

Symposium for an Asian Link

**Humanistic Ideals and Humanistic Relations for the Education of Post-modern
Era: Exploring from the Eastern Tradition**

Member 1: Ruyu Hung, Professor, Department of Education, National Chiayi University, Taiwan

Member 2: Morimichi Kato, Professor, Department of Education, Sophia University, Tokyo, Japan

Member 3: Duck-Joo Kwak, Associate Professor, Department of Education, Seoul National University, Korea

Member 4: Eun-Ju Park, Doctoral Student, Department of Education, Seoul National University, Korea

In this symposium, four presenters from three different countries, Japan, Taiwan, and Korea, will attempt to touch upon key underlying concepts related to humanistic ideals or humanistic relationship between the teacher and students from the eastern tradition. They have been critical to each of these countries' understanding of their own educational practice. This attempt is conceived as a response to dehumanizing school culture recently developed so pervasively in all three exam-driven countries where student violence and suicidal acts are more commonly witnessed in the face of highly competitive school environments. It aims at opening up a broader conceptual perspective from which we can see and explore an alternative way of understanding 'educational practice' which have been obscured by its engineering and consumerist modes recently accelerated by education reform movement for public schooling across the world. Each discussion will focus on how the concepts suggested can contribute to reviving (or envisioning) educational practice in such a way as to be adaptive to the post-modern demands on education or schooling. What follows is each presenter's short note on his or her own theme.

Member 1: Ruyu Hung

Title: In Pursuit of an Alternative Humanism? On the Convergence of Early Daoism and Deconstruction

Abstract:

Drawing on Steven Burik's notion of comparative thinking, I attempt to manifest the consonance of Early Daoism and philosophy of deconstruction as a constant pursuit of an alternative humanism—or in Michael Peter's term—a profound humanism and to reveal implications in relation to education. To be human in this sense is not to fulfill or actualize the pre-existent and pre-programmed essence as defined in the mainstream philosophy as human nature, but an endless seeking and inventing of self. Early Daoists (Laozi and Zhuanzi) use the concept of 'wuwo' (non-I, self-undoing) to describe the state of not being aware of selfhood. In

Derrida, the 'subject' and the discourse of subject need to be questioned, re-examined, re-conceptualised, and re-constituted all the time. There is a certain sort of consonance between the Daoist undoing of self and Derrida's deconstructing subject, which may shed new light on our understanding of education.

Member 2: Morimichi Kato

Title: The humanistic significance of the original teaching of Confucius: Japanese Interpretation

Abstract:

Humanistic education aims at the cultivation of what is specifically human, such as reason, discourse, love and compassion etc. In the West it was originated with the idea of Greek *paideia* and Roman *humanitas*, and then reestablished by renaissance humanism which asserted the educational value of humanistic studies, such as language and literature.

In the East its counterpart can be found in the Confucian tradition. The original thought of Confucius himself was closely related with the humanistic education. It was the education which aimed at the cultivation of humanity, *jen*. This original humanistic insight of Confucius was probably never completely forgotten in the long history of Confucianism. However, in the course of history it became a school doctrine advocating the official ideology of the ruling government. The influence of Chusi School which interpreted Confucianism predominantly from the metaphysical point of view accelerated this process.

However, there were intellectual movements which resisted against the scholasticism of Chusi School and tried to return to the original humanistic insight of Confucianism. In Japan such movement took place in the eighteenth century by thinkers like Ito Jinsai and Ogiu Sorai. This new movement was predominantly historical and philological. Through the careful historical and philological study to the original texts, it tried to uncover the original insight of the text which had been buried under the metaphysical interpretation of Chusi School.

The presentation consists of 2 parts.

- 1) The humanistic significance of the original teaching of Confucius
- 2) The significance of the Japanese Confucianism of the eighteenth century

Member 3: Duck-Joo Kwak

Title: Challenges to the Confucian concept of the educated person as "the noble man" (君子) in the Korean Context

Abstract:

In this short presentation, I will briefly describe the traditional view of the educated person or 'the good person', which is culturally so pervasive that we Koreans have fostered it, both formally and informally, through our everyday school culture. I think this traditional

understanding of the educated person in Korea is deeply rooted in the humanistic ideal of Confucianism often portrayed and labeled as “the noble man” (君子) in many places throughout *the Analects* of Confucius. So I will attempt to trace the dominant idea of the educated person in Korea back to the notion of “the noble man” in *the Analects* to make conceptual connections or disconnections between two ideals. Lastly, I will critically examine the humanistic ideals in terms of how they could meet contemporary challenges derived from the rapidly changing social and economic demands outside schools in Korea.

Member 4: Eun-Ju Park

Title: ‘Yang-Chi’ (良知: good knowledge) in the philosophy of Yangming and the modern educational ideal ‘authenticity’

Abstract:

By drawing out some educational concepts from the teachings of Wang Yangming, Chinese idealistic Neo-Confucian philosopher, I will show how these concepts can allow us to explore the possibilities and limitations of modernist educational ideal, ‘authenticity’. To do so, I will first discuss the concept of Yang-Chi (良知: good knowledge), which relies on the subjective mind in Yanming’s sense; this is the mind that conforms to the objective order of things. According to Yanming, Yang-Chi(良知: good knowledge) is developed in the reconstruction of Kyuk-mul-chi-gi(格物致知; the investigation of things and extension of knowledge), which is a traditional Confucian method of study. In proposing the idea of Yang-chi, Yanming strongly criticizes philosophy of Chusi which has stressed the importance of the objective order, while highlighting a way to acknowledge it as a study method. Yanming’s teaching is rather to focus on one’s own ‘mind’. This emphasis on one’s mind in Yanming is comparable with the western idea of subjectivity as well as its modern educational ideal ‘authenticity’. Thus this examination may shed a new light on the latter’s educational possibilities and limitations.