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To Yan Feng with Love

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INTRODUCTION

Confucianism is seen here essentially as a moral philosophy which represents a moral idealism as it provides good guidelines, but only the self-elected few are able to accomplish them. The aim of a Confucian society is to create a harmonious society which can only be achieved through the appropriate regulations, together with the commitment to virtue. However, it can be argued that the institutionalization of morality can lead toward the demoralization and degradation of individuals' moral characters as the aim of following institutionalized moral behavior is extrinsic rather than intrinsic to a person's moral character. Nevertheless, moral ethics and virtues are essential in the guidance of human relations as humans are inclined to pursue their own selfish interests often without consideration for the effects on others. Even if humans were as much concerned with the rights or well-being of others as with their own, ethics and moral conduct would not become redundant; but as Foot (1978) explains, virtues are essential for the correction of human nature, so that the acquisition of ren (仁) is described in Confucianism as a prerequisite for appropriate social interaction.

Kant (1964) makes the point that moral development of the child is moving from a stage of heteronomy to a stage of autonomy, so that children have to be initiated into moral education; however, the rationale of this cannot be appreciated by them at the beginning of their early stage

of education. Initially, rituals as well as the use of authority are essential to induce moral behavior, so that in China the education of children using Confucian texts below the age of 13 entails reading and the memorization of classical texts without having to understand the actual texts. Furthermore, not everyone is progressing through the different stages of moral education equally, so that Confucius classifies individuals according to their intelligence and prescribes education for individuals according to their perceived individual characteristics. However, for Confucius superiority comes from a person's virtue which has been cultivated through action and a person's character. According to Confucian thoughts, do not treat others the way that you do not want them to treat you. If people are not happy if others are imposing their will on them, then they should also allow others to make their own decisions. The Confucian concept of 'do not do to others what you yourself do not desire' is the "Golden Rule" (Gu, 2016; p. 800) which implies that humans should treat each other without discrimination as equals, and yet Confucius advocates a social hierarchical structure. However, mutual respect as advocated by Confucius could advance international relations which could enhance multilateral and mutual understanding.

The successful completion of the aims of a Confucian Society requires a comprehensive way of teaching Confucian morality; but a Confucian moral ethics is not the only applicable moral philosophy which could make a viable contribution in enhancing people's social and private morality. A greater contribution can be made if other important appropriate ethical concepts from other moral philosophies could be combined with a Confucian understanding of morality. The teaching of a

moral philosophy would only be comprehensive if it included the most important contributions to moral philosophy, rather than just stick to one particular version of morality.

However, the aim of Confucianism is not to bring hope which may or may not be fulfilled; instead, it can induce the public to become involved in the creation of their lives rather than waiting passively for their hopes to be fulfilled. Hope merely paralyses people's minds, which induces them to become inactive, while education may provide individuals with the opportunities to become pro-active. Ernst Bloch (1995) argues that hope is embedded within our deepest experiences which initiate reason and a sense of justice; however, a hope of change for the better will not eventuate unless individuals have a goal together with the required planning to accomplish their goals; without goals hopes remain unfulfilled. In fact, a rapidly changing society such as China, shows that individuals who are resistant to change will be left behind, when their degree of self-cultivation may be insufficient to enable them to take advantage of the social and economic changes within the country.

Much of the following philosophical discussion on Confucianism deals with the classical Confucian philosophies, such as those of Confucius (孔子) who lived from c. 551 - c. 479 BCE. The Analects (Lúnyǔ 论语) are the main source of Confucius's philosophy; however, the Analects which are a collection of comments attributed to Confucius and some of his disciples were written as a manual for the higher echelon within the Han dynasty. The Analects also includes much of earlier works of the literati learnings which eventually came to be known as Confucianism, which has gradually evolved as a social theory which is able to give some guidelines

towards educational policy. However, most Chinese who have experienced the Chinese higher education system have an inadequate understanding of Chinese tradition, despite the fact that the Chinese culture has been greatly affected by such tradition.

