Education in the Asia-Pacific Region:
Issues, Concerns and Prospects 26

Shihkuan Hsu
Yuh-Yin Wu *Editors*

Education as Cultivation in Chinese Culture

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Series Editors' Introduction

This book on 'Education as Cultivation in Chinese Culture' explores the significant role of education in the Chinese context and the inherent traditional nuances related to it. At the same time, the authors examine the increasing demands of modern society, through major influences such as globalization, and explore the impact of the challenging concept of 'cultivation' on the education process. 'Cultivation' here, as encompassed in the entire book, is defined through the whole person (i.e. skills and knowledge, as well as morals and virtues), through one's development (i.e. from life's beginning until end) and through relevant social structures which support the traditional values of the society.

The overriding influence of education on development, along with the responsibilities of the child, family and society, is reflected throughout the book. From the more traditional view of the 'ideal' child and the substantial role of the teacher for academic and character development to how philosophies in Ancient China influence the Chinese view of human nature and its connection to education, this book offers a valuable insight into the role of Chinese culture in the education process. Despite the seeming disconnection of Western and Eastern principles as manifested in some of the chapters, the prevailing ideal of the role of education in shaping the child remains unchallenged. In this book, Shihkuan Hsu and Yuh-Yin Wu qualify to emphasize the central role of moral and character development along with academic achievement.

As reflected in this work, the concerted efforts of both the family and society, to achieve and maintain the idyllic child through proper education, will most certainly present challenges to a culture that endures the principle of time-honoured institutions in an increasingly contemporary setting. Likewise, such conciliations in the education process distinctively define the otherwise elusive essence of the Chinese learner.

April 2014

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Chapter 1
Introduction

Shihkuan Hsu

Abstract Education in Chinese culture is a process of cultivation. In education, cultivation is a cultural practice largely based on Confucian values. As a result of this practice, countries or regions with Chinese heritage, mostly in East Asia, have performed well in international educational assessments. International comparative education studies have found that students from these countries spend long hours in school, and they face intensive entrance examinations for senior high schools and universities. These characteristics may be traced back to beliefs in education and the orientation of Chinese culture. Research has documented the phenomena and the cultural foundations for these characteristics. There is more to be learned, however, about how Chinese culture has been influenced by ancient philosophies and how philosophical assumptions interact with people and social structures. Understanding cultural dynamics helps educators explain the roots in the past, the form of schooling in the present, and the ways education can be changed to improve it in the future. Therefore, this book elaborates on the goals and processes of education with accounts from different levels and branches of education. The concept of cultivation will be characterized in three ways. The first aspect of cultivation focuses on the whole person. The Chinese view education as cultivation of the whole person including knowledge and skill as well as morals and virtues. The second aspect of cultivation focuses on growth and development throughout life. Chinese view education as cultivating throughout a persons' life, from the beginning to the end of life, with schooling as a part of the process. The third aspect of cultivation focuses on social structures. Chinese have many social structures that support and reinforce traditional values, such as political forces, examination systems, and social ladders. Analysis of these three aspects of cultivation, accompanied by case studies of schools, mostly in Taiwan, will provide a broader perspective on Chinese education. It will illuminate methods through which Chinese traditions can be preserved, revised, or transformed during the challenges of globalization.

Keywords Chinese education • Chinese learner • Cultivation • Taiwan • Traditional values • Globalization

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1.1 The Unique Characteristics of Chinese Learners

The meaning of education for Chinese is both interesting and perplexing. It is interesting because many Chinese learners exhibit a strong desire to learn, yet it is difficult to explain their desire with current theory in education. There are many reasons for the interest in Chinese learners. One of the reasons for the increasing focus on Chinese learners is their attainment of academic achievement. In the past, it has been shown that students from Chinese immigrant families in the USA and other Western countries have higher academic achievement compared to other ethnic groups (Schneider, Hieshima, Lee, & Plank, 1994). This phenomenon persists and can be seen in many dimensions. One example is the "confession" of a Chinese mother and Yale law professor in the book *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother* (Chua, 2011). The author is a second-generation Chinese immigrant, who was brought up and educated in a Western country, and yet she demanded high scores from her children in school and pushed them to enter prestigious universities. In both popular culture and educational research, there is abiding interest in the Chinese learner.

Students of Chinese ethnicity in Western countries have obtained a reputation for academic achievement. In the 1980s, researchers including Stevenson and Stigler in their book *The Learning Gap* (1992) analyzed American, Japanese, and Chinese educational practices and found many differences between these Asian countries and the USA. In an effort to explain the differences in academic achievement of school children in these countries, Stevenson and Stigler noted several aspects in the lives of children that may influence their school performance, including the involvement of parents, the role of the family, emphasis on effort in studying, and organization of school schedules and learning tasks. In comparative studies conducted by Stevenson and Stigler, students from Beijing, Tokyo, and Taipei outperformed American students in grade average for first and fifth grades on computation, word problems, graphing, estimation, and geometry. More recently, on international assessments including TIMSS and PISA, several Chinese heritage countries or regions such as Shanghai, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Taiwan ranked at the top in math and science and sometimes in reading. The performance seems to echo the findings by Stevenson and Stigler, and it suggests that achievement is not an individual but a group quality.

The effort to understand the phenomenon has continued. The first step was to note the unique quality of Chinese learners. Previous research identified many differences between Chinese and Western learners (Chan & Rao, 2009; Li, 2012; Watkins & Biggs, 2001). Chinese learners, according to Watkins and Biggs, have different perceptions about the classroom environment, the methods of study, effort and motivation, and teachers and teaching compared to Western learners. Watkins and Biggs called these differences paradoxes, because they may seem strange based on Western views of learning. Examples of the paradoxes of Chinese learners include the following points.

1.1.1 Unpleasant Environment but Excellent Achievement

Teachers and students learn in seemingly unpleasant conditions such as large classes, but they perform well (Cortazzi & Lixian, 2001). Lecture format often dominates. Teachers routinely fire questions at students and the students have to answer immediately. This type of class environment is common in the Chinese heritage countries.

1.1.2 Strict but Loving Teachers

Teachers seem to be dominant in their teaching process. They are strict and they keep order in their classrooms. However, teachers frequently interact with students after class and sometimes treat them tenderly (Ho, 2001). Excellent teachers are proud of themselves as people who have a great capacity in terms of their ability to love and support students.

1.1.3 Rote Learning for Higher-Order Thinking

Rote learning or memorizing is a technique students used often during studying and was encouraged by teachers during class. Although many students employ rote learning, they can also accomplish higher-order thinking. Rather than viewing rote learning as something to avoid, teachers and students perceive repetition and memorization as helpful and connected to deeper learning, and therefore they regard rote learning and active learning as parallel and mutually supportive.

1.1.4 Intertwined Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation

Teachers and students do not view extrinsic motivation as opposite or harmful to intrinsic motivation. They often depend on extrinsic reward and see them as legitimate and intertwined with intrinsic motivation, and sometimes they even lead to intrinsic motivation. They consider both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation as means to achieve their goals.

1.1.5 Effort Not Ability Determines School Success

Parents and teachers believe the key factor for academic success is not ability but effort. Parents and teachers encourage children to try harder and often inquire about the effort of students when completing schoolwork. They repeatedly advise students

to make more effort, and they suggest that sufficient effort will overcome lack of ability.

These characteristics are drawn from observations made in schools and interviews with teachers and parents (Chan & Rao, 2009; Watkins & Biggs, 2001). These observations highlighted Chinese students' values and behavior, showing diligence in studying, identifying reasons for school success, and portraying teachers' support for learning. This portrait of Chinese learning captures the culture and practice, but it does not allow immediate analysis of underlying cultural conceptions, such as the occluded belief in cultivation in learning and education. Observing the society and the practice is not the same as understanding the culture (Huang, 1988). To better explain this phenomenon, it is necessary to analyze cultural traditions.

1.2 Cultural Traditions of Chinese Learners

The rote learning-high achievement caricature of Chinese students paints a two-dimensional portrait of cultural practices. To understand why Chinese do so well in these achievement tests requires a deeper understanding, adding three-dimensionality to the portrait. Looking into Chinese cultural traditions provides a richer appreciation of the differences between East and West. To understand why Chinese students are so devoted to their studies, it is necessary to also perceive the cultural background that conditions students to believe that learning emerges from hard work. Li (2012) delineated the differences in the Western and Eastern cultural orientation in an effort to explain the unique characteristics of Chinese learners from a perspective of their cultural traditions. In doing so, Li used abstract concepts to explain the many classroom characteristics that have been observed.

1.2.1 Virtue and Not Mind Orientation for Learning

Li proposed that learning in Chinese culture can be seen as heart-oriented and focuses on self-cultivation of virtue, as compared to Western orientation of mind and inquiry. Rather than seeking the truth in the world as in the Western tradition which focuses on the mind, Chinese culture promotes self-transformation for a perfect person.

1.2.2 Self-Transformation and Not Mastering the World as the Goal for Learning

Li pointed out that the seemingly universal commonality of hard work in learning for Chinese has a foundation in Confucian teachings, where the learning goal is not to master the world but to transform the self to become a better person. Confucianism

focuses on self-perfection [自我完善], and it is achieved through self-cultivation [修養, 自我修養]. People are supposed to continuously improve themselves throughout their whole lives to become virtuous. Learning, therefore, is not limited to school but is a lifelong pursuit.

1.2.3 Learning Virtues Rather than Inquiry as the Process of Learning

Regarding the process of learning, Li identified a set of principles that are highly regarded as important in Chinese learning as the "learning virtues." The learning virtues include diligence, practice, perfected mastery, endurance of hardship, concentration, respect for teachers, and humility. Following these values, therefore, learning is not separated from self-perfection or self-transformation, but rather it is an essential part of it. In the Western view, where understanding of the world is the goal, inquiry and exploration are often regarded as the critical process underlying learning.

1.2.4 Actions Not Words Are the Key Element for Expression

Li suggested that for Chinese learners actions are more important than words. She argued that the art of speaking (rhetoric) has a long tradition in the West, from Greek orators to electoral politics. The ability to speak publicly is a sign of intelligence, leadership, and artistry. However, the Chinese view speaking as less important than the deeds of a person. Words do not carry the same weight as behavior.

1.2.5 The Tradition Is Supported at Home and School

The Chinese cultural tradition does not only exist in school, but it also has a place in the family. Parents and grandparents convey cultural values directly and indirectly. Li recalled her childhood experiences and remembered that her mother and grandmother used to encourage her with phrases and aphorisms that actually came from Confucius. As a child, Li failed to realize the source of the sayings because her mother would state that they came from ancient people.

With her deliberations on the Chinese cultural foundations, Li (2012) provided a background and a framework that explains the findings of Watkins and Biggs (2001) that there are unique characteristics of the Chinese learners. Using the self-cultivation of virtue as the goal of learning, Li stressed the importance of effort, diligence, and hard work in a person's earnest and continuous pursuit of virtue. Citing the words of Confucius and later neo-Confucian scholars such as Zhu Xi [朱熹],

Cheng Yi [程頤], and Cheng Hao [程顥], Li showed that there has been a long tradition in Chinese culture for one to set virtue cultivation as the goal of life and to learn to become *junzi* or a noble man who takes the world upon himself and even a *shengren* or a sage-like person who can "love, care for, and extend their benevolence to all" (Li, 2012, p. 42). Li also examined other traditional values such as being humble and respectful to others, which contributes to the moral aspect of learning process and in turn may lead to the quietness and self-effacement of Chinese students during class.

1.2.6 Unanswered Questions

Li's analysis illuminates the cultural foundations of Chinese learners. There are two points, however, which Li seems unable to explain. The first point concerns the interaction of these traditions within society. The question remains how these traditions were supported by the Chinese society as a whole, including social and political forces and systems, as well as people's goals in their lives such as the betterment of themselves and their family. Li stated that words to this effect have been passed down from generation to generation at home but did not go on to explore how the social structures and people's practices interact with these Chinese traditions to allow for its persistence over 2,000 years. The original wisdom and scholarship from ancient China, including Confucianism and other schools of philosophy, has evolved over time. The ways these ideas have been supported are an important issue in the past and the present.

The second point that Li avoids is the potential drawbacks of Chinese learning traditions in relation to the modern educational practice. Compared to the Western educational practice, traditional Chinese classrooms, which are dominated by lectures, authoritarianism, pressure, testing, and studiousness, seem old-fashioned and even anti-intellectual. The dissatisfaction with traditional methods of education has led to the call for educational reform. Over the last 25 years, in Chinese heritage cultures such as in China, Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan, and Taiwan, there have been many waves of educational reform, and the emphasis on reform stretches back over the last century. These are efforts to change educational practice, pursuing a more modern and oftentimes more Western way approach to curriculum and instruction. Interpreting the challenges and opportunities for Chinese traditional education in the face of globalization is a problem that must be addressed.

1.3 Taiwan as a Window to Understanding Chinese Education

Culture may be woven into every aspect of life, but it remains mostly invisible until individuals encounter a different culture. For those who are living in a culture, tradition is often hard to identify. It is easy to point at international restaurant chains and

identify global influences, but foreign cultural ideas, like traditional ideas, are often difficult to detect. Some researchers (e.g., Miller et al., 2002) found in their cultural comparison studies that some important and prevalent concepts and beliefs in Northern America are not considered essential in Asian countries. When experiencing another culture, however, a person's existing conscious understanding of their own culture may come into the light, especially when there is a conflict between the two, as in the case of the recent school reform in Taiwan.

Taiwan is a place in which Chinese heritage culture is as vibrant as modern Western thinking. In Taiwan, there is a constant struggle between continuing traditional practices in education and embracing Western ideas of learning. Globalization, the culture built on worldwide economic development and communication, has promoted international connectedness and boundary crossing (Hermans & Hermans-Konopka, 2010). Despite the advantages of globalization, it has required people to compete with intellectual talent from all over the word, and this has created many challenges for traditional cultures. Therefore, in this book, Taiwan is presented as a window through which to view the Chinese culture of education in practice as well as to examine how the long tradition is absorbing parts of other cultures. Taiwan has interacted with the political, military, and economic forces of global economy for over 400 years, and this interaction is once again challenging the society (Gao, 2005).

Educational practice in Taiwan is basically following the Chinese tradition and Mandarin Chinese is the language used for instruction from kindergarten to graduate school. Despite 38 years of Dutch occupation in combination with 16 years of Spanish occupation in the early 1600s, there was little historical evidence of Western educational practice in Taiwan. Subsequent control by Ming Dynasty loyalists and the Qing Dynasty administration shaped the dominant educational tradition to match the practices of China, though the language of instruction was Taiwanese. Starting in 1895, Japan colonized the island, built many elementary schools, and built a new educational infrastructure in Taiwan, which was in place for 50 years, and they changed the language of instruction to Japanese. After the Chinese Nationalist government moved from China to Taiwan in 1949, it instituted many political and social schemes, including the national curriculum developed in China in 1929, and they changed the language of instruction to Mandarin Chinese. The subjects to teach, the material to learn, the tests to take, and the rules to follow remained the same for several decades after WWII. In the early days of the Nationalist government, secondary schools were few and colleges and universities were scarce, with the competition to high schools and colleges intense. The days of studying hard in class, listening to strict but caring teachers, and preparing extensively for entrance exams became the common experience for several generations.

In the last 40 years, Taiwan has gradually moved from an agricultural to an industrial economy. With numerous government-led projects to encourage economic development, people's prosperity has greatly improved. As a result, many people have gone abroad to receive higher education in Western countries such as the USA, Japan, England, and Germany. Numerous expatriates have returned and taken high posts in the government, bringing their Westernized thinking and values with them into government and education. As economic progress developed, more people in Taiwan became better educated, and there was a greater demand for

democracy in life as well as in education. The request for more students' rights, more room for students' pursuit of personal interests, and more choices in classroom assessment has challenged the existing educational systems and high-stake examination practices, as well as traditional beliefs of teaching and learning.

After the four-decade-long martial law was lifted in 1987, many grassroots organizations were formed and they protested against various problems in education. Responding to the citizens' calls for educational reform, a committee headed by Yuan-Tseh Lee, Taiwan's renowned Nobel laureate, was formed to examine educational problems in Taiwan, and they were given the charge to propose directions for reform. As suggested by the committee, the first encompassing curriculum and school reform was implemented in 2001. The new curriculum, called Grade 1–9 Curriculum Reform, had as its goal to encourage students to enhance their competence rather than knowledge. The new curriculum incorporated a variety of new ideas, such as integrated subjects, competence guidelines, competence tests, and flexible schedules (see Chou & Ching, 2012, for a more detailed description).

The Grade 1–9 Curriculum Reform combined Western and Chinese educational practices with the aim of creating a curriculum that is more suitable to students' needs, developing their competence, and helping them to survive in the future world. There were, however, many problems with the reform plan. The integrated subjects, which are popular practice in the USA and other Western countries, combined several existing subject matters to create a subject area, such as combining history, geography, and civil education into social sciences. The hope was for students to have a more integrated view about the subjects they learn, and not learn each subject in a separate class. However, it was later found that teachers were unsure how to manage integrated curriculum and textbook publishers continued to present each subject separately despite producing books that combined chapters on each topic. The failure of adopting an integrated reform curriculum can be seen as a local problem, but it can also be seen as a conflict between Western and Chinese educational practices.

The new curriculum discarded the 40-year-old senior high school entrance exam and replaced it with a Basic Competence Test in 2003. The competence guidelines focused on student's competence and not knowledge, and they used standards based on American and Australian educational benchmarks. Therefore, the competence exam was designed to serve a basic requirement and covered only the basic knowledge and core concepts. However, because of the parents' rejection of other means of evaluation, it later became the filtering mechanism for senior high school entrance. As a result, the Basic Competence Test for Junior High School Students became the only exam that all the junior high school students took to enter senior high school. Compared to the past exams which were regionally designed and administered, the Basic Competence Test became a monstrous national exam, ranking all the students on one scale. As a result, students had to practice the simple questions for all 3 years of junior high school, and all the schools are ranked according to their students' performance on the tests in percentiles.

Flexible scheduling, another feature of the reform plan, was a good idea in theory but a failure in practice. The flexible schedule offered alternative learning periods for schools. The idea was to incorporate the null curriculum based on the aesthetic

theory proposed by Eisner (1979). The idea of null curriculum was to leave blanks in the existing curriculum so that the schools or the teachers can create new courses to fill the gap between the existing curriculum and the needs of the students for future development. Most of the school administrators and teachers, however, did not understand how to design a null curriculum or have the ability to tailor the existing curriculum to the specific situations in the school and community. Most of the schools used these flexible and additional hours to compensate for the reduced hours of the main subjects, such as Chinese, math, and English, which students would be tested on in their high school entrance exam. In the end, the expected changes, including a more integrated curriculum, a more lively teaching, and a more active learning, did not occur.

The curriculum reform is an example of how Taiwanese tried to incorporate Western ideas about education into existing Chinese educational system. In the training of teachers, the influences and conflicts between the Western thinking and local Chinese practice were numerous. The reform agenda used in the theory of education, as taught in universities, came almost entirely from the West. The actual practice of teaching, however, was mainly Chinese. For example, in the preservice teacher education, such as in educational psychology courses, the predominant theoretical orientation is constructivist and humanitarian, which is based on the Western scholarship. In educational foundations and methods courses, instructional systems such as exploratory learning, inquiry, and cooperative learning are taught. Nothing, in fact, is usually mentioned about the Confucian philosophical foundation in teaching and learning. However, as soon as the student teachers go into the classroom, they would find that majority of the schools and classes operate in an entirely different way. They have to teach large classes with lectures, to teach many classes in a tight schedule, and to take care of their students in terms of both grades and behavior. Moreover, both school administrators and students' parents watch the students' performance closely in school tests and ultimately the entrance examination for high school and college. Teachers are responsible for helping and supporting the students not only for their learning of subject matter but also in the development of moral conduct.

1.4 Education as Cultivation in Chinese Culture

The introduction of educational reform into Taiwan indicated that people felt dissatisfied with the traditional form of education, but change is difficult with cultural and structural factors hard to untangle. The Taiwanese experience also suggests that inserting Western ideas and practices into the existing Chinese ones will most likely fail unless deeper issues are tackled. To understand the reason certain educational practices are so persistent, it is necessary to examine the historical roots of philosophies from which the practices were derived as well as the context and systems where the methods were practiced. Ultimately, it is important first to ask what education means for Chinese.

For Chinese, education is not limited to schooling, nor does it only mean to obtain knowledge and skill for a profession. It means cultivating a person as a whole throughout a lifetime. In Chinese history, Confucius is regarded as the Sage of Teachers, and the Duke of Zhou [周公] in the Zhou Dynasty (1100 BC) is acknowledged for building the foundation of the rites and rules for the Chinese people. About 3,000 years ago, the Duke of Zhou, in order to educate the defeated rebels and unite the kingdoms into which China had been separated, established the *Rites of Zhou*, teaching people the common rituals and ways of being. Confucius paid great homage to the Duke of Zhou and continued his thinking by incorporating it as the basis for his own ideas, now called Confucianism.

The building of character or the cultivation of self through core values of being a human, such as *ren*, justice, rite, wisdom, and trust [仁義禮智信], is necessary in the process of education. Therefore, in the Chinese view of learning, the learning of knowledge and building of character are both included in conceptualizing education (Hu 1995). Moreover, Confucius started with a person's cultivation of virtue and character, extending to the organization of one's life and family and expanding to the governing of people and the country. As the historian Qian stated, "The meaning of education is not for the delivery of knowledge, neither for the training of profession. It is not even for children, youth, or people younger than middle-aged only. It is for all the people in the society and even for all humankind" (Qian, 1995, p. 235). Thus, the meaning of education is significantly greater than school teaching and learning.

Scholars, including Qian (1995) and Hu (1995), examined the goals of Chinese education. Based on their interpretations, it is possible to characterize education in Chinese culture as three aspects of cultivation. The first aspect of cultivation focuses on the whole person to include not only the knowledge but also virtue learning. The second aspect of cultivation focuses development throughout life with schooling as part of the process. The third aspect of cultivation focuses on social structures that support the practice of traditional values in education.

1.4.1 Cultivation as Learning to Be a Whole Person

Since Chinese culture has an all-encompassing perspective about education, learning is viewed as the process of cultivating the whole person. The whole person perspective can be seen to include the self-cultivation of virtue as well as the attainment of knowledge and skill.

The process of self-cultivation focuses on a person's inward effort to pursue virtue and not the outward quest. In the heart of Confucian teaching, the transformation of the self to achieve virtuous conduct such as justice, rite, wisdom, and trust and, ultimately, the state of *ren* is regarded as the goal of life. The state of *ren*, which Confucius himself never clearly defined, can only be approximated by indicating that one is not only knowledgeable about the world but also kind to others, as well as having the ability to help others and solve social problems. This state which may

be described as the sage or *shengxian* [聖賢], and which is also described as the nobleman or *junzi* [君子], is the goal for all the intellectuals and learned people.

It is noteworthy that the pursuit of virtuous conduct is not limited to the perfection of oneself but also applies to the betterment of others and even to society and humankind as a whole. Li explained the concept of self-cultivation from the ancient Confucian work *The Great Learning* [大學] and summarized the meaning of learning in Chinese culture as follows:

> It is thus clear that learning in the Confucian way is not just for personal fulfillment, self-actualization, or personal gain in a practical sense; rather – and more importantly – it moves from an individual starting point and expands gradually to the large sphere of human life as a whole. One begins with a quest for understanding things in the world (note this understanding focuses on the social, not the physical, world). Then one sets one's heart and mind on the path of lifelong self-cultivation. When one achieves maturity, one has the moral strength and practical skill to manage one's family. With the family regulated, one is suited to assume greater responsibility in the community, presumably because one has won trust and respect of the people. If one can lead the community (locally or at higher levels) well, one is fit to lead the world. Thus, one's individual self-perfection is not individualistic but has a strong social component from the very beginning. (Li, 2012, pp. 46–47)

At the same time as focusing on the cultivation of virtue, the learning of knowledge is important in a person's life. Confucius addressed many strategies for learning knowledge. For example, he thought students would not understand something if they were not feeling frustrated by a question or feeling anxious about a problem. He also thought that when a teacher showed students one corner (or one aspect of things), students should be able to reply by pointing out the other three corners (the other aspects). Moreover, Confucius commented about the level of learning and stated, "To merely know is nothing compared to being interested to know, being interested to know is nothing compared to deriving joy from learning it" [知之者, 不如好之者; 好之者, 不如樂之者]. Confucius, therefore, was an advocate of active learning. Chapter 2, which explains theories of human nature, offers a more detailed explanation about Confucius' views regarding active learning. In addition, other Chinese philosophical traditions, including Legalism, Mohism, Taoism, and neo-Confucianism, address attitudes and methods of learning knowledge and skill. For example, Xunzi in his writing of a passage in *Quan Xue* (or *Encouragement to Learning*) [勸學篇] elaborated on the importance of a person's friends and the learning environment by saying that if pigweed grows up in the midst of hemp, it will stand up straight without being propped up. If white sand is mixed with mud, it too will turn black [蓬生麻中, 不扶而直; 白沙在涅, 與之俱黑].

Given that education is an all-encompassing concept in Chinese culture, learning means improvement of multiple aspects of a person, whether moral or intellectual. The broad scope of education and the cultivation perspective in Chinese culture invites a discussion about the definition of goodness in school settings. The vision of perfection for a person influences what constitutes goodness as a student in a Chinese culture school. The question about what is goodness in education is discussed extensively in Chap. 3 of this book, and it describes the model student and the reasons for selecting the model.

Because the purpose of education in Chinese culture includes both moral and cognitive aspects of growth and development, expectations of teachers are high and their role is broad. Besides the parents and family, teachers are the most important figures which help students develop their knowledge and skill as well as their moral character. As Watkins and Biggs (2001) stressed, even today in contemporary Chinese heritage regions such as Hong Kong, Chinese teachers see the teaching process as educating the person as a whole, and they see their responsibility not only includes teaching students knowledge but also helping them to grow. To illustrate this condition, in Chap. 11 of this book, a case study describing an elementary school teacher in Taiwan is presented. As depicted in the chapter, school teachers in Taiwan need to help the students to achieve the goodness in their virtue and character development. At the same time, they need to help students to do well in class so they are able to pass their examinations and get into a good high school or university. The dual goals of teachers are presented and discussed.

1.4.2 Cultivation as Learning Throughout Life

Another way to view cultivation is to apply a whole-life perspective to education. In Chinese culture, education is a process of cultivating a whole person, and thus it requires effort throughout a person's whole lifetime. Education, therefore, does not mean simply the days spent at school, but it starts from birth, or even before birth, and continues until the day of death. In fact, it reaches beyond a single life, as it spans numerous generations. Li (2012) noted that many of her learning attitudes were passed down from her mother and her grandmother. The fact that words, phrases, values, and attitudes can be passed from generation to generation suggest that cultivation can be seen as a multigenerational form of education.

There is a distinct feature in the assumptions regarding human nature in Chinese culture that is worth noting for it explains the reasons that Chinese are committed to education. The root of this commitment connects to Chinese assumptions about human nature. Rather than assuming that human beings have inborn talent, Chinese tradition postulates the nature of a human being can be influenced, changed, elevated, or diminished. A review of theories of human nature from major schools of philosophy, including Confucianism, Legalism, Mohism, and Taoism in ancient China, presented in Chap. 2 of this book, suggests that the practice of shaping people began in ancient China.

Because the ideal and the possibility to be good go hand in hand, Chinese parents have great expectations that their children will be the best from the time they are born or even before they are born. To portray this phenomenon, as described in Chap. 4 of this book, the dream of an ideal child was formed even before the child was born. Prenatal education was documented for the women in the royal family since the time of the Zhou Dynasty. Even today, the psychological and medical care for the pregnant woman and the rituals for the baby signify the hope and importance of having an ideal child. Of course, when parents have a special needs child, their disappointment from losing the dream is huge.

When children grow older, the hope of having an ideal child is the same, but the strategies of traditional parents are different from parents with Western views of learning. To describe this situation, Chap. 5 of this book compares examples of schedules from one private kindergarten representing Western influences and one public kindergarten with more traditional Chinese philosophy. The comparison of schedules shows that public kindergartens spend more time on the relationship between rules and proper behavior while private kindergartens allocate more periods for academic skills such as English, math, and Chinese character writing.

Elementary school is the start of formal education. As shown in the case study presented in Chap. 6, moral training and virtue cultivation are an important part of elementary school education. Teachers, especially homeroom teachers, often devise many individual strategies and group activities to encourage students' moral development and virtuous action.

1.4.3 Cultivation as Structure and Context for Supporting Learning

A multidimensional approach to the study of cultivation takes into account the context or the structure of bigger organization. In the LeVine et al. (2008) anthropological study of child development, a framework was proposed to include multiple cultural constructs to analyze parenting and child rearing. The same multidimensional approach can be taken into consideration and used to study cultivation.

In reviewing cultural foundations for Chinese education, it is important to note social and structural influences on the lives of people. The Chinese tradition of virtue cultivation was not only regarded as the goal of learning to better oneself but also well supported by the governing political structure and the examination systems. For over a 1,000 years, for example, the establishment and continuing practice of the Civil Service Examination served an important role for the government to select young talent and distribute positions to serve the country. The subjects tested in the examination were mainly Chinese traditional philosophy and literature. Therefore, placing pressure on children for academic attainment is not solely for moral cultivation and virtuous pursuit but also for their social advancement. Teachers, schools, and families are all needed to support such educational endeavors.

Chapter 7 of this book portrays the life of secondary students in Taiwan. The chapter discusses both the pressure and the support from parents on students to pursue academic achievement. Education is not only a student's responsibility but also the responsibility of the entire family. Academic achievement generates opportunities to enter the better universities and pursue high-status jobs. In addition, the choice between academic senior high schools and vocational high schools is discussed. Because of the linkage between learning effort and virtue, low-achieving students are often regarded as unwilling to work hard, and as a result they fall into lower ranks including vocational tracks. Therefore, such students rarely receive sympathy. Despite being pushed down, many lower-ranked students aspire to climb

up. To illustrate the interplay between levels, Chap. 8 introduces a case study of students and parents in Nanjing, China, who use the art education track and examination to create alternatives. Students who showed an interest in art are provided opportunities early in life. As they grow older, the parents try to determine if there are any possibilities to go to a good academic senior high school or university. If not, then the parents put more effort on art education track because it increases the chance of getting into good high schools and universities. The search for alternatives to the traditional educational system takes many forms.

The linkage between education and social mobility is probably one of the most noticeable but troublesome aspects of the Chinese education. Chapter 9 of this book delves into the concept of social mobility and its relationship to individuals climbing up the social ladder through education. This chapter describes the relationship between acquaintances and strangers to argue that the high-stake examination system was used as a way for the emperor to select people to work for the government and to reward those who follow the rules. The social linkage between the pursuit of a better person and the attainment of higher income and social status creates binding relationships, and it strengthens the importance of education in Chinese culture. Therefore, to solve the problems caused by intense competition in the practice of education, there have been many reforms in the recent years. The purpose of these reforms was to reduce the pressure resulting from high-stakes examinations and allow for the development of multiple talents. However, after the reform was implemented, the pressure to compete for good schools did not decrease, and the use of cram schools which focus on test preparation increased severalfold.

To prepare the children to climb up on the ladder of education and improve their social status, there is a lot of support provided along the way. Chapter 10 analyzes several dichotomies which have resulted from such debates at different levels of the school system, and it tries to find a balance somewhere in between. Besides the parents and family, schools and teachers are also part of the support structure. Using scenarios from both elementary and secondary schools, Chap. 11 illustrates the way teachers in Taiwan are helping students to achieve the goal of obtaining high scores at the same time as building their character. The debate about the purpose of education and whether it should be a selfish pursuit or an endeavor to serve others still exists in the current educational system.

Despite the teacher being an indispensable part of the educational system, and overseeing students' growth and development, the role of teacher in Taiwan is under fire. Traditionally, teachers are very important to the process of education and cultivation in Chinese culture. Historically, there has been a distinct difference between teachers of knowledge and those who teach people. Teaching knowledge is based on organizing the material and explaining the content clearly and concisely. Teaching people, by comparison, starts with a thorough understanding of the disciplinary content and connects it to the world and to the people, enlightening students and influencing them. Therefore, the teacher of people is not separated from the teacher of knowledge. Rather they are intertwined, the second building on the first, furthering the outcome of the educational

process. The concept of teachers of both kinds is elaborated in Chap. 12. It was recognized that delineation of these traditional concepts of teachers may provide insights for teachers today to find their own place and identify in the turbulence of reform movements as well as endless demands from evaluation criteria and indicators.

In sum, at the root of the concept of cultivation is the whole process of cultivating a person. The word cultivation is used to indicate the nature of the Chinese view of education as learning by the whole person, as learning throughout the lifetime, and as structure and context to support learning. These three aspects of Chinese education explain the nature of the current educational system, the reasons for Chinese emphasis on education, the roots of the current system, and the philosophical beliefs that underpin the system which are being corrupted by Western ideas in the reform movement.

1.4.4 A Brief Note on the Order of the Chapters

One of the unique contributions of this book was the elaboration on the cultivation of virtue in Chinese education at both theoretical level and in educational practice. The first part of the book starts with two theoretical pieces. The second part of the book, Chaps. 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8, include cases and detailed description of practice in educating children from the prenatal period, early childhood, elementary school, and secondary school.

As part of the theoretical deliberations, Chap. 2 presents and discusses various schools of Chinese philosophies on human nature, including Confucianism, Legalism, Mohism, and Taoism. Chapter 3 further elaborates on the concepts of goodness, starting from ancient concept of sage king and sage being and going on to the purpose of being a learned person. These two chapters are quite heavy on the philosophical concepts and the references to ancient Chinese literature. For readers who are unfamiliar with East Asian philosophical traditions, it is recommended to read Chaps. 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 first, as the description of classroom scenarios will set the stage for the more philosophical discussion.

The last part of the book, from Chaps. 9, 10, 11, and 12, is about issues existing in the interaction between traditional educational concepts and modern practices, as well as the role and identity of teachers. One of the concepts elaborated is linkage of the goal of education to the social mobility. One issue that emerged was the goal of education and its relationship to climb social ladders. Whether education is focused on the pursuit of personal advancement or the development of self-cultivation of virtue for the sake of serving others is a lasting struggle in the past and in the present. Similarly, the way in which teachers position themselves on the continuum from upholding traditional values on one end to fulfilling the demand for producing global citizens on the other end is a constant battle. Once again, reading the cases from Chaps. 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8 provides ample contextual background to understand the debates.

Conclusion

Delineating the unique qualities of Chinese learners and comparing cultural foundations in learning are helpful to highlight the differences between the East and West. As Li (2012) pointed out, the Western view about learning centers on knowledge and the knowing of the world while the Eastern view of learning regards diligence, hard work, and personal qualities as essential for the pursuit of self-cultivation. These traditions have evolved from a variety of ancient Chinese philosophers and reflect beliefs and assumptions about human nature, expectations of learned people, and the meaning of education in Chinese culture. Therefore, this book presents a discussion of some of the philosophical origins of past educational practices and cases of present ones in order to understand the ways cultural traditions interact with the people and the societal structures, and it can help educators clarify their beliefs in the midst of changes. Three aspects of cultivation were used to discuss the meaning of education in Chinese culture, cultivation of a whole person, cultivation for a lifetime, and cultivation supported by the social structure.

Chinese education in modern society faces constant challenges due to the conflict between the past and the present. On one hand, history and tradition offer a comprehensive system and a method for students to ascend. In order to get to the top, students have to concentrate their time and effort, and students and families need to climb the ladder of social mobility together. On the other hand, the modern, largely Western, theories of child development articulate the benefits of individualization and multiple paths for the individual to find a new route for personal recognition. As it now stands, the main goal of recent school reform in Taiwan is based on individual expression and producing new solutions for future economic development for society. This new direction has some basis in self-cultivation, but the ancient Chinese belief in self-perfection is being obscured by the new emphasis on individualization. For a Confucian society that is based on contribution, this is a grievous loss. Hence, the meaningfulness of this analysis of cultivation as the foundation of education is not just the definition and the articulation of the ancient concept in the modern setting, but the social negotiation to retain the cultural tradition that makes Chinese who they are.

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Chapter 2
Human Nature and Learning in Ancient China

Hung-Chung Yen

Abstract Many Chinese schools of philosophy have addressed the issue of human nature. Several important traditional perspectives on human nature include the theory of acquired habits from the Confucianists and Mohists, the theory of the original goodness from Mencius, the theory of evil human nature from Xunzi and the Legalists, and the simple and true theory of Taoism. These schools of philosophy addressed human nature in relation to the elements of traditional values in Chinese culture, the view of feelings and emotions in learning, the functions of the teacher, and the roles of the government. In addition to analyzing human nature, the implications of these traditional values on current educational practice in Taiwan are presented. Amidst these complicated and sometimes contradictory traditions, the changeable human nature is affirmed, the autonomy of teachers and learners is recognized, and deliberation on the learning process is recommended. Human nature has played a central role in traditional Chinese philosophy in the past and will continue to be relevant in the future.

Keywords Chinese educational philosophy • Confucianism • Taoism • Goodness and evil of human nature • Theory of acquired habits

2.1 Introduction

Education is a cultural phenomenon. People's existing thinking patterns and social values are always firmly intertwined with their basic attitudes, values, and thinking patterns. When analyzing educational issues from a cultural perspective, therefore, it is necessary to recognize the complexity of cultural content in order to grasp subtle applications in current practice.

One of the cultural components in traditional Chinese culture is people's basic attitudes toward human nature. The nature of education and its relationship with human nature are topics that cannot be excluded from research regarding the cultural

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factors in education. Scholars who study the philosophical tradition in China suggest that reflections on human nature are more significant to Chinese than to Western philosophies (e.g., Fung, 1952–1953; Lao, 2010; Nivison, 1996). Despite the difficulty of defining its concept and evaluating its impact, human nature is an important avenue to interpret Chinese traditional thoughts and culture. The rich and lengthy tradition of discussion about human nature has profoundly influenced politics, society, and culture, and it continues to subtly influence the psychology, practice, and systems of contemporary Chinese education. With this tradition in mind, this study explores the connections between traditional theories of human nature and educational practice in four categories: theory of acquired habits, theory of original goodness, theory of evil human nature, and simple and true theory of Taoism.

2.2 A Brief History of the Debate on Human Nature

人之初, 性本善。性相近, 習相遠。
When people are born, they are naturally good.
Natures are similar, but learning habits vary widely.
苟不教, 性乃遷。教之道, 貴以專。.....
Without teaching, the nature will become worse.
The right way in teaching is to emphasize on concentration.
玉不琢, 不成器; 人不學, 不知義。
Jade without chiseling would not become a utensil, just as a person without learning cannot know what is right.
為人子, 方少時, 親師友, 習禮儀。...
Taking advantage of youthful years, children ought to befriend teachers and friends, and to practice ceremonial usage.
首孝弟, 次見聞。
Children ought to learn about filial piety and fraternal love first, and then about knowledge.
(《三字經》 *Three Character Classic*)

San Zi Jing, or the *Three Character Classic*, has been a popular instructional text for early childhood education since the Ming and Qing dynasties, and it remains highly valued among recitation textbooks designed for children adopted by private education institutes and schoolteachers. Taken from *San Zi Jing*, the verses quoted at the beginning of this paper are familiar to native Chinese speakers and contain a variety of Confucian narratives regarding the relationship between human nature and education. The concepts in the verses above were derived from the educational philosophy of *Lunyu* (also known as the *Analects of Confucius*), *Mengzi* (also known as *Mencius*), and *Xunzi*. Why do they begin with the discussion of human nature when discussing education of children? Why do they include various schools of thought when elaborating on human nature? Why is teaching of knowledge placed after teaching of behavior? These questions are not complicated, but to explain them properly requires an understanding of the way thinking about education accumulated and developed over more than 2,000 years of Chinese history.

Current educational systems, forms, and concepts adopted by ethnic Chinese communities differ significantly from those maintained in traditional Chinese

education. Despite of the passage of time, *San Zi Jing* remains familiar to people who have received traditional recitation training. In addition, the diverse concepts of human nature and education featured in traditional Chinese culture still persist. They are the foundation of many beliefs concerning education and cultivation.

In Chinese schools of thought, human nature has inspired a long history of debate. Among there many reasons attributed to this phenomenon, two stand out as the most significant. The first reason is that in the pre-Qin Dynasty era, when philosophies were developing, no single mythical and religious explanation dominated in the areas of politics, society, ethics, education, human nature, and the sources for good and evil. At the time the societal structure of pre-Qin Dynasty collapsed and was reconstructed, these issues became the foci of philosophical controversy. When it came to arguments about education, such as whether or not people should receive education, and questions about the purpose, content, and methods of education, there were many issues. Plato used the metaphor of the city-state to discuss human nature, whereas many thinkers in the pre-Qin period used analyses of human nature to characterize the varied conceptions of ideal politics. The arguments focused on theories of human nature, which in turn inspired numerous discussions.

The second reason is that Taoism and Buddhism, both popular schools of thought during medieval times (third to ninth century), introduced novel perspectives on life. Religions had to address issues that persisted within the ideological community. The doctrine of realizing a true heart and original nature was advocated by Zen Buddhism and eventually became the prevailing current of thought in China. Consequently, the Confucian restoration that occurred during the Tang and Song dynasties relied on the establishment of a Confucian theory regarding heart and nature. From a broad perspective, before the Tang Dynasty, Confucianism was divided between various conflicting theories regarding human nature, such as the theories of acquired habits, the original goodness of human nature, evil human nature, the three classes of human nature (i.e., upper, middle, and lower), temperament, and the nature of talent. With the rise of Neo-Confucianism in the Song Dynasty, the theory of the original goodness of human nature dominated the ideology for a significant period of time, during which Confucianism became divided. Although particular scholars advocated a reform of Neo-Confucianism during the Qing Dynasty, the theory of the original goodness of human nature persisted; however, the emphasis placed on human nature shifted toward knowledge development, practice, and the perspective of human and cultural evolution. Therefore, the question is, from the point of educational theory and practice, whether or not theories of human nature corresponded to the theories of learning or at least reflect the major points and arguments of the learning theories at the time.

Since human beings are cultural animals, human societies have a great variety of methods of passing down the culture and the developing technical skills. In the pre-Qin era, philosophers or thinkers were often called *Zhi* [子] or *Xiansheng* [先生], an honorable form of address for those who advise or instruct people, which can be seen as early evidence of the respect for teachers. Although schools did exist before the Spring and Autumn periods (inscriptions on the Great Yu Tripod [大盂鼎] and the Shi Li Gui [師㝬簋], two bronze vessels from the Western Zhou period,

document the existence of a royal elementary school where princes learned archery and music), ancient accounts of such schools differ significantly, which causes difficulty in understanding and verifying the actual situations. For example, according to *Mengzi: Teng Wen Gong* [孟子滕文公篇], community schools existed in three consecutive dynasties (i.e., Xia, Shang, and Zhou dynasties), and they taught appropriate behavior and conduct for interacting with people. In addition, *The Rites of Zhou* [周禮] introduced *Cheng Jun* [成均] as a type of ancient institution where the nobility, or "sons of the country," practiced rites and music. Furthermore, in *Liji* (*Book of Rites*) [禮記]: *Xue Ji* (*Record on Education*) [學記], a Great College [太學] was described as an educational institution focused on the learning of classical texts. Scholars who have provided restored accounts of the institution by referencing previous literature include Yang Kuan (1999) and Yu Qiding and Shi Kecan (2000). As a final example, the educational philosophy embraced by people during the Zhou Dynasty emphasized following the virtuous conduct of one's ancestors (as indicated in *Book of Poetry: Sacrificial Odes of Zhou* and *Shang Shu: Western Zhou*). In addition, rites and music literacy, crafts and martial arts, humility and self-control, and wise judgment were considered essential qualities that the nobility and wise and well-mannered people should possess. However, Confucius was the first scholar to develop an organized understanding of education operations and theories. He was also the first to connect human nature to learning.

2.3 Theory of Acquired Habits

The *Analects* primarily comprise accounts of Confucius's teachings for students, and the broad educational insights are not easily summarized into a well-defined educational theory. However, as far as the narratives about human nature were regarded, the content of the *Analects* can be considered as the preliminary form of the theory of acquired habits. The theory of acquired habits suggests that through learning, people can cultivate a second nature; the influence of which is comparable to that of the original nature. As the first educational theory proposed by Chinese scholars, this theory had a most profound influence. For example, both Confucius and Mencius valued this concept highly, and innovative theories, such as the theories of evil human nature and the three classes of human nature, are extensions of this concept which build on the original idea.

2.3.1 Confucius and Theory of Acquired Habits

According to current knowledge, Confucius was the first teacher to be revered. The core values and approaches of the Chinese educational tradition, including "In education there should be no distinction of classes" [有教無類], "inspirational teaching" (Heuristic Method of Education) [啟發教育], "anytime inducing to learn"

(Inducement Teaching Method) [循循善誘], and "educate a person according to his natural ability" [因材施教], were all developed by Confucius (Chin, 2007; Wu, 2006; Yen, 2008). However, Confucius said little about the human nature. He only commented that "Natures are similar, but *xi* or learning habits vary widely" (*xi* refers to patterns of practices or habits that are influenced by both goal-oriented learning and social influences). He stressed that the difference between individuals was due to "nurture" instead of "nature." The argument can be seen as the prototype of the theory of acquired habits. In addition, Confucius stated, "Only the minds of the highly intelligent and the extremely stupid cannot be influenced." Therefore, except in extreme cases, human nature is malleable. This viewpoint can be interpreted as another articulation of "natures of people are almost similar." The statement later became the basis for the theory of the three classes of nature (*Xing San Pin Lun*) [性三品論]. It seems that Confucius disliked analyzing human nature but confirmed the effect of learning. Before the tenth century AD, Confucianism maintained an open and accepting attitude toward explanations of human nature. This open attitude allowed many contradictory concepts to enjoy long-term coexistence. The possibilities opened up by Confucius's flexible attitude cannot be overlooked.

Following the theory of acquired habits, there was a great emphasis on the importance of motivation and trusting in the effect of active learning. Confucius did not say much on the subject of teachers, and his only known remark was "those who can gain new insights by studying the past can be a teacher." Nor did he propose the way one should look for a good teacher. He once described himself by saying, "In a group of three people, there is always someone from whom I can learn." Students also said of Confucius, "From whom does the Master not learn? What use was there for him to have a regular teacher?" According to descriptions of his followers, Confucius could learn practically from anyone and anything. His place of learning was not at the school but in the whole society (we do not know if Confucius ever entered a school or what types of schools existed in the State of Lu at the time he lived). Confucius stated, "When I was 15 years old, I made up my mind to study," which emphasized his determination to study. He seems to think learning is a rather pleasant and relaxed matter, asking, "Isn't it pleasant to study and practice timely?" He even said, "In a village of ten families, one would always find a man as honorable and sincere as I am, but he may not be as fond of learning as I am." Although Confucius was a modest man, he openly expressed the pride in his love of learning. He believed that his strength was not an inborn talent, but rather it is due to his intense desire to learn. He believed that the desire to learn was far more important than inborn traits for one to have accomplishments and great morals. As long as one had sufficient motivation, one could find things to study anywhere. Confucius also said, "When it comes to *ren* [仁], do not defer even to your teacher," suggesting that the most reliable direction a student could follow was his own heart. In sum, Confucius' most important teaching was to ask people to be engaged in sincere and active learning. He explained his principle of "inspirational teaching" as follows:

> I have never enlightened anyone who has never gone into a passionate furor trying to understand a difficult question or has never felt severe frustration trying to put one's thoughts into

> words. If I point out one angle to somebody and he is unable to return with the other three, I will not point it out a second time.

Confucius based his instruction entirely on the student's sincere thirst for knowledge and how much the student understood and applied what was learned.

Confucius did not like to address the topic of human nature but definitely confirmed the value of affect development and its resonance with the human mind. He described affect development in this way:

> As at home, a young man should be filial. As going outside, he should treat others as brothers. He should be trustworthy and behave properly, show love towards people and cultivate the friendship of the good. If all above are accomplished and he still has time and energy, he should devote it to study (*Analects: Xue Er*).

It was clear that affective and ethical education should go before knowledge education. Confucius also attached great importance to such traits as honesty, sincerity, forgiveness, reverence, and humbleness. Those emphases can be found throughout the *Analects*. The most complete manifestation of affective and ethical education would be *ren* (benevolence). Confucius asked, "Is *ren* really that far away from us? Whenever I seek *ren*, it is close at hand," and in addition, he asked, "Is anyone able for one day to devote himself to *ren*? I have never seen the case in which his strength would be insufficient." In Confucius's view, the human heart possessed such an authentic power that only exists in affection but not knowledge, and this quality was cultivated primarily through the personal interaction with family and the community.

2.3.2 The Mohist Theory of Acquired Habits

In an era of fundamental cultural reforms, an interpretation of human nature was required. The lack of definition or analysis of human nature by Confucius himself has probably caused uneasiness among his followers. Zi Gong, a principal student of Confucius, stated, "The Master's displays of his cultural accomplishments may be heard, but his discourses on human nature and the way of Heaven cannot be heard." Zi Gong's emphasis on the lack of teachings by Confucius addressing human nature implied that other people, possibly including himself, needed to devote substantial attention to this issue. This theoretical vacuum may have contributed to the rise of Mohism.

Mohism, a major school of thought equal to Confucianism in significance, supports the notion that education should be based on the theory of acquired habits and adopts an even more radical position. Mozi proposed the concept of universal love (*jian ai*) [兼愛], stipulating that people should treat others as they treat themselves and love what other people love in the same way they do. Universality and equality are basic rules of morality, while self-interest and partiality are roots of harm. To practice *jian ai* requires actions that benefit other people, as "It is the works of the man of *ren* to try to promote whatever brings welfare to the world and to eliminate

whatever brings harm" (*Mozi: Jian Ai*). To treat others like treating oneself require extreme rationalism. The moral guide in every things is *yi* [義], paralleling utilitarianism, which can be proved through strictly reasoned arguments. He proposed that the cooperation of political power and education has the potential to promote and implement unified and enduring values for human peace. Mozi's extreme optimism about civil education and his belief in acquired habits inspired many Confucianists.

If Confucius advocated the importance of personal influence as "gentlemen scholars who can influence others like the grass would bend with the wind" [風行草偃], the strong hope of the Mohist would be to create an ideal political system and social environment to help all the people form great characters. In the school of Mohism, there existed rigid organizations, set standpoints, strict student-master hierarchical structures, and uniform debating styles. The extreme interpretation of the theory of acquired habits, therefore, infused the development of the extreme authoritarianism.

In response to this challenge, Confucianists were required to provide a more specific interpretation of human nature. However, the significant difference in responses was unprecedented in ideological history. The following section introduces three major responses: the theory of feeling and nature, as documented in *Xing Zi Ming Chu* (*Destiny as the Provenance of Human Nature*) [性自命出] from *Guo-Dian Bamboo Slips* and *Liji: Yue Ji*; the theory of the original goodness of human nature proposed by Mencius; and the theory of evil human nature, as documented in *Xunzi: Quan Xue* (or *Encouragement to Learning*).

2.3.3 Theory of Feelings and Nature

Before the time of Mencius, Confucian attention to issues regarding human nature had adopted the idea of *yi* from Mohism. Emphasizing analysis of the development of morality, *yi* indicates that the Tao comes from the interaction between internal feelings and external matters. Theoretically, feelings spring from the destiny of human nature. Since destiny and nature are intangible, feelings are indeed of great significance in reality. When influenced by various external matters, people develop differing feelings such as happiness, anger, grief, and joy. During the process of feeling development, judgments regarding good and evil are formed.

In a recently unearthed text from the Warring States period, *Xing Zi Ming Chu*, the importance of feelings is elaborated. It states that "The Way begins with feelings, which spring from people's nature, and end with *yi*." In other words, it is impossible to adopt *yi* without accompanying it with human feelings. This theory differs from the ideas proposed by Mozi, who focused exclusively on *yi* without addressing feelings.

At an educational level, *Xing Zi Ming Chu* indicated that feeling can only be taught by appealing to the interaction, sharing, and echoes among people. Enchanting poems, songs, and rituals help people share emotions. Similarly, models with ideal personality also echo and enlighten others. The goal of education is to cultivate

humanity in people's hearts, and it can only be attached with genuine feeling. Therefore, the acquisition of knowledge that contains connotations of ideal human affection, such as poetry, documents of history, rites, and music, was particularly emphasized. In summary, Mohism emphasized guidelines and principles, whereas Confucianism valued the sentiment and edification of feelings during human interactions.

At the educational and political levels, Confucianism was the only school in the pre-Qin and Han periods that adopted a positive attitude to people's internal emotions. The theory of feelings and nature continued to flourish in later Confucian tradition. Numerous works related to poetry, rites, and music, such as *Yue Ji* (*Record about Music*) [樂記] and *Maoshi Daxu* (*Mao's Book of Poetry: General Prologue*) [毛詩大序], presented similar views on education or even civilization of all people. As a result, from a broader perspective, the theory of feelings and nature can be considered a type of general theory regarding the original goodness of human nature.

These theories of feelings and nature exerted a profound influence on the governing of the Han Dynasty, where rites, music, and moral exemplars were the means of educating and influencing people. As a result, social morale was gradually transformed, which led to the establishment of what is today called Confucian society.

2.4 The Theory of the Original Goodness of Human Nature

Mencius, who was born about 160 years later than Confucius, was the first person to propose a theory regarding the original goodness of human nature. Although this theory did not gain dominance in the pre-Qin period, it became the foundation of later metaphysical theories proposed in *Zhongyong* (*the Doctrine of the Mean*) [中庸] and *Yi-Chuan* [易傳], possibly because scholars wished to challenge the extremely popular Taoist metaphysics.

Modern Neo-Confucianism often considers the theory of the original goodness of human nature, a moral philosophy that recognizes the subjectivity of morality, which, after objective knowledge is recognized in modern civilization, serves as the final defense of human dignity and the values of Chinese culture. Despite the differing ideological backgrounds and focuses of these selective interpreters, the theory of the original goodness of human nature presented in the works of Mencius emphasizes unique theories of learning and political functions.

2.4.1 Goodness Is Originated from Within

Mencius addressed the original goodness of human nature from multiple perspectives. One of them explains the relationship of goodness with feeling development. For example, in a debate with Mencius, Gaozi focused on the issue of *ren* and *yi* (i.e., benevolence and justice). Gaozi interpreted *ren* as an internal order of feelings

and *yi* as the external order of objective things and society. The separation of *ren* and *yi* was seemingly intended as a compromise between Confucianism and Mohism. Mencius strongly disagreed with this theory and argued the following:

> The core of *ren* is to service parents, and the core of *yi* is to follow elder brothers. The core of *zhi* (wisdom) is to know both and not to depart from them. The core of *li* (propriety) is to order them. The core of *yue* (music) is to enjoy them. Enjoyment makes everything grow vitally. How can they be repressed? (*Mencius: Li Lo*)

Ren and *yi* can gradually lead to politeness and intelligence, which are successive and involved comprehensive reasoning and judgment. The development stage from feelings to cognition inherited the feeling of care included in the theory of feelings and nature, and it shifted full attention to cognitive capabilities. In Western education, literary appreciation is often viewed as an advanced skill that comes long after basic decoding, grammar, and vocabulary. Similarly, mathematics as a subject of beauty is reserved for the advanced student. Confucianists contend that the high-level intellectual capability, however, has to be built on the base of honest emotions.

The second approach is the theory of four beginnings, which contends that people possess four mental instincts to do good deeds, and these four instincts are sufficient for developing crucial virtues. For example, someone asked Mencius to comment on the following three theories regarding human nature: "human nature is neither good nor evil," "human nature can be made to be good or evil," and "some people are inherently good and some are inherently evil." Rather than directly refuting the notions, Mencius stated:

> Everyone has the sense of sympathy, the sense of shame and disgust, the sense of respect, and the sense of right and wrong. The sense of sympathy is *ren*; the sense of shame and disgust is *yi*; the sense of respect is *li*; the sense of right and wrong is *zhi*. *Ren*, *yi*, *li* and *zhi* are not infused into us from the outside. They are our original endowments. And a different view is simply owing to want of reflection. (*Mencius: Gaozi*)

The virtues of benevolence, justice, politeness, and intelligence originate from internal emotions of empathy, shame, and respect (sometimes known as humility) and from the sense of right and wrong, rather than from external matters. Three other views of human nature above were all centered on the issue of whether or not destiny makes a person to be good or bad. The topic Mencius addressed, however, was that the inner essences or forces in human nature are critical in developing all goodness in the world.

2.4.2 Human Relationships Connect to Intuitive Learning of Goodness

Mencius suggests that *ren lun* (i.e., human relationships) education should be provided to teach people about filial piety, sibling love, and harmony with neighbors. Mencius regarded people's feelings and conduct toward their family as an intuitive

ability. Consequently, the theory of the original goodness of human nature proposed by Mencius can be explained in the following way:

> The ability possessed by men without learning is intuitive ability, and the knowledge possessed by men without thinking is intuitive knowledge. An infant has no lack of knowledge of how to love its parents, and when it gets older, it knows automatically how to respect its older brothers. Loving one's parents is *ren*, respecting one's older brothers is *yi*. These are always true all over the world. (*Mencius: Jin Xin*)

For Mencius, goodness of human nature, such as *ren* (a form of affection) and *yi* (implying order), originates from the feelings of natural family affection. By referencing the Mencian account of Shun, it can be demonstrated that Mencius strongly believed in affective education. Given a conscience and intuitive ability, people possess the basic conditions necessary for developing perfect personalities and capabilities. In the Mencian political blueprint, the king should define and guarantee the industries necessary for people to live and work in peace and contentment and thus people can be cultivated to cooperate and assist other people. Subsequently, education for all can be implemented on this basis.

Current knowledge indicates that Mencius was the first person in Chinese history to propose education for all. His plan was as follows:

> Let mulberry trees be planted around the homesteads of five *mu*, and persons of fifty years old may be clothed with silk. Do not lose the breeding time of raised fowls, pigs, dogs and swine, and persons of seventy years old may eat flesh. Do not upset the farming schedule in a farm of one hundred *mu*, and the family of even eight mouths will never be hungry. Pay careful attention to education in schools, basing it on the instruction of filial piety and respect for elders, and the gray-haired people will not carry heavy burdens upon their backs or heads on the road. (*Mencius: Liang Hweiwang*)

In particular, Mencius suggested that common people be provided with sufficient economic freedom to support their elderly family members and live without worrying about food and clothing. Although Mencius had extensive knowledge of the past and present, he did not emphasize knowledge education. Instead, his focus on multiple capabilities was primarily at the level of life practice.

2.4.3 People Have Natural Desires for Pursuing Goodness

Nevertheless, the goodness that Mencius referred to was beyond the scope of moral virtue. Mencius often used the stories of Yao and Shun to demonstrate the goodness of human nature. Shun's parents and brothers were morally corrupt, and he had never encountered virtuous or wise people. How did he become a kindhearted and wise person? The method is shown in the following description:

> When Shun was living deep in the mountains, dwelling with the trees and rocks, and wandering among deer and boars, he differed little from the rude inhabitants there. But once he heard an impressive talk, or saw a good action, he was like a big river bursting its banks and flowing outward irresistibly. (*Mencius: Jin Xin*)

Mencius hypothesized that Shun was committed to virtue and learned from the merits of everyone. A similar analysis also proposed by Mencius is as follows:

> When anyone told *Zi Lu* that he had a fault, he rejoiced. When *Yu* heard words of goodness, he would bow in respect. But the great *Shun* had greater largeness of view. He regarded the goodness of others to be the same as his. He gave up his own way to follow others, and delighting to learn from others to practice what is good. From the time when *Shun* was a farmer, a potter and a fisherman, up until he became an emperor, all he practiced was learned from others. To practice goodness from people is to support them to practice goodness. There is no attribute of a gentleman greater than to support others to practice goodness. (*Mencius: Gongsun Cho*)

Allegedly, Shun once lived with combative and lazy farmers, potters, and fishermen, but within a year, he had managed to transform them into polite and responsible people (*Shang Shu: Canon of Yao*). The story did not explain how Shun achieved such effects, and Mencius reasoned that despite inferior abilities compared with those of the farmers, potters, and fishermen, Shun learned from the advantages of everyone. Consequently, these people felt that they were supported and encouraged and became willing to perform good deeds. Compared with Zi Lu and Yu, who appreciated people who identified their faults and talked good words to them, all Shun did was to admire people and learn from the strengths and virtues of others. Shun's accepting attitude was more encouraging. In Shun's story, goodness includes all virtues and advantages in various matters, including labor, skill, capability, and moral conduct. Shun's intention regarding all the goodness is the most appropriate example for Mencius to demonstrate that "all goodness is originally within ourselves, and there is no greater delight than to be conscious of it sincerity" (*Mencius: Jin Xin*). Mencius wrote a large number of fictitious stories, in which Shun was often the main character who seeks the goodness with all his heart and mind. From a contemporary point of view, these stories can be considered educational and philosophical novels. They were typical and significant especially in New Confucianism.

2.5 The Theory of Evil Human Nature

Theories that contrast the original goodness of human nature can be divided into two categories. These theories were primarily proposed by Xunzi, a Confucianist who lived during the late Warring States period, and Legalist scholars represented by Han Fei, a student of Xunzi. Based on a distrust of human beings, Legalism as a school of political thought still influenced the actual pedagogy and discipline of modern schools. By contrast, the core of Xunzi's philosophy was located in education and ethics and therefore worthy of thorough discussion.

2.5.1 The Legalist Theory of Evil Human Nature

Legalism was based on a distrust of human nature, a concept first proposed by Shen Buhai, a politician in the State of Han who warned the king against the ministers who were deceiving and flattering him to seize royal power. Based on this theory, legalism was developed to supervise the subjects and people. For example, the king should not express personal likes and dislikes or trust a single person; instead, he should listen to various opinions to prevent subjects from colluding to seize power. Nevertheless, Shen Buhai was generally considered the person best able to read the mind of his lord Han Zhaohou.

Shang Yang, a statesman of Qin who enacted numerous reforms, was another well-known legalist. He implemented rigid rewards and punishments to control officials and civilians. Numerous statutes were promulgated as required codes of conduct for the people. Simultaneously, people were ordered to learn the provisions of laws and comply with the instructions. Because hereditary political power possessed by nobility had been substantially reduced and avenues for enjoying personal wealth were restricted, the only way for people who wished to improve their lifestyle and elevate their social status was to fight battles, participate in agricultural production activities, and comply with laws. Consequently, personal development was determined by national goals, and the state of Qin became the first example of totalitarian politics in the history of China.

Subsequently, this theory flourished following further development by Han Fei, a prince of the State of Han. Having grown up during a period of political turmoil, Han Fei fully understood the fierce struggle for power. Additionally, as an expert of theoretical development, he collected numerous violent examples to demonstrate the diversity and complexity of political deception, as well as the severe consequences of readily trusting people. In his famous work *Shui Nan* (*Difficulties in the Way of Persuasion*) [說難], Han Fei analyzed the intricate and malicious competition between officials when they expressed their opinions to the lord.

According to this theory, although not everyone is evil, the evil ones can be highly skilled at disguising themselves in order to gain the trust of others. Han Fei expanded Shen Buhai's theory to suggest that an intelligent leader should never trust anyone. Even more importantly, a leader should never devote the foundation of ruling to winning the hearts of the people. First of all, the common people can only comprehend immediate benefits and lack long-term vision. Secondly, people's good feelings toward the king do not necessarily translate into obedience and loyalty. Children are a good example. Will a child obey a tender mother or a strict father? Is he more likely to listen to loving parents or to a dispassionate official who possesses punitive authority over him? In view of this interpretation of human nature, and because of these convincing arguments for the distrust in human nature, Han Fei's work achieved an irreplaceable position in Chinese tradition.

Legalists proposed that the foundation of governing should be control. People should be managed using only reward and punishment. As an indispensable symbol of power, punishment played a more significant role. A lord can achieve rule effectively only by exercising his authority to implement reward and punishment

and by formulating and enforcing stringent and comprehensive laws and regulations. Simultaneously, the government should discourage social compensation inconsistent with its political goals and laws. Thus, the goal of a government in educating its people was well defined: Developing people to understand and follow laws which state legal rewards and punishment produces more effective results than transforming people into kind human beings. The combination of an absolute and wise lord with his officials and the submissive common people was far from balanced. Nevertheless, in Han Fei's conception, this society can operate effectively, fully satisfy people's needs, encourage simple lifestyles, and achieve governance with *wu-wei* (nonaction) [無為]. The last two outcomes may be surprising, but they provide significant evidence of the influence that Taoism had on Han Fei (Zhou, 2000).

Han Fei's theory was adopted as the ruling policy in the Qin Dynasty. Except in the Qin Dynasty, traditional China has never pursued such extreme and immoral ruling strategies. The history of the Qin Dynasty reflects how such strategies were a double-edged sword. On one hand, they allowed the country to expand to a size second to none in the world at that time. On the other hand, the country was weakened to a point that it was easily overthrown by a baseless but angry peasant revolt.

Most thinkers did not fully agree with Han Fei's tactics. In both theory and practice, however, the implementation of a simple reward and punishment system can quickly bring about effective control in extreme circumstances. Whether in the army or at school, as soon as hope in human nature is lost, or at times when confidence in the abilities the ruler is diminished, he could implement strict policies to take control. Some leaders are even able to establish detailed and all-encompassing tactics to maintain control over a factory or school. In the case of Taiwan in the recent past, the latter is perhaps more prevalent than the former. Except under the pressure of specific ideological and circumstantial forces, these types of tactics rarely receive widespread approval. However, they are often the managers' or educators' last resort. To avoid resorting to such policies, at least under normal circumstances, one must be completely trained with pedagogy and leadership and cultivated especially with the confidence in oneself as well as in others.

2.5.2 Definition of Evil Human Nature Proposed by Xunzi

Although Xunzi is known for proposing the theory of evil human nature, people familiar with the history of Chinese ideology, whether or not they admire Xunzi, understand that this interpretation was seriously flawed. The "evil" that Xunzi indicated simply meant "unpleasant" rather than "evil."

Xunzi proposed that nature (*xing*) [性] was the animalistic instincts that human exhibit before education, including the greed, idleness, and desires which cannot be indulged. The existence of this human nature necessitates postnatal education and cultivation of goodness. Xunzi postulates that humans cannot rid themselves of animalistic instincts. However, by way of learning, they can actually control, utilize,

and transform these instincts to cultivate pleasant personalities and establish rational group life. Xunzi stated:

> Human nature is evil; any good in humans is acquired by conscious exertion. …… Any person who follows his inborn nature and indulges his natural inclinations will inevitably become involved in wrangling and strife. This is accompanied by violation of social class distinctions and throws the natural order into anarchy, resulting in a cruel tyranny. Therefore, people must be transformed by teachers with the code of conduct and guided by ritual and moral principles. Only after these have been accomplished do courtesy and deference develop with precepts of good form and reason, and then order is achieved.
>
> The potter molds clay to make an earthenware dish, but how could the dish be regarded as part of the potter's inborn nature? …The sage's relation to ritual principles is just like that of the potter molding his clay. This being so, how could ritual principles, morality, accumulated effort, and acquired abilities be part of man's original nature?
>
> As a general rule, the fact that men desire to do good is the product of the fact that their nature is evil. (*Xunzi: Xing E*)

Regarding the ultimate conviction, the faith that Xunzi had in humans and human effort was comparable to that of the most optimistic scholars. Therefore, a more accurate statement is that Xunzi proposed a theory of negative human nature to emphasize the immense development potential possessed by humans. Although the theory of evil human nature has been mistaken for a long time, derivative educational theories and concepts are widely accepted. The verses in *San Zi Jing*, "Jade without chiseling would not become a utensil, just as a person without learning cannot know what is right," presented the core concepts of Xunzi's theory.

Recognizing the necessity of education, Xunzi paid particular attention to the means, process, and psychology of education. He proposed *shi fa* (teachers with the code of conduct) [師法] and used rites and justice as the primary method for learning. Additionally, Xunzi summarized pre-Qin Confucian ideas regarding education into theories.

2.5.3 Xunzi's View of Education as a Process of Refining Human Nature

According to Xunzi's theory, education is a process of refining, sculpting, correcting, and shaping human nature. *Quan Xue* (*Encouraging Learning*) [勸學] documents a number of Xunzi's famous sayings, such as "Learning should never cease. Blue comes from the indigo plant but is bluer than the plant itself" and "A stick of wood as straight as a plumb line may be blent into a wheel as circular as drawn with a compass and, even after it has dried, will not straighten out again." With its focus on the processes of achieving a great state, the theory provides an extended operational description of the concept of acquired habits.

Regarding the content and process of learning, Xunzi stated that the main focus should be human and cultural knowledge. Students should memorize cultural classics such as *The Book of Poetry* and *Shang Shu* (necessitating a basic knowledge of Chinese characters) until they can fully understand and accurately interpret political

norms, social rituals, and institutions. Such a requirement became the basis for a classical education and disciplinary studies by later Confucianists. By contrast, internalizing and practicing values requires lifelong dedication and endless effort, which means wise people should be held as the ideal. Therefore, the proper process of education should be unanimous, the concept of which is evidently different from Confucius and Mencius.

Since knowledge is acquired from external environments, Xunzi valued learning theories that addressed accumulation as well as internalization and evolution. For example, he argued that "Pile up earth to be a mountain and wind and rain will rise up from it; pile up water to be a deep lake and dragons will appear; pile up good deeds to create virtue and godlike wisdom will come of itself, there the mind of the sage will be fully accomplished." Xunzi emphasized possibilities of learning that are not only profound and marvelous but also open to everyone. He said, "The gentleman is by birth no different from any other people; it is just that he is good at making use of tools." To one who keeps his mind on learning and never gives up, there will be accomplishment in the future. Therefore, people should commit themselves to industriousness and lifelong learning. The rate of tangible accumulation is determined by endowment, but people can ultimately achieve ambitious goals through persistent effort.

