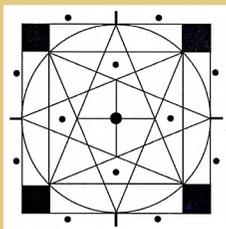
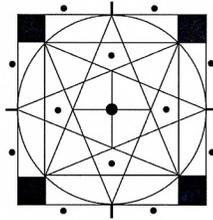


The Way of Humanity:
Confucian Wisdom for an Opening World
Teachings of the Korean Philosopher, Haengchon



Edward R. Canda

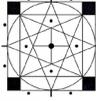
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I am forever grateful to my parents, Anne and Frank Canda, in loving memory, for setting me out on the path of life and spirituality, and to my wife, Hwi-Ja, for accompanying me and supporting me all along the way since we first met in 1976.

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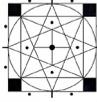
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Figure 1

Myeongnyundang, Hall for Illumination, Sungkyunkwan²

² *Myeongnyundang*, built 1398, is the central hall for study to illuminate virtue at Sungkyunkwan academy in Seoul. Photograph by Yi Suhng Gyohng, PhD, 2017; gift to the author.



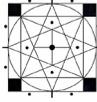
Preface

This book presents a Confucian vision for personal and social transformation intended to bring about a worldwide social order of harmony, dignity, and justice for all peoples, beyond divisive sectarianism and nationalism. It is based on ideals for human flourishing gleaned from 2500 years of East Asian thought, as found in the Confucian classics and insights from Neo-Confucian and contemporary Korean Confucian philosophers. These ideas have been distilled by a highly respected elder philosopher in South Korea, Yi Dong Jun, PhD (literary name, Haengchon). He is a Professor Emeritus of the College of Confucian Studies and Eastern Philosophy at Sungkyunkwan University in Seoul who has received prestigious national awards for his scholarly contributions on Korean Confucian philosophy. His concern is for how Confucianism can promote the Way of Humanity (i.e. expressed by two Chinese homonyms, pronounced *rendao*: 仁道, 人道) which encompasses the natural human way of living in relationships, the moral imperative for people to relate benevolently, the method of cultivating our benevolence, and the evolutionary course of human civilization that is opening up the possibility for a global order of wellbeing and justice. Master Haengchon³ teaches that the core insights and ideals of the Way of Humanity are crucial to preserve and transmit, whether Confucianism continues as a formal system of philosophy and religion, whether it adapts well to the contemporary world, or whether it passes away as a distinct institution.

The Way of Humanity is the first detailed presentation of a contemporary Korean philosopher's perspective on Confucianism as grounded in daily life, its implications for personal spiritual development, and its potential to contribute to world development. The book is based on my interactions with Master Haengchon for a period of 44 years, utilizing qualitative research methods applied to many occasions of immersion in academic and daily life settings in South Korea and the United States, formal studies of Confucian philosophy under his guidance, and analysis of field notes, interview notes, photo documentation, and audio and video recordings.

³ When I refer to Haengchon directly, I will use the English title of respect, 'Master', in recognition of his accomplishments as a philosopher and in appreciation for his role as a teacher and mentor for me and numerous others. There is more explanation in chapter 1.

The book holistically presents Master Haengchon's insights through six complementary approaches: 1) vivid stories gleaned from our daily life interactions; 2) thematically arranged chapters regarding philosophical topics about virtuous daily living, larger matters of social justice and cosmic context, and implications for global transformation; 3) concise explanations of key philosophical concepts and Korea-specific cultural matters; 4) numerous figures that illustrate and amplify the text; 5) audio recorded chanting of two prominent Confucian classics: selections from the *Book of Changes* and the *Great Learning* (entire); and 6) recommendations for further reading in footnotes and references with hyperlinks to sources.



Foreword
by Haengchon

As people say that time flies like an arrow, already 44 years have passed since I met Professor Emeritus Edward R. Canda. Ed and I met for the first time at Sungkyunkwan University in March 1976. He had just arrived in Korea, a country little known to the Western world at that time, after graduating with a major in anthropology from Kent State University. As a grantee of the Fulbright Scholar Program, he decided to study in the Master's program of Eastern Philosophy within the Graduate School at Sungkyunkwan University. Sungkyunkwan is the oldest institution for higher education in Korea. It takes the basic principles of Confucianism as its pedagogical standards. Since I was the youngest faculty member in the department at that time and had some ability to communicate in English, I was assigned to help him adjust in the new environment. After that, we met quite often, and soon we became close friends. We discussed almost everything. Ed was a probing, ardent student. He was extremely enthusiastic about his research.

The faculty in the College created a non-degree curriculum specifically designed for Ed. In that program he was able to study some Confucian classics, introduction to Korean traditional philosophy, and Korean cultural anthropology and art history.

In addition to indoor academic activities, faculty and students in the College would leave on field trips to explore historic sites. Ed never missed such opportunities and he seemed to have fun during those trips. Other than his academic research, Ed was very enthusiastic about learning Korean *nongak*, which is folk dance and percussion performed with traditional musical instruments such as drums and gongs. He specialized in learning to play the *janggu* (hourglass shaped drum) and *kkwaenggwari* (a small gong made of brass).⁴

It is also noteworthy that Ed spent much time with a Korean lady, Jeong Hwi-Ja. She was a senior in the Department of Biology at Sungkyunkwan University who helped him for his adjustment during his stay in Korea. They eventually got married in the United States and they have stayed married until

⁴ For more information on *nongak*, read Canda (1993). A video of a *janggu* drum performance by the author can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BAleco2WDFk>; Korean Culture Show, the University of Kansas, 2008.

the present day as a devoted couple. This seems to me to signify a harmonious union of the East and the West.

In 1977, I composed a Korean style name for Ed, based on advice from my father. The name is Yi Gwan Dae (Korean: 이관대; Chinese: 李觀大). We made this name by considering Korean words that sound like his English name. ‘E’, the first letter of his personal name, became ‘Yi’ (pronounced like ‘ee’) which is also my family name, since in Korean the first name is the surname. ‘Canda’ became his Korean personal name, ‘Gwan Dae,’ which means ‘to perceive the great’.

Ed went back to the United States after 14 months of study at Sungkyunkwan. Since then we have kept up on each other’s lives quite well through correspondence and visits. After his study at Sungkyunkwan, he received his Master’s degree in religious studies at the University of Denver and Master’s and PhD degrees in social work at The Ohio State University. Ever since he became a professor at the University of Iowa in 1986, and after he moved to the University of Kansas (KU) in 1989, he has visited Korea many times to lecture, conduct research, and teach study abroad courses for KU students.

During many visits to Korea, Ed stayed at my home with my family for about 10 to 20 days or even longer. When he stayed with us, he worked, studied, and wrote using his computer. During free times, we talked, ate, and traveled together. He is like a family member to us.

When Ed first came to Korea, he was in his early twenties. Nevertheless, he looked older than compared to how he currently looks. That is because his hair, mustache, and beard were much longer at that time. So when Ed first came to my home, my young children said that they were seeing Jesus Christ. In fact, I heard that Ed went to a Catholic school in his childhood. However, he never displayed religious intolerance. On the contrary, even in those days, he seemed very generous and open minded about other religions. I believe that he deeply understands Christianity, and that at the same time, he respects other religions, and tries to learn about them with utmost sincerity.

He and I usually talk about everyday matters in a casual fashion. We talk about Confucianism and topics of Eastern studies often. We enjoy our conversations whenever we meet, often over dinner.

Several years ago, Ed told me that he wished to publish a book based on our conversations and some of my fragmentary writings. I sometimes say things informally, and sometimes I write notes and manuscripts for the preparation of presentations at academic institutions such as KU. It seems that he collected and recorded those sayings and writings in more detail than I realized. After some time, he sent me a manuscript based on this. It was amazing

to me how he was meticulous in documenting all those materials, especially when our conversations occurred with no intention of formal documentation.

This incident reminds me of something. Most Koreans know about Master Toegye (Yi Hwang, 1501-1570), a great Confucian scholar in the Joseon Dynasty. He left *The Records of Self Reflection*, a selective collection of his correspondence sent to his colleagues and pupils.⁵ In its preface, Toegye quoted a passage from the Confucian *Analects*: The Master said, “The reason why the ancients did not lightly utter their words was because they feared that their actions might not measure up to them.”⁶ Toegye said that some of what he wrote in his correspondence he forgot while other people did not, and some of it both he and others forgot. He thought that this was not only shameful, but also intemperate. He added that he compiled the correspondence to be published as a book not because he wished to make an achievement, but because he wished to use it as a tool of self-examination.

Considering Toegye’s aforementioned remarks, I realize that now Ed has done me a favor by writing out what *I* have to do for *my* self-examination. Thanks to him, I obtained an opportunity to reflect on what I said and how I behaved in the past, just as Toegye did. How kind he is! I am very lucky to have such a helpful person like Ed as my friend.

I carefully read the manuscript drafts that Ed has sent me. I find the book to be very well organized, and, I could not find a line that was against my opinion. The book discusses learning the Dao (Way) of Humanity and applying benevolence and other virtues to daily life, social welfare, and the opening of the world to freedom and justice for all people. As suggested by those topics, this book deals with what I ought to do, rather than what I have actually done. And although I may be a teacher, I cannot afford the appellation of ‘master’. What I have done throughout my life is simply to convey what I have learned.

A poem comes to my mind. It is Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s *The Arrow and the Song*⁷:

I shot an arrow into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For, so swiftly it flew, the sight
Could not follow it in its flight.

⁵ Chung (2016); for more on T’oegye’s thought, I recommend Kalton (1988).

⁶ Legge, (1893a) book 4, chapter 22.

⁷ Available in the public domain at <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/1365/pg1365.txt>.

I breathed a song into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For who has sight so keen and strong,
That it can follow the flight of song?

Long, long afterward, in an oak
I found the arrow, still unbroke;
And the song, from beginning to end,
I found again in the heart of a friend.

I learned this poem by heart during my high school years and have liked it ever since then. But I never expected it to come back to me as Cupid's Arrow would.

Another poem occurs to my mind. It is from the beginning of Rabindranath Tagore's *Gitanjali*⁸:

Thou hast made me endless, such is thy pleasure. This frail vessel thou
emptiest again and again, and fillest it ever with fresh life.
This little flute of a reed thou hast carried over hills and dales, and hast
breathed through it melodies eternally new.
At the immortal touch of thy hands my little heart loses its limits in joy
and gives birth to utterance ineffable.
Thy infinite gifts come to me only on these very small hands of mine.
Ages pass, and still thou pourest, and still there is room to fill.

There are things that move our hearts. They vary in kind and in nature. They move us towards certain directions. Perhaps both Ed and I are travelers moved by the same thing.

Professor Emeritus Edward Canda is now an internationally known scholar, who has published numerous books and articles. For example, between 1999 and 2020 he published three editions of *Spiritual Diversity in Social Work Practice* (3rd edition by E. R. Canda, L. D. Furman, & H. Canda; Oxford University Press, New York, 2020). A long time ago in 1990, he established an organization named the Society for Spirituality and Social Work and it still continues. As those titles suggest, his professional life has been devoted to integrating the depth of our spirits and the width of our lives, and to leading

⁸ Available in the public domain at <https://www.sacred-texts.com/hin/tagore/gitnjali.htm> under the title: Rabindranath Tagore, *Gitanjali: Song Offerings*, a collection of prose translations made by the author from the original Bengali, with an introduction by W. B. Yeats.

humankind to the world of harmony. I hope that his efforts will bear fruit and that our world will become a garden of happiness where individuals, families, societies, and all humanity are one.

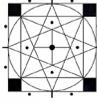
April 26, 2020

Gwacheon City, Korea

PART ONE
LEARNING THE WAY⁹



⁹ The image for title pages of Parts One and Two is a tricolored *taegeuk* (태극) symbol from the top of a gate for the entrance of Yeongneung Monument with tomb and memorial museum for King Sejong. *Taegeuk* means 'Great Ultimate'. This symbol represents creative integration of Heaven, Earth, and humanity. A more common form of *taegeuk* symbol is composed of two colors representing yin and yang, as in Figure 51 and displayed on the flag of the Republic of Korea.



1

Background and Context

Purpose and Perspective of the Book

This book concisely presents insights from the heart of Confucian wisdom regarding a way of spiritual cultivation for individuals and for governance of society that opens the world toward wellbeing and justice for all people. It provides a rich source of insights for the reader to reflect on with regard to their personal development and spiritual life, to wider contemporary issues of social justice and social development, and to the Confucian tradition as it is being reshaped currently in East Asian societies. This Confucian wisdom is distilled from nearly 45 years of my study with Professor Yi Dong Jun¹⁰ (literary name, Haengchon) who is one of the most respected elder philosophers in South Korea.¹¹

Figure 2
*Portrait of Haengchon*¹²

Over this long period, Master Haengchon has taught, mentored, and befriended me. He brought me into his home, family, and daily life during my many visits to South Korea and his visits to the USA. He helped



¹⁰ Korean names begin with the family name (usually a single syllable) followed by the personal name (usually two syllables), as in Yi Dong Jun.

¹¹ Professor Yi was born in 1937. He has been recognized by several awards, including the 17th Yeolam Academic Award from Park Jong Hong Memorial Society (1998); the 3rd Yulgok Grand Award (Academic Field) from Gangwon Province and The Society of Yulgok Studies (2001); the Nokjogeeunjeong Decoration, awarded by the President of the Republic of Korea (2002); and the 4th Yulgok Academic and Culture Award from Yulgok Culture Institute (2007).

¹² This photograph of Master Haengchon at home is a gift from Dr. Yi Suhn Gyoehng. It was taken in 2017 by a *Hankyoreh* (한겨레) newspaper reporter, Cho Hyun (조현). Among objects in the background are a portrait of Confucius and a photograph of his father.

set me out on the Way of Humanity. That transformational relationship began when I arrived in Seoul, Korea, in March of 1976, to study at Sungkyunkwan University. Sungkyunkwan has more than 1000 years of history, beginning as a center for Confucian learning and preparation of scholar officials, and continuing now as a major highly regarded modern university.¹³ I studied there then for fourteen months during which time he was my teacher and advisor.

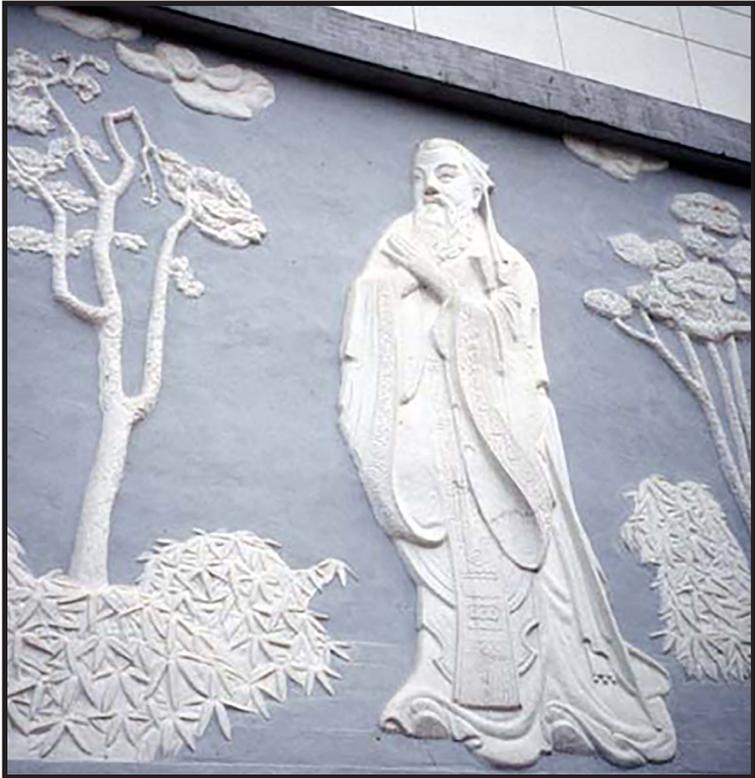


Figure 3
Mural of Confucius, Sungkyunkwan University¹⁴

¹³ In 992, during the Goryeo dynasty, the plan for a National University was established. The name of this university was Gukjagam at first, changing to Sungkyunkwan in 1308. During the Joseon dynasty, founded in 1392, the name of Sungkyunkwan remained the same, though the capital moved from Gaeseong to Seoul and the university followed in 1398. Today, it is called Sungkyunkwan University. The meaning of the name refers to an academy for ‘accomplishing’ the cultivation of human nature and ‘balancing’ society. For more information: Kang (2006), the Wikipedia entry (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sungkyunkwan>) and http://cefia.aks.ac.kr:84/index.php?title=Korea%27s_Religious_Places_-_2.2_Seonggyungwan_National_Academy

¹⁴ 1976.

On a lovely spring day when forsythia bushes were blooming prolific yellow, during my first semester, Master Haengchon arranged for me to accompany him and a group of Korean philosophy professors and students to visit the tomb of the Confucian scholar Jeong Jae Du (1649-1736) on Ganghwa Island which is off the coast, west of Seoul.¹⁵ We gathered there to learn about his thought.

We all stood solemnly in front of the mounded tomb and then bowed in respect. Following this, the professors carefully placed translucently thin white paper over the face of the memorial stone and made a black ink rubbing copy of its inscriptions for further study.

After students bowed and observed the copying of inscriptions, we worked together to spread out large bamboo mats on the grass nearby. The mats were large enough for the dozen or so people to sit comfortably. We took off our shoes, sat down cross-legged, and relaxed there on the field beside the grave, near stately pine trees that spread their branches toward us. I was in a rather serious mood as I reflected on the tomb-side proceedings. Soon a local farmer walked toward us, waddling, carrying two large buckets, one in each hand. To my surprise, the buckets were full of homemade cloudy rice wine (Korean: *makgeolri*).¹⁶ He set the buckets of wine nearby. Teachers and students poured cups of wine for each other. We discussed and laughed about matters great and small.

During a crowded bus ride home, Master Haengchon kindly stood with me in the aisle. We gripped handholds as the bus bumped along. I commented that the friendly conversing and drinking at the side of the scholar's grave showed me the importance of harmonizing formality and enjoyment. He agreed and added, "Confucianism teaches that the sacred and the ordinary are one. That is why teachers and students sat together beside the scholar's grave, sharing wine and conversation, after paying our respects and studying the memorial stone inscription. Temperate drinking and happy discourse are one with the solemnity of the scholar's grave."

¹⁵ Jeong Je Du attempted to preserve in Korea teachings from the Wang Yang Ming school of Chinese Neo-Confucianism by moving to a remote location on Ganghwa Island. This school was an alternative to the school of Zhu Xi which became the accepted orthodoxy of the Joseon dynasty (Kang, 2006).

¹⁶ Throughout the book, I insert Chinese and Korean Romanized spellings for key terms, at least on the first occasion they appear and more often as necessary to clarify meaning. Chinese and Korean proper names and key terms can be found in Appendix A along with Chinese characters and Korean *Hangeul*. Chinese Romanizations follow the Pinyin system (without diacritics). *Hangeul* Romanizations follow the Korean Government's Revised Romanization of Korean formulated in 2000. Some terms commonly accepted in English, such as yin and yang, use the current common English spellings. Some Korean proper names' Romanizations in the text follow conventional orthography or that preferred by the person or institution, instead of the Korean Government's Revised Romanization rules, for instance, Sungkyunkwan University.

This story illustrates some of the key lessons that permeate this book: Respect and study the wisdom of scholars of the past. Preserve it. Carefully reflect on it. Adapt and apply it as relevant to present circumstances and to outlook for the future. Enjoy the company of others who share the path of learning the Way. Live with awareness that the sacred and the ordinary are one. And do all this for the wide benefit of the world.



Figure 4
Guardian Scholar Statue
*at Tomb of Yulgok*¹⁷

Master Haengchon is a scholar who knows the traditional wisdom of Eastern philosophies thoroughly, who is passionate about their relevance to the contemporary world, and who lives according to what he says. To him, philosophy is not merely an academic exercise. It is a lifeway (C: *dao*)¹⁸ true to the Greek meaning of the roots of the word ‘philosophy’: loving wisdom. This lifeway expresses the ideal of the Korean Confucian scholar (K: *seonbi*), which is to cultivate oneself in order to be of service to others well. Master Haengchon honors and transmits the Confucian tradition, but he does so with concern for its relevance to daily life and for the wellbeing of everyone in the world and without clinging rigidly to its traditional forms.

Though he honors the Confucian tradition and is deeply engaged with Chinese and Korean Confucian texts, he is not a Confucian in any partisan or sectarian sense. He is conversant in major texts of Buddhism, Daoism, Christianity, and Greek philosophy. He is especially fond of spiritually astute literary works of people such as Rabindranath Tagore, Kahlil Gibran, and Tolstoy. His social circle includes people of many religions and philosophies. He reads, thinks, travels, and teaches widely around the world. He is committed to spiri-

¹⁷ 2004.

¹⁸ ‘C’ refers to Chinese; ‘K’ refers to Korean.

tual ideals, most especially those that promote loving and caring for all humanity. But he is not constrained by any particular religion. He said, “I myself have not entered the gate of religion. No one can say that I am Christian, Buddhist, or strictly Confucian. So no one can tell me what to say or not to say. I am free. I am plain. I am like a tree with no decoration.”

His most pressing concern is for how Confucianism can contribute to the coming of the future world, which he believes and hopes will support the dignity of all people, dissolve divisive sectarianism and nationalism, overcome oppression, and fulfill the potential for harmony between all in Heaven and Earth.¹⁹ Master Haengchon emphasized to me, “The purpose of your book should not be for the promotion of Confucianism itself. Rather, it should be for the benefit of humanity. Confucius did not dedicate his life in order to make an institution or religion. He dedicated his life for humanity.”

Master Haengchon exhorts me to use my position as an American with close ties in both West and East to serve as a connector and conveyor of wisdom. He asked me to share the wisdom of Confucianism widely in a style easy to understand for both the general reader and for those with an interest in East Asian philosophy, spiritual development, and ways to promote wellbeing and justice. He said that this follows the teaching style of Confucius, who taught for the benefit of society and world.

Professor Yi Dong Jun’s literary name, Haengchon, was given to him by Professor Lew Seung Kook, who was his teacher, mentor, colleague, and in-law (K: *dongseo*).²⁰ The name Haengchon means ‘village of ginkgo trees,’ referring to a place for Confucian scholars to gather or to a Confucian ethos. In usual conversation, I and his other students refer to him in polite Korean style as *gyosunim* (respected professor) or *seonsaengnim* (respected teacher). I further regard him as a mentor and guide on the path of life, which can be expressed by the title *seuseungnim*. Professor Yi recommended that I use his literary name for this book.

¹⁹ Certain philosophical terms referring to forces of major cosmological significance (e.g. Dao, Heaven, Earth) are capitalized in English renderings.

²⁰ Professor Lew Seung Kook (1923-2011) was a highly prominent and respected scholar of Korean philosophy. He was a Professor and then Professor Emeritus of East Asian and Confucian philosophy at Sungkyunkwan University for fifty-three years. He mentored Professor Yi since young adulthood. With Professor Lew’s blessings, Professor Yi married Professor Lew’s wife’s younger sister. Further, Professor Lew was a student of Professor Yi’s father, Master Yi Jeong Ho (literary name, Hak San). The teachings and ideals of these three scholars are intertwined. Professor Lew was one of my teachers from my very first day as a student at Sungkyunkwan University and he kindly continued encouraging me for the rest of his life. He was famous for his great energy and enthusiasm displayed when teaching philosophy and promoting East/West understanding.

When I refer to him directly in this book, I will use the honorific English term, Master, to encompass the intent behind the three Korean titles of respect above. This is a sign of my respect for his accomplishments as a philosopher and for his teaching and mentoring of myself and many others. However, this does not imply any intention on his part or mine to elevate him on a grandiose pedestal. He never relates to me in such a manner and he says that he does not merit such an honorific. Indeed, when I first proposed a book title with him as an author, he insisted that I be listed as author although (in my view) I am merely editing and conveying his words and ideas. He said, “I am not sure that my name should be in the title of your book, as I am not Confucius or Socrates or any other sage. I am just an ordinary person.” He added in a humorous tone, “It seems you are confusing me with a sage.” We finally agreed that his literary name should be in the subtitle to convey that this book presents his teachings as I have received, selected, and edited them, but with the caveat that he describes himself (like Confucius said of himself, I note) as only a transmitter of others’ ideas.²¹

My involvement in the social work profession over the past 40 years influenced our conversations and it has shaped my writing of this book.²² My interest in the ways that diverse religious and nonreligious spiritual perspectives contribute to positive human development and social justice is congruent with Master Haengchon’s interest in the ways that Confucian thought can contribute to the wellbeing of individuals, families, societies, and world. I highlight this point of intersection between our interests in this book.

Meaning of ‘The Way of Humanity’

The title of the book reflects the main theme of Master Haengchon’s teachings: living in a genuinely humane way for the benefit of self, family, society, and world. I chose this title to reflect Master Haengchon’s highly nuanced understanding of human nature and the purpose of human life. It is best for the reader to let this understanding form through reflection on Master Haengchon’s ideas that unfold in the following chapters. But an explanation of this

²¹ Confucius said (*Analects* 7:1), “Transmitting insight, but never creating insight, standing by my words and devoted to the ancients: perhaps I’m a little like that old sage, P’eng.” Translation by Hinton (1998a, p. 67).

²² The social work professional values that shape my approach can be found in the International Federation of Social Workers’ *Global Statement of Ethical Principles*. My framework for addressing spiritual diversity in social work, including Confucian and other perspectives, is presented in Canda, Furman, & Canda (2020) and Canda (2020). For applications of Confucianism to social work and social welfare, read Canda (2002 a & b; 2013 a & b); Canda & Canda (1996); and Canda, Shin & Canda (1993).

phrase at the outset will help the reader to wend through the book's themes and subthemes.

The term Dao²³ (C: 道, *dao*; K: 도, *do*) literally means the way, route, or path (Sommer, 2003). It is a key concept in traditional Chinese and Korean philosophy. In Confucianism, the Dao especially refers to a way of learning and conducting one's life and governance, such as the benevolent Way of Humanity (C: 仁道, *rendao*; K: 인도, *indo*; Figure 5), and to the course and way of changes of the cosmos. The Dao of Humanity, in the sense of a way of benevolent living, is congruent with the cosmic Dao. Indeed, according to Confucian thought, Heaven instills the moral imperative of benevolence within us.

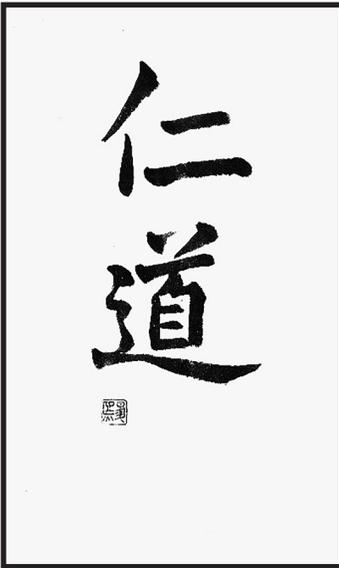


Figure 5
*The Way of Humanity (C: rendao, K: indo), Calligraphy*²⁴

The Chinese concept *ren* (C: 仁, *ren*; K: 인, *in*) is central to the Confucian Way. It was highlighted with more nuances of meaning in Neo-Confucianism. It refers to the cardinal virtue of benevolence and caring in relationships. The Chinese character for *ren* is composed of an ideogram for a human figure (人) along with two horizontal parallel strokes on its right side (i.e. meaning the number 'two'), connoting the essentially relational and interconnected quality of human nature. The form of the Chinese character symbolizes the nature

of persons as relational beings and it represents the ideal for benevolent expression of that relatedness. *Ren* is variously translated as benevolence (Legge, 1893a; Lau, 1979), good or goodness (Waley, 1938), humaneness (Hinton, 1998; Keenan, 2011; Yao, 2000), co-humanness (Rošker, 2016), love (Chen, 1993), and humanity (Chan, 1967; Goldin, 2011; Hinton, 1998).

In one sense, *ren* is a particular virtue of living in caring connectedness with others (Tu, 1985). *Ren* manifests in relationships, such as filial piety within a family, and it can extend to universal connectedness with all. In a larger

²³ Dao is the *pinyin* rendering. Many English speakers are more familiar with the spelling as Tao.

²⁴ This calligraphy is by Park Seung-Hee, PhD, a friend and Professor of Social Welfare at Sungkyunkwan University in Seoul who has a special interest in implications of East Asian philosophy for contemporary social welfare. It is a gift to the author.

sense, it is a general virtue that underlies, embraces, and ennobles other virtues (such as bravery or righteousness). *Ren* is the prevailing quality of a mature person who has cultivated their essential nature of connectedness such that it expresses in daily life activity as benevolence. The book title renders *ren* as humanity, which as Chan (1967) pointed out, well expresses its various nuances in Neo-Confucianism. Within this book, the term is most often rendered as humanity or benevolence, depending on context.

As ordinary persons and societal leaders cultivate their *ren* inwardly and express it in benevolent, humane relationships more and more widely through family, society, world, and cosmos, then human wellbeing and cosmic harmony bloom. Master Haengchon's teachings emphasize that to be fully and genuinely human is to live connected with others in a mode of benevolence and caring, in matters from the nearest and most ordinary activities to the most extensive engagements with all. Confucianism is a Way to learn how to live this way. As Master Haengchon said, "Confucian wisdom teaches people how to live in harmony with each other, Heaven, and Earth. This is the Dao of Humanity."

But Dao existed from the beginning of all. Though it is elucidated by Confucianism, it is not limited to Confucianism. Master Haengchon exhorts that the Dao of Humanity is the crucial path to preserve and transmit, whether Confucianism continues as a formal system of philosophy and religion, whether it adapts well to changes in the contemporary world and future, or whether it passes away.

There are actually two words pronounced as *ren* (K: *in*) that are represented by two different but related Chinese characters (i.e. 人 and 仁). As mentioned previously, the Chinese character for benevolence is constructed from the character for a person (人) plus the number two. *Ren* (i.e. 人) also means humanity in the sense of the human species. So both benevolence (仁) and person (人) are pronounced the same.

The book title 'The Way of Humanity' (C: *rendao*; K: *indo*) portrays multiple meanings that encompass both homonyms. Firstly, it is the way of human life rooted in our nature of relationality, that is, the Way of Human Beings (人道). Secondly, it is the way of living humanely, benevolently, and caringly, that is, The Way of Being Humane or The Way of Benevolence (仁道). Thirdly, it is the path of learning through which we cultivate ourselves so that we can consistently express our nature of benevolence for the mutual benefit of ourselves and others, that is, the Way of Becoming Humane (仁道). Fourthly, it is the spiritual evolutionary course of human civilization, the Way of Humanity as a species developing through history toward the possibility for an

open world of benevolence and harmony for all (人道). According to Master Haengchon, the Way of Human Beings (人道) can have a broad meaning that encompasses the Way of Benevolence (仁道). As Mencius emphasized, the genuine person is a benevolent person.

