

1

Ancient Chinese Ethics and Education

Charlene Tan

Introduction

The words “ethics” (伦理 *lunli*) and “morality” (道德 *daode*) do not appear in ancient Chinese vocabulary. But this does not mean that normative considerations are unimportant to the Chinese in antiquity. On the contrary, a perennial concern of Chinese thinkers and educators in classical times was to identify and propagate *dao* (道 Way) – a shared vision of human excellence to guide humanity on what is true and false.¹ This chapter explores the salient characteristics of ancient Chinese ethics and their enduring relevance on educational thought and practice. Centering on the two influential indigenous philosophies in China – Confucianism and Daoism – this essay analyses the concept of virtue (*de* 德) in the Chinese classics. The first part of the chapter provides a brief introduction to ancient Chinese philosophical traditions. The next section expounds on the notion of virtue from Confucian and Daoist perspectives. The last section highlights the major educational implications from our elucidation of ancient Chinese ethics.

Ancient Chinese Philosophical Traditions

Ancient Chinese philosophical traditions are comprised of many schools of thought, proponents, historical developments, and sociocultural systems. The two leading and impactful indigenous philosophies since the Zhou dynasty (1046–256 BCE) in China are Confucianism and Daoism. These two “complement each other, running side by side like two powerful streams through all later Chinese thought and literature.”² It is therefore instructive to give a brief

¹ Antonio S. Cua, *Ethical Argumentation: A Study of Hsun Tzu's Moral Epistemology* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985); Charlene Tan, *Confucian Philosophy for Contemporary Education* (London: Routledge, 2020).

² W. M. Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom, *Sources of Chinese Tradition: From Earliest Times to 1600*, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 77.

introduction to these two philosophical traditions before we discuss ancient Chinese ethics.

Confucianism, as indicated by its name, is closely identified with Confucius (孔子 *Kongzi*) (551–479 BCE), whose teachings and conduct are documented in a Chinese classic known as the *Analects* (论语 *Lunyu*). But it is important to clarify that Confucius is not the founder of Confucianism. Rather, Confucianism, as a cultural and intellectual system, predated Confucius.³ The Chinese equivalent of Confucianism is *ru*xue 儒学, which means “the study of *ru*.” The *ru*, whose membership included Confucius, are learned persons and facilitators of rituals for the aristocrats in traditional China.⁴ Confucius’ ingenuity lies in expanding the knowledge and expertise of *ru* by adding novel elements to them. From the time of Confucius, Confucianism has spread to other parts of East Asia, framing the mental models and lifestyles of Chinese over the centuries. Rather than a monolithic ideology, Confucianism is more appropriately described as “a worldview, a social ethic, a political ideology, a scholarly tradition, and a way of life.”⁵

Besides Confucianism, Daoism is the other native philosophical tradition that has molded the thinking, value systems, and behaviors of the Chinese for millennia. The term “Daoism” (道家 *Dao Jia*), literally, “the school of *dao*,” was coined in China in the second century BCE. But its philosophical thought was already known by the populace as “the teaching of Laozi and Zhuangzi.”⁶ Laozi 老子, who lived during the sixth century BCE, and Zhuangzi 庄子, who lived during the fourth century BCE, are the two preeminent Daoist thinkers. They are also the authors of two seminal Daoist texts, *Daodejing* 道德经 and *Zhuangzi* 庄子, respectively. Unlike Confucius where much has been written about his life – although not everything that has been documented is reliable – relatively little is known about Laozi and Zhuangzi. Consequently, there are also doubts and controversies over the authorship of the before-mentioned Daoist classics. The general consensus is that *Daodejing* and *Zhuangzi* were probably written not only by Laozi and Zhuangzi, but also by several unknown authors over a period of time.⁷ Hence this chapter shall use “Laozi” and “Zhuangzi” throughout the discussion to refer to the writers of the two texts in general.

Despite their different and even competing doctrines, Confucianism and Daoism are united in placing ethics at the heart of their teaching and practice. A common mission is to provide a *dao* 道 or Way to guide the general population to achieve some moral good, such as social harmony or personal contentment.⁸

³ Xinzhong Yao, *An Introduction to Confucianism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁴ John Knoblock, *Xunzi: A Translation and Study of the Complete Works*, vol. 1 (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988); Eric L. Hutton, *Xunzi: The Complete Text* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014); Charlene Tan, “A Confucian Perspective of Self-Cultivation in Learning: Its Implications for Self-Directed Learning,” *Journal of Adult & Continuing Education* 23, no. 2 (2017): 250–262.

⁵ Wei-ming Tu, “Confucius and Confucianism,” in *Confucianism and the Family*, ed. Walter H. Slote and George A. DeVos (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), 3.

⁶ De Bary and Bloom, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*.

⁷ Angus C. Graham, *How Much of Chuang Tzu Did Chuang Tzu Write?* (Singapore: Institute of East Asian Philosophies, 1986); Charlene Tan, “Revisiting Donald Schön’s Notion of Reflective Practice: A Daoist Interpretation,” *Reflective Practice* 21, no. 5 (2020): 686–698.

⁸ Brook Ziporyn, *Zhuangzi: The Essential Writings with Selections from Traditional Commentaries* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2009).

Consistent with the emphasis on morality, the notion of learning carries an unmistakable ethical import for both Confucianism and Daoism. Confucian learning is essentially about “moral striving”⁹ or moral self-cultivation, which is “a gradual process of building up one’s character by making oneself receptive to the symbolic resources of one’s own culture and responsive to the sharable values of one’s own society.”¹⁰ Likewise, Laozi and Zhuang spoke out against man-made and authoritarian laws that oppress the masses and diminish human well-being. They propose instead a form of learning where one empties one’s ego and obtains moral power by developing one’s nature or innate disposition.¹¹

Having provided the background information on ancient Chinese philosophical traditions, the next section expounds the concept of virtue in Confucianism and Daoism. The attention is on the views of Confucius in the Confucian traditions, and the ideas of Laozi and Zhuangzi for Daoist traditions.

The Concept of Virtue in Confucianism and Daoism

The Notion of Virtue in Ancient China

The Chinese word for virtue is *de* 德, which has also been rendered variously as “moral excellence,” “ethical nature,” “spiritual powers,” “power imparted from *dao*,” “moral force,” “the powers native to beings and things,” and “virtus,” among other terms, in the Chinese traditions.¹² The etymology of *de* informs us that virtue revolves around two broad components: moral excellence and moral influence.

