181–182) states, 'it is through the visual, motorial, and tactile "imagination" that we give "body" to a calligraphic element in its constitutive role in the emergent configuration of the written character about its dynamic centre of motion. The written character is thus at once an expression of gestural movement and a constructed form.' The blank and the blackened dynamically form together to give meaning to the viewer. Líubái is to signify by the absence of signifier.

The strokes of edge-hidden and blank-retention manifest the empty space on the canvas, which relates the artistic expression to the inner freedom. The mastery of

[15] 父書肇於自然, 自然既立, 陰陽生焉; 陰陽既生, 形勢出矣。藏頭護尾, 力在其中, 下筆用力, 肌膚之麗。(蔡邕, 九勢).

[16] 常欲筆鋒在畫中, 則左右皆無病矣。(姜夔, 續書譜用筆) (Hua 1997, p. 359) 用筆之勢, 特須藏鋒, 鋒若不藏, 字則有病。(徐浩, 論書) (Hua 1997, p. 252).

[17] 夫臨文用筆之法…或有藏鋒者大, 側筆者乏。(王羲之, 筆勢論觀形章第八) (Hua 1997, p. 31).

[18] 筆軟則奇怪生焉。(蔡邕, 九勢) (Hua 1997, p. 6).

writing skills and tools is to grasp the inner freedom. As Tsài Yong (133–192 CE) writes,

> Writing; releasing. In order to write one must release oneself from inner confinement. Let go the mind and heart. Then write. If one's heart and mind is obliged, one could not write well even if one has the best brush. (Hua 1997, p. 5; my translation)[19]

The empty space is, in the Swiss sinologist Jean François Billeter's (2002) words, 'un vide fécond'. The fertile or fruitful void is made by the calligrapher because the author has a deep awareness of freedom – the state of being free from any confinement. Furthermore, the carefree calligrapher is able to produce works mirroring the nature. As Tsài continues, the excellent calligraphy embraces and reveals the nature in every aspect. It can be enfolded in remarkable calligraphic works various attitudes and postures, e.g. 'sitting or walking, flying or moving, coming and going, lying down or getting up, being depressed or being joyful, insects' eating leaves, sharp swords and halberds, nice bows and arrows, water and fire, clouds and mists, the sun and the moon' (Hua 1997, p. 6; my translation).[20] Inner freedom, as described by the calligraphers and critics, accords with Dao and nature. Inner freedom, or self-release in the Daoist words is 'fasting of the mind'. 'Fast' literally means to abstain from food. 'Fasting of the mind' in Zhuangzi means having the mind abstained from all desires and deliberations. Zhuangzi states,

> Maintain a perfect unity in every movement of your will, You will not wait for the hearing of your ears about it, but for the hearing of your mind. You will not wait even for the hearing of your mind, but for the hearing of the spirit. Let the hearing (of the ears) rest with the ears. Let the mind rest in the verification (of the rightness of what is in the will). But the spirit is free from all pre-occupation and so waits for (the appearance of) things. Where the (proper) course is, there is freedom from all pre-occupation; such freedom is the fasting of the mind. (Zhuangzi, 4:2; Legge 1891)[21]

Fasting of the mind is to enter into the state of clarity, purity, stillness, and free from the external attractions (Hung 2015). A calligrapher master in such a state of mind writes as one becomes harmonious with the ultimate Dao. The master writes in the way that one is unintentional but enlightened. Zhuangzi's well-known story of the Cook Ding ingeniously depicts how a master chef develops his extremely artful and natural practice of dismembering an ox from a novice. The Cook Ding described that when he first began to cut up an ox, he saw nothing but the (entire) carcase. After 3 years, he ceased to see it as a whole. And another 16 years, the Cook Ding has already entered into the state of being harmony with Dao. He says,

> Now I deal with it in a spirit-like manner, and do not look at it with my eyes. The use of my senses is discarded, and my spirit acts as it wills. Observing the natural lines, (my knife)

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[19] 書者, 散也。欲書先散懷抱, 任情恣性, 然後書之。若迫於事, 雖中山兔毫, 不能佳也。(蔡邕, 書論) (Hua 1997, p. 5).

[20] 若坐若行, 若飛若動, 若往若來, 若卧若起, 若愁若喜, 若蟲食木葉, 若利劍長戈, 若強弓硬矢, 若水火, 若雲霧, 若日月。(蔡邕, 書論) (Hua 1997, p. 6).

[21] 若一志, 无聽之以耳而聽之以心, 无聽之以心而聽之以氣。聽止於耳, 心止於符。氣也者, 虛而待物者也。唯道集虛。虛者, 心齋也。(莊子, 人間世, 4:2).

> slips through the great crevices and slides through the great cavities, taking advantage of the facilities thus presented. My art avoids the membranous ligatures, and much more the great bones. A good cook changes his knife every year; (it may have been injured) in cutting – an ordinary cook changes his every month – (it may have been) broken. Now my knife has been in use for nineteen years; it has cut up several thousand oxen, and yet its edge is as sharp as if it had newly come from the whetstone. (*Zhuangzi, Nourishing the Lord of Life*, 3:2; Legge 1891)[22]

The interlocutor ruler Wén Hùi appraised the skill of the Cook Ding as impeccable and perfect and was inspired by his words for 'the nourishment of life'. Two implications are drawn from the above discussion. First, the consonance between the essays of writing calligraphy and the story of the Cook Ding indicates that the supreme realm of a practice or a vocation is to be in tune with Dao, to be united with Dao – a state which I coin the term as 'Daoful'. The execution of a practice or a vocation in an utmost artful and natural way is to reach the realm of Dao. Therefore, to be in harmony with Dao is to be human (non-natural) as well as to be natural (non-human). The goal of being Daoful is what we can find in calligraphic literature that embraces Confucian and Daoist inspirations. As Ho (2005, p. 166) writes, 'The goal of learning is the attainment of *Dao* through dwelling in a practice, a view held by the founders of both Confucianism and Daoism.' The engagement of and aspiration for the Dao is the most significant goal of self-cultivation in Chinese tradition. Writing calligraphy is one of the practices. Second, reaching the realm of Dao is to be human (artful) and nonhuman (natural) at the same time. This resounds the Táng calligrapher Chang Zǎo's (張璪, n.d.) aesthetical commentary about brush-writing as 'learning from external changing nature and gaining from the origin of the mind' (Chang 1954, 10.31; my translation). Nature as the outside surroundings and the internal human mind are linked and communicated through writing, the artistic expression. To be human and to be nonhuman simultaneously bring forth the nourishment of life from the Daoist perspective. Being non/human seems to be a contradictory mode. Yet it is the state that a human being is tuned in Dao through practising a certain profession or art to the ultimate. Be it cooking or writing, as long as one is entirely devoted with heart, mind and body to a practice, one's life is nourished and enriched to attain the Dao. In this vein, any ordinary profession or practice could lead to the Dao.

9.4 Concluding Remarks

In Chinese Tradition, practising calligraphy plays an important role in educating people of letters. It is taken as a process of self-cultivation aesthetically and morally. In the Confucian tradition, the moral dimension of calligraphy is more important

[22] 方今之時, 臣以神遇, 而不以目視, 官知止而神欲行。依乎天理, 批大郤, 導大窾, 因其固然。技經肯綮之未嘗, 而況大軱乎!良庖歲更刀, 割也; 族庖月更刀, 折也。今臣之刀十九年矣, 所解數千牛矣, 而刀刃若新發於硎。(莊子, 養生主, 3:2).

than the aesthetic one, which I cast doubt on. Not only do I doubt the validity of making judgment of a person's moral character directly from his handwriting. I also challenge the implications of moral character in Confucian tradition because the moral character is often limited within the framework of patriotism and loyalty to the ruler. Nevertheless, the above discussion shows that calligraphy from the Daoist lens provides profound inspirations for linking the body and the mind, the art and the nature, in an alternative way. In this view, practising calligraphy is viable to cultivate the self for strengthening patience and keeping serenity and, furthermore, a possible way of communicating nature and art.

