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Symposium

*The Future of Inquiry into Human Beings
In Search for Contact Points between Primatology,
Anthropology, and Philosophy of Education*

Thematic Research

Learning to Be Human in East Asia

Philosophy of Education Society of Japan

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Quest for the Origin of Incest Taboo

Juichi YAMAGIWA

Kyoto University

1. Introduction

The method of discussing the norms of human society through comparison with animals has been forbidden for a long time in the world of Western science. It originates from Darwinian Theory of evolution.

Charles Darwin, who proposed the concept of 'Origin of Species' in 1859 and advocated the concept that different species evolved from common ancestors in the past, avoided mentioning the evolution of mankind. In the "Descent of man" written in 1871, he explained that continuity between animals and humans can be found not only to morphological features but also to intellectual ability and moral character. And since the gorillas and chimpanzees that are most morphologically similar to humans live only in the African continent, we foretold that fossils of the oldest human ancestors can be found there. However, the majority of anthropologists at that time believed that humans had evolved in Europe and Asia, and they had continued to discover old human fossils in Europe (ex. *Homo neanderthalensis*) and Asia (ex. *Homo erectus* in Java and Beijing). Such belief led to a large misunderstandings of human evolution. In 1909, old human fossil was discovered in Britain and anthropologists named it Piltdown man. However it was a false fossil that skillfully shaped the mandible of the orangutans with those of modern humans. For 40 years until 1949, people believed that human evolved in Britain by the false evidence. In 1964, the discovery of *Homo habilis* in the Olduvai Gorge, Tanzania finally proved the Darwin's forecast.

On the other hand, the study of human society using evolutionary theory blossomed in "Ancient Society" of Lewis Morgan in 1977. He noted that marriage forms around the world are reflected in differences in relatives' names, trying to locate the form of marriage and relatives of prehistoric times by following the change in relatives' names. Based on the results, Morgan described the evolutionary pathway from the era of primordial

marriage in which sexual intercourse was prohibited between parents and brothers and sisters, by the appearance of the insect taboo, collective marriage, Punarua marriage which shares each other's spouse with same- Daughter marriage tolerate sexual intercourse outside marriage, depicted a pathway evolved into the current single marriage. However, this theory was criticized as a wrong method of dividing the modern family form into advanced one and late one, and arranging it temporally along the axis of evolution. In addition, because the greater risks of the idea leading to racial discrimination and colonial rule, and leading to Eugenic thought appeared using evolution theory were pointed out, the opinion that it is dangerous to apply evolutionary theory easily to human society spread rapidly. In the first half of the 20th century, rather than exploring the evolution of human society, the focus was on finding universal features in human society, evolutionary theory was applied only to nonhuman animals. There was a trend that society and culture should not be talked about in terms of evolution.

Anthropologists argued that families are common and most basic societal features of humans, while avoiding mentioning its origin. However, as a condition for the family to be established, any scholar raised the presence of the insect taboo., Claude Lévi-Strauss who wrote "The Elementary Structures of Kinship" in 1949, asserted that exchange or reciprocity is a fundamental principle behind the human society, and suggested that incest taboo may lead to the lack of women to marry within relatives and facilitate marriage by exchange of women between them.

In the course of these Western academic societies, suddenly, scientific disciplines to apply evolutionary theory to human society and to discuss the evolution of society appeared. It was Japan that was a frontier in the academic world led by Europe and the United States, and it was academic called animal sociology. The fact that monkeys not inhabited in Europe and the United States lived in various places of Japan worked advantageously, and primatology to learn the continuity between human and animal society was fostered. Among them, the family and the incest taboo were regarded as an important theme from the beginning.

2. Evolution of human family and incest taboo

Kinji Imanishi, the founder of Japanese primatology, declared that society can be recognized for all creatures in his book "The World of Living Things" in the midst of World War II in 1941. He hypothesized that all living things constitute a "species society" unique to each species, by living in a society without prejudice to language and consciousness, and by having a proto identity that reacts with the same species

individually. And by interacting with other species in the place where the species lives, we can assume a "holistic society" consisting of several species, he insisted. This is the hypothesis before James Watson and Francis Crick found out the replication mechanism of the DNA, which is the universal structure of genes in all living things. Since then all organisms have been programmed by DNA, making it of common origin was recognized as a universal fact. Imanishi stated the idea that all the creatures should have differentiated from a common ancestor and could react each other to shape a society or community. Imanishi dissertation was the theme of the "habitat segregation" phenomenon of aquatic insects named Hirata mayfly (*Schistonota*), but during the Second World War he had a strong interest in mammalian society through the observation of Przewalski's Wild Horse (*Equus ferus przewalskii*) in Inner Mongolia. He started the study on animal society with his students after the war. Their challenge was to confirm the existence of society and culture in non-human animals.

Imonishi, Junichiro Itani, and Shunzo Kawamura, who met Japanese monkeys at Toi Peninsula in Miyazaki prefecture in 1948, had a strong impression in their stunning movements as a group, and they decided to study on a society of monkeys. By obtaining phylogenetically close subjects to humans as monkeys, the center of research was directed towards the evolution of society, leading to human beings. In 1951, Imanishi wrote "Society before Human Beings", in which, through an overview of the society of insects and birds, he emphasized the necessity of logic to unite two conflicting social organizations such as pair bonds between sexes and a larger group consisting of both sexes, in order to consider the evolutionary pathway from an animal society to a human society. For the first time there emerged human families as a universal unit in a human society for the main theme of Japanese primatology.

Primate researchers who succeeded in provisioning Japanese monkeys at Koshima in Miyazaki prefecture and Takasakiyama in Oita prefecture to observe Japanese monkeys at close proximity, soon found that the social structure of Japanese monkeys were characterized by linear dominance ranks, leaderships, alliance formation within kin groups, and the pre-cultural ability to propagate newly acquired behavior such as washing potatoes with water and collected wheat grains by dropping them with sand into sea water. However, Japanese monkeys were phylogenetically too far away from humans. Imanishi and others started investigating great apes trying to find clues to social evolution leading to human beings. They conducted three surveys of gorillas in Africa held in 1958-60. Its main purpose was to find the original type of the human family in the gorilla society.

Unfortunately, gorillas were not provisioned like Japanese monkeys, and in 1960 the gorilla survey was forced to be interrupted due to outbreaks of independent wars

everywhere in the habitat of gorillas. Based on the results of these insufficient surveys, Imanishi published a paper entitled "the Origin of Human Families - from the standpoint of primatology" on *Ethnology Studies* (Imanishi, 1961). The gorilla society was depicted as a "pre-family" in which male enters from outside to gain a young daughter as a spouse, becoming an interceding son and becoming independent. He proposed four conditions for the establishment of a human family, 1) the marriage system, 2) incest taboo, 3) division of labor between sexes, 4) close neighboring relationship, among which he considered that the three conditions excluding the division of labor have been sproutly established in the ape society. Actually, before the survey of gorillas, Kisaburo Tokuda and Itani reported that mothers and their sons tend to avoid copulation in macaque groups including Japanese monkeys even in estrus (Tokuda & Itani, 1953). Imanishi thought that nonhuman primates had already a tendency to avoid sexual intercourse among close relatives, although this tendency was not established by institution like humans. Masao Kawai and Hiroki Mizuhara also reported from their survey on mountain gorillas in the Virunga Volcanoes that gorillas groups extensively overlapped their range with neighboring groups without territoriality (Kawai & Mizuhara, 1959). Imanishi therefore imagined that "pre-family" of gorillas organize a neighborhood community like human society, with keeping close relationships among families having non-territoriality.

This hypothesis became invalid later, because male gorillas unlikely join groups after emigration from their natal groups (Harcourt et al., 1976). Avoiding wars, Japanese primatologists led by Imanishi started to study chimpanzees in Tanzania, succeeded in provisioning chimpanzees in Mahale Mountains and established a long-term research site at the eastern shore of Lake Tanganyika. Junichiro Itani, who took charge in the surveys of chimpanzees and hunter gatherers, focused on the similarity of the community called Pygmy's band and the group of chimpanzees. He proposed "Preband Theory", that the establishment of a community preceded the establishment of a family in the evolution of mankind (Itani, 1966). He also pointed out that the group-living primate societies have two contrasted extremes of male transfer or female transfer from their natal groups to other groups, and hypothesized the evolutionary pathway of primate societies from elemental society of nocturnal monkeys with solitary nature and territoriality, monogamous pairs with territoriality, polygynous or polyandrous groups with partly overlapping home ranges, multi-male and multi-female groups, and finally to differentiate into matrilineal (female-bonded) or patrilineal (female-transfer) societies (Itani, 1972). In his theory, incest avoidance constitutes the major role in the evolution of primate social structures.

3. Incest avoidance in primates

Avoidance of incest is attained by two different features of non-human primates. One is a propensity to leave natal groups by one sex, to transfer into other groups without close relatives, and to breed there. This prevents them to copulate with close relatives in the groups into which they transfer. Moreover, they do not stay in the new groups for a prolonged period and leave them before their offspring mature, so that the transferred individuals may not have the opportunity to copulate with their offspring consequently. Only males tend to transfer in *Cercopithecus* monkeys including Japanese monkeys, while only females transfer in the African great apes (chimpanzees and gorillas). The former is regarded as matrilineal society and the latter as patrilineal society in primatology. The latest ancestral society of humans may have the patrilineal features as the African great apes (Foley & Gamble, 2009; Yamagiwa, 2015).

The other is a behavioral features of primates to avoid copulation with close relatives, even if they coexist with kin related individuals after maturity. In Japanese monkeys, after provisioning, or in isolated conditions without any group nearby to transfer, there observed mature males that had never left their natal groups. Yukio Takahata (1982) investigated Japanese monkeys at Arashiyama Monkey Park in Kyoto and found out that mating is avoided within the fourth degree of kinship relations. Since Japanese monkeys live in a matrilineal society, the degree of kinship relations is based on maternal relations. The first degree is mother-son, the second is brother-sister and grandmother-grandson, the third is aunt-nephew, and the fourth is cousins. Female Japanese monkeys usually form alliance among kin in conflicts, and they have affiliative relationships within the fourth degree of kin relations from birth. Such affiliation relationships may prevent them from sexual interactions. Moreover, Takahata found that a male-female pair formed through sexual interactions during the mating season gradually developed the tendency to avoid copulation in the next mating season. Japanese monkeys have the mating season from autumn to winter in which they form a peculiar proximate relationships through copulation. This relationships with the dominant male enables the subordinate females to access the artificial foods at the provisioning site, and the followership between them continues in the next non-mating and mating seasons. But it consequently leads them to avoidance of copulation irrespective kin relatedness. Based on these observations, Takahata concluded that affiliative relationships may generally prevent Japanese monkeys from copulative interactions.

Mating avoidance with conspecific kin has been observed in other primate species (e.g., red colobus: Starin, 2001; baboons: Alberts & Altmann, 1995; langurs: Sterck et al., 2005), but found that they do not recognize their kin-related conspecifics inherently

(Pusey, 1990). Based on DNA analysis extracting from blood samples in confined troops of Japanese monkeys and Barbary macaques, they did not avoid copulation with paternal relatives (Inoue et al, 1990; Kuester et al, 1994). Not biological relations, but intimate relationships after birth may cause incest avoidance in primates.

Copulation in mother-son pairs is also rare in the great apes (Pusey, 1980; Harcourt & Stewart, 2007; Kano, 1992). In gorillas, copulation tends to be avoided in father-daughter pairs (Stewart & Harcourt, 1987). It is not necessary for these males to be biologically related to daughters; an affiliative relationship between a male and young female may be sufficient for the avoidance of copulation. Alexander (1970) reported that copulation was avoided in a male-female pair in which the male took care of the female during her childhood. Kuester et al. (1994) monitored pairs of Barbary macaques and found that mating avoidance may occur when more than 3% of daytime is allocated to intimate caretaking lasting 6 months, irrespective of biological paternity. This implies that incest avoidance is fostered by intimate social relationships at immaturity, even in nonhuman primates. Human families are not totally based on biological kin relations, but are constructed based on cognitive relationships through caretaking after birth.

4. From incest avoidance to Incest taboo

In fact, it has been known for a long time that intimate contact in early childhood also leads to repelling sexual intercourse in humans. Edward Westermarck (1891) pointed out that men and women in an intimate relationship since childhood have a tendency to avoid sexual intercourse, in "The History of Human Marriage". However, this theory was criticized by Sigmund Freud (1910), who created psychoanalysis in the same era, as it is not necessary to ban as a taboo if suppression of close relatives sexual intercourse is natural procurement. For Freud, the earliest sexual excitations of youthful human beings are invariably of an incestuous character due to the inherent nature of the foundation of the "Oedipus complex". Even then this theory was criticized and ignored by sociologists and anthropologists.

However, in the latter half of the 20th century, as the researches on the community of Kibbutz in Israel progressed, some reports came to support Westermarck's hypothesis. Kibbutz is an organization that separates children from their families and raises them in a community, but it became clear that men and women, who grew up in the same Kibbutz, did not get married as expected and that they tended to marry other Kibbutz origin (Shepher, 1971). In addition, Arthur Wolf (1970), who investigated household registration records from Taiwan, found that intimate childhood association promotes

sexual aversion. Women who are forced to marry a childhood associate bear fewer children than those who marry a stranger. They are also more likely to divorce or avoid their husbands in favor of other men. Based on this case, Wolf (1995) concludes that human beings, like other primates, have intimate relationships during early childhood avoiding sexual intercourse. As a result of these reports in succession, the theory of Westermarck revived and is now called "Westermarck effect".

Why the Westermarck effect on primates had to be normalized to taboo in humans. It should have been caused by growing population size with forming a community including several families. In nonhuman primates, the mean group size is positively correlated with the ratio of the neocortex size to other parts of the brain. This is called the "social brain hypothesis," which proposes that social complexity is the driving force for increases in brain size (Dunbar, 1996). Considering that the human brain has also evolved as such a "social brain", since the brain has started to grow two million years ago, the brain capacity increases about three times, the brain of modern human fits 150 people for the suitable group size. This agrees with the average size of bands in contemporary hunter gatherers. In other words, human beings have rapidly increased the population since farming and livestock began 12,000 years ago, but they had lived for as long as 150 population groups at the most for many years during the life of hunting and gathering.