The Confucian Context of Haengchon's Teachings

Master Haengchon describes himself as an ordinary person who transmits the wisdom of others through his role as a teacher and through daily activities. He is an ardent purveyor of Chinese and Korean Confucian philosophy, but he says that he cannot be considered a Confucian in any restrictive sense. His life and studies show respect for and interest in many philosophies, religions, and cultures. For example, I have observed that when he visits the graves of Confucian scholars, he bows Confucian style two times. At the national shrine for Confucius at Sungkyunkwan, he bows four times for Confucius, in the highest sign of respect. When he visits Buddhist temples, he goes to the main Buddha hall first and bows three times Buddhist style in front of the statue of Shakyamuni Buddha,²⁵ indicating respect for Buddha's teaching. When attending Catholic mass, he participates with sincerity and attentiveness.

After an Indigenous sweat lodge ritual²⁶ in Kansas in 1997, led by a friend of mine, he said that it was a memorable and precious experience, with the feeling of original Confucianism. He later recalled the experience: "My impression of your Indigenous friend's sweat lodge and spirit supper in memory of his deceased wife was very favorable. I tried to participate with full sincerity. During the sweat lodge ceremony, we sat within the sweat lodge in a circle around the central hole, in darkness except for the light of the glowing hot rocks that were placed in the hole. The ceremonial leader put healing herbs and water on the rocks to produce steam. People sang and prayed so earnestly. I felt that we were enclosed in the round lodge like returning to the womb of the Earth. That is original Confucianism. We were in reverence and harmony with all the elements."

"At the spirit supper afterwards, we shared a meal in honor of the deceased person. Offerings were put into a fire for her. This reminded me of the Korean ceremony for honoring ancestors (*jesa*). I enjoyed this very much."

Though Master Haengchon is not formally religious, he regards daily life itself as a spiritual path and he is open to the sublime in everything. For exam-

²⁵ The historical founder of Buddhism.

²⁶ The sweat lodge is a prevalent ritual for purification and prayer among many North American Indigenous cultures. I recommend the explanation of the Oglala Sioux Tribe tradition of sweat lodge (*inipi* in Lakota language), based on the teachings of Black Elk, in Brown (1971).

ple, in 2009 I showed him a photograph of myself and a mutual friend that was taken during a recent visit to a Buddhist temple that had a large stone Maitreya Buddha statue on the grounds.²⁷ He exclaimed, “Such a nice photograph of you and your friend. What do you see in this picture? You are both sitting next to that large statue of Maitreya Buddha. Look closely. All things in the picture are Buddhas: the pine trees, the grass, the Buddha statue, and the two gentlemen sitting beside it.”

His teachings can be understood within the Confucian tradition by considering his most common allusions. Confucianism has taken many forms and been put to many uses since Confucius taught in China about 2500 years ago.²⁸ When teaching me, Master Haengchon commonly harkened back to the Chinese Confucian ‘Four Books’ and ‘Five Classics’ as a standard for wisdom and as a base for innovating in the future.²⁹ He highlights exemplars of the Kingly Way of humane and just governance, such as the ancient sagely kings Yao and Shun.³⁰ He emphasizes passages from the *Analects* of Confucius, *Mencius*, and the other classical Confucian texts that expound the importance of cultivating virtue within one’s daily life and putting virtue to practice in social relationships and governance, so that it can transform the world. He often refers to Zhu Xi (1130-1200), the Chinese Neo-Confucian scholar whose perspective strongly shaped Neo-Confucianism as it became the orthodox philosophy of the Joseon dynasty (1392-1910) in Korea.³¹

From Korean history, he recounts the legend of Dangun, the Korean culture founding hero, who is said to have been born from the union of a Heaven-

²⁷ Maitreya Buddha (Sanskrit; K. *Mireukbul*), in Mahayana Buddhism, is a Buddha who resides in Tusita Heaven, waiting to come to earth to bring in a new era of teaching and enlightenment for the world.

²⁸ For more on the history of Confucianism: Angle (2016); Chang & Kalmanson (2010); Cheng & Tiwald (2012); Goldin (2011); Ivanhoe (2000 & 2013); Makeham (2003); Neville (2000); Rainey (2010); Rosker (2016); Soles-Farras (2014); Yao (2000 & 2013). I recommend the books of Tu Weiming (born 1940) listed in References. Tu is a prominent Chinese American philosopher who is interested in implications of Confucianism for contemporary society in a global perspective.

²⁹ These are Chinese Confucian classical texts or scriptures. Zhu Xi highlighted them as the basis of Confucian learning. The Four Books include the *Great Learning* and *Doctrine of the Mean* (originally chapters in the *Book of Rites*) and the *Analects* of Confucius and the book of *Mencius*. The Five Classics include *Classic of Poetry* (aka *Book of Songs*), *Book of Documents* (aka *Book of History*), *Book of Rites*, the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, and the *Book of Changes*.

³⁰ Yao and Shun were legendary sagely emperors of ancient China. Yao (ca. 2342-2206 BCE) bequeathed the throne to Shun (ca. 2294-2184 BCE).

³¹ For example, read Chan (1967). For a collection of seminal essays on Korean Confucianism, including its history, characteristics, key figures, interreligious relations, and women’s issues, read Ro (2019).

ly being and Earthly bear woman, and then established the ancient Go Joseon kingdom of harmony, traditionally thought to have begun in 2333 BCE. He speaks often about Great King Sejong (1397-1450) and his sagely invention of the Korean alphabet, known as ‘right sounds to educate the people’ (K. *hunminjeongeum*). Master Haengchon extolls the way Great King Sejong’s alphabet harmonized philosophical insight, linguistic principles, benevolent concern for the welfare of common people, and practical utility. He frequently refers to Yi Hwang (literary name, Toegye, 1501-1570) and Yi I (literary name, Yulgok, 1536-1584), who are two of the most renowned Korean Neo-Confucian scholars. He praises the scholar minister Jo Gwang Jo (1483-1519) for his steadfast encouragement to the king to conduct government for the benefit of the ordinary people.

Master Haengchon has often mentioned three mentors in his personal life: his father, the scholar Yi Jeong Ho (literary name, Hak San, 1913-2004); Professor Lew Seung Kook (1923-2011); and a teacher in his youth, Ryu Yeong Mo (literary name, Daseok, 1890-1981). His father specialized in the philosophy of King Sejong’s alphabet and in the philosophy of a Korean Neo-Confucian philosopher and visionary, Kim Hang (literary name Il Bu; 1826-1898), who described a coming new world of harmony and justice.³² His father studied under a nephew of Master Il Bu, Kim Hong Hyeon. Professor Lew Seung Kook, who was a student of Master Haengchon’s father, became a close companion, mentor, and in-law.³³ Professor Lew emphasized the importance of East/West dialogue and the value of Confucian thought for humanizing contemporary democracies. Master Ryu Yeong Mo was a teacher who deeply investigated Eastern philosophies as well as the thought of Christianity.

Three priorities are prominent in what Master Haengchon emphasizes from this long line of tradition: benevolence in daily life and just social governance; creative interaction between diverse cultures, religions, and philosophies East and West; and adjustment and application of the Way of Humanity to help bring in a new era of worldwide harmony and justice.

³² Il Bu was a Korean scholar and visionary. He wrote the book, *Right Changes*, that envisioned the emergence of a new world based on full human potential and the transcendence of oppression and inequities. For an English translation with commentary and a concise biography, read Chung (2010).

³³ More information is in footnote 20.



Figure 6
*Professors Yi (Haengchon),
Lew, and the Author
at Tomb Memorial for
Master Yi Jeong Ho³⁴*

Method of Composing the Book

During the past 44 years of my interactions with Master Haengchon, I utilized qualitative field research methods to observe, immerse myself in, document, and analyze his teachings and way of life as a person and philosopher (e.g. Lawson, et al., 2015; Padgett, 2008; Patton, 2015). However, this was not done in a detached academic manner. My experience with him emerged naturally from initial studies as a graduate student into a prolonged relationship as a mentee and friend, welcomed into his home and family life. Throughout this long period of relationship in South Korea and the United States, I engaged in formal studies of Confucian classics and Korean thought under his guidance and shared many informal and spontaneous daily life experiences together. This book is the result of a fully collaborative project between mentor and mentee.

Master Haengchon often conveyed his philosophical thoughts to me through relatively brief and concise comments rich in meaning, frequently with a touch of humor. Many times, especially in formal lectures, he delivered longer explanations. I often learned the ethos of his teachings just by observing him and imbibing the significance of the situation and context. This helped me to understand the underlying values and feelings of his words and the general tenor of his ideals for living.

I gathered numerous field notes, interview notes, photo documentations, lecture manuscripts, audio and video recordings, and artifacts such as Master Haengchon's calligraphies, jottings, books, and memorabilia. I analyzed these materials in order to identify the major themes and subthemes of his teachings. I drew on these materials to explain the life context of his teaching in Part One of this book, illustrated by stories about our interactions. I also constructed essays that present his teachings in a way that very closely tie to his original words. These are arranged into thematic chapters for Part Two. The

³⁴ 2005.

chapters in Part Two are titled according to major themes of his teaching and the subheadings indicate subthemes. These chapters are arranged to create a flow and cumulative understanding of his teaching, starting with what is near and direct in experience of human nature and daily life, moving into the social justice implications and the cosmic context, and then opening up a vision for the ideal future of humanity. Passages culled and adapted from English lecture manuscripts are footnoted with an abbreviation of the title of the manuscript. For example, MSC means ‘excerpted and adapted from Modern Society and Confucianism’. (The list of these English manuscripts is in Appendix B.)

Many significant topics and persons reappear in different sections of this book. The first time that a significant concept or person is mentioned, a brief explanation is given in the main text or in a footnote. Key terms and names can be found in the Glossary (Appendix A), including Romanizations, Chinese characters, and Korean spelling (*Hangeul*). These terms and names can be used to search the electronic version of this book in order to compare passages that provide information about the given topic.

The primary language of our conversations and lessons has been English in order to accommodate my very limited abilities in Korean language and Chinese characters. Master Haengchon refers to Korean language and Chinese characters to give me the full meaning of key concepts. Fortunately, my own language skill limitations have resulted in an advantage for the writing of this book. Master Haengchon is selective and deliberate in what he says and how he says it to me, in order to be sure that the ideas are clear and understandable to an English speaker who is not a specialist in East Asian philosophy.

I have edited all his teachings into an English style that maintains a sense of his own style of speaking and writing English while adapting it to be closer to a native speaker’s flow. Master Haengchon jokingly and modestly refers to his style of English as 1950s or even 19th century, since he learned it in high school. In my view, his manner of speaking English is more articulate and profound than what is common among native speakers. His erudition far exceeds what I convey in this book. His English is influenced by that period of American English and by English translations of Confucian classics by James Legge from the late 1800s.³⁵ I have kept the poetic feel of his English by staying close to his oral phrasings and his written words. In recent years he has made some changes of 1950s conventions, such as using gender inclusive pronouns and

³⁵ Many of Legge’s translations are freely available online (<http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/book/lookupname?key=Legge%2C%20James%2C%201815-1897>). Explore the Legge translations listed in References for more translations.

references, because he does not want to imply otherwise by using an outdated style language. For example, he now regularly uses terms like ‘humanity’ or ‘humankind’ instead of ‘man’ to refer to human beings as a collective.

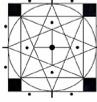
Koreans have an expression that means ‘mind to mind transmission’ (*isimjeonsim*). This level of mutual understanding is achieved through close relationship and empathy. My selection, editing, and paraphrasing of Master Haengchon’s teachings certainly reflect my choices and decisions, so any

limitations of the book are my own. However, I hope that there has been a sufficient level of *isimjeonsim* to inspire what I have written. In order to verify that my writing is a faithful and accurate presentation of Master Haengchon’s intent, I have shown him drafts of the manuscript at several stages, including the complete draft, in order to receive his corrections and approval.



Figure 7
*Haengchon Presenting the Author with His Scroll on Hunminjeongeum and Jeong Yeok*³⁶

³⁶ Gift to the author in celebration of his 60th birthday, 2014. This scroll presents diagrams related to composition and philosophical significance of the original Korean alphabet (*hunminjeongeum*) and a quote from *Jeong Yeok (Right Changes)*, a book by Master Il Bu (Kim Hang). The diagrams were designed by Master Hak San (Haengchon’s father). The Chinese calligraphy and accompanying Korean translation present a quote of Master Il Bu from his book: “Heaven and Earth would be empty shells without the sun and moon. The sun and moon would be vacant shadows without the true person.” The meaning of the calligraphy above the left stamp is “I respectfully copy Il Bu’s phrase and Hak San’s *jeongeum* diagram. Around the Spring Equinox of 2014. Yi Dong Jun.” More on King Sejong and the invention of the Korean alphabet is in chapter 3. There is more information on Il Bu in chapters 5, 7, and 8. Thanks to Dr. Yi Suhn Gyohng for help with explanations.



2

Learning the Dao

This chapter provides stories that illustrate Master Haengchon's way of teaching me through formal studies and daily life interactions. It contextualizes the ideas to be presented in Part Two within the daily life experience and insights of the way he teaches, holistically and personally.

Formal Studies

My original classes with Master Haengchon in 1976-1977 were mostly one to one private meetings and dialogues. We usually met in his office at Sungkyunkwan University in Seoul. He taught mainly in English and alluded to Korean and Chinese as needed. He had me read works that summarized Confucian and Korean philosophy, original Confucian classics in translation (such as the *Great Learning*, the *Doctrine of the Mean*, the *Analects*,³⁷ and the *Book of Changes*), and various articles about Korean Neo-Confucianism. We discussed the main ideas and he corrected my understanding as displayed through our discussions and my essays. Of course, I had to learn the contents of these texts. Yet their deeper significance came through my observation of his spontaneous comments and his way of conduct.

For example, my final course with him was on the *Book of Changes* (*C: Yijing*). He spoke of this book with special regard. He said that it is an advanced work and that Confucius was especially fond of its study.³⁸ I had learned a little about that classic previously, but mainly as a tool for divination. Master Haengchon emphasized that the *Book of Changes* should be regarded primarily as a book of wisdom about the principles of change that reflect the cosmic Dao as it expresses through the flow and interaction of yin and yang, the various resultant situations of human life, and ethical guidelines for how to harmonize with and mature through these situations. He taught me the traditional yarrow

³⁷ Another freely available translation of the *Analects* of Confucius (by A. Charles Muller) is online at: <http://www.acmuller.net/con-dao/analects.html>.

³⁸ Some scholars translate Book 7, verse 16 from the *Analects* to support this. For example, "Confucius said: If I was given a few more years, I would devote fifty to the study of the *Book of Changes* so that I may be free from serious mistakes." The translation by Richard Brown is at <https://brownbeat.net/2019/07/analects-of-confucius-book-7/>. However, some translators do not accept that the *Book of Changes* is indicated here (e.g. Waley, 1938).

stalk method of divination.³⁹ Yet he cautioned that one is not supposed to use it for selfish or trivial purposes. Meaningful insight can only come forth from the divination process if that process itself is done sincerely, carefully, at the right time, and for the right purpose. He said that he himself rarely used this divination process, mainly at times of great personal importance or national urgency.

The Book of Changes

(易經, *yijing*; 역경, *yeokgyeong*)

Selections Chanted by Haengchon

<http://hdl.handle.net/1808/30363>

Master Haengchon explained: “I will chant the first parts of *Zhouyi* [another term for *Yijing*], the *Qian* Hexagram and the *Kun* Hexagram. First, I will read the *Qian* Hexagram.” Then, the audio recording begins. After reading that section, he said, “I have completed reading the *Qian* Hexagram. Now I am going to read the second Hexagram, *Kun*.” When that concluded, he said, “I read up through the *Kun* Hexagram. Thank you.” The recording finishes at that point.⁴⁰

Such formal lessons always unfolded more with greater detail and depth later, through other daily life interactions. For example, I continued more extensive personal study of the *Book of Changes* while in the United States from 1977-1980. We discussed it on many other occasions of our meetings in the ensuing years.

In 1997, Master Haengchon took a 7-month sabbatical leave at the Univer-

³⁹ For an explanation, read Wilhelm & Baynes (1967).

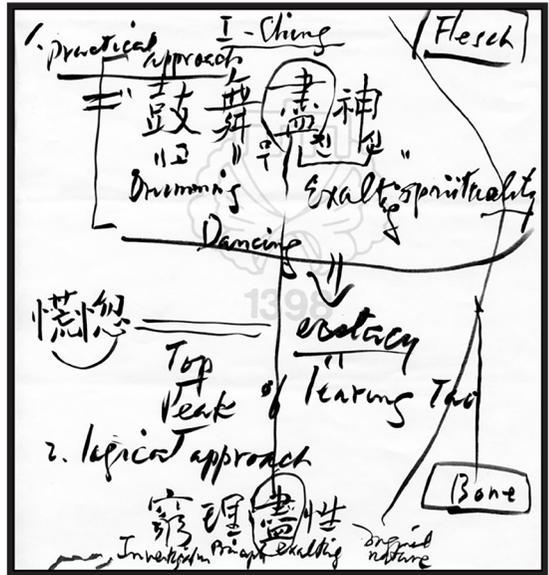
⁴⁰ 2009. In this audio recording, Master Haengchon chants the text for Hexagrams 1 (*Qian*, meaning ‘Creating’) and 2 (*Kun*, meaning ‘Complying’ or ‘Receptive’), including Judgment, Commentary on the Judgment (彖傳), Commentary on the Greater Images (大象傳), Line Statements (爻辭) with Commentary on the Smaller Images, and Commentary on the Words of the Text (文言傳). For a translation, read Adler (2020, pp. 52-74). Click on the link above to listen or search for the internet address online (length is about 22 minutes). The link goes to the website location for this book.

This style of chanting is a respectful way of reading the text aloud in Korean pronunciation of the Chinese text. Dr. Yi Suhn Gyohng provided this helpful explanation of the two hexagrams: *Qian* and *Kun* are two core Hexagrams in *Yijing*. *Qian* stands for Heaven and father, while *Kun* stands for Earth and mother. Heaven and Earth are recognized as parents who give birth to all things. *Yijing* says that the universe is constantly changing every moment in a process that balances and maintains its life. As the *Yijing* states, “The great attribute of heaven and earth is the giving and maintaining of life” (The Great Appendix part 2, Chapter 1.10). Translation is by Legge (1899).

sity of Kansas, where I was a professor in the School of Social Welfare. (Now I am Professor Emeritus, retired.) During that period, he enjoyed participating in gatherings of friends that I organized to drum together in a meditative and highly energizing way, influenced by traditional Korean drumming. After one of these events he said, “I appreciate your percussion performance. It is very energetic and enthusiastic. This reminds me of a passage from the *Book of Changes* saying that people drummed and danced, exalting the power of spirituality.”⁴¹ This is a practical and experiential approach of ecstasy for learning the Dao. The logical approach to learning the Dao is complementary to this. It involves investigating principle in order to exalt our original nature. The practical approach through drumming and dancing is like our flesh. The logical approach of study and reasoning is like our bone. Both flesh and bone are necessary for human life.” He jotted out a diagram to illustrate these points and presented it to me.

Figure 8
*Learning the Dao by Flesh and Bone, Jotting by Haengchon*⁴²

During that period, I completed a month-long private retreat in a forest cabin in order to meditate and write. I came to visit him in town once every week for a meal and conversation. When I completed that retreat, he said, “Congratulations on completing a successful retreat for spiritual awakening! A commentary on the Creative hexagram (number 1) in the *Book of Changes* says that sublimity is the greatest good, success is the conjoining of all that is beautiful, furtherance comes from harmonizing all beings through justice, and perseverance lays the foundation for successful actions.”⁴³



⁴¹ Legge (1899), Appendix III, The Great Appendix, section I, chapter XII, verse 76.

⁴² 1997.

⁴³ Wilhelm and Baynes (1967, p. 376).

He liked to take walks in town and in a nearby lake park. During one of those walks near the lake, he discovered bushes with straight stalks suitable for use in the divination procedure. He cut and fashioned the necessary fifty stalks to just the right length and heft to match my hands and presented them to me as a surprise gift.



Figure 9
Fifty Divination Stalks, Carved by Haengchon

Master Haengchon also supported my continued learning vicariously. For example, his eldest daughter, Dr. Yi Sunh Gyohng, has special expertise on the

Book of Changes. I sponsored her to do research and writing on this topic for 6 months as a Visiting Scholar in 2019-2020. She focused on the philosophy and application of *Yijing (Book of Changes)* based divination as a method of meditation that can help people to live a vibrant life that harmonizes quietude and activity as well as spirituality and rationality. Our many conversations enhanced my understanding.



Figure 10
Dr. Yi Sunh Gyohng Explaining the Divination Process⁴⁴

These examples of how he taught me about the *Book of Changes* give a good sense of the way in which formal teaching interconnected with explicit and implicit, planned and spontaneous educational interactions over many years, such that my learning could continue to ripen.

⁴⁴ At her presentation on *Yijing* based meditation for the University of Kansas School of Social Welfare; February 7, 2020.

Master Haengchon always encouraged my continuing studies of Confucianism. But he never pushed me. It seems to me that he waited for signs of my interest and readiness and then responded in such a way as to help me onward. For example, in 1999, I lived with his family for about two months while I was on sabbatical, in order to study Confucian classics more deeply regarding their ideas about social welfare and justice. After some days settling in, I became eager to obtain Master Haengchon's teachings. I asked him to recommend a way to begin.

He brought me the *Book of Rites* which I had not studied previously. He showed me the section about ceremonial usages.⁴⁵ I vaguely remembered that he had shown it to me many years previously.⁴⁶ He said, "Professor Canda, please see this. You can find many useful things here." He marked off the passage in which Confucius laments the loss of the harmonious Great Way of ancient sage rulers, a time of Grand Equality (C: *datong*; K: *daedong*) when all people in need were provided for and when everyone loved each other as their family.⁴⁷ I was impressed by the scope and profundity of this vision for social welfare.

I said, "That is wonderful. I will begin by studying this section and then look at the whole book." So I thoroughly read and annotated the book of nearly 500 pages. I worked intensely for a month. When I finished, Professor Yi commended my hard study.

"Professor Canda, excellent work. Now, continue with this."

He handed me another book that turned out, to my surprise, to be the second half of the *Book of Rites*, near the same length. I was disheartened at first to see the long task ahead. But I delved in and found many more riches. As an aid to my study, I wrote an extensive essay and a series of verses based on my findings. Professor Yi patiently and carefully reviewed it all and gave comments and corrections.

These stories illustrate how Master Haengchon taught me with a combination of high expectation, patience, flexibility, and continuous caring. He exemplifies an ideal for teaching that he described to me a few years ago. He told me that the true teacher integrates the quality of strictness, according to standards of correctness, together with the qualities of grace and love.⁴⁸ Traditionally, he explained, the true teacher should usually be kind. But in making the distinc-

⁴⁵ Book number 7 in Legge (1885).

⁴⁶ Legge (1885).

⁴⁷ Legge (1885) book VII, section I, verses 1-3.

⁴⁸ For a detailed explication of the ways Confucius taught, read Chen (1993).

tion between right and wrong, the teacher should be strict. Especially today, he said, a teacher should express grace and love at the same time as being strict about right and wrong.

Master Haengchon admired the example of Jesus as a teacher. He said that Jesus was different from many previous prophets and Pharisees because he emphasized love over law. “So, in Christian teaching, even when someone is in a state of sin, one can be forgiven by God and Jesus due to their grace. This is why Jesus moved people so much, although he died young. Yet even though Jesus was merciful, he sometimes scorched the Pharisees and money lenders with criticism for their hypocrisy.” Yet, in my own experience, Master Haengchon’s style was never scorching; he emphasized the way of love.

In order to present a realistic picture of his teaching style, I should add that his way of teaching me was not his most common way of teaching. Most of his regular teaching activities occurred through formal philosophy courses, presented in Korean along with extensive use of Chinese characters. For example, he taught at Sungkyunkwan University from 1976 to 2002 as a Professor and also from 2002 to present as Professor Emeritus. He served as Dean of the College of Confucianism and Eastern Studies there for several years. He was Dean of the Taedong Academy for Eastern Classics during 2003-2007 and Director of the Yulgok Institute from 2004-2007, both institutions belonging to Hallym University. For many students, he supplemented regular course-based teaching with field excursions, study retreats, personal mentoring, and study gatherings at his home.

Eating and Drinking

Many of our conversations occurred during and after meals at restaurants or at his home. In Korea, I learned to enjoy eating to an extent I had never experienced before first going there. I used to consider eating as just a necessary chore. Most traditional style Korean meals involve rice and a wide range of fresh and hot spiced vegetables (especially *gimchi*), soup, and often meats or seafood. Many dinners include some type of wine. The aromas, colors, textures, and tastes delight the senses.

Master Haengchon enjoys eating. He does not like to eat too much, but he eats in a manner to meet his needs and to enjoy the process of eating. He eats with gusto and exclaims about especially delicious items. When I eat with Master Haengchon and his family or friends, the accompanying conversations are full of interest, comradery, and laughter. Sometimes I would notice a particularly fascinating or inspiring comment from him and then I would jot it down soon afterward. Often, when he and I ate by ourselves or lingered to-

gether after a family dinner, he would engage me in sincere expositions about his philosophy of life. For example, in 2010, after a wonderful home cooked meal provided by his wife, he commented, “Confucius was a transmitter of wisdom. He invented a method of transmission. That is different from me as I am an ordinary person.” He added with a smile, “I only transmit by eating and drinking.”

There has been a lot of wonderful transmission on many occasions! For example, in 1993 he took me to a fine traditional restaurant. After dinner he ordered a bottle of special wine, saying half-jokingly, “This is to help you live long! Please live long!” The name of the wine meant ‘no aging; long life’.

When I saw this wine and its long-life wish, I thought of something that peeved me. I complained that some people pursue long life but neglect the quality of life. In such a manner, they might merely prolong misery or banality. I said that this might happen in the case of magical Daoism, if it becomes preoccupied with selfish pursuit of longevity. I continued to lament that it also happens sometimes in Western medicine, which does much to stop disease and extend life, but often does little to help people to cultivate wellbeing and wisdom. I opined that to seek long life without wisdom is pointless. I felt rather pleased with my lofty thinking.

Master Haengchon replied in a kind but corrective tone, “You seem to prefer philosophical Daoism, emphasizing cultivation of wisdom, over religious Daoism, emphasizing cultivation of longevity. But both wisdom and long life are valuable. Why not cultivate both?” Then, with a friendly gaze, “Please enjoy your drink!” I immediately came down to earth, enjoyed his words and wine, and felt both humbler and more sublime.

Although Master Haengchon enjoys sharing wines and spirits, he cautions not to drink too much alcohol. “Practice the way of moderation!” He also said, “Wine in the proper amount is good for the health. Too much makes one stumble down. Too much of anything is bad. The problem is that we usually want too much.” He added, with a chuckle, “But if we only want a little too much sometimes, that’s alright.” Currently, he drinks alcohol sparingly.

When we drink wine together, we follow Korean customs that demonstrate caring connection, attentiveness to each other’s needs, and mutual pacing to avoid excessive drinking. As student and junior, I should pour for him first. But his style is to be solicitous and affectionate by often pouring for me first. We toast each other’s health while raising and clinking our small cups together. I place my cup so as to touch below the rim of his, in order to acknowledge his seniority and my regard for him as teacher.

We do not pour drinks for ourselves. We watch each other's drinking progress. When I notice that his cup is empty or nearly empty, I offer another drink. If the offer is accepted, I pour a drink into his cup, extending both hands as a sign of respect. He also watches me. Even though I am his junior and student, he often pours for me with both hands as well. We might remark on the special taste and aroma of the wine. Good conversation always ensues. This type of drinking is non-egotistic. It requires mutual attentiveness, empathy, and good timing, like partnering in a dance. This is *ren* in interaction.

Sightseeing and Casual Strolls

Another frequent venue for his teaching is when we go sightseeing to historic sites, museums, the graves of Confucian scholars, Buddhist temples, parks, and places of beautiful nature. We often take subways to our destination. We usually are quiet for long periods of time. Sometimes, during a ride on a crowded subway car, he suddenly leans over and whispers something to me, such as "You are a bridge between East and West." That kind of message sinks in.

Often, he drives his car to more distant places. We spend long periods in silence, enjoying the scenery. Sometimes when he is in an especially good mood, he hums or sings. Sometimes we listen to traditional Korean music or Western classical music. Sometimes we discuss philosophy and current events.

For example, several times we have visited the tomb of the late Goryeo period scholar Jeong Mong Ju (1337-1392, literary name Po Eun), because of his historical significance and because he is the ancestor of my wife's clan. Master Haengchon explained on several occasions that Jeong is commonly regarded as the father of Neo-Confucianism in Korea. He was a highly ranked scholar official and Prime Minister to the king at the end of the Goryeo dynasty. Jeong is honored by many Koreans as an exemplar of loyalty.

Master Haengchon said, "At that time, the Goryeo dynasty was in turmoil. The general Yi Seong Gye led a revolution in order to establish a new state. But Jeong refused to betray his sovereign. He kept his conviction of mind to maintain the Goryeo dynasty. So the general's son directed Jeong to be assassinated. Jeong was killed while he passed over a bridge near Gaeseong city which was the capital of Goryeo. Tradition says that a red stone there symbolizes his blood that was spilled."

Master Haengchon often points out different perspectives on the same historical event. In this case, he added, "There are two viewpoints about Jeong Mong Ju. On the one hand, his loyalty was to be commended. On the other hand, the Goryeo dynasty had become full of disorder, disarray, and poverty.

So it was not great in itself to maintain the kingdom of Goryeo. He should be acknowledged as a loyal minister of one country. But what is right is that which upholds the life of the people. So perhaps a time of change was necessary.”

On a visit to the tomb in 1993, my wife Hwi-Ja and I felt a special significance. This was our first visit to this illustrious Jeong family ancestor. The three of us bowed in respect. Then Professor Yi said with a humorous yet meaningful tone, “How could he [Minister Jeong] have imagined that his distant descendant and her husband from a land far away would come to visit his grave at this time, so long after his life? Perhaps he is watching and smiling from above.”



Figure 11
*Tomb of Jeong Mong Ju*⁴⁹

In 2011, he and I traveled there along with a good friend of his. After we finished bowing at the tomb, the three of us sat on the ground in front and off to the side. From there, poised high on a hill, we had an expansive view of the valley

⁴⁹ 2011.

in front and the rim of mountains that surrounds and embraces the tomb site. We discussed a wide variety of topics, various like life itself: Bertrand Russel's reasons for not being a Christian, medieval European Catholic monks as scholars and preservers of intellectual culture, Korean children's idiomatic expressions for toileting, the pleasant weather, the lovely view, dinner plans, and so on.

That summer we made another of many visits to the Sungkyunkwan Confucian academy campus in Seoul, moved there in 1398, which includes a national shrine (*Daeseongjeon*) to honor Confucius and other venerated Chinese and Korean Confucian scholars. He had arranged with an official for us to enter the shrine to view and photograph the ceremonial chairs and memorial tablets set there to recognize these scholars. But when we arrived, the official who met us said that it would be impossible to enter the locked building. Surprisingly, shortly after his saying this, an elder Confucian ritual official came to the door of the shrine and opened it for another purpose. Master Haengchon asked if we could enter. The elder agreed.



