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Wisdom as Perfect Intelligence: Intelligence and Wisdom in Chinese Intellectual History and in Modern-Day Taiwan

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In Taiwan, the term for "intelligence" is often used interchangeably with the term for "wisdom" (Yang & Sternberg, 1997a). Most English-Chinese Dictionaries indicate that the Mandarin Chinese translation for the noun "wisdom" and for the adjective "wise" is *zhihui* (智慧), while the translation for the noun "intelligence" is *zhili* (智力) and the translation for the adjective "intelligent" is *cōngmíng* (聰明) (*Eurasia's Modern Practical English-English and English-Chinese Dictionary*, 1979; Liang et al., 1973, 2007; Lu et al., 2000). Nevertheless, in everyday life, many intelligence-related terms are often expressed using the word *zhihui*. For example,

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"artificial intelligence" is *rengong zhihui* (人工智慧) in Mandarin Chinese (Chen, 1995) and "intellectual property rights" is "*zhihui cáichǎn quan*" (智慧財產權) in Mandarin Chinese (National University of Kaohsiung, n.d.). Needless to say, many AI-related products use the term *zhihui*. For example, in Taiwan "smartphones" are called "*zhihui xing shǒujī*" (智慧型手機) (Tech Focus, 2015, October 26).

Do Taiwanese people view wisdom and intelligence as identical? Previous studies have shown that Taiwanese people understand the two concepts differently since they view the core components of each as different. Taiwanese people's conceptions of intelligence consist of five factors: general cognitive ability, interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence, intellectual self-promotion, and intellectual self-effacement (Yang & Sternberg, 1997a). However, a different set of four factors showed up in their conceptions of wisdom: competencies and knowledge, benevolence and compassion, openness and profundity, and modesty and unobtrusiveness (Yang, 2001). As a researcher collecting these data from Taiwanese participants, the first author of this chapter can attest that research participants gave notably different descriptions for intelligence versus wisdom. Furthermore, in many interviews that the first author conducted regarding the differences between intelligence and wisdom, the most frequent responses she got were "little intelligence, great wisdom" (小聰明, 大智慧 *xiao cōngmíng, da zhihui*) (Yang, 1996, 1998). Thus, it seems that Taiwanese conceive of intelligence and wisdom differently; they also think that wisdom is more important and valuable than intelligence.

If Taiwanese conceive of intelligence and wisdom differently, what is the reason for the interchangeability of the two words "intelligence" and "wisdom" in Chinese? We speculate that it is because most Taiwanese believe that wisdom is perfect intelligence. This personal experience from the first author may help to illustrate this belief. Before going to the United States for graduate studies on intelligence, she generally assumed that it is human nature to use intelligence to do good. She also believed that as long as people have adequate intelligence, they will see the benefit, and hence the necessity, of doing good. Following this line of reasoning, the more intelligent a person is, the greater the good he or she should pursue and accomplish. No one ever challenged or corrected her

assumption in the years she was growing up in Taiwan. It therefore shocked her to learn that intelligence as conceived by many in the West is amoral (i.e., unrelated to morality), and that very smart but bad people may still be considered intelligent persons. Her assumption that people generally use their intelligence to do good predisposed her to conceive of intelligence in light of wisdom. Do other Taiwanese hold the same belief? While writing this chapter, we shared this experience with members of our research group, and most of them were as shocked as she had been to learn of the Western view that intelligence is sometimes separate from morality and that it differs from wisdom in this sense (Shin-yi Huang, personal communication, May 13, 2021).

Why, then, does this group of researchers believe that people generally use their intelligence to do good? We look to Taiwan's cultural context for an answer. Taiwanese conceptions of intelligence and wisdom differ from those in some other cultures. In the United States, for example, Sternberg (1985) found that intelligence consisted of six factors (practical problem-solving ability, verbal ability, intellectual balance and integration, goal orientation and attainment, contextual intelligence, and fluid thought), while wisdom consisted of a different six factors (reasoning ability, sagacity, learning from ideas and environment, judgment, expeditious use of information, and perspicacity).

Taiwan and Its Cultural Context

What is the history and what are the ideas that have shaped Taiwan's cultural context? Prior to the seventeenth century, Taiwan was inhabited mainly by indigenous peoples. It became first a Dutch and then a Spanish colony between 1622 and 1662. It was a territory of the Qing dynasty of China between 1662 and 1895, and then a Japanese colony between 1895 and 1945. Since 1945, Taiwan has been a territory of the Republic of China (ROC); its government was founded in 1912 by Dr. Sun Yat-sen in mainland China, which relocated to Taiwan in 1949 after it lost the civil war with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), which founded the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 in mainland China. Taiwan has thus absorbed a large number of Chinese immigrants since the

seventeenth century, with the most recent being the 1.2 million people who fled the CCP in mainland China around 1949 (Government Portal of the Republic of China, Taiwan, n.d.; Hwang, 2015). At present, the majority (>95%) of Taiwanese are of Han Chinese ancestry (Chen et al., 2016).

Thus, Taiwan has been influenced by many cultures. In addition to the Chinese and Japanese cultures it has inherited, Taiwan opened itself to the influence of American culture when it began receiving American aid in the postwar period; according to Lin (2004), Taiwan received as much as US$1.48 billion from 1950 to 1965. Contemporary Taiwan is considered to be "the first and only democracy yet to be installed in a culturally Chinese society" (Chu, 2012, p. 42); as Weller (1999) noted, "The really stunning recent political change has been Taiwan's move from authoritarian control to true democracy beginning in the late 1980s" (p. 1). We think this may be credited to U.S. influence.

Among the many cultures influencing Taiwan, Chinese cultural traditions play a predominant role in Taiwan's cultural context. For most Chinese in Taiwan, Confucian ethics provide a way of life. Even during the Japanese occupation when Chinese studies were forbidden, many people still secretly taught and learned Confucian texts (Shen, 2009). Studying Chinese cultural traditions was further encouraged after the ROC government moved to Taiwan. Several movements were launched to revitalize Chinese culture, most notably the "Chinese Cultural Renaissance" in 1967, the ROC government's response to the Cultural Revolution launched in PRC in 1966 (Shen, 2009).