The number of 150 people is a community including 10 to 20 families. The society with this multi-level structure has never been recognized even by the great apes. That is because the principles of families and communities have conflicts sometimes. Within families kin-related people do not demand return, while in communities members usually have duties according to roles for cooperation. Due to these conflicts, gorillas form a small family group, and chimpanzees form a large community without segregation of family groups. An exceptional example is Hamadryas baboons living in grasslands within a multi-level society, in which small polygynous groups aggregate to form a large band or troop and females transfer within bands. The lack of competitive food resources in grasslands may prevent females from forming kin-based coalitions, and the high predation pressure may lead to frequent association and alliance formation among males of different polygynous groups (Barton et al., 1996). Adding to these ecological factors, sexual coercion including infanticide may have promoted cooperation among kin-related leader males of different groups and facilitated modular society (Grueter et al., 2012). When early hominids extended their range into open land, they may have faced the same problems as papionins in promoting a multi-level social system (Yamagiwa, 2015).

The first possible human family in the Homo clade is assumed to be a community in which several monogamous and polygynous groups associate loosely. Females

transferred between groups within or between communities, and males dispersed from their natal groups but remained in a community to cooperate with kin-related males. A community with substructures of various compositions had a tendency of fission-fusion for different daily tasks (Aureli et al., 2008). Increased animal foods in their diet facilitated encephalization, and early weaning and subsequent delayed maturation promoted cooperative breeding and division of labor for provisioning their offspring. These changes in life history and feeding technology led to a multi-level community structure in which several families cooperated with each other in diverse tasks of subsistence (Yamagiwa, 2018). This formation might have been resilient against severe conditions in arid areas and enabled *Homo erectus* to expand their distribution out of Africa.

However, in order to maintain a breeding group called families and to organize the communities they gathered, it is necessary to weaken the repulsion among small family groups like gorillas, or to establish regulations on promiscuous sexual interactions such as chimpanzees. When families and communities become unit of marriage, accepting bride or son-in from outside, opportunities for unrelated men and women to live together may increase. It is necessary to set norms on sexual interactions to keep autonomy of the family as a breeding group. If a wife wishes to have sexual relations with her husband's father or brothers, or a husband does in the same way, the couple will not be able to form a sustainable bond.

Our ancestors should have used the tendency of incest avoidance called "Westermarck effect" inherited from nonhuman primates for making these norms. Kin-related members tend to avoid sexual intercourse due to affinity relations formed in early childhood. Both parents-in-law and in-law daughter or son were also regarded in such relationships, during which they created a norm to prohibit sexual intercourse in the extended family through marriage. The norm that intimate relationships among kin do not lead to sexual relationships opened the way for couples to coexist with other family members without having sexual trouble. Without these norms, our ancestors could not create a community including multiple families.

However, as the community expands in size and the movement of people between community increases, independence of families as breeding groups is hardly maintained only by prohibition of incest. Therefore, it seems likely that cultures and customs developed to hide sexual intercourse from the public place and to restrict sexual expression to private places. Nevertheless, people suffer from sexual troubles including violence in modern society. Human society is not yet able to control the sexual interactions, in which sociality and creativity unique to humans may be embedded.

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Summary Report on the Symposium

Nobuo FUJIKAWA
Osaka University

Satoshi TANAKA
The University of Tokyo

1. Summary of the Symposium “The Future of Inquiry into Human Beings” and Report Outlines

Reports on the symposium’s topic were submitted from three different research fields: primatology, anthropology and philosophy of education. Speakers included professor Juichi Yamagiwa, president of Kyoto University, who has conducted his research on gorillas in the field of primatology, professor Naoki Kasuga of Hitotsubashi University, who has led the “ontological turn” of anthropology and its further development in Japan, and professor Satoji Yano of Kyoto University from the field of philosophy of education (titles omitted below).

Yamagiwa calls for a reinvestigation of the incest taboo, which has been thought to be peculiar to human beings and which has shaped the characteristics of human society. He suggests this via focusing on the relation between physical characteristics and social structure to seek out the reason for incest avoidance observed in primate society.

Kasuga’s critical consideration of the *Ida* ritual of the *Umeda* people in Papua New Guinea as analyzed by anthropologist Alfred Gell, presents the possibility of an “asymmetric and bidirectional analogy” between the two fields of everyday life and ritual. Thereby, he also presents a possibility to transform today’s anthropology since the advocacy of the “ontological turn” into what can be called “ontology” in the original sense beyond an anthropology that “follows the natural sciences blindly” (for example anthropology of Alfred Gell or Victor Turner).

Employing a critical anthropological perspective, which launches a re-inquiry into

what makes human beings human, Yano traces back the intersection point between primatology and anthropology to Jean-Jaques Rousseau, and points out the importance of “self-consciously staying on the borderline of the binary opposition” of human beings/animals, culture/nature, and adult/child. Here, the task of education is the transmission of the proper art of “how to close or open” this borderline.

2. Outline of Discussion

The discussion following these presentations included a Q&A session first between presenters and then between presenters and the floor.

The first question by Kasuga was directed at Yamagiwa: How can primatology explain the “neither distant nor near” relationship with exchange partners in exchange and marriage relations within “primary” human society? Yamagiwa’s answer: Unlike other Primates, the relationship with one’s descent group is maintained even after marriage in the case of human families and communities, and this functions as bond between different groups. At the same time, “cross cousin marriage” is located on the boundary between cutting and keeping of the relationship with descent group. Kasuga also asked if and to what extent it is possible to talk about early human beings by drawing analogies to chimpanzee troops. To this question Yamagiwa answered that it is impossible to talk about early human beings by drawing analogies to chimpanzee society, because monogamic society comes from society where notable swelling of sex skin is not observed whereas this physical characteristic is notably observed in chimpanzee society characterized by promiscuous sexual-marriage relationship. Yano asked Yamagiwa to tell his views on the difference between learning and education from the perspective of primatology. Yamagiwa’s answer was that in order for education to take place, certain behaviors need to be displayed: educator and educand understanding the knowledge disparity between them and the educator teaching the educand even if it leads to loss of his/her own profit. According to Yamagiwa, such behaviors may have developed in the evolution process of human beings because of an over-development of our ability to sympathize with others.

Next, questions were directed at Kasuga. Yamagiwa asked him on his views on the limits of our ability to merely use visible things (as base-analog) in analogy, or the asymmetry between invisible and visible things in analogy. Kasuga suggested that natural sciences are thought to search for patterns (visible things), whereas human and social sciences take up intention (invisible things). But in fact both of them are connected to

each other: Similar to researchers in the human and social sciences, a physicist sees what he/she *intends to see* and understand what he/she *intends to understand*. Yamagiwa also asked Kasuga why symbols do not remain at the level of simple analogy in rituals, but rather are extended toward flamboyant decoration. Also, what meaning does this have for human beings? As to this question, Kasuga gave his opinion in reference to Gregory Bateson supposing that play sets the logical level in a different, meta-, or excess dimension. Human culture's characteristic of extending analogy in this way comes from such play.

Then, Yano asked Kasuga whether an anthropologist as an observer of the *Ida*-ritual, which establishes a passageway and traffic between the world of everyday life and the world of ritual by analogy, adds another layer of analogy from the outside. As to this question, Kasuga gave the example of anthropologist Marilyn Strathern. Strathern attempted to save anthropology out of the so-called "crisis of representation" into which anthropology had fallen in the 1970s by adding one analogy to another and thereby also trying to describe the chain movement of analogy in observation targets. Yano also asked Kasuga how the possibility for human beings to understand other cultures is explained by the analogy concept. As a response, Kasuga mentioned that anthropology has attempted to represent local knowledge on the one hand, and tried analogy on the other hand in order to understand other cultures. Marcel Mauss made one such attempt in his article "*The Gift*". Here, Mauss tried to make invisible things visible by means of analogy, using broad concepts of "gift" and "money" – concepts, which might not even exist within target populations.

Finally, questions were asked for Yano's presentation. Kasuga, citing 'The Lives of Animals' in John Maxwell Coetzee's novel "*Elizabeth Costello*", asked Yano about his views on the dangers accompanying the crossing of the boundary to de-humanizing. Yano replied to this with reference to his own previous studies on animal picture books. Acknowledging differences between feral child, feral man and savage, who are located at the boundary between human and non-human, and the inherent violence that lurks in discussing them all together, Yano explained that it is his attempt to make an inquiry into commonalities and issues which do not come into view until we dare to discuss them under the common theme of 'boundary line'. Then, Yamagiwa cited Junichiro Itani's "*Discourse on Equality*" in which he criticizes Rousseau's feral man having no influence from others and asserts an evolutionary stream from 'original equality' through 'transcendental inequality' to 'conditional equality'. He asked Yano about his opinion on such thought that human beings are unequal with regard to their bodily properties, but also have directionality to produce equal society by adding a variety of conditions

(observed even in play of Japanese macaque). To this Yano remarked that he did not give his presentation along Rousseau's "*Discourse on Inequality*" and suggested the importance of reconsidering the way of connection from animal world to human world along Itani's argument. Further, Yamagiwa pointed out that Yano did not discuss sexuality, despite it being one of the important conditions for society's construction, as well as one of the important moments of boundary crossing between child and adult. Yano admitted that Yamagiwa's comment positively "shocked" him, recognizing that unlike adults who interact with children every day, the tradition of philosophical and pedagogical thought (except for Sigmund Freud and others in his line of thought) has regarded and excluded sexuality as animal affair.

Moderator Tanaka asked if "sympathy", which Yamagiwa mentioned in his explanation of the difference between learning and teaching, is a sort of analogy. Yamagiwa answered that it is analogy, which is carried out "in a temporal gap". This analogy is formed by either the teacher or the person taught on the basis of the image of the latter's grown-up condition. Further, Tanaka asked both Yamagiwa and Kasuga if analogy (*analogia*) between creature and "invisible" god has been taken into consideration in primatology and anthropology. Yamagiwa expressed the following view: Since human beings have come to control the night by use of fire and mutually communicate analogical illusions created in the night's darkness by means of symbols including language and gesture, they acquired an ability to express something like god which does not exist in reality. Kasuga suggested ~~as his imagination~~ the possibility that to feel someone's intention in the night darkness and an adult pointing a finger to call a child's attention to something are related to each other. In addition, Yano pointed out the importance of inventing various ways to draw boundary lines, especially since European and American thought based on monotheism has drawn clear, uncrossable boundary lines between god/human/animal, whereas in Japan the crossing between the three has been regarded as possible. Tanaka asked further whether the Japanese way of drawing boundary lines and Rousseau's "pity of all living beings" (handout, p.7) overlap. Yano suggested the possibility of a new way of thinking by returning to "St. Paul's Christianity" as a classical source of "cosmopolitanism" (handout, p.6) and start a re-inquiry as to its importance, which is different from Henri-Louis Bergson, who extended the thought of "cosmopolitanism" and reconsidered its possibility, no matter whether that can be called Japanese way of thinking. Further, Yamagiwa asked Yano how pedagogy understands our current state of transition in which science and technology change the ways of producing human life and thereby have the potential to make the realm of sexuality, which has been regarded as important for society's construction, more ambiguous. As to

this question, Yano suggested the necessity to cross swords with the dimension of religious thought and to accept knowledge of advancements in leading fields of science and technology to contrive various teaching tools according to learners' growth stages, because it is religion that has dealt with questions on the boundary line between life and death as well as between before-birth and birth.

Following the panelists' discussion, the discussion was opened up to the floor. Itakura (Waseda University) pointed out the following three points: First, those who discussed the boundary line between animality and humanity in the eighteenth century to which Yano pays attention attempted to destroy the realistic meaning and importance of Christianity, and were situated within dynamics between god, human, and animal, because they thought that unsettling the boundary line between human and animal would lead to an unsettling of the boundary line between human and god. Second, in relation to the problematique which Yamagiwa pointed out concerning Yano's argument, despite sexuality being the most important theme in and after the fourth chapter of "*Emile*", that is in its two thirds, pedagogy established in academism in response to teacher training in the nineteenth century has interpreted and used this book by ignoring most of this part. Third, Rousseau's theory of "great cosmopolitan souls" is located within the context of his criticism of the lost of ability to sympathize with other's pain among large parts of people in society in those days and therefore understanding this as aim just as Yano did leads to an overvaluation of Rousseau.

Yamagiwa's response to Itakura was that in his opinion eighteenth century discussions of natural law centered on how humans, not god, are able to create society within the natural law. Therefore, not only god but also animals did not appear there. Also, with regards to the issue of sexuality, Yamagiwa expressed his opinion that sexuality occupied a very important position in "*Emile*" in relation to "telling lies". After that, Yano explained that he took up the theory of "great cosmopolitan souls" with reference to the context which he developed in the second half of his presentation.

Then, Atsushi Suzuki (Oita University) asked Yamagiwa for his opinion on the idea that the animal world is in principle characterized by high birth and death rates, whereas in the human world fecundity became useless due to advancements in science and technology, so that also in education as well as pedagogy a discourse on considering human maturity (adulthood) as intellectual maturity instead of sexual maturity was produced. To this, Yamagiwa presented his opinion that if machines could substitute sexually mature bodies for reproduction, the physicality of human beings would gradually become insignificant (even though we do not know how this might change taboos). This could lead to discrimination against those who have not reached certain

levels of intellectual development, but it could also lead to feedback of our physicality.

3. Summary

The fact that Japanese primatology started with the application of sociological methods to Primates research and that findings from Primatology have given sociological research new suggestions makes us realize that the history of these disciplines is one example of “asymmetric and bidirectional analogy” (Kasuga). Also, in the parts on primate society analysis in his books, Yamagiwa conducts a careful search for “patterns” by paying attention to many exceptions, and develops daring opinions in those sections that discuss human society. Could this be an expression of his “intention” toward analogy, which crosses the boundary line between animal and human? Further, the connection between Yano’s argument of “self-consciously staying on the boundary line of the binary opposition between human and non-human beings” and Kasuga’s argument of “asymmetric and bidirectional analogy” is very strong. We can also see this from the material, which Yano distributed entitled “Personification and Contra-Personification as Subjects of Thought concerning Boundary Line”.