We bowed four times for Confucius. Then I was able to take photographs.

Figure 12
*Memorial Seat and Tablet for Confucius, Daeseongjeon Shrine*⁵⁰

I asked Master Haengchon if this official had come by plan or coincidence. He said with a mixture of serious meaning and humor, "It was a coincidence. But

perhaps Confucius and Heaven arranged this, knowing the intentions of this honorable guest from far away."

We also have taken many casual strolls in parks and scenic nature areas, just for exercise and relaxation. For example, in 1997, social welfare Professor Park Seung-Hee (who composed the *Dao of Humanity* calligraphy, Figure 5) took us out to a remote and pristine area in the mountains of Gangwon Province. We enjoyed a few days at a rustic farm. One warm and sunny afternoon

⁵⁰ 2011; *Daeseongjeon*, the Hall of Great Accomplishment, is part of the *Munmyo* complex at the Sungkyunkwan academy. The tablet itself is inside the wooden cover.

we hiked to a secluded place in a river valley. We disrobed and sat down into a calm pristine river pool nestled between large boulders. We sipped wine from bamboo cups, reveling in the beauty of nature. Tiny fish nibbled on the hairs of our legs, tickling. We all exclaimed, “*Jota!* (How good!)”

In 2004, Master Haengchon and I visited Andong in South Gyeongsang Province, a city well known for preservation of Confucian customs. We then took a walk through nearby Hahoe village, noted for traditional folk culture, including masked dance theatrical performances with shamanistic connections. We came across an area enclosed by a tiled mud wall that drew our interest. When we walked inside, we found a very large and old tree with long outstretched branches. It was venerated by the villagers as part of animistic worldview. People had tied to the branches small paper streamers that signified wishes for blessings. I felt attracted to the tree, impressed by its wise presence. I spent quiet time with the wonderful tree, respectfully touching it. Master Haengchon came close to me, touched the tree fondly, and spoke aloud wishes for blessings upon me.

In summer of 2011, we took a walk to a children’s playground, nearby his home, with his young grandson. Seeing many children playing there alone or with nannies, Master Haengchon seemed wistful. He remarked, “These days many children cannot easily be attended by their parents, because so many fathers and mothers are working long hours away from home in order to support the family. Yet children, like adults, feel all kinds of emotions such as joy, anger, sadness, and loneliness even though many adults do not realize how children feel. So, when parents are not available, it is the time for grandparents to attend to their grandchildren. Grandparents can keep them company and teach them the ways of culture and rites.”

On another outing that summer, we walked around a lake at Seoul Grand Park. We sat for a rest and watched the water rippling, birds flying, and people passing by. He indicated a middle-aged husband and wife walking nearby. “Look at the couple walking along the path there. They are enjoying themselves on their hike. They appear satisfied. People are satisfied if they can do what they want. But too often politicians and religionists oppress them. The powerful people depress, repress, and compress them with their laws and doctrines. Such people take oppressing others as their hobby. For me, my hobby is simply eating an apple. In the future age, such oppression will disappear into the realm of nonexistence.”

A little while later, as we gazed at the lake, he directed my attention upward. “Do you see the small cable cars going over the lake, up to the mountain

there? Recently, when a woman was passing over the lake in one of those cars, she somehow fell out of the car into the lake. Fortunately, there was a net below which caught her. When she was pulled up from the water, she must have been very surprised. But she was not at all angry! What a remarkable mind she must have!”

We walked a bit further and then I received a smartphone call. It was my wife calling from the United States to let me know that my father had suffered a mild stroke. I had been worrying about my father’s health and this news intensified my concern. Master Haengchon and I sat quietly for a while. I explained to him that I was thinking about my father and that I wished to return to his home to reflect further. He did not say anything much. His expression and manner showed his empathy. I knew his own deep filial regard for his parents who had passed away. Just walking home with him quietly was comforting.

In recent years, even when we are separated on different sides of the world, Master Haengchon often calls and texts me using a Korean smartphone app. Frequently, he shares photographs of beautiful scenes from his walks in parks and his neighborhood. Even as I worked to complete this book in Spring 2020, while mainly home-bound with social distancing during the covid-19 pandemic, Master Haengchon has been sending me photos of lovely blooming spring-time flowers, bridging the gap between us and between the human experiences of suffering and beauty.

Home Life

Many of the previous stories alluded to my learning by living with Master Haengchon’s family. This has been a privilege and joy.

I have been in his home on several somber occasions of family funerals and ancestral honoring ceremonies (K. *jaesa*). This gave me insight into his way of adapting Confucian ceremonies and customs to contemporary life. For example, in 2011, I was present for a *jaesa* for his mother. The traditional time for the ceremony would have been around midnight, but it was held at nine o’clock in the morning when everyone was able to gather, including those relatives coming from a distance.

There were gender distinct roles, as in a traditional style of ceremony; but the roles were complementary and cooperative. For example, wife, daughters, and daughters-in-law focused on preparation of ceremonial food while Master Haengchon and sons and son-in-law focused on preparing the offering table and guiding the proceedings. However, men and women assisted each other with these roles.

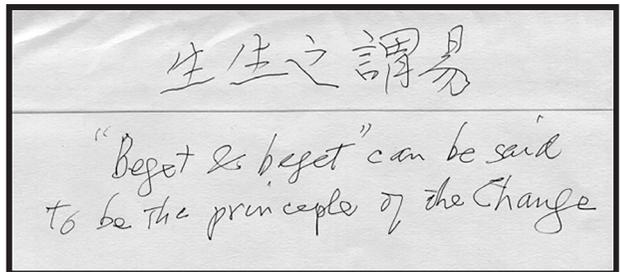
Everyone who wished to do so, including me, was invited to make offerings and bow in respect at the *jaesa* table. Afterwards, everyone shared a feast of the food from the offering table. This way everyone was accommodated according to their intentions and comfort. Master Haengchon summed up his family style, “In my house, we arrange the *jaesa* table and the proceedings somewhat freely in order to adapt to circumstances.” Afterwards, we all traveled to a distant place to make bows of respect at the graves of his mother and father.

Master Haengchon has several places for study, some in his home and some elsewhere. One study room is in the basement of his home. It typically is full of books in Korean, Chinese, and English languages. His books overflow to other rooms and storage places. In this study, there is a copy machine, a long table for him to spread out books and to meet with students, and an assortment of things just for storage. There are usually calligraphy scrolls hanging on the walls. One of the hanging calligraphies I noticed in 1999 was adapted from the first line of the *Analects*: “Timely learning and practice: Is it not delightful?”⁵¹

In 2011, when we were in his study, he showed me a calligraphy that he had written recently. It was from the classic, the *Great Learning*. He translated for me: “From the emperor to the common people, all must cultivate themselves and recognize that this is the root of everything.”⁵² He added, “It was so wonderful to discover this phrase when I was in high school. I like to think about it. At that time, I studied with a Chinese classics tutor who came early in the morning before regular classes in order to give lessons. He was not paid. We and the other students just politely asked him to teach us. We once gave him an ashtray as a gift. He was very dedicated. In winter, when the weather was cold, his mustache was icy.”

Figure 13
‘Beget’, Jotting by
Haegchon⁵³

In 2009 and 2011, I asked Master Haengchon to chant some verses from Confucian



classics, so that I could audio record them for later listening. On both occasions, he brought me down to his study so we could close the door for

⁵¹ Legge (1893a), Book I, chapter I, verse 1.

⁵² Legge (1893c), Introduction, paragraph 6.

⁵³ 2011.

privacy. Each time, after I digitally audio recorded the chanting, I played the recordings back on my laptop computer and activated a music visualizer. Master Haengchon joked that he cannot even open email.⁵⁴ He appreciates the advantages of modern technology but does not use computers. When he saw the dynamic sweeping changing color patterns of the music visualizer that accompanied his chanting, he remarked, “How wonderful! Such vivid and colorful transformations that blend the traditional and the modern! There is a saying from the *Book of Changes*: “Beget and beget is the principle of the Change.”⁵⁵

Also in his home, there is a bright room with large windows and a long low table. He likes to sit on the floor and read there. Along one wall there is a curio shelf and a decorative chest. There are usually a wide variety of memorabilia from home life, travels, and gifts. For example, in 2011, I noticed a wide variety of things, including photographs of his wife and his deceased mother and brother; a post card showing a Silla period (early 7th century) statue of Maitreya Buddha;⁵⁶ a small statue of a dwarf holding a loom; a miniature flag of the Republic of Korea; Eastern Orthodox devotional pictures of Jesus and his mother Mary; assorted Buddhist and other bells; a reproduction of a Silla period urn; a small bust of Mother Teresa; and, at center, a statue and portrait of Confucius. This shows his widely inclusive interests.

Master Haengchon often talks about the importance of family relationships and ways that Confucian teachings about virtuous relationships can be applied in the contemporary world. I observed these principles in his family life. For example, when his parents became frail and in need of daily care, he welcomed them to live in his home. I always observed him, his wife, and children to be attentive to their needs. A mutual friend told me that Master Haengchon lived out the ideal of filial piety. But of course, he never said so about himself to me.

⁵⁴ However, in recent years, he uses a smartphone commonly.

⁵⁵ Legge (1899), Appendix III, The Great Appendix, section I, chapter V, verse 29; Wilhelm and Baynes (1967, p. 299).

⁵⁶ Refer to footnote 27.

Figure 14
*Filial Piety Commemoration Shrine, South Jeolla Province*⁵⁷

His wife is also an exemplar of filial piety. In 2010, she received a plaque from Chungmu Sunim (1931-2011), known as the filial piety monk, to honor and commemorate her filial piety. His style of Buddhism was very consistent with the values of Confucianism. The plaque commended her for raising children successfully, for being a good wife, for accomplishing her own education, for teaching as a professor for many years, and for aiding her elderly and sick parents-in-law with great caring and long patience.



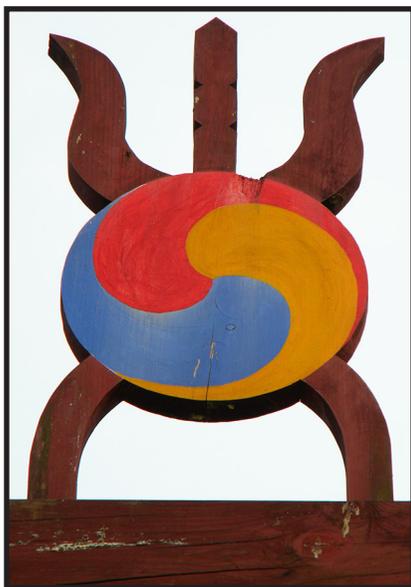
Master Haengchon commissioned the creation of a beautiful tomb memorial for his parents, including inscribed sayings and symbols developed by his father based on philosophical insights. His filial devotion continues to now. For six years (2010-2016), he worked tirelessly on organizing and editing his father's collected works for publication and he is working on revisions now.⁵⁸ This is truly following the guidance of Confucius to serve parents when they are alive and to honor them after death.

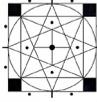
The teachings that follow in Part Two of this book should be understood within the context of Master Haengchon's way of teaching and living. They are not like museum artifacts from past Confucian history. They are expressions of a life dedicated to bringing forward traditional wisdom, to transform it to be relevant to the contemporary world, and to revealing a hopeful vision for a forthcoming open world of wellbeing and justice for all people.

⁵⁷ 2005; This is a traditional filial piety commemoration shrine.

⁵⁸ They were published as 『학산 이정호 전집』 (전13권), 성남: 아세아문화사, 2017. *The Complete Works of Haksan Yi Jeong Ho* (13 volumes), Seongnam: The Asian Culture Press, 2017.

PART TWO
THE TEACHINGS OF HAENGCHON





3

Virtues and the Virtuous

The Genuine Person of Benevolence

Confucian wisdom teaches people how to live in harmony with each other, Heaven, and Earth. This is the Way (*dao; do*)⁵⁹ of Humanity (*ren; in*). Confucius emphasized that the Dao should be one's ultimate concern when he said, "If a person in the morning hears of the Way, then one may die in the evening without regret."⁶⁰ The genuine person strives to live out such wisdom. The human being is a microcosm of the universe, manifesting the interactions of Earthly yin energy and Heavenly yang energy. The harmonious person displays a perfect flow of energy in the actions and qualities of daily life.

This ideal of harmony between Heaven, Earth, and humanity is vividly presented in the story of Dangun, who was the founder of the original Korea (*Go Joseon*, i.e. Former Joseon) in 2333 BCE. According to the story, the Heavenly King Hwanin sent his son Hwanung to Earth at Taebaek Mountain in northern Korea in order to establish civilization there.⁶¹

A she-bear and a tigress prayed to Hwanung hoping that they be transformed into human beings. In answer to their prayers, he instructed them to eat mugwort and garlic and to hibernate in a cave for 100 days. As it turned out, the tigress disobeyed and failed to transform. The bear however was successful in becoming a woman after 21 days, so her name became Ungnyeo (i.e. bear become woman). She prayed again to Hwanung in order to have a child. So Hwanung married her. The son of Hwanung and Ungnyeo was Dangun. Dangun reigned harmoniously for 1500 years.

In this story, Hwanung descended from Heaven and Ungnyeo ascended from Earth, thus begetting Dangun. So Dangun can be described as a godly person in whom Heaven and Earth meet. We see in this relationship that the Heavenly world was realized on earth in the ideal City of God (K: *sinsi*), estab-

⁵⁹ From this point on, Romanizations of key terms will be listed with Chinese first and Korean second when both versions are included together. The Glossary and Transliteration Guide (Appendix A) includes Chinese characters and Korean *Hangeul*.

⁶⁰ Legge (1893a), *The Analects*, 4:8.

⁶¹ *The History of the Three Kingdoms* (K: *Samguk Yusa*) written by Ilyon. For a translation, read Ha & Mintz (1972).

lished by Dangun to broadly benefit human society. This story illustrates that the Korean people reflect a blending of Earthly and Heavenly qualities, and further, that the holy exists in humanity.⁶²

Confucius said that Heaven (*tian; cheon*) instilled virtue in him. This illustrates the innately moral nature of the human being.⁶³ A true person cultivates this virtue within and extends it outward through activity. Yulgok used the simile of a fan. When a true person is at rest, one is quiet, as though a folded fan held closed. When a true person is in motion, the fan spreads out, expanding and manifesting self-realization outward through the body, home, society, and the wider world.

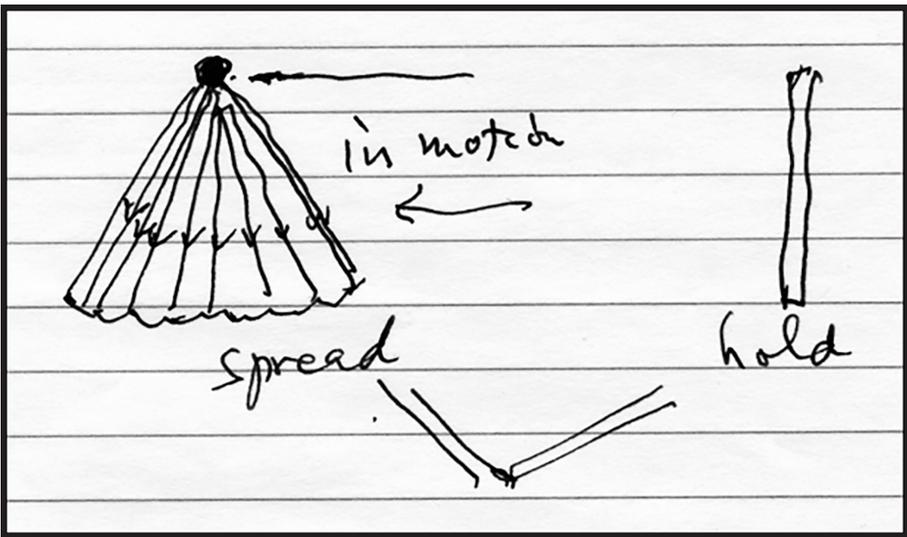


Figure 15
*Yulgok's Simile of a Fan, Jotting by Haengchon*⁶⁴

The genuine person is a person of benevolence (*renzhe; injja*) who truly knows oneself. Knowledge of one's true nature of benevolence (*ren; in*) and connectedness to others gives rise to compassionate regard (*qing; jeong*) for others. Thus, the true person understands what is undesirable for both oneself and others. One avoids what is undesirable to self and others, and also, one desires to fulfill others' needs. This is called reciprocity (*shu; seo*). Confucius

⁶² HKT.

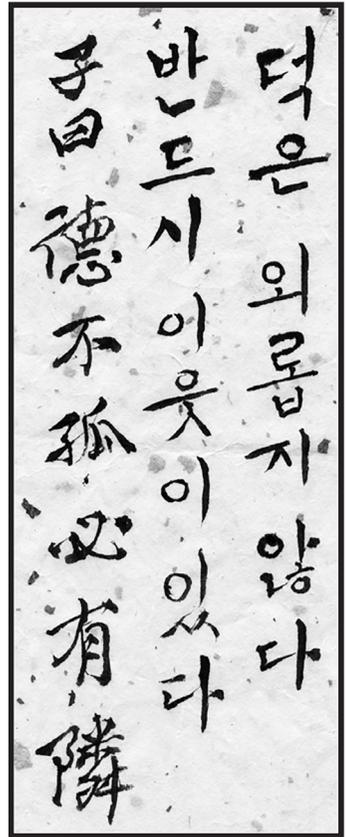
⁶³ CIJ.

⁶⁴ 1989.

(*Analects*, 4:25) said that “Virtue is not alone. Necessarily, there are neighbors.” This means that virtue expresses through connectedness and also that it attracts friends.

Figure 16

‘Virtue is Not Alone’, Calligraphy by Haengchon



Ren means human being in its original sense. The *Doctrine of the Mean* (20:5) and the *Book of Mencius* (7B:16) say that benevolence (*ren*) is the characteristic quality of humanity.⁶⁵ The acme of *ren* is the sage.⁶⁶ Mencius emphasized three main points. First, human nature is good. This means that our nature is characterized by benevolence. Second, people should live according to righteousness. Third, society should be administered with empathic humaneness.⁶⁷

According to Zhu Xi, Mencius taught that although desire for life and fear of death are natural, it is possible to transcend life and death by means of one’s conscience. The innate conscience can distinguish between good and evil, right and wrong, justice and injustice. For example, in the *Book of Mencius*, there is a story of a child who is about to fall into a well (book II, part 1, chapter 6). Mencius says that when somebody sees the child about to fall, a feeling of commiseration arises that motivates the person to pull the child away from danger. The person does this without expecting anything from the parents, without looking for praise from neighbors, and without fear of blame for not trying to help the child. All people have a mind that cannot tolerate seeing the suffering of others.⁶⁸

In cultivating our humanity, it is desirable to pursue the creation of a whole and harmonious person in whom intellect, virtue, and physical aptitude are united. A person who is not biased and who can develop all aspects of one-

⁶⁵ Master Haengchon often paraphrases and quotes from memory, using the Confucian Classics and other texts. When it is helpful to illuminate his comment, I will add citations.

⁶⁶ CIH.

⁶⁷ For more on the thought of Mencius, read Liu & Ivanhoe (2002).

⁶⁸ CIJ.

self in a balanced way is an ideal human being. In Confucianism, this kind of mature human being is referred to as a person of virtue (*renzhe; injja*), a noble-minded person (*junzi; gunja*), a worthy (*xianzhe; hyeonja*), or a sage (*shengren; seongin*).⁶⁹

There is a monument and stone stele at the entrance to Sungkyunkwan that was erected in 1742 during the reign of King Yeongjo. It presents a saying from the *Analects*, 2:14: “To be universal and impartial is the unbiased mind of the noble-minded person. To be partial and not universal is the biased mind of the small-minded person.” This inscription was placed here because, at that time, there were many divided factions at court that were struggling with each other. So it was not efficient to perform government affairs. The king wanted the factions to harmonize. Bringing harmony between conflicting factions is still very important today in local, national, and international affairs. Nearby is another stele marking the place where people who entered should dismount from their horse. It can be taken as a call for humility when entering a place for learning. The qualities of a genuine person are very necessary today just as then.



Figure 17
*Dismount Stele at Entrance to Sungkyunkwan*⁷⁰

In the case of a petty or small-minded person (*xiaoren; soin*), the degree of egoistic attachment is very

⁶⁹ CIH.

⁷⁰ The calligraphy on the stele states, “Everyone who passes this place, regardless of rank, should dismount from the horse.” Thanks to Dr. Yi Suhng Gyohng for this translation. The monument in background is named *tangpyeongbigak*, ‘pavilion for the policy of impartiality’. It houses the stele set up by King Yeongjo. For more on monuments and buildings at Sungkyunkwan: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sungkyunkwan>.

dense. In the case of the great or noble-minded person (*junzi*; *gunja*), the degree of attachment is fairly free. Confucius said that while the great person thinks of virtue, the petty person thinks of comfort and favors (*Analects* 4:11). However, the person of virtue and the petty person are both to be respected as human beings. Confucius did not consider the condition of the small-minded person who remains preoccupied at the level of biological needs as desirable. But this does not mean that he criticized people who lived in poor conditions and therefore needed to be focused on material needs.⁷¹

The qualities of the noble-minded person are symbolized by the four noble plants (K: *sagunja*, literally ‘the four noble-minded persons’). Plum flowers blossom out in early spring like virtue that comes forth at hard times. Orchid is highly regarded for its subtle, sweet, and pervasive fragrance. This signifies the wide yet nonintrusive influence of virtue. A poem by Toegye says, “There is an orchid flower in a deep mountain forest. And it emits fragrance all day long alone, without knowing its action.”

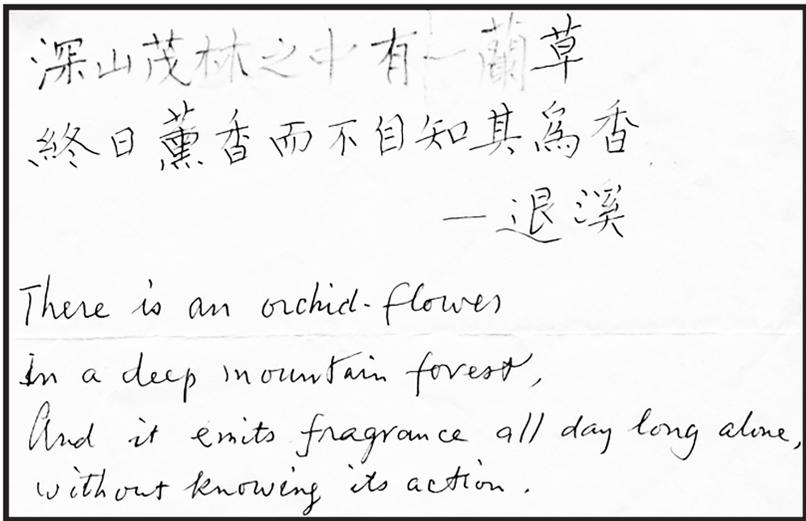


Figure 18

*Toegye's Orchid Flower Poem, Jotting by Haengchon*⁷²

Chrysanthemums bloom in the autumn and persevere in chilly weather, like virtue persevering through adversity. Bamboo is praised for its straightness, strength, and constancy. It symbolizes fidelity and unwillingness to submit to unjust power.

⁷¹ SH.

⁷² 1976.

Confucius said that if a noble person abandons the virtue of benevolence, then one cannot fulfill the requirements of the name 'noble person'. The great person does not act contrary to virtue even for the space of a single meal. In moments of haste and seasons of danger, the noble-minded person holds on to virtue (the *Analects* 4:5).⁷³ Furthermore, no matter how supposedly noble and wise a person may be, Confucius did not respect a person who was not worried about and devoted to the world. Only a person of good quality who promoted the practice of Dao in society could be respected.⁷⁴

According to Confucius, a ruler should have virtue and a person of virtue should become a ruler. In general, the pursuit of material benefit is natural. But if a leader is glued to this pursuit, one would not be able to fulfill the appointed tasks and role of leadership.

Unfortunately, appearance of a sage in the world is rare. Confucius said, "I do not have hope to see a sage; if I could meet a person of real talent and virtue, then that would satisfy me. I do not have hope to see a benevolent person. If I could meet a person possessed of constancy, then that would satisfy me" (*Analects*, 7:25).

Cardinal Virtues

A mature person forms when intellect, emotion, volition, and morality are all contained and harmonized on a high level of personality development. Confucius said that the wise are free from perplexity, the virtuous are free from anxiety, and the courageous are free from fear (Legge, 1893a, *Analects*, 14:30). Wisdom (*zhi; ji*), benevolence (*ren; in*), and courage (*yong; yong*) are virtues involved in the concept of *ren* as the complete human being. *Ren* combines all virtues but is not limited to particular good qualities. Brilliant accomplishments and solid qualities should blend together in a personality of integrity.⁷⁵

Mencius exalted the goodness of human nature, elucidated human dignity, and encouraged realization of the goodness in human nature, despite the utter chaos of his time. He explained that the fundamental nature of humanity consists of benevolence, righteousness (*yi; ui*), propriety (*li; ye*) and wisdom and that these develop into the Four Beginnings, namely compassion, shame and dislike, modesty and yielding, and a sense of right and wrong. Although our basic nature is good, our innermost feelings can be destroyed in the same way that young and beautiful trees can be cut down by the axe or can be made bar-

⁷³ SH.

⁷⁴ SH.

⁷⁵ CIH.

ren by cows and sheep devouring their leaves. Such injuries can make people become like animals.⁷⁶

He also said that the innate nature of the great person cannot be increased by enlarging one's sphere of action and it cannot be diminished by poverty or retirement. This innate nature is given by Heaven. Everyone possesses an inviolable interior world. Benevolence, righteousness, propriety, and wisdom are rooted innately in each person's heart. These virtues grow and manifest through self-cultivation. They show forth in a virtuous person's mild and harmonious countenance and bodily appearance.

Benevolence

As explained already, benevolence (仁, *ren*; 仁, *in*) is the primary cardinal virtue characterizing the Heavenly endowed nature of humanity. It involves interconnectedness, loving, and caring. The Chinese character for *ren* (i.e. benevolence) is composed of an ideogram for a human figure (人) with two parallel strokes on its right side (i.e. meaning the number 'two'), depicting the relational and interconnected quality of human nature.

In one sense, *ren* is a specific virtue of loving and caring in particular relationships. In a larger sense, it is a general virtue that underlies, embraces, and ennobles other virtues such as righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and others. *Ren* is the prevailing quality of a mature person who has cultivated their essential nature of connectedness such that it expresses in daily life as benevolence.

Righteousness

Genuine righteousness (*yi*; *ui*) is an unconditional and sincere response of moral conviction. Someone who conforms to external appearances of morality based merely on ulterior selfish motives or conformity to conventional standards is not truly righteous. Confucius said, "Riches and honors acquired by unrighteousness are to me as a floating cloud" (Legge, 1893a, *Analects*, 7:15). Therefore, he refused benefits obtained through injustice. Words such as, "In view of gain, think of righteousness" (Legge, 1893a, , 14:13) or "When you see benefits, think of righteousness" (Legge, 1893a, 16:10), show that he was talking about a higher dimension than material benefits themselves. He was not against material benefits as he acknowledged they are needed to satisfy the desires of people for their wellbeing. But he gave priority to virtue. In a similar vein, Yi I (Yulgok), the Korean Neo-Confucian philosopher, cited Mencius' teaching: "I will always keep this teaching in my heart: Even though the world

⁷⁶ CIJ; Mencius, chapter 8 (<http://nothingistic.org/library/mencius/mencius42.html>).

could be gained by doing an act of injustice or by killing one innocent person, it must not be done” (from the *Book of Mencius*, 2A:2 as cited in *Phrases for Self-Cautioning in The Complete Works of Yulgok*, vol. 14).⁷⁷



Figure 19
‘Righteousness’ in Munjado
Calligraphy Style⁷⁸

Righteousness sometimes must be applied to oppose unrighteousness. For example, the Japanese aggressions in the Korean peninsula during the Hideyoshi invasions (1592-1598) needed to be repelled. One of the righteous people who tried to defend the country of Joseon was Master Jo Heon (1544-1592, literary name Jungbong). He was a scholar and government official who integrated theory with practice, including within development of his inner self and in outward expression of actions.

His virtuous character was shown by the fact that although he had an elevated social position, he farmed by his own hands, attended his parents well, and treated his teacher’s servant as a guest in his own home.

⁷⁷ SH.

⁷⁸ *Munjado* (문자도) is a type of traditional folk painting style that infuses images of plants, animals, and people into Chinese characters with Confucian significance. From author’s collection, 1976. The Chinese character for righteousness is 義.

Figure 20
Jo Heon Plowing, Woodblock Print,
Office for the Jungbong Jo Heon
Memorial Society

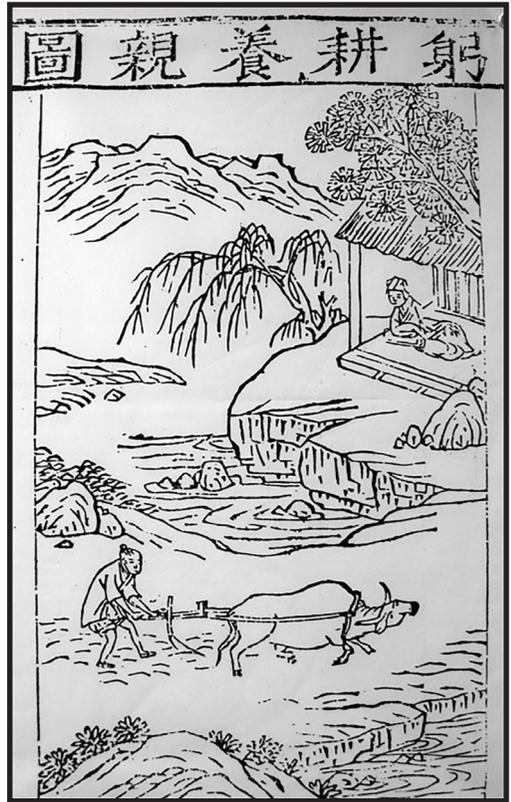
A Japanese mission came to Korea and asked the king to send an envoy mission to Japan. But Jo Heon believed that the Japanese really intended to invade Korea. Therefore, he knelt down in front of the palace and pled for them not to send the envoy. Unfortunately, the government leaders thought that he must be a crazy or bad person, so they ignored his pleas and exiled him to a distant place.

Later, the Korean envoys conveyed a message from Japanese ruler Hideyoshi that Korea should open a way for them to invade Ming China. Master Jo instead recommended that they should ally with Ming (China) in order to defend Korea from a Japanese invasion. The Japanese invasion did occur, so Master Jo gathered a group of armed scholars and they joined with a group of Buddhist monk warriors. Together, they defeated the Japanese army at Cheongju City in Chungcheong Province. Unfortunately, later, he and his son and a remaining army of 700 scholars were all killed in a 3-day battle in Geumsan, Chungcheong Province.

