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Confucian Self-Cultivation and Daoist Personhood: Implications for Peace Education

Abstract This essay argues that the concept of reaching peace within in order to sustain peace outside in classical Confucianism and Daoism offers us important lessons for peace education in the contemporary age. Building harmonious connections between differences in one's personhood paves a path for negotiating interconnections across conflicting multiplicities in the outside world. The essay starts by discussing the Confucian and Daoist notions of personhood as a microcosmic universe connected to a macrocosmic universe. Second, the historical context of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Period in which Confucianism and Daoism emerged are briefly reviewed. Third, Confucian self-cultivation and the Daoist conception of personhood are discussed. Fourth, relational issues of harmony in difference and tranquility in turbulence are analyzed. Lastly, inner peace reaching outer peace in leadership and governing is formulated in terms of the unity between means and end in peace education.

Keywords peace, Confucianism, Daoism, harmony in difference

Introduction

While the contemporary age has brought unprecedented interconnectedness across the globe and in everyday life, it has also simultaneously witnessed fragmentation, conflict, and ethnic and religious warfare. Can Confucianism and Daoism, first formulated in ancient China, be useful for addressing our contemporary concerns about bringing peace out of conflict? This essay argues that the Confucian and Daoist traditions of reaching peace within in order to sustain peace outside offer us important lessons. Building harmonious connections between differences in one's personhood paves a path for negotiating interconnections across conflicting multiplicities in the outside world. In this sense, peace is not merely a diplomatic or political issue but also a fundamental

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educational issue since it is rooted in personal cultivation.

Peace studies as a formal program was initiated after World War II in the West. As part of it, peace education is concerned with cultivating knowledge, skills, and attitudes that can lead to peace rather than violence by way of a formal curriculum or community-based activities (Lin, Brantmeier, & Bruhn, 2008; Salomon & Cairns, 2010). Two aspects of peace education are intertwined: negating violence and promoting a culture of peace. Originally dealing with the causes of war and its prevention, peace education has recently evolved to embrace new paradigms that locate unity (Danesh, 2010) or harmony (Brantmeier & Lin, 2008) as the center of attention, shifting the focus towards transforming education for peace. Drawing upon Eastern traditions, Jing Lin (2006, 2008) emphasizes the importance of understanding peace as a process of the dynamic interplay of opposites and as a global ethic of universal love and reconciliation. The essential messages of dissolving violence and advocating peace in Confucianism and Daoism can inform today's efforts in peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peace building.

In this essay, without claiming that Confucianism or Daoism can offer solutions to our contemporary issues, I examine classical writings of both philosophies to discuss what possibilities they may offer as we travel through today's complex landscapes of peace education. In particular, their central concern with personhood as the site of educational and social change is discussed as a way of rethinking peace education. Peace movements in the contemporary age are usually seen as proactive, collective efforts to end wars, challenge social or ecological injustice, or eliminate inter-group conflicts¹. By contrast, Confucianism and Daoism locate the cultivation of inner peace as the bridge to outer peace. This essay starts with this location, situates it in historical contexts, moves to the relational issues of harmony in difference and tranquility in turbulence, and further discusses the role of leadership and governing to argue for unity between the means and end of peace education. The implications of classical Confucianism and Daoism for peace and peace education are suggested throughout the paper either explicitly or implicitly.

The Site of Personhood between the Microcosmic and the Macrocosmic

Both Confucianism and Daoism view a person as a microcosmic universe

¹ See the autobiography of Leymah Gbowee "Mighty be our Powers," a leader of the Liberian peace movement, for how peace among women activists became impossible after the war ended without achieving personal peace inside; the end of the war did not necessarily mean the beginning of peace.

connected with the macrocosmic universe. The movement within the inner world circulates out into the external world and vice versa so the interaction between the micro and macro levels is the key for personal and global welfare. Thus, discussions about world peace need to start with peace within. The West has long claimed the importance of the individual and usually perceived the Chinese tradition as hierarchical and suppressive of individuality; ironically, however, the location of the person as the site for relating to others and governing the world is a deeply rooted Chinese philosophical notion.

