

Confucius' Analysis of the Human Nature of Irrationality and His Quest for Moral Education

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Abstract

This study uses mainly Confucian classic Lunyu to explore Confucius' insightful thinking about humans' strong innate nature of irrationality out of their physical needs. Irrationality causes interpersonal disturbances and chaos, and as such moral education is indispensable. Confucius advocated humanity, the principles of conscientiousness and charity, to help people's instinct work in a rational way by managing their irrational desires. To achieve rational behavior, Confucius taught his students Six Classics, namely Shijing (classic of poetry), Shujing (classic of history), Lijing (book of ritual), Yijing (classic of changes), Yuejing (classic of music) and Chunqiu (annals of spring and autumn). By mastering these classics, a person could inculcate in himself a rational character through self-discipline and self-indoctrination. This study reveals humans have great potentials to redirect their innate irrational behavior towards a rational state through moral education.

Keywords: Confucius, Lunyu, human nature, irrational, moral education

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Introduction

Since the start of economic reforms in the 1980s, China has made substantial material progress but has witnessed the field of moral education seriously lagging behind. Such a situation having adverse social implications on public security and building a harmonious society cannot be ignored any more. Du Shizhong (2007) has criticized that, in the present circumstances, moral education in China is tantamount to ‘political education and behavior training’ which shapes and ‘limit individuals’ life to satisfy social needs blindly’. As a consequence, it has confined ‘people’s life to suit what a society needs’, thus turning morality into ‘a compulsive life outside the humanity domain’ (Feng Jianjun, 2011). So it is not strange, as Hu Zhongping (2005) argues that fundamental mistakes have been made in the orientation of moral values and in the theoretical approach of moral education, even though people are unwilling or afraid to admit the current moral rationality is flawed with strong self-interest.

Indeed, more and more social members have confused social ethics with moral education; the latter is built on rectifications of human nature and humans’ subsistence as individuals of a society. Hence, what is moral education and how it is related to the teaching of Confucius is the analytical tool of this paper. China has been influenced by Confucianism for over two thousand years. The founder of Confucianism is Confucius, whose important remarks and deeds on moral education were recorded in the classic book *Lunyu* in which we will investigate the relationship between human nature and moral education.

Confucius lived at the end of Spring and Autumn period of China (770-476 BC). He was the first one in ancient China to advocate teaching without making any social distinctions in education.¹ According to *Shiji* (史記), the historical writings of Si Maqian, Confucius had over 3000 students from many social classes, and 72 of them were the brightest.² It is said that he mastered the cultural heritage and knowledge of China 2500 years before him, and opened up a new phase of Chinese traditional culture till today. Thus, despite being criticized during the May 4th Movement (1919) and the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), Confucius has played a linking role in the 5000 years of Chinese civilization and history (Qian Mu, 2011, p. 165). Works on his doctrines and ideas including *Lunyu*, which was compiled by Confucian scholars after Confucius over two thousand years ago, are among the most influential in the Chinese political ideology and governance, carrying the equivalent weight of the Bible to the Chinese (Li Zehou, 1998, p. 5). What is intriguing in this paper is to examine *Lunyu*’s discussion of human nature and irrationality.

The human nature of Confucianism

In *Lunyu*, Confucius rarely pointed out directly what human nature was like, except one sentence:

Men, in their nature, are alike; but in practice they become widely different.³

On this issue, his senior student Zigong once commented that he hardly heard his teacher talking about human nature and the mandate of heaven, as Confucius was more inclined to touch on more concrete issues.⁴ However, the successors of Confucian scholars such as Mencius, Xuncius, Dong Zhongshu and some others had their own human nature views, which could be summarized as follows (Judson B. Murray, 2012):

- (1) human nature tends to realize its potentials for moral goodness;
- (2) nature of human beings is inherently and inevitably bad for morality;
- (3) people’s nature includes factors of both morally good and bad; and
- (4) innate nature of people is neither good nor bad.

Mencius held the first view, and he always argued against Gaocius who supported

the fourth viewpoint. Gaocius was not a pure Confucian follower because he also practiced Mohist school of thought, as pointed out by Zhao Qi, a scholar in Han Dynasty based on his *Notes of Mengzi*. In one of the debates, Gaocius argued that there was no moral goodness or badness in human nature, and turning a person into one of good morality was just like using an osier to make a wooden cup. Mencius reacted that nurturing people's moral characters was not the same as making a wooden cup, because making the cup you need harm the osier while nurturing morality is to develop one's innate potentials for goodness, without harming anyone.