2.5.4 Xunzi's Opinion Regarding Learner Psychology as Training the Mind to Transform Oneself

Xunzi maintained that people's natural desires must be controlled and emotions sublimated, and the impetus for desire control and emotion sublimation is a mental capacity exclusive to humans. A detailed analysis of this mental capacity is provided in *Zheng Ming* (*Rectification of Name*) [正名], where Xunzi divided the capacity into four nouns (i.e., *xin* (heart) [心], *lu* (consideration) [慮], *zhi* (intelligence) [知], and *neng* (ability) [能]), each with differing referents. The development of mental capacity was considered the drive that shaped perfect personality and superior judgment, implying that knowledge was not ultimate goal of learning. Therefore, despite the focus on the mind and knowledge, Xunzi did not emphasize curiosity as a learning motivation. The incentives he proposed in *Quan Xue* referred to the personal and mental goodness that can only be achieved through learning. Knowledge itself is an externally beautiful thing, and the process of knowledge acquisition involves more than merely understanding that beauty. Instead, it is a process of training the mind and subsequently relying on the mind to adjust and transform the self. *Quan Xue* said:

> When the superior men learn, they use ears to listen and heart to memorize. These people fully commit themselves to learning, and their speech and behavior serve as examples for others. … The superior men learn to improve themselves, whereas mean men learn to show off and draw attention.

This theory regarding the process of individual education explained the mechanism through which culture shapes personality. Xunzi used the psychological effects that

people experience when participating in rituals and musical ceremonies as examples to demonstrate that noble feelings result from rational analysis as well as truthful perceptions of the values worth honoring and sustaining in cultural traditions.

2.5.5 *Xunzi's Views on Education as Social Compensation Which Produces Respect and Status*

Xunzi argues that learning was more than suppression and pain, although learning requires people to devote effort to overcoming their original selves, keeping desire in control, and correcting personal temperament until habitually doing everything well. After desire for beauty and goodness as well as spiritual sublimation is satisfied, Xunzi proposes that learners will be rewarded with psychological gifts of pleasure and dignity.

In addition, the reputation and material rewards obtained from society outweigh the difficulty of suppressing original desires. Society ought to offer compensation to successful learners because they are the essential managers and instructors for maintaining society and educating the public. In other words, they are the *jun* (leaders) [君] and *shi* (teachers) [師]. Rather than being confined to specific persons or the relationship with specific persons, *jun* and *shi* meant group mechanisms that perform social functions (*Xunzi: Wangzhi*). This theory was predicative of a long tradition of Chinese social models featuring governments led by wise men and societies led by scholars. Xunzi postulated that people should enjoy different levels of prosperity based on their status which can be enhanced by learning. Xunzi said:

> Though base-born were I to wish to be noble, or though stupid were I to be wise, or though poor were I to be rich—would this be possible? I say: It can be done only through learning. (*Xunzi: Ruxiao*)

From this statement, it can be seen that educated people not only become wise but also get higher status and respect.

Unsurprisingly, people in educated groups were divided by hierarchy. Xunzi distinguished among *daru* (great *ru*) [大儒], *yaru* (elegant *ru*) [雅儒], and *suru* (vulgar *ru*) [俗儒] using well-defined criteria (*Ru Xiao*). The concept of a *daru* was modeled after the Duke of Zhou, a great statesman of the early Zhou Dynasty. After the death of King Wu of Zhou (brother to the Duke of Zhou), young King Cheng succeeded to the throne, and the Duke of Zhou assumed the responsibilities of establishing a kingdom and stabilizing society. This is the first example of a surrogate throne or regent in Chinese history. The Duke successfully quelled domestic revolts and formulated standards for rites and music, establishing a sound system that lead to long-term stability and peace during the Zhou Dynasty. Finally, he retired, returning all power to King Cheng, who had by then matured and undergone training to be a competent king (*Xunzi: Ruxiao*). In simple terms, a *daru* is responsible for offering guidance to the king, devising systems, developing culture, and identifying future development directions. He can unite the world. *Jaru* can bring peace and stability to the country. Darus and Jarus deserve eternal respect; however, they have

no desire for power and pose no threat to a virtuous king. *Ru* is the social role that wise and virtuous people should play. For a true *ru*, in spite of being deserved, social compensation of learning is eventually not necessary.

2.5.6 *Xunzi's View of Teachers as Judges of Culture and Guides of Students*

Xunzi proposed that rather than originating from human nature, the knowledge and norms that people learn are derived from the development and accumulation of culture. Evidently, knowledge and norms cannot be judged by individuals, at least not until they are revered as wise men. Instead, knowledge and norms must be judged by authorities, that is, teachers who are capable of realizing cultural values. Xunzi indicated:

> Ritual is the means by which to rectify yourself; the teacher is the means by which the ritual to be rectified.… If your emotions find peace in ritual and your understanding is like that of your teacher, then you have become a sage. (*Xunzi: Xiu Shen*, or *Improving yourself*)

Learning must honor and follow tradition, and good teachers are living examples of tradition. Compared with all the forms of knowledge, content, rites, and music combined, the benefits of good teachers are more immediate and immense. Only good teachers are capable of endowing knowledge with life and facilitating the extensive application of knowledge. Therefore, the optimal approach for learning is to follow the guidance of ideal teachers. Moreover, Xunzi thinks that good teachers were irreplaceable. This view was consistent with his theory regarding human nature.

Xunzi's theory of human nature had at least three major contributions to Chinese traditional education. The first contribution was to reach a balance with Mencius' theory of human nature by including the knowledge learning aspect as well as the culture and tradition aspect in education. The second one was to attempt to analyze the mind and the psychological process of internalization during learning. The third one was to develop extensively the socialization of education and the functions of social structures. As a result, the process that followed was the compliance to the power of knowledge, the respect of teachers, and the standardization of educational contents, processes, and methods, as well as the differentiation of academic achievements. The definite need for education and the requirement of professionalism, therefore, increased as a whole. This line of thought was almost completely opposite of the Legalist theory which insolently viewed human nature as evil and education as a political tool.

2.6 Simple and True Theory of Taoism

The core concerns of all the traditional Chinese theories of human nature discussed so far addressed affection, good, evil, law, and the mind. There were, however, other theories of human nature not based on these elements, the main two being Buddhism

and Taoism. While the influence of Taoist theories of education cannot be overlooked, the case of Buddhism is more complicated. On one hand, Buddhist sects and teachings varied widely, and the teachings popular in China differed greatly from the early forms of Buddhism that emerged in India. On the other hand, Buddhism's origins were deeply rooted in the complicated Indian cultural belief of transmigration. Moreover, Buddhist thinking in general did not have much of an influence on education.

Taoism hardly addressed the issue of human nature. Represented by Zhuangzi and Laozi, Taoism pays attention to the possibility of moral cultivation and self-perfection but disbelieved knowledge. Moreover, Laozi and Zhuangzi held a hesitant attitude toward emotion and feelings. Laozi mentioned the teaching of overcoming selfishness and desires, whereas he never addressed education about emotion. Zhuangzi explained the view of "man without passions and desires" by saying, "What I mean by a man without passions and desires is someone who does not, due to his emotions, do inward harm to his body; he who follows the natural law and does not seek material gain" (*Zhuangzi: De Chong Fu*) [德充符]. According to this view, feelings of enjoyment, fear, sorrow, happiness, good, and bad should be expressed in accordance with natural law and not be motivated by gain or harm. This type of emotion conforms to reason and moral integrity, but feelings in and of themselves cannot improve the internal character.

Taoist judgment was rather reserved, if not suspicious, of good and evil. According to Laozi, "When everyone knows what is good, it becomes bad." In general, societal values of good and evil often take one side and overlook the bigger picture. Laozi confirmed that real goodness is a type of selfless attitude. He said, "The highest goodness is just like water. Water benefits everything without contention, and sits low where nobody wants to be. Therefore it is close to *Tao*." The word "goodness" here was about action or inclination but not referring to human nature or social values. Zhuangzi sometimes vigorously declared, "Act of good should not be close to gain fame or recognition, just as act of evil should not be close to meet punishment" (*Zhuangzi: Yang Sheng Zhu*) [養生主]. It seems that the fame of good is as dangerous as the shame of punishment. At times, Zhuangzi also stated, "Unbeknownst to me, the teacher had washed away my anger and vexation with his instructions in goodness" (*Zhuangzi: De Chong Fu*). Zhuangzi believed that a teacher could cleanse a student's heart and soul just with his good character. It appears that Zhuangzi did not deny the existence of goodness; however, he did not see it as an object of definite substance. As a whole, Taoism did not endorse any specific type of virtue, believing that doing so would have adverse effects. Authentic goodness is supposed to be amorphous and flowing, complying with the internal forces of moral integrity, which rests in fulfilling goals and surpassing expectations in life.

Taoism not only paid little attention to the subjects of human nature, goodness, evil, and affection, it also said little on the tangible form of education. Zhuangzi's ideal of education is such that "When (the teacher) stands, he does not instruct (students). When he sits, he does not lecture (to them). Nevertheless, all students who go to him empty leave full. Is there such as a thing as wordless instruction? Is there

fulfillment of the mind without the form of learning?" (*Zhuangzi: De Chong Fu*). This is the combined effect of the theory of absolute imperceptible influences and the practice of internalization and self-detachment from the inner noises. Because the path of learning *Tao* was without formats or rules, it was difficult for everyone to achieve the goal. *Zhuangzi* contained many examples of him rejecting some people who came to seek his teaching of Tao.

Individuals who achieved success on the path of learning *Tao* had the following characteristics:

> The ideal character is honest and simple. In order to achieve this kind of character, one must let go of knowledge and ability to return to a pure and natural state. The ability to return to a pure and natural state does not rest in one's outer appearance. In works of Zhuangzi many variations of moral character were described. More often than not, individuals of good character cannot be distinguished from outer appearance.
>
> The mind can surpass physical and material confinement. Even when facing problems or dangers, one must still maintain a humble quiescence, and only then can one return to a pure and natural state. One can learn to cultivate virtue, whereas reaching humble quiescence and transcending the figure and intelligence of a person is the first step. Achieving abundance and fullness in life is possible, but one cannot do so by depending on intelligence and skill. The only way to achieve this state is by cultivating inner virtue. If one can maintain a humble quiescence, then one can reach the state of *Tao* regardless the size of the problems he faces.

The Taoist emphasis on simplicity is rooted in Chinese culture and has become a perpetual core value. Even in a world characterized by utilitarian values, people who work quietly and seek no external attention still exist. There are still teachers who discourage talented students from becoming prominent figures to avoid affecting the students' growth. This attitude is related to the educational philosophies advocated by Confucius, Laozi, and Zhuangzi.

2.6.1 Art and Tao

Zhuangzi described several cultivated people of insignificant social status or technical professions to illustrate that people of any background can find *Tao*. As an example, he offered "Dismembering an ox by butcher *Tin*" [庖丁解牛] to demonstrate that learning a technical skill can also be a process of cultivating the spirit. Skill and character can be cultivated together and reach the state of perfection at the same time. The process could instruct a king under huge political pressure in ways to nourish his life as well as his mind.

The Taoist theory of personal and virtue cultivation has been extensively practiced in Chinese societies and even became a common philosophy and tradition of the East. In ancient China, arts such as painting, calligraphy, chess, and music, as well as varied crafts and martial arts, all shared the Taoist tradition to some extent. As time progressed, however, they have different fates. Artistic practices such as painting, calligraphy, chess, and music instrument playing, after being embraced by the intellectuals throughout the medieval time, have gained a higher recognition and

noble status in society. This tradition has continued to the present, as evidenced by the popularity of private tutoring and talent classes, which can be found in Chinese societies everywhere. The role of these artistic practices in cultivating ones' character and temperament has been well accepted as a cultural convention. The goal of the artistic practices in Chinese tradition, therefore, was not to achieve outward purposes such as creative production or award-winning talent but to inwardly realize the fulfillment in life and the possibility of opening up the heart and soul.

On the other hand, the practice of crafts and martial arts, although not without seeing its mastery achievement in the past and technological professionals at the present time, has never been held in as high as regard as the artistic practices. It is not clear yet what have contributed to this outcome. Was it due to the fact that Taoism, which intentionally de-emphasized the design of institutional structure and social hierarchy, rarely came to confront the institutional structures based on Confucian principles? Or was it due to the fact that Taoism was only an imagery principle in crafts and martial arts, which in reality were only practical systems centered on the transfer of knowledge between teacher and student, and did not offer them sufficient focuses on the cultivation of spirit and character nor help the technical practices ascend to the level of Tao?

Stories of skill development abound in contemporary East Asia, particularly in Japan. This trend eventually spread throughout Chinese-speaking world. For example, Taiwanese society praises Wu Pao Chun, a skilled baker. Western culinary competitions typically emphasize innovation, taste, individuality, and tension between competitors. In addition to these elements, the popular Taiwanese story of Wu Pao Chun emphasizes his modest personality, dedicated efforts, simple motivations (i.e., his motivation results from the desire to improve his mother's living standard), willingness to share, as well as the selflessness he demonstrates by training young bakers following his rise to fame (He, 2010; Wang, 2008; Wu & Liu, 2010). Thus, Wu Pao Chun is generally revered as an ideal personality model. Movies based on his story and similar themes are typically well received. This is a contemporary version of the artisan story written by Zhuangzi.

In Taiwan, technical and vocational education is provided only at universities of technology and technical colleges, whose reputations are generally lower than those of general universities, although the professional competence of their graduates are recognized by industry. Professionals in academia have endeavored to improve the social image of professional technicians; however, as yet, no effective solution has been identified. Part of the solution may be discovered in familiar Taoist stories.

2.7 Analyzing the Education in Taiwan by Theories of Human Nature

Numerous contrasting theories regarding human nature have existed in Chinese intellectual history, whereas the notion that human nature can be shaped remains dominant. Confucian, Mohist, Taoist, and Buddhist philosophers maintained that

human capability and competences can be enhanced and that people have the potential for virtue. Under this premise, either people or governments often devote substantial attention to education and optimistically anticipate the improvement of people and of world. It is an important foundation of the development of universal education in East Asian countries.

The theories of human nature provide an effective means for clarifying the basic characteristics of Chinese education and identifying the problems of contemporary education. According to the theories based on the human potential for virtue, education involves the development of personality in addition to skill or specialty training. Traditional Chinese culture was characterized by a reliance on wise men who were essentially educated men with a noble character and outstanding ability and who were expected to assume various social responsibilities. In contemporary Chinese society, academic achievement is widely used as the basis for identifying and selecting talent as well as allocating opportunities and power in the public and private sectors. This phenomenon can be partially attributed to general demands of societies in the process of modernization accompanied by rapid transformation and reorganization, but the effects of institutional legacy and traditional beliefs of education are still at work. Some practices apparently followed Legalists' view, using rigorous laws with rewards and punishment to shape people's ideology. Such usage of coercion which exhibited a complete distrust in human nature was actually a commonplace in educational environments under modern totalitarian governments.

The effects of culture accumulate, and instead of becoming obsolete, past viewpoints coexist and complement the overall culture. Additionally, the cultural implications underlying common educational phenomena are sophisticated and inspiring. For example, the content of *San Zi Jing* and the educational phenomena observed in contemporary society can only be fully understood by referencing multiple cultural viewpoints.

The following paragraphs explore students' learner autonomy in Taiwan from the perspective of human nature. Students' lack of learner autonomy is a frequent criticism presented in discussions regarding Chinese education. In addition to inflexible examination methods and limited teaching materials, the tasks assigned to students often prevent them from setting personal learning goals. These restrictions are typical of elementary, secondary, and university-level education. In most curricula, students experience identical or similar demands and training, and extracurricular activities, competitions, and games are usually limited to fixed models. Certain education reformers have attributed these phenomena to the pressure of numerous entrance examinations, whereas other people have accused teachers of being idle and irresponsible. Although the recent decline in the birthrate has caused some schools to experience stress from low enrollment, diverse educational practices have not arisen as a result. Instead, teachers who urge students to pass entrance tests are still considered successful and popular. Therefore, the lack of learner autonomy cannot be sufficiently explained by the school entrance system or teacher idleness.

Recently, special education and particularly education for gifted students have rapidly expanded in Taiwan. In the design of gifted and talented curricula, the programs provide students with greater freedom in the choice of subjects learning and

personal development. By contrast, students experiencing difficulties adapting to school, and thus receiving low scores, are only provided with remedial education. This difference indicates that the amount of freedom students receive is fundamentally associated with educators' trust in learners' learning abilities.

Traditional theories of human nature provide further insights regarding trust in learners. In general, the greater the trust in human nature, the greater the possibilities are offered for autonomous learning. The theory of acquired habits (which includes the theory that human nature is inherently evil, as proposed by Xunzi) was the dominant educational philosophy from the time of Confucius and Mozi to the rise of Neo-Confucianism and even following the demise of Neo-Confucianism. These theories can be divided into two schools of thought: the theory of feeling and nature, which is a Confucian theory that asserts that education should be based on human nature and feelings, and the philosophy advocated by Mohists and Xunzi, that is, education should be based on external norms and restrictions. Confucius valued the aspiration, judgment, and autonomy exhibited by learners and typically refrained from providing students with definite answers. The focus of his teaching was to inspire learning motivation.

The openness observed in the development of Confucian thoughts is closely related to Confucius' attitudes to education. Scholars who support the theory of feeling and nature have argued that emotional resonance should be employed as the primary educational approach. Specifically, poetry, rites, and music should be emphasized, and favorable external environments should be established. These scholars optimistically expect students to gradually develop capabilities and the virtues of benevolence, justice, politeness, and intelligence. Additionally, these scholars consider learners' internal motivation to be crucial and the roles played by teachers to be supplementary. By contrast, Mohists and Xunzi, who held pessimistic views of human nature, emphasized that people must be shaped by education and placed almost absolute authority to teachers. Mohist disciples, who supported ideals such as universal love, formed action groups that honored rigorous rules, close relationships, and absolute obedience. Xunzi believed that teachers were indispensable in the learning process and that successful students must first imitate excellent teachers and adopt particular learning methods. The learning model proposed by Xunzi has noticeable similarities with the school education system currently implemented in Taiwan.

Universal education and autonomous learning are both important beliefs of Mencius. However, the educational philosophy underlying the Mencian theory of the original goodness of human nature seems the most irrelevant to contemporary Chinese education. Mencian philosophy was not appreciated or supported until the following millennium when Neo-Confucianists in the Song Dynasty adopted and developed his theory into various schools of thought. Specifically, Cheng Hao, Cheng Yi, and Zhu Xi advocated a learning method that emphasized a willingness to learn from other people's advantages and perform good deeds. Subsequently, these scholars developed an educational philosophy that featured inclusiveness and erudition, as well as the joy and curiosity that people experience in relation to

knowledge and virtue. By contrast, the school headed by Lu Jiuyuan and Wang Shouren advocated the cultivation of virtue, including a conscience and intuitive abilities. For example, Lu Jiuyuan stated, "Illiteracy does not prevent me from being a righteous human being." Accordingly, internal values and judgments were the sole basis of learning guidance.

Substantial internal confidence enables people to challenge authorities and depart from norms as well as restrictions caused by the accumulation of knowledge. Among the students of Wang Shouren, awakening in a flash of insight and demonstrating no reliance on scholarly knowledge were no rare. This simple and bold learning style encouraged people of the lower classes to participate in free lectures provided by scholars. However, as this school of scholars began promoting the idea that "wise and virtuous men are everywhere on the streets," malpractice resulting from a disparity between words and deeds became prevalent. With the demise of the Ming Dynasty, the theory of the original goodness of human nature gradually became obsolete in practice. Nevertheless, the spirit underlying the popular trend of attending academic lectures during the Ming Dynasty has never disappeared. For example, Taiwan's religious communities and privately owned academies host lectures and lessons that are open to the public, and artistic education is flourishing beyond conventional school systems. These learning programs address learners' interest, autonomy, and practice and are essentially the successors of the cultural tradition prevalent during the Ming Dynasty. However, such cultural awareness is lacking in current school education.

Studies regarding theories of human nature have declined since the Qing Dynasty, whereas rigor and specialties were valued in scholarships, and the arduous accumulation of objective knowledge became the primary goal. Additionally, reliable evidence was required for analyses of discourses, and no hasty judgments should be made. Influenced by these academic practices, hard work and perseverance were emphasized in education, and the accumulation of existing knowledge was valued in scholarships. However, the most detrimental outcome was that the people cultivated in these systems lacked the ability to think independently, the courage to judge comprehensively, and the joy and curiosity for knowledge. These problems resemble the issues observed in contemporary school education.

Fundamental solutions for improving contemporary education can be identified after the following questions are answered: What theories of human nature and knowledge are current educational systems and approaches based on? What is the potential of affective education? Is the fundamental student attitude toward knowledge education based on curiosity, tools, internal literacy, or the process of intellectual and mental training? How much confidence should we have in students' ability to conduct autonomous learning? Why must students recognize the authority that teachers have in knowledge acquisition and personality cultivation? Though traditional theories of human nature cannot direct the ways of education today, they surely help to reflect where we came from and ask us to make sure what we believe now.

Conclusion

The Chinese emphasis on education originated from the tradition of imperial examinations and of the traditional faith in personality development. This faith is shared by seemingly contradictory theories of human nature. In contemporary Chinese education, the subjects taught at schools are associated with knowledge accumulation and basic operation methods, and students are supposed to learn to internalize the external knowledge during the process. So far, the education sector has no definite understanding of how personality should be developed from affect or how to use affect to achieve knowledge acquisition and ability cultivation. These deficiencies can be attributed to the educational philosophy developed after the Qing Dynasty, following the decline of the theory of the original goodness of human nature. However, the philosophies practiced in contemporary education activities resemble the educational philosophy proposed by Xunzi, which is characterized by a refusal to believe that internally inspired human qualities can guide learning and even insufficient emphasis on students' life goals. Moreover, the misconception that learning involves only the internalization of external elements has resulted in fixed educational models and a lack of learner autonomy.

Moreover, because knowledge only exists in the objective and external world, learners usually comprehend and absorb knowledge passively. Consequently, the affective development cannot be integrated with values and judgments because these two elements are just based on knowledge and facts. Hardworking and kind students who lack curiosity, the ability to think independently, and the courage to make moral judgments are commonly observed. These issues are closely related to the problematic educational philosophies discussed previously.

East Asian culture is generally perceived to be profoundly influenced by Confucianism, particularly the notions of Confucius and Mencius. However, the educational philosophies practiced in this region today differ as much from the ideas advocated by these two wise men as they do from Western philosophies. This difference occurred as culture developed through various stages. Understanding the theories of human nature helps in finding its application and mechanisms in cultural practices, as well as opening up possibilities for insights and implication in education.

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Chapter 3
The Chinese Way of Goodness

Chin-Hsieh Lu

> *"To be able to judge of others by what is nigh in ourselves; this may be called the art of virtue."*
>
> — Analects

Abstract This chapter introduces the Chinese way of goodness, elaborating on the ideal of sagehood, which is a cultural meme based on Confucianism. The Chinese way of goodness is discussed from three perspectives: the meme of sagehood, the way of goodness, and the way of achieving sagehood. The meme of sagehood, based on the goodness of the sage king, evolved from the notion of the sage king to the sage and finally to self-cultivation. The way of goodness can be divided into three correlated concepts: the natural tendency of humanness, the way of attaining goodness, and the way of perfecting goodness. The practice of achieving sagehood is based on the story of Wang Yangming, a famous Confucian scholar. The conclusion discusses personal cultivation, through which people can become living examples of goodness, influencing and encouraging future generations to follow the way of goodness.

Keywords Goodness • Junzi • Sage hood • Self-cultivation

In modern society, the value of a person is typically measured based on occupation, such as a person's status as a physician, a lawyer, or an academic, or expertise, such as knowledge of science or art. This value system is primarily based on talent. In the book *Truth, Beauty, and Goodness*, Gardner (2011) suggested that classical virtues have been assailed by modern industrialized developments, urging readers to examine the definitions of truth, beauty, and goodness and consider how others can perceive the same virtues dissimilarly. Realizing the various concepts of goodness can prompt people to appreciate the numerous types of virtue that have emerged in various

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cultures over the past centuries and remain present today. For thousands of years, Chinese scholars have developed a value system that is based on the Confucian concept of goodness, which can be recognized as a unique perspective on goodness that is applicable to the dramatically changing world.

Deeming the "neighborly morality" to be insufficient for use in the complex, highly interconnected world, Gardner (2011) suggested that the diverse populations of the world embrace a new definition of morality that facilitates transmitting the concept of goodness to future generations. As human being, we evolved to know how to treat our neighbors properly. But in a complex society, our neighborly morality is not sufficient for us to make proper decisions, like what a good journalist or a scientist should do or should not do. Regarding goodness of the professional works, Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, and Damon (2002) proposed an "ENA" meme for goodness at work after conducting in-depth interviews with more than 1,200 professionals from nine fields of work. A meme, analogous to the biological transmission of genes, exemplifies a self-replicating unit that transmits the ideas or values of a culture (Csikszentmihalyi, 1994; Dawkins, 1976).

The three components of the ENA meme exemplified by the letter E are *excellent*, *engaging*, and *ethical*, which represent three E's that can be applied to citizenship. Gardner (2011) maintained:

> The good citizen is technically **excellent**—she knows the rules and procedures of the polity or polities to which she belongs. The good citizen is **engaging**—she cares about what happens and rises to the occasion as needed, or even proactively. Third, and of particular importance, the good citizen is **ethical**. She tries to do the right thing, even when, indeed, especially when, the proper course of action does not promote her self-interest. (p. 90)

Similar to DNA, which enables us to develop as *Homo sapiens*, the professional ENA "allows us to be good workers" and "opens up the possibility of passing on the relevant 'memes,' or unit of meaning, to future generations of workers" (Gardner, 2011, p. 89). A meme of goodness at work can transmit the concept of excellence, engagement, and ethical behavior to future generations.

However, instead of focusing on goodness at work, this paper introduces a meme of goodness, the Chinese Confucian idea of supreme goodness, and the methods through which supreme goodness was achieved by Confucian scholars. The essential question of goodness concerning Chinese philosophers is how people can realize the goodness of humanity irrespective of goodness to the self, to neighbors, to work superiors, and to the throne. Numerous Chinese scholars, such as Confucius, Mencius, and Lao Tze, expounded upon human nature and goodness in traditional Chinese culture. Despite the variance among philosophies of human nature, the idea that sagehood is the highest attainment people can achieve remains the same according to all philosophies as Yen mentioned in Chap. 2. Sagehood has become a powerful meme inspiring Chinese scholars to achieve supreme goodness. Among the many paths to goodness described in Chinese culture, only Confucianism influenced moral education. To comprehend the Chinese way of goodness, the Confucian concept of sagehood and the methods of self-cultivation by which to achieve sagehood must be examined. According to the Confucian concept of sagehood, this chapter reviews three aspects of the Chinese way of goodness: the meme of sagehood, the Chinese

way of goodness based on sagehood, and self-cultivation as a means through which scholars achieved the supreme level of goodness. The conclusion discusses personal cultivation, through which people can become living examples of goodness, influencing and encouraging future generations to follow the way of goodness.

3.1 The Meme of Sagehood

Sagehood has been a paragon esteemed by scholars in Chinese culture for more than 2,000 years. Although not regarded as religious materials, Confucian classics, such as *Four Books*, have been studied and become a vehicle for transmitting the meme of sagehood. The role models portrayed in the classics provided Confucian scholars examples from which to understand the supreme conduct of sagehood. Scholars who devoted their lives to achieving sagehood are revered as sages in Chinese culture. The meme of sagehood began as the goodness of a sage king, transformed from the sage king into a sage, and eventually evolved into self-cultivation. The following is a discussion of how the meme of sagehood transformed from the sage king to self-cultivation, and several examples from the classics are presented to illustrate the goodness of sagehood.

3.1.1 The Goodness of the Sage King

The Christian and Confucian views of goodness are similar. Christian goodness originated from the Ten Commandments and the New Testament, whereas Confucian goodness developed from Confucius' idealization of several sage kings and legendary emperors, such as Yao, Shun, Yu, and Tan, who governed selflessly. Both religious traditions of goodness were initiated by saints and transmitted from the top to the bottom. Although the god of Moses and the sage kings of Confucius might be idealized, they profoundly influenced the moral education of subsequent generations.

In China, discourse on the process of becoming a sage began with Confucius (551–479 B.C.) and continued with Mencius (c. 372–289 B.C.) and scholars from every dynasty. Two emperors during the Chou Dynasty (c. 1030–256), Wen and Wu, and Wen's prime minister, Chou Gong, were revered as sage kings because of their high morality. Scholars and political advisors recounted the words and actions of the idealized sage kings to guide the moral decisions made by their emperors. Discourses on the path to sagehood became elaborate, enabling Wei (1984) to compile a list of virtues and administrative performances from each of the six sage kings and the one prime minister: sage inside, kingdom outside, filial piety, frugality, respecting good people, inventing, establishing a calendar, and performing rituals and music. The first five, which are directly related to goodness, are further discussed in the following.

3.1.1.1 Sage Inside

The concept of "sage inside kingdom outside" (內聖外王) which means sagely virtue inward and leadership outward was first discussed by Confucius and is typically mentioned together by scholars. Sagely virtue refers to a pure heart and mind. For example, Yu applied the principle of unconditional love, *ren* (仁), to rule his kingdom and bowed in respect when heard of good words and empathized with the misfortunes of other people. Chou Gong was frugal even when he was wealthy, humble when he held a position of power, and morally guarded even when he was alone.

3.1.1.2 Kingdom Outside

A frequently quoted saying by Confucius is "Cultivate the self, nurture the family, govern the country, and possess the world." Possessing the world, commonly misinterpreted by non-Chinese people as the ambition to conquer the world, has two implications. First, possessing the world entails managing international affairs. At the time of Confucius, Chou was divided into several small kingdoms that frequently engaged in warfare. After a king had effectively governed his country, he next had to address international issues. For example, Yao coordinated all nations, Shun maintained no relations with other countries, and Yu gathered feudal kings at Tu Mountain, where all kings paid him respect.

Second, possessing the world refers to performing duties well or spreading sagely virtues, such as love and kindness, throughout the world. This second meaning is the ultimate demonstration of inner moral being and enables personal *chi* (氣), attitude or moral disposition, to be united with the chi of the universe. Leadership is discussed in detail in a subsequent section.

3.1.1.3 Filial Piety

Shun and Wu (武王) exemplified this virtue. When his father was ill, Wu served him with such devotion that Wu did not take time to change his clothes. When his father ate, Wu ate; when his father ate again, Wu ate again. Filial piety is highly valued in Chinese culture and is defined as children's obedience, service, and love for their parents. Expressions of filial piety include the following: Children should not anger parents; when parents are old, children should not travel far away; if a parent dies, then the son(s) should stay in the parent's home mourning for 3 years, even if the son(s) lives far away and is a government officer. In other words, the son(s) must take a 3-year memorial leave. Currently, in China, a law stipulates that a son or daughter must take care of his or her parents financially as well as physically.

3.1.1.4 Frugality and Respecting Good People

Yao embodied these two virtues. As a king, he ate on a hillside when working at the field; instead of passing the throne to one of his ten children, he enthroned a moral person, Shun. Scholars and officials in the imperial court constantly advised emperors to appoint someone with high morals to imitate the sage kings of ancient times and cultivate his morality to become a sage. Frugality is a virtue practiced widely by Chinese people for thousands of years, especially in rural areas. Even today, the Chinese government experiences difficulty in motivating rural people to spend money.

3.1.2 From Sage King to Sage

To Confucian scholars, the goodness of sagehood was not limited to kings or people of talent. According to Confucius, the goodness of sagehood can be attained by everyone through persistent cultivation. Followers of Confucius, such as Mencius, and scholars in Northern Sung Dynasty (960–1126) elaborated the notion of sage king with their theory of sagehood. Mencius supplemented good deeds to each sage king mentioned by Confucius in his discourse. He considered people to be more valuable than the emperor and believed that human nature is good. Moreover, he taught that every person, not merely sage kings, is endowed with inborn benevolence (仁). The supreme level of sagehood can be achieved by everyone through persistent self-cultivation.

Mencius' secularization of the sage king was furthered by Confucian scholar Chou Tun-yi during the Sung Dynasty. Chou believed that the way to sagehood lies in core ideas such as benevolence and justice. He maintained that sages emphasized the principles of impartiality, benevolence, and justice to achieve human perfection through tranquility and sincerity. To become a sage, the mind must be morally cultivated; respect, impartiality, and sincerity should be fostered to become enlightened and abandon desires. Of the aforementioned virtues, sincerity is the most fundamental.

The following story of Li Yung, based on the *History of Chinese Political Thoughts* (Yang, 1977), is an example of a man living as a sage. Li Yung was a Confucian scholar during the Chin Dynasty. He exemplified filial piety regardless of difficult living conditions and maintained sincerity by rejecting high positions offered to him.

When Li was 16 years old, his mother taught him about loyalty, filial piety, integrity, and justice every day. Occasionally, his family went without food for several days. After his father died, he dared not travel too far away from home in consideration of his old mother. A few years after the death of his father, Li's mother also died:

> He often walked to the town, searching everywhere for the spirits of his parents, but in vain. Therefore, he composed an elegy and prayed at a shrine. He went into deep mourning, wearing hemp cloth, weeping throughout the night until he was tearless, speechless, and

> bleeding… He beat his breast, scolding himself, "You unfilial son, what are you doing here? Imagine wasting your time here. Are you still a man with a conscience?" He immediately stopped his work, left for the town, and slept at a shrine. (Yang, 1977, p. 344)

Because Li had a reputation for being reclusive, the governor recommended Li for a governmental position 3 years later. However, Li rejected it numerous times on the pretext of illness. From that time on, many officials visited him and inquired after him, but he refused to entertain them, pleading incapacity. During the reign of Emperor Kangxi (康熙), a court minister recognized Li as a true Confucian in the empire, because only Li understood the essence of the ancient study of goodness. Subsequently, high officials visited his home more than ever before; however, Li feigned serious illness and remained withdrawn.

Eventually, a high official was permitted to see Li and went to his bedside to convince Li to accept a governmental position. However, Li refused to eat for 6 days and even contemplated suicide, upon which many officials were greatly shocked and no longer pressed him, allowing him time to treat his illness. Yung sighed,

> "Those who made me famous nearly killed me. I have failed to keep a close enough check on my ambition and live in obscurity." Knowing that his will would not bend, the authorities decided to leave him alone. From that time on, Yung locked his wooden gate and would not communicate with others. Only the sagely scholar Ku Yenwu was entertained when he visited Li. On an inspection tour to the west, the Emperor Kangxi sent word that he would grant an audience to Li; however, Li declared, "I am dying!" and refused to see the emperor on the pretext of infirmity. (Yang, 1977, p. 345)

The story of Li Yung illustrates an extreme example of filial piety and the value the government placed on this virtue. A sage embodying a noble sentiment is "the most truthful and sincere in all the world, [and] can completely fulfill his life. Being able to fulfill his own life in a perfect way, he can also completely fulfill the life of other men" (Legge, 1893). A man like Li Yung, sincerely embodying the supreme goodness of filial piety, was expected to be able to manage people as best as they can and teach them to be moral; therefore, government officials desired that he serve the country. In the spirit of an unselfish, "parental" heaven, officials led and cared for citizens. Like political leaders, parental officials (父母官, literally, "officials regarded as parents") were excellent mentors, as expressed by the Chinese saying "mentor for a day, father for a lifetime."

Heller (1984) asserted that if a society requires a type of morality that extends beyond ordinary ethics, then a connection between goodness and heroic behavior must be established. For Confucian scholars, morality was a lifelong goal. In addition, moral character became a unique means through which social status could be redefined. In society, to cultivate morality in ordinary people, ethnic Chinese revere someone who lived like a sage by building a temple, an ancestral shrine, or a monumental archway, which is similar to churches in Western culture. However, Christian churches are built to honor one god, whereas Chinese shrines are dedicated to numerous sages and can increase in number as more people attain sagehood.

Wen Tien-hsian (文天祥), a Confucian scholar from the Sung Dynasty, was an example of a sage-like man for whom ethnic Chinese have built shrines throughout China and Taiwan. The "Song of Honor" (正氣歌) is a poem Wen composed while

in prison. At the end of the Sung Dynasty, an official tried to convince Wen to surrender and offered him a high position in Yan Dynasty. However, Wen refused, saying, "Since ancient times, who has not faced death? A loyal heart illuminates the pages of history." When Wen was confined to a cell for 2 years, the emperor repeatedly sent messengers and even went personally to persuade Wen to serve the Yuan Dynasty. Still, Wen refused and said, "I ask for nothing but death." While in prison, he quoted Mencius, saying "I am good at cultivating the great moving force," and composed the "Song of Honor." The following first lines of the poem suggest his idealistic righteousness and his desire to emulate Confucian scholars:

There is a righteous power on earth and in the sky,
It exists in various forms.
On earth are the rivers and the mountain,
Up in the sky are the sun and the stars.
In people we call it the virtue of righteousness,
which fills the whole universe.
When a kingdom is in good times,
loyalty is subtly reflected in the good government.
In troubled times those who sacrifice for righteousness stand out,
and case by case are recorded and respected in history.

Li and Wen were admired for their devotion to realizing the goodness of humanity, but not for their success. Their stories have been passed through generations, and learning the "Song of Honor" remains a requirement that every Chinese student must learn.

3.1.3 From Sage to Self-Cultivation

Although most Confucian scholars agree that the virtue of Li and Wen is unattainable by ordinary people, Mencius attested that sagehood can be achieved by everyone through persistent cultivation. When someone decides to be a Confucian scholar, persistent cultivation and the attainment of goodness is the ultimate goal of learning. Those who cultivate the self to attain sagehood are the *junzi* (君子) of which Confucius spoke; the term *junzi* originally referred to the son of the emperor and was later used to indicate those of high moral character. Although most scholars never obtained sagehood, they still strove to embody a *junzi* by cultivating a moral and noble self. Many people attain superiority by devoting their time to actualizing their talent, whereas Confucian scholars attained the extraordinary by devoting their daily lives to cultivating goodness.

Without a strong religious foundation in Chinese culture, studying the *Four Books* and other classics became a way to realize sagehood. The *Four Books*, a collection of four Confucian classics, including *The Analects of Confucius*, expounds on morality and managing people and life virtuously. Most essay topics in the civil service examination were taken from this book; the government engaged in this practice to cultivate goodness, the *junzi* ideal, and sagehood. To determine how

Confucian scholars cultivated the ideal of *junzi*, understanding the learning methods emphasized in the *Four Books*, especially in the *Analects*, is crucial.

Scholars were advised to cultivate the self to become a *junzi*. In the *Analects*, Confucius said, "Learn to love." Studying the classics was a method by which to learn to become a true *junzi*. However, the purpose of studying classics, mastering rites, or cultivating versatile talents was to develop a deeper, more complex, and complete understanding of the value of human nature. Confucius taught that a *junzi* should focus on virtue when performing every act instead of the act. He said,

> Cultivated *junzi* do not compete. (You might object by saying) do not they clearly do so in the case of archery? But before ascending (to shoot) they bow and defer to one another. And (after shooting) they descend and drink together. Such is the competition of the cultivated *junzi*. (Legge, 1893)

Archery was not intended to merely elicit particular behaviors; the goal was to instill certain sensibilities, attitudes, and dispositions in the practitioner. Confucians believed that only the virtue of introspection could produce the particular set of dispositions required for a harmonious, meaningful, and flourishing society (Ivanhoe, 2000). Hui, the favorite disciple of Confucius, exemplified the virtue of introspection; he loved to learn and never repeated a mistake. When Hui learned one kind of goodness, he kept it in mind and cultivated it. When Hui detected a personal fault, he eliminated it immediately. Other disciples practiced goodness periodically, whereas Hui constantly dwelled on attaining perfect virtue. These descriptions of Hui in the *Analects* emphasize the importance of his persistent introspection. Another frequently cited disciple, Zeng, also practiced introspection. He said,

> I daily examine myself on three points: whether, in transacting business for others, I may have been not faithful; whether, in intercourse with friends, I may have been not sincere; whether I may have not mastered and practiced the instructions of my teacher. (Legge, 1893)

Introspection was critical for self-cultivation because, when *junzi* endeavored to embody goodness, they scrutinized the root of motivations or behaviors. When this practice, however slight, began to develop, quality of character was affected. Thus, Confucian scholars were vigilant in identifying the slightest indications of inner deviation from goodness and attempted to correct faults immediately lest they be led farther from goodness. When *junzi* contemplate virtue in every act, the characteristics of sagehood mature. By devotedly studying the classics and examining personal behavior, people can realize the goodness of human nature.

Ultimately, *junzi* denotes a person of decency rather than ability. Although most scholars did not fully embody decency, their lifelong practice of goodness enabled future generations to obtain valuable knowledge. Confucian scholars, or *shi* (士), were valued as the highest members of society because of their moral cultivation rather than their perfection of talents or skills.

Sagehood is a quality of character requiring lifelong learning and cultivation and is unlike industrial or investment performance, which can be judged according to a benchmark. Irrespective of whether the sage kings were as sagely as purported by Confucians, if people believe they were sages and esteem them, the designation of

sage greatly influences scholars intent on becoming sages. Sagehood has a deductive function that determines selective bidding for a particular quality within society and influences people intent on achieving that quality. Thus, Kuo (1992) considered the Chinese concept of sagehood to be comparable to the Western concept of genius, which exemplifies the Western emphasis on intellectual and artistic achievement. After comparing the cultural foundation of learning between Chinese and Western society, Li (2012) proposed that the cultural model of learning is more intellect oriented in the West and more virtue oriented in Chinese culture. Most Chinese teachers and learners still consider the purpose of learning to be moral development or perfection (Li, 2012; Van Egmond, 2011). Sagehood remains a meaningful meme for Chinese learners.

3.2 The Way of Goodness

Appreciating or identifying talented or sagacious people reveals an alternate perspective of human nature that prompts questions regarding how good people can be and what human beings can become. A person's potential for goodness depends mainly on what he or she believes and is expected to become. In *Toward a Psychology of Being*, Maslow (1968) stated,

> When the philosophy of man changes, then everything changes, not only the philosophy of politics, of economics, of ethics and values, of interpersonal relations, and of history itself, but also the philosophy of education, of psychotherapy, and of personal growth, the theory of how to help men become what they can and deeply need to become. (p. 189)

According to Maslow, what kind of philosophy can enable people to believe firmly that they can become sages?

When the way in which Confucian scholars strove to attain sagehood through self-cultivation is considered, the foundation of Confucian philosophy as is applies to people must be examined. According to the ideal characteristics of sagehood, the Chinese way of goodness can be separated into three subtopics: human nature according to Confucian philosophy, the methods through which human nature can be attained in practice, and how perfection of goodness can be achieved.

3.2.1 Tendency of Goodness in Human Nature

According to Confucian belief, human nature is good, and therefore, Confucians expect that people can enhance their natural inclination toward goodness and attain sagehood through self-cultivation. Mencius stated that human nature tends toward goodness just as water tends to flow downhill. The Tao (道), or the path, should be followed accordingly. In contrast to Western people, Chinese people traditionally viewed nature as a dynamic, harmonious system rather than a system comprising

concrete phenomena. Nature, heaven, and earth are the essence of the good, and the Tao is the fulfillment of the good of nature. The nature of life is an endless process of learning that is inclined to goodness, and every person possesses intrinsic worth because he or she lives in the Tao.

According to the concept of the Tao, being good and being fond of goodness are human nature. Mencius said,

> If a sovereign truly encourages the stirrings of virtue innate in his conscience, even the most distant, hostile peoples will "infallibly" be won over by his goodness and spontaneously throw open their gates to him and flock to welcome him to enjoy the beneficence of his reign. (Legge, 1893)

Distant, even hostile, people will eventually be overcome by goodness, a phenomenon that exemplifies the Tao of human nature. Therefore, the extraordinary achievement of sagehood is realizing the Tao of human nature by being completely human. A thorough understanding of human nature enables people to achieve any goal that they must achieve to attain significance and value in unison with the Tao. Bearing in mind a sense of sacredness, Chinese people are human not merely by embracing themselves as individuals but by combining the phases of human perfection into a holistic unity of the universe (Fang, 1980). Although people tend be good, they will not necessarily be good ultimately. Therefore, people must learn to remain aware that they are always attaining goodness.

3.2.2 Attaining Goodness Realizing Human Nature

If human nature tends toward goodness, then "to be able to judge others by what is nigh in ourselves" should be easy. However, this remains difficult for most people, because most people are unable to attain goodness constantly.

A cultivated *junzi* who lives by the virtue of good restrains himself or herself constantly according to the way of goodness. Ordinary people and *junzi* differ because *junzi* choose to follow the Tao continuously, whereas ordinary people choose to follow the Tao or the way of goodness occasionally. Developing talent often depends on individual differences; every person is born with various ability levels and temperaments. The mastery of a specific ability depends on hereditary nature and environmental nurture. However, when striving for goodness, everyone is equal. According to Mencius, everyone can become sages. Determining whether to be a sage entails choosing between morality and immorality. People live daily without being aware of how daily life shapes character. Like water, life is easily influenced by the environment but tends to flow toward good. In addition, like flowing water, moral people more easily become more virtuous, whereas immoral people tend to fall further into immorality. Morality can be cultivated through mere self-awareness or introspection and dispelling erroneous thoughts at the core, as Hui did.

Attaining goodness is the process of releasing innate potential for good and can be explained by the term "benevolence" (仁), which is translated as selfhood or

realizing innate goodness. The ideal person vindicates the possibility and potentiality of human nature, and attaining goodness is the ultimate goal and benchmark by which Confucian scholars measure conduct.

3.2.3 Suffering Perfecting Human Nature

In general, practice makes perfect. It assumed that through daily practice and constant introspection, like that performed by Hui and Zeng, people can achieve supreme goodness. Why is sagely virtue so valuable? Most people are ordinary and, when encountering critical situations in life, easily falter. The motive of a *junzi* to say "I like life, and I also like righteousness. If I cannot have the two together, I will let life go, and choose righteousness" (Mencius; Legge, 1893) must be considered. Being righteous is not a concept but a consistent choice and the only choice regardless of events that occur, especially attaining the sagely virtue through suffering. According to Mencius, to become a matured sage, people must suffer. He stated,

> …When Heaven is about to confer a great office (or mission) on any man,
> it first exercises his mind with suffering, and his sinews and bones with toil.
> It exposes his body to hunger, and subjects him to extreme poverty.
> It confounds his undertakings.
> By all these methods it stimulates his mind, hardens his nature,
> and supplies his incompetence....
> From these things we see how life springs from sorrow and calamity, and
> death from ease and pleasure. (Legge, 1893, p. 447)

In this passage, Mencius indicates that suffering comprises mental and physical pain. The mind can be stimulated and the character can be hardened through suffering. The Western psychiatrist Frankl (1955) proposed logotherapy, which emphasizes the role of suffering in personal growth. Mencius' secularization of sagehood, together with his concept of suffering, guided scholars who wished to become sages.

Many Chinese scholars considered suffering to be crucial for learning and self-cultivation, creating environments in which they suffered. For example, Lu Tien (1042–1102) lived in poverty, studying by moonlight because he had no lamp. He walked far to learn from teachers and once declared, "I would rather learn to be a sage and fail than become famous just by performing a good deed" (T'o-t'o, 1977, Vol. 343). Confucian scholars such as Lu Tien learned to be a sage and suffered for self-cultivation rather than for fame.

The story of Wu Yu-pi (1391–1469) is another example of suffering as cultivation. Wu originally was hot tempered; however, through cultivation of the mind, he became gentle. He immersed himself in his studies, secluding himself on the second floor of a building, and for many years did not go down or out. When he was caught in a storm that nearly upset his boat, he remained calmly upright. Holding no public office, he engaged in personal cultivation and studied with his students, content with simple fare. One day, a scholar traveled from the south to learn from him. At day-

break, Wu was thrashing grain alone. While he was in the field, the scholar was sleeping. Wu shouted at the scholar, "If a scholar is lazy, how can he be expected to become…a disciple of Mencius in the future?" (Yang, 1977, p. 296). Once, he cut his finger with a scythe while he was reaping grain and stopped working to assess the cut. Suddenly, he thought, "How can I be conquered by things?" (Yang, p. 296), upon which he suppressed the pain and continued reaping.

The aforementioned scholars embraced suffering to become sages, purposefully creating environments causing them to suffer. However, some scholars suffered accidentally and were transformed by the experience. The author of *The Growth and Decline of Chinese Geniuses*(1992), Youyuh Kuo, had an unplanned experience of suffering. After living a comfortable life in Taiwan, where he enjoyed a high governmental position, he immigrated to the United States, where he worked as a dishwasher in a Chinese restaurant for 12 hour per day. At that time, restaurants were not equipped with automatic dishwashers. His hands were continually soaked in soapy water, and he developed rashes on both hands. This suffering, combined with loneliness and financial uncertainty, strengthened him and enriched his life, enabling him to be proud and mature.

Regarding attaining sagehood through suffering, Mencius has a famous saying that has been subjected to many interpretations: "moving force" (浩然之氣). Fung (1952) considered this, and the example of Wen, to be an example of "mysticism" (p. 131). In addition, the function of suffering in achieving sagehood is mystic. Because Kuo suffered briefly, he believes that he gained the ability to manage his emotions and problems. Suffering enables sufferers to more intimately relate with the self, sages, heaven and earth, or God and facilitates transcendence and compensation through creativity; thus, Beethoven and Schubert were able to produce symphonies. Although few people transcend the self through suffering, "no cross, no crown" remains an important learning method in Chinese culture through which to achieve the extraordinary.

Korean president Park Geun-Hye experienced several family tragedies, including the assassination of her parents, before she was 30 years old. Her life was painful and full of misery until she began meditating and reading Western and Eastern classics. She recently delivered a speech entitled "Seeing the Light House of My Life: The Oriental Philosophy" at Tsinghua University during a visit to China. *Chinese Philosophy* by Fung greatly influenced her and accompanied her during difficult years in the 1970s. From the pages, she learned a way of life, the wisdom to overcome predicaments, and knowledge that enabled her to cultivate herself and live righteously. Among the quotations that influenced her were the philosophy of "letting go" by Lao Tze and the concept of *ren* by Confucius: "do unto others as you would do unto yourself":

> Since living with Chinese philosophy, I recovered tranquility; what was unclear became understood. Life is not fighting against others, but struggling with oneself. …Only the righteous life is the most valuable. Hence, the sufferings in life turn into encouraging companions, truth becomes the lighthouse of my way. (Park, 2013)

Park urged young people in China to live a righteous life and forge ahead. She is now achieving a state of sage inside and kingdom outside. Various people have gained numerous insights from Chinese philosophical quotations. The most diligent practitioners fulfill life and human nature, and suffering might be a method through which inner sagehood is awakened.

3.3 The Practice of Achieving Goodness: Proactiveness, Self-Cultivation, and Personalization

Because sagehood was the supreme quality of human nature for Confucians, many Confucian scholars devoted their lives to cultivating themselves and achieving sagehood. The following story of Wang Yangming (王陽明), a famous scholar during the Ming Dynasty, is a classic example of how *junzi* cultivate the self to achieve sagehood. A famous theory developed by Wang is "the realization of inner knowledge" (致良知). The following story is based on "Wang Yangming" (Qian, 1947). At the age of 12, Wang asked his private tutor, "What are considered to be the greatest tasks?" Since childhood, Wang had already determined to undertake the greatest tasks in the world. In his early youth, he persisted in achieving success and became a highly distinguished person.

After marrying at the age of 18, Wang learned the Neo-Confucian concept of "investigating all things" (格物) from a fellow Confucian and was convinced with greater confidence than before that sagehood can be achieved through learning. Moving to Beijing at the age of 21, Wang was determined to practice the concept of investigating all things. Wang and a friend attempted to investigate a bamboo plant in a courtyard through meditation. His friend fell ill after 3 days of meditation, and Wang became sick after 7 days. However, neither had achieved a deeper knowledge of the bamboo. After this failure, Wang determined that giftedness is required to become a sage and gave up pursuing sagehood to focus on literary studies. At the age of 34, Wang advocated the sagely way with a fellow Confucian, inviting apprentices and lecturing. Although not entirely confident in the study of sagehood, Wang spread the study of sagehood. When he was 35, with great dignity, Wang petitioned the imperial court to rescue a sincere Confucian official but was punished by the emperor with a beating of 40 lashes that left him near death. At the age of 37, he moved to northwestern Guizhou and lived in a harsh, mountainous environment. In Guizhou lived wild animals and fugitives, and disease was rampant. During this time, Wang willed himself through hardships; however, he constantly felt anxious about death. Therefore, he constructed a stone coffin and meditated regularly to dissolve his fear of death. Eventually, Wang cleared his mind and felt relieved. His attendants, however, failed to adapt to the environment and became sick. Thus, Wang chopped wood, carried water, made congee (Chinese rice porridge), and served his servants. To prevent his servants from becoming depressed, Wang sang verses and hummed popular folk songs to entertain them. Wang was unable to transcend the harsh environment; he merely sought to forget his hardships and strove to manage the world's greatest tasks. He

questioned himself, "What would a sage do in my current position?" Enlightenment came while he was sleeping, and he suddenly awoke and composed the *Doctrine of the Investigation of Things and Extension of Knowledge* (格物致知).

Wang aspired to become a sage like Confucius or Mencius rather than a great artist or scientist. The *Analects* indicate that *junzi* who aim to be people of complete virtue do not seek to gratify their appetites or live comfortably. They are earnest in their pursuits and love to learn. Because Wang strove to become a sage, he never sought material security. Wholeheartedly, he pursued the spirit of the greatest only. Qian Mu, a Chinese historian and philosopher, described Wang as being "just cheerful, and he was just interesting; he was not content with vulgarity and inferiority, and he wanted to become one of the greatest, well-distinguished individuals" (1947). After suffering through difficulties, Wang realized that everyone possesses sagely virtue. Sagehood does not result from the investigation of things but rather from following inner knowledge while investigating the outside world. His doctrine *The Realization of Inner Knowledge* is the result of his lifelong practice. As Qian emphasized, without an understanding of Wang's life, the true meaning of his doctrine cannot be understood. In addition, without understanding his or her own life, a person cannot understand the true meaning of Wang's works.

Wang suggested that achieving sagehood is no longer a classical discourse but a practical way of living. Sagehood is neither a ready-made theory nor an empty talk and depends on not merely following rules or reasoning but on personal effort and moral cultivation. Wang's story illustrates three criteria regarding the way to achieve sagely virtue: the tendency to be good in human nature, attaining goodness as the realization of human nature, and suffering as a way of perfecting goodness. Wang transformed the meaning of sagehood through his personal practice.

The Chinese way of goodness, emphasizing the fulfillment of life for the self, for others, and for all sentient beings, entails moral perfection and the realization of a moral life, which are aspects of life to which Chinese scholars devoted themselves and might be neglected in Western society. As Bertrand Russell (1928) indicated in *Skeptical Essays*, "We have, in fact, two kinds of morality side by side: one which we preach but do not practice, and another which we practice but seldom preach" (p. 103). In Western society,

> the people who are regarded moral luminaries are those who forgo ordinary pleasures themselves and find compensation in interfering with the pleasures of others. There is the element of the busybody in our conception of virtue: unless a man makes himself a nuisance to a great many people, we do not think he can be an exceptionally good man. This attitudes from our notion of Sin…….In Chinese this is not the case. (Russell, 1928, p. 103)

Fang, a contemporary Chinese thinker, agreed with Russell's view and commented,

> Indeed! It cannot be the case!…In matters of morality, we do not preach; we only reveal our real character through action by setting a living example which is to be followed by the other people spontaneously. The reason for this is that we firmly believe in the innate goodness of human nature. (Fang, 1980, p. 117)

Practical methods for realizing ideal goodness might differ among cultures; however, realizing goodness as the main purpose of learning is unique to Chinese culture. As Gadamer (1979) suggested in *Practical Philosophy as a Model of the Human Sciences*,

humans are not blindly obedient to the prescriptions of a society. In everyday life, people always seek the best, the good, in their decisions. Regarding moral reasoning, it is necessary to examine why people have preferences. Gadamer stated,

> It (moral reasoning) may be the case that it is good and moral, even politically justified, to go beyond the prescription of conventions. To teach moral philosophy would overlook the function of phronesis, which is just the application of more or less vague ideals of virtues and attitudes to the concrete demand of the situation. Moreover, this application cannot evolve by mere rules but is something which must be done by the reasoning man himself. (Gadamer, 1979, p. 82)

For Confucians, because virtue comes from within, practice is the only means through which to realize goodness. The beauty of humanity is the quality of practice conforms to the doctrine, and the moral person learns to actualize this beauty. Mencius stated, "the bodily organs with their functions belong to our Heaven-conferred nature. But a man must be a sage before he can satisfy the design of his bodily organization." The most diligent practitioners fulfill their lives and human nature. Gandhi, Mandela, and numerous other great people simply believed that they were merely being human; however, through their extraordinary courage to be human, they remodeled how good human can be.

The characteristics of sagehood concerning the inner life of the mind and its relationship to existence in the world are consistent with the definition of spiritual intelligence (Vaughan, 2002). However, Gardner (2000) asserted that the quality of a supreme mind or spirit cannot easily be quantified according to scientific criteria. Instead, he (1999) proposed "existential intelligence," which he did not include in multiple intelligences. The Chinese way of goodness is not a value judgment or a matter of ethics that differentiates deeds as good or bad but rather an approach to judging the quality of human nature. The way of goodness is not intellectual, which would enable people to pretend moral superiority, but is practical, and, therefore, practitioners of the way of goodness are "able to judge of others by what is right in [themselves]," as Confucius stated. Realizing the inner beauty of human nature is an art rather than an ability. The difference between character disposition and ability is that the actions of *junzi* stemmed from benevolence and a sense of duty. They acted as themselves when they realized the way of goodness.

Conclusion

Without a strongly religious overtone, the Chinese way of goodness is the spiritual heritage of Confucius. The sages idealized by Confucius and Mencius may not actually have been sages, but they possessed virtues such as frugality, diligence, filial piety, and the ability to withstand suffering and have therefore been recognized as Chinese national heroes for the past 2,000 years. In other words, the meme of sagehood has become a culture meme that is passed through generations. From the aforementioned examples of scholars who strove to become sages, the concept of sagehood, which was promoted by the government, has vastly influenced self-cultivation and moral education in traditional

(continued)

Chinese society. Philosophers who investigated sagely virtues added to the existing views of sagehood or proposed new ideas about achieving goodness.

For Confucian scholars, morality or goodness is a lifelong practice. The purpose of learning or studying the classics is to realize the goodness of human beings and the meaning of life. Morality, to the Chinese, is an endless process of character cultivation. The practice of achieving goodness is personal and relies on the intellectual commitment and inner judgment such as Wang. "To learn by example is to submit to authority," wrote Polanyi (1979) in *Personal Knowledge*, emphasizing that a culture intending to preserve the personal knowledge of paragons must transmit that knowledge through the practice of apprenticeship. Current educationalists assert that students should be educated based on their characteristics not on the models desired for society. Booker (1992) indicated that the current period is a time of "neophilia," during which new entities are by default assumed to be good. Popular cultural demands that people, particularly young people, try to express themselves individually. In addition, young people tend to distrust the possibility of values and virtues (Maslow, 1971) and feel that they have been swindled or thwarted in life. Although most of these people have heard their elders speak of honesty and benevolence, they have observed their elders do the opposite. These younger people tend to reduce human beings to concrete objects and refuse to view people under the aspect of spiritual. This describes the defense mechanism of "desacralizing" (Maslow), which constitutes a major challenge for moral education.

In China and Taiwan, the models of sagehood, Wen Tien-Hsian and Wang Yangming, have gradually been replaced by Einstein, Mozart, and Jobs. The *Four Books* have been downgraded from esteemed teachings to a textbook. Determining how to guide moral education has become a challenge confronted by teachers in Chinese culture. For educators, enlivening traditional goodness and creating a meme that can exist in a multicultural society are essential. Although the meme of sagehood might evolve into a new form, it should be retained.

In the process of determining a new approach to education for adapting to a dramatically changing world, an existential question must be addressed. Why and what does human differ from other species? Regardless of whether the current age is an age of neophilia, people admire and need the greatness of Gandhi and Mandela. Claxton, Craft, and Gardner (2008) asserted that an urgent educational objective is encouraging teachers to undertake the leadership role of goodness rather than endless reorganization of curricula and examinations:

> Education shied away from moral stands overs the last few decades, preferring to busy itself with knowledge. If it is not too late, it may be time for education to overcome its reticence and be more willing to stand up for the Good. (p. 176)

Mencius stated, "that by which humans differ from the birds and the beasts is extremely small. Ordinary people get rid of it, but the morally noble man keeps it safe" (Legge, 1893). People can transmit the notion of good to future generations by cultivating themselves to embody the goodness that they desire to see in the world.

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Chapter 4
Teaching at an Early Age

Chiou-Shiue Ko

Abstract Chinese parents carry high expectations for their children and try their best to shape them to be an ideal child. They hope their children can be a dragon or a phoenix, the symbols of the emperor and the empress, to honor the family and the ancestors as well as enjoy splendor in the future. Hence, the cultivation of children starts early. In ancient China, pregnant women were thought to exert a strong influence on the fetus, and imperial family members promoted prenatal education based on Confucian philosophy and ethical norms to cultivate children with excellent morality and wisdom. Later in the history, supported by the Chinese medical notion that external stimuli affect internal sensation, pregnant women from ordinary families would also be committed to following moral rules, in order to protect and influence the fetus. Since the health of pregnant women plays a significant role in the development of an ideal child, family members provide additional care and protection during pregnancy. Restrictions were imposed on pregnant mothers to keep both the baby and the mother away from danger, and some of these rules became long-standing taboos. Scientific research on fetal development has enhanced the importance of nurture in developing ideal children. With the devotion to teaching their children to be the dragon or the phoenix, many Chinese parents offer great support and protection of their infants and toddlers, and as a result, they are usually viewed as authoritarian. Parents of children with disabilities or special needs started with the same ideal image of the dragon or the phoenix, though they usually grow disillusioned, but some of them still retain hope and make a great effort to raise and cultivate the child with special needs.

Keywords Chinese parents • Early age • Ideal child • Parenting • Special needs

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4.1 Introduction

Based on the traditional Chinese concept of parents envisioning their children as becoming a "dragon" or "phoenix" (which means that parents expect their children to succeed and prosper), Chinese parents typically possess high expectations for the future of their children, hoping that they can surpass others and excel. In ancient China, dragons played a vital role in the development of political power. Depictions of dragons were first identified on totems made by the Fuxi tribe; thereafter, the dragon became a totem god praised by every tribe in China (He, 1993). Because the dragon represents authority, the Yellow Emperor claimed to be an incarnation of the dragon to demonstrate his dominance; thus, the dragon became the symbol of the emperor, representing the possession of political power (He; Liu, 2011), and the phoenix became the symbol of the empress (Liu). Consequently, Chinese parents highly value their children's education.

Ancient Chinese people established a blueprint for illustrating how the ideal child is shaped in the womb (Bai, 2005). During the Western Han Dynasty, the statesman and writer Jia Yi proposed the concept of prenatal education, asserting that the development of a fetus is the beginning of life (Bai, 2005; Chung, 2006b, 2008; Liu, 1998). Thus, Chinese parents receive prenatal education during pregnancy to enable their children to achieve prosperity in the future. Inadequate medical care during the ancient periods caused people to apply various methods to nurture, protect, and ensure the survival and health of the fetus. Through prenatal education, pregnant women could exert a strong influence on fetal development. Therefore, family members provided pregnant women with additional care and protection during their pregnancy, focusing specifically on their diet, manners, and emotional state in the hope that the women give birth to ideal children. In summary, prenatal education is imbued with the concept that the physical and mental health of pregnant women exerts a profound influence on fetal development.

In the modern era, prenatal education is a universal concept, which is defined by the *Ministry of Education Revised Chinese Dictionary Amendment* as the necessity for a pregnant woman to demonstrate exemplary and amiable conduct before the birth of her child, thereby exerting a positive influence on the fetus (Ministry of Education, Republic of China (Taiwan), 2013). Prenatal education serves as a guide for pregnant women in nurturing the fetus. Both the external environment and emotional state of pregnant women strongly influence fetal development; thus, creating an appropriate nurturing environment facilitates positive fetal development (Liu, 1998). Therefore, the ancient Chinese believed that fetuses could feel and were influenced by maternal emotions, a perception that is consistent with contemporary concepts regarding genetic health.

After birth, the baby typically remained under parental care and protection. Although Chinese parents have consistently believed in authoritative parenting (Chao, 1994; Chen et al., 1998; Lieber, Fung, & Leung, 2006) in which children are taught to demonstrate filial piety and obey their parents, they continue to implement the fundamental concept of prenatal education by protectively caring for young

children. Parents who raise children with disabilities are typically disconsolate because their hope for an ideal child is presumably devastated. Therefore, parents who have endeavored to raise children with special needs are also described in this chapter.

4.1.1 Prenatal Education

In China, the concept of prenatal education has existed for a long period and posits that a developing fetus is influenced by the mother's behavior and environment. Specifically, the inheritance system of the imperial family strongly emphasized the education of the heir to the empire because the imperial family believed that prenatal education should be provided at an early stage of pregnancy. This belief indicates the importance of and the extent to which the imperial family valued prenatal education. The *Dadai Liji: Baofu* (Han, 206–220 BC) stated, "The principles of prenatal education should be documented on a jade plate, treasured in a golden cabinet, and stored in a royal shrine to provide royal successors with practical guidelines" [胎教之道,書之玉板,藏之金櫃,置之宗廟,以為後世戒] (Ren, 1993).

4.1.1.1 The Origin and Development of Prenatal Education in Ancient China

Prenatal education originated from China and this ideology was developed in over 2,000 years of scholarly research, traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) studies, and with the support of the imperial family and intellectuals, who introduced and promoted this ideology to the public (Bai, 2005; Chung, 2008; Liu, 1998; Tang & Chung, 2002). The origin of Chinese prenatal education dates back to the Western Zhou period (1046–771 BC), according to historical records from the Qing and Han Dynasties. Prenatal education methods were explicitly documented in several historical books from the Qin and Han Dynasties.

The imperial family of the Western Zhou period highly valued prenatal education. The mother of King Wen of Zhou, Tai Ren, was the first to receive and implement prenatal education and served as an example for the wives of the Zhou family. Subsequently, the wife of King Wu, Yi Jiang, followed Tai Ren's example; after giving birth to King Cheng of Zhou, she precisely adopted prenatal education practices and raised King Cheng to be a wise ruler. People attribute his achievements to the success of prenatal education. Jia Yi greatly respected prenatal education, asserting that all women should receive this type of education to foster exceptional progeny. However, not all empresses and concubines of kings were strictly complied with the principles of prenatal education as Yi Jiang. Therefore, by referencing the *Qingshizi*, Jia Yi asserted that prenatal education is the root of education, which should be taught to all the princes of all imperial families. The area in which prenatal education was conducted was known as ritual chamber [簍室].

Essentially, in the seventh month of pregnancy, the queen was required to receive prenatal education in this ritual chamber, during which experts, such as the king's music master, chef, and diviner, monitored the conduct and behavior of the empress and concubines, increased their awareness of prenatal education, and ensured that their behavior conformed to proper conduct (Chung, 2008; Tang & Chung, 2002). In summary, Jia Yi established the guidelines for the prenatal education of the imperial family, established the ritual chamber in which prenatal education was conducted, and instructed experts to supervise the empresses and concubines, thereby ensuring that the king's wives and concubines adhered to the principles of prenatal education and successfully gave birth to an exceptional and intelligent heir.

Within the hierarchical system of the Zhou Dynasty, prenatal education was strongly emphasized. The cultivation of an exceptional and wise king was attributed to the success of the prenatal education implemented by Tai Ren and Yi Jiang. However, during this period, prenatal education was available to only imperial families. During the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Periods, political, economic, academic, and educational knowledge was provided to those at lower hierarchical levels in the imperial palace. Subsequently, the prenatal education taught in the Western Zhou palace was taught and promoted to the public (Tang & Chung, 2002).

Between the period of the Six Dynasties and the Tang and Song Dynasties, the concept of prenatal education became ingrained in the ideology of Chinese villagers and medicine. Prenatal education exerted an influence on the citizens, prompting numerous TCM researchers, writers, and educators to advocate the importance of prenatal education. A writer and educator of the Northern Qi Dynasty, Yan Zhitui (AD 531–590), proposed implementing familial prenatal education. In his book, *The Family Instructions of Master Yan: Teaching Children*, he outlined the methods of prenatal education, stating that fetuses should receive family education as early as possible (Liu, 1998). Similar to other ancient philosophers, he proposed that prenatal education should involve pregnant mothers adhering to proper conduct and engaging in prenatal education after the first trimester. The Tang Dynasty was among the most prosperous eras in Chinese history, during which several rulers (e.g., the Emperor Taizong of Tang) believed that providing prenatal education could promote the development of the fetus (i.e., future crown prince) (Liu). In *Xiaoxue* (*Elementary Learning*)*: Teaching First*, the educator Zhu Xi of the Southern Song Dynasty (AD 1130–1200) praised Tai Ren for her ability to engage in prenatal education in an ethical manner and advocated the principles of prenatal education (Chung, 2006a, 2006b, 2008; Liu, 1998).

Numerous ancient Chinese medical researchers promoted prenatal education, providing insights into the monthly development of fetuses and the fundamental methods by which pregnant women should provide fetal care. The principles of prenatal education have been delineated in ancient works relevant to gynecology and pediatrics. These works were compiled by famous medical researchers. Their discourse regarding the content of prenatal education is detailed in the following sections.

Prenatal education was also strongly promoted by female teachers in ancient China, who believed that receiving this type of education was a pregnant woman's

duty (Liu, 1998). Thus, the theory of prenatal education was disseminated to other hierarchical levels of society and subsequently propagated among all citizens. During the late Qing Dynasty, internal and external crises jeopardized the prosperity of the country. Consequently, Kang You Wei outlined prenatal education in his book *The Book of Great Unity* (*Da Tong Shu*): *The Social Welfare Institution—Transforming Family Education into Institutionalized Education* (Liu). He delineated the problems in prenatal education and suggested the establishment and promotion of a prenatal education school to assist pregnant women with caring for their fetuses and fostering peaceful and ethical citizens, thereby setting the foundation for the country to strengthen and survive (Bai, 2005; Chung, 2008; Liu, 1998; Wu, 2007).