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Chapter 10
Zhu Xi's Ethics of Reading: For the Recovery of Humanistic Pedagogies of Learning

Duck-Joo Kwak

Introductory Remarks
By Roland Reichenbach

The old history of reading is strongly intertwined with the cultural development of writing. Learning to read is to become "literate". This presupposes education, relatively stable forms of living together, and pedagogical authority; this is especially the case when a culture develops a large diversity of ideographic characters (such as in China). Reading has a liberating effect for it helps the individual to find additional guidance in inner reflection rather than just traditional behavior patterns which one acquires in the community. Reading is a silent, almost intimate activity (which was not always the case), an incredibly diverse conversation between words and the reader. Books are senseless without readers. To become a reader also means to enable persons to link themselves with past epochs, distant others, foreign cultures; becoming a reader further means to participate in a culture of symbolic order which will – for a life time – be helpful to express one's own feelings, thoughts, and points of view. Education can be seen as effort to become more differentiated in expressing one's own experiences; personhood and becoming literate are so tightly connected that it is quickly overseen within a merely pragmatic and instrumentalist world.

Professor Duck-Joo Kwak's contribution focuses on the normative aspect of reading expressed by Zhu Xi (1130–1200), very important (neo-) Confucian thinker, and representative of the rationalist wing of Confucian philosophy. Duck-Joo Kwak understands Zhu Xi's "ethics of reading" as providing "self-reading experiences", which help to gather personal insights and therefore has the potential to enhance self-knowledge. In opposition to idealistic perspectives in Confucian thought – most strongly represented by Wang Yangming (1472–1529) – Zhu Xi advocates the

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R. Reichenbach, D.-J. Kwak (eds.), *Confucian Perspectives on Learning and Self-Transformation*, Contemporary Philosophies and Theories in Education 14,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-40078-1_10

crucial role of studying the classics: to read (and understand) is to come in contact with the world of ideas that one needs to know to follow the way of self-cultivation; the proper and persevering study of texts is always more than the mere acquisition of knowledge about things written and authors' ideas. It means to connect oneself to human culture, and beyond that, to develop a sense of being a part in a universal or heavenly order. The educational program of such an ethics of reading is not led by the "romantic" assumption of self-realization by some sort of psychological inner building plan or genetic structure; rather, it is more "interactive". It means that the person comes to herself by connecting to ideas that are greater than herself.

Professor Kwak critically as well as fruitfully discusses the special status of texts, and the ethics of reading, in Zhu Xi's philosophy of education. She argues that Zhu Xi's ethics of reading is to be "characterized as aesthetic as well as moral in its nature", – This, however, may hold true mainly for texts that are worth being read and studied for their potential of providing valuable insights and self-knowledge to the reader.

10.1 Introduction: Why a Talk on the Ethics of Reading Today?

The humanities as part of the university curriculum have been under huge pressure to show its public utility in this global world of technocrats and entrepreneurs, where the instrumental view of knowledge is widespread and firmly entrenched. In response to this pressure, a well-known American philosopher, Martha Nussbaum (1997, 2010), defends the arts and humanities as irreplaceable resources in fostering future global citizens for their abilities of "critical thinking" and "narrative imagination." But the manner in which she defends the humanities seems insufficient to show why we should teach it in the universities. It is a clever move that she associates humanities education (liberal education) with global or democratic citizenship. It is also reasonable for her to claim that the two abilities, critical thinking and narrative imagination, are required for democratic and global citizenship today. Critical thinking equips us with 'independence of thought' to fight against the massive manipulation of our minds by multinational corporate mass-media (2010, p. 54), whereas narrative imagination allows us to have 'sympathy' with others from different cultural and moral outlooks in this pluralistic global world (p. 96). However, it is hard to see the *necessary* connection between teaching the humanities and fostering these two abilities in Nussbaum's account, since it is always possible that teaching the humanities fails to foster the two abilities in our pupils, as often happens.

It is not that we don't see that teaching the humanities, mostly consisting of reading good books, can lead young people to think critically and imaginatively; it is likely to do so. But the connection between teaching the humanities and cultivation of these two abilities, as articulated by Nussbaum, seems to be only contingent, not necessary. All Nussbaum can tell us is that the arts and humanities are, compared to

other things, e.g., chess-playing, voluntary service or adventurous traveling, *more useful* educational resources in developing 'critical thinking' and 'narrative imagination' in young people; her account is still enmeshed in some sort of instrumentalism. Thus it begs another question: Precisely what is it about the humanities which enable us to develop the two abilities in the first place? What is the *inherent force* of reading books in the humanities that leads us to cultivate these two abilities? If we cannot answer these questions, the educational justification of the humanities would still remain incomplete.

Regarding this question, Peter Brooks' recent book, *The Humanities and Public life* (2014), is worth noting. In this collection of essays he edited, Brooks states that the humanities represent a commitment to 'ethical reading.' He seems to characterize the nature of reading *inherent to* the humanities as *ethical* reading. I think that this is a better move in seeking the educational justification of the humanities since it is directed to a more fundamental question of *what it means* to read books in the humanities. In the humanities, reading texts, that is, reading them in a certain manner, *closely* and *interpretatively*, is the exclusive way of doing research. But what does it mean to read texts closely and interpretatively? And why did Brooks describe it as *ethical* reading? What does he mean by the 'ethical' here?

In exploring the possible meanings of 'ethical reading' as the nature of humanistic reading, Brooks specifies two ways in which the phrase is sometimes employed, but which he refuses to accept (2014, pp. 1–4). When we define humanistic reading *as* close or interpretative reading, it usually refers to reading of a careful, analytic and self-conscious kind. Thus, we can say, first, that humanistic reading is ethical because it makes us *critical thinkers*. But in what sense can it be called ethical? It may be so in the sense that it makes our young student's thinking *disciplined* by developing their ability to read critically. This resonates with Nussbaum's earlier account. However, Brooks disagrees, claiming that, even if the ability to read and think critically is crucial in *contributing to* our pupil's leading the good life when the manipulation of minds is increasingly what running the world is all about today, being disciplined in their thinking cannot be itself described as ethical. Second, we may think that reading in the humanities can be called ethical because the kind of texts we are reading makes us good persons due to their morally relevant content. This is to say that the practice of reading *good* books makes us good persons. But Brooks does not find this account satisfactory, either. For him, in both usages the term "ethical" is (wrongly) attributed to the *outcomes* of the practice of reading, *not* to the process of reading itself.

Describing reading in the humanities as a self-conscious *practice*, Brooks tries to place the source of its ethical nature in *the process* or *experience* of reading itself, not its outcomes. For him, the very process of reading slowly and consciously can be characterized as an *ethical act*. For this practice is pursued "with care and attention to language, its contexts, implications, uncertainties" (Brooks 2014, p. 3). According to Brooks, our reading in the humanities attempts to ensure that our interpretation of a text can be defended in the context of the text by subjugating the meaning we derive to the constraints of the lexicon, the historical horizon, and the text as a whole. In this sense "this submission to culture as something beyond one's

individuality is in itself a discipline" and deserves to be called an ethical act (pp. 3–4). On the other hand, J. H. Miller also gives us another idea of the ethical aspect of humanistic reading in a similar vein to that of Brooks. In his book *the Ethics of Reading* (1987), he says that the experience of reading is ethical when it requires us to face the ethical moment in reading, the moment when we are forced to be *responsive to*, *responsible for*, or *respectful of*, what we are reading, namely, the text (1987, p. 4).

