

In John Chi-kin Lee and Christopher Day (eds.) *Quality and Change in Teacher Education: Western and Chinese Perspectives* (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer, forthcoming in 2016), pp.215-229.

Chapter 13

The Idea of the Normal University and the University of Education: Implications for a Confucian Pedagogy

Ruth Hayhoe

Setting a Historical Context

I welcome the opportunity to contribute a chapter to this significant book on Quality and Change in Teacher Education: Western and Chinese Perspectives. It is now more than two decades since the end of the Cold War in 1991, and this has been a period in which there have been ongoing debates over Huntington's provocative thesis about a "clash of civilizations" replacing the ideological clashes of the Cold War period. (Huntington, 1993) While the Cold War had been dominated by tension between two world views that had both emanated from Enlightenment Europe – capitalist modernization and socialist construction – the Western world finally became aware that there might be a great deal to learn from other civilizations. (Hayhoe & Pan, 2001) The United Nations designated the year 2001 as a "year of dialogue among civilizations" and appointed a committee of eminent scholars to stimulate and lead this dialogue, including the Confucian philosopher Tu Weiming, then based in Harvard University's Divinity School, now located at Peking University. It was a sad irony that the year of dialogue also witnessed the 9/11 terrorist attack on New York and its ongoing consequences. If nothing else, however, that event underlined the importance of understanding civilizations with roots very different from those of the West, whose values and ideas have had world historical importance at different periods of time and are certain to persist. It brought an end to the assumptions of convergence and universalism that marked both the narratives of modernization and socialist construction and viewed "advanced" industrialized nations as setting standards of quality that all others should strive to reach.

This book focuses on Western and Chinese perspectives with regards to quality and change in teacher education, and I would like to develop a line of reflection that looks at how quality in teacher education might be understood from a Confucian perspective, and the implications for pedagogy that arise from longstanding Chinese understandings of the relationship between the teacher and the learner and the kinds of knowledge that are most

important for human betterment. In terms of change, it will be significant to note a recent literature that suggests a remarkable persistence of core Confucian values in the modern educational development of East Asia. This underlay the Western institutional models of teacher education that were adapted in processes of capitalist modernization in the case of Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong, and socialist construction in the case of Mainland China and Vietnam. It is not surprising to find profound similarities in the ways in which teachers, learners and families played out their roles, in spite of striking differences in the educational structures and policies of these six distinctive societies. (Hayhoe, 2008)

Already in the 1980s and 1990s, North America was becoming aware of what might be learned from Japan, Taiwan and Mainland China as evidenced in the pathbreaking studies of Harold Stevenson and his associates. (Stevenson and Lee, 1990, Stevenson and Stigler, 1992) With China's recent remarkable rise and the success of children in these societies on IEA and PISA tests, it has become more and more evident that there is a quality to the pedagogical practices that are common to Confucian-heritage classrooms that could enrich approaches to teacher education globally and contribute to the ongoing dialogue about reform. As a comparativist who has always felt a historical perspective is crucial to comparative understanding, I would like to focus this chapter on the experience of change in the developing teacher education systems of China and Japan over the 20th century, and identify ways in which there has been a fruitful integration of Western and Confucian values that have culminated in two Asian models whose unique features make possible both excellent quality and a high status for teacher education programs. One of these models, the normal university, has disappeared in the Anglo American world, though it persists in France and Russia, while the other, the university of education, is unique to East Asia, and has already spread to countries such as Malaysia and India from there. (Hayhoe, 2009)

The chapter will begin with an overview of the core values of the European university model, and the notion of quality embedded in the way in which knowledge was structured in this model. This is then contrasted with the Confucian model of the academy, which long pre-dates the European university, its core values and the ways in which knowledge was structured. While the Confucian academy was destined to disappear with the modernization efforts of Japan and China in the 19th century, the European university, most notably Humboldt's revitalized University of Berlin, has remained a dominant model globally. Most recently it has given shape to the "global research university," a mecca for institutions aspiring to top positions in the major ranking systems that measure university quality on global scale. Historically, however, this model was not seen as fostering high quality in teacher education, and efforts to reform teacher education have been marked by struggles to counter its dominant values.

