

ON VALUING WHAT IS FITTIN, THE GUIDANG CHAPTER OF THE *LUSHI CHUNQIU* AND SOLVING MORAL PROBLEMS

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*Abstract: Are there material and moral connections between wealth and moral values? Do people require a certain level of material well-being to be moral? Can people choose freely to abide by moral values when their physical or material well-being are in jeopardy? Can people be expected to follow moral values when their self-interests would be advanced by not adhering to moral values? Does technology create impersonal relationships that make immoral acts easier to perform? Can ethical reasoning be taught? This paper explores insights from ancient China, especially the *Lüshi Chunqiu*, to argue that moral education is an ongoing developmental process that people must constantly cultivate to value the appropriate moral action for the particular context at hand. Some contemporary approaches to the importance of teaching ethical problem solving will be reviewed.*

Are there material and moral connections between wealth and moral values? Do people require a certain level of material well-being to be moral? Can people choose freely to abide by moral values when their physical or material well-being is in jeopardy? Can people be expected to follow moral values when their self-interests would be advanced by not adhering to moral values? Does technology create impersonal relationships that make immoral acts easier to perform? Can ethical problem solving be taught? This paper explores insights from ancient China, especially the *Lüshi Chunqiu* 吕氏春秋, to argue that moral education is an ongoing developmental process that people must constantly cultivate to value the appropriate moral action for the particular context at hand. Some contemporary approaches to the importance of teaching ethical problem solving will be reviewed.¹

Influenced by the four aims of life from the *Upanishads*, Abraham Maslow proposed that people's most basic needs had to be met before they could mature and develop social and moral values.² Many deontological, duty based moralities, advance the notion that people can and must adhere to the moral values in the face of immediate personal adversity or future retaliation for doing the right thing. There may

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² Abraham H. Maslow. 1954. *Motivation and Personality*. New York: Harper & Brothers. See my application of Maslow to *zide* (tzu te 自得) in "Three Models of Self-Integration (tzu te) in Early China," *Philosophy East and West*, 37/4 October, 1987, 372-390.

be a contextual truth to both perspectives. On the one hand from a developmental perspective people have to achieve and maintain a degree of physical and material well-being to attain the requisite level of mature understanding required to acquire moral values, and to develop the will power to behave according to those values. After attaining a high level of maturation people are, then, in a position to make sacrifices, to suspend their personal self-interests, to do their duty for its own sake regardless of the consequences or social repercussions. The deontological notion of doing duty for duty's sake is not unique to Kant. It is found in many warrior cultures such as the Zulu, Vikings, Kshatriya caste and so on; all the warrior cultures understand the need for people but especially the warriors to do their duty, stand their ground and sacrifice for the sake of others. In order to do your duty for duty's sake, people must achieve a level of maturation to be able to make personal sacrifices, and to override drives and other organic processes tied to survival to do the right thing for the right reason. They must override; their self-interests, when necessary to do the right thing. If people are not given the material means to sustain a healthy life, then they will be far less likely to be able to perform moral actions or even participate in positive social relationships.

The infamous case of the Ik (pronounced 'eek') in Uganda Africa is a case in point. After the Ik, a hunting and gathering people, were forced to live on a reservation and the feeble attempts to teach the Ik farming techniques had failed, the Ik were reduced to a very low level of poverty and extreme starvation such that most social and moral relationships had broken down.³ They were no longer able to cooperate with each other, let alone work together for a common good. So, from their experience we can conclude that without sufficient resources to sustain life, people cannot be expected to override biological, survival drives for the greater good of social and moral purposes. For people to be moral they must have sufficient resources to sustain life and sufficient emotional maturity to create, hold and maintain ethical values; without the resources they cannot be good. For morality to be put into practice, society must achieve a high level of well-being.

