Chapter 8
The Soft Power in the Confucian "Kingly Way"

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8.1 Perpetual peace

In his "To perpetual peace: A philosophical sketch" [1795], Immanuel Kant argues that perpetual peace in global society is guaranteed not by the improvement of the moral quality of the human race, but by the force of nature:

> Perpetual peace is insured (guaranteed) by nothing less than that great artist *nature (natura daedala rerum)*, whose mechanical process makes her purposiveness [*Zweckmässigkeit*] visibly manifest, permitting harmony to emerge among men through their discord, even against their wills (Kant 1983, p. 120).
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> This kind of problem [i.e., the problem of perpetual peace] must be *solvable*. For it does not require the moral improvement of man; it requires only that we know how to apply the mechanism of nature to men so as to organize the conflict of hostile attitudes present in a people in such a way that they must compel one another to submit to coercive laws and thus to enter into a state of peace, where laws have power.... Consequently, the mechanism of nature, in which self-seeking inclinations naturally counteract one another in their external relations, can be used by reason as a means to prepare the way for its own end, the rule of right, as well as to promote and secure the nation's internal and external peace (Kant 1983, p. 124).

In their coauthored book titled *Achieving Good by Good Means* (*Yi Shan Zhi Shan*, 以善致善), Jiang Qing and his colleague categorize Kant's theory of perpetual peace as one advocating "achieving good by evil means." Jiang does this for two reasons. First, Kant views that the achievement of perpetual peace does *not* rely on the moral quality of the human race. Second, Kant assures us that perpetual peace can be achieved *through* the process of confrontation among people (Jiang and Sheng 2004, pp. 2–3). Jiang and his colleague thus

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hold Kant responsible for the fierce arms race and mass killing that has transpired all over the world in the past few centuries.

Most scholars of Kantian ethics would find such criticism surprising: How can Kant, who has "constantly-increasing admiration" towards "the starry Heavens without and the moral law within," and who advocates that only good will has unconditional worth, have taught us to pursue peace based on hostility? And how could he possibly be liable for the past centuries of slaughter among human beings?

We might need to modify Jiang and his colleague's description of Kant's theory a little in order accurately to capture Kant's meaning. Kant's view may best be described as that of achieving peace without good means rather than that of achieving it by evil means. He does not say that in order to achieve peace, we have to be hostile to and fight with each other. What he says is that evil intents will not triumph, as is shown in his quotation from Friedrich Bouterwek: "whoever wills too much, wills nothing" (Kant 1983, p. 124). Therefore, projects in pursuit of unreasonable self-interests will eventually be defeated, and thus he concludes that "nature irresistibly *wills* that right should finally triumph" (Kant 1983, p. 124).

How exactly, according to Kant, does nature guarantee the achievement of perpetual peace? His answer is composed of three key points. First, as quoted above, "self-seeking inclinations naturally counteract one another." This explains why those who will too much end up gaining nothing. While motives of self-interest cancel out each other in time, motives of public interest do not. When the latter, which do not cancel out each other, compete with the former, the latter prevails. Second, inter-group interactions are inevitably subjected to hurdles of language and religion. In Kant's eyes, such hurdles, on the one hand, have brought about disputes among groups, but on the other hand also made it difficult for any group to keep another group completely under its control. Of course, the difficulty in conquering grows with the mass of nations one attempts to conquer. Therefore, all projects to conquer the world will eventually come to failure (Kant 1983, pp. 124–125). Finally, while we can admit that competition is inevitable among people, it is important to note that cooperation is even more so, and these two types of relationships are in tension with each other. To illustrate his point, Kant raises the example of the tension between war and trade (Kant 1983, p. 125). The example is certainly an unfortunate one, for history has shown that we can indeed force a nation by physical power to open up her market as in the Opium War. The inappropriateness of the example aside, however, we can still say that cooperation and physical conflicts do not sit together comfortably. And in the end, Kant believes, it is cooperation that will prevail, for, unlike competition, cooperation is something without which humanity simply cannot survive.

All these show that Kant's idea is not really one of achieving good *by evil means*. Rather, I suggest, we should call his position that of achieving good *without good means*. Notwithstanding this modification, one important idea in Jiang and his colleague's interpretation is still correct, i.e., for Kant, we do *not* need moral people to achieve peace. And, turning to the real world, we can see that violence, or the threat of violence, has long been and still is an important factor defining international order. It would be nice if Kant's idea were correct.

However, since the end of the Cold War, military rivalry has not disappeared among countries. In combating terrorism, the U.S. initiated the "anti-terrorist war," which has not ended terrorism, but invited more people to join it. So it seems important to rethink the relationship between morality and peace. How should we evaluate the contrasting strategies of achieving good (such as peace) by good means and achieving it without good means? In coming sections, I will try to answer these questions with the help of Joseph Nye's idea of "soft power" and the Confucian idea of the "kingly way" as developed by Jiang in recent years.

8.2 Nye's "Soft Power"

What is soft power? It is the opposite of hard power. Hard power, to put it simply, is the ability to coerce or to pay in order to have one's goals achieved (Nye 2004, p. x). This ability is boiled down, roughly, to military and economic powers. One may be tempted to equate coercion with military power and payment with economic power. This understanding, however, is only approximately true. It is often found that military power can also be used to buy one off by diplomacy. Providing another country with special protection can benefit one country with their cooperation in return. On the other hand, economic strategies can also be coercive, as in the case of sanctions. Whatever the particular means, hard power is always about benefits and loss.

Military power is, of course, the most typical form of hard power. It is, roughly speaking, the power employed, or to be employed, in large-scale physical conflicts. Whether such power is used to threat or induce, the "threat" element is always there. For example, when a country with superior military force offers a weaker country protection in exchange for cooperation in return, more often than not the former has their eyes on the latter's flawed self-defense. And for survival, the latter is left with no choice but to comply. In this way, although at the surface the powerful country is offering help, it is practically indistinguishable from a threat. A nation's military power can influence behaviors of other nations, and since such influence originates from the necessity of existence, military power has always been extremely important in defining international order. In order to understand the nature of military power, let us begin by examining a few statements from Clausewitz:

> War is nothing but a duel on a larger scale. Countless duels go to make up war, but a picture of it as a whole can be formed by imagining a pair of wrestlers. Each tries through physical force to compel the other to do his will; his immediate aim is to throw his opponent in order to make him incapable of further resistance (Clausewitz 1976, p. 75).
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> Kind-hearted people might of course think there was some ingenious way to disarm or defeat an enemy without too much bloodshed, and might imagine this is the true goal of the art of war. Pleasant as it sounds, it is a fallacy that must be exposed: war is such a dangerous business that the mistakes which come from kindness are the very worst (Clausewitz 1976, p. 75).
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> [W]ar is an act of force, and there is no logical limit to the application of that force (Clausewitz 1976, p. 77).

The above quotations can be summarized in two points. First, military power is the power to make others surrender, i.e., obey against their wills. Second, war is the use of force, and this force has no logical limit. By having "no logical limit," what Clausewitz means is that there is no boundary, so that, when surpassed, the use of force will cease to be effective. Clausewitz's view is thus even more realistic than that of achieving good by evil means. Thus, it is might that rules the world, not right.

Yet even within the scope of hard power, there are also milder means, i.e., persuasion with benefits. This again can be done by means of either inducement or threat. For instance, nations that are more powerful can, in the name of offering help, induce smaller countries to coordinate with them in the implementation of their international policies. Or, wealthy nations may also force less developed nations to adopt their policies by threat of economic sanctions.

Whether coerced by economic or military means, weaker nations cooperate not because they enjoy the cooperative relationship itself, but because they have to do so in order to protect their vital interests. Once those external incentives are removed, foundations of collaboration collapse. Therefore, although it is the advantage of hard power that it can force others to cooperate against their own wills, it also has the disadvantage of being unable to gain the active commitments of the collaborators. It is precisely for this reason that Nye urges the United States to secure her international status by properly cultivating her soft power.

