Dao & Ethics: Birth, Seemingly Death, and Rebirth of Educational Philosophy

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Abstract

Since the beginning of documented human history, educational philosophy has served as the creative and guiding force in the concerted efforts to search for truth, education, and growth of human society (Durant, 1976; Ozman & Craver, 2012;). This was the case from Siddharta Gautama (Kornfield 1993), Laozi (1999), and Confucius (1979) in the East to Plato (1925) and Aristotle (1899; 1975) in the West. From "junzi" to "philosopher king," educational philosophies and philosophers shaped and directed human learning, teaching, and development throughout history, leading, pushing, and expanding the frontier of creativity, sustainability, and prosperity. However, in recent decades, educational philosophy as a field has experienced a seemingly near-death globally in contrast to fields of high tech, sciences, and data driven assessment in the context of career and profit driven education (Hung 2017). There has been a noticeable and ominous trend in the lack of new philosophers, effective and inspirational philosophies, student recruitment, and career employment. Quantitative numbers have usurped philosophy as the driving force in education and life with daring consequences. This paper aims to examine the forces, factors, and outcomes behind such a harsh turn, and discusses the needs and significance of a rebirth of educational philosophy. It engages dialectics (Engels, 1878; Hegel, 1984; Laozi, 1999), relationality (Ames, 2001; Ravencroft, 2005), and relativity (Einstein, 1916; Gollnick & Chinn, 2009) to promote Dao and ethics as the leading force for a holistic reconstruction of humanity through education and life.

Keyword: educational philosophy, Dao, ethics, education

Introduction

Philosophy and educational philosophy, since their inception, have played powerful and pivotal roles in human civilizations in recorded history, may it be oral or written. The great thinkers and educators of the world have shaped, directed, and taught throughout their times and continue to influence education beyond their time and geographical borders (Cremin, 1967 & 1988; Ozman & Craver, 2012; Rusk & Scotland, 1987). In the Western philosophical tradition, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle have been the grandfathers of various schools of thought that continue to be the focal point of our curriculum. While in the East, Siddharta Gautama (or Buddha, approximately 2,600 years ago), Lao Zi, and Confucius have been regarded as the greatest thinkers and

teachers for humanity. The same is true for any culture throughout the history regardless of time and location. In each nation, tribe, and indigenous culture of either oral or written traditions, we can find great thinkers and leaders who transform their people and place through sharing their metaphysical view of the universe and beliefs. They leave lasting impacts on civilizations and environments, and shape the way people think, live, and relate to one another and the nature all around us.

However, much has changed in the last century or two, especially since the Industrial Revolution. The advancement of capitalization, colonization, commercialization, technology, and sciences has brought people from far corners of the world closer to one another. This has drastically changed every aspect of the world from its political and social structure, to economic development and the labour market, fashion and lifestyle, and human outlooks on the world as well as our diets. The globalizing forces have expanded formal schooling rapidly in every corner of the world. However, at the same time, teaching and learning have shifted to an employment-oriented, profit-driven, and numbers-ruled enterprise. Once-reverent philosophers and thinkers seemingly have become obsolete, and fewer philosophers have exerted their influences in educational and life since Dewey. For the young generation of learners, MBA, computer sciences are the popular chosen paths of learning, and iPhone, Nike, and Coach are the must-have/s in developed nations as well as developing countries.

Rust (1987) commented, "Most people concerned in education will tell you that there is no such creature as a 'Great Educator' nowadays" and only "fashionable names" (p. 1). What, then, has led to such a change of heart of humanity on philosophy and educational philosophy? Why has a once powerful force of human theories and studies, with its birth, vigour, and impact, glided to a seemingly death and oblivion? This paper intends to examine the primary factors of the rise and vigour of philosophy and educational philosophy, and those that have led to their downfall. The goal is to advocate for the important role of philosophy in education and life so as to continue and sustain human advancement in accordance with nature and the universe to strive for the goodness for all and the sustainability of humanity in connection with the universe around us.