In summary, historical figures in China (i.e., scholars, writers, educators, medical researchers, and politicians) have valued and endorsed prenatal education. Imperial families, nobles, intellectuals, and citizens have advocated and developed prenatal education, asserting that pregnant women exert a profound influence on their fetuses. Ultimately, the imperial system of prenatal education and family instruction was developed to implement prenatal education and cultivate generations of exceptional and outstanding heirs.

4.1.2 The Implications of Prenatal Education in Ancient China: The Effects of Women on Fetuses

4.1.2.1 The Perspective of Imperceptible Influence and the Concept That External Stimuli Cause Internal Sensations

Analyzing and integrating the data from Bai (2005), Chung (2006a, 2006b, 2008), Liu (1998), Ren (1993), and Tang and Chung (2002), in ancient China, prenatal education was influenced by Confucianism, TCM theory, and folklore taboos (i.e., prohibitions during pregnancy) believed by metaphysicians. Prenatal education enables a woman to nurture, protect, and educate her fetus. During the process of prenatal education, the effects that women's ethical norms, surrounding environment (i.e., what they see and hear), emotions, and behaviors have on fetal development were strongly considered. In the imperial family of the Zhou Dynasty, the king's wives were required to obtain prenatal education and served as a model example for their fetuses. Their behaviors and conduct were required to comply with the norms of morality and propriety, which exerted a positive influence on their fetuses and nurtured babies into talented, virtuous, and intelligent kings. According to the *Biographies of Exemplary Women: Matronly Models—Mothers of Zhou*, Liu Xiang described how Tai Ren implemented prenatal education: "When she was pregnant, she did not look at evil colors, listen to inappropriate music, or speak arrogantly; she then could engage in prenatal education" [及其有娠, 目不視惡色, 耳不聽淫聲, 口不出敖言, 能以胎教].

As the mother of King Wen, Tai Ren was a virtuous and honest person who complied with the principles of prenatal education; her behavior and conduct were

influenced by Confucian philosophy and conformed stringently to the norms of moral behavior. Consequently, King Wen became a virtuous and intelligent king who exhibited a strong learning capability and could understand the multiple dimensions of a single thing. The historians in that period attributed his success and the resilience of the Zhou Dynasty to the superior prenatal education practiced by Tai Ren. Her maternal behavior influenced the fetus; therefore, Tai Ren became a praiseworthy paradigm that influenced and motivated subsequent generations to implement prenatal education as the basis of cultivating intelligent and virtuous descendants. This belief implies that external stimuli affect internal sensation (hereafter referred to as ES-IS) (Chung, 2006a, 2006b, 2008; Liu, 1998). ES-IS refers to the influence that verbal and behavioral conduct, diet, and the emotions of pregnant women have on fetuses. The fetus perceives questions of morality that its mother perceives; therefore, proper behavioral conduct and food intake by the mother influence the morality and conduct of the fetus, which contributes to raising an attractive, virtuous, and ideal child. Furthermore, Liu Xiang used Tai Ren as an example, explaining that the fetus could perceive external stimuli in the womb:

> …during pregnancy, a woman should monitor her feelings discreetly because the fetus may perceive her positive and negative feelings. Human life is a reflection of nature, and human behaviors, such as facial and verbal expressions, are responses to nature. The mother of King Wen possessed this knowledge […妊子之時, 必慎所感。感於善則善,感於惡則惡。人生而肖萬物者, 皆其母感於物, 故形音肖之。文王母可謂知肖化矣].

In *Xinshu: Taijiao*, Jia Yi described the time when Yi Jiang was pregnant with King Cheng, similar to Tai Ren, and noted that she strictly adhered to the principles of prenatal education. She specifically focused on her behavior and controlled her temper and emotions to influence her fetus internally:

> When the Queen of Zhou was pregnant with King Cheng, she stood without limping and sat properly. When she was alone, she did not sit with her legs crossed and when she was angry, she did not curse. This is called prenatal education [周妃后妊成王於身, 立而不跛, 坐而不差, 笑而不諠, 獨處不倨, 雖怒不罵, 胎教之謂也].

Mencius' mother also adhered to Confucian philosophy during her pregnancy by focusing on her behaviors and diet and educating her fetus based on the ES-IS concept. In the *Hanshi waizhuan*, Han Ying quoted the words of Mencius' mother, "When I was pregnant, I forbid myself to sit on improperly placed mats and eat foods that were improperly cut. This is the principle of prenatal education" [吾懷妊是子, 席不正不坐, 割不正不食, 胎教之也]. Mencius became known as Yasheng (meaning an ethical and intelligent person that is second only to Confucius) [亞聖] because his mother taught him by example, specifically when she engaged in prenatal education. Han Ying therefore stated, "Virtuous sons are born from virtuous mothers" [賢母使子賢也], which means that a virtuous mother raises a virtuous son. Mencius' mother focused intensely on the education that Mencius received. She was extremely concerned with the negative influence that the poor environment had on Mencius; therefore, she moved to a different home three times. She eventually moved to a house located near a school where Mencius learned to be courteous and behave like a gentleman.

This famous story, known as *Mencius' Mother Moved Three Times*, demonstrates how Mencius' mother extended the principle of prenatal education, focused on the influential effects that teaching by example has on child learning, and relocated to a suitable learning environment. Mencius was subtly influenced by this environment, learned the six arts (i.e., rites, music, archery, charioteering, calligraphy, and mathematics), and subsequently became a well-known scholar of Chinese history.

The success of Tai Ren, Yi Jiang, and Mencius' mother in performing prenatal education demonstrates the potential of educating a fetus through maternal behavior. Prenatal education is based on Confucian philosophy and the ES-IS concept. Furthermore, the ability of these successful mothers to teach by example and attentively focus on their propensities and conduct and their profound belief in the value of morality enabled them to raise children to become talented, virtuous, and intelligent kings (i.e., King Wen and King Cheng of Zhou) and scholars (i.e., Mencius).

4.1.2.2 Traditional Chinese Medicine Philosophies

Prenatal education has been praised highly by Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) scholars. Medical experts in various eras have stressed the growth and development of a fetus in a woman's womb, and this emphasis approximates that of the embryology theories of modern medicine and is used as the basis for protecting and nurturing fetuses.

The concept of prenatal education in TCM was influenced by Confucianism, specifically in teaching etiquette and ES-IS concepts (Chung, 2006a, 2006b, 2008; Liu, 1998). Prenatal education was founded on the roles that women play in fetal growth and development and in nurturing fetuses into ideal children. In addition, discourses regarding conventional medicine encompass folklore taboos associated with pregnancy (Chung, 2006a, 2006b, 2008; Ren, 1993).

Xu Zhicai (AD 505–572), an extremely observant medical researcher from the Northern Qi Dynasty, compiled the book *Month-by-Month Formulas for Nurturing the Fetus*. According to Xu Zhicai, women's diets should be monitored during pregnancy. Women should rest and work properly, live comfortably, and wear comfortable clothes to maintain fetal health and avoid dystocia, premature births, or children with genetic defects. In addition, women should undertake prenatal education to cultivate exceptional progeny. Xu Zhicai affirmed that by the third month of pregnancy, the fetal organs are not fully developed; therefore, women should nurture and protect their fetuses, regulate their emotions and diet, ensure that verbal and behavioral conduct conformed to the rules of etiquette, and maintain a positive emotional state by applying the ES-IS method and appreciating nature, all of which exerted a positive influence on the fetuses. Therefore, the first trimester is the optimal period for undergoing prenatal education.

The ES-IS concept implied in prenatal education was described by a medical researcher during the Southern Song Dynasty, Chen Zhiming, in the *Complete Collection of Prescriptions for Women*, who stated that "speaking positive

words," "behaving appropriately," "wearing white jade," and "reading poems and books" were the foundation of cultivating upright, dignified, beautiful, and virtuous children. This perception stems from the perspectives of Jia Yi and Liu Xiang regarding the Confucian philosophy of prenatal education and stresses the influence of maternal moral behavior on the fetus (Chung, 2006a, 2006b, 2008; Liu, 1998). Furthermore, prenatal education demonstrates the considerable effect that ES-IS conceptualization had on TCM philosophy regarding fetuses.

During the Yuan, Ming, and Qing Dynasties, pediatric medicine gradually evolved, and TCM gynecologists and obstetricians strongly promoted and advocated prenatal education, emphasizing the influence of a woman's diet and emotions on fetuses. Prenatal education was extensively evaluated in *Gezhi yulun* (Further Discourses on the Properties of Things) by Zhu Zhenheng (who lived from AD 1281–1358; Chung, 2008). His perspectives correspond to the findings of contemporary medicine. In this book, women's prenatal education was discussed based on maternal and fetal physiological mechanisms. Zhu Zhenheng asserted that the fetus and mother are intimately connected because the mother's emotions and diet exert a profound influence on the physiological characteristics of the fetus, such as potentially causing abscesses on the newborn's head, phlegm panting, and skin infections by consuming unhealthy food (e.g., spicy food; Bai, 2005; Chung, 2008).

Xu Chunfu of the Ming Dynasty produced numerous works that also emphasized the prominence of prenatal education. He believed that prenatal education involves using the TCM method for nurturing fetuses to adjust the physiology of the fetus and encourage pregnant women to foster their fetuses and subsequently cultivate exceptional descendants by adopting Confucian philosophy and the ES-IS concept (Chung, 2006a, 2006b, 2008; Liu, 1998).

4.1.3 Prenatal Education and Taboos Associated with Pregnancy

In ancient China, several conventional taboos related to TCM ES-IS in prenatal education became ingrained. From a modern scientific viewpoint, these taboos are considered superstitions. According to Chinese culture, continuing the family line is crucial, and any disruptions to this process are considered acts of severe filial misconduct. In ancient periods, inadequate medical care increased the likelihood of a miscarriage or infant death. Based on the perspective that fetuses are vulnerable (Bai, 2005), numerous taboos relating to the ES-IS concept of prenatal education became implanted in society. Pregnant women were the key to cultivating a healthy and ideal child heir; therefore, they were required to protect and nurture their fetuses meticulously. Subsequently, numerous restrictions were imposed on pregnant mothers to protect both the baby and the mother.

Taboos which related to prenatal education for pregnant women primarily evolved after the Han and Jin Dynasties and were influenced by metaphysical factors. Medical practitioners and scholars of the modern era have considered these taboos, which include dietary, behavioral, emotional, and environmental taboos, as superstitions (Chung, 2006a, 2006b, 2008; Liu, 1998; Ren, 1993).

In ancient China, historical records have delineated dietary taboos. For example, Liu Xiang mentioned in the *Biographies of Exemplary Women* that pregnant women should not eat food possessing rancid odors or an odd taste. Numerous ancient books have listed the foods that were prohibited during pregnancy, which included (a) rabbit meat (or seeing or interacting with rabbits), because rabbits may cause congenital cleft deformities, and (b) ginger, because the baby could be born with six fingers (Liu, 1998). These dietary limitations demonstrate the strong concern of ancient Chinese people toward fetal protection. Restrictions, such as avoiding medication and alcohol during pregnancy, are widely accepted in the modern era; however, the prohibition of eating rabbit meat and ginger and interacting with rabbits is considered irrational (Chung, 2006a, 2006b, 2008; Liu, 1998; Ren, 1993).

Behavioral taboos restricted the behavioral norms of pregnant women. Thus, women of the Confucian period were required to consider the influence of behavior on their fetuses. For example, they could not eat improperly cut foods or sit on improperly placed mats and were expected to carry white jade stones, watch jasper jades, and read poetry and books. In addition, they were instructed to adopt various methods to protect the safety of the fetus, e.g., pregnant women should not consume medication, drink alcohol, lift heavy weights, climb stairs or ladders, or perform risky actions (Chung, 2006a, 2006b, 2008). These conventional recommendations correspond to methods adopted by modern pregnant women for protecting their fetuses and thereby safely give birth to healthy babies. Several behavioral taboos were developed to limit the actions of pregnant women to protect the fetuses and the women. For example, during pregnancy, pregnant women were forbidden to move households or furniture, nail anything at home, or use needles. Modern Chinese society considers these restrictions as superstitions (Chung, 2006a, 2008; Liu, 1998; Ren, 1993).

A common Chinese idiom expresses that a woman's physical and mental health influences fetal development. This idea was also conveyed in the *Huangdi Neijing* of the pre-Qin Period, which indicated that a pregnant woman's emotions could cause congenital fetal diseases (Chung, 2008). During ancient periods, numerous distinguished medical researchers stated that maternal emotions exerted an effect on physical and mental health of the fetus. Depressive emotions could possibly cause dystocia, as indicated in *Beiji Qian Jin Yao Fang* by Sun Simiao: Depression and sorrow causes dystocia [憂悒則難產]. Therefore, pregnant women should attempt to feel positive emotions.

Fostering tranquility is conceivably beneficial for fetal development. According to the medical researcher Xu Zhicai, music is essential in regulating emotions (Chung, 2008). His viewpoint is consistent with that of current prenatal education, which also considers music conducive to calming emotions and facilitating fetal development.

4.1.4 Modern Prenatal Education

With the advancement of medical technologies and test instruments, research on fetal development has increased substantially over the past 20–30 years (Graven & Browne, 2008). Concerns related to modern prenatal education (e.g., fetal development and capabilities) have been empirically verified. By using ultrasounds, fetal brain waves and heart rhythms can be detected to determine fetal sensory abilities. A fetus can memorize, learn, and feel the mother's thoughts and feelings based on hormone levels. Moreover, the fetus can also express emotions such as happiness, anger, sadness, and excitement (Makoto, 2012; Trano & Keren, 2010). *National Geographic* (Pioneer Productions & Macdonald, 2005) and *Discovery* (James & Hearle, 2011) have described using 4-D technology to record the process of fetal development in the uterus.

In addition to the biological foundation of genetics, mothers play a pivotal role in fetal development. Most fetal neurosensory systems (including touch, auditory, taste, and smell) develop in the last 16–20 weeks of pregnancy. Between 28 and 37 weeks, the neural tissues of the fetus' cerebral cortex develop to the extent of newborns. This provides the fetus with thinking abilities. Therefore, the uterus should be maintained as a supportive environment for the healthy development of fetal brains (Graven & Browne, 2008; Verny & Weintraub, 2000). Numerous risk factors involved during prenatal development necessitate that mothers and family members focus on methods of preventing and mitigating these risks. To give birth to a healthy baby, women should (a) maintain a positive health status, both physically and emotionally (i.e., manage illnesses such as diabetes, anxiety, and depression); (b) focus on dietary and hygienic issues; (c) learn about potential genetic disorders and risk factors in their own family and the father's family; and (d) determine risk factors existing in the surrounding environment (e.g., environmental pollution, radiation, drugs, and alcohol (Berk, 2009; Verny & Weintraub; Zhang and Zhang, 2012)). Empirical results have indicated that prenatal education leads to the generation of hormones in pregnant women that enhance and strengthen the emotional attachment between the fetus and mother; therefore, an increasing number of doctors are encouraging and supporting prenatal education (Makoto, 2012; Verny & Weintraub, 2000).

Numerous prenatal education books are available. In addition to extending the main perspectives of TCM, scholars offer recommendations regarding the balance between *qi* (the energy of the body) [氣] and blood, monthly prenatal care, and methods for nurturing the fetus. For example, TCM experts Zhang and Zhang (2012) suggested that the fetus should be educated while developing in utero to "learn" languages (by parents speaking to them), knowledge (by parents reading fairy tales and relating life aspects to them), actions (parental physical contact stimulates the fetus), and music (the baby receives positive aural stimulation). Pregnant women frequently follow the prenatal instructions and practices recommended by the well-known prenatal education experts, including Thomas Verny (Verny & Weintraub, 2000) and Shichida Makoto (2012). The Shichida Method involves

mitigating emotional stress during pregnancy, reinforcing mother-child attachment, and nurturing babies to produce lively and healthy children.

The philosophical norms stipulated by the imperial family during the Zhou Dynasty and the folklore taboos associated with food, behavior, and emotions have evolved and are considered superstitions that serve the purpose of restricting the activities of pregnant women. Taiwanese women possess considerably increased knowledge regarding pregnancy. The robust development of medical facilities, the substantial increase in scientific knowledge, and the promotion of nutritional, hygienic, and health care have prompted pregnant women to disregard traditional taboos. Instead, women adhere to medical advice and recommendations suggested by prenatal education experts (e.g., eating a balanced diet and performing appropriate amounts of exercise). However, society continues to stress the necessity for pregnant women to engage in prenatal care, nurture the fetus, and maintain a balanced diet and calm emotional states to protect the fetus and promote fetal health. Chuang (2005) interviewed 16 women who were between 36 and 40 weeks into their pregnancy in Pingtung County, Taiwan. The results indicated that most of the interviewees conscientiously managed their diet during pregnancy; these women typically avoided eating foods that could cause allergic reactions (e.g., spicy foods). These women adhered to the traditional prenatal taboos (e.g., avoiding manicures and long-distance journeys and moving household furniture) that they were taught by their families and society because they preferred to believe in these taboos. Liu (1991) claimed that the varying healthcare methods used by pregnant women in Western and Eastern societies demonstrate subsequent discrepancies in the child-rearing methods they intend to employ in raising children, stating: "Traditionally, we treat pregnant mothers the way we treat infants, giving them whatever food and drinks they desire, but we restrict their activities and forbid them to engage in intense and risky exercises" (pp. 13–14).

Considering the importance of protecting and nurturing the fetus, modern pregnant women continue to engage in prenatal education to ensure healthy fetal development. Chuang (2005) demonstrated that Taiwanese pregnant women typically include listening to classical music as a component of prenatal education. They speak to the fetus, read books regarding prenatal education, pray for the health of the fetus, and love their fetuses. Furthermore, women decorate their anticipated baby's room with appealing photographs of other infants. These approaches are conceptually similar to the ES-IS concept of prenatal education employed in ancient China, in which both the woman's positive or negative perceptions and environment influence the nature (moral or immoral) of the anticipated baby.

In summary, ancient Chinese people highly regarded prenatal education because they wished to raise exceptional children. Imperial family members at high hierarchical levels advocated prenatal education by emphasizing Confucian philosophy and ethical norms to cultivate descendants of excellent morality. Mothers embraced teaching by example as the means of educating their fetuses to nurture children who possessed moral and intellectual qualities. In China, prenatal education advocacy was profoundly influenced by ES-IS; thus, Chinese medical researchers have asserted that the fetus is influenced by the mother's environment (including visual,

audial, and verbal perceptions), emotions, and diet. Therefore, to nurture and educate the fetus, pregnant women applied the concepts of Confucian philosophy and engaged in prenatal education based on the doctrine of monthly fetal development. Prenatal education concerns pregnant women, their fetuses, and surrounding people. However, several of these taboos (e.g., consuming ginger and rabbit meat) are currently viewed as superstitions. Scientific evidence has indicated that prenatal education is meaningful and crucial. Prenatal education is conducive to stabilizing the emotions of pregnant women and strengthening the mother-fetus relationship. This positively influences fetal development and facilitates the nurture of ideal children.

4.2 Chinese Parenting Methods for Babies and Infants

As previously stated, the dragon and phoenix are the respective symbolic representations of the emperor and empress; thus, Chinese parents typically hope that their children will become a dragon or phoenix. Of the 12 Chinese zodiac signs based on the year of birth, giving birth in the year of the dragon is the most preferable option. Despite declining birth rates, the number of births increases dramatically during the year of the dragon, specifically that of baby boys, who are considered capable of achieving future success, upholding family honor, and becoming wealthy. Chinese parenting methods have been extensively examined and compared with Western approaches. Studies have typically employed the bisection method to explore the parenting methods used in Western countries and Chinese-heritage countries. Authoritative Chinese parents are those who educate their children based on the model of punishment and protection; by contrast, Western parents typically adopt a democratic and liberal approach by encouraging their children to conduct active exploration (Chao, 1994; Chen et al., 1998; Li, 2012; Lieber et al., 2006; Liu, 1991; Liu et al., 2005). Based on the perspective that infants are vulnerable, Chinese parents typically adopt a protective parenting style (Bai, 2005; Liu, 1991). The following sections discuss the implications related to the authoritative- and protective-style parenting methods used in Chinese culture.

4.2.1 Authoritative and Disciplinary Education Styles Used by Chinese Parents

After comparing parenting styles used in Western countries and in Chinese-heritage countries, numerous cross-cultural studies have indicated that Chinese parents who expect their children to be successful adopt authoritative and controlling parenting styles (Chao, 1994; Liu et al., 2005). The methods of authoritative or controlling parenting styles that are implemented in Western culture can frequently be used to predict low academic performance, self-esteem, and morals and high aggressive and

problematic behaviors in children, whereas those adopted in Chinese culture have not necessarily affected children negatively (Lieber et al., 2006). Chao (1994) pointed out that students excel in school when their parents adopt authoritarian and controlling parenting methods. The *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother* by Chua (2011) demonstrated this finding. Chua (who is referred to as the Tiger Mother in the book) believed that childhood is the optimal period for cultivating and educating children. The stringent teaching methods she used to raise her two daughters inspired discourse regarding Chinese parenting styles. The parenting method embraced by the Tiger Mother succeeded with her oldest daughter Sophia, who obeyed her mother, devoted herself to practicing piano, and was admitted to both Harvard University and Yale University. However, Chua's method failed with her second daughter, LuLu, causing Chua to compromise and to provide her children with greater autonomy. In practice, typical Chinese authoritative parenting differs from the persistent and dogmatic educational style adopted by Chua.

Authoritative parenting is associated with the hierarchical human relationships established by traditional Confucian culture. In the *Analects of Confucius Book XI*, it stated that rulers, government officials, fathers, and sons should all demonstrate behavior conforming to their identity [君君、臣臣、父父、子子]. Under this social system, people should effectively fulfill their familial and societal roles, which entails high and low as well as superior and inferior relationships of the status (Hwang, 2001). According to ancient books, such as *Chunqiu Zuozhuan: Third Year of Duke Yin of Lu*, ethical and righteous children are raised only by discipline instead of indulgence (Shek & Lai, 2000). Furthermore, the *Liji (Book of Rites): Xueji* stated, "jade cannot be used without being polished and refined" [玉不琢不成器]. Thus, Chinese parents believe that parenting is associated with providing, rather than neglecting, an ascetic education to their children, who can thereby succeed in life.

Chao (1994) indicated that training or disciplining children does not involve parents punishing children or depriving them of necessities. This training is imbued in the context of a highly involved parent–child relationship, in which the parent provides the child with a supportive nurturing environment to fulfill their needs. Although Chinese parents rigorously train their children and monitor learning progress, parents exhibit a high degree of parental care to prepare their children for achieving high scholastic achievements. Moreover, appropriate disciplinary education encourages children to becoming ethical, responsible, diligent, and perseverant through socialization (Chao). Parents consider children's learning as their parental duty, in which they discipline and urge their children to learn earnestly and diligently. Parents cannot guide their children until they understand their schoolwork. This process demonstrates the concentrated efforts that parents exert in cultivating and learning with their children. In addition to improving children's academic achievements, parents are responsible for training the child to follow social and moral rules (Lieber et al., 2006). Based on these assertions, Chinese parents are committed to this responsibility. Based on the Chinese concept that feeding children without providing an education is considered a paternal failure, parents must assume responsibility when their children experience failures in life. Authoritative discipline

is associated with the high degree of care and expectations that parents have for their children. Only by providing devoted and earnest cultivation and support can parents educate their children to become the expected dragon son or phoenix daughter.

Chinese children who are educated using the doctrine of authoritative and disciplinary parenting are frequently cast in the role of a listener and relegated to a position of passivity and unquestioning obedience. However, this is conceptually improper because actively listening without defying parental orders is a positive notion (Fung, Miller, & Lin, 2004). As a contemporary master of Confucian learning, Qian Mu contemplated the teachings of his parents, in which his father taught him the consequences of poor performance and his mother explained the nature of the family to which they belonged (Qian, 2009). Qian Mu learned how he should converse and interact with people, listen and respect others, and understand the explicit meaning of socializing with others (Qian). In summary, Chinese education strongly emphasizes the value of the experiences children gain through socialization and interactions. Furthermore, authoritative parenting involves teaching children the value of respecting others in society.

4.2.2 Protective Education Provided by Chinese Parents

Authoritative and protective education is a single concept with two dimensions. As discussed in the previous sections, pregnant Chinese women emphasize prenatal education and fetal care during pregnancy. The care and protection of newborns also reflect the custom of postpartum care. Postpartum care is a well-established tradition in Chinese culture that is abided by most people of Chinese ancestry worldwide. Although this cultural practice typically lasts for approximately 30 days following birth, the length varies according to different regional folklores and can range from 40 to 60 days (i.e., 2 months) to 100 days (Ruan, 2007; Su, 2012). Local postpartum care centers have been established to accommodate the busy schedule of contemporary families by assisting them in providing adequate care for expectant and new mothers. The primary purpose of postpartum care is to facilitate physical recuperation by means of sufficient rest and dietary adjustments. Local practices that involve prohibitions during postpartum care are common. For example, because of the heavy blood loss that accompanies giving birth, new mothers are physically weak and possess a cold body type (i.e., having cold extremities and inclined to feel cold easily). Consequently, they are prohibited from eating raw or cold foods and are encouraged to eat warm food (e.g., sesame oil chicken) instead to enrich the blood and breast milk, promote milk secretion, and strengthen the body of the newborn. In addition, new mothers are forbidden to wash their hair and lift heavy objects to prevent negative effects on their physical health, such as the common cold (Ruan, 2007; Zhuang, 2005).

Excessive crying and restlessness in newborns frequently result from the mother's lack of rest, milk, or emotional stability. Postpartum care enables new mothers to

physically recuperate and assists in creating a positive beginning in the life of newborns. Therefore, postpartum care is considered a project to create hope (Zhuang, 2005). In other words, postpartum care provides new mothers with sufficient rest, whereas family support and assistance contribute to the mother's emotional stability, thereby allowing her to focus on learning newborn care techniques and subsequently increase mother-child interactions. In addition, implementing appropriate dietary regimens enhances breast milk secretion, which provides for the newborn's nutrition and health and, thus, establishes an excellent foundation for building an ideal future for the child.

Protective parenting also reflects the Chinese perspective that children are vulnerable and must be protected (Bai, 2005). Chen et al. (1998) indicated that Chinese mothers might view their children as being particularly vulnerable and, thus, typically shield children from danger by sheltering them in a safe and suitable environment. Therefore, inhibited behavior demonstrated by children would be accepted and supported (Chen et al.). Chinese parents typically care for and protect their children from perceived danger. Liu (1991) indicated that Chinese parents considerately attend to the needs of infants and young children at all times, ensuring that their food, clothing, housing, and activities are meticulously provided. Being a mother is particularly stressful because mothers must care for their children day and night. Mothers restrict child activities (i.e., protecting them from harm) to the extent that children remain mentally immature (Liu, 1991).

The act of infants and young children sleeping with their parents is culturally accepted in Chinese society. This also represents the stage at which Chinese parents begin cultivating their children to grow into a dragon or a phoenix. At this stage, parents express concern and fear for the safety of their children. Liu (1991) stated that allowing infants to sleep with parents during their first year demonstrates the level of dependency that children have on their parents. However, in practice, parents are dependent on their children and subtly rely on them. For example, a mother might be worried, or even afraid, something disastrous will happen to her young children, because they are very vulnerable to injury; therefore, whenever the mother does something (e.g., household) or wherever she goes, she keeps them close at hand (Liu).

From an alternative viewpoint, the practice of Chinese parents sleeping with their children and embracing protective parenting reveals the cohesive bonds manifested in dependency among family members. Parents are responsible for providing a safe environment for their children, specifically for infants. Therefore, in contrast with Western parents, modern Chinese parents continue to sleep with their babies. Lin (2004, 2006) interviewed 20 Taiwanese mothers and discovered that most of the parents who desired to protect and care for their children allowed their children (before school age) to sleep with them.

Regardless of whether the parenting method embraced by the Tiger Mother has been contradicted, Chinese people strongly believe that the optimal strategy for protecting children is to assist them with preparing for their future, understanding their capabilities, and fostering inherent skills, positive habits, and confidence (Chua, 2011).

Overall, Chinese authoritative or controlling parenting involves providing meticulous care, supervision, and discipline to cultivate moral and exceptional children rather than instructing children to unquestioningly obey parents. The development of advanced technologies, economic changes, and the encroachment of Western cultural values and ideology in China have induced social changes within China and might motivate parents specially in urban China to encourage their children to be independent and autonomous (Liu et al., 2005). According to articles reported in the famous Taiwanese magazine, *Baby & Mother*, and *Education, Parenting, and Family Lifestyles*, modern mothers no longer employ authoritative parenting. Although mothers continue to regard disciplining children as an obligation, they respect and value their children's independence. The purpose of placing children into a listener role is to teach children to listen and respect others. The close relationships existing within families are demonstrated by Chinese parents who care for their children's needs (e.g., food, clothing, housing, and activities), sleep with them, and create safe environments to protect their children from harm and danger.

4.3 Chinese Parenting Methods for Infants and Young Children with Special Needs

Over the last 10 years, parenting a child with disabilities or special needs has attracted a great amount of attention and inclusive education is a hot topic in Taiwan. An old Chinese saying, "parents around the world have the same goals" [天下父母心], applies also to special needs children. Before a child is born, parents have an idealized image of their child as a dragon or a phoenix. After they find a child has special needs, this image gradually diminishes. What are their parenting styles or methods and attitudes? This will be discussed in the following sections.

4.3.1 Early Intervention Increases Parenting Abilities

In *Lunyu: Wei Ling Gong*, Confucius stated, "*you jiao wu lei*" (class distinctions should not exist in teaching) [有教無類]. This educational theory has exerted a profound influence on the current educational system and has become the foundation of education. Special education for children with physical and mental disabilities who attend school has developed vigorously after the enactment of the "no rejection principle" stipulated in Taiwan's *Special Education Act*. Including students with disabilities in classrooms with ordinary students is one of the goals of implementing this national policy; furthermore, early intervention is the cornerstone of inclusive education.

In Taiwan, early intervention is highly valued by the central and local governments. This policy has been integrated into the medical, educational, and psychological services offered by hospitals, developmental centers, workplaces, day-care centers, and preschools. In the past 30 years, early intervention services in Taiwan have

generally been available to infants with special needs and children older than 3 years, and these services have been proven to be effective. Practitioners have strongly promoted the "very early intervention" program, which is an early intervention program for babies from birth to the year they reach 3 years of age. The first international conference for very early intervention was held in an effort to implement early intervention services for babies from birth to the year they reach 3 years of age.

Chinese parents of children with special needs are particularly sensitive to social perceptions of having children with special needs, social expectations, and reputations (Chou, 1998). These parents frequently feel anxious and stressed because they attempt to hide their children's condition. The emotional experiences of parents of children with disabilities and their adaptation and acceptance of their child's condition have been extensively investigated and discussed. The emotional experiences of mothers who play a crucial role in the process of adaptation frequently involve (in order) shock, uncertainty, denial, anger, concession, expectations, and acceptance (Ko, 2008, 2013; Panitch, 2008; Turnbull, Turnbull, Shank, & Smith, 2004). However, these emotions are not felt by all parents. Not all parents are capable of adapting to the psychological, physiological, and economic burdens that result from caring for children with disabilities. Before parents can accept their children's condition, they experience internal turmoil, insecurity, emotional pain, and concerns for the future of their children. During this period, relevant professional workers should provide parents with psychological, informational, and financial support and actively cooperate with parents to enhance their ability to cultivate these children.

The Angel Heart Family Social Welfare Foundation (www.ah-h.org) created the following slogan: parents should come forward first, and then their children may have hope for their future. Therefore, if parents of children with disabilities can successfully adjust to their children's condition, they can adopt a proactive perspective on collaborating with professional experts in various fields (e.g., medical, educational, and social workers), rather than exhibiting passivity toward accepting the support and services of professional workers.

Parents of children with disabilities or developmental delays endure a difficult process, during which their children first receive early intervention services and then subsequent medical treatment and educational services. Mothers are the primary caretakers of children with special needs and, thus, experience greater psychological distress than fathers do. These parents hope for their children to succeed and prosper; however, their disappointment intensifies as their children develop. Nevertheless, early intervention has given new hope to these parents, enabling them to believe that their children will demonstrate the same accomplishments as those of other children.

4.3.2 Chinese Parenting Methods for Young Children with Special Needs

By researching and reviewing relevant studies, Lin and Chang (2008) identified that parents of children with special needs generally adopt a stringent, overprotective, or negligent style of parenting. Compared with parents of healthy children, these

parents are disposed to using command- or authoritative-oriented interactive parenting styles (Lin, Lin, & Liu, 2002). Because of their children's condition and limited capabilities and their own expectations for their children, these parents must spend a considerable amount of time and seek professional knowledge to understand their children. In addition, their children's cognitive difficulties and emotional problems necessitate that parents authoritatively and stringently make an increased number of requests that their children must fulfill. Several parents with financial, labor, or parenting difficulties or psychological and emotional distress cannot care for and educate their children; thus, they fail to fulfill their children's needs. Parents become stressed about their children's health and physical disabilities or feel responsible for their children's inabilities to learn in a manner comparable with that of healthy children because of the severe inherent cognitive defects. Consequently, these parents forbid children from engaging in dangerous activities to ensure safety. These parents eventually become overprotective, submit to their children's desires, and permit unrestricted learning activities and behaviors, thereby fostering children who are overindulged. Wang and Kuo (2012) analyzed master and doctoral dissertations that were available in Taiwan's National Central Library and discovered that Taiwanese parents typically adopt authoritative, indulgent, and overprotective styles of parenting.

When these parents understand and accept their children's conditions, they feel less guilt and subsequently refrain from behaving in an overly protective or stringent manner and adjust the educational training methods they use accordingly (Ho, 2006). For example, Li (2012) stated that China and other East Asian countries emphasize virtue-oriented learning, in which parents of children with special needs actively cooperate with experts to design suitable early intervention courses (e.g., an Individualized Family Service Plan or an Individualized Education Program), based on the assessment results for children according to age, abilities, and familial needs. Relevant experts are available to support these parents and improve their confidence by convincing them that their children's abilities will be enhanced if adequate effort is exerted. After each early intervention session, parents are assigned homework and are requested to learn with their children. Consequently, parents are inculcated with the belief that "determination can overcome all odds" [天下無難事, 只怕有心人] and "diligence can compensate for a lack of intelligence" [勤能補拙]. Most parents believe that experts can assist them by encouraging children to accept early intervention treatments and overcome difficulties and challenges. Based on the expression that practice makes perfect, they assert that their children's condition can be mitigated through concentrated effort and perseverance. Therefore, these parents collaborate with experts to motivate their children to learn and practice relevant capabilities. Parents of children with severe disabilities understand the value of early intervention; therefore, they actively cooperate with early intervention experts.

I previously interviewed a mother of a young child with severe disabilities in my study, "The influence of early-intervention home visiting services on economically disadvantaged mothers with children with developmental delays" (Ko, in press). At the beginning of the home-visit early intervention treatments, the young child's disabilities were severe to the extent that the young child could not visually track a

moving object. However, despite financial difficulties experienced by the family and the severity of the child's learning disabilities, the mother remained hopeful for her child's recovery. She embraced the cohesive power of her family and actively engaged in extensive discussions with the home-visit teacher. She also established goals with the teacher and motivated her child to practice following and tracking moving objects:

> The mother has a child with multiple severe disabilities. Similar to a doll, the child, An, is physically immobilized and can only blink her eyes. The mother initially did not know how to interact with An. The home-visit teacher instructed her to massage her child to prevent muscle stiffness. Accordingly, the mother massaged An whenever opportunities permit, either when she is sleeping or waiting for a medical consultation. When the teacher proposed attracting An's attention using a light source, the mother placed cheap, secondhand Christmas lights, which were purchased at a flea market, in different areas. The illumination from the light induced a response from An. The home-visit teacher also taught the mother to encourage An's older sister and younger brother to interact with An. Thus, when An is in a relatively positive mood, the mother guides the older sister and younger brother to talk and enjoy the shining lights in the room with An. When An turned toward the light source, the mother ecstatically claimed, 'We were deeply moved and happy!' Through reinforced cooperation among the parents, home-visit teacher, and therapist, and specifically the mother's devoted effort to interacting with her child, An can now attend classes in a developmental center. (Field note, 2011.07.06)

This mother exhibited the claim asserted by Li (2012) that in addition to encouraging children to learn earnestly, parents should also devotedly, persistently, and attentively focus on parenting, accompanying, and assisting their children with early intervention treatments.

Although many parents of children with special needs have accepted their child's condition and no longer expect their child to become a dragon or a phoenix, they remain expectant with regard to the learning and developmental outcomes of their child during the early intervention process. Other parents possess unreasonable expectations or no expectations (e.g., protecting their children by not requiring the children to undergo any educational training) or overly high expectations (e.g., early intervention programs inspire immense hope in parents, which prompts them to envision that their child will demonstrate the same accomplishments as those of healthy children). Parents with heightened expectations tend to actively seek various types of early intervention programs (and "shop around" for treatment and education methods). They take their child to attend the numerous intervention courses and workshops provided by medical institutions and developmental centers on a daily basis, which exhausts and antagonizes the child and causes the parents to feel physically and emotionally exhausted as well. Moreover, excessive pressure and tension resulting from completing homework assigned by teachers or therapists negatively influences the natural interactions between parents and children. A small portion of these parents continue to maintain the unrealistic expectations of cultivating an ideal child, despite having a child with severe mental disabilities or autism. They typically hope that their child will surpass others by enrolling their child in early intervention programs (e.g., cognition and language courses). Many parents of young children with high-functioning autism or Asperger's syndrome ignore the

necessity for their child to interact with other young children. They greatly value cognitive learning, believing that the child's learning ability can substantially improve through reading and writing or by playing breaking-through-the-barricade games on iPads and that these activities prepare the children for attending advanced classes.

The belief that where there's a will, there's a way [有志者事竟成] strongly encourages parents of children with special needs to actively engage in early intervention programs and confront future challenges. During this process, experts motivate these parents to earnestly learn with their child and believe in the advantages of early intervention. The persistence that these parents demonstrate is highly impressive. Nevertheless, numerous parents do not attempt to understand or accept their child's condition. Consequently, these parents become excessively indulgent, overly protective, and completely submissive to their children and occasionally possess unreasonably high expectations, insisting that their child must strenuously engage in training to fulfill the same achievement standards as those of healthy children. Confucius stated, *yin cai shi jiao* (suit the teaching to the ability of the pupils) [因材施教]. This notion is consistent with the developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) principle advocated by the National Association for the Education of Young Children in the United States. Therefore, experts should apply this principle, which is personalized for young children, to guide and help parents adjust their expectations and their methods by which they educate their children. This enables parents to accept their children's condition and abilities and cultivates an approach that is appropriate for educating the child.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the characteristics of Chinese parenting methods from ancient to the modern times at an early age are described as follows:

First, in ancient China, prenatal education was profoundly influenced by Confucian philosophy, TCM, and cultural taboos. Specifically, the ES-IS concept of prenatal education emphasizes the essential role of the mother during fetal development, and the mother uses prenatal education as the foundation for cultivating an ideal child. Based on current scientific perspectives, several cultural taboos are considered to be illogical superstitions. However, scientific research has indicated that traditional prenatal education is conducive to fetal development and learning and supports the mother's physical and mental health. Therefore, pregnant women should teach by example and focus on the effects that their health, emotions, and behaviors have on their child. In other words, mothers have to behave themselves well and serve as the optimal example for their fetuses. Teaching by example rather than verbal education is valued.

Second, the authoritative and disciplinary style of Chinese parenting involves parents expressing a high level of concern for their children and

(continued)

supervising their learning progress and moral development because they hope that their children will become a dragon or phoenix and a talented, virtuous, and outstanding person. Meticulously caring for infants and young children demonstrates the intimate parent–child relationship that manifests during the process of raising children. This care is also associated with the fear that parents have regarding the vulnerability of and danger to their child and demonstrates how they build a safe and supportive environment for their child. The early postpartum care reflects the careful protection of newborns and has already an ingrained tradition for years in Chinese culture. Influenced by the ideology of Western education, Chinese citizens have questioned the authoritative and protective style of Chinese parenting. Consequently, Western cultural perspectives have permeated Chinese culture, transforming the authoritative parenting method into a democratic-based teaching style that encourages children to become independent and autonomous. However, these cultural cognition changes can be understood based on only the context of Chinese culture. The child supervision and discipline duties of parents remain crucial in caring for and assisting children for the future success in life.

Finally, parents of children with special needs can better prevent themselves from stringent or overprotective parenting styles through a deeper understanding of their children and the early intervention professional support. Starting with the hope for an ideal child to its disillusion, many parents participate in early intervention courses to try their best to learn more about effective parenting methods. In addition to encouraging children to learn diligently, parents of children with special needs must devote increased effort and time to raising them. When parents have particularly high or low expectations for their child, experts should assist these parents in teaching their child based on the child's needs and abilities.

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Chapter 5
Conflicting Images of Young Taiwanese Children

Min-Ling Tsai

Abstract Beginning with two vignettes on the first day of kindergarten in rural and urban areas in Taiwan, this chapter describes and explores the conflicting images of young Taiwanese children. Whether in rural or urban areas, Taiwanese parents share the same expectations for their children's learning and character development, that is, intelligence and diligence. Despite these shared expectations, parents have different views of young children and early childhood education. The purposes of this chapter are (a) to introduce diverse and sometimes conflicting views of the education of young Taiwanese children and (b) to elaborate which factors or background elements contribute to these differences. First, the current status of Taiwanese early childhood education is summarized to provide the context for subsequent discussion. Second, the dimensions that contribute to the conflicting images of young Taiwanese as well as the backgrounds of these dimensions are described. These dimensions consist of (a) the official kindergarten curriculum standards or guidelines disseminated by the Taiwanese government during various periods, (b) how narrative texts are used in kindergarten classrooms, and (c) discussions regarding native language and English learning. The chapter concludes with photographs that reflect Taiwanese parents' emphasis on early childhood education and the author's opinions regarding the conflicting images and the education of young Taiwanese children.

Keywords Conflicting images • Curriculum guidelines • Early childhood education • Narrative texts • Young Taiwanese children

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5.1 The First Day of Kindergarten

One day in 2011,[1] parents living in a rural village in Taiwan brought their young children to a local kindergarten affiliated with a public elementary school. It was the first day of school, a major event for these families. Clutching green onions, celery sticks, and an egg in each hand, as soon as they arrived, the parents eagerly asked the teachers, "Where is my child supposed to sit?" Unlike elementary schools Taiwanese kindergartens do not require young children to sit in designated seats. Overwhelmed by the parents' incessant inquiries, the teachers pointed to random seats to assure the parents that their children had a place of their own.

The parents immediately tied the green onions and celery sticks to the chair designated for their child and rolled the two eggs back and forth in parallel directions on the desk. Only after they had finished these rituals did the contented parents leave. The expectations the parents had for their children were reflected in the objects they brought. In Mandarin Chinese, the character for green onion [蔥] has the same pronunciation as the character for intelligence [聰] (pronounced *cong*); the pronunciation of the character for celery [芹] is identical to that for diligence [勤] (pronounced *qin*); and egg rolling signifies a smooth school life. Parents in rural Taiwan wish their children intelligence, diligence, and a smooth school life. After these rituals, they are comfortable leaving their children to the teachers.

Parents in urban areas of Taiwan do not carry green onions, celery sticks, or eggs on their children's first day of school. Instead, they use cameras or video equipment and smartphones to record their children's every movement in the classroom.[2] Before bringing their children to school, parents have typically enrolled their children in various after-school courses, the most popular of which are English and art classes, such as piano, violin, and dance.

Whether in rural or urban areas, Taiwanese parents share the same expectations for their children's learning and character development, that is, intelligence and diligence. These expectations are expressed on the first day of school through the customs practiced in traditional agricultural societies or the use of high-tech recording tools available in urban societies. Despite these shared expectations, parents have different views of young children and early childhood education, including the contents and methods of learning, on the first day of kindergarten.

[1] This vignette is recorded in my field notes when conducting a 3-year study on young children's narratives.

[2] The scene of the first day in kindergarten in urban areas of Taiwan had been reported by several teachers in the cities of Taipei and Hsinchu.

5.2 Current Status of Early Childhood Education in Taiwan

Currently, over 95 % of 5-year-old children are enrolled in kindergarten (Ministry of Education, 2013); the learning experiences of these children, however, differ substantially. The fact that many more children attend private than public kindergartens may contribute to the differences—approximately 62.4 % attended private kindergartens in 2011, compared with 37.6 % in public kindergarten (Ministry of Education, 2013).

After Taiwan was liberated from the Japanese rule in 1945, early childhood education received minimal attention from the government. Only after 1968, when a 9-year compulsory education (6 years of elementary education and 3 years of junior high school education) was implemented, did the Ministry of Education make an effort to improve the quality of early childhood education. Early childhood education has never been compulsory in Taiwan, and a national curriculum or standard teaching materials for young children have never been established.

What do young children learn in kindergarten? No easy answer to this question exists. Before the 9-year compulsory education policy was implemented in 1968, elementary school children were required to pass a competitive entrance examination to be admitted to junior high schools. Competition began as early as kindergarten. Some "famous" private kindergartens were regarded as better preparing young children for admission into academically demanding private primary schools, increasing their likelihood of attending the best junior high schools.

For example, my schooling began at a private kindergarten in 1967. My mother was a tailor and had high expectations for my education. Despite the harsh economic conditions experienced by my family at that time, my mother enrolled me at a private kindergarten located approximately 1 h away by car. Her decision reflected popular practice of the time when kindergarten was viewed as a necessary preparation for elementary education.

Like elementary schools, kindergartens at that time featured curricula that focused on acquiring Mandarin listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills and preparatory knowledge of the subjects that would be taught at elementary schools. Analysis of the weekly schedules of private kindergartens (presented in Sect. 5.3) showed that, despite significant transformations over the past 45 years, this curriculum is still implemented in many private kindergartens in Taiwan. After entrance examinations for junior high schools were no longer required, some private kindergartens were gradually transformed into institutions with distinctive approaches to education, while others maintained a curriculum of reading, writing, and arithmetic.

The status of early childhood education in Taiwan has been closely related to the establishment of early childhood teacher training institutions. After the government of the Republic of China relocated to Taiwan in 1949, the Ministry of Education focused its attention and financial resources on elementary education, overlooking early childhood education. The first teacher preparation university that offered 3-year programs for early childhood teachers was established in 1974. Enrollment

was targeted at graduates from vocational schools. In 1987, early childhood teacher training programs in Taiwan were extended to 4 years, the same length as programs for elementary school teachers. The professional status of early childhood education began to be established in Taiwan.

Over the past two decades, university graduates who passed the teacher qualification examination and the teacher recruitment examination and became teachers at public kindergartens were primarily trained at public (national or municipal) universities that specialize in training kindergarten teachers. By contrast, teachers employed at private kindergartens have more diverse backgrounds and were trained at either specialized teacher preparation universities or at general universities. The philosophies and practices at private kindergartens are heavily influenced by the owners, creating a wide range of educational philosophies and practices. By contrast, typically the curricula and teacher qualifications in public kindergartens are with little significant variations.

Not surprisingly, teachers also vary regarding what and how they teach at early childhood institutions. Because of the higher tuition fees, parents who enroll their children in private schools have a greater influence on how their children should be educated. Socioeconomic status and the increasing gap between the rich and the poor, however, are not the only factors that affect what and how young children should learn at school and at home. Amid the various learning approaches advocated by different kindergartens, multiple forces compete to define what childhood is and how children should be educated. Among the seemingly never-settled competing forces, the one commonality is the high value placed on learning. This high value, however, is enacted in various ways regarding why, what, and how young children should learn.

As stated above, the goal of this chapter is to describe some of the many competing forces and how they affect what and how young children learn in Taiwan. This exploration begins by discussing the most recent changes to the government's official curriculum guidelines.

5.3 Previous Curriculum Standards and Updated Curriculum Guidelines

Although a national curriculum for young children was never established in either China or Taiwan, curriculum standards have existed for kindergarten children since the *Temporary Kindergarten Curriculum Standards*[3] was disseminated by the Ministry of Education of the Nanjing government in 1929. This first formal kindergarten curriculum regulation has subsequently undergone five revisions. In 2012, a new guideline was released for preschool[4] [幼兒園] children from age 2 to 6. This

[3] It was "temporary" due to the need for some minor revision.

[4] Preschool is the official translation for early childhood institutions for children from ages 2 to 6. This differs from how *preschool* is used in English-speaking countries.

new curriculum guideline warrants substantial attention because of its considerable differences from the previous five curriculum standards regarding children, learning, and curricula. Below, the newer curriculum guidelines are compared to the older curriculum standards to highlight how drastic the changes are and how such changes can be interpreted.

The older kindergarten curriculum standards [幼稚園課程標準] were published by the Ministry of Education in 1987, the fifth revision of the 1929 original. The standards included general principles for both what and how to teach young children in the following six areas: health, play, music, work, language, and social and natural knowledge.

For these six curriculum areas, teaching goals, scope (content, selection of teaching materials, and teaching methods), and assessment strategies were established. According to the content of these general principles, particularly the way the goals were phrased, these standards conceptualized kindergarten curricula as tasks that teachers are responsible for accomplishing. The goals of the six curriculum areas were targeted at what teachers should do to achieve. For example, one goal in the area of language was "to develop young children's interest in reading, conversation, and presentation" (Ministry of Education, 1987: 63). The standards regarded young children as needing protection and instruction. Teachers were responsible for children's learning and were advised about instructional methods. The names of the six areas, excluding play, were similar to the subject areas of the curriculum established for elementary schools. The standards provide valuable insight into the conceptualization of early childhood education in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Even though a new curriculum guideline was released in 2012, the influence of the old curriculum standards on early education (at least in public institutions) remains strong. Further discussion of the residual influence of these old standards will be presented later in this chapter. The context within which the new curriculum guideline was constructed highlights the differences.

After years of efforts, the Early Childhood Education and Care Act was enacted into law on January 1, 2012. This act mandated that daycare centers and kindergartens be integrated in terms of curricula and the official governing units. The labels "daycare center" and "kindergarten" were replaced with "preschool for young children ages two to six.[5]" To prepare for this dramatic change, the development of new curriculum guidelines began in 2006, concluding in 2012. The law suggests the guidelines to be implemented in every preschool, whether public or private. The guidelines comprise an overall outline and six developmental areas: (a) body movement and health, (b) cognition, (c) language, (d) society, (e) emotion, and (f) aesthetics. Along with different area names, the guidelines differed from previous curriculum standards in many other aspects. First, the guidelines were no longer "kindergarten curriculum standards," because the guidelines were not conceptualized as "standards" to be attained. Second, the new guidelines were based on a

[5] Even though the labels "daycare center" and "kindergarten" were replaced with "preschool" in 2012, this chapter will still use the term "kindergarten" sometimes because most of what has been discussed on early childhood education covers what happened before 2012.

2-year empirical study of young Taiwanese children's development in the six areas. The research results provided the basis for a set of long-term learning goals and a set of short-term learning goals, reflecting the learning potential of children in four age groups (2–3, 3–4, 4–5, and 5–6 years of age). These learning goals emphasize the focus of the guidelines on a planned and systematic curriculum.

Overall the guidelines adopt the concept of benevolence [仁] as its foundation and focus on social relationships and contextualized learning. Despite the claim of being rooted in traditional Chinese values, the content of the six developmental areas is strongly influenced by Western theories of knowledge, learning, and development. Children are viewed as active and competent learners within the local cultural contexts in which they are raised. This perspective is reflected in the learning goals in the six areas.

In contrast to previous standards, the revised learning goals view children as the subjects of learning. For example, one goal in the area of language is "to be fond of reading and able to develop personal perspectives" (Ministry of Education, 2012: 43). The goals state what young children should be able to accomplish after completing preschool education. Children are regarded as the protagonists on the stage of learning. They are viewed as able to plan, initiate, explore, and experience rather than as passive actors waiting to be taught and directed by their teachers. The differences in how education goals are expressed reflect changing concepts related to children, curriculum, learning, and teaching over the past 25 years (from 1987 to 2012). As the guidelines were constructed by a team of seven university professors[6] with doctoral degrees from American universities, the influence of Western developmental and learning theories was both inevitable and obvious.

5.4 Development Theories and Parents' Ideal Children

The idea that knowledge is constructed within local cultural contexts rather than directly instilled into the minds of learners has been widely accepted by the field of early childhood education in Taiwan. Over the past 20 years, the widespread influence of post-Piagetian theories has raised concerns regarding stage theories of cognitive development. Cultural psychology, sociocultural cognition, and sociolinguistics have promoted serious consideration of the influence that sociocultural contexts exert on children's learning and development (e.g., Bruner, 1996; Cazden, 1988; Cole, 1996; Gee, 1999; Vygotsky, 1962, 1978). Most (if not all) of these intellectual influences were brought to Taiwan by scholars who earned graduate degrees in North America or Europe. As noted above, the seven members of the research team responsible for developing the new curriculum guidelines had all studied in the United States. All of them had taught in teacher preparation universities in Taiwan for at least 20 years.

[6] The current author is one of the seven guideline constructors, the major researcher and writer of the area of language.

Accordingly, it appears that only within teacher preparation universities do people recognize the value of providing children with appropriate space and time to develop their learning potential. In private kindergartens or daycare centers, parents anxious to equip their children with the necessary skills to survive a competitive world exert a greater influence on children's lives and education than professors and developmental theories. Most parents of young children want to see immediate outcomes of their children's learning. Children from affluent families attend all-English or so-called bilingual kindergartens, and both the teachers and parents call the children by their English names. Figure 5.1 shows a weekly timetable used at a highly sought-after private kindergarten.

The timetable provides a clear example of how private kindergartens combine the appearance of an "expected curriculum" with subject-based content to satisfy parents' demands that their children's learning be more "substantial." As shown in Fig. 5.1, thematic learning is misinterpreted as learning different subjects under a common theme. Schooltime is devoted to learning science, mathematics, reading, writing, art, physics, and even phonics (circled in Fig. 5.1). Although these private kindergartens consider themselves "bilingual" schools, the timetable shows that young children are permitted to speak and learn Mandarin only for 40 min a day (Chinese lesson, 15:00–15:40, bold and underlined). For children in such private kindergartens, travelling overseas is a common extracurricular activity. Parents want to prepare their children for later schooling as early as possible.

In addition to all-English or subject-based kindergartens, some parents are attracted by specific educational philosophies and send their children to preschools with distinct learning approaches, such as Montessori, Waldorf, or art-oriented schools. Interestingly, parents who send their children to private kindergartens typically hold two contrasting views of children. Some hope their children can learn as much as possible, whereas others wish to provide their children with a pressure-free childhood. Nevertheless, the majority of parents want kindergartens to prepare their children for future education.

Unlike private kindergartens, public kindergartens do not blatantly implement subject-based education because such programs are discouraged by the Ministry of Education. Only a limited number of public kindergartens, however, implement the integrated curricula and project approach supported by the government and universities. Figure 5.2 shows the weekly schedule of a kindergarten affiliated with a public elementary school.

As shown in Fig. 5.2, the period between 9:30 and 11:30 AM is reserved for unit or thematic learning, a period for implementing integrated curricula in typical public kindergartens. During this period, teachers organize learning activities based on themes that they selected independently or with the children. These activities usually involve learning in diverse development fields, such as language, cognition, and society, as previously mentioned. Thematic learning activities are often extended into small group activities that are conducted in different corners. Compared with private kindergartens as described above, the pubic kindergartens that employ the project approach provide young children with greater freedom regarding the topics and process of learning.

Time \ Day	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Arrival 8:30–9:00	Morning exercise + breakfast				
9:00–9:30	Circle time (date, weather, feelings, songs, numbers, colors, shapes, chants)				
	Weekend sharing	Song time	Story time	Song time	Music time
9:30–10:00	Phonics	Writing	9:40–10:40 Learning stations	Writing	Show and tell
10:00–10:30	10:00–11:30 Swimming	Reading		Theme	Reading
10:30–11:00		Super math	10:40–11:00 Experience sharing	Super math	Theme (art)
11:00–11:30		Phonics	Theme	Library	Theme (art)
11:30–12:00	Lunch				
12:00–13:50	Nap time				
14:00–14:30	13:50–14:30 Physical education class (odd weeks)/ story time (even weeks)	Theme	Theme (science)	Playtime	Story time
14:30–15:00	Theme	Play time	Playtime	Music peekaboo or hobby Time	Playtime
15:00–15:40	**Chinese lesson**				Cooking
15:40–16:00	Snack time				

Fig. 5.1 A one-week schedule for a private kindergarten class

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
08:00–08:50	Sharing records of home reading	Physical activity	Pictorial diary and sharing time	Outdoor activity	Music and movement
08:50–09:10	Snack time				
09:10–09:30	Safety education	Life education	Gender education	Vernacular language	Character education
09:30–11:30	Unit or thematic learning				
	Corner time, story reading (whole class), or craft work				Library time
11:30–12:40	Lunch andstory reading (individually or in small groups)				
12:40–14:20	Nap				
14:20–14:40	Tidy-up				
14:40–15:40	Snack				
	Story reading, physical games, mathematics games, language games, Tang poems				
15:40–15:50	Preparing to go home				

Fig. 5.2 A one-week schedule for a public kindergarten class

Although many public kindergartens advertise integrated curricula, integrated teaching is typically implemented for only 1 or 2 h daily. As shown in Fig. 5.2, the remaining hours of the days are occupied with other learning activities. For example, between 8:00 and 8:50 AM on Tuesdays, children participate in physical activity, and during the same period on Fridays, the children engage in music and movement activities. The period between 9:10 and 9:30 AM is reserved for essential learning designated and required by the Ministry of Education, such as safety, gender, and moral education.

Generally, compared with previous curricula, the curriculum currently implemented in public kindergartens reflects the increasing attention devoted to allocating the appropriate room and space for young children to actively construct knowledge. Teachers, however, still dominate the content and progress of student learning, and young children are conceptualized as receiving instruction. This phenomenon conflicts with the images of children described in the updated curriculum guidelines.

Additionally, because of the low birth rates in recent years, public kindergartens face challenges in recruiting enough students. Teachers must spend additional time

and energy to demonstrate young children's learning to parents. Phonics, Chinese character recognition, and writing, despite being scheduled for first grade, are already being taught at certain public kindergartens. Even when activities are not listed on the schedules, teachers may design exercises that young children are required to complete at home with their parents. Doing this sends a message to parents that these contents are indeed taught at the kindergarten.

Superficially, public and private kindergartens resemble elementary schools, where the school day is typically divided into several unrelated modules. The focus of curriculum planning in public kindergartens, however, is thematic, and the thematic learning occupies the key learning periods of each day. By contrast, thematic learning is ornamental in private kindergartens. Both public and private kindergartens recognize young children's high learning potential and emphasize their trust in children's ability to actively acquire knowledge. Unfortunately, the images of children in contemporary development theories seem to matter only in teacher preparation universities. Most parents expect their children to become fast and effective learners at kindergarten.

In rural areas, some parents who send their children to public kindergartens do not necessarily have the time or energy to be concerned about what their children learn at kindergarten. They may, in fact, care more about the free lunch provided for their children and having the school look after their children while they work odd jobs. The financial status of families who send their children to public kindergartens differ more widely compared with those who send their children to private kindergartens.

How school education should conceptualize children and respond to the differences mentioned previously remains a serious challenge in contemporary Taiwan. The influence of child development theories in teacher education universities has not altered some parents' strong belief that the earlier young children start academic learning, the more they will accomplish in life.

5.5 Narrative Texts Used as Character Education Tools or as Art to Be Experienced

Despite the differences discussed above, public and private kindergartens have one thing in common—they both use stories or other types of narratives as teaching instruments. For example, a public kindergarten teacher led a class of young children in reading the poem "Watching the Swimming Fish in the Pond" [觀游魚], written by Bai Juyi [白居易].[7] The poem is translated[8] as follows:

[7] This vignette was observed and reported by a kindergarten teacher teaching in a public kindergarten in a city in northern Taiwan in 2012.

[8] The translation tried to convey the meaning of the poem but failed to express the original rhyming.

I walked around the pond and watched the fish swim. [繞池閒步看魚游]
Some children were riding fishing boats. [正值兒童弄釣舟]
We both loved the fish but did so in different ways. [一種愛魚心各異]
I provided food to the fish whereas you attempted to hook it. [我來施食爾垂鉤]

After leading the children in reading the poem several times, the teacher explained the meaning of the poem using pictures she drew. Then, she pointed to the words of the poem and asked the children to read each line of the poem after her. Finally, the teacher initiated a discussion by posing the question, "Why do you think Bai Juyi composed this poem?" The children did not reply with the answer the teacher was expecting. She then told the children directly that the poet wanted to teach people to care for fish. She spent additional time reminding the children not to catch fish in the pond. In this and numerous other kindergarten classrooms, the purpose of reading poems is clear, that is, to help children learn good and expected behaviors.

Among the various genres of narrative texts, stories are the most commonly used to teach young children in all types of early childhood institutions, regardless of differences between educational approaches. In Figs. 5.1 and 5.2, both timetables feature "story time." In all-English kindergartens, picture storybooks written in English are used to teach English language skills. In public kindergartens, stories are often used "to arouse learning motivation", a term typically used to refer to the first section of a planned activity. To arouse children's motivation to learn, teachers often use a story to provide the context for planned learning. The term suggests that children's learning motivation must be stimulated by forces external to their cognition. This contradicts the academic belief that children are active and competent learners. Rather than helping children to experience literary works, stories are more often used to mold young children's characters. Stories are seldom used to help children explore and broaden their experience and exploration. When reading a story to children, teachers are more concerned with the moral lesson of the story than the beauty of the story itself.

A factor that may explain the frequent instrumentalization of stories can be found in the "old" kindergarten curriculum standards. These standards clearly stated that stories should be used to cultivate positive character traits among children and advised kindergarten teachers that "when young children are losing attention, have been working for long durations, or are waiting to have a snack, it is appropriate to implement story or rhyme teaching" (Ministry of Education, 1987: 65). Thus, stories are used as instruments to soothe children's nerves instead of as art or literary works that nourish children's minds. Teachers are also encouraged to "adapt social and natural knowledge, current happenings, and life habits into stories to attract children's interest" (65). The influence of these recommendations remains strong, as evidenced by the presentations given by the participants in the kindergarten teacher recruitment examination held every year. The participants treated stories as tools to modify children's behaviors or communicate moral lessons.

Although young children are generally regarded as competent and active learners, the examples above suggest a view that young children are not sufficiently competent to experience the beauty and pleasure of literary works. Kindergarten teachers may be excessively occupied by their responsibility to

teach and thus regard all types of text as teaching materials. Kindergarten teachers' lack of literary competence may also contribute to their instrumental reading of literary works. Unfortunately, if narrative texts are only used as instruments of moral teaching, young children are very likely to regard stories in the same manner as their teachers.

An additional consideration[9] for understanding such instrumentalization of narrative texts is the Confucian tradition of Chinese education. As Qian (1995:284) stated succinctly, all Chinese educational thought can be reduced to one sentence, that is, "to teach a person how to be a person." The task of "teaching a person how to be a person" can be further divided into internal and external aspects. Knowledge and skills are regarded as external aspects, and virtue and morality are regarded as internal aspects. Qian maintained that to be a well-rounded person, the internal aspects are more important than the external aspects (288).

"Whole-person education," which is emphasized in traditional Chinese education, refers to education that targets the entire internal life and morality of a person. Confucius' teachings valued morality more than other talents. Qian cited the *Analects of Confucius* to support his point: "I set my heart on the Way, base myself on virtue, lean upon benevolence for support, and take my recreation in the arts" [志於道 據於德 依於仁 游於藝] (Lau, Trans., 1992). Among the four subjects of Confucian teachings, virtue was regarded as the most important; language, politics, and literature were considered less significant. Hu (1990: 2) made a similar observation regarding the priorities of traditional Chinese education. Character education is regarded as more important than the teaching of knowledge and skills. This might explain the instrumental use of narrative texts and the emphasis on teachers' responsibility to provide character education at all times.

The government also shares the responsibility to mold the character of young children. The first picture storybook published in Taiwan was composed by the Bureau of Education of the Provincial Government of Taiwan in 1964. From 1964 to 2002, the bureau published more than 900 picture storybooks. Most of these books published before 1987, the year when martial law was lifted, show a moral slant. The child protagonists were taught to behave appropriately, obey their parents, and love animals and the environment.

The influence of Confucian heritage on Chinese education remains strong although the image or concept of children may be changing. Nevertheless, certain responses to changing views of children have been observed. The language area of the new curriculum guidelines provides an example. The guidelines emphasize the literary and aesthetic values of experiencing a story and state that stories should not be reduced to instruments for specific moral lessons. Teachers are encouraged to learn to appreciate stories as works of art and literature. Many classroom observations and research studies in Taiwan have explored young children's competence in responding to young children's literature (e.g., Tai & Tsai, 2013; Tasi & Tai, 2008). Teachers and parents, however, often focus exclusively on the teaching function of

[9]This consideration is kindly and wisely provided by Professor Hung-chung Yen, the author of Chap. 4 in this book.

stories and narrative texts of other genres. This raises an equally (if not more) important issue related to the storytelling approach. Because story reading is such a pervasive activity in kindergartens, what language should be used to tell stories to young children?

5.6 Cultivating a Taiwanese Identity or Preparing for Internationalization

As highlighted by Bruner (1986: 121), "The medium of exchange in which education is conducted – language – can never be neutral because it imposes a point of view not only of the world to which it refers but toward the use of the mind in respect of this world." Language enacts curricula, social relationships, and identity (Cazden, 1988). The language used to interact with and educate young children definitely influences how Taiwanese children view the world and construct their self-identities. Following the lifting of martial law in 1987 and the first change in the ruling party of Taiwan in 2000, Taiwanese culture and native languages have attracted increasing attention. The drastic demographic changes in the past decade have increased the difficulty of determining which language(s) should be used and taught at school. In the past decade (2004–2013), the percentage of babies born to immigrant mothers, coming from countries such as Vietnam, Indonesia, and China, was approximately 7–13 % of all the newly born children (Ministry of the Interior, 2013). The increasing number of immigrant children contributes to the complex profile of Taiwanese children.

Mandarin remains dominant in schools as the official language of Taiwan. Even in families whose first language is Taiwanese Hokkien, Hakka, or other native Taiwanese languages, many parents choose to speak to their young children in Mandarin. Children raised in these families typically can speak only one language. Although this situation is rare in Southern Taiwan or among families with strong Taiwanese cultural awareness, the fact that not all young children can speak the languages of their parents and grandparents has generated significant concerns. Additionally, many parents who believe that their poor English skills have limited their own academic and career advancement strongly desire their children to begin learning English at an early age.

Whether it is more essential for young children to learn English or a native language has been widely debated. If the answer is native language, a new issue arises: "Which and whose native language should young children learn?" People's "mother tongue" now ranges widely. Not all mothers are entitled to speak to their children in their native languages—some mothers are not allowed to read bedtime stories to their children in their native language. For most families with mothers from foreign countries, the "father's tongue" is the main language used when interacting with young children. The status difference between the native language of the father and mother further increases the challenge of multicultural education and language learning.

Considering that the concept of "native language" has received unprecedented attention and is more subtly conceptualized, some parents remain extremely determined to have their children learn English as early as possible. To learn English earlier is the main reason that parents send their children to private kindergartens. In public kindergartens, the weight of English language learning in the overall curricula and English teaching methods differs substantially. Some public kindergarten teachers do not teach English at all; some incorporate one period of English language learning into the week schedule; and others claim that English is "naturally integrated" into the curriculum.

In private kindergartens, the proportion of English integration also varies. In so-called bilingual kindergartens, English is the dominant language, with Mandarin being permitted for a limited amount of time (see Fig. 5.1). In all-English kindergartens, children are prohibited from speaking languages other than English at all times in school. The "no Chinese" rule is strictly adhered to in such kindergartens. It seems absurd that some parents call their children by their English names and talk to them in English when bringing them to school every morning. Parents who can afford to enroll their children in English language private schools regard English competence as essential for their children's future academic success. Simultaneously, a substantially smaller portion of parents believe that learning native Taiwanese languages is more essential for young children to construct their self-identities and appreciate Taiwanese culture.

What is the stance of the official early childhood curriculum guideline regarding this issue? In the 1987 kindergarten standards, native Taiwanese languages and English had no role at all. The standards mandated that teachers use "correct Mandarin" to speak to and teach the children. Children were expected to associate the sounds of Mandarin with the concepts explained—they were taught to think in Mandarin (Ministry of Education, 1987: 67).

In the 2012 curriculum guidelines, the Mandarin-only position was abandoned. One goal for the language area is "to understand and appreciate that multiple languages are used in Taiwanese society" (Ministry of Education, 2012: 43). Examples provided to explain the short-term learning goals for nursery rhymes or phonological features define "multiple languages" as native Taiwanese languages, including Mandarin, Taiwanese, Hakka, and aboriginal languages. One learning goal clearly states that children are expected to recognize the languages used in Taiwan before they can differentiate Taiwanese languages from foreign languages.

Nevertheless, because the trend of learning English earlier is not abating, the concept of "multiple languages" can be interpreted in other ways. In the updated curriculum guidelines, young children are expected to become capable of appreciating the beauty of native languages. Parents in the rural parts of Southern Taiwan expect their children to be proud of their native languages, while parents in the urban areas consider English vital to provide their children with advantages in the future. Such diverse perspectives regarding language acquisition and learning have resulted in dramatically different childhood experiences for young Taiwanese children.

5.7 Conclusion: The Final Day of Kindergarten

In this final section, the discourse regarding Taiwanese children and their education is summarized with a number of photographs. Figure 5.3 shows a photograph taken in 1968 of a girl graduating from a private kindergarten. Figure 5.4 shows two photographs taken of a boy graduating from a public kindergarten in 2012.