We will first consider the development of normal schools in 19th century France for the formation of the nation's teachers, then reflect on the 19th century American and British experience. Only in France did a university model that gave highest importance to teacher education emerge, with the Ecole Normale Supérieure, a model that was taken up in Soviet Russia after the 1917 Revolution. In East Asia, it is fascinating to trace the differing ways in which the models of the normal school and normal university were integrated into the development of modern higher education systems. Influences from continental Europe, America and Russia, coming at different times over the twentieth century, resulted in the emergence of the

two models identified above – the university of education in Japan and the normal university in China.

Japan's early reform experiences were strongly influenced by European models, with normal colleges and normal universities taking shape up to the mid-20th century. After World War 2, however, a dominant American influence drove out this concept in favor of the comprehensive university, as Japan became the second country in the world to raise teacher education to an all graduate profession. Japan's unique response to American influences was the university of education model, which will be discussed in greater detail later.

For China, early modern education also embraced the concepts of normal school and normal university coming from continental Europe, but the dominance of American influence in the south of the country promoted the absorption of teacher education into comprehensive universities between the 1920s and the 1940s. Only after the revolution of 1949 and the adoption of Soviet patterns were normal universities given importance at all levels of the Chinese higher education system. Currently, the craze over ranking systems based on the global research university, has placed China's normal universities and their excellent tradition in the leadership of teacher education under threat. Nevertheless, national policy stipulating that they keep their "normal" identity and enhance their leadership in a more open system gives them the opportunity to reflect on the meaning of this model and what it might have to say about quality in teacher education. (Hayhoe and Li, 2010) Furthermore, the emergence of a dynamic Chinese program of cultural diplomacy, with the establishment of over 450 Confucius institutes all over the world, has given normal universities reason to reflect on core values of the Confucian tradition, as they seek to introduce them to the world through partnerships with universities, school boards and NGOs in more than fifty countries.

Can a better historical understanding of the Japanese model of the university of education and the Chinese model of the normal university contribute to the core question of this volume, "what is high quality in teacher education?" And do the cultural dimensions of these two models have something to say to the current reform debates around pedagogy? If readers have the patience to follow this historical reflection on comparative educational change, they will be rewarded with a tentative answer to these questions. Part one presents a portrait of the medieval university of Europe, while Part two sketches out a contrasting portrait of the Confucian academy. Part three then looks at the emergence of normal schools and the normal university in post-revolution France, and Part four reflects on the way this model was absorbed into the Anglo-American experience of educational modernization. Part Five turns to East Asia, analyzing the ways in which the values of the normal school interacted with Confucian traditions in the forming of normal schools, colleges and universities, with a focus on the rich resonance between the French word "normal" and the characters for "the teacher as a model" (师范) transliterated as *shihan* in Japanese, *shifan* in Chinese. Finally, we turn to a rich debate underway in current issues of the *Journal of Curriculum Studies* around the nature of Confucian pedagogy, and ask what kinds of structures and patterns of knowledge might make possible the lively and dynamic interaction between student and teacher that characterizes the dialogic encounters between Confucius and his disciples in the *Analects*, one of the Four Books of Confucianism and an enduring East Asian educational classic.

The University of Medieval Europe

In many ways the emergence of universities in 12th century Europe was an important moment in educational history. Their core values of academic freedom and autonomy drew upon three important institutions of medieval Europe. From the Pope and the Roman Catholic Church, they obtained independent legal status and the right to own property, enshrined in a charter, which protected them from interference by local political or ecclesiastical authorities. Before the existence of nation states, they were effectively international, as the charter conferred the right to teach everywhere (*ius ubique docendi*). Masters and students were thus free to move around among universities across a wide region, with Latin as the common language of teaching and learning.

From the medieval craft guilds, they gained the model of a self-governing organization which decided who should be admitted to membership based on their knowledge and skill. They were thus almost always established in merchant cities where guilds had fostered economic activity independent from the landowning fiefdoms that dominated the countryside. From the monasteries, they inherited an approach to knowledge that emphasized the long-term cumulative collection of texts, rather than applied forms of knowledge relevant to local social needs.

The traditional professions of medicine, law and theology dominated the early universities, together with the trivium of grammar, rhetoric and logic, and the quadrivium of arithmetic, astronomy, geometry and music. Theology was viewed as queen of the sciences, and was expected to integrate all other fields of knowledge in a hierarchy, that placed law and medicine above the basic arts and sciences. Logic and theoretical knowledge was more highly valued than practice and applied knowledge. With the emergence of modern science through the application of mathematics to experimentation in the natural world, the inherent tendencies to specialization increased. The Kantian separation between facts and values allowed wide-ranging exploration in the natural sciences and the development of such new social sciences as economics, sociology and political science. Yet it also strengthened the tendency to value theoretical and specialist disciplines of knowledge most highly.