First, virtue is historically tethered to the ideal of *moral excellence*. The oracle bones, which were used for divination in ancient China, depict *de* as a person walking on a straight path. This illustrates a morally excellent person who is true and uncrooked.¹³ Such a person possesses *de* as a form of “power” within oneself, similar to the Latin meaning of *virtus*, which points to a thing’s intrinsic and distinctive character.¹⁴ It needs to be added that *de* as moral excellence is not about individualistic achievement. Rather, *de* has an inherent interpersonal aspect, which is illuminated through the quality of *moral influence*. *De* in early Shang dynasty designated the charismatic power given to a ruler by heaven (天 *tian*) or ancestral spirits.¹⁵ Describing *de* as “Royal Virtue,” Ivanhoe and Van Norden note that this spiritual power validates the legitimate rule of the leader, enabling one to gain the trust of followers in a natural way.¹⁶ This is achieved by the ruler exerting a moral power and charismatic attraction over others, leading

⁹ Jin Li, “The Core of Confucian Learning,” *American Psychologist* 58 (2003): 147.

¹⁰ Tu Weiming, *Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), 68.

¹¹ Knoblock, *Xunzi*.

¹² David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, *Thinking through Confucius* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987).

¹³ Roger T. Ames, *Confucian Role Ethics: A Vocabulary* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2011).

¹⁴ Edward Slingerland, *Confucius. Analects with Selections from Traditional Commentaries* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2003).

¹⁵ Slingerland, *Confucius*.

¹⁶ Phillip J. Ivanhoe and Bryan W. Van Norden, eds., *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2001).

to the ethical transformation of the subjects.¹⁷ Put otherwise, the moral influence of a sovereign produces patterns of deference from the people, who are inspired to emulate the leader's way of behaving.¹⁸

To sum up this portion, *de* in ancient Chinese traditions denotes the supreme moral quality and impact of individuals, particularly political leaders. Virtue describes "the *acquired excellence* of human beings and the *attendant influence* that such an achievement brings with it."¹⁹ It follows that *de*, from an ancient Chinese perspective, is necessarily interpersonal and other-regarding. The next section elaborates on the two components of *de* – moral excellence and moral influence – by examining it from the Confucian and Daoist viewpoints, respectively.

Virtue in Confucianism

This section gives details on a Confucian interpretation of virtue by turning to the thought of Confucius as recorded in the *Analects*. Confucius' views on virtue are summarized through two main ideas: the exaltation of virtue, and the ethical charisma of exemplary persons.

Moral Excellence through Exalting Virtue

First, Confucius stresses the importance of exalting virtue, as noted in the following passage from the *Analects* 12.10:²⁰

Zizhang asked about the exaltation of virtue and the recognition of misguided judgement.

The Master said, "Make it your guiding principle to do your best for others and to be trustworthy in what you say, and move yourself to where rightness is, then you will be exalting virtue."

The expression "exaltation of virtue" (崇德 *chongde*), also translated as the "accumulation of excellence,"²¹ is the Confucian idea of self-cultivation (修身 *xiushen*). The idea here is to value and acquire moral excellence by developing one's character and demonstrating one's virtues in everyday life, so that one overcomes misguided decisions. Three moral qualities for the exaltation of virtue are singled out by Confucius in the above passage: doing one's best, being trustworthy, and doing what is right. It is helpful to shed light on each of them.

First, doing one's best (忠 *zhong*) is about the disposition of whole-heartedness, sincerity, enthusiasm, and steadfastness – the basic ingredients for one to cultivate moral excellence. This character trait is coupled with two other indispensable attributes that spur a person on to perform social roles and navigate

¹⁷ Daniel K. Gardner, *The Four Books: The Basic Teachings of the Later Confucian Tradition* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2007).

¹⁸ Ames, *Confucian Role Ethics*. ¹⁹ Ames, *Confucian Role Ethics*, 208 (emphasis added).

²⁰ All citations are taken from this text and adapted from D. C. Lau, *Confucius: The Analects* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1997).

²¹ Roger T. Ames and Henry Rosemont, *The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1998).

human relationships. The characteristic of trustworthiness (信 *xin*) is about making good on one's word, which ensures that such a person is reliable and conscientious in carrying out one's duties and obligations. It is noteworthy that trustworthiness, for Confucius, does not mean or imply that one has to keep one's word in a naïve or unthinking manner. Rather, trustworthiness is complemented by rightness (义 *yi*) or "appropriateness," which is the third moral quality.

Yi involves the exercise of discretion and judgment based on particular circumstances. Such a person avoids poorly formulated judgments by creating personal meaning and value.²² *Yi*, which is essentially Confucian wisdom, approximates Aristotelian *phronesis* as both ideas are about ethics-based and situation-centered reasoning.²³ Confucius prizes *yi* by averring that this is what makes a person worthy of emulation. In his words, "In one's dealings with the world the exemplary person is not invariably for or against anything; such a person is on the side of what is *yi*" (4.10, also see 4.16, 17.23). The *Analects* is replete with instances of *yi* in daily life, such as conversing with someone (10.2, 10.15), receiving gifts (10.23), traveling (10.26), and participating in social events (10.3, 10.4). Confucius gives the following advice on whether, when, and how one should communicate with another person:

To fail to speak to a person who is capable of benefiting is to let a person go to waste. To speak to a person who is incapable of benefiting is to let one's words go to waste. A wise person lets neither persons nor words go to waste.

(15.8)

It is clear from the above passage that *yi* is needed to help a person to assess the readiness of the other person and make the correct judgment according to the evolving circumstances. Bringing together the three moral qualities, a person upholds virtue by making good on their word wholeheartedly and wisely.

It is evident that the exaltation of virtue is not a solitary endeavor but a communal one. Confucius observes that "virtue never stands alone; it is bound to have neighbours" (4.25); the "neighbours" in question are like-minded friends (1.1) who are "straight, trustworthy in word and well-informed" (16.4). One becomes virtuous by carrying out one's duty and obligation in accordance with one's roles and positions in society.²⁴ The Confucian accumulation of virtue shows up collective ethics, ethos, and experiences: as one gives of oneself by serving others, one stores up moral excellence concomitantly.²⁵

Moral Influence through the Ethical Charisma of Exemplary Persons

Besides the exaltation of virtue, Confucius also underscores the ethical charisma of exemplary persons. Ethical charisma refers to a capacity to attract, impact, and inspire others because of one's moral character.²⁶ Undergirded by the principle of equality, moral charisma is not restricted to an elite group such as kings and aristocrats, and is available to anyone who invests in cultivating

²² Hall and Ames, *Thinking through Confucius*. ²³ Slingerland, *Confucius*. ²⁴ Cua, *Ethical Argumentation*.