The main concepts discussed in the Lúnyǔ (论语) are benevolence and humaneness (ren 仁), filiality (xiao 孝), ritual propriety (li 礼), righteousness or the right or appropriate behavior in specific situations (yi 义) and the education of a potential morally exemplary person (junzi 君子). However, the major theme of the Lúnyǔ is not only moral self-cultivation, but also deals with the relationship between an individual's inner quality and external cultivation. Various other ancient Confucians are discussed at great length, including Xunzi (荀子) (c. 300 – c. 230 BCE) and Mengzi (孟子) (c. 371 - c. 289 BCE). Most of Confucian moral ethics have been derived from the Four Books of the pre-Qin period; that is, the Analects (Lunyu 论语), the Great Learning (Da Xue 大学), the doctrine of the Mean (Zhong yong 中庸) and Mencius. Other sources are the Five Classics: the Book of Changes, the Book of Odes, the Book of History, the Book of Rite, and the Spring and Autumn Annals (春秋).

Throughout the book Chinese and Western philosophies in regard to moral ethics have been compared; for example, ancient Greek and ancient Chinese philosophies can enrich each other as they often deal with similar concepts, but at times have different approaches; they both advocate skepticism, secularity, rationality, the golden mean as well as ethics. Both philosophies promote not only common themes, but they can also complement each other. The reason is to a large extent to be found in the fact that education in both ancient China and ancient Greece was directed

towards the selected few, so that education was able to concentrate on what was regarded as important from a pedagogical point of view, rather than teaching functional subjects and disciplines which help students to find jobs as required in the labor market, so that the formal studies of moral ethics have become largely regarded by many as irrelevant; even though the importance and relevance of moral ethics are certainly not less important nowadays than in the past.

Hence, the promotion of morality and self-cultivation is not a major concern in education at any level; as the aim is to fit students into the labor market, so that moral ethics is usually not given any high priority; although it is not suggested that education should not consider the labor market as part of the curricula; rather theoretical knowledge should consider its practical applications and implications as well; that is, education has to go beyond serving just the labor market if the aim of education is to facilitate personal cultivation.

This Book on Confucian Philosophy and Moral Development highlights the need for the introduction of moral education within society and it also explains the basic underlying concepts of Confucian moral ethics. However, any introduction will face various obstacles as education is mainly based on the underlying assumption of a structural-functional education system where students study to be able to fit within the labor market, rather than to improve themselves through self-transformation toward a higher moral ethics which requires the appropriate teaching method, so that a balance has to be found between 'educare' and 'educere' which depends on the specific situation.

The introduction of any subject matter into curricula requires the appropriate teaching method to be effective. Different educators have different views on education; some relate education to 'educare', which refers to bringing up, implying to train or to mold; while others relate it to 'educere' which denotes to lead out which is opposed to any dogmatic teaching which amounts to mere inculcation. Both terms are reflected in the word of education, but 'educare' is essentially 'teacher-centred' education, while 'educere' is 'child-centred'. Most education relates to educare as it relates to the preservation of culture. However, education systems have to seek the right balance between the two types of education, but both are essential and they are both applicable to the education as practised in China.

The Romans changed the method of education from *educere* as practiced by Socrates to *educare*. In the case of *educare*, the authority determines the curricula and thus decides what is to be taught. Hence, the political nature of education has been apparent since antiquity from the ancient Greek and ancient Chinese philosophy to the present. Plato (1955) argues that philosopher-kings are to decide what is to be taught, and their main criteria were what type of education was considered to be good for the proper functioning of the State, so that educational philosophy was guided mostly by political considerations, rather than the interests of the students. On the other hand, Mill (1962) objected to any state intervention in education as "a general State education is a mere contrivance for molding people to be exactly like one another" (p. 239). Nevertheless, Socrates, Plato and Confucians argue that virtue is knowledge.

It can be argued that within the structural-functional education prevailing nowadays, individuals may engage in education to further their own interests within the job market, rather than trying to improve themselves morally. Education is seen as a means to obtain a job, so that the value of education for most students as well as for their parents is extrinsic rather than intrinsic; hence the general perception is that moral education does not help students to enter the job market, so that moral education would have to be part of a compulsory curriculum to be effective.