While universities contributed to the development of European civilization in important ways, they had limitations. They remained highly elite up to the late 19th century, with most applied technological and industrial education being developed in alternative institutions. Although women had been active as students and teachers in the abbeys and cathedral schools that pre-dated the medieval universities, they were excluded from universities for nearly seven centuries. Feminists have argued that the university's objectivism, orientation towards narrow specialization and linear approach to logic have resulted from this historical situation of male domination.

The Confucian Academy

The great historian of Chinese education, Thomas Lee, has noted that the purpose of classical education in China was to bring about a harmonious integration between the individual good and the benefit of society. *The Great Learning* expressed this in the following way: "to let

one's inborn virtue shine forth, to renew the people and to rest in the highest good." (Lee, 2000: 10-11) This focus on moral development and the social good is something that East Asian higher education has always kept as a high priority, even as it developed new disciplines of knowledge under Western influence and adapted Western models of the university to its own context.

It is reflected in the organization of the classical curriculum in China, with four major subject areas, classics, history, philosophy and the arts, forming the content for the civil service examinations. All other subjects, including medicine, mathematics, agriculture and engineering, were viewed as technical knowledge to be developed for the good of society. The four core curricular areas were not discrete, nor were they organized into the kind of hierarchy that characterized the European university curriculum; rather they were integrated around the central concept of the Way. "The Classics expresses the way in words, history in deeds, while philosophers and literary artists illustrate various other aspects of the Way." (Luk, 1997:486)

Clearly education, in its broadest sense, was the most highly respected area of knowledge in the East Asian curricular tradition, as an applied inter-disciplinary field, with a high sense of responsibility to serve the good of both society and the individual. Theoretical, specialist and technical knowledge were seen as subordinate to the applied social knowledge of the Confucian Classics. There were also deep relations of personal nurturing among teachers and students, in both the official institutions preparing young people for the imperial civil service and in the informal academies or *shuyuan*. By the Tang dynasty, students were coming from as far afield as Japan, Korea and Vietnam, taking back the classical texts and integrating some aspects of the Chinese writing system into their knowledge traditions, while also selectively emulating aspects of China's institutional patterns of higher learning.

The core values of academic freedom and autonomy, that have been so important to the Western university, are not found in the same form in the institutional traditions of East Asia. There was rather a kind of intellectual authority, expressed in the important role of scholar-officials who served both the people and the Emperor on the basis of their knowledge. There was also considerable intellectual freedom in the *shuyuan*, where scholars who did not hold public office discussed, debated and revised the classical curriculum, integrating new and diverse views from a wide range of sources. (Hayhoe, 2001: 328) The *shuyuan*, however, were not protected by law, in the way that the charter protected Western universities. Their vitality and ability to express criticism of government was based on the independent thought and strong social conscience of individual scholars.

Although women were excluded from formal participation in the civil service examination system, which selected scholars for official positions in the imperial bureaucracy, the patterns of integrated knowledge that persisted to the 19th century within neo-Confucian philosophy were less alien to women than the increasing specialism and the embrace of value neutrality which came to characterize the European university's development.

Interestingly, it was precisely these characteristics that may explain why universities were not considered suitable institutions for forming the large number of teachers needed for the mass schooling systems that were created in the 19th century. Rather, the need was seen for an

entirely new type of institution, which was open to women, favoured integrative and morally explicit forms of knowledge and offered a direct service to community and nation.

The Normal School and the Normal University in France

The terms normal school and normal university are derived from French, where *normal* means “setting a moral standard or pattern.” The first Ecole Normale Supérieure or higher normal school was founded in 1794, a few years after the French Revolution, when universities had been abolished and new institutions were being created to serve the republican state. The decree passed by the National Convention stated that professors in this new institution “will give lessons to the students in the art of teaching morality and of shaping the hearts of young republicans to the practice of public and private virtues.” (Smith, 1982:7) Citizenship and moral development were thus key purposes of the new institution, and its curriculum focused on reading, arithmetic, practical geometry, history and French grammar. This stood in striking contrast to the traditional professions that dominated the university, and the use of Latin as the language of study. Graduates were to go back to their local districts and establish normal schools where all the teachers needed for the newly established state schooling system could be educated along lines learned in this new institution.