It is written in the *Dao De Jing* that “cultivated in the person, its *de* is true; cultivated in the family, its *de* is rich; cultivated in the village, its *de* lasts; cultivated in the nation, its *de* is abundant; cultivated in the world, its *de* is universal” (Chapter 54, author’s translation). There are different interpretations of what *De* means in Daoism (Cline, 2004) and one of contested point is related to whether or not *De* is moral. Some believe it has moral connotations, some believe that it is naturalistic without moral connotations, and others think that it has both moral and cosmic dimensions. In general, however, it is considered as the embodiment and expression of *Dao*, which can be related to individual thing or an individual person. Fung (1948/1976) explains that *De* is what each individual thing obtains from the universal *Dao*, so “*Te [De]* is a word that means ‘power’ or ‘virtue,’ both in the moral and non-moral sense of the latter term. The *Te [De]* of a thing is what it naturally is” (p. 100). I think the notion of the Daoist *De* is broader than Confucian morality since it is rooted in the natural way, but there is a certain connection between Daoist *De* and the Confucian virtue based upon internal principles rather than external demands. Personal cultivation is about getting in touch with *De* and achieving *Dao* is coexistent with expressing *De* and reaching *Dao* in the family, the village, the nation, and the world.

The Great Learning, one of the Confucian classics, outlines the steps to self-cultivation in detail:

When things are studied, knowledge is achieved. When knowledge is achieved, then one reaches sincerity of thought. When one reaches sincerity of thought, the integrity of heart comes. With the integrity of heart, the person can be cultivated. When the person is cultivated, the family life can be regulated. When the family life is regulated, the nation can be rightly governed. When the nation is rightly governed, the whole world can be made peaceful. From the emperor down to the common people, all must consider the cultivation of the person as the root of all. It cannot be that, when the root is neglected, what springs from it will be well-ordered. (1992, p. 1, author’s translation).

Dao De Jing and *The Great Learning* clearly echo each other, although the process of self-cultivation in *The Great Learning* is more specifically articulated

with a clear sense of flowing from one level to another level until it reaches the broadest level of the whole world, while “*Dao De Jing*” does not explicitly speak about the extension from one level to another. These steps depicted in *The Great Learning* became a foundation stone of Confucianism. Moreover, Laozi’s *Dao* is firstly cosmic and secondly moral, while early Confucians believed in the moral nature of the universe and elevate humanity to a higher position than other forms of existence. “*Dao De Jing*” clearly speaks about how *De* and *Dao* takes priority over Confucian virtues (Chapter 38). The Daoist connotation of virtue goes beyond humanity since virtue also resides in what a thing naturally is. Partly for these reasons, the concentric linking of person, family, nation, and world is usually regarded as a Confucian concern.

Likewise, while “internal sagehood and external kingship” is usually regarded as a Confucian notion, the phrase first appeared in the *Zhuangzi* (Chapter 33, author’s translation). *Zhuangzi* also radically claims that one needs to achieve authentic personhood first because the true nature of *Dao* is for governing the self, and then what is left is for governing the country and the world (Chapter 28). He privileges personhood over conducting world affairs and believes that only those who attend themselves first can be entrusted with the responsibility of governing the world. This priority of the authentic self, however, is embedded in his underlying principle of forgetting or dissolving the self in order to become one with *Dao* and thus does not indulge in self-centeredness.

The specific focuses of Confucianism and Daoism may have different twists but Confucians and Daoists share a commitment to personal cultivation as essential for both individual fulfillment and societal development. This commitment has important implications for the current concerns with peace education in the contemporary age, an age full of turbulence, conflict, and crisis, not very different from the historical period in which both Confucius and Laozi lived. Peace is usually perceived in the West as between nations or groups, but peace in Confucianism and Daoism is first and foremost about peace within each person, and in this sense, peace education is first of all about personal cultivation for peace within and without. The formulations of classical Confucianism and Daoism were responses to their own historical circumstances, but the seeds they planted are rich for growing our own visions of how to make dynamic interconnections across differences in today’s world. Their unique perspectives on achieving harmony, tranquility, and peace despite turbulence offer us illuminating links for education for and through peace at various levels. Before addressing the issue of peace out of conflict, the following sections first discuss the historical contexts in which classical Confucianism and Daoism responded to the call of their time, and then briefly introduce the Confucian conception of

self-cultivation and the Daoist conception of personhood.

A Brief Review of Historical Contexts

Confucianism and Daoism emerged in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States Period (770–221 BCE) when the stability of the Zhou Dynasty was lost (Fung, 1948/1976; Li & Ji, 2001; Mair, 1994). This period was also called the Eastern Zhou Dynasty. The Zhou Dynasty initially ruled through the distribution of land among nobility and the regulation of the extended family system. But that system began to break down and nobility gained so much control as to compete among one another for hegemony while the Zhou kings lost control. Gradually the status of nobility according to the bloodline was interrupted as many lost their inherited status due to all the fierce fighting. As a result, a particular class, called *Shi*, emerged and became “an influential group of scholars and political theorists who actively sought to alter the policies of the various dukes” (Mair, 1994, p. xvii). Moreover, *Shi* was composed of people from various social groups, not just the descendents of nobility, but they were all well-educated, and from this intellectual class emerged leaders of various schools of thought.

