

SELF-CULTIVATION AS EDUCATION EMBODYING HUMANITY

Tu Wei-ming

The primary purpose of Confucian education is character-building, and the starting point and source of inspiration for character-building is self-cultivation. This deceptively simple assertion is predicated on the vision of the human as a learner, who is endowed with the authentic possibility of transforming given structural constraints into dynamic processes of self-realization. The true function of education as character-building is *learning to be human*. Paideia or humanitas is, in its core concern, educating the art of embodiment. Through embodiment we realize ourselves (body, mind-heart, soul, and spirit) in community, nature, and Heaven.

The overriding concern of the Confucian tradition is education. The primary purpose of Confucian education is character-building, and the starting point and source of inspiration for character-building is self-cultivation. The *Great Learning*, one of the four cardinal texts in Confucian moral education, asserts that “from the emperor to the commoner every person must, without exception, regard self-cultivation as the root.” This is a claim about a moral ideal and an articulation of faith. Furthermore, it is the natural expression of a style of moral reasoning: self-cultivation is seen as the basis of family harmony and family harmony in turn serves as the basis for the governance of the state. Indeed, only when states are governed is there peace under Heaven. Therefore, all human beings, from the most powerful to the least influential, are obligated to actively involve themselves in this humanist joint venture of self-realization through their own moral effort of self-cultivation. The *Great Learning* assigns self-cultivation the pivotal position in its comprehensive

educational program because of an awareness that human survival, as well as human flourishing, depends precisely on this kind of communal critical self-consciousness. It is more than moral idealism and pedagogical optimism that motivates the Confucians to take self-cultivation as the root of family harmony, state governance and world peace. It is the faith in the improbability of the human condition through cumulative individual effort that prompts them to ground their moral education on self-cultivation.

This deceptively simple assertion is predicated on the vision of the human as a learner, who is endowed with the authentic possibility of transforming given structural constraints into dynamic processes of self-realization. Learning, in this connection, is the procedure by which our bodies are vaporized to become aesthetic expressions of ourselves. The true function of education as character-building is *learning to be human*. Through humanization, we embody the humanity inherent in our nature. By digging a well into our ground of existence we are empowered to tap into the spiritual resources of our own life water to create, nourish and sustain an ever-expanding network of human-relatedness as well as to actualize our full potential as feeling, thinking and willing individuals.

The underlying assumption of this seemingly unbridled Pelagic view of human nature is that all members of the human community possess a heart-mind which is endowed with the capacity for affectivity, cognition, and connotativity. Surely, from an evolutionary perspective, humans, animals, plants, and rocks are consanguineous. We humans share a great deal of our basic instincts with other mammals and our knowledge of ourselves can be substantially enhanced by studying other life forms, not only dogs and horses but bees and ants as well. Yet, there are dimensions of human experience that cannot be meaningfully explained in terms of animal behavior; for example, no matter how ingeniously animal behavior is interpreted, it cannot account for the significance humans find in food and sex. Although it is not necessary to specify the uniqueness of being human as diametrically opposed to or completely separated from the rest of the animal kingdom, to reduce the salient features of the human to merely an example of animal behavior is unjustifiable even in sociobiological terms.

Individual diversity features prominently in the uniqueness of being human. As an ancient Chinese proverb has it, human beings, like their faces, are all different. Each human being, because of ethnicity, gender, place, time, and natural endowment, is constituted in his or her specific particularity. Duplication is impossible, even if one shares identical genes. As soon as a person is born, the individuality that comes into being is absolutely unrepeatable. There is a kernel of truth to the

existential observation that we all die a lonely death. Indeed, the path that each of us travels is, in its totality, uniquely personal. The Confucian injunction that *learning is for the sake of the self* fully recognizes the centrality of the specific constellation of one's particular human condition. No external demands, including societal encouragement and parental approbation, take precedence over understanding oneself and developing one's own appropriate sense of direction. Learning for the purpose of character-building is an intrinsic value rather than a means to an end, no matter how noble and lofty the end purports to be.

