Confucian Education A new look at an old tradition

Introduction

In East Asia, there are several countries[1] that have a Confucian heritage culture, and in all of these countries, education, in keeping with Confucian thought, is regarded as having great importance and is seen as a means of fostering social harmony. As it was envisaged by Confucius[2], education is a way in which human beings are freed from poverty and deprivation, and, if given the opportunity, with a good education any person can rise from humble beginnings. Although Confucius did not foresee the education system that developed from its beginnings in the Han dynasty as a means of training officials and administrators for the Chinese imperial public service, his conception of education as means of fostering equality was eminently successful. (Lee, T., 2000) In countries with a Confucian heritage culture[3] and which have maintained at least some aspects of Confucian education, it remains highly successful on various measures of educational achievement, such as PISA[4] when compared to Western education. This is despite being roundly condemned by educational theorists for being authoritarian and emphasizing rote learning and memorization. It has also been criticized for being conservative, for its teacher-centredness and for the importance it accords to hierarchical relationships and social order.

Without doubt, where students from Confucian heritage cultures encounter Western conceptions of learning and teaching there are difficulties in adapting to different learning styles and expectations. The classroom or lecture theatre is likely to be very different to what they have been used to. Large class sizes are the norm in China, for example, with 50-60 students in a primary class (Cortazzi and Lixian, 2001. p. 115) which means that learning approaches common in Western classrooms are not possible. Of course, large class sizes were not uncommon in Western schools no more than a generation ago and this necessitated very different teaching and learning methods to those used today.[5] Coupled with an encounter with a significantly different culture, it is not surprising that students from Confucian heritage cultures (CHCs) have problems adapting to Western methods of learning and teaching. Moreover, since Western teachers evaluate CHC students from their own Western standpoint, it is not surprising that they see little good in Confucian education – hence the problem of the Confucian paradox.[6]

It is not only CHC students, however, who have difficulties in adapting to Western classrooms. Teachers encountering students from a Confucian heritage culture will also have problems in teaching students with different expectations of a teacher. Biggs and Watkins report that research shows that different cultures will have different ways of teaching and these will vary from culture to culture. In addition, there was little variation in the way teaching was done within a culture, but larger differences across different cultures. (Biggs and Watkins, 2001, p. 278) This is not surprising, since we would expect that teachers, once they have a sense of how students learn, will use the most appropriate teaching method. Within a particular culture, how students are able to learn will be determined, at least in part, by their experiences of learning within that culture. Teachers will similarly teach according to what their culture has taught them, perhaps unconsciously, about the nature of learning and they will tend to use the teaching methods they themselves have encountered. Implicit cultural influences will affect teaching styles whatever the teaching methods they have been exposed to during teacher training. This is because culture and tradition provide an implicit and rarely questioned foundation for the beliefs and values (Bourdieu, P., 1988) which, firstly, form the basis of the explicit theoretical understanding of what is involved in learning and teaching and, secondly, motivate how a teacher teaches. The challenge for Western teachers teaching Confucian heritage students is three fold: (i) they have to be critically aware of their own conceptions of teaching; (ii)they have to be sensitive to the differences in the learning styles of such students; (iii) most importantly, they have to have an awareness of the values and beliefs underpinning their own conceptions of education, as well as of their students. For their part, students themselves will need to be made aware of the different expectations that teachers have of them and be helped to understand their own learning styles. They also need to gain some sense of

how their own culture and tradition influences their perceptions of how they learn and how they are taught.