I. Definitions and Two Assumptions: Value and Free Will

A few definitions are in order. Absolutists often speak as if there were only one system of morality. In fact there are many moralities or belief systems that judge human actions to be morally good or bad. Ethics is a branch of philosophy that studies moralities. Ethics is an abstract endeavor that passes judgment on the belief systems of morality. Hence the importance of teaching ethical problem solving is that it allows people a means by which they can critique and correct insufficient or irrational moralities. Learning to use ethical problem solving also assists others to decide when to intervene as a witness to immoral acts.

Any discussion of ethics and morality is based on the assumption that people believe that some things are more or less valuable than others, and that people believe

³ Colin M. Turnbull. 1972. *The Mountain People*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

that they have the ability to choose one course of action over another. I do not have the time or space required to argue that people can and do believe in the relative value of things. The fact that people do believe in the relative value of things should be readily available to most people. People do have values and their moral values are some of the most cherished and respected of values. The question of whether or not people have the freedom of will power to make choices is another hotly debated topic that cannot be resolved here. For the time being, let us assume that most people are able to control their choices. Free will must be a reality, if any discussion of ethics is going to be meaningful. People must have the free will to choose, and they must be able to choose the moral or good alternative. If people cannot choose to be moral or if people do not have the free will to choose at all, then making moral choices would be impossible.

II. Immoral Acts

The consequences of immoral acts can have and have had far-reaching even global consequences. Immoral acts are performed within a wider context of general social harmony. Immoral people have little or no regard for the negative consequences of their actions and sometimes they intend and celebrate the negative results. Although many times immoral acts are specifically intended to harm a particular person, generally speaking, many immoral acts are not intended to harm anyone particular person nor is the expected result of the action intended to benefit the person performing the action. For example, mass murder, suicide bombings, and violence against ethnic out-groups bring little or no benefit to the perpetrators, and they are directed at a group. After being named by *Fortune* magazine as the most innovative company for six consecutive years, Enron collapsed, in 2001, under the weight of its immoral accounting practices and fraudulent shell companies. A year later, in 2002, WorldCom improperly accounted for \$3.8 billion in operating expenses and filed for bankruptcy. In 2008, we saw the collapse of several large investment firms such as Bear Stearns, Lehman Brothers, Merrill Lynch and various other financial institutions that were directly linked to immoral or illegal acts. These financial collapses were correlated with greed and a lack of concern for others in an impersonal, technological environment. The list can be developed further. Most wars in world history were motivated out of excessive self-interest, greed for wealth and power, and a lack of concern for the well-being of other people. The impacts of these wars and the other events have been far-reaching, even global.

The impact of what at first appear to be small scale immoral acts, such as one person lying to, or cheating, or hurting another person, have an insidious way of creeping into and tainting the overall social context. Immoral actions occur within the context of interpersonal harmony, trust, and social order. The impact of relatively small scale immoral actions can have far-reaching and even global ramifications, especially when technology can help spread the actions' influence far, wide and quickly.

Ancient China provides a unique literary culture with values and perspectives that differ from our own contemporary points of view that can be employed to inform

our discussion of ethics and the study of moralities. Can ancient Chinese texts teach us anything about ethical problem solving that we can apply to our circumstances today?

III. The *Lüshi chunqiu* 吕氏春秋 on Valuing What is Fitting

To study the *Lüshi chunqiu* (*Lü-shih ch'un-ch'iu*) or *The Spring and Autumn [Annals] of Master Lü* is to enter into the tumultuous but progressive times of the Warring States period (403-221 before the Common Era, hereafter BCE) in China.⁴ This period is commonly referred to as the pre-Qin period because of the fundamental changes which occurred after the Qin 秦 unification. The *Lüshi chunqiu* was probably completed, in 241 BCE, by various scholars at the estate of Lü Buwei (Lü Pu-wei 吕不韦), also known as Lord Wenxin 文信侯, the prime minister of Qin 秦 and tutor to the Qin child King, Zheng.⁵ It is one of the few pre-Qin texts that dates itself. The date, though not precise, is given in the *xuyi* 序意 chapter.⁶ A decade after the