As these photographs show, wearing bachelor's gowns by children at kindergarten graduation ceremonies is a convention practiced at both public and private kindergartens for over 50 years. Slight differences in how the children were positioned are obvious. Beside the more formal pose, the boy was permitted to pose how he wanted. The four words inscribed on the rock behind the boy is the school motto: [敦品勵學], which means to push to develop a good character and study hard. Indeed, to excel in morals as well as academic performances [品學兼優] is a very common expectation of both teachers and parents for children in Taiwan. As stated in the first paragraph of this chapter, Taiwanese parents' expectations for their children's learning and character development (i.e., intelligence and diligence) are reflected in the simple rituals they perform on their children's first day of school. These expectations are as enduring as the conventions. As discussed in this chapter, parents' strong expectations for their young children to learn have been transformed into diverse educational practices. These practices occasionally reflect conflicting images of young children.

Fig. 5.3 A girl wearing a bachelor's gown on graduation day in 1968

Fig. 5.4 A boy wearing a bachelor's gown on graduation day in 2012

The 2012 guidelines regard young children active learners, sufficiently competent to experience and explore, and teachers are responsible for designing systematic learning activities according to children's development. This assumption, however, seems to be shared only by early education professors and a small percentage of parents. Most teachers do not perceive young children to be sufficiently competent, for example, to appreciate literary works. Most parents arrange extremely tight schedules for their children's learning. Certain parents, however, still believe that children's happiness is the most precious aspect of their childhood. Some parents hope that young children learn to identify themselves as Taiwanese by appreciating the beauty of Taiwanese languages and culture. Other parents remain anxious their children may not have a bright future because of their poor English proficiency.

In the past 20 years, the professional status of early childhood education has been gradually established. Early childhood education is no longer regarded as a simplified version of elementary education. The philosophy, however, that young children should be allowed to learn actively and happily based on their developmental progress has not been implemented in the practice of early childhood education in Taiwan. Compared with children raised in earlier eras, young Taiwanese children living in this era are actually encountering increasingly complex educational expectations.

Nevertheless, the conflicting images or expectations of young children may serve as competing forces that constantly "disrupt the fatality of the established order" (Buchanan, 2001: 105) and arouse lively discussion about how to appropriately conceptualize young Taiwanese children. Lancy (2008:1) observed, "Euro-American values have come to define all that is good, beautiful, and true, including our scientific and pragmatic understanding of the nature of children." In Taiwan, this situation

appears to be more complex. The conflicting images of children described in this chapter imply a resistance to the direct application of Western theories of development and learning. Such resistance may open spaces for ongoing debate regarding what is good education for young children in Taiwan. A continuing debate about the role of Confucian traditions, Western developmental theories, and local empirical studies in establishing good and effective early childhood education may well lead to the establishment of multiple ways in which Taiwanese young children can learn and develop, appropriately and happily.

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Chapter 6
Primary Schooling in Taiwan

Li-Juing Wu

Abstract The main focus of this chapter is to reveal the spirit of "cultivating the whole person" in primary schooling in Taiwan. In terms of research methods, case study, personal experiences, and documentary analysis have been employed. Two contrasting stories from pupils are presented at the beginning to give readers a brief picture of primary schooling in Taiwan. One pupil is from a well-off family and she attends a privileged private primary school. In contrast, another pupil is from a disadvantaged family and he goes to a public primary school. From the interpretation and analysis of these two contrasting cases, many similarities can be detected.

Based on the stories from pupils, two sets of issues are then discussed, drawn from the examples given. The first pair deals with academic achievement and character cultivation. The second one pays attention to teaching and nourishing. From the analysis, the concept of "cultivating the whole person" emerges and manifests itself from the pictures drawn. In a word, academic achievement and character cultivation appear to be almost equally emphasized. In addition, primary school teachers devote their time to teaching and nourishing daily. It has been felt that teaching and nourishing contribute to each other in an indirect way. In sum, the precious educational tradition from Chinese culture can still be discerned in the running of primary schools in Taiwan in the twenty-first century.

Keywords Case studies • Elementary education • Virtue cultivation • Role of teachers • Primary school

The main focus of this chapter is to disclose the strength of "cultivating the whole person," a concept drawn from Chinese tradition and still deeply rooted in primary schooling in Taiwan. Regarding the methods of this inquiry, case study, documentary analysis, and personal experiences have been employed. To avoid disrupting the narrative, no distinctions are made concerning which sources of evidence may be used in presenting the findings which follow. Two contrasting stories from pupils are presented at the beginning of this chapter to give readers a brief picture of

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primary schooling in Taiwan. In addition, these two stories also act as the basis for generating issues for further discussion in the chapter. This account begins with the stories from the case inquiry.

6.1 Two Windows Through Which to View Primary Schooling

Before commencing the discussion of primary schooling in Taiwan, two stories from pupils will be presented to give readers an initial image. The first subject, Ping Ping, is from a well-off family and she attends a private primary school after 2 years' public primary schooling. Her parents decided to pay more in order to buy a better education; therefore, they switched her from a public school to a private school. The second one, An An, is from a broken family; he is struggling with learning as well as resource issues. These two contrasting cases should give an interesting perspective through which to understand primary education in Taiwan.

6.1.1 Ping Ping's School Life

Ping Ping is a third grader in a primary school located in New Taipei City. A brief picture of her daily life reveals that she gets up around 6:30. After breakfast prepared by her grandmother, she takes the school bus to a quite prestigious private school. Her school day begins at 8 o'clock and school ends at 5:30 in the afternoon. She and her classmates recite Chinese classical poems at the beginning of every teaching section before their teachers attend class in the morning. There are four sections' teaching with one big break of 30 min and two small breaks of 5 min each in the morning.

Due to the nature of a bilingual school, Ping Ping switches to English in the afternoon. Most of the teachers who teach in the afternoon are native English speakers from overseas. Ping Ping uses Mr./Mrs./Miss to greet her teachers in the afternoon instead of *laoshi* [老師] in the morning. *Laoshi* means "teacher" in Chinese. Literally, *laoshi* means "old master," and to respect the old reflects Chinese traditional culture. Therefore, *laoshi* is a respectful way to greet teachers in many Chinese-speaking areas, such as Taiwan and Mainland China. The teaching styles employed in the afternoon are normally quite lively, according to the observation of Ping Ping. Compared with her friends in the public primary school, Ping Ping has one more extra lesson period to finish off her homework at school under the supervision of teachers. In Taiwan the majority of primary schools are public, and the instructional language is Mandarin. According to the statistics from the Ministry of Education, among 2,657 primary schools in Taiwan, only 36 are private. The private school which employs bilingual teaching policy is rare.

Fig. 6.1 Pupils' daily cleanup activity

One thing which deserves to be mentioned is that Ping Ping and her classmates have to complete daily cleanup work in the afternoon from 4:20 to 4:50. This includes tidying up the classroom, the toilets, and some open space near the classrooms (Fig. 6.1). For students to carry out cleanup activities is essential among primary and secondary schools in Taiwan and it is rooted deeply in the tradition of Chinese education. In a word, book knowledge is only a small part of learning.

After a 30–40-min bus journey, Ping Ping returns to her grandmother's house to have a relaxed evening. Both of her parents work in banking. Her father travels between Taiwan and Hong Kong and stays in Hong Kong for half of his working time. Her mother is also a senior manager in a bank; therefore, returning late from work seems the norm. Fortunately, her grandparents live nearby and give strong support. Once a week Ping Ping attends a dance class after school hours at "Cloud Gate Classroom" which is created by a worldwide famous dancer Lin Hwai-min [林懷民]. In addition she also has a piano lesson in the evening once a week. In addition to these activities, she goes to a Chinese classics reading lesson once a week. During the interview, she recited many famous Chinese classics to me such as *The Great Learning* [大學], *Doctrine of the Mean* [中庸], and *Analects* [論語]. However, she could not interpret the meaning of what she recited to me. Quite often taking Ping Ping to these after-school learning activities becomes her grandmother's duty. One thing deserving mention is that in the case of Ping Ping, all the after-school programs she is involved in are run by private institutions. It means that her parents have to pay extra money for these educational activities.

As a vegetarian since birth, Ping Ping enjoys the meal provided by her school. She has quite a clear religious commitment although she was only 10 years old when the interview was carried out. Her religion dedication is *Yiguan dao* [一貫道] which integrates beliefs from the main religions such as Buddhism and Christianity. This phenomenon is rare among pupils in Taiwan. According to my understanding,

it is due to the family context. Her grandparents and her parents are all deeply committed to this syncretic approach to religion.

To summarize Ping Ping's story, the following three elements can be discerned:

- Her parents care about her education very much; however, they cannot afford enough time to accompany her.
- Her primary schooling reveals strong evidence of "glocalism" or cultural hybridism.
- As a child from a well-off family, she has many learning opportunities outside the school after school hours.

6.1.2 An An's School Life

An An was a sixth grader in a public primary school when the inquiry was carried out. However, he is thin and short; he looks like a third grader from his appearance. An An is from a single parent family, because his father abandoned his mother. An An's mother has suffered from a tragic event and has serious psychological issues. Without any financial support from her ex-husband, An An's mother has been forced to move and now stays with her mother and relatives.

Without a bread winner in the family, the daily life of An An is severely deprived. Fortunately, his tuition fees can be paid by the government. In addition, he is entitled to free lunch, free supper, and free after-school learning programs run by the school. To accommodate the pupils from disadvantaged families after-school hours is a new scheme initiated in 2008 in Taipei City. It means that An An has extra learning opportunities from 4:00 to 7:30 in the afternoon without paying while many of his classmates may go to private *buxiban* (cram school) [補習班] or *caiyiban* (after-school program run by private institutions) [才藝班] to enhance their learning with extra tuition as in the previous case of Ping Ping.

An An's daily life looks like this. He walks to school around 7:50 after finishing his breakfast. He and his classmates have 20 min quiet reading time in the morning when they enter the classroom. After the reading period, four sections of teaching unfold in the morning. Each section is 40 min long with a 10-min break. During lunch time, most of the pupils have their hot meals provided by the school but a few bring in their own lunch boxes and reheat the meal in the school (Figs. 6.2 and 6.3). By regulation, pupils are not allowed to leave the school to have lunch. A 40-min nap follows after lunch for pupils as well as teachers.

In the afternoon, three sections of teaching are followed by cleanup activities. This activity deserves some interpretation. Some primary schools arrange this cleanup activity in the morning, and some other schools even organize two cleanup sections in each school day, because cleanup has been regarded as an important item in traditional Chinese education. After cleanup activities most classmates of An An go home or go to private *buxiban* and *caiyiban*,[1] while An An stays at the school

[1] cai-yi-ban: Literally, it means the institutions where students go to learn all sorts of arts and speciality such as piano, dancing, drawing, writing, etc. They are run by private institutions outside the school.

Fig. 6.2 Pupil delivering food during lunch time

Fig. 6.3 Teacher's supervision at lunch time

until 7.30 p.m. to continue two extra sections of teaching to enhance his learning and to get a free supper. It is a long day for An An.

Two things are worthy of mention here. One of his teachers notices that An An always asks for more food than he can actually finish up. When I went to his class for this study, I also observed a similar phenomenon. The language and content of

his worksheets reflect a strong sensation of poverty. For example, once he mentioned to me that he would like to earn a lot of money to support his families when he grows up. While this article was being written, he finished 6 years' primary schooling and has moved to the first year of junior middle school. Based on the 6-3-3-4 educational system in Taiwan as well as the local culture, the majority of students will finish their university education. It means that An An still has a long way to go before he can earn money to maintain his family.

An An's primary school has been devoted to international exchange programs for quite a long period of time. Obviously, his family cannot afford for him to travel; however, through the whole school program, An An has also participated in related actions, such as a charity program for children in Nepal and taking children from Singapore to tour the school campus, etc.

To summarize An An's story, the following three elements can be detected:

- His mother is unable to accompany or supervise his learning.
- As a child from a deprived family, he can enjoy free learning opportunities after-school hour as well as free meals due to government policy.
- Due to his family background, An An has strong feelings of poverty.

6.2 The Main Pictures of Primary Schooling

Two sets of issues related to the previous two cases will be discussed in this section. The first pair deals with academic achievement and character cultivation. The second one pays attention to teaching and nourishing. These two pairs of issues also act as windows to view primary schooling in Taiwan.

In Ping Ping's case, her parents work harder in order to transfer her from a public school to a private school. For her parents the bilingual learning environment and the emphasizing of character in this particular private school attract them equally. In other words, this means better schooling for them. They pay much more to buy both of these qualities. Their religious commitment makes the emphasis on character cultivation in this particular private school appealing to them. The first pair of issues—"academic achievement and character cultivation"—emerged clearly.

Regarding the second pair of issues, the case of An An requires some interpretation. I met An An in an after-school program sponsored by the Taipei City Government since 2008. This program has a beautiful name which is "Lighting for Angel" (LA). The LA program looks after pupils from disadvantaged family backgrounds. Scholars argue that disadvantaged students with low income or other family difficulties have less chance to involve themselves in school activities. In addition, more behavior and discipline problems can be seen such as poor peer relationships and lacking ambition to learn (Tan & Wu, 2009). Obviously, An An has bad peer relationships and this factor contributes to his negative attitude towards learning. An An quarrels with peers quite often, according to the observation of a teacher who is responsible for the program. In An An's case, the government scheme

bridges the family's shortcomings to support his learning as well as covering the dimension of nurturing. However, a primary school teacher taking the role of nurturing is quite pervasive. It is not confined to pupils like An An. This will be illustrated at greater length in this chapter.

A friend from Malaysia shared that when a Muslim moves in to a new place, the first thing they strive to do is to build a Mosque; while when a ethnic Chinese moves in to a new place, the first priority for them is to build a school or to find a good school to educate their children. This observation from a cultural outsider supports the image that ethnic Chinese do value education. The case of Ping Ping and the case of An An, both verify the same message. It deserves to be noticed that education in Taiwan is viewed from a broad perspective. As mentioned above teaching and nourishing are looked after in schools, and character cultivation and academic formation are both emphasized. This phenomenon can be explained by the notion of education as a "whole person cultivation" in traditional Chinese culture.

6.2.1 Academic Achievement and Character Cultivation

The ideal person in ethnic Chinese society is good in character as well as talent [才德兼備]. This tradition still exerts its influence upon schooling.

6.2.1.1 Character Cultivation Remains a Dominant Concern

First of all, I would like to go back and decode the original meaning of education in Chinese culture. The Chinese character for education is "教育" (*jiao yu*), and the first character "教" literately means "to utilize a cane to foster children to exercise filial piety"; the second character "育" literally means "cultivating your son/daughter to be kind." It can be detected that "moral color" is strong in the concept of education in Chinese culture. This thought continued and can be observed from the argument of a famous writer Han Yu [韓愈] (AD 768–824) in the Tang dynasty. He argued that the written text is the vehicle of *Tao* [文以載道]. In other words, the main aim in writing an article is to convey *Tao*. The analysis of textbooks in primary schools still reveals that character formation occupies an important role nowadays. The formal curriculum emphasizes the role of character formation; even the subject of "living and ethics" [生活與倫理] has been moved away in 2001 due to a major curriculum reform. Since then, it has been suggested that moral and character education should be integrated into all subjects.

Some examples from Mandarin textbooks of the primary school in Taiwan can illustrate the phenomenon. In the textbook of Year 6, the story of a famous movie director, Ang Lee [李安], has been included. Based on his life story, the main message sent out is that diligence and fortitude are important for success.[2] In the Year 4

[2] Mandarin textbook Vol. 11. Lesson 13 (Publisher: Nan-Yi)

Mandarin textbook, lesson 10 discusses an article from a local newspaper. The main story line is that a man gets hurt and needs a blood transfusion. Coincidentally, he notices that the blood used in the transfusion is what he donated the previous week. The chief note of this lesson to pass on is "kind deeds come back to you."[3] Another example is from the Year 2 Mandarin textbook; the story of a cake made by thousands of people has been presented to stress the importance of cooperation.[4] Similar examples are plentiful. However, Martin (1982) argues that what is conveyed in textbooks is not necessarily taught by teachers nor learned by pupils. It is a sensible argument. The gap among different levels of curriculum is not a new concept in the educational community. In addition to the formal curriculum, the hidden curriculum, the teacher-implemented curriculum, and the informal curriculum will be addressed later.

In terms of the teacher-implemented curriculum, I noticed a widespread practice among primary school teachers from my personal experiences as well as the analysis of the parent-teacher communication books. The good practice is that primary school teachers have wisely made efforts in a crowded timetable to put character and moral education into focus. According to my observation, there are two books which have been used heavily by teachers to cultivate pupils' character. They are *TiZi Gui* (Rules for students) [弟子規] and *Jing Si Aphorisms* (Words for reflection) [靜思語]. Some teachers ask pupils to read or recite or copy some parts of the books as their homework. Some teachers ask pupils to chant parts of the books at the beginning of each teaching section (Fig. 6.4). By this very action, both *TiZi Gui* and

Fig. 6.4 Pupils read TiZi Gui at the beginning of each teaching section

[3] Mandarin textbook Vol. 8. Lesson 10 (Publisher: Nan-Yi)

[4] Mandarin textbook Vol. 3. Lesson 10 (pp. 82–89). Publisher: Kang-Xuan.

Jing Si Aphorisms may have positive impacts upon pupils' mind-set. The corollary is that it is valuable for the pupils' character formation.

Some teachers put *Jing Si Aphorisms* on the wall in the classroom. By this very action, I see the hidden curriculum of character cultivation in Taiwan. Some extracts from *Jing Si Aphorisms* may give you the flavor. Here are some of the wise sayings:

- To a beautiful heart, everything appears beautiful.
  [心美看什麼都美]
- When we are criticized by someone, we should actually be grateful to that person.
  [受人批評,應感恩對方]
- Learn to be agreeable, learn to be humble, but don't learn to resolve matters with your fists.
  [學點頭,學低頭,不要學拳頭]
- Anger is punishing oneself for the mistakes of others.
  [生氣是拿別人的錯誤來懲罰自己][5]

The book *Jing Si Aphorisms* was written by a Buddhist Master, Cheng Yen [證嚴上人]. She initiated and organized the Tzu Chi Foundation [慈濟功德會] to help the needy with cash or goods all round the world. A group of teachers touched by the endeavor of Master Cheng Yen initiated an association for teachers to convey the teaching of *Jing Si Aphorisms* as well as all sorts of benevolent actions in 1992. There are more than 10,000 teachers involved in this association.[6] The background information about *Jing Si Aphorisms* reveals that religion contributes indirectly to character cultivation in schools.

Turning to *TiZi Gui*, the spirit of this book is from the *Analects* [論語]. This book is about rules and advice given by wise men from ancient times and the readership has been mainly targeted at children. The very beginning of this book is as follows:

> First, you must obey your parents, respect your older siblings, love your younger siblings, be careful in your speech, and keep your promises to others. You should have a generous love towards others, and try to be friend people with good manners. If you can do the above and still have energy left, you can proceed to study literature and other knowledge.[7]
> [首孝弟 次謹信 泛愛眾 而親仁 有餘力 則學文]

From the beginning of *TiZi Gui*, it is clear that character cultivation has been valued much more than academic learning in ancient Chinese culture. Although change is inevitable, the root of character among ethnic Chinese still survives.

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[5] More detailed information can be seen from the following website: http://tw.myblog.yahoo.com/jw!lYxKcBCVAhJVoIPy6E8CArS0PGw-/article?mid=428

[6] More detailed information can be seen from the following website:
http://www.tzuchi.org.tw/
http://teacher.tzuchi.net/teacher.nsf

[7] To learn the English interpretation of "Ti-Zi-Gui" (弟子規), more detailed information can be seen from the following website: http://edu.ocac.gov.tw/biweekly/classics/1/english2.htm

One point which deserves more attention in *TiZi Gui* is the embodied nature of the learning of character, although the concept of embodied learning is unknown to most teachers. The end of *TiZi Gui* is as follows:

> The room should be clean; the walls clear;
> The desk, spotless; the pen and ink well, straight;
> If the ink is ground unevenly, the heart is not upright;
> If the attitude towards writing is not respectful, the heart has first fallen ill.
> Books should be set out in a regular place.
> After reading, return them to their original place.
> Though there may be an urgent matter, roll and tie them properly
> And if there's damage, repair it immediately[8]

Reading into this extract, a rich interpretation can be constructed. I would like to draw attention to only two points. Firstly, it is related to the daily cleanup activities in primary school. The activity of cleanup has been enriched by the flavor of character formation. However, I asked Ping Ping whether she knew the meaning of cleanup activity. She shook her head. This event reminds me of another experience. I have done an inquiry into a Taiwanese pupil who had most of her primary schooling in the UK and returned to a public primary school in Taipei after many years. One thing she complained of about the schooling in Taiwan was the cleanup activity. She said that the school is criminal because she has to carry out cleanup activity daily without any pay. Having just returned to Taipei from the UK, the cleanup activity in her mind is child labor without pay. Another similar one is the response to cleanup activities from Australian pupils. I took a group of intern teachers to a primary school in Brisbane to carry out practice teaching in 2010. One intern teacher made a film to introduce the pupils to daily life in Taiwan. After the introduction Australian pupils were asked whether they would like to come to Taiwan to have new experiences. Most of them went for this invitation but with reservations about doing daily cleanup activity. The important thing is not what you see but how you see. Definitely, the perspective of Chinese culture gives the meaning of cleanup a very different flavor.

Secondly, I coin the term "Latin in character" to serve the interpretation. According to my understanding, Latin is almost a dead language. However, from the perspective of "formal discipline theory," it is still functional. Those issues mentioned in *TiZi Gui* such as "grinding ink evenly" and "writing with respectful attitude" are meaningful, and yet in daily life, they are not the priority of practical concern. In other words, the attitude is much more important than the behavior itself. Therefore, I provide the name "Latin in character" to manifest the color of "formal discipline theory." It is still quite common in Taiwan that people believe in "The way you write represents yourself." Therefore, to write Chinese characters beautifully itself contains a moral implication.

[8] More detailed information can be seen from the following website: http://www.tsoidug.org/dizigui_trans_comp.php

I suffered from this cultural complex when I was a child. To write calligraphy was a daily must in my childhood. It is a way to cultivate character. Once when I did the practice of writing, my classmate came to visit me. I wrote the calligraphy while chatting with my friend at the same time. My father gave me a warning. However, I ignored the message and kept doing the calligraphy writing in an improper way. A slap on my face from my father was what I got for this misbehavior. The way to do things properly in order to preserve a good mentality is the lesson I had to learn from the slap.

Going back to the case of Ping Ping, the emphasis on virtue in her school is a magnet for Ping Ping's parents. Interestingly, the name of this private school literally means "Cultivating Virtue." From the reading of the school website, I noticed that one of the projects the pupils just carried out is to donate money for a very poor Filipino child to complete his schooling. Similar projects can be found in An An's school too. The teachers in An An's school run a project called "Realizing one's dream" which aims to send stationery to poor pupils in Nepal.

The examples mentioned above disclose that character and moral education have not been ignored, even without the former teaching subject named "Living and Ethics." Through the interpretation and implementation of practicing teachers, character and moral education have been comfortably situated in the pupils' daily lives.

6.2.1.2 Academic Achievement Remains a Dominant Concern

Regarding academic achievement, the imperial examination in ancient China has planted a strong root in ethnic Chinese culture. Although the mechanism of imperial examinations was abandoned in 1905, the belief of good examination results symbolizing a promising career future is difficult to rewrite. The past has never fully passed away. Therefore, it can be observed from the case of Ping Ping that her parents would like to pay more tuition fees to transfer her from a public school to a private school to get better schooling. In terms of An An, the government funding comes in to enhance his academic learning. This section shows that academic achievement is still one of the dominant concerns in primary school from the evidence of communication books, the pupils' views towards their examination reports, and the messages from private crammers.

To unfold the picture of emphasis on academic achievement, I have examined the content of 43 communication books which came from schools in different regions of Taiwan in order to cover the varieties of application (Wu, 2008). It is necessary to pay some attention to the mechanism of the communication book here. The history of employing a communication book in primary schools dates back to nearly 30 years ago in Taiwan, although the timing of different cities/counties adopting this mechanism is varied (Wu, 2008). In terms of format there are many different designs. However, the main content is the section on homework and testing as well

as the aide memoire regarding items pupils have to bring in on the following school day such as stationery, money, etc. In addition, there is a blank column for parents/guardians and teachers to correspond with each other, if it is necessary. To check and respond to each pupil's communication book has become one of the priorities of practicing teachers in Taiwan. To sign the communication book for children every day is a must for parents. Therefore, the communication book is a valuable window through which to view primary schooling. Through careful analysis, the students' experienced curriculum in Taiwan can be observed.

Before the examination of these communication books, I did not assume that the pressure of academic achievement still exerts such a prevailing influence in primary school. The data proves that I was too naïve, although the entrance examination for junior middle school has been abandoned for nearly 40 years. Anxiety over academic achievement in primary schools still cannot be ignored, particularly in Year 5 and Year 6. In addition, the main subjects (e.g., Language and Mathematics) have been underlined through homework as well as pupils' after-school crammer sessions outside the school. In terms of the crammer phenomenon, I shall go back to this issue later.

Here are a few notable examples from communication books. One book owned by a Year 1 pupil from Kinmen Island surprised me. According to the content of her communication book, she took part in a language test in the third week of her very first semester in primary school. According to my personal understanding, it tends to be a bit more conservative in terms of educational philosophy in Kinmen. Therefore, I turned to the communication books from different cities or counties. However, I found that this case is not the only one among the 43 communication books which I collected. In a word, pupils have the experience of testing at a very early stage of their schooling.

Regarding the significance of examinations, the frequency of their appearance in a communication book is an important indicator. I analyzed the items written in a communication book owned by a grade 4 pupil who lived in Kinmen. I noticed that there were 301 items in the whole semester, and the items related to testing came to 68 (22.22 %). It means that nearly one-fourth of the items in his communication book related to examinations. Again I went to a school with the philosophy of open education in Taipei and collected a communication book owned by a grade 2 pupil. The number showed that there were 253 items in the whole semester; the items related to testing were 21 (8.3 %).[9] Personally, I feel that the number is not low in primary school. One important message to bear in mind is that most of the tests referred to are in Language and Mathematics.

How do pupils view the results of their examinations in Taiwan? It was a norm for pupils and their parents to get a report of the major examination results of the whole class. There are two major examinations in every single semester. The corollary is that every pupil knows their relative position in the class in terms of test

[9] Regarding the items which are not related to examination, they are the items that need to be brought in the next day as homework, etc.

scores. This has been regarded as one way to inspire pupils' fighting will. In addition the information is helpful for the parents to guide their children to study. However, due to the concern of privacy and confidentiality, the Ministry of Education put a new regulation into practice to forbid this practice since August of 2012.

Regarding this policy, a case study has been carried out to understand the voice of the pupils. It is very interesting that children in this case prefer to know their pecking order as long as it is not made public. It has been argued that the pecking order is an important piece of information for pupils to understand their own learning (Cho & Chen, 2013). There is a rich message related to the attitude held by pupils. One thing which cannot be ignored is the anxiety over academic achievement.

This anxiety can be connected to the role and significance of "cram schools" in Taiwanese education. Therefore, it is necessary to examine more closely the issue of cram school in Taiwan. There are many private cram schools located in the area where I teach; therefore, it is difficult to ignore the messages sent out by these institutions. I would like to give just a few examples from the advertisements of cram schools to give the readers a glimpse that academic achievement is still one of the major anxieties even in the primary school phase. The advertisement of a particular cram school reads as below:

> One to one tailored course—The tutor will accompany you until you make sense of the lesson—No matter how late it is, we are always here for you.
> Half of our students pass the entrance examination to private middle schools
> Join the transition program to win the race at the beginning

In terms of the issue of time, some cram schools remain open until midnight. From the reading of the names of cram schools, it is clearly suggested that academic achievement is the obsession. There is a cram school named after a top girls' secondary school "bei-yi" (literally, it means the top secondary school in Taipei) [北一]; another one is named after the top university in Taiwan "Tai-Da" (臺大, National Taiwan University). This is not to mention other names used like "Little Harvard" or "Princeton," etc. The implicit message is "Please come to us, you will have more chances to go to the top schools or the selected universities."

Going back to the case of An An, he is entitled to be enrolled in a free after- school program. In addition to his needy family background, he does not perform well in terms of academic achievement. This is why I met An An in the after-school enhancement program. His case reveals that the policy-makers highlight academic achievement too. Without doubt it is still academic achievement which leads to admission to a place in a good high school and university in Taiwan now. This structure goes hand in hand with the Chinese tradition of increasing pupils' anxiety over academic achievement. The game may be changed after the implementation of the "12-year Basic Education" [十二年國教] reform in Taiwan. It deserves to be watched constantly.

In sum, I would argue that it is the idea of the "whole person" which underpins the teaching practice mentioned above in primary school. According to the inspiration of the whole person concept, rigorously speaking, some elements have been missed in current primary schooling in Taiwan. To go back to the thoughts of

Confucius, he described the ideal person to be produced by the Chinese version of paideia: a man who possesses wisdom, courage, and magnanimity and who is accomplished in courtesy, ceremony, and music. Training in both literary and martial subjects was thought essential for producing such a broadly cultivated person (Levine, 2006). According to this standard, a lot needs to be done in primary school. However, under all sorts of pressure, primary school teachers still strive hard to maintain the tradition of whole person cultivation. Take the example of "model student" [模範生] selection to serve as an explanation. A pupil must be good at academic performance as well as character to be eligible to become a candidate for model student status. Model student is the top honor in primary school. Symbolically, this indicates the aim of primary schooling. In terms of secondary school, the story of "model student" is more or less the same. I suggest the reader consults Chap. 7 of this book. In a word, the whole person is what we are aiming for in Taiwan during the primary phase despite the stress from all directions.

6.2.2 Teaching and Nourishing

Nourishment cannot be ignored when considering primary schooling in Taiwan. In fact, I shall argue that nourishing is one part of the broader sense of the meaning of teaching in Taiwan.

6.2.2.1 Teaching Script

Regarding teaching in primary school, I would like to give some brief factual information. Primary schooling lasts for 6 years. Each semester consists of 200 school days and every week has 5 school days. The teaching areas consist of Language Arts (including Mandarin, English, and Dialects), Mathematics, Health and Physical education, Integrative activities, Social study, Science and technology, and Arts and humanities. The last three areas integrate together to become "Life Area" for Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. The curriculum structure shifted from learning subjects to areas since the major reform of the "Grade 1–9 curriculum" [九年一貫課程] in 2001. It is clear that integration is the main spirit of the curriculum in primary schools.

Now I shall employ the concept of "teaching script" to further unpack primary school teaching in Taiwan. The term "teaching script" has been coined by Biggs and Watkins (2001). When Stigler and Hiebert (1999) tried to characterize the pedagogical flow of different systems, they noticed that teaching varies a lot in different cultures, while the pedagogical flow is more or less the same within the same culture. Based on this observation, Biggs and Watkins argue that each culture builds up its own teaching script, and the script determines the learning outcomes in this culture rather than the individual actors who deliver the teaching (Biggs & Watkins). In a word, to catch the teaching script means to get in touch with the fundamental structure of teaching in a specific culture.

There was an idiom used in the Taiwanese educational community to denote good schooling. It can be interpreted literally as "teaching diligently and managing students' behavior rigorously" [勤教嚴管]. This phrase can still be found on websites of some schools to indicate their sincerity and commitment to schooling. This philosophy of teaching may not be completely followed nowadays. However, it is not sensible to pay no attention to its influence. From the script of teaching in Taiwan, I can detect the flavor of this phrase.

A teacher standing in front of the class, firmly in charge of teaching is still one of the main pictures of primary schooling in Taiwan. With the so-called open education, cooperative teaching, and constructive teaching, plus similar concepts which constantly flow from the West, a slight shift of the teacher's position in the classroom is unavoidable. However, the main image of the teacher remains. Many primary school teachers tell me that sitting while teaching is going on makes them feel that they are lazy and do not carry out their job properly.

The picture during break times deserves mention. Normally, teachers will sit in their homeroom or go to the staff room to mark students' homework (Fig. 6.5). Teachers joke that they have to shovel away the mountain of students' homework daily. It takes teachers an enormous amount of time to mark pupils' homework. The essence of "diligence" can be detected here. Primary school teachers assign homework daily, and normally, students have to hand it the very next day. The consequence is that the homework assignment is mainly a short-term task and the teachers have to mark students' homework daily. I argue that this practice is the consequence of an agricultural past (Wu, 2008). In Taiwan each morning farmers have to make sure there is enough water for their rice farm. This way to give homework is quite different from giving a long-term inquiry project as in many Western countries.

Fig. 6.5 Teacher marks pupils' homework daily

Fig. 6.6 Pupils practice new words in the air

Back to the issue of teaching script; taking Mandarin as an example, the teaching script runs from the investigation and practice of new words (vocabularies) and then moves to the interpretation of lesson content and ends up with practice from a worksheet. To read the lesson/text aloud by students collectively is a common practice. In addition, question and answer between pupils and teachers can be discovered spreading around the whole teaching course. In terms of the practice and mastery of new words, during the teaching, pupils have plenty of opportunities to use their fingers to write every single new word one stroke after another in the air [書空] after the leading of the teacher (Fig. 6.6). However, the element of speaking has not been paid enough attention in daily Mandarin teaching. This practice reminds me of the argument of Li. She argues that East Asia does not have a tradition of valuing speech. In other words, East Asia devalues and distrusts verbal eloquence as a means to achieve worthy ends (Li, 2012, p. 296). I noticed that many famous sayings in Chinese culture do point to the direction. Here are some of them:

> Before you open your mouth to speak, think twice and chew your words carefully. The point is not to hold your peace, but to speak with discretion and prudence
>
> A solid step forward speaks louder than a hundred empty, fair words.
>
> Keep your ears and eyes wide open, but mouth tight shut; be quick with your hands and legs, but slow to spend.[10]

It is obvious that the link between teaching and culture can be discerned again in primary schooling in Taiwan.

[10] From *108 Paths to Liberation* which was written by Master Sheng Yen

Going back to the way of learning new words, why primary teachers take such a long period of time in this part of teaching deserves to be explored. First of all, it is deeply rooted in Chinese culture that the way to write represents the character of the person. As a result writing new words appropriately deserves a lot of attention. In other words, writing practice is aimed at the cultivation of character. It has been said of Chinese classics that cultivation of character is the foundation of managing one's household, and the managing household is the foreground of managing the country [修身 齊家 治國]. The importance of character formation is divulged from the teaching script of Mandarin.

In terms of Mathematics, two scripts can be observed. One follows the logic of induction and another one follows the path of deduction. The former one corresponds to the constructivist view of Mathematics teaching. The deductive script unfolds teaching from a precise formula. No matter which script has been adopted, practice and yet more practice after teaching seems the norm. The analysis of communication books discloses that Mathematics appears in the student homework column quite often. The cultural message is obvious from the teaching script of Mathematics. "Practice makes perfect" is one among the cultural values endorsed by Mathematics teaching. Another one is "Diligence makes things possible" [一勤天下無難事]. In a word, character formation can be seen through analysis of the teaching script.

6.2.2.2 Nourishing Primary Schooling

An ethnographic study carried out in 1988 showed that primary school teachers in Taiwan spent much of their time doing jobs which are not directly related to teaching (Chen, 1988). These findings have been reconfirmed through the analysis of communication books by the author of this chapter (Wu, 2008). In addition to instruction, I noticed that primary school teachers in Taiwan carried out many caring jobs. First of all I would like to share an observation from three American intern teachers. These teachers joined the affiliated experimental school of National Taipei University of Education to carry out their teaching practice around 2010. They shared their most impressive observations before leaving Taiwan. Their observations are as follows:

> During lunch time, a quiet boy holding his dinner plate walks to his teacher who stays in her homeroom to have her meal and to supervise her pupils' dining at the same time. Obviously, there is still a lot of food left on his plate.
>
> The teacher shakes her head with a smiling face. From the observation, it can be told that this boy is disappointed, but he goes back to his seat and continues[2] to finish off his lunch.

This scene happens in Taiwan daily in many classrooms. As a cultural insider, I took it for granted before this conversation. However, these three American intern teachers were so amazed at this observation. One mentioned to me that in the US, this is a job for a mother but not teachers' work. Another intern teacher interrupted enthusiastically and said that nowadays even a mother in the US does not normally

have the capability to ask her children to finish off their meal. This conversation reveals many messages. What I would like to draw attention to here is the caring/nourishing attitude of school teachers in Taiwan. This is not in the teachers' job description;[11] however, they think it is the right thing to do. Their effort can promote healthy eating habits of children. Do the healthy eating habits of pupils contribute to learning and teaching? Without doubt, the answer is positive, although it is not easy to carry out direct observation.

From the reading of pupils' communication books, plenty of examples reveal that primary school teachers care very much about pupils' nourishment and they pay attention to this issue daily. Here are some examples: Yuan Yuan is a fourth grader in the southern part of Taiwan. I noticed that her teacher jotted down the following sentence in her communication book:

> Yuan Yuan fell down in PE class. Please do look after the wounded part.
> Do not wet the wound during bath or shower.

The second day, Yuan Yuan's mother noted down "O.K. Thank you" in the "Parent and teacher communication column" of her daughter's communication book. This communication seems short; however, it is meaningful and functional.

Another case is a Year 1 pupil. The school day normally finishes at 12 noon for the grade 1 and grade 2 pupils. Therefore, some of them have to attend an after-school program run by the school, however with inexpensive fees. Man-Man is one of the examples. Her father teaches in the southern part of Taiwan and she stays with her mother in Taipei. However, her mother's job does not allow her to take Man-Man home at 12 noon. Here is the message from a teacher in the after-school program to Man-Man's mother:

> Man-man was not used to the school program last week. She was unsettled and cried a lot. However the circumstances have improved quite a lot. She is cheerful and eats a lot this afternoon. Her brother dropped by to see her during the break. Please do give Man-man a big hug and high praise.

Man-man is a grade 1 pupil; she is new to the school. This communication is considerate and helpful. I can detect the caring attitude easily from the note in the communication book. One thing deserving mention is that the note written by the after-school teacher was read not only by parents of Man-man but also by her homeroom teacher. A "village of education" can be discerned through the communication book.

In addition to the individual teacher's caring attitude, the whole school system is devoted to nurturing issues in Taiwan. From the following writing in a communication book, it is not difficult to get the sense of this:

> I had an injection in school, I need much more water than usual.

This text was typed by a grade 1 teacher and is delivered to pupils' parents/guardians through the communication book. It aims to remind parents/guardians to give more water to pupils after injections carried out in the school. The caring

[11] Until 2013, the detailed job description of school teachers is unheard of in Taiwan.

attitude of this teacher is the first message from the text. The second one is that primary schools perform as an agent for health promotion. It not only saves a lot of parents' hassle but also places the school in a better position to protect the disadvantaged family. Here is another reminding text in a pupils' communication book to reveal the nurturing role of the primary school in Taiwan:

> Please hand in the tube of urine tomorrow morning for medical examination. Don't eat too much sugar today.

The examples mentioned above prove that primary school teachers do pay attention to the issues related to pupils' caring or nourishing in Taiwan. The most important concern is "How to interpret this phenomenon?" Personally, I took the phenomenon in Taiwan for granted until 2004. I applied for a study leave and stayed in the UK for a year. I took my daughter with me and fortunately she got a place in a very good private school. However, the beginning of her schooling was a real challenge for me. Take the issue of health examination as an example. I got a note from the school, and I knew the address of the clinic where I was supposed to go. As a new arrival, I did not have time to buy a car. In addition, I did not have opportunities to make friends who I could turn to. This UK experience sheds new light upon the role of nurturing adopted by schools in Taiwan. I do appreciate the extra commitment of teachers and the school system in Taiwan. I believe that the disadvantaged family can benefit from the supportive system and the teachers' caring attitude.

Leaving the role of mother, as an educator I would like to argue that the practice of caring/nurturing is essential to the cultivation of the whole person, and the image of the whole person is the vision of education derived from Chinese cultural tradition. Besides, caring is inclined to contribute to a good relationship between teachers and pupils as well as the relationship between teachers and parents. Teaching is the art of cultivating the connection between teacher and student (Wu, 2011). Even though it may cause conflicts between teachers and pupils when the nourishing jobs have to be done properly, the benefits of carrying out nourishing jobs far outweigh the disadvantages. Therefore, it is sensible to argue that the job of nourishing/caring done by teachers contributes to teaching/instruction.

Teaching and nourishing may not constitute a lineal casual relationship. Drawing a metaphor from Chinese medicine, when a patient suffers from a headache and goes to ask for an acupuncture treatment, the Chinese herbal doctor does not shoot the needle into his/her head. Instead the joint between the thumb and the index finger is the right place for the needle. Similar examples are plentiful.

My argument is that the nourishing job done by schools or teachers could contribute to teaching indirectly, although from the superficial view, it seems to take teachers' time away from professional tasks. Taking the argument from Spencer into account, the nourishing elements are the most valuable curriculum. His argument is:

> A student should only engage in those activities that would ultimately allow him/her to survive in society. Special emphasis was placed on the physical, biological, and social sciences while English grammar and literature were believed to be outdated.[12]

[12] http://www3.nd.edu/~rbarger/www7/spenser.html

In sum, I shall use a Chinese idiom to exemplify the relationship between teaching and nourishing. It is "you are among us, and I am among you" [你泥中有我, 我泥中有你]. They contribute to each other. In addition, the association between teaching and character formation is tight. The ethnic Chinese tradition of "whole person" has been maintained by these interconnections.

6.3 Looking into the Future

A story in Han Fei [韓非] (280–233 BC) serves to end up this chapter. The story runs like this:

> A man asks his wife to make a new pair of trousers for him.
>
> His wife does not know how to do the job.
>
> The man passes his old trousers with patches to his wife, and says it is easier to copy this one. The old trousers do make the things easier. After the task is nearly done, his wife compared the two pairs of trousers and noticed that she forgot to do the patches. She happily added the patches for the new pair of trousers.

The treasure of Chinese culture needs to be preserved by education, in education, and for education. Education enjoys a respectable and strong tradition in Chinese culture. This tradition deserves to be cherished. However, metaphorically speaking, it is not necessary to copy and keep the patches on the trousers. Furthermore, it is sensible to tailor new trousers according to changes of shape.

From the issues discussed in this chapter, it is reasonable to argue that Chinese culture still strongly dwells in primary schooling in Taiwan. The spirit of "whole person cultivation" can be seen from the effort of teachers who carry out a teaching as well as nourishing job. Furthermore, the picture of the "whole person" can be discerned from the students' actually experienced curriculum which emphasizes academic achievement as well as character formation.

However, the influence of globalization cannot be avoided. The way forward of primary schooling needs much more deliberation in daily life. "Look to the West" is not the only option. In terms of education, it is possible to better the world through the conservation and extension of Chinese culture. Go back to the story in Han Fei and borrow its lesson. It is not sensible to copy the patches on the old trousers only because they are there, unless the patches suit the fashion style which attracts you. In the context of the "glocal," facing the crossroads in the educational community, three words will serve as the ending of this chapter: they are deliberation, deliberation, and deliberation.

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Chapter 7
The Studying and Striving of Secondary Students

Tsun-Mu Hwang

Abstract The article explores the uniqueness of the social context of secondary education which arises from the influence of Chinese culture and tradition. Due to the social context of Taiwan and other countries with Chinese heritage, secondary school students have a perspective on learning behavior, daily school life, and the meaning of learning that varies considerably from the youth in Western countries. The ideal youth in Chinese society who are to work and live in the global world are expected to be the ones equipped with an integration of globalization and Chinese heritage. As a result, the main focus of teacher training programs should be on how to cultivate the younger generation to be ideal youth.

Keywords High school • High-stakes examination • Ideal youth • Learning • Secondary education

7.1 A Typical Day of High School Students

In Taiwan, junior high schools are often located in the central parts of a town or a village. With no school buses provided, students living in the suburban areas have long had to leave home early in the morning to get to schools on time. Compared with junior high schools, senior high schools are usually located in the downtown area of a city. Without being limited by school district boundaries, as is the case of elementary and junior high schools, senior high school students are admitted based on competitive entrance exams. Thus, they often have to travel far to attend school. Wherever the students live, they all have to be at school before 7:30 AM to start their daily cleaning activities, attend morning assembly, or complete morning quizzes. Students have long been taught that morning hours are the best of the day to work [一日之計在於晨].

The 7:30 AM morning cleanup routine can be traced back to a Chinese tradition from the Sung Dynasty. The famous Confucian scholar Zhu Xi (朱熹, 1130–1200)

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proposed that children need to get up early in the morning and perform cleaning activities to practice the self-cultivation of virtue. In Taiwan, students from elementary school to senior high school perform the cleanup routine twice a day, once in the morning and once in the afternoon. Their cleanup areas include not only their own classrooms but also public areas on the school campus. The daily cleanup routine is meant to cultivate students' sense of diligence, responsibility, and self-discipline together and help them develop the habit of maintaining clean surroundings. In keeping with this tradition, recycling has been added to the routine. Ancient Chinese literature supports training ideals for young people. *The Four Books* complied and interpreted by Zhu Xi have been an important part of the official senior high school curriculum for numerous years along with *Analects of Confucius* and *Mencius*. The object of these lessons aims to forge the students into becoming human beings upright in character and diligent in the pursuit of knowledge [敦品勵 學].

The first class of the day typically starts at 8:00 AM. There are usually four classes in the morning, each lasting 45–50 min, with a ten-minute break in between. Lunch break is about an hour long, from 12:00 noon to 1:00 PM, with three more classes in the afternoon. Although school days are regulated and the government specifies they end at about 4:00 PM, most schools have one or more extra classes, usually called eighth period class, to advance the learning of major subjects such as Chinese, English, and math.

Among the many subjects, Chinese, English, and math are given the most time and attention. The minor subjects, such as science and social science, are given less time in the schedule, but they are still among the subjects tested on the entrance exam for high school and university. As for music, arts, home economics, crafts, and physical education, since these subjects are not assessed in the high-stakes examinations, they have even fewer hours in the school schedule. In the past, the class periods of these "least-valued" subjects were even used for students to have tests on the major subjects instead of carrying the learning of these subjects. Students, therefore, actually received less instruction originally assigned in the official curriculum in certain subjects. For the last 20 years, the biased-learning situation has been largely improved in the urban regions, especially in schools where teachers with professional backgrounds in music, arts, and physical education are to be found.

In class, the way students learn is largely teacher-oriented. Teachers have considerable authority in planning and teaching lessons with students listening attentively and rarely asking questions. Teachers' dominance in the classroom can be explained in terms of course curriculum and instructional methods. First, there is frequently more content packed in the curriculum than the class hours allowed, and with comparatively a large number of students packed in the classroom than space permits, teachers often adopt a uniform schedule and standardized tests in teaching and evaluation. Second, lecturing is the preferred format of instruction in the Chinese educational tradition. Teachers do not usually discuss topics with the whole class, but prefer to ask one-to-one questions to individual students. After practicing for a long time, from elementary school to high school, students are very much accustomed to such learning environment and atmosphere. Classroom lectures are often regarded of highest importance in teaching and learning. Teachers' role in schools, therefore, is relatively authoritative.

Before junior high school students are dismissed, they are required to record the homework assigned that day and note the tests for the next day in their journal (sometimes called the parent-teacher communication book). Many of the room teachers hand out inspiring articles for their students to read and require students to write down their reflections on these articles in the journal on a daily basis. Then the teachers review what the students write the following day and offer advice or remarks. As for senior high school students, they are assigned weekly journals to record the news of the week, their reflection on learning, and daily life of the week. Teachers' comments on the (weekly) journals always aim to encourage the students to forge themselves to be a better self with a sound and healthy mind.

By the time students leave school at 5:00 or 6:00 PM, they have already stayed in school for about 10 h. During the fall and winter, the sky is still dark when they leave home in the morning, and it is dark again when they leave school in the evening. Many students, however, do not go straight home. Instead, they continue to attend cram school. By the time cram school classes end, it is already 10:00 PM. After they arrive home, students still have to do homework and prepare for exams on the following day. If they can go to bed by midnight, they consider themselves lucky.

On weekends, many students have *buxiban* classes (cram school courses) [補習班] scheduled. The purpose of *buxi* (makeup study or cramming) [補習] is supposed to help students with what they have difficulty understanding or the subjects that are not presented in sufficient detail at school. However, many students in Taiwan attend cram schools for the purpose of learning ahead of normal schedule so that they are likely to have better academic performance due to more drills in cram schools. The overarching goal of all these supplementary courses is to be more competitive and get an edge on school tests, term exams, and high-stakes examinations.

The phenomenon of young students studying for long hours started in the post-war era of 1950s, a time when most people were poor. As the economy of Taiwan improved during the 1980s, the number of families which had the ability to send their children to senior high school and attend cram schools became the majority. More than 90 % of students attend senior high schools; thus, they face tremendous pressure on senior high school entrance exams.

The study-hard phenomenon is still very much alive for secondary students around Taiwan today. Students spend long hours burying themselves in books, which leads to many health-related problems such as lack of sleep or physical exercise, nearsightedness, and the backache from carrying overloaded book bags. All of these maladies are common in schools located in both urban and suburban areas and sometimes even in the countryside. The government has been trying to find a solution to these problems since the 1950s.

As for the students in vocational high schools, they spend their time in cooperative school-industry programs, attending apprenticeship training classes, preparing for technician certification tests, and getting real-world experience. Many start working part-time earlier than the students in academic secondary schools. However, with more companies expecting their job applicants to have a master's degree or even a doctoral degree, over 70 % of vocational high school graduates continue their schooling at technical colleges or universities. As a result, studying hard and

going to cram schools in order to pass the entrance exams for further studies is the same for most of the vocational high school students as high school counterparts.

In general, in East Asian countries such as Japan and Korea, junior and senior high school students studying hard and spending long hours is a common phenomenon. In recent years, the situation has become a focus of criticism in these countries, gradually culminating in the demand for school reform in the late twentieth century.

7.2 What It Means to Be a Good Student

Good students need to learn a large amount of material of fair difficulty in many subjects. Many schools have large class sizes, expository instructional styles, considerable amount of norm-referenced assessment, and intensive external examinations. Teachers tend to emphasize the content which will be covered in the exam. Although the learning pressure is high and the educational environment is less than ideal, according to previous research (Biggs & Watkins, 1996; Li, 2012), students concentrate well in classes and study hard on their own. They not only use recitation techniques often but also are able to understand the deeper meaning of the content and engage higher-level cognitive processes (Biggs & Watkins). Compared to their Western counterparts, secondary school students in Confucian heritage cultures, such as Hong Kong (Biggs, 1996), China, and Japan (Hess & Azuma, 1991), do not need teachers to instill motivation to learn, because they are ready to learn when class starts. The reason for students' industrious attitudes may be their strong desire to do well in high-stakes examinations, but also can be their intrinsic motivation to pursue self-cultivation in Chinese cultural tradition, or the personality characteristic called self-realization in Maslow's terms (Lee, 1996; Li, 2009). Good student in Chinese culture has two common meanings.

First, good students are often high achievers in Chinese culture. Those students who have high grades on major subjects often enjoy the fame and status in school. This kind of evaluation for students seems to be different from the Western culture. Li (2012: 189–190) points out, in American schools high-achieving students who are intellectually curious and make an effort to pursue personal interests, especially in science, math, and technology, or other subjects that the rest of the peers find too complex and difficult to comprehend, are often regarded as outcasts. Many high-achieving students suffer from peer harassment and victimization. In East Asian countries, however, these students usually receive positive attention from teachers and peers. They may become class assistants to teachers, help low-achieving students, grade students' papers, and become class leaders. These jobs are considered an honor to hold.

Second, although academic achievement is important, there is more to being termed "a good student" than simply high grades. If the high achievers are humble and generous to others, they are considered *pin xue jian you* (excel in morals as well

as academic performances) [品學兼優]. This is the highest evaluation for good students. For those students who make an honest effort, but do not excel in academic performance, they are still considered "good" students. If the students are intelligent, but do not work hard, then it is hard for teachers to regard them as good students. Worse yet, if they are interfering with classroom order, coming late, leaving early, or missing class, then they are violating the school rules and definitely not regarded as good students. Goodness, therefore, has to be placed in the context of group dynamics.

Collaboration among students is an important part of learning. Peer competition is common in classes in both the East and West (Turner & Acker, 2002). Despite of heavy study pressure and competition on high-stakes exams, there is still spontaneous collaboration among Chinese students. Students often discuss content together, share study strategies, and encourage each other, which are effective methods to prepare for tests (Li, 2012; Tang, 1996). Many teachers design collaborative task-based projects and appoint academic high achievers as the group leaders to coordinate the projects and make sure every group member completes their assigned task.

Tang (1996) elaborated that in a group- or community-oriented Chinese culture, people tend to identify their "ideal self" as being closer to their "social self" and in turn involve their ideal self closely in social relationships. Therefore, phrases depicting the closeness of peer relationship or friendship in study community have been passed down from ancient China and are still in use today. The common ones are *tongxue* (study together) [同學], *tongchuang* (sit by the same window) [同窗], or *tongyen* (share stationery together) [同硯]. These phrases provide a vivid picture of ways young students study together and collaborate on academic work. In a culture where *guanxi* [關係], broadly defined as personal relationships, are particularly important, students enjoy a simple and pure circle of relationships. School provides plenty of opportunities for peer interaction, such as classroom learning, club activities, sport events, and leisure gatherings. With such frequent interaction and years of studying in the same class, the students are always likely to develop strong attachments to each other. Even today, in Chinese communities, many people still organize class reunions several decades after they graduate, and the reunion is for "class," instead of for the "school."

The type of interaction among students seems to be changing in Chinese classes. More recently, being influenced by Western culture, classes in Chinese schools have increased the use of practices such as group discussion, team collaboration, and active learning. Researchers have found that students in Hong Kong have used these Western strategies to study content-based materials, foster the development of critical and creative thinking, interact by sharing experiences, and engage in common tasks where each individual depends on and is accountable to the others in the group (Law et al., 2009). In recent years, high school students in Taiwan have been encouraged to participate in athletic events, extracurricular activities, and volunteer service. Whether they are active in outside school or not is even referred to as one of the requirements for admission to certain schools. Thus, interaction between students has been evolving.

7.3 The Meaning of Learning

Compared to Western culture, academic performance seems to be a more important part in the way Chinese culture defines outstanding young people. The reason academic achievement is viewed this way may be traced back to the cultural tradition of how learning is defined. There are several aspects of learning in Chinese culture that need to be examined and explained to understand why this is the case.

7.3.1 Entwining of Extrinsic and Intrinsic Aims

Typically, the association of higher educational level and higher extrinsic rewards, such as income and status, is common in both the East and West. However, the combined effect of fame and substance, in both subjective and objective domains, is what makes the association even stronger in Chinese society. The linkage between the extrinsic aims and intrinsic aims deserves special discussion.

In traditional Chinese culture, the ultimate goal of education is to cultivate a perfect self. Confucius mentioned that learning is not for the sake of pleasing others or showing off to others, but rather for the sake of oneself. Pursuing a perfect self, however, does not mean that one should be a lonely person. Rather, the perfect self is autonomous and can be extended automatically to serve others (de Bray, 1983). Fei (1947) also notes that in Chinese culture, human relationships actually extend from the self and are centered on the self. In Confucian tradition, the purpose of receiving education is to perfect self and then spontaneously to help others. It is said in *The Great Learning* that a person should "cultivate himself, regulate the family, then govern the state, and finally lead the world into peace" (*The Great Learning*, IV) (Tang, 1996, 37). In this view, if a person fails to help others after achieving self-perfection, then it is a failure or insufficiency of the individual and, hence, a still uncultivated self. Therefore, although the Chinese learners start out by perfecting the self, the ultimate goal is to help others, contribute to others, and produce practical and actual benefits for others. This is the meaning of *xueyizhiyong* (education with a view to service to country or application to society) [學以致用], or applying what you study to serve the practical purpose.

Chinese people hold a practical conception of learning. Therefore, *xueyizhiyong* plays an important role in Chinese traditional view about learning. From an individual point of view, excellent academic achievement or attainment of a higher level of education not only serves as a tool to gain better jobs and higher income but, more importantly, represents a highly regarded social symbol and raises the self-confidence and self-esteem of a family or even the entire clan. Many believe that "children's achievement become celebrated and bring glory to one's parents" [揚名顯親]. The idiom "the worth of other pursuits is small, the study of books excels them all" [萬般皆下品, 唯有讀書高] also echoes such belief.

In the imperial China, those who pass the highest level examination can be *shidaifu* [士大夫] or scholar-bureaucrat. Built on the original meaning of literate or scholar, the term *shidaifu* means legitimacy or eligibility to gain political and legal status, to become a government officer, and to join the governing elite. It is worth noting that people who pass the exam and become *shidaifu* can then become the gentry in their communities. Even without a government post, they can still have land, property, money, status, influence, and a good marriage (Chaffee, 1995; Chang, 1955; Lee, 1985). For an individual, this achievement is the basis of a highly respected life and generally perceived an endowing happiness. For the family and the ancestors, it is a great honor. From the Sung Dynasty, there was a popular saying "there are thousand tons of grain in the book; There is a golden mansion in the book; and there is beauty like jade in the book." In other words, if a person works hard in studying the books, then status, fortune, and beauty are within grasp. From the individual point of view, this is the true meaning of "the worth of other pursuits is small; the study of books excels them all."

The concept of *xueyizhiyong*, or applying what one learns to serve the practical purpose, is not limited to personal goals only, but has a definite concern for the public as well. In Chinese tradition, learning and cultivation can help a person to become *junzi* [君子], meaning a gentleman or person with a noble character. The idea of *junzi* lies at the core of what characterizes an ideal person. The concept seems abstract, but its implementation is not hard to conceive. According to Chinese tradition, a *junzi* not only cultivates himself through constant learning and studying but also is able to contribute to the community, govern the country, and help the future generations work and live in peace and prosperity. The concept of *junzi* carries the deepest expectation of a learned person in Chinese tradition. It begins with a person's cultivation but ends in the contribution to society. This expectation of learning may seem strange to Westerners, but it is a widely accepted concept in Chinese culture. Most of the Chinese would expect their children and descendants to become *junzi*.

The Chinese educational system supports the development of a *junzi.* Since a *junzi* has to be well versed in Chinese traditional literature, the examination system was built by the Imperial Chinese to test a candidate's knowledge of Chinese literature. Judging how well a person was approaching the state of *junzi* then became a clear and easy job, and the criterion was to pass the three levels of examinations:

Level 1: *Xiucai* [秀才], a candidate who passed the county level exam
Level 2: *Juren* [舉人], a candidate who passed the provincial level exam
Level 3: *Jinshi* [進士], a candidate who passed the national level exam

For generations, passing the three examinations was the dream of all Chinese students and their families. When the Imperial China fell and the Republic of China emerged, the examination system was transferred to three levels of Western educational systems: Elementary school, secondary school, and tertiary education. After the Civil Service Examination was abolished in 1906, the concept of matching the Western educational system to the Chinese three levels of candidates was widely accepted by the Chinese people (Chang, 1998: 92–97). The operation of the public

education system by the Republic of China government also adopted the examination system in the long past. The country-level government managed the elementary schools; the city-level government managed secondary schools; and the central government managed the colleges and universities (Qu & Tang, 1986:287–523; Tang et al., 2006:228–242).

Whether for individual or for societal purposes, the reasons why Chinese are fixated on education has extrinsic aims and concerns of practicality. The pursuit of these extrinsic goals, however, is tightly intertwined with personal internal growth and cultivation. Biggs and Watkins (1996) noticed this linkage of internal goals and external goals of Chinese learners. Studies by Lee (1996) and Li (2003, 2009) suggest that learning in Chinese society is associated with not only an individual's academic performance and moral self-cultivation but also contribution to the welfare of the public and the devotion to bettering public affairs. This ideal is the spirit of the core values of *sage within and king without* [內聖外王], as discussed in Chap. 3. With this perspective, the intrinsic and extrinsic worlds are not regarded as opposites but considered to be connected.

7.3.2 An Important Goal for the Whole Family

Chinese collectivist culture prompts students to pursue group goals. Studying hard is not only for oneself but also for the family and extended family. Chinese students often connect the personal achievement to supporting family members (Rao & Chan, 2009). On the other hand, Chinese family also sees the educational achievement of the children as family honor, and therefore supporting children's education is logical and necessary.

In the USA in the 1980s, there was a great influx of Chinese American students at elite private preparatory schools, such as Phillips Exeter, Groton, and Deerfield, and at highly competitive public high schools, such as Bronx High School of Science and Stuyvesant High School in New York and Lowell High School in San Francisco, all of which serve as fast-track conduits to the best universities in the country. The enthusiasm of Chinese parents as they encouraged and supported their sons and daughters who were pursuing educational achievement attracted media attention and prompted widespread discussion in the USA (Chang, 2003:327).

In fact, the phenomenon that the whole family devoted all the effort in supporting the education of children was nothing new in Chinese cultural societies, such as Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and China. Parental support starts early by securing a good kindergarten. Some parents use all kinds of strategies and tactics to get into highly ranked kindergartens. The situation becomes frantic at the time when children are getting into junior high schools. Because junior high school belongs to compulsory portion of education in Taiwan, the assignment is by school district. In order to get into desirable junior high schools, which are often located in high socioeconomic status communities, parents have to buy or rent a house in the district, sometimes as early as the year the children were born, or find a personal connection to establish

household registration in the district. When the length of time is calculated for the eligibility of the students, many students are not admitted and are unable to enroll in those high status schools.

In addition to receiving formal education, many Chinese parents would also send children to private tutors or *buxiban* after school. This type of effort is viewed as family responsibility and necessary investment. Chinese parents are often not satisfied with the educational resources the government provides and purchase additional instructional services so that their expenses on education are often high in proportion to income. According to official statistics, people in Taiwan save a considerable portion of their income, and about one fifth of their expenses are related to education (Department of Budget, Accounting and Statistics, 1985). In 2012, the commercial bank HSBC conducted a survey about the future of retirement (HSBC, 2013). In the survey, the Taiwanese interviewed stated that they save money for retirement, parents' care, and children's education, with education being one of the top three reasons to save money. Similar answers were obtained from other Chinese heritage countries such as Hong Kong, Singapore, and China.

The book *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother* (Chua, 2011) presents a vivid picture of the relationship between a Chinese mother and daughters. On one hand, Chinese parents try their best to provide for children's education, and on the other hand, they demand high performance in academic achievement and sometimes set rigid requirements. Ran (2001) mentioned in her study that even when British teachers praise the high achievement of students, their Chinese parents would still ask the kids to keep alert and work harder to make better progress.

Many of the above phenomena, such as heavy spending on education and cram schools, are also popular in Confucian Asian regions outside greater China, such as Japan and Korea. In recent years, the heavy involvement of parents has been popular in these countries, as captured by the term "helicopter parents,""monster parents," or "education mamas," indicating that this phenomenon is turning into a problem that requires special terms to describe it and it has become an emerging issue for discussion.

7.3.3 Cultivation of Characteristics

As many studies have pointed out, students of Chinese heritage work hard and believe that effort is more important for success than ability and that ability itself can be improved by intensified effort (Rao & Chan, 2009). Of course, working hard and making an effort when studying are cultural constructs. Li (2009:37) gave an example of a first-year university student who graduated from Taiwanese senior high school and received a letter from her father when facing difficulty in studying at a university. Her father quoted a well-known saying from *Mencius*:

> When heaven is about to confer a great responsibility on a man, it will first test his resolution, subject his sinews and bones to hard work, expose his body to hunger, put him to poverty, and place obstacles in the path of his deeds, so as to stimulate his mind [and heart], strengthen his nature, and improve wherever he is incompetent (Wu & Lai, 1992, 330).

The above quote from Mencius is famous among students of Chinese heritage. For over a 1,000 years, many teachers and parents would consider it as the golden rule, as a way to encourage their children or students to endure hardship, to pursue higher goals, to overcome adversity, and to cultivate their own hearts and minds.

Based on her research in Chinese learning characteristics, Li (2009:52–55) summarized several unique qualities, including quietly reciting and comprehending, not asking many questions in the beginning of learning, insisting on continuous learning, and the integrating the learning of knowledge and cultivating of self. Li also pointed out that there are five learning virtues, including *fen* (resolve) [奮], *qin* (diligence) [勤], *keku* (hardship) [刻苦], *hengxin* (perseverance) [恆心], and *zhuanxin* (concentration) [專心]. Therefore, learning for Chinese has a strong emphasis on cultivation of one's characteristics, such as *lizhi* (commitment) [立志], *baofu* (vision) [抱負], passion, respect, and humility.

Cultivation of one's character is an important part of the learning process in Chinese culture. Learning sometimes can be seen as a serious, heavy, continuous, and never-ending task. Because learning is such an important task, most parents are unable to direct and supervise the job themselves. Schools and teachers, therefore, are very important to this effort. Chinese parents are serious about formal education and have high expectations of school, curriculum, and teachers. Besides formal schooling, there are numerous extra learning activities in the shadow of education, including private tutoring, cram schools, and talent lessons. Such a situation is most likely initiated and preserved in the society due to a cultural tradition that emphasizes on students' industrious effort in studying.

7.4 Choosing "Good" High Schools

7.4.1 The Division of Laoxin *and* Laoli

Because formal education is so important to Chinese parents, choosing a good school, consequently, is one of the major preoccupations. Chinese parents and students are intensely focused on which school is being attended. Even when it comes to cram schools, the question of the quality of the cram school is paramount. The purpose this focus on which school is still to improve children's academic performance. If the students can do well in a top junior high school, they usually get admitted to a top senior high school, and then they can get into a good university. Of course, the criteria for what makes a good junior high school differ from what makes a good senior high school or university. For Chinese parents, however, there is a clear preference and a set of criteria for choosing good schools at each level.

One of the criteria is the type of school. Regular high schools help students to develop academic skills. Vocational high schools help students to develop skills for vocational and occupational careers such as agriculture, engineering, and business. When the Chinese government established the three-level educational system of

elementary, secondary, tertiary schools at the start of the twentieth century, vocational high and regular high school systems were both established at the same time. However, the vocational high school was immediately looked down on by Chinese parents and regarded as a second choice of schooling.

Traditionally, Chinese people have divided the educational system into *laoxin* [勞心], meaning to work with one's brains or a mental worker, and *laoli* [勞力], meaning labor with one's hands. They value these two types (academic-vocational) completely differently. In fact, in traditional Chinese society, schools are mainly designed to educate those who are the brainy type, i.e., the intellectual elite. Learning of technical skills and crafts was never done at schools. Although the modern Chinese educational system has a vocational track, it is rarely the top choice of the parents.

It is worth noting, however, the divide of *laoxin* and *laoli* does not suggest that people are of different and opposite nature, as has been proposed by Plato (429–347 BC) (Waterfield, 1998). From Plato's point of view, those who are the industrial type [銅質者] and not the ruling type can make a lot of money and own land and houses. Those who are ruling type, on the other hand, should not own property and should devote their time to rational thinking and consideration of public matters. The logic of Chinese tradition is different from Plato. The difference between *laoxin* and *laoli* is the condition of the student. *Laoli* is an insufficient or lower status, as described in Chap. 2 of this book, which can be made up through personal industry and concentration and improved via the learning process. The situation can be changed and it depends on personal will and effort.

In the Western world, it seems that the social status of a person not necessarily can transcend the school a person graduated from and the educational background the person holds. Whatever upbringing or family background or types of occupations people have had, individuals are granted opportunities and possibilities to stand out in the society. This is not the case in Chinese society. In comparison educational background plays a vital role in the criteria that define a person's social status in Chinese society and in Chinese heritage countries. From sociological point of view, Chang, Hsueh, and Hwang (1996) note that Chinese tend to link the level of education to the level of social status. Vocational schools and blue-collar jobs, for Chinese, are seen as a lower status. Many Chinese regard those people as not working hard or not being able to treasure the time to study during their student years, attributing their resulting low status to their laziness and lack of interest in studying or due to indulging in play instead of work.

The focus on schooling and school performance seems persistent even when Chinese live in Western nations. Anthropological accounts of Chinese immigrant families in Western nations reflect the emphasis on persistence, especially in education. Chang (2003:327–328) quoted the statement of anthropologist Franklin Ng as the following:

> *HOW TO BE A PERFECT TAIWANESE KID*
> *(from the first generation perspective)*
> Score 1600 on the SAT.
> Play the violin or piano on the level of a concert performer.
> Apply to and be accepted by 27 colleges.

Have three hobbies: studying, studying, and studying.
Go to a prestigious Ivy League university and win enough scholarships to pay for it.
Love classical music and detest talking on the phone.
Become a Westinghouse, Presidential, and eventually Rhodes Scholar.
Aspire to be a brain surgeon.
Marry a Taiwanese-American doctor and have perfect, successful children (grandchildren for *Ahma* and *Ahba*!)
Love to hear stories about your parents' childhood, especially the one about walking seven miles to school without shoes.

Although the above account suggests the view of early Taiwanese immigrants in the USA, Chang (2003) points out that the values the Chinese immigrants have after 1980 is no different. Both middle-class and working-class Chinese families still have a strong desire to send their children to good senior high schools and universities in order to help them to become intellectual elite. Hsu and Chen (2005) compared Chinese immigrant families in the USA, Australia, and Canada and found that there were no differences in their priorities and dedication to their investment in their children's education with high expectations for their children's entering good senior high schools and good universities and family focus on schooling. Nothing matters more than their children's academic performance. Schools in the Western world hold high expectations for their students to get into the most prestigious colleges and universities with no exception. However, academic performance is not the only focus. Students' talents in arts or athletics are as highly valued and cherished.

Similar values still exist in the life of immigrants such as Amy Chua, who received a Western education and married an American. In her book *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother*, Chua presents a vivid picture of the family emphasis on education. Even though Chua's family and Chua herself have lived outside of a Chinese community for a long time, her beliefs in education are derived from Chinese culture seems quite strong and stable.