²⁵ Ames, *Confucian Role Ethics*. ²⁶ Ivanhoe and Van Norden, *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*.

oneself. A person who succeeds in doing so is known as a *junzi* (君子 exemplary person), as taught by Confucius:

The virtue of the exemplary person (*junzi*) is like wind; the virtue of the small person is like grass. Let the wind blow over the grass and it is sure to bend.
(12.19)

Here Confucius makes a direct link between the virtue of an exemplary person and that of a “small person” (小人 *xiaoren*). What sets an exemplary person apart from a small person is not social status or other background factors but virtue. An exemplary person, as Confucius puts it, “reveres virtue” (14.5). This point is affirmed in the above passage that likens the virtue of an exemplary person to wind that is overpowering and irresistible. In contrast, the small person, also known as a petty person, is a morally undeveloped person whose displayed virtue is only superficial. The paradigmatic small person is the “village worthy” (鄉原 *xiangyuan*), who is castigated by Confucius as “the ruin of virtue” (17.13). Ann-Ping Chin explains how the “village worthy” manages to deceive people through a façade of virtue:

if you want to censure him, you cannot find any evidence of his wrongdoing, and if you want to attack him, you cannot find a clear target. He is in tune with the prevalent custom and blends in with the sordid world. When in a state of repose, he appears to be conscientious and trustworthy. When actively engaged with the world, he appears to be principled and immaculate. People all like him, and he thinks he is in the right.²⁷

The expression used by Confucius to describe the village worthy is *de zhi zei* (德之賊), which is literally “a thief of virtue.” Such a person “steals” virtue by taking what one does not have – the person is only pretending to be moral. The village worthy exhibits virtue “under false pretences” by merely going through the motions of ethical behavior without the desired values and attitude.²⁸

Returning to 12.19, the small person does not possess authentic moral excellence, unlike that of an exemplary person. That is why the so-called virtue of the small person is analogous to grass, which, when compared with the wind, is weak and powerless. Confucius’ point is that only the exemplary person possesses the ethical charisma to win over others effectively and naturally. Because of one’s ethical charisma, an exemplary person does not need to resort to force or pressure. Such a person reaches out to become coextensive with people, inspiring others to move in the same direction, thereby building harmonious connections.²⁹ In the case of an exemplary person who happens to be a ruler, such a person is capable of leading by virtue without resorting to punitive measures. As articulated by Confucius,

Lead them by edicts, keep them in line with punishments, and the common people will stay out of trouble but will have no sense of shame. *Lead them by virtue*, keep them in line with *li* (normative behaviours), and they will, besides having a sense of shame, reform themselves.

(2.3, emphasis added)

²⁷ Ann-ping Chin, *The Authentic Confucius: A Life of Thought and Politics* (New York: Scribner, 2007), 155.

²⁸ Ames and Rosemont, *The Analects of Confucius*, 207. ²⁹ Hall and Ames, *Thinking through Confucius*.

According to Confucius, to lead by edicts is to rely on law and punishment to effect obedience and induce fear in the followers. This form of governance only achieves outward compliance in the masses without moral transformation – this is what having “no sense of shame” means in the above passage. In contrast, to lead by virtue is to model moral excellence so that one’s ethical charisma is visible and appealing to all and sundry. Leading by virtue is linked to keeping the people “in line with *li* [normative behaviors],” which means directing and motivating the people to do what is virtuous. The desired outcome of the moral transformation of the masses is attainable only if the ruler is a moral exemplar in the first place. A virtuous leader is like “the Pole Star which commands the homage of the multitude of stars without leaving its place” (2.1). Whether it is the Pole Star or the wind, the exemplary person relies on role-modeling, inspiring everyone to look up to and follow the leader willingly.

Having delineated a Confucian reading of virtue, the next section shifts our focus to a Daoist understanding of virtue.

Virtue in Daoism

According to Laozi and Zhuangzi, virtue is achieved through the following two ways: moral excellence through emptying one’s heart and mind, and moral influence through *wuwei* (noncoercive action).

Moral Excellence through Emptying One’s Heart and Mind

Unlike a Confucian orientation of achieving moral excellence through exalting virtue, a Daoist remedy is to empty one’s heart and mind through “sitting and forgetting” (坐忘 *zuowang*). This is explicated in this passage where Zhuangzi sketches an imaginary conversation between Confucius and his disciple Yan Hui:³⁰

Yan Hui said, “I am making progress.”

Confucius said, “What do you mean?”

Yan Hui said, “I have forgotten Humanity and Responsibility.”

Confucius said, “That’s good, but you’re still not there.”

Another day he came again and said, “I am making progress.”

“What do you mean?”

“I have forgotten ritual and music.”

Confucius said, “That’s good, but you’re still not there.”

He returned another day and said yet again, “I am making progress.”

“What do you mean?”

³⁰ All citations are taken from Ziporyn, *Zhuangzi*.

Yan Hui said, "I just sit and forget."

Confucius, jolted as if kicked, said, "What do you mean, you sit and forget?"

Yan Hui said, "It's a dropping away of my limbs and torso, a chasing off of my sensory acuity, which disperses my physical form and ousts my understanding until I am the same as the Transforming Openness. This is what I call just sitting and forgetting."

Confucius said, "The same as it? But then you are free of all preference! Transforming? But then you are free of all constancy! You truly are a worthy man! I beg to be accepted as your disciple."

(*Zhuangzi* 6.53–6.56)

In this passage, Zhuangzi uses Confucius and Yan Hui as mouthpieces to disseminate Daoist ideas. In a palpable criticism of Confucius' teachings, Zhuangzi turns the table around by making Yan Hui the teacher and Confucius his student. It is pertinent that Zhuangzi distinguishes between "forgetting," on the one hand, and "sitting and forgetting," on the other. Confucius' critical response to Yan Hui's experience about forgetting about humanity, responsibility, ritual, and music shows that it is insufficient, from a Daoist viewpoint, to just give up some parts of human expressions and ways of life. What is required is a complete overhaul of one's outlook, aspirations, and value systems through "sitting and forgetting."

Yan Hui's metamorphosis symbolizes a Daoist version of self-cultivation. His figurative severance of his physical body and senses symbolizes the eradication of all human desires that go against *dao*. Unlike Confucius, who interprets *dao* as a shared vision of human excellence, Zhuangzi and other Daoist thinkers view *dao* as the innate disposition in a thing. Zhuangzi invites all to "follow the rightness of the way each thing already is without allowing yourself the least bias" (7.4) so that all creatures may "delight in themselves" (7.5). Hence, to follow *dao* is to act in accordance with one's *dao*, or innate disposition. That is why Confucius acknowledges that Yan Hui is "free of all preference" and "free of all constancy," that is, worldly standards of right and wrong. By becoming one with "transforming openness," Yan Hui has emptied his heart and mind to return to his original natural state. He has, in the words of Confucius (or more accurately, Zhuangzi) become "a worthy man," or a man who is truly virtuous.