⁴ John Knoblock and Jeffrey Riegel. 2000. *The Annals of Lü Buwei*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press. See Richard Wilhelm, trans. 1979 reprint. *Frühling und Herbst des Lü Bu We*, with a new introduction by Wolfgang Bauer. Düsseldorf: Eugen Diederichs Verlag. The first edition of the translation was reviewed by Paul Pelliot, 1930, a review of Richard Wilhelm's *Frühling und Herbst des Lü Bu We*, *T'oung Pao*, XXVII. Also see Eugen Feifel. 1975. "A Review of Frühling und Herbst des Lü Bu We" *Philosophy East and West*, 25/1. Some of the more significant commentaries among the Chinese editions are: Yang Jialuo, ed. 1977. *Lüshi chunqiu jishi deng wushu*, contains Xu Weiyu's commentary. Taipei: Ding Wen Publishing Co. Chen Qiyou, ed. 1984. *Lüshi chunqiu jiaoshi*. Shanghai: Xuelin Publishing Co. Chang Shuangdi, et al., ed. 1986. *Lüshi chunqiu shizhu*. Gulin: Gulin Wenshi Publishing Co.

⁵ Lü Buwei sponsored thousands of scholars and compiled them in *The Lüshi chunqiu*. For an historical background and analysis of the text in general see the following. James D. Sellmann. 1998. "Lüshi chunqiu," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. E. Craig, Routledge, and 1995. "Lü Buwei," in *Great Thinkers of the Eastern World*, ed. Ian McGreal, HarperCollins. Michael Carson, and Michael Loewe. 1993. "Lü shih ch'un ch'iu," in *Early Chinese Texts A Bibliographical Guide*, ed. Michael Loewe. Early China Monograph Series No. 2, The Society for the Study of Early China, and the Institute of East Asian Studies. Berkeley: University of California. John Louton. 1981. *The Lü-shi chun-qiu: An Ancient Chinese Political Cosmology*, University of Washington, unpublished dissertation. For a detailed discussion of Lü Buwei's sponsorship of the *Lüshi chunqiu* see the following. Sima Qian. 1975. "Lü Buwei 'liezhuan'," in *Shiji xuan*. Taipei: Wenyi Publishing Co. Qian Mu. 1956. *Xian Qin zhuzi xinian*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, pp. 485-489. Guo Moruo. 1962. *Shi pipanshu*. Peking: Koxue chubanshe, pp. 387-460. Derk Bodde. 1967. *China's First Unifier, A Study in the Ch'in Dynasty as seen in the Life of Li Ssu*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, pp. 1-22. These are all discussed at length by John Louton. *The Lü-shi chun-qiu: An Ancient Chinese Political Cosmology*. pp. 22 ff. Bodde's later understanding is detailed in Denis Twitchett and Michael Loewe, eds. 1986. *The Cambridge History of China*, Volume I *The Chin and Han Empires*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 40-43, and 95.

⁶ The Postscript chapter [or *xuyi* 序意] tells us that the work was completed "in the eighth year of Qin ...". There is a debate still unresolved as to what year that would be. Hu Shi (Hu Shih) and others use King Zheng's enthronement to propose that "the eighth year" refers to 238

completion of the *Lüshi chunqiu*, King Zheng began the ensuing nine years of fervent warfare that led to his unification of the empire in 221 B.C.E. Before the political unification, the *Lüshi chunqiu* (LSCQ) created a philosophical consolidation.⁷ The *Lüshi chunqiu* (LSCQ) performed an important function in the literary and political education of the young King Zheng. More importantly, it provided a philosophical understanding of and justification for a unified empire which left its mark on the young King, and subsequent Han philosophy. After the unification of the empire, King Zheng took the title *Qin shihuangdi* (First-generation Emperor of Qin 秦始皇帝), and he established the insignia of water for the imperial emblems, extinguishing the fire emblems of the Zhou court. He did this by employing concepts from *Lüshi chunqiu's yingtong* (Responding and Identifying 應通) chapter that describes the