Like all virtues, righteousness should have a quality of benevolence. Righteousness without love can become fierceness and cruelty. We can hardly live if we only have righteousness. But love without righteousness can become undiscerning affection.

Propriety

Correct conduct and ritual performance that are appropriate to circumstances reflect the virtue of propriety (*li*; *ye*). The Chinese character for propriety and ritual (禮) shows a way of looking at the relation between humanity and Heaven. Its shape represents making offerings to Heaven. Human beings



receive their nature from Heaven and, in return, they display their respect to Heaven through appropriate conduct and rituals.

For example, there is a tomb of a famous person that is very elaborate and impressive in design. There are unusually intricate carved stone decorations around the base of the tomb. Perhaps it is excessively elaborate. Confucius felt that grandiose display of one's own respectability exceeds the bounds of propriety. However, the family who maintains the tomb cannot be faulted for showing their piety.

Confucius said that the noble-minded person is anxious about attaining truth rather than about gaining food or falling into poverty. He said, "To subdue one's self and return to propriety is perfect virtue" (Legge, 1893a, 12:1). These statements refer to overcoming an unprincipled or unreflective way of living. He said that the determined scholar and virtuous person do not seek to live at the expense of injuring their virtue. If necessary, they will sacrifice their lives to preserve their virtue.⁷⁹

Wisdom

Wisdom (*zhi; ji*) arises from a genuine experience of connection between minds (*xin; sim*). The Chinese character for mind (心) comes from the shape of the heart. Wisdom is understanding through heart to heart connection. Wisdom is also characterized by realistic humility. Confucius said that wisdom is nothing but saying that one knows what one knows and that one does not know what one does not know.

Confucius said that the noble-minded person (*junzi; gunja*) greatly receives. This means that the noble-minded person receives spiritual understanding. In contrast, the small-minded person only analyzes things by means of thinking. This thinking-limited kind of understanding is wisdom, but only small wisdom.

Great wisdom comes from harmonization of both rational and spiritual sides of the person. Though Confucius emphasized the rational in his teaching, he harmonized the rational with the mystical. For example, Confucius said that only Heaven knows him. He was sometimes deeply transfixed by study and by music. But his teaching method was to begin with what is earthly and to work toward the highest level. Confucius realized that at his time of history, it was most appropriate not to discuss what is abstract too much. Therefore, he addressed his students variously according to their abilities and readiness.

Mencius said that every person has the capacity for wisdom, given our innately benevolent nature. We can achieve wisdom by cleansing ourselves and

⁷⁹ CIJ.

relationships of polluting selfishness. Every person is fundamentally a genuine person. Through intellectual, spiritual, and emotional discipline, anyone can become a sage. A sage is a person who expresses inner wisdom in the regality of outer actions. Every person, in any role of life, can become like a sage king, that is, a person who manifests wisdom in the conduct of daily life and social responsibilities.

Sincerity

To live virtuously requires sincerity. We can imagine a circular diagram with wisdom at north, benevolence on the east, propriety on the south, and righteousness on the west. Then sincerity is in the center.

For example, there was a performance of ritual music and dance in front of the Confucian shrine at the Sungkyunkwan academy campus. Government officials and dignitaries were invited to participate. It was elaborately produced, but artificially staged. I have been considering whether such a performance is in keeping with propriety. It depends on the intention behind the performance and the mind of performers. Sincerity is the most important point.

Another illustration of sincerity relates to families' performance of ancestral honoring ceremonies (*jisi; jesa*). Sometimes people wonder whether a spirit really comes to the ancestor honoring ceremony. We can consider three views about this. Some people believe that the spirit of the ancestor literally visits during the ceremony at the time when offerings are placed on the offering table. Others regard the presence of the ancestor to be symbolic. In this view, ceremonial actions are carried out in commemoration and respect for the ancestor. The continuing example of the ancestor and the family connections that are enhanced through the ceremony are most important. The third view combines a sense of sincerity, as with the sense of the ancestor's literal presence, together with mindfulness of the symbolic significance of the ceremonial activities. However, in any case, the noble person is not attached to selfish outcomes such as trying to gain favors from the ancestor through supplication. The spirit is present in relation to the degree of sincerity in the ceremony. The spirit's presence is this very sincerity itself.

Timeliness

The most desirable posture toward living is Confucius' 'way of timeliness' (*shizhongzhidao; sijungjido*). Timeliness means striking just the right spot or fitting well to the situation. Timeliness accords with the situation. Timeliness means that the human subject is in appropriate relation with objective conditions. Confucius did not predetermine his course of action. As circumstances changed,

his methods changed also. The *Book of Changes* says that it is only the sage who understands how to press forward and how to draw back. The sage knows existence and annihilation without losing one's true nature.⁸⁰ Sometimes it is necessary to be patient in order to overcome an obstacle in life. Even if you need to wait 10 years, it is rather better to wait until the obstacle passes before going ahead. Acting in accord with the time and circumstances brings success. Timeliness is regarded as the most difficult practice in the *Doctrine of the Mean*.⁸¹

Filial Piety

The virtue of filial piety (*xiao*; *hyo*) means benevolent caring in family relationships.⁸² And the practice of filial piety helps us learn how to extend benevolence into wider extents of relationships. Filial piety involves respecting and caring for parents in sincere appreciation for the gift of life and for the nurturance that they give to their children. Filial piety joins three generations. When adult parents are filial toward their own parents, they serve as filial models for their own children. Ultimately, filial piety is a caring that reaches to Heaven and Earth as our father and mother and to all people and to all creatures as our brothers and sisters.

King Jeongjo (1752-1800) is one of two famous scholar kings in Korean history, the other being Great King Sejong. He is especially known for his filial piety. King Jeongjo's father, Crown Prince Sado, had been accused of treason and bizarre and violent behaviors.⁸³ Therefore, Sado's father, King Yeongjo, punished his allegedly treasonous son (Sado) by locking him into a large rice storage box which was displayed to the public. Prince Sado suffered there until he died.

When Jeongjo succeeded his grandfather as king, he exonerated his father. After King Jeongjo's death, his tomb was built not far from his father's. It is said that it was built this way so that father and son could look upon each other. Actually, while alive, King Jeongjo had visited his father's tomb often.

King Jeongjo established the Royal Academy (*Gyujanggak*) and supported wise scholars, like King Sejong had done. He wrote and sponsored many books. He helped to connect Neo-Confucianism with the school of Practical Learning (*Silhak*).⁸⁴

⁸⁰ CIJ.

⁸¹ CIH.

⁸² For more on the Confucian philosophy of filial piety and contemporary social welfare implications, read Canda (2013a) and Ikels (2004).

⁸³ This episode remains controversial and debated as to who were the accusers, how this related to political factional rivalry, and whether the accusations were true.

⁸⁴ *Silhak* promoted a practical approach to governance that emphasized social welfare, such as land reform, farming, and abolition of class barriers (<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Silhak>).

But we have to be careful not to take apparently virtuous behavior to injurious extremes. Some books published in the Joseon dynasty depict stories of filial piety that go to the extreme of children harming themselves for the sake of their parents. However, the writings of Confucius, Mencius, and many other classics did not teach that anyone should harm one's body for the sake of parents. In fact, the *Classic of Filial Piety* points out that since we received our bodies from our parents at birth, it is filial not to harm ourselves.

Chungmu Sunim⁸⁵ (1913-2011) was known as the 'filial piety monk' because he widely promoted the Buddhist Sutra of the Ten Graces of Parents⁸⁶ (*bumoeunjunggyeong*). Chungmu Sunim was a close family friend. He was the teacher of my younger brother, who died in an automotive accident on a mountain road while serving as a Buddhist military chaplain. Chungmu Sunim's approach to Buddhism has many similarities with Confucianism. This sutra is depicted on pagodas that he constructed at three temples and in woodblock prints that he distributed. According to this sutra, the Buddha taught that we should greatly respect the graces of our parents. The sutra depicts the ideal loving attitude of parents toward their children that invokes reciprocal filial caring of children for their parents. These graces are as follows.

1. The grace of conceiving and protecting the fetus.
2. The grace of giving birth with patience, even withstanding pain.
3. The grace of forgetting one's distress after the child is born.
4. The grace of accepting what is bitter for oneself while giving what is sweet to the child.
5. The grace of drying the child when it is wet and laying the child in dry bedding.
6. The grace of giving milk from the breast and nourishing the child with love.
7. The grace of cleaning the child's body and clothes.
8. The grace of worrying about children when they are far away.
9. The grace of responding with help for one's children even if the situation is difficult.
10. The grace of worrying about one's children and having a mind of compassion even when one's own life ends.

⁸⁵ *Sunim* is a title of respect for a monk. *Sunim* is a spelling commonly given in English. The formal Romanization is *seunim*.

⁸⁶ Another translation with the full sutra is at <http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/filial-sutra.htm>.



生子忘憂恩

臨產受苦恩

臨產受苦恩
 懷經十箇月
 產難欲將臨
 朝朝如重病
 日日似昏迷
 惶怖難成記
 愁淚滿宵襟
 含悲告親族
 惟懼死來侵

해산함에 임하여 고통받은 신은 해
 아이 뱀지 열달이 지나가니 어려운
 해산날이 닥쳐오도다 날이면 날마
 다 중한 병에 걸린 듯이 정신이 혼미
 하도다 두려움고 무서운 심정어찌
 다 헤아릴까 근심으로 울린 눈물
 자락을 다 적시도다 슬픔을 머금은
 채친족에게 아뢰옵되 이러다가 주
 지양을 가깝날 뿐이외다

자식을 낳고서야 근심잇으신은 해
 자비하신어머님 근심한고통 겪었으
 장육부도려내느심하고 육체는 기절하
 니 마음은 혼미하고 육체는 기절하
 며 짐승을 잡은 듯이 앙자히 피 흘렸
 도다 갖난 아이 충실한 말들이 시
 고 무던히기 배하시언만 기쁨이 가
 신뒤에 슬픔이 밀려오니 고통스런
 그 심정 가슴을 저미도다

Figure 21
 The Second and Third Graces of Parents, Woodblock Print

The set of woodblock prints concludes with the sentiment that a child's relationship with parents is very deep and endless. So much so that there is no way to fully appreciate it. According to this sutra, the Buddha said that if someone would like to acknowledge parents' graces, one way is to become a monk, study sutras, deepen in self-reflection, make offerings to the Buddhas, and grow to be a better person.

In Confucian understanding, the experience and practice of filial piety within the family prepares us to extend the reach of benevolence to all other people and to all other things in Heaven and Earth. This was well expressed by the Chinese Neo-Confucian scholar Zhang Zai (1020-1077). He wrote the Western Inscription to show how greatly genuine benevolence and filial piety can extend. He wrote, "Heaven is my father and Earth is my mother, and even such a small creature as I finds an intimate place in their midst. Therefore, that which fills the universe I regard as my body and that which directs the universe I consider as my nature. All people are my brothers and sisters, and all things are my companions... Respect the aged... Show affection toward the orphaned and the weak... The sage identifies one's character with that of Heaven and Earth... Even those who are tired, infirm, disabled, or sick; those who have no siblings or children, wives, or husbands; are all my siblings who are in distress and have no one to turn to... To rejoice in Heaven and have no anxiety is filial piety at its purest."⁸⁷ Thus, filial piety is a virtue that expresses the inherent relatedness and benevolence of Heavenly endowed human nature, connecting together individuals, family members, the wider society, and all things in Heaven and Earth.

Virtuous Governance

Confucianism emphasizes the importance of bringing justice to society through virtuous governance. If anyone tries to destroy dignity, then justice needs to arise to protect humanity. So if society becomes wholly peaceful, then the need for justice disappears. In a country governed according to the Dao, justice is alive at the level of public society and the state. The governing principles and fundamental spirit of justice are *ren* (humanity) together with *yi* (righteousness). Justice guarantees the wellbeing and order of the people. It is the realization, completion, and guarding of *ren* as well as the repelling of that which is against *ren*. In a positive sense, justice is the manifestation of *ren*, i.e., the principle that exalts and perfects human life. Complementarily, justice is

⁸⁷ Translation adapted from de Bary, Chan, and Watson (1960, pp. 469-470).

yi, i.e., the way of disciplining and eliminating that which is unrighteous and against humanity.

Examples of repelling that which is against humanity include refusing the immorality of the powerful who recklessly restrain and slaughter people; opposing exploitive acts and conditions that shrivel up life, such as violations of property rights; and promoting ‘rectification of names’ (*zhengming*; *jeongmyeong*) which makes it possible for people to do their duty appropriately.⁸⁸

During the times of Confucius and Mencius, the fundamental principles of the state and society were being shattered. Powers big and small were holding their grounds. Therefore, the people lived in danger, fear, and mistrust. There were numerous cases in which people were restrained by countless government orders and unjust imprisonment. Mencius spoke of this as entrapping the people. Confucius knew that governmentally enforced order and punishment could not be a solution for social problems. He insisted that the people should be treated according to rules of propriety (*li*; *ye*) that could be practiced spontaneously and that rulers should set examples of virtuous behavior that truly would appeal to the people.

So Confucius said, “If an administrator is courteous, the people cannot but be respectful; if he is just, they cannot but obey; if he is faithful, they cannot but be truthful” (Legge, 1893a, 13:4). Confucius attempted to block the violation of human rights by acknowledging the good nature of the people instead of by enforcing government orders and punishment. He called for rulers to show responsibility through virtue (*de*; *deok*), appropriateness (*li*; *ye*), righteousness (*yi*; *ui*), and trust (*xin*; *sin*). This was, indeed, a very important conversion from the common thinking of that time.⁸⁹

For Confucius, justice is not only conceptual. It is also in accord with reality. The validity of the idea of justice comes from the meeting of the subjective consciousness with objective realities. Confucius said, “The superior person in the world does not set the mind either for anything or against anything; what is just, the superior person will follow” (Legge, 1893a, 4:10). This means that one should not affirm or deny anything before one has looked at the circumstances. Once one has considered the concrete circumstances of time and space, the most suitable course of action will appear. This view does not completely depend upon objective conditions. Neither does it merely follow

⁸⁸ SH.

⁸⁹ SH.

subjective intuitions. Therefore, the *Doctrine of the Mean* speaks of the difficulty of timeliness (*shizhong; sijung*) that was discussed earlier.⁹⁰

Justice is not found where there is an absence of interior sincerity, trust, or benevolence. It is not found through social order concentrated only by national wealth, military power, expansionism, or the expediency of political techniques. Justice is completely different from despotism and tyranny.

Rather, justice derives from the sage's law of the spirit that knows the given situation and the task to address actual circumstances. Since it is concerned with benevolence and propriety, it appeals to our humanity. Confucius said that if there are only law and punishment, people will do their best to avoid them. But if there are virtue and propriety, people will be ashamed over their faults and will become good.

The way of power (K: *paedo*) is different. It seeks wealth and military power only for one's own country. It uses other countries without any sense of shame. This is the power of expansionism under the guise of benevolence. Expansionist countries want to be and are large. The countries under their influence obey only because they have less power, not because they want to obey. In contrast, the way of justice is not interested in bigness. It is concerned with a happy spirit in society and people's sincere compliance with virtuous leadership.

Clearly, Confucianism emphasizes the importance of living a virtuous life. Virtues must be deep for them to permeate our lives and the world, as said in the following poem from *The Songs of Six Dragons Flying in Heaven*:

If a tree has deep roots,
Wind cannot blow it over easily.
It will have many flowers and fruits.
When a fountain of water comes from a deep stream,
It will not dry up even in a parched season.
The water will flow on to the ocean.⁹¹

⁹⁰ CIJ.

⁹¹ Quoted from the second chapter of *The Songs of Six Dragons Flying in Heaven*, which was written and edited by prominent scholars during the period of King Sejong. An alternate translation appears in "Songs of Flying Dragons (1445-1447)" in Lee (1981, p. 74). Lee notes that "...the *Songs* were the first experimental use in verse of the Korean alphabet invented in 1443-1444."



Figure 22
500-Year-Old Ginkgo Tree at Sungkyunkwan

Two Exemplars of Virtue

In Korean history, Great King Sejong (reigned 1418-1450) can be considered an excellent example of virtuous governance. He made numerous accomplishments of music, ritual, technology, humanities, and social administration. He is widely considered to have been a sagely king. For example, King Sejong devised an alphabet that would represent the sounds of Korean language faithfully. Up to then, writing was done with Chinese characters. They pose difficulty for literacy because they do not represent Korean sounds and they are difficult to learn. He also ordered a group of Royal Academy scholars to explain the principles for creating the alphabet and its applications.



Figure 23
*King Sejong's Tomb*⁹²

King Sejong wanted the alphabet to be easy to learn within one day. This would make it easier for the common people to express themselves correctly. The Korean alphabet was named 'Right Sounds to Educate the People' (*hunminjeongeum*).⁹³ It was promulgated in 1446. King Sejong thought this was especially important for the fair adjudication of court cases. His intention was to

elevate human rights and to build up the true personality of people. The king's preface to the book that proclaimed this alphabet said, "Feeling compassion for them (i.e. illiterate people), I have newly made twenty-eight letters that are easy to learn and convenient to use in everyday life."

This writing system combined understanding of the philosophical principles of the *Book of Changes* and Neo-Confucian thought together with knowledge of the physical process of producing sounds in the mouth. It is an exemplary case of joining spiritual insight and practical action for social benefit.

The scholar officials appointed by King Sejong wrote commentaries and examples in order to explain precisely how to teach people about this alphabet. They said that the Dao of Heaven and Earth works through the principles of yang and yin and the rotation of the five elements or states of change (i.e. wood, fire, earth, metal, and water). Based on Principle (理: *li*; *ri*) which is the Great Ultimate (*taiji*; *taegeuk*), yin and yang produce all things. Accordingly, all human speech sounds are governed by the qualities of yin and yang.

The scholars explained that the creation of the alphabet resulted from exhaustive inquiry into the principle of sound. The function of sound conforms to the activities of Heaven and Earth. Heaven is motion and Earth is quietude. The human being combines both and is therefore able to comprehend the nature and ability of Heaven and Earth.

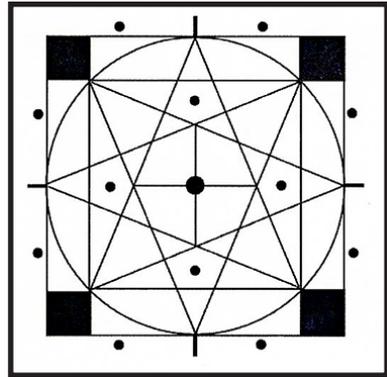
⁹² 1999.

⁹³ KSCKA.

So twenty-eight letters were made according to the shape of articulating vocal organs and symbols for the way that the forces of Heaven, Earth, and humanity interact. This demonstrates King Sejong’s benevolent concern for the people and his ability to connect that which is philosophically profound with that which is practical in daily life. Unfortunately, due to the prestige of Chinese characters, this Korean writing system did not become widely used for 450 years; it was adopted as the official writing system in 1894. Now, in adapted form, it is a standard writing system in Korea. Some previously non-literate cultures have also adopted the Korean writing system to express their language in recent times.

My father, Master Yi Jeong Ho, explained the way the principles underlying *hunminjeongeum* are related to the philosophy of the *Book of Changes* (*Yijing*). He diagrammed the relationships among vowel sounds as well as the relationship among consonant sounds. Combining the two diagrams creates a compass design showing the cosmic relations among Heaven, Earth, humanity, the Great Ultimate, and the workings of yin and yang.

Figure 24
Hunminjeongeum Compass Diagram,
by Master Yi Jeong Ho



As my father said, this diagram of *hunminjeongeum* is like an astronomical chart introducing the marvels of the universe, or a nuclear explosion bringing about a mental revolution, or the coming and going of life itself. He said that flux and ceaseless change are the reality of being, the rhythm of life, the pulsation of heart, the ensemble of truth, and the realization of love (Yi Jeong Ho, 1978). He described that it expresses hope and joy, song and dance and that it glorifies the grand work of nature and the providence of the Creator. So King Sejong’s invention is highly significant for linguistic purposes, social welfare, and philosophy.

Another exemplar of commitment to social welfare and justice is Jo Gwang Jo (literary name Jeongam). He demonstrated the dedication of a scholar official to promoting justice as an advisor to the king, even at risk to his own life. Jo was born in 1482 and executed by royal decree in 1519.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ HCKC.

Jo was committed to promote the true Confucian way of governance that makes the needs of the common people first priority. He sought to adjust taxation and the administration of law in order to benefit the common people, to restrict prestige of the ruling class, and to expand human rights and freedom of speech. Many people perceived Jo as a gift from Heaven due to his wisdom. Yet, he was able to serve the government as an official advisor only for four years before being ousted by a rival faction.



Figure 25
*Portrait of Jo Gwang Jo from His Memorial Shrine*⁹⁵

Master Jo understood that when there is an honest person who wants to make a change in society, that person might experience a disaster due to opposition from others. However, Jo was firm in belief that if a tradition does not suit the needs of the people, it should be changed. Jo followed this belief to his death.

Jealous rivals convinced the king that Jo wanted to undermine the throne. So the king sentenced him to death by poisoning, just as happened to Socrates in ancient Greece. Yet Jo, despite this maltreatment, maintained his loyalty. He complied with the command and drank the poison. Although Jo died young

⁹⁵ 1993.

and served the king only four years, he was able to have far reaching influence. This is because he was himself an exemplar of the right way to live.

Later, Jo was recognized as an important teacher and reformer. He inspired other Neo-Confucian reformers who came afterward. In 1610, his memorial tablet was instated in the national Confucian shrine. Deep Valley *seowon* (study center) was established and maintained by his descendants in his honor.

Master Jo planted the ginkgo tree that is still standing in front of the *seowon*. Confucians prize ginkgo trees because Confucius enjoyed teaching his students under the widely spread branches of a ginkgo. The descendants of Jo who care for this place used to sell the fruit of the tree to raise money for the support of the ritual sacrifice in honor of their ancestor. Perhaps we can imagine that Master Jo was so far sighted that he prepared for his own memorial ritual to be carried out in distant generations.

Not far from the *seowon* is his grave. Yulgok made an inscription for a memorial stone to be buried there for recording whose tomb this is. In reference to those who defamed Master Jo, the inscription says: "You who falsely condemned the worthies cannot be forgiven even in the other world." This writing remains in his collected books.

Master Jo's last words before dying are recorded on another memorial stone there. They show his faithfulness and steadfastness.

I loved the king as my father.
I worried about the country as my home.
The white sun came down upon the earth
And shines brightly within my red heart.

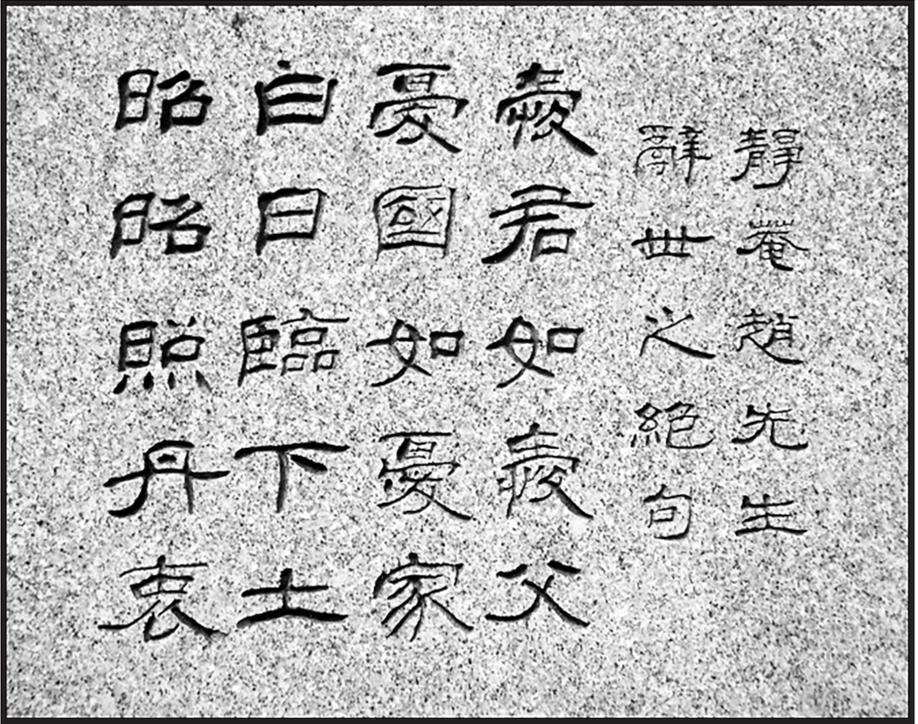
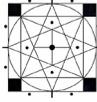


Figure 26

*Jo Gwang Jo's Final Words, Inscription Near His Tomb*⁹⁶

King Sejong and Master Jo are illustrious historical figures who demonstrate the way that virtue can manifest in both personal conduct and service to society. For current times, the important point is how each of us can learn to live like that.

⁹⁶ 1993.



4

Great Learning

Self-Cultivation

The ideal of Confucius and the original teaching of Confucianism is called ‘making the people comfortable by cultivating oneself’.⁹⁷ The goal is to realize the potential of every individual’s life while bringing peace to the world. This is what can be truly called great learning. As the *Great Learning* says: “From the emperor to the common people, all must cultivate themselves and recognize that this is the root of everything” (Legge, 1893c, Introduction, verse 6). Everyone, with no distinction between emperor and common people, is to cultivate themselves.



Figure 27

‘Self-Cultivation is the Root of Everything’, Calligraphy by Haengchon

⁹⁷ For more on Confucian self-cultivation, read Ivanhoe (2000) and Keenan (2011).

The Great Learning
(大學, daxue; 대학, daehak)

Chanted by Haengchon
<http://hdl.handle.net/1808/30363>

Before beginning, Master Haengchon explained that he would read aloud in the traditional way of chanting that he had learned. The audio recording begins with the first line of the Great Learning. After the conclusion, he says, “I read this whole book, the Great Learning. Thank you.” The recording finishes at that point.⁹⁸

The *Great Learning* explains the way to extend the influence of virtue throughout the world. To spread virtue throughout the world, first order the state. To order the state, first regulate your family. To regulate your family, cultivate yourself. To cultivate yourself, rectify your heart. To rectify your heart, make your thoughts sincere. To make thoughts sincere, extend knowledge fully. To extend knowledge fully, investigate things.

It is important for the noble person to nourish both oneself and others for mutual benefit. This is illustrated by the Nourishment hexagram (number 27) from the *Book of Changes*. It is shaped like an open mouth, with two solid yang lines top and bottom and the middle yin lines all open. This represents the idea that one should nourish oneself with what is good. Just as Heaven and Earth nourish all things, the sage nourishes the worthy with good and extends nourishing to all people.

⁹⁸ 2011. The audio recording is about 25 minutes. Click on the link above or search for the internet address online. The link goes to the website location for this book. James Legge's (1893c) translation of the book can be found at <https://www.sacred-texts.com/cfu/conf2.htm>.

Figure 28

Notation on the Nourishment Hexagram, by Haengchon⁹⁹

Gen Above 上艮
Zhen Below 下震

☶ 頤 Yi [Nourishment] March 3, '87

[Judgement]
頤貞吉 觀頤 自求口實

Yi is such that constancy here means good fortune. Observe nourishing and how he seeks to fill his own mouth.

象曰 頤貞吉 養正則吉也
觀頤 觀其所養也
自求口實 觀其所養也
天地養萬物 聖人養賢以及萬民 頤之時大矣哉

[Commentary on the Judgement]
"Yi [Nourishment] is such that constancy here means good fortune, "for when Nourishment is correct, there will be good fortune. "Observe his nourishing" means "observe the nourishing [of others] that he does," and "Observe how he nourishes himself." As Heaven and Earth nourish the myriad things, so the sage nourishes the worthy and thereby extends this nourishing to the countless common folk. A time of Nourishment is indeed great!

象曰 山下有雷 頤君子以慎言 節飲食。

[Commentary on the Images]

A. Thunder going under the Mountain: this constitutes the image of Nourishment. In the same way, the noble man is careful with his language and practices restraint in his use of food and drink. (R. J. Lynn)

B. At the foot of the mountain, thunder:
The image of PROVIDING NOURISHMENT.
Thus the superior man is careful of his words
And temperate in eating and drinking. (R. W. T. / C. F. B.)

Neo-Confucianism developed from focusing on self-examination, being sure of oneself, and keeping awareness of one's self-independence. However, this did not mean dwelling on oneself alone. It included a concern with the

⁹⁹ 1997.

universal aspect of communication with others. Cheng Yi (K: Jeong I, 1033-1107), speaking of the meanings of ‘for oneself’ and ‘for others’ as these ideas appear in the *Analects* of Confucius, said that long ago scholars were interested in themselves but eventually became interested in the development of others while scholars of his day professed to be so much interested in others that they lost themselves.¹⁰⁰

In fact, ‘being for oneself’ does not stop with one’s own problems. By helping to develop others, both oneself and the other are actualized. If being for the other is merely a formality, the self too is lost in the process. ‘Being for oneself’ or knowing oneself is not pure selfishness. Rather, it is a true recognition of self, an establishment of self-independence whereby my neighbor and I can be actualized together.

In the *Analects*, there are four points indicated for escaping the egocentric self-centered mind, based on the qualities of Confucius. “There were four things



from which the Master was entirely free. He had no foregone conclusions, no arbitrary predeterminations, no obstinacy, and no egoism” (Legge 1893a, 9:4). Zhu Xi interpreted these qualities as freedom from the following faults: egoistic narrow thinking, trying to accomplish something insistently, excessive assertiveness, and selfishness. To be entirely free means to break off these four faults. Such a person forms judgment not by a one-sided assertion, but rather through a fundamental purity of mind that perceives matters as they stand.¹⁰¹

Figure 29
Portrait of Zhu Xi,
*Chunghyeon Study Center*¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Cheng Yi and his elder brother, Cheng Hao, were instrumental in the formation of Neo-Confucian philosophy. Cheng Yi especially emphasized the importance of the concept of *li* (Principle).

¹⁰¹ CIH.

¹⁰² *Chunghyeon Seowon Study Center*, Gongju City. Photo is a gift to the author from Master Haengchon. *Seowon* are private educational institutions that were common in the mid to latter Joseon dynasty. For more information on *seowon*: [http://cefia.aks.ac.kr:84/index.php?title=Korea%27s_Religious_Places_-_2.4_Seowon_\(Private_Confucian_Academies\)](http://cefia.aks.ac.kr:84/index.php?title=Korea%27s_Religious_Places_-_2.4_Seowon_(Private_Confucian_Academies)).

Looking at the question of one's self in this way is nothing other than the study of the principle of human nature. This means establishing one's own interiority as a basis that links with the common human nature of all people. Thus, the horizon of communication between oneself and the other is opened up. This way a person becomes aware that within oneself is embodied the common basic essence of all, which is nothing other than the nature given us by Heaven, called variously the Great Ultimate (*taiji; taegeuk*), the Human Ultimate (*renji; ingeuk*), the Principle of Nature (*xingli; seongri*), or the Principle of Heaven (*tianli; cheonri*). This true Principle of Nature surpasses the boundaries of nation, race, and blood relationships. It is valid for all countries and peoples.