Essence & Importance of Educational Philosophy

Of all the various educational philosophies throughout human history and civilizations, those that have survived and remained have stood the test of time and change. Although they may be different in cultural, social, and historical imprints, influences, and focuses, as all human matters are, they share tremendous overlapping synergy regarding the essence of human understanding, education, and life. The following three aspects highlight such focus and consciousness:

Cultivation for both Individual and Society

Philosophy in general is an explorative, summative, and inclusive study of human's understanding and views of cosmic metaphysics. It is thus described as "love of wisdom" (*philosophia*) in Greek, and "theory of the sage" (哲理) in Chinese. Educational philosophy, with its particular focus, examines the universe in connection with humanity on matters of teaching and learning for the purpose of survival, development, and sustainability. Naturally, the perspectives and angles of the philosophers vary a great deal based on their time, culture, and orientations from the world of abstract thought to the universe of real matters. Nevertheless, all educational thinkers and schools of thought inevitably focus on the paths of elevating and transforming human beings, the individual and/or society as a whole through teaching and learning (Ozman & Craver, 2012; Rusk & Scotland, 1987). They bear the belief that humans are educable and learnable for improvement, and that the cultivation elevates each and all of us. Socrates' famous questioning is a tool in such learning process to find the clarity and truth about who we are and what our role is in the universe. Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" shows the impact of learning and search for light on human's new understanding, development, and transformation (Plato, 1925).

For the philosophers, the emphasis and focal points for cultivation may differ. For instance, Siddharta Gautama explores his personal spiritual transcendence (Kornfield, 1993), while Rousseau's Emile (1979), and Descartes' meditative discourse work on the individual search and journey of growth (1960). Whereas Confucius (1979) stresses cultivation of the social and relationship of kinship, community, and nation, Laozi (1999), who left his text and teaching for his fellow men (and women), actually gears the cultivation of human beings in the context of the entire cosmos. However different they may be, all educational thoughts and thinkers search for higher educational goals, purposes, and outcomes for both the individual and society. The former is the starting point and whose end result always connects with the latter.

Therefore, the inclusive cultivation of human beings in the context of the society and environment around them becomes one of the strong and central themes for educational philosophy. As a result, educational philosophy plays a key role in the human efforts throughout history. As Dewey points out, "education is all one with growing; it has no end beyond itself." (Dewey, 1916, pp. 1-9). Such growth for him is to "free human activities and make people more capable of directing individual and social life because only in this way can proper growth in democratic living occur." (Ozman & Craver, 2012, p. 138). This means that education needs to seek two objectives simultaneously to satisfy both the demand of the society and the natural tendency of the child (Dewey, 1973). This dual-purpose of education connects humanity strongly with education on both the micro and the macro level and has served as a dominant driving force.

Principles of ethics

During the cultivation of both individuals and society, principles of ethics become another key component and highlight in educational philosophy. Philosophers from different times, cultures, and perspectives may present quite varied beliefs and views on ethics, may they be religious, political, autocratic, or democratic. Nevertheless, they all recognize the necessity and importance of developing and applying ethical principles as both the content and means for individual learning and social development (Ozman & Craver, 2012; Xu, 2017). While there are infinite ethical explorations in history, which far exceed the scope of this paper, the three overlapping ethical themes on love, peace, and goodness may hopefully serve as brief and adequate examples.

Among infinite works of ethics, the concept of "love," or "compassion," and "benevolence" forms a strong overlapping theme. Such emphasis is particularly strong in early eastern and holistic philosophies as well as in indigenous cultures such as Native Americans and Hawaiians. Laozi (1999) describes "compassion" as one of the highest virtues that is apparently needed for human relational harmony (Chapter 18, p.32). Confucius (1979) advocates "benevolence" throughout his teaching as his educational purpose, content, means, and ethical criteria all in one. In Hawaii, "aloha" has served as the corner stone of Hawaiian teaching, learning, and existence to this day (The Huna Philosophy, 2017). Such beliefs build the foundation of both education and life in an intertwined process.