In both descriptions, reading as an ethical act is highlighted: reading as the very *experience* of an ethical event in relation to the text one reads. This may allow us to conclude that reading in the humanities can be called ethical in the sense that the act of reading *affects* the reader *through* the mediation of *the text* she reads in such a way as to force the reader to relate herself to the text in a *certain manner*. Thus we may say that there is a distinctively humanistic practice of reading, which can be identified as the *ethics* of reading since this practice itself necessarily intervenes and transforms the reader's self-relation.

I think this idea of reading as an ethical practice has its ancient origins in the humanistic tradition of both the East and West. In both traditions, 'reading' used to be considered critical to forming students' selfhood as a pedagogical practice. However, 'reading' in modern schooling has lost its *spiritual* connection to the self. This change has to do with a modernist shift to 'writing' as a main pedagogical tool, to which reading tends to be subordinated. What is called essay-writing is a pedagogical tool in secondary and tertiary education today, and is commonly used to judge students' mastery and comprehension of material, emphasizing the factual and the logical rather than the literary with the use of the first person singular discouraged (Kwak 2013, p. 44). Thus, reading in modern education is cast adrift from the reader's personality, intentionality and sensibility.

This paper aims to reconstruct a twelfth century neo-Confucian scholar Zhu Xi's *ethics of reading* to see if it can provide us with a new possibility of recovering the old practice of reading as a self-(trans)formative event, yet in such a way as to accommodate the post-metaphysical culture of contemporary liberal education. With a comparative perspective, this attempt is intended to contribute to enriching vocabularies to describe the educationally intrinsic value of the humanities education, which Brooks aspires to with his idea of ethical reading. In this reconstruction, I will start with Zhu Xi's *new* ideas of (humanistic) learning since his ethics of reading is conceived as the actual way of realizing his ethics of learning. My underlying concern in this paper is to see whether Zhu Xi's ethics of reading can be newly interpreted as the practice of *self-reading*, which may allow us to formulate his old idea of self-cultivation in quest for the Way (*tao*) in new terms: self-cultivation as self-dispossession in favor of the text, or as self-dialogue with the mediating practice of textuality.

10.2 Main Characteristics of Zhu Xi's Ethics of Learning as Tao-Learning (道學)

Zhu Xi (1130~1200 AD) is well-known as one of the most influential Neo-Confucian scholars from the twelfth century Song dynasty in China. But it is relatively unknown that he was also one of the most significant *educators* in the East Asian region. It was he who firmly established the Confucian school curriculum that lasted more than five centuries in most pre-modern East Asian countries: the system of the Four Books as a common denominator to their education system.[1] A contemporary American neo-Confucian scholar, Theodore de Bary (1996, pp. 23–24), suspects that the so-called 'East Asian mentality' common to contemporary East Asians, despite their various historical experiences in the process of modernization throughout the twentieth century, may have to do with this long lasting educational influence by the shared school curriculum on the basic levels of education. For, from the thirteenth century on, the Four Books had been considered in this region core to the curriculum for *general* education, not professional education, while being targeted not just for elites but also for common people as its educational audience.

The idea of the Four Books was proposed with a very liberal and progressive spirit against corrupting educational tendencies in the eleventh century, by some neo-Confucian scholars as a response to the tendencies pervasive in the Song dynasty (960~1279 AD) in China (Park 2005, p. 30). What is so significant about the emergence of the Four Books from the educational perspective? And what are those corrupting cultural malaises that caused its emergence? Since the Han dynasty (206 BC~220 AD) in China, which took Confucianism as its dominant political ideology, 'learning' had been the central issue from the very beginning, i.e., the time of Confucius himself, as shown in his statement in *the Analects*: "From fifteen my heart-and-mind was set upon learning" (Ames and Rosemont 1998, p. 76). And in this old Confucian tradition, the Five Classics,[2] not the Four Books, had long been the main curriculum for young pupils. Thus, Zhu Xi's shift to the Four Books as the core curriculum is said to have signaled the beginning of a new orientation in the ethics of learning in the Confucian tradition: a shift from "learning for the sake of others" to "learning for the sake of oneself." To understand the full meaning of this shift, we need to briefly touch upon the social, political and intellectual settings in the eleventh and twelfth century of the Song dynasty, which gave birth to this new ethics of learning.

According to de Bary (1989, p. 189), Zhu Xi's new ethics of learning emerged against two dominant cultural trends in the Song dynasty. First, there was the increasingly prevalent culture of examination-style learning, which can be described

[1] The Four Books are: the *Great learning*(大學), the *Analects*(論語), the *Mencius*(孟子), the *Doctrine of the Mean*(中庸). These are collections of sages' and worthies' words from the past, especially the ancient period of China.

[2] The Five Classics are: the *Book of Poetry*(詩經), the *Book of History*(書經), the *Book of Rites*(禮記), the *Book of Changes*(周易), the *Spring and Autumn Annals*(春秋).

as the culture of "learning for the sake of others" since it takes a form of professional preparation for *public* service as government officials. In the Confucian tradition, learning, which is normally and exclusively practiced by the class of literati, is supposed to play three roles in the society. Three equally independent aims of learning are: (1) transmission of culture, (2) service to society, and (3) moral self-transformation (de Bary 1989, p. 7). So, potential public officials' pursuit of learning for the sake of passing civil service examination, which was universally open by the Confucian government to anybody who wanted to belong to the literati class, was not necessarily found despicable, as we contemporaries tend to think, for it was usually associated with political leadership for social service.[3] But unusually high competition for civil service examinations, caused by political and economic factors in those times, such as political factualism and misguided educational policy, created an excessive tendency among the literati of learning purely for careerism or worldly success in the name of learning for others.[4] Zhu Xi and other neo-Confucian scholars found it deeply unsatisfactory and despicable, and proposed as an alternative the idea of learning for spiritual and moral advance which stays *independent of* political order.[5]

On the other hand, according to de Bary (pp. 188–189), Buddhism and Taoism were strongly popular among Zhu Xi's contemporary intellectuals, with their greater popular appeal for the educational uplift of the masses. What was so appealing about them was their emphasis on spirituality and lofty mental culture centering on such fundamental questions as the nature of the cosmos and the position of human beings in it. While being once deeply absorbed in both, especially in Buddhism, in his formative period of scholarship, Zhu Xi in the end turns away from them, due to his problem with a Buddhist *transcendent* tendency and a Taoist *nihilistic* bent. In Zhu Xi's view, neither of them was much interested in educational instruction and cultural methods to reach the larger public with contempt at the words written and spoken. To Zhu Xi's philosophical taste, their emphasis on meditation, a monastic

[3] A national civil service examination system had been implemented in China since the Han dynasty (206 BC ~ 220 AD) by the emperors for the reason of employment of the talented for the government. It was a system through which people could move up to the class of *literati*, which was respected as both a social and intellectual class, regardless of their birth class. The examination-obsessed culture common to contemporary East Asian societies is often explained by many scholars as having to do with this historically deep-rooted origin of the Confucian convention.

[4] This tendency was blamed on a very influential Confucian scholar-official Wang An-shih's new policy (1021–1086 AD), or his ethics of learning that emphasized the idea of 'learning for affairs of government' (de Bary 1989; Bol 1989). We will discuss Wang's idea of learning in detail a little later in this section.