7.4.2 The Effort to Eliminate the Elite-Mass Divide

The notion of schooling has changed in modern Chinese societies changed in the early twentieth century. With the Western influence, secondary schools in China have increased and secondary education was transformed from elite to public education. In Taiwan, while the educational system and government policies have moved away from elite to public education, the influence of the *laoxin* and *laoli* divides are still firm in people's minds. Many parents still prefer general high schools rather than vocational high schools for their children. As a result, around the turn of the twenty-first century, almost 100 % of the Taiwanese 15- to 18-year-olds are enrolled in school, and all of them are competing for general high schools. To eliminate such elite-mass divide, the government announced that "12-year basic education" will start at August 2014. In the 12-year basic education policy, most of the junior high school students are supposed to go directly to high school without

examinations. The purpose is to encourage students, teachers, and schools to pay attention to the basic value of education and not aim at passing the high-stakes exams.

In an attempt to reduce the divide and provide more educational opportunities, the Taiwanese government has increased not only the number of senior high schools but also the number of universities. Many technical and vocational colleges were upgraded to universities during the 1980–1990s. The number of colleges and universities has increased from 28 in 1986 to 160 in 2011 (Ministry of Education, 2012). As a result, by 1992, all high school graduates have a chance to enroll in a postsecondary educational institution.

With such a high admission rate, however, the pressure to study for junior and high school did not decrease. In the view of most students and parents, attending a good senior high school that will prepare them to enroll at a good college or universities is still the most important thing. They are not satisfied with "basic" education. In other words, with the large number of colleges and universities available, the elite-mass divide was not eliminated. There could be several reasons.

First, almost all the students are now involved in the same level of education, and it has made the competition for good education even more intense. Second, there has been a depreciation of the value of senior high school diploma, and now credentials from universities are undergoing depreciation. The credential inflation phenomenon has been a topic of discussion and research in the West (Van de Werfhorst & Anderson, 2005). Dore (1976) found cases of credential inflation in developing countries and called it *diploma disease*, predicting that the expanding of higher education will make matters worse. In the case of Taiwan, in the last decade, due to the increasing credential inflation problem, an advanced graduate degree has become a necessity for social mobility.

In terms of secondary schools, although the number of schools has increased, the competition remains the same. Entrance to senior high school is still a selective and competitive process. Students need to take a unified examination, and then they are sorted into different senior high schools according to the scores. Some prestigious high schools may get the top ranked 1–3 % of the students in a region. The definition of "good" senior high school means that the students have better chance to get into "good" universities. The so-called "good" universities are usually those academic-oriented and top-ranked universities. Since getting into those top universities is the ultimate goal of many students, getting the most number of students into those top universities is the top priority of these good high schools.

When most students seek admission to good universities, the competition increases for the 12–18-year-olds. Especially at a time where the value of degrees is dropping, getting degrees from good high schools and thus good universities is a way to preserve the value of education. Even with the situation in Taiwan, where most of the students can be admitted into high schools, the competition for good senior high schools has continued.

Taiwan is a Chinese society where citizen social consciousness and political awareness are more mature than other Chinese heritage regions or countries.

Taiwanese citizens demand more open, fair, and equal educational opportunities. In the recent school reforms, the government has responded to such demands by trying to make all senior high schools equal in quality. Besides increasing the number of schools, the government would need to take more responsibility to develop quality teachers and equipment to strengthen the school. Schools, therefore, aim to develop every student and to maximize each individual's potential. In addition, the fulfillment of social values like justice and common good is to be sustained throughout primary education, continuing to the senior high school level by offering free tuition, free meals, and free afterschool programs to the less privileged students. This change is a sign of the democratic development of a society. However, if the traditional view about the elite-mass divide still exists and the ranking of schools is still allowed, the competition for better schools will not disappear.

7.5 The Challenge of Ever More Complicated Educational Goals

7.5.1 Changing from Educating the Elites to Educating the Public

Before the end of the nineteenth century, most Chinese were illiterate. Very few were homeschooled by *sishu* (private tutors) [私塾] to learn to read and write. Even fewer went on to study literature and become involved with research and scholarship. Therefore, in the past, people who received education were considered elites. During the end of the nineteenth century, however, China was under the attack from many Western countries. Many visionaries felt that if the education level of the citizens was not elevated, and too few people had the ability to defend their own country, China would be wholly subjugated. With such an awareness, and sense of crisis due to increasing foreign domination of ports and concessions, there emerged an upsurge in building new Western-style schools. From then on, education no longer served the elites; rather, it became a place to train professionals for all the fields. As a result, the status of s*hi* (the learned people) [士] was gradually changing. While the status of the learned people was regarded at the top of the professional ladder [士為四民之首], it later became common for all the professionals [四民皆士] (Sun, 2007:95). This process of educational modernization was first undertaken in secondary schools.

The three-level school system established in 1904 was originally designed to carry out the mission of modernizing the country by providing new concepts and skills to citizens. However, because of the attachment of the three levels of the Civil Service Examination System, going to school and moving up in the school system became the major goal, sometimes regarded as the only goal, as in the civil service system, to climb up the social ladder and to honor the family. To climb up the school systems and become officers in the government, scholars, scientists, doctors, lawyers, engineers, and business managers, has been viewed as path to achievement.

Therefore, the three-level educational system became the modernized ladder of upward movement, and the traditional view of emphasizing education was supported and even strengthened.

After the twentieth century, the number of secondary schools increased. High schools and vocational high schools were gradually transformed from terminal degree programs to a middle step on the way to university. In Taiwan, half of the 12–17-year-olds work extremely hard at school, and this focus on education is an impressive phenomenon to other societies. The phenomenon was created by the combined effect of the tradition and modernization.

7.5.2 Changing Curriculum from Traditional Values to Multiple Academic Disciplines

In the area of school curriculum, the process to create citizens for globalized states through education is the new and emerging challenge. Although the emerging globalization and the knowledge economy are basically being led by Western countries, many Asian countries are active participants. By trying to catch up with the West, Asian countries need to think about how to turn their citizens into knowledge workers and at the same time maintain their traditional values and investigate ways to help citizens develop critical thinking abilities and at the same foster patriotic attitudes (Kennedy & Lee, 2008).

To make the matters worse, Chinese culture, which is based on a unified world view founded on Confucian and Taoist teaching, tends to integrate many beliefs together and treat them as a whole without much analytical effort on logic or laws of nature and natural law [普遍法則] (Wu, 2008). Many of the recent calls on education for greater respect of multiple views, such as multiculturalism and multiple intelligences, when those concepts were brought to the East, were transformed from a philosophy about respecting individual differences to a cultural belief that person has to have all the intelligences. For example, a student would not be good enough unless he or she has achieved both academic and artistic excellence; not only do they have to learn about Chinese culture, but also they have to learn about Western knowledge and skills.

Under such circumstances, the secondary school curriculum in many Chinese heritage countries has become heavier and more complicated, increasing the requirements for students. Such a complicated curriculum, at the same time, presents a great challenge for teachers. It is actually difficult to help the students in schools with 50-min periods and over 15 subjects per week, especially when addressing issues such as understanding local and global issues, cultural traditions, civil participation, and global competition in a meaningful way. Even when students work really hard, they still do not have time to absorb or integrate all the necessary content, not to mention get involved in real-life experiences or participate in international issues.

As a result, teachers have difficulty in learning such a huge knowledge system and presenting it in a systematic and contextual way to students. They are often forced to cram a lot of knowledge into students' minds or even reduce the content knowledge to materials for exams only. Students, at the same time, are forced to digest huge amounts of the material, but they often fail to make meaningful connections. For some slow students, despite trying to catch up by working hard, they still remain behind. With standardized testing and objective criteria in evaluation, therefore, secondary schools can easily become a place that produces losers.

7.5.3 Changing Evaluation from a Single Focus to a Diversified Assessment

Globalization also presents a challenge for the role of evaluation. Chinese traditionally prefer a one-time high-stakes examination to select people. Many years of study are evaluated in a single exam. High-stakes exams often involve huge numbers of students, carry a lot of weight in careers, and have even been linked to the rise and fall of families. The highly competitive examination system has existed for several thousand years, most likely since the Sung Dynasty (960–1279) (Chaffee, 1995; Lee, 1985). Many Chinese societies still use such high-stakes exams as the main method to filter students. The results of the high-stakes exams today can be used to apply for local and international colleges and universities, to be considered for scholarships or fellowships, and thus they play an important role in obtaining resources, support, and opportunities in students' careers.

Researchers observing the use of high-stakes exams in Asian countries found that evaluation is not used as assessment of learning, but as assessment for selection (Kennedy & Lee, 2008). Because many countries are non-Confucian heritage societies, they do not seem to think that such use of evaluation is associated with Confucian culture or traditions, but rather is based on a tradition of meritocracy.

In fact, for over 1,000 years in Chinese history, the Civil Examination System was used as a social system to award the highest positions to those with the most ability. Individual capacity and competence being the sole criterion for high positions, civil examination system, with its fairness in competition, becomes the symbol of social mobility, contributing to the possibility of individuals' change of their class and social status within their lifetime. In a way, the system fits the goal of meritocracy. From Sung to Qing Dynasties, the examination system was never controlled by the upper classes. Children from upper class still needed to pass high-stakes exams to obtain the official positions and privileges. Children from poor families, at the same time, could also pass the exam and climb up the social ladder (Chaffee, 1995; Chang, 1955; Lee, 1985). The examination system has been a sociocultural tradition which continues to be a stimulus for families to invest money and effort in education. Perhaps that is the reason it is so difficult to reduce or eliminate high-pressure examinations in Chinese education.

High-stakes exams present problems for teaching and learning. For a long time, teaching has been limited by the content of high-stakes examinations, learning has been occupied by exam preparation and practice, and as a result the meaningfulness of learning has been reduced or distorted. Recently, there have been an increasing number of requests in Taiwanese society for more multicultural and dynamic processes in learning and assessment. These requests, however, do not make the learning and assessment more flexible nor reflect student's individuality; rather, they made learning and testing more complicated. Students now not only have to prepare for paper-and-pencil tests but also have to prepare portfolios, present proof of teamwork, show problem-solving ability, and demonstrate international exposure, and therefore, they have become busier than ever. Teachers are unable to escape from all the responsibilities, from trying to help the students to become good people and learn to be good citizens and at the same time to help them to get into good universities. A related discussion of this topic can also be found in Chap. 9 of this book.

Working hard and making an effort when studying are cultural constructs. However, many educational reformers have long criticized such traditional conceptions. In the past two decades, in reaction to the criticism along with possible misinterpretation of Western education, there is a rising trend of "happy learning" and "relaxed education" in Taiwan and Japan, responding to the problems of high-pressure schooling. School reform in Taiwan, for example, has tried to achieve the goal of happy learning by simplifying teaching material and lowering the difficulty levels of assessment and evaluation, providing equal opportunity for students, eliminating the differences between schools, canceling high-stakes examinations, and using letters of recommendation or applications for students who have special talent but would not have been accepted by traditional, high-stakes examination methods. After the cancelation of junior high school exams in 1968, the Taiwanese government promised to cancel the high school examination in 2014, by implementing the 12-year basic education policy. It was hoped that the new policy will undo the harm caused by high school entrance examination.

The new 12-year basic education policy in Taiwan meant well. Many people, however, did not think the new policy would be successful in eliminating the pressure to compete in high-stakes exams for the following reasons:

1. Teaching quality may not be improved significantly unless the teaching methods focusing on accuracy and completion are also changed.
2. High school teachers are worried that the "unfiltered" students will be more difficult to teach. Before the college entrance changes in any significant way, the new system will make it harder for teachers to send their students to good universities.
3. A more diverse assessment system will actually reflect more about the parents' wealth and status than paper-and-pencil tests, which will be contradictory to traditional Chinese system, which used exams as a means for social mobility and higher education as a means for personal elevation.
4. The formation of good schools is a result of many factors, and they grow slowly over many years. It would be difficult for the government to eliminate the differences between high schools by simply manipulating the entrance exams.

The ideal of "happy learning" should be accomplished by admitting the diversity of students, promoting cultivation of individuality, and guiding each student so that they will be "eager to learn." The definition of "happy learning" should not be mistaken as learning without pressure, because it suggests that learning or studying can be loose or sloppy. Thus, simply eliminating the pressure or eliminating competition would not achieve the goal. The government should do more to help students recognize their own strengths early and help them realize their ability to achieve since every trade has its master [行行出狀元]. Helping students to fulfill their potential should be the aim of schooling and goal of the school reform.

7.6 Developing the Ideal Youth

From the essence of education, the reason why secondary education is essential is because it is the most critical stage for a person to prepare for adulthood. However, for a long time, the strategic goal for secondary school students was to get into college or university and to prepare to be an ideal adult. The image of ideal adult has often been based on qualities such as a sizable income, a respected job, and plentiful resources to take care of family, parents, and even society. Moreover, an ideal adult should be a decent person with good moral characteristics such as honesty, justice, kindness, and generosity. For the most part, school curriculum contains a simplified version of the knowledge and skills needed as an adult. In fact, currently schooling has only little to do with young people's own lives and their involvement with the world.

As globalization exerts an important impact on school curriculum, the matter has become worse. Because the expectations of an ideal adult in the twenty-first century are too high, students may not be able to master everything necessary to prepare for the life of an ideal adult, even if they try very hard for 6 years. The new and revised content and curricula in secondary school tend to include knowledge and skills needed for the adult world that is too hard for students to handle. Students, therefore, are forced to learn too many concepts and skills that are too technical and instrumental, and the secondary school curriculum does not contain enough instruction on feelings, appreciation, thinking, and critiquing. This type of early exposure to adulthood is vividly portrayed by communication scholar Postman (1994) in his book *The Disappearance of Childhood*, which discussed the problem of disappearing youth in the face of electronic media and contemporary education. Children often enter adult world before they have time to experience childhood.

It is necessary to treat "ideal youth" and "ideal adult" as two distinct concepts and seriously consider the differences between them, as well as the connection between them. Basically, the former should be the foundation of the latter, not a miniaturized version. The development of an ideal youth needs more attention to authentic context, focusing on theory and practical wisdom, automatic research and teamwork, and logical analysis and critical thinking.

Apart from the main focus on academic performance, the core function of high school education in Taiwan is to prepare the young generation to be citizens, on

which even more stress is laid when students are attending senior high school. In comparison, the teaching about rights, obligations, and law and order in certain courses such as "citizenship society" is emphasized to the point that the image of an ideal adult can be said to fit the profile of a law-abiding citizen. With the content of social science being largely centered on knowledge-based aspects, modernity has been playing the essential part in the high school curriculum, leading the youth to fostering rationality, efficiency, sophistication, professionalization, and demoralization. On the contrary, respect, reflection, trustworthiness, caring, and tolerance, together with the long-existing value of treating others as you would treat yourself, which are the core legacy of Chinese heritage, have been lessened in the schooling of the secondary education students. Ironically, what makes an ideal adult actually lies in forging an ideal youth to be a whole human being with all the virtues and morality vital to Chinese heritage. An ideal adult should be someone with a heart and head, instead of having a head only. In other words, citizens of modern society ought not to be one-dimensional persons, but the ones with inner beauty who care, love, and live out the morals.

The government officers who make the plans need to also have the same capacities as the ideal youth, so that we can develop more diverse people, rather than ask everyone to have every talent. To respond to globalization, it is more important than ever to develop young people who consciously immerse themselves in Chinese knowledge and reflect on their own Chinese traditions in order to be able to contribute to and enrich the world.

Learning in Chinese culture has much to do with extrinsic goals. However, it is fascinating and remarkable because it means that the learners are expected to apply their knowledge for the betterment of the world and they are expected to be strong themselves before they can be strong enough to serve others. The expectation of education for the young people in Chinese culture is not to chase success as defined by the society, but to find meanings and values in their being in the human world or humanistic tradition. Some cases can be seen as examples. For example, a vegetable vendor in the market lives a simple life but donates a lot of money to the poor. A baker makes the award-winning bread with natural and local ingredients. An engineer uses technology to create energy safe and environment-friendly applications. These cases demonstrate what matters is not the task, position, or income one has, but how one find his or her own values in the relationship with others and with the world. People with this attitude may be what are really needed in the era of globalization. People from Chinese cultural traditions may portray them as *junzi*.

7.7 Reflection and Conclusion

In sum, the expectation of educating the youth should concentrate on who the young people themselves are, and not the adults they may be after they grow up. They should not be viewed as an agent, one who acts for another, but as a complete and independent being. In the secondary school education, teachers should not use the image of an ideal adult to define and plan an ideal youth. Youth is the foundation of

the adult. Preparing the youth to be an adult is not a correspondence relationship, but a manifestation one.

Following the task of preparing the ideal youth, teachers would need training not only on subject area, education area, but also courses in liberal education and general education. A good teacher should first be a sound person, then a professional, and then a knowledge expert. There is a long tradition in Chinese society to respect teachers. Although the salary is not ranked on the top, teachers have a good reputation in Chinese society. Although teachers' workloads do not always correspond to their salaries, there are still many fine young people trying to be teachers. Government should try to develop teachers with *Tao* and *junzi* standards and expect them to develop ideal youths with the same standards.

The trend of globalization in the twenty-first century brings challenges and opportunities for developing youth. Secondary school students should be given more opportunity to have contact with the real world, have the ability to do independent research, and concentrate on learning not limited to what is in the textbook. In this regard, the role a school plays may seem to be weakened, but in fact it may be more critical and more challenging than ever. The demand for more authentic context for students' learning and more individualized treatment for students would require more investment in education and higher demand for cultural capital. Teachers, at the same time, would need to be more versatile in improving students' performance and attitudes to help them become "eager to learn." Therefore, the pressure on schools, teachers, and students is not going to be lower but higher. Because not all the schools can provide meaningful learning experiences, and not all the students have the money to go to private schools, public schools are becoming more important. The government and schools will have to do more, and not less, to ensure that every student has the opportunity to succeed and there is fairness and justice in the society.

In Chinese culture, the importance of education is unshakable. Looking into the future, schools will have to do more; teachers will have to find a balance in teacher-centered/content-oriented and student-centered/context-oriented; students will take care of many aspects including knowledge, skill, competence, and affective attitudes. In the process of globalization, working hard and developing eagerness to learn will remain the essence of Chinese learners.

In cultures with Chinese heritage, people hold the belief that it is diligence and hard work that enhance one's academic performance to the fullest. Chinese people are convinced that incompetence can be remedied by diligence through education and that only after experiencing the bitterest of the bitterest can a person of excellence be forged. In the process of schooling, young learners get to be cultivated to hold even a stronger faith in diligence and hard work, which enables the Chinese to participate in and contribute to making the world a better place.

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Chapter 8
Art Transforms Destiny: The Unified Examination and Fine Art Education

Ju-I Yuan

Abstract This chapter is the preliminary result of a long-term research project that aims to understand the status of fine art education in one area of China. The fieldwork was based in the Nanjing municipal area within Jiangsu Province, China. It utilized concepts and ethnographic fieldwork techniques from cultural anthropology. The present chapter attempts to use the current data to decipher one of the many interesting phenomena observed in fine art education. This is significant for the fact that in China, professional art educators are trained in undergraduate-level fine art programs in schools of art rather than colleges of education in the West. Therefore, the recruitment process for first-year university students in the visual arts is the same as the recruitment process for fine art education professionals. The present chapter focuses on a loophole embedded in the system of university entrance examinations (the *gaokao* system) in the recruitment that allows students to enter higher-ranked universities despite weaker academic scores. The loophole highlights local ideas that surround fine art education. This chapter is organized in four parts. The first part introduces the background of the research and the present chapter. The second part describes those aspects of the *gaokao* system that involve the recruitment of fine art freshmen. The third part further contextualizes the loophole. The fourth part discusses the meaning of the loophole, the status of fine art education in China, and the implications this situation has on understanding the status of fine art education in the Chinese-speaking world.

Keywords Chinese education • Chinese speaking world • Educational ethnography • Education from an anthropological perspective • Fine art examination

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8.1 Introduction

During China's tumultuous years of the Cultural Revolution, all schools, including universities, were closed. As a result, university entrance examinations were suspended in China for 10 years (1966–1976). Meanwhile, government-administered university entrance examinations went on in various forms in the rest of the Chinese-speaking world of Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore.

In 1977, the national university entrance examination, or the *gaokao* system, was restored in China. Competition among examinees was fierce from the start. Over 5.7 million test takers participated and less than 300,000 were accepted during the first year (Chen, 1998). The scale of the test continued to grow through the years and peaked at 10.5 million registrants in 2008 (Yin & Lin, 2013). By 2012, there were 9.15 million people registering for the *gaokao*, and exams were held in over 310,000 classrooms (Wu & Sun, 2012). The present chapter analyzes only one relatively small aspect of the country's massive university entrance examination system. The field data used in this chapter was collected between 2009 and 2012. After this first stage of fieldwork was completed, data was analyzed to produce this present first publication. More fieldwork, analysis, and writing are expected in the future. The long-term goal is to obtain a deeper understanding of the status of fine art education in China.

In China, the training of professional fine art educators is rooted in fine art programs rather than education programs. In other words, artists are automatically considered as able to teach art and art educators. The recruitment process of the undergraduate level visual art freshmen is thus deeply incorporated into the recruitment of future fine art education professionals in the country. I believe that an inquiry into the recruiting examinations and placement process of students into fine art programs will bring about a better understanding of the fine art education in China. Within these parameters, one specific phenomenon, a loophole in the recruiting process, was selected for a closer examination.

As a Mandarin-speaking Taiwanese art educator and researcher trained in the United States, and in order to study China with the fewest presumptions, I took a grounded approach (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Predetermined topics or preexisting frames of mind were discarded as much as possible, for according to the grounded theory, localized topics would emerge in the process of investigation. The loophole was one of the many fascinating topics that emerged, and it provided a window into the status of fine art education in the Nanjing area in China.

To achieve the aim of a grounded long-term research, I borrowed concepts and ethnographic fieldwork methods from cultural anthropology. Concepts like cultural perspective (rather than educational perspective), cultural relativism, and a belief in contextualized understanding were central to my concern throughout the data collection and data analysis process. The methods I used included on-site participant observation, interviews, note-taking, daily journaling, photography, audio and video recordings, object collection, online communication, and online data collection.

The description in this chapter is supported by field data. Due to the nature of inquiry in research, all collected material was considered "cultural data" regardless

of source, whether they were official announcements on government websites, qualitative results of an interview, academic publications of university researchers, or brochures of commercial cram schools. They were all used to contextualize the loophole and to facilitate the discussion of the topic. For the purpose of providing clear references, however, the origin of different data has either been clarified in the text (e.g., based on field data) or cited in the references if there were relevant technical or academic publications. To guard the privacy of my informants in the field, no names are identified in the text.

Between 2009 and 2012,[1] I made 12 trips to my research site at Nanjing, the largest city and provincial capital of Jiangsu Province, China. My field station was the Xingzhi Garden,[2] and I stayed there for roughly one month on each visit. The Xingzhi Garden was located in a rural but rapidly developing district called Pukou that sat on the north shore of the Yangtze River, facing downtown Nanjing. Xingzhi Garden was originally a dilapidated rural primary school established by several peasant agricultural production brigades. The school was gradually transformed after the arrival of two young teachers from a small teachers college in 1990. One of these teachers was Yang Ruiqing, who has stayed at the Xingzhi Garden and became the principal.

Under Principal Yang's leadership, the Xingzhi Garden had developed into a 20 acre conglomerate of various educational institutions by 2011. The primary school was renamed after Tao Xingzhi (1891–1946), a Western-trained Chinese educator of the early twentieth century whom Yang admired, and the naming of other new schools and facilities at the site followed this tradition (Xingzhi Primary School, 2013; Yang, 2004). Xingzhi Garden currently contains the Xingzhi Kindergarten, Xingzhi Primary School, Xingzhi Middle School, and the Jiangsu Province Nanjing Adolescent Social Practice Xingzhi Base (or Xingzhi Base).

The site was selected for the present research primarily out of the kind permission and assistance of Principal Yang but also because of the large and varied education-related population that congregates at the Xingzhi Garden. This allowed me easy access to local, municipal, and provincial students, parents, administrators, and educators. It also enabled me to have direct contact with diverse educational constituents that inhabited the urban, suburban, and rural areas of the city. The field site was thus ideal for the purpose of the current research to understand the status of fine art education in China.

For the data used in the present chapter, local students were mostly from the villages and housing projects nearby who attended schools in the Xingzhi Garden. Other than this relatively stable population, a larger and more mobile population

[1] This study was supported by a three-year grant from the National Science Council of Taiwan, the Republic of China, between August 1, 2009 and July 30, 2012.

[2] I am deeply grateful to Principal Yang Ruiqing of the Xingzhi Primary School and his wife Pan Xuemei, Vice Principal and Base Director Liu Mingxiang, Party Secretary Ruan Min, Vice Principal Yu Tingling, Vice Principal Zhou Yating, Director Yang Jun of the kindergarten, Principal Fu Youkang of the Middle School, and the teachers, staff, and workers at all school for their warm welcome and hospitality.

was from the Nanjing municipal area that visited the Xingzhi Base throughout the year. Hundreds of students at a time could be organized by K-12 public schools to board at the 700-bed Xingzhi Base for 2–3 days. They were there to learn agricultural skills and engage in nonclassroom activities, including art.[3] This gave me nearly unlimited opportunities for participant observation in an informal situation and in a relaxed environment.

8.2 *Gaokao* and Fine Art Freshmen Recruitment

In this section, I will attempt to explain a significant phenomenon in the fine art freshmen screening embedded in the *gaokao* system. The phenomenon relates to a systemic loophole in the screening process. Prior to doing so, several groups of terms needed to be clarified.

Throughout much of Chinese history, there was no comparable term for the Western academic field of "art" (*yishu*) [艺术]. The same dilemma goes for "art education," [艺术教育], until the early nineteenth century (Yuan, 2006). Within the time frame of my fieldwork in China, art was an inclusive term covering fine art, music, and the performing arts. The term "fine art" [美术] is also used interchangeably with visual art [视觉艺术], a term that generally includes Western and Chinese painting, calligraphy, seal engraving, photography, animation, and various 2D and 3D design fields. Thus, "fine art education" and "visual art education" were interchangeable umbrella terms for the education in these fields. The field of art in China thus covered three categories: fine art or visual art, music [音乐], and performing art [表演艺术].

The term "*gaokao*" stood for many things in China. Depending on context, it could refer to anything between the entire college entrance examination system and various subsets of exams in the system. To avoid confusion, the term *gaokao* [高考] in this chapter will be used as a blanket term to broadly represent everything related to the college entrance examinations. The "*gaokao* system" [高考体制] will denote the regulations, organizations, procedures, and institutional operations of these examinations. The "primary *gaokao*" [大高考] refers to the most important exam within the *gaokao* system, while the "minor *gaokao*" [小高考] refers to secondary exam. Student scores on the primary *gaokao* were called "academic scores" [文化分].

Within the *gaokao* system, the group of examinations that specifically screened freshmen for technical-oriented programs were called the "professional exams" [专业考试], and their scores were the "professional scores" [专业分]. Within these professional exams, those that were independently organized by different universities to screen fine art freshmen were called "school exams" (*xiaokao*) [校考], while the unified exams organized by the Jiangsu provincial government for many higher

[3] To a lesser extent, schools from other parts of Jiangsu and other provinces also transported their students to the Xingzhi Base. Periodically, students from Singapore and Hong Kong visited the Base for a week for cultural exposure. Occasionally, the facility of the Garden was used to host international guests from around the world who came to learn Chinese language and culture.

learning institutions were called the "unified exams" (*tongkao*) [统考]. These two types of professional exams were used in a system of "independent recruitment" (*danzhao*) [单招] by individual schools or "united recruitment" (*tongzhao*) [统招] when coordinated by the provincial government. The professional exam for the united recruitment of fine art freshmen, in particular, was termed "fine art tongkao" [美术统考].

The *gaokao* system was a hugely complex operation even for insiders, so much so that no experts in the field could claim to know it all. Since it would be impossible to describe the whole system in detail within the space of one chapter, I will attempt to provide a concise summary of the core components of the *gaokao*, plus a selection of its parts that relate to the phenomenon of interest: the loophole (*kongzi*) [空子] embedded in the *gaokao* system that screened fine art freshmen for undergraduate level fine art programs.

While the *gaokao* was initially managed by the central government starting in 1977, this responsibility has since been delegated to local authorities in many provinces. In the case of the present chapter, the local authority was the Jiangsu Provincial Education Examination Authority [江苏省教育考试院] ("the Authority" henceforth). The Authority's website contained valuable public information for the description and analysis of this section of the chapter. The present section will give a general overview of the *gaokao* system in Jiangsu Province with a focus on the parts that screened new students for university fine art programs. As previously indicated, such an admission channel was also the beginning of a fine art education career. In particular, the fairly limited understanding of the loophole gleaned from the convoluted *gaokao* system in Nanjing may provide a foothold into understanding the status quo of fine art education in China.

The information that will be introduced below was gleaned from various official documents posted on the Authority's website and has been reconstructed chronologically to show the host of exams that high school students in the class of 2012 must surmount in order to enter a university fine art program through the *gaokao* system and begin a career in fine art education. Information unrelated to this target group, such as students in different years or those who pursued advancement channels other than the *gaokao*, will be omitted. Other omissions will be acknowledged in the process of the following description.

The path of typical Chinese students in the class of 2012 through their senior high school years includes the *gaokao* system. Students in the class of 2012 would have entered senior high school as 10th graders in 2009. During the first or second year of high school, they typically selected one of two tracks of study: either the humanities or natural sciences. This choice would affect their subsequent course load, with students in each track taking more advanced courses in their respective concentrations.

Despite art and physical education officially being two other tracks to choose from, they were generally not offered except at a few select high schools. This was not a deterrent to students with aspirations in art or physical education in practice, as such students would simply study in the humanities or natural science tracks and then take the additional tests necessary to qualify for art or physical education departments in college.

Starting in 11th grade, students would face a series of exams that preceded the primary *gaokao*. The first of these is the information technology exam, which was held between December 24 and 27, 2010. The content of the test centered on Internet usage, although advanced students could opt to be tested on computer programming (Jiangsu Provincial Education Examination Authority [JSEEA], 2011e). The exam was short and graded on a pass/fail basis. Even though failure at this point would result in disqualification from the *gaokao*, most students considered this test to be a mere formality due to the ease of passing.

The next set of exams were held between March 19 and 20, 2011, and were commonly dubbed the "minor *gaokao*" (小高考). Six subject tests would be offered over this two-day period in history, physics, politics, geography, chemistry, and biology. The minor *gaokao* was designed as a general education exam, so students were expected to select subjects that were not in their area of concentration, since those would be tested later in the primary *gaokao*. Each test in the minor *gaokao* was scored out of 100 points, with letter grades of A, B, C, and D assigned to raw scores in the 100–90, 89–75, 74–60, and 59–0 ranges, respectively. The relatively wide point ranges in this scoring system was designed to lessen the pressure on students. A minimum grade of C was required in all subjects tested for a student to continue onward.

The total number of test takers for the 2011 minor *gaokao* was 512,520, of which 444,959 were 11th graders and 67,561 were 12th graders. The latter group consisted of students in the class of 2011 who were unsatisfied with their minor *gaokao* scores in the previous year and chose to retake it with the class of 2012. The test combinations (JSEEA, 2011c) and the number of registrants (JSEEA, 2011a) for each subject test are summarized in Table 8.1. Note that popular subjects on the primary *gaokao* would necessarily have a lower number of registrants on the minor *gaokao*. Thus, the registration numbers on the minor *gaokao* in Table 8.1 already reflected the popularity of the natural science track among high school students.

Following the minor *gaokao* were the unified professional exams, commonly abbreviated as the "unified exam" or *tongkao*. The fine arts tongkao was held on December 4, 2011, and had 46,954 registrants (JSEEA, 2011d). The written music tongkao was held on December 1, 2011, with separate auditions held between

Table 8.1 Minor gaokao test subjects and registrants

	Subject					
Track	History	Physics	Politics	Geography	Chemistry	Biology
Natural science	Required	Not required	Choose three and reserve one for primary *gaokao*			
Humanities	Not required	Required	Choose three and reserve one for primary *gaokao*			
Art	All six subject tests required					
Physical education						
Total registered	350,960	233,469	372,667	399,388	360,024	373,706

December 5 and 24, and had a total of 6,093 registrants (JSEEA). The physical education tongkao with actual tryouts was held much later between April 22 and 23, 2012, and had only 7,077 registrants (JSEEA, 2012a).

There were only six test sites that hosted the fine arts *tongkao* in 2011, so many students had to make arrangements for transportation and lodging. Students must demonstrate their proficiency in both drawing and coloring. Three hours were allotted to each test, with the drawing test beginning at 8:30 AM and the coloring test starting at 2:00 PM. The maximum score for each test was 150 points, which are combined for a total of 300 points (JSEEA, 2011b).

The drawing examination used a vertically placed piece of drawing paper. Each examinee was also provided a drawing board, an easel, and a stool. The examinees brought their own pencil and charcoal to draw a 3/4 portrait of the dressed upper torso of a man that included his hands and head. No live models were used. Instead, two representations of the same person were provided. One was a full frontal photo of the person's upper torso that included his hands. The second was a line drawing of the same person in 1/2 profile, with two small photographs replacing the hands. Examinees must compose the 3/4 portrait drawing using the indirect visual information given above.[4]

The coloring examination used paper of the same size as in the drawing examination but placed horizontally. Each examinee was given a black-and-white photo of a still-life display. The setting included an ensemble of "objects of daily life, including vegetables, pottery, glass ware, fruits, flowers, food, beverages, kitchen utensils, everyday objects, school supplies, and a variety of cloth." The examinees must bring with their own watercolor or gouache paint and tools and paint a still-life work based on the information given (JSEEA, 2011b).

The primary *gaokao* was finally held between June 7 and 9, 2012. The first two days of the *gaokao* covered the core subjects of Chinese, mathematics, and foreign language that everyone must take. The two subject tests that students had skipped on the minor *gaokao* were then held on the last day, now at a much higher difficulty level compared to their minor *gaokao* versions. The 2012 primary *gaokao* schedule is shown in Table 8.2, with additional details added (JSEEA, 2012b).

The Chinese test for humanities students and the mathematics test for natural science students were longer due to an additional 30-min test section worth another 40 points; the first 160 points of each exam were otherwise identical for all test takers. The foreign language exam was available in several different languages, but the overwhelming majority of students chose English. Letter grades for the subject tests on the last day were assigned based on percentile ranks, with A+, A, B+, B, C, and D grades corresponding to the top percentile ranks of 5 %, 5–20 %, 20–30 %, 30–50 %, 50–90 %, and 90–100 %, respectively. When contrasted with the grading system on the minor *gaokao*, we can see that the primary *gaokao* yields a much lower proportion of top letter grades. The number of registrants for the primary

[4] The original document (JSEEA, 2011b) that was made public only said that the examinees were to follow the instructions on the paper and create a portrait of an upper torso. The specification given here was according to the memory of two experts.

Table 8.2 Primary gaokao test schedule and subjects

	June 7	June 8	June 9
Morning	*Chinese*		Choose one from *physics and history*
	Humanities track: 9:00–12:00 (160 + 40 points)		9:00–10:40 (letter grades)
	Other tracks: 9:00–11:30 (160 points)		
Afternoon	*Mathematics*	*Foreign language*	Choose one from *chemistry, biology politics, and geography*
	Natural science track: 15:00–17:30 (160 + 40 points)	15:00–17:00 (160 points)	15:00–16:40 (letter grades)
	Other tracks: 15:00–17:00 (160 points)		

Table 8.3 Primary gaokao registrants per track or track combination

Track	Registrants	Percent of all registrants
Natural science	253,367	53.35 %
Humanities	131,417	27.67 %
Art	25,423	5.35 %
Art and natural science	23,991	5.05 %
Art and humanities	25,032	5.27 %
PE	1,485	0.31 %
PE and natural science	4,619	0.97 %
PE and humanities	3,508	0.74 %
Other (implied)	6,053	1.27 %
Total	474,895	100 %

gaokao as classified by the Authority is compiled in Table 8.3 (JSEEA, 2012h). An "other (implied)" category has been added to account for discrepancies in the official numbers.

The dual-track categories, such as "art and humanities" or "art and natural science" in Table 8.3, correspond to students who chose to take all the subject tests on the minor *gaokao* to satisfy the requirements of the art and physical education track but then also registered to take the two harder subject tests on the last day of the *gaokao*, thus satisfying the requirements for the humanities or natural science tracks too. This course of action was mainly taken by students who were not confident in their track choice or *gaokao* performance, as they retained the option of applying to departments in both tracks they selected after the *gaokao*. Table 8.3 shows that such dual-track students actually constituted around two-thirds of all students that registered for art. The much larger number of dual-tracked art students compared to those dual-tracked physical education students also reflected the fact that artistic skills were much easier to train than physical skills in the short term.

Overall, students on the humanities track, the natural science tracks, or any of the dual tracks had a maximum *gaokao* score of 480 points, while those on the art and

physical education tracks exclusively had a maximum score of 440 points. This numeric score was the most important factor in the final step of the *gaokao*: the matching and placement of students into universities.

Once the primary *gaokao* results were released to the public on June 25, 2012, two stages of matchmaking between students and universities were held between July 8–23 and August 3–23 (JSEEA, 2012c). The first stage of matchmaking covered three lots of schools: the Early Lot, Lot 1, and Lot 2 schools. The second stage encompassed Lot 3 schools and professional schools. Each stage was then further divided into several rounds. The matchmaking generally proceeded in descending order of competitiveness, so programs in the first stage were regarded as much more prestigious than those in the second stage.

The matchmaking system was extremely complicated, but the fundamental procedure was as follows. After the *gaokao* scores were released, each school would submit to the Authority a list of minimum requirements that prospective students must meet. These requirements were specified in the form of some combination of test scores. For students on the humanities and natural science tracks, the main requirement was the primary *gaokao*'s numeric score and letter grades, with tiebreaking provided by the total scores in Chinese and mathematics. For students on the art or physical education tracks, the main requirement was their total numeric score on the *gaokao* and relevant *tongkao*, with tiebreaking provided by the *gaokao* score. If a school contained programs that belonged to different tracks, then they must specify their requirements for students in each track separately. The choice of these minimums was a balancing act by the school. Raising the requirements would improve the quality of applicants and the prestige of the school, but it also risked public embarrassment and ridicule if it resulted in too few freshmen admitted.

In addition to minimum test scores, each school must also report to the Authority the total number of students they planned to admit across all programs, as well as the number of applications they were requesting from the Authority. Schools were allowed to request more applications than seats offered in case an application was rejected. Although rejections were rare, they could happen if, for example, a student's test scores passed the minimum specified by the school, but did not meet the minimum required by any of the school's programs. While a school might only require two letter grades of Bs on the primary *gaokao*'s subject tests, the history program in that school could additional require students score an A on the history subject test and thus eliminate some applicants.

Once the above information was collected from the schools by the Authority, it was quickly published for all students to peruse. After a period of consideration, each student must submit to the Authority a ranked list of their desired schools and preferred programs in those schools. Depending on the matchmaking stage and the track of the student, anywhere between three to six schools could be ranked by each student, with four to six departments further ranked under in each school. The advantage of dual-track students surfaced here as they could apply to schools and programs under both of their selected tracks.

With information from both the schools and students on hand, the Authority finally sorted all the students in descending order of the relevant score combination,

which is the numeric *gaokao* score for the humanities and natural science tracks and the sum of the numeric *gaokao* and tongkao scores for the art and physical education tracks. Following this sorted order, each student's academic record was then sent to the highest ranked school on that student's preference list, provided that the student met the school's minimum score requirements and the school still had room for more applicants.

The content of the student records being delivered to each school was described by the Authority as "3 + academic standards exams + student quality evaluation" (JSEEA, 2011c). The first number refers to the three numeric test scores from the core subjects of Chinese, mathematics, and foreign language on the primary *gaokao*. The academic standards exams were the various subject tests under the *gaokao* that only produced a letter grade, which corresponded to politics, history, geography, physics, chemistry, biology, and information technology. The student quality evaluations were provided by high school to evaluate their students' performance in six areas: morality, civics, learning ability, communication and cooperation, sports and health, aesthetic judgment, and performance (JSEEA). As high schools have a vested interest in the success of their students, there was generally little distinction between students in this area.

After the Authority sent out all the student records, each school then processed their applicants independently and tried to match students to their desired programs. Although rejections can happen, schools generally put significant effort into admitting students, as a high number of rejections can dissuade future students from selecting the school and adversely affect the school's prestige. In fact, schools may even offer admission into departments not on students' preference lists to ensure that students do not go unmatched.

The results of the 2012 *gaokao* (JSEEA, 2012h) are summarized in Table 8.4. The admittance rates for 2012 were a historical high in Jiangsu Province, and this was hailed by the Authority as a sign of success for the *gaokao* system (JSEEA, 2012g).

Given the multiple rounds of matchmaking after the *gaokao*, students who were willing to settle for lower-ranked universities could generally find a program to accept them. The bulk of unmatched students therefore consisted of those who were unsatisfied with their test scores and thus the quality of the schools that they were being matched to. Many of these students would go on to retake the *gaokao* in later years in pursuit of higher scores and better schools.

Once the matchmaking and placement process concluded, the Authority would publicize the lowest scores admitted by each department, and this score list would

Table 8.4 Admittance statistics per track for the class of 2012

	Status		
Track	Admitted	Percent of all admitted	Admittance rate for track
Natural science	222,755	57.00 %	78.00 %
Humanities	125,018	31.99 %	78.16 %
Art	40,483	10.36 %	54.38 %
PE	2,522	0.65 %	26.24 %

become one of the most important factors in determining the prestige of each school and each academic program in the eye of the public.

The matchmaking process after the *gaokao* was the point where artistic talent—or training and cramming—could allow students to gain entry into prestigious schools they would otherwise not have access to. This loophole existed because universities that offered both art programs and traditional academic programs in the humanities and natural sciences typically had much lower admittance scores for their art programs. For example, Nanjing Normal University, widely regarded as a top university in Jiangsu Province, had a minimum *gaokao* score requirement of 355 for its humanities (JSEEA, 2012f) programs and 352 for its natural science programs (JSEEA, 2012e). Its art program, however, admitted students whose combined *gaokao* and tongkao scores were as low as 542 points, with a minimum *gaokao* score of only 308 points (JSEEA, 2012d). That nearly fifty point difference on the minimum *gaokao* scores was thus seen as a lifeline to students who did not perform well on the academic exams but could do well on the fine art *tongkao*. For these students, their selection of the art track, either alone or in combination with another track, could be the factor that determines whether or not they are admitted to a prestigious university.

Such a clear advantage for fine art examinees was extraordinary. Considering the stakes involved, such a discrepancy can hardly be ignored. It is clearly a loophole in a supposedly high-stakes, highly scrutinized, and painstakingly designed admission system. The existence of an open loophole that served and only served the fine art examinees sounded counterintuitive. Its existence seemed to signify inequity and injustice, something that officials took great care to eliminate judging from the intricate design of the *gaokao* system itself. As a matter of fact, the emphasis on promoting fairness was almost always the top concern stated in the numerous public documents of the Authority. Specifically, a 2012 official announcement stated the nature and aim of the fine art *tongkao*:

> The aim of the tongkao is, based on the principle of fairness and justice [and at the same time] through scientific and rigorous means and methods, to conduct subjective and accurate evaluation on the professional level and professional quality of the examinees. [The purpose in so doing is] to aid higher institutions to holistically assess and select the freshmen of all [their] fine art programs based on relative educational demands of the fine art profession. [It is done] to better cultivate artistic talent that is qualified and matches the need of society. (JSEEA, 2011b)

In contrast to the straightforward statement above, the next section will show that the fine art *tongkao* had a very different impact in the everyday world and that by explicating the operation of the loophole, a cultural understanding of fine art education in the Nanjing area could be obtained.

8.3 The Recruitment Process and the Loophole

There are many ways to describe the recruitment process and the loophole. In this section, "experts" who discuss recruitment are the fine art program professors and high school art education experts who have had the experience of being invited by

the Authority to participate in the *gaokao* system. They were asked to provide opinions, make minor decisions, grade the exams, and/or supervise the actual operations of tongkao. The "cram" teachers refer to the owners/teachers and hired teachers of cram schools or "training centers" [培训中心], which coached examinees on how to get higher scores on the fine art *tongkao*.

Some historical background of the *gaokao* and *tongkao* is necessary. It was said that university entrance examinations already existed in China before the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), but the exams favored students who were from an urban elite background. Party leader Mao Zedong believed these exams undermined the authority of the workers, farmers, and soldiers. It was under such leftist scrutiny that the exams were reformed during the Cultural Revolution. The exams were suspended for 10 years in favor of a system that selected students based on political and ideological merit.[5] The *gaokao* system, in the form of a nationally unified exam as it was before the Cultural Revolution, was restored in 1977 after the Cultural Revolution. In the early years after the 1977 reform, art programs generally had low admission numbers.

Around the mid-1990s, several factors converged to prompt the birth of the fine art *tongkao*. The communist party leader Deng Xiaoping instituted a new central government policy that promoted a more rounded university education, and subsequent reforms altered the *gaokao*'s previous emphasis on science and engineering to embrace the art and humanities as well. In order to expand university education to more people, the government abolished political and ideological screenings, increased enrollment quotas, and allowed private investments in higher education. As such, the growing scale of the *gaokao* made it increasingly difficult for the central government to manage alone, so the responsibility for administering the exam was gradually delegated to local authorities.[6]

These reforms to the *gaokao* were accompanied by a flood of financial support from the central government. In the Nanjing area, a part of these funds was used to relocate universities from crowded city centers to spacious suburban "university towns" (*da xue cheng*) [大学城]. Huge buildings were constructed on wide tracts of land to create room for a larger student population. Partly as a result of this, the fine art freshmen enrollment numbers expanded from around 3,000 a year in 2000 to 50,000 a year in 2011.

Before the implementation of the unified fine art *tongkao* in Jiangsu Province in 2000, each university's fine art program operated its own independent recruitment exams. Examinees were required to participate in every technical examination at each school to which they applied. The examination methods in those days also varied from school to school and were subjected to frequent changes. This situation made it very difficult to prepare for the exams. More troublesome still were the fluctuating standards adopted by each university to grade the tests. Problem mounted

[5] Meanwhile, government-administered general university entrance examinations continued without interruption in various forms in the rest of the Chinese-speaking world of Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong.

[6] Similar accounts could be seen in the article by Cui and Zhao (2014).

when additional technical examination application fees and traveling costs became a heavy burden on examinees and their families.

The pressure was no less for the universities at the time. Each institution organized their own annual exams which imposed a heavy burden on both financial and human resources. They also had to risk becoming the target of public criticism if the exam was seen as unfair. Under mounting public outcry and pleading from the universities, the provincial government finally intervened by organizing a unified technical examination.

Almost immediately after the first unified fine art *tongkao*, the existence of a loophole in the system was noted, said one expert. The fine art *tongkao* was recognized as a backdoor into good universities. It was not surprising that it drew the attention of examinees and their supporters, which often included their homeroom teachers in addition to parents.

I had met a second year high school girl who drew a Disney character, the Little Mermaid, on a plaster wall in her room. The girl's father was a factory worker, her mother and grandparents cultivated the land behind the family house, while her younger sister attended the Xingzhi Primary School. The girl openly discussed the backdoor into good universities during our interview in 2012. She was the pride of her family for being "good at reading books" [会读书], a common phrase that described students who were capable of, willing to, and knew how to study hard to get good grades. She said that she would not rule out using the loophole entirely.

The girl's plan was as follows: if she maintained her academic performance by getting high enough scores in her upcoming practice exams offered at her high school, she would have the confidence to let her primary *gaokao* scores decide which good university she would attend. If she did not do well enough to give her this confidence, she would try the military universities which provided a stable employment, as long as her eyesight could pass the physical examinations. If that did not work out, she would need the help of one of the cram schools in town to improve her fine art *tongkao scores*. The reason being that she could only "copy" [模仿] (the Little Mermaid on her wall, for instance) instead of draw and paint like a real artist.

With an improved fine art *tongkao* scores, combined with her reasonably good academic scores, she said that she would still have a chance to enter a good university. This option through the fine art *tongkao* was not the preferred choice however, as she recalled her teacher warning her class that "you painters, your paintings would not be known until after you are dead." This girl also expressed concerns about the cost of fine art cram schools[7] and the burden it would impose on her family. Therefore, she concluded that she would rather keep art as a hobby to relieve stress and boredom than pursue it as a career.

This girl and other examinees I met who planned to use the loophole shared some similarities. They were the ones who were uncertain about their own academic performance but had some interest in the fine art. Most were from a lower- or lower-middle-income, rural farming, or working-class families and frequently had a father with

[7] The cram schools would have cost between two and three thousand renminbi per month for three to four months, not including the cost of supplies.

limited literacy and an illiterate mother. These families had no special "relationship" (*guanxi*) [关系] networks, like those available to parents with enough power and/or financial resources that could enable their children to enter any university or program. While many examinees from better backgrounds chose a dual track including art merely to broaden their options, students from lower-class families like this girl generally focused their attention on a singular, if somewhat abstract, goal of "getting into a good university." They viewed the diploma from a good university as a ticket to a good life and the only way to earn a living without manual labor. The importance of this was such that lower-class families were not very picky about the specific programs their children might attend, as long as that program was at a good university.

According to public belief, "good universities" were government-run Early Lot, Lot 1, and Lot 2 universities that were cheaper to attend and enjoyed the most government funding, employed the most elite faculty, and received the best students. The society as a whole seemed to agree that diplomas from these brand name public institutions would ensure an easier life afterward. An easier life meant a good job, a good marriage, a good pension, and prestige for the whole family. In contrast to that, private universities were generally more expensive, of lesser quality, and did not guarantee a good future.

A secondary goal for students was to get into a good university program. A good program might be one that was supported by government policy, aligned with current economic trends and in demand by the job market. Fine art programs were typically not good programs in this sense. As a matter of fact, they were traditionally thought of as potentially leading to a life of insecurity such that graduates "will have nothing to eat" [会没饭吃]. There was one exception however: if a student was using the loophole to get into a fine art program at a good university. Since a good university was more important than a good program, this would be a shrewd step by the student that could lead to a good life. Whatever the case, students were primarily concerned with the practical benefits of their education rather than on their aspirations.

Utilization of the fine art loophole required the cooperation of the teenager when the time came, and that could sometimes be a difficult task for the parents. In order to prepare for the situation early on, one parent described her plan to me. It was to send her child to a fine art studio as early as kindergarten. In the studio, the child could become familiar with the basics of drawing and painting in a relaxed environment. The desire to create art could also encourage the child to focus and improve his ability to sit still and increase his attention span, which is something that can pay dividends in academics too. The goal for all this was to make learning art enjoyable to the child, so as to leave a lasting positive impression in his mind. An affinity for fine art could thus be maintained through the regular fine art classes in school over the years. Hopefully, the child would grow up with positive thoughts about drawing and painting, thereby making it easier for him to endure the hardship of fine art training at cram schools, should the need arise one day.

This parent's plan would not be complete without cram schools. The following is a description of a parent conference held at a medium-sized cram school. At the end of summer 2011, with only three months left before the fine art *tongkao* was to take place, the time had come for parents to make some hard decisions after an initial

phase of summer art training was over. The cram school director had conducted a two-day mock *tongkao* examination. On the second day, the scores were announced and a parent conference was called on the same evening.

Fourteen parents arrived at the conference, with most of them coming directly from work. There were more fathers than mothers at the conference. The parents' concerns for their children's futures were palpable. During the conference, the director first analyzed the examination rules, schedules, and key issues of that year's fine art *tongkao* for the parents. Next, the director provided a detailed analysis of the mock test results for each student whose parents were present. The entire process was conducted using a PowerPoint presentation, and the director continuously answered parent questions well into the night.

While the adults carefully planned and strategized their children's futures, several students went home to complete their schoolwork. Others remained outside of the conference room surfing the internet, playing games on their smartphones, or eating a bowl of instant noodles while waiting patiently for the conference to end. They all kept their voices down and only spoke to me in whispers, as if acknowledging the conference was important for their future and that they should not disturb their parents and the director.

The adults in the meantime were making important decisions. Although some teenagers remained in the cram school after the summer of 11th grade, they obtained poor scores in this mock exam and did not display enough artistic talent according to the director. Most parents of these students told the director that they still wished to have their children enroll in the fine art *tongkao* just as an extra safety net.

For the other students that were well behaved and exhibited a willingness to exert increased effort, their parents decided to permit the training to continue based on the director's evaluations. They were the ones who believed their children would improve their scores on the fine art *tongkao* and eventually enter a good university. Several parents and students opted out of more training on the spot because their high school homeroom teachers had informed them that the students could still find success through the primary *gaokao* alone, so the student's time and energy should be completely focused in that direction. In quite a few cases, the final decision was mixed, with parents electing to continue the fine art *tongkao* training part time. The division of time could be academics in the morning and professional in the afternoon, or fine art during the day and studies for the primary *gaokao* at night with material prepared by a student's high school homeroom teachers, or focus on regular high school work on weekdays and attend fine art cram courses on the weekends.

At close to 10:00 pm, after the last parent left, the director commented on the conference. In the following record, I am represented by "A," and the director is represented by "B."

B: Think about it, so many students start halfway. They learn fine art halfway and not because they like it. They just… What the parents and students convey is that although the student will likely not draw well in a fine art undergraduate course, at least the student attended an undergraduate course. Parents do not care if the student can or cannot learn other subjects at the university, as long

as they are not shamed in front of relatives and friends. [He was frustrated by the lower than expected number of parents that showed up at the conference.]

A: Yes, for example, if the student is accepted into Nanjing Normal University…

B: Yes. Regarding the [fine art] discipline, some parents asked [questions], others do not. Students will not volunteer the information. The student continues schooling and parents do not care if the student learns anything. This happens in China. The parents manage to enroll their child in a university, but the rest of the student's education is the child's own problem. If the student has greater family support than other students do, then the student will graduate. They play hard during college years and they do not learn anything in regular classes. Afterward, if they cannot find a job after graduation, they might rely on connections, apply to take the civil servant exam, or they might obtain money to open their own business. That might be how their futures turn out.

A: Do parents believe that securing a high-paying job in a certain sector is easier than directing their child to study that subject? Does that happen?

B: Of course it does. However, parents and students must establish a balance. For example, if the student likes literature and had problem with mathematics, the student will develop headaches every time he hears about anything in physics or chemistry. Whether the student's father is a noted figure in biology or biochemistry does not matter. If the student is not the [raw] material for this subject, pushing him into the field is fruitless. In this manner, parents must consider their child's abilities. However, if the child's abilities are all-around average, for example, if the student is skilled in both the liberal arts and in science, then the parents must consider and decide which field offers a better future and in which field they can help their child. This must be considered. Always consider the student's ability first. For example [pointing at a drawing posted on the wall], this student that selected fine art [tongkao] had a *gaokao* score of 200. If you do not take fine art…you…

A: Basically have no chance.

B: Because you do not even qualify for university…early university [placement threshold]…

Apparently, the parent conference was about how to utilize the loophole to each and every student's benefit. Understandably, the considerations included family resources and individual differences such as talent, aptitude, attitude, and potential. In a very rigid *gaokao* system, the loophole brought extra room for choice and maneuvering. However, while the loophole provided hope of a better university for students and dreams of glory for their families, it did not seem to guarantee success. The loophole was just a means to an end that helped many high school students gain a slight edge in the fight for a university seat. Yet, since there was no easy way to a good life except through the *gaokao* system, this loophole meant a great deal to many less privileged examinees and their families.

It meant so much that school teachers who ostensibly had nothing to do with the *gaokao* system would be involved with the loophole very early on in a student's education. A conversation with a primary school fine art teacher who was visiting

the Xingzhi Garden enlightened me as to how she fit into the grand plan. This fine art teacher was in her mid-40s. She graduated from a local art college before the *tongkao* was implemented. In her primary school, besides working as a teacher, she was also the leader of the school's teachers' union. This was an elected post that suggested how well respected she was among her colleagues.

The teacher told me that education in her rural school was not up to par with that of urban areas. Teacher credentials, campus resources, the school district's socioeconomic condition, and parental support were all inferior. It was only natural that the school's academic test rankings were low among Nanjing's primary schools. The school performed so poorly on the tests that the possibility of school closure was even considered by the city government at one point.

The only area that the students performed well in was fine art. Drawings produced by her students, she said, were brilliantly uninhibited. She and her colleagues decided to harness their talents. They picked out students for special training to participate in children's drawing contests. She even contributed funding for the first few trips for contests out of town. The children went on to win regional, municipal, and provincial awards. Some even won national awards in Beijing. She believed this honor reduced the pressure that was brought on by the school's poor academic rankings, thereby raising the faculty's morale, which in turn improved the students' academic performance. She said that fine art was one of the vital turning points for her rural primary school.

The teacher mentioned a particular case in which a shy boy gained confidence after receiving multiple awards. He later became a "student of three excellences" [三好生]: excellence in moral, intellectual, and physical education.[8] He later entered a fairly prestigious art institute by participating in the fine art tongkao. I felt this student was surely a success story for fine art education. I thought that the teacher would encourage all her artistically talented students for the same reason, but that was not the case, as I would soon discover.

The conversation moved on to the new extracurricular fine art society she had established for the upper grades on Friday afternoons. The society consisted of a group of mix-aged children. In 2011, when I visited her society, 20 or so children were scribbling along excitedly. For these students, the fine art tongkao would be at least 6 years away. As the children were busy with their assignment that day, I interviewed the teacher. Our conversation came to how she would manage if too many students wanted to enter the society. Here was what she said (I am denoted by "A" and the fine art teacher is denoted by "B").

A: The class we are in now is called the fine art society?
B: Yes, society.
A: This society is for students with common interests?
B: (Nods)

[8] The most basic and common standard for being an outstanding student in Chinese schools was the "three excellences," which referred to students whose moral (ideological), intellectual, and physical education scores lead their classes. The award winners were publicly rewarded with gifts.

A: What are some other requirements?
B: People must have an interest as well as talent in the subject.
A: So the qualities you look for are…?
B: Yes, I will see whether or not a student is a promising candidate.
A: Meaning the student must be a promising candidate before you allow them to join the courses? [At this point I thought she was talking about student's fine art performance.] Do you limit the number of students?
B: Yes, of course. Another condition was added later. The students must attain an above average academic performance before joining the society.
A: Why?
B: Because, if you come here and interrupt your other studies, the other teachers will require that you make up that work at the office. Then you will not have the opportunity to come.
A: Meaning, the homeroom teacher will take the students to the office to make up the class work when the society's activity is being held?
B: Yes. So you will not have time to come.
A: So it's futile.
B: I have told the children that I do not care what talents they have, the most important thing is that they have the solid foundations [in academics]. They must go to middle school, right? They must be eligible for middle school after primary school and then graduate from middle school with qualifications for attending high schools to accomplish their goals. If they graduate from junior high school but are not eligible academically after high school graduation, then they cannot learn other subjects [subjects not tested in the primary or minor *gaokao*, such as art]. Of course, cases of folk artists that successfully overcome this hurdle exist. However, these cases are rare. It will be difficult [life] if they take that path. So I tell them that if they need to make up academic work after class, then I might as well wait until their grades improve before I teach them fine art, right?
A: So academic performance should be taken care of first?
B: (Nods) At least they will have the good foundations, right?
A: So if the students have interest, you will be there to help them learn art. But if one's academics are weak, one will not move from primary school to junior high and will not move from junior high to high school.
B: Yes.
A: So all would be in vain without a good academic performance?
B: (Nods) Pressure [to perform well academically] is intense in junior high, and even worse in high school. By then, the students will spend all their time on the basic subjects [of the primary and minor *gaokao*] and will not have time to draw. If they can grasp the foundational subjects, even if at an average level, it will suffice.
A: So the students have chances to make up their art education anyway. Even with a long interruption of [fine art] training, the students can improve and advance if they desire to enter [college level fine art programs]. However, if their academic performance does not qualify them, then they have no other options, right?
B: (Nods)

Based on this perfectly fine and devoted teacher's logic, academic performance was not only tightly linked to fine art education but also linked to social elevation. She was essentially saying that whether a student's performance, endowment, or interest in fine art could be developed depended on his or her academic performance. While in the case of the shy boy, the teacher believed that fine art education could improve student self-esteem and overall school performance, and she also saw fine art education as a privilege which provided an additional channel for success that should only be granted to students with conditions. The act of entering an extracurricular fine art society was seen as an opportunity, a special treat even, that students must strive to earn by showing his or her willingness to maintain a certain level of academic performance. As such, below average academic performance was a reason to bar a child from receiving extra fine art education.

Moreover, excessive interest in fine art could divert a student's attention away from intellectual activities, which could potentially be detrimental to their performance on both the *gaokao* and *tongkao*, thus hampering their development. This was the reason why students' interests in art must be properly managed and adjusted according to their academic performances.

From a cultural perspective, here was an adult who was cultivating the behavioral norms and shared values of society in a younger generation: that academic performance is a more important measure of a person than professional performance. In this regard, the design of the fine art tongkao could further tell us that such a norm was endorsed by not just the primary school teacher but also the experts.

According to the two experts I interviewed, most alterations to the *tongkao* since its inception in 2000 had to do with improving the fairness of the tests.[9] Regarding the drawing exam, initially this test involved using the members of the paramilitary police (the People's Armed Police) as models. When the examination scale grew, the number of officers could no longer suffice, and there were talks to request help from the People's Liberation Army. In the end, the Authority did not resort to expropriating more personnel from the military. Its approach was to eliminate live models altogether. The drawing exam was redesigned so that all students each year were provided with a photographic representation of the same model. This change was seen as a move toward a fairer exam, since it removed an unpredictable variable that made it difficult to unify grading standards. Similar actions were taken on the coloring exam too.

In earlier times, the coloring exam was conducted by giving examinees a list of still-life items. The examinees were told to rearrange the items into a new composition. It was soon found that examinees could disregard the rearrangement challenge by directly painting from a memorized composition and passing the exam. This trick was said to have been invented by the private cram schools. To compound the problem, the graders had difficulty distinguishing between a composition that was created on-site and ones that were memorized. It was said that, after

[9] Such alterations happened each year. However, in order to be fair to each year's examinees, all alterations on test methods or regulations must be announced when the students were still in their first year in high school.

some adjustments, a decision was made to provide examinees with a line drawing of a still-life arrangement to homogenize the work content, composition, and perspective of examinees. Both changes to the drawing and the coloring exams were widely supported for eliminating unfair practices.

Cram school teachers told me that besides the common drawing and coloring abilities such as representation, color scheme, image transcribing, modeling and spatial perception, etc., the internalization of a number of ideas was also important. For instance, to get a high score in drawing, examinees needed to employ the method of using a grid system to draw a figure with limited frontal and sideway clues given. For the coloring exam, cram school students were told to emphasize the mutual reflections between colors and shadings of different still-life objects in order to make the composition more harmonious and more three dimensional. Some of the ideas given by the cram schools could border on speculation. I have heard on several different occasions that the reviewers of the Jiangsu Province coloring examination preferred high saturation, brighter, and refreshing hues. Cram school teachers who maintained this lore attributed the unconscious evaluator preference for the foggy and misty climate of south and east China that Jiangsu Province had. Some other ideas were more strategic. For example, cram school teachers would help students understand what an appropriate performance level would be. This meant the students must learn how to complete their work with just the right degree of finish, not too much and not too little. The idea was to give the reviewers a good enough first impression but not to challenge their aesthetic tastes, even though the test instruction specifically indicated that there was no limitation as to *expressive methods* (JPEEA, 2011b). It meant that examinees did not want their works to stand out stylistically and risk controversy during a mass reviewing process in which every work got only a few seconds of eyeball time. Not to mention, I was told, the rule stipulated that the highest and lowest review scores were to be dropped to control for any possible prejudice among individual reviewers.

To get a better grasp of the safe zone for performance, cram schools provided plenty of references for students to review. For instance, cram schools would frequently publish albums of exemplary pictures. Some contained works that supposedly belonged to highly graded examinees from previous years, and others contained works by cram school teachers that claimed a deep understanding of the subject. There were also guides that provided information on the aesthetic, skill, style, and knowledge of traditional French and Russian fine art academies. Nearing the test date, I also witnessed a retired expert lecturing and answering student questions at the invitation of a cram school.

In short, there was an abundance of effort made by the cram schools to make the work of their students more palatable to the experts that would grade them. So what exactly were these experts looking for in a freshman? During my interview with one expert (A), when the topic came to the future development of admitted freshmen, another expert (B) who had kept to herself jumped in. The two of them started a conversation about the desirable and undesirable qualities of fine art freshmen.

B: Remember the one (student) mentioned by teacher Chen? The one that ended up not doing well on the fine art tongkao that he mentioned.

A: Well said. It is correct. That is why in our teaching, [we find that] if the child's academic score is good, he often possessed good *sense of awareness* [悟性]. When learning the fine art with a good sense of awareness, a little instruction [by the teacher] is enough to go through. In contrast, [who] we are tutoring… the worst students are the ones that get the most tutoring and result in the least effect. Why do academically bad students perform worst in spite of the most tutoring? It has to do with his techniques. It is related. He is… a student who has good academic score has better intelligence. He has higher IQ. With a little instruction from the teacher, a little teaching on methods, a bit of training would be enough for him to have a grasp. Whereas the one that has relatively low academic scores has slower response. The slowness… on the same [drawing or painting] problem, no matter how many times you talk, [plus] finish correcting [his work], two hours later [the student would ask] teacher to "please correct my work again." [Then you found that] the student has [scratched what you corrected for him earlier and] was back to where he began. Again you… The teacher saw the picture, [found that] small adjustments would not do, [then the teacher] makes changes again, [while all the time the teacher is thinking] am I doing the right thing? How could there be improvement? [The student's] improvement is [bound to be] minute.

These two experts maintained that freshmen who performed poorly on the primary *gaokao* and minor *gaokao* possessed limited potential for development from the college level onward. This was especially so with new students who came in holding high professional (tongkao) scores but low academic (primary and minor *gaokao*) scores. The reason behind their experience was summed up by expert A. He said, "Without academics as a kungfu base [功底], subsequent development is difficult, very difficult. I can't say it would be so [in all cases], there might be exceptions but… very difficult." Kungfu as a metaphor was brought into this conversation to infer that academics were the foundation for everything. It was interesting in that kungfu was a discipline that emphasized the importance of a solid foundation of physical conditioning from which more advanced skills could be developed. Using the metaphor meant that drawing and coloring were not the actual foundations of fine art; that role belonged to the academics tested on the primary and minor *gaokao* instead.

Further inquiry indicated that this so-called subsequent development did not refer to moral, physical, or mental development but rather to a person's aptitude at improving his or her ability at gaining social status through wealth, power, position, a stable career, increased independence, social recognition, and respect. Similarly, sense of awareness in this context meant the ability to become well prepared and ready to adapt and transform oneself when opportunities arise. To illustrate this point, I found that only a few teachers from university fine art programs expected more than a couple of their students in each class to go on to a sustainable fine art career. The career could be called a painter, a fine art educator, or, as Chumley (2011) described, an "entrepreneur" and "freelancer" in the new visual media market.

Painting illustrates this situation. To be a painter in China required decades of hard work, material deprivation, a never-ending string of art contests, and an uncertain economic outlook. To be a fine art educator would take years of studying and cramming for a range of exams, and one could never stop accumulating more credentials or certificates. It was easy to understand why many former students of these two experts worked in odd jobs or jobs unrelated to art. It was not surprising either that many of these students banded together to open up their own fine art cram schools.

The very kind and dedicated expert B drove her point further. New students who possessed high primary *gaokao* scores but low passing scores on the *tongkao* required only 1 year of in-school training and some additional extracurricular practice to improve their artistic techniques. The reason, as two other artist/professors echoed on another occasion, was that these students understood things better and were simply more intelligent. These two men went as far as telling me that they did not really care how good the freshmen were in their drawing and coloring because they all had to be retrained. The men said that the bad habits freshmen picked up from cramming for the drawing and coloring exams had to be expunged before the right ideas about art could be put into their heads.

Expert B pointed out to me that upon graduating high school, students who attained high primary *gaokao* scores before his or her entry into university often had an easier time preparing for additional examinations in the future, which might enable them to become a public official or an advanced degree holder with a higher-paying job. The implication was that students with better academic performance were likely to have broader career options and an easier transition into fields outside of the fine art profession compared to those students who could only paint. Once again, the academic performance exhibited in the score of the primary *gaokao* was thought of as a better indicator of a fine art freshman's long-term development than the same person's performance on the fine art *tongkao*. This probably explained why the loophole remained in place for more than a decade since the tongkao was introduced: the less than enticing nature of fine art careers should have attracted a far lower number of examinees to the fine art tongkao were it not for this loophole. I already knew that there was a vested interest among students to keep the loophole in place given the practical outlook among students, parents, and teachers.

University fine art programs also benefited from this loophole, as the freshmen they received would otherwise have much lower academic scores and consequently dimmer prospects for development. With the loophole in place, however, fine art programs, especially those inside Lot 1 and 2 universities, could screen students from a much larger pool of high school graduates. Even better was the opportunity to admit students with higher academic scores, who were more likely to achieve long-term success in a society where nearly every desired job was gated by an exam.

This emphasis on academics over artistic talent may also explain why the design of the drawing and coloring exams on the fine art *tongkao* was so far removed from the common characterization of art in the modern era. Originally, I found it counterintuitive that the screening process for new blood in fine art and fine art education in China should be so deliberately uniform and regimented. With this new understanding, however, I began to see that the drawing and coloring exams were not at

all flawed, but were actually working as intended. Perhaps the underlying purpose of the exams was not to test for artistry. It was more important to keep the exams fair so that they could be operated easily with as little controversy as possible for the experts and the Authority. The fact that the required skill set for the exams could be sharpened through cram schools in as little as three months by high school students may indicate a spirit of openness on the part of fine art programs. Finally, the fairness guaranteed by the rigidity of the exams could reassure and even encourage students that would otherwise not be interested in fine art. The role of all these exams under the *gaokao* system thus became clearer: the primary and minor *gaokao* would serve to select students based on intelligence and their sense of awareness, while the fine art *tongkao* was to ensure that artistic aptitude was not completely absent among incoming freshmen.