It is not our intention to elaborate these issues here except to note the difficulties and to point out the importance of an understanding of the values and beliefs which form the basis of a particular culture and tradition. The purpose of this paper is to consider the philosophical foundations of Confucian education and to argue that because its central aim is the development of moral character through the cultivation of the virtues - propriety (*lǐ* (礼), benevolence, or humaneness (*rén*, 仁), rightness or appropriateness (義 *yì*), intelligent awareness[7],(智 *zhì*) – that this has much in common with the kind of liberal education espoused by such diverse Western thinkers as Robert Hutcheson, Jacques Maritain, R.S. Peters and J.H. Newman, though we do not propose to provide an outline of this here. All of these, however, to be sure to differing degrees, acknowledge that the right kind of development of moral habits is important in the formation of human persons and that the basic aim of education is to enable human beings to lead virtuous, fulfilled and meaningful lives. In short, to have wisdom. The concern for the inculcation of the moral virtues also points to wisdom as the ultimate objective of Confucian education. Without undertaking to provide an analysis of the concept of wisdom, whatever else we might adumbrate, we mean by it at least an understanding of, and commitment to, what is required to live a virtuous life successfully as well as having a deep understanding of the connectedness of all knowledge. It is to have a profound appreciation of the sacredness of life and its meaning. Though classical Confucian education has significant differences with recent liberal, self-described child-centred Western conceptions of education, there are important similarities with older, unfashionable Western conceptions of education. It is concluded that an awareness of the principles at the heart of such conceptions of education will lead to a better understanding of Confucian education and so recognition that at the heart of all education is the quest for wisdom. Moreover, the basic moral values and principles at the heart of Confucian education inform the approaches to teaching and learning, since it is the inculcation of these that is the central aim of education.

There is much to criticise in both Confucian education and Western education. If wisdom is the central aim of education, then both have strayed from the fundamental purpose of education. Both, as practised, have concentrated on the acquisition of skills and capacities that will enable successful entry into the workforce. The end of education is seen as instrumental: its purpose is economic success for the individual and more importantly, economic success for business and the State. The values of Confucian education, such as self discipline and persistence, are valued only because they will lead to success in acquiring skills and capacities. Similarly, in the West, education has been commodified, its value determined by the demands of the market. In both cases, education serves extrinsic ends almost exclusively. Acquiring skills and capacities is important and students need to learn to read and write, to be numerate and to be employable, but this insufficient, if we want human beings to be able to lead fulfilling lives. If they have not learned anything about the meaning of their lives nor its purpose nor acquired moral virtue our education system will have failed them for they will have limited or no appreciation of the nature of the good, of truth, beauty, or justice. Having an appreciation of such concepts is, of course, quite useless, as Newman pointed out, since this does not give someone useable skills or render him or her employable, but lacking this, life is meaningless and burdensome. (Newman, 1996, p.80)

The relative success of students from Confucian heritage traditions in the PISA tests and in higher education has led researchers in the Western world to seek answers, why, prima facie, 15 year olds in the case of the PISA tests have not performed as well as their counterparts in the East and why in some areas Western higher education students lag behind their Confucian Heritage co-students. Various reasons are advanced for this, such as Confucian Heritage students are more hard-working, persistent, because they have been raised to believe that intelligence can be improved by hard work. (Starr, 2012, p.6) Other reasons expressed for the relatively poorer performances of Western students place the fault at Western learning and teaching methods which disadvantage Western

students or on the laziness of Western students when compared to the dedicated Confucian Heritage students.

On the other side of the coin, there is also significant discussion within Western educational circles about the problems that CHC students experience in the Western classroom. They are reported to struggle, for instance, in situations where the teacher acts as a facilitator rather than an authority figure, that they do not engage in questioning the teacher and rarely volunteer answers. They are perceived to be passive learners whose learning style involves memorisation and rote learning without thereby acquiring any deep understanding of the subject material they are studying. The constructivist approach assumed by much Western pedagogy is alien to them. (Gutierrez, F. and Dyson, L.E. 2009) As in most cases, the situation is far more complex than it appears and the perceptions needing significant nuancing. There is no doubt that some CHC students experience difficulties in the classroom because, just as Western students have a range of abilities, so too will CHC students. Some will have greater difficulties with language, for example, others will have difficulty with adapting to a different culture and style of education. This is to be expected and good teachers will make an effort to adapt their teaching to the situation that they find themselves in. These discussions, however, concentrate on various cultural differences which are seen to account for the teaching and learning difficulties of both Confucian Heritage students and Western students in various situations. CHC students do well on some measures and Western students on others. This is neither unexpected nor surprising. Sensitivity to cultural difference is one way of compensating for these problems, but of course will not necessarily be sufficient. The issue with which we are concerned, however, affects both CHC students as well as Western students, since it is the general aims of education in both cases that have been obscured by the focus on the learning and teaching styles that have been adopted to solve the problems faced by CHC students and of poor performance by Western students.