It was at the end of the Spring and Autumn Period when both Laozi and Confucius appeared on the stage (Laozi is usually considered to have lived a couple of decades earlier than Confucius), along with many other influential leaders. It is important to recognize that there are debates about whether or not Laozi was a real person and whether or not Laozi composed *Dao De Jing*, and there has not been any consensus (Mair, 1994; Gu & Guan, 1994). But the existence of *Dao De Jing* and its founding role in Daoism is beyond dispute. Faced with turmoil in family, society, politics, and culture, different scholars and philosophers expressed their respective social and political ideals and made efforts to practice these ideals when they found the support of any ruler receptive to their ideas. Daoism and Confucianism were just two of these schools of thought, and became highly influential in Chinese society and Chinese culture only in the later part of Chinese history. In a turbulent time, how to restore peace and order out of chaos became a major concern, but answers to such questions were various. Due to the scope and focus of this paper, details of these various ideas cannot be expanded on, but the fact that there were many diverse perspectives responding to similar social and personal issues tells us that historical and social contexts influence but do not determine individual perspectives.

Both classical Confucianism and Daoism were concerned with inner and outer peace as a response to their historical time, and their shared intention, first of all, to influence rulers who could settle the turbulence in the world as sage-kings, if they cultivated inner peace. But the channels to accomplish such a task were not the same between early Confucians and Daoists. This difference might be

partially due to which historical heritage they drew upon for further advancement. For instance, Xiaopeng Zhu (2009) argues that Confucianism drew inspiration from the hierarchal and patriarchal society of three ancient dynasties especially the Western Zhou Dynasty, but Daoism went back before the three dynasties to reach into the ancient Chinese matrilineal culture for revelation. Sometimes Confucianism is perceived as *Yang* and Daoism is perceived as *Yin* in Chinese philosophy so they form complementary and interactive dynamics for influencing Chinese society as a whole.

While Confucius and Laozi are usually considered contemporary to each other, so are another pair of leaders in classical Confucianism and Daoism, Mencius and Zhuangzi (there are also debates about Zhuangzi as a historical person). The Spring and Autumn Period led to the Warring States Period in which the larger states formed during the earlier chaos competed through warfare and Chinese society further deteriorated to a state where all traditions were in disarray (Li & Ji, 2001). Mencius and Zhuangzi lived in the middle of the Warring States Period and they were both disgusted by the bloody social conditions of that time. It is significant that both philosophers paid more attention to the individual person than earlier founders of each school, even though their attention was directed toward somewhat different ends. While the *Analects of Confucius* and the *Dao De Jing* both addressed rulers and urged them to become sage-kings who could bring peace to the world, Mencius put more emphasis on common people's individual development (Mair, 1994), and Zhuangzi emphasized the achievement of individual freedom over the governing of society (Ding, 2004). The ruthless governing style of state rulers at that time without any consideration of ordinary people's interests or needs provided a background against which Mencius's further formulation of principles of humane governing for a better society and Zhuangzi's rebellion against any social constrain upon personal freedom were developed.

This brief historical review tells us that the Confucian and Daoist concerns with inner peace and outer peace emerged from one of the most turbulent historical periods in China. Against the existing destructive environment, these masters carved out a basis for initiating engaging social transformation to achieve harmony: personal cultivation. In today's world, facing the threat of unprecedented ecological crisis, social conflict, and nuclear destruction, we may well learn from Confucianism and Daoism that the starting point of peace education is not the world itself, but rather it is within the self. Next, Confucian and Daoist concerns with personal cultivation are discussed.

The Confucian Tradition of Self-Cultivation

For Confucius, the purpose of self-cultivation is to bring peace to others and the

whole world (*Analects of Confucius*, 14.42). Becoming a sage inside and becoming a king outside are inherently related, and self-governance goes hand in hand with the governing of the world. While self-cultivation is fundamental, the self is not an isolated entity but is always in social relationships and cosmic interconnections. The relationship between self and the other can be best stated in the following principle: “A *junzi* wishing to be established himself seeks to establish others; wishing to be expanded himself seeks also to expand others” (*Analects of Confucius*, 6.30, author’s translation). *Junzi* (translated as nobleman, gentleman, superior man, man of perfect virtue, or exemplary person), is the Confucian ideal of a cultivated person.