My key philosophy of life is this: Do not deceive yourself. Remember that even if you can deceive others, you can never deceive Heaven. Live to nourish the power to overcome yourself.

In the New Testament, John 14:6, Jesus says that he is the way, the truth, and the life and that without him no one can come to God. He said that if you want to follow him, first negate yourself and bear your cross.

To become your True Self, you need to overcome yourself. To acquire the accomplishment of the True Self through overcoming oneself is the very way of accomplishing the benefit of one's home, one's country, and all humanity. People should live every day like this so that there is no feeling of shame in the mind.

If we do not live this way, even if we do any kind of social action, it is senseless. If we live this way, every day we become more enlightened. An enlightened society cannot come without enlightening ourselves. If we can all live like this, every person will become like a ripened fruit. Indeed, the true purpose of religions is to help us become ripened fruits.

Dedicated Effort

A person's degree of virtue is determined by a combination of one's capacity and achievement through effort. This is like a cup that has a given capacity but its actual contents depend on how much wine is poured into it. If one does not keep one's life direction completely and thoroughly, then truth will not be actualized in life.



故君子尊德性而道問學 致廣大而盡精微
極高明而道中庸 溫故而知新
敦厚而崇禮 中庸第22章

Therefore, the superior man honours his virtuous nature, and maintains constant inquiry and study, seeking to carry it out to its breadth and greatness, so as to omit none of the more exquisite and minute points which it embraces, and to raise it to its greatest height and brilliancy, so as to pursue the course of the Mean. He cherishes his old knowledge, and is continually acquiring new. He exerts an honest, generous earnestness, in the esteem and practice of all propriety.

From THE DOCTRINE OF THE MEAN XXII

Figure 30

Notation on Constant Study, from the Doctrine of the Mean, by Haengchon

Confucius said of himself, "At fifteen, I had my mind bent on learning. At thirty, I stood firm. At forty, I had no doubts. At fifty, I knew the decrees of Heaven. At sixty, my ear was obedient for the reception of truth. At seventy, I could follow what my heart desired, without transgressing what was right" (*Analects* 2:4). This shows that Confucius fixed his purpose on learning in his boyhood. Through commitment to growing and maturing throughout life, he finally reached a state of sagely freedom where volition and law, self-interest and morality, are united.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ CIH.

Confucius said, “One who aims at being a person of complete virtue does not seek to gratify the appetite, nor in one’s dwelling place does one seek the appliances of ease; one is earnest about what one is doing, and careful in speech; one frequents the company of people of principle in order to be rectified: such a person may be said indeed to love to learn” (Legge, 1893a, 1:14). This expresses an austere process. “The determined intellectual and good person will not seek to live at the expense of injuring one’s own virtue. Such people will even sacrifice their lives to preserve their virtue complete” (Legge, 1893a, 15:8). A person of virtue would die for higher values since one has transcended life and death as well as gain and loss.¹⁰⁴ Achieving such a quality of character requires persistent effort to develop a stable mind, which Confucius said was most necessary. With a stable mind, even a situation of inequality or poverty is not a worry. Without a stable mind, even though one possesses much, there will be anxiety and struggle.

Consider the difference between an adept magician and a sage. Some magicians perfect extraordinary feats of bodily control. For example, some can eat metal or drive pins through their flesh without injury. Although such feats may be remarkable, they are not meaningful in themselves. It is important to consider the intention and direction of the person who tries to develop one’s abilities greatly. Such magical feats result from focusing on one point so well that the person can do the unexpected. But what is the purpose?

A sage is a person who has developed a great ability, like a magician, to focus intensely. What distinguishes a sage is keeping the direction and intention to contribute to the wisdom and benefit of others. As the great Chinese scholar Zhu Xi (K: *Ju Hui*) said, a person who focuses yang energy can even penetrate metal. The sage is a person who studies with one-pointed focus with the intention to help others. Confucius was such a person.

Yet I do not advise extreme measures. Many sages and saints from ancient times have taught restraint. Restraint, restraint, restraint! Restrain yourself. But I am not like that. I believe that we should enjoy the pleasures of life, but in adequate amounts. Not too much and not too little.

Methods of Self-Cultivation

The *Doctrine of the Mean* describes two ways of awakening. The sage’s way engages self-awakening to all-embracing ontological truth. Then particular individual things become illuminated by this understanding. This is a de-

¹⁰⁴ SH.

ductive process of awakening. In contrast, the noble-minded person's way is to work to understand particular things within ordinary life. By expanding this understanding, one eventually realizes the whole all-embracing ontological truth. This is an inductive process of awakening. Both ways of awakening bring about transcendence of the ego. Confucius emphasized the direction of learning from the ordinary and working up toward the highest achievement of truth. This is most suitable for most people.

Studying

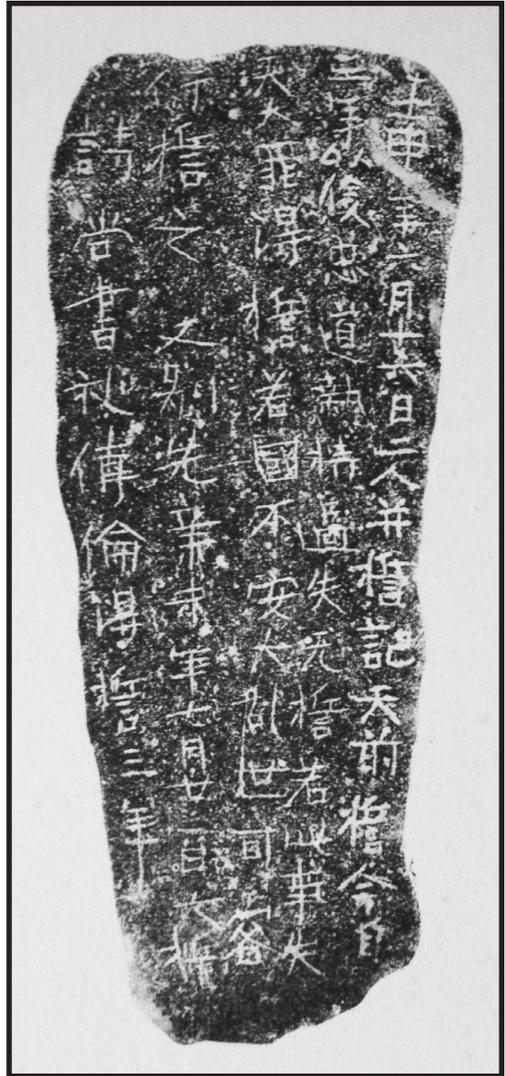
One of the prominent ways to learn is to study with great commitment the wisdom of worthies and sages as presented in the traditional Confucian texts. This is a long tradition in Korea. For example, there is a stone inscription from the Silla dynasty (57 BCE - 935 CE). It is thought to have been made by members of the *Hwarang Do* (Flower Youth Way). Hwarang Do members cultivated themselves through a holistic education to serve as defenders of the country. The Chinese inscription reads as follows: "Today, the 16th day of the 6th month of the year of the monkey,¹⁰⁵ we two persons together record our oath before Heaven that within three years we will take hold of the Way of loyalty and will have no fault. We swear this again. There must be no failure. If we fail in this matter, we deserve to receive a severe punishment from Heaven. If our country is unstable and there is great violence in society, then we must be able to act to save it. That is why we repeat this oath. Last year, on the 22nd day of the seventh month, we solemnly swore to systematically study the following classics within three years: the *Book of Poetry*, the *Book of History*, and the *Spring and Autumn Annals*."

¹⁰⁵ Historians do not agree about the year this refers to. Some speculate it was 552 CE, 612 CE, or 732 CE. Thanks to Dr. Yi Sunyuhl for this information.

Figure 31
Hwarang Do Inscription Stone,
*Ink Rubbing Copy*¹⁰⁶

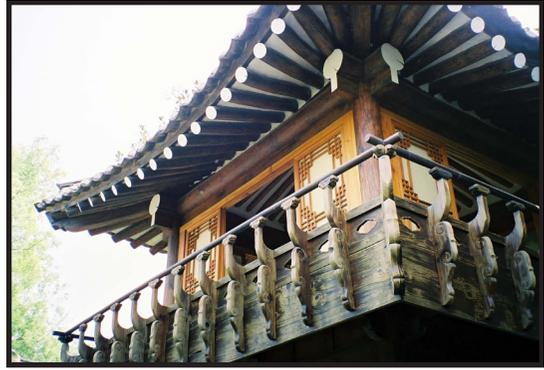
When I was dean of the Taedong Academy for Eastern Classics, we required students to memorize and recite the classics. When doing so, students must concentrate on the words, internalize their meaning, and make them so much a part of themselves that they can recollect them at will. In addition, when we read such books, it is important to look for the deep meanings, not just the surface of words. For example, when reading the *Book of Mencius*, it is important to grasp both the details and the essence. Mencius emphasized that government should exist for the purpose of providing for the people and that the common people are the voice of Heaven. This is the core of Mencius. It is essential for understanding the real meaning of Mencius. But knowing the details of this book is also important. Without the core, details are meaningless. Without the details, the core is useless.

Finding this essence that infuses an entire book opens up great insight. I have a tiny bamboo scroll on which brief selections from the *Analects* are written. This amount is enough to understand the *Analects*. Even one third of this is enough. Even if I randomly chose one line, that would be enough. If a leaf drops from a tree in the autumn, we can know that the world is filled with autumn.



¹⁰⁶ Gift to the author from Professor Lew Seung Kook, 1977.

Figure 32
A Study Pavilion
*at Taedong Academy*¹⁰⁷



Yet book learning is not sufficient. Confucius emphasized a holistic and balanced approach to human development, so he encouraged people to learn the Six Arts of Rites, Music, Archery, Chariotering, Calligraphy, and Mathematics. So it is good for people to enjoy and integrate arts and physical disciplines along with formal study in the context of natural beauty and camaraderie with fellow students and friends who are committed to learning.

This is illustrated by a scroll that I keep in my study room at home. The calligraphy is based on The Ordinary Room Inscription by Liu Yu Xi (772-842, Tang China).¹⁰⁸ The verses read as follows:

Mountains do not exist only in high places.
Where there is a mountain sage (K: *sinseon*),
that is the place where a mountain exists.
Water does not exist only in deep places.
Where there is a dragon,
that is where there is spiritual and mysterious water.

This ordinary, humble room
exudes the fragrance of virtue.
From here we can see that outside in the garden
a trace of moss covers the upper steps with green.
Bamboo infuses the bamboo curtain with the feeling of blue.

We discuss among ourselves and smile.
Great scholars come and go.
There are no foolish people here.

¹⁰⁷ 2006.

¹⁰⁸ Liu Yu Xi was a poet, philosopher, and essayist. For more information, read the [Liu Yuxi entry](#) in Wikipedia. This translation is by Master Haengchon.

Thus we can play the stringless lyre
and read the Diamond Sutra.¹⁰⁹
There are no confusing noises of instruments
made by bamboo and strings.
There is nothing that strains our bodies
due to reading the writings of others that are spread on the desk.

Is this place not like Zhu Ge Liang's¹¹⁰ hermitage or Yang Zi Yun's¹¹¹
pavilion?
As Confucius once said,
What impure thing can exist there?

Physical Exercise

I find it helpful to do regular exercises in order to keep the body and mind healthy. This is actually an act of consideration for our loved ones. We should keep ourselves healthy so that we do not cause others worry on our account. It is good to adjust the specific exercises to the situation of the person. But daily care for one's health in some way is important.

Often when I awake, I help myself become alert by mild exercise. I rap the head and face gently with knuckles and then I massage my face. Then I rap and massage my arms, legs, chest, stomach, and whole body. This brings alertness and stimulates blood circulation.

Then I continue with a more vigorous routine. I lay on my back for these exercises. First, I stretch my arms and body and arch my back up, two times. Next, I lay my arms next to my sides and clench my fists, then flex my toes up and down. Next, I raise my arms up, perpendicular to my body. I thrust and shake my arms vigorously 100 times, making my whole body move. I feel the blood circulating strongly through the body. Next, I clap my bare feet together 50 times, sometimes crossing my feet in each direction. Then, I lift and fold my legs up, with knees high and feet flat on the ground. Next, I lift my torso and buttocks up and down quickly, 100 times. Then I raise up both arms and legs, perpendicular to my body, and shake my feet and hands. Next, I set my arms down on the ground outstretched and then slowly lower my legs to the

¹⁰⁹ A prominent Mahayana Buddhist scripture, available at <https://plumvillage.org/sutra/the-diamond-that-cuts-through-illusion/>.

¹¹⁰ Zhu Ge Liang (181-234) was an advisor to the founder of the Shu-Han dynasty. For more information, read the [Zhuge Liang entry](#) in online Encyclopedia Britannica.

¹¹¹ Yang Xiong (courtesy name Ziyun) was a poet and philosopher. For more information, read the [Yang Xiong entry](#) in online Encyclopedia Britannica.

ground, repeating several times. Then, I rest while breathing deeply and slowly from my lower *danjeon* (C: *dantian*) energy center.¹¹² I may also add other postures and movements from *gukseondo*, a Korean form of exercise.

Mindfulness

Whether one is studying, doing calligraphy, exercising, or conducting social activities, the way to learn from all of it is to approach affairs of daily life with mindfulness (*jing*; *gyeong*).¹¹³ Mindfulness is attentive unbiased awareness applied to each moment. It establishes the complementarity of stillness and motion in any activity. The practice of quiet sitting meditation can be valuable to cultivate mindfulness. In this type of meditation, the intention is to let the natural harmonious quality of mind emerge. Force is not used to make anything happen.¹¹⁴

Fruits of Self-Cultivation

Confucius' life is an example of what can be attained through self-cultivation. He achieved a state of freedom consisting of, as he said: “the pleasure of eagerly pursuing and forgetting food,” “enjoying the breeze among the rain altars and returning home singing” (Legge, *Analects*, 1893a, 11:25), and “following what my heart desires, without transgressing what is right” (*Analects*, 2:4).¹¹⁵

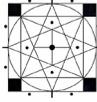
The *Doctrine of the Mean* describes the condition that results when a great person follows the path of the mean. The mind rests in equilibrium when there are no stirrings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, or joy. When these feelings are stirred to their proper degree, the state of harmony results. Equilibrium is the root of all action in the world and harmony is the universal path they should follow. The virtuous qualities of the cultivated person are meant to extend for the benefit of family, society, and world. So, as Legge (1893b) translates from the first chapter, “Let the states of equilibrium and harmony exist in perfection and a happy order will prevail throughout heaven and earth, and all things will be nourished and flourish” (1:4).

¹¹² The energy (*qi/gi*) focus point in the lower abdomen about two inches below the navel.

¹¹³ This is not the same as Buddhist mindfulness practices as now commonly known in the West. *Jing* (K. *gyeong*) is sometimes translated as reverence, seriousness, prudence, or attentiveness (as discussed in Chan, 1967), or reverent composure (Adler, 2020). Dr. Yi Suhn Gyohng decided on ‘reverent attentiveness’ for a presentation she did at the University of Kansas in February 2020.

¹¹⁴ For example, read Taylor (1988).

¹¹⁵ SH.



5

Eternity in Daily Life

Finding Eternity in Daily Life

Confucius' thought connects the most common human tasks of pursuing the Dao in daily life with the question of superhuman and transcendental development. This is expressed in the phrase 'raising to the greatest height and brilliancy'.¹¹⁶ This 'raising up' occurs through cultivating ourselves and it is for the purpose of bringing peace to all people, as Confucius said.¹¹⁷ Although he gave great importance to social and political issues, the level of reality that gave him most pleasure was that in which every-day experiences are both common and unworldly.

For example, Confucius asked four disciples what they would like to do if a ruler called upon them for service.¹¹⁸ Three disciples mentioned measures they would take to serve and strengthen society. Finally, Zeng Xi paused from playing his lute and said that his wishes are different from the fine purposes of the other three gentlemen. The Master encouraged him to explain. So he continued to say that, on this late spring day, he would like to go along with several children and companions to wash in the river, enjoy the breeze among the rain altars, and then return home singing. The Master heaved a sigh and gave him approval. While Confucius confirmed the good intentions of each disciple, he especially praised Zeng Xi who spoke about something that had nothing to do with politics.¹¹⁹

By cultivating ourselves within daily life, we can discover its brilliance and significance. One of the most valuable ways to do this is to deeply experience the profundity of our human mortality. I learned this great lesson from my teacher Master Ryu Yeong Mo. Master Ryu had bad health from childhood. People had not expected him to live past 30, but he lived to the age of 91. He had a weak body, but he lived long because he lived carefully and wisely. Sometimes a person with a weak body can live much longer than a person

¹¹⁶ For example, Legge (1893b), *The Doctrine of the Mean*, Chapter XXVI. Also, CIH.

¹¹⁷ Hinton (1998), *Analects*, 14:42, p. 166; Legge (1893a), *Analects*, Book XIV, Chapter XLV.

¹¹⁸ Legge (1893a), *Analects*, Book XI, Chapter XXV.

¹¹⁹ SH.

with a strong body. This is because a strong person can too easily fall into complacency and recklessness, thus coming to an untimely end. A fragile person is forced by circumstances to become vigilant and careful about one's condition, and to take special care. In this way, a diligent weak person grows in strength and maximizes capacity for health and longevity.

Figure 33

*Portrait of Master Ryu Yeong Mo*¹²⁰



Master Ryu recommended regular reading of the book of the Daoist Master Lao Zi for strengthening good health, because this encourages a harmonious way of life. Also, he only ate one meal a day. He said that this helped make clear the meaning of Confucius, who had said that although everyone eats food, few really taste it. Eating once a day made each meal precious for him. Food became delicious beyond description.

One of the most profound points that I learned from him is the importance of getting beyond the distinction between each passing day and eternity itself. With such wisdom, one becomes immortal each day, although one eventually dies.

Master Ryu was fond of pointing out that the Korean word for ‘today’ (*oneul*) has two meaningful syllable sounds. The first part is ‘*oh!*’ an exclamation of surprise. The second is ‘*neul*’, which means eternity. So every morning, upon waking, he would exclaim, “*o-neul!*” (Oh, eternity!) In this way, he lived with an attitude of pleasant surprise at the eternity in each day.

What is most evident is that everyone will die. What is most difficult to know is when one will die. So we must always pay attention.

I wrote a poem about experiencing each moment of life as a beginning:

Beginning

Supposedly, it was the beginning,
yet years and months have flown far behind.

¹²⁰This portrait was included on a poster at the home of Professor Lew Seung Kook.

Cherished as the beginning,
yet already the end arrived.

Thus,
there is beginning and beginning
and beginning again.

So time is nothing but beginnings.

Beginning is beginning,
half along the way is beginning,
and the end is also a beginning.

Then, what is the end?
The end is only a vision.
Beginning and beginning...
Time...
Time.

It is very interesting that the Korean expressions ‘being alive’ (‘being to live’, *sal-a-jin-da*) and ‘being disappearing’ (*salajinda*) sound similar, though spelled differently. Also, the phrase ‘being created’ (*jieojida*) is similar to ‘being erased’ (*jiwojida*). However, this does not mean being preoccupied with death or what happens after death. Confucius said that to be preoccupied about what happens after death does not make sense when one does not even know how to live while alive. The key point is to know how to live.

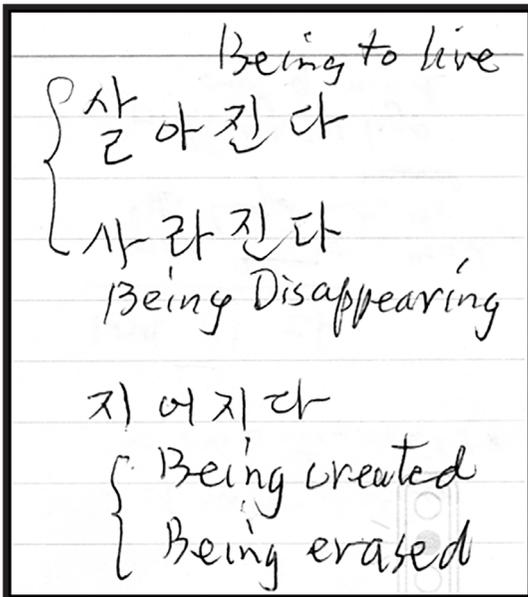


Figure 34
Being to Live, Jotting by
Haengchon

Indeed, since we live, we cannot avoid growing older. And eventually we will pass away. That is only natural. How lovely to follow the way that Providence has given us!

Tolstoy wrote a story about a man who was offered as much land as he could walk around in one day. The man was so excited to get as much as possible that he walked as hard and fast as possible the whole day. After that, he fell dead from exhaustion. In fact, as it happened, he only needed enough land to serve as a grave plot.¹²¹ Earning millions of dollars is completely useless. Knowing how to live is what is useful.

We can find eternity in daily life by simple activities like eating and drinking and by enjoying the ordinary things of life.

Confucianism prays with the whole body in actions, not merely with the tongue in words. For example, when I begin eating, I only say, ‘enjoy the meal’. When I finish eating, I only remark on how well I ate. During eating, I notice the delicious flavor of the food. I say thank you, thank you, and thank you again. Just keeping the mind of thankfulness is prayer. Just eating is prayer.

Eating is important for supporting the soul. The physical and the spiritual are complementary, but the spiritual has primary importance. We can see this in a word play of a sequence of Korean words: Rice (*ssal*) >> Flesh (*sal*) >> Egg (*al*) >> Soul (*eol*). Rice grows and gives of itself to nourish the human being. This food is ingested and converted into body. Bodies then produce offspring. And each new offspring has a soul. So rice and human soul are interrelated in the cycle of life.

There is a Korean proverb, “Have something to eat before climbing the Diamond Mountains.” The Diamond Mountains in northern Korea are noted for their outstanding beauty. Many people traditionally hoped to see them. This saying means that it is important to attend to the practical and to nourish oneself before setting out on a lofty undertaking. So before discussing philosophy, it is wise to enjoy a good meal.

Confucianism teaches that the sacred and the ordinary are one. So we can deeply enjoy common and simple things, whether eating or doing anything else. The Greek philosopher Epicurus (341-270 BCE) said that all he needed was a piece of bread and a drink of water. With that, he could challenge Zeus.

When you pass a blooming rose bush, really notice the beautiful flowers! When you hear birds, really notice their splendid sounds, which can be much better than the noisiness of people. At my countryside retreat house, there is

¹²¹ This anecdote is from the last part of the story, “How Much Land Does a Man Need?” by Leo Tolstoy, which can be found in the public domain at: <https://www.online-literature.com/tolstoy/2738/>.

often the terrible stench of cow dung from the farm below. Yes, it stinks! But cow dung is very useful for agriculture. Cow dung can smell wonderful—why not? Even while stuck in a traffic jam in a busy city like Seoul, we can experience something meaningful. Being stuck in a traffic jam is just like the human condition. We are the descendants of many people, who from long ago, for many generations, have lived like this, though in a different way. Human existence is inevitably a struggle for survival. On the one side, that is tragic. But out of this tragic situation, human beings create beautiful music such as the classical music I like to play on the car radio. And throughout time, sometimes sages and saints appear.

The Trinity of Heaven, Earth, and Humanity

Some people portray Confucianism as merely a godless ethical system. But that is not accurate. Confucius refers to Heaven (*tian; cheon*) and Dao, the Way. Confucius said that only Heaven knows him. He does not often mention the divine by name for the same reason that in Eastern cultures we do not mention our father's name. The reason is respect.

Confucius understood that deep wisdom comes from a blending of careful rational study and spiritual/mystical insight. Confucius had these two sides, though many scholars do not realize it, claiming that he was only rational. Though he emphasized the rational in his teaching, he harmonized both the rational and the mystical in life. His method was to begin with what is earthly and to work toward the highest level. But he actually addressed his students variously according to their abilities and readiness. The Way, virtue, righteousness, the Above (*shang; sang*), and the Heavenly Ordinances (*tianming; cheonmyeong*) are all metaphysical concepts related to the Heavenly Way (*tian dao; cheon do*). For Confucius, Heaven is expressed as an absolute and ultimate being.¹²² The Chinese character for Heaven (天, *tian; cheon*) is formed from a line stretched out above the figure of a great person who is standing on the Earth with arms outstretched.

In Confucian tradition, Heaven is also often considered in relation to Earth as cosmic forces that epitomize the qualities of yang and yin. For example, the first two hexagrams in the *Book of Changes* are those representing Heaven and Earth.

¹²² CIH.



Figure 35
Heaven and Earth Calligraphy
 by Song Si Yeol, Panel 1 from a
*Calligraphy Screen*¹²³

In the *Book of Changes*, each hexagram represents a basic type of situation and its quality of change. The six lines (*yao*; *hyo*) of a hexagram (*gua*; *gwae*) are read from bottom to top. This series of lines represents the process and cycle of change in a given situation. Time flows between each line position as everything changes. The first line is like a seed in the ground. It sprouts and grows taller, becoming a tree. At the top of the hexagram, fruit has ripened and is ready to drop. When

it falls, a seed rests in the Earth again and the cycle repeats.

The lines of hexagram 1, the Creative, symbolic of Heaven, illustrate this process. We can think of the lines in terms of a person's relation to a situation. The first (bottom) line is a time of silence. The person remains hidden, developing through quiet diligent effort, growing in power and ability. The second line is the time when a person appears in the world, beginning to display and share one's talents. The third line is the transition toward and commencement of a significant endeavor. The fourth line represents a time of outlook to the future. Then, a person must be careful, moderate and patient. The fifth line represents success and fruition. The sixth line is a transition toward a new beginning. If one indulges in hubris and overextends one's efforts, there will be cause for regret. The highest point is also the beginning of decline. Twelve o'clock at high noon cannot remain unmoved. The daytime eventually changes into darkness.

The Heaven hexagram (number 1) is composed of 6 solid yang lines. The Earth hexagram (number 2) is composed of six open yin lines. The Heaven and Earth hexagrams represent opposites and contrasts, but they do not neces-

¹²³ Song Si Yeol (literary name Uam) lived 1607-1689. He was a prominent scholar, statesman, and calligrapher. Haengchon arranged for me to photograph this large screen courtesy of the Sungkyunkwan University Museum.

sarily conflict. Originally, their natures are such as to be harmonized. In order for harmony to exist, there must be opposition. With opposition, harmony can exist.

The Heaven hexagram appears to be creative and active. But inwardly, it is deeply excavated to be empty so as to embrace all. The Earth hexagram appears to be receptive and quiet. But inwardly, it never surrenders. It is like a steady drip of water upon rock. It will eventually cut through the rock. Earth manifests the virtues of concession, embracing, holding, and generosity.

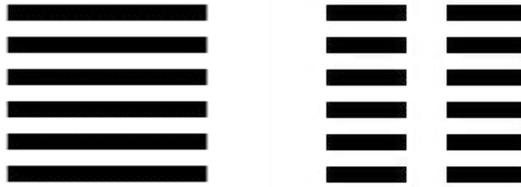


Figure 36
Heaven and Earth Hexagrams

Fundamentally, the natures of Heaven, Earth, and humanity are joined.¹²⁴ Heaven is the father who imparts the quality of benevolence to human nature. Earth is the mother who nurtures humanity in this life. The true person is the filial (*xiao*; *hyo*) child who respects these parents and lives in harmony with them. *Dao* consists of the harmonious relationship between Heaven, Earth, and humanity. All creatures, human and nonhuman, are children of our Heavenly father and Earthly mother, so we must be considerate of each other.

Confucianism is humanistic, but not selfishly human centered. Indeed, what makes us human is the *Dao* of Heaven that is bestowed upon us. Human beings engage and complement the dynamic interaction of Heaven and Earth. The great person has a profound role in manifesting this. As Master Il Bu said in the *Jeong Yeok (Right Changes)*: “Heaven and Earth would be empty shells without the sun and moon. The sun and moon would be vacant shadows without the true person.”¹²⁵

The thought of a godly person, such as King Dangun, displays harmony and integration between the spiritual and the material, the metaphysical and the physical, the Heavenly and the Earthly. It condenses together all different

¹²⁴ For more on Confucianism and ecology, read Tucker & Berthrong (1998).

¹²⁵ For another translation, read Chung (2010, p. 38).

and various kinds of thoughts. King Sejong's invention of the Korean writing system, known as Right Sounds to Educate the People, reflects the harmonious and dynamic relation between Heaven, Earth, and human being. The shapes of the vowel letters originate from symbols for Heaven, Earth, and human being. As a commentary on the Right Sounds says, the human being is a delicate coagulation of endless truth and the spirit of yin/yang and the five elements.

The Great Ultimate Within Us

Neo-Confucianism developed a metaphysical framework to understand interconnections between the ultimate and the ordinary world. They referred to the ultimate reality as the Great Ultimate (*taiji*; *taegeuk*). Though it surely exists, it is not perceivable. Therefore, it is also called the Limitless Ultimate (*wuji*; *mugeuk*) or the Ultimateless in order to avoid confusing it with material things. *Taiji* can also be called *li* (Principle). From the Great Ultimate unfolds the interaction of yin and yang as the dynamic of *qi* (flowing force, vital energy).¹²⁶ *Qi* literally means flowing energy or substantial force. It does not refer to a material thing. In immanent actuality, *li* and *qi* are not separate.

The Great Ultimate is within us, so it is also called the Human Ultimate (*renji*; *ingeuk*), meaning the ultimate within humanity. A basic tenet of Neo-Confucianism is that human nature is the same whether past or present and whether one is a sage or a common person. Original human nature transcends history. Further, human nature must be actualized in concrete and changeable circumstances.¹²⁷

In Neo-Confucian cosmology, transcendent Principle (*li*) is prior to flowing substantial force (*qi*) logically, because it is the ground and principle by which *qi* can generate activity and phenomena. *Li* is the 'why and how' of *qi*. However, one cannot find *li* separated from *qi*. Principle and material force cannot exist without each other. They imply each other. Both are essential. Their relationship can be described as being both one and two. One includes two. Two belongs to one. As one, they cannot in actuality be separated. However, as two, they are logically and conceptually distinct and should not be confused with each other. The human challenge is how to find *li* through *qi*.

The Neo-Confucian philosopher Zhou Dun Yi's (1017-1073) diagram of the Great Ultimate (*taiji*; *taegeuk*) illustrates this well.

¹²⁶ In English writings about Confucianism, *qi* is often translated as 'material force'. However, Master Haengchon prefers 'flowing force' in order to avoid the implication that *qi* is merely something material or rigid.

¹²⁷ CIJ.