Growing up in Taiwan, we and many other Taiwanese studied most Confucian and Daoist (also called "Taoist") classics in Chinese literature classes and Chinese history in history classes from elementary school all the way to college. Our impression is that many, if not most, people in Taiwan know Chinese classics and history well, and people study Chinese cultural traditions for their own interest. For example, as a psychology major, the first author studied and even memorized the 5000-word *Laozi* (*Daodejing*) during her sophomore-year summer vacation. She later found that many Taiwanese act similarly when they want to learn more about Daoism, Confucianism, and other Chinese philosophies. These

Chinese philosophies form an important part of Taiwan's cultural context and have influenced Taiwanese conceptions of wisdom and intelligence.

Intelligence and Wisdom in Chinese Intellectual History

Some ideas in those Chinese philosophies have influenced people's conceptions of intelligence and wisdom more than others. Here, we describe the decisions and actions that were made throughout Chinese intellectual history to introduce the essential cultural elements derived from Chinese philosophies that have strongly influenced people's conceptions of wisdom and intelligence. We introduce Chinese intellectual history in eight important eras, from the beginning of the civilization to the present (see Table 6.1). After briefly describing the events from each era that are important in the development of the concepts of wisdom and intelligence, we explain the meanings of "wisdom" and "intelligence" found in the texts of that particular era.

Here we present Chinese intellectual history based on what we have learned in Taiwan, a historical interpretation that, to our understanding,

Table 6.1 Principal eras in Chinese intellectual history

	Era	Time
1	Chinese civilization in the Neolithic Age and Yin-Shang civilization	c. 7000 BCE–1046 BCE
2	Zhou dynasty and "Contention of a Hundred Schools of Thought"	c. 1046 BCE–221 BCE
3	A unified country and experiments with Legalism, Daoism, and Confucianism	c. 221 BCE–220 CE
4	Neo-Daoism and Confucian scholars' profound learning	c. 220–580
5	Chinese Mahayana Buddhism: A Confucianized version of Buddhism?	c. 580–907
6	Neo-Confucianism: Incorporating lessons learned from Buddhism and Neo-Daoism to Confucianism	c. 960–1644
7	Qing dynasty and the study of history	1644–1911
8	The Republican era and the scientific ways of research	1911–now

is shared by many non-Communist Chinese communities around the world. However, we note that there are divergences between the PRC and Taiwan in the interpretation of Chinese history; in Taiwan, Chinese history has rarely been interpreted from a Marxist perspective.

1. Chinese civilization in the Neolithic Age (around 7000 BCE–1500 BCE) and Yin-Shang civilization (cf. 1600 BCE–1046 BCE). Although Chinese civilization in its earliest stage probably developed in relative isolation from other civilizations, it had multiple origins (Mair, 2005). The archeologist Chang Kwang-chih (2004) indicated that during the Neolithic Age, at least six different regions had independent cultures. These six are: (a) the central region, roughly the middle reaches of the Yellow River; (b) the eastern region, roughly the lower reaches of the Yellow River; (c) the southwest region, consisting of the upper reaches of the Yangtze River; (d) the southeast region, consisting of the lower reaches of the Yangtze River; (e) the southern region, the area around Poyang Lake, stretching to the Pearl River Delta; and (f) the northern region, the territory surrounding the Great Wall areas (Chang, 2004; Hsu, 2012).

Through contact and conflict, these six cultural systems gradually influenced one another and eventually coalesced to form the Yin-Shang civilization, well-known for its bronze technology, writing, and chariot warfare. The Yin-Shang people worshipped gods, and their writings were preserved in oracle bones which they used for divination. Moreover, they viewed their state as a central kingdom of high culture surrounded by other peoples with lesser cultural attainments (Mote, 1971).

2. Zhou dynasty and "Contention of a Hundred Schools of Thought" (c. 1046 BCE–221 BCE). Nevertheless, the great Yin-Shang state was conquered around 1111 BCE by the smaller Zhou state, a state in the west with lesser cultural and economic attainments, originally a subject of the Yin-Shang state. This victory, which established the Zhou dynasty, surprised everyone, even the Zhou. Why did it happen? Among the explanations that the Zhou people identified, they interpreted the conquest in terms of virtue: destruction came to Yin-Shang because it had lost its virtue. Historically, this interpretation was a novel one, for the Yin-Shang deities which the Zhou people also worshiped were not identified as benign or evil. This interpretation, which linked the power of

deities with the virtues of humans, had a profound influence, serving as a foundation for many Chinese philosophies (Hsu, 2012).

Confucius's (551 BCE–479 BCE) ancestors were Yin-Shang aristocrats. Like many of Yin-Shang descent, Confucius was well-versed in Yin-Shang culture. He was born at a time when the Zhou polity was falling apart, with feudal lords' power surpassing the king's and increasing conflicts between the different fiefs (Hsu, 2012). As one familiar with Yin-Shang ceremonial ritual, who often assisted in temple rites, Confucius, perhaps more than most of his Zhou contemporaries, knew from personal experiences that harmony can be achieved if everyone follows rules with a reverent heart. Nevertheless, Confucius also identified strongly with the virtue-focused Zhou culture; as he stresses in the *Analects (n.d.)*, the collection of his words and deeds, "I follow the Zhou" (Book III:14, cited in Bloom, 1999, p. 48). He instilled the Zhou ideal of virtue into his Yin-Shang culture, and argued that sacred rituals would be meaningless if the persons following them are without virtue: "If a man be without the virtues proper to humanity [*ren*], what has he to do with the rites of propriety?" (*The Analects*, Book III:3).

The virtues that Confucius upheld were wisdom (*zhi* 知), humaneness (*ren*, or benevolence and humanity), and courage, as his words in the *Analects* attest: "The man of wisdom [*zhi* 知] is never in two minds [about right and wrong]; the man of benevolence never worries; the man of courage is never afraid" (*Confucius*, 1979, p. 100). Here, the Chinese word *zhi* (知) denoting wisdom refers to the cognitive ability used in making clear judgments. It is a classical word now written in the modern script as *zhi* (智), the same word as in the compounds *zhihui* and *zhili* described earlier. This character was also used in the *Analects* to refer to intelligence, when Confucius distinguishes people of different levels of cognitive ability: "The Master said, 'It is only the most intelligent [知 *zhi*] and the most stupid who are not susceptible to change'" (*Confucius*, 1979, p. 143). Confucius, then, held that most people can change their intelligence through education except for those whose intelligence is extremely high or low.