While learning is for the sake of the self rather than for the sake of others and while each of us, in the last analysis, needs to pursue the path individually and alone, we are not isolated discrete entities but connected centers of relationships. Learning for the sake of the self encourages, indeed urges us to be connected with a variety of communities—family, neighborhood, school, society, nation, region, and the global village. Self-cultivation in the Confucian sense entails “knowing people and taking care of ordinary things” as manifestations of self-knowledge. Through relationships with others and the wider world, we learn to realize ourselves not as abstract concepts but as concrete persons: mothers, fathers, wives, husbands, daughters, sons, friends, colleagues, teachers, students, patrons, clients, benefactors, and beneficiaries. The self, embedded in social relations, realizes its centeredness in dynamic interaction with other selves. Like a flowing stream, rather than a static structure, the self transforms itself as it encounters other selves. This self-transformation in the process of encountering the other entails a process of humanization. In Confucian terminology, humanization (the way we grow up in the human community) necessarily involves ritualization. Human beings learn to be human in a spirit of togetherness through a ritual (*li*) process.

We may envision the ritual process as a twofold educational program. The first is building a cultural code on biological reality. Despite continuity with all modalities of being in the cosmos, humans learn to fully realize themselves by transforming their instinctual demands into social and, occasionally, aesthetic expressions of the self. As the most sensitive and responsive of all sentient beings, humans actively take part in their socialization. They learn to be civil, polite, and kind by living and working with others. Just as there is no private language, there is no private ritual. Ritualization as a social act requires a continuous interchange between the self and an increasingly complex network of human relationships. The creative activity of person-making and culture-making is communal rather than individualistic. Nevertheless, the dignity of the person should not be subsumed under social utility. The Confucian dictum of “learning for the sake of the self” clearly indicates that autonomy and independence are cherished values in self-cultivation philosophy.

The other aspect of the program involves realizing our distinctive personality in an other-related community. Whether or not our sense of freedom is predicated on an awareness of alienation from society, family harmony and, by implication, social solidarity is paramount. A critical consciousness of independence and autonomy need not be in conflict with the recognition that we must be seasoned in social roles. Unless we continuously reflect on the quality of our relationships, we fall short of a meaningful existence. Since, according to the Socratic tradition, the unexamined life is not worth living, without conscientiously appropriating the value of other-relatedness as an expression of our self-care, we cannot live up to the Confucian idea: "If you want to establish yourself, seek to establish others as well" (*Analects*, 6:28).

The apparently narrow ridge between the Scylla of internal individuation and the Charybdis of external socialization provides an open space for the ritual process informed by self-cultivation to occupy the central stage in Confucian education. In this process, human beings are not conceived as self-sufficient, individual souls or content-less, mechanistically programmed robots, but are feeling, thinking, and willing persons committed to self-transformation and capable of self-transcendence. We can characterize the Confucian ritual process as "humanization," a comprehensive and integrated way of learning to be human. The full meaning of this educational program cannot be accounted for either by care of the self or by other-relatedness. Neither individuation nor socialization is adequate in conveying the dynamic interchange necessary for the actualization of the authentic person.

The idea of humanization presupposes humanity (*ru*) as both substance and function. As substance, humanity is a quality. Like the seed or kernel, it constitutes the core and the most important part of all members of the human community. No human being, no matter how exalted, is above humanity, and, no matter how depraved, is beneath humanity. Although it is only when we are deliberately engaged in caring for ourselves that we can be said to be truly in possession of our humanity, as long as we are alive we naturally and spontaneously have access to our humanity. Humanity is that which makes each of us human. Yet, it is the transformative potential of the seed or kernel that makes it a real presence rather than an imagined possibility. If we assume, as most Confucians of the Mencian persuasion do, that the most universal characteristic of being human is "the feeling of commiseration" (or straightforwardly "sympathy"), humanity, in the most elemental sense, must be understood as affectivity. Only secondarily will it be perceived as rationality or connotativity. The idea of sympathy in the Confucian tradi-

tion is compatible with those of reason and intention; indeed, humanity as sympathy is not only feeling but also willing and thinking.

As function, humanity manifests itself primarily in other-related situations. Being sensitive to and aware of those around us requires, at a minimum, an ability to establish a sympathetic resonance with the other. Our heart-mind (*xin*) is such that it is, at least in principle, capable of responding to any aspect of the myriad things in the cosmos—a blade of grass or a distant star. Sensitivity and awareness are innate qualities of the heart-mind. While, in practice, we are often insensitive to the overwhelming majority of things and happenings in the world and unaware of many intimate events around us, the capacity of the heart-mind to be touched and moved is always present. Confucian humanism espouses that the human heart-mind, through its sensitivity and awareness, can form “one body” (*yiti*) with Heaven, Earth and the myriad things.