As we have discussed earlier, soft power is the counterpart of hard power. Contrary to hard power, soft power neither threatens nor induces. What it does is attract and convince, which comes from "the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideas, and policies" (Nye 2004, p. x). As a result, soft power, unlike hard power, does not only make people do what you want them to do; rather, it makes people like to do what you want them to do. "When you can get others to admire your ideals and to want what you want, you do not have to spend as much on sticks and carrots to move them in your direction" (Nye 2004, p. x). The key to mastering soft power is thus to *please* others with what you are doing for them. Soft power, in other words, is "the ability to shape the preferences of others," where preferences are nothing but the "shared values between individuals and countries, and the sense of responsibility thus derived" (Nye 2004, p. 5). So, to put it simply, soft power is the power arising from values and preferences. You possess soft power when others admire you, admire what you do for them, and find your behaviors morally agreeable.

So which is more important, soft power or hard power? Clausewitz would say the latter. Should I have the ability to wipe out all my enemies, while those who agree with me would of course concur, even those who do not would have to either surrender or become extinct. The world would continue to run in whatever manner I wished. This might well explain why John McCloy once roared in the face of John F. Kennedy, "World opinion? I don't believe in world opinion. The only thing that matters is power" (Nye 2004, p. 9).

But there is a question here: Can anyone possess the power of wiping out all his enemies? Or we may ask a yet more prompting question: Can anyone have the capacity to maintain such a power forever? Nye's answer to this latter question is a definite "no." He does not negate hard power out of a passion for a moral ideal, but rather regards his position as a hard truth we have learned from history.

> After its victory in World War II, the United States helped to restructure Japan's economy, but it is hard to imagine that the United States today could effectively threaten force to open Japanese markets or change the value of the yen. . . . Even nondemocratic countries that feel fewer popular moral constraints on the use of force have to consider its effects on their economic objectives. War risks deterring investors who control flows of capital in the globalized economy. A century ago, it may have been easier to seize another state's territory by force than "to develop the sophisticated economic and trading apparatus needed to derive benefit from commercial exchange with it." But it is difficult to imagine a scenario today. . . (Nye 2004, p. 20).

The United States bypassed the United Nations and attacked Iraq in 2003, stirring up rage almost everywhere in the world (including citizens of her own and her closest ally, Britain). In the eyes of many people around the world, the United States has become "a classical imperialist power" (Nye 2004, p. 127). The Germans were very sympathetic towards the US after 9/11. Yet, since the Iraq War, younger Germans became skeptical about the events of 9/11, and some even begin to conjecture that the incidence is a farce written and played by the US herself (Nye 2004, p. 130). A former Pakistan diplomat once reported, "the US invasion of Iraq is a complete gift to the Islamic parties. People who would otherwise turn up their noses at them are now flocking to their banner" (Nye 2004, p. 29). The so-called anti-terrorist attack has transformed into the inducement of further terrorist activities. Today, transnational terrorism has unveiled American vulnerability (Nye 2004, p. 129), and it is with this backdrop that Nye called for a remedy for the US impaired soft power. "Winning the peace is harder than winning a war," says Nye, "and soft power is essential to winning the peace" (Nye 2004, p. xii).

8.3 Soft Power of the Kingly Way

"Winning peace is far more difficult than winning a war." This certainly reminds those familiar with Chinese history of a conversation between Emperor Gaozu and the Confucian Lu Jia in the Han dynasty, which is recorded in *Historical Records* (Shiji, 史記). According to the record, Lu once recommended to Gaozu that he should take more seriously the study of Confucian classics such as the *Book of Songs* (Shijing, 詩經) and *Book of Historical Documents* (Shujing, 書經; or Shangshu, 尚書). Gaozu reproached, "I conquered the empire [by fighting wars] on horseback. What is the use of the *Book of Songs* and *Book of Historical Documents*?" "Of course an empire can

be conquered on horseback," retorted Lu. "But can it be administered on horseback?" (Sima 1994, Book 97, my translation). What Lu means is similar to Nye's opinion: hard power may help to win a war, but it is not likely to help build a peaceful order.

Very much like Nye, Confucians also believe in the power of attraction. For them, it is virtues that have the strongest attraction. Confucius says, "if distant people are not willing to comply, one has to civilize oneself and cultivate one's virtues in order to attract them" (*Analects* 16.1, my translation). Mencius also says, "there are cases in which a nonbenevolent man is in possession of a state. But there has never been an unbenevolent man who got possession of the world" (*Mencius* 14.13, trans. Zhao et al. my modification). Confucians call power of attraction by virtues the "kingly way," a term derived from Mencius' famous statement:

> One who uses force under the guise of benevolence can become a hegemon [i.e., leader among feudal states], but he must first establish a powerful state before achieving this. One who practices benevolence through the virtuous rule will become a true king, and a true king does not need a powerful state (*Mencius* 3.3, trans. Zhao et al. my modifications).

Xunzi has a nice explanation for why attraction is better than coercion. He divides three ways of "annexing" or gathering people: by moral power, by raw power, and by wealth. The power of morality convinces, and therefore people willingly work for it. As a result, the power of morality grows with the number of people it rules. Unlike the power of morality, the people moved by raw power and wealth do not do so willingly. Therefore, the more people one conquers, the more one has to invest in the control of these people. Therefore, in both cases, one's power decreases with the expansion of one's territories. Thus, Xunzi concludes:

> One who uses moral power to annex people will become a True King; one who employs raw power to annex them will become weak; and one who employs wealth to annex them will become poor (*Xunzi*, *15.6a*, trans. Knoblock).

Just like Nye, Confucians also believe that the superiority of the kingly way is a hard historical fact rather than a rosy ideal. Zhou[1] people, after overthrowing the Yin (殷; or Shang, 商) dynasty, inherited the Yin concept of Heavenly decree (*tianming*, 天命) with the understanding that governmental authority comes from Heaven. Unlike the Yin people, however, they learned from the collapse of the Yin Dynasty that Heaven has its own principles, and its decree can never be privatized by any particular group. In the poem "King Wen" (Wen Wang, 文王), Zhou emperors are reminded to learn from the lesson of the Yin dynasty and cultivate their virtues so that they can secure the Heavenly decree: in the "Major Odes" of the *Book of Songs* it says:

> May you never shame your ancestors,
> But rather tend their inward power[2],
> . . .
> In Yin you should see as in a mirror,
> That Heaven's high charge is hard to keep (*The Book of Songs*, Poem 235, trans. Waley)

The message in this and other similar passages in the *Book of Songs* is interesting. On reflection upon the collapse of the Yin Dynasty, Zhou people concluded not that the Yin dynasty collapsed because it failed to possess sufficient might, but because it lacked moral virtues. Similarly, the *Book of Historical Documents* states firmly, "Great Heaven has no partial affections;–it helps only the virtuous" (*Book of Historical Documents*, XVII, 2, trans. Legge). This can be considered the earliest manifesto of soft power in Chinese history: the key to the survival of a government is not brute force but virtue. Consequently, the Zhou people developed an institution, which Confucius regards as an exemplary model of ideal society, whereas their reign has enjoyed centuries of stability before it degenerated into a state of social unrest. In the course of disorder, the Qin (秦) state adopted the legalist idea and depended chiefly on brute force in governing its people as well as conquering other states. Though Qin did end up taking over all of China, the Qin dynasty (221–206 B.C.) could not even be sustained to its second reign, which presented a remarkable lesson for later rulers and scholars.

The collapse of the Qin dynasty provided Chinese intellectuals with another perfect lesson on limitations to the use of brute force. When the Han (漢) finally replaced the Qin, Confucian scholars began again to try to convince their rulers that Confucian political ideals were indeed most desirable and practical. Besides Lu, another prominent Han Confucian Shusun Tong (叔孫通) also leaves us with a famous statement: "Confucians may not be good at aggression, but they are certainly good at maintenance" (*The History of the Former Han Dynasty* [*Hanshu*漢書], "Biography of Shusun Tong," my trans.). At long last, Dong Zhongshu (董仲舒) succeeded in convincing Emperor Wu (武帝) to pursue Confucianism as the official ideology of the empire. Since then, the priority of soft power has gained official recognition, at least nominally.