In connection with the concept of love is the belief of peace and harmony (or pono). The focus of Confucius ethics and philosophy is entirely on the human relations and considers harmony an ethical quality, social purpose, and fundamental criteria for human behaviours. Peace for Siddharta Gautama is the highest spiritual consciousness and manifestation of enlightenment (Knorfiled, 1993). Similarly, Gandhi's philosophy is primarily focused on building peace, physically, mentally, spiritually, individually, and socially, through education, as he narrates in his autobiography, *The Story of My Experiment for Truth* (1957).

Love and peace embody the "good," or "goodness." Plato views such goodness as "in the soul already" and advocates that education is the interaction and application of the knowledge by the soul, which can lead to "the brightest and best of being, or in other words, the good" (1960, p. 208). The search and debates for the good have consumed the philosophers persistently, and the challenge to teach the good in a successful and sustainable way via education remains to this day. However daunting as it has been, the philosophers and educators alike have never stopped their efforts in search for the right concepts, structure, pedagogies, and process to reach the higher ethical and moral consciousness. For instance, Kant insists to use his "maxims," which "train how to think" to build the foundations of a moral culture (Kant, 1960, p.63), Maslow (1987) uses his hierarchy to illustrate the higher needs and realization in human development and motivation, and Kohlberg (1971) maps out the developmental stages of moral plains.

The ethical and moral focus of educational philosophy addresses a difficult and yet core necessity in human existence through their encounters, personal, tribal, or national, at peace, or in conflict and war. Thus, it provides an authoritative voice and force in life and social governance.

Dialectics and Dynamics

Life, however, is full of complexity and differences in its manifestation. This is reflected in each person, not to say a group, and in various cultures and nations across geographic landscape, space, and time. It is ultimately challenging for educational philosophy to search, find, articulate, and implement universal truth and for ethics to provide the principles and yardsticks for human beings constantly and consistently. As the philosophers seek the truth amidst such dazzling and often conflicting multi-dimensions, the simple, elegant, and all-inclusive dialectic views tend to synthesize all occurrences and infinite transformative states.

  The eastern yin-and-yang belief reflected in the Daoist symbol is one of the earliest documented metaphysical descriptions of the constant changing universe (Barratt, 2008; Wiley, 1979). Such an understanding recognizes that different properties or forces that coexist within one entity and can change and transform the property based on quantitative and qualitative changes in connection with the environmental and internal conditions. For instance, both yin and yang elements exist within a human whether the person is female or male, with the female possessing more yin and the male more yang. However, in certain conditions, the female may manifest more yang energy or vice versa. *The Book of Change* or *Yi Jing* (易经) further illustrates such complexity with the simplicity of Taiji map through a myriad of energy balance and proportions in relation to the directions and multiple factors of the universe (Wiley, 1979).

  In the western philosophical tradition, Hegel's dialectics also integrate change as a component of searching for truth. His logics consist of thesis and antithesis, which "included many variations and shadings of the triadic categories." They form a "continuum" "characterized by a moving, constant 'synthesizing' –a moving, growing, ever-changing thought process." (Osman & Craver, 2012, p. 17). This approach enriches the human thinking process and considers the complexity and variations of human situations and move beyond the subjective and absolute truth.

  Dewey (1916), influenced by Hegel, continues to take the dynamic of the changing world into consideration to counterbalance the one-size fit all model of education as the Industrial Revolution brought the fast expansion of mass education. He "took on a rather different position regarding ethics from the earlier established Western schools of thoughts, which emphasized absolute truth, classic cannons, and fixed values… and sought educational ethics in a changing world with consideration of different environments, cultures, and passages of time" (Xu & Ernestine, 2017, p.100). His pragmatic approach to ethics balances both individual and societal needs with realistic

considerations. By doing so, Dewey echoes Confucius' pragmatic principles of morality, which advised people to preserve harmony among the family as the primary goal.