Such a relational viewpoint of the Confucian self opens an important gate for reaching peace through connecting with others rather than being at war with others. The reciprocal relationship between self and other requires the avoidance of violence. “The *Analects*” states, “do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself” (15.24, author’s translation). Thus Confucius not only promotes a mutually advanced relationship between self and other but also refuses to impose the will of the self onto others. As Fingarette (1979) points out, *Junzi* seeks to actualize the Way but does not impose anything so that “an ideal community in which there is no coercion or imposition of one person’s will upon another” (p. 136) becomes possible. Confucius speaks directly against using force and military violence (*Analects of Confucius*, 7.21) and advocates peacemaking in conducting affairs between states (*Analects of Confucius*, 14.16). For him, government through *Ren*, through moral virtue, through personal exemplars, is the way to promote peace in the world.

The Confucian framework of personal cultivation involves an extension from the self to the other, from the internal to the external, and from the near to the far. The steps of personal cultivation outlined in *The Great Learning* demonstrate a complicated encircling web of relationships in which knowledge pursuit is integrated with moral consciousness and the extension from the near to the far is coupled with the fulfillment of the near under the far. In fulfilling oneself, the relational potentiality of things, others, and the world is also fulfilled. The fulfillment of the world in turn deepens and advances self-realization. Here individual and society become both means and end for each other.

The interdependent relationship between self and society does not mean the loss of individual integrity in interconnections as criticism of Confucianism often claims. Both Confucius (*Analects of Confucius*, 6.17; 7.16) and Mencius (Mencius, 6.2) speak about a strong inner sense of moral mission despite difficulties in external circumstances. It is necessary to follow moral integrity rather than society, especially when the social conditions are incongruent with the Confucian ethical, moral, and political ideals. Both de Bary (1998) and Tu (1985) challenge the common assumption that the Confucian self aims at serving

collective intentions and needs. It seems that the debates about whether the Confucian self seeks social harmony or self-realization miss the essential Confucian teaching about the non-duality between self and society. In the long run, social harmony is rooted in internal harmony and self-realization is dependent on the degree to which a society makes it possible, even though self and society can be at odds with each other. Such a Confucian viewpoint was the platform for both personal transformation and societal reform in wartime China.

How can one achieve inner harmony and promote outer peace with others and between states? Confucius advocates both *Ren* (translated as love, humane-ness, reciprocity, benevolence, perfect virtue, and so forth) and *Li* (translated as ritual or propriety). He thinks *Ren* is the core content of *Li* while *Li* carries the best part of historical legacy. Different from Daoism, which perceives humans as natural beings, Confucius believes that humanity has unique and superior qualities and that moral consciousness and the ability to create civilization make human beings different from other forms of existence.

Ren, is central to both Confucius and Mencius as the ideal quality for both *Junzi* and society. For Confucius, practicing *Ren* depends on oneself rather than others (*Analects of Confucius*, 12.1); he also sees it as a task that is accomplishable for anybody who is willing to try: “Is *ren* far from me? I wish to be virtuous, then *ren* comes at hand” (7.30, author’s translation). Making an important link between *Li* and *Ren*, Confucius considers a loving filial relationship as the basis of *Ren*, which requires the individual to extend familial feelings to others in the world. Mencius’s five human relationships (father and son, ruler and minister, husband and wife, old and young, and between friends) clearly shows that family relationships are the cornerstone of social networks. The filial relationship is listed first. The image of ruler and minister is often evoked as that of father and son, and loyalty between friends is likened to brotherly affection.

Mencius further develops *Ren* as universal human nature and considers the task of practicing *Ren* in a turbulent time as returning to the original source of goodness and restoring peace to the world. Mencius argues that the four feelings of commiseration, shame, reverence, and the sense of right versus wrong are inherent in everybody (Mencius, 11.6). Thus *Ren* becomes ontological, and Mencius stresses the imperative of moral cultivation at the personal level in order to change society at large. For both Confucius and Mencius, *Ren* is much more than reason but is an overarching scheme for emotional, ethical, moral, social, and spiritual growth. Touching people’s hearts rather than enacting legal regulations or engaging in military competition is their concern.

Confucius and Mencius share fundamental humanistic concerns. Their notion of self-cultivation is intricately linked with societal welfare and its essential moral nature is crucial to achieving inner peace and world peace. The Confucian interdependent relationships between self and other, and between individual and

society lay a solid foundation for making nonviolent connections, and this notion of interdependence is an important building block for peace education as both means and end.