In another debate, Gaocius compared human nature to water which, like its directions of flow, did not represent good or bad. However, Mencius responded that although the directions might be unpredictable, water's downward flowing trend is unchangeable which is comparable to humans' innate compulsion towards goodness.⁵ This contrast in view is symbolic of the confrontations between the holders of the first view and the fourth one.

Xuncius is the representative of the holders of the second point of view. For Xuncius, people are born with inherent instinct, which would cause conflicts among individuals. Thus Xuncius insisted that human nature is always morally bad, and it is through acquired education that could nurture people's morality towards kindness, and this applies to all individuals, even to sages.⁶ We can see that the doctrine of Xuncius was derived from his interpretations of human's irrational intentions due to innate physical desires.

The third view could also be found in the theory of Dong Zhongshu, a famous Confucian of Han Dynasty who helped establish the political dominance of Confucianism in the Chinese society. Dong believed that human beings are the epitome of the universe and the reflection of all essences under the heaven, and the universe is comprised of two opposing courses – *yin* and *yang*. Therefore, human nature is also constituted by *yin* and *yang*. *Yin*, put simply, represents the negative part of the nature while *yang* means the positive part, so human nature includes both goodness and badness of morality.⁷

Human nature of the Confucian masters cited above are all used as a basis of their educational thoughts. These thoughts would determine what moral education could pursue and accomplish to help people actualize their human rationality (Judson B. Murray, 2012). The situation would be the same to Confucius. Actually, there are many places recorded in *Lunyu* that Confucius was good at educating people on the issue of human nature.⁸ He was so confident in the role of education that he once sighed and said: '*Who can go out without using the door? Why, then, not follow this Way?*'⁹ Moreover, plenty of evidence was found suggesting that Confucius contended to use metaphysical theories to guide people to behave rationally as he was fond of using a so called 'connecting principle' to teach by concrete activities.¹⁰ Thus we have good reasons to believe that Confucius' human nature interpretations were hidden in his words or between the lines in his written works. The classic book *Lunyu* is where we could find his human nature views on moral education backed by his teaching practice and demonstrations by examples.

Irrationality: the basis of human nature

A tenable theory always needs a solid starting point of logic. The same goes for Confucius' human nature theory which also has a logical starting point. Apparently, any proper education, especially for the purpose of actualizing people's nature, is under the precondition of human survival. Thus, all moral education researchers should not deny that physical needs are basic instinct of humans. This thinking was best illustrated when Confucius travelled on one occasion to a principality called Wei (Weiguo 卫国), outside his own principality Lu (Luguo, 鲁国), with a student who was his carriage chauffer. He remarked, 'What a large population here!' 'With such a large population, what should be done?' his student then asked. 'Enrich them.' answered Confucius. 'And after that?' asked the disciple. 'Educate them' was the response from Confucius.¹¹

Educating people is the quintessence of Confucianism. To Confucius, however, it must be built on the basis of mass numbers and enrichment. Undoubtedly, only after meeting the basic requirements of subsistence could the population grow, and only when living resources are abundant would people be prepared to be educated. It is self-evident that only abundant supply would satisfy physical needs and ensure the survival of individuals. In this sense, Xuncius said: 'people when hungry demand to be full, to be warm when cold, and to have a place of comfort when tired, and that's humans' nature.'¹² When individuals have more resources to satisfy their physical needs, the better they would live as individuals. So Confucius did not conceal his favor of wealth, signifying that if there was a chance to be rich, he would take it no matter how lowly the job was, as long as it was legitimate. His implication is that it is human's nature to draw on advantages and avoid disadvantages, which I would quote him below:

If wealth were a permissible pursuit, I would be willing even to act as a guard holding a whip outside the market place', and, 'Riches and honours are objects of men's desire...Poverty and a low position in life are objects of men's dislike...'¹³

In fact, Confucius went beyond physical and physiological demands by pointing out that irrationality would follow people's instinct, for which he set out the following warning signal:

There are three things which a man should be beware of in his three stages of life. In youth, when his body is not physically formed, he should be beware of lust. In manhood, when his physical powers are in full vigour, he should be beware of strife. In old age, when his physical powers are in decline, he should be beware of greed.'¹⁴

Accordingly, Confucius observed that human irrationality takes different forms—lust, strife and greed which are instinctual and derived from human demands, leading to interpersonal conflicts and confusion between social members depending on the stages of one's life. Irrationality has rooted in our physical body, in control of the impulses of physical needs, and as part of us during the whole life span. At times, the irrationality of our desire can be so powerful that it could hardly or completely be controlled by moral doctrines and externally set social rules and legislative measures. In this regard, Confucius observed by analogy this:

I do not see a man who loves moral worth in men more than he loves beauty in women.'¹⁵

It is a case of conflicting pursuit of human moral worth which clashes with the innate outpouring of animality to love beauty in women. Maybe the words said over a hundred years ago by Karl Marx, a famous German philosopher much respected in modern China, could explain it: since humans have evolved from animals they will never be able to get rid of animality thoroughly. The problem merely lies with the extent they could break away from animality, and this differentiates humanity from animality (1960, p. 110). Nevertheless, Confucius recognized the irrational physiological needs with strong animality are basic instinct of human nature in his educational thoughts, although he did not articulate this point directly. This leads us to elaborate subsequently how rationality functions in the real world.

The social functions of rationality

As mentioned above, humans' animal-rooted instinct shows non-rationality against humanistic social norms in daily operations. This concurs with Xuncius' discourse which highlighted: 'people are born with physical desires, so they would appeal strongly to satisfy their desires. Without proper channels to satisfy them, they would go for uncompromising measures, and this could result in chaotic confusion and disturbance.'¹⁶ Seeing rationality as indispensable in our life, Confucius embodied it in humans' daily life using two principles.

The first principle is: *'What you do not wish others to do unto you, do not do unto others.'*¹⁷ This principle is similar to the second golden rule of the United Nations in setting the basis of harmonious relationship between nations in international affairs. In Han Dynasty a few hundred years after Confucius, this idea was further expounded in *Hanshiwaizhuan* where it said: *'If you detest starvation, you would understand well the desire of hungry people in demand for food. If you detest toil, you would understand why people would seek for comfort. If you detest poverty, you would understand why wealth is sought after by people.'*¹⁸ Based on similar token, Confucius added the second principle: *'Help others to take their stand so that they themselves are willing to take that stand, and help others to get where they themselves want to be there.'*¹⁹

Zhucius, a famous Confucian scholar of the Song Dynasty, said: *'it is the principle of conscientiousness when one spends one's own energy to help others, and the principle of charity to put oneself in the place of another.'*²⁰ The first principle mentioned above is the principle of charity, and the second one, which is deduced from the first one, is the principle of conscientiousness. By practicing the two principles simultaneously, humans are in a better position to coordinate their different sources of desires, and therefore, attain harmonious compromise between them. This kind of harmony is defined as humanity (ren 仁) in the ancient Chinese dictionary known as *Shuowenjiezi* (说文解字), where the highest moral values set by Confucius could be found.²¹ In this aspect, Zengcius, one of Confucius' best students, drew a concluding remark that Confucius' teaching could be subsumed in two words: *conscientiousness* and *charity*.¹⁰

It is these two principles that help to harmonize individuals' desires and connect social members together, and they are essential qualities to make a righteous man. Qian Mu (2002, p. 162-163), an influential scholar in modern China, explained why men with no integrity could still survive by luck because they are supported by righteous people without whom the whole society would collapse, just as what Confucius said: *'That a man lives is because he is straight. That a man who dupes others survives is because he has been fortunate enough to be spared.'*²² Indeed, Frank Thilly (1901, pp. 258-259) argued that *'the relations between man and man are so close in a civilized community that every member's behavior is bound to produce effects upon the environment as well as upon the agent himself.'* That's why Confucius advocated that the substance of all moral characters is *'for oneself'*.²³