Discussion of the aims of education understandably is not a focus, since there are other more pressing problems to be solved as we have briefly indicated – adjustments to different cultural realities for CHC students in Western classrooms and the problems of addressing poor performance for Western students. Nor should it be supposed that CHC students in their own classrooms in their own countries do not struggle with learning, despite the apparent advantages offered by Confucian education. Aims are taken for granted, but it is argued that if formation of human beings to be morally virtuous is the central concern of education, then poor performance in various tests and other measures is not what is to be focussed upon, rather, on whether education is producing moral virtuous, fulfilled balanced human beings. If the principles of Confucian education are enumerated, then it will be possible to see if the teaching and learning methods employed lead to the desired outcome of cultivating moral beings.

Confucian Education and its aims

The Confucian style of education has been characterised as involving overbearing dependence on the teacher, a hierarchical structure in which students are to regard the teacher as the supreme authority figure and learning which relies on memorisation and recitation. (Watkins and Biggs, 2001, p.3, Yu, Z., 2002, p.71) This description of Confucian education as it is carried out in classrooms is clearly negative and, as we have already said, does not appeal to teachers trained in liberal, Western democracies. This negative view of Confucian education is further reinforced when it is argued that in collectivist societies – a code for socialist societies, such as China – there is an expectation that people will conform to uniform standards of behavior. In addition, unlike Western countries where there is moral pluralism, it is claimed that in socialist countries there is an authoritarian moralism that judges people according to particular moral standards. (Ho, 2001, p. 100) Teachers, as significant authority figures, are expected to take responsibility for the moral behavior of students both within the school environment as well as outside it. The notion of being *in loco parentis* is taken seriously and, unlike in the Western classroom, responsibility for students extends beyond the classroom. (Ho, 2001, p.103) The teacher, therefore, has a central place in the life of the student and has a role which is broader than what would be expected in a Western school. The teacher is more

closely akin to a guru, that is, someone who is not only a teacher, but a spiritual and moral guide as well. This is not unexpected, since the twin purposes of Confucian education are described as moral education and the gaining of knowledge. (Yao, 2000, p.283)
Confucian education is essentially humanistic and seeks to cultivate the sprouts of virtue with which every human being is endowed. Central to an understanding of Confucian education is the connection between *rén*, 仁, and *lǐ* ,礼 humaneness and propriety. The connection between these two virtues brings out the harmony that needs to exist between the inner states of persons and their outward behaviours. Heart and mind must be in harmony if persons are to be living fulfilled and meaningful lives. The concept of *xīn*, 心, heart or heart-mind, is central to Chinese thought, since it expresses the unity between thought and emotion, between the inner states of the human being and the external world. *Xīn* is to be understood as cognition, but not simply a rational exercise of the mind, but as the full engagement of the human being in understanding the world. The world cannot be investigated removed from human immersion in it, but through active engagement, both emotionally and intellectually, with our experiences of the universe. "The universe is the heart and the heart is the universe", says Lu Jiuyuan (陆九渊), and Wang Yanming (王阳明, also known as Wang Shouren 王守仁), agrees, saying, "Man is the heart of Heaven and Earth and the ten thousand things; the heart is the master of Heaven and Earth and the ten thousand things." (Cited in Yu, Ning, 2007, 32-33.) Likewise, when the two virtues are considered, it is not enough to observe *lǐ*, says Confucius, if we do not have *rén*, but we will not attain *rén*, if we do not practise *lǐ*. (*Analects*, 12.1)