The original Ecole Normale Supérieure had a very short life span, but each of France’s 28 *académies* or university districts made vigorous efforts to establish normal schools for both men and women. These were populist institutions open to young people from the working classes, and recruiting as many young women as young men for the new career of elementary school teacher or *instituteur*. Their core values stood in striking contrast to those of the university: an emphasis on excellence in pedagogical practice rather than theory; a curriculum characterized by integrated learning in basic knowledge areas such as mathematics and language, in contrast to the highly specialized disciplines of knowledge and professions fostered in the university; a commitment to the explicit moral formation of students in contrast to the tendency towards value neutrality that came with the rising prestige of the natural sciences in the university; a nurturing environment with strong ties of affection and mentorship between teachers and students, in comparison to the impersonal environment of the university, where students were free to select the lectures they wished to hear and move freely across institutional boundaries; a tendency towards close state regulation and professional accountability in contrast to the autonomy and academic freedom of the university; a strong sense of responsibility to offer direct service to the local community and the nation, in contrast to the university’s internationalism and tendency to serve knowledge advancement rather than local needs.

In 1806 the Ecole Normale Supérieure was re-established under Napoleon as one of France’s Grandes Ecoles. These were highly elite institutions attached to various ministries of the French government. Students were selected by competitive examination and educated to become top civil servants. This element in France’s new higher education system was probably influenced by China’s traditional civil service examination system, which was greatly admired by French intellectuals of the time. Higher education became integrated into the state bureaucracy to ensure a supply of well qualified civil servants in all important knowledge areas needed for modern development, a model that also had considerable influence in Soviet Russia after the 1917 Revolution.

The Ecole Normale Supérieure (ENS) still exists as a leading institution in France, and three others were founded in different parts of the country during the 19th century. They have set a model for the normal university, with a curriculum that reflects both the emphasis on specialized disciplines in the basic sciences and humanities that is central to the university curriculum, and the embrace of education as a multi-disciplinary and applied field responsible for ensuring excellence in teaching from early childhood to tertiary education. In reality, however, the ENS in Paris, and its sister institutions, have mainly educated scholars, research scientists and teachers for universities and academic secondary schools, leaving the other levels of education to be served by the normal schools.

The Anglo-American Experience with the Normal School

Christine Ogren (2005) gives a dynamic overview of the large number of State Normal Schools that were established on a French model in 19th century America to prepare teachers for the burgeoning state schooling system. They were the first higher learning institutions open to women, and their curricular patterns and pedagogical ethos were characterized by the same commitment to moral and civic education, the same nurturing relationship between teachers and students and the same integration between subject knowledge and educational practice that characterized the normal schools of France. They did not, however, offer degrees and were thus destined to disappear in the move to upgrade teacher education to degree level that began earliest in the United States.

Viewed by universities as “poor stepchildren of academe,” in the words of one historian (Lucas, 1997:39), they were either integrated into major comprehensive universities as faculties of education, or upgraded to become local comprehensive universities that retained a strong focus on education and the training of teachers, but were never given the title of normal universities. They were thus not able to resist the university’s orientation towards privileging theoretical knowledge in the established disciplines. The fact that the University of Chicago’s Faculty of Education was closed in 1996, in spite of striking contributions in the economics and sociology of education, reflected its remoteness from the actual needs of Chicago’s schools and teachers. (Altbach, 1998)

There has thus been a constant struggle to balance the academic demand for specialized, theoretical and internationally oriented research and teaching, and the needs of schools and school boards for practical professional knowledge relevant to local needs. This was addressed in the 1980s and 1990s by the efforts of the Holmes Group to create professional school networks which involved close linkages with a group of schools that could provide a practical context for field service, action research and professional revitalization. (The Holmes Group, 1986, 1995) Most recently, Obama’s Race to the Top Program has provided incentives for states to put in place more effective accountability systems to ensure the excellence and effectiveness of teacher-preparation programs.