This realistic recognition and consideration of the forever changing dynamics in humanity and environment empower the philosophers and educators as they negotiate a wide range of variety and diversity throughout history and human development. The goal and focus on cultivation, ethics, and dialectics form three essential pillars in educational philosophy as it serves humanity on earth. The essence and power of educational philosophy in the long history are synergized and built around this profound wisdom, leading vision, and practicality for individuals and society alike. This accounts for the leading and sustaining capacity of educational philosophy for thousands, if not millions, of years.

Factors of Philosophical Decay

What, then, has led to the downturn of educational philosophy and the loss of its guiding and influential power in the recent decades, when education actually has been booming and expanding around the world? While there could be infinite explanations, big or small, similar or different, in various cultures and locations of the world, the following three are perhaps determining factors worth noticing among many:

Movement From Elite to Mass Education

Education, for millions and thousands of years, has been a privilege of the few and elites everywhere on earth. Those who had the fortune to learn often were directly connected with the social and political governance of a tribe, culture, and nation or the dynamic paradigm shift from an old to the new. For instance, the concept of democracy was born in the context of Greek, Roman, and Persian social and cultural contexts for governance. (The Origin of Democracy, 2017). The rise and continuation of Confucianism as a philosophy largely resulted from the needs of sustainability of Chinese dynasties since Confucius' times. Therefore, educational philosophy was organically intertwined and integrated with the social power and politics of state governance, authority, and hierarchy, which in turn provided its legitimacy and far reaching influence and impact.

In the past century or two, industrialization, the advancement of sciences and technology, commercialization, and globalization have drastically changed the landscape of education worldwide from an elite privilege to a common commodity. Based on OECD and IIASA data, in 2015 the amount of people who have had access to some formal education reached 86% of the total population compared to 17.2% in 1820. (Roser & Nagdy, 2017). The ration of gross enrollment at primary level for both sexes has changed from 89.19 in 1970 to 104.14 in 2014 (World Bank, 2017). Formal schooling and education have become the largest enterprise and business on earth.

Ironically, the explosive expansion of education actually has weakened the status and stronghold of educational philosophy both in schooling and life. The purpose and goal of education has shifted drastically, from an all-inclusive and lofty orientation of human cultivation, social and political governance, and scholarly and aesthetic pursuit to a practical focus of economic development and career employment. Education and educational philosophy, once highly valued and respected, become valued in a much different manner –with profits and personal benefits at the core instead of social significance, peace, and purposes. Recently, the Vice-President of Tsinghua University, Shi Yigong has made a strong statement that research universities should not have career employment and money making as their primary goals. He stated that universities are the places for talents, scholars, and future leaders (2017). What has plagued Tsinghua University is happening worldwide in higher education institutions. Harvard University President, Dew Faust, has echoed Shi's comments recently, stating, "While we wish for our students to thrive in every dimension, we reject the idea of measuring education achievement by financial gain alone" (Faust, 2017, p.5). Educational philosophy has lost its value in this re-evaluation of the new educational process of practicality and commercialization. It has been lowered into another subject or a narrow subfield of learning, one that is less lustrous compared to financiers, doctors, and lawyers due to its limited earning capacity and the lower social status associated with a philosopher as a career.

Compartmentalization of knowledge and learning

The next factor that has impacted educational philosophy and its status overall is the compartmentalization of knowledge and learning that has accompanied the expansion of formal education. Traditionally, educational philosophy served as the core, driving force, and guideline for all teaching and learning. Philosophy, language, and literature formed the early scholarship in various human societies. As learning advanced, philosophy was the study that profoundly connected all, the art of governance, religion, military strategies, astronomy, medicine, and so on. Education was a holistic and integrated journey, as it was manifested in the traditional "Six Arts" in Chinese classical teaching (Xu, 2016). Junzi (君子) used to be erudite role models and sages that had both the depth and breath of living knowledge.