Qian Mu (2011, p. 7) further discussed morality *'for oneself'* as a component of altruism which follows the tenets of filial piety, fraternal duty, conscientiousness and charity. However, it is out of emotional needs and high-level requirements, according to Qian, that fulfilling of the tenets of altruism is a sort of self-interested behavior.²⁴ Taken in this sense, there is internal consistency between self-interest and altruism, and the key is to nurture the social and high-level needs of one which can connect him to other social members. Qian Mu (1974, p. 8) continued to emphasize that once members are connected together by high-level moral values and expressing true emotions, a society would not require any gods. In Confucius' words, *'to work for the things the common people have a right to and to keep one's distance from the gods and spirits of the dead while showing them reverence can be called wisdom.'*²⁵

Thus, only by understanding the shared moral values and the values of the existence of others can rationality develop. In this sense, rationality can drive not only humans' instinct but also their high-level and social needs, towards a righteous judgment of what is right or wrong. A man with pure rationality, according to Confucius, would even sacrifice himself for the benefits of the majority to complete his moral personality. For example, *'for a gentlemen of spirit or a man of humanity while it is inconceivable that he should seek to stay alive at the expense of humanity, it may happen that he has to accept death in order to have humanity accomplished'*, as Confucius said.²⁶ With the development of rationality, an individual would identify himself with the society, following willingly the moral codes of society consciously. Correspondingly, Confucius said:

Living upon the poorest fare with cold water for drink, and with my bended arms for a pillow, – I could yet find pleasure in such a life, whereas riches and honors acquired through the sacrifice of what is right, would be to me as unreal as a mirage.²⁷

Qian Mu (2002, p. 166), in an attempt to source the origin of pleasure within altruism and self-sacrifice commented that morality actually comes from human nature, as part of nature. When natural beauty is felt by human heart and expressed in art forms, morality and arts would help a virtuous person to appreciate art. Pleasure from art appreciation, which does not depend on too much substances, explains why Confucius could find pleasure with little material gains, making him indifferent to fame and wealth in the secular utilitarian world. Thus, Confucius put a high value on the study of arts in his personality-cultivating education, especially Chinese classical music. Apparently, in the educational thoughts of Confucius, it is believed that music, especially when it is performed with the rites, could inculcate and promote people's morality. There is a record in *Lunyu* that Confucius discussed on the enlightenment function of music with one of his disciples who had been a local official.²⁸ It was music, rather than other disciplines, that was always the focus of Confucius in matching the rites with moral education in *Lunyu*.

In summing up, we can see that people's rationality serves two functions. The first is to coordinate individual's physical and physiological requirements while the second one, which is based on the first one, is to cultivate people's high-level needs by connecting with other social members, helping each other to eliminate unlimited material desires. In doing so, a man would find pleasure in life, happy with little material comfort and low-level needs. Attaining rationality is to harmonize instinct needs and live peacefully with other social members. Attention is now shifted to how an irrational man might be turned into a rational man.

The process to develop a man from irrational to rational

As mentioned above, humans' basic survival depends on physical needs which are low-level needs filled with innate irrationality with a huge possibility of causing chaos in human societies. This corresponds with what Xuncius once commented: 'whether gentlemen or base persons, their innate dispositions are similar', and this explains why Confucius said 'men, in their nature, are alike'. Though people's innate nature is alike, 'in practice they become widely different'. In a word, the human nature in *Lunyu* could be summarized as having a bad inclination but with potential for good.

Confucius differentiated irrationality from rationality in that humans' natural qualities are integral of irrational animality. Only through education would humans acquire rational sociality and Confucius advocated to mix animality and sociality together to attain a psychological structure blending nature and nurture of people (Li Zehou, 1998, p. 18).²⁹ But building this kind of structure needs substantial amount of learning and ability in putting together man's innate feelings and knowledge (Qian Mu, 2011, p. 5). Unfortunately, Confucius found that people are always born without knowledge but they could acquire it via education.³⁰