[5] The fact that a high number of populations then were so eager to take the examination had the consequence of leaving a lot of them without public offices. According to de Bary and Chaffee (1989, p. 6–10), it created a situation where Zhu Xi's idea of learning for the sake of oneself was received favorably by those who failed to pass the exam and to take public posts. From this time on, the idea of learning for the sake of oneself started to take a moral high ground since it was not directed to utilitarian careerism but pursued for pure moral reasons. It prompted the emergence of new kind of literati who did not take up public offices, yet still were viewed as leading the people as cultural and moral leaders outside the government.

way of life, devotional and charitable service for spiritual training was too otherworldly, and their exclusive concern with spiritual enlightenment was too transcendental to guide our secular goals and ordinary lives. Buddhism's insistence on giving a top priority to the problem of self and non-self without addressing education for a distinctive social and cultural value did not seem to be down-to-earth enough to orient common people's lives in pursuing the good life in this world. According to de Bary and Chaffee (1989, pp. 4–6; p. 189), Zhu Xi was a practical realist who was interested in systematic intellectual and moral training especially with the study of books. Thus Zhu Xi chose a middle road between cultural utilitarianism *and* religious transcendentalism or obscurism for his educational philosophy, that is, education for self-understanding *by means of* cultural studies and book-learning.

This shift in focus for education of literati seems to give a new order to the relationship among the three aims of Confucian education mentioned earlier; (1) the transmission of culture and (2) service to society are both now considered secondary to the purpose of (3) moral self-transformation in Confucian education. In making this shift for literati learning, Zhu Xi reformulates the main question of the Confucian educational project from "How do we implement the Way(*tao*, 道) in the government of the state?" to "How do we implement the Way in our own individual life?" This *inward* turn in Zhu Xi is original. But this is only one aspect of his originality. Critical of Buddhism and Taoism, he also attempts to combine this inward turn with a reemphasis on 'cultural tradition' or 'book learning.' This means that the cultivation of one's individual moral mind is to be mediated by cultural tradition, i.e., by means of reading canonical texts from cultural tradition. However, according to Peter Bol (1989), there were two other Confucian scholars prior to Zhu Xi in the Song dynasty who had taken cultural tradition seriously for literati learning; "Wang (An-Shih) and Su (Shih) represent the era that asked how the literati ought to relate to the cultural tradition" (de Bary and Chaffee 1989, p. 7). Thus, to clarify the full aspects of Zhu Xi's originality, we need to see how Zhu Xi was different from the two scholars in establishing his ethics of learning in relation *to* cultural tradition. For that let me follow Pol's excellent account below.

For Zhu Xi, as for the other two predecessors, learning for a literatus means to become a sage(聖人) through learning the cultural tradition of sages from the past. But, Zhu Xi's deep concern with his contemporary culture was: Why did today's literatus who learned to act as a literatus not turn out to be a sage? The philosophical task for Zhu Xi, therefore, was to define the kind of learning that makes this possible (Bol 1989, p. 153), and one of his critical missions was to show the real distinction that exists between true learning and examination-style learning. The latter was widespread in the literati culture during his era under the strong influences of two distinctive schools of learning: Wang An-Shih's and Su Shih's. Wang (1021–1086 AD), a politically influential scholar-official, defended learning for the institutional reform of society, and stressed the Five Classics as the proper subject matter. On the other hand, Su (1037–1101 AD), a brilliant poet-official, advocated learning for cultural accomplishment and individual creativity, emphasizing literary studies for its subject matter. In fact, these two schools of learning established a dual

examination system then that allowed candidates to choose to be tested either in the exegesis of the Classics or in the composition of prose and poetry in civil service examinations (p. 152). According to Bol, they were two alternative schools of learning that Zhu Xi attempted to replace by proposing his new ethics of learning in the name of 'true learning.'

Then, what were the differences among these three Confucian schools of learning in their view of the role of cultural tradition in learning? According to Bol (pp. 163–167), even if all three Confucian schools of learning have the same goal in seeking to produce sages, each school pursued a different type of sage-hood. Wang's learning is concerned with the cultivation of one's ability to *order the world*. This means that learning is to know how to master the means of ordering the world, just as sages did in antiquity in creating their political institutions. Thus, a literatus was expected to learn to be a sage by studying the institution and models that the ancient sages created in the past to understand why their works formed coherent and inclusive systems. The sages' teaching on how to achieve order and their commands constituted the literary tradition of the Five Classics, especially *the Rites of Chu*. Of course, it did not mean just to repeat the models created by the sages from the past. According to Wang's school of learning, periodic reforms of institutions are necessary to reestablish an integrated and uniform order that can accommodate the changes in one's contemporary world. It pursues knowledge that combines an understanding of the ideas in the Five Classics with knowledge from contemporary sources. But, for Wang's school, man can know the true order *only from* cultural tradition, not from within himself, and the sage's words and deeds are still thought to be directly accessible to man (pp. 164–170).

According to Confucian ethics of learning, man should discover a way of unifying heaven and man, which is called *tao*(道), the Way. For Wang's school, this *tao* can be realized only through the affairs of government rather than through the cultivation of one's moral conduct. In other words, the only reason to learn for oneself is to gain the ability to do things for others, i.e., serving in the government. However, Zhu Xi does not think that the good man is obliged to serve in government (de Bary and Chaffee 1989, pp. 7–8). Yet, Zhu Xi does not completely disregard the civil service or institutional reform defended by Wang's learning, either, as one of the missions by literati. He even admires Wang An-Shih for his noble intention and aspiration for social reform. But Zhu Xi criticizes him for his error about the *means* by which to achieve the goal, ordering of the world. According to Zhu Xi, Wang was right in submitting to the discipline of learning from the Classics, but he was wrong in the manner in which he submits to it; in other words, he does not submit to it in a tr*ue* manner (Bol 1989, p 169). According to Zhu Xi, Wang lacked the true understanding of the Way(*tao*, 道); he did not know *how* the Way could be found. Wang thought it was to be found from cultural tradition, not from within ourselves. But for Zhu Xi, the Way (*tao*) is innate within each one of us. Wang's sheer indifference to our innate capability had the consequence of leaving common people mistakenly enraptured by Buddhism and Taoism. Zhu Xi claims that moral cultivation or knowing the Way (*tao*) from within is basic to any successful political actions; only men who know and share the goals and methods of true learning can be politically

effective. Hence, Zhu Xi wants to demonstrate that his vision of true learning can guide all literati in both managing the affairs of government and maintaining cultural tradition.

On the other hand, unlike Wang's learning, Su's school of learning takes the same *inward* turn as Zhu Xi's new learning, in seeking the Way (*tao*). Emphasizing literary styles and various forms of composition in prose, poetry and calligraphy in which the literati could demonstrate their cultural accomplishment, Su's learning entertained high popularity among literati in the Song dynasty then in competition with the idea of learning of his contemporary neo-Confucian scholar Ch'eng I′.[6] Thus, there was a widespread saying back then, according to Bol, that "one can learn *tao* (the Way, 道) from Ch'eng I and *wen* (culture, 文) from Su Shih" (1989, p. 171). But Su's school of learning also had its own idea about literati values and *tao* (the Way). For Su, literary qualities that give man's cultural accomplishment real value are the very qualities that define the Way (*tao*) of Confucian sages. Thus, according to Su (pp. 181–182), a literatus should develop his individual ability to compose and bring new things into being by evaluating his own or others' works with broad learning and careful analysis of past accomplishment. The sages are those who know how to *delight in* the demands of literary tradition and to *practice* them without forcing themselves. In Su's view, civilized traditions are the very outgrowth of contingent human sentiments and circumstances, which allow individual creativity to flourish. On the other hand, Su's learning assumes that sages' *tao* include the realm of both things and mysterious invisibles of the inner being. Thus, learning is meant to shift back and forth between the one and many, bringing into being the realm of many new things on the basis of one's intuition about *the one* inexhaustible source of creativity within ourselves, that is, *tao*. This source is mysterious and unknowable. Being at one with this mysterious source brings to us real spontaneity in the form of intuition, which enables us to develop things in our own individual Ways (*tao*). Thus, for Su, to be a sage is to be in touch with this source of intuition while making something new in combination with past accomplishment. That is, in creating something out of inspiration, man has a chance to combine intuition from within oneself and knowledge acquired from men from the past. Hence, cultural tradition, especially literary tradition, seems critical to Su's learning.