Of these three virtues, the second one, humaneness or benevolence, is seen as Confucius's innovation. The Chinese character for this word is 仁 (*ren*), which before Confucius denoted sensory pleasure (Liu, 1995),

appearance (Hsu, 2012), or a practice of human sacrifice (Xu, 2019). Confucius completely transformed its meaning and made it a term for virtue (Hsu, 2012; Liu, 1995). We can tell that this was a new meaning for *ren* since the *Analects* describes countless people asking Confucius to explain this term, and the book is full of Confucius's explanations for this virtue and how it should be embodied in different contexts. What is *ren*? The pithy definition in the *Analects* is, "Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire" (*Confucius*, 1979, p. 112). This is why common English translations for *ren* include humaneness (Bloom, 1999; Hu, 2021), benevolence (Lau, 1979), or humanity (Shen, 2003). Many believe that Confucius's *ren* marked in Chinese civilization the beginning of the Axial Age, a period when an emphasis on humanity appeared in many civilizations around the world (Jaspers, 1953; Liu, 1995).

Contrary to the respect and honor that Confucius received in later periods of Chinese history, he was not popular in his own time. Although famous for his knowledge and virtue, his ideas were not adopted by any of the feudal lords when he was alive. Not long after Confucius's death, the political situation of the Zhou dynasty worsened: the fiefs had turned into powerful states and fought against one another for supremacy. The Warring States period (475 BCE–221 BCE) was characterized by almost nonstop warfare. Paradoxically, during this era different schools of thoughts flourished. It was during this time that Legalism, Mohism, Confucianism, Daoism, and many other schools took shape, as their respective proponents contended before feudal lords for political application. This phenomenon is called "Contention of a Hundred Schools of Thought" in Chinese history.

Mencius (or Mengzi, 372 BCE–289 BCE), the most famous proponent of Confucian thought, was born at the beginning of this era, almost a hundred years after the death of Confucius. Even though the *ren* of Confucius was not popular at that time, Mencius took up the ideal and expanded it. Not only did he exalt *ren* as the highest Confucian virtue, but he also went so far to argue that all human beings are born with the capacity to cultivate this virtue:

> Suppose a man were, all of a sudden, to see a young child on a verge of falling into a well. He would certainly be moved to compassion,… From

> this it can be seen that whoever is devoid of the heart of compassion is not human,…. The heart of compassion is the germ of benevolence [*ren*]. (*Mencius*, 1970, p. 82)

Thus, according to Mencius, it is intrinsic to human nature to be virtuous. In the same paragraph, Mencius also states, "whoever is devoid of the heart of right and wrong is not human… the heart of right and wrong is [the germ of] wisdom [智 *zhi*]" (*Mencius*, 1970, p. 83). From Mencius onward, *ren* has been considered more important and valuable than intelligence/wisdom and courage. Following Mencius, Xunzi (or Hsün Tzu, 289 BCE–238 BCE) also identified strongly with *ren* and argued that it should be cultivated through knowledge and education. In fact, the main function of knowledge and education is to cultivate *ren*, and the purpose of learning is to becoming a virtuous person (Lao, 1995–1996). *Xunzi*, the work traditionally attributed to the Chinese philosopher Xunzi, begins with an essay entitled "Encouraging Learning," which says, "Learning should never cease.…. If the gentleman studies widely and each day examines himself, his wisdom [智 *zhi*] will become clear and his conduct be without fault" (*Hsün Tzu,* 1963, p. 15). Later in the same chapter, the text says, "Where does learning begin and where does it end?…, it begins with learning to be a man of breeding, and ends with learning to be a sage" (p. 19).

It is during this period that *zhi*, the word root for both *wisdom* and *intelligence*, was elevated to include moral judgment, and the efforts required to cultivate it. In addition, it is in texts attributed to the late Zhou period that we find the three compounds *zhihui, zhili*, and *cōngmíng*, which often denote high cognitive ability, with *cōngmíng* sometimes having an emphasis on sensory acuity. For example, in *Laozi* (*Daodejing*) the text reads, "When intelligence and wisdom [*zhihui*] emerged, there was great artifice" (Bloom et al., 1999, p. 84). In *Mencius,* a conversation that Mencius cites a saying from the state of Qi that is translated as, "You may be clever [*zhihui*], but it is better to make use of circumstances; you may have a hoe, but it is better to wait for the right season" (*Mencius*, 1970, p. 75). In *Xunzi*, the text describes a sage as "Astutely intelligent [*cōngmíng*] and possessing sage-like wisdom [*zhi* 知]—he does not use these to place others in difficulty" (Knoblock,

1988, Book 6:10, p. 226). In *Han Feizi (n.d.),* a book attributed to the key Legalist philosopher Han Fei (281 BCE–233 BCE), the text reads: "kings sell official posts, subjects sell intellectual capabilities [*zhili*]" (*Han Feizi,* Book 35:195). Thus, in this period of time, *zhihui, zhili*, *and cōngmíng* probably denoted intelligence or high cognitive ability.

3. A unified country and experiments with Legalism, Daoism, and Confucianism (c. 221 BCE–220 CE). Legalism, a branch of Chinese philosophy whose essential conviction was that strong law and severe punishments rather than morality was the most reliable and useful instrument for ruling a state (Wong, 2003), eventually won the contention among different schools of thought. The king of Qin, who adopted Legalism, eventually unified the whole country in 221 BCE and became the first emperor of the Qin dynasty. The Qin dynasty (221 BCE–206 BCE) brought standardized currency, weights, measures, and a uniform system of writing, which had a strong influence on Chinese civilization. As sinologist Victor Mair (2005) observes, it is the uniform system of writing that binds "Chinese civilization in a cohesive and enduring whole" (p. 4). However, the Qin dynasty is also well known for its "burning of books and burying of scholars" (Hsu, 2012; Lao, 1995–1996). Legalism proposes that rulers should rule through force and should make people obedient and easy to be controlled by depriving them of knowledge and education. These propositions are antithetical to Confucianism, which holds that rulers should rule with the virtue *ren* and encourage the people to cultivate their own virtue of *ren* through knowledge and education. When Confucian scholars' criticism of the first emperor of the Qin dynasty increased, the emperor responded by burying alive 460 Confucian scholars in 212 BCE and, in 213 BCE, burning texts that the Legalists had not approved (Goldin, 2005). This harsh Legalistic rule failed, and the Qin dynasty (221 BCE–206 BCE) lasted only 15 years before it collapsed in political chaos and was replaced by Han dynasty (206 BCE–220).