Viewed in this way, Confucians have two points in common with Kant and Nye. First, there are limitations to hard power, which is precisely the opposite of the stance of Clausewitz. As both Kant and Xuzi have noted, power weakens as it extends. There is no such thing as hard power that can be infinitely projected. This is precisely what Mencius means when he says, "there has never been a nonbenevolent man who got possession of the world."

Interestingly, when we look more carefully into Clausewitz's view about military power, we can see that the limitation to it is also recognized implicitly:

> If wars between civilized nations are far less cruel and destructive than wars between savages, the reason lies in the social conditions of the states themselves and in their relationships to one another. These are the forces that give rise to war; the same forces circumscribe and moderate it. They themselves are not part of the war; they already exist before fighting starts (Clausewitz 1976, p. 76).

In other words, there is a power emerging from the social relationships among people and nations, which exists prior to military power and sets the conditions in which military power takes effect. Quite contrary to Clausewitz's own conclusion, then, these social relationships do set limits to the functioning of

military power, and thus, military power cannot simply be applied unlimitedly. And this power, which limits the applicability of military force, can quite properly be called soft power. Presupposing that morality is core to the building and maintenance of social relationships, there is good reason to relate this soft power with morality.

This brings us to the second agreement among Kant, Nye, and the Confucian. All of them recognize that morality is an important source of soft power. Both the Confucian and Nye have made this claim explicitly, while Kant does so implicitly when he describes the dynamics between egoistic and altruistic projects. The default order of nature seems to have decided that right is going to triumph over might in the end. What is called the order of nature here is called the Heavenly decree by Confucians, though the latter term may differ from the former that it carries a certain transcendent dimension in its meaning.

Even if we admit morality to be a major source of soft power, we still have to recognize three major limitations to its strength. First, although morality usually carries with it a strong soft power, it is neither necessary nor sufficient for the latter. The soft power Jesus possesses over his disciples is virtually indistinguishable from that which Osama bin Laden possesses over his supporters (Nye 2004, p. 2). Even gang leaders can have immense soft power over their gang members based on loyalty to the group. On the contrary, a person of virtue can also appear obnoxious because of his insistence on moral principles. Those who are judged by him as wrong, out of resentment, will naturally judge him as wrong in return. It is precisely for this reason that Confucius believes that a truly virtuous person is doomed to be loved by good people but hated by bad ones (*Analects* 13.24). Nye says that soft power is attraction rather than coercion or payments, but it is never easy to tell the former from the latter. And you do not have to be moral in order to be attractive. Looking sexy is certainly very attractive to many people, but it has nothing to do with moral virtue.

Second, whether it is Shusun's idea that Confucians are not good at aggression or Lu's idea that Confucian classics are not good for conquering the empire, the underlying message is that the kingly way is not particularly good at fighting. This can be fatal. Of course, being not good at fighting is not a moral fault. But when it comes to a point where invading troops are under your nose, your side will be brought to extinction, whether just or not. Confucius has made clear note of this when he says, "Military preparation is necessary for civil matters, while civil measures are also necessary in support of military actions" (*The School Sayings of Confucius* [kongzi jiayu孔子家語], "Being Councillor in Lu," my trans.). It sounds noble to insist that we need nothing other than moral virtues, but such insistence will not save a life. Fortunately, the kingly way is not totally useless in fighting either. According to legends, when Emperor Wu (武王) revolted against Yin, not only did the Yin people not fight back, but they joined hands with Emperor Wu to bring down Emperor Zhou (紂王) of the Yin dynasty. This is a very lively example of implementing soft power in military actions. In fact, this is precisely what soft power does: it gives direction. When the direction is made clear among a mass, hard power possessed by its

members can be brought together to serve the soft power. The only question is whether the people thus motivated possess the necessary hard power to achieve their goals.

Third, as Nye has pointed out, soft power depends (more than hard power does) on the existence of willing interpreters and receivers. Moreover, attraction often has a "diffuse effect," creating "general influence rather than producing an easily observable and specific action," although it can "make a significant difference in obtaining favorable outcomes negotiations" (Nye 2004, p. 16). Simply speaking, soft power takes effect only when others willingly cooperate. Here is where hard power becomes so absorbing: if people do not willingly cooperate, with it one can make them do so. This is what soft power cannot accomplish. Therefore, soft power cannot guarantee that good triumphs over evil in every single battle.

Although there are important similarities between Nye's idea of soft power and the Confucian idea of the kingly way, they are still very different in some ways. The concept of the kingly way is basically a moral concept: it is about using one's power *morally*. In contrast, soft power is basically a concept of power: once you successfully attract others, you possess soft power, whether your values are correct or not. Morality may help strengthen one's soft power, but it is not necessary. Osama bin Laden has soft power. A hamburger has soft power. But none of these powers come from morality. So there are two gaps between morality and success. First, being more moral does not always guarantee greater soft power. Second, soft power does not always guarantee success. By attracting millions of absolutely powerless people I am still powerless, or nearly so. That is why Confucius emphasizes the importance of having military preparation in support of civil measures. Likewise, Nye also says, "Smart power means learning better how to combine our hard and soft power" (Nye 2004, p. 32).

We are thus living in a very complicated world. We cannot be as optimistic as Kant was, holding tight to the belief that evil cannot beat good. Nor do we need to be so pessimistic as to side with Gaozu, deeming that it is might that rules. We can take both sides into consideration, while tipping ourselves slightly toward the side of optimism for the reason that, whereas hard power is in no conflict with either morality or personal interests, soft power certainly sits more comfortably together with morality than unwarranted self-interests. In such a manner, morality would have a mild advantage over evil in the struggle between the two.

Jiang and his colleague have repeatedly stressed, in their *Achieving Good by Good Means*, that achieving good by evil means is never acceptable. From the above discussion, this position is supported by two important arguments. First, since nature does not guarantee that good will eventually triumph, the project of achieving good by evil means, or without good means, is excessively optimistic. Second, with morality itself being a major source of soft power, the project of achieving good by good means should certainly be reckoned feasible, although it does not mean that we have a guarantee for success. In what follows,

we will discuss in detail the Confucian ideas of just war and benevolent rule in order to see how the soft power of morality should be nurtured and employed.

8.4 Just War

From the perspective of the kingly way, war, as a form of brute force, should always be brought under the rule of morality. On the one hand, we may say that we do not bring it under the rule of morality for any specific purpose. We do it simply because it is the right thing to do. On the other hand, even speaking from a power point of view, we can still say that, in order to strengthen our power, we have to ensure certain soft power development at the same time when we use our hard power. Whether we are concerned with morality or power, we should have a touch of morality in us, at least in our observable behavior.

Confucians advocate the kingly way, which emphasizes virtues. And they see the soft power of morality as well. When King Hui of Liang (梁), a small state in the Warring States period (481–221 BC), asked about protecting his own state, Mencius advised him to adopt benevolent rule and help cultivate the virtues of the people. By doing so, explains Mencius, "the people will love their superiors and die for them" (*Mencius* 2.12, trans. Zhao et al.). With such devotion to the protection of their home state, the people of the Liang state would be able to defeat troops of powerful states such as Qin and Chu (楚), which relied on brute force alone and thus failed to have wholehearted support from their people (*Mencius* 1.5, trans. Zhao et al.).

> There is a way to win the world: win the people's support and you will win the world. There is a way to win the people's support: make them like you and you will win their support. There is a way to make them like you: help them get what they want and avoid inflicting on them what disgusts them (*Mencius* 7.9, trans. Zhao et al. my modifications).

What was meant here runs almost perfectly in line with Nye's idea of soft power: attraction is an enormous power. And for Mencius, benevolence is the greatest soft power of all.[3] Therefore, he says,

> Hence a good ruler may prefer not to fight, but if he fights at all, he will certainly succeed because he has the world obey him, and his opponent has even his own relations turn against him (*Mencius* 4.1, trans. Zhao et al.).
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>   If the ruler of a state loves benevolence, he will be matchless in the world (*Mencius* 7.7, trans. Zhao et al.).