Confucius emphasises the importance of practice. We cannot attain true virtue without constant effort. Yen Yuan asks Confucius about the nature of perfect virtue and he responds by saying that perfect virtue involves the subduing of the self and a return to propriety. Confucius does not insist that there has to be a cognitive assent to the morality of the actions that are to be carried out, but he does insist that each person becomes habituated through practice of the particular norms which propriety demands. He says that we should not do what is contrary to propriety neither listening, speaking nor acting against it. Perfect virtue means behaving as if one is in the presence of an important guest and in every action to act as if it is the most important thing that one is doing. In order to have perfect virtue, that is, *rén*, we must be observant of ordering our conduct, being respectful of others and acting with propriety. (*Analects*, 12.1) In order to become virtuous, which is understood to be the attainment of *rén*, that is, of humaneness, the first requirement is to practise what is expected in accordance with the norms of right behaviour. In this, it is not expected that the person will understand the reasons for that behaviour, but will act according what is required. It is, in the first instance, a habituation to what are the requirements of right behaviour.

There are striking similarities between Confucius's demand that every act should be attended to as if it is the most important thing that we are doing and the requirements of the Rule of Benedict. According to Benedict's Rule, everything that is done is to be considered as an act which glorifies God, so must be done with full attentiveness. Hard physical work and invariant routine, hallmarks of Benedictine life, are imposed in order to habituate the monk to a rhythm of life in which mind and body work as one, so that the virtuous life is reinforced by every action. Benedictine education, therefore, as established in the Rule of Benedict, exemplifies the practical approach to the development of virtue. The purpose of the Rule is to order the lives of the monks living in community and to cultivate attentiveness to the task at hand, for each is an opportunity to pray – *ora et labora* – to pray and to work – being the motto of the Benedictines. It is this motto which provides the blueprint for the form of education which is developed by Benedict. (Benedict, 1949) Just as Confucius advises that in acting according to the right norms of behaviour requires constant practice, so does Benedict. Both are aware that practice without attentiveness to the task at hand is not sufficient for virtue. Benedict also adds a third dimension through the requirement that monks spend a portion of their time in reading and reflecting on what they have read. *Lectio divina*[8] is also

an important practice, and as we indicate below, the *shuyuan* tradition[9] revived by Zhu Xi similarly takes seriously the importance of reflective reading.

Confucius is right to insist that people should practise propriety (礼, *lǐ*) first, since it is this which habituates them to doing what is right, for as Aristotle says, when considering how the virtues are to be taught, one is led to the halls of reason through the inculcation of habit. Children will not have the capacity to understand why they have to do certain kinds of things or what it is to have respect for others or what virtue is, but they do have the capacity to internalise a variety of good habits. Parents, as adults, have an understanding of why the practice of *lǐ* is crucial, since they will know the importance of its connection to humaneness, (仁) *rén*, the attainment of which, if they love their children, will be their central concern. Teaching children good manners and right behaviour is carried out firstly without explanation and only later, when they have the capacity to understand and to commit to a way of life that reasons can be given.

Zhu Xi (朱熹), the great reformer of the Confucian tradition in the Song Dynasty of the 12th century AD, revives the *shuyuan* tradition and proclaims the centrality of the Five Teachings found in *Mencius*, namely: *"Between father and son there should be affection;*
Between ruler and minister there should be righteousness;
Between husband and wife there should be attention to their separate functions;
Between old and young there should be proper order;
Between friends there should be faithfulness." (*Mencius*, 3A: 4)
In order to attain these, the *Zhong Yong* (中庸,Doctrine of the Mean) prescribes the order of study of the Five Teachings proposing that five things are required: extensive study, accurate inquiry, careful reflection, clear analysis, and, importantly, practice of them. (*Zhong Yong*, Ch. 20) The last of these is the most important, since it is this attentiveness to practice and the formation of habit which enables the previous four elements of learning to be carried out.