Normally, however, the specific others that evoke our sensitivity and awareness are those close to us. It is naturally human to feel discomfort when our beloved ones suffer. According to Mencius, our inability to bear the suffering of others, an exemplification of commiseration or sympathy, is the “beginning” (*duan*) of humanity. In practice, the “others” are precisely those who in biological and sociological terms, are closest to us. This childlike attachment to our primary caregiver(s), considered by several major religious traditions as the basis of egoism, is, in the Confucian order of things, not necessarily a hindrance to our self-realization. Indeed, if this relationship is correctly perceived and vigorously cultivated, it provides a rich spiritual resource and abundant supply of energy for personal growth. The focus of Confucian elementary education can be conceived thus: the affectivity between parent and child, one of the most sacred, complex and problematic of human feelings, is taken to be the center of a continuous spiritual exercise enabling us to appreciate human-relatedness in its primordial form. Since the lack of such an affection leads to grave negative consequences for human flourishing, how to develop a proper measure so that the love between parent and child is never lost presents a major challenge. The Confucians are acutely aware of the cost of an obsessive attention to this particular dimension of the human experience. Still, they insist that since a defining characteristic of the human condition is the necessity and desirability of parental care (or its functional equivalent), it seems natural and logical to consider the parent-child relationship as the basis for educating humanity.

The construction of an ethic, an elaborate cultural code, on the basis of a biological reality, seems to be a strategy of making virtue out of necessity. However, the recognition that the parent-child relationship is educationally significant precisely because it is biologically given is predi-

cated on this ethical wisdom: learning to be human begins with an awareness that one is not alone and that one's feeling of attachment is profoundly meaningful for one's moral growth. Indeed, care of the self properly understood is not at all incompatible with other-relatedness. The fruitful interchange between the self and an ever-expanding network of relationships defines the ritual process as humanization.

William James, who insisted that "the ultimate test for us what a truth means is the conduct it dictates or inspires," observed:

Without the impulse of the individual, the community stagnates; without the sympathy of the community, the individual impulse fades away.

This interplay between individual impulse and the sympathy of the community strongly suggests that our "stream of thought" is not merely an internally generated psychological fact but imagined or real responses to the world around us. Even Ralph Waldo Emerson, who believed in the "divine sufficiency of the individual" and refused to grant the positive existence of evil, advocated the ethic of responsibility of the scholar as an active member of a community and a tradition.

However, there is a major difference between James' pragmatic individualist assertion that religious faith is "true" when it provides emotional satisfaction and the Confucian sense of awe toward Heaven. Although there may be an agreement between James' rejection of idealist metaphysics and critique of pretended absolutes and the Confucian preference for lived concreteness, the behaviorist tonality in James' pragmatism appears too goal-oriented to Confucian ears. Similarly, while Confucians share Emerson's steady optimism about the transformative potential of human nature, they may have difficulty sharing his sentiments about self-reliance.

In the Confucian perspective, as a concrete, living person, each one of us is fated to be a specific human being. We do not choose our parents, our time and place of birth, the particular kind of vital energy that constitutes our bodily existence, and the pattern of socialization available to us. In short, there is a structural limitation to who we are and what we can do; the more we are critically aware of our limitation, the wiser we become. Yet, we are free to the extent that we are capable of taking charge of the educational process and conscientiously shaping our characters according to our aspirations. This, I surmise, is the meaning of "learning for the sake of the self." When Confucius remarked that "at fifteen, I set my heart upon learning" as the first occurrence in his succinct autobiographic reflection, he seems to suggest that the beginning of his examined life took the form of self-education. Before then, his existence had been primarily determined by the structural limitation. His meaningful life began when he

realized his procedural freedom by taking an active role in shaping his own growth.

The message implicit in the dichotomy of structural limitations and procedural freedom is misleading, if freedom is merely understood as rejection of and departure from limitation. An important Confucian insight into the human condition is the firm grasp of our fatedness not as a predicament to escape from, but as an occasion for self-knowledge and self-realization. Our “embeddedness” in the world here and now is not a figment of the mind, an abstraction, a fixed principle, or a verbal articulation, but an undeniable fact and an experienced reality. Surely, we are constrained in thought and action, but the structural limitation which defines our finality is empowering as well. As an occasion, it provides a unique opportunity for each of us to realize the full potential of our specific constellation of possibilities. Instead of rejecting our limitation, we build our worth upon it; instead of departing from who we are, we return to the inner core of our being by thoroughly familiarizing ourselves with our bodies.