Taken this way, the soft power of morality for Mencius seems not just enormous but all-conquering. It is difficult for us to decide whether Mencius means this literally or it is an encouragement, but his insistence on the strong power of morality is clear.

Xunzi, another prominent pre-Qin Confucian, shares Mencius' belief in the strong power of morality. Xunzi divides authority into three types: morality (or

"the Way and its Power" as translated by Knoblock), harsh management (or "harsh and judicial and cruel judicial investigations"), and reckless use of brute force (or "deranged madness"). Xunzi insists that it is only morality that helps to strengthen a state or nation (*Xunzi* 16.2, trans. Knoblock). And his reason is the same as Mencius: One who does not love his people is not loved by his people, and thus cannot expect protection from his people. One who leaves himself unprotected invites conquerors. Given his inability to protect himself, he is doomed to be extinguished (*Xunzi* 12.5, trans. Knoblock). "Hence to be good at winning the support of the people is also to be expert in the use of the army" (*Xunzi* 15.1a, trans. Knoblock).

Within this framework of the kingly theory, Confucianism is against war. Mencius even says that "those experts at war should suffer the severest punishment" (*Mencius* 7.14, trans. Zhao et al.). Yet, it has not absolutely overthrown the use of force. When Emperor Wu revolted against the tyrannical Emperor Zhou of Yin, Mencius' comment was that it was not a "regicide" but a "despot forsaken" (*Mencius* 2.8, trans. Zhao et al.), which implies that military actions can sometimes be justified. As we have pointed out, Confucius also admits that military preparation is very often necessary. In *Historical Records*, it is even reported that Ran You (冉有), a disciple of Confucius, learned how to fight a battle from Confucius:

> Ran You led a troop for the Ji (季) clan to fight against the Qi (齊) troop and won the battle. Ji Kangzi asked, "Did you learn how to fight a battle, or are you just a born fighter?" Ran You answered, "I learnt it from Confucius" (Sima 1994, Book 47, my trans.).

Since Confucians permit the use of force on the one hand and insist on the priority of morality on the other, the only way for them to accommodate both considerations is to place the use of force under strict moral constraints. This gives rise to a Confucian just-war theory. Below I will sketch a model of the Confucian just-war theory.[4] It can be summarized in seven principles.

1. Caution principle

   It is recorded in the *Analects* that there were three things with which Confucius was cautious, and one of those was war (*Analects* 7.12). Being cautious with war is, of course, a perfectly practical principle. It is so practical that, indeed, even the militarist has to adopt it, as stated in *The Art of War* (Sunzi, 孫子): "The art of war is of vital importance to the State. It is a matter of life and death, a road either to safety or to ruin" (*The Art of War* I.1, trans. Giles).

   There are two meanings in what the Confucian calls caution. A first meaning is that one should try one's best to avoid unnecessary military conflicts. Caution also has a second and very different meaning, namely, that we should not overlook the possibility of war either, and there should always be preparation for war. That explains why Confucius says that civil matters must be supported by military preparation, for he understands perfectly well the importance of a military force as the last resort to protect

a society and its members. For this reason, there is always an obligation for a government to get her people ready for war. So Confucius says, "Only when men of the right sort have instructed a people for 7 years ought there to be any talk of engaging them in warfare" (*Analects* 13.29, trans. Waley). Mencius also says, "To send the people to fight without training them first is to plunge them into disasters" (*Mencius* 12.8, trans. Zhao et al.).

2. Violence prohibition principle

    War is evil because it is a form of violence. However, it is necessary to use a just war to protect people from unjust violence. This idea is most clearly stated by Xunzi. He says:

    The military principles of which I spoke are just the means whereby to prohibit violent and aggressive behaviors and to prevent harm to others; they are not the means to contention and confiscation (*Xunzi* 15.3, trans. Knoblock).

    We can find the same idea in Mencius: "In times of old, frontier barriers were set up to ward off violence" (*Mencius* 14.8, trans. Zhao et al.). In *Rites of Zhou* (zhouli, 周禮), we can also find a similar instruction: "Rescue the innocent and conquer the guilty" (*Rites of Zhou*, Summer Ministry with the Overseer of Military Affairs, my trans.).

3. People-based principle

    Whether a war should be fought or not should be decided by people, or more precisely, by the people of the nation to be attacked. After defeating the Yan (燕) state, King Xuan of the Qi state asked Mencius whether he should take over the land thus occupied. Mencius' answer was to let the Yan people decide.

    If the people of Yan are pleased with your annexation, then annex it. . . . If the people of Yan are not pleased with your annexation, then do not annex it (*Mencius* 2.4, trans. Zhao et al.).

    The people-based principle obviously has close connection with the violence prohibition principle. A war prohibiting violence is certainly welcome by those who are thus rescued. Therefore, a war that abides to the principle of prohibition of violence will also usually pass the test of the people-based principle.

4. Life protection principle

    For Confucians, it is the basic responsibility of the government to provide the people with the conditions for leading a decent life. Thus, in case war is inevitable, government should strive to mitigate the harm done to the people. Thus, there should be no excessive killing or destruction on the one hand, and absolutely no looting on the other. In *Records of Ritual Matters by Dai Senior* (Dadai liji, 大戴禮記), it is stated that military forces should be used to "console people instead of robbing them" (Royal Speeches [zhuyan, 主言], my trans.). Mencius also has a similar idea when he refutes the theory as there was large-scale bloodshed when Emperor Wu revolted against Emperor Zhou. His idea is simple: A benevolent ruler does not let this

happen. (*Mencius* 14.3, trans. Zhao et al.). This may not be a good theoretical argument, but the underlying moral principle is clear.

The life protection principle can also be found in Xunzi, who further elaborates its content in much more detail:

> The army does not execute the aged or the young, nor does it trample down growing crops. Those who offer allegiance are not incarcerated … nor are those who flee for their lives made prisoners. As a general principle, in punitive expeditions, punishment is not extended to the people, but rather only to those who have caused anarchy among them (*Xunzi* 15.1f, trans. Knoblock, my modification).

5. Proper authority principle

    Confucians have always emphasized the importance of hierarchical order, in which people of different ranks are endowed with different powers. Modern people may be tempted to believe that such an idea is workable in feudal societies, but not modern societies, but views of this kind are indefensible. In no country could or should a clerk in a governmental office have the same power as that of the president. When the idea of hierarchical order is applied to the issue of warfare, it results naturally that only the highest proper authority can legitimately initiate a war. With the feudal system of the Zhou dynasty, this highest authority is the emperor, which implies that no subordinating state in the nation has the right to launch an attack against another. This idea is expressed clearly in the *Analects*:

    > When the Way [i.e., the way things ought to be] prevails under Heaven, all orders concerning ritual, music, and punitive expeditions are issued by the emperor. When the Way does not prevail, such orders are issued by feudal princes… (*Analects* 16.2, trans. Waley, my modification).

    Similarly, Mencius declares, "A punitive war is one waged by a ruler against his subordinates. States on an equal footing are not to wage punitive wars against each other" (*Mencius* 14.2, trans. Zhao et al., my modification).

    Therefore, both Confucius and Mencius insist that subordinating states do not have the right to declare war against another state on the same hierarchical level. Projecting to the modern world, this would mean that no country has a right to declare war against another unless delegated by a higher international authority, say the United Nations. Should this principle be accepted by all nations worldwide, we would be close to achieving a peaceful order on a global level. However, even if we accept the principle of highest authority, a remark must be added here. When there is gross injustice in the world or in a nation, it is at least sometimes justifiable to restore order with the use of military force without permission from the alleged highest authority. It is in this vein that Mencius argues for the moral correctness of Emperor Wu's revolution against Emperor Zhou. Therefore, the proper authority principle may allow exceptions. This, on the one hand, seems perfectly acceptable, but on the other hand also leaves room for misinterpretation and abuse.