The early Han dynasty adopted the philosophy of Daoism (c. 206 BCE–141 BCE). However, people soon noticed that government officials trained in the Confucian tradition were the most well-received and effective in public administration (Liu, 1999). Historical records show that Dong Zhongshu (179 BCE–104 BCE), a high-ranking official and a philosopher in the Han imperial court, wrote a memorial/

memorandum to the Emperor Wu (141 BCE–87 BCE) around 140 BCE, suggesting that knowledge of Confucianism be a requirement for selecting officials. Emperor Wu later issued a decree regulating that the Confucian texts be included as a requirement for selecting officials. This decree, which later historians dubbed as "revering only the Confucianism," ensured that all public officials were trained in the Confucian tradition, a practice that continued up until the Qing dynasty (1644–1912).

As a result of Dong Zhongshu's suggestion, an Imperial academy, the *Taixue*, was established in 124 BCE where officials were taught Confucian ideas. Normally, instruction took one year to complete, and those who graduated were given positions in the Imperial bureaucracy. The number of students enrolled in the college grew from 3000 at the end of the first century BCE to 30,000 in the late Han period (c. third century). Thus, the bureaucracy in Han dynasty was dominated by officials trained in the Confucian tradition (Kwok et al., 1999). By the middle of Han dynasty then, the experiment with Legalism, Daoim, and Confucianism came to an end, and Confucianism became the dominant ideology.

From our perspective, it is Confucius's emphasis on *ren*, with its focus on being compassionate in the interpersonal realm and cultivating oneself in the intrapersonal realm, that has guided the modern Taiwanese conception of intelligence to focus on the interpersonal and intrapersonal aspects of intelligence, and the modern conceptions of wisdom to include benevolence and compassion as important factors. We also credit the influence of Confucian philosophy for the assumption held by many Taiwanese that people by nature will use their intelligence for good and humane purposes.

4. Neo-Daoism and Confucian scholars' profound learning (c. 220–580). However, when Confucian training gained a favored position, both the teaching and the learning of Confucianism became stagnant, since the classics were restricted to a particular mode of interpretation and texts of other schools of thought were often dismissed. To people who truly identified with Confucius's ideal of *ren*, the situation was unbearable. Thus, they turned to Daoist texts for a deeper understanding of the Way (*dao*), a concept that Confucius also mentioned frequently in the *Analects*. When the unified Chinese state fell apart in the post-Han period, Confucian scholars devoted themselves to "profound learning"

(*xuanxue*), a type of learning aimed at explicating the true meaning of the Way, for an innovative interpretation of the dominant Confucian orthodoxy as well as a critique of corrupt practices. Neo-Daoism, a revival of Daoist philosophy, came into prominence from the third to sixth centuries in Chinese intellectual history (Chan, 2003). During this period, scholars who were well-versed in Confucian classics also read the Daoist "three profound treatises"—the *Book of Changes* (*Yijing*), *Laozi*, and *Zhuangzi*—for insights into nature and the human condition. They believed that ancient sages, including Confucius, shared a profound understanding of the Way and were thus all Daoists (Chan, 2003). However, like Confucians who identified strongly with the ideal of *ren*, those scholars "may be said to have interpreted Daoism in the light of social and moral philosophy of Confucianism" (Lynn & Chan, 1999, p. 378). Nevertheless, it is because of their efforts to integrate Confucianism and Daoism that these Daoist classics are considered as essential reading for Chinese scholars, whether they identify themselves as Confucians or not.

Important texts of this period include *Book of the Master Who Embraces Simplicity* (or *Baopuzi*), *Records of the Three Kingdoms* (or *Sānguózhì*), *A New Account of the Tales of the World* (or *Shishuo Xinyu*), *The Literary Mind and the Carving of Dragons* (or *Wén Xīn Diāo Lóng*), and *Precepts of the Yan Family* (or *Yanshi Jiaxun*). The meanings of the compounds *zhihui, zhili*, and *cōngmíng* found in these texts all seem to denote high cognitive ability or sound moral judgment (*Chinese Text Project*, n.d.). However, we speculate that it is the Daoist influence from this period onward that has guided Taiwanese conceptions of intelligence to include self-effacement and Taiwanese conceptions of wisdom to include modesty and unobtrusiveness; both point to an emphasis on humility and nonaction (*wuwei*) derived from Daoist philosophy. In addition, it is through *Zhuangzi*, a book attributed to the Daoist philosopher Zhuangzi (369 BCE–286 BCE), that the distinction between "great understanding" and "little understanding" was engrained in the mind of Chinese people. In *Zhuangzi*, the text reads "Little understanding [*xiao zhi*小知] cannot come up to great understanding [*da zhi*大知],… The morning mushroom know nothing of twilight and dawn; the summer cicada knows nothing of spring and autumn" (*Chuang Tzu*, 1964, p. 24). This

distinction corresponds well with the distinction that the Taiwanese make between little intelligence and great wisdom.

5. Chinese Mahayana Buddhism: A Confucianized version of Buddhism? (c. 580–907). History shows that Mahayana Buddhism, a branch of Buddhism claiming to offer salvation for all, spread throughout Central Asia to China (Hurvitz & Tsai, 1999). Based on official records, Buddhism came to China around the first century from India as a foreign religion (Lao, 1995–1996). The first generation of Buddhist monks were of Indian ancestry. Up to the fourth century, most Buddhist monks were ethnically Chinese. Some of them, such as Huiyuan (334–416) and Zhu Daosheng (360–434), were well-versed in Confucian and Daoist texts. After joining the discussion of *xanxue*, profound learning, they often impressed contemporary intellectuals with Buddhist philosophy by interpreting the texts of profound learning from a Buddhist perspective. Moreover, they were able to introduce Buddhism using common terms derived from Confucianism and Daoism, thus making knowledge of Buddhism fashionable and popular among the Chinese intellectuals (Hurvitz & Tsai, 1999; Lao, 1995–1996). In this way, Buddhism recontextualized itself in China, where it evolved into various Chinese traditions. Among them, the Chan school, which later in its Japanese version was called "Zen Buddhism," was a full-blown Chinese Mahayana Buddhism (Shen, 2008). By the late tenth century, at the end of Tang dynasty (618–907), Buddhism had been assimilated into Chinese culture and became an essential cultural component (Hsu, 2012).