In Zhu's hands, *lǐ*, is transformed into a more general principle (理), one more akin to a creative force, ordering and enabling creation to occur. Though it is not *xing,* human nature, nor *xin*, the heart-mind, it is inherent in these and is what orders them to be what they are. (Yu, 2002, p. 77) While a more complete account of Zhu's ontology and his conception of *lǐ* is beyond our scope here, it is his understanding of it that frames his emphasis on the importance of reading in the education and formation of human persons. *Lǐ*, as stated, is inherent in every human being, but in order to grow in virtue, persons need to know the *lǐ* within themselves because knowing *lǐ* enables them to act with propriety (礼). Reading of the experiences of other human beings and reflecting on what has been read will enable readers to uncover the *lǐ* within themselves and hence know the proper way to act.

It is, however, not simply a matter of taking a text and reading it, Zhu Xi emphasises, just as we observed with Benedict in his Rule for monks. There is the centrality of adequate mental preparation for the task of reading. Once more, practice and habituation to the conditions which will enable attentive reading are stressed. Readers are to have a calmness and openness of mind which are preconditions that they must have before any reading is to be attempted. Learning cannot take place unless readers have the right attitude of openness to the subject matter of what they are to engage with and have schooled their will so that they are in a frame of mind which is free from distraction. Zhu Xi recommends that readers spend half a day sitting and forgetting, and another half a day following this in reading. (Chan, 1987, p. 27) Noteworthy is his view that it is not the quantity of books that students read, but quality of their reading that is important. Reading the same book many times in order to distil every important thought within is of much greater benefit to students than reading many books in a superficial way. Attentiveness to what is being read and a willingness to study a text in detail, going over every character many times until it is thoroughly grasped is the most important aspect of reading. (Yu, 2002, p. 78)

It is at this juncture that the significance of memorisation and rote learning becomes apparent. It is not done so that students can recite back to the teacher what they have memorised, but is an important technique in the understanding of a text. Reading of a text is repeated over and over because it is through this means that students begin to see the variety of meanings that the text can have and if the text has been memorised, it will always be available to them to reflect upon and glean further meaning. It should also be noted that the texts to be studied are not simply novels but are the classical canonical texts of Confucianism, which are akin to the sacred texts of the major religions. Christians, Jews and Muslims do not read their holy books cursorily once or twice and then consider they have learned enough, but study them over and over in order to penetrate their meaning. Memorisation of texts is not an old-fashioned means of having access to texts when there is no book or electronic copy available (though it is that too), but a way of deepening and extending knowledge of what is written in the texts, and in the Confucian case presented by Zhu Xi, gaining a better conception of *lǐ*, understood here as the creative intelligent force inherent in all things. Those who understand *lǐ*, have grasp of the fundamental principle, which is both immanent and transcendent, ordering all creation. Knowledge of *lǐ* also leads to the possession of *rén*, which in Zhu Xi's system is broader than the classical Confucian conception of humaneness, and is more broadly the principle of love, which can only be possessed through the practice of the virtues. (Zhu Xi, in Chan, Wing-tsit (ed.), 1963, p. 633.) Memorisation is therefore not rote learning, but an internalisation of the text which leads to a transformation of the self. (Yu, 2002, 79) In modern, constructivist terms, memorisation of texts leads to individuals making what they have learned their own.