The Daoist Tradition of Personhood

Due to their different interpretations of the role of humanity in the universe and the effects of civilization, the Daoist sense of personhood is different from the Confucian self even though both perceive the individual person as the micro-body of the universe. For Laozi, the individual person is a natural being and the highest level of personal achievement is to go back to the original source of life and follow the way of nature. Different from the Confucian view of humans' occupying a superior position in the universe, Laozi lists humanity along with three other important aspects: heaven, earth, and Dao: "Human follows the way of the earth; the earth follows the way of the heaven; the heaven follows Dao; Dao follows the way of nature" (*Dao De Jing*, Chapter 25, author's translation). Here humanity is not more valuable than other aspects but must be in unity with nature. The literal translation of the Chinese for nature is "self-so" or "self-so-ness." To borrow a phrase from contemporary chaos and complexity theory, it is self-organization. This self-so-ness is the Daoist key to everything.

Following the way of nature means respecting and caring for every person and everything and seeking the growth of the whole as well as providing a good atmosphere for the growth of every inanimate and animate thing and human relationship in the family, village, nation, and state. The spontaneity and creativity of self-organization both in the human and natural world is enabled by "the movement of the deep underlying harmony that interfuses and interpenetrates between man and man [*sic*], between men and things" (Chang, 1963, p. 93). It is this sense of movement that the next section will address to highlight the Daoist possibility for going beyond conflicts to reach peace.

With such a belief in nature, it is not surprising that Daoism questions societal conventions that block the spontaneous movement of nature and rigorously calls for unlearning those ideas and practices. So Laozi paradoxically speaks about learning leading to more knowledge but unlearning getting nearer to the Dao: "The pursuit of learning results in daily increase [of knowledge]; following the *dao* leads to daily decrease [of convention]" (*Dao De Jing*, Chapter 48, own translation). Different from the Confucian emphasis on moral values and rituals, Daoism challenges all conventional notions regarding strength, achievement, and knowledge and seeks to go beyond all distinctions, for instance, between right and wrong, good and evil. For Laozi, only after *Dao* is lost do *Ren*, righteousness, ritual, intellect, and trustworthiness become important (*Dao De Jing*, Chapter 38).

He does not necessarily negate the importance of *Ren*, but rather insists that what is more essential is *Dao*, which cannot be achieved without going beyond *Ren*. Zhuangzi claims:

if one has high morals without suppressing desires, cultivates the self without talking about *ren* and righteousness, governs the nation without pursuing success and fame, has a free spirit without retreating into sea and river, has a long life without making efforts to improve the blood circulation and to soften the body, one cares for nothing but gains everything with good things coming to his way; this is the Dao of heaven and earth, the virtue of the sage. (Zhang, 1990, Chapter 15 “Regulating Consciousness,” author’s translation)

The Daoist sage seems to follow a reverse route to wisdom, leadership, and peace.

Does Daoism have a tradition of personhood? This question can become an issue for debate. Even with Confucianism, it is also controversial whether or not a sense of the self exists. Certainly it does not exist in the sense of the self that positions the individual person as a separate entity, and the Confucian construction of the individual is not separate from others or the collective but is interdependent with society. With Daoism, it is even more elusive, as Zhuangzi’s notion of the authentic person ultimately seeks to dissolve the ego in order to become united with *Dao*. His notion of the self becomes paradoxical: selfless self-realization. But in this nondual sense of the self and the universe lies another perspective of personhood. Laozi’s notion of sagehood and Zhuangzi’s notion of authentic personhood all speak to a person’s enlightenment, although Laozi speaks more about the government of the world and Zhuangzi speaks more about achieving personal freedom (Sun, Lu, & Liu, 2004).

Laozi’s vision of a sage is that a sage is first to be compassionate, second to be frugal, and third to refuse be ahead of all in the world. For Laozi, compassion leads to bravery, frugality leads to profusion, and refusal to be the first leads to becoming the chief of all. On the contrary, bravery without compassion, profusion without frugality, and occupying the foremost position without taking the hindmost position lead to death (*Dao De Jing*, Chapter 67). Laozi is well known for his advocacy of softness to overcome strength and of positioning oneself on lowly ground. Doing so, however, leads to success rather than failure. Laozi claims that the sage does not praise himself, does not pursue anything to an excessive degree, and does not compete with others in the world. But precisely because of his non-competition, nobody in the world can compete against the sage who follows the natural course of success (*Dao De Jing*, Chapters 22, 29). This positioning is related to Laozi’s dialectic worldview in which opposites go towards each other. From here it is not difficult to discern his position against war, military advances, and man-made force to impose any will upon people and

the world. Compatible with such a natural course, peace of mind is not achieved by intellectual understanding or emotional attachment but by achieving insight into things as the way they are. For Laozi, if one follows the way of nature in its movement, opposites become a part of the dance of life and nonviolence is the key to the secret of sustaining life energy for human welfare.