Zhu Xi greatly admired Su for his cultural accomplishment and literary skills, but found Su's learning even more threatening than Wang's to his true learning. Why is that so? Zhu Xi criticizes Su for not knowing the correct basis of *tao*, the Way; Su found its basis in composing *wen* (文, writing) and thought we could find *tao* in creating good compositions. For Su, the act of composing is the first thing to do, and then the act of discovering *tao* is to follow. There seems to be a dual basis for Su's learning; *wen* and *tao*. For Su, cultural accomplishment can have real value, and a man of cultural accomplishment can be morally responsible without being a moralist. However, in Zhu Xi's view, Su's cultural accomplishment rather tends to

[6] Ch'eng I (1033–1107 AD) was one of the outstanding neo-Confucian scholars whom Zhu Xi highly admired and followed as one of his neo-Confucian predecessors.

turn away men's minds from *tao* or moral cultivation. In other words, in Su's learning *wen* (culture) can be easily separated from *tao*, the Way. Of course, Zhu Xi takes *wen* or cultural tradition as necessary and vital to his true learning. But *wen* (culture) could also be the greatest threat to the success of true learning since it provides an alternative definition of what it means to be a literatus. Bol points out that we can see here Zhu Xi's inner tension "between the pull of cultural pursuit" he was raised to appreciate and "his desire to establish himself as the teacher of the Way (*tao*) to the world" (p. 178).

In contrast to Su's learning, Zhu Xi attempts to make a distinction between *wen* (culture) and *tao* (the Way), and to give a priority to *tao* over *wen*. For Zhu Xi, there is only a single basis for learning, which is *tao*; culture is only a medium through which we can meet *tao*. On the other hand, Zhu Xi holds that Su had a fundamental misunderstanding of *tao* in viewing it as mysterious and unknowable (Bol, pp. 173–181). For Zhu Xi, the nature (性) and *tao* (道) are to be one thing, and we can be certain that we know our nature and *tao* (the Way). Here Zhu Xi seems to deny the equal combination of *wen* (culture) and *tao* (the Way) in his learning. He insists that *wen* (culture) can have a value only when it is entirely in service of *tao*. In other words, cultural pursuits are not basic to his enterprise; they can have real value only when they are the expressions of true moral cultivation. Thus, only morally committed men can bring about real culture.

According to Bol (p. 184), Zhu Xi here shows a new way of *reintegrating wen* (culture) with *tao* (nature). Prior to Zhu Xi in the history of China, cultural tradition was considered the only source for men that could define the kind of ideas guiding all literati. But, with Zhu Xi now, *tao*, the Way, is conceived of as something that exists independent of cultural tradition. Its existence is confirmed by the process of nature rather than the records of culture (p. 185). For Zhu Xi, *tao* (the Way) is understood as *li* (理, principle), residing in all things in the cosmos as well as innately present in all, and this is supposed to be the basis of understanding cultural tradition to provide us with models for the affairs of government and one's personal cultural accomplishments. Here we can see that Zhu Xi introduces a new question of how literati should relate themselves to the transcendent principle of morality in their learning.

Now we can see that Zhu Xi's true learning rests upon three beliefs. First, we have innate moral endowments capable of guiding our conduct. Second, we must engage in the process that enables us to recover these innate guides. Third, this process can start by investigating and understanding principle (*li,* 理) of morality or pattern of moral behaviors, which underlies all things in the cosmos. Then, how can we start to investigate principle? Zhu Xi's answer is: by reading books, especially by starting with the Four Books. Why reading books? Zhu Xi says that "All things in the world have principle, but its essence is *embodied* in the works of the sages and worthies (Gardner 1990, p. 37). This means that, even if principle inheres in all things and affairs in the universe, the Classics written by the great sages of antiquity manifest principle more clearly than anywhere else. As de Bary (1989, p. 193) says, Zhu Xi's emphasis on the Four Books as the basic curriculum for his new learning seems to be a matter of convenience because they are constructed in a good

combination of principle and practicality for nurturing man's moral nature.[7] However, for Zhu Xi, reading the Four Books in itself does not make the reader morally good; reading books for moral cultivation will be ineffective unless we read in a *proper* manner. A method of reading becomes even more critical to Zhu Xi's true learning. This is the question to which we turn now.

10.3 Zhu Xi's Ethics of Reading: Pursuit of Principle by Preserving the Mind

According to Gardner (1990, p. 38), texts would mean little for Zhu Xi, no matter how much wisdom or inspiration they contain, if the reader does not possess a *proper* attitude in approaching them. So in establishing a rigorous curriculum, Zhu Xi develops a highly elaborate method of reading.[8] Zhu Xi's concern here is that reading canonical texts is not primarily an intellectual exercise but an intellectual means to a moral and spiritual end. So for him, reading must never be an end in itself but merely a way to come to know principle (*li*, 理) and to follow the true Way, *tao*. Once principle is apprehended, the Classics and commentaries on them can even be abandoned. Zhu Xi says:

> Book learning is of secondary importance. It would seem that moral principle is originally complete in man; the reason he must engage in book learning is that he hasn't experienced much. The sages experienced a great deal and wrote it down for others to read. Now in book learning we must simply apprehend the many manifestations of moral principle. Once we understand them, we will find that all of them were complete in us from the very beginning, not added to us from the outside (p. 128).

Here we can see that reading books, for Zhu Xi, is a means for the discovery of moral principle, which is already *within ourselves*.

Thus we can say two facts about the educational purpose of reading books in Zhu Xi. First, it concerns the discovery of moral principle. Second, this discovery is the very way of realizing one's true nature, or recovering one's spiritual connection to oneself. On the other hand, we can also say something about the educational usage of texts in the pursuit of this educational purpose. Texts are considered to embody

[7] Zhu Xi places the Four Books as texts more *basic to* the texts of the Five Classics because the "ease, immediacy and brevity" of these texts gave the reader an accessibility that other texts in the canon lacked. So only after fully mastering these four texts, are students supposed to turn to the previously authoritative Five Classics (Gardner 1990, p. 39).

[8] Zhu Xi, as a teacher and educator concerned with the institutionalization of his true learning in his society, attempts to give the educational process for moral self-transformation a clear direction, a coherent method, and substantial content with graded priority of learning (de Bary 1989, pp. 186–187). He also devotes most of his later life to working on various educational projects, i.e., editing, abridging and commenting on the Classics by focusing on the concrete examples and concise formula to make teaching and learning memorable, and by proposing a schedule of readings graded according to the age of students with a division of elementary and advanced education (p. 212).

the lives of sages with a diversity of human experiences and irreplaceable values, while the sages are those who understand principle. This means that texts are full of the manifestations of principle in sages' words. Thus we as readers are supposed to understand principle *through* the sages' words in the texts.