As mentioned at the beginning of this symposium, its purpose was to “provide a chance to take an academic deep breath through knowing new tendencies in human sciences adjacent to pedagogy”. The topic contained the risk of dispersing the discussion, but it was in large measure thanks to the presenters’ thoughtful attention to theme selection that the discussion was focused on some central topics. Especially, the proceeding of the symposium benefitted largely from Yano’s discussion of points of intersection between primatology, anthropology and pedagogy in the first half of the symposium. Allow us to use this opportunity to offer our thanks to the presenters.

Confucius's Concept of *Ren* and its Application in Education

Zhongying SHI

Beijing Normal University

Abstract

Confucius was a great philosopher and educationist of ancient China, the founder of Confucianism. Ren (仁) is the central concept of his philosophical and educational theory, and a main topic of his discussions with different disciples. Three sayings are of the most importance for the essential of Ren. The first one is “to love others”, which is the guiding principle; the rest are “do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire” and “to help others to take their stand in so far as he himself wishes to take his stand, and get others there in so far as he himself wishes to get there”, which are the standards for action. From a methodological view, sympathy is the basic way to practice Ren. Confucius' these comments upon Ren are of great significance for modern education. They inspire us to reflect upon the human nature in education, the value judgment in education and the role of sympathy in moral education and development.

Keywords

Confucius, Ren, Human Nature, Moral affection, Value Judgement in Education

1. Introduction

Confucius (551 BC – 479 BC) was a great philosopher and an educationist of ancient China. A great amount of ancient books survived after his edition. He was the founder of Confucianism and the earliest private school in China. His contribution to the promotion of culture and education was so great that for about 2,500 years, he has always been admired by Chinese people and the Temples of Confucius were built in different places. Many people came to sacrifice him in festivals. During the process of modernization in the 20th century, Confucius suffered from many criticisms, some of which were irrational and even of personal insults. While, criticisms cannot always cover the great contributions he did to our state. Recently, there appears a renaissance

Correspondence:

Zhongying SHI, Beijing Normal University, Email: szying@bnu.edu.cn

movement of the Chinese traditional culture and people of different social levels became interested in Confucius. *The Analects* (論語) is widely read nowadays in China.

In his philosophy, the concept of Ren (仁) is of the most importance. Some scholars even call his philosophy the philosophy of Ren. While, people's opinions diverge on how to interpret this concept. One reason contributes to this phenomenon is that Confucius' statements of Ren vary with the contexts of his discussions with his different disciples; another reason is that scholars after him, including Mencius (孟子), ZHU Xi (朱熹), WANG Yangming (王陽明), KANG Youwei (康有為) offered different interpretations of Ren in different backgrounds, which make the literature on Ren expand greatly. This article will try to re-analyze the concept of Ren based upon a close reading of *The Analects*, in order to clarify the essential of Ren and reveal how it can be applied to education of nowadays. I do hope this article could interest those scholars from Japan and other countries.

2. The Essential of Ren

According to LIU (2008), Ren, as the central concept of Confucius, appears 109 times in *The Analects*. Considering that *The Analects* consists of only 11,705 characters, it is fair to say that Ren is very important for Confucius. Ren appears directly and also indirectly; sometimes in Confucius' discussions with his disciples, sometimes in Confucius' comments upon other people, historical or contemporary. One of the direct examples is that, "Fan Ch'ih(樊遲) asked about Ren. The Master said, 'love your fellow men'" (12:22; LAU, 1979, p.116).¹ While, it also appears indirectly when Confucius commented upon some other issues, like "the Master said, 'It is rare, indeed, for a man with cunning words and an ingratiating face to be of Ren'" (1:3; Lau, 1979, p.59). However, Confucius never clearly defined what Ren is, no matter in direct or indirect way. This makes some people feel very hard to understand the concept of Ren. Some even claim that Ren is mysterious. Sometimes, it looks like one of the moral requirements and sometimes it seems to be equated with morality.

While, the concept of Ren is never beyond our comprehension. We can still understand the essential of Ren, if we closely read Confucius' great amount of statements of it. Wittgenstein told us that "the meaning of word is its use in the language. And the meaning of a name is sometimes explained by pointing to its bearer" (PI: 43; Wittgenstein,

¹ All the translation of *The Analects* in this article is basically from the Penguin Classics Edition (1979), translated by D. C. Lau, an excellent bilingual scholar from Hong Kong.

1958, pp.20-21). Though never giving us a definite definition of Ren, Confucius did tell us what kind of behavior can be called Ren and what cannot in particular situations. We can still find a way to understand the essential of it, if we give our attentions to those distinctions made by Confucius.

Three paragraphs are worth attention, since they contains Confucius' direct statements on Ren. The first one is that, "Fan Ch'ih(樊遲) asked about Ren. The Master said, 'love your fellow men.'" (12:22; LAU, 1979, p.116) This is a summary statement of Confucius about Ren. To love 'fellow men', which refers to others, is compared with 'to love yourself'. Ren is the emotional connection between me and others. To be a man of Ren is to hold strong affection to others. The next paragraph is that, "Chung-kung(仲弓) asked about Ren. The Master said, 'When abroad behave as though you were receiving an important guest; when employing the services of the common people behave as though you were officiating at an important sacrifice. Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire. In this way you will be free from ill whether in a state or in a noble family'" (12:2; LAU, 1979, p.112). Confucius' this statement consists of three stages: the first one is about how should people behave in their daily lives in accordance with Ren, to show respect to others; the second one promotes the standards of behavior up to an abstract ethical principle which means that never force others to do what you yourself do not desire; the last one is about the result of the behavior of Ren, which would never bring resentment whether in a state or in a noble family. However, the time Confucius lived was a time of resentment because of the dramatic social changes. Here the last paragraph that needs our attention is that "when answering Tzu-kung(子貢), Confucius said, 'a man of Ren helps others to take their stand in so far as he himself wishes to take his stand, and gets others there in so far as he himself wishes to get there. The ability to take as analogy what is near at hand can be called the method of Ren'" (6:30; Lau, 1979, p.85). Ren means sympathy, which would help yourself and others to achieve their goals. "Help others to take their stand in so far as he himself wishes to take his stand, and get others there in so far as he himself wishes to get there" was compared by Confucius with "do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire". If the latter one is of the negative Ren, which refers to what you should not do; the former one is of the positive Ren, which refers to what you should do. Confucius' concept of Ren consists of these two closely related parts. More than a strong affection to others, Ren is also an action which shows your sympathy to others and your effects on others.

If the credo of ancient Greek philosophers was "the love of wisdom"; comparatively, Confucius' philosophy was "the love of people". The term *people* here refers to others. While, since everyone exists as "the other" to anyone else, "to love yourself" was also

generalized and contained in this believing. In this sense, Mencius defined Ren as “the people”². A person who pursue this virtue with his whole life can be called a man of Ren; this kind of action can be called an action of Ren; and politics of this kind can be called the politics of Ren; our society can be called “back to Ren” if everyone lives in accordance with Ren and makes a community of love.

3. Confucius' Advice on How to Practice Ren

As stated above, Ren, the core concept of Confucius, is basically “the love of people”. It contains two principles of sympathy: 1, do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire; 2, Help others to take their stand in so far as he himself wishes to take his stand. However, Ren still seems difficult to reach in our practice, though not absolutely impossible. Confucius' discussions with his disciples can be seen as his advice on how to practice Ren.

Firstly, Confucius hoped that everyone should use their subjective initiatives to behave in accordance with Ren. Ren is like seeds which have already existed in everyone's heart, not only those talented ones. Since Ren is closely related to our attitudes, affections and moral concerns to others, it comes out in anyone's heart and can be achieved by anyone. As Confucius said, “is Ren really far away? No sooner do I desire it than it is here” (7:30; Lau, 1979, p.90). He also believed that the practice of Ren requires no special ability. “The Master said, ‘I have never met a man who finds Ren attractive or a man who finds non-Ren repulsive. A man who finds Ren attractive cannot be surpassed. A man who finds non-Ren repulsive can, perhaps, be counted as Ren, for he would not allow what is not Ren to contaminate his person. Is there a man who, for the space of a single day, is able to devote all his strength to Ren? I have not come across such a man whose strength proves insufficient for the task. There must be such cases of insufficient strength, only I have not come across them’” (4:6, Lau, 1979, pp.72-73). However, Confucius did required more upon the elite than upon common people. As one of his disciples, Tseng Tzu (曾子) said, “A Gentleman must be strong and resolute, for his burden is heavy and the road is long. He takes Ren as his burden. Is that not heavy? Only with death does the road come to an end. Is that not long?”(8:7, Lau, 1979, p.93) In Tseng Tzu' view, a gentleman has the responsibility to practice and carry forward Ren. Confucius even said that, “When faced with the opportunity to practice Ren do not give precedence even to your teacher” (15:36; Lau, 1979, p.137). This saying reveals

² Interestingly, Ren (仁) and People (人) pronounce the same in Chinese.

Confucius' encouragement to his disciples to practice Ren in their coming days and it is interesting to compare it with Aristotle's famous saying that "Plato is dear to me, but dearer still is truth".

Secondly, Confucius emphasized the restraint of desire, and he put the observance to the rites as an important act in political life. According to him, those selfish desires, including lust, avarice, and greed for power, are the worst enemies of Ren. Xun zi(荀子), a Confucian philosopher after Confucius analyzed that, once the selfish desires went out of control, they would expand crazily and dominate our attitudes, affections and value judgments, make us the slaves of our desires. It would break our sympathy to others and the community we live in. Based upon this, when Yen Yuan(顏淵) asked about Ren, the Master said, "To return to the observance of the rites through overcoming the self constitutes Ren. If for a single day a man could return to the observance of the rites through overcoming himself, then the whole Empire would consider Re to be his. However, the practice of Ren depends on oneself alone, and not on others" Yen Yuan said, "I should like you to list the items." The Master said, "Do not look unless it is in accordance with the rites; do not listen unless it is in accordance with the rites; do not speak unless it is in accordance with the rites; do not move unless it is in accordance with the rites" (12:1, Lau, 1979, p.112). The restraint is not equal to elimination. To restrain our desires is to keep them in control, not evolving into a disastrous ending. In this sense, "to overcome the self" in Confucianism is different from "to destroy the desire" in Buddhism and "to eliminate the desire" in Daoism. In Confucius' view, one should restrain his desires to the extent as not to violate the rites. One should not look, hear and do anything, as long as the rites do not allow. No doubt that the rites here refers to the Rites of Zhou(周礼), which represents the ideal society for Confucius.

Thirdly, Confucius emphasized that the persistence to practice Ren is very important. Since Ren comes from everyone's heart, it is never something too difficult to achieve for common people. Nevertheless, Confucius admitted that to persist on Ren is of difficulty. He praised his disciple Yen Hui (顏回)³ that "in his heart for three months at a time Hui does not lapse from Ren. The others attain Ren merely by fits and starts"(6:7; Lau, 1979, p.82). A gentleman like Yen Hui could persist on Ren for three months, while common people just did it occasionally. Hence, those who want to become a man of Ren, should practice consistently, reflect and restrain himself during his whole life. "The Master said,

³ Yen Hui (顏回) and Yen Yuan(顏淵) was actually the same person. Hui was his first name. In ancient China, only people in higher position could call others in their first names. Therefore, Confucius could call him "Hui". While, Yuan is his courtesy name(字).

‘Wealth and high station are what men desire but unless I got them in the right way I would not remain in them. Poverty and low station are what men dislike, but even if I did not get them in the right way I would not try to escape from them. If the gentleman forsakes Ren, in what way can he make a name for himself? The gentleman never deserts Ren, not even for as long as it takes to eat a meal. If he hurries and stumbles one may be sure that it is in Ren that he does so’”(4:5, Lau, 1979, p.72). This saying means that a gentleman should always be with Ren. His daily life should be in accordance with Ren, even in troublesome or dangerous situations.

Fourthly, Confucius emphasized the function of learning in understanding and practicing Ren. As we know, Confucius himself loved studying very much. He learnt from books, and also those of different occupations in the society. “The Master said, ‘Even when walking in the company of two other men, I am bound to be able to learn from them. The good points of the one I copy; the bad points of the other I correct in myself’”(7:22, Lau, 1979, p.88). Though only a few people could be called Ren, Confucius numbered three historical persons. “The Viscount of Wei(微子) left him, the Viscount of Chi(箕子) became a slave on account of him and Pi Kan(比干) lost his life for remonstrating with him. Confucius commented, ‘there were three men of Ren’”(18:1, Lau, p.149). All of them lived in the time of King Zhou(紂王, ?–1046 BC), who was the last king of the Shang(商) Dynasty and also one of the most famous tyrants in Chinese history. Wei was King Zhou’s brother, but chose to leave the government; Chi and Pi Kan were King Zhou’s uncles and never gave up criticizing his policies. Finally, Chi was put into prison and Pi Kan was killed. They enjoyed Confucius’ praise probably because they dared to correct King Zhou’s ruthless doings, even making the supreme sacrifice. Another historical figure that Confucius praised was Kuan Chung(管仲, 720 BC ?–645 BC). “Tzu-lu(子路) said, ‘When Duke Huan(桓公) had Prince Chiu(糾) killed, Shao Hu(召忽) died for the Prince but Kuan Chung failed to do so.’ He added, ‘In that case, did he fall short of Ren?’ The Master said, ‘It was due to Kuan Chung that Duke Huan was able, without a show of force, to assemble the feudal lords nine times. Such was his Ren. Such was his Ren’”(14:16, Lau, p. 126). Owing to Kuan Chung’s efforts, Duke Huan could be recognized as the Hegemon by other states, which avoided a lot of probable wars that were disasters for common people. This met Confucius’ requirements of politics of Ren. Besides, when “Tzu-kung asked about the practice of Ren. The Master said, ‘A craftsman who wishes to practice his craft well must first sharpen his tools. You should, therefore, seek the patronage of the most distinguished Counsellors and make friends with the gentlemen of the most Ren in the state where you happen to be staying’”(15:10, Lau, 1979, p.133).