What is key in this assimilation process is the incorporation of the Confucian ideas, that *ren* is intrinsic to human nature and that everyone is capable of being virtuous, into Buddhism. In the Indian tradition, not everyone can attain Buddhahood, and there is a class of people—the *Icchantika* (Lao, 1995–1996)—who are "sentient being[s] without Buddha nature" (Shen, 2008, p. 124). However, the Chinese Buddhist master Zhu Daosheng, perhaps adopting Mencius's idea that "all human beings are capable of becoming a Yao or a Shun [ancient sages]" (*Mencius*, Book VI-B: 2, cited in Bloom & Watson, 1999, p. 154), argued that "all sentient beings can become Buddha" (Shen, 2008, p. 125). Later, Chan Buddhism not only followed this central tenet of Chinese Mahayana

Buddhism but put it more radically: "All sentient beings are originally Buddha" (Shen, 2008, p. 126).

Regarding conceptions of intelligence and wisdom, Buddhism brought to the Chinese culture the Sanskrit word for wisdom "*prajñā*," the understanding of the true nature of phenomena, which in the India tradition means both perfect and imperfect wisdom (Shen, 2008). Xuanzang (602–664), a Chinese Buddhist monk and also the greatest translator of Indian Buddhist texts in Chinese history, noted in his works that although the Chinese equivalent of *prajñā* is *zhihui*, *prajñā* (or "*bore*"般若, the phonetic translation of *prajñā*) should be used because "the use of the Sanskrit term '*prajñā*' shows respect, whereas the use of the Chinese term *zhihui*智慧 (wisdom) turns out to be superficial" (般若尊重，智慧輕淺) (Shen, 2008, p. 114). However, as Chinese Mahayana Buddhism became popular among the commoners, many Chan Buddhist texts adopted *zhihui*, rather than *prajñā* or *bore*, to denote perfect wisdom (Lao, 1995–1996), with the meaning of "immediate self-realization of the Buddhahood in the details of everyday life" (Shen, 2008, p. 114).

Searching for *zhihui, zhili*, and *cōngming* through such full-text databases pertaining to the traditional Chinese classics as Scripta Sinica (n.d.) and the Chinese Text Project (n.d.), we found that the majority of appearances of *zhihui* in most writings after the Tang dynasty are in Chinese Buddhist texts (e.g., the Taishō Tripiṭaka/大正新脩大藏經, a definitive edition of the Chinese Buddhist canon). In these texts, *zhihui* most often denotes realization of Buddhahood or enlightenment. By contrast, most instances of *cōngming* and *zhili* in the same time period appear in non-Buddhist texts, such as in *Tongdian* (*通典,* c. 776–801), and still denote intelligence or high cognitive ability.

6. Neo-Confucianism: Incorporating lessons learned from Buddhism and Neo-Daoism to Confucianism (c. 960–1644). During the roughly eight centuries after the fall of the Han dynasty (c. 220) to the rise of the Song dynasty (960), Chinese culture was strongly influenced first by Neo-Daoism and then by Buddhism. In this period, the great Buddhist temples became intellectual centers, where Buddhist ways of teaching that encouraged direct learning sessions between a master and disciples were practiced (de Bary et al., 1999). Confucianism remained the accepted code of ethics and the basis of the educational system because its

classics were required for civil service examination. Many treated the study of Confucian classics as an avenue for worldly success or as a method for achieving a degree of mastery over the language (Dien et al., 1999). For those very few who identified strongly with Confucius's ideal of *ren*, it was a time for reflection on Confucianism and learning from Daoism and Buddhism. Among them, Han Yu (768–824), a Tang dynasty scholar and official, was the most important figure (de Bary et al., 1999). Han Yu adapted the terminology of Neo-Daoist and Buddhist philosophy to explain the Confucian ideas. Let's take *ren*, for example. Confucius's *ren* refers mostly to the compassionate intention and virtuous acts one feels or does for other persons. After learning Daoist philosophy, in which *dao* involves everything in the world and Buddhist philosophy in which Buddhahood involves all sentient beings, Han Yu broadened the definition of *ren*, stating, "To love largely is called humanness (*ren*)" (*Yuandao*, ["*Essentials of the Moral Way*"], cited in Dien et al., 1999, p. 569). Facing the preeminence of Buddhism, Han Yu reaffirmed the Confucian integration of the private moral life of the individual with the public welfare of society (Dien et al., 1999). The works of Han Yu and other like-minded Confucians in the Tang dynasty (608–907) set the foundation for the Neo-Confucianism that blossomed in the Song dynasty (960–1279).

The Song dynasty ended the chaotic Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms (907–979) period, during which five dynasties succeeded one another in the north and more than twelve independent kingdoms were established in the south (Chan, 1987). In the early Song, Fan Zhongyan (989–1052), a scholar-official of humble origin who identified strongly with Confucius's ideas, led a political reformation that laid the foundations for China's public education system for the next millennium (Lee, 1990). Thus, many Confucians taught in public schools throughout the Song dynasty, and the Confucian ideals they disseminated changed the zeitgeist and nourished Neo-Confucianism (Chan, 1987; Yang, 2016). The improvement in public schools also stimulated the development of private schools, where influential scholars gave lectures from the Southern Song period (1227–1279) on until the Qing dynasty (1644–1912) (Lee, 1990).