Then, our next question should be: "How can reading the classical texts or sages' words help us to understand principle?" In other words, how should we take the textual meanings of the words in relation to principle? Zhu Xi hints at the answer in saying: "Read books to observe the intentions of the sages and worthies. Follow the intentions of the sages and worthies to observe natural principle" (p. 129). His words seem to imply that the sages' intentions and thoughts revealed by the texts *exemplify* principle. In other words, in order to understand principle, we readers are supposed to understand the sages' intentions and actions first. But what sort of connection is there between the understanding of the sages' intentions and the understanding of principle? How can we make the leap from reading the manifestations of principle in the concrete lives of sages to the discovery of moral principle, which sounds *abstract* and *universal*?

To answer this question, I will reconstruct below Zhu Xi's ethics of reading, or his method of reading, in terms of how it can help the reader mediate between the understanding of the sages' intentions and the understanding of principle. I draw here mainly upon the original text of Zhu Xi's *method of reading* (*tu-shu fa*, 讀書法) from *the Conversations of Master Chu, Arranged Topically* (朱子語類選集), translated into English by Gardner (1990).[9] Reading the original text in Zhu Xi's voice is in itself an inspiring and enlightening experience. What would sound especially intriguing to the ears of postmodern literary readers is that Zhu Xi encourages readers to be *both* active and passive in interpreting texts, taking readers' role very seriously. But my main focus in this section is to show how his instructions on how to read are conceptually related to his ethics of learning for the discovery of principle as a way of self-transformation.[10]

We can reconstruct Zhu Xi's method of reading on two levels: readers' dispositional orientation and their epistemology. For Zhu Xi, the successful reading of texts depends not only on the intelligence of readers' minds, but also on their dispositions. So let me start with his discussion on readers' dispositional orientation in reading. What I mean by dispositional orientation is the one that both body and mind of the reader should be ready to take as *the foundation* of the reading activity. There are three kinds of dispositional orientations I find worth addressing to show the main characteristics of Zhu Xi's method of reading. First, Zhu Xi asks readers *to believe* that the curriculum to be offered to them contains a coherent message as the essential

[9] I also referred to another version of the same text in Korean (2012) by Lee, but it was a translation from a Japanese version of the same text by Kunio. I also referred to other Korean materials on Zhu Xi's method of reading, such as those by Hwang (2010, 2014) to get a general grasp of the original text.

[10] For Zhu Xi, the discovery of principle is the same as the discovery of *tao* (the Way), the principle as personal morality innate within oneself as something real and substantial in the self. Thus, this discovery can be said to be the same as a shift in one's values, that is, self-transformation.

unity of the Confucian teaching throughout the texts they are expected to read. This interconnectedness among the classical texts was what Zhu Xi himself had a deep faith in. Zhu Xi says: "Everything you read is of the same principle" (Gardner 1990, p. 135); "Your reading will be successful only if you understand the spot where everything interconnects" (p. 131). Gardner (p. 37) claims that Zhu Xi tries to reconcile various passages from different texts to demonstrate the essential unities of the message through many of his annotations or commentaries. I think this is because Zhu Xi knew that this faith in the Confucian texts was indispensible in motivating readers to ceaselessly and persistently tackle the meanings of the words they read to make sense of them. To readers, to understand the meanings of the words in texts in a quest for principle is not an easy job to do. Thus, this absolute faith that the texts they read possess truth can motivate pupils to take the books seriously and can keep them persistently seeking coherent meanings of the words in them.

Second, Zhu Xi repeatedly asks readers to keep the mind open, clean, calm, empty, and settled. He states; "If you open your mind, you will understand moral principle clearly" (p. 147). If you do not, Zhu Xi adds, you will become the victim of your preconceived ideas (p. 147). So we have to clean our minds first. Zhu Xi even suggests; "Simply scrub and clean the mind and then read. If you don't understand the text, put it down for the moment, wait until your thoughts have cleared" (p. 146). He also says: "When the mind isn't settled, it doesn't understand principle. Presently, should you want to engage in book learning, you must first settle the mind so that it becomes like still water or a clear mirror"(p. 145). Zhu Xi even advises readers to practice 'quiet-sitting' in saying: "In reading, students must compose themselves and sit up straight; look leisurely at the text and hum softly; open their minds and immerse themselves in the words"(p. 147). Here it seems to be assumed that the text we read would reveal principle of itself before our eyes if we are ready to receive it with a right attitude, such as a *reverential* attitude, in reading.

Third, Zhu Xi also emphasizes for readers their *will* (*chih*, 志) as the intention or inclination of the mind, which can help guide the mind in the right direction. According to Zhu Xi, man has to strive to keep his will firmly fixed. He says: "If your will is not fixed, how are you going to read?"(p. 145). He also says; "In reading, you must keep your mind glued to the text. Only when every sentence and every character falls into place have you done a good job of thinking through the work" (p. 145). Here Zhu Xi seems to point to a kind of mental power that controls and collects the mind or holds on to something. This is a mental power that makes us concentrate on what we are reading, as well as being attentive and present to what we are reading: a power to keep a state of mind in which we are absolutely attentive to whatever is before our minds without any distraction, concentrating all of our mental energy on it. This is also described as a kind of mental power that can be *achieved* or *further developed* through the practice of reading itself, not just the power that is *required* to read books; the relation seems circular. Thus, Zhu Xi says: "If a person reads constantly, he can pretty much control his mind and thereby keep it constantly preserved. Heng-chu said: 'Books are the way to maintain the mind. The moment you put them down is the moment your virtuous nature grows lax.' How then can one neglect reading?"(p. 141). This is why Zhu Xi makes a bold claim

that "It is essential that preserving the mind and reading books constitute one matter" (p. 145). Thus, preserving mind(敬)[11] is required to read books, but reading books also help the readers further develop a power to preserve the mind.

Zhu Xi's special emphasis on these dispositional orientations in reading shows us something important about the nature of the pursuit of principle as the educational purpose. The pursuit of principle is not entirely an epistemological exercise, that is, the discovery of the principle per se; it is also a spiritual or moral exercise to be practiced by readers as independent moral agents, exercise *by the very process of* reading. And, for Zhu Xi, this exercise can be called *foundational* in the sense that those who have these orientations in reading could "efficiently and successfully apprehend principle in things" (pp. 52–53).

On the other hand, for Zhu Xi, successful reading of books also requires readers to take a right epistemological approach to texts. Relevant epistemological questions would be, as mentioned earlier: How can we make a leap from reading the manifestations of principle in the concrete lives of sages *to* the discovery of moral principle within ourselves which is *abstract* and *universal*? How can book-learning mediate between the understanding of the sages' intentions and the understanding of principle? From the original text of Zhu Xi's *method of reading* (*tu-shu fa,* 讀書法), we can notice that there are two distinct moves that Zhu Xi instructs his pupils to make in their reading. I think this can give us a hint for how we should make sense of the (epistemological) transition from the understanding of the sages' intentions to the understanding of principle.

Let me first explain what I mean by the two distinct moves. Zhu Xi says:

> Generally speaking, in reading, we must first become intimately familiar with the text so that its words seem to come from our own mouths. We should then continue to reflect on it so that its ideas seem to come from our own minds. Only then can there be real understanding. Still once our intimate reading of it and careful reflection on it have led to a clear understanding of it, we must continue to question. Then there might be additional progress. If we cease questioning, in the end there'll be no additional progress (p. 135).