Fifthly, Confucius made some other important statements when talking about the practice of Ren. For example, he said that “being good as a son and obedient as a young man is, perhaps, the root of a man’s Ren”(1:2; Lau, 1979, p.59). It means that Ren always begins with those very trifles in our daily lives. He also said that “It is rare, indeed, for a man with cunning words and an ingratiating face to be of Ren”(1:3; Lau, p.59). Our inner affections, respects and concerns, rather than those “cunning words and an ingratiating face”, constitute Ren. In some other places, Confucius said that “of neighborhoods Ren is the most beautiful. How can the man be considered wise who, when he has the choice, does not settle in Ren?”(4:1, Lau, 1979, p.72) It shows that a harmonious society contributes a lot to the growth of a person of Ren. It was also believed by Confucius that “the man of Ren reaps the benefit only after overcoming difficulties. That can be called Ren”(4:22; Lau, 1979, p.84). A gentleman of Ren would always prefer to overcome any difficulties if that is required by Ren and seldom consider about the benefits he can get.

All those sayings become a supplementary part of the essential of Ren, and make Confucius’s concept of Ren of richer contents and higher operability.

4. Ren’s Application in Education

Based upon the analyses above, Confucius’ Ren is neither an isolated virtue, nor a generic term of all the other virtues. Ever since Mencius, Chinese People tended to put “Ren, Justice, Proper Rite, Knowledge and Integrity(仁,義,禮,智,信)”⁴ together. However, unlike other moral virtues or Five Human Relationships(五倫)⁵ of Confucianism, Ren does not refer to any particular ethical relationship between people. Ren is neither a generic term of other virtues. To achieve Ren is not like a game of collection of other virtues, which would make the concept of Ren very demanding. However, Ren is never isolated from others, rather they have very close and inner connections. Confucius once said that, “what can a man do with the rites who is not of Ren? What can a man do with music who is not of Ren?”(3:3, p.67) It means that Ren plays as the essential of all the rites and music. It is also the source of all the virtues and benevolence. Without Ren, without the sympathy and concerns to others, neither can one understand all the virtues nor practice those virtues and become a man of morality. Modern Chinese philosopher FENG You-lan (馮友蘭) has commented that “a man of

⁴ Sometimes, Integrity(信) is not included here.

⁵ The concept of Five Human Relationships was propounded by Mencius, which refers to five fundamental relationships between people: King-Subject, Father-Son, Elder-Younger brothers, Husband-Wife and friends.

Ren is a man of public spirit. However, he will show his affections and concerns to others. Whether a man is of justice is only about whether he has the public spirit. While, the concept of Ren is more than that. Ren contains an emotional feeling to others. This is about the nature of man in his moral behaviors. Therefore, CHENG Yi (程頤) said that Ren is the public spirit embodied in people's feelings. And ZHU Xi said that the core of Ren is about people" (Feng, 2007, pp.118-119).

Confucius' concept of Ren influenced the Confucianism theory and Chinese people's sense of order in their daily lives greatly. Mencius applied it into politics and emphasized the significance of the common citizens in the state. When talking with King Hui of Liang(梁惠王), Mencius said that, "what is the point of mentioning the word 'profit'? All that matters is that there should be Ren and Justice"⁶(1: A: 1; Lau, 1970, p.49). He held a view that "the Three Dynasties won the Empire through Ren and lost it through cruelty. This is true of the rise and fall, survival and collapse, of states as well. An emperor cannot keep the Empire within the Four Seas unless he is of Ren; a feudal lord cannot preserve the altars to the gods of earth and grain unless he is of Ren; a Minister of a Counsellor cannot preserve his ancestral temple unless he is of Ren; a Gentleman or a Commoner cannot preserve his four limbs unless he is of Ren. To dislike death yet revel in cruelty is no different from drinking beyond your capacity despite your dislike of drunkenness" (4: A: 3; Lau, 1970, p.119). According to this, Mencius made his famous claiming that "the people are of supreme importance; the altars to the gods of earth and grain come next; last comes the ruler" (7: B: 14; Lau, 1970, p.196). Its influence continues until now. Confucius' concept of Ren has been widely applied into different aspects of Chinese society, including our ethics, business, education and medicine. People resent those who make profits through deviating from Ren. On the contrary, those who sacrifice their lives to pursue Ren are always respected and admired.

Confucius' Ren is also of great importance in education.

Firstly, it inspires us to think about some fundamental problems in philosophy and philosophy of education, which includes "what is the nature of human being?" "How does a man reaches maturity?". Particularly about the nature of man, different philosophers have offered different ideas from a very ancient time. In the west, answers have come as "reason" (Aristotle, Descartes), "naturalness" (Montaigne, Rousseau), "culture" (Ernst Cassirer, Eduard Spranger), "labor" (Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels), "play" (Schiller, Johan Huizinga), or "economic man" (Adam Smith, Alfred Marshall).

⁶ All the translation of *Mencius* is also basically from the Penguin Classics Edition (1970), translated by D. C. Lau.

For Chinese philosophers, some defined the nature of human as good; some as evil; some said there exists neither goodness nor evilness; some said that goodness and evilness are mixed together. While for Daoism, the nature of human should be in correspondence with the Nature. Compared with them, Confucius did not offer a very clear proposition on it, and he just said that “men are close to one another by nature. They diverge as a result of repeated practice” (17:3; Lau, 1979, p.144) which means that the natures of different people are very close to each other. The sympathy in his Ren also suggests that there exist some fundamental feelings, attitudes and value judgments that can connect our human beings. For Mencius, this became the standard to tell the difference between human and brutes. He said that “slight is the difference between man and the brutes. The common man loses this distinguishing feature, while the gentleman retains it. Shun(舜)⁷ understood the way of things and had a keen insight into human relationships. He followed the path of morality. He did not just put morality into practice”(4: B: 19; Lau, 1970, p.131). Modern Chinese scholar QIAN Mu(錢穆) also agreed that “a society cannot be built without Ren; human beings cannot last long without a society; education cannot exist without a time that is long enough. Therefore, Ren is the source of our human culture and a common human nature across different cultures.” Since Ren is such a common human nature, it will normally define the maturity of human beings. “To become a man”, is some kind of mission that one needs to accomplish in correspondence with Ren, rather than a natural result.

Secondly, Ren tells us the importance of sympathy in education. In my opinion, in the western philosophy of moral education, no matter in virtue ethics, deontological ethics, utilitarianism, or in the school of values clarification, the moral affection has always been ignored. Compared with the western philosophical tradition founded upon logos, Confucius’ concept of Ren is not exactly a theory abstracted based upon logics. It contains a great amount of affections, showing one’s respect, concerns, forgiveness, responsibilities and hopes to others. A man of Ren acts not only according to some principles, but all to his inner emotional feelings. In private and public lives, the idea of “to love others”, the principle of “do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire” and “to help others to take their stand in so far as he himself wishes to take his stand, and get others there in so far as he himself wishes to get there” are founded upon sympathy of our human beings. Sympathy functions as a mental mechanism which connects us with others and adjusts our behavior. As Adam Smith said, “and hence it is, that to feel much for others and little for ourselves, that to restrain our selfish, and to indulge our

⁷ Shun, also known as Emperor Shun, was a legendary leader of ancient China.

benevolent affections, constitutes the perfection of human nature; and can alone produce among mankind that harmony of sentiments and passions in which consists their whole grace and propriety”(Smith, 1801, p.38). The lack of sympathy, or the lack of *Ren*, might be one key reason why the ethic knowledge and action separate and inhospitality dominates our society.

Thirdly, the concept of *Ren* makes us reflect upon the value judgment in our modern education. Modern education developed with the modern society, which is basically founded upon individualism, utilitarianism, scientificism and performancism. It emphasizes the priority of individual, utility, intelligence and performances. Compared with this tradition, Confucius' concept of *Ren* emphasized the priority of others, moral, harmony and the development of human nature (see Chen, 2015, pp.36-74). Therefore, it will help us to solve those problems, like the conflicts between people because of individualism, the inequality in our society because of the extreme utilitarianism, the oppression upon human spirits because of scientificism, and the ignorance of the development of human nature because of performancism. It will lay a foundation for personal development, a harmonious society and a collaborative development of human beings.

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A Way of Becoming Human: Between the Ritualized Body and a Humanizing Action

Duck-Joo KWAK

Seoul National University

1. Ritual Proprieties for self-cultivation and East Asian humanities

What does it mean to cultivate ‘humanity’ in education? How is it supposed to be connected to ‘humanities education’? Humanities education in schools or colleges is expected to cultivate humanity in youngsters. But what does ‘humanity’ mean here? Different traditions may respond differently. When I was in a junior high school, the school textbook for moral education specified three types of the educated: a man of good character, a man of deep knowledge, a man of high fame. I was taught that the ‘man of good character’ deserved genuinely to be called the educated. (As a young adolescent, it was really touching to discover this.) When Koreans say that they expect the school to cultivate ‘humanity’ in youngsters, it usually means the formation of ‘good character’. And the core of good character is considered to be the disposition to conform to social norms, i.e., obeying teachers and the elderly and knowing how to behave in relation to other people of a different status, a disposition associated with the essential Confucian virtue of *‘jen’* (仁), namely, benevolence or love of others.

This sense of good character is the basis of ‘the noble man’ (君子, *junzi*), the moral ideal of Confucianism, which has dominated the minds of Korean people since the establishment of the neo-Confucian Chosun dynasty in the 14th century. But the ultimate purpose of the noble man is to become a sage who discovers ‘his Way’ (道, *tao*). And the discovery of the Way is pursued through self-cultivation, which is to be practiced by two different, yet complementary pedagogical approaches: *bodily* mastery of ritual proprieties and book-reading.¹ Simply put, Confucian education in Chosun dynasty can be said to consist of two stages with two distinct approaches to self-cultivation: embodied

¹ Here book-reading refers to studies of the following four classical texts of Confucianism: *the Analects of Confucius*, *the Mencius*, *The Great Learning*, *the Doctrine of the Mean*.

character-building through *the Elementary Learning*(小學) and understanding of principle(理) through *the Great Learning*(大學). The former was supposed to cultivate the basic Confucian ethics of conduct by inculcating in young people ritual propriety, namely, proper ways of behaving as a human being (Han, 2001, 31). The latter was expected to motivate them to pursue the ultimate meaning of becoming a human through study of classical Confucian texts.

In the *formal* school curriculum in Korea today, the studies of the classical texts are long gone, having been replaced by modernized humanities curriculum from the West, which is usually centered on modern academic subjects, i.e., math, science, history and languages. Along with this change, the educational power of Confucian ritual proprieties as social norms appears to have been gradually reduced in the *minds* of modern educators in Korea. But what seems often to be unnoticed by them is the fact that, as Roger T. Ames says (1993, 149), “the expression and performance of *the body*, like other Confucian preoccupations such as the practice of ritual, the playing of music, the writing of calligraphy or the composition of literature,” was a critical “medium for self-articulation” for the Confucian educated. Thus, even if young Korean students today are taught modernized subject-matters in school, their embodied educational experiences are still greatly influenced by *informal* school culture that is pervasively Confucian, if not dominantly. This means that the kind of humanity to be developed through the official curriculum tends to be at odd with the kind of humanity encouraged for young people through the hidden curriculum. For example, when Martha Nussbaum claims that the humanities education in this globalizing world should aim at educating youngsters as ‘good citizens’ who have, among other capacities, a capacity to care about others, near and distant, with genuine concern, as well as a capacity for critical thinking to raise a dissenting voice in a given society (2010, 45-46), we Korean teachers may find it appealing as a world-spirit, yet without having it affect the way we lead our lives.

My underlying concern here has to do with the fact that the idea of ‘humanity’ in the Confucian sense is often found to be at odd with the idea of humanity assumed by the modernized school curriculum. Some qualitative gap between the two kinds of humanities can often be experienced by young students under the modern school system in east Asia. To put it in a more dramatic way, the modern education system in east Asia forces them to live in the Confucian *body* with the western *mind* resulting in their selfhood being seriously split or fragmented. I think that we as educators need to pay due attention to this phenomenon and take seriously how the Confucian body is formed since the latter was traditionally considered critical to Confucian self-cultivation as the educational ideal.

Korean educationalists’ apparent lack of appreciation of the educational power of

Confucian ritual proprieties (禮, *li*) for modern education may have to do with their modernist prejudice, which regards Confucian rituals as outmoded, being susceptible to misuse as a means of social control. This prejudice prevents them from seeing *how* the Confucian ritual proprieties as social norms have *in fact* shaped and reproduced the distinctive *social body* of modern Koreans through schooling. Resonating from Foucault's work on the role of disciplinary power in the formation of the modern subject, I want to problematize progressive educators' alleged characterization of the Confucian practice of ritual proprieties as a form of mental indoctrination or behavioral conditioning, either through repetitive drills or the effective states induced by group engagement. What is often neglected in this view are more subtle and ambivalent effects of the ritual on our *bodies* in education, especially from participants' perspective. By over-simplifying the function of Confucian ritual as *social* control, we may end up depriving ourselves of one of the most powerful educational inheritances that could be a way of empowering young people to be *active cultural agents*.

This paper will introduce an alternative view on the function of ritual, termed a reality-thesis formulated by Catherine Bell (1953-2008), an outstanding American scholar in religious studies,² to show how ritual can be better understood from the educational perspective. And then I will make use of this reality thesis to reinterpret the way Confucian ritual works in forming our social body. This is intended to free ourselves from the politically charged modernist criticism of Confucian ritual and to see if it could be in fact the very source of modern subjectivity, which is usually thought to be repressed by the ritual.