This is clearly Zhu Xi's intent, since he recommends that students make a text relevant to themselves, reading it so that what sages have written is understood and they become thoroughly conversant with its meaning. The goal of reading is to understand, not accumulate facts nor to repeat what someone has written, and through this to gain wisdom. Wisdom, Zhu Xi says, is apprehension of *lǐ*, since it is this which leads to self-realisation. (Yu, 2002, 79) Study of texts should be undertaken seriously and in orderly manner and this is accomplished by self discipline, which is both internal and external. As remarked, not every text will enable *lǐ* to be apprehended, and so Zhi Xi prescribes a comprehensive curriculum in which the Four Books (*The Analects*, *The Great Learning*, *The Doctrine of the Mean* and *Mencius*) are to be studied first, followed by the Five Classics (*Book of Changes*, *Book of History*, *Book of Poetry*, *Book of Rites* and *Spring and Autumn Annals*). It is the thorough study of these texts which will enable students to begin to discern *lǐ* and so acquire the wisdom to live fulfilling lives.

The social significance of human learning is recognised in another of Zhi Xi's prescriptions for reading. The reading of texts, it was recommended by Zhu Xi, was to take place slowly and deliberately, ensuring that as many commentaries as possible were consulted. In addition, reading was to be undertaken aloud and in the company of others. This was an important aspect of Confucian education, since what is recognised is the importance of human relationships and sociability not only in human development and the formation of identity, but also in helping to create a harmonious society. Human learning according to Confucian education is a collaborative and cooperative venture in which all students help each other to learn. One manifestation of the need to be collaborative is the recitation of texts together and this also illustrates the importance of rhythm as means of memorising texts. By helping each other memorise texts, the possibility of gleaning further insights into the texts is enhanced, since each student will know the text and be able to reflect on it. Most significant, however, is the social nature of the activity. Embedded in this, is the view that every individual possesses the capacity to learn and that the only difference will be the time that it takes for someone to learn. That is, in principle, everyone can learn. Paradoxically, alongside this is the recognition that there are hierarchies of ability and promotion in the old Imperial examination

system depended on success in the examinations. Emphasis of the social aspect of learning brings home the shared nature of knowledge and our inescapable dependence on one another, even when it is recognised that abilities will differ.

Zhu Xi's insistence that selected texts be studied thoroughly, rather than a superficial reading of a large number of texts, is very similar to the view of education taken by John Henry Newman, who argues that learning is not a matter of knowing a large number of facts or items of knowledge. Instead, Newman argues that education is concerned with the enlargement of mind, of gaining a deep knowledge of a few things. Enlargement of mind meant that pupils saw the connectedness and unity of what they had learned and hence were better able to recognise that human fulfilment depended on living a virtuous life. Newman also recognised the importance of the study of great literature as means of fostering the broadening of perspectives. (Newman, 1996) Strikingly, both Zhu XI and Newman see wisdom as the outcome of education.

Zhu Xi has been taken as a representative of the Confucian view of education and it may be objected that he is perhaps alone in insisting on the revival of the *shuyuan* approach to education. Whether or not he was alone in this is not important, what is crucial is that he provided a systematisation of Confucian education and revived the central principle that education is moral education. Although his systematisation was novel and he extended the classical writings of Confucius and Mencius, he also brought a recognition of the rational nature of the mind and the importance of its development. Despite his novelty and reform of Confucian education, he remains firmly within the framework of Confucian thought. While those who came after him may have moved away from his emphasis on rationality, the central core of Confucian education remained much as Zhu Xi outlined it.

Conclusion

Although it is apparent that the central ideals of Confucian education have been corrupted, some of its techniques remain firmly embedded. Like Western education, the aim of education as the formation of virtuous human beings who have the wisdom and insight to lead fulfilled lives, has been lost sight of and replaced with a short-sighted focus on what is of immediate utility. Life-long learning as advocated by Confucius has been weakened to mean a continual updating of skills that are useful in the workplace, rather than a constant search for moral betterment and human fulfilment in service to the community. Instead of cultivating humaneness, students are encouraged to learn only what is required to achieve whatever short-term goals they might have with little thought given to their personal development as human beings. In a commodified, packaged conception of education, there is little room to consider how an individual is to learn how to live in relationship with others. To some extent, CHC students are still steeped in a traditional understanding of their place in the community and the disciplines that are maintained by culture and tradition leave them in advance of students in the West who do not have the advantages of a cultural tradition which still demands recognition of the obligations of community. Unfortunately, the high ideals of Zhu Xi, one of the foremost exponents of Confucian education, have been also abandoned in favour of more measureable and direct outcomes of learning and teaching. Western liberalism places the desires and interests of the individual at the centre of education, while any sense of relationship with others as mitigating or moderating individual desires is an afterthought. The aims of education are no longer lofty, but short-sighted.