The above passage instructs readers to take two distinct acts in reading: first, be intimately familiar with the text to the extent that the words come naturally from their mouths and reflect on it to the extent that the ideas come naturally from their own minds; second, question or doubt what they have understood about the text to make additional progress in their reading. I think that 'being intimately familiar with' and then 'reflecting on' a text describe the kind of act in reading by which we as readers *fully submit ourselves* to the sages' words in the text without our preconceived ideas. On the other hand, 'questioning and doubting' describes the kind of act in reading by which we *apply* what we have understood *to ourselves* and make it relevant to ourselves. Zhu Xi says:

> In reading a text, you must open your mind. Don't come to the text with preconceived ideas—you'll commit many mistakes in no time at all. He also said: Open the mind and

[11] 'Preserving mind' is a translation of a Chinese word *ching* (敬), a virtue of mind, which Ch'eng I first discussed and Zhu Xi after him further developed.

> make the reading relevant to yourself. If you open your mind, you'll understand moral principle clearly. If you make the reading relevant to yourself, you'll naturally grasp its meaning for yourself (p. 147).

Here we can recognize two distinct steps for us to *reach* by taking the two distinct acts: the understanding of moral principle *through* sages' words first, and then the understanding of its meaning for ourselves *by* making it relevant to us.

It seems that the (full) discovery of principle(*li*, 理) or the Way(*tao*, 道) is to be processed and completed by these two moves. Jonathan R. Herman (2000) helpfully interprets them for us in describing that: "the text represents or evokes matters that are particular and wholly scrutable, but which somehow replicate or participate in a single truth (or principle) that is both moral and metaphysical. And the knowledge is not complete until it is recognized as identical to one's (the reader's) inborn human nature and realized in all existential configuration" in his embodied life (2000, pp. 216–217). It looks that the first move is about *unpacking* the text we read, whereas the second move is about *repacking* it for ourselves; in this process, what is called 'principle,' which is assumed to be the same everywhere in its nature, is *somehow* transmuted from the sage's selfhood to our own selfhood. But how exactly does it happen?

To seek a possible answer to it, let's follow more of Zhu Xi's words. Zhu Xi says: "Read books to observe the intentions of the sages and worthies. Follow the intentions of the sages and worthies to observe natural principle" (Gardner 1990, p. 129). This suggests that to understand principle it is important to understand the *original* intentions of the sages as historical figures who created the words in the past. Then the textual meaning the reader is supposed to capture is the reconstruction "of the thoughts, feelings, insights and experiences of the author who first created the work" (Herman 2000, p. 217). And in order to capture the sage's thoughts and feelings, Zhu Xi also advises: "Read little but become intimately familiar with what you read; experience the text over and over again; and do not think about gain. Keep constantly to these three matters and nothing more" (Gardner 1990, pp. 131–132). Here he instructs his readers to be intimate and familiar with the text or sages' words they read since it would lead them to understand principle.

As a way of being intimately familiar with sages' words, Zhu Xi stresses the value of *reciting*. He says:

> The value of a book is in the recitation of it. By reciting it often we naturally come to understand it. Now, even if we ponder over what is written on the paper, its useless, for in the end it isn't really ours…..Should we recite it to the point of intimate familiarity and moreover think about it in detail, naturally our mind and principle will become one (pp. 137–138).

> The method of reading is to recite the text, then ponder it over; to ponder it over, then recite it (p. 139)

Here we can see that reciting is not just for a rote-learning or mechanical memorization, as is often misunderstood by modern educators; surprisingly enough, it is rather a way of *understanding* (moral and metaphysical) *principle*. In order for us to get intimately familiar with sages' words, Zhu Xi asks us to limit the size of curricu-

lum, to read only one text at a time and to read each text slowly and over and over again. That is to say, seeking a large quantity of what we read and reading quickly and superficially will not get us anywhere. He even advises us to *experience* the sages' words *personally* by reading them slowly, and again and again, while focusing on them in detail as if we were "speaking with them (the sages) face to face" (p. 129). Here Zhu Xi seems to tell us how we should engage ourselves with the words: *to imagine* the intentions and feelings of the sages by stepping out of our own frame of mind and entering into their framework of minds. Then, the meanings (of principle) would leap right from the text and, as Zhu Xi states, "the paragraph will *become part of us*" (p. 133).

All these techniques and approaches in reading, proposed by Zhu Xi, seem to be intended to lead readers to get *closer to* the words of the sages in the form of *assimilation* or *attunement*. But this assimilation or attunement would not take place in the readers merely by their habitual repetition or the routinization of the words. Zhu Xi says; "If we recite it then think it over, think it over then recite it, naturally it'll become *meaningful for* us" (p. 138). The act of reciting is to be followed or accompanied by some sort of mental engagement, such as imaginative projection, on the part of readers. Thus, intimate familiarity to sages' words brings the readers into a kind of organic relationship with the words.

If the textual meaning we are supposed to capture concerns the *original* intentions and feelings of sages in the form of assimilation or attunement, our (presumably first) understanding of principle does not take the form of the acquisition of new information about the sages' original intentions, feelings, insights and experiences. It is rather an *intuitive* form of knowledge of *what it would be like* being sages like the historical figures, a type of knowing that cannot be easily reduced to the concepts or propositions about the particular sages or their sage-hood (Herman 2000, p. 219). This is why it takes time for readers to get to understand sages, by being patient with, attentive to and diligently and repetitively reflective upon, their words, just as it takes time for us to get to know someone well. It takes a kind of phenomenological understanding of the person behind the text. If this is the case, reading, for Zhu Xi, requires readers' active involvement with the sages' words for their subjective and imaginative reconstruction of the sages' (intuitive) knowledge of principle to the extent that "its words seem to come from our own mouths" and "its ideas seem to come from our own minds" (p. 135). Herman dramatically describes this state of mind as the state in which the reader knows "the sages better than they knew themselves" (2000, p. 215).

According to Zhu Xi, this (reconstructed) possession of the sagely knowledge does not make the reader sagely yet. There is an additional move for him to make. Zhu Xi says:

> In reading we cannot seek moral principle solely from the text. We must turn the process around and look for it in ourselves…..We have yet to discover ourselves what the sages previously explained in their texts. Only through their words will we find it in ourselves (Gardner 1990, p. 149)

> In our reading, it's essential to open our minds and to make the reading relevant to our selves. Only by opening our minds are we able to understand the meaning of the sages and worthies. And by making the reading relevant to our selves, the words of the sags and worthies will not be empty (p. 147).

Knowing principle from the text is not sufficient to make the reader a sage. The reader is supposed to make the principle he has understood from the texts relevant to himself, and discover it *again within himself*. What does this mean? Zhu Xi says: "The books you read, the principle you probe, should be embodied in your person" (p. 143). Here Zhu Xi seems to suggest another move that the reader is supposed to make in reading, which can be described as the act of self-appropriation.

Zhu Xi said earlier: "Still, once our intimate reading of it and careful reflection on it has led to a clear understanding of it, we continue to question. Then there might be additional progress. If we cease questioning, in the end, there'll be no additional progress (p. 135)." And he continues to say:

> In reading, if you have no doubts, encourage them. And if you do have doubts, get rid of them. Only when you've reached this point have you made progress (p. 151).

> The problem with men is that they feel the views of others alone may be doubted, not their own. Should they try to reproach themselves as they reproach others, they may come to realize their own merits and demerits (p. 151)

In the passages above, readers' acts of questioning and doubting in reading are highlighted. And what are readers to be questioning and doubting? Since it is suggested as a move right after the reader has understood principle from the text, we can say that the reader is supposed to question his own idea, that is, his (reconstructed) understanding of the sages' knowledge of principle, to make it relevant and meaningful to himself. But what would Zhu Xi mean by 'making principle relevant and meaningful to the reader'? How exactly can we do that? Zhu Xi says: the readers "should turn the moral principle with which they're already intimate over and over in their minds until it permeates their entire person" (p. 146). This indicates that it does not mean the mere application of the reader's reconstructed understanding of principle to the exigencies of his own circumstances. It would rather mean that the reader re-reads the principle again and again until he could *relive* and *animate* it within himself and his own life, finding its source within himself. What Zhu Xi says below seems to support this interpretation, reminding us of a modern educator's voice, interestingly enough:

> Generally, you mustn't let a student look at a text while he's explaining it. For if he looks at the text, his mind will die right there. Just have him go on explaining it, and his mind will be alive with it. Moreover, he won't forget what he's explained (p. 160).