2. Ritual for Social control or Ritual for Reality-forming?

Ritual practice lies at the heart of Confucianism. In Chosun dynasty, the ritualization of political, social, and even economic relationships in a Confucian mold significantly shaped the cultural matrix of the entire society (Deuchler, 2002, 292). On the other hand, according to Bell, "ritualization correlates with and contributes to the restraining effect of *closed* and *highly structured* societies" (1993, 177), whether they may be premodern or modern. Bell also holds that a society governed by ritual assumes a fair degree of

² Catherine Bell (1953-2008) is a contemporary American scholar in religious studies, who specialized in studies of Chinese religions and ritual studies. Her book, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (1992, Oxford), is considered a breakthrough-text in religious studies that changed the framework for understanding the nature and function of ritual. My paper will heavily draw upon her book in understanding the Confucian ritual.

consensus, whereas another society characterized by the legalistic rule of law and order assumes much less. Given these descriptions, Chosun society for sure, and modern Korea to a certain extent, can be rightly considered high ritual societies.³

What was (is) the function of ritual in Chosun dynasty and in modern Korea if there is any? I am not asking here why Confucianism traditionally takes ritual seriously as a way of governing society and educating people, nor how people in Confucian society justify or explain their ritual practice. This line of internal accounts can be or must have been given by many Confucian scholars and specialists (Han and al, 2001; Kato, 2016). In fact, we can even safely suppose that in participating in ritual, people within the society more or less know what they do and why they do what they do. My question rather comes from a suspicion that they may know what they do and why, but they “do not know *what what they are doing does*” to themselves in participating in ritual (Bell, 1992, 108). This question is first inspired by some post-structuralist perspective on ritual in cultural studies, which takes ‘the body’ seriously in the account of ‘ritualization’, as in Foucault’s and Bourdieu’s works. But my question above in regard to ritual is primarily educational in the following two senses. First, it is concerned with what is exactly happening to *the individual*, especially to her *body*, when she participates in ritual; this question is educationally critical because educational practice is supposed to be in the end all about the (trans)formation of the individual selfhood as a unity of one’s mind and body. Second, it is concerned with the nature of ritual as a culturally strategic practice for *the fusion* between mind and body, individual and society, thought and action, emotion and belief (Bell, 1992, 21). This fusion is exactly what modern educational practice aspires to offer in the midst of the ever self-alienating and dehumanizing exam-obsessed school culture in Korea.

One of the dominant accounts about what ritual does to individual participants engaged in ritual is a *repression thesis* (Bell, 1992, 172-173). It says that the function of ritual is social control over the participants in the form of socialization. Here socialization is defined as a matter of transmitting shared beliefs, or instilling a dominant ideology as an internal subjectivity. In fact, the same understanding of ritual lies behind the above-mentioned modern educators’ criticism of Confucian ritual proprieties, such as filial piety or loyalty to the government, as a disguise for the elite class’s interest and domination

³ Bell uses the terms, ‘ritual,’ ‘ritual practice,’ and ‘ritualization,’ interchangeably. As following her usage without objection, which is concerned with ritual in general, I treat without further thought Confucian ritual propriety (禮, *li*) as a *form* of ritual to which her general account can be applied because Confucian ritual propriety as conventional practice takes a strong formality, fitting the main features of ritual that Bell describes. The detailed discussion of it will be followed in the next section.

(Shin, 1970). I think this sociological criticism of Confucian ritual is parasitic on a psychological assumption of the repression thesis: “ritualization is the controlled displacement of chaotic and aggressive impulses” (Bell, 1992, 173). According to the repression thesis, ritualization is central to *any culture* as a means to dominate *nature*, i.e., the natural violence within human beings. This thesis treats ritual as an oppressive device inherently *necessary* to an ordered society by being repressive of the individual; it pays attention to how ritual exercises control the individual’s *affective* state to make them *social* or even *moral*. What is to be noted here is the thesis’s underlying assumption of dichotomies between culture and nature, individual and society, (controlled) reason and (chaotic) emotion.

I don’t think this (sociological and psychological) account of ritual is accurate enough to be applied to Confucian ritual, even if it was politically employed that way by oppressive military regimes of the past in Korea. Bell also holds that the social control wielded by ritual is a much more complex phenomenon than the manipulation of affective states or cognitive categories, as described by the repression thesis. She instead proposes an alternative thesis called *a reality-thesis* by drawing upon many different scholars and works in cultural studies, such as Geertz, Douglas, Foucault and Bourdieu among others (Bell, 1992, 175). According to Bell, ritual does not control. It rather constitutes a particular dynamic of social empowerment by *modeling* ideal relations and structures of values. This thesis views ritual as “a symbolic modeling of the social order, with this imaging or iconic quality as the basis of its efficacy” (Bell, 1992, 175). With this use of the word ‘modeling’, the thesis tries to highlight not how ritual ‘controls’ but how it ‘defines’ social situations by being presented to social members as a reality to be rendered and experienced. I think this reality thesis provides us with a better framework through which we can more accurately understand how Confucian ritual actually works *from the participant’s perspective*. Let me briefly reconstruct how the reality-thesis explains ritual as a general account of it.

According to Bell, the purpose of ritual practice is the production of the *ritualized* (social or public) body. But what is noteworthy about this practice is that it does not see itself doing that, namely, the production of the ritualized body. What is the ritualized body, by the way? Bell says: it is “a body invested with a sense of ritual” (Bell, 1992, 98). And ‘a sense of ritual,’ she continues to say, is what we are embodied with *as* “an implicit variety of schemes whose deployment works to produce sociocultural situations that the ritualized body (of ours) can dominate in some way”. This seems to say that our repeated practice of ritual brings to us a variety of schemes that open to us as participants a certain bodily horizon in which we can orient ourselves in such a way as to make ourselves feel

that we *fit* to given situations. How well we are attuned to the given situations is a matter of our practical mastery of the strategic schemes in ritualization. What is to be noted here, according to the reality-thesis, is that ritual's ability to define an order *as the real* in both its internal structure and its limits is a form of control, yet a very unique kind of control that is not experienced *as such* by the people involved. In other words, ritual exercise helps to define as authoritative certain ways of seeing society by deflecting people's attention from other ways without their noticing of that very fact (Bell, 1992, 175-176). How is it possible?

According to Bell, ritual does this job by being deeply implicated with the human body. Drawing upon a series of post-structuralist theories that identify the human body as a social construction in the image of society and a microcosm of the universe, the reality thesis considers the human body as one's existential site where the mediation of the simple dialectical interaction between the individual (perception of the world) and the social world (of categories) takes place (Bell, 1992, 94). Thus, it is said that through ritual the construction of cultural reality focuses on the body, which in turn experiences the construction *as* natural to itself (Bell, 1992, 95); it is *the body* that makes us not notice what the ritual does to us by taking it as natural to itself. This means that ritual grants the body a critical site for the social construction of reality, and the body is shaped or socialized by rituals into the *social* body. Turning to this social body is a key to the relationship of one's self, society and cosmos. Ritual as modelling this whole process of socialization, that is, the transformation of natural body into cultural body, transforms one sort of man into another sort of man.

Then, how exactly does this happen through the human body? According to Bell, the invisibility of what and how ritual does is possible because ritual *naturalizes* arbitrary assumptions of reality, so as to make them *look* necessary or real to the people involved. Creating this misrecognition within ritual participants and making this very act invisible to them are essential to the successful operation of ritual in defining reality. In Bell's view (1992, 112), the reason ritual could function in this manner has to do with the way it communicates with the participants. Ritual communication differs from linguistic communication in its function in two ways. First, the way ritual expresses its codes or principles is not discursive but *performative* as in such speech-acts as 'promising' or 'declaration of wedding'. What is distinctive about ritual is not what it says or symbolizes but what it *does things* to the people involved in it. Ritual is always a matter of the performance of gestures and the manipulation of objects. Ritual languages are *deeds* in themselves that accomplish things; they operate by showing and creating things to be perceived and interpreted. There is no message to be conveyed; they act upon reality (Bell,

1992, 111) and thereby create a situation that supplies to the participants the opportunity to infer and master the codes underlying the ostensible activity of the rite for their future actions. Second, this means that ritual communication plays on *ambiguities* with the symbolic meanings of ritual codes when it produces model-experiences in the participants. Its underlying codes or scheme are not determined enough to instruct specific meanings to the participants; the specific meanings are supposed to be *inferred and mastered* by them (Bell, 1992, 181). We may describe this (internal and personal) inference and appreciation as part of physical self-cultivation in the Confucian context. Thus, we can say that ritual is a matter of programmed learning through activities that involve the participants' appreciation of codes, principles, and concepts, and their reproduction *in practice and in action*. These two strategies of ritual inevitably elude the full articulation of *the work ritual does to* the participants themselves; full articulation is not a medium that can grasp the ritual practice (Bell, 1992, 97 & 114).

Let me pause here to examine more closely exactly how the participants do *not* notice the work ritual does to themselves or what is happening to themselves while ritual does its job. Adapting Bourdieu's discussion of practice, Bell holds (1992, 98-99) that we can speak of the natural logic of ritual, logic embodied in the physical movements of the body and thereby lodged beyond our grasp of consciousness and articulation. The principle underlying this logic can be made explicit only with great difficulty; they are rarely in themselves the objects of scrutiny or contention. In other words, for Bell, the molding process of our social body within a highly structured environment of ritual often does not come up to our inner state of mind. Rather it primarily acts to *restructure* our bodies in every performance of our acts themselves. Hence, for example, a required bowing (to the elderly) in the Confucian ritual does not merely communicate our subordination to the person we bow to. For all intents and purposes, our practice of bowing *produces* a subordinated bower in and through the act itself. Of course, sometimes on another level within ritualization, such an act of bowing may actually set up a bifurcation between the external show of subordination and an internal act of resistance. But in either case, the ritual practice shapes one's *deep ontological* orientation to the social life, involving the setting up of oppositions and differentiation in the orientation, i.e., social oppositions of the elderly and the young or man and woman, combined with geographical oppositions of right and left or above and below.

Through the privileging of a certain set of categories built into such an exercise of generating hierarchical schemes, a loose sense of totality and systematicity is produced in one's order of the world (Bell, 1992, 104). This means that ritual's function in our life, since it is so deeply implicated with the way our body is oriented, is more ontological

than social in its nature. In this way, ritual dynamics afford and develop our experience of order as well as our sense of fit between the taxonomic order and the real world of experience, which leads us to find the connection so natural and organic as if it were part of the way things are. Therefore, we can conclude that these structured and structuring experiences of the world through ritual practice guarantee the reality and value of its underlying schemes by means of our sense of fit or coherence between the instincts of the socialized body and the environment in which it acts.

What we can see here is that ritual does not simply act to bring the social body to the participants. The participants also actively seek and appropriate the coherence in terms of their ontological concerns or social interests, as persons or groups, so as to experience it as more or less *redemptive*; this means that they are also empowered by the schemes of the rituals (Bell, 1992, 114-115). This is how, as Foucault's concept of micropower well shows (Foucault, 1995), ritual makes the body an arena where more local social practices were linked to the larger scale organization of power. This is also how ritual leaves room for the social body to turn into an active cultural agent in the form of consent, negotiation and resistance in the process of internalizing the schemed order of reality defined by rituals. Bell says it is because the process of internalization of the scheme differentiates the private from the social selves in the actors, involving a distancing within them of their private and social identities. This distancing is integral to what ritual does through its elaboration of symbolic meanings, but it can be problematic, of course, if taken too far (Bell, 1992, 217; Butler, 1997, 19). The relationship between any instance of ritualization and its immediate social reality by means of the participant's acts does not seem to be the mere reflection of power of given order but that of their interplay. Ritualization cannot be understood apart from the immediate situation, which is reproduced in a misrecognized or transformed way through the production of *ritualized agents*. Thus, we may conclude that, honoring Foucault's terms (1995, 192 & 194), ritual does not just control or subordinate the subject, but *produces* it as well.

3. Cultivation of the Ritualized body as a Way of Self-cultivation; a Case of Confucian Ritualization

How can this general account of ritual be applied to Confucian ritual in particular?⁴

⁴ Bell (1992, 220) summarizes several features common to all forms of ritualization: 1) strategies of differentiations through formalization and periodicity, 2) the centrality of the body, 3) the orchestration of schemes by which the

In what follows, I will try to make use of the reality-thesis to see the extent to which Confucian ritual can be understood as a social practice that shapes the *social body* in the form of self-cultivation that could create an empowered subject. Confucianism, especially neo-Confucianism, is a highly sophisticated system of rituals. It is not an exaggeration to say that Confucian education is all about rituals, i. e., learning how to obey or conform to rituals in one's actions on every level of everyday life. But what exactly does ritual (禮, *li*) refer to in the Confucian context? First, it refers to institutionalized forms of rites, which people usually tend to take as a tradition, i.e., periodic or celebratory rites of royal courts or ancestral worship ceremonies as a set of formal procedures. Second, Confucian ritual (*li*) more commonly means some patterns of overt behavior of actions that are instructed on the way we carry our bodies and make physical gestures, as well as a set of specific rules of conducts that prescribes our *role-performances*, roles such as a king, a father, or a son. Lastly, *li* can be described as a set of more general rules of conduct that govern one's *personal relationship* with others, such as reciprocal respect, loyalty or good faith, which is almost synonymous to what we call today *moral norms of action* (Han, 2001, 16).