It is important to clarify that Zhuangzi is not against the virtues of humanity and responsibility, nor is he rejecting ritual and music per se. Rather, he condemns the artificial imposition of morality that is conceived and mandated by rulers and thinkers because it violates *dao*. Specifically, the Daoist idea of "sitting and forgetting" is targeted at abolishing the prevailing norms of humanity, responsibility, ritual, and music that have come to be associated with Confucianism. In the Taoist traditions, the integration of virtue with *dao* is through "self-so-ing" (自然 *ziran*), which is a return to what is natural.³¹ Instead of humanistic rules, structures, customs, and manner of living,

³¹ Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall, *Daodejing, "Making This Life Significant": A Philosophical Translation* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2003).

Zhuangzi calls for a return to one's *dao*, or innate disposition.³² Yan Hui's transformation represents the antithesis of the ego-self through forgetting the conventional knowledge, worldly wisdom, values systems, and logics that are taken for granted by the masses.³³ To achieve virtue, it follows, is to empty one's heart and mind so that one can return to the original state. Wing-tsit Chan explains *dao* and its relationship with virtue in the Daoist traditions:

When the *dao* which is "natural, eternal, spontaneous, nameless, and indescribable" – is possessed by individual things, it becomes its character or virtue (*de*). The ideal life for the individual, the ideal order for society, and the ideal type of government are all based on it and guided by it.³⁴

The desired result of emptying one's heart and mind is reiterated in a fictitious story of three emperors:

The emperor of the southern sea was called Swoosh. The emperor of the northern sea was called Oblivion. The emperor of the middle was called Chaos. Swoosh and Oblivion would sometimes meet in the territory of Chaos, who always attended to them quite well. They decided to repay Chaos for his virtue.

"All men have seven holes in them, by means of which they see, hear, eat, and breathe," they said. "But this one alone has none. Let's drill him some."

So each day they drilled another hole. After seven days, Chaos was dead.

(Zhuangzi 7.15)

It is notable that Chaos is recognized as a virtuous, welcoming host by the other two emperors. Tellingly, the absence of any holes in Chaos indicates his primordial state – his innate disposition or *dao* that is untainted by human systems, yardsticks, and contrivances. But unlike the Confucian case of an exemplary leader winning others over with one's ethical charisma, the moral leader in this scenario is powerless and victimized. The tragic ending of Chaos epitomizes the tyrannical ethos and practice of those who have forsaken *dao*. Through the above passage, Zhuangzi is driving home the point that human beings need to stop behaving like the two emperors and emulate instead Chaos, who is natural, free of human-centeredness, and at one with the natural environment. As posited by Zhao, "To cut people loose from their attachments, Zhuangzi attempts to break down the boundaries erected by our minds and desires, and ultimately to put aside and to lose the minds and wills altogether so that we can get back to the primordial mode of living, being in unity with the whole (*hun dun*) [Chaos], or as an infant, for whom there is no intelligibility, representation, conception, and language."³⁵

³² Charlene Tan, "Conceptualising Social Justice in Education: A Daoist Perspective," *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 51, no. 4 (2021): 596–611; Charlene Tan, "Rethinking the Notion of the High-Performing Education System: A Daoist Response," *Research in Comparative and International Education* 16, no. 1 (2021): 100–113.

³³ Donald Sturgeon, "Zhuangzi, Perspectives, and Greater Knowledge," *Philosophy East and West* 65, no. 3 (2015): 892–917.

³⁴ Wing-tsit Chan, *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963), 136.

³⁵ Guoping Zhao, "Transcendence, Freedom, and Ethics in Levinas' Subjectivity and Zhuangzi's Non-being Self," *Philosophy East & West* 65, no. 1 (2015): 75.

Moral Influence through *Wuwei* (Noncoercive Action)

The second defining Daoist approach is the expression of moral influence through *wuwei* (noncoercive action 无为). *Wuwei* is literally “nonaction” in the Chinese language, but it does not mean a total absence of activity. Nor does *wuwei* encourage passivity, indifference, and weakness. Instead, it is about letting nature take its own *dao*, so that all human actions are consistent with *dao*, free of human embellishment and interference.³⁶ *Wuwei* follows logically from the previous point on emptying one’s heart and mind by eschewing any action that is contrary to nature. In a word, everyone needs to have a “Yan Hui” experience (*Zhuangzi* 6.53–6.56) and be like Chaos (*Zhuangzi* 7.15). To further understand the concept of *wuwei*, it is helpful to differentiate contemplative *wuwei* from purposive *wuwei*:

Contemplative Wu Wei indicates a genuine non-action motivated by a lack of desire to participate in a struggle of human affairs. *Purposive Wu Wei* refers to a technique for a person to gain enhanced control over human affairs. The first is purely passive while the second is a strategy to act in and reform the world.³⁷

Both forms of *wuwei* are accentuated in the Daoist traditions. Contemplative *wuwei* liberates human beings from divisive competition, rivalry, and stress. Working hand in hand with contemplative *wuwei* is purposive *wuwei*, which energizes a person to act within the *dao* of things, thereby experiencing harmony with all.³⁸ Collectively, the two forms of *wuwei* enable human beings to rein in their insatiable desires and distortion of their nature.³⁹

Laozi has much to say about *wuwei*: living a life that is simple, tranquil, spontaneous, and free of strife.⁴⁰ Echoing Zhuangzi’s story about Chaos and the two emperors, Laozi calls attention to the *wuwei* of *tian* (天 heaven), which is nature. Daoism supports the alignment with the order, constancy, and flow of nature (天道 *tiandao*) by not coercing or mandating one’s ways.⁴¹ He maintains that “sages keep to service that does not entail coercion (*wuwei*)” (*Daodejing* Chapter 2).⁴² The Daoist sages are not the refined Confucians but people who flow with *dao* through *wuwei*. Laozi clarifies that a sage “does things non-coercively (*wuwei*) and yet nothing goes undone” (Chapter 48). He adds in Chapter 77 that “sages act on behalf of things but do not make any claim on them, they see things through to fruition but do not take credit for them.” A truly virtuous person, from a Daoist standpoint, is not obsessed with “making a display of their worth” (Chapter 77). Instead, such a person manifests *wuwei* by being “always non-interfering in going about its business” (Chapter 48). Paradoxically, it is only by “do[ing] everything non-coercively” that “nothing

³⁶ Ames and Hall, *Daodejing*; Chan, *A Sourcebook*.