6. Trustworthiness principle

In a debate with the militarist Lord of Linwu, who believed that tactics and deceptions are essential to warfare, Xunzi argued that a humane military leader should not use deception as a means to victory: "The army of a humane man cannot be dissembled" (*Xunzi* 15.1b, trans. Knoblock). Lord of Linwu's position is exemplary to the militarist school. Sunzi, for example, states, "All warfare is based on deception" (*The Art of War*, I.11, trans. Giles). With this Xunzi firmly disagrees. As a Confucian, Xunzi has no doubt in the soft power in morality, and thus deception is not just unnecessary, but indeed harmful to the user. Likewise, Mencius argues that, to strengthen the power of a state, what one needs most is moral power, because that is the way to gain support from one's people (*Mencius* 4.1). Mencius has not mentioned here the question of deception, but the meaning is equivalent: even at the moment of physical confrontation, the determinant of victory is still the power of morality.

What if insistence on morality actually costs the war? The attitude Confucians hold would still be positive. Sheng Hong quotes the comments of the *Spring and Autumn Annals* on the incident in which Duke Xiang of the Song (宋) State refrained from attacking the Chu army while the latter were crossing the river, and thus being defeated: "At a critical moment, [Duke Xiang] still kept steadfastly to the rules of propriety. Even [sage kings like] King Wen could do no better than that" (Jiang and Sheng 2004, p. 11). Such rigid obediance to moral principles may appear a little puzzling for some people. We shall come back to this point later.

7. Proper measures principle

The word "measure" here means whatever methods used in managing armies. All six principles above are derived from basic moral values or principles, but even the best values do us no good unless they are brought to be practiced properly. Governmental and military officials have the duty to manage troops well so that they can effectively protect the nation, and at the same time safeguard the moral values upheld by the government. *Xunzi* lays down detailed principles in ruling an army, which cannot be reported in full here. Briefly speaking, Xunzi's major principles include: (1) troops must be perfectly disciplined, (2) material resources must be well managed and well protected, (3) intelligence work must be done in a professional manner, (4) decisions must be made independent of irrational emotions, and (5) there should never be any reliance on luck (*Xunzi* 15.1e, trans. Knoblock).

Just like Confucianism in the East, Christianity in the West also believes in just wars. The Christian just-war theory has a long history and has many formulations with minor and delicate differences from each other. Below, I will mention a modern version of it. The Christian just-war theory is composed of two parts. The first part is composed of principles deciding legitimate conditions for declaring war (jus ad bellum), and the second part is composed of principles setting limits to behaviors on battlefields (jus in bello).

Jus ad bellum

1. Just cause
   War is permissible only to confront a real and certain danger, i.e., to protect innocent life, to preserve decent human existence, and to ensure basic human rights.
2. Competent Authority
   War must be made by competent authority with responsibility for public order, not by private groups or individuals.
3. Comparative Justice
   Even when there is a just cause to use military force, that cause can never justify the use of force without limits. Therefore, the use of force must always be limited within the scope deemed justifiable by its cause.
4. Right Intention
   War can be legitimately intended only for the reasons set forth as just causes. The pursuit of peace and reconciliation must remain the highest priorities in the process of conflict.
5. Last Resort
   It is only when all peaceful means result in no progress that one should fall back on the use of force.
6. Possibility of Success
   One who fights must stand a chance of winning.
7. Proportionality
   The damage to be inflicted and the costs incurred by war must be proportionate to the good expected by taking up arms.

Jus in bello

1. Proportionality
   The same principle of proportionality is also applicable in this area. The damage done in military actions should not exceed the extent justifiable in terms of the good intended.
2. Discrimination
   The lives of innocent persons may never be taken directly (US Catholic Bishops' Pastoral Letter 1992, pp. 98–107).

When we carefully compare the Christian and the Confucian just-war theories, the two appear amazingly similar. The Christian principles of just cause and just reason resemble the violence prohibition principle and the people-based principle in Confucianism. Both theories regard a proper authority crucial to the legitimacy of a war. The principles of comparative justice, last resort, possibility of success, and proportionality remind us of the caution principle. And the final principle in the Christian theory, i.e., the principle of discrimination, parallels in spirit with the life protection principle. The only Confucian principle that fails to find a parallel in the Christian principles would be the trustworthiness principle. It seems then that we shall arrive at very similar conclusions about the moral values of warfare as long as we view the matter of warfare with a

proper sense of compassion. In other words, it is highly plausible that both the Confucian and Christian just-war theories should be applicable more or less universally.

Although Nye has not attempted to develop a comprehensive just-war theory, we can still find that his reflection on military affairs in some way resembles the Confucian and Christian theories. Nye believes that if there are occasions on which the United States really has to use hard power, she must be mindful to protect her soft power "by creating broad coalitions." Although, given its present structure, it is difficult for the Security Council to pass any bill on the legitimization of any military action, the United States should still gain "the de facto support of a large majority of Security Council members" before she takes any military action (Nye 2004, p. 145). This is precisely a revised version of the authority principles from both the Confucian and Christianity just-war theories.

8.5 Benevolent Rule

Nye says that attractive cultures, political ideals, and policies are all sources of soft power. Such a belief is similar to the Confucian ideal of benevolent rule. As I have pointed out previously, this is still not necessarily the kingly way. To boost one's soft power, the key lies within being wanted and preferred, not spotless moral integrity. Granted all these, however, it is worthwhile to see how much similarity there is between practicing benevolent rule and expanding soft power, for it will help us see why morality is much more than a useless ideal as some may think it is.

How do we cultivate soft power? There are three major sources according to Nye's analysis: (1) culture, (2) political values, and (3) foreign policies (Nye 2004, p. 6). In what follows, we shall discuss the Confucian views on culture, foreign policy, and political values accordingly.

Let's start with culture. Culture, on one hand, involves activities and products of high culture such as literature, art, and education, and on the other also involves popular culture, which focuses on mass entertainment (Nye 2004, p. 11). The relationship between popular culture and soft power is rather complex. On the one hand, people who enjoy hamburgers do not necessarily adore the United States. On the other hand, survey findings do indicate that American popular culture has established an image of being affluent, strong, attractive, trendy, and innovative in the eyes of people around the world. In order to explain the soft power of popular culture, Nye quotes the recent rights movement in China as an example. A young Chinese rights activist explained how they prepared psychologically to fight lawsuits: "We've seen a lot of Hollywood movies–they feature weddings, funerals, and going to court. So now we think it is natural to go to court a few times in your life" (Nye 2004, p. 12). This, of course, goes against Confucius' idea of building a society where

"there were no civil suits" (*Analects* 12.13). Whatever the significance of the trend, this truly reflects that popular culture can edify. At the same time, however, "Hollywood movies that show scantily clad women" are also undermining the United States' soft power by irritating people in more conservative societies (Nye 2004, p. 15). Apart from popular culture, personal contacts among people also provide important ways by which culture is transmitted, and thus may help to cultivate soft power (Nye 2004, p. 13).

The soft power of culture implies that culture helps to bind people together (and is therefore beneficial to the stability of society), and this is certainly well adopted by Confucians. This belief is made clear when Confucians discuss the importance of edification through rites and music. Confucius himself points out that, when the government fails to promote proper rites and music, the people will be so confused about ways to handle social life to the extent that they do not even know how to position their limbs (*Analects* 13.3). The chapter, "Record of Music," in the *Book of Rites* further elaborates the edification function of rites and music. The idea is that every piece of music carries with it a particular emotional content, and there is a two-way interaction between the music we play or listen to and our feelings (*Book of Rites* XVII, I, 2). As a result, music is considered a perfect tool for emotional education and thus personality education. We can induce in people a sense of harmony and peace by continually exposing them to the right kind of music, and that will help bring peace to society (*Book of Rites* XVII, II, 14 & 18).

All the above messages, in words, are about the edification function of music alone. It is important to notice, however, that the word "music" in ancient Chinese can mean more than music as such and include poetry (poems were more often than not sung instead of simply recited) and dance. And these, together, cover almost all the forms of what we now call cultural activities available in their time. Therefore, what is true of music is also true of other forms of cultural activities, and we can conclude that, for Confucians, cultural activities play an essential role in the formation of the moral character of a people as a whole.