According to Huai Zhen Ding (2004), at least four steps are essential to achieving authentic personhood for Zhuangzi. First, one needs to purify one's heart to reach a state of emptiness and quietude. This requires dissolving worries and concerns so one can return to the way of nature. Second, one needs to sit quietly and forget self, things, and the distinction between self and things so as to gradually get in touch with *Dao*. Here lies the paradoxical state of forgetting the self in order to cultivate the self's compliance to *Dao*. Third, one is no longer influenced by the vicissitude of gain and loss, or sadness and happiness, but can adapt to any change freely. Fourth, one persists in efforts to go beyond the secular world, beyond everything under heaven, and beyond life and death until one reaches the unique *dao* in the clarity of the morning light. This process is called "tranquility in turbulence," in which one reaches a carefree state in union with *Dao* after passing through all the turmoil. From this sketch, we can see that the effort to go beyond all conventional concerns is simultaneous with a deepened relationship with *Dao*. The inner peace is not accomplished by escaping or retreating from the world but by the rigorous process of liberating oneself from all the external and internal constraints. This rigor is by no means less demanding than the Confucian advocacy for persistent involvement.

Attaining a peaceful state of mind is the basis for bringing peace to the world. With inner calmness, the Daoist sage can settle that which is restless. In a low position, one draws people and enables others to engage in personal and social transformation for peace. Daoist wisdom is not only contrary to the mainstream of modern Western traditions, but is also often seen as backward and ill-fitting for today's China. As the author argues elsewhere (Wang, 2008), however, Daoism has sustained Chinese civilization, and getting in touch with its vital energy is important for today's education. In particular, its teachings about nonviolence are essential for peace education.

Harmony in Difference and Tranquility in Turbulence: Peace Out of Conflict

Their notion of personhood is a microcosmic that embodies the macrocosmic subjects of Confucianism and Daoism to the critique that they submerge individuality into holism and suppress personal freedom. However, in this

interdependent viewpoint lies the capacity to see a bigger picture and, rather than repressing difference, carve out of conflict a generative space that makes inner peace and world peace possible. Harmony and peace are often perceived as static rather than dynamic and, in the Western critiques of Chinese philosophy, as serving the collective at the expense of freedom. However, the Confucian notion of harmony in difference and the Daoist notion of tranquility in turbulence present a quite different picture. This section discusses these dynamics in relation to peace education.

Confucius says, “A *junzi* seeks harmony not sameness; an inferior man seeks sameness not harmony” (*Analects of Confucius*, 13.23, author’s translation). This sense of harmony, quite contrary to the popular criticism of Confucianism as a centralized and unitary system, incorporates rather than rejects difference and implies variety rather than conformity. According to Chang Chun Wang (2002), this principle of harmony in difference is important to Confucius’ thought and marks its essential openness.

Harmony in difference has several aspects that contribute to peace out of conflict. First, harmony is opposite to sameness and does not come from agreement or blind loyalty but from negotiating with difference within and reaching balance between the Confucian Way and current circumstances. When inner balance is achieved within a person by self-cultivation, a Confucian can deal with external conditions in accordance with the Confucian path. Second, harmony is not conformity. The rejection of sameness is a refusal to follow the mainstream customs, practices, and assumptions of a chaotic age when they do not follow Confucian principles. Both Confucius and Mencius urge *Junzi* to cultivate an internal sense of what is good and what is right. When the external conditions do not allow the actualization of inner principles, *Junzi* should not follow others’ steps. Third, harmony is dynamic and creative as it moves through differences to achieve balance. In the end, the inner peace of a person may not be compatible with external circumstances. Confucius and Mencius believe that retreat from the public world in order to preserve principle is important, and they also advocate sacrificing oneself for the sake of the Confucian way when necessary. In either case, what cannot be given up is the Confucian way. Harmony does not avoid conflict but works through conflict to set peace in motion.