³⁷ Yijun Xing and David Sims, “Leadership, Daoist *Wu Wei* and Reflexivity: Flow, Self-Protection and Excuse in Chinese Bank Managers’ Leadership Practice,” *Management Learning* 43, no. 1 (2011): 99, emphasis added. Also see Key Sun, “How to Overcome without Fighting: An Introduction to the Taoist Approach to Conflict Resolution,” *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology* 15, no. 2 (1995): 161–171.

³⁸ Yueh-Ting Lee, Honggang Yang, and Min Wang, “Daoist Harmony as a Chinese Philosophy and Psychology,” *Peace and Conflict Studies* 16, no. 1 (2009): 68–81.

³⁹ Ivanhoe and Van Norden, *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*.

⁴⁰ Charlene Tan, “The Learning School through a Daoist Lens,” *Oxford Review of Education* 46, no. 3 (2020): 393–407.

⁴¹ Hall and Ames, *Thinking through Confucius*. ⁴² All quotations from this text are taken from Ames and Hall, *Daodejing*.

goes undone” (Chapter 48), leading to “the flowing together of all things” (Chapter 62, also see Chapters 63 and 67).

Laozi uses the analogy of water to illuminate the notion of *wuwei*. Water embodies noncoercion as it is formless and fluid. Yet it “benefits everything” (Chapter 8), like the sea that flows through and accepts all life-forms without exception. A virtuous person is like water by not forcing others to adopt one’s own values, beliefs, and practices. Daoist sages “do without contending” and “benefit without harming” (Chapter 81). Besides water, another analogy mentioned by Laozi is the hub at the center of a wheel. As stated in Chapter 11: “The thirty spokes converge at one hub, but the utility of the cart is a function of the nothingness (*wu*) inside the hub.” A leader who demonstrates *wuwei* is like the hub at the center of the wheel that enables activities to carry on effortlessly without moving.

The end result of *wuwei* is moral influence – the “natural therapeutic effect Daoist sages have upon the people, creatures, and things within their presence.”⁴³ Such a person is a *zhenren* (真人), who is the Daoist counterpart to the Confucian *junzi* (exemplary person). Like the *junzi*, a *zhenren* exercises moral influence by extending oneself to become coextensive with others. But the *zhenren* is unlike the *junzi*, who attracts people by performing one’s social roles in accordance with *li* (normative behaviors). Instead, the *zhenren* transforms others by emptying oneself of all thoughts, feelings, and actions that violate *dao*, and relating to others through *wuwei*. David Hall and Roger Ames note that the ego-free nature of a *zhenren* makes such a one amenable to the virtue of one’s natural environment, leading to one’s potency, productivity, and extensive impact on all of existence.⁴⁴

The Enduring Relevance of Ancient Chinese Ethics on Educational Thought and Practice

The foregoing has shown how ancient Chinese ethics is understood primarily as moral excellence and moral influence. The earlier sections have outlined the fundamental features of ethics in Confucian and Daoist philosophical traditions. This last part of this chapter discusses the enduring relevance of ancient Chinese ethics on educational thought and practice. Two key educational implications are set forth here: an emphasis on (inter)personal cultivation of virtue, and the power of role-modeling.

(Inter)personal Cultivation of Virtue

The first educational relevance of ancient Chinese ethics is an emphasis on the (inter)personal cultivation of virtue through character education. Character education aims to “mold children’s character by directly teaching them moral

⁴³ Ivanhoe and Van Norden, *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*, 390.

⁴⁴ Hall and Ames, *Thinking through Confucius*. Also see Chad Hansen, “Chinese Language, Chinese Philosophy and Truth,” *Journal of Asian Studies* 44 (1985): 491–517.

values and shaping their behavior in an attempt to produce positive behavioral patterns and habits.”⁴⁵ The objective is to nurture in young people a set of beliefs and values about right and wrong, good and bad, justice and injustice, fairness and unfairness, and so on. Character education should not be limited to the inculcation of a core set of moral beliefs and values in the young. It should also teach them how to apply these beliefs and values in critical and creative ways to solve real-life moral problems and dilemmas. In short, an effective moral education should teach morality as well as the development of moral character in each student.⁴⁶

This is where the attention to and nurture of virtue, which is underlined in ancient Chinese philosophical traditions, are salient. We have already seen that a perennial theme of ancient Chinese ethics is moral cultivation at both the personal and interpersonal levels. As discussed earlier, the personal development of virtue is referred to as self-cultivation (*xiushen*) in Confucianism and “sitting and forgetting” (*zuowang*) in Daoism. Regardless of the differences between Confucian self-cultivation and Daoist “sitting and forgetting,” what is common in the Confucian and Daoist traditions is the priority of moral development through two main ways: integrating one’s heart and mind, and deepening one’s relationships with the human or natural environments.⁴⁷ These two ways are elaborated in turn.

First, the cultivation of virtue through character education should help students to integrate their hearts and minds. The ancient Chinese do not see education in general and character education in particular as purely cognitive. Rather, as signaled by the term “heart and mind” or “heart-mind” (心 心 *xin*), education involves a synthesis of the heart (affective) and mind (cognitive). Classical Chinese philosophers, from Confucius to Laozi, Zhuangzi, and other thinkers, oppose the Cartesian mind-body dualism; that is, they do not view the body and mind as different kinds of existence. Rather than dichotomising reason and passion, “knowing” in the Confucian worldview is made up of and reflects a person’s feelings and mood.⁴⁸ The cultivation of virtue through character education, it follows, should engage one’s heart and mind. Successfully inculcating values is not just about knowing what one ought to do, but also feeling the motivation to do so.⁴⁹

Second, the cultivation of virtue through character education, for both Confucianism and Daoism, is not individualistic and presocial. On the contrary, personal development takes place within a communitarian context. The envisaged target is increasing interdependence through recognizing and experiencing emotions that are common to humanity, such as empathic concern and joy of learning.⁵⁰ For Confucians, moral development occurs in the human world where one exalts, acquires, and accumulates virtue by performing one’s roles

⁴⁵ Mark J. Halstead, “Moral Education,” in *Encyclopaedia of Cross-Cultural School Psychology*, ed. Caroline S. Clauss-Ehlers (Boston: Springer, 2010), 631.

⁴⁶ Charlene Tan and Yew Leong Wong, “Moral Education for Young People in Singapore: Philosophy, Policy and Prospects,” *Journal of Youth Studies* 13, no. 2 (2010): 89–102.

⁴⁷ Hall and Ames, *Thinking through Confucius*. ⁴⁸ Ames, *Confucian Role Ethics*.

⁴⁹ Anh Tuan Nuyen, “Moral Obligation and Moral Motivation in Confucian Role-Based Ethics,” *Dao* 8 (2009): 1–11.