Therefore, it is essential that the government be extremely careful about the moral implications of its cultural policies. Without a set of careful policies to ensure the moral profundity of the culture of society, two possible scenarios may follow. First, with the influence of a culture of degraded morality, the moral quality of people will be eroded. This will then put society under the risk of disintegration, for morality as the cohesive force of society will then fail to function. Second, indecent cultural trends may irritate some social members with strict moral standards, and there will be fights and quarrels between them and people who follow those trends. To maintain a peaceful order, therefore, a government must pay due attention to the building of a proper social and moral atmosphere through cultural means.

A second issue to be discussed is foreign policies, which Nye takes to be essential for the nurturing of a nation's soft power: "Domestic or foreign policies that appear to be hypocritical, arrogant, indifferent to the opinion of

others, or based on a narrow approach to national interests can undermine soft power" (Nye 2004, p. 14).

Nye's concrete suggestion for America is that she must put more effort in striving for global welfare instead of defending her own on all occasions. For example,

> [T]he Bush administration deserves credit for its efforts to align the United States with the long-term aspirations of poor people in Africa and elsewhere through its Millennium Challenge initiative, which promises to increase aid to countries willing to make reforms, as well as its efforts to increase resources to combat AIDS and other infectious diseases. Success in implementing those programs will represent a significant investment in American soft power (Nye 2004, p. 144).

Nye's idea that the US needs to strive for global welfare in order to expand her soft power accords perfectly with the Confucian idea of the kingly way. Mencius says:

> Now if you practice benevolence in your government, then all the officials in the world will want to find a place in your court, all tillers to plow your fields, and all merchants to store their goods in your marketplaces, all travelers to journey on your roads, and all those who hate their rulers to lay their complaints before you. Such being the case, who can stop you from achieving the end? (*Mencius* 1.7, trans. Zhao et al.)

In the same vein, Xunzi also says: "Accordingly, one who uses the state to establish justice will be a true king; one who establishes authority will be a hegemon; and one who establishes a record of expediency and opportunism will perish" (*Xunzi* 11.1a, trans. Knoblock, my modifications).

According to the Confucian ideal of the kingly way, striving for the well-being of all people all over the world is a joint duty of all governments. For the Confucian, foreign policy is but the extension of domestic affairs. The foundation of the pacification of the world is good governance in individual states, while the foundation of good governance in states is harmony in clans and moral cultivation in individual persons (*The Great Learning*). *The Doctrine of the Mean* says, "How great is the Dao [i.e., way] of the sage! Super abundant, it develops all things, extending up to Heaven" (*Doctrine of the Mean*, trans. Muller 2009b). That is to say that sages must strive to nurture the lives not only of their own people but also people in the entire world.

Finally, we come to the issue of political values. Political values drive a country's domestic affairs, which eventually affect her soft power. Nye illustrates this with the examples of capital punishment and weak legal gun control in the US, which he thinks are undercutting American soft power on an international level (Nye 2004, p. 13). Likewise, refusals to cut down the emissions of greenhouse gases and domestic agricultural subsidies structured to protect wealthy farmers have also set back the American soft power (Nye 2004, p. 143). In the same vein, Confucians also say that the benevolent rule is not only able to make its people happy, but also attract foreigners (*Analects* 13.16).

The problem of political value is extremely complicated. It is easy to assure the importance of correct political values. It is much more difficult to spell them

out. The Confucian believes that core to correct political values is benevolence, but a popular answer from the contemporary West is that of justice. These answers can give rise to very different policies.

So let us begin with an examination of the idea of benevolence. What do we mean by benevolent rule? "When superiors and inferiors love one another," says the *Book of Rites*, "we have the condition of benevolence" (*Book of Rites* XXVI, 4, trans. Legge). Benevolent rule is impossible without a certain sense of affection, or sense of connectedness, among people. On the contrary, the Western concept of justice is derived from the idea of social contract, which has nothing to do with interpersonal relationships, at least at the moment of contract making.[5]

A classic example of having justice as the primary political value comes from John Rawls. What makes Rawls' theory particularly interesting in our discussion is that his theory is just another exemplary attempt to achieve good without good means. For Rawls, it is not only *unnecessary* for government to promote good, but indeed *compulsory* for it to *avoid* promoting good, in order to achieve the right form of governance.

Rawls' position is very often called the position of moral neutrality, a widely accepted position among contemporary liberals. What Rawls means by moral neutrality is that the government should avoid siding with any *comprehensive* value theory. By comprehensive value theory, he means the following:

> [A value theory] is comprehensive when it includes conceptions of what is of value in human life, and ideals of personal characters, as well as ideals of friendship and of familial and associational relationships, and much else that is to inform our conduct, and in the limit to our life as a whole (Rawls 1996, p. 13).

Viewed this way, Confucianism is certainly a comprehensive value theory. Therefore, from a Rawlsian point of view, Confucianism must be an unacceptable political theory. But is he right?

To answer this question, we have to see first why the principle of moral neutrality is adopted at all. The reason, for Rawls, is that we are living in a world of plurality, i.e., a world in which people disagree about what constitutes a good life. It is not only that they disagree, but also that there is no way to have these disagreements resolved rationally. Consequently, in order to have people living together peacefully, the only reasonable thing for the government to do is to remain neutral about the correctness of these theories.

> The political culture of a democratic society is always marked by a diversity of opposing and irreconcilable religious, philosophical, and moral doctrines. Some of these are perfectly reasonable, and this diversity among reasonable doctrines political liberalism sees as the inevitable long-run result of the powers of human reason at work within the background of enduring free institutions (Rawls 1996, pp. 3–4).

If the government cannot assume the correctness of any particular comprehensive value theory, then the job of the government cannot be that of identifying and promoting goods of its citizens. Its job is rather to distribute certain primary goods in a fair manner. His list of primary goods includes the following:

a. basic rights and liberties;
b. freedom of movement and free choice of occupation against a background of diverse opportunities;
c. powers and prerogatives of offices and positions of responsibility in the political and economic institutions of the basic structure;
d. income and wealth; and
e. the social bases of self-respect (Rawls 1996, p. 181).

There are two reasons why the government can take these goods, but not comprehensive ones, for granted. First, since political liberalism aims to provide a model for building a political system, its idea of goods must be political instead of comprehensive. Primary goods do not define good lives in general, but only enable us to participate in social activities as citizens (Rawls 1996, pp. 178–180). Second, what makes these primary goods different from comprehensive values is that they, rather than stipulating particular life projects, are prerequisites of all possible life projects. Therefore, even from a morally neutral point of view, we can still admit these goods as real goods (Rawls 1996, p. 187).

Against this, the Confucian can raise two objections. The first objection has to do with Rawls' separation of political or civil matters from personal matters. Consider a father who never cares about his child. Fatherly care, of course, is a family value and thus comprehensive good. But should we, then, say that fatherly care has nothing to do with political values? Is fatherly care totally irrelevant to, say, the civil education of a child? If, as Rawls permits, a just society can reward a judge because of his contribution to the legal system (Rawls 1996, p. 80), why cannot it also reward a caring father who, with his care, helps his child grow into a good citizen?

Second, if Rawls' primary goods can be recognized as good by a just government because of their all-purpose character, then a responsible government for exactly the same reason can recognize many comprehensive goods. Consider the following Confucian values: (1) ritual knowledge[6] (understanding of the rules according to which society has been working properly), (2) stable and reliable interpersonal relationships, (3) freedom from excessive desires, and (4) personal virtues such as perseverance.[7]

We do not have to assume that this list covers all our basic needs in our personal and social life. All we have to say is that the list does cover goods Rawls rejects as comprehensive and beyond the political realm. Our list deliberately declares that certain ways of living are good: ritual competence is good; stable and reliable interpersonal relationships are good; freedom from excess desires is good, and possessing certain personality traits such as perseverance is also good. Comprehensive as they are, however, they are all just as all-purpose as Rawls' primary goods. You need these qualities whatever your life project is. If I were totally ignorant of the established social norms (rites) of my society, or if I were incapable of behaving at least in approximate accordance with these norms, I would not even be able to become a full-fledged member of society, which Rawls admits is a necessary condition to self-fulfillment, and even less

can I pursue my personal goals in it. If I could not build reliable relationships with others, then at times of frustration and exhaustion, I would not be in reach of the spiritual and emotional support needed for recovery. Freedom from excessive desires is important because an overdose of desires undermines my concentration in the course of endeavors to realize my dreams. Finally, perseverance is also, beyond doubt, a quality one must possess in the pursuit of any dream. If all these qualities are just as all-purpose as Rawls' primary goods, why should the government refrain from admitting them as real goods?