The motivations of university fine art programs were also much clearer to me now. It seemed that they were seeking to achieve a set of objectives in a well-defined order. Their highest goal was to recruit freshmen that excelled in both academics and fine art. Failing that, they would seek students who still had good academic records but were not as well developed artistically. As a last resort, they would accept students who had good artistic skills but could only attain academic scores to pass the threshold for Lot 1 and 2 universities. Regardless of how talented a student may be in fine art, at no point could academic performance be ignored.

By now it was easy to see how the cram schools fit into the picture. The fine art tongkao cram schools were a common trade around the Nanjing area. Their advertisements were all over town centers, residential areas, and school neighborhoods. The cram schools came in all sizes. I have seen a small operation tucked away under the stairwells of an apartment building with only one teacher and five students. I have also visited a few medium-sized studios with less than 10 teachers and 40–120 or so students on a rented floor. I even toured a large cram school chain that employed several dozen teachers to train almost 800 students across several sites in the Nanjing area. All of these cram schools shared the singular goal of helping their students obtain higher scores on the fine art *tongkao*.

The large cram school chain I visited was run by a young entrepreneur in his thirties. Conversations with him and other cram school administrators and teachers revealed to me how the cram schools, students, parents, high schools, university fine art programs, and education officials all worked together to cultivate the *tongkao* loophole. The following was the young CEO's view of how the loophole worked.

The young man told me that he came from a poor family in a small fishing village in Jiangsu Province. He could not do well academically, but he did have enough talent for drawing to get him into a prestigious fine art program. The professors in his program had friends whose children in high school would soon have to attend independent fine art examinations. When the professors were asked to tutor these high school students, they offered that opportunity to the young man since he needed the income to pay for his schooling. The young man accepted the challenge and became very good at coaching the high school students. Many of his pupils entered their desired fine art programs. Around 2000, when universities across China expanded admissions in response to central government policy, demand rose for his

private tutoring. He and a number of like-minded classmates then started a private studio in a rented location outside the university. From that small joint was born the large fine art cram school chain with him as the CEO.

The CEO admitted that his business was not exactly legal in the eyes of local education officials. Nevertheless, with the support of the parents and high schools, rules were bent or set aside for him. For instance, if a high school only had a few students preparing for the fine art *tongkao*, their fine art teachers may not be interested in volunteering for the coaching job. This was due to the provincial government's stipulation that in-service teachers cannot offer private tutoring. In such cases, parents would come forward to apply for a leave of absence on behalf of their children. Knowing full well that the students were to spend months in the cram school, the high school would grant the requests without further scrutiny. If the number of students preparing for the fine art *tongkao* was large enough to form a class, then the CEO's cram school chain may even send instructors to work inside the high schools. The expenses were all managed by the parents and not by the high schools. In other cases, entire high school classes, including the homeroom teachers, would relocate to the cram schools. The students would complete their schoolwork under the supervision of their homeroom teacher as though they were still in their high school classrooms. Parents would have to pay extra for this option in order to compensate the homeroom teacher for the additional effort and risk of bypassing the high schools and educational authorities.

One could see that parental involvement was the key to avoiding official scrutiny. The officials were certainly willing to turn a blind eye since they had nothing to gain by obstructing the parents. Thus, the high schools had more room to stretch the rules that might disadvantage their students by tying them to the standard curriculum. The cram schools offered what the system could not provide for their students, and the students were able to have more juggle room in an otherwise stiff system. On the whole, all parties worked quite seamlessly together to exploit the fine art tongkao loophole, including a host of other entities such as the art suppliers, the publishers, the printers, and the transportation and lodging providers. The loophole was in essence the center of a web of interests.

There were voices of dissent against the disproportionate power of the loophole in shaping the face of fine art education in the field. Three lines of criticism describe this perspective.[10] The first focused on the conflict of quality education and test-centered education. It pointed out the lack of diversity in a unified examination, the neglect of fine art literacy, and an inability to screen for creativity or true fine art aptitude.

The second line of criticism was aimed at the systemic negative influence of a unified examination. The fine art *tongkao* as it was had very little to do with the curriculum guidelines for high schools, junior high schools, and primary schools set

[10]The discontent was mostly expressed in face-to-face situations. Few experts resort to text in voicing their criticism about the tongkao and the loophole. Two of them were found in the 2011 *Jiangsu School Fine Art Education Journal* by Dong Bin and Liu Sheh. Dong Bin was the president of the Suzhou Art High School of Jiangsu Province (Suzhou No. 6 Middle School). Liu Sheh was the dean of the Nanjing Normal University Art Institute.

out by the provincial government. The scope and the depth of the fine art *tongkao* were seen as grossly insufficient to test for true artistic talent and did not serve to normalize fine art education across all levels. On the contrary, it actually discounted and corrupted normal fine art education in the classrooms.

In reality, all parties involved with the loophole still had reservations about it. Nobody thought the design of the exam reflected what fine art education was or should be. Nobody thought cram school education was good or desirable. The use of cram schools and loopholes were just means to an end, that of entering a good university and obtaining a good and normal education. If the means were a bit overwhelming at points, then it was just unfortunate, as expressed by the people I interviewed. As a result, there was a sense of separation between the ideal world and real decisions. These criticisms may eventually lead to reforms one day, but up until the end of my 3-year fieldwork, they still remained as ideas for the future rather than any concrete measure for the present.

The third line of criticism was on the unethical use of the fine art *tongkao* as a loophole to get into good universities. It was seen as enticing young people into a path that might not fit them as an individual. Although the practice increased student opportunities to attend better universities, it lowered artistic standards in the fine art programs of these higher learning institutes. The misuse of the loophole was seen as indirectly promoting unethical practices to the students. Another consequence of the loophole was the creation of an oversupply of labor in fine art-related fields. This was perceived as misleading and may increase unemployment rates later on.

Children represented their family's hopes for a propitious future in Chinese culture. I felt that the theme of "moving up"[11] (*fanshen*) [翻身] in society was the unchanging motivation for people. Time and time again, I encountered parents who expressed something like this: "We never had good educational opportunities in the past, so we had to earn money the hard way. Our only wish is for our children to receive a good education so that they will not have to endure the hardship that we endured." Based on my research, I found this sentiment different from the three lines of criticism above. The field data showed that the recruiting operation for fine art freshmen was intrinsic of the cultural context, linking multiple parties together and responding to everyone's interest. The use of the loophole maximized the personal choices and individual development of the examinees. It was not something that was placed on a platter for them. They had to grab the opportunity and be very alert at all times about using the limited resources they had.

From a macroscopic perspective, inequality in China was no news. It was openly admitted by the central government. In 2010 and 2011, the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party published two books that analyzed major national inequalities and invited public discussions over national media (Bureau of Theory, 2010, 2011). In the books, "inequality" was termed "imbalance." The topics identified included imbalances in regional, urban, and rural development; imbalances in the

[11] William Hinton's *Fanshen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village* (1980) is a romantic portrayal of key land reforms before the establishment of the People's Republic of China, which considered the Chinese peasant revolution as breaking through hierarchical restrictions.

labor market; the difficulty of responding to health problems among impoverished citizens; education disparities between the rich and the poor, between the urban and rural dwellers, and between the powerful and the powerless; unreasonable regional housing prices; and large-scale disparities in living conditions that threatened social cohesion. These issues established limitations on the development of not just the country but the individual examinees and their families regardless of their place of residence (urban or rural), rich or poor, and status of power.

In the field, people were aware that the privileged among them dealt with their educational challenges through connections, unofficial channels, payment of expensive school selection fees, and circumvention of college entrance examinations altogether by leaving China to study in the United States and other foreign countries. In fact, inequality is the main preoccupation of Chinese education. For instance, Wu (2010) observed the systematic maintenance of regional inequality in China's teacher training system. The majority of the people would still have their fates determined by the *gaokao* system, but even then, the system was imperfect for people with limited resources. For instance, Gao (2008) observed that a decision process existed in the advancement of high school students in China that was based on family, cultural, and financial capital.

With limited resources, strategic thinking and planning on the part of normal people only served to equalize opportunities. The concerted efforts of students, parents, teachers, schools, cram schools, fine art programs, professors, and experts to exploit the loophole in the *gaokao* system were in effect a balancing factor to inequality. A close link between examinations and autonomous achievement in society was thus created. New meaning emerges when one looks at the collective and integrated manner in which the tongkao loophole was cultivated and shared by all parties. The large number of examinees who utilized the loophole could not be just seen as "gaming" the system or cheating; this was in fact more than just a means to an end. The clever manipulation of the system for personal gain could be interpreted as an expression of the power of the people, however minuscule, to improve one's own circumstances and to elevate oneself socially. The benefactor of the loophole was egalitarian enough. Everyone, not just the artistically endowed or otherwise privileged, could actively improve their individual development by putting in the effort. In essence, if educators were accustomed to the claim that "education transforms life" with a sense of equality for all in mind, then the utilization of the loophole was achieving the same thing. It allowed "art transforms life."

8.4 Discussion and Conclusion

The recruitment of freshmen for university fine art programs in the Nanjing area was a small slice of my research between 2009 and 2012, and what I learned in this corner of China could only be considered a first step in understanding the status of fine art education in China and the Chinese-speaking world. Several conclusions can still be drawn from this preliminary inquiry.

8.4.1 The Embedded Loophole Phenomenon

A systematic and contextualized description was given in this chapter to facilitate the understanding of the *gaokao* system and the recruitment of fine art freshmen in the Nanjing area. This description was focused on a systemic loophole involving the fine art tongkao that allowed examinees to enter a good university even without necessary academic scores on the primary *gaokao*. This shortcut was made possible because admissions into fine art programs were based on the combined score from the primary *gaokao* and the fine art *tongkao*, the latter of which could be improved through short-term cramming.

The context for the loophole was provided to enable a deeper understanding of its inner workings and the manner in which it benefited all parties involved. The phenomenon was deemed to be cultural in nature as it attracted the active participation of many parties with diverse interests, it was maintained by sectors across the society, its ideas were supported by traditional value of social elevation, and its norm was consciously or unconsciously transmitted through various institutions.

Although the existence of such a loophole could ostensibly be interpreted as an undesirable flaw that undermined fairness, the loophole was not simply a defect in the otherwise tidy *gaokao* system, but an entrenched pathway that actually improved the system's fairness by serving the interests of all parties involved.

For the examinees in particular, the loophole was an opening that provided some room for personal development in an otherwise rigid and inflexible system. In a highly competitive yet sociologically unfair environment, the utilization of the loophole could be interpreted as a means for people to equalize their opportunities. To be more precise, entrance into a good university by way of its less competitive fine art program with a relatively small expense of resources could be interpreted as a successful manipulation of the loophole by unprivileged people to maximize individual development. From this perspective, it could be said that the *gaokao* system and its embedded loophole allowed fine art to transform life.

8.4.2 Fine Art Education in the Nanjing Area

In the process of exploring the *gaokao* system and the loophole, many interesting phenomena were observed that may be the seeds for future research into fine art education in China.

The high regard that the Chinese conferred on "academic" fields in comparison to "professional" fields was one of the most conspicuous phenomena observed. The former were associated with intelligence and creativity, whereas the latter were associated with dull manual labor. Performance in academics was positively linked to performance in fine art, including fine art education. Students who were "good at reading books" were seen to possess a better "sense of awareness," were more intelligent, and would thus perform better in all aspects of life, including fine art and

fine art education. The low regard toward "professional" fields extended to fine art and fine art education. There was an overall lack of attention and resources given to fine art class in K-12 schools. Regular fine art classes in schools were frequently dropped or rescheduled to accommodate or even be completely replaced by academic classes.

The ease in which students could cram for and pass the fine art *tongkao* was another notable phenomenon. In contrast to fields such as music, the performing arts, or even physical education that required both innate talent and years of training from a very young age in China, success on the fine art *tongkao* could be earned with a few months of hard work, and this made the fine art a relatively egalitarian field.

The training of fine art educators in China also differed significantly from that in Western countries. Fine art education is regarded as part of the field of fine art rather than a field of education in China. Fine art educators are therefore trained in drawing and coloring instead of in the theory and practice of art education.

Finally, the *gaokao* system, the fine art *tongkao*, and the loophole that was observed also reflected some aspects of the ideological struggle with the Chinese Communist Party over the year. In order to better understand the status of fine art and fine art education in China, one will have to learn more of this much larger political context and its relationship to fine art and fine art education.

There is clearly much to be learned about the points identified above. They could be the focus of other studies to come. If integrated with more research, they could offer a clearer picture of what fine art education is in China under its own context.

8.4.3 Fine Art Education in the Larger Chinese-Speaking World

The observations made on the *gaokao* system in this chapter were limited to a short period of time and within a small region of China. In the context of the Chinese-speaking world, the scale of higher institution entrance examination is substantially greater than Nanjing City or Jiangsu Province alone. In all Chinese-speaking cultural regions, higher education entrance examinations are similarly high stake and full of drama. They are significantly different too. Each region's operation has its own set of history, structure, challenge, and evolution. One thing they do share is the way the examinations profoundly influenced the status of fine art, education, and fine art education of the related people. It is as though one could not understand these fields without asking what the local university entrance examination is like. This situation meant that there existed in-group similarities between the different parts of the Chinese-speaking world that would help construct a whole new and thus far unfamiliar set of logic about cultural transmission. Such an understanding could contribute to global ideas about child rearing and to the better communication and cooperation among educators across cultural boundaries.

Some of the practices I observed in the Netherlands in 1991–1992 and the United States in 1998–2008 (Yuan, 1995, 2010) could be the starting point for further

cultural comparison and cultural understanding. The Netherlands had a multitracked education system which funneled 12-year-old students into different careers, so there was no need for a national university entrance examination for 18-year-old high school graduates. The Dutch did not regard of a university diploma as a solution to life's problems, but rather viewed it as a choice in life. The education in a Dutch university stressed abstraction and did not guarantee a job, never mind a good paying job after graduation. Only students with an interest and ability in abstract thinking would stay on the purely academic track from age 12 through completion of a university degree, whereas most other students would attend polytechnics and vocational schools that were career oriented.

Furthermore, the country had very few but large universities that were the result of extensive mergers, and each field of knowledge would primarily be concentrated in just one program under one university. The rationale of this design was to ensure that resources could be concentrated and used efficiently for maximum production. A similar design, as I understood, was also found in Germany and other northern European countries like Denmark.

At the time of my visit to the Netherlands, the Dutch disliked the centralized examination and placement system used in the Chinese-speaking world. The same could not be said about my Taiwanese university students who heard of the Dutch way. The Taiwanese students were very suspicious of the Dutch system's quality, and they would question the structure of the Dutch multitrack system that seemed to restrict a student's right and freedom to move around at will. They wanted to know why children and parents did not object to their fate being decided by evaluations from primary school teachers, no matter how extensive those evaluations were. Such a system could not have been fair or fair enough, they said. This response from my Taiwanese students was very similar to that of a group of Chinese parents that I had the opportunity to speak with, and together they demonstrated the potential for the rich new understanding that could be gained from cultural comparisons across cultural boundaries.

It is my hope that this chapter will encourage further research into the status of fine art education in China. By combining the present work with studies done in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Singapore, one could bring about better understanding of the characteristics of Chinese fine art education and that this understanding could lead to the development of a more culturally relevant fine art education for the Chinese-speaking world.

A further aspiration is that research like this will help the Chinese-speaking world become a partner in the global educational dialogue and a more active participant in the global art education community. In the increasingly globalized world that we live in, it would also be interesting to see what cultural elements were added, omitted, magnified, suppressed, integrated, or created as the Chinese-speaking world becomes more connected. I believe that by observing and recording the conditions of various encounters among different cultures of the world, the field visual art education could discover the wisdom of its own practices. I hope that by documenting environments like the Chinese-speaking world, there could be true diversity and new relevance in visual art education.

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Chapter 9
Education-Based Mobility and the Chinese Civilization

Hsueh-Cheng Yen

Abstract This article addresses two issues of mobility in Chinese education: the emergence of the meritocratic ideal and its realization through the civil service examination. My argument is based on a theory of civilization. I contend that a complex society must transcend the kinship principle to incorporate non-kin strangers into an enlarged social unit. Historical evidence has shown that the pre-Qin philosophers acknowledged the stranger problem and argued against *guanxi* or relationalism. Instead of the kinship principle, which calculates social distance, ancient philosophers proposed a ladder structure whereby strangers could be evaluated based on meritocratic standards. They insisted that a person's position on the ladder should be the basis for distributing political power and material wealth in a complex civilization. However, upward mobility in a meritocracy was a threat to the ruling class. In considering class reproduction, modern scholarship generally agrees that education mobility was only a facade and commoners obtained no true mobility. I argue that this position disregards the power struggles between the Chinese emperors and their court officials. Mobility, as exemplified in the civil service examination, can be seen as a strategy of the emperors to recruit new members to supplant the old guard in court. As the examination system consolidated the power of rulers at the expense of the reigning bureaucrats, both the meritocracy and imperial autocracy reinforced each other. Moreover, encouraging commoners to compete in the examination also provided an efficient way for integrating local societies into the empire.

Keywords Complex society • Meritocracy • Social mobility • Resource distribution • Ladder structure

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9.1 Introduction

Education has been highly regarded in Chinese society. I argue that this is because education has provided the social foundation upon which Chinese civilization has rested. Here, I define civilization as a complex society in which a state organization rules over a large population. When the small-scale kin-based society is set as the baseline, one can consider social evolution toward civilization as involving the incorporation of non-kin strangers into the expanding social unit. Whereas a kinship structure provides the framework for social interaction in a small-scale society, in a complex society, most members cannot be related through kinship. Thus, coordinating the interactions between people who are not related by kinship emerges as a problem that a complex society must solve. The problem becomes especially critical when considered in light of the kinship principle that anthropologists have described for small-scale societies. Kinship distance typically determines the quality of the social relationship between people. Because strangers are extremely remote in terms of kinship distance, they are commonly viewed as potential enemies and as people who can be exploited. This negative attitude toward strangers poses a threat to complex societies in which strangers are forced to interact with others extensively and intensively in everyday life. How a complex society copes with the stranger problem defines its character as a civilization. I contend that the creation of a meritocratic ladder structure, which engendered a peaceful interaction protocol among strangers, was the reason that education became an indispensable part of Chinese civilization.

I support my hypothesis with an analysis of the texts of the Chinese philosophers of the Spring and Autumn period (771–476 BC) and the Warring States period (475–221 BC). Strangers were a central theme in the texts. Although the ancient philosophers did not use the modern term *moshengren* to refer strangers, their works frequently refer to anonymous people by using terms such as *ren* or *min*. These were non-specified people with whom one lacked personal associations. Numerous pre-Qin philosophers viewed a negative attitude toward strangers as the source of social chaos and argued that a new social principle was required for reinstituting social order. Most of the philosophers agreed upon one solution, a meritocracy, which can be regarded as a ladder on which a person's position is determined by the merits that the person has earned. The relative positions of two strangers on this ladder guided the interactions between them. In contrast to the kinship principle based on which each person forms the center that is used for calculating the social distance to others, in the meritocracy, a person's ladder position is evaluated using absolute criteria that transcend the self-focused distance calculation.

Although the pre-Qin philosophers differed in terms of what they considered as the criteria required for merit evaluation, they all agreed that merits were self-achieved. Ideologically, this meritocracy ladder was not the social hierarchy similar to the Indian caste system or the European feudalism in which a person's status was inherited and unchangeable. The ladder was founded on the principle that people should be given a chance to accumulate merit, demonstrate their worth, and climb

the social ladder. The pre-Qin philosophers insisted that the ladder should form the basis for the distribution of political power, material wealth, and social prestige. Education was critical because it prepared people to make the climb and concurrently legitimatized the ladder structure.

The pre-Qin philosophers argued in favor of using the ladder structure as a means to bring peace and order to society. However, this ideal was not always welcomed by the establishment. Embracing the notion of the ladder meant that social status could no longer be inherited from one generation to the next, and it further meant that commoners could move up the ladder and become members of the ruling class; thus, people in the upper class could be replaced by people considered to be beneath them in the hierarchy. The most celebrated example of this upward mobility on the ladder that the pre-Qin philosophers used was that of the legendary sage-king of Yao: this king bestowed his throne not to his son but to Shun, who in turn left his throne to Yu. This was based on the Confucian ideal that only a man of merit worthy of the throne should be made king. Another good example of meritocracy could be found in Book 2 of *Mencius*. In explaining why the house of Zhou, which was previously loyal to the Shang dynasty, could revolt against the "Son of Heaven," Mencius contended the last Shang king was a tyrant who lost his right to rule. When asked about the legitimacy of the Zhou revolt and the killing of the last Shang king, Mencius said, "I have heard killing of a ruthless man. I have not heard of putting one's king to death." Thus, claim of Mencius could have easily antagonized a ruler, and he did antagonize one: Hongwu, the first emperor of the Ming dynasty, edited out paragraphs in *Mengzi* that legitimized uprisings against tyrants.

Without royal endorsement, the ideal of a meritocracy could have readily been treated as heresy. Moreover, a social mobility that brought fresh blood to a court also threatened the position of the ruling bureaucrats. Thus, we can reasonably presume that the dominant class would have attempted to undermine the ideal of a meritocracy in an effort to preserve their privileged position. From the point of view of class reproduction, education-based mobility might only serve as a facade to disguise the immobility of social classes.

However, to emphasize that the dominant class would try everything possible to ensure class reproduction would overlook the potential conflict between an emperor and his ministers. Members of elite families who had occupied key positions in an emperor's court for generations and who had built extensive networks within the bureaucracy were typically most likely to force an emperor into abnegation in the name of meritocracy. A meritocracy that brought fresh blood into the court and replaced the ministers would not only have weakened the power of the reigning elite but also have built a firewall that prevented the emperor from becoming entwined in the mobility process. The philosophical ideals of certain ancient philosophers would not have been promoted by the state or disseminated to the public unless they served a specific purpose. I argue that it was in the civil service examination that the Chinese rulers identified a strategy for gaining the upper hand in a power struggle. By recruiting new people into the system, the examination served as the handmaiden of Chinese autocracy; instead of disguising class immobility, encouraging commoners

to participate in the examination and promoting them into the bureaucracy was crucial for a ruler who sought to gain absolute power at the expense of the powerful elite families.

Another function of the examination system was to integrate local societies. A critical problem that Chinese emperors faced was to determine how to unify an empire featuring an extensive territory, a large population, and diverse customs and languages. Unlike the kings in a feudal system who delegated their power to feudal lords located in various parts of their domain, the Chinese emperors opted for direct control over their kingdoms. Because resources were scarce and technology was not advanced, the control was limited and the bureaucracy never penetrated below the county level. However, privileges were bestowed on people who earned an imperial degree and these people were transformed into the local elite, and the dominant position of these people in local societies was tied to the fate of the empire. Moreover, because these elite members of the society were established as role models for others to follow, commoners who were inspired to seek upward mobility would instill the rules of the game in themselves, even if they had no chance of succeeding in the examination.

Although the examination created intellectual strata comprising people who shared a common ideology, political integration did not advance at the expense of local identity: people who devoted themselves to studies were often motivated by the desire to bring glory to their family, lineage, and local community. The more the people were encouraged to celebrate the superior status of their family, lineage, and local community by participating in the competitive examination, the more they were absorbed into the system.

The altar in a modern-day Chinese family's home frequently features a long wooden plaque on which five Chinese characters are written: heaven, earth, ruler, parents, and teacher. In explaining the meaning of the five characters, Xunzi suggested that both the ruler and the teacher provide governance or the order for proper conduct, or *Li*, and indicated that desire can never be satisfied and that ungoverned desire leads to conflict between people. Xunzi contended that instead of practicing asceticism, people must order and express their desires according to *Li*. I suggest that the desire that education governs is the will to seek political power, material wealth, and social prestige. By both encouraging and controlling this desire, the Chinese state maintained its stability and extended its control. Education-based mobility was an essential part of the political process. In order to lure people to participate in the competition, it was imperative for the empire to support the meritocratic ideology and constantly demonstrate that the mobility was real by using examples. The empire was required to hold just and fair examinations and provide rich rewards to the winner in an effort to ensure that people continued to feel a strong urge to participate in the examination. By providing the criteria required for evaluating a person's position on the meritocracy ladder, education offered one approach to solve the stranger problem: education guided the people in their climb up the social ladder and formed the basis upon which political power and material wealth were distributed. Furthermore, the system encouraged competitiveness in pursuing excellence in education, which has had a long-lasting effect on Chinese

culture: many of the cultural aspects of Chinese learning, such as moral perfectibility, exerting effort to overcome hardships, and harboring an insatiable desire to succeed, can find their roots in the political economy of Chinese education.

The paper is composed of four sections. Based on anthropological studies on social evolution, I propose a theory of civilization in Section 1. The stranger problem is a concern that a civilization must address. Section 2 is devoted to the meritocracy system proposed by pre-Qin philosophers. I show that the kinship principle was criticized by the major schools of thought of the period. Meritocracy was commonly accepted as an approach for solving the stranger problem; however, I also discuss reservations and objections of some of the philosophers of the period. In Section 3, I describe the civil service examination and present the practical reasons based on which the emperors adopted and promoted the ladder structure. In Section 4, I examine the ladder structure from a comparative viewpoint and discuss several cultural themes that are retained in modern Chinese education.

9.2 Beyond the Kinship Principle

From a band-level society often comprising no more than a few hundred people to a state-level society containing millions of citizens, human social evolution is a process of expanding social integration (Lewellen, 2003; Service, 1962). The state is the political wing of a civilization that is referred to as a "complex society" by anthropologists. Although a complex society might share several traits with a simple society, the mechanism used for integrating strangers into a common social unit distinguishes complex and simple societies.

Kinship is recognized by anthropologists as the dominant organizing principle in small-scale societies. The first step in the development of a complex society was the integration of non-kin strangers into social groups. Although fictive kinship might have enabled strangers to be adopted into groups individually, massive incorporation of strangers would have violated the personal aspect of kinship relations. Thus, a new principle was required for guiding the interaction between people not related through kinship, and this principle was required urgently because anthropologists have discovered that negative attitudes toward non-kin strangers were widespread in small-scale societies. Sahlins (1972) explained the negativity by using a concentric-circles model. According to the model, every person formed the center of a series of concentric circles, and the people that this person encountered were positioned in distinct circles based on their kinship distance from the central person. Kinship is crucial in a small-scale society because it can synchronize two other types of distance: geographical distance and moral distance. Sahlins showed that people who live near each other are typically close in kinship distance and share a high moral responsibility for each another. As kinship distance increases, people live farther away from each other, and their moral responsibility for each other decreases. It is commonly found in kin-based society that stealing from non-kin strangers is viewed as an act of bravery and people who exploit strangers do not face the risk of moral or social sanctions.

Intriguingly, the concentric model of Sahlins is strikingly similar to Fei Xiaotong's well-known concept of *chaxu geju* or the gradational mode of association, which Fei described as ripples caused by a stone thrown into water: every person is at the center of a set of such ripples, and the person calculates the distance at which others are located. As described in the concentric model of small-scale kin-based society, people of distinct grades or social distance from a given person are treated dissimilarly. On the other hand, the same behavior exhibited by two people is judged differently by a person based on the degree of closeness between that person and the people exhibiting the behavior. The gradational mode of association served as the foundation for the discussion of *guanxi* or social relationalism in Chinese society. *Guanxi* refers to the particularistic ties between people (Jacobs, 1979). Moral judgment under this particularism is not based on a universal and absolute criterion and is instead always related to the degree of closeness between the people in question; thus, Shweder and Bourne (1984) referred to it as situational morality.

Fei proposed that the gradational mode of association is a distinctive cultural trait that separates Chinese society from Western society. However, the ripples analogy in Fei's gradation and the concentric circles in the description of primitive societies by Sahlins are clearly similar. Shweder and Bourne (1984) argued that situational morality based on particularistic ties is shared by all non-Western cultures and this is in contrast to the individualism exhibited by Western cultures. Thus, what Fei considered as a factor that distinguishes Chinese and Western cultures makes Chinese culture similar to all other non-Western cultures. However, this grand and categorical contrast between Western and non-Western cultures is now being challenged. Particularism can also be observed in modern Western culture (Holland & Kipnis, 1994; Spiro, 1993), and terms such as "pulling strings" and "the old-boy network" are developed based on assuming a particularistic quality of relationships (Gold, Guthrie, & Wank, 2002).

The concentric model of relationships that dominated social relations in small-scale kin-based societies can also be observed in the modern West; however, no one would claim that Western civilization is built on particularistic ties. People in both capitalist countries and communist countries "pull strings" to get things done, but capitalism and communism are not based on particularistic ties. Although Gold et al. (2002) indicated that a phenomenon like *guanxi* is not uniquely Chinese, most *guanxi* scholars still regard it as the most critical social fabric of Chinese society (Yan, 1996; Yang, 1994). In the argument that follows, I contend that the mechanism that the Chinese civilization employed to integrate millions of people was not based on particularistic ties: The gradational association that is characteristic of the kinship principle was considered by pre-Qin philosophers to cause social chaos when the population increased. The philosophers insisted that a new social principle must replace the concentric model of relationships in order to reinstitute social order in a large complex society. A meritocratic ladder was the foundation of this new principle.

9.3 Pre-Qin Meritocracy

The gradation in *guanxi* was expressed in pre-Qin texts as *qinqin* [親親] (the first *qin* means to act intimately, the second *qin* means kin), which denoted a principle according to which a person should act more intimately toward people who are close in kinship than toward distantly related people. Modern *guanxi* scholars support their argument by using Confucian texts but typically overlook the detail that almost all other pre-Qin philosophers were against it, and the Confucian texts modified *qinqin* and thereby transformed a relativistic social principle into an absolute standard.

The most widely recognized antiparticularism argument was *jian ai*, which was proposed by Mozi, the founder of Mohism. According to Mozi, people fight with each other because they make distinctions between degrees of closeness: a person might favor people who are close and abuse those who are distant in terms of kinship. Thus, a family would bully another family and a kingdom would conquer another kingdom because of the kinship distance. The principle of *jian ai*, or love without distinction, was developed with the aim of repudiating the calculation of social distance.

The concentric models of Sahlins and Fei Xiaotong are clearly expressed in a dialogue between Mozi and a certain Wu Mazi:

Wu Mazi said to Mozi: "I differ from you. I cannot practice *jian ai* - I love the people of Zou better than the people of Chu, the people of Lu better than the people of Zou, the people of my district better than the people of Lu, the members of my family better than the people of my district, my parents better than the other members of my family, and myself better than my parents. This is because they are near to me." (*Mozi* Book 11; my translation).

Chu, Zou, and Lu were the names of countries that were located at increasing distances from Wu Mazi's hometown. The logic propounded by Wu Mazi was that a person's moral responsibility toward others increased as social distance decreased. Mozi offered a rebuttal by saying that if a person could profit by killing another, then Wu Mazi would have no excuse for stopping that person because everyone is ultimately for himself or herself.

At the opposite end of the Mohist pacifism was the Legalist school, which aimed to create a wealthy state featuring a powerful army. Shang Yang, one of the most critical contributors to Qin's empire-building efforts, insisted that the law should apply to all without discrimination. Shang Yang acknowledged that the principle of *qinqin* could guide small-scale societies but indicated that *qinqin* would mismatch social development as the population increased. Taoists also refused to acknowledge the importance of kinship. Laozi claimed that *Tao* does not exhibit affinity toward any particular thing. The widely recognized tale of Zhuangzi playing the drum and singing songs at his wife's funeral was told to send the message that life and death are natural occurrences. From the point of view of *Dao*, distinguishing

the degree of closeness between people is meaningless. With the exception of Confucianism, all major philosophical schools considered the calculation of social distance to be an antithesis to their doctrines.

Among Confucians, Mencius was the most determined defender of the *qinqin* principle. For example, Mencius attacked the Mohist idea of *jian ai* by arguing that following this principle made humans no different from beasts, because only a beast sees no disparity between its parents and all others. One can readily imagine that Mencius must have faced tremendous pressure by supporting *qinqin*. In two passages in *Mengzi*, Mencius elaborated his position by way of conversing with his students; both cases involved the sage-king Shun, who was recognized for his filial piety, and these were scenarios in which the close kin of Shun committed wrongs against people who were distant in kinship from them. In the first case, a student asked Mencius a hypothetical question: if Shun's father killed a man, what would the sage-king do? The second case was regarding what Shun should do with his brother who was known to be a mean and terrible person. The established practice of the time was that a ruler assigned territories to relatives and made them feudal lords. The student asked pointedly that given that Shun had ascended to the throne because he had driven cruel and violent rulers out from the land, why did the people deserve Shun's cruel and violent brother as their ruler. In both cases, the question dealt with whether Mencius was applying a double standard by following the principle of *qinqin*.

Mencius answered to the first student that Shun would abandon his throne and go into exile with his father. Moreover, Mencius indicated that when sneaking out of the country with his father, Shun would not use his kingly powers to interfere with the law. Even someone who was a king could preserve the kinship principle under these conditions only by banishing himself from society. In response to the second question, Mencius suggested that the king's brother would be given the title of lord only and the brother's ministers would be appointed by Shun himself. Here, Mencius defended *qinqin* at best weakly. Killing or bullying a person merely for being a non-kin stranger was no longer accepted at that time. The compromise Mencius made was a demonstration that *qinqin* was not the ultimate justification for one's behavior and that some other principle had to be devised to establish social order among strangers.

The new principle was clearly suggested in Shang Yang's three-stage theory of social evolution. In Book Five of *Shang Jun Shu*, a book whose authorship was credited to Shang Yang, the author maintained that the *qinqin* principle was not inherently wrong but was outdated. Shang Yang surmised that in the first stage of human development, people recognized their mothers but not their fathers and they practiced *qinqin* and loved the people who were close to them in kinship distance. However, population growth disrupted the balance. Shang Yang indicated that chaos would reign in a society featuring a high population density if social actions were based solely on the calculation of kinship distance. To ensure the peaceful coexistence of quarrelling non-kin strangers, a large-scale society must adopt a social principle that transcends kinship calculation.

The social principle of the second stage of social evolution was *shangxian* [上賢]. The first character *shang* means to praise or elevate to a high place; *xian* means people who are wise and virtuous. In *shangxian*, or meritocracy, people who were wise and virtuous were honored for establishing an absolute standard that the society could follow. However, if every wise person promoted his or her own absolute standard, common people would be uncertain as to which standard to follow, and chaos would once again rule in society. Thus, society evolved to the third stage: *guigui* [貴貴]. The first *gui* means to value; the second character means political power bestowed by the state. The multiple standards characteristic of the second stage had ended, and only one standard could guide social behavior: the standard put forward by the state. The absolute standard was used for not only enforcing the law but also for distributing political power and material wealth. Legalists regarded punishment and rewards as two sides of the same coin, and the resources controlled by the state (mainly political offices) had to be distributed according to this standard. Shang Yang developed a twenty-rank system in which a foot soldier and the highest minster in court were positioned on the same ladder. Although not all foot soldiers received the opportunity to climb the ladder of success, the image of a single ladder broke the boundaries between the aristocracy and commoners, at least ideologically.

Shangxian was a term commonly used by pre-Qin philosophers. For example, *Mozi* includes two chapters with the title *Shangxian*. However, Mohist usage of the term is distinct from that of Shang Yang. Shang Yang considered *shangxian* to be related to praising the person who proposed the absolute standards that transcended *qinqin*. By contrast, in Mohism and other schools of thought, *shangxian* was related to elevating wise and virtuous people to a high social status. Nevertheless, both schools agreed that the criterion used for social ascendance was based on an absolute standard. Thus, Mozi insisted that a ruler should not bestow political power to people only because they were close to him and argued that political power and material wealth should instead be awarded to people who were good and wise. According to Mozi

> The ancient sage-kings governed by assigning high ranks to virtuous people. A farmer or an artisan would be elevated from a lowly status to a high one if that person was capable and moral. The person would be commissioned with a high rank, provided great material wealth, trusted with government affairs, and empowered to make critical decisions. This was because if the person's rank was not high, people would not respect that person; if the wealth the person received was impressive, people would not doubt that the person had been fully trusted by the sage-king; and if the person could not make key decisions, people might slight that person's orders. (*Mozi* Book 8; my translation)

Both Mohists and Legalists considered *shangxian* to be synonymous with social mobility and the belief that commoners should be given the chance to ascend the meritocracy ladder. Although they expressed reservations regarding *qinqin*, Confucians embraced *shangxian* without hesitation, and Confucians transformed the *qinqin* principle by way of the absolute standard used in *shangxian*. Whether a person was filial son was irrelevant to a stranger according to the concentric model: the son would become a person to be respected by all because filial piety was a

criterion used for measuring a person' moral standing. Moreover, to love one's close kin was viewed as basic behavior, and Confucius indicated that to love a stranger was a demonstration of one's moral growth. Instead of considering that a person's moral responsibility to others was decreased when they were far apart in social distance, Confucius measured a person's moral development in terms of his or her ability to extend moral sensitivity outward. Consequently, the argument was that the most deserving people should be given substantial political power so that they could extend their benevolence to everyone in the realm. The ranking of moral status established a common denominator that was used for comparing non-kin strangers.

The Confucian political philosophy was closely tied to the mobility in moral development. Yu Ying-shi (1980) indicated that the *shi* (intellectual gentleman) who appeared on the stage in the Spring and Autumn period represented a class of minor aristocrats who could ascend the social ladder to become high ministers at court or descend the ladder and become peasants. Confucius and his followers belonged to a group of such intellectuals, and they constantly sought official positions in an effort to contribute to the world. Social mobility was intrinsic to the Confucian doctrine. Confucius stated repeatedly in *Analects* that a good government should award the wise and virtuous with political power and material fortune. For example, Confucius said, "When a state is under good governance, one should be ashamed of if remains poor and debased. When a state is not under good governance, one should be ashamed of if he is rich and holds high office" (*Analects* Chapter 8; author's translation). Mencius argued that people were of two categories: laborers who used their mind and laborers who used their body; the people who were in the second group were submissive to those in the first. However, a person's status was not ascribed by birth. Mencius was a strong supporter of the mobility ladder and his position is expressed most effectively by his claim that "everyone can become a sage-king like Yao and Shun." The possibility of upward mobility was limitless and was apparently open to all.

Political power, material wealth, and social prestige were not set as opposites of morality; by contrast, the level of a person's moral development was expected to reflect that person's position on the social ladder. However, considering the great rewards that awaited those who climbed the moral ladder, we can readily imagine that people must have pretended to have achieved great moral progress. This potential drawback of meritocracy was clearly recognized by Confucius, because he listed two motivations of learning in Chapter 14 of *Analects*: "In ancient times, man learned for the sake of himself. Nowadays, men learn for the sake of others." Here, the first motivation reflects the aims of self-improvement and moral cultivation, and it contrasts the second motivation, which reflects the aims of impressing others and using learning as a steppingstone for social advancement. Although Confucius disapproved of the utilitarian approach to learning, he admitted it had become prevalent in his time. The warning was elaborated by the distinction made by Mencius between moral development and ranking in political office:

> There is the rank of Heaven, and there is the rank of man. Heaven ranks people according to empathy, righteousness, loyalty and fidelity, and the unfailing joy in these virtues. Duke, Premier, and Minister—these are the ranks of man. The ancients cultivated the virtues of

> Heaven, and a person's position in the rank of man naturally followed. Today, men cultivate the Heavenly virtues in order to receive the rank of man, and once they have gained the rank of man, they ignore the Heavenly virtues. They are troubled men and in the end they will lose everything. (Book 11, *Mengzi*; my translation).

Although Confucians warned against a potential deviation from of meritocracy, they never faltered on their support of *shangxian*. However, not everyone accepted *shangxian* as the cure for the stranger problem in a complex society. For example, Laozi considered the competition to climb the ladder to be the cause of social chaos. In Chapter 3 of *Dao De Jing*, a book attributed to Laozi, he argued that *shangxian* makes people crafty because they compete to get ahead in social ranking: linking moral progress with social advancement corrupts morality. Laozi did not provide an alternative to the ladder structure in relation to how a complex society should be organized and instead dissolved the stranger problem by reverting to an argument regarding a simple society:

> I prefer a small state with small population. Although the people have the ability to make machines that can work ten to a hundred times faster than man, they do not use them. The people is afraid of death and do not travel far. While they have boats and carriages, they have no use of them. They have armor and weapons, but they do not show them. Men return to the knotting of rope instead of writing. They are satisfied with plain food, simple clothes and rudimentary homes; they are happy in their ways of life. They live within sight of their neighboring state, and could hear the crowing cocks and barking dogs across the border, yet they grow old and die within their own state and never interfere with the business of others (Chapter 80, *Dao De Jing*; author's translation).

Daoism served as a key "release valve" for the intense pressure of ladder competition; however, returning to a simple society was no longer a practical alternative for Chinese people, and meritocracy set the tone of Chinese civilization. Although most pre-Qin philosophers argued that peasants and artisans could be recruited into the ruling class if they were wise and virtuous, the exact rate of social mobility before Qin united China in 221 BC is unclear. Nevertheless, the ideology of social mobility had become established.

9.4 The Civil Service Examination

The transition from developing the idea of a meritocracy to implementing it was not smooth. The Legalists were extremely adamant about institutionalizing the mobility ladder. Whereas their policy was supported by the kings, it was strongly resisted by the aristocrats. Shang Yang, for example, was persecuted and executed by the aristocrats after the death of the old king. During the struggle against the aristocrats, the Legalist Han Fei wrote essays in which he advised rulers that they should retain their power of punishment and rewards for themselves and that they should not share these powers with ministers and aristocrats. He urged the rulers not to show personal attachments or preferences toward their courtiers, so that the rulers could avoid being manipulated by the courtiers for selfish purposes. By isolating the rulers

from the ruling class who were required for running the country, the Legalists intended to create an autocratic state in which the king ruled with absolute power. This was based on the idea that *Qin* had abolished the feudalist system in which aristocrats could rule over a territory with full jurisdiction and military power and pass on the lordship to their heirs. Under *Qin*, all local officials were appointed by the state and were promoted and demoted according to the merits they earned when fulfilling their duties.

The benefits of direct control were cast in doubt because the *Qin* kingdom collapsed merely 19 years after it unified China in 221 BC. The consensus at the time was that the *Qin* kingdom contained no feudal lords who could come to the kingdom's aid when the court was in jeopardy. The system collapsed once the central command was destroyed because no one of the king's bloodline was available at the local level to preserve and regroup the remaining forces. The Han dynasty (202 BC to 220 AD), which followed the Qin dynasty, created a system in which feudalism was blended with the central command system. However, this synthetic system was unstable, and the court often encountered recalcitrant feudal lords who not only resisted the central government but occasionally also revolted against it.

A ruler had to rely on capable people of running the government. The meritocracy system insisted that the pool from which these capable people were to be chosen should not include only the aristocrats or elite families: fresh blood from the commoner class had to be recruited into bureaucracy. This idea prevailed during the Han dynasty; however, local officials (and feudal lords) enjoyed the privilege of recommending "filial and virtuous" people to the court. This created a patron-client relationship between the local officials and those whom they recommended. Emperors who required the cooperation of local officials in order to maintain peace or the supply tax revenues had to accept the recommended people; this, in turn, expanded the factional network of the elite officials. Moreover, the elite families who placed clients in various offices in the bureaucracy could count on the clients to preserve their privileged positions, which further enhanced their power and made it hard to remove them from their position.

The problem with the system was exacerbated after the Han dynasty collapsed. A new nine-rank system was implemented in the subsequent dynasties. In this system, local officials graded their constituents according to virtue and ability into nine ranks, and this ranking guided the selection of the people who were awarded official positions in the government. The result of using this system is expressed in a description of the time: "the upper rank included no one from people of lower status, and the lower rank included no one from upper status." This reinforcement of the status of elite families increasingly threatened the Chinese emperors.

Against the aforementioned backdrop, the civil service examination system was implemented. Although the system was established in 605 AD during the short-lived Sui dynasty (581–619 AD), it grew in importance during the Tang dynasty (618–907 AD), was consolidated during the Sung dynasty (960–1276 AD), became a dominant institution during the dynasties of Ming (1368–1644 AD) and Qing (1644–1911 AD), and was terminated in 1905 AD. The development of the examination system was coupled with the growth of the autocratic power of the emperors.

Under the Han system, a person was required to secure a recommendation from local officials, which reinforced the patron-client relationship between the recommenders and the people recommended. Under the Sui system, people who wanted to participate in the civil service examination could self-enroll, and how well they fared in the examination determined whether they would be recruited into the ruling class.

Tang emperors are widely recognized to have used the examination system to curtail the power of the elite families who dominated politics. Although the elite families did not disappear overnight after the civil service examination entered the scene, by recruiting fresh blood to the court, the examination system undermined the established networks of the old guard. The elite families were not barred from taking the examination, and they established ties with the rising stars identified by the examination by means of strategies such as marriage. However, the key point is that because the examination was promoted as the most worthy path for obtaining power, wealth, and glory, the inheritance of offices from one's forebears came to be regarded as being "second best."If high officials were granted an imperial favor that allowed their sons to inherit their titles, the officials would often choose the less capable sons to do so; a capable son should be able pass the examination and make the father proud. An elite status was no longer ascribed by birth. One needed to demonstrate his superiority by beating others in the completion. And all the elite families could do was to pour in their resources to educate their sons to show they were qualified. The resources they commanded gave them a head start against the commoners. However, greater investment was not guaranteed to garner greater returns. The Chinese people expected the elite families to invest more in their sons' education than the commoners did, and equal footing was never a considered critical factor. Social justice was determined by whether or not the competition was fair.

The examination created a route that commoners could use for upward mobility, and the use of this route did not depend upon upper-class endorsement; however, the patron-client relationship between the established families and the new recruits could not be readily eliminated. Institutionally, the Tang system allowed examinees to establish private associations with examiners before taking their examination. Thus, winning favors from the examiners was a key strategy used for increasing one's chance to be selected, and the examinees often felt obliged to the examiners who had picked them from hundreds of competitors. However, during the Sung dynasty, the private association between examiners and examinees was banned, and the names of examinees on test sheets were concealed to prevent examiners from identifying the examinees to whom the test sheets belonged. The essays were even copied by trained scribes to prevent the handwriting of the examinees from being recognized. Moreover, the final examination was held in the palace and the ultimate winners were in theory picked by the emperors themselves. The examinees were expected to express gratitude to the emperors, and thus, the emperors supplanted the examiners as the patrons of successful examinees (Miyazaki, 1981).

In addition to channeling the power struggles at the court, the civil service examination served as a crucial mechanism for social integration. Integrating an empire featuring vast lands, diverse languages, and dissimilar customs by using premodern

communication technology was challenging. The Chinese empire was unable to establish a bureaucratic apparatus below the county (*xien*) level, and it thus created a stratum of local elites whose status depended on winning imperial titles. The people who passed the civil service examination received special privileges, and they became members of the ruling class and could communicate with local magistrates as equals. By contrast, even wealthy landlords and merchants had to prostrate before or kowtow to officials when in their presence. In the absence of an imperial title, a person could not demonstrate superiority in front of local people and minor officials. The position of the title holders as intermediaries between the local societies and the state made the title holders indispensable to imperial control. The examination bound the fate of the local elites with that of the empire: the elites had to support an empire that was the source of their local dominance. Furthermore, the imperial title became a critical part of their personal identity, and they would view any challenge to the empire as an attack on their self-esteem.

Social integration was not achieved by suppressing local identity; by contrast, the empire encouraged local identity. Social integration did take away a person's allegiance to his family in the name of the emperor: it celebrated family loyalty. The empire made local communities and families proud of their sons who had beaten the sons of other localities in an open competition. Success in the examination caused a family to be respected in the local society, and local people boasted about their native sons' achievements over those of the sons of other localities. Bringing glory to one's parents and hometown was often the proclaimed motivation for the self-sacrifice endured when preparing for the examination.

The power and wealth gained by succeeding in the examination served as the bait used for attracting ambitious people. The second Tang emperor, Taizhong (598–649 AD), once said contentedly that "the best and brightest of the realm are now in my pocket" when he was watching the examinees pass through the gate of the examination hall. The same theme was evident in the Qing dynasty a 1,000 years later. In a court discussion regarding the fate of the examination, Ortai (1677–1745 AD), the Grand Secretary to Emperor Qianlong, contended that no better method existed for "caging" the ambitious people and "driving" the brightest people than the examination system. However, the most crucial integration function of the examination was not related specifically to who succeeded in the competition. Whenever one commoner succeeded in the examination, tens and hundreds of commoners would consider that person as their role model and followed suit. Although most of these people ultimately failed, they self-inculcated the rules of the competition in order to compete, and they accepted the legitimacy of the empire as they struggled to climb the ladder. The Chinese empire was not required to invest in an expensive system of citizen education in an effort to disseminate its ideology: a fair and open examination would "cage" the people.

The civil service examination created the centripetal force required for social integration by promoting local elites into the ruling class and granting them political power, material wealth, and social prestige and broaden their ambition to become national figures. The integration function of the examination system could be detected in the quota system. Balancing the regional backgrounds of its members

had long been a consideration of the court. For example, during the Ming and Qing dynasties, the south was more prosperous than the north. Prosperity led to a disparity in the literary development of the regions of the empire. The quota system ensured that scholars from the north would not be left out of the system: everyone was offered the opportunity to take the bait.

Holding a fair examination was a top priority for ensuring that no one would feel cheated. By banning the private association between examiners and examinees, the system prevented examiners from creating a patron-client relationship with the examinees. Moreover, the social and cultural capital of the examinee was intentionally excluded for the consideration of the examiner. In this open examination, a "contract" was signed between emperors and their subjects. In "Encourage Learning" (*quanxue*), a well-known poem composed by the third emperor of the Song dynasty (Zengzong, who ruled from 997 to 1022 AD), it is stated that:

> Buying good land to enrich your family is not necessary,
> Books convert to a thousand measures of grain.
> Building a grand mansion for easy living is not necessary,
> Books give you houses of gold.
> Annoyed at absence of followers when going out is not necessary,
> In books, carriages and horses form a crowd.
> Annoyed over lack of a good go-between for marriage is not necessary,
> In books there are beautiful girls.
> If a boy wants to become a somebody,
> He must devote himself to the classics, face the window, and read.

The emperor assured the commoners that the pursuit of learning held rewards. The emperor made a pact with his people that the empire would provide the diligent scholars who passed the civil service examination with all the worldly goods that they could imagine and that all their ambitions would be fulfilled. The unwritten part of the contract was that the emperor would ensure that the examination was fair and objective. Although corruption was a constant problem, when it was exposed, the emperor was required to act affirmatively to preserve the integrity of the examination. Notably, buying government titles and offices was legal throughout the history of the Chinese imperial system, but no economic meddling was permitted in the civil service examination. Furthermore, people who had passed the examination were likely to be appointed to the highest posts within the government. Thus, although the sons of rich and powerful people were better equipped than the sons of commoners were for taking an examination that required financial investment, people could not readily convert wealth into power unless they passed the examination.

9.5 Discussion

A common approach used in analyzing education in modern capitalist societies involves examining the manner in which social classes reproduced. Whether considering the class habitus described by Bourdieu and Passeron (1990), or the working-class

culture studied by Willis (1981), the common theme that emerges is that education does not further social mobility: education is instead viewed as a facade that hides class immobility. In the same vein, Elman (1991) opposed the thesis of high mobility rates in late imperial China that was proposed by Ho (1962). Ho studied the family background of more than 30,000 imperial title holders in the Ming and Qing dynasties and determined that the mobility rate was high. Ho considered upward mobility to have occurred when the lineal ancestors who were three generations before a title holder had never received an imperial title. Ho claimed that the average mobility rate of 42.6 % in late imperial China was comparable to that of a modern industrial society.

Elman (1991) questioned Ho's argument of a high mobility rate by pinpointing that members of peasant families found it challenging to spare the time and money required to pursue political office. The demands of becoming fluent in learned Chinese, which was distinct from the vernacular form of the language, created an additional obstacle that the commoners faced. However, the financial status of a commoner family often depended upon the stage of the family cycle it was in. A family of seven comprising a husband and wife who had to feed three young children and support two aged parents experienced greater hardship when compared with the hardship faced in a later stage of the family cycle in which the parents were no longer alive and the children had grown up and were working for the family. A story of a Chinese family from the early twentieth century might offer a valuable insight: Lin Yueh-hwa (1947) reported that a Chinese family would bestow distinct levels of support on its sons: if the eldest son worked on the family farm and the second son worked as a trader, it might allow the youngest child to study the classics. People from wealthy family backgrounds undoubtedly stood a better chance of passing the civil service examination than did the commoners; however, this did not eliminate a farmer's chance of competing in the examination.

Elman also challenged Ho's methodology by arguing that examining three previous generations of ancestors was inadequate: if lineage were considered as the unit of social mobility, the rate would drop considerably. Agreeing with this view, the lineage system that began to appear in the Sung dynasty was identified as a mechanism used by local elites for preserving their dominance (Ebrey & Watson, 1986). Supporting the best and brightest youth of the lineage in competing in the examination and winning an imperial title was a strategy used by this lineage to establish a valuable connection with the bureaucracy. Thus, Elman argued that the civil service examination was not a mechanism used for increasing social mobility: it was one used for class reproduction of the dominant lineages of a locality. However, considering a lineage as a single unit means overlooking its diverse class composition. Although a localized lineage would unite to fight against other similar lineages for the purpose of local dominance, a large lineage was always internally divided (Freedman, 1958; Watson, 1985). Whereas some people were landlords who owned businesses in market towns, others were smalltime peasants and tenants. If a tenant boy succeeded in passing the examination, should it be counted as a case of social mobility for his family or as class reproduction of his lineage?

However, my major concern regarding the mobility debate is that it has overlooked the detail that not all traditional civilizations found it necessary to hide class reproduction. Even if we accept the argument that the civil service examination gave false hope to commoners who sought to climb the ladder of success, the key question is why this facade was required. European feudalism and the Indian caste system did not create this false image. In these civilizations, the idea of social integration was based on an organic model of labor division in which a person's occupation in society was complementary to that of another. Integration resulted from interdependence, and social stability rested upon the premise that people did not trespass on the profession of another person. Thus, in the Indian caste system, a Brahmin did not cut his own hair, a barber did not butcher his own livestock, and a butcher did not cultivate rice. In this system, because a person relied on the services of others, the interdependence constituted an organic whole. Because a person had been ascribed a fixed position in the grand scheme, social mobility created instability.

I do not contend that no social mobility occurs in a caste system or in feudalism. However, the ideologies of caste and feudalism do not encourage social mobility. People do not celebrate a person who has risen from the status of an untouchable to that of the Brahmin, even if that were ever possible. If a peasant boy could become a feudal lord, he might hide his lowly origin to save himself from ridicule. By contrast, the ideology of meritocracy celebrates such mobility. A favorite topic in storytelling has been the poor peasant boy's conquering of all odds and succeeding in the highly competitive civil service examination. In *Da Xue*, one of the *Four Books* and a primer of Confucian education, we read that people should progress from cultivating a person, to regulating his family, to governing the state, and, lastly, to bringing peace to the realm. Moreover, according to the text, this path should be followed by everyone, from the Son of Heaven to the commoner. I doubt that untouchables or serfs would be encouraged by Brahmins or feudal lords to harbor the ambition of governing the state or bringing peace to the realm. "Everyone can become a sage-king like Yao and Shun" must be an unfamiliar concept in feudalism or caste system.

The organic model is also a prominent feature in the explanation of social integration in modern society. From the organic solidarity of Durkheim (1984) to the world-system theory of Wallerstein (1974), all theories clearly emphasize division of labor and interdependence. Although modern society no longer prohibits people from changing professions, mutual interdependencies are still used for explaining how the complex society holds itself together. No longer based upon the idea of the Great Chain of Being in which a fixed position is ascribed for every person, now the market coordinates the interdependent parts. A person is urged to abandon self-sufficiency and concentrate on what the person can produce most efficiently. The aim of receiving an education thus becomes developing one's talent and pursuing what one can do most efficiently.

The ladder structure in meritocracy provides a distinct route to social integration within a complex society. The stability of the empire was affected by whether people were willing to be attracted to the fortunes that the empire offered. Social mobility was an integral part of the political system. Whereas the civil service

examination most effectively exemplified the working of the system, I have shown in this paper that the practice was potentially dangerous to the establishment and it was through the conflict of interest of the emperors and the elite families that the ideology of meritocracy became institutionalized in the civil service examination. Education played a crucial role by providing the criteria used for measuring a person's position on the ladder and for preparing to climb further. Teachers were respected because they helped people fulfill their ambition of bringing glory to their families, lineage, and hometown.

The concept of ladder mobility makes it possible to comprehend several of the cultural conceptions of learning. Li (2012) argues that Chinese learning is based on the assumption of moral perfectibility. The idea that a person can become morally perfect echoes the ideal that everyone can climb the ladder of success. Encouraging commoners to participate in the examination was vital for recruiting fresh blood to the court. Watkins and Biggs indicate that "to many Chinese students, teachers, and parents, intelligence itself is not something innate and relatively fixed but rather something that can be improved by hard work" (Watkins & Biggs, 2001: 6). Innateness is incompatible with a meritocracy system that encourages transformation from a commoner to a member of the ruling class. Hard work is not related to fulfilling one's duty determined by society, as in the case of feudalism and it is not related to developing one's talent and choosing a suitable profession in view of the market division of labor. Hard work is about transforming oneself and taking on a position that is not available at the present moment; it is not about prudence, but about dreaming the impossible dream. The insatiable desire to climb the social ladder might partly explain the intense competition evident in modern entrance examinations for high school and university in Taiwan, China, and Hong Kong (Kipnis, 2011).

I do not contend that the desire to climb the social ladder is unique to Chinese people. Entering the most prestigious universities and graduate programs in an effort to seek increased job prospects and climb the status ladder is also a prominent feature in the flexible citizenship of the global elite (Ong, 2004). An educationscape exists that crosses national boundaries (Appadurai, 1990). A ladder in the global higher-education system is clearly represented by the world ranking of universities (Marginson, 2006). Every university must comply with the standards that are used for measuring achievement in order to enhance their reputation and attract high-quality students (Dill & Soo, 2005). Moreover, national governments invest heavily in education systems in an effort to boost their world ranking and to demonstrate their superiority. National identity expressed in terms of national pride becomes an integral part of the globalization of education. As the Chinese case discussed here has shown, competition in education could serve as a route for social integration of complex societies. Whether achieving a high world ranking in higher-education systems and striving to become a member of the global elite can confer a new form of social integration at a global scale, or even serve as a foundation for a global government, remains to be seen.

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Chapter 10
The Conflict Between Social Mobility and Individual Development

Hsueh-Cheng Yen and Yuh-Yin Wu

Abstract This paper discusses some of the controversies in Chinese education with experiences from Taiwan. Taiwanese share the same ethnic Confucian heritage as that of the people from China. The focus is whether education should function as a mechanism for social mobility or to promote individual development. We traced the controversies to the Confucian moral-political order that insists that a good society should allocate its political power, material wealth, and social prestige based on individual merit. When education provides upward mobility, it becomes a mechanism for the distribution of social resources. The mobility motive can be witnessed in modern Chinese and Taiwanese education. However, the joint entrance examination and the classroom *ban-ji* system as ways for allocating resources also produce ill effects. Schools are ranked as the result of the joint entrance examination. Strategies for educational reform have been adopted to amend the situation for schools/university departments as well as individuals. In the end, it does not seem that the reform has provided an alternative for distribution of resources, and it faces tremendous difficulty as people still wish to find upward mobility in education.

Keywords Confucian moral-political order • Education reform in Taiwan • Individual development • Joint entrance examination • Social mobility

10.1 Cultural Approach to Chinese Education

In recent years, many researchers have investigated Chinese education from cultural perspective. For example, Li (2012) contrasted the Confucian goal of education as a process of moral development with the Western idea of education

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as gaining knowledge of the world. In dealing with the so-called paradox of Chinese learner, Watkins and Biggs (2001) asked why the large class, rote learning, and teacher-centered approaches not conductive to effective learning according to the prevalent theories of learning actually make Chinese students to attain better academic achievement. They showed that the dichotomies presumed in Western learning theories, such as memorizing vs. understanding, effort vs. ability, and extrinsic vs. intrinsic motivation for learning, may not be appropriate in the Chinese context.

In addition to scholarly work, the cultural differences in education between the Chinese and the West have entered into popular awareness with the documentaries such as 'Chinese School' from British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in 2008 and 'China Prep.' from Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) in 2008. Both television programs focused on the extreme competition among Chinese senior high school students preparing for university entrance examination. The competition is brutal, and once a student falters, there may not be a second chance that year. However, students can retake the examination in the following year. The entrance examination is believed to be the only chance for the poor and the rich to compete on a level playing field. The programs show the desire for social mobility as the main reason students sacrifice personal interests and leisure time.

As China's national strength becomes more formidable, the methods that the Chinese use to educate their young have become significant in global competition. The clash of cultural differences in education was brought to the forefront in Chua's (2011) autobiography: "The Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother." The relentless effort of the Yale professor to force her two daughters to adopt their mother's life goals was a shock to American parents. The author's constant contrast between Chinese and American parenting presents readers a sense that there exists real differences between their respective education philosophies and practices.

It seems that there are great differences between the Chinese and the West in their understanding of education. However, there is a broad spectrum in Chinese educational thinking which is often lost in the cultural comparison. Since the 1980s, anthropologists have advocated the idea that culture is contested. Culture is no longer viewed as an integrated whole without internal contradictions and diversities (Clifford, 1983; Thomas, 1999). People in a culture often have different interests and conflicting agendas. They disagree among themselves and develop ideas to support their respective claims. To portray the Chinese idea of education one-dimensionally is an essentialism that reifies the reality.

This paper focuses on a deep-rooted contradiction in thinking about education since the time of Confucius. The purpose is not going to trace the history of the contradiction but to examine its manifestations in modern-day Taiwanese educational reform. Several hotly debated issues will provide a sense of dynamics in Chinese education. Although some of the rhetoric in the modern debate about educational reform contains nontraditional elements, we can clearly trace the roots of the issue to a concern that Confucius expressed more than 2,000 years ago.

10.2 Education and the Confucian Moral-Political Order

In Book 14 of the Analects, Confucius bemoans: "In ancient times, man learned for the sake of himself. Nowadays, men learn for the sake of others." To learn with a view to enhance their own moral improvement is contrasted with to win approbation from others and to get promoted on the social ladder. It must be made clear that Confucius is not against social mobility. A just society should promote wise and able people to government in order to bring welfare to the general public. As a matter of fact, Confucian learning is always moral-political. But how is morality and politics connected?

Although there are many facets in Confucians morality, the most important link with the political order is the concept of *ren.* In Chinese pictogram, *ren* is depicted as two individuals. While it is often translated as benevolence in English, we argue that it denotes an individual's moral capacity to empathize with others. Confucian moral development is therefore about expanding one's ability to feel the happiness and suffering and to commiserate with others. Once a person is able to empathize with others, he becomes a *junzi* as scholar-gentleman who cannot but to act with considerations of how others feel. This would make his political decision more benevolent. It is in the ability to empathize with others that scholar-gentleman should be given the position to rule. At the opposite end of the scholar-gentleman is *xiaoren* or small-man who cannot be affected by the emotions of others. He is not a bad person to be eradicated from society. Rather, a small-man is a callous person whose "antenna" is broken and cannot attune to the frequency and receive the messages sent out by others. Thus, they could only be ruled rather than given the position of ruling.

Based on the philosophy of *ren*, the social ranking of people should accord to their ability to empathize. It is the Confucian belief that while the ability to empathize with others is seeded in everyone, one can increase his or her moral capacity through learning. For example, reading and writing poetry have been considered as good training of one's sensitivity toward the world. Education becomes an important component in the Confucian moral-political order. It provides both the standard to evaluate one's moral progress and to guide the distribution of political power and material wealth in Confucian meritocracy. It encourages people to climb up the ladder and transform from a small-man to a scholar-gentleman. Since everyone has the capacity to transform, Confucian meritocracy is open to everyone.

10.2.1 Dilemma Within the Confucian Moral-Political Order

However, a problem lies at the heart of the Confucian moral-political order: how to distinguish people who pretend to be able to sense from a true scholar-gentleman? Mencius expresses this concern in Book 11 of *Mengzi*. He points out that political office should only be bestowed upon a person after he or she has progressed

morally. However, Mencius laments that nowadays people would abandon their moral development once they received political offices. It is in light of this problemat that we can better understand the dilemma that Confucians face. There must be just and fair evaluation of people in terms of their moral progress. Once the standard of evaluation is stipulated, people would fake it in order to get promoted on the social ladder.

The dilemma is built in the moral and political philosophy of Confucianism. The problem became more acute in the seventh century AD when the imperial civil service examination was instituted and became the most important pathway for social mobility after the tenth century AD. For example, Zhu Xi (1130–1200), the famous Confucian scholar during the Sung Dynasty, complained that the examination has corrupted the students. The school becomes a place for chasing personal profits, and students forget the teachings of the sages. There have been numerous attacks on the civil service examination. However, as a fair and just mechanism for social mobility, it lasted till the end of the Chinese Empire in the early twentieth century.

10.2.2 Confucian Ideal and Modern Education Reform

The debates in modern Taiwanese education echo Confucius' contrast between learning for the sake of one's self and learning for the sake of social advancement. Both Confucius and the modern education reformers have a common enemy: the utilitarian motive that sees learning as a way to win approval from others. They are against learning as a means for personal profit.

Nevertheless, it must be pointed out that Confucian and current educational reformers have a different conceptualization of the self. For the modern educational reformers, each individual self is unique, and there should be no common standard against which everyone is to be measured. In contrast, Confucian moral development assumes an absolute standard to evaluate moral progress. Confucians recognize that people are variously endowed and the specific routes for moral development may be different among individuals. Still, the final destination is the same: to become a scholar-gentleman/gentlewoman. A Confucian teacher is like an athletic coach who would develop various techniques that are best suited for individual athletes. Still, the competition is about who runs faster or jumps higher. A common standard is imposed on all. A modern education reformer, on the other hand, would do away the competition all together. Since everyone is unique, there could be no common standard against which all are to be evaluated.

While Confucians argue that moral development should take precedence over social advancement, both moral progress and social advancement are built on the same ladder principle of ranking. It is in the ladder ranking that separates the modern reformer from the Confucian ideal. While Confucians lament the fall of school education, they still accept the ranking as a distributive system for political power and material rewards founded on the premise of moral development. Reformers may adopt the Confucian rhetoric when attacking the utilitarian approach to

learning; however, they would turn against Confucianism when it comes to ladder ranking. However, without providing a feasible mechanism for the distribution of valuable resources (such as who can go the best school), the ladder system remains as the only viable option. Modern educational reformers often have to concede that they offer no alternative mechanism for distribution. In that sense, the Confucian moral-political order still prevails. Thus, although the subject matter in modern education is different from Confucian moral teaching, there is a similarity between them as a mechanism for social mobility and resource distribution. The best example of it is in the entrance examinations for senior high school and university.

10.3 Joint Entrance Examinations

In Taiwan, the 12-year Basic Education Program was launched in 2014. One thing unchanged is that for students who want to go to senior high school or university, they have to pass a joint entrance examination. Unlike the American Scholastic Assessment Tests (SAT), which can be taken more than once by students, the entrance examinations in Taiwan are held once a year in early summer. Those who fail the examination or are unsatisfied with the results can try their luck the next year. A student starts anew with each entrance examination. What one has done in the previous examination has no effect on the next. Moreover, neither grade point average (GPA) nor extracurricular activities in schools are considered in the admission process. Only the examination score counts. One reason that GPA and extracurricular activities are not considered is because the grading scales are different between schools and there is a lack of objective criteria to compare them. On the other hand, taking the same set of examination questions on the same day under same conditions makes the examination score fair and easily comparable.

Fairness in the examination is of utmost importance for it is a distribution mechanism. To earn a high score on the entrance examination wins a person the right to choose the school he or she prefers to go to. A higher score on the examinations often leads to a better chance of finding a good job in the future. Moreover, by entering into the best schools, one is in the community of elites. Since one's social network is important in the Chinese culture, to go to the same school with elites provides a person better position in society. The examination is not simply certifying one's academic proficiency. The entrance examination determines one's life chance and social network.

The important benefit of the joint entrance examination is to reduce the amount of time and money students spend applying to different schools. Unlike the Japanese system, where each school holds its own entrance examination, at Taiwan, entrance examination is held jointly; while at China, it is held. Therefore a student needs to take one examination to apply for all the available schools. Unlike American universities, where students apply individually and pay for the application fee to each school, a joint examination allows students to choose between different schools by going through a single process. In addition, it also allows schools to

have a much larger pool from which to choose its prospective students. Moreover, the joint examinations offer the central government a convenient way to monitor and control the education process and distribution mechanism.

10.3.1 The Consequences of the Joint Entrance Examination

The consequence of the joint entrance examination is to make both students and schools comparable. It is remarkable that several hundred thousand students are put into a single hierarchical profile from the highest to the lowest based on their examination scores. There is no consideration of individual differences. A generalized evaluation is imposed on all. More than that, the schools are also ranked. The high school and university department ranking is not based on the highest or the average scores of incoming students. Rather, it is based on the lowest score of the students admitted to the school. The lowest score functions as a cut off in admission. Thus, even if a highly ranked student applies to a poorly ranked school, it would not boost the rank of the school if the lowest admitted score remains at the same level. The effect of the joint entrance examination is the parallel development of a student hierarchy and a school hierarchy. Students are expected to fill their priority list based on the school ranking. In general, a school is not known by its particularity but its position on the hierarchy.

The joint entrance examination serves as one of the greatest distributive systems in a person's life. As a result, examination days become one of the most important days for students in Taiwan. After 3 years of intensive preparation, the entrance examination is the final showdown. Media always have extensive coverage and invite guests to provide tips not only for the test taking skills but how to eat and rest and calm down when under extreme pressure. On the examination days, schools send their support teams for their students, parents accompany their children to cheer them up, cram schools are giving away brochures of their programs, peddlers are selling food and pencils, the police are controlling the traffic, and reporters from news networks are waiting for students to come out and ask questions about what they feel about the examination. Small matters, such as malfunctioning air conditioners, become newsworthy if they are related to the examinees' performance. Newspapers would have full page covering the examination and post correct answers the day after the examination for students to estimate the score they achieved. On the day of admission announcement, newspapers publish the names of the examinees and the school and university department to which they have been admitted. Not only the highest-score students are hailed as heroes, the so-called grand first (狀元), handicapped students or the ones from poor families who achieved high scores are celebrated as role models. One's achievement in the examination is never a private matter. An honor roll might be posted at school's entrance as a school pride toward students' performance. It is rather like the Olympic Games only with almost every adult in Taiwan has once being a competing athlete and may still have family members participate in the game.