BCE. Hu Shi. 1961. "Du *Lüshi chunqiu*" in *Hu Shi wencun*. Volume. III, ed. Pu Jialin. Taipei: Far Eastern Book Co. Qian Mu's argument is more convincing; he uses the year of Lü Buwei's appointment, 249 BCE, to begin the calculation. So I follow his date of 241. See Qian Mu. 1977. "Lü Buwei zhushukao," appended to Yang Jialuo's preface to *Lüshi chunqiu jishi deng wushu*, no page numbers. Qian Mu's study is briefly discussed by Kung-chuan Hsiao. 1979. *A History of Chinese Political Thought*. Translated by F.W. Mote. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 557, n. 19. Also see Michael Carson and Michael Loewe. 1993. "Lü shih ch'un ch'iu," in *Early Chinese Texts A Bibliographical Guide*.

⁷ When I speak of a "philosophical consolidation" or a "syncretic philosophy" the reader should *not* be under the impression that these were discrete "schools" of philosophy. The different philosophers or masters (*zi* 子) had much to dispute concerning their respective understandings of the way (*dao* 道). For example, Mengzi (Mencius) clearly differentiated his alignment with Kongzi (Confucius) versus Mo Di (Mo Ti), Yang Zhu (Yang Chu), and others. However, the idea that there were discrete "schools" was advanced by later interpreters, such as the author of chapter 32 of the *Zhuangzi*; Sima Tan and Sima Qian the principal authors of the *Shiji*, and Liu Xiang and Liu Xin. Certainly the "disputers of the *dao*" had their differences; see A.C. Graham. 1989. *Disputers of the Tao*. La Salle, (Illinois): Open Court. However, they were not so much at "war" with each other as later interpreters have led us to believe by imposing the "warring states" model on to the so-called "schools" of philosophy. In the arts of rulership and statesmanship, it was and is pragmatic to amalgamate various diverse positions. The label *jia* (school 家) was developed by historians and bibliographers primarily to classify the various books. During the Han Dynasty, when imperial policy was being directly configured by conflicting philosophical schools (now commonly referred to as the Modernists and the Reformists) there was an anachronistic tendency to read this kind of contention back into the pre-Qin period. During the pre-Qin period, the rulers either did not take the philosophers seriously (Kongzi is the classic example) or when the rulers or prime ministers did pay attention to academics, they supported a broad spectrum of them which is seen in the Jixia Academy's compilation of the *Guanzi*, and Lü Buwei's *Lüshi chunqiu* (LSCQ). Therefore, when I utilize expressions like *daojia*, *fajia*, *Daoist*, or *Legalist*, I am not contending, nor should the reader imply, that there was an organized school or systematic philosophy of "Daoism" or so-called "Legalism." I merely employ those expressions as convenient labels. For the debate between the Modernists and Reformists during the Han Dynasty, see Denis Twitchett and Michael Loewe, eds. 1986. *The Cambridge History of China*. Volume I *The Ch'in and Han Empires*, pp. 104-106, 128, 144, and 488-489. Concerning the misleading bibliographical classification system, see pp. 651-52.

succession of previous dynasties that changed imperial emblems according to the timely cycle of the five phases (*wuxing* 五行). Qin shihuangdi changed the emblems to justify his new dynasty.⁸

The *Guidang* 貴當 chapter (Valuing What is Fitting, or Prizing What is Fitting *Guidang* according to Knoblock's translation) provides an analysis of the reasons why leaders, that is rulers and ministers, or contemporary managers for that matter, need to follow a moral way or *dao* 道. If the ancient texts are going to be relevant to modern life, then I suggest that we understand ourselves today to be the leaders or rulers and ministers that can take advantage of LSCQ=s teachings. The examples given in the chapter emphasize the importance of the particular context that people find themselves in, the importance of maintaining healthy friendships, and the need to "plow" or cultivate oneself and others to promote success.