Therefore, we can say that, for Zhu Xi, "the fullest understanding of a text occurs when the reader not only understand the experiences and ideas manifested in the textual representation, but also generate and bring to completion those very same experiences and ideas for himself" (Herman 2000, p. 220). In other words, Zhu Xi's suggestion of making the understood principle from the text *embodied* in one's person seems to call for the reader to *activate* principle *latent in* his own nature; he is

supposed to discover *within himself* the same principle he has discovered through the sages' words. Thus it cannot be said that the reader *acquires* principle, but that he rather *produces* it himself (Herman 2000, p. 221). This may be a moment when the reader finds himself aware of some sort of resonance between the sages and himself, which uplifts and animates his sense of being. In Zhu Xi's words, this is the very moment when the reader finds his own nature in the form of his Way (*tao*), principle (*li*) in the form of his personal morality.

We may conclude that Zhu Xi's method of reading is intended to show to readers a way of discovering and producing the Way (*tao*) within himself by means of reading texts. Here reading texts with sages' words plays a critical role in mediating two moves in readers' understanding of principle: a move for readers' (reconstructed) understanding of principle (*li*, 理) *abstracted from* sages' words and another move for readers' self-appropriation of principle (*tao*, 道) *animated within* their minds. It seems that principle (*li*) and the Way (*tao*) are two different names of the same nature, for Zhu Xi. What is to be noted here is the paradoxical role of texts. The text in itself is not important unless it is taken by readers as important or taken in a certain manner. On the other hand, the text is extremely important since it is the only means through which readers can have an access to sages' intentions and thereby principle. This fact is closely connected to the *humanistic* nature of Zhu Xi's new learning. For Zhu Xi, the understanding of principle is possible only by 'becoming like a sage' *through* reading the text. Thus, Herman (2000, p. 221) arrives at an insightful conclusion about Zhu Xi' ethics of reading: "one understands principle *by becoming* a sage," not becoming a sage *by understanding* principle. This is exactly the opposite of what we modern readers tend to seek in reading books.

10.4 Conclusion: Implications for the Humanistic Pedagogies in the Post-Metaphysical Era

This essay attempted to explore Zhu Xi's ethics of reading to see if we can identify alternative resources to clarify the intrinsic value of the humanities in teaching as well as some distinctive features of humanistic pedagogies in contrast to the ever-instrumentalizing rhetoric of educational discourse today. In this discussion, the critical task I set for myself was to make sense of the idea of (humanistic) reading as a self-reading experience in the form of an ethical process of self-transformation.

I think Zhu Xi's ethics of reading can give us a distinctive sense of (humanistic) reading as a self-reading experience, which sheds new light on an intuitive form of self-knowledge that has been unfamiliar to modern readers. Zhu Xi says that "probing the principle (in reading books) is subsumed naturally in the nurturing process: one probes the principle being nurtured" (Gardner 1990, p. 118). Here the act of *nurturing* is delivered by the reader's attentive mind on principle; principle *is nurtured* by this caring and attentive mind of the reader. On the other hand, Zhu Xi also

states: "The nurturing (of the mind) is naturally subsumed in the process of probing the principle" (p. 118). The nurturing and caring mind is supposed to submit itself to another act of mind, i.e., the *probing* mind which is searching for and examining principle. For Zhu Xi, while probing principle to the point of complete comprehension is the crucial step in his self-cultivation program, these two processes are inseparable; the mind probes the principle it nurtures. Here we can see how the intuitive form of knowledge of one's own nature (*tao*), namely, self-knowledge, is cultivated in this close interaction between two acts of the mind, nurturing sensibility and probing criticality.

On the other hand, in Zhu Xi's ethics of reading the ontological status of texts, not that of principle, needs to be noted. For texts are supposed to *be there* to invoke readers' minds to open up and nurture principle in the first place. In contrast, it does not seem to matter if principle *objectively* exists or not, as long as the reader accepts an empty assumption about it: principle in things is to be the same as principle in man, while principle in other men such as sages is to be the same as principle in the reader. Thus, the reader's attunement to *the text*, not to principle or the resonance between the reader and *the text* seems critical; for the text of the sages' words is the *only* channel through which the reader can have access to principle to nurture. Thus, even if the text itself means nothing to the reader for the discovery of principle, it is also everything to him because without it the pursuit of principle would not even be possible. For Zhu Xi, experiencing texts means experiencing something of the self that is connected to human culture as well as to the universe. Thus, paradoxically enough, in Zhu Xi's ethics of reading, texts should be treated as if they had some sort of an affective force or transformative power over one's selfhood.

I think that this paradoxical nature with the ontological status of the text may allow us to see Zhu Xi's ethics of reading as aligned with the post-metaphysical spirit in the contemporary culture of the humanities. This means that the reader's approach to, and his experience of, the text in Zhu Xi's ethics of reading may also be characterized as *aesthetic* as well as moral in its nature. Then, the text can be better taken as if it were a work of art which has its own status of being as a symbol of indefinable yet absolute value, i.e., principle, the meaning of which the reader is supposed to unpack to make principle part of himself.

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Glossary

Classical Authors

Cheng Hao (程顥)
Cheng Yi (程頤)
Hu Hong (胡宏)
Kongzi (孔子, Confucius)
Laozi (老子)
Linji (臨濟, jp. Rinzai)
Lu Xiangshan (陸象山)
Mengzi (孟子, Mencius)
Seng Zhao (僧肇)
Shao Yong (邵雍)
Wang Yangming (王楊明)
Xu Heng (許衡) → Xu Luzhai (許魯齋)
Yan Hui (顏回) → Yan Yuan 顏淵
Yi Hwang (李滉) → Toegye (退溪)
Zengzi (曾子)
Zhou Dunyi (周敦頤)
Zhu Xi (朱熹)
Zhuangzi (莊子)
Zigong (子貢) → Duanmu Ci (端木賜)

Classical Texts

Chuanxilu (傳習錄, Instructions on the Practical Living)
Chunqiu (春秋, Spring and Autumn Annals)
Daodejing (道德經)
Daxue (大學, Great Learning)
Five Classics (五經)
Four Books (四書)

R. Reichenbach, D.-J. Kwak (eds.), *Confucian Perspectives on Learning and Self-Transformation*, Contemporary Philosophies and Theories in Education 14,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-40078-1

Jinsilu (近思錄, Reflections on Things at Hand)
Liji (礼記, Book of Rites)
Lunyu (論語, Analects)
Mengzi (孟子, Mencius)
Shijing (詩經, Classic of Poetry, Book of Odes)
Shujing (書經, Book of Documents)
Xiaoxue (小學, Elementary Learning)
Xingli Daquan (性理大全, Great Compendia of Nature and Principle)
Xunzi (荀子)
Yijing (易經, Book of Changes, I Ching) → Zhouyi (周易)
Zhongyong (中庸, Doctrine of the Mean)
Zhouli (周禮, Rites of Zhou)
Zhuangzi (莊子)
Zhuzi Yulei (朱子語類, Conversations with Master Zhu)