The above discussion explains why moral education is always the core of benevolent rule. For the Confucian, personal goods and social goods form a spectrum instead of two independent realms, as is expressed thus: "When the self is cultivated, the clan is harmonized. When the clan is harmonized, the country is well governed. When the country is well governed, there will be peace throughout the land" (*The Great Learning*, trans. Muller 2009a).

If it is inappropriate to expel morality from politics, then what morality should we introduce into society? A comprehensive Confucian answer would be too complicated to be presented here. Briefly speaking, we may say that it should at least be a morality of relationships. Interpersonal relationships are where real moral lives start. Furthermore, for Confucians, relationship building and maintenance cannot be done arbitrarily, but has to follow certain instructions. *The Doctrine of the Mean* states,

> There are five pervasive relationships in this world, which are carried out in 3 ways. The relationships are those between ruler and minister, father and son, husband and wife, older brother and younger brother, and between friends. The three ways of practice are wisdom, benevolence and courage, but they are practiced in unison (*Doctrine of the Mean*, trans. Muller 2009b, my modification).

From this, we may derive a set of rules governing a series of human relationships in a concrete manner. We can make up a list of personality traits that are favorable to relationship building and maintenance, such as wisdom, benevolence, and courage, as stated in the above quotation. We may also add to it such values as harmony, which serves as the ultimate goal of all human interactions. Harmony, though vague, should be reckoned with due respect today. Since the rise of imperialism and capitalism, the entire world has been overwhelmed by a relationship of keen competition, which is apparent not only in the military world, but also in the world of economy. Such keen competition disrupts not only the harmony among people, but also that between people and nature. Like numerous Confucians in traditional society, Jiang and his colleague see that the Confucian civilization can be characterized basically as a civilization of edification through rites and music (Jiang and Sheng 2004, p. 23). From Jiang's view, "a civilization built on the kingly way, gentlemanship, and courteous deference" is most favorable to "the maintenance of harmonious human relations and sustenance of human livelihood" (Jiang and Sheng 2004, p. 35). Below I will elaborate these ideas a little further.

First, benevolent rule is not just a matter of institution, but also a matter of attitudes. One cannot equate benevolent rule to (for example) democracy, or social justice in the morally neutral sense. Benevolent rule means having the right values as a guide to social decisions and public policies. As Jiang points out, when all people are occupied by their personal interests, benevolent rules will be made incompatible with democratic procedure.

> Personal interests of one person are mere personal interests. Personal interests of ten people are mere personal interests also. Personal interests of an entire nation are still mere personal interests. It is just that they are bigger (Jiang and Sheng 2004, p. 46).

Therefore, unless the people of a nation should vote for goods of the entire world, democracy would serve at best the personal interests of a particular nation (Jiang and Sheng 2004, p. 46). He goes on to explain the limitation of the democratic procedure as a mechanism to authorize governmental power: "Since the days of Machiavelli up until now, the problem with the West lies within its effort to drive morality away from politics, which ended up with a total separation of the two" (Jiang and Sheng 2004, p. 58).

> By paying attention solely to the procedure of voting but not to what people vote for, and by paying attention solely to the reception of the candidates' political programs but not to whether they can serve as role models of people, we shall water down the moral standard of a nation. This is the major problem. Politics, as understood in the Chinese tradition, cannot do without morality. We have to realize moral values by political means. We have to guide, transform, uplift and correct politics with moral values.... Political power is legitimized by moral values. Politics is by nature moral rather than non-moral (Jiang and Sheng 2004, pp. 58–59).

Second, under the benevolent rule, we cannot propagate the pursuit of personal interest as a positive aspiration. Of course, it is neither possible nor right to forbid citizens from pursuing their interests. The best we can do is let the pursuit of self-interests lead its own way without making propaganda out of it. We may acquiesce in its existence without making it a public moral claim, still less make it the leading value of society. Comparing the Confucian ideal with our society today, we will find the main trend of its development deeply disturbing. In a society where only public opinion counts, a government stands no chance of survival if it fails to fulfill its promise on significant economic growth, even when we know that endless economic growth cannot help but further destroy the natural environment. Universities, high schools, and elementary schools alike, which should aim at knowledge and education, have all explicitly made competition for rankings, subsidies, and public examination results their goals. This may sound harmless, but we have to note that all these purposes are private interests of educational institutes instead of social responsibilities. By replacing the growth of students or pursuit of knowledge with funding or ranking as goals, educational institutes risk betraying their real ideals.

8.6 Force Led by Virtue

What role should morality play in the building of social and world order? From Kant to Rawls to Nye, we have seen three distinctive attitudes. Kant finds moral virtues dispensable, while Rawls actually dispenses with them. Amongst the three, Nye's attitude towards moral virtues is most positive: he reasons that moral virtue is a supportive power we should never ignore. However, as we have pointed out, Nye's core concern is still power instead of morality. Nonetheless, since he has pointed out the soft power of morality, Nye's idea remains most favorable to the Confucian idea of the kingly way.

We mentioned earlier that both the concepts of hard power and soft power are concepts of force instead of morality. As Nye says, the smart use of power requires a combination of the use of hard power and soft power. What is implied here, provided that morality is an important source of soft power, is that we can put together morality and power. How should we do that?

Confucians have two clear principles in answering this question. First, there is the principle of the priority of virtue over power. As Mencius says, "[The ancient sages] would not have done an unjustifiable thing or killed an innocent man even to win possession of the world" (*Mencius* 3.2, trans. Zhao et al.). Putting the use of hard power strictly under the guidance of morality may strike some as being too naive. In some ways it is. If a small trick can save the life of the entire nation, it is not at all easy to decide whether it is wrong to do so. But there is still a sense in which Confucians are correct. Power is a tool. It must serve certain purposes. The question is what our purposes are. When our purpose is self-interest, we direct the use of our power to the pursuit of self-interest. When our purpose is the welfare of the entire world, we direct the use of our power to the promotion of their welfare. The second strategy is by no means less rational than the first.

The second principle is giving priority to soft power. This principle is clearly presented in the *Analects*:

> Zigong asked about government. The Master said, "Sufficient food, sufficient weapons, and the confidence of the common people." Zigong said, "Suppose you had no choice but to dispense with one of these three, which would you forgo?" The Master said, "Weapons." Zigong said, "Suppose you had no choice but to dispense with one of the remaining two, which would you forgo?" "Food. For from the beginning of time death has always been the lot of all people; but a people that no longer trusts its rulers are lost indeed" (*Analects* 12.7, trans. Waley).
>
> The Master said, "Govern the people by regulations, keep order among them by chastisements, and they will flee from you, and lose all self-respect. Govern them by moral force, keep order among them by ritual, and they will keep their self-respect and come to you of their own accord" (*Analects* 2.3, trans. Waley).

Sufficient weapons present a coercive force. Sufficient food serves as an inducement. Adopting Nye's terminology, they are both hard powers. To have the confidence of people in the government, however, is clearly a form of soft power, and Confucius clearly opts for the latter. Similarly, political punishment

is a hard power, whereas virtues and rites are soft power. And once again, we see Confucius' preference is for the latter. Yet neither principle overrules the implementation of hard power. And Confucius clearly has recognized this when he parallels civil matters with military preparations. What then, in practical terms, is the relationship between morality and hard power? Jiang has made some interesting suggestions, on which we may elaborate a little further.

When applying our principles to foreign affairs, according to Jiang, two things result. First, a country must not expand her army in the name of cosmopolitanism. We have to achieve good by good means, and more particularly, attain peace by peaceful means (Jiang and Sheng 2004, p. 2). Since military power is the last resort to defend one's homeland, Jiang adds:

> The moral basis for military force is merely to defend oneself and to avoid evil. The principle is thus that of self-protection, which guards us against the endless arms race as prescribed by social Darwinism (Jiang and Sheng 2004, p. 2).