Therefore, Confucius put a high value on learning by which knowledge and rationality could be acquired. For him, having an insatiable desire to learn is essential in achieving rationality.³¹ Confucius referred to himself as a man who would make all efforts to acquire knowledge, so much so that he might neglect food, and forget his sorrows of life and old age while enjoying time spent on learning.³² Confucius urged young men to learn to be a good son at home, a good citizen in society, and being judicious and truthful.³³ Based on this, Confucius would offer six Classics, which were tied in with the Chinese culture of the time, including *Shijing* (classic of poetry), *Shujing* (classic of history), *Lijing* (book of ritual), *Yijing* (classic of changes), *Yuejing* (classic of music) and *Chunqiu* (annals of spring and autumn), as courses. Each classic could make one form different moral characters, and it recorded: people may nurture gentleness and sincerity from *Shijing*, in-depth understanding of things and foresight from *Shujing*, respectfulness and moderateness from *Lijing*, perception and clarity from *Yijing*,

magnanimity and amiableness from Yuejing, and didactic perspicacity concerning historical events from Chunqiu.³⁴

Nevertheless, what was even more important in learning was to understand and digest what one had learned, with thinking, because no Classic is perfect. For example, learning Shijing without reflection and thinking would lead one to be foolish; some contents of Shujing was criticized to be fictitious even during pre-imperial times of China; and Lijing for being cumbersome; Yijing for being superstitious; Yuejing for being self-indulgent; Chunqiu for being disordered.³⁴ In this respect, Confucius focused on the integration of learning and thinking very much, as he said: *'Study without thinking is labour lost. Thinking without study is perilous.'*³⁵ Apparently, thinking supplements learning and learning supplies information for thinking. Only through thinking could one transform knowledge into the cognitive structure, namely getting the thread of the acquirements.¹⁰ Meanwhile, people's personality, the structure of nature and nurture, could be built up through ethical learning, and humanity was the highest level of personality Confucius mentioned.

Confucius did not deny the function of law to keep social order, but without moral education he was not convinced the judicial and penal system only could work well.³⁶ He said thus:

*Guide 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. Guide them by virtue, keep them in line with the rites, and they will, besides having a sense of shame, reform themselves.*³⁷

Strictly speaking, moral education and law enforcement share different social functions, and they complement each other in helping rationality win a place in society. Law tends to resolve temporary, direct problems while moral education is obviously better suited to resolve more fundamental, longer term problems.

Conclusion

The human nature view in *Lunyu* has enlightened us that moral education is essential in inculcating rationality in man, having potential to contribute towards building a harmonious society. Moral education is needed due to humans' innate nature of animality, with its basic instinct of desires inclined to be anti-social and irrational. Conflicts arising from irrational desires have called for resolutions to settle frictions and problems between individuals or groups who have non-compromising interests of conflict. Moral education, a key element of Confucian teaching, has played and will continue to play an important ideological and socio-political role in China in building a harmonious society. Hence, moral education including art and music has to be strengthened in the school system of China. Inculcating more rational values and behavior will have great potential towards constructing a harmonious and more considerate society. Therefore, true moral education is to cultivate high-level emotions and needs based on human's innate nature by rationality nurturing and art accomplishment, which goes beyond education of political belief and behavior involving a large number of related fields.

Notes

1. See Section 15, *Lunyu* (论语·卫灵公第十五). It records: *'In instruction there is no grading into categories.'* And in Section 7 (述而第七), it also records: *'I never denied instruction to anyone who, of his own accord, has given me so much as a bundle of dried meat as a present.'* However, it does not mean that Confucius refused to teach those who could not afford to pay. Actually, many disciples of Confucius were very poor, such as Yan Yuan (颜渊), Zhong Gong (仲弓), Ran Boniu (冉伯牛), and so on. Confucius loved them very much, and he cried over the death of Yan Yuan, saying: *'Heaven has forsaken me!'* (Section 11, *Lunyu* 论语·先进第十一). A Confucian follower Mengcius also commented that Confucius would always

welcome people to consult him, however, without any remuneration (Jinxin Part II, Mengzi 孟子·尽心下).

What is worth mentioning is that the English versions of *Lunyu* by both Gu Hongming (2013) and Liu Dianjue (2008) have been for the reference of this paper.

2. See *Kongzishijia, Shiji* (史记·孔子世家).

3. Original from Section 17 of *Lunyu* (论语·阳货第十七).

4. See Section 5, *Lunyu* (论语·公冶长第五) where Zigong said: *'One can get to hear about the Master's accomplishments, but one cannot get to hear his views on human nature and the Way of Heaven.'*

5. *Gaozi, Mengzi*(孟子·告子篇).