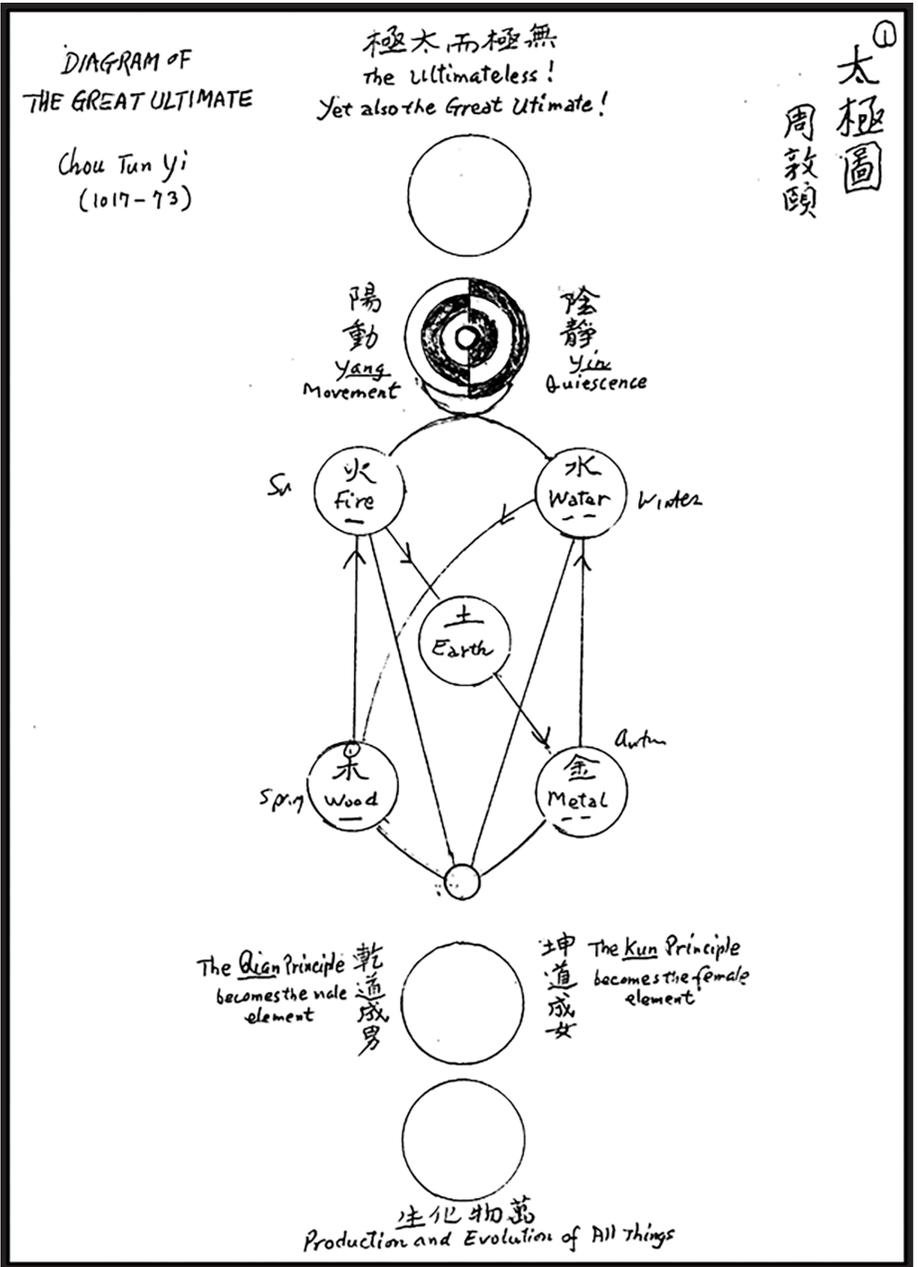


Figure 37

Zhou Dun Yi's Diagram of the Great Ultimate, Drawn by Haengchon

The top figure is a circle. This represents the Great Ultimate which is also Ultimateless or the Limitless Ultimate (*wuji*; *mugeuk*). The Great Ultimate is the transcendent reality beyond phenomena, beyond division and distinction, and beyond description. It is beyond the dualism of yin and yang.

The second circle figure represents the dynamic interaction of yin (*yin*; *eum*) and yang (*yang*; *yang*), dark and light. The world works according to the interaction of yin and yang. Yin energy has the qualities of receptivity, nurturing, and darkness. Yang energy has the qualities of activity, creativity, and brightness. Yin and yang are complementary opposites that work together and transform into each other within the process of change. Originally, yin referred to the shady side of a tree and yang referred to the sunny side. When the sun moves throughout the day, the sunny and shady sides of the tree shift. Day and night also shift, day turning into night, and night into day.

At the central core of this figure is the smallest circle that represents the Great Ultimate as immanent within phenomena. This core shows that the Great Ultimate is the essence of yin and yang. Yang is produced by the movement of the Great Ultimate. Yin is produced by the tranquility of the Great Ultimate. The right side of the figure shows that yin is the root of yang; the left side shows that yang is the root of yin.

The third figure shows that yang and yin change and interact to produce the five cosmic elements: water, fire, wood, metal, and earth. These five elements are the manifestation of the working of *qi* through the dynamic of yin and yang. They connect to a sixth small circle below them, representing the Great Ultimate, which is also *li* (Principle). This shows that *wuji/taiji*, yin and yang, and the five elements are profoundly combined, without any gaps between them.

The fourth figure signifies the stage of yin and yang activity before they have condensed into form. Heavenly male yang *qi* and Earthly female yin *qi* are ethereal, formless, and complementary. Each polarity of yang male *qi* and yin female *qi* has its own distinct individual nature. At the same time, though appearing different, yang male *qi* and yin female *qi* are just one in a sense that they are no more than *qi*. They are one in that the Great Ultimate is immanent in them.

The fifth figure signifies the production and evolution of all things with physical appearances. As such, they have their own distinct characteristics. At the same time, all things have one universal nature of *taiji*.

This diagram shows the complementarity and unity of the transcendent and the immanent, the ultimate and the ordinary, the spiritual and the material. Confucianism recognizes universality as well as particularities and differences. It teaches us to harmonize the universal and the particular.

Dao Mind

The Neo-Confucian ideal is for people to live in accord with one's inner nature of benevolence bestowed by Heaven. But Neo-Confucian philosophers recognized that this can be a challenge because we may feel divided between selfish and benevolent impulses. So Zhu Xi made a distinction between 'human mind' (*renxin; insim*) and Dao Mind or 'Mind of the Way' (*daoxin; dosim*).

The reason for this distinction comes from the fact that the first (human mind) arises from one's body and the other (Dao Mind) arises from one's Heavenly endowed nature. The first can be somewhat dangerous and disorderly, while the second is hard to recognize because it is hidden. However, everyone, regardless of degree of intelligence, possesses the so-called 'human mind' and the 'Mind of the Way'. If Dao Mind becomes a person's master so that the human mind listens to its command, then the dangerous aspect will be corrected and the hidden aspect will become manifest. There will be the right balance of motion and rest as well as speech and action.¹²⁸

According to Toegye (Yi Hwang, 1501-1570), from the viewpoint of the pre-eminence of Principle, 'human mind' and Dao Mind are clearly distinguished. Dao Mind issues from Original Nature and is purely good. Human mind is emitted from *qi*. Although human mind is originally good, it can easily develop excessive or deficient qualities through deviation based in human desire. Then human mind can become evil.

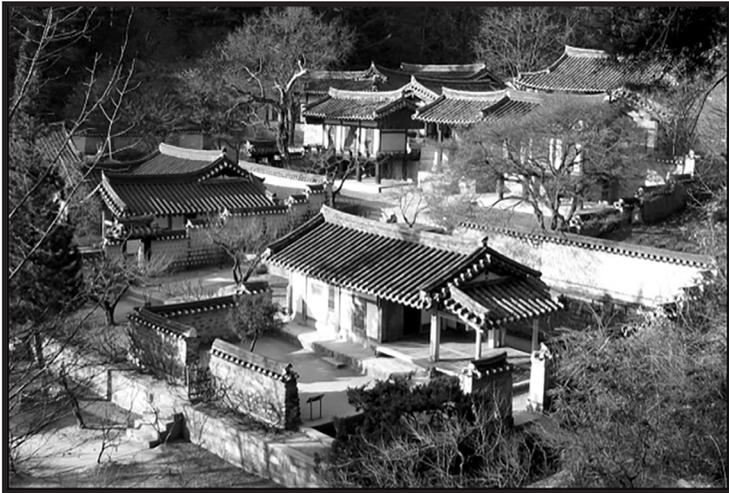


Figure 38

*Toegye's Retreat House and Dosan Study Center*¹²⁹

¹²⁸ CIJ.

¹²⁹ *Dosan Seowon* Study Center, Andong City. Photo is gift to the author from Master Haengchon.

Toegye emphasized the distinction between Heavenly Principle (*li*) and flowing force (*qi*) and the contrast between public justice and selfish interest. For Toegye, the focal point of the concept of justice is how to control disordered desires and thereby restore one's original nature. He warned that all kinds of evil could arise through lack of restraint of physical desires. He took as his mission the defense of the purity and dignity of each person's individuality. However, there is still this problem: While maintaining this purity, how are we to respond to the turbulence and change of our actual world? Toegye viewed the concentrated mind of piety, mindfulness (*jing*; *gyeong*), to be the power to control oneself first.¹³⁰

Yulgok (1536-1584) viewed this matter differently.¹³¹ Although Yulgok also distinguished human mind from the Mind of the Way, he emphasized that mind is originally one; mind is nondualistic. Yulgok and Toegye agreed that mind has a purely intellectual side and a side concerned with physical desires. But because the Mind of the Way is mind, and human mind is also mind, mind is one. The distinction between human mind and the Mind of the Way becomes apparent through the function of a person's mind. According to Yulgok, when the mind as reason and spirit appears without relating to bodily senses, it is called Dao Mind. When the mind appears because of bodily stimulation, it is called human mind.

He said, for example, that the Mind of the Way is directed toward principle and justice, respect for one's parents, loyalty to the king, commiseration, shame over injustice, and a sense of piety when passing the ancestral shrine. In contrast, the human mind is directed toward the body, for example, focusing on hunger, tiredness, thirst, or sexual arousal. But he does not say that human mind and Mind of the Way come from two different sources. Although the Mind of the Way is not separate from *qi*, when it springs forth on behalf of principle and justice, it pertains to one's Heavenly nature. Although human mind is based on Principle, when it springs forth on behalf of bodily desires, it pertains to *qi* on the physical side.

Even sages cannot avoid eating and clothing. Human mind partakes of the Principle of Heaven. But when lower appetites run loose and uncontrolled, the bad result is selfish desire. Although mind is essentially good, we must guard it, because it easily wanders toward selfish desires that can be somewhat dan-

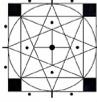
¹³⁰ CIJ and CIH. Earlier in this book, *jing* was described as mindfulness or reverent attentiveness. For more information, read footnote 113.

¹³¹ For an overview of Yulgok's thought, read Ro (1988). For a comparison of Toegye and Yulgok, read Kim (2018).

gerous. Mind can be united with Heavenly Principle. When human mind obeys the command of Dao Mind, it becomes the Dao Mind.¹³²

When Dao Mind guides the actions of leaders of society and the general population, society develops in accord with the Dao. When leaders govern according to the Dao, conditions become favorable for everyone to realize the Dao in their daily lives.

¹³² CIJ and CIH.



6

The Great Dao Society

When the Great Dao Prevails

Spiritual understanding must express in concrete behaviors and in the administration of society; otherwise, it cannot be called real knowledge. Accordingly, much of Confucian philosophy is focused on guidelines for administration of society in a way that benefits people widely. Confucius' ideal and aspiration was a well-ordered country and world in which people would be able to enjoy blessings and benefits, free from bondage, and in which they would also delight in Dao. This ideal should be actualized both as a personal inner experience and as a condition of freedom for everyone in the world. Ultimately, everyone should be blessed with this. Confucius tried to persuade the rulers of that time to govern justly. He himself tried to undertake administration differently from conventional aristocrats.

In the *Analects*, we find such words as, "To have no murmuring against you in the country;"¹³³ "When a country is well governed When a country is ill governed;"¹³⁴ "When good government prevails in the empire."¹³⁵ These phrases show that the concrete social reality of the country was an extremely important matter of concern to Confucius. The problem is whether true principles of Dao are expressed in the society. He said, "When a country is well governed, poverty and a mean condition are things to be ashamed of. When a country is ill governed, riches and honor are things to be ashamed of."¹³⁶

As the *Book of Rites* states, when the Great Dao prevails, then the first priority of society is caring for widows and widowers, orphans, the elderly, children, and those who have disabilities or are sick.¹³⁷ Benevolent government means that it establishes society in such a way that people's material needs are met and their minds are respected. Confucian principles for social welfare

¹³³ Legge (1893a), *Analects*, book XII, chapter II.

¹³⁴ Legge (1893a), *Analects*, book VIII, chapter XIII.

¹³⁵ Legge (1893a), *Analects*, book XIV, chapter IV and book XVIII, chapter VI, verse 4.

¹³⁶ Legge (1893a), *Analects*, book VIII, chapter XIII, verse 3.

¹³⁷ Legge (1885), *The Book of Rites*, book VII, section I.

support the development of well-ordered and harmonious families that serve as the basis for a good society.

Confucius was concerned about clothes, food, and housing as the necessary conditions of human survival. He especially identified the importance of food for living and the importance of military affairs to defend the country in times of trouble from within and without. In other words, he felt that economic strength and military power are fundamental conditions for the survival and existence of a country. Confucius did not praise military affairs in themselves, but he was not a pacifist, either. He deplored the act of sending the people to war without properly training them. The Master said, “To lead an uninstructed people to war is to throw them away.”¹³⁸

Mencius carried forward the ideal of benevolent government. He emphasized that government should exist for the purpose of providing for the people and that the common people are the voice of Heaven. Mencius distinguished between the Kingly Way (*wangdao*; *wangdo*) of benevolent governance and the Ruler’s Way (*badao*; *paedo*) of force and privilege for rulers exerted over the common people. This understanding is essential for the real meaning of Mencius. For example, Mencius visited the king of Liang. To paraphrase, the king

said, “Welcome venerable sir. Now that you are here, please tell me how I can make my army stronger and increase my prosperity.” Mencius replied, “Is that all you care about—power and wealth?!”¹³⁹ Indeed, in later centuries, some emperors banned the reading of Mencius, because Mencius strongly challenged corrupt government and oppressive rulers.



Figure 39
Memorial Seat and Tablet for
Mencius, Hyanggyo, Yeongam City,
*South Jeolla Province*¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ Legge (1893a), *Analects*, book XIII, chapter XXX. SH.

¹³⁹ Legge (1895), *Mencius*, book I, part I, chapter I.

¹⁴⁰ *Hyanggyo* are local Confucian study centers that were established by the government during

Mencius said that if some people have plenty of meat in the kitchen and plump horses in the stable while other people are dying of starvation, then this is like feeding human flesh to beasts. Then he quoted a passage from Confucius' words. According to Mencius, Confucius said in unsparing terms, "The inventor of burial figures in human form deserves not to have any posterity."¹⁴¹ He could not even agree with burying a statue that had human shape, not to mention burying a living human to accompany a deceased ruler to the afterlife, as had been done by some. And it is certainly much more terrible to leave a human being to starve than to bury a statue.¹⁴²

Many scholars during the Joseon dynasty of Korea tried to promote the Great Dao Society. One such prominent scholar was Jo Gwang Jo (1482-1519).¹⁴³ He had an advanced perspective that gave most importance to the principle that government administration must prioritize the common people. Indeed, he advocated elevating the common people so that they would all be at a high level of quality of life. He considered the common people to be most important.

He viewed scholars to be next in importance due to their commitment to learning and service. The king comes next in importance. This means that the true purpose for existence of the ruling class and bureaucrats was to serve the people well. Scholars have responsibility to spread knowledge to help all people.

Jo advocated for the recruitment of wise and benevolent scholars from all over the country to serve in government. He encouraged officials to make recommendations of such people based on their meritorious ways of living and virtuous personalities, so that recruitment would not be limited to those who passed the examination (*keju*; *gwageo*) for entry into government service.

Jo advocated for the benevolent Kingly Way (*wangdao*; *wangdo*) propounded by Mencius, rather than the forceful and expansionist Ruler's Way (*badao*; *paedo*). The Kingly Way emphasizes development of just social regulations with which the people voluntarily wish to comply as led by their consciences and inspired by virtuous leaders. He believed that people will natu-

the Goryeo and Joseon dynasties. The calligraphy means "the person [Mencius] who is almost a sage [i.e. Confucius]" (亞聖公, *yashenggong*; 아성공, *aseonggong*). 2003. For more information on *hyanggyo*: [http://cefia.aks.ac.kr:84/index.php?title=Korea%27s_Religious_Places_-_2.3_Hyanggyo_\(Local_Confucian_Schools\)](http://cefia.aks.ac.kr:84/index.php?title=Korea%27s_Religious_Places_-_2.3_Hyanggyo_(Local_Confucian_Schools)).

¹⁴¹ Legge (1895), *Mencius*, book I, part I, chapter IV, verse 6.

¹⁴² SH.

¹⁴³ Jo is discussed as an exemplar of virtue in chapter 3. HCKC.

rally obey just regulations, so that there is no need for coercive administrative enforcement. The king should govern by the persuasiveness of truth.

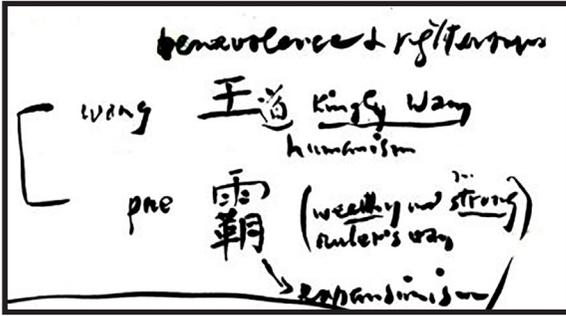


Figure 40
Wangdo versus Paedo,
Jotting by Haengchon

While Jo emphasized that government must not neglect the material needs of the people, he did not intend that it should become

materialistic. The spiritual is primary and guides the material. For example, during a time of famine, the government should make sure that people do not starve. During a time of plenty, people should be able to eat well. The king should not seek a large country through warfare and imperialism, but rather should govern the territory peacefully.

Jo wanted to broaden the righteous way of governance by encouraging open expression of views. He believed that when people at all social levels can speak freely, they would conclude that it is well to choose what is good. Thus, the country would flourish. He believed that abolition of free speech leads to the destruction of a country. For example, when he first became a government official, Jo repeatedly asked the king to change the heads of the Offices of Censor General and Inspector General, because they had engaged in unjust censorship and arrests. Unfortunately, the king rebuffed the requests. Jo said that he would resign from office in protest. Therefore, eventually, the king did replace the officials.

Jo protested against the giving of bribes and the pursuit of selfish profit. For example, after a political coup against a previous unjust king (*Yeonsangun*, lived 1476-1506), there were many supporters of the revolt who were given high rank and privilege, even if they did not merit it. Fourteen years later, Jo and his followers protested this improper granting of merits and promotions. Eventually, three-fourths of the false merit allocations were cancelled.

These falsely promoted people resentfully plotted against Jo, saying that Jo wanted to become king. They arranged for Jo and his followers to be arrested and brought before the king as betrayers. At their prompting, Jo was exiled and forced to drink hemlock poison.

When facing death, the steadfast Jo wrote a poem proclaiming his love for the king and worry for his homeland.¹⁴⁴ Though Jo died after only four years of government service, his followers knew his profound character and kept up his memory. Eventually, most of his proposed reforms were enacted. Many of his persecutors themselves were condemned later. Eventually, under King Seonjo (reigned 1567-1608), Jo's reputation was restored and he was given the highest rank posthumously. Jo's influence has been crucial to the development of Korean culture.

Jo also encouraged the application of propriety to social support systems. Propriety is expressed in proper conduct of the Five Human Relations, which can be described as follows: (1) intimacy and love between parents and children; (2) righteousness between king and subjects; (3) respectfulness, integrity, distinction, and fidelity between husband and wife; (4) order based on respect and care between elders and youngers; and (5) trust among friends.

Propriety is also expressed through the Four Rites of the life cycle: (1) becoming an adult; (2) wedding; (3) mourning and funeral; and (4) memorial sacrifice for ancestors and close relatives. The first two rites address the living. The second two rites address the deceased.

These principles of propriety were applied to social action through the social support system of the community compact (*xiangyue*; *hyangyak*). The Chinese scholar Zhu Xi had refined and encouraged this system. Jo encouraged it in Korea. There were four main principles of community compact applied to village social life. First, people should mutually encourage each other in virtue and daily affairs. Second, people should sincerely relate to each other on the basis of propriety and righteousness. Third, people should prevent wrong deeds and they should admonish and uplift each other. Fourth, people should help one another when disaster and affliction occur.

Later, the highly influential scholar Yulgok praised Jo for his insights about proper government, including rectification of the king's mind; developing the Kingly Way; broadening the righteous way by letting everyone speak; and forbidding selfish profit. Yulgok emphasized that the principles of the community compact should only be applied when realistic, so that hardship is not imposed on anyone.

For Yulgok, the Mind of the Way (Dao Mind), which is the natural goodness of the human spirit, is connected with society and must be enlarged therein. This is the basis of Yulgok's theory of reform. Yulgok said that one's concrete historical reality should be examined from every possible angle. This

¹⁴⁴ The poem is shown in Figure 26.

means that one must judge whether one's current times call for completely new beginnings, continual development, or fundamental reform.

Yulgok considered that his particular times called for reform. In order to bring about the welfare of society he considered it necessary for government to lower taxes, to lessen the time people spent in public compulsory work, and to punish crimes justly and fairly. To accomplish these ends he saw the need to distinguish between public justice and private interest, to balance conservation of nature and production, to provide regular employment, and to put order into the military administration.

Yulgok saw that before you can educate people there must be some degree of social stability and provision of basic human needs. However, for stability, mutual trust is essential. Trust can exist only when there is public order. Public order is what keeps a nation alive. His opinion was that if public order was not renovated, then everything would collapse. This situation is like when a person loses strength and then becomes sick in every part of the body.¹⁴⁵



Figure 41
Portrait of Yulgok
*from Memorial Shrine*¹⁴⁶

Shadow and Bright Sides of Governance

Unfortunately, in traditional society, many government ministers were Confucian in form only. They were not genuine persons living according to virtue. Politicians who make a show of conventional rituals, who seek selfish advantage and power, and who fall into corruption and factionalism cannot be said to be following the genuine Dao of Confucianism. Ideology can be twisted to suit the desires of corrupt people; but the spirit of the true Dao can never be eradicated.

¹⁴⁵ CIJ.

¹⁴⁶ Jaun Seowon Confucian Academy, Paju City, Gyeonggi-do; 2004.

Confucianism often has been misapplied and tied to conservative customs and government.¹⁴⁷ In that respect, it may seem to be regressive. That is the shadow side of governance. Since Confucianism was the main ideology of the previous Joseon dynasty, it has taken the blame for many of the current problems of Korean society. For example, late in the Joseon dynasty (1392-1897), the Opening the State Movement raised questions about Confucian tradition. On a larger scale, in China, the New Culture Movement (began 1915) and the May Fourth Movement (1919) formed against the imperial force of Japan and sought to bring about major reform for a new China. The former ideology of Confucianism was seen as conservative, regressive, tyrannical, and feudalistic. These movements sought to replace Confucian tradition with Western thought, democracy, and science. Revolutionaries ended the Qing dynasty and established a republican government.

However, genuine Confucianism has a bright aspect. It teaches people how to nourish the benevolence within human nature freely and how to cultivate wise leadership for society. Unfortunately, there have been few wise sages who could act successfully to implement these views in society throughout history. So it is necessary to understand both the shadow and the bright sides of governance in order to consider Confucianism's relevance to contemporary society.

As Mencius described, from ancient times until now, there have been two ways of governing: the Kingly Way (*wangdao*; *wangdo*) and the Ruler's Way (*badao*; *paedo*). In actual practice, sometimes the Ruler's Way has been mixed with Confucianism, causing distortion. In truth, Confucianism rejects the Ruler's Way. It is crucial to understand the main principle underlying Confucianism in order to avoid confusing these two different ways. The main principle of Confucianism is that of virtue, including benevolence, propriety, wisdom, and righteousness. Throughout history, sometimes society has received the Confucian Way in the correct, bright way. But often society has taken it in a harmful, distorted way.

¹⁴⁷ For more discussion about pros and cons of Confucianism: De Bary (1991); De Bary & Tu (1998); Deuchler (1992); Kim & Pettid (2011); Rosenlee (2006); Rosker (2016); Shim (2009); Sole-Farras (2014); Tu & Ikeda (2011).



Figure 42

*The Five Cardinal Human Relations Tree, Sungkyunkwan*¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁸ The five main trunks represent the five cardinal human relationships as discussed on page 89; 2006.

These two ways can be contrasted as follows. The Kingly Way is humanistic, emphasizing benevolence and righteousness. Those who govern in this way do not seek to acquire a large territory for their country. Nor do they crave power and wealth for their own sake. In contrast, the Ruler's Way is selfish, despotic, profit oriented, expansionist, militaristic, and exploitive.

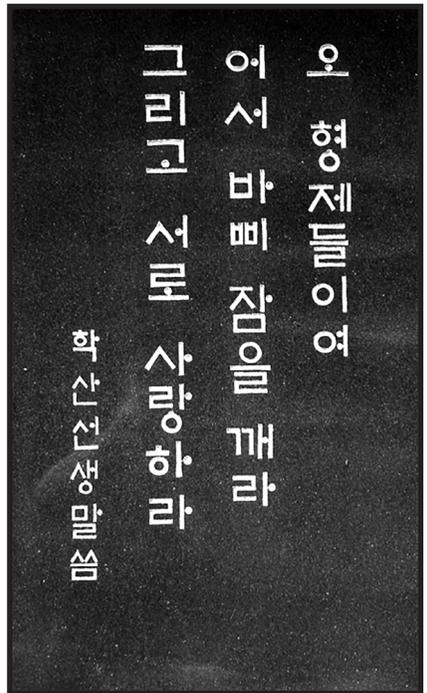
Yet this distinction between the Kingly and Ruler Ways does not imply an absolute dichotomy between such things as virtue and profit. For example, a society must accrue profit in order to enhance the material comfort of its people. However, according to Mencius' criticism of the profit motive, profit should not be an end in itself; rather, it should serve as a benefit for the people. Profit should not be valued more highly than virtue. Virtue should guide the development of wealth.¹⁴⁹

The Great Dao Society as an Ideal for the Present and Future

Unfortunately, even now, many in the old generation of Confucian scholars are stuck in a rut, repeating ideas of the past. Confucianism needs to be revitalized by the creativity of a new generation who can bring together the best of East and West.

Indeed, any ideology, regardless of times, can be well applied or misapplied. If there is a bright side on the one hand, then there is a dark side on the other. We should not simplistically judge any religion or thought from only one side.¹⁵⁰ When we evaluate an ideology, it is good to think of the value embodied in my father's words, which are carved on his tomb's memorial stone: "Oh brothers and sisters, hurry and wake up. Love each other!"

Figure 43
"Love Each Other" Inscription
on Memorial Stone for
*Master Hak San (Yi Jeong Ho)*¹⁵¹



¹⁴⁹ SH.

¹⁵⁰ MSC.

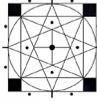
¹⁵¹ 2005.

As we work toward fulfillment of the ideal of the Great Dao Society, we must strengthen our mental power to know why and how to work for human dignity and for world peace. We must not work merely for material gain. Working for human dignity and world peace is the reason why we have material life. We do not have life for the purpose of seeking material gain.

Throughout history, human beings and cultures have lived in accordance with their own ways of life. They, with their similarities and differences, have sometimes opposed or fought with each other. Sometimes they have used differences to make a positive effect of complementary mutual elevation between groups. Nevertheless, people have often harmed or even destroyed others merely because they differed in certain respects—especially, in religious beliefs and political ideologies.

Therefore it would be desirable to develop an idea for society and world that respects and integrates the diversity and differences of human lives. In other words, a new philosophy or a new spirit of integration is needed in order to bring the age of discord and hostility to an end and in order to initiate an age of concord and mutual benefit.¹⁵²

¹⁵² HKT.



7

Challenges and Opportunities for Religions and Philosophies

Interactions of Religions and Philosophies

Religions and philosophies play an important role in shaping people's minds and social systems. If we can learn from their insights and their misapplications, they can contribute to the development of a new world in which all peoples and things can flourish. Religions have a good side in that they help many people materially or in their spiritual development. But they also have a side that is restricting and oppressing. In order to create a vision for world change, we need to select what is valuable about past traditional values. We also must visualize the future. We need flexibility, intelligence, and creativity to bring together both traditional and modern insights and to produce wisdom for a new system of values. This kind of study can help us to move from a closed society to an open society. The general direction I offer is to promote the dignity of life, to respect human beings, and to accomplish peace in the world.

This concern goes back to the time of Confucius. At that time and later, some people chose extreme responses to the corruption of Chinese society. On one extreme were those who withdrew from society. These were people who considered the state as irremediable, so they abandoned any attempt to save the world. They tried to protect their own bodies by becoming recluses. They called themselves 'scholars who have fled from the world'. They were a sort of Daoists. On another extreme were those who wanted to engage with society and the real world in very strong ways. For example, there was the Mohist school that trained and acted devotedly for the people without even caring for their own bodies, not to mention indulging in extravagances. They believed that it would benefit the country to regard everyone as equal beyond specific kinship and social relations. Another variety of response, the Legalists, believed that people were basically unyielding and entangled in gain/loss relationships. So they did not trust in anyone. Therefore, they advocated that benefits and punishments should be strictly controlled and settled by law, without consideration for sympathy and personal feelings. Legalism was a totalitarian, regimented system closely tied to the mundane world.

The attitude of the recluses can be regarded as a kind of naturalistic individualism that renounces the world. The latter two groups can be regarded as kinds of worldly and practical extremism. Though all these groups might have had sincere reasons for their responses to problems and corruption, they were too extreme. One extreme escaped from socio-political reality while the other extreme was overly attached to socio-political reality.

Confucianism differed from the so-called Daoists or Legalists. It pursued an exalted reality that unites transcendence and immanence. Confucius regarded performing Dao as implanting justice everywhere from the closest places to the most distant places of this world. He devoted his life to practicing and teaching this.

Interaction and dispute among religions and philosophies was also acute at the end of the Goryeo dynasty (918-1392) and in the early Joseon dynasty in Korea. At that time, Buddhism had a strong influence on government and the general population. It had accrued excessive power and wealth, so Confucian reformers sought political change.

Various Confucians held three different critical stances toward Buddhism. The first position supported and honored the truthfulness of Buddhism as a spiritual way. However, it recognized that Buddhism as an institution had fallen into corruption by the end of the Goryeo dynasty by amassing riches and servants and by exerting undue influence on politics. Therefore, Buddhism required reform. This was the position of Yi Saek (1328-1396).