The true freedom of the spirit, in this sense, is neither rejection nor departure, but affirmation and returning. The body is the proper home for the soul and spirit. As the ritual process signifies, the elementary education involving the six arts (exercises in ritual, music, archery, charioteering, calligraphy, and mathematics) intends to discipline and cultivate the body so that it becomes a fitting expression of the self. Actually, we do not own but become our bodies. The misconception that somehow our bodies are our possessions is based on the impoverished idea that we are, in the last analysis, thinking rather than feeling, willing, and sensing selves. As we learn to express ourselves through our bodies, our bodies become vehicles rather than obstructions of spiritual self-transformation. Our spirit is not released from the body as the prison house of the soul. Rather, it realizes its power and actualizes its potency through the body. When Mencius announced that only the sages can fully realize their bodily forms, he celebrated the authentic human possibility of transforming our structural limitation into full expression of freedom. The idea that, through self-cultivation, we can transform our biological reality (body) into an aesthetic expression of the human spirit (self) is realized in the last stage of personal growth in Confucius’ autobiographic reflection: “to follow the dictates of my heart without transgressing the boundaries of right.” The body, so conceived, is more than a given; it is an attainment.

The attainment of the body entails four dimensions (self, community, nature, and Heaven) of the human experience which, in turn,

form three fundamental principles: (1) continuous fruitful interchange between self and community, (2) a sustainable harmonious relationship between the human species and nature, and (3) mutual responsiveness between the human heart-mind and the Way of Heaven.

SELF AND COMMUNITY

The self as a center of relationships occupies a pivotal position in a continuously evolving series of concentric circles. Community variously constituted (family, clan, neighborhood, school, company, society, nation, world, and cosmos) is always present in our self-understanding. As we interact with an ever-changing complex pattern of other-relatedness, we cherish the hope that our centeredness is enriched without losing its inner identity. While we maintain the dignity, independence and autonomy of the self as a center, we endeavor to make it open and flexible enough to constantly benefit from the presence of the other. Undoubtedly, as Habermas has persuasively argued, it is communicative rather than instrumental rationality that enables us to engage ourselves in a continuous fruitful interchange in society. The need for civility and overlapping consensus through dialogue, conversation and negotiation is so obvious that either the neoclassical notion of *homo economicus* or the Lockean idea of the state of nature seems inadequate to account for the fruitful ambiguity in wholesome human interaction. The ancient wisdom of Socrates and Confucius seems more appropriate for providing the ethical foundation underlying self and community.

There is a subtle but significant difference between the Socratic and Confucian dialogue. While both share a commitment to awakening each and every person to self-cultivation and both express faith in the transformability of ordinary people through self-effort, they differ remarkably in understanding the sort of moral capacity that is required. Socrates' preference for logical analysis and dedication to rational argument prompted him to question everyone and everything. Since he refused to rely on any source of knowledge except the reasoning mind, he was inattentive to, if not outright contemptuous of, established ritual, time-honored convention, or deep-rooted tradition. In addition, he also seriously doubted the usefulness of the authority of sacred books for the attainment of *eudaimonia* (the Aristotelian concept as a generic Greek educational ideal).

Confucius also recognized the value of critical scrutiny of widely accepted ideas, alertness of the mind, and intellectual curiosity, but he believed that education by acculturation to the time-honored values and practices of the ancient civilization was vitally important and that it need

not be an uncritical submission to authority. On the contrary, the true transmitter of the Way is, strictly speaking, not a gadfly. To awaken rather than torment the soul requires exemplary teaching which often appeals to common sense, so that those who are seasoned in conventional beliefs may perceive the profound significance of values and practices they merely take for granted.

Far from being tacit acceptance of the status quo, the Confucian faith in the realizability of the ultimate meaning of life in ordinary human existence is a conviction that, in the relationship between self and community, sympathy is both necessary and desirable. Critical reflection is compatible with and complementary to the harmonious flow of feeling that makes us an integral part of the ritual process, but rational analysis in itself, without the prior consent of those involved to become willing participants in dialogue, is unlikely to bring about the anticipated Socratic results. The activation of independent-mindedness and the production of a reasonable discourse community require sympathetic resonance as well as communicative rationality.