Let me give you some examples for these:

Do not listen with the head inclined on one side, nor answer with a loud, sharp voice, nor look with a dissolute leer, nor keep the body in a slouching position. Do not saunter about with a haughty gait, nor stand with one foot raised. Do not sit with your knees wide apart, nor sleep on your face (*The Elementary Learning*, 3:2:2, trans, Lee, 1999, 135)

When he was in the carriage, he did not turn his head quite round, he did not talk hastily, he did not point with his hands (*The Elementary Learning*, 3:2:7, trans. Lee, 1999, 140)

Parents are sometimes liable to faults and mistakes. Then the child must try to correct them, using, however, only the mildest and most indirect of means. If the parent refuses to change ways, the child must wait and try to correct them again only after his respect and filial piety please them. Even if the parent is not pleased, the child must try to correct them not to let him susceptible of dishonor for the

body defines the environment and is defined in turn by it, 4) ritual mastery, and 5) the negotiation of power to define and appropriate the hegemonic order of the society. I think all these features are also true of Confucian rituals as conventional practice.

family. If the parent punishes the child for criticizing, the child is not to feel any anger or resentment, even if beaten until blood flows. The child must continue to try to please him with high respect and filial piety (*The Elementary Learning*, 2:1:22, trans. Lee, 1999, 55)

Tzu-kung asked about how friend should be treated. The Master said, “Advise them to the best of your ability and guide them properly, but stop when there is no hope of success. Do not ask to be snubbed” (*The Elementary Learning*, 2:5:4, trans. Lee, 1999, 108-109)

These passages are all from *the Elementary Learning*, an anthology of selections from the Confucian classical texts, which greatly influenced the way the Koreans oriented education for their children.⁵ The Neo-Confucian scholar Chu Hui created this text for the purpose of fostering specific and concrete modes of behavior that are both practical and ritualistic (Kelleher, 1989). The first two passages reveal the physical aspects of self-cultivation in young people. *Li* includes very trivial acts of our everyday life from sweeping and sprinkling to talking and posing the head. The last two passages touch upon more subtle manners of conduct as a son and as a friend in learning how to converse with the elderly and relating *affectively* with people around us as young people.

Young people are expected to love their parents, respect the elderly, and esteem teachers. The mastery of all these physical appearances and behaviors prepares them to advance to the next level, that is, the pursuit of the goal of *the Great Learning*: cultivating the self, regulating the family, ruling the country, and finally establishing one’s peace of mind in the world. The distinctiveness of this educational approach is to make young people adopt the specific codes of behaviors, i.e., the way they carry themselves, their facial expression, and even the tone of one’s voice, just exactly the way the text instructs us to do *up to the level* of their becoming part of our unconscious self. This means that they are supposed to make them part of their bodily habit without raising any questions; this obedience is critical in building their ‘good character’ as the early development of

⁵ *The Elementary Learning* is a text edited in 1187 by a well-known Neo-Confucian scholar Chi-Hui from the Song dynasty in China. But his educational influence on the Chosun dynasty of pre-modern Korea was so vast, pervasive and lasting that his teaching from *the Elementary Learning* still remains deep inside of everyday moral psychology of most of Korean middle-class parents. This text was an important part of the Neo-Confucian core curriculum, which was taught in official educational institutes in Korea from the early Chosun dynasty until the period of Japanese colonialism in Korea in the 1900’s. But the educational philosophy and spirit underlying the text is still with us in our everyday moral psychology and school culture, even if it has been rapidly disappearing (or disintegrating) for the last few decades.

their personality.

The significance of the Neo-Confucian teaching from *the Elementary Learning* usually lies in its greater attention to ‘the social process’ of building a good character, and how it can contribute to individual self-development. The high level of specificity in instructing young people’s physical aspects of self-cultivation, namely, person’s comportment, dress and habits of eating and drinking as a way of disciplining oneself and reverencing others seems to assume a strong connection between the orientation of physical body and moral character. That is, a ritual act itself would somehow empower them into a good character; the former is considered the mirror of the latter. A person’s posture and carriage would both reveal his (or her) character *and* influence upon forming it. Thus, learning at this stage is not just to master prescribed code of behaviors but also to *internalize* the idea that behavioral prescriptions and role models most effectively inform one’s character. This is why it is extremely important in Confucian education for young people to learn how to *unconditionally* accord their bodily orientations and behaviors to the specific prescriptions of conducts instructed by the elderly and the text without reflecting or raising questions on the norms themselves underlying the behavioral codes. It will form their character by way of shaping their moral psychology, i.e., orienting their every little emotion and attitude for their everyday situations in accordance to a set of Confucian norms. On this first stage of teaching, evoking action is more important than reflection. Here we may say that this process of building a good character is the very process of shaping *the social or ritualized body* in terms of reality thesis.

But how convincing is the Confucian assumption of a strong connection between the orientation of physical body and moral character (of the social body)? It may not be as convincing as we think it would be for two reasons. First, it seems to be *empirically* possible to conform to the prescribed behavioral norms and rituals without the expected moral psychology accompanied. We can *pretend* to conform to them, if it is necessary. In fact, most of us who have not reached the level of “the noble man” in the Confucian sense can be said not to be fully free from this pretension since only “the noble man” can succeed in finding “the Way” in the sense that his every little act in the everyday life *naturally* goes along with the heaven’s Way without involuntary wills on his part. Second, it is *logically* possible to conceive another set of behavioral norms and rituals the commitment to which can lead young people into the individual self-cultivation, or perfection of one’s character, which is the ultimate purpose of the Confucian education. In other words, the specific codes of behavioral norms and rituals prescribed by the text can be said to be arbitrary in connection to the Confucian ideal of self-cultivation; the connection is not necessary, but contingent. This means that there is *no guarantee* to make

a shift from the former to the latter. Then, what is the point of Confucian ritual as a way of physical self-cultivation? Or what would possibly facilitate the connection between them in Confucian education?

It seems that one's participation in Confucian ritual *somehow* facilitates the connection between *li* and good character. The question is how it does this. At this point, we may need to call out the reality thesis discussed earlier, and ask: What is 'the work' that Confucian ritual does in facilitating the *actual* connection between them? How does it do the job? We can say that Confucian ritual does this job by awakening *jen*(仁, benevolence or love of others) in the participant. This potential answer directs our attention to the relation between *li*(禮) and *jen*(仁) in the formation of the Confucian self. And Herbert Fingarette, a well-known Confucian scholar, gives us a helpful description of the relation between *li*(禮) and *jen*(仁). He says:

Li and *jen* are two aspects of the same thing. Each points to an aspect of the action of man in his distinctively human role. *Li* directs our attention to the traditional social pattern of conduct and relationships; *jen* directs our attention to the person as the one who pursues that patterns of conduct and thus maintains those relationships. *Li* also refers to the particular act in its status as exemplification of invariant norm; *jen* refers to the act as expressive of an orientation of the person, as expressing his commitment to act as prescribed by *li*. *Li* refers to the act as overt and distinguishable pattern of sequential behaviors; *jen* refers to the act as the single indivisible gesture of an actor, as his, and as particular and individual by reference to the unique individual who performs the act and to the unique context of the particular action.

Our more familiar Western terminology would be misleading. We are tempted to go further than I have above and to say *jen* refers to the attitudes, feelings, wishes and will... (Fingarette, 1972, 42-43).

Interestingly enough, Fingarette describes *li* and *jen* as two different aspects of *the same thing*; *li* refers to the observable bodily objectification of patterns of conduct, whereas *jen* to an act that expresses the orientation of the particular actor *as a person* who delivers *li*. But, as suggested in the last part of the passage, Fingarette keeps warning us that we should not take *li* as an overt and objective behavior *in contrast* with *jen* as a subjective inner state, as the dualistic Cartesian mindset in the West often mistakenly conceives the human mind. In fact, this is why Fingarette starts with the sentence which says that "*li* and *jen* are two aspects of *the same thing*."

But what does he mean by ‘the same thing’ here? One interpretation could be that they are ‘ontologically’ the same thing. What does this mean? By this I mean that they are interconnected in their origin or derived from each other. Let me explain why this can be the case by exploring some textual evidence. Confucius says in *the Analects* in responding to the question raised by his disciple on how to *be jen*:

He who can submit oneself to *li* is *jen* (*The Analects*, 12:1, trans. Fingarette, 1972, 42)

When abroad, behave *as though* you were receiving an important guest.

When employing the service of the common people, behave *as though* you were officiating at an important sacrifice.

Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire. (*The Analects*, 12:2, trans. Lau, 1979, 109)

Man of *jen* helps others to take their stand in that he himself wishes to take his stand, and gets others there in that he himself wishes to get there. The ability to take as analogy what is near at hand can be called the method of *jen* (*The Analects*, 6:30, trans. Fingarette, 1972, 41)

The first passage says that being *jen* is all about being able to submit oneself to *li*. This phrase sounds surprisingly puzzling to modern ears since it says that all we need to do to *be jen* (humane or benevolent) is to obey to the specific norms of actions rectified by *li*. But the second passage gives us some clues towards a more intelligent understanding of the phrase. It suggests that one’s observance of *li* is not a mechanical nor even a practical process; it is a *symbolic* process since we are supposed to deliver *li* in a certain manner, that is, *an as-if mode*. This symbolic process of imagining other hypothetical situations in delivering *li* seems to give the practitioner a certain normative orientation, which leads into *being jen*. The last passage clearly specifies that being *jen* can be cultivated by our ability to make the as-if analogy given the situation we are in.

By connecting this to the reality thesis, we can make sense of my claim that *li* and *jen* are ‘ontologically’ the same thing. First, as Fingarette holds that *jen* develops *only* so far as *li* develops (1972, 48), they can be said to be *developmentally* connected. The more one practices *li* up to the point of naturalizing it as part of oneself, the more he or she turns into being *jen* or being humane. How? It was said earlier that ritual primarily acts to *restructure* our bodies in every doing of our acts. By restructuring our bodies, ritual

involves the setting up of the fundamental *schemes* of the world in us whose deployment works to produce the ritualized body, i.e., schemes of social oppositions of the elderly and the young, or man and woman. This means that submitting oneself to *li* is the social process of embodied internalization of the *underlying schemes* of *li*, which prepares the social body with the ability to cultivate *jen* in it; for the latter is developed with one's ability for the symbolic manipulation of the very schemes at given situations. For example, we cannot have profound and intelligent filial pieties toward one's parents unless one has practical knowledge about how to behave in specific socio-familial relations as well as extensive experiences by participation in the specific social and family affairs, and the practical knowledge and experiences are made possible only with the embodied schemes of the social and cosmic world. This means that *jen* is to be developed out of one's observance of *li*, which restructures our body with the basic Confucian schemes of oppositions and differentiations that order the universe and society.

Secondly, being *jen* by submitting oneself to *li* is not just a matter of being familiarized with *practical* knowledge on how to do things in certain social situations. It is a matter of being able to attentively appreciate the *symbolic* meanings of the conducts rectified by *li*. More specifically, being *jen* is deeply related to our ability to attribute some *idealized* meanings and purposes to the social norms rectified by *li*, as indicated by the 'as though' phrases above. It can be described as a *personal* process of appropriation of social norms rectified by *li*. Thus, we can say that the observance of *li*, which equips us with bodily schemes of social norms, teaches young people not only practical skills on how to behave; it also evokes some *power* over them that awakens *jen* as their imaginative capability for the idealization of the norms they submit to. Where does this power come from about *li*, then?

Third, I think that the observance of *li* could lead us to actively conjure up Confucian ritual acts *as real* because, as the reality thesis says earlier, ritual dynamics afford and develop our experience of order as well as our sense of fit between the taxonomic order and the real world of experience. It makes us find this connection so natural and organic as if it were part of the world. And the very sense of naturalness is likely to create a sense of *sacredness* in us who deliver *li*. This means that the successfully ritualized body, let's say, the noble man (君子, *junzi*), would, willingly and repeatedly, *conjure up* Confucian ritual acts *as real with a sense of sacredness*, especially when he has an *organic* sense of fit between his instincts of the ritualized body and the environment in which it acts. This sense of sacredness can deeply touch the participants and awaken their sense of *jen*. Ritual acts can give them an ontological orientation to life with a fulfilled sense of finding themselves as part of the universe. We can see here that

li and *jen* are ontologically inseparable because they depend upon each other in generating the ritualized body.

On the other hand, in distinguishing one from the other, Fingarette emphasizes above the nature of *li* as a set of *patterned* behavior and the nature of *jen* as an act of a *particular person*. While warning us not to take them as dualistic, namely ‘an overt act of *li*’ versus ‘inner mental state of *jen*’, he seems rather to highlight the *social* or *collective* dimension of *li* and *jen*’s special connection to *the person* who delivers the acts. Thus, we may conclude that *li* and *jen* refer to the same act, but address different dimensions of the same act: *li* addresses the social or public dimension of one’s conduct performed by the ritualized body, whereas *jen* the personal orientation or commitment reflected in the same conduct.

Fingarette further articulates the differences as follows:

Li stresses the act as overt, the series of movement through space and time. As such, the act is analyzable into segments, into a series of steps, each step a prerequisite for its successor. There is therefore a way to carry out *li*, but not so with *jen*. When we look at action from the standpoint of the actor, we use categories that do not provide us with complex patterns of action analyzable into spatial and temporal relationships but with “simple” acts. To put it another way; to look at an act from the standpoint of the actor is not to shift from outer space and time, and to look instead into an inner mysterious realm, but it is to characterize the act in terms of categories that do not have the same logical features as the ones that characterize the act as overt behavior (Fingarette, 1972, 49).

Fingarette holds that two different logical features govern *li* and *jen*: one analyzable in spatial and temporal terms and the other not so. Even if Fingarette seems to be interested in articulating the logical differences between them, I am more interested in articulating how a dynamic shift from *li* to *jen* or from *jen* to *li* internal to an actor, takes place. This shift is supposed to take place in the ritualized body, a shift from *li* as the *external imposition* of social norms to *jen* as the *personal appropriation* of *li*, which is key to the formation of good character. Even if we cannot take for granted this shift, practicing *li* seems to be the *necessary* means to be *jen*. This is why Fingarette holds that practicing *li* with *persistence* is the only way to secure the participant the way to be *jen* (1972, 51).

Thus, we may conclude that the practice of *li* facilitates *jen* by making one embody the schemes of *li* in one’s participation in *li*, and that *jen* secures and fulfills *li* by making

one relive *li* through one's active interpretation of the symbolic meanings of the schemes. Here the relation between *li* and *jen* in shaping the ritualized body looks circular. But it is not an empty circularity; in the process, a human power seems to be created. It is a power that emanates from human beings as actors in ritual, and it is directed toward other human beings and influences them (Fingarette, 1972, 54). The way this human power is produced in Confucian ritual could look miraculous or mysterious, especially when one's participation in *li* often looks so mechanical. But the practice of *li* itself is dynamic and alive if participants try to persist with it in pursuit of *jen*. It is a way of re-orienting one's whole being, living in a new way at every moment of practicing *li* with an act of *jen*. If we follow the reality thesis, we can say that, with this humanizing act at every moment, one can create one's reality in a new way where one lives.

