

The Importance of Self-recognition as Virtue

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Abstract

This paper starts with the author's reflection on his own life experience. It is intimated that his life has been a tough one. To seek the recognition of Confucian morality and secular value system, the two mainstream value systems in Taiwan, is identified as the source of the author's hardship.

In the second part of this paper, the author invokes several theorists' works, John Rawls' and Charles Taylor's in particular, to spell out the point that social recognition has close relation with self-esteem (or self-respect), and that the latter is one of the primary goods necessary for good life.

In the third part of the paper, the author delineates the basic characteristics of Confucian morality and the secular value system, and goes further to suggest that it is hard, if not impossible, to live up to the standards of the two mainstream value system. Hence, the difficulties of gaining social recognition much needed, and a good life based on proper self-esteem is hard to achieve.

Two cases are presented in the fourth part to substantiate the main point made in the third part that to obtain social recognition makes our lives tough.

In the final part of the paper, the author tries to argue that the way out of the inappropriate burden of social recognition is to promote the cultivation of self-recognition in education on the one hand, and to shape up a moral minimalism on the other hand.