6. In *Xing'e, Xunzi* (荀子·性恶篇), it is said: *'The nature of human beings is morally bad, goodness is artificial'* (人性之恶, 其善者伪也), *'The position of a gentleman and a base person is the same'* (君子与小人, 其性一也) and *'Every passerby has the potentials to be Yu'* (涂之人可以为禹). Yu was a sage in the history of China, born four-thousand years ago.

7. See *Chunqiuflanlu* (春秋繁露): *'Heaven has its dual operations of yin and yang, and a person has his dual character of greed and humanity. Heaven sometimes restricts yin. Likewise, a person sometimes would weaken his emotions and desires, following the Way of Heaven.'* Yin and yang represent a unity of opposites in the world, and *yin* is the negative part, with *yang* the positive part, such as male and female, day and night, the sun and the moon, life and death, and so on. So *yin* means moral badness while *yang* is moral goodness in the field of morality. Dong Zhongshu advocated that Heaven tends to develop *yang* but suppress *yin*, in contrast with Dong' who felt that yin and yang are in a more balanced state (Judson B. Murray, 2012).

8. In Section 5 of *Lunyu* (论语·公冶长第五), Confucius said:

'Even in a very small town there must be men who are as conscientious and honest as myself: only they have not tried to cultivate themselves as I have done.'

Without proper cultivation people are still able to be as conscientious and honest as Confucius, so the moral qualities are out of potentials of human nature. Therefore, Confucius educated people according to their potentials rather than taught them blindly to be conscientiousness and honest. In other words, Confucius' teaching corresponded with the natures of people.

9. See Section 6, *Lunyu* (论语·雍也第六).

10. In Section 4, *Lunyu* (论语·里仁第四), there is a dialogue between Confucius and his disciple Zeng Shen:

Confucius said: 'Shen! In all my life and teaching there is one underlying connected principle.' 'I see.' answered Zeng Shen.

After Confucius had left, the other disciples asked Zeng Shen: 'What did the master mean by what he said just now?' and Zeng Shen said, 'The principle in the master's life and teaching is comprised in the two words: conscientiousness and charity.'

And there is another one in Section 15, *Lunyu* (论语·卫灵公十五):

Confucius once said to Zigong: 'You think, I suppose, that I am one who has learned many things and remembers them all?' 'Yes,' replied Zigong, 'but is it so?'

'No,' answered Confucius, 'I unite all my knowledge by one connecting principle.'

The 'connecting principle' means to have a single thread binding all the acquired knowledge, also could be interpreted to build a cognitive structure on a field.

11. Section 13, *lunyu* (论语·子路第十三).

12. See *Xing'e, Xunzi* (荀子·性恶).

13. The two chapters are from Section 7 and 4 of *Lunyu* (论语·述而第七、里仁第四)

14. Section 16, *Lunyu* (论语·季氏第十六).
15. Section 15, *Lunyu* (论语·卫灵公第十五).
16. *Lilun, Xunzi*(荀子·礼论篇).
17. See Section15, *Lunyu* (论语·卫灵公十五).
18. Section 12, *Lunyuzhengyi* (论语正义·颜渊第十二).
19. Section 6 of *Lunyu* (论语·雍也第六).
20. Section 4, *Lunyujizhu* of *Sishujizhu* (四书集注·论语集注·里仁第四).
21. In *Shuowenjiezi*, the Chinese character *humanity* (ren 仁) was explained as *cong ren cong er* (从人从二), meaning harmony among individuals.
22. Section 6, *Lunyu* (论语·雍也第六).
23. In Section 14 of *Lunyu* (论语·宪问第十四), Confucius remarked:

'Men in old times educated themselves for their own sakes while men now educate themselves to satisfy others.'

'For one's own sake' is another translation of the phrase 'for oneself' (wei ji 为己). Apparently, Confucius advocated the spirit of studying 'for oneself' of ancient people, because all the acquirements and moral characters are to satisfy one's needs, including both spiritual and material needs, in order to build a rational kind of personality, rather than conform to what others want blindly, as he said: '*A wise man will not make himself into a mere machine or tool* (jun zi bu qi 君子不器), which is from Section 2 of *Lunyu* (论语·为政第二).

24. Qian Mu said people always fulfill the principles of filial piety, fraternal duty, conscientiousness and charity, which is altruistic, for their own sake. In fact what he meant is that people do this out of their emotional and high-level requirements.