4. Conclusion

This essay starts with a *deliberate* suspicion about our inheritance of Confucian ritual, only to reconsider it as a legitimate educational resource for our future generation. It is attempted not because Confucian ritual is simply *ours*, but because we realize that there is no way we east Asians can get away from it: it deeply constrains us, that is, constraining not only the way we see the world but also the way we orient ourselves in life; it has shaped our whole mode of being. This recognition should lead us to appreciate more of what is unique about an east-Asian tradition of humanities embodied in our tendency to obey social norms or ritual formality, which is usually considered negative in contrast with the western tradition of humanities that emphasizes free-thinking or independent-mindedness.

In making this argument relevant to contemporary schooling in east Asia, one of the biggest challenges would be to create a form of educational ritual where the circularity between *li* and *jen* is made *more* dynamic and productive, rather than mechanical and routine. To do so, it seems inevitable that we examine more consciously the implicit varieties of hierarchical schemes of Confucian norms and see how they could be revised in such a way as to be compatible with the horizontal schemes of modernity. The schemes behind any educational ritual need to be reasonably coherent with each other while loosely connected; otherwise, it would be hard to invite young participants to engage in the ritual with lived experiences.

Lastly, I want to add that my educational interest in Confucian ritual, which looks somewhat politically conservative, hides an ambition for a new perspective on education. In contrast to the view of education in east Asia, which has traditionally taken ritual as

central to humanities education, as well as to the view of modern education in general, which tend to take ritual as a pre-modern tool for social control, I think that ritualization can potentially be a good pedagogical tool as the strategic embodiment of schemes for power relationship that can promote the forces that have been traditionally thought to work against social solidarity or control. Bell's words below may support this somewhat seemingly paradoxical possibility for the creation of modern subjectivity that is embedded in east-Asian culture:

It is possible that ritualization itself can generate and deploy such bifurcations of the self as that described by Durkheim as “two things facing in different and almost contrary directions.” If so, it would be a feature of ritualization in a particular historical and cultural setting, a setting in which such schemes would have some efficacious value outside the ritual (Bell, 1992, 217).

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Learning to Be Human in East Asia: In Taiwan's Regard

Ruyu HUNG

National Chiayi University

Executive Committee Member, TPES

Part I: A Brief Introduction of Taiwan Philosophy of Education Society (TPES) (臺灣教育哲學學會)

First, I wish to thank the Philosophy of Education Society of Japan (JPES) for inviting me to speak at the Annual conference of the PESJ. As the Executive Committee Member of the Taiwan Philosophy Society (TPES), I make a brief introduction of TPES. I sincerely hope that the TPES and the JPES can build a very good collaborative relationship to improve the research and teaching of philosophy of education in East Asia. Then I will address my thoughts about 'Learning to be human' from the perspective of a Taiwan's philosopher of education.

Taiwan Philosophy of Education Society (TPES) was formally founded in March 19, 2016. The goal of TPES is to facilitate the teaching and research in philosophy of education, and to create a professional network among researchers and teachers. Before the formation of the society, a small group of scholars who taught philosophy of education in universities already did periodical seminars or reading groups for decades. The scale of these activities was usually small because of lacking funding. With the formal establishment of the society, the TPES is able to do academic activities and publish journals with support of members and funding from governmental or nongovernmental sectors.

The first annual conference was held in May 2017. It was a success at the national and international levels. The number of the overall participants was over 150 and that of presented papers around 60. There were international guest speakers and participants from Japan, Australia, the US and Korea. However, compared with PESs in China, Korea and Japan, TPES has a smaller population. At the present time, the officially registered

members are between 70 and 80. Although the number of the member is relatively small, we still manage to publish an official journal of the society – the *Journal of Taiwan Philosophy of Education* (臺灣教育哲學期刊). It is a rigorous peer-reviewed publication and publishes two issues a year. The first issue was released in March 2017. As a newly founded academic organisation, TPES is earnestly looking forward to develop international collaboration with colleagues and academia of neighbouring countries – among them, JPES is one the best fellow organisations to work with.

Part II

Learning to be human is the most profound goal for education, particularly in East Asian cultures. ‘To be human’ or ‘to humanise’ in Chinese is 成人(or 成為人). 人 means ‘human’ whereas 成 (or 成為) ‘to be’, ‘to become’, ‘to complete’ or ‘to accomplish’. In the Confucian tradition, to be human is not only to grow up. The most important point for a person to be human is to develop moral characters. The highest or noblest moral virtue is 仁, which is often translated as benevolence. Etymologically the word 仁 means two (二) persons (人). Benevolence denotes the proper, moral, and right relationship between persons. A person who has virtues can build the proper, moral and appropriate interpersonal relationship with others. In the *Analects*, Zilù (子路) asked Confucius about how to become a complete human person. Confucius answered that if one person has the following virtues, he is qualified to be fully human. These virtues include ‘the knowledge of Zang Wu Zhong, the freedom from covetousness of Gong Chuo, the bravery of Zhuang of Bian, and the varied talents of Ran Qiu; add to these the accomplishments of the rules of propriety and music.’ (Legge 1861, 14.12)¹ However, these virtues may change from time to time because Confucius continues to say, ‘But what is the necessity for a complete man of the present day to have all these things? The man, who in the view of gain, thinks of righteousness; who in the view of danger is prepared to give up his life; and who does not forget an old agreement however far back it extends – such a man may be reckoned a COMPLETE man.’ (Legge 1861, 14.12)² Following this, we might ask: what does it mean to be human in the 21st century? For educators, what does it mean by teaching or learning to be human in modern societies?

In modern Taiwan, the Confucian view of humanity still has a great impact even

¹ 臧武仲之知，公綽之不欲，卞莊子之勇，冉求之藝，文之以禮樂。(論語，憲問 14.12)

² 今之成人者何必然？見利思義，見危授命，久要不忘平生之言，亦可以為成人矣。(論語，憲問 14.12)

though it is centuries-old. Confucian virtues like filial piety for parents (孝親) and respect for elders (尊長) are still important parts of character education proposed by the Ministry of Education. In addition, some modern or Western values are included in the popular view. In my view, the mainstream (or official) view adopts a modern progressive and child-centred education position with a mixture of traditional Confucian ideas. In a certain sense, the adoption of progressive virtues is to modernise Confucian humanistic education on the practical level. Let me take the National Curriculum Guidelines of 12-Year Basic Education (MOE, 2014) as an example of the official as well as the popular view to reveal the generally accepted conception of the human being.

The latest official guidelines were announced in 2014 and put into practice in 2018. According to the fundamental idea of the guidelines, three points are drawn. First, the goal of the state education is to develop younger generations into autonomous individuals who can self-motivate and self-teach. Second, individuals are seen as co-existents, or in Heidegger's (1962) term, *Mit-sein* (Being-with), who are living among others. Third, the final end of education is to build a harmonious and organic community that everyone shares with each other. The goals of the official education, in my view, are the beneficiary of Confucianism and progressivism.

Let us take a closer look. The learner rather than the teacher is the key of education. The child-centeredness of progressive education is recognised in Taiwan's formal education. We can find many vocabularies that the national curriculum guidelines share with progressive education, such as 'learning by doing', 'experiential learning', 'integrated and crossing disciplinary curriculum', 'democracy', 'human rights', 'community spirit and service', 'lifelong learning', etc. However, these terms are not simply transplanted from the West to Taiwan. They have been contextualised and reborn in Confucian culture. For example, the key difference of the 2014 guidelines from the 2008 edition lies at the replacement of 'basic ability' (基本能力) with 'core competence' (核心素養). 'Core competence' refers to the knowledge, abilities and attitudes that are required to develop a complete human being with adaptability and resilience (MOE, 2014). There are 9 dimensions of the core competence. If we take a careful examination of the contents of the 9 dimensions of the core competence, we will find concepts entailing Confucian merits including 'moral practice', 'appreciation of beauty and good', 'virtues of knowing good, doing good, and enjoying good', 'friendly interpersonal relationship', 'being altruistic and gregarious', etc. The self as target of the national curriculum is a person who is an active individual and simultaneously a gregarious and sociable human being. These terms are the modern interpretation of the characters of the Confucian self as the Confucian learning revolves around morality. Learning is to be a moral human being, to

be good in terms of Confucian ethics. Within the Confucian heritage cultural sphere, to be a morally good person means to be a good team player of the community, as a moral vanguard of the society to maintain social solidarity and enable people to live in harmony and prosperity (Tu, 1988).

In addition to the progressive-Confucian inclination, the guidelines also assume pragmatic values. Compared with the previous guidelines, a new learning field of science and technology is added as a requisite subject in the curriculum from year 7 to year 12 (MOE, 2016). The learning field of science and technology includes two main subjects: information technology and technology for daily life. The aim of this learning field is to develop students' ability to use knowledge of science, technology, engineering, mathematics and design in a coordinative way. As the official curriculum guidelines (2016) reveal, preparing students for employment on the pretext of developing logical thinking ability plays an important role. The human subject targeted by the official curriculum is a technician, a programmer, or an engineer. More importantly, he or she is supposed to be a fully prepared employee ready for the information industry after finishing 12 year basic education. Therefore, the human subject aimed for by the official curriculum, by the government, society or state should be useful and usable. The goal of the official curriculum is to prepare workforce for business sectors, industry, or economy. As the official curriculum represents the public educational policy, the public education is strongly outcome-oriented for producing effective workforce. The outcomes-based education anticipates to building effective human resources. The human subject then is reduced as an instrument of industry. This view somehow narrows down and dilutes the meaning of education and humanity.

There have been many criticisms about the outcome-based education with the preference for cultivating workforce for business or industry (Berlach & McNaught, 2007; Biesta, 2007, 2009; Martin & Alderson, 2007; Lee, 2003; Towers, 1992). I do not mean to reject the demand of ICT workforce and the corresponding response of policy of formal education. what concerns me is that the concepts of 'usability' and 'usefulness', and the relatives like 'practicability', 'accountability', 'measurement' and others, powerfully dominate educational discourse and limit the meaning of humanity as the end of education – if cultivating humanity is the end of education. In modern times, the virtues valued in the Chinese traditional values of hierarchical society are transformed, some eliminated, displaced, accommodated, or reserved. One thing is for sure, that is, community life and common values are both cherished in the Confucian and progressive-pragmatic traditions. Thus the human person in the popular educational papers is targeted to be a team player. In addition to the pragmatic ideas catering for capitalist marketisation,

what else can we envision for education and human beings? Can we imagine human beings otherwise? Dare we imagine an education for, say, anarchists? Do we dare to propose an otherwise way of thinking education for human being?

Attempting to imagine the otherwise education, I take the ‘dao-de-construction’ approach, which is formed with the inspirations of Daoism and the philosophy of deconstruction. Drawing on Caputo and Derrida (1997, p. 79), ‘to explore what [the tradition] omits, forgets, excludes, expels, marginalizes, dismisses, ignores, scorns, slights, takes too lightly, waves off,’ is the serious way of treating the tradition. And that is not enough. The deconstructive reading needs to be transgressive, and yet, transgression is ‘a passage to the limit (*passage à limites, à frontières*), the crossing of a well-drawn border that we all share, giving something straight a new bent or twist’ (Caputo & Derrida, 1997, p. 81). In a similar tone, I seek inspirations from the Daoist philosopher Zhuangzi as he provides abundant insights about the marginalised or the dismissed by the tradition. In many aspects Zhuangzi counters and problematises, disturbs and deconstruct the normal. Besides Zhuangzi, an American-Taiwanese artist Tehching Hsieh who displays the remarkable performance art to interfere and unsettle what has been taken for granted. The Hsieh-Zhuangzian approach offers the dao-deconstructive approach to education to be human with regard to the abnormal body.

Zhuangzi’s Abnormal Body: The Deformed Body

Zhuangzi is taken as one of the most creative philosophers ever. His book *Zhuangzi* named after the author is listed in the greatest literary and philosophical masterpieces. The *Zhuangzi* text is an anthology, of which is a very unique literary style. It tells a lot of interesting, fascinating, and ridicules stories about real and imaginary figures. The most captivating and unusual figures addressed in the *Zhuangzi* are the handicapped people, whose bodies are impaired or deformed. In the ancient society, the handicapped people are supposed to be the most vulnerable and weakest, and perhaps the most discriminated and hated. Yet in the *Zhuangzi* the bodily impairments or weird bodily movements do not cause failure or difficulty to the body-knowing and the fulfilment of the self. Furthermore, it is the defective or deformed body that a True Human Person (真人) or a Perfect Human Person (至人) is fleshed out.

The handicapped people that Zhuangzi presents include the Master of the Right (右師), Shu the Deformed (支離疏), Wang Tái the De-footed (兀者王骀), Shen Tújia the De-footed (兀者申徒嘉), Shú Shan the Toeless (叔山無趾), Ai Táita the Ugly (惡人哀

駘它), Yin Chí the Cripple without Lips (闔跂支離無脣), and Wòn Yan the Goitre (甕盎大癭). These handicapped people, in the public eye, are often taken as worthless, useless, hopeless, miserable, disgusting and repulsive. Yet as Zhuangzi addresses, they live in the way that is in accord with nature, with dao. Their lives are not as miserable or pathetic as ordinary people thought. Instead, the way they live is so calm, peaceful and carefree that ordinary people cannot be. These handicapped people do not only live in serenity but also satisfy people in an unexpected way. For example, Ai Táita the Ugly has a most terrifying and repulsive look but whoever comes near him is attracted by him and loves to stay with his company (Zhuangzi, 5.4; trans. Legge, 1891). Why does the ugly man have such charms? As Zhuangzi replies, Ai Táita is indeed ‘all-powerful’ (全才) with hidden virtues (德不形). What does it mean by ‘all-powerful’?

According to Zhuangzi, the power is the ability to follow the nature, keep intrinsic nature pure and intact, and carry out the inner potential to the fullest. Having such a power is a virtue. To initiate the power needs to work with nature, otherwise there will be disturbances or conflicts. The Perfect Human Person does not only self-realise but also enables other beings to self-fulfil in peace. Due to the power of enabling all beings to be who or what they really are, Ai Táita the Ugly is therefore esteemed as a Perfect Human Person.