Neo-Confucianism began as a philosophical movement in a renaissance of Confucianism by several scholars who, as with most individuals who identify themselves as Confucians, upheld Confucius's ideal of *ren* and shared Mencius's belief that people are predisposed to be good. Neo-Confucianism later developed into a moral, ethical, and metaphysical philosophy (Hon, 2003). Nourished by lessons learned from Neo-Daoism and Buddhism, Neo-Confucian scholars enriched Confucius's *ren* with *li* (理), a philosophical concept that they learned from Huayan Buddhism and which can be loosely understood as the principle that governs the universe (Liu, 2003). In his treatise "On Understanding the Nature of *Ren*"(識仁論), one of the most celebrated essays in Chinese literature, Neo-Confucian philosopher Cheng Hao (1032–1085) wrote, "The student must first of all understand the nature of *ren* [humaneness]. The humane man forms one body with all things comprehensively. Rightness, decorum, wisdom [*zh*i 智], and trustworthiness are all expressions of *ren*" (cited in Adler et al., 1999, p. 694). From this, we can see that Confucius's *ren* is applied not only to fellow individuals but to all things, a broadened perspective which perhaps can be credited to the lessons learned from the Neo-Daoist and Buddhist philosophies. Moreover, wisdom, which was once understood as the realization of Buddhahood, is now considered an expression of *ren*. Thus, through this and other similar integrations, Neo-Confucian philosophers transformed what they learned from Neo-Daoism and Buddhism into Confucian ideas.

Roughly a hundred years after Cheng-Hao, Zhu Xi (1130–1200) synthesized the contributions of his Neo-Confucian predecessors and attributed *ren* to the cosmic principle (*li*) that produces and embraces all things (Adler et al., 1999). In humans, this principle is our moral nature, which is fundamentally good. Thus, Zhu Xi defined *ren* as compassionate love in the widest sense; it is not only the essential human virtue but also a cosmic force. He argued that "*ren* involves love for all" and "[h]umaneness is the principle originally inherent in the human mind… It must be put into practice by human beings before it becomes humaneness" (*Zhuzi wenji* 67:21, cited in Adler et al., 1999, p. 712). Thus, for Zhu Xi, wisdom is a component of *ren*: "it can be seen that *ren* includes wisdom" (*Zhuzi wenji* 67:21, cited in Adler et al., 1999, p. 712) and "[w]henever and wherever humaneness flows and operates,…wisdom will be fully wisdom" (*Zhuzi*

wenji 67:21, cited in Adler et al., 1999, p. 711). We believe that it is this all-encompassing *ren* and its relation to wisdom that guides Taiwanese to include "profound and open-mindedness" in their conceptions of wisdom.

What is special about Zhu Xi's philosophy is that, as a dynamic teacher at a prestigious private academy, he selected four books as basic texts for learning Confucian philosophy: the *Analects*, the *Mencius,* the *Great Learning*, and the *Doctrine of the Mean*. These four books, together with Zhu Xi's commentaries, were known as the "Four Books" in subsequent dynasties; they became the basis of the civil service examinations and hence the official orthodoxy from the fourteenth century to the turn of the twentieth century. In addition, his writings were accepted as the most complete and authoritative exposition of Confucian teaching in Japan and Korea, and hence exerted significant influences on the cultural development of East Asia well into modern times (Adler et al., 1999).

More than a hundred years after Zhu Xi, Wang Yangming (1472–1529) in the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) reasoned that if humaneness is the principle originally inherent in the human mind, then whoever has inner knowing of this principle will naturally act upon it. He thus argued for the unity of knowledge and action by stating, "There have never been people who know but do not act. Those who are supposed to know but do not act simply do not yet know" (*Instructions for Practical Living*, cited in de Bary et al., 1999, p. 850). Thus, the high value that the Taiwanese conception of wisdom gives to actions that embody wisdom may also be credited to the Neo-Confucian emphasis on the unity of knowledge and action.

7. Qing dynasty and the study of history (1644–1911). The Qing dynasty, a Manchu-led conquest dynast, succeeded the Ming dynasty and was the last dynasty before the founding of the Republic of China (ROC), the government of Taiwan. Pained by the rule of the Manchu, who were considered an alien ethnic group and had their own distinct culture and language, many Confucian scholars turned to history to seek the "principle" (*li*) of being Chinese. Thus, the study of history absorbed the best minds in the Qing dynasty. It is owing to their investigation of history that the concept of "Chinese civilization" as we now identify it was formulated. They put great emphasis on checking historical knowledge with objective evidence, and their exegetical studies lead us to know that many Confucian classics that had been attributed to Confucius and his

disciples, such as the *Book of Changes (Yijing)*, *The Doctrine of the Mean,* and *Great Learning*, were actually written by his admirers in the Han dynasty (Lao, 1995–1996). Moreover, they also reflected on and criticized Neo-Confucianism and argued that practicality of thought, that all-encompassing Neo-Confucian philosophy, should be put into practice to benefit daily living and to manage society. This was thus an era in which the value of knowledge and wisdom was upheld. For example, Dai Zhen (1724–1777), "possibly the most representative thinker and scholar of the Qing dynasty (MacMorran et al., 2000, p. 43), discussed *zhi* (智or wisdom) intensively in his famous treatise the *Inquiry into Goodness* (*Yüan Shan* 原善). He wrote: "A mind that acquires the principles of order and reason and therefore exhibits orderly patterns in its thoughts in accordance with the principles of order and reason can be said to be wise [*zhi*]. Is it not hidden in wisdom [*zhi*] that one may find benevolence [*ren*]?" (cited in Cheng, 1971, p. 67). From this we can see that the status of wisdom had changed. Thus, from the Song and Ming dynasties to the Qing dynasty, the conceptions of wisdom had lifted from an expression of humanness to the platform through which humaneness can be displayed. It is perhaps owing to Qing Confucian scholars' emphasis on practicality of thought that Taiwanese people emphasize that wisdom should be embodied in real-life contexts.

8. The Republican era and the scientific ways of research (1911–now). In 1842, the Qing lost the Opium War to Great Britain; this event marks the beginning of modern Chinese history (Hsu, 2012). What came with opium were Western influences. Learning Western knowledge so as to catch up with the West has become the zeitgeist since then (Sun, 1924). Many young people started to study abroad (Leibovitz & Miller, 2011). In 1911, a revolution led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen overthrew the Qing dynasty, and the Republic of China (ROC), which adopts the Western style of government, was founded. The Chinese civilization thus entered its Republican era (Hsu, 2012). Scientific ways of research have attracted the best Chinese minds since then, including those in humanities. Those who identify strongly with Confucius's *ren* also have devoted themselves to scientific ways of research, including psychology. However, they adopted the same strategy as Confucius, scholars of profound learning, Chinese Mahayana Buddhists, and Neo-Confucians when facing other

cultures and new knowledge: they chose to incorporate the best of West and East rather than total Westernization. This proposition, that one should learn maximally from other cultures while cherishing one's own culture, has been followed by many even after the ROC government was relocated to Taiwan in 1949.