However, the fast expansion of formal education in the past two centuries has opened numerous subjects and fields in formal schooling, including foreign languages, sciences, technology, engineering, computer, IT, oceanography, aero-dynamics, and law, to name a few. Each has sub-fields, focuses, and specializations within. Teaching and learning have centred on knowledge, information, and skills for one to be a subject matter specialist or expert. During this process, the orientation of education has changed to the information (what) and the techniques (how) without deeper personal and social purposes (why). For instance, in the ancient times in China, people went to a Chinese doctor and herbalist for holistic treatment. Nowadays, each person needs to have an

internal physician, dentist, orthodontist, optometrist or ophthalmologist, allergist, immunologist… and the list goes on.   In education and teacher training, philosophy is taught as a separate course from history, sociology, multicultural education, subject matters (English, math, sciences, elementary and secondary education, and special education), psychology, and technology.

As a result, education philosophy has been stripped down to information and facts of knowledge instead of the thinking and guiding force of education and life. The separation of subject matters and fields may make teaching and learning manageable with a narrower focus. However, the departmentalized approach builds borders or walls within learning, segregates knowledge, and stifles a holistic education with higher and bigger purposes. In recent decades, the stand-alone department of educational philosophy has become "the last Mohigan" in America (Cooper, 1826) and worldwide. It is rare to see educational methods or subjects taught with profound philosophical underpinning.

Separation between theory and practice

Certainly the globalization of formal education has been a powerful force in the fate of educational philosophy in the larger context. However, it is important to recognize that much of the downfall of educational philosophy has internal reasons as well.

Due to the strong connection with the elite, autocracy, and ruling class, educational philosophers were associated with the power, tribal chiefs, kings and queens, the political or military states. They were revered as the "philosopher king," sages, *junzi*, and the wisemen, larger than real life. There was a clear divide between the learned who ruled and the illiterate who were ruled, as Confucius stated, "those who use their brains rule others and those who labour manually are ruled (*"laoxinzhezhiren and laolizhezhiyuren*, 劳心者治人，劳力者治于人*")* (Confucius, 1893,10:2). The mass education has, to a large extent, levelled the ivory tower and broken the ancient divide between the high and low brows. The democratic and equitable bend of modern education have challenged and shaken the old power structure and authority in philosophy and formal schooling.

Meanwhile, the content and methodology of educational philosophy remained largely unchanged over thousands of years. The established schools of thoughts of the East and West, especially of the latter, have been the main cannon and focus especially since colonization. More often than not, the philosophies have been taught within the historic time capsules without vigorous connections and relations with the contemporary practices and relevance. We see the "opaque" practice of the droning teacher, which often bores the learners, for thousands of years since the criticism in *Xueji*, and such an approach is still fully alive today in the classrooms around the globe (Xu & McEwan, 2016, p. 12). For years, a dean of education in the United States repeatedly described educational philosophy as a "useless" course to his faculty and staff due to his own

suffering in such a course during his doctoral study. Needless to say, such experiences are highly costly and deadly for educational philosophy and education.

  The decline of educational philosophy over the past century or two occurs, to a large extent, in a self-inflicted and accumulated manner. When the internal and external forces are combined and converged, it is not a surprise that educational philosophy has shrivelled to where it is today. Whitehead explained the reasons well,

> In the history of education, the most striking phenomenon is that schools of learning, which at one epoch are alive with a ferment of genius, in a succeeding generation exhibit merely pedantry and routine. The reason is, that they are overladen with inert ideas. Education with inert ideas is not only useless: it is above all things, harmful—*Corruptio optimi, perssima* (Whitehead, 1954, p. 13).

We see a distinct disconnection, in most cases, between the philosophical theories taught in class and the educational reality in formal schooling. The abstract concepts and theories often are discussed separately from the dynamic changes of teaching and learning as well as life that are in full swing outside the classrooms.