HUMAN SPECIES AND NATURE

In summarizing the newly published collection of essays on *Confucianism and Ecology*, Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Bethrong observe:

... Confucianism may be a rich source for rethinking our own relationships between cosmology and ethics in light of present ecological concerns. Its organic holism and dynamic vitalism give us a special appreciation for the interconnectedness of all life-forms and renews our sense of the inherent value of this intrinsic web of life. The shared psychophysical entity of *chi (qi)* becomes the basis for establishing a reciprocity between the human and nonhuman worlds. In this same vein, the ethics of self-cultivation and the nurturing of virtue in the Confucian tradition provide a broad framework for harmonizing with the natural world and completing one's role in the triad [the interrelation of Heaven, Earth, and humans].

Accordingly, a sustainable harmonious relationship between the human species and nature is an essential aspect of Confucian education.

Of course it is misleading to assume that Confucius, Mencius, and Xunzi in the classical period or Zhu Xi, Wang Yangming, and Dai Chen in the imperial age, were ecologically aware in the modern sense of the term, but, by subscribing to the thesis of "the continuity of being," the Confucians always considered "forming one body with Heaven, Earth, and the myriad things" not only as an exalted human aspiration but also as an

attainable common experience. The assumption is that the human body is an integral part of the natural world; the way we breathe, drink, and eat clearly indicates our connectedness with nature. This fact alone suggests that this connectedness is not merely an imagined possibility but an experienced reality. The celebrated opening line in Zhang Zai's (1020–1077) *Western Inscription* is, consequently, not a romantic assertion about cosmic togetherness but a spiritual articulation of human indebtedness to nature as the moral basis for filial piety:

Heaven is my father and Earth is my mother, and even such a small creature as I finds an intimate place in their midst. Therefore that which fills the universe I regard as my body and that which directs the universe I consider as my nature. All people are my brothers and sisters, and all things are my companions.

In this view, we are and ought to be filial children of Heaven and society and family.

The Cartesian exclusive dichotomy of the body/mind, spirit/matter, and nature/human is so alien to the Confucian mode of thought that it does not even merit consideration as a rejected possibility. The educational import of Vico's new science and Herder's philosophy of history is certainly more compatible with the Confucian concern for the humanities, but their cultural presumptions are definitely problematic from the Confucian perspective. Even in Kant's Enlightenment project, the idea of harmony with nature is not at all pronounced. Hegel's phenomenology of the spirit, not to mention Marx's dialectic materialism, are, from the Confucian point of view, thoroughly anthropocentric. Furthermore, the program of self-cultivation, essential for learning to be human in the Confucian tradition, has received little attention in modern Western philosophy since Descartes.

While we human beings are inevitably connected with nature, which is the proper home for our existence, we are not immersed in nature by forming an undifferentiated whole with rocks, trees, and animals. Rather, the sensitivity and awareness of our heart-minds enable us to appreciate our continuity and consanguinity with Heaven, Earth, and myriad things as an integral part of the cosmic process. Through self-cultivation, we learn to become stewards of the natural order. We minister to the sanctity of the earth by transforming ourselves into guardians of nature. The dictum that "Heaven engenders and humans complete" suggests not only a harmonious relationship but a partnership as well. It may not be farfetched to assume that the secret code of Heaven is implanted in human nature.

THE WAY OF HEAVEN AND HUMAN HEART-MIND

Teaching or education, in the opening line of the *Doctrine of the Mean*, is defined as “cultivating the Way” which in turn is defined as “following human nature.” Thus, human nature serves as the foundation for the Way and the Way provides the basis for education. This may have been the reason that Confucius confidently remarked, “Human beings can make the Way great; the Way cannot make human beings great.” Human nature, the Way, and education are so interconnected in the Mencian tradition of Confucian humanism that education as a form of cultural construction is rooted in what we naturally are.

Indeed, in this view, what we morally ought to become is, in principle, not at all in conflict with what we are biologically given. Yet, it is naïve to believe that education is unnecessary, that if we simply follow our instincts we will naturally turn out to be good. Even if we do not follow Xunzi’s assertion that an artificially designed social program is necessary for “humanist” education, the education that follows the Way and human nature by no means imply that we can build our teaching on instinctual impulses. Although the demands for food and sex are constitutive part of our nature, it is the feeling of commiseration (the root of sympathy) that makes us uniquely human. Human demands for food and sex are legitimate animal instincts; they form a part of our body, but since they do not in themselves make connections and generate values, we can refer to them as the “small body.” By contrast, since the feeling of commiseration can provide an inexhaustible supply of resources for making connections and generating values, it is characterized as the “great body.” Paradoxically, the “small body” and the “great body,” two classical Mencian conceptions, are intended to designate, on the one hand, a pervasive sense of the human as a member of the animal kingdom (small) and, on the other, the peculiar quality that enables human beings to realize themselves as the most sentient among rocks, plants, and animals in the cosmic process (great).