The *Guidang* chapter opens with the following counsel to follow the correct approach or *dao*. The illustrious reputation cannot be purposefully sought. It must be achieved by following the *dao* 道. Control of things depends, not on the things, but on men. Control of men depends, not on the men, but on the task. Control of the task depends, not on the task, but on the feudal lord (or the manager). Control of the feudal lord depends, not on them, but on the Son of Heaven (or the executive). Control of the Son of Heaven depends, not on him, but on his desires. Control of the desires depends, not on the desires, but on the developing character (*xing*, inborn nature 性). Developing character is the fundamental consideration in the myriad things and can be neither increased nor decreased, for it is what definitively makes each thing the thing that it is. This is a constant principle of Heaven and Earth. (Modifying Knoblock, p. 620)

There may be a tendency to want to read the concept of *xing* (developing character 性) as an innate capacity and Knoblock implies this by translating *xing* as "inborn nature." I argue elsewhere that *xing* is best understood as an ongoing life process.⁹ The subsequent arguments and examples given in the *Guidang* 貴當 chapter emphasize the ongoing, developmental, dynamic and contextual character of moral development and ethical problem solving. The chapter goes on to say that the moral exemplars, such as Kings Tang and Wu practiced self-cultivation, and the world followed their lead. On the other hand immoral tyrants, such as Jie and Zhou Xin were contemptuous, and the people rebelled against them. The paragraph

⁸ Qin Shihuangdi is supposed to have adopted the symbol of water to show that he had extinguished the Zhou symbol of fire. See Derk Bodde's discussion of this, and his refutation of the criticisms against the claim that Qin did not adopt the symbol of water in Denis Twitchett and Michael Loewe, eds. 1986. *The Cambridge History of China*, vol. I, pp. 77, and 96-97; for the significance of the water-symbol in the Han dynasty also see, pp. 119, 208, 729-730 and 737. However, as far as I can tell I am the first one who has drawn a connection between this passage in the *LSCQ's yingtong* chapter and the First Emperor's claim to legitimacy.

⁹ James Sellmann. 2002. *Timing and Rulership in "Master Lü's Spring and Autumn Annals*. Albany: State University of New York Press. See chapter 2.

concludes: “The prince of virtue (*junzi* 君子) pays close attention to what resides within him and to nothing else.” What resides within him is a learned ability to reason morally, not an innate capacity.

For example the chapter goes on to relate a story about an expert physiognomist who had an audience with King Zhuang. The physiognomist admits right off that he cannot predict a person’s destiny by his physiological appearance, but rather he does it by examining the person’s friends. When he examines a commoner and discovers that his friends are filial, dutiful and obedient, then he predicts that the person will be prosperous and his family will flourish. Likewise the physiognomist does the same thing when he examines ministers and rulers, he predicts their destiny by studying their friends. Again, the better their friends are the better their destiny is likely to be. This provides the basis for a social epistemology for ethical problem solving. Namely, people need to be surrounded by successfully moral people to be moral themselves. This can be called the practice of correct association. People must associate with other people who practice being moral to be moral themselves. Of course this was also recognized by Aristotle who had a lot to say about the importance of proper friendships and how they promote a person’s ethical development and ultimate success for achieving a complete and happy life.¹⁰

Therefore, worthy rulers/leaders give timely audiences to people of moral refinement and cultivation, not merely so they will be surrounded by them, but because through them they achieve great things. With them important and minor tasks can be completed (Modifying Knoblock, p. 621).

If leaders, executives, managers or even common people are going to be successful they need to work with others who are themselves morally upright and successful.

Because aristocrats and rulers, in ancient China, were often fond of losing themselves in hunting and racing events, these activities were typically associated with irresponsible behavior. The next passage in the chapter proposes that morally worthy people can engage in such hunting and racing activities to sharpen their thinking, while incompetent people become confused by engaging in such activities. This is an interesting point. It is not so much what specific activities people engage in that helps them develop, but rather it is the mind-set and attitude that they bring with them to engage in the activities that makes a difference regarding the outcome of the activity.