Rebirth of Dao and Ethics

The question then can be asked whether educational philosophy is at the end of its purpose and capacity. Or does the world still have a need and place for educational philosophy? This brings a full circle back to the origin of philosophy, education, and its definition. Ozman and Craver (2008) point out that the purpose of educational philosophy was and still is for human survival. This basic need has not only continued but also expanded in the modern society in many new forms, including developing our abilities to think, work, and communicate and living leisurely and fully to our entire capacities. They define educational philosophy as "the application of philosophical ideas to educational problems, which in turn, can lead to a refinement of both philosophical ideas and educational development (2008, p.2). Whitehead vividly explains the aims of education and educational philosophy as follows,

> A merely well-informed man is the most useless bore on God's earth. What we should aim at producing is men who possess both culture and expert knowledge in some special direction. Their expert knowledge will give them the ground to start from, and their culture will lead them as deep as philosophy and as high as art (1954, p. 13).

The nature of philosophy, as human beings perceived and developed, encompasses all learning including liberal arts, sciences, ethics, logic, aesthetics, metaphysics, and epistemology, etc. in the search for general understanding of values and reality (Webster Universal Encyclopaedia Dictionary, 2002, p. 1371). Philosophical study,

reflection, and development happen naturally at all times, whether it is individual or group, and formal or informal. By its own definition, it is inevitable and essential in education and life.

So the seeming death of educational philosophy perhaps is not a real indicator of the death of the discipline but rather one due to the misperception and misapplication of educational philosophy among humanity in the rapidly changing world. Then the question would be how we could redirect educational philosophy in such a way that will revitalize its vigour, purpose, relevance, and positive impact in education and life sustainably. While it is impossible to discuss this in full scope, this paper will highlight and advocate two aspects, holistic Dao and universal ethics. Neither is new in philosophy or humanity. However, the argument below intends to integrate the lessons of the past and current challenges of the contemporary society.

Dao

Laozi, in his famous *Dao De Jing* (1999) approximately 2,500 years ago, taught that when the Dao is followed all are prosperous and when the Dao is opposed, it leads to peril. The Dao "is empty; yet when you use it, you never need to fill it again. Like an abyss! It seems to be the ancestor of the ten thousand things" (Chapter 4, p.8). The evoking of the Dao from ancient sages is to holistically connect humanity with the beginning of the cosmic creation and the natural development ever since. Ambiguous or mystic as it may be, especially in the early days of civilizations, the Dao includes the cosmos in its entirety with humanity as one element of "the ten thousand things." Thus, human learning and education consist of all heaven and earth in a related manner, and this orientation gives both education and educational philosophy the importance and capacities far beyond where we are at this time and place.

This all-encompassing Dao focuses on cosmic and nature principles, which regulate all elements in all dimensions and space, not only the subjective rules made from the human mind, ego, and greed. This reconnection with the source and origin of all expands educational philosophy in its purpose, content, pedagogies, process, and outcomes in a forceful, inclusive, and lasting way. Actually, this illustrates the forces and reasons that made educational philosophy so powerful in history in the first place. However, it is not a simple return to the past, but a spiral up with at least two major differences. First, it is definitely not a repetition of imperialism, autocracy or elitism that we experienced in the past; and second, it needs to truly embrace and embody the entire cosmos and principles without a narrow-minded and blatant human-centrism.