It is with this mindset that the Taiwanese met IQ tests. When the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale and the Revised Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children were first introduced to Taiwan in the 1960s and 1970s, they were translated using the Chinese compound *zhihui*, as "Wechsler *Zhihui* Scale" (Fan, 1979; Lu & Chien, 1968). With IQ tests being administered more frequently in schools, it is our observation that many Taiwanese are learning to re-conceptualize intelligence as innate ability, the very abilities that IQ tests claim to measure. In fact, the translation of "IQ tests" was soon changed to "*zhili* tests" (Lu et al., 1988). However, some authors still use *zhihui* to translate "multiple intelligences" and "emotional intelligence" (Chang & Chang, 2003; Chen, 2008), perhaps because "intelligence" in these two terms denote more than high cognitive ability.

Focusing on some of the major points from this brief review of important cultural elements in Chinese intellectual history, we note that *zhi*, the Chinese word root for the Chinese term for wisdom (*zhihui*) and intelligence (*zhili*), originally denoted high cognitive ability, but gradually expanded in meaning. It came to incorporate Mencius's idea of "the heart of right and wrong" to denote the ability to make sound moral judgment, and Zhuangzi's idea of "greater understanding" to denote having rich knowledge and a broadened perspective. Of the two compounds, *zhihui* gradually came to incorporate "the understanding of the true nature of phenomena" from the Indian concept of "*prajñā*" (Shen, 2008), "the realization of Buddhahood" from Chan Buddhism (Shen, 2008), "an expression of humaneness" from Neo-Confucianism (Adler et al., 1999), and "a mind that acquires and exhibits the humane cosmic principle" from Qing scholars (Cheng, 1971). It thus encompasses much more meanings than *zhili*, which literarily means the power of *zhi*. Thus, perfect *zhi* or intelligence can be wisdom in the Taiwanese cultural context.

A Study of the Differences between Wisdom and Intelligence as Perceived by Young Taiwanese in Modern Times

How do modern Taiwanese conceive of wisdom and intelligence? Compared to elderly Taiwanese, young Taiwanese are less entrenched in traditional Chinese ways of thinking but may be more sensitive to Taiwanese culture. To examine empirically how young Taiwanese perceived intelligence and wisdom, we conducted a pilot study by giving an open-ended questionnaire to 148 Taiwanese college students asking about the differences between wisdom and intelligence.

These 148 young Taiwanese were recruited from university classes: students were invited to participate and to spread the word to their friends and relatives who were less than 30 years old. Among them, 90 were females (61%) and 58 were males (39%). Their ages ranged from 18 to 26 years old (M_{total} = 19.2, SD_{total} = 1.94). Their majors can be roughly classified into nine categories (e.g., Language and Literature, Policy and Administration, Education, Chemistry, Engineering, Finance, Information Management, Social Policy and Social Work, and Economics). They came from the northern, central, and southern parts of Taiwan.

They were asked to respond to a "Survey of Wisdom and Intelligence," which involves eight open-ended questions: (a) "What do you think is the major difference between wisdom and intelligence?"; (b) "What are the most important differences between an intelligent person and a wise person?"; (c) "Would you like to become an intelligent person?"; (d) "Based on your own standards, are you an intelligent person?"; (e) "What efforts are needed for you to become the ideal intelligent person you envisioned?"; (f) "Would you like to become a wise person?"; (g) "Based on your own standard, are you a wise person?"; and (h) "What efforts are needed for you to become the ideal wise person you envisioned?"

They were reminded that there were no "right" answers for those questions. They received credits in a psychology course for responding to the questionnaire. Because the term *zhili* is more often used in formal or academic writings, the Chinese term used in this study for intelligence is

cōngming, and for wisdom is *zhihui*, both following the examples set by previous studies (Yang, 2001; Yang & Sternberg, 1997a, b).

Once their responses were collected, we recruited five analysts from a university in central Taiwan to conduct independent thematic analyses. The analysts came from education-related departments: One had a graduate level of education, while the rest had a college level of education. Four were females. Their ages ranged from 19 to 22 (M_{age} = 20.6, *SD* = 1.04). Analysts were instructed to read each response thoroughly, and then to analyze it thematically (Guest et al., 2014). Each response was unitized and coded based on its dominant themes. Similar themes were then clustered into dimensions. A research team, consisting of the five analysts and the principal researcher, met to discuss and resolve disagreements after the analysis was complete.

Results of this preliminary study showed that most participants conceived of wisdom and of intelligence somewhat differently. Following is a brief description of the most frequent responses collected for each question, which includes five sections: (1) The major differences between wisdom and intelligence; (2) The most important difference between "an intelligent person" and "a wise person"; (3) The desirability of being an intelligent or a wise person; (4) Self-evaluation of own intelligence and wisdom; and (5) Efforts needed to become the ideal intelligent or wise person.

1. The major differences between wisdom and intelligence. The 148 young Taiwanese most frequently compared wisdom and intelligence on two dimensions: origin and application. In terms of origin, participants most frequently mentioned that wisdom results from accumulating lessons learned from life experience (*n* = 101, 68%), while intelligence was most frequently described as being related to innate ability (*n* = 85, 57%). In terms of application, they most frequently stated that intelligence is most often used to learn knowledge and skills (*n* = 55, 37%), while they described wisdom most frequently as being applied to dealing with human affairs (*n* = 54, 36%).

2. The most important difference between "an intelligent person" and "a wise person". Twenty-two (15%) of the 148 young Taiwanese indicated that wise persons are not necessarily intelligent, nor are intelligent persons necessarily wise. Nevertheless, 18 of them (12%) believed that

wisdom is more difficult to achieve and that intelligence is a component of wisdom. They described wise persons as individuals who can manage human affairs, including their own, well (n = 67, 45%), who continually and purposefully learn from life experience (n = 39, 26%), who are rational and calm (n = 31, 21%), selfless and altruistic (n = 15, 10%), have broad perspectives and profound visions (n = 11, 7%), and earn true respect from people (n = 8, 5%). While they gave no negative descriptions for wise persons, more than one-third of them (n = 57, 38%) described intelligent persons negatively. They described intelligent persons as individuals who have a high IQ (n = 30, 20%), are good at learning knowledge and skills (n = 23, 16%), can solve problems with efficiency (n = 22, 15%), are often conceited (n = 27, 18%), profit-oriented (n = 15, 10%), quick-tempered, and short-sighted (n = 21, 14%), and can be too smart for their own good (n = 24, 16%).