The second position recognized truthfulness in Buddhism and respected the Buddha as a wise person, but it felt that the Buddhist tradition had gone astray from Buddha's original wisdom. These people held that the practice of Buddhism had fallen into corruption and also that the teachings themselves had strayed from the Buddha's original message. Confucians of this viewpoint rejected Buddhist doctrine, customs, and efforts to govern the state. This was the position of Jeong Mong Ju. For example, although Jeong comprehended Buddhism, he criticized the Buddhist idea that it is necessary to retreat to a temple in order to find truth. He said that a silent temple is helpful for beginners to discipline themselves, but it is not the place to find Buddha's truth. According to Jeong, leaving the world in order to find truth is not correct because the truth is already in the world.

Jeong told the king that real truth does not exist beyond actual persons. He said that the Way of the ancient Chinese sage rulers Yao and Shun is nothing but 'keeping righteousness in action and stillness, in speaking and silence'. On the contrary, Jeong noted, Buddhist monks leave society and their families

to seek emptiness. He said that they try to extinguish themselves, by wearing coarse clothes and eating only plants. Jeong doubted how leaving the world could produce a useful truth for human beings who naturally live within the world.

The third Confucian position on Buddhism was most hostile. It totally rejected both the principle and practice of Buddhism. This rejection related to a conviction that it was necessary to replace the Buddhist ideology that had become paramount but corrupt during the Goryeo dynasty with the new ideology of Neo-Confucianism that could guide the new Joseon dynasty on a path of reform. This was the position of Jeong Do Jeon (ca. 1342-1398).

Somewhat later, great King Sejong (reigned 1418-1450) also struggled with this issue. Some people say that he persecuted Buddhism. Actually, Sejong honored Buddhism and practiced it in his personal life. For example, he wrote a book of poetry titled *Worincheongangjigok* (meaning ‘the moon shining in one thousand rivers’), which praised the life of Buddha. He even built a Buddhist temple on the palace grounds. This was a strong act of support for Buddhism, because he did it over the protests of many scholars of the Royal Academy. Many left the palace in protest. Sejong wept about their departure. So the Prime Minister (Hwang Hui) visited their homes and persuaded them to return.

However, King Sejong agreed with many Confucians that Buddhism needed to be reformed and restricted, because of its prior excesses. By the end of the Goryeo dynasty, Buddhist temples had become opulent with wealth, land, and servants. Monks had undue influence over government affairs. So Buddhism needed to be reformed for the public good, even though its teachings had merit.

In our current time, religions still sometimes fall into corruption and fight against each other. Many people in various religions say that they oppose false idols within other religions. They say that the object of their own religious belief is not an idol, but that the objects of others’ beliefs are idols. But the idol is itself that which says that the idol must be destroyed. Doctrines and religious symbols can become idols. Buddha knew this.

Christianity has become an especially strong influence in Korean society in modern times. Christian denominations have contributed many valuable things such as the foundation of universities, hospitals, and social services. But some Koreans who converted to Christianity were led to betray their traditions by Christian missionary influence. These days some Christians practice in a way that is exclusive and rejecting of other religions and philosophies.

For example, a large church building was constructed over the objections of the local people. They did not want their area to be disrupted. But the church promoters succeeded in convincing the city government to allow its construction. Although Jesus had stood up for the common people, nowadays many church goers use their power to dominate over the common people. They act as though Jesus appointed them as his representatives on earth. Perhaps if Jesus Christ returned to earth now, he might not be able to find many followers, though there are so many people who call themselves Christians. This is also true of other religions, such as Buddhism. Nowadays many Buddhist monks present themselves as something glorious. Would Buddha recognize them as his followers?

But religions do not have to function like that. They can cooperate to help society. For example, Ongcheong Museum and Chapel is maintained by a priest who is my friend and former East Asian philosophy student. Many of the artworks there are composed of styles, subjects, and symbols from Catholic theology, the Bible, and Korean art and culture. That place represents a harmonization of Catholicism and Korean culture.



Figure 44

Painting with Korean Traditional and Christian Motifs, Ongcheong Museum¹⁵³

¹⁵³ 2012. This painting features a prominent depiction of the Mountain Spirit on right (i.e. the old sage with an attendant and a tiger who is a messenger and helper), a reference to St. John the Evangelist, and at left, Christ with a follower, and the Korean word for “calling” (*buleunda*, 부른다). There is also a crane, recognized as a Mountain Spirit-carrying bird and as a symbol of longevity, blessing, and the noble spirit of a classical scholar. Thanks to Dr. Yi Suhng Gyohng for contributing to these insights. For more on the Mountain Spirit, read Canda (1980).

Today many religions want to preach about the next world. Instead, I suggest, they should consider the orphans. If members of every Christian church in Korea adopted orphans, then there would be no more orphans. If every rich Buddhist temple decided to care for poor elderly persons, then there would be no more poor and lonely elders. If all religions would act in this way, then it would be alright for them to preach whatever they want.

The main point of religions is to love one another. We simply need to show this love by embodying it in our actions. Speaking strongly to convince others of religious opinions is not necessary. Wouldn't it be wonderful if Christ, Lao Zi, Buddha, Socrates, and Confucius could all gather and talk together in a friendly way?! Churches and temples should be training centers for loving each other. The world needs to learn integrative ways of thinking in order to overcome divisions and disputes.

Confucianism and Integrative Korean Thought

Confucianism, along with other trends of integrative thought in Korean history, has the potential to provide a perspective for connecting and integrating insights from various religions and philosophies. Confucianism was the first philosophical tradition imported from China to Korea more than 2000 years ago. It became the spiritual basis of Korean life. It became intimately and thoroughly infused in the life of Korean culture throughout history. Therefore, in Korea, Confucianism should not be seen simply as a religion in competition with other religions. It is not just one particular religion or sect among others. Its influence is pervasive at the level of national affairs. For a long time, Korean people have been nourished and educated fundamentally in Confucianism, beyond limitations of any particular sect. Even Christian and Buddhist clergy have been influenced by Confucianism, generally or partly. Though some may oppose Confucianism, they are really half Confucian.

In Korea, Confucianism can be considered as being at the center of spiritual life, as the hub of a wheel of Korean religions. At the top point of the wheel's circumference is Buddhism, which is very spiritual and metaphysical in orientation. Buddhism needs the social action and daily life involvement dimensions of Confucianism. Considering the Eight Branches of learning (from the introductory section of the *Great Learning*), Buddhism emphasizes the first five branches that are concerned with self-understanding. These branches include investigating things, knowing principle, making the movement of the mind truthful, rectifying the mind, and cultivating the self. Confucianism includes these and adds the other three branches that are concerned with social

action. These include regulating the home, governing the state, and making the world peaceful. As contemporary Buddhism is beginning to concern itself more with social action, it is becoming more similar to Confucianism.

On the right side of the wheel is Christianity. Christianity is very spiritual in orientation, often speaking of God and things beyond this world. However, despite this speaking about God, often it is practiced in a very materialistic way in order to seek blessings and profits. Also, Christianity has often neglected or denounced traditional Korean spiritual customs and ways. Korean Christianity needs to be open to the influence of Confucianism in order to ground it in Korean culture and to help itself to harmonize the spiritual and material aspects of human life. Catholicism is moving in this direction, for example, by allowing its believers to hold ceremonies to honor ancestors (*jisi; jesa*).

At the bottom of the wheel is Dangunism (K: *daejonggyo*). Dangun was the founding hero of Korea and the ruler of the ancient kingdom of Go Joseon. According to the *Samguk Yusa, History of the Three Kingdoms*, he was the offspring of marriage between the son of the Heavenly Lord and a bear who was magically transformed into a woman. Dangunism is a native Korean religion with its own scriptures. It focuses on patriotism. It reflects the principles of the culture founder, Dangun, such as 'widely benefitting the people' and 'harmony of Heaven and Earth'. Dangun's ideas of governance represented in the *Samguk Yusa* are similar to the Confucian principles expressed in the *Analects*. Dangun represents the harmony of yang sky energy and yin earth energy. Confucianism helps to give philosophical refinement to this indigenous religion.

On the left of the wheel is Daoism. The folk form of Daoism is similar to shamanism in that it has a strong emotional quality, appealing to the common people's needs for blessings and emotional relief. This kind of Daoism needs the intellectual rigor of Confucianism to make it more profound and complete.

Shamanism is part of the original culture of Korea, so it is important to understand it as part of the cultural background of this wheel of religions. Shamanism also influenced early Chinese culture and the development of divination.

So Confucianism is at the center of Korean culture. It expresses beliefs, values, and practices that have shaped Korean culture for more than 2000 years. Confucianism also connects with, infuses, and contributes to other religions that influence contemporary Korea.

In fact, there is a long historical development of integrative Korean thought. Ancient Korean viewpoint may be characterized as follows. First, from the story of King Dangun's birth where it is described that the conflicting elements of Heaven and Earth are amalgamated to be one single entity, it can

be inferred that the Korean people possess innate potentials for the acceptance and unification of different elements. Second, as indicated by the phrase “broadly benefiting human society,” included in the perspective of Dangun’s Go Joseon, which was the ancient kingdom prior to the age of the Three States (i.e. Goguryeo, Baekje, and Silla), Korean people have had the tradition of valuing human lives and cherishing peace.¹⁵⁴ The godly way of the Old Joseon dynasty could be the beginning of latter times’ integrative thought in Korea.

The people of Go Joseon had their own conventions of lives and religious beliefs, although it is now difficult to ascertain what their lives were exactly like due to the lack of evidence. Nevertheless, we can assume that Koreans had formed cultural and economic relationships with neighboring countries from the early period of the country. As time went by, elegant and delicate thoughts such as Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism were introduced from China. The Confucian school and Daoistic thoughts, which have humanistic and naturalistic characteristics respectively, were brought in prior to the age of the Three States. In the fourth century, Buddhism started to be introduced to the Three States. In the seventh century, Daoism was introduced from the Tang dynasty as a form of religion. Hence, it can be said that the three mainstream systems of thought took root in the ancient period of Korea.

However, the role of each system of thought differed from each other. Confucianism has contributed to the establishment of institutions for actual life in society and the state, especially with respect to moral codes, education, and politics. Meanwhile, Buddhism and Daoism have contributed to mental development of the society, especially in terms of religious and philosophical thoughts. In short, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism took root in the early period of Korea and have played a crucial role in building the Korean people’s ways of thinking for hundreds of years.

For instance, in the late Goguryeo kingdom period (37 B.C.E.-668 C.E.), Prime Minister Yeon Gaesomun said that the country is like a ceremonial offering vessel that needs three legs in order to keep steady balance and support. At that time, Buddhism and Confucianism had already entered the country. According to him, Daoism in its religious form was needed as the third leg.

¹⁵⁴ HKT.

Figure 45
*Three-Legged Urn, Gyeongbok Palace,
Seoul*

Choi Chi Won's (855-?) *Preface in the Memorial Stone for Nanrang*, written during the late Silla dynasty, said that the Way of Pungryu (*pungryudo*¹⁵⁵) includes three teachings. These were somewhat Buddhistic, Confucianistic, and Daoistic, although originally they were Korean ways of thinking. The Hwarangdo order of noble youth followed the idea of *pungryu*. Choi Chi Won wrote that within this Dao, the three kinds of teachings, though separate and varied, are fused into one. These teachings change the lives of those they touch.



There are also various examples of integrative thought in Buddhism. For example, the monk Wonhyo (617-686) of Silla, employed the method of 'harmoniously dissolving troubles' and the monk Chinul (1158-1210) included both *gyojong* (scripture-based learning) and *seonjong* (meditation practice).

In Neo-Confucianism, Yulgok contemplated the philosophies of Hwadam (1489-1546) and Toegye (1501-1570), who had advocated the theory of *qi*'s prominence and the theory of elevating the status of *li*. Yulgok sublated the two theories by employing the concept of "the subtle integration of *li* and *qi*." This is a typical example of how an integrating theory can evolve from contrasting theories.

These observations illustrate that the Korean people have attempted to integrate the elegant thoughts introduced from China including Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism, and that they have attained exquisite accomplishments based on them. Likewise, contemporary national religious and philosophical thoughts could go on to unify the ideas from all three of these mainstream thoughts rather than to be engrossed in only one of them.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵ Literally, 'Way of Wind and Stream'.

¹⁵⁶ HKT.

The Way for Confucianism to Contribute to the Opening World

Although Confucianism can offer much wisdom to the contemporary world, it is important to consider how Confucianism should continue in order to be beneficial.

Some conservative Confucians wish to revitalize Confucianism in contemporary society as a sectarian religion in competition with other religions, such as Buddhism and Christianity. They think of Confucianism as a formal institution with beliefs and rituals that should be pitted against those of other religions. They regret the loss of power and resources that has befallen Confucianism since the end of the Joseon dynasty. They want to reorganize it. They wish to extend the theorization of Confucianism and embody it concretely in actual life. They want to increase the glory and strength of Confucianism in order to more effectively compete with other religions and to regain influence over public life. They want to resist against other religions' influences on society that have drawn followers and resources away from Confucianism.

This approach has some merit, because it can help to preserve and promote the traditions and wisdom of Confucianism for posterity. However, there are problems with this approach.

One problem is that such a revitalization movement would require a strong leader who can mobilize support. But there is no such leader presently. And even if such a leader arose, the movement would be dependent on the quality of the person's character. Since many people who try to gain such influence have egotistic intentions, the movement would be in danger of harmful influence.

Another problem is that such a movement creates divisiveness between religions. But divisiveness is inappropriate to our time. This is a time in world history that requires reconciliation. Our time requires moving beyond the barriers of sectarianism, nationalism, racism, and other narrow views. Confucianists might legitimately criticize other religions for their sectarian efforts to convert and control the minds of people. Yet a sectarian revitalization of Confucianism would fall into the same trap. Sectarian, divisive Confucianism would be no better than other forms of sectarianism.

Hoping to retrieve the way of the past to impose it onto the future is only a dream. This strategy restricts Confucianism to a sectarian and temporal institution, subject to the vicissitudes of history and competitive struggles. This approach may be acceptable to sectarian Confucianists, but I propose another way.

An alternative way to revive Confucianism is to promulgate the essence of Confucian wisdom which is perpetual and unfettered by sectarian institutional

forms. In this way, it is not necessary to use the formal name and symbols of Confucianism. Rather, Confucian wisdom can serve as an educational guide and influence for life, even through other religions or ideas.

The most important point is to carry on the essential mission of Confucianism which is to help everyone learn to be fully human. Being fully human is not a matter of religious or national identifications, roles, labels, or categories. Full humanity is the common benevolent true nature of all people.

No one owns the teaching of 'being fully human'. Confucius did not own it; he transmitted it. Confucians do not own it. No one can own it. It exists in our true nature, for all to share freely. We need to be like Socrates who was a true philosopher, a lover of wisdom, and not an owner of wisdom. Genuine humanity is the common heritage of all people. The mission of Confucianism is to transmit this wisdom widely to benefit all people.

In fact, the form of Confucianism changes over time. Its influence naturally waxes and wanes. Originally, Confucianism was not segregated as a separate religion. People bowed to Confucius only as a great exemplary teacher. People did not honor him in order to obtain blessings or profit. Confucius himself did not teach in order to establish a religion in competition with others. He did not even know that the *Analects* would be produced in the future. In a sense, by the time he died, he was just a defeated old man. As Creel said, Confucius travelled with his disciples for thirteen years in order to meet lords and rulers of various countries, hoping that they would realize his political ideals.¹⁵⁷ Actually he returned having failed to fulfill this goal. He spent the last days of his old age teaching his disciples and compiling books.

Over the centuries, the organization and institutionalization of Confucianism was developed only for convenience in transmitting wisdom. The danger of religious organization is that if the wrong persons make it or assume control, then there is a struggle for hegemony. In such a case, it is better not to have any organization. If we mean 'religion' in the Latin sense of *religare*, meaning 'to connect again', in other words, to connect human beings with each other and with that which is sacred, then we could say Confucianism is a religion.¹⁵⁸ But religion as sectarian divisiveness is not the humane way forward. It is best to look into the essence of Confucianism.

This essence is not limited to a religious form. The essence of Confucianism is not for competition or power seeking. It is no problem if other religions borrow its wisdom and put it into action. It is good to give freely of everything

¹⁵⁷ Creel (1953).

¹⁵⁸ For more on religious aspects of Confucianism, read Taylor (1990).

Confucianism has to offer. Confucian names, buildings, and institutions only exist for convenience of transmitting a tradition of wisdom. They are not essential or necessary. The true Confucian Way does not require a founder to worship. Even if there would no longer be a movement called Confucianism, still its wisdom could prevail within other religions and under other forms.

But the message of ‘being fully human’ must continue as long as there are human beings. This message is what must be preserved, though not necessarily in a particular form. If other religions pick up wisdom from Confucianism and transmit it, as long as that helps people, there is no problem. If Confucianism flourishes as a religion to spread this wisdom, that is also no problem. Even if Confucianism passes away as a religious form, as long as the message continues on in order to help people, then that is also alright. The essence of wisdom needs to be infused pervasively throughout contemporary society and around the world in the lives of both religionists and those with no religion. Indeed, Confucianism can be practiced beyond divisions of race, religion, occupation, gender, and other distinctions. What is most necessary is to share the wisdom of Confucianism that can help the contemporary world and the emerging new world to harmonize and neutralize the extremes of spiritualism from the past and materialism of the present.

Indeed, I look forward to a time when there will be no more competition and strife based on religion, a time when it will not be important to label people according to different competing religions. In that time, churches, temples, and other such places will only be places for people to gather together, to enjoy each other’s company, just as human beings, without labels to separate from others. Then there will be human to human genuine communication.

This does not mean giving up distinctions between people. Each person has valuable uniqueness. When we relate to each other in our full humanity, we embrace both commonality and distinctions. The only distinctions that will remain will be the distinctions based on who each person truly is. There will be unity with distinctions. Just as many different kinds of trees may grow together in a forest, many different kinds of people will live in unity. The pine tree remains a pine; the ginkgo remains a ginkgo. In this way, the forest of humanity is recognized for what it is.

For the long term, Confucianism can teach us how to pull down attachments to religious forms. It can show people how to live as a genuine human, not merely as a sectarian religionist. If people were not waving flags of competing religions, there would be no reason to fight among religionists. When we can break out of our thick shells of religious forms, we will be able to meet each other as person to person. This does not mean religious forms must be re-

jected. But, rather than being trapped in them, we need to internalize and enjoy religious forms, as though we are eating delicious candies. If some people still feel a need to raise a religious flag, then that is alright. But if so, let us raise a flag proclaiming that no flag is needed.

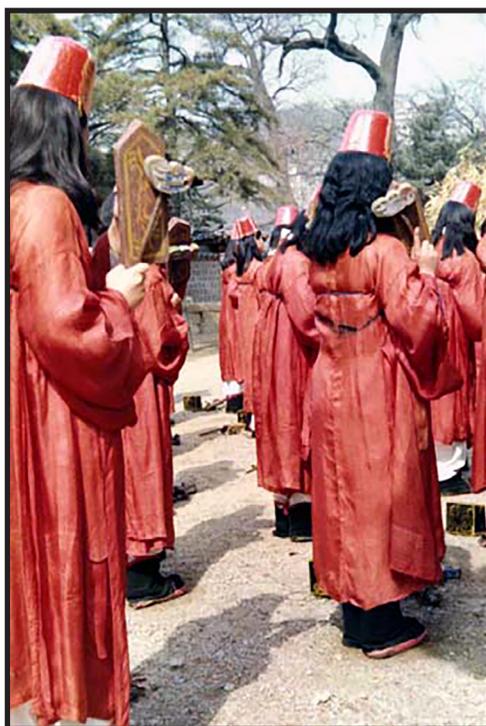
As my father said, the spirit of Master Il Bu's *Right Changes* is that no one should speak ill of others' religions, stick to one's own religious dogmas obstinately, or forcibly demand others to convert to one's faith. The correct way is to transcend sectarianism and to increase mutual understanding and cooperation among religions. Then all humanity can gather under the same flag of truth with togetherness, peace, and happiness. This is the compassionate society of the approaching new world.

Having said all this, I should add that it may still be worthwhile for both strategies of reviving Confucianism to be followed. The sectarians can strengthen Confucian organization to help preserve the forms of wisdom for posterity. But more fundamentally, the essence of wisdom needs to be preserved and divisiveness needs to disappear.

Figure 46
Dancers for the Ceremony
*Honoring Sages*¹⁵⁹

I offer twelve suggestions for the future direction of religions from the viewpoint of Confucianism. The emerging open world calls for a type of person, Confucian or otherwise, who is committed to maturing as a human being and to living in an open society.

1. Deepen one's religious mind and endeavor to become a mature person.
2. Speak carefully and speak little about transcendental existence and the other world of heaven and hell.



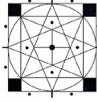
¹⁵⁹ Close-up of some of the 64 dancers who accompanied the springtime ceremony (*Seokjeon Daeje*) at Sungkyunkwan for honoring Confucius and other notable sages and scholars; 1977.

3. Spread the teachings of sages widely, but take it as childish to say that one's own religion is the best.
4. Comprehend the main point of one's own religion deeply and try to humbly understand the beliefs of others.
5. Recognize that large religious buildings and the power of religions have nothing to do with the original nature of religion.
6. Think that plain and simple meeting between human beings is more precious than the meeting between religions or in the name of religions.
7. Keep your original human shape and acknowledge that doctrines, robes, and forms of religions are nothing but empty shells.
8. Gradually reduce emphasis on the flags and signs of religions and pull them down as soon as possible.
9. Gradually reduce the size of the name plates of religions on religious buildings, leaving them no larger than that of a family's name on a house.
10. Understand that it is not good to attach religious beliefs to worldly desires and success.
11. First love neighbors, nations, and all humankind, before seeking the paradise of the heavenly other world.
12. Investigate and criticize issues of human rights throughout all countries in all directions, whether large or small, within one's own country and abroad, and keep a mind that is willing to be a martyr for the sake of upholding benevolence and righteousness.

Professor Lew Seung Kook promoted three principles with the same spirit in relation to society as a whole in the Charter for the Movement for a Bright Society.

1. We recognize that the dignity of the human being is the basis for the recovery of human rights for all people, beyond color, gender, age, religion, and other characteristics.
2. We are going to accomplish the creation of a beautiful, abundant, and valuable society by means of a spirit of good will and cooperative service.
3. We love the human family with a spirit of love toward our homeland and also with commitment to contribute to the peace of all humanity.

Eventually, in the open new world, today's doctrines will pass away. Every religion must change and change and change again. Religions must change because of the coming age. I envision that a new doctrine, soft and mild and beautiful, will arise. Community decisions will be made by committees of people who are full of benevolence and the courage of justice. There won't be any high religious authorities. There may be religious organizations, but they will be soft, organized only to help maintain order. Religious buildings are not useless; they can be helpful for people to gather. But the people in the buildings are what is important, not the buildings themselves. So all ideologies can be melded into the greater stream of Providence. In order for this to happen, someone has to be born and arise who can bring about integration for the world. The teaching must be wise, powerful, and persuasive. My vision of the future is only a dream. But from a dream may come ideals. And ideals can lead to reality.



8

The Trend of History Toward a New Open World

Three Stages of History

We can think broadly of world history as a process of development through three stages that form a trend of change from ancient closed societies to the present emergence of open societies. This is reflected in Fu Xi's Former Heaven of beginning civilization, through King Wen's Latter Heaven of growth, to Kim Il Bu's (1826-1898) Correct Changes period of completion.¹⁶⁰ From the standpoint of Il Bu's book, the *Right Changes*, King Wen's Latter Heaven has become a Former Heaven. The time of Correct Changes is now the new Latter Heaven in which there is a fruition of the seed established during the beginning period of Fu Xi. This is the phase of world history that we have entered.

Development from closed to open can be represented through the way Koreans count to ten by using one hand. We begin with an open palm, then fold the thumb onto the palm for one. Then each finger is folded down, one by one. This is a process of closing in. The numbers 1 through 5 represent beginning and begetting. Then, for number six, the little finger is extended up. The other fingers continue opening until the thumb also comes out. Finally, the entire hand is open. Number 10 is completely open. Coincidentally, the Korean word for 10 is *yeol*, which sounds the same as the word for 'open'. We are now in a historical phase of opening up.

The following diagram represents these three stages of world history. It is based on a banner composed by Professor Lew Seung Kook (1923-2011) in 2010. It was his final gift to the world before his death.

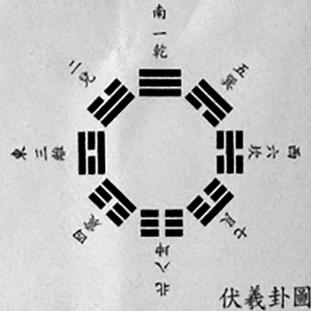
¹⁶⁰ Fu Xi is a legendary culture-founding hero credited with originating the early form of the *Yijing (Book of Changes)*. His arrangement of the eight trigrams is referred to as the Former or Earlier Heaven arrangement. King Wen (ca. 1231-1136 BCE) was a count (and posthumously titled king) of the Shang dynasty and was substantial to foundation of the Zhou dynasty. King Wen is credited with a later arrangement of the eight trigrams, called the Latter Heaven arrangement, as well as creating the system of combining the eight trigrams into 64 hexagrams (i.e. two trigrams placed together vertically) and adding judgments to each. Regarding Kim Il Bu, more information is in footnote 32 and chapters 5, 7, and 8.

人類文明的 歷史的 轉換斗 價值觀의 變遷

大韓民國學術院 會 員 哲學博士 柳 承 國
 成均館大學校 名譽教授

1. 人倫社會로써 東方社會(君主封建社會) 前近代社會(東洋的價值)

- | | |
|-----------|-------------|
| 1) 身分上下社會 | 1. 宗教中心社會 |
| 2) 縱的主從社會 | 2. 天尊時代 |
| 3) 抑陰尊陽社會 | 3. 義理社會 |
| | 4. 春·生의 播種期 |



2. 利益社會로써 西歐社會(民主共和制社會) 近代社會(西洋的價值)

- | | |
|-----------|-------------|
| 1) 大眾人權社會 | 1. 科學中心社會 |
| 2) 橫的平等社會 | 2. 地尊時代 |
| 3) 盛陰衰陽社會 | 3. 功利社會 |
| | 4. 夏·長의 成長期 |



3. 東西和合의 大同社會(人類世界化社會) 脫近代社會(世界的價值)

- | | |
|-----------|-------------|
| 1) 人類共同社會 | 1. 人間中心社會 |
| 2) 義利縱橫社會 | 2. 人尊時代 |
| 3) 調陽律陰社會 | 3. 利義雙全 |
| | 4. 秋·成의 圓熟期 |



Figure 47

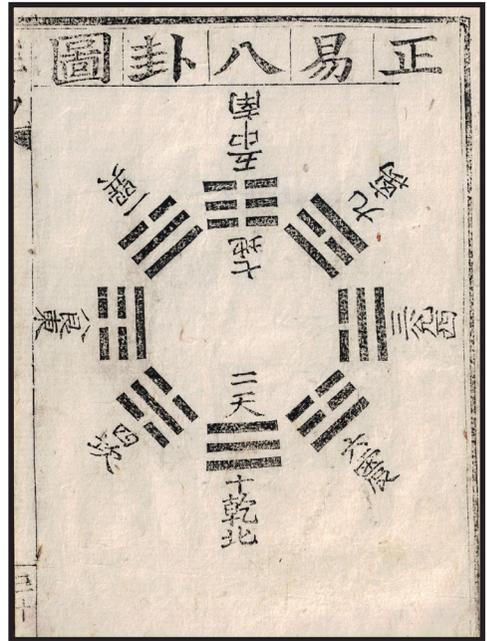
Professor Lew Seung Kook's Banner of Three Historical Stages¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ Lew Seung Kook, PhD, Professor Emeritus of Sungkyunkwan University and Member of the National Academy of Sciences, Republic of Korea. More information is in footnote 20.

On the right-side column of his original banner, there are three arrangements of trigrams representing stages of world history. First, at top, representing Pre-Modern Society, is the trigram arrangement by Fu Xi, which is the Earlier Heaven arrangement as found in the *Book of Changes*. Second, representing Modern Society, is the arrangement by King Wen, which in a broad sense is the Latter Heaven arrangement in the *Book of Changes*. Third, representing the emerging new age, is the trigram arrangement by Master Kim Il Bu, as found in the *Right Changes*. The third stage is the fruit of the growth of civilization. In the *Right Changes* arrangement of trigrams, all cosmic elements, as represented by the trigrams, are in complementary and harmonized relationship with each other. For example, the Heaven and Earth trigrams face each other, as in the Fu Xi Earlier Heaven arrangement, but they are in relation to each other like the trigrams in the Peace Hexagram rather than the Stagnation Hexagram, as will be explained.

Figure 48
Master Il Bu's 'Right Changes'
Diagram, Woodblock Printed Page

When you compare the three trigram arrangements, it is important to know that there is a difference in how to read the trigrams. In the first two arrangements (i.e. Earlier and Latter Heavens of the *Book of Changes*), you must imagine that you are in the center of the circle and you read the trigram lines from inside to outside. In other words, the inside line is the first line of each trigram. This is an experience of outward growth. In contrast, in order to read Master



Kim Il Bu's arrangement, you must expand your mind to include the whole diagram. You then read each line of the trigrams from the outside going in. So the outside line is the first line of each trigram. This is an experience of consciousness ripening.

HISTORICAL TRANSFORMATION OF HUMAN CIVILIZATIONS
AND CHANGING VIEWS ON VALUES

<i>Three Stages</i>	<i>Qualities of Each Stage</i>	<i>Values</i>
Pre-Modernity	<p>I. Eastern Society as Society of Human Relations (Feudal Society of Monarchy)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Society of Ranking by Above and Below 2. Vertical Society of Lords and Servants 3. Society of Lowering Yin and Elevating Yang 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Religion Centered Society 2. Age of Exalting Heaven 3. Society of Righteousness 4. Period of Planting Seeds, of Spring, and of Birth
Modernity, the Present	<p>II. Western Society as Society of Interest in Profit (Republican Society of Democracy)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Society of People and Human Rights 2. Horizontal Society of Equality 3. Society of Ascending Yin and Descending Yang 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Natural Sciences Focused Society 2. Age of Valuing the Earth 3. Age of Utility and Interest in Profit 4. Period of Summer and Growing
Post-Modernity, the Future	<p>III. Society of Grand Equality with Integration and Harmony Between East and West (Globalized Society of Humankind)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Common Society of Humankind 2. Integration of Righteousness and Interest, and, the Meeting of Vertical and Horizontal 3. Society of Harmonizing Yang and Yin 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Humanity Centered Society 2. Age of Exalting Humanity 3. Profit and Righteousness both Complete 4. Period of Maturing, Autumn, and Completion

Pre-Modernity

The *Book of Changes* shows the perspective of the ancient world, a time in history that hallowed yang and restricted yin.¹⁶² It maintained Heaven to be in the superior position in relation with Earth as Heaven's wife and partner. This first world had theocentric governments. This is represented by Hexagram 12, Stagnation (*pi*; *bi*), in which Heaven (three yang lines) stands above Earth (three yin lines). This is a relationship of stability but also stagnation.