Second, we bring the "wisdom of timeliness and the golden mean" into practice, by which Jiang intends "giving up the goal *temporarily* if the necessary means appears despicable" (Jiang and Sheng 2004, pp. 9–10, my italics).

We have to admit, though, that these principles are somewhat difficult to apply. Yes, it is true that we do not want to be dragged into endless arms races. But arms races are never goals in and of themselves. Everybody knows that an arms race is a lose-lose game. Yet a sense of security requires freedom from threats, and freedom from threats requires one to be stronger, or indeed much stronger, than one's potential rivals. For this reason, there is no situation in which both parties feel that they are safe. The only situation that comes to this is a state of security based on mutual assured destruction. This is peace on the edge of extinction, and therefore not the kind of peace anyone would find pacifying. Moreover, the second suggestion that one should give up one's goal temporarily if the necessary means appear despicable is not always feasible either. In many cases, once you give up your goal, you give it up forever. If the only way to save your life is to fight a dirty war, then either you do it or you die. There is no third option as to giving up your goal temporarily.

But then we see again the shared wisdom of the Confucian and Nye. What is essential is not only to uphold correct moral principles, but also to make good use of soft power. To end the arms race, the only feasible means is to build trust among countries by well-managed foreign policies. Violence does not build trust. Trust is built on proper images, cooperative relationships, and flexible as well as friendly foreign policies. Similarly, to avoid the necessity to fight dirty wars for survival, a nation has to build powerful and reliable alliances. This again requires making good use of soft power.

Of course, that is not to say hard power is useless. As the Chinese idiom states, "Weak countries have no diplomacy." Hard power is indeed necessary to back up soft power. Therefore, smart policymakers use hard and soft powers together. On the one hand, they take hard power seriously, and on the other, they make good use of their soft power in order to build up cooperative

relationship with other countries. Indeed, this is precisely what makes a powerful nation: a solid hard power as a last resort combined with an inexhaustible soft power to support her long-term development.

There is an old Confucian view about the relationship between the shaping of a moral culture on the one hand and the use of legal coercion on the other. The view might be translated as "punishment led by morality" (de zhu xing fu, 德主刑輔). This idea was originally aimed to apply to domestic affairs only, but we can extend it to a wider scope, resulting in the idea of "force led by morality." Confucians have always emphasized the priority of morality in a nation's policies, whether foreign or domestic. Benevolent rule is achieved not by universal suffrage alone, nor by abiding to rules of justice as defined in terms of moral neutrality. It is achieved by guiding one's behaviors and policies with moral values and thus building a society with a great "wealth of culture" (*Analects* 3.14, trans. Waley), one in which people's "words are sincere, and what they cultivate is harmony" (*Book of Rites*, Book VII, I, 2, trans. Legge). In short, it is a society of edification with rites, music, and other cultural activities. At the international level, the Confucian also seeks a morality-led approach with a focus on the building of friendly relationships among countries. It is only with the promotion of true moral values through the use of soft power, which is in turn supported by a solid hard power that we can achieve long-term stability and peace at both the national and international levels.

To conclude, Confucianism has a higher moral requirement for politicians than all the alternatives we have discussed. Both Kant and Rawls have thought of bypassing moral virtues to build world and social orders. Kant is not wrong when he says that right would prevail in the end. But then the idea about morality is unnecessarily developed by Rawls into the idea that we must, in some particular sense, get rid of morality in order to build society right. Finally, it comes to Nye, who, with concern for both world leadership of America and world peace, reassures the necessity of the strategy of "achieving good by good means." I have in this essay demonstrated that, whether it is for the building of international or social order, such a strategy is the only feasible option. From the examples of Kant and Rawls, we may want to regard Western culture as one that strives to "achieve good without good means" instead of "achieve good by evil means." The modern West does not try to build social and world orders by evil means. Rather, it tries to do so by, in some way, ignoring moral virtues. But in the end, not even this is going to succeed. Once we have bypassed morality, we can hardly build a decent social and world order – whether or not we have a moral concern in our own minds at the beginning.

We may then conclude that a good society must be one in which true moral values are given their due respect. But how is this possible? Before I end my discussion, I would like to add a few words about this question. Due to space limitation, my discussion is rudimentary and suggestive rather than comprehensive and conclusive. To revive a culture of respect for moral values, what we need is a multi-dimensional cultural reform project. If we want a simple answer, saying that we can fix everything by fixing just one thing, then we are doomed to

be disappointed. However, a multi-dimensional project, with its complexity, would appear incomprehensible, perhaps even to the wisest among us. Therefore, a certain clarification and simplification would still be needed. Below, I will provide a simplified sketch of what the project should look like.

Tasks in the project can be divided roughly into three levels: theoretical, institutional, and daily-life. In principle, it is the tasks at the theoretical level that constitute the core of the project, for we need theories to guide our practices. But in reality, theoretical work should also be informed by the experience we gain from actual practice at the institutional and daily-life levels. Therefore, work at these levels should have a dynamic relationship with each other. So, let us begin with theories. I believe the establishment of a theory of the kingly way should involve four major tasks. First, we have to prove the relevance of moral values to social order and institutions. Second, we have to develop a defensible version of meritocracy. Third, we have to re-assure the importance of certain basic forms of interpersonal relationships in moral life. Fourth, we have to enrich the moral language used in society. In the Confucian context, we may want to revive a series of terms in relationship to humanity and ritual propriety in public discourse.

When a theory of moral values and their relationship to social life is established, then it will be possible for us to implement these ideas into social institutions. There are just too many different ways by which we can blend moral and political concerns together, and I do not want to say too much about this, for there is rich discussion on the matter in this volume already. What I want to do is remark that I do not think we can decide a priori which model among those suggested by Jiang and others is the correct one. No institution can be proven correct until it passes the test of real social experiments. However, social experiments carry great dangers. A failed social experiment brings enormous harm to members of society. Therefore, my suggestion is that we begin with mild reform projects, proceeding to ones that are more radical, step-by-step and stop where experimental results tell us.

The third level is the daily-life level. Daily life is the ubiquitous transmitter of cultural ideas. Cultural ideas permeate into the invisible corners in our daily life and form rigid bodies of cultural sediments. These sediments are very useful for the revival of an endangered culture. For example, however hard the Chinese have tried to throw away their traditional values, the idea of filial piety remains a powerful moral concept among the contemporary Chinese population, educated and uneducated alike. Likewise, in spite of the predominance of individualism in our society, we all think that saving one's marriage is a meaningful social work. Therefore, through education and cultural policies, we can revive the relatively uncontroversial values in the Confucian tradition. (Other societies may want to revive their own traditions in the same way.) These will then serve as a path for us to gain an understanding of other related values that appear, though perfectly justifiable, less attractive at the present moment in a society heavily embedded with the idea of moral neutrality.

Notes

1. Zhou is the name of a dynasty (1122–256 B.C.), whose "culture of rituals and music" has been the root of the philosophical reflection of Confucius.
2. An alternative translation of "inward power" (de, 德) is "virtue."
3. One should be mindful, however, that Mencius has not carefully distinguished between true benevolence and populism here, although he has dealt with this problem somewhere else (see *Mencius*, 2.7).
4. My model of Confucian just-war theory is developed, with significant modification, out of a simpler model suggested by Lin Guizhen (林桂榛). For his model, please see Lin (2004).
5. We have to be careful that, while Confucians also frequently use the term "justice" (yi, 義), their justice cannot be understood independent of benevolence. In this way their understanding of justice is quite different from that of the modern West.
6. The word ritual comes from the word rites, which is one of the more widely acceptable, but not at all accurate, translations of the word *li* (禮) in Chinese. Other translations include propriety, ceremony, politeness, courtesy, manner, protocol, institution, etc.
7. Here, I do not presume that all Confucian scholars would come up with the same list, but I do assume the basic principle of such to be Confucian.

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