Structural-functional education reaffirms the status quo within a society. The underlying assumption is that "consistency and harmony preserve the structure and the smooth functioning of social systems whereas change and conflict lead to dysfunction" (Schmidtke and Chen, 2012; p. 433). Confucian ideology can also be used as a means to legitimize the social hierarchical structure of the division of labour. The Confucian type of education system uses quasi-markets for purposes of financing the education of students while keeping state control largely intact. The Chinese educational system is embedded within a hierarchical structure and the "Confucian social harmony is based on the universal acceptance of this hierarchy, moderated by the glimmer of hope that exceptional diligence at school will earn an honorable place on the upper rungs of the social ladder" (Marginson, 2011; p. 600).

Confucian education could, however, involve the teaching of various skills to enhance personal creativity and the ability to be self-critical. The aim of teaching is to enhance the ability of students to increase their capacity for reasoning and problem solving; however, the aim is not just to increase the amount of knowledge, but instead to change the way of thinking and

increase the problem solving skills; that is, students have to use reasoning and critical thinking to bring alive the knowledge taught, so that it can be applied to specific situations. In other words, knowledge has to be constructed rather than just being regurgitated. Of course, this does not make the teaching easier, as it is easier just to teach students by telling them what to think, and neither are there too many students who want to go beyond merely regurgitating the material that is being presented to them. The regurgitating process has been described by Freire (1974) as the "banking concept", that is, students passively accept and then regurgitate the knowledge presented to them through education, which is assumed to be the case of the vast majority of students.

Students have to be taught to apply the knowledge that has been taught to them; however, not much effort is being made in many courses to teach the application of such knowledge. The traditional Chinese teaching method consisted, and still does so to a large extent, of rote learning to enhance exam results which were used to assess potential high-ranking officials for appointment (Altbach, 2009). Chinese students are largely used to passive learning, so that rote learning and lectures are largely the dominant form of teaching; hence students are expected to regurgitate what has been taught without any questions being asked, so that it may impede the ability of critical thinking. Within the Chinese tradition, education mainly emphasizes practical knowledge, because education has to be able to be applied to be effectively implemented; it also includes self-cultivation through the acquisition of ethics and morality. However, the one-for-all pedagogy is inapplicable as students have different abilities to effectively absorb of what is taught; furthermore, students may be able

to acquire and learn concepts and ideas, but they may not internalize such ideas. Moral behavior must not only be learned but has to be internalized to promote moral behavior.

Different types of education could be provided to students according to their abilities and inclinations; however, the underlying assumption is that for the vast population it is sufficient to teach them to become industrious, docile, and compliant, without any incentives given to students to develop their own thoughts; instead, the aim is to a large extent to keep them self-contented, mainly by giving them cheap entertainment which prevents them from developing their own thoughts. On the other hand, those with high abilities, taught in separate streams are encouraged to use their abilities in an initiative way. Confucius is aware of the differences in students' abilities and characteristics, and argues that education, including vocational eduation has to take such differences into account. However, Confucian philosophy strongly emphasizes self-formation through education, but if education is to be prescribed merely according to individuals' characteristics, then self-formation and self-transformation may be even more stifled for those with lesser abilities, while it enhances it for others with higher abilities.

In contrast to Confucianism, Mo Tzu (墨子) who lived from about 476 to about 390 BCE emphasized technical education for peasants and artisans; he also argued that such education has to include an understanding of the sciences. However, vocational education was disregarded in Confucian ideology; as it was more concerned with the cultivation of the elite, which was regarded as the ideal, while technical and utilitarian training was not thought to be part of it; although Mo Tzu's concept and application of

technical education would have been more appropriate for the vast majority of the population; his ideas on technical education are also highly relevant in the present age, but Mo Tzu's philosophy of education declined in its importance during the Han Dynasty (206 BCE – 220 CE) when Confucianism became dominant. There is of course no reason why technical and utilitarian education for the vast majority could not be combined with the moral teaching of Confucianism.

Presently, the Chinese education system and its practice are in transformation. The intention is to transform students, whereby they become exposed to multiple teaching methods which include a greater attempt towards child-centred teaching and an attempt to move away at least partially from rote memorization at the higher level of secondary education. Confucianism is also being re-introduced into Chinese education in an attempt to enhance moral citizenship and to strengthen national identity and social harmony. Mengzi also advocates an increase in public quality which can be accomplished if an increase in virtue throughout the community has become wide-spread through the teachings in educational institutions.