Figure 49
Hexagram of Stagnation

In the context of Eastern societies of pre-modernity, worldview emphasized the importance of the quality of human relationships, such as based on benevolence. But this was a time of hierarchical monarchy and feudalism. Society was ranked by positions of higher and lower. Religion, or reverence for the sacred as being above human beings, was a central organizing principle. The king was understood to be connected with Heaven. That was the age of deferential filial piety and obedience to religious and political authorities. The highest ideals of Confucianism contained the seeds of human potential, but they were constrained by the hierarchical social context. Nonetheless, these seeds were planted. This period is like the season of spring, the birth of civilization. It is the historical starting point of civilization, like the time of a baby positioned head down as it comes out of the womb or like the situation of a seed just sprouting.

Modernity

Modernity is characterized by a predominant worldwide influence of Western society and values. Broadly speaking, this stage of history emphasizes the importance of human rights for all individuals and democracy. It challenges

¹⁶² For example, read Zhu Xi's discussion of meanings related to line 1 of the second hexagram (C: *Kun*, Complying) in the *Book of Changes*, which is composed of all yin lines, signifying Earth, in Adler (2020).

traditional hierarchies and forms of oppression. It champions equality among all people. It is a time in which the quality of yin has been ascending over the quality of yang, especially in the sense of women's rights, valuing the earth, and growing the power and influence of oppressed peoples. In this second stage, it is as though societies are children who have grown to be young adults who challenge the elders' ways. They rebel against their authorities and begin to open up the world. For example, the French Revolution and the US Declaration of Independence emphasized movement toward equality and this view has spread throughout the world. This second world of the present emphasizes materiocentric governments.

The approach to understanding the world has shifted from emphasis on the spiritual to a priority on the material. Many societies have become strongly shaped by the influences of natural sciences, materialistic philosophies, and rapid technological advances. Capitalism, based on concern for utilitarianism and profiteering, has grown across the world. Many traditions that have positive value are being destroyed. This stage is like the season of summer, with much heat and rapid growth. This stage contains the shoots of a newly emerging world.

In contrast to the first stage, characterized by the Hexagram of Stagnation, this stage, at least in its best qualities and its potential for the new world, is characterized by the Hexagram of Joining and Peace, number 11. In this hexagram, the Earth trigram stands above the Heaven trigram. The Peace hexagram signifies that Heaven has humbly come down below Earth. Earth has risen up above. Given these positions, there is a dynamic and harmonious interaction in which Earth settles downward and Heaven rises upward, so that they meet each other in Peace. The *Doctrine of the Mean* describes this as the equilibrium and harmony of Heaven and Earth in which all things have their place and everything is nourished.¹⁶³

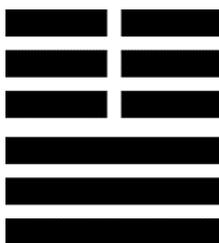


Figure 50
Hexagram of Peace

¹⁶³ Legge (1893b), *The Doctrine of the Mean*, chapter I, verse 5. MSC. For more on Confucian philosophy of harmony, read Li (2014).

At this time in history, the mode of relation represented by the Peace Hexagram is especially important. The challenge for our time is how to harmonize both Heavenly and Earthly aspects in the human being and in society. Therefore, Confucianism today should emphasize the harmonization of the essences of traditional and modern views.

The Meeting of East and West in Modernity. We are living in a time of dramatic encounters between tradition and modernity, a time of huge changes, a grand historical period. In the past, exchange between East and West was rare. Many intellectuals of the East were frightened about influences from the West. But modern Western science and democracy have provided a valuable shock to Eastern cultures, stimulating them to change and to explore new possibilities. This is a significant opportunity to evaluate tradition. But when tradition is evaluated, one should not make simplistic judgments. Rather, it is important to discern the relative merits of different aspects of tradition.

Today we confront a serious problem as traditional Korean values encounter modern concepts of democracy and science as imported from the West. Democracy cannot entirely substitute our traditional mode of life. Scientific development has brought a new pattern of life, but science is just science; it is not humanity. If we are not careful, abuses of science and technology might destroy the existence of human beings and the natural environment. Democracy, if distorted, could lead us into the confusion of relativism.

Now as we reflect on the situation of modern society, many things seem dark and bleak. Though many people are rich in comparison with ancient times, we cannot say that we are happier than in traditional society. In South Korean society, there are many troubles related to psychological stress, sense of competitiveness, gap between rich and poor, and excessive individualism and social fragmentation. On a global level, military and economic power has been ruling the world.

There is a crisis in modernity with two aspects. The first is conflict between wealthy people who own much and poor people who own little. Communism tried to solve this by defeating the rich. Capitalism tried to address this by developing economies. But the age of control by American and Soviet powers has gone. Soviet style communism has collapsed. American style capitalism is unstable due to global monetary crises and the rise of other economic powers. So there is an important question how humanity can solve the problem of owners versus non-owners.

The second aspect of this crisis is religious conflict. It is good for religions to serve society and spread messages of grace and caring. All religions do so.

But humanity has not been able to find harmony between religions. There is still much hostility and violence between people of different religions. The first kind of struggle is over materials belonging to the Earth. The second kind of struggle is between spiritual ideas belonging to Heaven.

However, we in the East must face the philosophical, religious, and scientific ideas of the West. No doubt it is a matter of importance to figure out how Eastern philosophy can accept the new thoughts and generate a new integrating system of thought and culture without losing its identity. For this reason, a quote from Master Il Bu (Kim Hang) indicates how we ought to construct our future civilization with an integrative quality of mind and culture: “Harmonizing yang and yin is the way of nature and the principle of the future world to come.”¹⁶⁴



Figure 51
*Yin/Yang Symbol on Entrance Gate
for Jo Gwang Jo's Memorial Shrine¹⁶⁵*

Thanks to the development of science and democracy, interaction between the East and West has become extensive. South Korea has passed into a new age within the context of interconnections among all the world's countries, industrialization, democracy, and information technology. The globe seems to be one village. Moreover, thanks to the modern virtues of science and democracy, there is a recovery of individuality which had been very weak in traditional East Asian societies. Without their influence, East Asian societies would have become anachronistic from a modern viewpoint.¹⁶⁶ Scientific discoveries and democracy have opened up the world and humanity cannot shut the door.

Several principles should guide this newly emerging Korean society. They are also instructive for the world as a whole. First, everyone should be able to enjoy and express their own personality. Second, righteousness and profit should be harmonized. Third, everyone should be able to live as a full human being. Fourth, the previous historical period's logic of oppression in which 'the strong eat the flesh of the weak' must be overcome. These are principles

¹⁶⁴ HKT.

¹⁶⁵ 1993. Symbol of the Great Ultimate (*taegeuk*) encompassing yang and yin. More information is in chapter 5.

¹⁶⁶ MSC.

that come from Confucian traditional wisdom, but they must be adapted to the emerging world situation.



Figure 52
*Gwanghwa Gate Viewed from Inside Gyeongbuk Palace with
Modern Government Building Behind¹⁶⁷*

The present world situation poses both great danger and great promise. There are dangers in uncritical acceptance of some features of modern Western values as well as holding rigidly to traditional ways of the East. The urgency of the current world situation makes the teachings of Confucianism important to consider anew. The teachings can remind people how to restore harmony with their true nature and to express their true nature in efforts to rectify the world situation.

During the Japanese occupation of Korea (1910-1945) and subsequent period of modernization, the continuity of the Confucian tradition was broken. People turned strongly to foreign and Western values and lifestyles. But now some people are beginning to understand that what is modern and Western is only half of the value perspective required for the new world. Although Confucian organizations have become weak, the wisdom of Confucianism continues. It is necessary to cull the wisdom of Confucianism in order to provide a vision

¹⁶⁷ 2006.

for modernity. If society only prepares its members in technical and economic activities, without human dignity and mental strength, it will become weak and endangered.

Need for Creative Engagement of East and West in Modernity. Nowadays, most people, even in South Korea, emphasize individuality as promoted in the West. Individuality is not bad. But without communality, people become isolated. Grains of sand cannot build anything. We need to have a glue to connect grains of sand together in order to build a house. Lately, the glue of community sometimes is thought to be a kind of bondage. However, we need both individuality and communality. We need flexible bonds without bondage.

This is like finding the right kind of belt to hold up one's pants. The Western style of belt is rigid. It constricts the stomach. In contrast, the traditional Korean style belt is a cloth rope that can be tied and then loosened or tightened according to need. That is the kind of flexible and adjustable bond for society that we need today.

Hard and soft must be combined, just like in the human body. The body is composed of hard bones and soft flesh and blood. Bones are hard and rigid—we need them to stand and sit and keep our form. Flesh and blood are soft and flexible. We need hard and soft to work together in order to move. It is valuable that the East learns the efficiency of the West. It is also valuable for the West to learn the grace of the East.¹⁶⁸

For example, America is representative of the potential of modernity for the emergence of a new world. Its culture is experimental and exploratory. It converges diverse influences. But it is excessively materialistic, leading to many social and environmental problems. If we deny either material or spiritual sides, then problems result. An overemphasis upon the soul may lead to neglecting the body and material needs, resulting in poor health for an individual and in poverty for a society. The opposite extreme, which is more common in modern societies, is throwing away the soul while craving for comfort and wealth. This mistake makes human life miserable, even for those who live in the midst of material plenty. Therefore, American materialism needs to converge with traditional Korean spirituality in order to establish a proper balance of values for the emerging new world.

¹⁶⁸ Here, Master Haengchon is referring to the positive insights and traditions of East Asian thought as presented in this and previous chapters.

Confucianism offers a way forward to establish the proper relation between material and spiritual needs. Confucianism regards human ethics and economy as a relationship between roots and branches. As the *Great Learning* says, virtues are roots, and goods are branches.¹⁶⁹ This puts emphasis more on human virtues than on materialistic pursuits. Our virtuous nature comes before material desires. But the relations of roots and branches are not dichotomous such as between rightness and wrongness. One should not be inclined to prefer roots and to give up branches. Confucianism does not disregard material civilization but rather grasps it positively as in the relations of roots and branches.¹⁷⁰

Materialism has been experimented as a way of life in modern societies for more than 100 years. This trend has gone to an extreme. Unfortunately, even though many people in modern society criticize Confucianism for the shadow side of its misapplication, political leaders nowadays still commonly emphasize the Ruler's Way of power and wealth. Those with sophisticated weapons have used their power to control others within their own societies and in other countries.

It is time for the tide of morality to rise again. Without morality, we cannot survive. Lack of morality leads to confusion in interpersonal and international relationships. Confucianism can make an important contribution to achieving a balance between the material and the spiritual and between private need and moral social responsibility, because its hallmark is the combination of idealism with practicality. Indeed, Confucianism makes the spiritual practical by guiding material aspects of life with spiritual values.

Confucius emphasized humanity over materialism. When humane virtue guides action, wealth is generated for the benefit of people. When this principle is distorted into a neglect of material needs, social progress and material advancement are obstructed. The real meaning of the *Great Learning* is that wealth (as the tip of a branch) cannot be more important than virtue; but it is not unimportant. Priority should be placed on virtue without neglecting wealth. This priority can correct the modern value confusion of materialism, while avoiding the common traditional mistake of neglecting material progress.

Although Confucius himself emphasized the importance of education and scholarship, he did not ignore the need to produce material things. Although Confucianism encourages the production of wealth, it recognizes that the noble qualities of the virtuous person cannot be created by wealth.

¹⁶⁹ This is a common metaphor in the *Great Learning*. In particular, read Legge (1893c), chapter X, verse 7.

¹⁷⁰ MSC.

Need for a New Understanding of Confucianism in Modernity. In order to deal with this problem, we must have a new understanding of the Confucian tradition. Confucianism itself contains elements related to democracy and science. Rather than breaking off traditional life and replacing it with modern values, we can make society more abundant by absorbing what is good about tradition and modernity. Then we can seek new development.

For example, the principles of the community compact system¹⁷¹ (*xiangyue*; *hyangyak*) should be reinterpreted and creatively applied to enhance propriety in contemporary social relations. Also, the Way of genuine scholars (*ru*; *seon-bi*) who are dedicated to a life of continuous learning and public service should be revitalized.



Figure 53
*Scholar Guardian Statue at Tomb
of Jeong Mong Ju*¹⁷²

The timeless and constant values of the Five Human Relations that come from the teachings of Mencius and the *Book of History* need to be reinterpreted for the new age. For example, family relations need to be reconstructed based on harmony between members of couples, between parents and children, older parents and adult children, and between grandparents and grandchildren.

The Four Rites of propriety that mark important times of life transition (i.e. birth, marriage, death, and honoring ancestors) should be renovated in order to help people devel-

op fully and to pass through critical life cycle stages smoothly. This renovation should manifest the true meaning of these rites, as an expression of humane heartedness, in a manner appropriate to the 21st century. Renovation does not

¹⁷¹ More information is in chapter 6.

¹⁷² 2009.

mean a literal restoration of anachronistic forms. In general, the spiritual must be respected and elevated, without neglecting the physical.

In contemporary times, the character of the genuine scholar should not be limited only to a traditional scholar social class. Farmers, merchants, teachers, industrialists, politicians, high technology experts, indeed all people, should have the noble character of a scholar. Restrictive social rules and roles can be overcome by benevolence. This is Confucian humanism. Likewise, the idea of the Buddha nature of all human beings means that there is an essential equality that transcends the social restrictions of old times.

Post-Modernity: Emergence of an Open New World

We are at a time of history in which a new world is emerging, a new world that brings to fruition the positive aspects of the prior two stages. This will be the fulfillment of the ideal from the ancient *Book of Rites* of the Society of Grand Equality in which everyone is cared for. It can also be considered as a fulfillment of the ancient ideal of Dangun, the Korean culture founder. Humanity can fulfill its potential as mediator and joiner of Heaven and Earth.

This will be a time of integration and harmony between the best aspects of East and West within a globalized interconnected society of all humankind. This new world will integrate the Confucian value of priority on righteousness with the importance of practical interests, profits, and benefits so that material and technological progress is applied to the benefit of all peoples and the planet. This new world will join the positive aspects of vertical relations, such as respect, with the positive aspects of horizontal relations, such as democracy and human rights. This will be the world society that harmonizes yang and yin, neither any longer oppressing the other. Humanity will be exalted in the sense of embracing all peoples in a spirit of benevolence and mutual caring. The third new emerging world will be the age of genuine human beings (*renlei; ingan*). This will be like the season of autumn in which human civilization has matured and reached its potential.

Master Il Bu described the emerging new era as a transformed world. According to the *Right Changes*, in terms of nature, although it is not easy to take this literally, the rotation of sun and moon will alter in such a way as to create a year of exactly 360 days composed of twelve months with exactly 30 days each. This idea represents a harmonization of all elements of nature. In terms of human development, human beings reach completion. The utmost center of the universe meets the empty nucleus of the human soul. Filial piety and love for each other as brothers and sisters are fulfilled everywhere. All racial inequalities and prejudices are transcended. Social welfare flourishes, differenc-

es of wealth are leveled, there are equal human rights for all, men and women respect and love each other, and freedom and love prevail. This is the ideal of the Central Ultimate (皇極, *huangji* / 황극, *hwanggeuk*).¹⁷³

Since the third stage is a future possibility just beginning to emerge, it is not possible to forecast exactly what this will be or how it will come about. But there are some current trends that are suggestive. When I look carefully at human history, I see very favorable trends. For example, the USA became a democratic leader in the world even though its history includes oppression of Indigenous peoples, slavery, racism, and many other problems. America holds more promise for bringing world peace than any other country, because it has joined together so many varieties of people. For example, Obama's election to the presidency of the United States twice was a miracle of overcoming racism. Yes, there continues to be much sickness, injustice, and crisis in the United States and in the world. But these can be changed. I have hopefulness.

The Arab uprisings of 2011 in many countries in the Middle East were significant. They are indicative that this is the period of history when all dictators in the world are being overthrown. The development of the European Union in recent history shows the trend toward international connections and convergences. The current economic crisis among countries in the European union is just a difficult phase of development. It is noteworthy that many young people did not support the 2016 vote in the United Kingdom to leave the European Union. There are always ups and downs of development. Eventually, this will work out. Then, perhaps an Asian Union will develop. But this could take a long time. The United Nations is a good step in the right direction for the future of the world. But the UN has countries represented with veto rights and differential influence of certain nations. We need a new global approach to government representing all individual countries with the same rights. Although there is not yet any ideal democracy in the world, perhaps in the future, all countries can come together as one in a genuinely democratic world. I am hopeful that soon the time is coming when the boundaries of all nations will be transcended. Definitely, absolutely!

Yet it is important to be realistic. Until this process is complete, the powerful people who want to sustain the remains of the former world will make much trouble, trying to hold on to old past ways. This will continue to result in conflicts between religions, races, and northern and southern hemispheres.

¹⁷³ This paragraph is paraphrased from Master Haengchon and from his father's article: Yi Jeong Ho (1978).

During such times of great change, there could be an increase of natural disasters, such as floods, earthquakes, or the outbreak of deadly diseases.

This time of major transition poses a danger for all countries. There will be many setbacks and struggles. But human beings will overcome, just as our ancestors for many generations before have done through even greater disasters, such as the ice age. In the future, with the fulfillment of the third stage, the world will be one.

If we try to imagine beyond this third stage, perhaps it will be the winter of civilization. Then we may rest, reflecting back on the past life of humanity.

The Perennial and Contemporary Challenge

Throughout the history of humankind, people searched for the true meaning of life. However, in actuality, the human being is characterized by insufficiency, always left with experiences of right and wrong, merits and demerits. One must be modest before truth. Today, the human race is still living in a world of disintegration. If we continuously search for the true meaning of humanity and justice in order to guide our living, then we need to newly understand the teachings of Confucius as a master teacher of humanity. In this respect, it is required for everyone in current times to possess the virtue that was required for the leaders of the past. It is necessary for everyone, universally, to become a person of virtue.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁴ SH.

APPENDIX A
GLOSSARY AND TRANSLITERATION GUIDE

	KEY CONCEPTS	
English	Chinese	Korean
Ancestral honoring ceremony	祭祀, jisi	제사, jesa
Appropriateness	禮, li	예, ye
Benevolence (also humanity)	仁, ren	인, in
Central Ultimate	皇極, huangji	황극, hwanggeuk
Community compact	鄉約, xiang yue	향약, hyangyak
Courage	勇, yong	용, yong
Daoism	道家, daoja	도가, doga
Dao Mind (Mind of the Way)	道心, daoxin	도심, dosim
Drum, Korean, hourglass shaped	not applicable	장구, janggu
Earlier (Former) Heaven	先天, xiantian	선천, seoncheon
Earth	地, di	지, ji
Examination for government service	科舉, keju	과거, gwageo
Filial piety	孝, xiao	효, hyo
Five elements (i.e. wood, fire, earth, metal, water)	五行, wuxing	오행, ohaeng
Five Relations	五倫, wulun	오륜, oryun
Four Beginnings	四端, siduan	사단, sadan
Four noble plants (literally, four noble persons)	四君子, sijunzi	사군자, sagunja
Four rites	四禮, sili	사례, sarye
Genuine Human Being	人類, renlei	인간, ingan
Gong, small Korean brass	not applicable	팽과리, kkwaenggwari
Grand Equality	大同, datong	대동, daedong
Great person	大人, daren	대인, daein
Great Ultimate	太極, taiji	태극, taeguk

Heaven	天, tian	천, cheon
Heavenly ordinance (will)	天命, tianming	천명, cheonmyeong
Heavenly Way	天道, tiandao	천도, cheondo
Hexagram	重卦, zhonggua	중괘, junggwae
Hexagram line	爻, yao	효, hyo
Humanity (also, genuine human being, benevolence)	仁, ren	인, in
Human Mind	人心, renxin	인심, insim
Human Ultimate	人極, renji	인극, ingeuk
Hwarang Do	花郎道, hualangdao	화랑도, hwarangdo
Justice	正義, zhengyi	정의, jeongui
Kingly Way	王道, wangdao	왕도, wangdo
Latter Heaven	后天, houtian	후천, hucheon
Legalism	法家, fajia	법가, beopga
Limitless Ultimate	無極, wuji	무극, mugeuk
Maitreya Buddha (from Sanskrit)	彌勒佛, milefo	미륵불, mireukbul
Flowing Force/Vital Energy	氣, qi	기, gi
Mentor or life guide (title of respect)	not applicable	스승님, seuseungnim
Mind (heart)	心, xin	심, sim
Mindfulness	敬, jing	경, gyeong
Mind of the Way	道心, daoxin	도심, dosim
Mind to mind transmission	以心傳心, yixinchuanxin	이심전심, isimjeonsim
Mountain sage (literally, spiritual sage)	神仙, shenxian	신선, sinseon
Noble-minded person (also Superior person)	君子, junzi	군자, gunja
Person of virtue (or benevolence)	仁者, renzhe	인자,inja
Petty (i.e. small-minded) person	小人, xiaoren	소인, soin
Principle	理, li	리, ri
Propriety, ritual	禮, li	예, ye

Reciprocity	恕, shu	서, seo
Rectification of names	正名, zheng ming	정명, jeong myeong
Rice wine (i.e. Korean cloudy rice wine)	not applicable	막걸리, makgeolri
Righteousness	義, yi	의, ui
Ruler's (Despot's) Way	霸道, badao	패도, paedo
Sage	聖人, shengren	성인, seongin
Sage king	聖王, shengwang	성왕, seongwang
Scholar	儒, ru	선비, seonbi
Stagnation (i.e. name of a hexagram)	否, pi	비, bi
Superior (i.e. noble-minded) person	君子, junzi	군자, gunja
The Above	上, shang	상, sang
Ten (i.e. the Korean number)	十, shi	열, yeol
Timeliness	時中, shizhong	시중, sijung
Today	今天, jintian	오늘, oneul
Trigram	單卦, dangua	단괘, dangwae
Trust	信, xin	신, sin
Uprightness	直, zhi	직, jik
Virtue	德, de	덕, deok
Way	道, dao	도, do
Way of Wind and Stream	風流道, fengliudao	풍류도, pungryudo
Wisdom	智, zhi	지, ji
Worthy (i.e. a person of worthy character)	賢者, xianzhe	현자, hyeonja
Yang	陽, yang	양, yang
Yin	陰, yin	음, eum

	NAMES OF CHINESE PERSONS	
English	Chinese	Korean
Cheng Yi	程頤, Cheng Yi	정이, Jeong I
Confucius	孔子, Kong Zi	공자, Gong Ja
Fu Xi	伏羲, Fu Xi	복희, Bok Hui
Gao Chai	高柴, Gao Chai	고시, Go Si
Lao Zi	老子, Lao Zi	노자, No Ja
Mencius	孟子, Meng Zi	맹자, Maeng Ja
Shun	舜, Shun	순, Sun
Wang Yang Ming	王陽明, Wang Yang Ming	왕양명, Wang Yang Myeong
Wen (King)	文王, Wen Wang	문왕, Mun Wang
Yao	堯, Yao	요, Yo
Yen Hui	顏回, Yan Hui	안회, An Hoe
Zhu Xi	朱熹, Zhu Xi	주희, Ju Hui
Zhuang Zi	莊子, Zhuang Zi	장자, Jang Ja

	NAMES OF KOREAN PERSONS		
English	Korean	Chinese Characters	
Choi Chi Won	최치원, Choe Chi Won	崔致遠	
Chinul	지눌, Jinul	知訥	
Choi Ik Hyun	최익현, Choe Ik Hyeon	崔益鉉	
Dangun	단군, Dangun	檀君	
Haengchon (also Yi Dong Jun)	행춘, Haengchon	杏邨	
Hwanin	환인, Hwan In	桓因	
Hwanung	환웅, Hwan Ung	桓雄	
Jeong Do Jun	정도전, Jeong Do Jeon	鄭道傳	
Jeong Jae Du	정제두, Jeong Je Du	鄭齊斗	
Jeong Mong Ju	정몽주, Jeong Mong Ju	鄭夢周	
Jo Gwang Jo	조광조, Jo Gwang Jo	趙光祖	
Lew Seung Kook	류승국, Ryu Seung Guk	柳承國	
Ryu In Suk	류인석, Ryu In Seok	柳麟錫	
Ryu Yeong Mo	류영모, Ryu Yeong Mo	柳永模	
Sejong, Great King	세종대왕, Sejongdae-wang	世宗大王	
Wonhyo	원효, Weonhyo	元曉	
Yi Dong Jun	이동준, Yi Dong Jun	李東俊	
Yi Hang Ro	이항로, Yi Hang Ro	李恒老	
Yi Hwang (Toegye)	이황(퇴계), I Hwang (Toegye)	李滉(退溪)	
Yi I (Yulgok)	이이(율곡), Yi I (Yulgok)	李珣(栗谷)	
Yi Jeong Ho	이정호, Yi Jeong Ho	李正浩	
Yi Saek	이색, Yi Saek	李穡	
Yi Song Gye	이성계, Yi Seong Gye	李成桂	

	KOREAN DYNASTIES	
English	Korean	Chinese
Go Joseon	고조선, Go Joseon	古朝鮮, Guchaoxian
Silla	신라, Sinra	新羅, Xinluo
Goguryeo	고구려, Goguryeo	高句麗, Gaogouli
Baekje	백제, Baekje	百濟, Baiji
Goryeo	고려, Goryeo	高麗, Gaoli
Joseon (aka Yi dynasty)	조선, Joseon	朝鮮, Chaoxian

	CONFUCIAN TEXTS	
English	Chinese	Korean
Analects of Confucius	論語, lunyu	논어, noneo
Book of Changes	易經, yijing	역경, yeokgyeong
Book of History	書經, shujing	서경, seogyeong
Book of Mencius	孟子, mengzi	맹자, maengja
Book of Poetry	詩經, shijing	시경, sigyeong
Book of Rites	禮記, liji	예기, yegi
Doctrine of the Mean	中庸, zhongyong	중용, jungyong
Great Learning	大學, daxue	대학, daehak
Phrases for Self-Cautioning	自警文, zijingwen	자경문, jageongmun
Reflections on Things at Hand	近思錄, jinsilu	근사록, geunsarok
Right Changes	正易, zhengyi	정역, jeongyeok
Right Sounds to Educate the People	訓民正音, xunminzhengyin	훈민정음, hunmin-jeongeum
Small (Elementary) Learning	小學, xiaoxue	소학, sohak
Spring and Autumn Annals	春秋, chunqiu	춘추, chunchu
The Records of Self Reflection	自省錄, zixinglu	자성록, jaseongrok

APPENDIX B
HAENGCHON'S LECTURE MANUSCRIPTS
CITED IN TEXT¹⁷⁵

Abbreviation

Unpublished English Lectures

- CIH *Discovering the Confucian Image of Humanity*, 4/3/1997, Department of Religious Studies, The University of Kansas, USA.
- CIJ *The Confucian Idea of Justice and its Influence on Korean Society: Especially the Viewpoint of Neo-Confucianism*, 10/14/1983, Department of Philosophy, University of Rhode Island, USA.
- HKT *Methodological Reflection on the History of Korean Thoughts and the Spirit of Integration*, 10/2010, The 4th Hanshan Temple Culture Forum, Hanshan Temple Culture Research Institute, Suzhou, China.
- MSC *Modern Society and Confucianism*, 8/6/1994, Center for East Asian Studies, The University of Kansas, USA and Kansas Zen Center, Lawrence, Kansas, USA.
- SH *Spirit of Humanity and Social Justice of Confucius*, 2/15/2007, The School of Social Welfare, The University of Kansas, USA.

Published English Materials (Brief Paraphrased Excerpts Used)

- HCKC *A Study on the Historical Consciousness of the 16th Century Korean Neo-Confucianists*, PhD Dissertation with English Abstract, Sungkyunkwan University, Seoul, Korea, 1975. Dissertation revised and published as: *16세기 한국 성리학파의 철학사상과 역사의식 (16segi hanguk seongrihakpaui cheolhaksasanggwa yeoksauisik) / The Philosophical Thoughts and Historic Sense of the 16th Century Korean Neo-Confucians*, Seoul: Simsan Publishing Co., 2007.
- KSCKA King Sejong's Creation of the Korean Alphabet and Neo-Confucian Philosophy, *Academia*, The English Literary Society, Sungkyunkwan University, Seoul, Korea, 1998.

¹⁷⁵ Master Haengchon used his legal name (Yi Dong Jun) as author in each case. These lectures were presented in multiple venues at various times. I list the date of the version used for this book.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Edward R. Canda, PhD, is Professor Emeritus in the School of Social Welfare at the University of Kansas (KU) in Lawrence, Kansas, USA. Prior to retirement, he was on the faculty at KU from 1989 to 2019 and at the University of Iowa for three years earlier. Dr. Canda was also a Courtesy Professor of Religious Studies and a Member of the Center for East Asian Studies at KU for many years. He was a Fulbright Scholar and Graduate Fellow of East Asian Philosophy (Sungkyunkwan University, Seoul, 1976-77) and has an M.A. in Religious Studies (University of Denver, 1979) and MSW and PhD degrees in social work (The Ohio State University, 1982 and 1986). Dr. Canda's work addresses connections between cultural diversity, spirituality, and transience in relation to social service, health, and mental health. In 2013, he received the Council on Social Work Education's Significant Lifetime Achievement Award for innovations on spirituality through scholarship and education.

For more than 40 years, Professor Canda has been exploring insights from East Asian philosophy for social welfare. He has been a Visiting Researcher or Professor in South Korea at Sungkyunkwan University and the Academy for Korean Studies and in Japan at Ritsumeikan, Doshisha, and Kansai Universities. Dr. Canda has more than 200 publications and has conducted about 240 presentations in the United States and in many other countries, especially in East Asia and Central Europe. His most widely cited book is *Spiritual Diversity in Social Work Practice: The Heart of Helping* (3rd edition: Canda, Furman, & Canda, 2020, New York: Oxford University Press).

The Way of Humanity presents a Confucian vision for personal and social transformation intended to bring about a worldwide social order of harmony, dignity, and justice for all peoples, beyond divisive sectarianism and nationalism. It is based on ideals for human flourishing gleaned from Confucian and Neo-Confucian thought as distilled by a highly respected elder philosopher in South Korea, Yi Dong Jun, PhD (Haengchon, literary name). He is Professor Emeritus of the College of Confucian Studies and Eastern Philosophy at Sungkyunkwan University in Seoul.

The Way of Humanity is the first detailed presentation of a contemporary Korean philosopher's perspective on Confucianism as grounded in daily life, its implications for personal spiritual development, and its potential to contribute to world development. The book holistically presents Master Haengchon's insights through vivid stories, philosophical essays, numerous illustrations, audio recordings of Confucian chanting, and recommendations for further reading.

The author, Edward R. Canda, PhD, is Professor Emeritus in the University of Kansas School of Social Welfare. Dr. Canda has been exploring connections between Confucian philosophy and contemporary social welfare for more than 40 years under the guidance of Master Haengchon. In 2013, the Council on Social Work Education conferred Dr. Canda with the Significant Lifetime Achievement in Social Work Education Award for his prolific and trailblazing work on the role of religion and spirituality in human development.

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