⁵⁰ Hall and Ames, *Thinking through Confucius*.

and building relationships in society. The Daoists, on the other hand, locate human beings within the natural environment, reminding them to repudiate artificial and humanistic rituals and practices in favor of being aligned with nature.

The ancient Chinese accent on the (inter)personal cultivation of virtue is pertinent to character education in contemporary times. We have noted how both Confucian and Daoist traditions foreground the acquisition, learning, and accumulation of virtue by all people. Self-cultivation of virtue, accordingly, requires reflection, both individually and collectively. The goal is to guide and empower learners to assess their own thoughts, values, beliefs, actions, and relationships with others. Individuals need to reflect on whether they have become (more) virtuous by doing their best, being trustworthy, and doing what is right from a Confucian perspective. They also need to self-correct and eliminate deleterious thoughts, feelings, and actions that do not accord with nature, through a Daoist lens.

To enact character education that develops the heart-mind of students in a myriad of social settings, it is vital for schools to foster an inclusive, mindful, and reflective school ethos and climate. Specific values needed by students include integrity, compassion, fairness, and love of lifelong learning.⁵¹ The aim is for students to have ample opportunities to accumulate their virtues of doing their best, being trustworthy, and doing what is right. At the same time, students need to ponder which aspects of their lives that should be “forgotten,” such as greed, strife, and discrimination. Through advancing introspection and reflexivity within interactional learning surroundings, students learn to take ownership of their moral development.⁵² The practice of introspection and reflexivity for students should be integrated into the total school curriculum, teaching methods, and appraisal systems in the school. In tandem with synthesizing one’s heart and mind, the learning experiences for students should be not purely intellectual, but rather tailored to harmonize both their thinking and emotions.

Recommended pedagogies to champion character education include cooperative learning strategies that engender the acquisition of virtues such as teamwork, perspective-taking, and interdependence. The community of inquiry (COI) method that utilizes dialogical thinking and moral dilemmas is particularly salutary.⁵³ Another suggestion is to involve students in social innovation projects. These projects are geared toward addressing real social problems and enabling students to link theory to practice in a plethora of sociocultural settings. It is likely that a host of moral and community issues and controversies will surface in social innovation projects, which provides a platform for students to reflect critically and develop their character. For example, a project on how to encourage more older adults to get vaccinated requires students to be sensitive

⁵¹ Christopher Day, Pam Sammons, and Kristine Gorgen, *Successful School Leadership* (Reading: Education Development Trust, 2020).

⁵² Xing and Sims, “Leadership, Daoist *Wu Wei* and Reflexivity.”

⁵³ Stephen Law, *The War for Children’s Minds* (London: Routledge, 2007); Matthew Lipman, *Lisa*, 2nd ed. (Caldwell, NJ: Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children, Montclair State College, 1983); Matthew Lipman, *Thinking in Education*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

to the multitude of concerns, struggles, and needs faced by older adults. Students also need to grapple with ethical dilemmas such as respecting the freedom of choice of those who choose not to be vaccinated, versus the larger good of community through mass vaccination. In cultivating the students' character, it is also critical for educators to adopt appropriate assessment modes that are formative and authentic, such as reflective writing, peer feedback, and individual portfolios. Consistent with the principle of *wuwei* (noncoercive action), appropriate evaluation methods are those that build interpersonal trust rather than foster inter-student competition.

The Power of Role-Modeling

The second enduring relevance of ancient Chinese ethics on educational thought and practice is the power of role-modeling, especially from school leaders. A common thrust in ancient Chinese ethics is the impact of the moral influence of sages on people around them. We have already learned how both Confucian and Daoist traditions underscore the moral influence of paradigmatic figures, whether as *junzi* (exemplary person) or *zhenren* (authentic person). A major divergence between the exemplary person and authentic person is that the latter extends beyond the human community to the natural environment.⁵⁴ Whether it is through demonstrating the virtue of an exemplary person instead of a small person, or the virtue of noncoercive actions, the exemplary or authentic person has the capacity to influence others to emulate their virtue. Both paragons of virtue are authoritative in the sense that they "evoke deference from those around them" and are "achieved models whose own efficacious, integrative activity conduces to the genuine expression of others."⁵⁵

The ancient Chinese premium on a person's moral influence presupposes that the person is virtuous in the first place. In other words, a necessary condition for role-modeling is the possession of individual moral excellence that is witnessed by all. In this regard, the spotlight on ethical leadership is in tandem with the theory of virtue ethics in the existing literature.⁵⁶ *Virtue ethics* does not define the goodness of a person on the basis of the act or consequence of one's actions. Instead of focusing on moral rules or duties, virtue ethics concentrates on the character of the person performing the moral act. It follows that, the stress is on virtues – the flexible aspects of our character that reflect our sense of self and evidenced in our choices and social interactions.⁵⁷ In ancient Chinese traditions, a person is virtuous when one cultivates and evinces moral excellence, thereby winning over others with one's ethical charisma. The weight given to moral character in ancient Chinese philosophical traditions explains why Chinese ethics does not separate the act or consequence from the actor. Put otherwise,

⁵⁴ Ames, *Confucian Role Ethics*. ⁵⁵ Hall and Ames, *Thinking through Confucius*, 172.

⁵⁶ Antonio S. Cua, "Early Confucian Virtue Ethics: The Virtues of *Junzi*," in *Dao Companion to Classical Confucian Philosophy*, ed. Vincent Shen (Dordrecht: Springer, 2014), 291–334; Edward Slingerland, "Virtue Ethics, the 'Analects,' and the Problem of Commensurability," *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 29, no. 1 (2001): 97–125.