The chapter emphasizes this point with a story about a poor man from Qi who loved to hunt, but he was not successful because his hunting dog was no good. He could not afford to buy a better dog. So he returned to the fields and dedicated himself to plowing. Then he acquired some wealth, could afford to buy a good hunting dog, and he became a very successful hunter. The example serves to show that dedication and hard work or *Aploving* pave the way to success. It also shows that people

¹⁰ Aristotle. 1941. *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon. New York: Random House. See the *Nicomachean Ethics*, book 8.

must have a material base; their basic needs must be met. They are able to act freely and creatively, to plow or to cultivate themselves to improve their lot in life and to better themselves

From antiquity to the present, there has never been a case of anyone becoming a lord-protector without first ‘plowing.’ This is what sets the worthy apart from the unworthy. The worthy and unworthy have the same desires as ordinary people. Wherein they differed was how they pursued their desires. Thus, when a worthy leader examines a course of action and finds it improper, he will not follow it, and when he considers it proper, he will. Since what he does always follows the *dao*, nothing can harm him. Thus, his accomplishments surpass those of others ten thousand fold. (Modifying Knoblock, p. 622)

The authors of the chapter argue that people have to develop their capacity to engage in ethical problem solving to do the right thing, at the right time, and in the proper manner. When people live in harmony with and according to the moral *dao*, practice right friendship by associating with ethically good people, and they “plow” or apply themselves to work hard in a rational manner to achieve their objectives and goals, then, people are valuing what is fitting.

As the *Guidang* chapter emphasizes, the importance of building and maintaining proper, ethical friendships cannot be overstated. Humans need social contact with others to become ethical, rational and to develop the skills needed to solve moral problems. Without social and moral contact human beings will not and cannot develop their personhood as a member of a moral community. To the extent that technology creates an artificial distance and alienation between people, it would appear that technology makes it easier for some people to engage in immoral and criminal acts because they cannot sense the others’ pain; they cannot empathize or sympathize with the unseen, unheard other against whom they are perpetrating the immoral or criminal act. Generally speaking it is becoming clear that the present generation of youth who were raised on the internet seem to have a lack of concern for issues of privacy and personal property, especially when online or on the internet. They seem to live in a “cut and paste” world without intellectual property rights. The online social networks are providing a context for people to redefine ownership and sharing, to redefine personal interaction and privacy. With the advent of electronic stock trading and the emerging global economic market place, we have already seen the negative global impact of corrupt, immoral and illegal economic practices. This is my concern for online, distance education, namely, that with the lack of human contact online students, learning at a distance, will not develop sound ethical problem solving skills. So I am concerned that education at a distance may not be the best way to instill the importance of being moral or learning the processes of solving ethical problems.

IV. Solving Ethical Problems

Plato’s dialogue the *Meno* grapples with the question of whether or not people can

learn to be moral. In the end Socrates proposes that being moral cannot be learned. It is a gift from the gods or a "... divine dispensation."¹¹ I hope that is not the case. If the ability to be moral is a gift from the gods, then there is a two-sided negative consequence. On the one hand someone may obtain the moral gift but cannot understand the gift, or worse than that, he cannot perform moral actions. On the other hand, someone who does not obtain the gift has no other way to discover the proper course of action. But people are moral and ethical. People are able to improve their morality and ethics and become better at it. So morality and the ability to solve moral problems cannot be a divine gift or innate capacity, it must be something that people can learn to do.