25. See Section 6, *Lunyu* (论语·雍也第六). Actually, there are many places reflecting Confucius' attitude to mysterious force, for example:

The topics Confucius did not speak of were prodigies, force, disorder and gods (Section 7 of *Lunyu* 论语·述而第七).

And:

Jilu asked how the spirits of the dead and the gods should be served. Confucius said: 'You are not able even to serve man. How can you serve the spirits?'

'May I ask about death?'

'You do not understand even life. How can you understand death?' (Section 11, *Lunyu* 论语·先进第十一).

26. Original from Section 15, *Lunyu* (论语·卫灵公第十五). In Section 12 (颜渊第十二), there is a chapter that could play a role as a supplement interpretation of Confucius' outlook on morals and death:

Zigong asked about government. Confucius said: 'Give them enough food, give them enough arms, and the common people will have trust in you.'

Zigong said: 'If one had to give up one of these three, which should one give up first?'

'Give up arms.'

Zigong said: 'If one had to give up one of the remaining two, which should one give up first?'

'Give up food. Death has always been with us since the beginning of time, but when there is no trust, the whole human group will not be able to remain alive.'

It is still Qian Mu who has understood the wisdom of Confucius on this chapter most to the point. According to Qian (2002), in everyday situations, the order should be food, arms and trust, but in special case, it is necessary to keep trust before food, because people, who are mortal inevitably, are still able to obtain food as a result of common efforts even though they may starve temporarily when times are tough, or the whole group would disappear. Therefore, though people ought to cherish their lives, sacrificing is necessary sometimes.

27. See Section 7, *Lunyu* (论语·述而第七).

28. From Section 17, *Lunyu* (论语·阳货第十七), the original is:

When Confucius on one occasion came to a small town where one of his disciples was Chief Magistrate, he heard the sounds of music and singing among the people. He then, with a mischievous smile in his look, remarked, 'To kill a chicken why use a knife used for slaughtering an ox?'

'Sir,' replied the disciple who was Chief Magistrate of the town, 'I have heard you say at one time that when the gentlemen of a country are highly educated, it makes them sympathize with the people; and when the people are educated, it makes them easily amenable to government.'

'Yes,' answered Confucius, turning to his other disciples who were present, 'He is right: what I said just now was only spoken in jest.'

Actually, Confucius had a fairly complete education on music himself, and got his own musical insight. For example, once he said in *Lunyu*:

'This much can be known about music. It begins with playing in unison. When it gets into full swing, it is harmonious, clear and unbroken. In this way it reaches the conclusion.' (Section 3 八佾第三)

In a word, it was Confucius' profound musicianship that played a basic role in his music education.

29. In Section 6 of *Lunyu* (论语·雍也第六), Confucius said:

'When there is a preponderance of native substance over acquired refinement, the result will be churlishness. When there is a preponderance of acquired refinement over native substance, the result will be pedantry. Only a well-balanced admixture of the two will result in gentlemanliness.'

Native substance is animanity and acquired refinement is sociality. However, basis of sociality is just rationalized animanity, so without animanity sociality would lose its groundwork, turning itself into pure restrictions and fetters. So Zhucius said that it is better to be churlishness than to be pedantry when elaborating this chapter in his *Sishujizhu*. Based on this, Li Zehou put forward the view of psychological structure of nature and nurture.

30. Confucius mentioned 'those who are born with knowledge' in Section 16 of *Lunyu* (论语·季氏第十六). Nevertheless, he denied being this kind of persons himself and never saw them, as recorded in Section 7 of *Lunyu* (论语·述而第七).

31. The original is from Section 7 of *Lunyu* (论语·述而第七).

32. See Section 7 of *Lunyu* (论语·述而第七).

33. In Section 1 of *Lunyu* (论语·学而第一).

34. See *Jingjie, Liji* (礼记·经解).

35. From Section 2 of *Lunyu* (论语·为政第二).

36. There are many records in *Lunyu* that Confucius praised the representatives of the legalist school, such as Guan Zhong, Zi Chan, for their contributions to ancient China, although he did not advocate this school very much.

37. From Section 2 of *Lunyu* (论语·为政第二).

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