Although we have only briefly alluded to older Western conceptions of education, it is clear that a reconsideration of these in the light of the success of Confucian education even in its degraded form, will lead to a better understanding of the nature of education. In particular, an awareness of the principles at the heart of such conceptions of education, it is to be hoped, will lead to a recognition of the true purpose of education. In the meantime, an understanding of the origins and basis of

Confucian education will inform both teachers and students about the influences which frame their approaches to both teaching and learning. Specifically, a recognition of the basic moral values and principles of Confucian thought is crucial if there is to be a convergence of understanding on how CHC students learn. Finally, and most importantly, a sense of the foundations of Confucian approaches to education as a moral education, it is to be hoped, will lead to a realisation in Western education that it too is essentially a moral education. Success or lack of success in various measures is unimportant if the basic moral purpose education is realised – and it seems – greater awareness of its moral purpose, as still evident in Confucian education, is no barrier to success in more mundane matters.

NOTES

[1] China, obviously, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Thailand and Malaysia are usually considered to be Confucian heritage cultures.

[2] The Latinised version of the name of Kǒngzǐ, 孔子, will be used throughout this paper.

[3] The term, Confucian Heritage culture should not be taken to represent a uniform culture that exists in a number of Asian countries, rather the opposite. It is simply a term to cover cultures which have been influenced by Confucian thought and asserts that there are recognisable similarities of culture and tradition.

[4] PISA stands for Programme for International Student Assessment and is a series of tests for 15 year olds in reading, mathematics and science conducted by the OECD. In 2009, Shanghai, China, emerged as first in the test results for all three areas. See Thomson, S., De Bortoli, L., Nicholas, M., Hillman, K., Buckley. S. (2009) *PISA in Brief:Highlights from the Full Australian Report*, at URL: http://www.acer.edu.au/documents/PISA-2009-In-Brief.pdf Accessed: 11/9/2012.

[5] Whether students today get a better education than their parents' generation is at least debatable. The main point here is that educational success may not be as strongly correlated to such things as class sizes, student-centred learning and use of modern technology as some educationalists would have us believe. If this is so, then though Chinese classrooms differ from Western ones and on various measures learning conditions for Chinese students are worse, if students learn the learning and teaching strategies being used in the classrooms are effective.

[6] The so-called Confucian paradox refers to the perception that CHC students because they rely on rote learning and memorisation have only a superficial understanding of what they have been taught, yet, by various performance measures, they show very deep understanding of what they have been taught. This is paradoxical. See Watkins and Biggs (eds.) (2001), p.3., also see Watkins and Biggs (eds.) (1996).

[7] That is, being able to distinguish between good acts and bad acts.

[8] *Lectio divina*, literally divine reading, is the practice of slowly and reflectively reading a passage of scripture so that it is understood. The second stage is to meditate upon the selected reading and to discern what it means for us. The third stage involves letting our hearts speak to God, that is, our response to what we have read and discerned. The final stage requires us to give up all our own ideas and listening for what God is telling us in our innermost being. It is through this listening that we become transformed from within. There is in this a significant similarity to 心, *xīn*, the heart-mind, which is to be cultivated in order for us to become fully developed moral persons.

[9] The 书院 or shū yuàn is a classical academy of learning. Education at such academies was free and anyone could apply for admission. They were also marked by a less rigid curriculum than was available at government schools which in the Song dynasty (as well as before it and after) were dominated by examinations for entry into the public service. During the Song dynasty they were centres of learning of the classics. Quite literally, shū yuàn means book institute.

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