The handicapped people, who are supposed to obtain help from others, as a matter of fact, are able to give help and support to other normal people. Shu the Deformed is described as with shocking and extreme deformities: ‘His chin seemed to hide his navel; his shoulders were higher than the crown of his head; the knot of his hair pointed to the sky; his five viscera were all compressed into the upper part of his body, and his two thigh bones were like ribs.’ (Zhuangzi, 1.4.7; trans. Legge, 1891)³ Despite of the deformities, Shu is surprisingly productive. ‘By sharpening needles and washing clothes he was able to make a living. By sifting rice and cleaning it, he was able to support ten individuals.’ (Zhuangzi, 1.4.7; trans. Legge, 1891)⁴ In this vein, the handicapped person is more useful and helpful than ordinary people.

Overall, the handicapped people presented by Zhuangzi all go beyond the expectation of ordinary people. They do not have any indignation at their bodily deformities, whether these impairment are born or caused by other reasons. Nor do they seek for repairs, remedies or compensations of their deformities. It is noteworthy that these people do not ask help from others but rather provide help to the world. The

³ 支離疏者，頤隱於臍，肩高於頂，會撮指天，五管在上，兩髀為脅。(莊子人間世, 4.7)

⁴ 挫鍼治繒，足以餬口；鼓筴播精，足以食十人。(莊子人間世, 4.7)

handicapped people, to our surprise, embody Daoist virtues through deformed body to exemplify the Daoist ideal human person. By these characters Zhuangzi poses questions regarding ethics, aesthetics, and language. These questions are still irritating and thought-provoking today. The terms such as ‘handicapped’, ‘crippled’, ‘deaf’, ‘blind’ and others, are taken as discriminative or too strong, and thus they are replaced by terms like ‘disabled’, ‘physically challenged’, ‘visually impaired’, and ‘hearing-impaired’. However, in Zhuangzi, the disabled person becomes the ablest one. The physically challenged person does not have difficulty in his life. On the contrary, he does great help to others. As a matter of fact, those who are with deformities and supposed to be ‘challenged’, rebound the challenge. It is us normal people who are challenged.

Tehching Hsieh’s Abnormal Body: The Suspended Body

The stories of deformed body in Zhuangzi can be seen as metaphorical strategy, similar to what Edmund Husserl (1982) called, *epoché*, or ‘bracketing’. It is to question and suspend the taken-for-granted beliefs, presuppositions, biases and conventions, and lay them aside. The stories of the deformity show the body as a thinking method, a powerful metaphor that breaks the habitual way of thought. The deformed body is able to deconstruct the accepted and so be the ‘body in suspension’. Here I take a Taiwanese American artist Tehching Hsieh (謝德慶) as an example to demonstrate the suspended body displayed in his performance art. In my way of reading, Hsieh’s body art intriguingly speaks Zhuangzi’s language.

At the present time Tehching Hsieh is representing Taiwan at the 57th Venice Biennale in 2017 with an exhibition in Italy. The discussion about Hsieh’s art in this symposium sounds an unexpected interesting echo.

Between September 1978 and July 1986 Hsieh accomplished five separate extraordinary yearlong performance artworks. His sixth epic work is a thirteen year plan which began on 31 December 1986 and came to a close at the turn of the millennium. For an artist, six pieces of artwork are few. However, as ‘the scale, nature and affects’ of Hsieh’s artworks really display a particular intensity, he is recognised as ‘something of a cult figure’ (Heathfield & Hsieh, 2009, p. 11). Especially, his artworks or lifeworks in a particular sense incorporate Zhuangzi’s unusual body.

Hsieh’s first *One Year Performance 1978-1979* (Cage Piece) was to lock himself in a wooden 11’ 6”X9’X8’ cage without any communication with anyone, without reading, writing, listening to the radio or watching television. He remained alone in a strict solitary

confinement and deprived ‘himself of almost all means of communication and cultural stimulation’ (ibid, p. 24). During this year, audience members were able to visit Hsieh on selected days. The artist made no response whatsoever.

The second piece, *One Year Performance 1980-1981*, is usually called Time Clock Piece. From 11 April 1980 to 11 April 1981, Hsieh made himself punch a time clock every hour, on the hour, 24 hours a day for a whole year. Each time he punched, he took a picture of himself. As he was unable to do the punch-in for 133 times, at last he had overall 8,627 mugshots for making a 6-minute movie.

Hsieh’s third lifework, *One Year Performance 1981-1982*, is generally known as Outdoor Piece. He spent one year outdoors, not going inside, not entering any building or shelter of any kind, such as a building, subway, train, car, airplane, ship, cave, and tent. During this year he took an extreme form of homeless street life. He had a sleeping bag and a radio set. It is extremely freezing in winter in New York City. Therefore, Hsieh needed to know about the weather on the radio to prepare himself. Every day he wandered through the streets of Manhattan and depicted his walking route on the map. In total he created 365 walking route maps.

The fourth piece, *Art / Life: One Year Performance 1983-1984*, or Rope Piece, was performed by Hsieh and Linda Montano from 4 July 1983 to 4 July 1984. These two artists were tied by an 8-foot-long rope for a year without touching each other.

Hsieh’s final One Year Performance 1985-1986 is the so-called No Art piece. On 1 July 1985 Hsieh embarked on the lifework and announced the inaugural statement that he would ‘not do ART, not talk ART, not see ART, not read ART, not go to ART gallery and ART museum for one year’ (ibid., p. 296). He would not do anything related to art. Compared with his previous works, this piece left very little artefacts except the declaration of intent and its initial poster (ibid.). The artist was forbidden to experience or produce art in any way although this was paradoxically a yearlong artwork. This No Art Piece was a precursor of the artist’s next as well as the final lifework – *Tehching Hsieh 1986–1999* (Thirteen Year Plan).

On 31 December 1986 Hsieh published the statement of the Thirteen Year Plan. He declared that he would make art during the time without showing it publically. On New Year’s Day 2000 Hsieh issued his concluding report with two simple sentences: ‘I kept myself alive. I passed the December 31, 1999.’ He then completely stopped creating art.

Hsieh’s lifeworks can be understood from many aspects. Here I only explore the dimension in relation to the body with deformity in Zhuangzi. The body with deformity refers to the being that is not concordant with others in a certain way. It suspends our aesthetics, ethical, cognitive, and ontological judgements. In this view, Hsieh’s body in

these artworks can be said as incorporating deformity for his suspension of the 'normal' way of life. Zhuangzi's discourse and Hsieh's practice are different forms of manifestation of bodily suspension, which is to deconstruct, undo the taken-for-granted, the accustomed, the accepted, the established, and the ready-made.

Hsieh's performance artworks demonstrate a series of undoing the self by disengaging the body from the comfort zone, locating the body in the place and time that is out of order. The temporality and spatiality of the body's kinestics questions and interrogates viewers. Like Zhuangzi's handicapped men, the artist interrupts, disturbs and annoys the senses of viewers. And yet, as the artists announces, there is no art but life. Or, I should put it this way, there is no art without life.

The Cage Piece presents the state of being strictly confined, physically and psychologically, since the artist was nearly disconnected with the world. There is no interaction between him and the world. Not giving a word to anyone else, not receiving a word from other people, Hsieh disengaged himself from the rest of the world except in the space of the cell measuring 11' 6"X9'X8'. Within the cell with little space and extremely poor facilities, the artist was imprisoned in the state of heavy material deprivation. Besides, Hsieh set the rule against contacting with other people. The double deprivation – mental and physical – minimised the artist's life to the simplest and purest. There was no stimulus form outside. The situation was similar to a monk's retreat, near monasticism because the worldly pursuits were renounced. At the same time, the artist lived the animal life. He exposed himself when feeding, sleeping, washing, discharging urine and excrement in front of viewers. Such exposure deprived him of the human dignity. What then was left in the cage, so to speak, was the self. The self comes to the questions concerning freedom and restraints, existence and subjectivity, speech and thought, time and space, art and life. The creation of the Outdoor Piece drives the artist into an extremely deprived and harsh situation and therefore he became disempowered and disabled in some way. Hsieh's artworks demonstrate that free spirit would not be bound by any cage or cultural artefact. This works echoes the Daoist philosopher Laozi's having nothing but simultaneously relaxing in the beings of the world.

The Time Clock Piece shows rigid serialisation and routinisation of the time. It is a way of doing time as well as undoing time (Heathfield & Hsieh, 2009). It is doing time because in daily life ordinary people are not particularly aware of the flow of time. They only speak, act, eat, sleep and work in the normal pace. At some point a certain accident makes the moment powerfully impressed, and thus people suddenly and clearly come to grips with temporality. We live most of our life without clear consciousness of the time. The punch-ins separate and regulate the time flow and thereby make time sensible,

intelligible and visible. Each punch-in is a registration of time which ‘was accompanied by exposure, by a capture of his body in the still instant of the photogram’ (Ibid., p. 32). The invisible yearlong period of time is embodied and condensed in a six-minute movie. The visualisation of time is to undo time by replacing temporality with spatiality. The inseparable duration of time is reorganised as a collections of images. The problem: if temporality is, as Heidegger (1962) states, fundamental to the ontological and existential construction of Dasein, what being one becomes when he does time by undoing time, or when he undoes time by doing time?

Hsieh’s artworks encounter viewers with open-ended questions, however, the answers to which are difficult to define. Hsieh’s fifth and sixth lifeworks confuse the boundary between art and life. In what sense is the No Art Piece an artwork if there is no art, neither imitation, nor representation, in Plato’s term? Is mere living art? Then what is the nature of art? Nor can we find any trace of imitation or representation from the Thirteen Year Plan because the ‘artist’ refused publication of anything during this period of time. Is the refusal itself an art? This artwork reframes art as an ‘open possibility’ (Heathfield & Hsieh, 2009, p. 58). Viewers have to seek or construct the answer by themselves. Moreover, the Thirteen Year Plan Piece paradoxically demonstrates the invisibility, inaudibility and intactility of art. These qualities (or non-qualities) project towards Zhuangzi’s chaos – the undifferentiated one. In Zhuangzi (Legge, 1891), chaos is the ruler of the centred land but he does not have seven orifices to see, smell, breathe, eat and hear. The rulers of southern and northern oceans drill orifices on chaos to give him senses. However, chaos dies when seven orifices are made. Hsieh keeps his art from being sensed by the public is to keep art in chaos. This work’s not being seen, heard, viewed, and communicated by others makes it chaos-like. The viewer does not know anything created during these years. This artwork embodies non-knowledge and non-art as chaos – something cannot be made sense of.

Overall Hsieh’s body arts with Zhuangzi’s inspiration reminds us that a human being is a flowing body-subject that travels around various states of being, being born and young, being ill and old, being strong and handsome, being ugly and weak, being admired, or being rejected. The states of being alive cannot be exhaustively addressed but only experienced. No one state can be undergone once and for all.

Concluding Remarks

In what sense can the stories of handicapped people told by Zhuangzi and Hsieh’s body

artworks enlighten East Asian education that has been committed to standardisation, credentialism, elitism, and accountability for a long time? Overall, the abnormal body of Zhuangzi and Hsieh deconstructs the normal human subject, that is, the weird, deformed, defective, abjected body deconstructs the ritualised, moralised, and respected body. By doing so, Zhuangzi and Hsieh unsettle the accepted values systems, ideologies, and institution of education. They show the possibility of pedagogy of deconstruction because they both provide ways of ‘crossing the borders, establishing new themes, new problems, new ways, new approaches to new problems’ (Caputo & Derrida, 1997, p. 7). Education is not only about maintaining the *status quo*, but also about creating and opening up new spaces regarding ethics, aesthetics, metaphysics, and epistemology. The understanding of good and evil, right and wrong, beauty and ugliness, truth and falsehood, reality and illusion, should be examined again and again.

Second, Zhuangzi and Hsieh demonstrate the profound resilience of the extraordinary people who have a free spirit to transcend the ordinary life. Those people with handicapped, ugly or deformed bodies, or the people who chose to live an eccentric life, are often detested, excluded and rejected due to their weird looks or outlandishness. Yet in Zhuangzi the deformities do not limit their potential or creativity. They play a far more important role than normal people in helping others. Likewise, Hsieh’s performance art made him rejected when he kept himself outdoors and homeless-like, or disabled when he alienated himself from anything related to art or the public. However, it is because the body is such a *bête noire*, who is avoided, and sometimes, rejected and excluded from the majority. He thus is in solitude. Let us push the idea a bit further. Being at a distance with people – being alone, or being self – is an alternative way of existence. Being alone is the first step of practising Zhuangzi’s ‘mind-fasting’ (xinzhai, 心齋) – mind-emptying. In the state of mind-fasting, one is able to hear without ears, and see without eyes. He is able to be free from sensual interferences and external temptations to attain great serenity.

The juxtaposition of Zhuangzi and Hsieh helps us to examine the meaning and purpose of education through a lens different from the mainstream one. Whether or not we accept Nussbaum’s (1998) suggestion that the process of living is all about cultivating humanity (Todd, 2015), cultivating humanity is surely one of the most important issues concerning the end of education. Zhuangzi and Hsieh bring a new light to how we understand human existence, humanity and education. I do not mean to reject the Confucian-progressive view of humanity as the goal of education. What I mean is that the traditional or popular view of humanity and education must be interfered, disturbed and challenged. With this regard, the alternative ways of human existence and

conceptions of humanity will and should be tolerated and included, invited and encouraged. Then we may keep the human mind and future open to possibilities although there could be dangers and difficulties. Education is not only about peacekeeping, but also about risk taking. Being a normal body is to be a team player and live safely within the community whereas being an abnormal body is to live in the unexpected and uncontrollable situation, sometimes alone. However, life can never be rid of changes that include all kinds of imperfections, problems, pains, accidents, threats, hazards, and so on. Zhuangzi's metaphor of deformed body and Hsieh's lifeworks of suspended body help us to grasp the profound understanding that learning to be human may be an endless journey without definite ends or specific patterns. To be human never completes, never accomplishes, never ends.

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