⁵⁷ Nicholas C. Burbules, "Reasonable Doubt: Toward a Postmodern Defence of Reason as an Educational Aim," in *Critical Conversations in Philosophy of Education*, ed. Wendi Kohli (New York: Routledge, 1995), 82–102.

there is no chasm between one's belief or opinion and one's person. One's thoughts, from an ancient Chinese standpoint, are "dispositions to act" and "embodied actions."⁵⁸

The idea of role-modeling, along with the power of moral influence, is pertinent to modern educational thought and practice, specifically for school leadership. The ancient Chinese traditions place ethics, specifically virtue, at the heart of leading. The ancient Chinese understanding of virtue, as Roger Ames puts it, "is what we accrue through a life of service to others."⁵⁹ A survey of the extant literature on ethical leadership attests to the emphasis on the moral character of the leader and the theory of virtue ethics. The research on ethical leadership is a testament to the importance of moral character and virtue ethics.⁶⁰ Studies have shown that successful school leaders stand out for their personal values and conduct. These school leaders obtain improved performance primarily through the core values and personal qualities they express in their exchange with educational stakeholders.⁶¹ Ancient Chinese ethics, as an example of virtue ethics, reminds school leaders of the following:

The imperatives of virtue ethics – be patient, be kind, be compassionate, be courageous – better equip an individual to negotiate the obstacles of the moral life. The virtue-ethics approach is not to follow a set of abstract rules, but to develop a unique ensemble of behaviors, dispositions, and qualities that lead to human excellence. Virtue ethics may not have pat answers to specific cases – no ethical theory could offer this – but it does prepare the moral agent for adaptation, innovation, and flexibility.⁶²

Applying role-modeling to education means that school leaders need to model and advocate moral values as part and parcel of managing instructional matters. The focal point is not simply improving student outcomes or teacher capacity, but, more crucially, exemplifying and advocating virtuous living for the school community members. Another way of putting it is that a school leader should go beyond the administrative and operational aspects of running a school, to championing and advancing virtue. This is achieved by demonstrating virtues such as trustworthiness and *wuwei* (noncoercive action) through nonoppressive school policies, as well as creating and sustaining a conducive and supportive school culture. The Confucian and Daoist presupposition of harmony and interdependence ensures that all educational stakeholders work together in a spirit of deference, empathy, and harmony. Congruent with the goal of a *junzi* and *zhenren* to eliminate egoism and antagonism and generate harmonious interdependence, a school leader promotes holistic development and well-being in all students.

Role-modeling is not limited to the school leaders but extends to the teachers as well. The reason is that the conduct of teachers is witnessed by their students

⁵⁸ Hall and Ames, *Thinking through Confucius*, 157, 224. ⁵⁹ Ames, *Confucian Role Ethics*, 209.

⁶⁰ David Knights and Majella O'Leary, "Leadership, Ethics and Responsibility to the Other," *Journal of Business Ethics* 67, no. 2 (2006): 125–137.

⁶¹ Kenneth Leithwood, Alma Harris, and David Hopkins, "Seven Strong Claims about Successful School Leadership Revisited," *School Leadership & Management*, 2019, advance version. doi: 10.1080/13632434.2019.1596077, 1–18.

⁶² Nicholas F. Gier, "The Dancing Ru: A Confucian Aesthetics of Virtue," *Philosophy East and West* 51, no. 2 (2001): 300.

and has a direct impact on the latter. To put it differently, a teacher “is able to organise one’s natural, social and cultural environments and disclose their possibilities for a productive harmony.”⁶³ Teachers are often looked up to as role models, sources of aspiration, and moral competence by their students and even parents.⁶⁴ One suggestion is for the teacher to model the moral feelings and reasoning process when considering and responding to moral issues and dilemmas. The teacher could also encourage students to reflect on and cultivate virtues by asking Socratic questions that invite a range of answers. Another recommendation is mentoring students by sharing one’s life experiences with individual students, and guiding them to flourish in their socioemotional learning.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the nature and educational relevance of Chinese ethical traditions through an elucidation of Confucian and Daoist thought. The two indigenous Chinese philosophies complement each other in the evolution of Chinese civilization: “To the solemn gravity and burden of social responsibility of Confucianism, Daoism opposes a flight from respectability and the conventional duties of society; in place of the Confucian concern for things worldly and human, it holds out a vision of other, transcendental worlds of the spirit.”⁶⁵ Focusing on the concept of virtue as explicated in Confucian and Daoist texts, it is noted that the pivot of ancient Chinese ethics is character development. It is further argued that the notion of virtue, from an ancient Chinese worldview, consists of moral excellence and influence. In the Confucian traditions, virtue is expressed through the exaltation of moral goodness and ethical charisma of exemplary persons. In the Daoist traditions, virtue is embodied in the emptying of one’s heart-mind and *wuwei* (noncoercive action).

In terms of educational implications, ancient Chinese ethics underlines (inter) personal cultivation of virtues and the importance of role-modeling. Self-cultivation of virtue, accordingly, requires reflection, both individually and collectively, to guide and empower students to examine their own thoughts, values, beliefs, actions, and relationships with others. The practice of mindful reflection can be nurtured through the total curriculum as well as corresponding pedagogical and assessment approaches. The idea of role-modeling coupled with the power of moral influence is relevant to modern educational thought and practice, specifically for school leadership. School leaders, as *junzi* and *zhenren*, are models of ethical charisma to attract students, staff, parents, and other educational stakeholders to collectively achieve the shared vision. Our exploration of Confucian and Daoist traditions shows that ancient Chinese ethics is not “truth-seeking” in terms of the identification and clarification of

⁶³ Ames, *Confucian Role Ethics*, 208.

⁶⁴ Antonio S. Cua, “Competence, Concern, and the Role of Paradigmatic Individuals (Chün-tzu) in Moral Education,” *Philosophy East and West* 42, no. 1 (1992): 49–68.

⁶⁵ De Bary and Bloom, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, 77.

any moral rules, principles, duties, or consequences.⁶⁶ In this sense, ancient Chinese ethics is distinct from that in the Anglo-American contexts that focus on theory-making and reasoning regarding the goodness or rightness of specific acts and outcomes. Rather than truth-seeking, ancient Chinese ethics is “Way-seeking” by focusing on “a search for the right path, the appropriate models of conduct to lead one along the path, the ‘way’ that life is to be lived, and where to stand.”⁶⁷ The overarching goal of ancient Chinese ethics is to guide a person to bring about the transformation in oneself and in the world, not asking truth-related questions such as “What is it?” but Way-directed questions such as “Where should I go?”⁶⁸

In closing, normative issues and consideration are of utmost importance in ancient China. As evidenced in the case of both Confucian and Daoist traditions, moral considerations take center stage, bringing to the fore the continual significance of ancient Chinese ethics for educational thought and practice.

Bibliography

- Ames, Roger T. *Confucian Role Ethics: A Vocabulary*. Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2011.
- Ames, Roger T., and David L. Hall. *Daodejing, “Making This Life Significant”: A Philosophical Translation*. New York: Ballantine Books, 2003.
- Ames, Roger T., and Henry Rosemont. *The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1998.
- Burbules, Nicholas C. “Reasonable Doubt: Toward a Postmodern Defence of Reason as an Educational Aim.” In *Critical Conversations in Philosophy of Education*, edited by Wendi Kohli, 82–102. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Chan, Wing-tsit. *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963.
- Chin, Ann-ping. *The Authentic Confucius: A Life of Thought and Politics*. New York: Scribner, 2007.
- Cua, Antonio S. “Competence, Concern, and the Role of Paradigmatic Individuals (Chün-tzu) in Moral Education.” *Philosophy East and West* 42, no. 1 (1992): 49–68.
- Cua, Antonio S. “Early Confucian Virtue Ethics: The Virtues of Junzi.” In *Dao Companion to Classical Confucian Philosophy*, edited by Vincent Shen, 291–334. Dordrecht: Springer, 2014.
- Cua, Antonio S. *Ethical Argumentation: A Study of Hsun Tzu’s Moral Epistemology*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985.
- Day, Christopher, Pam Sammons, and Kristine Gorgen. *Successful School Leadership*. Reading: Education Development Trust, 2020.