In Confucianism there are several aims which have to be pursued in education, the most important ones are the extension of knowledge by deepening and widening it (zhī zhī 知知) and self-cultivation (xiushen 修身) to become a virtuous person. The acquisition of morality is an important stage in the learning process about society and forming a personal moral integrity which enables individuals to enter society in a mutually beneficial way. Important is the teaching and the acquisition of a moral ethos of care not only towards nature but towards each other. Hence,

"a caring symbiosis in this aspect of education may entail developing the following habits: reciprocity in relationships, an attention to unspecialized knowledge, encouraging sacrificial support of one peer, an attention to space and place and valuing authentic human experience without consideration of market return" (Jones, A. H. 2021, p. 17). Confucian virtue politics, especially those of Mengzi and Xunzi, regards moral education as vital for human-beings.

Much of Confucianism intends to promote virtue but much of it is also rather idealistic unless the education system will introduce such studies of morality and even then, the graduates of such courses will have to encounter others within the community who never have given a thought about morality; after all, moral interactions with others do not occur in social isolation but have to be reciprocal to succeed. Without education, humans are left to satisfy their biological needs and personal self-gratification; however, the purpose of education, especially moral education, is to enable individuals to go beyond the fulfillments of such basic needs. The individualistic "care of the self" as described by Foucault (1990) explains well people's thrust towards short-term gratification. Education is a long process so that it requires perseverance.

However, when Fraser (2006) argues that through such an educational process, the will and character are modified until one "feels completely aligned and connected with the world" (p. 532), it portrays an ideal conception of education. It may be suggested that most people do not acquire the education as required by Confucians for the purpose of self-cultivation, so that such higher education may disconnect them from

the vast majority of the public; hence the greater people's desires to meet their short-term gratifications, the less there is likely to be self-cultivation.

Confucius makes the point in the Analects (Confucius, 2017, XIV, 25) that "man in old times educated themselves for their own sake, men now educate themselves to impress others"; that is, in previous times men learned to transform themselves and to improve themselves, whereas now they learn to control others; of course, Confucius is referring to the elite, rather than to the wider public, who remained largely illiterate. However, it is not argued here that individuals with more education would always follow a more ethical guideline in their moral behavior, but the introduction of moral education would be a path forward to a more moral society, so that education at all levels could place greater emphasis on moral development of students which can then be further intensified through the use of the appropriate case studies.

Dewey advocates the teaching of moral knowledge through the standard curricula in education together with academic knowledge; he proposes that the teaching of academic subjects are combined with the teachings of the moral aspects at all levels and "regards all academic subjects as constellations of more than fact and information, but as dynamic modes of knowing and of inquiring into our experience of life and the world" (Hansen, 2007, p. 174); so that "a sense of moral principle and purpose ought to emerge from, and concurrently with, the study of academic knowledge" (Hansen, 2007, p. 175). However, subject matter and its moral aspects are generally kept unduly separate in education and consequently are taught separately, or moral ethics may be disregarded and so is taught to keep values and hence ethical considerations without any knowledge of

perceived facts; so that in many educational systems knowledge is emphasized with little consideration on its application or moral implications, while intelligence is emphasized more than moral ethics.

Hence, "many students leave school mystified by the operations of society" (Hansen, 2007, p. 177). Dewey argues that education is a catalyst for individual and social growth, so that the teaching of morality together with technical knowledge may enhance social consciousness; however, the social consequences of insufficient teaching of the requirements of moral behavior are not adequately if at all considered; as subject matters are usually disconnected from each other when taught, the required knowledge of the interactions between them in real life situations is often not available. Furthermore, Dewey (1969b) makes the point that people's innovative abilities in technical endeavors are more respected than virtue; so that individuals' technical know-hows are more likely to assist them in obtaining employment, rather than their moral aptitude.

The question then is what is the real purpose of education? There are basically three separate purposes in education. First, students study to enhance their employability within the job market. Second, the aim is to teach students not only knowledge and its application, but to enhance their ability of critical thinking. Third, the aim is to teach moral ethics and their applications in everyday life situations; so that students may enhance their self-transformation through self-cultivation. The book primarily deals with the last topic. Confucianism can also have wide-ranging implications when applied, as Confucianism can be conceptualized not only as a philosophy of education (Li, J, 2002, Sun, Q, 2008) but also as a system of political

thoughts (Bell, D. A. 2008); hence a second book on Confucianism will discuss Confucian policies and their relationships with democracy.