As an educator, a professor and a dean, I believe that people can learn how to engage in moral problem solving. Robert J. Sternberg (2010) has constructed an eight step model of moral behavior that seems to apply to a variety of ethical problems.¹² "The model identifies the specific skills students need to reason and then behave ethically. The skills are taught by active learning—by having students solve ethical-reasoning problems, employing the skills they need." (Sternberg, p. 36) Sternberg's model is based on bystander intervention research. Sternberg points out that based on family, school and religious training, we expect bystanders to intervene, but this is not the case. In keeping with the above discussion from the *Guidang* chapter, people need to "plow" or work diligently at being moral. Sternberg proposes that regardless of the amount of formal training a person might have if that person is going to intervene, then she must go through all eight steps in his model to act morally. The eight steps are:

1. Recognize that there is an event to which to react.
2. Define the event as having an ethical dimension.
3. Decide that the ethical dimension is significant.
4. Take personal responsibility for generating an ethical solution to the problem.
5. Figure out what abstract ethical rule(s) might apply to the problem.
6. Decide how these abstract rules actually apply to the problem so as to suggest a concrete solution.
7. Prepare to counteract contextual forces that might lead one not to act in an ethical manner.
8. Act (Sternberg, pp. 36-37).

To illustrate the model, he employs a simple example of one student, John, observing another student, Bill, cheating on an exam.

First, John has to see Bill cheating and he has to decide that he can potentially do something about it. Second, John has to recognize Bill's actions as immoral. Although many would consider cheating to be immoral, some may consider that it is alright if Bill can get away with it. Third, John has to decide that Bill's cheating is serious enough that it warrants his attention. Fourth, John has to decide that he is personally responsible for taking action to solve this problem. Many times people will feel that there is an ethical problem but that they are not personally responsible for the solution. Fifth, John has to figure out what rule or rules apply to this problem. He

¹¹ Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, eds. 1980. *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. 'Meno,' pp. 353-384. Socrates concludes "...whoever has virtue gets it by divine dispensation." p. 384.

¹² Robert J. Sternberg. 2010. "Teaching for Ethical Reasoning in Liberal Education," *Liberal Education*, 96/3, Summer, 32-37.

might decide that the rule to follow is that he should mind his own business. Sixth, John has to decide how to apply the rule to the problem so as to find a concrete solution. Even though John may believe that he should report Bill for cheating, he may not be able to prove that Bill did cheat. Seventh, John has to counteract forces that might lead him to reconsider and not take action. For example, John might fear being shunned by Bill and others for being a snitch.

Eighth, the ultimate end of solving ethical problems is not merely about changing what a person thinks but also it is about changing how a person takes action. John has to go from thinking about what to do to actually doing something. Ethical problem solving must lead to moral action. A person requires courage or moral fortitude to do the right thing. A high level of motivation is not only required to intervene as a Good Samaritan but a high level of motivation is also required to initially perform a good moral act, especially moral actions that go against self-interest.

Solving ethical problems, it would be hoped, can be taught and more importantly can be learned and put into practice. People are not born innately moral and ethical. Morality is not a gift from the god(s). As Edward Slingerland has pointed out people also have a propensity for seriously violent, harmful emotions and behaviors.¹³ This is not to say that there are no organic dispositions or propensities that allow for people=s moral and ethical development. The Mammalian disposition to play and to care for their young allows creatures to consider the feelings of others. The organic dispositions are not sufficient in and of themselves to generate moral feelings and behaviors. If we believe that an innate ability does not require further development, then we destroy ourselves (see *Mencius* 2A:6). People must be instructed in the art of being moral and they must be taught how to engage in critical, ethical problem solving so that they do not become captive to a narrow belief system or a culturally relative belief system. After being born with organic dispositions to behave and choose in certain ways, people need to be raised, trained and educated in a culture and society mostly composed of morally responsible persons. As such moral and ethical development cannot be separated from the project of person-making.

Building on the work of Eliot Deutsch, I want to argue that person-making is the process of appropriating our biological, environmental and cultural givens in an articulated or artful manner such that a person manifests personal and cultural potentials, ultimately participating in the achievement of transcultural person-making or personhood.¹⁴ I have argued that ritual and the performance of ritual-actions play an important role in our personal development, in our transformative experiences, and

¹³ “Mencius’ particular picture of this shared taste may be overly rosy: a more extensive, well rounded account of innate human emotions . . . would have to include our propensity for horrific out-group violence; our powerful desires for wealth, power, comfort and sex; and the prevalence for opportunistic selfishness and convenient self-deception.” Edward Slingerland. 2011. “ ‘Of what use are the *Odes*?’ Cognitive Science, Virtue Ethics and Early Confucian Ethics.” *Philosophy East and West*, 61/1, 880-109, p. 98.