10.3.2 The Ill Effects of the Entrance Examination

It is phenomenal of how Chinese students prepare themselves for the showdown. Endless mock tests simulating the entrance examination dominate curriculum. Students often have to study late till midnight and attend cram school after regular school hours. Those subjects not to be tested in the entrance examinations, such as physical education, music, and home economics, are often ignored not only by the students but also by the schools. The "essential" ones that are to be tested in the entrance examinations are often appropriated class time, and those "nonessential" subjects are sacrificed. Some private junior and senior high schools even pack 3-year course works into two, so the third year can be used for reviewing the examination materials. Liu (2012) has found that cram schools help students improve academic performance. Demand for fairness has excluded all those unquantifiable markers in the evaluation processes. Thus, most questions in the entrance examinations are in multiple choices. To prevent students from guessing, various strategies were developed. For instance, there are multiple correct answers to a single question, and there is a penalty for choosing a wrong one. Moreover, to distinguish academic proficiency among students, the examiners design trick questions that make students concentrate on the minuscule. The cat-mouse game consumes great energy for both the examiners and examinees.

It has often been pointed out that rote learning prevails and has eroded passion for knowledge. It is also claimed that the students are unhappy. The score one earned becomes the source of one's identity. Furthermore, the scores earned on the mockup examinations are often posed for everyone to see. School is a pressure cooker. To study for the sole purpose of getting a high score makes the school environments, as in Miyazaki's (1976) depiction of the Chinese imperial civil service examination, a "hell." The excruciating experience is felt in the daily life in the classroom.

10.4 The *Ban-ji* System in the Classroom

Daily life at most Taiwanese junior and senior high schools is centered on *ban-ji*. *Ban-ji* is the organizing and administrative unit in the school system. *Ji* means school year. Students of the same school year are divided into subunits (class) known as *ban*. *Ban-ji* means classes of school years. A *ban-ji* unit often contains some 30 to 50 students. Students of same *ban-ji* often stay together for one school year. However, it is not uncommon for junior high school students to stay at the same *ban-ji* for 3 years. In contrast to American junior and senior high schools, whereby students travel between classrooms and teachers stay put, students of a *ban-ji* "reside" or "dwell" in the same classroom and teachers of various subjects travel between the classrooms to teach. Only for classes that need special equipment, such as lab science and music, students go to specialized classrooms. Even for that, they travel to the specialized classrooms together and attend the classes as a single *ban-ji*.

Students of a *ban-ji* spend some 8–9 h a day together. They share a common space. Each is also assigned a desk with a compartment for personal belongings and is assigned with a *ban-ji* seat number which the administration and teachers identify one by. Unlike the personal lockers that are located in the hallways in a typical American junior and senior high schools, what is personal for Taiwanese students is enclosed in his or her *ban-ji* space and personal desk. The students manage that space. They decorate the *ban-ji* classroom and are responsible to keep it tidy. They elect their *ban-ji* officers and hold weekly conference for *ban-ji* matters. The *ban-ji* also participates as a unit in school activities such as cleaning tasks and school-wide sports competitions. There is a strong sense of belonging within *ban-ji* members. Moreover, each *ban-ji* is assigned a homeroom teacher (guidance teacher) who is responsible for certain subjects plus the general welfare of his or her *ban-ji* students. Compared to other subject teachers, the guidance teacher develops most intimate relationship with the students and with whom the students grow attached to. As a matter of fact, often a guidance teacher, at least in junior high schools, has an office desk in his or her *ban-ji* classroom. They would eat lunch with their *ban-ji* students in the classrooms and oversee their daily routines. Taiwanese schools often do not have a cafeteria; students eat their lunch in *ban-ji* classrooms. It is generally held that how a *ban-ji* does in the joint entrance examination and other activities reflect the capability of the guidance teacher.

Each *ban-ji* is a close-knit community. Since all its seats are assigned, no one can anonymously enter the classroom. There is no way for a student to go to another *ban-ji* for classes. The relationship within a *ban-ji* is intimate. Its members compete and cooperate among themselves. In the endless quizzes and mockup examinations, students are first ranked within their *ban-ji*. It is where peer group pressure is mostly felt. On the other hand, strong competition within a *ban-ji* may boost its competitiveness against others. Thus, to get into a competitive *ban-ji* ensures one's chance in the joint entrance examination. How a *ban-ji* is formed becomes utmost important. It is a challenge for guidance teachers to promote personal competitiveness as well as to ensure empathy and camaraderie within the *ban-ji*, as described in Chap. 11.

Due to ability grouping, as a result of the entrance examination, students of a high school are generally of the same academic bracket. Thus, members of a high school *ban-ji* are more or less equal in their scholarly proficiency. Junior high school, on the other hand, is a different matter. The enrollment of junior high school students are based on school district. Range in terms of their academic proficiency is much greater than high school students. Therefore, the composition of a junior high school *ban-ji* becomes a serious matter for the students and their concerned parents. It is quite common for able parents to pull strings using relationships to get their children into a good *ban-ji*. With good *ban-ji*, there must also be bad *ban-ji*, and many parents try to avoid having their children assigned to a bad *ban-ji*. Thus, the *ban-ji* becomes the first scarce resource for junior high school students as they enter the education distributive system.

From a teacher's perspective, a *ban-ji* with students of similar motivation and academic proficiency is easier to teach than a *ban-ji* with students of diverse ability.

To classify students and put them into *ban-ji* of different academic levels would also be a good strategy for the middle school administrators. After all, a school's reputation relies on the number of its graduates entering the elite high schools. To gather the most motivated and academically proficient students into same *ban-ji* may boost the school's success rate in the high school entrance examination. To achieve that goal, not only would school authority assign its most capable guidance teacher to the elite *ban-ji*, such *ban-ji* would often been favorably treated by the schools. They are like elite troopers for competition among junior high schools. Out of such considerations, many of the junior high schools in Taiwan adopt an ability-based principle for *ban-ji* formation.

Ability-based formation requires schools to hold pre-admission ability tests and rank the students according to the scores. Generally students are divided into three levels: the top 20 % students are put into elite *ban-ji*; students from about 20–60 % form the intermediate cohort; as for the bottom 20 %, they form the third tier. Some schools take 10, 40, and 50 % division. Yet there are also schools that divide the two tiers with 50 % of the students composing each. Often each cohort allows some form of mobility. For some schools, especially private junior high schools that charge high fee for preparing students for the entrance examination, every semester or academic year, students were to be upgraded or downgraded in *ban-ji* assignment according to his or her term performance.

The ill effects of the ability-based *ban-ji* assignment are apparent. On one hand, the students in the elite *ban-ji* face greater pressure from their teachers and parents who expect that they do well in the entrance examination. All the abnormalities in teaching, such as skipping the nonessential subjects and cramping 3-year courses into two, are forced upon them. They are believed to be unhappy because of the relentless pressure and losing face by being downgraded to the next-tier *ban-ji*. On the other hand, the third-tier *ban-ji* is sometimes referred as "cattle pasturing." That is, the teachers might just give up on them and let them roam around. The schools have forsaken them in the mobility competition, and teachers save their energy for the more promising students in the elite *ban-ji*. The low achievers are often labeled as losers in the games. They are looked down upon and often said to have low self-esteem. Not only the students are divided because of the ability-based *ban-ji* formation, so are the teachers. To serve as the guidance teacher in the lower-tier *ban-ji* is often viewed as a sign of incompetence. However, the "competent" teachers of elite *ban-ji* have to exert great pressure on students. The success rate of their students in the entrance examination is a test for the teachers as well. In the end, no one is satisfied with the system.

10.5 The Normalization of *Ban-ji* Formation

The ability-based *ban-ji* has been criticized as the major cause of abnormality in junior high school education. It has been the primary target for education reform. Education as a mobility system is based on the idea that resources are limited, and the ranking provides the guideline as to who earns the priority in allocation of the scarce resources. To alleviate the great pressure caused by the mobility system,

the common strategies for the Taiwanese education reformers are to convince people that resources are not limited and also to obscure the ranking so that there is no hierarchy to follow. The reform against the ability-based *ban-ji* system adopted the first strategy by eliminating the differences between *ban-ji*.

The Taiwanese legislature banned the ability-based *ban-ji* formation in 2004 (Primary and Junior High School Act, 2004). Instead, all students must be distributed "normally" among *ban-ji*. Suggested procedures fall into two categories: random distribution and even distribution. By leaving it to chance, randomness produced by drawing does not necessary produce an even distribution of academic proficiency of students among *ban-ji*. To guarantee absolute evenness in *ban-ji* composition, an S-shape placement is recommended (Ministry of Education, 2005). Before entering schools, students take a certain kind of achievement test. Based on the test results, students are ranked top down. Every student is placed to each *ban-ji* one by one in ranking order consecutively. After the first round, students are placed into *ban-ji* one by one in ranking order but going backward. Table 10.1 shows the process. For example, the top eight students are placed into eight *ban-ji* in ranking order, and then, the next eight students are placed into *ban-ji* in backward order. This is to make sure that the average level of each *ban-ji* is even.

The implementation of the S-shape placement in junior high schools is very effective in solving the problem of labeling students at different levels of *ban-ji*. It forces each *ban-ji* to be composed of students with different achievement levels. From then on, there would be no 'cattle pasturing' *ban-ji* anymore. However, due to the considerable differences in academic proficiency within *ban-ji*, there have been more and more cattle wandering around in each classroom. As class content grows more difficult and abstract, it becomes a serious challenge for teachers to look after students of different levels. Eventually, teachers tend to teach on an intermediate

Table 10.1 The S-shape placement process to form *ban-ji*

Ban-ji	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
students' ranking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
classes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
students' ranking	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	9
classes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
students' ranking	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
classes	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
students' ranking	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	25

level for the majority in a *ban-ji*. As the result, the top students are not challenged, while the low achievers feel that the content is too difficult. The unexpected result of the normalization in *ban-ji* formation is the rise of number of cram schools. Since competition within *ban-ji* is lessened for the top-tier students, they enter cram schools with the hope of achieving higher academic levels and maximizing learning opportunities. In 2003, there were 2,640 cram schools in Taiwan; after 9 years of the implementation of normally distributed *ban-ji*, the number of cram schools increased to 10,689 (Ministry of Education, 2014a). While the normalized *ban-ji* formation is not fully responsible for the increased number of cram schools, it is believed to be one of the causes.

The inflexible *ban-ji* is one of the culprits of student pressure in junior high school. Could the problem be solved with the American model whereby the student goes to classrooms hosted by individual teachers? It is important to note that the *ban-ji* system is necessary to cope with a large number of students in relatively small campuses. In general, a Taiwanese junior high school in metropolitan areas has between 1,000 and 2,000 students. A school with 2,000 students would need at least 50 classrooms if each classroom holds 40 students. Adding special classrooms for lab, music, and computer, the school may require some 60 classrooms. With an average student/teacher ratio of 16/1, the school has about 130 teachers traveling between *ban-ji* giving lessons. Imagine a school with similar size student body but dispersed to classrooms each hosted by an individual teacher; the number of classroom needed would at least be doubled. If the students are allowed to elect courses, it is not possible for each classroom to be fully occupied with 40 students as in the *ban-ji* system. Discounting the deep-rooted tradition, it seems the *ban-ji* system is the only viable choice given the limited educational resources including the small number of teachers, large number of students, limited equipment, and constricted space.

10.6 The 12-Year Basic Education Program as a Reform Act

The 12-year Basic Education Program, launched in 2014, extended Taiwanese citizen education from 9–12 years. That means that everyone can go to a high school and there should be no more entrance examinations to screen out unqualified individuals. Senior high schools would no longer be limited resources that students fight over. With the implementation of the program in 2014, it was hoped that pressure to compete for high schools would be lessened and tendency of going to cram school would be gradually reduced.

Nevertheless, the greatest obstacle for the 12-year Basic Education Program was the elite high schools that enjoy greater success rates in the university entrance examination. They are the limited resources that the junior high school students are competing. Nationwide, there are about 20–30 such high schools predominantly located in the metropolitan areas. It is important to note that although there are 15

examination districts under the joint entrance examination system, a student can apply for any district regardless of his or her household registration. It is quite common for an elite high school to draw students from various parts of the country. Some top high schools may have as high as 10 % of its student body from districts other than where they are located. Since the better students have been collected by the elite schools, a disparity is created not only between high schools but also between metropolitan and rural areas. This actually is one situation that the education reformers attempt to amend.

Similar to the strategy to normalize the distribution of students in junior high school, the top priority for education reformers is to take the elite high school out of the equation. If there is no elite high school and every school is about the same in quality, resources are equalized and there would no need for junior high school graduates to compete. Moreover, since the ranking of students is functioned toward the allocation of such scarce resources, with the elimination of the elite high schools, the hierarchical ranking of students in junior high school would no longer be necessary.

One agenda in the 12-year Basic Education Program is to upgrade every high school to a similar level and to persuade students to attend to the school near their hometowns. With support from the government, the non-elite senior high schools are now being referred as "community high schools" with the aim of attracting local students. Sadly, they generally attract students of middle and lower tiers. Upper-level students still set their sights on the elite senior high schools.

10.6.1 Grand School District

It is possible to ignore the wishes of the top-tier students who have set their sights on the elite senior high schools. A simple solution is to assign each student to a specific high school based on the school district of junior high and elementary schools. The school district for elementary and junior high schools is rather small. Based on one's household registration, a student is assigned to a school with no option. If not satisfied with the designated school, one can go to expensive private school or change household registration to the school district where a preferred school is located. One major side effect of the small school districts is skyrocketing real-estate prices in popular school districts. With the image of the elite high school clear in people's minds, the small school district proposal is rejected for fearing to create similar real-estate boom. With people of means buying real-estate property in better school district, it is said the Basic Education Program favors the rich. Thus, the small school district proposal is abandoned. It is clear that education as a pathway for social mobility rather than class reproduction is still a main concern for the Taiwanese.

The adopted approach for school assignment is a grand school district. There are 15 of them in Taiwan, and the largest has been the greater Taipei district which includes Taipei City, the New Taipei City, and Keelung City with a total population

of more than seven million with 74,000 junior high school graduates in 2014. All the high schools in the greater Taipei district are in the same pool. A junior high school graduate submits a priority card listing all the high school he or she wishes to go in order of priority. Although there are enough high schools to go around, it is obvious that the elite high schools would be more favored than others. Against the spirit of the 12-year Basic Education Program, the elite high schools are still scarce resources. How to allocate the scarce resource becomes a problem again.

Since a junior high school graduate can freely apply for any high school in the school district, the number of applicants is bound to exceed school capacity for the elite high schools. One proposed method to solve the problem is to draw lots irrespective of one's academic proficiency. This is rejected because the society still believes effort should be more important than random drawing. A capable person should be rewarded with the priority to choose first.

10.6.2 Three Categories for Prioritization

The need to prioritize students only occurs when the number of applicants exceeds school capacity. Only for those popular elite high schools is prioritization needed. Most schools have a capacity that equals or exceeds the number of applicants. Since the prioritization has been the center of popular attention, some have complained that the education reform has been hijacked by the elite high school. Because it is filled with contention, the central government lets each school district to decide how to prioritize students. In general, there are three categories to be considered: The national wide comprehensive graduation test; the multidisciplinary learning outcome; and the priority list of schools each student submits. The percentage and calculation within each category is different among school districts. The following discussion uses the great Taipei district as an example.

10.6.2.1 Comprehensive Graduation Test

Out of a total 90 points, each category takes 30 points. The most important of the three is the comprehensive graduation test. While the 12-year Basic Education Program has done away with the entrance examination, in its place it created a nationwide comprehensive graduation test. Similar to the entrance examination, five subjects—Chinese, English, math, natural sciences, and social sciences—are tested. However, the nature of the comprehensive graduation test is different from that of the entrance examination. In essence, the comprehensive graduation test is to control the quality of junior high school graduates. Unlike the entrance examination that lineup everyone in a single hierarchical profile, the comprehensive graduation test divides the academic proficiency of junior high school graduates into three levels: excellent, basic, and needs improvement. The three levels are credentials and curriculum-based standards (Research Center for Psychological and Educational Testing, Taiwan,

2014a) without assigned quota to each level. Nevertheless, it is expected that the excellent level contains students at about top 15 %; the basic level contains students about middle 60 %; and the needs improvement level contains students of bottom 25 % (Research Center for Psychological and Educational Testing, Taiwan, 2014b). Without distinguishing individual students in exact ranking order, the comprehensive graduation test is a poor mechanism to distinguish students for resource allocation. As a matter of fact, rather than as a framework for comparing students, the comprehensive graduation test is intended as a gauge for a student to evaluate his or her status in each of the five subjects. It alerts a student what is his or her weakness in the academics. Thus, the test is meant for self-improvement rather than for competition. Unfortunately, it is forced to serve the function of entrance examination for lacks of standardized indicators to evaluate the academic proficiency of the graduates.

A student receives six points for every subject being placed on the excellent level in the comprehensive graduation test. There are five subjects. So a student earns the full total 30 points if every subject is at the excellent level. For each subject a student receive four points by achieving basic level and two points at the needs improvement level. Although there are 30 points in total, there are only 15 intervals (there is no odd number score in the 30 points). If all the 74,000 junior high school graduates in the greater Taipei district are applying for the same high school as their first priority, the number of students in the same bracket must exceed the available seats offered by that school. It needs other scales to refine the distinction between students.

10.6.2.2 Multidisciplinary Learning

One major complaint about junior high school education is that the subjects not on the entrance examination received little attention from both school and students. Students are trained to be examination machines and care for nothing else. To remedy this, the multidisciplinary learning outcome is included as a category for the prioritization of students. What is multidisciplinary learning? It mainly falls into two categories: the non-test subjects and extracurricular activities. The non-test subjects include three sorts: physical education, arts and crafts, and integrative activities. There are regular classes for each of them. The grades that one earns in these classes now affect resource allocation. Extracurricular activities may include community service and awards one earned in various types of competition. Certain points are awarded if one wins medals in a national competition. Traditionally these learning experiences were generally ignored in school education. Now they occupy 30 points of the total score.

The reason that only entrance examination scores determine high school admission in the old system was because of the lack of a commensurable scale to compare the GPA from different schools and various extracurricular activities. Similar problem still exists. Since junior high schools would try not to be a hindrance to the future of their graduates, it is foreseeable that some of them would be more than willing to satisfy students' needs of getting the full 30 points. Thus, the comparison

among students of different school would be more difficult. To have a fair competition, it is necessary to minimize the effects of the multidisciplinary learning. This is exactly what the greater Taipei district has done. Out of the total 30 points, 18 points go to the non-test subjects. A student earns 6 points by passing one of the subjects in five semesters. 12 points go to extracurricular activities. A student earns 4 points per semester by performing 6 h of community services. In reality, these points are simply giveaway. Most junior high school graduates would earn the full 30 points with minimum efforts. It ends up no difference among students on the multidisciplinary learning results.

10.6.2.3 Priority List

With the comprehensive graduation tests and multidisciplinary learning being unable to differentiate students, the third and most controversial part of resource competition became the priority list score. A student submits a priority list of the school one is wishing to attend. For the greater Taipei district, students get full priority list scores of 30 points when contending for the first priority on the list. However, if not successful, they are now contending on the second on the list. However, this time students only get 29 points of the priority list score. If still not successful and reverts to the third choice, they now receive 28 points. The points keep reducing for the first 10 choices on the list. Thus, while the scores for comprehensive graduation test and multidisciplinary learning are fixed, the priority list score is floating. If a student receives 55 points in the first two categories and competes for a seat in his or her first priority school, the student is competing with 85 points. He or she is competing with his or her second choice school with 84 points, and the third choice with 83 points. What this means is punishment for those who want to try their luck and creates a gambling situation by guessing how his or her peers may arrange their priority list. If a student fills the priority list based on the traditional school ranking, he or she might find himself or herself in a terrible situation. Assuming a student put the traditionally top-ranking school first on his/her own priority list, but he/she missed the school, then he/she may fail all the schools way down because the priority list score keeps reducing.

To reduce score points is a strategy to make students conservative in ambition. One should not try to compete with something out of his or her league. The best bet should be the surest bet, which is to apply for a school whose ranking is just one notch below what one can attend in mock examination. Best of all, one should apply for a community school that is always available. If everyone is willing to settle for a lesser school, the problem of resource allocation will be solved. Following the traditional high school ranking in filling one's priority list may lead to a disaster. If students turn to be conservative and fill in the top priority with a lesser school, then the traditional school ranking would be shaken for the elite schools no longer be scarce resources.

There have been many reports of a rise of anxiety level. Whether one should try his or her luck or to be less ambitious in filling the priority list, it has troubled the

students, parents, and teachers. The anxiety is exacerbated because one has no knowledge about his or her position against others. One knows his or her test score but no one else's. Without the examination authority revealing the distribution map, a student does not know how many people are ahead of him or her. Since it is extremely difficult to calculate one's position against others, one has to make guesses when filling the priority list. It is a hit and miss game.

10.7 Reforms at the University Level

What makes a high school the top choice for junior high school graduate is its success rate in the university entrance examination. If a university remains a scarce resource, the examination-focused learning would always affect education at lower education levels. No wonder university education reform started quite early in 1980s at Taiwan. It is source of all the problems. We will discuss two reforms at the university level: the obscuring of ranks and the increase of supply.

As mentioned earlier in Sect. 3.1, two hierarchical rankings are produced based on the entrance examination scores. One is a ranking of institute (school/department) and another is the ranking of students. These two rankings were expected to be parallel. In other words, the highest-scoring students should go to the highest-ranked school. It is often considered a waste if a high-score student applies for a lower-ranked school. On the other hand, it would be considered unjust if a low-score student is able to attend a highly ranked school. Ranking eliminates individuality and uniqueness both at institute level and individual level for everything is comparable on the same scale. As a result, there were two important reforms in the 1980s and 1990s, respectively (Chin, 2004; Chou & Ching, 2012): obscuring departmental and students' rankings and increasing the supply of universities.

10.7.1 Obscuring Departmental Rankings

In order to transform the system for ranking of academic departments, there were two important strategies that altered some elements in the university entrance examination since 1984. First, university departments were allowed to weight the examination scores for admission to reflect their departmental particularity. For example, a Chinese literature department may decide to give 50 % more weight to the original score in Chinese. Another department may give 25 % more to the Chinese score and 25 % to English score. A third department may not weight any of the subjects. The added weighting allowed each department to demonstrate its individuality and show the kind of students it wanted to attract. This was a far cry from the previous system, whereas all the departments are put in a single ranking order irrespective of individual differences. A student who wanted to go to a Chinese department would

often submit a priority list based on the ranking of Chinese departments. The departments can now emphasize its uniqueness, even if symbolically.

When departments use different weightings, the scores between departments are difficult to compare. The perfect score for a department that opted not to weight any of the six test subjects would be 600. A department that weights 50 % for Chinese and 50 % for English would have a maximum score of 700. By allowing each department to assign its own weighting, the admission scores between departments are no longer on a common baseline. However, comparison could still be possible if the original scores of their lowest admitted students are known. In 1997, the original scores were no longer revealed, and no common scale exists for comparing departments.

10.7.2 Obscuring Student Ranking

Parallel to the obscuring of department ranking, the obscuring of student ranking as another strategy of the reform in the 1980s was undertaken. This strategy was designed to encourage students to discover their uniqueness such as individual aptitude and interest rather than blindly following the rankings when filling the school priority list after the examination. The reform proclaimed that since everyone is a unique individual, there should be no common standard against which everyone can be evaluated. This if successful would make the ranking of students obsolete. Before 1984, students filled out the priority list before the university entrance examination. They generally followed the department ranking when filling the list. After 1984, students submitted the priority list after the examination. However, unlike the 12-year Basic Education Program that does not provide a distribution map, the 1984 university entrance reform provided a percentile map in each tested subject. Although the weighting would obscure the department ranking, there is at least an objective scale for a student to evaluate his or her position against all others. Thus, student ranking was still intact.

The rationale behind filling the priority list after the examination was to give students time to think about what they want to do with their lives. The reason that people are competing for a seat in the best medical department is because, in the foreseeable future, a medical doctor receives more social prestige and material wealth than most other professions. Although a businessperson might earn more than a medical doctor, there is little to guarantee that a business major would become successful. Although entering the medical department at the best university has been the most coveted choice, reformers ask students, “Is becoming a medical doctor what they really want?” A contradiction between one’s individuality and the social economic status is created. Those who fill the priority list based on school ranking are condemned for giving up their true self and submitting to the conditioning of the society. It is proclaimed that if a topnotch student finds himself or herself more interested in gardening, he or she should prioritize his or her wish list for a department in agriculture rather than a medical department. Education should help

a student to discover the true self and the development of one's individuality. While it is acknowledged that education brings progress and change, progress is defined longitudinally as how one has changed through time. It is not about gaining more points in a horizontal comparison against other students.

Since the 1980s, the call for discovering individual uniqueness has been a constant theme in Taiwanese education reform. It is based on an essential belief that a person has some deep-rooted quality that cannot and should not be swayed by the society. It is claimed that students would be self-motivated and find happiness in studying a subject for which they are best suited. Moreover, there should be no scale for comparison across different individuals. It is out of this essentialism that the idea of "multiple intelligences" of Howard Gardener finds a huge following among education reformers in Taiwan. The theory presumes incommensurable gaps between individual intelligences that should not be transcended but acknowledged and confirmed.

The guiding principle for the reform is that one should conform to his or her innate self. The idea of an innate self is very different from the traditional view that it is malleable. If education serves as a mechanism for social mobility, it would assume an insatiable desire to climb up the social ladder. One should never be content with the self. One should always find himself or herself lacking and unhappy with the current situation. It is in sharp contrast to the creed of educational reform that brings smiles back to students. It is not a smile after one conquers all odds. It is a smile that one finds that there are no odds to conquer. Education is not about transformation of the self to become one who is not. Rather, it is about the asserting and the realization of the innate self. Since innate ability varies among students, it is claimed that education should be multifaceted, diversified, and adapted to every individual's need. To accommodate the diverse needs of students, it is necessary to have diversified education. More importantly, there must be more schools to satisfy the different needs of each individual.

10.7.3 The Proliferation of Universities

The second reform that began in the 1990s was meant to increase the supply of universities. The need for ranking was because resources are limited. Up till the 1980s, less than 30 % of the examinees of the entrance examination could go to an institution of higher education. If the supply was limited, it was believed that university education would always be a scarce resource for which students had to compete. The obscuring of the two rankings would be of little help if the source of the problem were not taken care of. The number of universities and departments has skyrocketed since the 1990s. By 2014, almost all the examinees could find a university to enter. Unfortunately, the reform failed. What people want is not only a college degree but a degree from one of the best university. Since the number of top universities is limited, they would always be the scarce resource that people fight over. Taiwanese educational reformers have often considered the source of all the problems as an issue of supply and demand. In one sense, this is true. Since there

are too many competing for too little, there must be a guiding principle as to who should receive a larger piece of the pie. The hierarchical ranking establishes the priority in resource allocation. By increasing the supply, it is hoped to result in an obscuring of the hierarchical ranking in schools and in students. It is based on this reasoning that one major proposal for the reform in 1990s is to increase the number of universities.

In less than 30 years, the number of four-year colleges and universities has grown dramatically. There were 50 in 1991 and 147 in 2014 (Ministry of Education, 2014b). However, the intensity of competition has not resulted in the expected outcome. Not only have university entrance examinations remained as competitive as ever, the entrance examination for high school is still intense. An important indicator is the rise of cram schools. It is obvious that people is not content with a college degree. To increase supply is like giving everyone a medal and everyone is a champion. Nevertheless, the Taiwanese people are not convinced that everyone could be a champion in their prospect for life. They do not want just a college degree but a degree from a prestigious university.

The proliferation of universities has not solved the problem; it actually made the situation worse. Now government education funding has to be shared by three times as many schools. However, it is not to be divided evenly. Besides the regular financial supports, extra money is awarded to universities that are considered as excellent. A university has to convince the state and also the society that it is worthy for more support. But how to decide which university is better? Since the 1990s, there is not only the proliferation of university, there is also the proliferation of university evaluation. The state has set up guidelines for evaluation. Some objective criteria, such as the number of peer-reviewed articles, become important for a school to win extra funding. A university then presses its faculty to produce more. Just like the distinction between essential and nonessential subjects in junior and senior high school education, the number of SCI and SSCI articles becomes essential for a university and its faculty. Other things, such as the quality of teaching, become less relevant for being subjective and not easily quantifiable. Thus, the rising number of universities not only does not solve the problem of limited higher education resource, it makes education funding a limited supply.

Conclusion

As the great hall of learning becomes hell, there has been cry for reform since the joint entrance examinations were instituted in the 1950s. Waves of reform come and go. While they are diverse in terms of their targets and strategies, it is clear that the reforms are aimed to destroy the hierarchical ranking both among schools and among students. For the reformers, education should be about the development of one's individual uniqueness. Since the idea of individual uniqueness is in opposition to comparison against an absolute standard, education is by essence irrelevant to hierarchical ranking and the

(continued)

distribution of scarce resources. Thus, it was understandable that Taiwanese educational reformers were not interested in providing an alternative to hierarchical ranking for resource allocation. Since the hierarchical ranking is employed as the guideline for the allocation of scarce resources, how to make the scarce resource disappear becomes important and critical.

At junior and senior high school levels, the reformers have implemented achievement equalization of students' assignment into *ban-ji*, promoting application process for admission, reducing points downward through the priority list of schools, encouraging multidisciplinary learning, and blocking information about examinees' performance in percentile ranks. A blocking strategy was developed to give as little information as possible of a student's relative position in high/vocational school entrance examination process. Blurring the distinction among schools and among students is the main task in order to break the hierarchy of schools as well as individuals. However, the blocking strategy created great anxiety among parents and students at the time they had to fill out the school priority list based on their comprehensive graduation test results.

At university level, reform actions include allowing departments to weight designated subject scores to promote departmental particularity and obscure rankings of departments. Another strategy was to increase the supply of universities. The Taiwanese government heeded this advice and increased the number of universities from about 50 to 147 over the recent 25 years. Unfortunately, the academic pressure actually has increased over the last decade as demonstrated by the sharp increase of three times in the number of cram schools, simply due to the commitment of people who are competing for the very few top universities to get higher scores.

It is clear that, the majority of the Taiwanese people still consider resource allocation as the primary function of education as depicted at Chap. 9. Thus, hierarchy of institutions of higher education and individual scores on entrance exams as a distribution device was perpetuated. The pursuit of uniqueness was sacrificed. It is due to this contradiction between hierarchy and uniqueness at institutional level and individual level that education reform has encountered many obstacles.

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Chapter 11
Teachers' Dual Responsibilities for Academic Achievement and Character Development

Yuh-Yin Wu

Abstract This chapter describes the dual responsibilities of teachers to facilitate student academic achievement and character development, and it discusses how teachers must both motivate students to achieve academically and enhance their communal spirit. First, a classroom vignette is presented as an example of the daily practices of teachers. Second, the importance of the "achievement ladder" in Chinese education is explained in relation to the traditional imperial Chinese civil service examination that was conducted to recruit political officers for approximately 1,300 years since the Sui Dynasty. Although the examination was abolished in 1905, the modern educational system mirrors the examination system from the elementary school to the doctoral level. The higher students rank on the achievement ladder, the brighter their career prospects are, and teachers serve as their examination coaches. Third, despite interpersonal and academic competition, teachers are mentors to students and facilitate cooperation among students within the classroom, creating a feeling of team spirit that prompts students to excel with their peers outside the classroom. Various activities are organized to develop camaraderie, such as "little teacher" system (peer tutoring system), sports, cleaning, and contests. Fourth, the "little teacher" system implemented throughout Taiwan and China exemplifies the dual responsibilities held by teachers. Students, including the "little teachers," believe that instruction and learning are mutually accomplished. Thus, as examination coaches, teachers motivate students achieve academically; as life mentors, teachers cultivate a communal spirit within the class. Fifth, a case study of a senior high school in the most disadvantaged economic area of Taiwan is examined to illustrate how school teachers nurture student desire to succeed through skill as well as effort. In conclusion, enhancing academic performance and character development is the responsibility of teachers.

Keywords Academic performance • Capabilities and efforts • Peer relationships • Student-teacher relationships • Teachers as mentors

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11.1 A Classroom Vignette

In a fifth grade classroom on December 23, 2 weeks before final exams, final examination notices were written on the left side of a large blackboard (Fig. 11.1). Five subjects would be tested: language arts (Chinese), physical science, and health on the January 10 and mathematics and social science on the January 11. On the right side of the blackboard, the following assignments to be completed for the following day were enumerated:

1. Correct the errors in Chinese characters on the previous homework assignment.
2. Review and copy newly learned Chinese characters.
3. Prepare for a language arts (Chinese) quiz tomorrow.
4. Correct the previous mathematics quiz and obtain a parent signature.
5. Complete mathematics worksheets on pages 81 and 82.

The workload seemed heavy for 11-year-old children. I asked them, "How do you feel about your homework?"

"Homework is always there for us to catch up on," they murmured.

For the moment, however, the children had forgotten their assignments and impending exams and were excited. They were anxious to learn the identity of their "secret angels," an activity that had been held for 2 months, starting when the weather turned cool and ending on Christmas. Every child had the dual roles of "master," being cared for by an anonymous classmate, and of "angel," caring for his

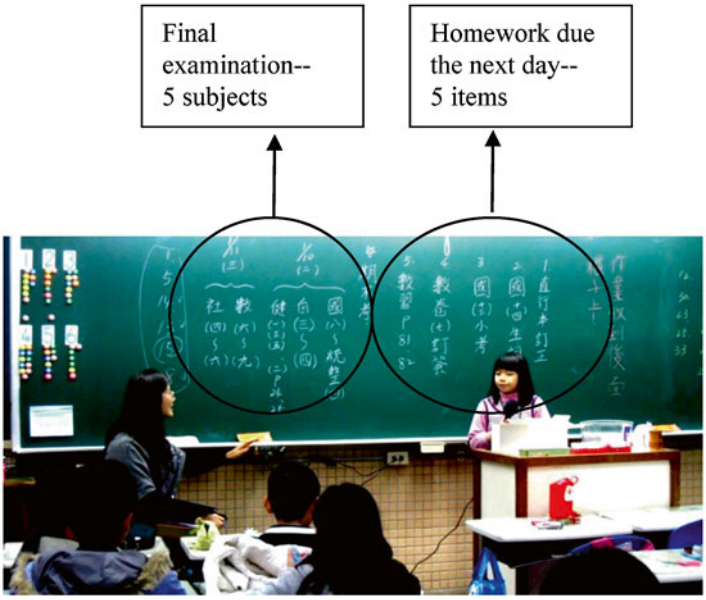

Fig. 11.1 In a fifth grade classroom: a homeroom teacher facilitating an activity with the blackboard showing homework list and subject tests

or her anonymous master. The masters and angels were not a reciprocal pair, but were randomly assigned to various classmates, forming an interwoven network. Today was the final day of the secret angel activity. Miss Wang, the homeroom teacher, selected a child to stand in front of the class and describe how he or she had been cared for by his or her angel. The entire class, listening to the description, guessed who the angel was based on the method and style of care. The most exciting moment occurred when Miss Wang disclosed the angel's name. The angel went to the front to accept his or her master's gratitude and a gift of appreciation. The angel then took the floor, describing how he or she was cared for by his or her angel. Miss Wang, sitting to the side, directed and facilitated the activity.

Looking at the scene where a student standing with a blackboard behind her, I found a contrast—a contrast between the serious cognitive assessment information on the blackboard and the affectionate cheerful students at the podium. The contrast exemplified the dual purposes of teaching in the classroom. Miss Wang worked diligently to assign Chinese and mathematics homework, grade quizzes, ensure that the children's corrections were verified and signed by their parents, and assist the children in coping with final examinations. In addition, she led the secret angel activity for months to foster a friendly, caring atmosphere and create a system in which the children aided each other at school.

The expectations of Miss Wang, her colleagues, and society are that she will push children to achieve by assigning a heavy homework load, routine quizzes, and examinations. However, she also designs activities to strengthen their sense of belonging to the class community. Her roles appear to oppose one another. Climbing high on the achievement ladder encourages competition, whereas engaging in enjoyable activities facilitates friendship among the children. Thus, competition and friendship constitute students' social networks at school and shape the dual responsibilities of teachers.

11.2 Climbing High on the Achievement Ladder

11.2.1 Pushing Students to Climb Higher on the Achievement Ladder

Why are tests highly esteemed in the education of children in ethnic Chinese communities? In countries with Confucian cultures, such as Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, China, Japan, and Korea, ability standards must be achieved to gain entrance into high schools (Educational Bureau, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, 2012; Ministry of Education, Republic of China [Taiwan], 2012; Singapore Ministry of Education, 2013). In the United States, a system of standardized tests holds school administrators and teachers accountable for student performance. By contrast, in Confucian countries such as Taiwan, Basic Competence Test, which is curriculum standards based, is used to determine high school entrance ability (Committee of the Basic Competence Test for Junior High School Students,

2012). In addition to holding schools accountable, this system holds students themselves accountable for their own academic performance. During school hours, teachers prepare students for the Basic Competence Test, and outside of school, students attend private "achievement-enhancing institutes," called cram schools, to practice their test-taking skills.

Families that can afford higher expenditures typically hire private home tutors to teach their children. The Chinese term for private tutor is "family teacher" [家教], which is similar to "school teacher" but emphasizes the home teaching location. In ancient China, wealthy families held private classes for children of relatives. In Mandarin, a family teacher is "invited" to teach at home, not "hired." The etymological root of the English term "pedagogy" can be traced back to the Greek *paidagōgo*, meaning a servant who escorts children, whereas the Mandarin equivalent of teacher is "mentor" [老師], a position of high societal recognition. With the position of mentor, four other positions constitute the traditional structure of worship and esteem: heaven, earth, emperor, parent, and mentor.

Across China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, and Singapore, the most elite high schools and universities are operated by the government. The government is obligated to provide high-quality education for an affordable tuition to all citizens irrespective of their income levels. Students from all socioeconomic backgrounds can climb the metaphorical achievement ladder to compete for entrance to top-ranked public high schools. Particularly for families with a low socioeconomic status, admission to a top high school greatly reduces tuition cost and offers children an opportunity to attend the top public universities. In another words, in countries with Confucian culture heritage, the finest high schools and universities are public. The elite are not from families of high social economic status, but are people who stand high on the achievement ladder, a position that is determined by outstanding objective test results.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) indicated that attaining education ensures high-paying job (2013). Moreover, in East Asian countries, higher education levels afford higher social status and greater respect (Chiu, 1983; Hwang, 2001; Tan & Yu, 1996; Tseng, 1998). Achievement is not limited to the student alone; academic achievement is a means through which honor is brought to parents, kin, and even neighbors and is predictive of a higher familial socioeconomic status in the future (Ho, 1959). Chapter 9 discusses this topic in greater details. Entering a top-ranked high school is the starting point for a successful career for students from all social economic levels.

Due to the high stakes of high school entrance examinations, the test format and content are critical. In consideration of the limited resources available to families of low social economic status, objective paper-and-pencil test format rather than students' portfolio is adopted as the main approach in East Asian countries (e.g., Committee of the Basic Competence Test for Junior High School Students, 2012; Singapore Minister of Education, 2013). The outcomes and format of these tests are similar to those of the traditional imperial Chinese civil service examination.

11.2.2 Imperial Chinese Civil Service Examination and Current Examinations

In educational and psychology testing and measurement area, the history of testing can be traced back to China during the Han Dynasty in 220 B.C. (Gregory, 2010). Originating from requests by imperial officers for recommendations of qualified people to serve the empire, a classification system of nine hierarchical levels [九品] gradually formed, differentiating and defining the characteristics, abilities, and quality of candidates (Fang, 1960). During the Sui Dynasty (607 A.D.), a system of civil service examinations was officially established and commoners were permitted to register for examinations on their free will. These formal civil service examinations had been administered for 1,300 years, ending in 1905, 6 years before the democratic Republic of China was established. However, the examination mentality persisted, and examinations have remained influential.

The imperial Chinese civil service examination system was an efficient, fair, and anti-feudal approach enabling ordinary people to get involved into the system to seek the possibility to rise socially and economically. The striving is exemplified in the Chinese saying, "A carp works hard and devotes its utmost to jump over the dragon gate [鯉魚躍龍門]." The spirit was reflected in a project named the "carp plan" implemented at Yung-Ping High School in New Taipei City for enhancing student competence. It also reflects in the name of a junior high school in Taipei City, the "Dragon Gate Junior High School."

Historically, all people, regardless of social status, had the right to participate in civil examinations. Generally, social and martial subjects were tested. Social subjects were tested through constructive essay writing, whereas martial subjects were assessed through martial arts performance. Social subject essays were classified into social policy, history, and classic Chinese literature. To ensure anonymity during grading, the examinee identification numbers written on answer sheets were covered. A formal ceremony was held to worship heaven and the ancestors, officially declaring the beginning of officer recruitment procedures; then the examination committee members were invited to enter the examination preparation hall [闈場], a closed area, in which to design test items. The doors and windows of the preparation hall were sealed with strips of paper, not to prevent forced entry, but to indicate that the hall was completely secured. To prevent from any leaking of testing information, examination committee members were kept in the closed and secured preparation hall from the very beginning of developing test items till the last minute when the test ends (Yu & Suen, 2005). Nowadays, it takes 40 days for university entrance examination at Sichuan province at China as an example. This formal ceremony is still held at the beginning of official examinations of all types in Taiwan and China, including high school entrance tests, university entrance tests, and officer recruitment tests.

The examination system ensured that more favorable test performance directly and closely related to a higher social status, higher political position, and higher standard of living. The saying "Once a person passes the examination and is admitted into the official service system, even the animals in his house obtain

entrance to heaven [一人得道雞犬升天]" expresses the importance of the civil service examination. People exerted their utmost to climb the test performance ladder and compete for limited resources. The highest honor was awarded to the top examinee, named "the grand first [狀元]." Because of the fierce competition, the registration, testing, and grading processes were required to be transparent and fair to ensure equal opportunity and foster hope in applicants from various backgrounds.

Spurred by the motivation to socially, politically, and economically improve familial status, people strove to climb the achievement ladder. Perseverance was equally as valuable as competence. The most vital concept behind the system was that, regardless of failures to place well, examinees always had the opportunity to retake the exam and could start afresh in spite of their background, personal history, and resume. There were stories about middle-aged men who studied exclusively for the civil service examination through these 1,000 and more years. Currently, high school graduates frequently spend a few years after graduation to study at home or full time at a private cram schools [*buxiban*, 補習班] to prepare for university entrance examinations (Chen, 2010), believing that previous failures can be washed out and victory will be attained by intense and persistent preparation.

The idea of grand first is not limited to the examination system, but appears in all career tracks; the saying, "one can stand out as the grand first on every career track" [行行出狀元], implies two meanings: (a) There are hierarchies in all career tracks. Once a field is entered, the top honor can be pursued by climbing high. (b) Academic achievement is merely one type of performance track. Academic failure is no cause for depression, because the grand first can always be pursued in any other career track of interest. Thus, this saying was conceived and has been used frequently to console others in times of academic failure.

11.2.3 Current Task of Teachers: Pushing Students up the Achievement Ladder

One hundred years after abolishing the traditional civil service examinations, the honor roll persists. Figure 11.2 depicts a modern honor roll announcement at a top public high school in New Taipei City. The honor roll was hung against the wall at the school's main entrance. The full names of those students admitted to universities are listed, following the department title of the university that they will attend.

In ancient times, examination coaches assisted people in preparing for the civil service examinations. Coaches were invited to teach at home or established private institutes, designing learning materials for the civil examinations. The test preparation materials were called "supplements of the classics for lecturing," implying that these materials were less authentic, reproduced, recomposed, and reinterpreted version of the classics.

The link between the career ladder and school level was established when the civil service examination was discontinued and replaced by the modern Chinese school

Fig. 11.2 Honor roll of students of a high school at New Taipei City, Taiwan, who were admitted to universities

system, which was established in 1912 in China (Liu, 1994) and comprises elementary school, junior high school, high school, and university. According to a political hierarchy of management, elementary and junior high schools are governed at the municipal level, high schools are governed at the provincial level, and universities are governed at the national level. This system has been functioning in Taiwan and China. The education system reflects the one and a half thousand-year-old (609 A.D. at Sui Dynasty till now) imperial civil service examination screening process that functioned hierarchically from local communities, to cities, to the capital.

Nowadays, teachers, particularly the homeroom teachers, are responsible for motivating students to achieve high grades on examinations in order to ensure students' career safety. Asian students are generally more motivated and focused in the classroom than Western students are (Fuligni, 2001; Ramburuth & McCormick, 2001). They believe that better classroom participation and performance predict greater prospective job opportunities. Eaton and Dembo (1997) found that the fear of academic failure aptly accounted for the motivation of Asian American students.

Examinations serve as filtering mechanisms at various levels of schooling. For example, in Hong Kong, performance in the fifth and sixth grades is part of a composite score used to rank students for selection by junior high schools (Educational Bureau, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, 2012). The higher the student rank is, the higher priority he/she has to be placed in a better junior high school.

Because resources are limited, competition among students is unavoidable. Teachers, particularly homeroom teachers, similar to the examination coaches of ancient China, help their students manage high school and university levels of official examinations and prepare students through mock examinations. A typical method teachers employ is to pass graded test papers home and enforce students' parents to sign in return to make sure that the parents have seen the test results. Mostly full score is 100. Figure 11.3 depicts an example of a fifth grade language arts (Chinese) midterm examination score, a frequency table of 34 students in the class, and a parental signature.

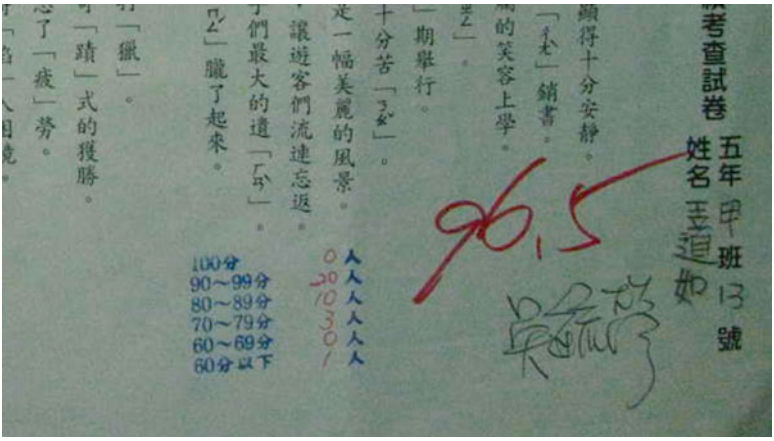

Fig. 11.3 Midterm test result of language arts (Chinese) with parental signature and frequency of a fifth grade class

11.2.4 The Value of Effort

For 18-year-old students, the university entrance examination represents the culmination of their 13 years of studying effort and implies their opportunities for success in future careers. The saying, "After ten years of bitter effort, known by no one, once you are placed in the honor roll, you will be famous nationwide [十年寒窗無人問, 一舉成名天下知]," emphasizes the association between effort and the result. A story depicting the importance of effort, commonly used as elementary language arts material, describes the efforts of Li Bai (701–762 A.D.), a genius and poet recognized as "the god of poetry" by followers. One day, the young Li Bai encountered an old woman grinding a pestle by a creek. When Li Bai asked her what she was doing, she answered that she was grinding the pestle into a needle. Li Bai further inquired how that was possible, to which the woman responded, "Only through constant devotion and effort [但需工深]." This story was later turned into the saying, "Even an iron pestle can be ground into a needle [鐵杵也能磨成針]," to emphasize the value of persistent effort. Li Bai, who has been known for his talent in poetry for more than 1,000 years, is the main character of this story, suggesting that even a gifted, godlike poet is not born as such, but rather must exert years of efforts.

One day, while I was collecting research data in a junior high school classroom, I walked into a classroom in which Mr. Chang, a language arts (Chinese) teacher, was lecturing about effort and had just written two sayings on the blackboard (Fig. 11.4). The sayings he wrote on the right, "Work turns out well because of diligence and turns out poorly because of laziness," and on the left, "Diligence creates no difficulty, whereas laziness creates no easiness," reflected the expectation that teachers must shape student character, thereby enabling students to climb the achievement ladder.

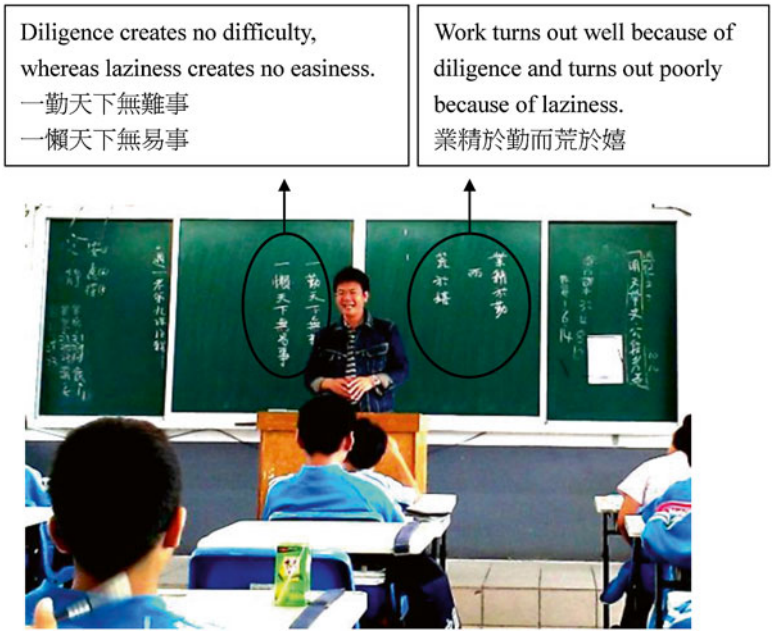

Fig. 11.4 A glimpse of a junior high school classroom where language arts (Chinese) teacher was giving a talk about the importance of diligence

Such expectations are prevalent, as the Chinese saying suggests: "Moral is never lonely and always has neighbors [德不孤必有鄰]." In a third grade classroom, two flyers posted on the left side of blackboard reminded students to "work and learn hard" and "never be afraid of failure" (Fig. 11.5). Teachers foster the attitude of diligence as well as ability and talent that transcend familial backgrounds. As indicated by Gardner (1995); Stevenson, Lee, and Stigler (1986); Uttal (1997); and Wu (2008), Asian students, teachers, and parents tend to attribute to effort as the core mechanism for success than innate ability and believe in malleable character.

In a competitive environment, students are always reminded of their relative positions in a group that indicate how high they are on the ladder and how much they have attained. Most classrooms in ethnic Chinese schools appear similar to those depicted in Figs. 11.1 and 11.4: Seats are arranged in neat rows and teachers stand in front and at the center; this setting is comparable to that of private classes that wealthy families held for the children of relatives in ancient times. The seating arrangement indicates the position of learning: Students learn from teachers, and teachers instruct and lecture students. This arrangement is similar to that of a rice field, in which rice seedlings are planted in rows.

Regarding seating arrangements, some homeroom teachers assign seat-selection priority to students according to term examination result rankings. Seat selection provides access to resources, implying that students endeavor to earn resources. Claiming a position in class depends on achievement; in another words, seating

Fig. 11.5 In a 3rd grade classroom where two flyers of "work and learn hard" and "never be afraid of failure" were posted on blackboard

arrangements are not fixed. Students continually have the opportunity to achieve a new rank and seat position when the results from the next term examination are released.

11.3 Taking Care of Each Other: Brothers and Sisters

11.3.1 Secret Angel Activity as a Symbol of the Classroom Family

In the aforementioned secret angel activity, the children in the role of master were cared for by anonymous angels through various means, such as blessing cards in their desk drawers or candy bars passed to them by a third classmate. A very touching care for angels to do would be secretly finishing the cleaning tasks which are supposed to be done by their masters. In public schools throughout mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, classrooms are cleaned by the entire class as a team. Homeroom teachers assign cleaning jobs to students who clean areas including those in the classroom, such as floors, windows, desks, the blackboard, bulletin boards, and trash cans, and the public areas outside the classroom, such as hallways, administrative offices, gardens, fields, and restrooms. Thus, angels sought to help

their masters complete assigned cleaning jobs (e.g., emptying a trash can). At elementary, junior high, and high schools, during the 8-h school day, cleaning jobs are frequently performed as a school-wide activity every day. The whole school simultaneously and cooperatively finishes the tasks. Homeroom teachers are responsible for monitoring and assessing completion.

From elementary schools to high schools, classrooms are home bases for students. Classrooms are not managed by teachers alone, but by students and teachers together. As depicted in Chap. 10, *ban-ji* (class) is a grouping unit in most grade 1–12 public schools in Taiwan and China. *S*tudents enrolled during the same school year are evenly distributed into *ban-ji* that comprises approximately 30–50 students. Students are likely to stay together and have the same homeroom teacher for at least one school year. Moreover, for some schools in Taiwan, desks and seats are provided in classrooms specifically for homeroom teachers. Some schools even do not assign homeroom teachers any other spaces than their homeroom classrooms. Students together as a *ban-ji* reside in the same classroom all day unless special equipment is required such as scientific experiments or musical instruments. Subject teachers move among *ban-jis* for instruction. The saying, "teacher for one day, father for a lifetime," suggests that the relationship between students and teachers, particularly the homeroom teacher, is similar to that of the parent and child. Under the atmosphere of family, students call their classmates "comrades in learning" [同學]. Students in higher grade levels from the same school or department are called "senior brothers and sisters in learning" [學長/學姐] by students in lower grades, and similarly, students in lower grades are called "junior brothers and sisters in learning" [學弟/學妹] by student of higher grades. In the metaphor of the *ban-ji* as a family, students perform cleaning tasks much like children assist with house chores. Likewise, university students are not exempt from being assigned certain cleaning chores on campus. Student participation in school facility maintenance is emphasized across Taiwan, China, and Hong Kong, where students, as members of their *ban-ji*, are held accountable. In Taiwan, the cleaning tasks of each *ban-ji* are organized into a school-wide contest. The degree of completion and cleanness is scored, and scores are tallied every week to determine which *ban-ji* has achieved first place. The *ban-ji* that wins first place is given a plaque of honor to hang on the classroom door (Fig. 11.6).

*11.3.2 Unity of Class (***Ban-ji***) as an Extension of Caring*

Five values and goals of school education, morality, intellect, physical fitness, community, and aesthetics, were established and emphasized since 1912 when the modern school system was established (Liu, 1994). Caring is the basis of moral and communal cultivation. *Ren* [仁] is central to Confucian teachings. The character *ren* is composed of two parts: the left radical part meaning "people" and right part meaning "two." Two people form the simplest relationship involving caring and concern. The interwoven network of caring forms a united class, *ban-ji*, that can

Fig. 11.6 Honor plaques of "the class *(ban-ji)* one of the sixth grade" indicating excellent performance in discipline and cleaning

participate as a whole group in various competitions among classes. Interclass competition is typical in schools and includes chorus and English drama contests, ball games, cheer squad competitions, tug-of-war contests, and relay races at yearly athletic meets.

At a commencement ceremony at a junior high school in Tao-Yuan County, Taiwan, graduated students entered the hall class by class. Each *ban-ji* had prepared a short class introduction that was read by the ceremony host when the class of students entered. An example of a *ban-ji* description is provided as follows:

> The class entering now is the most energetic group. We won third place in the rope skipping competition in seventh grade and were awarded 'the most vigorous class' prize during the camping activity in eighth grade. We even won first place in the basketball contest in ninth grade. Our classroom was full of laughter. We were always united to accomplish tasks. Although we were not number one at everything, we tried our best. We wish everyone a bright future.

During nonacademic activities, students are taught discipline and expertise that are worthy of exploration and attain honor. The expression of "homeroom teacher" in Chinese is "guidance teacher" [導師]. Guidance teachers at elementary, junior high, and high school levels constantly attempt to determine how to connect students and encourage cohesiveness through various group activities. Students are encouraged to contribute to team objectives. Even personal achievement is considered meritorious to the *ban-ji* as a group. I remember clearly that my junior high school class contained five students who were admitted to the prestigious Taipei First Girls' High School. This was a credit to my homeroom teacher and an

honor to my classmates. Occasionally, at alumni gatherings, when we chatted with old schoolmates, the honor may be mentioned to receive looks of admiration from friends from other *ban-jis*.

Students who were not talented were required to work harder. Frequently, guidance teachers meet with parents and help them organize to take turns accompanying the entire *ban-ji* who stays at school after school to study for extra hours during their senior year to prepare for the challenging entrance examinations. Teachers unite students, motivating them and encouraging them to perform well to honor the school.

11.4 Teachers Balancing Dual Responsibilities

Climbing the achievement ladder can facilitate obtaining higher positions politically, socially, or academically. However, this is not the true purpose of learning; the purpose of learning is not to earn a living but to live. Confucius once said in the Analects, Book I, "Isn't it a pleasure to study and practice what you have learned? Isn't it great when friends visit from distant places? Aren't you a man of complete virtue not to take offence when others fail to appreciate your abilities?" (Analects of Confucius, Book I). This passage conveys the true value of learning. Since the Sung Dynasty (Hu, 1995; Yeh, 1973), people went to "life colleges" [書院, a form of school] to learn, think, and become virtuous people [*junzi,* 君子; see Chap. 3] with the guidance of life mentors. At these schools, no paper-and-pencil examinations were administered. Students in life colleges never expected their mentors to teach skills that would enable them to pass civil service examinations. They merely studied the classics. Although these classics were tested during the civil service examinations, students in life colleges applied the values they learned from the classics, interpreting what they read and reframing their value systems. They never depended on the classics to achieve awards from the examination. Profound reflection, dialectic argumentation, and inspiration filled the time in life colleges, and students and mentors led life as Confucius advocated.

However, making a living and climbing the career ladder were unavoidable. Therefore, examination coaches instructed examinees preparing to compete for the grand first. Examination coaches and life mentors were once independent of each other and implemented their teaching tasks in their own territories without intermixing.

The divide between these two teaching roles dissolved in 1905 when the Qing Dynasty established a "modern" Western school system. The discontinuation of civil service examinations terminated the governmental recruiting mechanism. Life colleges no longer existed. Modern schools assumed the responsibility of life colleges, combining them with the objectives of civil examinations. Thus, the dual purposes of teaching were formed. The urgent task for school systems at the beginning of the twentieth century was to provide students with the skills necessary to assist the country as it moved toward modernization. Teachers as examination

coaches assist students as they compete and strive to succeed on the achievement ladder, whereas teachers as life mentors foster conscientiousness and kindness rather than compare students based on achievement or performance.

"Little teacher" is a system that most teachers throughout Taiwan and mainland China apply to balance their dual roles as examination coach and life mentor. Nearly every subject teacher in all grade levels selects a responsible student with excellent academic performance from the class to be a peer tutor, named "little teacher," who is similar to a teaching assistant. The tasks of the little teacher include collecting assignments, administering quizzes, and answering peers questions. Chinese people bestow the title of "little teacher" on students because it signifies honor, responsibility, and academic leadership. The most difficult task for the little teacher is assisting underachieving peers. To help them catch up, the little teacher works with them in pairs (e.g., assisting with a mathematics assignment) and sometimes in groups (e.g., rehearsing for an English drama or preparing a chemistry experiment). The saying, "teaching and learning are mutually accomplished (教學相長)," describes the spirit of "little teacher" that learning is not just to learn from teachers as students but also to teach as teachers. This saying is to signify that instructors and learners are mutually beneficiary in learning and teaching. Students are motivated to attain the honor being a little teacher. The system fosters a feeling of camaraderie in class that exists alongside the striving for achievement ladder.

Conclusion

In the current school system, teachers must determine an appropriate position and perspective according to which to fulfill their dual tasks of motivating students to achieve and enhancing the sense of belonging and responsibility to the *ban-ji* (class). In ethnic Chinese society, teachers, who are similar to students' second parents, never ignore the future prospects of students. The belief that education is the most effective approach for reducing poverty has been realized in ethnic Chinese society for thousands of years. Teachers perform their jobs to achieve familial and personal goals, fulfill their responsibilities to schools, and bring communities honor. Teachers seldom are revolutionists that create ideal educational utopias in which no competition or comparison occurs. Teachers frequently follow current educational policies and work diligently according to the policies and environmental constraints to motivate students to achieve academically and cultivate them to be useful members of society.

Classwork, homework, quizzes, and term examinations embody the achievement ladder. On a small scale, teachers create frequency distributions of test results within classrooms to mimic the form of final entrance examination results. On a large scale, junior high and high schools administer mock examinations to simulate entrance examinations. Students receive percentile rankings as they do after formal entrance examinations. Through simulation, students can estimate their ability and redesign their study plans to overcome the challenges. The image of grand first from the traditional civil service

(continued)

examination has been applied to the modern school system in ethnic Chinese society and brings honor to the school and community, particularly the family. Furthermore, the image persists in other career tracks, and people can strive to be grand firsts in all occupations.

However, the high stakes of entrance examinations have been criticized for the following reasons: (a) Students are under tremendous pressure while they prepare for and take the tests, thus hindering their psychological and physical development. (b) The scope of student knowledge is limited. Subjects that will not be tested are not taught or studied. (c) The testing system does not account for projects that require time, such as writings, artistic works, and scientific experiments. (d) Students are trained to select the correct answers and are not taught critical thinking and dialectic skills. (e) It is unreasonable to decide students' academic achievement by one single unified examination.

On the other hand, a fresh start is emphasized in ethnic Chinese society in education and religion as well as in entrance examinations. Students who fail the entrance examination at their graduation years might retake the test years after. A story from the Zen school of Buddhism recounts how a butcher who once slaughtered animals put down his cleaver one day because he sincerely felt that he was doing wrong and became a Buddha. The story implies that human traits or capabilities are transformable and changeable. Transformation depends on individual intention, objectives, and actions. The possibility of retaking tests suggests that a single test result is not the sole decisive factor in school admission. Previous failures can be forgotten and new life is given to people determined to succeed. Reinforcing the belief that each examination is an opportunity to renew personal status, teachers can help students strengthen willpower.

Currently in Taiwan, to balance the drawbacks of testing and to provide alternative approaches for students with diverse traits and backgrounds, two tracks for entering universities have been established for students to choose: the traditional method, which involves objective paper-and-pencil testing, and the alternative method, which entails an application process. To engage in the application process, high school seniors must take five-subject achievement tests and then apply to six departments for admission based on test rankings, personal interests, aptitudes, and performance. Each department screens then the number of applicants three times of the admitted vacancies for further interviewing, portfolio reviewing, or advanced examinations.

Because the main theme in character development is addressing challenges and overcoming obstacles collaboratively, various activities are held at schools to foster the spirit of teamwork. Individual academic achievement is considered a group honor for the entire *ban-ji* and school. Despite seemingly individual competition on the achievement ladder, teachers emphasize that achievement is a common goal. High achievers are frequently selected to be little teachers who manage assignment chores and help their peers. This system eliminates interpersonal tension in competition and enhances the sense of responsibility.

(continued)

I would like to end the chapter with a story that was reported in the Chinese Business Weekly in May 2013 (Shan, 2013) concerning the efforts of teachers at Hu-Wei Senior High School. It exemplifies the dual roles of teachers. Hu-Wei Senior High School is located in Yun-Lin County, where average income ranks in the bottom third of Taiwan. The number of people with university degrees is also in the bottom third, and the literacy rate is in the bottom second nationwide. To counter the previously poor student achievement, teachers cooperated to encourage students through a university entrance examination challenge. They designed a T-shirt emblazoned with the Chinese characters [認命], "This is fate," implying that students were born disadvantaged and therefore might as well accept the fact. If students do not work hard, they will be destined for poverty. Through continual effort, 3 years after students enrolled into the school, in 2013, three among them achieved the highest marks on the five-subject achievement tests, nine were admitted into medical school, and one was admitted to Hong Kong University. These accomplishments are comparable to those attained by students at elite schools in the capital city and were attributable to the teachers' belief in social mobility and the students' motivation to climb the achievement ladder and escape poverty. Teachers united students to reshape their destiny. Supported by the teachers, the students form a brand new life that they had never imagined. Teachers believe that success is obtained through intelligence and capabilities as well as hard work and effort. They are obligated to cultivate students' character through strengthening perseverance, hardening will, and fortifying effort as well as to enhance their academic performance.

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Chapter 12
Finding a New Identify for Teachers

Shihkuan Hsu and Tsun-Mu Hwang

Abstract Due to the high expectations of teachers in Chinese culture, teachers are highly respected and trusted. However, the role of teachers in Taiwan is gradually shifting. In order to understand the expectations of teachers, it is necessary to understand the two roles they play in traditional Chinese culture. The two roles are teachers of knowledge and teachers of people. Teachers of knowledge are responsible for instruction, the process of disseminating knowledge to students, but at the same time, teachers of people are expected to guide students on the way to become better people. Since education has become compulsory in the modern society, the teacher's role has expanded to include a wide range of additional tasks. However, the recent Western influences and new policies in Taiwan regarding teachers, such as accountability, professionalism, and advocacy for student's rights, have increased pressure and caused confusion for teachers. In doing so, the traditional role of the teacher in Chinese culture has been obscured and is at the point of being lost. Reflection on the traditional Chinese role of the teacher suggests that greater autonomy for teachers to practice the traditional functions would restore confidence in their role in modern education and fill the gap created by piecemeal adaptation of Western concepts and find a solution to the reform problem in the Chinese culture.

Keywords Good teacher • Role of teachers • Teachers in Chinese culture • Teacher professionalism • Teacher-student relationship

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12.1 The Role of a Teacher in Chinese Society

12.1.1 Teacher of Knowledge and Teacher of People

Teaching is considered a profession in the West. The profession has developed in tandem with the Western tradition of learning which focuses on the understanding of the world and the inquiry of the mind (Li, 2012). The ideal teacher in the West, exemplified by Socrates and the slave boy, is capable of eliciting the knowledge which already exists in the minds of students. Good teachers are supposed to understand the knowledge and the students and from this find the right method to help the students learn, explore, and discover more knowledge. Shulman (1987) describes this knowledge, which he calls the expert teacher's understanding, as follows:

1. The academic subjects they teach
2. General teaching strategies that apply in all subjects (such as the principles of classroom management, effective teaching, and evaluation)
3. The curriculum materials and programs appropriate for their subject and grade level
4. Subject-specific knowledge for teaching including special ways of teaching certain students and particular concepts
5. The characteristics and cultural background of learners
6. The settings in which students learn, such as pairs, small groups, teams, classes, schools, and the community
7. The goals and purposes of teaching

In Chinese culture, what is expected of a teacher, on the other hand, has a rather different focus. Confucius is regarded as the great teacher in Chinese culture. His teaching focuses on the cultivation of the student to be a better person and to be closer to virtue [近仁]. Later, during the Tang Dynasty, the famous scholar Han Yu wrote about the teacher in a famous prose "Regarding Teacher" [師說] in 801 AD, stating that a teacher's job is to instruct the meaning of Tao, to deliver the knowledge from the book, and to resolve doubts in learning as well as in life [傳道授業解惑]. In more recent years, it was considered that teachers should be both "teachers of knowledge" and "teachers of people." Teachers, therefore, not only teach knowledge and skills but guide students to become better people. Both roles are parallel and intertwined, contributing to each other, and when combined explain the character of the teacher in Chinese culture.

12.1.1.1 Teachers of Knowledge

One of the two principal goals of teaching is to instill knowledge in the minds of students. The term "teachers of knowledge," *Chin Shi* [經師], originally meant "teacher of classics," which was used in the Han Dynasty as a title for a government officer who taught Confucian classics. In the text called the *Han Book*, administrative

rules were listed including one requiring every town to set up a study (small school) [學], every county and city to set up a school [校], and every study and every school to set up a teacher of classics [郡國曰學, 縣、道、邑、侯國曰校。校、學置經師一人]. Later, the term "teacher of knowledge" was used to indicate scholars who had a specialty in a discipline and who had learned from someone distinguished and respectable.

A teacher of knowledge is expected to understand the content material as well as the extended meanings of the prose. Moreover, a teacher of knowledge should have a deep understanding of the subject and can offer a unique interpretation of the disciplinary area. Explained in modern terms, a teacher of knowledge does not just know the information in a field but also has a theory that contributes to the subject area. Such a teacher would not simply convey the content information for students, but ask questions, prompt ideas, stimulate thinking, arouse interest, and encourage appreciation of the subject. In other words, a teacher of knowledge would constantly try to explore the meaning of the material and ponder how to help the students learn. In the *Analects: WeiChang*, Confucius said, "If one can learn new things from studying the old material, one can be a teacher" [溫故而知新, 可以為師矣]. The type of teacher mentioned by Confucius in this line of text should be the teacher of the classics or teacher of knowledge.

If a teacher does not have a deep understanding of the material or the subject matter nor a thorough understanding of students' learning situations, but only repeats easily available information for students or adopts existing thoughts and merely organizes the material for students for the purpose of passing the exam, then he or she may not be called a "teacher of knowledge." At most, such teachers can be called a "teacher of study hall" [塾師] or "teacher of examination," and they are regarded as a lower-level teacher.

12.1.1.2 Teachers of People

In the Chinese view, teaching students knowledge and skill is not sufficient. A good teacher should also be a "teacher of people" [人師]. As a teacher of people, one helps the students to become a *Junzi* (see Chap. 7). A teacher of people would cultivate and advance the students in the process of becoming a greater person, not only for the benefit of the individual but also for the purpose of helping others and contributing to society. To help each student develop as a virtuous person, therefore, a teacher of people would exhibit the same virtuous quality and be capable of influencing others to follow a similar path. The Han Poetry Extra Volume portrayed a teacher of people as such "wisdom as running spring, behavior as archetypal, those who can be teacher" [智如泉源, 行可以為儀表者, 人之師也]. It indicated that a teacher of people should be both excellent in scholarship and exemplary in virtue, and therefore, they are respected by others. Teachers of people exert great influences on the students and are typically memorized by students, as exemplified by the interaction of Confucius and his disciples (Yen, 2008).