There are eight chapters in this present book on Confucian moral philosophy and moral development; each chapter relates to different themes of Confucian moral ethics; multiple topics are discussed ranging from an analysis of the various moral ethical concepts of Confucian philosophy: (i) the Development of Confucianism and its Praxis; (ii) the Ways toward Harmony (hexie 和谐); (iii) Following the Dao (道) under the Heaven (tian xia 天下); (iv) The Progression from Filial Piety (xiao 孝) to Graded Love; (v) Human Nature and Moral Development; (vi) Confucian Philosophy and the Creation of Moral Authority; (vii) Moral Transformation and Moral Conduct; and (viii) the Education of Confucian Moral Philosophy and Self-Transformation.

This book is followed by another book of mine on Confucian political philosophy and the relationship to democracy, which will analyse (i) The Present Confucian Renaissance within a Mixed-Market Economy; (ii) A Communitarian Democracy and the Well-Being of the People; (iii) Confucian and Governments by, of and for the People; (iv) The Competing Individuals and Social Interests and the Confucian Way; (v) Confucian Moral Ethics and Environmental Changes; (vi) A Civil Communitarian Culture as a Confucian Democracy; (vii) A Comparison between Confucianism, Liberalism and Democracy; (viii) Confucianism and Public Reason; (ix) The Relationship between Confucianism and Meritocracy; (x) Confucian Constitutionalism and Democracy; (xi) Moral Ethics within a Multipolar World Order.

In the present book a comparative perspective where appropriate will be taken to highlight the differences and similarities between the Confucian and Western philosophical approaches which are dealing with moral ethics and its application within a modern world, as well as the contribution that Confucianism can make to current virtue ethics. The most important Confucian philosophers from Confucius through to Neo-Confucianism to the present are discussed. However, relevant comparable philosophies on moral ethics and their applications are used to enhance the understanding of Confucianism and its applicability to democracies. Confucianism is in this book neither understood as inevitably supporting authoritarianism, neither is it regarded here as a solution to correct Western social problems. Instead, it is argued here that by comparing Confucianism to the major Western philosophies, they both can enrich each other to enhance individuals' understanding of moral ethics.

Throughout this book Confucian philosophies are compared and contrasted with Western philosophies; for example, Aristotelian virtue and Confucian moral ethics provide an essential alternative to liberal individualism. Other Western philosophers, such as Kant, Rousseau, Hobbes, Mill, Foucault, Habermas, and Hume, among others, who are also concerned with moral philosophy and moral education, are discussed as well; however, my main focus here is on the possible contribution that Confucianism can make to moral education. Confucianism together with various other philosophies of moral ethics can provide a moral compass for social interactions. However, Confucian and Western philosophies mostly have different interpretation of a well-functioning democracy; for example, Confucian philosophy regards individuals as role-bearers rather

than as right-bearers. This book covers a wide range of topics from the historical development of Confucianism and its praxis through to the major philosophical themes to the implementation of moral education to enhance self-cultivation.

CHAPTER 1

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONFUCIANISM AND ITS PRAXIS

1.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with a description of the historical development of Confucianism in China before discussing the actual educational policies and praxis of Confucianism and moral education to provide a proper historical context for the following analysis of Confucian moral philosophy and moral development. The relationship between the three teachings in China of Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism will be outlined. However, as Confucianism has the longest uninterrupted history of any philosophical tradition it is not surprising that various interpretations and reinterpretations have evolved. After all, Confucian moral values developed over a period of over 2400 years, so that by using the collective term of Confucianism it effectively denies the different developments within different Confucian philosophies. Furthermore, there are agreements and disagreements within Confucian moral philosophies, so that the knowledge of at least the most important Confucian moral philosophies has to be included. Nevertheless, there are significant moral core values which unite Confucian philosophy. The historical development of Confucianism in China and the present praxis of Confucianism in China show how Confucian philosophy has progressed from its historical roots toward the renaissance of Confucianism. The changes to government

policies since 1978 together with Confucian praxis have also been outlined.