¹⁴ Eliot Deutsch. 1982. *Personhood, Creativity, and Freedom*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, chs. 1, 3, and 5. Eliot Deutsch. 1992. *Creative Being: The Crafting of Person and World*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.

that ritual allows for the creative achievement of personhood.¹⁵ To be moral and ethical as noted above persons must be able to act freely. Ritual actions, and other performance opportunities provide a venue for acting freely. In dealing with a more general question of how an action can be performed such that the action and the actor realize their highest potential, Deutsch gives the following definition of acting freely:¹⁶

To act freely means to act skillfully in fulfillment of the natural grace manifest in every action-related process and thereby to attain an effortless power. To act freely is to express the achievement of personhood; it is to be self-expressive in action.

Deutsch goes on to give a careful analysis of the terms “skillful,” “natural grace,” and “effortless power.” It is not a coincidence that Deutsch’s analysis of Freedom parallels and has similar phrasing to that of Victor Turner’s analysis of Csikszentmihalyi and MacAloon’s coinage “flowing” which Turner likens to his own description of “*communitas*.” There is an important link between comparative philosophy and anthropology when Turner compares *communitas* with D.T. Suzuki’s discussion of wisdom (*prajñā*).¹⁷ Freedom, flowing, *communitas*, *prajñā*, *satori*, *nirvāṇa*, *moksha*, ritual, play, acting-as-if, these terms describe some of the respective processes in the achievement of person-making. The practice of moral actions and the development of ethical problem solving skills require the achievement of person-making.

In a world of bipolar, nondual, interpenetrating and interrelated opposites, wealth, material well-being, and moral values are dialectically interlocked. Without material well-being, without some level of wealth, persons cannot *afford* to be moral or ethical. That is to say that people who are trying to survive, people who are on the brink of starvation or being killed will not be able to override organic drives to survive in order to perform moral or ethical acts. They do not have sufficient freedom to be moral. However, most people who perform immoral acts are not living on the brink of starvation or annihilation. So why are they so easily motivated *not* to do the right thing?

It has been noted by psychologists that people often feel threatened by the challenges of modern life such that they have the impression that their lives are being threatened.¹⁸ The “dog eat dog” mentality of today’s capitalism and general business practices leave people feeling as if they are on the brink of starvation or annihilation,

¹⁵ James Sellmann. 1997. “Achieving Person Through Ritual,” *Asian Culture Quarterly*, XXV/2, Summer.

¹⁶ Deutsch. 1982. *Personhood, Creativity and Freedom*, p. 116.

¹⁷ Victor Turner. 1982. *From Ritual to Theatre*. New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, pp. 55-58, and Victor Turner. 1976. “Social Drama and Ritual Metaphors,” in Richard Schechner and Mady Schuman, eds., *Ritual, Play and Performance*. New York: The Seabury Press, pp. 112-116.

¹⁸ The idea that peoples’ stress leads or misleads them to believe that their lives are being threatened is made in different ways in various disciplines. For example see, Livia Kohn. 2008. *Chinese Healing Exercises: The Tradition of Daoyin*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, pp. 22-23. And see, Robert Kegan and Lisa L. Lahey. 2001. *How the Way We Talk Can Change the Way We Work: Seven Languages for Transformation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass; pp. 2-7.

when in fact they are living comfortably. A person who is actively engaged in the achievement of person-making becomes aware of the biological, organic “fight or flight” reaction to stress in order to act freely, creatively and ethically. The higher values of moralities and ethics can be and are achieved through the transformative experiences of person-making. Therefore, by valuing what is fitting in the ancient traditions, modern people can learn to improve themselves and their moral actions.