Laozi also emphasizes the role of harmony, “knowing harmony reaches constancy; knowing constancy brings the illumination of insights” (*Dao De Jing*, Chapter 55, own translation). Harmony is reached in the dynamics of opposites, or in Zhuangzi’s phrase, “tranquility in turbulence.” The notion of *Yin* and *Yang* in classical Confucianism is interactive and the privilege of *Yang* over *Yin* was developed later. But in Daoism, the interaction between *Yin* and *Yang* and the

creative potential of such an interaction is essential. Quietude, stillness, tranquility of the mind, and peace of the world all come from the interplay between opposite cosmic forces. “*Dao De Jing*” is full of teachings about how opposites mutually transform each other. Opposites do not become enemies to compete against and win over the other or even eliminate the other. The *Tai-ji* symbol illustrates well an inherently built-in existence of *Yang* within *Yin* and of *Yin* within *Yang*. When *Yin* and *Yang* are interconnected in this way, they cannot be at war with each other, as the killing of the other implies the killing of the self. It is the interaction of two opposite forces that holds the key to harmony. In this sense, peace itself is in movement rather than a static state of mind or human affairs. As Edward J. Brantmeier and Jing Lin (2008) argue, “Peace is to be understood as both a process and result of balance and harmony that is negotiated and renegotiated over time. It inherently transcends duality and dichotomy” (p. xv).

Since the Daoist notion of harmony and peace incorporates difference, opposition, and multiplicity, being able to see conflicting sides of the same issue and follow the two courses at the same time in an interconnected web of life is important. When situated in a broader context, what is initially perceived as conflict becomes a connected part of the whole. Zhuangzi’s story about the monkey and the monkey trainer is an interesting example:

Once upon a time, there was a monkey keeper who was feeding little chestnuts to his charges. “I’ll give you three in the morning and four in the evening,” he told them. All the monkeys were angry. “All right, then,” said the keeper: “I will give you four in the morning and three in the evening.” All the monkeys were happy with this arrangement. Without adversely affecting either the name or the reality of the amount that he fed them, the keeper acted in accordance with the feelings of the monkeys. He too recognized the mutual dependence of “this” and “that.” Consequently, the sage harmonizes the right and wrong of things and rests at the center of the celestial potter’s wheel. (Zhuangzi, 1994, p. 16–17)

This ability to follow two courses at the same time and thus to bring the freedom to turn to either the left or the right depending upon the circumstances demonstrates a deep insight into the ways things are in the bigger picture and goes beyond the confinement of either right or wrong. When dualism is transcended, the tensionality of conflict is pulled back into the whole to bring peace to turbulence. The situation is solved with a shift of the lens, a lens that sees through problems to bring clarity and open alternatives. This Daoist playfulness with paradoxes and contradictions emanates a sense of humor that relieves the fixation of any orthodoxy, whether it is the conventional notion of ego or the popular norms of the society. Tranquility in the midst of turmoil is full of smiles and laughter; peace and humor go hand in hand.

Harmony in difference and tranquility in turbulence embody the capacity to see through conflicts for shared humanity, but without sacrificing independence and freedom. Peace is not about reaching consensus or a fixed course but about seeing conflicting courses at the same time and searching for a route that leads to a win-win situation for all parties. Peace education is not about transmitting fixed knowledge or skills but about cultivating a capacity to understand the dynamic interplay of all factors in a situation in order to come up with interdependent strategies that evoke the peaceful aspects of all parties. In such an approach to peace and peace education, cocreating a shared life is not dependent upon eliminating differences but upon promoting nonviolent relational dynamics that draw out the best part of all participants in a community.

Inner Peace Reaching Outer Peace in Governing and Leadership

The inner peace of Confucian and Daoist sages is brought forth to influence the world through their respective visions of good government. Confucianism advocates government through *Ren* while Daoism advocates government through *Wuwei*. These notions challenge teachers and teacher educators to examine their roles in educating students and, particularly in peace education, to enact peaceful exemplars in their work.

In Confucianism, the moral orientation of *Ren* is inherently related to social progress. Government through *Ren* is accomplished by a Confucian sage who cultivates the supreme virtues within his heart and exercises inner sagacity to meet outer kingliness. This kingly way is the way of moral power. A benevolent government intends to reach out for people and lead by evoking positive responses from people rather than by legal or military force. Influencing people by moral persuasion without coercion is essential to Confucian governing. When Zigong asks about Confucius' choices among three conditions for an effective government—sufficient food, arms for defense, and the common people's confidence in their leaders—Confucius lists common people's confidence as the first priority (*Analects of Confucius*, 12.7). Similarly, for Mencius (*Mencius*, 4.1), opportunities presented by heaven or earth cannot compete with the united power of people, and this unity comes from governing through *Ren*. The control of the state border, the difficult barriers of mountains and rivers, and the strength of arms are, none of them, equal to the effects of governing through *Ren*.

The Confucian avoidance of force not only includes military force but also includes other forms of force such as legal force. For Mencius, caring for people is the most important task for governing; if people do bad things due to poverty but government punishes people legally, such a mode of governing is equal to

framing the common people for committing crimes (Mencius, 5.3). When conflicts are dealt with by underlying humane principles of morality, the mutually enhanced relationship between the part and the whole (and among parts) can be promoted to achieve long-term peaceful effects.