3. The desirability of being an intelligent or a wise person. Among the 148 young Taiwanese, 144 (97%) indicated that they "very much" or "definitely" wanted to be a wise person, and 4 (3%) answered "not really" or "doesn't matter." One hundred and eleven (75%) of the same 148 indicated that they wanted to be an intelligent person, and 37 (25%) wrote "not really" or "not at all." The results of a chi-square test showed that these two distributions were significantly different: $\chi^2_{(1, N=148)} = 5.48$ ($p < 0.05$), with more participants desiring to be a wise person than an intelligent person.

4. Self-evaluation of own intelligence and wisdom. Altogether, 122 of the respondents (82%) indicated that they did not think they were wise persons, and 26 (18%) believed that they had some wisdom. One hundred and seven (72%) of the same 148 indicated that they were not intelligent persons, and 41 (28%) believed that they could be considered intelligent persons. The results of a chi-square test showed that these two distributions were not significantly different: $\chi^2_{(1, N=148)} = 2.39$ ($p = 0.12$).

5. Efforts needed to become the ideal intelligent or wise person. Their responses on the efforts needed to become the ideal wise or intelligent person are similar. They mentioned (1) continuously learning and broadening one's perspective (n_{wise} = 73, 49%; $n_{intelligent}$ = 66, 45%); (2) having

a modest attitude and purposefully learning from more intelligent or wiser people (n_{wise} = 51, 34%; $n_{intelligent}$ = 24, 16%); (3) constantly applying what has been learned into real-life practices and continuing to accumulate experiences (n_{wise} = 49, 33%; $n_{intelligent}$ = 47, 32%); (4) managing emotions better and having more patience (n_{wise} = 26, 33%; $n_{intelligent}$ 5, 3%); (5) having more confidence and courage to face difficulties and remembering the mistakes one made (n_{wise} = 24, 16%; $n_{intelligent}$ = 4, 3%); (6) thinking more deeply and thoroughly and forming one's own opinions (n_{wise} = 24, 16%; $n_{intelligent}$ = 36, 24%); (7) having good relationships with others and trying to help others as much as possible (n_{wise} = 18, 12%; $n_{intelligent}$ = 12, 8%); and (8) learning more about oneself and finding one's own goals (n_{wise} = 7, 5%; $n_{intelligent}$ = 11, 7%). In addition, 31 respondents (21%) indicated that intelligence is primarily an inborn trait and so not subject to change; no one indicated that it is impossible to become a wise person.

The results of a chi-square test showed that these two distributions were significantly different: $\chi^2_{(8, N = 508)} = 71.92$ ($p < 0.001$). Post hoc tests showed that those young Taiwanese put more emphasis on "having a modest attitude and purposefully learning from wiser people" ($p < 0.05$), "managing emotions better and having more patience" ($p < 0.05$), and "having more confidence and courage to face difficulties and remembering the mistakes one made" ($p < 0.05$) when considering the efforts needed to become wise, but more emphasis on "thinking more deeply and thoroughly and forming one's own opinions" ($p < 0.05$) and "being unable to change what one is born with" ($p < 0.05$) in becoming intelligent.

To summarize, results of this preliminary study show that this sample of young people in Taiwan conceived of both wisdom and intelligence broadly; each of the two concepts covers more ground than cognitive ability. However, they also were conceived somewhat differently: wisdom, which was described in positive terms, was regarded more highly than intelligence. While more of the young Taiwanese indicated that they were not wise, they all believed that wisdom can be achieved by one's efforts. More than half of them believed that intelligence is related to innate ability, and one-fifth of them believed it cannot be changed. Nevertheless, the efforts that the respondents prescribed for becoming wise or

intelligent individuals were similar, even though they emphasized certain kinds of growth more for becoming wise than for becoming intelligent.

The results largely correspond with the concepts of wisdom and intelligence we examined in Chinese intellectual history. However, not all young Taiwanese shared our assumption that people will naturally use their intelligence for good purposes, since some described intelligent persons negatively. Nevertheless, participants mentioned similar efforts for becoming wise and becoming intelligent. Our results suggest that young Taiwanese view wisdom as perfect intelligence.

Conclusions and Suggestions

Based on our work here, we suggest that that future psychological studies of wisdom and intelligence make it a point to take important contextual elements, including intellectual and cultural history, into account. We suggest too that future studies of wisdom and intelligence in the Chinese language make a distinction between these two concepts *a priori* and choose the appropriate translations accordingly.

Altogether, this exploration shows how perceptions of the two concepts are influenced by historical events, and people's actions and choices both in the past and present. It also demonstrates how understanding of the two concepts is enhanced when looking at them in cultural context. Such understanding may help in recognizing applications of people's intelligence and wisdom when they occur in the real world, in both small-scale and large-scale situations. Taiwan's decisions and actions during the COVID-19 pandemic is an example of the latter: "Taiwan has successfully fought COVID-19 as a democracy, particularly in its incremental improvements on testing, tracing, and isolation without significantly compromising fundamental freedoms and civil liberties" (Soon, 2021, July 29) even though it "is 81 miles off the coast of mainland China and was expected to have the second highest number of cases" (Wang et al., 2020 March 3). An earlier, and similarly national-scale event concerns Taiwan after World War II when it was one of the "only two major emerging economies to grow faster than 5 percent for five decades in a row and to rise from poverty into the

ranks of developed economies" (Sharma, 2020, December 14) despite the constant threat of military invasion from China (Tai et al., 2021, April 30). These facts attest to the efforts of the Taiwanese people to strive toward wisdom by using their intelligence for good and humane purposes, as well as their decisions and actions to incorporate the best of the East and West. Hence, intelligence in context means not only seeing and understanding intelligence in context, but also encouraging contextualized applications of intelligence. In the cultural context of Taiwan, such applications point to perfecting intelligence in the effort to realize wisdom.

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