⁶⁶ Charlene Tan, “A Confucian Conception of Critical Thinking,” *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 51, no. 1 (2017): 331–343.

⁶⁷ Hall and Ames, *Thinking through Confucius*, 103.

⁶⁸ Sze-Kwang Lao, “On Understanding Chinese Philosophy: An Inquiry and a Proposal,” in *Understanding the Chinese Mind: The Philosophical Roots*, ed. Robert E. Allison (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1989), 265–293.

- De Bary, W. M. Theodore, and Irene Bloom. *Sources of Chinese Tradition: From Earliest Times to 1600*, 2nd ed., vol 1. New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.
- Gardner, Daniel K. *The Four Books: The Basic Teachings of the Later Confucian Tradition*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2007.
- Gier, Nicholas F. "The Dancing Ru: A Confucian Aesthetics of Virtue." *Philosophy East and West* 51, no. 2 (2001): 280–305.
- Graham, Angus C. *How Much of Chuang Tzu Did Chuang Tzu Write?* Singapore: Institute of East Asian Philosophies, 1986.
- Hall, David L., and Roger T. Ames. *Thinking through Confucius*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987.
- Halstead, Mark J. "Moral Education." In *Encyclopaedia of Cross-Cultural School Psychology*, edited by Caroline S. Clauss-Ehlers, 630–631. Boston: Springer, 2010.
- Hansen, Chad. "Chinese Language, Chinese Philosophy and Truth." *Journal of Asian Studies* 44 (1985): 491–517.
- Hutton, Eric. L. *Xunzi: The Complete Text*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014.
- Ivanhoe, Philip J., and Bryan W. Van Norden, eds. *Readings in Classical Chinese Philosophy*, 2nd ed. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2001.
- Knights, David, and Majella O'Leary. "Leadership, Ethics and Responsibility to the Other." *Journal of Business Ethics* 67, no. 2 (2006): 125–137.
- Knoblock, John. *Xunzi: A Translation and Study of the Complete Works*, vol 1. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988.
- Lao Sze-Kwang. "On Understanding Chinese Philosophy: An Inquiry and a Proposal." In *Understanding the Chinese Mind: The Philosophical Roots*, edited by Robert E. Allison, 265–293. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1989.
- Lau, D. C. *Confucius: The Analects*. Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1997.
- Law, Stephen. *The War for Children's Minds*. London: Routledge, 2007.
- Lee, Yueh-Ting, Honggang Yang, and Min Wang. "Daoist Harmony as a Chinese Philosophy and Psychology." *Peace and Conflict Studies* 16, no. 1 (2009): 68–81.
- Leithwood, Kenneth, Alma Harris, and David Hopkins. "Seven Strong Claims about Successful School Leadership Revisited." *School Leadership & Management*, 2019, advance version. DOI: 10.1080/13632434.2019.1596077, 1–18.
- Li, Jin. "The Core of Confucian Learning." *American Psychologist* 58 (2003): 146–147.
- Lipman, Matthew. *Lisa*, 2nd ed. Caldwell, NJ: Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children, Montclair State College, 1983.
- Lipman, Matthew. *Thinking in Education*, 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- Nuyen, Anh Tuan. "Moral Obligation and Moral Motivation in Confucian Role-Based Ethics." *Dao* 8 (2009): 1–11.
- Slingerland, Edward. *Confucius: Analects with Selections from Traditional Commentaries*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2003.
- Slingerland, Edward. "Virtue Ethics, the 'Analects,' and the Problem of Commensurability." *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 29, no. 1 (2001): 97–125.
- Sturgeon, Donald. "Zhuangzi, Perspectives, and Greater Knowledge." *Philosophy East and West* 65, no. 3 (2015): 892–917.

- Sun, Key. "How to Overcome without Fighting: An Introduction to the Taoist Approach to Conflict Resolution." *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology* 15, no. 2 (1995): 161–171.
- Tan, Charlene. "Conceptualising Social Justice in Education: A Daoist Perspective." *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 51, no. 4 (2021): 596–611.
- Tan, Charlene. "A Confucian Conception of Critical Thinking." *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 51, no. 1 (2017): 331–343.
- Tan, Charlene. "A Confucian Perspective of Self-Cultivation in Learning: Its Implications for Self-Directed Learning." *Journal of Adult & Continuing Education* 23, no. 2 (2017): 250–262.
- Tan, Charlene. *Confucian Philosophy for Contemporary Education*. London: Routledge, 2020.
- Tan, Charlene. "The Learning School through a Daoist Lens." *Oxford Review of Education* 46, no. 3 (2020): 393–407.
- Tan, Charlene. "Rethinking the Notion of the High-Performing Education System: A Daoist Response." *Research in Comparative and International Education* 16, no. 1 (2021): 100–113.
- Tan, Charlene. "Revisiting Donald Schön's Notion of Reflective Practice: A Daoist Interpretation." *Reflective Practice* 21, no. 5 (2020): 686–698.
- Tan, Charlene, and Yew Leong Wong. "Moral Education for Young People in Singapore: Philosophy, Policy and Prospects." *Journal of Youth Studies* 13, no. 2 (2010): 89–102.
- Tu Weiming. *Confucian Thought: Selfhood as Creative Transformation*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985.
- Tu, Wei-ming. "Confucius and Confucianism." In *Confucianism and the Family*, edited by Walter H. Slote and George A. DeVos, 3–36. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998.
- Xing, Yijun, and David Sims. "Leadership, Daoist *Wu Wei* and Reflexivity: Flow, Self-Protection and Excuse in Chinese Bank Managers' Leadership Practice." *Management Learning* 43, no. 1 (2011): 97–112.
- Yao, Xinzhong. *An Introduction to Confucianism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Zhao, Guoping. "Transcendence, Freedom, and Ethics in Levinas' Subjectivity and Zhuangzi's Non-being Self." *Philosophy East & West* 65, no. 1 (2015): 65–80.
- Ziporyn, Brook. *Zhuangzi: The Essential Writings with Selections from Traditional Commentaries*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2009.