Laozi's governing principle is *Wuwei* (see *Dao De Jing*, Chapters 2, 3, 37, 57, & 63). Although *Wuwei* literally means "non-action," it does not mean doing nothing. David Loy (1985) reads it as nondual action. *Wuwei* in "*Dao De Jing*" is coupled with its opposite, *Wubuwei*, which means being free to do anything (Chapters 37, 48). When a sage governor follows the *Dao* of nature, success comes without imposition. Laozi says, "Dao holds on to *wuwei*; yet through it everything is done. If nobility and kings can keep it, everything will transform itself" (*Dao De Jing*, Chapter 37, author's translation). *Wuwei* leads to the transformation of everything but does not force any change. To accumulate strength, like water flowing downhill, *Wuwei* keeps a low position.

From this position, the Daoist commitment to nonviolence is made evident and Daoism has a unique emphasis on non-possession, tranquility, spontaneity, and gentleness. Both Laozi and Zhuangzi are opposed to the use of warfare in government. Laozi affirms that the Daoist sage cannot rely on the force of arms for governing because such aggression is a curse and will eventually lead to decay. What is against Dao will perish (*Dao De Jing*, Chapter 30). He further claims that victory in battle should be commemorated with a mourning ritual rather than glorified by celebration (Chapter 31) and that "when two armies match each other in force, the one holding compassion will win" (Chapter 69, author's translation).

If conflicts should not be resolved by combat, the Daoist leader enables nonviolence by starting with what the common people want: "The sage does not have a selfish heart; he considers the heart of the people as his heart" (*Dao De Jing*, Chapter 49, author's translation). While the Confucian extension of *Ren* from self to other and further to the world runs the risk of seeing one's own principles and ideals as good for others, Laozi's sage king does not attempt to control the common people but gives them space for personal and social engagements. Laozi envisions the power of the sage as embedded in returning to the original source of nature: "I adopt *wuwei*, yet the people transform themselves; I love quietude, yet the people correct themselves; I do not interfere, yet the people enrich themselves; I do not desire, yet the people return to the state of nature" (*Dao De Jing*, Chapter 57, author's translation). With the nourishing of life as its fundamental purpose, Daoism enables inner and outer peace through a path less traveled.

The Confucian and Daoist styles of leadership teaches educators important lessons about uniting the means and end in peace education. When educating for peace is not engaged through peaceful means, the message cannot fulfil its own

potential. In schools and educational settings, various forms of violence are practiced in the name of serving students' best interests: labeling and tracking of students, focusing on developing students' intellectual power at the expense of emotional and spiritual growth, rewarding students' obedience rather than their critical thinking, demanding nationalism and glorifying war, to just list a few. But they are impositional rather than educational. And they exist both in Chinese and American schools and colleges in different forms. If we locate peace education under such an impositional mode of pedagogy and in such an institutional system, the message of peace is already lost before it reaches students' ears. Educational systems, teaching contents, and pedagogical relationships all need to undergo radical transformation if we are to enact a peace education which locates wholeness, integrity, complexity, embodiment, and freedom at the center of educational practices. Peace education involves intellectual, emotional, social, aesthetic, and spiritual cultivation of personhood situated in history and society to promote a culture of nonviolence.

On a cautious note, achieving inner peace and world peace in the contemporary age cannot fully come from furthering any one tradition but lies in a dynamic interaction of different perspectives and positions. That is why both Confucianism and Daoism are discussed; historically Chinese culture, philosophy, and politics have benefitted from the interaction between both—sometimes in resonance but most of the time in conflict—in responding to the needs of particular contexts. Moreover, both traditions have their limitations, and Neo-Confucianism and Neo-Daoism have emerged in contemporary contexts to address those limitations and learn from the strength of other traditions. Neither of them can be the key to unlocking the complexity of contemporary transnational, cross-cultural, globalized society; even the complementary combination of the two may not be adequate. Dialoguing with Western thought and other Asian philosophies is a work that must be done, but cannot be covered in this essay. Advocacy of nonviolence and peace is part of the best worldwide tradition that we need to regenerate (Smith-Christopher, 1998; Wang, in press). It transcends national or cultural boundaries. We need to look more closely at the inter-space created by the mobile world in which we live now in order to create multiple pathways of nonviolence and peace education. In other words, “a third space” (Wang, 2004) holding transnational hybrid movements and inter-civilizational dialogues offers new promise in a new age. But in the context of Western education, which knows little about Confucianism and Daoism, we need to learn more from both in order to participate in both local and global dynamics of peace and peace education.

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