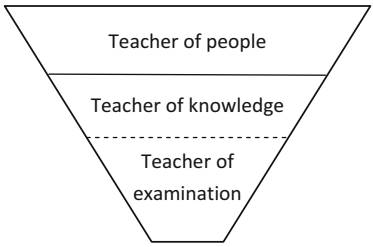

Fig. 12.1 A graphical representation of ancient Chinese' view about teacher of knowledge and teacher of person

Being able to touch people and to influence them is a higher level of achievement than merely teaching the knowledge or teaching for the examination. According to the above descriptions, in order to exert power and influence others as a teacher of people, the teacher has first to be teacher of knowledge, to have rich knowledge and deep understanding of the material or subjects, and then connect the knowledge to people and to the world around. Therefore, there is an inseparable quality of the two roles, as one is built on the other. That is, one is the foundation on which the higher level of skill is built. Based on this description of knowledge and virtue, it may be found that teachers of knowledge and teachers of people are not two completely separate concepts; rather, they can be seen as connected and may be even placed along the same continuum (see Fig. 12.1).

In ancient China, most of the people who would receive education are usually those who are aiming to become a scholar and a *Junzi* in the society. These people are unlikely to be layman and peasants. The expectations of teacher of people, therefore, were to encourage and inspire those who are already capable of studying the classic literature to be higher up in the path of pursuing cultivation in virtue. The goal of cultivating and developing students, in the modern days, may be different.

In modern days, unlike in ancient times when only a few people were allowed to go to school, the field of education has been open to common people and schools are available to everyone. At the present time in Taiwan, ten years of elementary and secondary education are compulsory for all citizens. Therefore, the meaning of teacher of people may be expanded to not only scholars but also to all the citizens. The meaning of cultivating a person has also expanded from pursuing the highest virtuous goal to taking care of all aspects of a person.

At the present, a teacher of people can be seen as a teacher who cares not only about students' learning of knowledge but also cares how students grow and develop as a whole person. When students are in need of help, the teacher first has to help sustain the students through the basic level of learning needs, such as providing food and remedial classes. Second, the teacher has to think of helping the students to improve and develop in personal and academic ways.

The relationship between the teacher of knowledge and the teacher of people can be seen as intertwined threads of a rope (see Fig. 12.2). The teacher's role expands from a lower level focusing on students' knowledge attainment and providing food and security to sustain everyday life, to a medium level emphasizing an

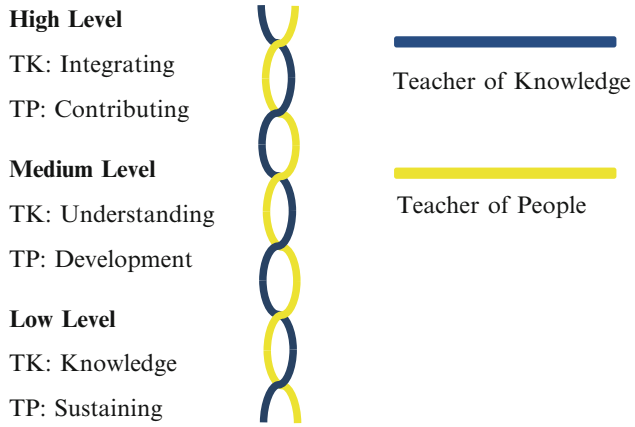

Fig. 12.2 A revised graphical representation of teacher of knowledge and teacher of people for modern days

understanding of knowledge and personal development, finally to a higher level aiming at helping students integrate multidisciplinary knowledge and connect to the world, finding inspiration and contributing to others.

12.1.2 The Trusted and Respected Teacher

Because teachers are considered such an important person in the lives of students, not only in the learning of knowledge and skills but also in the cultivation of virtue and characteristics, teachers are well respected in Chinese culture. *Xunzi* describes the well-respected teachers as "Those who are near singing; those who are far coming. People from all over the places are like a family; people who live in the territory all follow. This is what we call a teacher" [近者歌謳而樂之, 遠者竭蹶而趨之, 四海之內若一家, 通達之屬莫不從服, 夫是之謂人師].

Because of the all-encompassing role of the teacher in Chinese culture and the guidance and support they provide to their students, teachers are often regarded as second parents in a student's life. There is a Chinese saying, "one day the teacher, all life the father" [一日為師, 終身為父], which captures this cultural belief. Teaching has been a well-respected profession, and teachers are well-respected people in Chinese culture. Teachers are regarded as high as the Heaven and Earth, as high as emperors and parents.

Two examples demonstrate the veneration of teachers as second parents. The first example was when Confucius died and his students built small huts around his tomb, which signified a "three-year living by" ceremony originally completed only after the death of parents. In fact, some students stayed for more than 6 years, and the nearby areas formed a village as a result of it. A second example in more modern times shows how Chinese parents place a lot of trust in schools and teachers. During the time of the Second World War, China was a battle ground under attack from the Japanese army.

When the army of Kuomintang (KMT), the Nationalist political party in China, had to move to the southwest during the war, 8,000 students moved with their teachers from Shandong Province all the way to Taiwan (Tao & Chang, 2004). When they had a moment of peace during the move, the students would sit down under a tree or in a temple, put down their little stools, open their books, and start a class. After they have traveled over a year from 1948 to 1949, with only 5,000 students still alive, they finally reached Penghu, an island near Taiwan. While protecting the students from being sent to be soldiers, a principal and seven teachers were shot to death by the Nationalist army. These examples demonstrate the reverence of teachers.

Because of the highly regarded status of teachers in Chinese society and the potential to significantly influence the students, the teachers' own personality is also considered very important, and they are expected to hold high moral standards. Such emphasis of teachers' moral standards is evident in the teacher training programs in the old-fashioned normal school system and normal universities from the 1950s to 1990s in Taiwan where students' tuition fees were waived and paid for by the government. The life of students of normal schools included strict rules in daily lives, from classroom to dormitory, with the anticipation that they will be influencing others with their characteristics (Tien, 1976).

Even to this day, the society as a whole still holds high expectations of teachers' morals. During the earthquake in Sichuan Province in 2011, a teacher surnamed Fan ran away first and left his students behind in the classroom. This teacher was called "Running Fan" and was heavily criticized by people around China for his deficient moral conduct as a teacher (Lu, 2008). Teacher Fan, however, defended himself by stating, as a professional teacher, he teaches the subject well and did not think it was in his job description to protect his students at the expense of his own life. He declared that he was a teacher of knowledge, not a teacher of people, in order to clarify his position at the school and decision to flee during the disaster.

In another example involving life and death, a kindergarten teacher Lin Jing Chuan [林靖娟] saved her students during a tour bus accident in Taoyuan, Taiwan, in 1992 ("Lin Jing Chuan memorized and lived in the textbook," 1992). While the bus exploded and many students were trapped, Lin could have escaped alive but she went to the bus and was trying to save as many students as possible. At the end, Teacher Lin was killed while attempting to save the last four students on the bus, but many of her students she pulled from the bus survived. She was the first civilian to be memorialized in the Taipei City Martyrs, and a statue honors her at National Taipei University of Education where she graduated. The reason why Teacher Lin was memorized was because of her dedication to her students at the expense of her own life.

12.1.3 Teachers in Contemporary Chinese Culture and Schools

The tradition of expecting teachers to carry out the dual role of teacher of knowledge and teacher of people has continued into the twentieth century and is widely practiced in many Chinese heritage countries. In addition, the dual roles of Chinese teachers

have been observed in areas influenced by Chinese culture. In *Teaching the Chinese Learner*, Watkins and Biggs (2001) documented several studies of teachers in Hong Kong and China to capture the essence of Chinese teachers. In one chapter of the edited book, Ho (2001) investigated the authoritarian nature of Chinese teachers, and found that Chinese teachers are both strict in class and loving after class. Many of the award-winning teachers prize themselves as loving teachers. In another chapter, Cortazzi and Jin (2001) found that in Wuhan, China, although teachers have only limited resources and have to teach in large classrooms, many teachers provide a lot of out-of-class support for students. Watkins and Biggs (2001) provide many examples of how Chinese teachers continue in both roles (also see Chap. 11).

The dual roles of teachers are also supported by the administrative system in schools, especially in the role of homeroom teachers. In China and Taiwan, from elementary school to senior high school, a homeroom teacher is assigned to each class. The homeroom teacher typically takes care of a class of students for two years in elementary school and three years in junior and senior high school. The homeroom teacher supervises the students in the morning, during the day, and after class answers parents' calls. The homeroom teacher and students participate in all class events as a group, such as sports, performances, and outings. If a student has a behavior problem or is falling behind in terms of academic achievement, it is the job of the homeroom teacher to diagnose the situation, devise a solution, and seek assistance if necessary. Since homeroom teachers are the point of contact with the parents regardless of the subject or if another teacher is providing instruction, the parents hear first from the homeroom teacher, and all follow-up is communicated through the same channel. Homeroom teachers chair the Parent-Teacher Association meetings, explain the school policies and class activities to the parents, and organize the resources and help provided by parents. They serve as the liaison between school and parents.

For students who live under the poverty line, homeroom teachers are required to make an effort to help the students. For example, teachers in mountainous area in Taiwan often stay after school to help the students do their homework because they have no desks at home, help them buy and keep bus cards to make sure they can go home, and keep their students' subsidies from the government so that their parents are unable to spend the money on alcohol. These teachers often take the job of caring for their students seriously, especially when the students' own parents have not provided adequate support for their children.

12.2 The Struggle of Teachers in a Changing Society

12.2.1 Historical Review of Teachers' Pressure and Struggle

Although there are ideals for teachers in Chinese culture, teachers live with pressure and struggle to maintain this level. Even in ancient times, the effort to achieve the ideal was not without challenges. On one side, there was the inspiration to achieve Confucius' ideal as being teachers of knowledge and teachers of people. On the other side, there were political structures and examination systems, headed by

the emperor, as a way to distribute power, resources, and status. The political structures and examination system usually defined the content to be studied and set up the rules and standards for evaluation. Therefore, intellectuals and scholars in Chinese culture, both in the past and in the present, have never been able to function independently of political structures and examination systems. Especially when the political power is authoritarian, intellectuals can be trapped by teaching only the knowledge and skills necessary for the exams.

Given the tension which grows out of social and political forces, there have been many angry reactions from the intellectuals towards the dominant political forces. For hundreds of years, suppression by the emperor and the dynastic political system had been the source for many movements to protect and maintain the Confucian tradition and to follow the ideals of teachers of people. In Sung Dynasty (960–1279 AD), especially during the time of the great scholar Zhu Xi [朱熹], protection of the Confucian ideal became a strong force for action which continued into Ming and Qing Dynasties. There have been intellectuals who resisted the confinement of the political power and sought freedom to follow Confucian ideals. There have been numerous movements which aimed to "respect virtues" and "learn about the way (Tao)" in society (Yu, 1987). These thoughts formed the foundation of the movement against the invasion of Western thought, which was the effort against direct adoption of foreign ideas without integration into the Chinese tradition. Eventually, these movements pushed for revolution at the end of Qing Dynasty (about 1850–1910) and created the new liberal movement based on freedom and democracy in the early Republic of China (Lee, 1996; Lin, 1983; Yu, 2007).

After the Republic of China was established (after 1911), views towards teachers' jobs gradually changed because of the influence of Western thought. Teaching gradually came to be viewed as a profession, and the normal school system including teachers colleges was established to educate teachers. All of this can be seen as a part of a reorganization of education including new technical colleges and universities, and it was supported financially by the government. Students were assigned teaching jobs upon graduation. Despite the change to the normal school system, the focus on the values of teachers of knowledge and teachers of people held. However, because of the financial support of the government and the mission of educating the future citizens, the political influence on the development of teacher was even stronger. Therefore, the traditional struggle of "keeping the way" or "following the power" for the teachers did not cease; rather, it became more intense in the twentieth century. The threats from the political power and the examinations pressure have created a continuous struggle for teachers and students in Chinese culture. This has been the case for all the Chinese cultural countries and regions, including China, Taiwan, Singapore, and Hong Kong.

Under such circumstances, a great teacher in this day and age has to not only fulfill the requirements of the political demands and examination culture but also balance a liberal education with a general education, develop students' independent interests and individuality, and cultivate openness and freedom of thinking. On one hand, the teacher should be able to help the students to acquire knowledge and pass the exam, and on the other hand, the teacher needs to cultivate the students

to be a "great virtue without officer" [大德不官] and a person with dignity [風骨] and character that can help many people and serve the greater society.

12.2.2 Professionalism: The Changing Benchmark and Identity for Teachers

12.2.2.1 Professionalism and Teacher Responsibility

The concept of the professional teacher was imported from the West (e.g., *Holmes Group Report*, 1986; *A Nation Prepared*, 1986). As a multi-party political system based on democratic principles was implemented in Taiwan, society as a whole became more open during the 1980s. The traditional normal school system for training teachers was challenged and, ultimately, transformed. The request for a more open system for teacher education was strong, and the concept of teacher professionalism gradually became widespread. What teachers should do was written into objective criteria and standards and open for examination by the other teachers, academics, authorities, and parents. On the other hand, based on the foundation of professionalism, teachers' rights and independence had to be acknowledged, disciplinary professional organizations were formed, and financial safety for teachers was all but guaranteed by the government. Furthermore, labor unions were formed for teachers, and the teachers' rights and obligations were negotiated with the government.

When implicit expectations of teachers became explicit job descriptions and negotiated work requirements, conflict ensued. For example, currently many teachers, especially homeroom teachers, spend a lot of time helping students, such as giving remedial lessons after school, talking to students with emotional and behavioral problems, and working with parents to help the students. Good teachers do even more, such as finding extra funding to pay for food and school supplies and tutoring the students for free until they are capable of learning on their own. When the government began to define the responsibilities of professional teachers, however, they started to regulate the working hours, including when and how teachers should answer phone calls from parents. For example, the Ministry of Education in Taiwan once requested a nonprofit parents' organization to propose a set of "Job Rules for Teachers," including requirements that teachers should take all parents' phone calls up to 10:00 PM, but many people felt that the rules were absurd and unnecessary (United Daily News, 2011, June 21).

In Taiwan, teacher's professional evaluation has been open for teachers to participate voluntarily since 2006. The number of teachers had increased steadily in the first few years. However, the number of teachers participating reached a plateau and did not increase much from 2011 to 2012. A survey was conducted to examine the teacher's attitudes towards professional evaluation. Many teachers reported that they agreed in theory that teachers should receive professional evaluation, but in practice, they did not want to participate because it took too much valuable time from their busy schedule of teaching and managing students (Chin, Chang, Wu, & Gou, 2013).

12.2.2.2 Professionalism and Content of Teaching

Another change that came with professionalism was related to the content and methods of teaching. Professional teaching includes subject matter knowledge, methods of teaching, pedagogical knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987). These concepts delineate and shape the core curriculum in teacher education, as they establish a systematic and scientific basis for training teachers. Emerging disciplines, such as instructional technology, learning sciences, and educational sciences, have attempted to make teaching more empirical, technological, and procedural, and these new fields are starting to make a contribution to teacher education as well. Given these recent developments, the teacher as a professional, knowledge worker, and technical practitioner is a role that has been reinforced and amplified.

The traditional Chinese approach to teaching is losing its dominance and in many schools is even disappearing. As the emphasis on professionalism grows, teachers are being regarded less by their in-depth knowledge nor their virtuous conduct, traditionally an essential issue, but rather by externally accountable behaviors and performance indicators. Under the umbrella of objective evaluation standards, teachers are increasingly evaluated by procedures and metrics, all of which are outside the traditional Chinese conception of teaching. The achievement of their students, especially the results of high-stakes testing, is one of these. Although there is a talk about emphasizing students' individual differences as well as the development of students' ability of self-regulation, testing is still a means to an end, to achieve the predefined goals more effectively. With the prevailing influence of globalization, these goals and methods are being redefined according to the needs of the knowledge economy and global markets. This epochal change has resulted in the diminished appreciation of traditional Chinese values.

This type of professionalism is not necessarily good for teachers. The pressure from the political requirements and market demands has gradually expanded teachers' job descriptions and made their schedules overwhelming. While their job requirements have increased, however, the job of teaching still includes many technical and routine tasks. Many of the evaluation criteria to assess teachers' professional accountability and performance are actually designed with a hidden teacher-proofing goal (Darling-Hammond, 1985; Fergusson, 1994). The situation is no different in Taiwan. Following the school reform movements from 2001 in Taiwan, government agencies such as Ministry of Education and the Taipei City Bureau of Education, as well as parent organizations, have demanded professionalism of a similar nature from teachers. The irony is this type of accountability-oriented professionalism is going the opposite direction of teachers' professional development. When teachers can only process technical matters, performing observable and measurable tasks, and are often bound by tedious record keeping, they may be pushed away from their essential job of taking care of students. For teachers, then, it has become harder to develop a sense of empowerment, and the feeling of being honored as a teacher of people is being lost.

12.2.2.3 Impact of Professionalism on Students

Teacher professionalism is problematic for students. When teachers need to learn and implement content and procedures with multiple orientations, they spend a considerable amount of time completing the lessons and meeting the standards. As a result, the time they spend on students is frequently sacrificed. Moreover, both teachers and schools have to invest more resources in supporting and implementing the process of gathering evidence for evaluation. When there are not enough resources in small schools or schools in remote areas, the discrepancy widens the gap between the haves and the have-nots. While the students from the regular and well-off families can seek additional help from private tutors and cram schools, students from poor and disadvantaged families would not be able to afford the extra expense for supplemental classes.

The inequality between the rich and poor is increasing in Taiwan. The number of families who have fallen below the poverty line is also increasing, from about 67,000 in 2001 to 144,000 in 2013 (Monthly Bulletin of Interior Statistics, 2013). More students are living with single parents or grandparents. Teachers now have greater responsibility to help students with family problems, especially in terms of grades, food, and emotional needs. The government has various programs to help poor children, but many of them require involvement of the teachers. As described in Chap. 6 of this book, there are "Lighting for Angels" programs where the government provides funds for schools to stay open late at night in order for teachers to take care of poor children. In addition, the number of children from mixed families, defined as a mother or a father from another country, is also increasing. According to the Ministry of Education, the percentage of elementary and secondary school children from immigrants increased from 1.9 % in 2004 to 9.2 % in 2012 (Ministry of Education, 2012). These students are often called "new Taiwanese children." These students present ethnic diversity and academic and identity challenges for teachers (also see Chap. 5). With ever-increasing demands on the teachers, from Western professionalism and greater competition during high-stakes testing, teachers of current educational systems burn out faster than ever, and many decide to withdraw from the profession physically or mentally.

The government is aware of the negative impact that the culture of examination has on the direction of education. At times, the Ministry of Education in Taiwan has promoted different directions for evaluation of students. For example, in the recent school reforms of elementary to junior high school curriculum, the government has switched the content of high school entrance examination from testing complicated knowledge to testing basic competences and opening up more choices for colleges and departments to select students based on multiple methods rather than the one-time examination score only. Teachers and educators, similarly, noticed the trend of overemphasis on empirical, procedural, and technological aspects of teaching. Being loaded with so many new requirements, teachers do not have the time to engage in philosophical and ethical reflections on current practice. The result of this lack of philosophical reflection makes the linkage between examination systems, political benefits, and corporate requirements even tighter.

12.2.3 Democracy: The Rising Power of Students and Parents

One of the major changes in Taiwan is the increasing impact of democracy. The call for greater democracy has been a major political issue in Taiwan over the last two decades. After martial law was lifted in 1987, there was a demand for greater freedom and democracy in the society as a whole and in education in particular. Several aspects of the educational system became the target of reformers. Reformers hoped to change the long-dominant role of normal school system in teacher development, the issue of physical punishment, the extreme competition of high-stakes examinations, and the overemphasis on testing in teaching. Over the last 25 years, numerous changes have been made in educational policy and practice as a result of the new emphasis on democratic principles.

One of the major propositions of democratic movements is to ensure the rights of students and strengthen the power of parents. After martial law was lifted, many opinion groups and organizations representing the stakeholders in education emerged. One of the major advocacy groups "Humanitarian Educational Foundation" [人本教育基金會] was established in 1989 with the goal of scrutinizing schools and uncovering the "inhuman treatment of students." Based on Western models, eliminating corporeal punishment was one of their major proposals, and in 2006 they pushed the legislature to amend the "Educational Fundamental Act" by adding a clause called "Policy of Zero Corporeal Punishment." With the addition of this clause, using hands, whips, bamboo, and other objects to physically punish students or using any verbal language to scold the students can be considered violent and illegal. While the idea was noble, the new approach was not without problems. Many teachers are very used to use some tools of punishment as a sign of authority, although they do not actually use it on students. Taking away the tools the teachers often use to teach or manage children may have broader impact on teachers' feelings and behavior. Without any in-depth investigation or analysis of the practices in Taiwanese schools, the sudden passing of the law left many teachers miserable, and the establishment of the law was criticized about its legitimacy (Chen, 2008; Guo, 2008). With the rising of democratic movements, it is easier for parents and students to scrutinize the teacher's behavior in class and report any misconduct to the school authority, city government and commissioner, or media reporters. Many teachers are confused and could not differentiate clearly the differences between the management, discipline, and punishment of the students. In some instances, teachers have given up managing or disciplining students, and some unruly students even shout at and hit the teachers (Lihpao, 2010).

With the rising of the democratic movements, parents have been given more rights on campus. As democratic policy groups demanded educational reforms in the 1990s, the government responded with reforms in 2001. The school reform called "Grade 1–9 Curriculum Guidelines" replaced the administrative structure that has been in place since 1929. The regulations of what was called Nine-Year School Curriculum Reform gave more power to parents. With the new system, parents can formally participate in school decision-making processes, including hiring

teachers, administrators, and textbook selection. While this change opened up the school to the community, it also invited trouble and created conflict. Parents, who now have higher educational attainment and offer more democratic policy proposals, feel that if they disagree with the teachers they can openly voice their opinions. Schools and teachers now constantly face parents' complaints. The matter became worse when the city government of most major urban areas in Taiwan established direct phone lines for residents to complain about city affairs, including educational issues. Any parent who is dissatisfied with teachers or schools can pick up the phone and dial the direct line to city government. Typically, city governments pass the complaints to the school, and a reply is usually required within three working days. The easy access for citizens, although it pleases the citizens and probably increases votes for the politicians, presents a serious disturbance for schools and teachers.

With the increased power of students and parents, supposedly by the democratic enthusiasts, the status of schools and teachers in Taiwan suffered. Without serious reflection on the meaning of teachers and teaching, the honor and pride of being a teacher, especially the traditional Chinese status of being a teacher, has been damaged and even gradually disappearing.

12.3 Hopes for the New Identity of Chinese Teachers

12.3.1 Reflecting on Teacher's Role in Historical and Social Context

Given the pressure from many directions, it is difficult for a teacher to find a comfortable role or an identity. Based on insights from the traditional Chinese point of view, professional teaching should not be limited to technical skills to fulfill the requirements of high-stakes exams and authorized knowledge in the textbooks. The role of a teacher should go beyond political and social forces, examination culture, and the confinement of teacher professionalism. Not only should teachers pay attention to the requirements for professional performance, but they should reflect on the context from a societal and historical perspective.

Teaching in the twenty-first century now focuses more on the students' participation in the real world, and learning is certainly more situated and contextualized in broader social and occupational issues. While there is nothing wrong about such a focus, it could be problematic if teachers mindlessly carry out tasks without reflection about the purpose of teaching and seeking insight about the whole person development of students. Without such reflection as a premise, focusing on the effectiveness of learning and instructional process will undoubtedly push the teaching profession further towards the technocratic aspects of policy and practice, thereby making education mainly a tool for global economic development.

From Chinese Confucian tradition and the ideal of teacher of people, the purpose of teaching is not to ensure students a winning ticket nor to serve them like businesses

serving customers, but to treat a student as a whole person and cultivate them as people. Throughout the process of education, a student should maintain a lively spirit, starting from learning the knowledge, affection, and virtues and then gradually expanding to be a person with a commitment to independence as well as possession of the ability to better others (*lì ren da ren*) [立人、達人]. People with such qualities will find it easy to obtain professional knowledge and skills, develop a career, and prosper in their chosen fields. At this time in history as much as in the past, the Chinese traditional view concerning cultivation of a person contributes to the success of students.

12.3.2 Teachers' Professional Development

With the acknowledgement of the goal and role of teachers from Chinese historical and social context, it is natural to recognize that the teachers of people, whose role is intertwined with teacher's knowledge, should continuously improve themselves, whether it is in the area of subject matter knowledge, instructional methods, or student learning. This effort echoes the recent calls for teachers as learners (Kwo, 2010), teachers as reflective practitioners (Adler, 1991), and teacher as researchers (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990).

The ways that teachers begin and maintain the enthusiasm to learn are an issue that has puzzled many researchers, and yet the answer still remains a mystery. There does not seem to be a single path to become a great teacher. In reality, there are many great teachers who are devoting their lives teaching and helping the students. As Fuller (1969) pointed out, there are recognizable stages of teacher development. Great teachers have concerns about not only their own classes but also the greater communities. This vision is close to what the Chinese have in mind in the concept of a good teacher. However, knowing the outcome of teacher development still does not offer a definite path or the steps teachers can take to get there. Perhaps it is a personal journey that no single path can be foretold.

If there is no single path that can be followed, perhaps asking teachers to achieve exactly the same standards at the same time is not the best way to encourage mastery. While standardization may be able to produce better than average teachers who can, at least on the surface, meet the minimal requirements, it may not produce anything more substantial. It is possible that the methods to standardize average teachers may not be suitable for all teachers and might produce damaging effects for great teachers.

One of the possibilities to encourage good teachers is to acknowledge them. In most schools, a few good teachers may be recognized through government competitions and reward programs, but many of them, in Chinese society and maybe elsewhere, are quietly doing their jobs. If a teacher can be recognized and made known to others, perhaps it can improve their professional enthusiasm as well that of others.

Establishing professional learning community is one of the methods widely adopted in both Eastern and Western societies to encourage teacher professional

identify and development. Having a group is wonderful, but how such communities encourage and support good teachers demands attention.

12.3.3 The Support from the Government and the Public

Teachers do not operate in a vacuum. Besides teaching the students, teachers work within the school system, follow the government regulations, and face parents and other representatives of society. If there is no mutual trust and respect, it is difficult for teachers to perform their teaching jobs, let alone to develop and excel. For teachers to grow and prosper, the society as a whole and especially the governmental and administrative officials need to place greater trust in the teachers.

Currently in Taiwan, societal support for teachers is limited. With the increasing demand for democracy for people and the rising power of parents and students, teachers are under constant scrutiny and face public criticism. With the adoption of laws to protect the students and more convenient phone lines established for parents to report problems, it is easier than ever for teachers to be reported and become engaged in conflicts with parents, school administrators, and law enforcement personnel. The media is one of the major culprits in making the problem worse. While the majority of the teachers in Taiwan are good, a few step over the line. The instances of problem teachers, especially in a culture that has high moral demand for teachers, are often magnified and broadcast non-stop on news channels and listed as headlines in news media websites. These lasting and damaging reports are not balanced by the occasional positive article about good teachers in the news media. The effort and the effect of the majority of hardworking teachers can be therefore overlooked and downplayed. While many parents and people still hold high regard for teachers, the social status of teachers, which was established throughout the Chinese history, is eroding.

The government, however, has not reflected on the issue of the teachers' status from a historical and cultural perspective. The policies so far are doing more harm than good to restore the status and value of teachers. For example, because of the persistently low birth rate in Taiwan and in an effort to avoid future teacher layoffs, the government has hired more part-time and substitute teachers for elementary and secondary schools. The quality of these temporary teachers is uneven, and parents have turned to private schools or cram schools for solutions. Instead of passively watching the number of students shrink and for the teachers to lose jobs, the government should take this opportunity to devise a new system for training and certifying teachers. In addition, the government can be more active in reducing the class size, establishing expert and mentoring teacher systems, providing more systematic support for new teachers, and establishing more flexible helping systems for students.

With the reduced class size and continuing school reform, this is a good time for reflection and action. It is essential to have an awareness of teachers' role in the culture and history and reconnect the trust and support teachers need with the growth

and development of students. If the efforts of more good teachers can be recognized and supported, their enthusiasm will grow stronger, and the whole educational system will benefit.

Conclusion

Teachers enjoy a high level of status in Chinese society. The status of the teacher is based on the relationship of the teacher to the society, the foundation of which is cultivation, not professional development. Strategies emphasizing the recent call for professionalization of teaching, reports describing the differences between profession and non-profession, committees establishing performance assessment systems to satisfy the government, and schools of education using scientific research to uplift teacher's value are based on support from external sources. Although these external strategies may raise the status of the teachers according to professionalism, according to the Chinese traditional view about teachers, teacher's values and reputations should be raised from within. Teachers in modern Chinese schools should enjoy more autonomy to reflect on their own goals of cultivating the students to become a greater contributor to the society. Therefore, a teacher education program should train students to move from teachers of knowledge to teachers of people. The government and society as a whole should also support the effort to help the teachers to achieve these goals. Reflecting and adapting the traditional Chinese cultural role of the teacher may produce a solution to the reform problem endemic to Confucian heritage societies in the advent of globalization.

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Chapter 13
Conclusion

Shihkuan Hsu

Abstract In order to understand the meaning of education in Chinese culture, the concept of cultivation was analyzed. Three factors influencing the Chinese practice of education emerged from the review of the concept of cultivation: the transformable quality of human nature, the high expectation of self-cultivation, and the intertwined paths of virtue cultivation and the social mobility ladder. While virtue cultivation is the focus from prenatal existence to elementary education, effort for studying and preparing for examinations is the focus of secondary education. Tentative explanations have been offered for children unable to follow the traditional path, the pursuit of individuality in Chinese education, and the existence of virtue cultivation in current educational practice. As a result of this renewed understanding of the importance of cultivation for education, reformers should revisit the topic so as to find a new direction for contemporary Chinese education.

Keywords Chinese culture • Chinese education • Goals of education • School reform • Virtue cultivation

13.1 The Problem We Face Today

The Chinese student bent over a science book is a common sight, so frequent that it is now a stereotype. The image has a long tradition from early Chinese immigrants to Western countries to their Chinese descendants today (Garcia Coll & Marks, 2009). In the USA and other Western countries, Chinese parents and children continue to manifest this behavior, recently portrayed in the book of *Battle Hymn of the Tiger Mother* (Chua, 2011). These hardworking Chinese youth can be seen pouring over their textbooks, and their commitment and endurance while pursuing admission to prestigious universities are legendary. In addition to Taiwan and China, this behavior can be also found in other countries which share Confucian heritage, such as Japan, Singapore, and Korea (Osajima, 2005; Schneider & Lee,

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2009). The reason for this enduring behavior is historical, philosophical, and cultural. It has roots in the unique view of Chinese education as cultivation.

The behavior of the Chinese learner has both positive and negative sides. The positive outcome of this behavior is that it produces top scores and high-level academic achievement. The success of Chinese students can be seen in their top-ranked performance in international comparisons (Martin & Mullis, 2013; OECD, 2013). The negative outcome of this behavior is the intense pressure associated with obtaining the high scores. Academic pressure in the school systems of Chinese heritage countries has been criticized by people living in these cultures, as evidenced by the educational reform movements over the last two decades in Hong Kong, Singapore, Shanghai, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan (Cheng, 2003; Mok, 2006; So, Kim, & Lee, 2012). The intensive competition triggered repeated questioning about the value of achievement and the goal of education, especially at the time of globalization.

The pressure has spawned reform movements. As governments try to improve and reform the national curriculum and implement new policies, Western educational ideas are often introduced and adopted. In the case of recent school reform in Taiwan, ideas such as integrated curriculum and competence-based guidelines are mainly based on Western educational theories and practice (Chou & Ching, 2012). Introducing reforms based on Western theories of teaching and learning, however, has created new problems. Simply changing the curriculum, subjects, and schedules, without connecting to the existing culture of the school and teacher is one of the main causes of the failure of recent reforms. Adoption of Western ideals and teaching methods and the expectation that teachers make the necessary changes has been a futile effort over the last ten years of curriculum reform in Taiwan (see Chaps. 7 and 11). To begin to disentangle the problem, it was necessary first to understand where the traditions came from and what they are and how these traditions are intertwined in people's practice and the supporting systems and then analyze the problems to find the insights into solutions. This process has only just begun. The first step is to examine the meaning of education and the concept of cultivation in Chinese culture.

The term cultivation captures the meaning and scope of the Chinese view of education. Education as cultivation indicates that education for the Chinese includes the numerous aspects of the growth and development of a person, and it is a lifelong process which was supported by the society with various means and systems (see Chap. 1). This Chinese educational and social structure fostered virtue cultivation as a goal of life for intellectuals for thousands of years.

Cultural traditions are intertwined with the values and beliefs of people, and they are embedded in the social systems. In the past, observers have documented the practices of Chinese learners and teachers as well as their interactions in various contexts, especially in cross-cultural and comparative education studies (Li, 2012; Stevenson & Stigler, 1992; Watkins & Biggs, 2001). These observations show some patterns, and the patterns indicate some underlying rules. The rules suggest directions or inclinations of values, and the directions and inclinations of values imply long-cherished philosophies. Therefore, based on this perspective, this book has examined the hardworking Chinese learner phenomena from the assumption of the human nature from ancient philosophies, then from the goal of education as cultivation of virtue, and finally from the intertwined ladder of self-cultivation and social

mobility from prenatal through secondary school education. This analysis from historical, anthropological, and educational points of view has resulted in an improved understanding of the goal education in Chinese culture and its implication for modern education.

13.2 What We Have Learned

13.2.1 Human Nature Is Transformable

In this book, the starting point of the discussion of cultivation is human nature. Chapter 2 presents a discussion of human nature from different Chinese philosophies, including Confucian, Mencian, legalist, and Mohist. By examining theories of acquired habits, original goodness and evil human nature, and the simple and true theory of Taoism, it was suggested that people are able to change and transform their nature. Confucianists proposed that there are many virtuous qualities, and the highest level of virtue, *ren*, was the goal of life. Taoists advocated reaching the state of quiescence to achieve internal moral integrity. Furthermore, it is possible that human capability and competence can be enhanced and virtue can be pursued at the same time. With the effort to engage in continuous learning, people can reach the high level of virtuous state as the sage king or the sage being (see Chap. 3).

To pursue and to cultivate virtue, one has to constantly engage in learning. Confucius particularly stressed the value of active learning, although he did not think that studying would produce suffering. From Confucius' point of view, learning is work but an enjoyable task. It was not until Mencius, a philosopher in the tradition of Confucianism, that the goodness or badness of human nature enters debate. At a later time, Xunzi, a Confucianist who has a profound influence on legalism, proposed the idea that people need to endure the hardship in order to learn well.

In congruence with past empirical findings, Chinese parents and students, compared with their Western counterparts, seem to favor the concept of development, of change, and of options for change of a person's ability or predisposition, and effort has a greater role in improving it (Salili, Chiu, & Lai, 2001; Stevenson & Stigler, 1992). With this view of life, it is possible to suggest that the Chinese believe more strongly that human nature is transformable than their Western counterparts. Therefore, it is possible for people to change, improve, and transform using self-cultivation and self-perfection until reaching the state of *Junzi*, and with further effort people can become saints or sages.

13.2.2 Becoming Good Is the Goal of Education and Cultivation

Because of the transformable nature of humans, reaching the highest state of goodness is possible and the process of its pursuit is admirable. The pursuit of virtue has been the goal of intellectuals for well over a thousand years in Chinese culture.

The virtuous qualities such as *ren*, justice, rite, wisdom, trust, and many other traits are regarded as important qualities for learned people. The goal of virtuous pursuit is not for the benefit of individuals, but for the benefit of others, including those in the society and the country.

The phrase "virtuous pursuit" may need further explanation. When Confucianists insist that the purpose of a *Junzi*, or gentleman scholar, is to contribute to the welfare of the society, the claim is not based on the assumption that group is more valuable than individual self – that is, collectivism; nor each individual is of same weight in jural-political status, and each individual is ascribed with ultimate value – that is, individualism. Confucianism argues that a *Junzi* sacrifices for others because it is impossible to withstand the suffering of other people. He cannot help but rush to the boy about to fall into a well. He acts in order to stay true to his own feelings. He loves someone not because that someone would reciprocate. There is no mention of collectivism whereby one's individuality disappears in some shared universality. Neither is the empathy based on a philosophy of human rights that sees each individual as equal. This is best elucidated in Mencius' argument that a *Junzi* stays away from kitchen because he could not bear to hear the sound of the animal being slaughtered. Mencius of course does not assume that a *Junzi*'s empathy springs from sharing of equal rights with the chicken or pigs. Confucian morality is unilateral rather than bilateral. The Confucian moral development is about expanding one's ability to empathize with others. At the opposite end of *Junzi*, a small man or *Xiaoren* is the one who has not learned to feel the emotions of others. A gentleman scholar acts according to his heart's content. A Confucian is a supreme individualist (see Chap. 3 for more discussion about *Junzi* and *Xiaoren*).

Elaboration of virtue pursuit is plentiful in Chinese literature as well as richly portrayed in drama, opera, and children's stories. The children's song about learning quoted in Chap. 2, the children's poems "Watching the Swimming Fish in the Pond" quoted in Chap. 5, and the phrases about quiescence that children recite in Chap. 6 are examples of how the encouragement and cultivation of virtuous thinking and conduct (such as caring for fish) starts early in children's education. Cultivating virtue is not only a theme of philosophical and theoretical discussions but also a practice in Chinese culture.

13.2.3 The Intertwined Path to Becoming Good

Junzi is a sought-after personality trait. In Chinese history, people with great capability to learn, especially those with the potential to become *Junzi*, are not only highly regarded but also sought-after by those who are looking for people to serve the country. To assess those with virtue to serve in the political system, ancient literature was chosen to be the subject of examinations in the selection of officers for the emperor. As early as the Han Dynasty (about 200 BC), the classical works were used as the subject matter being tested in the Civil Service Examination. Since the Yuan Dynasty (about 1300 AD), the *Four Books*, including *Analects of Confucius*,

Mencius, *Daxue (The Great Learning)*, and *Zhongyong* (*the Doctrine of the Mean*), were designated as the test material for the official exam (see Appendix).

Those who obtained the official posts are often given power, money, and status. The intertwined relationship between the virtuous pursuit and the meritocratic system, exemplified by the Civil Service Examination System, has for generations given great hope to parents to encourage their children to climb the social ladder (see Chap. 9). Because a person's nature and talent can be changed and improved by dint of personal effort (see Chap. 4), there was a strong emphasis on the exertion of the individual (Li, 2012). Pushing the children to study hard so they can pass their exams, therefore, became the job of Chinese parents, and the result was academic pressure for Chinese children.

13.2.4 The Focus on Virtue Cultivation from Prenatal to Elementary Education

The expectation of having a child that is equipped with the nature and ability to become the virtuous sage is the goal of Chinese parents. It seems that starting from an early period of time, possibly as early as the Zhou Dynasty (about 1000 BC), there have been writings about promoting the health of the mother to ensure and improve the health of a baby. The influence of pregnant woman on the unborn has been documented and followed by many families. The care for the mother was especially strong for the queens who bore a future king. The moral quality of the king has to be ensured at the time when the baby was conceived. Not only the physical health of the mother but also the mental health was of great importance for the baby. What the mother eats, sees, and does have the potential to influence the health of the baby, including the future development of personality. The idea of prenatal education spread from the royalty to the general public during the Autumn and Spring Era (about 700 BC), and it was accompanied by the rising status of the traditional Chinese medicine, a practice which provides medical care but also knowledge and guidance for parents from the medical point of view about the way to create a healthy and virtuous child. The focus on the mother in health care and social beliefs persists till this day.

Modern practices based on these beliefs are plentiful. There are many taboos and prohibitions for pregnant women today, such as to avoid lifting weights and exposure to violent movies or inappropriate music. After the delivery of the baby, women should have 30 days of complete rest to ensure the recovery of the body and to care for the baby. Thirty-day centers, an after-birth service that combines childcare and rest for the mother, are more popular than ever, and when families are unable to afford 30-day centers, they make arrangements for mother and baby to stay with relatives or in-laws to stay for the specified time period. Before the children reach age one, there are several rituals to symbolize the good personality of child, such as courage, strength, and receiving good fortune and support from others. At the time

they are one year old, they will be given a chance to show their innate pursuit of future career [抓周]. The care of the child and the fulfillment of ceremonies are mixed together.

Beliefs about child development start to change in kindergarten. At this time in Taiwan, as described in Chap. 5, many parents begin to select one of the two major paths into education, one focused on academic training and the other concerned with the training of moral development. The two kindergarten schedules explained in Chap. 5 represent these two approaches to kindergarten. In Stevenson and Stigler's research (1992), the American mothers start early on giving children academic skill training at young age but change to a hands-off approach when the children start elementary school. Chinese and Japanese mothers, on the other hand, do not give children much academic training as they focus on personality development. When the children start the elementary school, however, the Chinese and Japanese mothers work hand-in-hand with the teacher to help the children on the academic work. It seems that this perception and practice in educating the children in Chinese society is no longer true or at least has partially changed.

The divide between the public and private sectors of education continues. The private kindergarten curriculum is the one focusing more on the academic work, as do the private elementary schools in Taiwan. As reported in Chap. 6, in public elementary schools in Taiwan, the cultivation agenda is favored. Recitation of poems and phrases that delivers the virtuous or wise words is used by teachers to train the students' minds. In addition, teachers are constantly directing and helping students to do jobs such as sweeping the floor and serving the food. Private elementary schools, however, focus more on the academic skills such as practicing Chinese characters and English learning. The influences of the Western educational practice on private schools can be seen in these two orientations to education.

13.2.5 The Focus on Effort in Secondary Schooling and Social Ladders

As elaborated by many works of ancient Chinese literature, especially those of Mencius and Xunzi, effort is important in the process of virtue cultivation. The effort for and the devotion to learning seems to be of increasingly important for children entering their teens, since it is considered the age to prepare for adulthood. Confucius said, "At fifteen, I had my mind bent on learning" [吾十有五而志於學] (*Analects: Wei Zheng*).

Young people gradually move to a state where their choice of life become definite and their effort makes a difference in their choices. At secondary school, learning and cultivation continue, but the focus switches to serious academic study and examination preparation. The homeroom teachers in secondary schools still help students shape their attitudes for life, but the older the students get, the more autonomy is assumed, and as a result more effort is placed on helping students succeed on examinations. How well students do on high-stakes college entrance

examinations will determine which level of university they will attend and furthermore the extent of their employment opportunities (see Chap. 11). In a way, the examination system that junior and senior high school students have to face in modern Chinese society is not very different from their ancestors who had to take the Civil Service Examination to obtain an official job assigned by the emperor.

For over a thousand years in Chinese history, an intense annual exam has been the method used to select officers for the empire. According to Chap. 9, the examination system served the goal of providing a ladder to a society that became too big to function on the basis of friendship or kinship. To solve "the problem of the stranger," the ruler or the political leader needed a way to grant rights and distribute power to unknown people. The system based on the merits of people is described as meritocratic, and an examination system that has many levels provides a ladder to climb and a way to accumulate merit. The ladder was very clear in ancient Chinese society. There were village levels, city levels, and country levels. People need to pass the lower level before they could move up to the next higher level. After they had risen to the top level, they were guaranteed a job as an officer. The post of an officer would bring not only the fame to the individual but also honor to the family. In ancient China, the emperor would place a plaque on the front door or the gate to announce the great achievement of the family. Therefore, for the Chinese, to earn such a reward and honor is a matter for the entire family or, in a society of close kinship, a matter for the entire village. The stakes were high, and the reward was great. To climb high, therefore, studying hard and passing the exams was essential.

Passing exams and winning a post was an arduous process, and in ancient times it typically took a person over 10 years to complete. During modern times, the situation is not so different. As described in Chap. 7, the devotion to study of the youth in Taiwanese secondary schools is equally long and intense. Students at secondary schools in Taiwan often go to school at 7:30 AM, leave school at 5:00 PM and go to cram school at 6:00 PM, and do not go home until 9:30 PM. In order to eliminate student's pressure, the Taiwanese government has increased the number of high schools and universities. As the number of institutions of higher education has increased, as described in Chap. 7, the value of the university diploma became inflated. Since everyone can get into college, simply getting into college is no longer enough. Getting into a good college has become a necessity to preserve the value of a university education. As a result, the number of cram schools increased tenfold during the 10 years of the reform movement. The intensive competition for the university examination has persisted for secondary school students (see Chap. 10).

13.2.6 The Less Than Ideal Situation

The ladder system that closely linked traditional Chinese values and expectations with the meritocratic system seemed to be a potent combination and an effective system most of time. The ladder system is clear and the parents push their children as high as they can. When the children are born healthy and intelligent, parents are

very happy and try their best to protect, support, and push for the highest level possible on the road to education and cultivation. When the children are born with special needs, however, the dreams of the parents usually fade. According to Chap. 4, however, some parents still try to hold onto the hope for their children and do their best to find ways to push hard for their growth and development of functionality and intelligence. The hope was never ending for the parents to push their children to go as far as they can, even when the children are less than ideal.

For students whose grades are not good enough at school, they are unable to enter an academic senior high school, and they have to select vocational track after junior high school. Instead of giving laborers who are an important part of the society sufficient respect, those who chose vocational track are often looked down on. Chap. 7 describes two types of people, *lao shin* and *lao li*, indicating people who use their minds and who use their hands. Because the Chinese believe that one can change their natural state and effort is needed to change a person's human nature, people who do fail to work hard and cultivate themselves stay at a lower level. Therefore, students who drop down into the vocational track are considered lazy and unwilling to work hard, and they do not win any respect or sympathy from others.

The arts are another alternative track. In Chap. 8, an anthropological account of students from Nanjing, China, describes efforts to pass a unified art education exam. According to the account, the parents of young children are open to possibilities for children to study art. When the children are older, they will be given choices, including academic, vocational, and arts tracks. For children who are good enough to get into academic programs, they would be told to keep art as a secondary interest and focus on academic programs. For children who are not smart enough to be admitted to academic programs at elite universities, parents might try to help their children develop their art skills so that they can have an alternative path to reach a desirable university based on their artistic abilities.

13.3 What We Have Yet to Learn

13.3.1 What to Do with Students Who Do Not Follow the Traditional Path?

High hopes for the children are common among ethnic Chinese, and the successful stories are plentiful among Chinese immigrants in the West. The outcomes of the children who are seemingly unsuccessful in school are infrequently discussed. Despite of the fact that there are many stories to encourage children to study hard, there are children who cannot follow the path. There are children who are uninterested in learning when they are young, but many of them became dedicated to studying at a later date, including the God of Poetry Li Bai in the Tang Dynasty. According to the story, Li Bai did not have a sense of direction nor an interest in studying when he was young. He often escaped from school and wandered around

the village. One day, he saw an old washer woman by the river grinding a big iron rod. He was very curious and asked that woman what she was doing. The woman answered that she wanted to make a needle out of the iron rod. Li Bai was surprised and asked how it could be possible. The woman answered, "If one concentrates his mind and focuses his effort, even big iron rod can one day becomes a needle." It was said that Li Bai was shocked and had a sudden realization. He went back home and started to work very hard.

There are also children who could not study without proper guidance. When Mencius was a small child, according to legend, his parents once lived in a market. He would imitate the merchants and play a buying and selling game. His mother did not think it was appropriate for him and moved two times until she found a place near the school. After that, the little Mencius imitated the school children in the act of reading books, and then his mother was relieved and stayed in the same house (*Qing Dynastic History Draft: Women's Biographies*) [清史稿列女傳]. Therefore, even those who would become saints later in adulthood were not always interested in studying in their early years.

Despite the guidance of great teachers, some students are unable to learn. One of the disciples of Confucius named Zaiyu [宰我] was lazy and slept during the day. Confucius was angry and regarded him as "rotten wood which cannot be carved; a wall of dirty earth that will not receive the trowel" (*Analects: Gong Ye Chang*). Confucius' remarks suggested that a person would be useless if he decided not to work hard and exhibit diligent behavior. Therefore, if one does not have the will or determination to learn, even sages or saints would not be able to help.

In modern days, children at school are probably suffering from the same problems as ancient people. Children with no interest in learning, those who are unable to learn without sufficient guidance, or those who are passive and unable to learn could be found in every school and every classroom. After the introduction of compulsory education, it became clearer because everyone had to take the same educational path, including students who might not have been interested in academic learning or would have started learning trades early in life. Traditionally, children are expected to study hard, and if they do not or cannot for some reason, there is no clear explanation about their situation and no clear solution for them.

In the last 40 years in Taiwan, during the time tracking was widespread, students who cannot perform used to be placed in the lower track which was sometimes called the "cattle-pasturing class" [放牛班]. After tracking was banned in public schools, those who used to be placed in the lower tracks now became the lower part of the class. For those who fall behind and are unable to catch up, even after they try hard, school can be very difficult and life can be stressful (Yang, 2004). They do not receive high regard from the teachers or their peers. They are considered losers in the class. If the parents do not care for those low-achieving students, they might start seeking acceptance elsewhere outside schools, such as in gangs. In extreme cases, for someone who do not receive help and have no place to go, they might feel so lonely and useless that they commit suicide. There are many tragic stories of frustrated parents and angry children who are unable to succeed in the academic life and fall behind.

A common suggestion for students who do not do well academically would be to try harder. While it is a useful concept and a cherished attitude, it also oversimplifies the task of understanding the students with various conditions that make studying difficult or impossible. Recognizing the needs of students and ways to help them learn is a much larger task. More work would be needed to observe, analyze, and help children in the process of learning.

13.3.2 Is the Goal of Education to Pursue an Absolute State or to Tailor to Diverse Individuality?

One of the directions that Taiwanese school reformers have proposed was for schools to help students explore their interests and talents, and that would assist them in selecting careers or professions. Chapter 10 discussed this proposal in detail. While the proposal sounds reasonable and certainly fills a gap in the current practice, a broader issue deserves discussion. The larger issue is that Chinese education is not really focused on the development of talent itself, but rather on the development of goodness. As discussed in different chapters, the Chinese goal of education is the pursuit of goodness. Goodness is defined both in terms of knowledge and virtue. A sage or *Junzi*, a person with a virtuous heart and mind, is able to create many things for the betterment of the life of others. In the past, the training of *Junzi* included many areas of specialty, such as rites, music, archery, carriage riding, reading, and arithmetic [禮樂射御書數]. Although these arts, crafts, and skills are the subject of the training, the goal is not to increase the level of specialty skills but the cultivation of the minds and development of positive attitude. Therefore, the learning of some specialty by itself is not important. It is only a means to an end. The end is to cultivate a person's mind and heart and to become virtuous.

Training for the professions, exploration of one's interests, and development of talent are rarely emphasized in the Chinese concept of learning. The words of Confucius that "the accomplished scholar is not a utensil" [君子不器] mean that *Junzi* is not limited to certain forms or functionality (*Analects: Wei Zheng*). It indicates that those who are virtuous and have open minds can adapt to various jobs. They do not necessarily specialize in one area or one profession, but they can do many things well. There are many examples of such people. For instance, people who are good technicians may be promoted to a managerial position or even become an owner of a company. Similarly, university professors who are good at research may become administrators or may be recruited by the national government. Some of the greatest officers are good at many things, such as writing, painting, and other forms of talent. Many of the greatest scientists are artists or musicians, and it is unclear whether one should limit oneself to a single skill area.

Perhaps due to the belief that human nature is changeable and the view that ability and talent are flexible in Chinese society, individual exploration and development are not emphasized. Except for some particular cases where children exhibit

their special talents early, Chinese parents usually do not actively explore the children's individual talents when they are young nor do they encourage their interests in a particular direction when they grow older.

The lack of interest in forming and finding the area of the specialty in the Chinese view of education is reflected in the curriculum and school activities. Although there are multiple subjects, there is very little room for flexibility, whether it is school-wide or individually tailored curriculum. Although the new grade 1–9 curriculum reforms aimed at creating such ability, the implementation over the last 10 years has yielded very little in terms of results. The situation has been worse in schools in the cities where competition was the greatest.

The recent school reform in Taiwan which advocates the exploration of individual talent will continue to face many challenges. It is not clear whether parents will support the idea and encourage their elementary school children to explore their own interests. It is also unclear whether schools will have room in the curriculum to help children to explore their interests or learn about future careers when they are only 12–15 years old.

13.3.3 Diminishing Cultivation of Virtue in School and the Role of Teachers

Cultivation of virtue has been the goal of education for over a thousand of years in Chinese culture, but social support for cultivation is weakening in contemporary schools in Confucian heritage cultures. In the past, the learning of the Chinese literature was supported by the examination systems. For over one thousand years, Chinese classics and the writings of ancient philosophers were the most important material to learn for Chinese intellectuals, as well as the material to be tested in the Civil Service Examinations. Learning, therefore, was the equivalent of the understanding of the ancient Chinese philosophies. For over a thousand of years, the learning, understanding, and practice of those ancient philosophies were not only on the mind of the intellectuals but also the way that emperor ruled the country; for the Chinese, it was not only the content of learning for small children but also the way of living of their parents.

Classic works of Chinese literature, however, are no longer the subject of tests after the Civil Service Examination System was reformed (see Chap. 7). Examination of the classics was abandoned in 1914, and a new curriculum for modern public education, which was established in 1929, focused on modern subject matter such as Chinese literature, English, mathematics, science, social science, physical education, and arts (see Chap. 12). Those school subjects, therefore, became the content of study and, subsequently, the content for testing for Chinese children. The Chinese children still kept learning virtues and studying hard, but the goal of virtue cultivation was no longer the major subject of learning or discussion.

Currently, the cultivation of virtue exists as an implicit part of the school culture, which is sometimes called the hidden curriculum. For the most part, it depends on people. Before a child is born, it is the mother who has the greatest influence on the child. In early childhood and kindergarten, it depends on teaching material and teachers. In elementary school, it is embedded in the teaching and school activities. Many children are nurtured by homeroom teachers. As mentioned in Chaps. 6 and 12, teachers communicate with the parents regularly about children's progress. At times when students are poor and disadvantaged or lack parental support, sometimes a teacher takes care of other aspects of the life for students besides academic studying, to an extent that almost like a parent.

In junior high school, the homeroom teacher still plays an important part of the student development of virtuous conduct and good study habits. Whether it is cleaning the classroom, interacting with peers, or developing patterns toward school work, the teacher guides the student participation in the realm of character, personality, and virtue development. In senior high school, however, virtue development is not the center of the concern. Rather, the development of intellectual ability and the pursuit of success in university admission becomes the prominent concern.

The recent Westernization of the Taiwanese curriculum and the content in teacher education programs has emphasized professionalism. The idea of professionalism concentrates on the explicit measures of a teacher's portfolio. Teachers have to face numerous evaluations. The question raised in Chap. 12 is whether this is the best way to promote the Chinese ideal of teachers: teachers who care for the students and vow to be role models. Under the concept of professionalism, teachers are obligated to perform according to rubrics and set criteria. Teachers are responsible for understanding many teaching strategies, and programs are aimed at designing student-centered lessons and activities. It is not clear if requirements for a professional teacher include the teacher's ability to foster the virtue of students. Cultivation is left largely to the teachers' own sense of integrity. Given that teacher education programs are also influenced by the Western scholars such as Lee Shulman (1987), where the subject matter content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge are emphasized, there is no place for the understanding and discussion of the cultivation of virtue in the process of teacher education.

Over the last 20 years, teachers who used to take the development of the children as their own responsibility would probably find it difficult because of the rise of democratic rights of the students and parents. As described in Chap. 12, when parents are holding teachers responsible and accountable for students' academic learning, there is no trust between them. When the society as a whole is creating a larger gap between the teacher and the parents, the teachers are often blamed rather than supported, and the job of cultivating virtue in children is becoming increasingly difficult. More recognition of the role of teachers in student's cultivation of virtue should be emphasized and discussed. The trust between the teacher and parents needs to be reestablished.

13.4 Conclusion and Suggestions

In thinking about education in Chinese culture, we realized the importance of virtue cultivation as the goal of people, especially for intellectuals. The cultivation process includes all aspects of a person's life, and it continues throughout a person's lifetime. It has been supported by social structures and examination systems for over a thousand years of Chinese history. The expectation of great virtue is associated with the learned people, and the learned people are expected to offer their lives to the service of people in the society and even to the entire human race.

The behavior of working hard on academic tasks by Chinese youth is associated with the firm belief that human nature is transformable and, by individual's devotion and effort, one can continue to improve and reach the goal of great virtuous state as the sage kings or sage beings. The societal system of recruiting talent to work for the emperor and to serve the country acknowledged these ancient traditions and integrated the cultivation of virtue with the examination system for selecting young talent. The Imperial Civil Service Examination System, which used classical literature from the ancient sages, especially of Confucius, has made the thinking associated with the school of the philosophies the norm and background knowledge of all learned people. For thousands of years, cultivation of virtue has become not only the goal and inspiration for studying and governing but also for living and being.

Because cultivation of virtue is associated with the examination system, the ethics of working hard is also often associated with the pursuit of degrees and academic disciplines which produce greater financial outcomes. Parents in Chinese cultures have great hopes for children and in the power of continuous encouragement to move their children higher on the social ladder. The ethics of working hard seen in Chinese students are now, more often than not, associated with the climbing of the social ladder and seizing the opportunity to have high-paying jobs and a greater share of the societal resources. The importance of traditional values of cultivation, at least in schools and perhaps in family, is less emphasized.

It is especially true when the subject being studied in schools is no longer ancient Chinese literature, but literary or scientific subjects such as Chinese, English, math, science, and social science. The concepts of virtue, the relationships among people, and governing methods may be briefly mentioned in some subjects, but it is certainly diminished and perhaps has even disappeared altogether in others. Learning about proper behavior, for example, is probably reduced to only one section of the civil education curriculum. The lack of the student learning about the cultivation of virtue, including the concepts, the process, the discussion, and the behavior, is probably the deepest loss in Chinese education. With teachers being pushed to exhibit more proficiency in meeting the professional criteria of content teaching, the emphasis on subject matter is much stronger than before, and the role of providing guidance to students is shrinking in the hearts of Chinese teachers.

Educational reform in Confucian heritage countries based on Western goals as well as measures aimed at finding a balance between cultural identity and the global

forces will never work. While there may be no such thing as a pure cultural identity, the local culture and the historical roots of the educational system have to be blended with the reform agenda. Educators in Confucian heritage countries should go back to the origin of the cultural tradition and explore the meaning of virtue cultivation and understand it from a psychological point of view, from a developmental point of view, and from a sociocultural point of view, with the goal of improving the way children are educated. Students should be encouraged to believe in the pursuit of higher virtue, the higher understanding of oneself and others, and a greater understanding of the society as a whole (Hu, 1990; Qian, 1995).

Pushing students to score high on exams is one way to realize the Chinese ethics of learning. Pushing the children hard, however, produces both positive and negative results, as can be seen in the two daughters described in Chua's (2011) book. A single-minded emphasis on high scores is likely to reduce the opportunity for students to learn about themselves, their relationships with others, and the world around them. If students develop a sense of perspective about their goals, to develop the ability to learn and to serve society, they may be able to find their own way after graduation. The pursuit of virtue is both academic and social, and the direction varies according to the individual. Such pursuit, therefore, was the goal of education for Chinese in the past and could be the goal also for the future.

Teachers are the last remaining hope in our educational system. For the most part, the teachers in Taiwan still uphold traditional values and quietly dedicate themselves to helping their students. This is the most precious resources in Taiwanese education, and maintaining the educational system to perpetuate Chinese cultural values and to invent new educational methods for the modern times is the challenge now being faced. How to highlight the traditional Chinese values of teachers and how to set up schools and educational systems which support those teachers are important and immediate tasks for the government. When schools have a sufficient number of capable and dedicated teachers, it will be clear for parents and students where to go to pursue their studies and further their learning for life.

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Appendix

Historical Milestones in Chinese Education

Historical eras		Prominent figures and historical achievements	Descriptions
Prehistory	Tang	Yao	Yao, Shun, and Yu were three legendary emperors in ancient China. Their stories were prevalent and recorded in the first millennium B.C., subsequently becoming political paradigms. In addition, the core concepts of education were embodied in the stories of these emperors
	Yu	Shun	Yu was said to be the founder of the Xia Dynasty. Although the Xia, Shang, and Zhou Dynasties were called the Three Dynasties, archeologists have not proven the existence of the Xia Dynasty
	Xia (ca. twenty-first–seventeenth century B.C.)	Yu (3rd millennium B.C.)	
Ancient China	Shang (ca. seventeenth–eleventh century B.C.)		Archeological evidence at Yinxu, the capital of the late Shang Dynasty, confirmed that fully developed characters emerged in the Shang Dynasty. Later, the Zhou Dynasty widely succeeded the culture of the Shang Dynasty

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Historical eras		Prominent figures and historical achievements	Descriptions
	Zhou (ca. 1027–222 B.C.) Western Zhou (ca. 1027–771 B.C.) Eastern Zhou (770–221 B.C.)	Duke of Zhou (eleventh century B.C.)	Scholars have regarded the Duke of Zhou as the primary founder of the ritual and musical systems of the Zhou Dynasty. Confucius admired and promoted the Zhou Dynasty culture, and Confucian followers endeavored to preserve this culture, compiling the Five Classics (i.e., *Classic of Poetry*, *Book of Documents*, *Book of Rites*, *I Ching*, and *Spring and Autumn Annals*) that influenced the thoughts of various pre-Qin scholars
	Spring and Autumn period (770–476 B.C.) Warring States period (475–222 B.C.)	Confucius (551–479 B.C.)	Confucius founded Confucianism and cultivated numerous outstanding scholars, becoming a permanent paradigm of Chinese teachers. He organized and taught ancient classics, profoundly influencing the thinking and cultural development of China. *The Analects* was a work recording Confucius's words and behaviors that was compiled by his disciples
		Mozi (ca. 480–ca. 390 B.C.)	Mozi was the founder of Mohism. His thoughts were preserved in the *Mozi*
		Laozi	The existing period of Laozi was controversial. Laozi's thoughts were preserved in the *Laozi* (aka the Tao Te Ching)
		Mencius (ca. 390–ca. 305 B.C.)	Mencius was a crucial Confucian scholar, whose thoughts were preserved in the *Mengzi*
		Zhuangzi (ca. 365–ca. 290 B.C.)	Zhuangzi was a crucial Confucian scholar, whose thoughts were preserved in the *Zhuangzi*.
		Xunzi (ca. 340–ca. 245 B.C.)	Xunzi was a crucial Confucian scholar, whose thoughts were preserved in the *Xunzi*
		Han Fei (ca. 280–ca. 233 B.C.)	Han Fei developed Legalism and recorded his thoughts in the *Han Feizi*

(continued)

Historical eras		Prominent figures and historical achievements	Descriptions
Traditional China: early empires	Qin (221–206 B.C.)		Qin Shi Huang established a unified empire, consolidating the traditional Chinese political regime. The policy of the "burning of books and burying of scholars" substantially affected Confucianism and other schools of thought and ended the pre-Qin culture
	Han (202 B.C.–220 A.D.)	Taixue (the Imperial Academy) was founded to instruct on Confucian classics (134 B.C.)	Emperor Wu of Han established the Five Classics doctorate system to teach students in Taixue; thus, most high-order officers received a Confucian education. The emperor built a culture- and education-oriented political tradition
		Organizing the Five Classics and various ancient books and documents (ca. first century B.C.)	A considerable amount of ancient thoughts, history, and various knowledge-related documents were organized during the Han Dynasty
		Compiling Confucian works, such as the *Ten Wings* and the *Book of Rites* (ca. first century B.C.)	The works compiled in this period primarily originated from the Warring States period. The contemporary text versions available were possibly prototyped in the Han Dynasty. These works preserved the political ideas, laws, and regulations of ancient China. The *Book of Rites* contains essential works regarding ideas toward education such as the *Record on the Subject of Learning*, *Record on the Subject of Music*, *Doctrine of the Mean*, and *Great Learning*
		Taoism emerged	Taoism is a locally developed religion. Taoism and Buddhism spread from India to China and were formulating the basic beliefs of Chinese people

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Historical eras		Prominent figures and historical achievements	Descriptions
Traditional China: Middle Ages (220–907)	Wei Jin Southern and Northern Dynasties (220–589)	Buddhism gained prevalence	Buddhism entered China during the Han Dynasty and flourished during the Period of Sixteen Kingdoms
	Sui (589–618)	The imperial examination system was established (605)	
	Tang (618–907)	The imperial examination system matured	The imperial examination system became the primary method that the government adopted to elect talented people. This system was implemented from Song to Qing Dynasties. Despite many reforms, this system was abolished in 1905
		Zen	After entry into China, Buddhism has been continually integrated with Chinese thoughts; Buddhism gained prominence in the Tang Dynasty. Zen is an example of the integration
		Confucian restoration	Buddhism and Taoism have thrived since the Southern and Northern Dynasties. In the mid-Tang Dynasty, Han Yu and other elite scholars initiated Confucian restoration, contributing to vigorous Confucian studies and the development of Neo-Confucianism during the Song Dynasty
Traditional China: early modern period (908–1911)	Song (960–1279)	Cheng Hao (1032–1085)	The Cheng brothers are the primary founders of Neo-Confucianism. They substantially contributed to Confucian thought and education
		Cheng Yi (1033–1107)	
		Zhu Xi (1130–1200)	Zhu Xi compiled Neo-Confucian thoughts by combining the *Analects*, *Menzi*, *Doctrine of the Mean*, and *Great Learning* (i.e., the Four Books) and provided supplementary commentaries to the Four Books that reflected the physiological tendencies of Neo-Confucianism
		Lu Jiuyuan (1139–1193)	Lu was a scholar who was critical of Neo-Confucianism and held views opposite to those of Zhu Xi

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Historical eras		Prominent figures and historical achievements	Descriptions
		Three Character Classic	The original version emerged in the Song Dynasty. Numerous scholars adapted the *Three Character Classic* according to the social situations and needs of the time, making the *Three Character Classic* a fundamental reading to foster child literacy and inspiration
	Yuan (1271–1368)	The *Interlinear Analysis of and Collected Commentaries to the Four Books* compiled by Zhu Xi was set as the basis of imperial examination (1315)	The Four Books replaced the Five Classics as the supreme classics and primary instructional materials until the imperial examination was abolished in 1905
	Ming (1368–1644)	Wang Yangming (1472–1529)	Wang was a master of Ming Neo-Confucianism. He held views akin to those of Lu Jiuyuan and formed widespread civil lectures and scholar associations. Following the collapse of the Ming Dynasty, the Qing Dynasty forbade scholar associations and civil lectures. Thus, thoughts against Neo-Confucianism became mainstream among scholars in the Qing Dynasty
	Qing (1644–1912)	A modern school was officially established in 1904. The imperial examination system was abolished in 1905	After the First Opium War broke out in 1840, China opened commercial transaction channels with foreign countries. In 1895, Taiwan was ceded to Japan
			In 1904, the Imperially Endorsed Statutes of Public Schools were promulgated and four school systems (i.e., elementary, middle, teacher, and professional schools) were established
Modern China (1912–present)	Republic of China (ROC) (1912–present)	In 1912, the Peking University was established as the first modern university in China.	In 1945, the Second Sino-Japanese War ended. Taiwan returned to Chinese rule
			In 1949, the ROC government moved to Taiwan
			The ROC government implemented martial law during 1949 and 1987
	People's Republic of China (PRC) (1949–present)		In 1978, the PRC announced its economic reform and open up policy
			In 1987, the ROC government lifted martial law, enabling various civil organizations to be established
			In 2000, the first alternation of party in power occurred in Taiwan

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Historical eras		Prominent figures and historical achievements	Descriptions
Modern Taiwan (1945–present)	Martial law period (1945–1987)	In 1952, a Joint High School Entrance Examination was first implemented according to districts in Taiwan	In 1945, the Second Sino-Japanese War ended. Taiwan returned to Chinese rule
		In 1954, the government implemented Joint College Entrance Examination in Taiwan	In 1949, the ROC government moved to Taiwan
		In 1968, the government implemented Nine-Year Compulsory Education in Taiwan	The ROC government implemented martial law during 1949 and 1987
			In 1978, the PRC announced its economic reform and open up policy
			In 1987, the ROC government lifted martial law, enabling various civil organizations to be established
	Post-martial law period (1987–present)	In 1994, the Teacher Education Act was legislated. Primary and secondary school teachers were no longer exclusively educated in normal schools, pioneering education reform	In 1994, civil organizations initiated the "410 Parade" to promote education reform as a public consensus
		In 2001, the Grade 1–9 Curriculum came into effect, replacing the curriculum standards for junior high and elementary schools that had been in use for 64 years. In addition, the Joint College Entrance Examination was abolished and substituted with the Multiple Entrance Program in 2001	In 1996, the Education Reform Committee proposed the Consultants' Concluding Report on Education Reform to activate a physical reform. General senior high schools and universities have been increasingly and extensively established; however, vocational education substantially dwindled, and students lost their occupational goals
		In 2005, the Joint High School Entrance Examination was abolished and replaced by the Basic Competence Test for Junior High School Students	In 2000, the first alternation of party in power occurred in Taiwan

(continued)

Historical eras		Prominent figures and historical achievements	Descriptions
		In 2011, the 99 Curriculum Guidelines for high schools and vocational schools came into effect to connect the Grade 1–9 Curriculum Guidelines	The Grade 1–9 Curriculum included competency indices, learning fields, flexible learning sessions, curriculum integration, a one-guideline multiple-text system, and competence test evaluations
		In 2014, the Taiwanese government implemented 12-Year Compulsory Education. The Basic Competence Test was abolished and replaced with the Comprehensive Assessment Program for Junior High School Students and special enrollment	From 2004 onward, members of Taiwan society began criticizing the past decade of education reform

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