The full opening means philosophy will be a connecting force and serve as a foundation in the entire process of education. That is educational philosophy should not be a stand-alone subject or course only, but needs to be embedded in all, educational methods, subjects matters, technology, as well as subjects beyond the educational profession such as law, sciences, math, medicine, nursing, health, and business. What we choose to learn, as well as the how and why, has everything to do with our philosophies

and belief systems. They in turn have an impact on our knowledge, learning, and life with consequences, for better or worse, whether we realize it or not. Educational philosophy needs to be taught at all levels as well. Lipman and Jackson have actually provided a working model with Philosophy for Children (P4C) (Lipman, 2002) and then philosophy for children (p4c) (Jackson, 2003). They have illustrated how philosophy can aspire children when learning is focused on wonder to discover the world through a collaborative community building. The program of the 2018 World Congress of Philosophy Conference actually illustrates the direct connection of philosophy and its power through its 99 varied themes, a tip of the iceberg, indicating the meaningful role of philosophy in every aspect of human life and learning. The challenge is to bring and hold such mega and macro galaxies of philosophy into our focal study in a relational manner instead of a micro view of a grain of sesame with a narrow and disconnected focus. Certainly, the full scope of philosophical breadth and possibilities do not negate the focused approach of in-depth analysis. It is the balance and inclusion of all that this paper calls for versus a mere lopsided, limited, and abstract scholarship.

Ethics

Ethics, indeed, is a human creation when virtue is lost and when the individual and society need moral principles for survival and sustainability. The human history has continuously indicated the necessity and importance of it. The closeness of human encounters of diverse cultures, nations, and people, resulting from the advancement of modern transportation and the internet, often brings acute awareness of our differences, conflicts, and varied perspectives. The ethical principles or norms established in one culture throughout history could be entirely abnormal or offensive to another. Human history has evolved through slavery, feudalism, imperialism, colonialism, capitalism, and globalism. The rich and advantaged often imposes certain values as the moral rules upon the disadvantaged through exploitation for their own profits at the expense of the latter. How, then, would ethics go beyond and overcome the past darkness, pitfall, and oppression?

The ethics of the Dao is to follow the natural and cosmic forces and principles, which do not favour one but include and apply to all. What happens to one actually impacts all in the world. The universe, as Einstein (1916) describes it, is constant in matter and changes in forms and manifestations. So in the realm of human societies, for ethics to be ethics, we need to recognize and honour our diversities and heritages respectfully and equally. Such an open and inclusive approach to ethics can be found from ancient philosophers as Laozi (1999) and Siddharta Gautama (Kornfield, 1993), modern thinkers Marx and Engles (1848), King (1963), and Freire (1970), and recent multiculturalism from Banks (2014), Bennette (1995), and Gollnick & Chinn (2009). Currently, the effort of United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) creates Global Citizenship Education "to empower learners to assume active roles to face and

resolve global challenges and to become proactive contributors to a more peaceful, tolerant, inclusive and secure world" (2017).

In order to develop ethics and values for all earthlings from the richness and diversity of humanity and the universe, we need to build a synergy that dialectically integrates both divergence and convergence of human knowledge, perspectives, and capacities. This process requires balance, equilibrium, and goodness for all (including all species and elements). At the same time, it focuses on "relationality" among family and community (Ames, 2001, Ravencroft, 2005). The constant building and rebuilding of relations of living beings and souls foster benevolent connections. Therefore, ethics becomes a living process of collaboration, cooperation, and construction instead of judgment, moral superiority, and elitism. The ethics, then, is more likely to be honoured and practiced by all.

A living ethics is the true ethics with positive impact and lasting effects. The return or rebirth of ethics also calls for it to be taught and learned via real life examples and role models. Ancient philosophers were revered, not only because they were scholars and subject matter experts, more importantly, they lived what they preached. The lasting power of Laozi, Confucius, and Socrates, and many others is because they embodied philosophies they taught in their lives, thus their legacies live continuously to the present day.

Concluding Remarks

The Dao and ethics have been the leading and guiding forces for humanity for millions of years, and they are the essence of educational philosophy. As all rivers flow into the ocean, educational philosophy, for its renewal, needs to go to its very water source and roots, its macro purpose and function in connection with the cosmos, humanity, and all through space and time. The rebirth of Dao and ethics are not only the narrow interest of the profession of educational philosophy, but that of the entire humanity and universe for the expansion of full potential and consciousness. It can only happen when each of us chooses to renew and reconnect as ONE.

Note

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