1.2 The Historical Development of Confucianism in China

China has a civilized history of over 5000 years which has been largely affected by the three separate teachings (san jiao 三 教) in China. The three teachings in China are Confucianism (rújiào 儒教), Daoism (dàojiào 道教) and Buddhism (fójiào 佛教) of which Confucianism is the dominant one. Daoism and Buddhism were only created in China during the Han Dynasty between 206 BCE and 220 CE; although Daojia (道家) was part of the earlier cultural tradition. Classical Chinese Confucian philosophies have been derived from the sixth century BCE to the end of the third century BCE and from the Han dynasty. Even Chinese written characters are a reflection of ancient Chinese philosophy as represented in Daoism, Confucianism and Buddhism, so that Chinese characters carry on inherited Chinese cultural tradition into contemporary Chinese society. The writing was simplified to make it easier for Chinese to learn but this was done at the cost of losing a lot of cultural knowledge.

Chinese philosophy developed from the ancient roots of the Changes of Zhou or the Zhouyi (周易) through the classical Confucian tradition (rujia 儒家) to the Daoist or daojia (道家) to Neo-Confucian or xin-rujia (新儒家) and onward to modern Confucian or xiang daixin rujia (相待新儒家). The main concern of Confucian philosophy is how people interact within a community, and how to lead a virtuous life and to take care of others. Confucian philosophy emphasizes people's own effort and ability in their self-cultivation primarily by living a virtuous life. Many of such

philosophical concepts were already part of Chinese culture during the Western Zhou dynasty which lasted from 1045 to 221 BCE, whereas Confucius lived from 551 to 479 BCE.

Daoism on the other hand has a more individualistic approach of people's behavior and seeks a balance between oneself and nature, and self and others; whereas in Buddhism the aim is to gain liberation from an existence of life which is basically self-centered. Daoism has been largely absorbed into Confucianism, so that it is also part of the Chinese philosophical tradition. Buddhism was introduced into China during the Han Dynasty and some well-known concepts in Confucianism were introduced from Buddhism, such as the concept of li (理) (principle). Neo-Confucians searched for a meta-physical basis for an ethics during the Song dynasty between 960 and 1279 CE. Two separate schools were developed for the study of the metaphysics of li (理), that is, li xue (理学) and the metaphysics of the mind (xin xue 心学). A paradigmatic shift occurred between Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism as a consequence of their understanding of human innate nature (xing 性) which is not only an ethical but also a metaphysical concept.

Confucianism began during China's classical era between 770 and 221 BCE and experienced its first renaissance during the Song Dynasty between 960 and 1279 CE when China's economy prospered for about 325 years. The invention of the first printing press contributed to the first renaissance of the Confucian texts during that time. Consequently, examinations were introduced for candidates who aimed to enter high political office as it became easier to distribute the required texts, and education became more widespread for the elite. Confucians envisage a

moral government, believe in a moral order, and the monarch was expected to promote benevolence and well-being for the people. Confucianism as interpreted at present largely relies on Confucianism as it has been interpreted during the Song period. Confucians together with their followers during the Song period mainly believed that humans are born good, but have been corrupted by the evil of the world and Confucian morals were meant to purify their loyalty.

The beginning of Chinese education can be traced back to the Zhou dynasty which lasted from 1045 to 221 BCE; Confucian teaching emphasized ethics and morality which "was successfully incorporated into state governance through a merit-based imperial examination system that facilitated the selection of the nation's finest to serve in the state bureaucracy" (Lu and Jover, 2019; p. 429); however, it was the privilege of the elite to supply government officials. The teachings dealt with matters of pragmatic, moral and political issues; consequently, society during the times of Imperial China became dominated by a secular elite which had been selected through merit-based imperial examinations, so that education was pursued for the purpose of passing examinations by those who intended to find employment in high offices.

The kejuzhi (科举制) was the imperial system of education which was based on the ancient civil service examination system which was abolished in 1905, but eventually shifted towards the gaodeng yuanxiao ruxue kaoshi 高等院校入学考试 (known as the gaokao 高考) examination which nowadays controls the entrance to tertiary education. The Chinese system of civil service examination promoted an elite based on meritocracy which is also reflected in higher education entrance examination. Before students