Specifically, the nature that inspires the Way and, by implication, informs the proper humanist education, is the great body rather than the small body. It is vitally important to note, however, that the great body and the small body are not mutually exclusive. Understandably, an important aspect of self-cultivation is to deal with the small body so that its intensity will not overwhelm the great body. Mencius’ instruction that, in nourishing the heart-mind, nothing is more effective than making our desires few, clearly indicates that since instinctual demands cannot be fully satisfied, we need to practice moderation in an attempt to bring order and harmony to our otherwise insatiable impulses. Mencius recommended temperance; we ought to be constantly in contact and in communication

with our sensory perceptions so that we learn that they do not overwhelm our feeling of commiseration. Actually, the greatness of the feeling of commiseration lies in its ability to accommodate the instinctual demands of the small body. On the contrary, sensory perceptions do not automatically give rise to sympathy; for obvious egoistic reasons, they tend to undermine other-related sentiments, if they are not properly channeled. Rather than asceticism, moderation is the appropriate and efficacious way of handling desires. The message, then, is to cultivate feelings of commiseration in our nature into fully realized sympathy by focusing on the cultivation of the great body without losing sight of the natural needs of the small body.

Human beings are not only capable of enlarging the Way: they are morally obligated to do so. The path by which this is accomplished is self-knowledge. Mencius believed that if we fully realize the potentiality of heart-mind for sympathy, we will know human nature. By knowing our own nature, we will know Heaven. This may give the impression that Mencius advocated a sort of immanent monism, if not a strong version of secular humanism. Such an impression is grossly mistaken. Instead of anthropocentrism, or self-sufficiency of the human, what Mencius proposed is mutuality between Heaven and humanity. The most important theme in this connection is that human nature is conferred by Heaven. Heaven, rather than human nature *per se*, is the source of the Way and of education. The reason that the human can enlarge the Way is because human nature is Heavenly ordained and thus accessible to the inner reality of Heaven. Furthermore, since the secret code of Heaven is implanted in human nature, our self-knowledge, the kind that is informed by the sympathy of the great body, is tantamount to Heaven's self-disclosure. The mutuality of the Way of Heaven and the human heart-mind is both the highest aspiration of self-realization and the commonest experience of learning to be human.

Paideia originally referred to the pedagogical subjects in ancient Greece comparable to the six arts in Confucian elementary education: gymnastics, grammar, rhetoric, music, mathematics, geography, natural history, and philosophy. The Latin idea of *humanitas*, derived from *paideia*, provided the basic curriculum for medieval Christian education and modern liberal arts education. These subjects, to this date, are the most direct and intimate disciplines for human self-understanding and self-reflexivity. The Confucian approach to this discourse, as exemplified by the centrality of self-cultivation in the Great Learning, is distinguished by its insistence that *paideia* or *humanitas* as a process of learning to be human must take the concrete living person here and now as its point of departure.

This emphasis on the lived concreteness of the person strongly suggests that embodied knowledge rather than abstract thinking ought to be the foundation of moral education. Through learned reflection on things at hand, we begin to appreciate the fruitful interaction between honesty with ourselves and consideration toward others. The perception of the self as a center of relationships recognizes that one's dignity as an autonomous and independent individual need not be in conflict with one's integrity as a responsive and responsible member of the community. Indeed, the creative interplay between self-care and other-relatedness generates the dynamic process of learning to be human. While rational argument is necessary for self-knowledge, the rhetoric of assent enlarges and enriches the wellspring of sympathy indispensable for human flourishing. As we learn to extend our feeling of commiseration from the family, school, and community to society, nation, and the world, we appreciate more fully and deeply the meaning of forming one body with Heaven, Earth, and the myriad things. Only then can we truly bear witness to the idea of humanity as an experienced reality rather than an abstract concept. *Paideia* or *humanitas* is, in its core concern, educating the art of embodiment. Through embodiment we realize ourselves (body, mind-heart, soul, and spirit) in community, nature, and Heaven.

Tu Wei-ming, Department of East Asian Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 02138; wtutu@husc.harvard.edu