Similar patterns can be seen in the British experience, though the move to an all graduate profession for teachers came a few decades later. While the term normal school had never been used, the parallel colleges of education were absorbed into the faculties of education of major

universities in some cases. Others developed into colleges of higher education providing bachelor degree level programs for pre-service teachers, as well as other undergraduate programs in the arts, social sciences, and various applied fields. Many of these have since become full-fledged universities. The Institute of Education of the University of London was able to maintain a leading role, because of its unique status within the federated University of London, giving it the autonomy of a fully fledged university of education, and enabling it to set standards for high-level research in education, as well as for pre-service and in-service programs for primary and secondary teachers.

Growing political concerns about the academicization of education as a field of study, and the perceived tendency for university programs to become more and more remote from the actual needs of schools resulted in fairly radical initiatives to ensure relevance. Government laid down criteria that courses of professional training must satisfy, and issued sets of competences that beginning teachers must demonstrate as a condition of certification. A Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE) was set up to oversee the implementation of these changes and to advise government on the development of professional preparation. In 1993 CATE was replaced by a Teacher Training Agency (TTA) to continue the process of accreditation and also to serve as the channel through which universities and colleges obtained funds to provide professional education for teaching. (Maguire and Ball, 1995: 246-249)

While teacher training remained a responsibility of older and new universities, all programs had to meet the stringent professional and practical requirements of the TTA before gaining on-going accreditation and funding. Much of the field service and professional training aspect of education programs were required to take place within primary and secondary schools, and gave schools a remarkably high degree of responsibility for the design and management of this aspect of professional preparation. This initiative illustrates a rather radical approach to ensuring that some of the valuing of practice, integrated learning, mentorship and accountability to society that had characterised the former colleges of education could be brought back into university programs for teacher education.

Teacher education is now the responsibility of comprehensive universities in the USA, the UK and the rest of the Anglo-phone world, while the terms “normal school” and “normal university” have disappeared from Anglo-American academic discourse. Most Anglophones are unaware of the original French meaning of *normale* as “setting a moral standard or pattern.” When they encounter the term, they are likely to understand it as “not abnormal.” One can only hope that this does not discourage an interest in seeking an understanding of the important contributions of normal universities in the Chinese context and universities of education in Japan and the wider East Asian context.

The Japanese Experience of the Normal School and Normal University

In the late 19th century and the first half of the 20th century Japan had established a large number of normal schools and colleges to train teachers for the modern education system which has been so important to its economic rise. These were developed under the influence of continental European models, largely French and German, and they provided a large cohort of well-trained teachers for primary and early childhood education, under a highly centralised

organisational model. With the American occupation after World War Two, Japan was strongly influenced by the American model, and by American concerns to support democratization and decentralization. As a result it became the second country in the world to move towards an all-graduate profession for teachers. Higher education was restructured in ways that absorbed some of the former normal colleges into university faculties of education. Others were developed into prefectural level universities with a strong focus on education.

In effect, the Japanese adopted an open model of teacher education, which allowed universities of all kinds, public and private, national and local, to provide courses for teachers' professional development as long as these courses were approved by the Ministry of Education. Furthermore the actual certification of teachers for primary and secondary school teachers was put into the hands of prefectural authorities, who selected the very best of those qualified by universities and colleges through competitive examinations for positions in their schools. The fact that teachers are civil servants, with commensurate salaries and benefits, has made the profession highly attractive.

Like the USA, Japan thus ended up with academically strong faculties of education at major national universities, which mainly prepare secondary school teachers, and prefectural level universities which focus on education as a major field, as well as having programs in social sciences, liberal arts and new inter-disciplinary fields such as environmental studies and women's studies. These institutions prepare the majority of primary and early childhood teachers. Many of their graduates work in fields allied to education in their local communities, since only a minority are successful in competing for teaching jobs. (Shimihara, 1995)

These institutions have been given the name "universities of education" (*kyoiku daigaku*), a term that is rarely used in the Western World and that might be viewed as a Japanese invention. According to one scholar who is familiar with the origin of these institutions, the American educational advisors of the 1950s were strongly opposed to the use of the term normal (*shihan*) because the pre-war normal schools were viewed as having some responsibility for fostering an over-charged nationalism that contributed to Japanese aggression in East Asia.¹ The Japanese response to this American view was to create the university of education rather than follow the American model of the local comprehensive university.

Local and regional universities of education have a particular commitment to setting high standards for the teaching profession, and have clearly incorporated many of the values of the normal school, including a focus on professional practice, close links to the local community and a range of integrated inter-disciplinary knowledge areas, such as environmental studies, community development, women's studies and adult and lifelong education. The approach to knowledge in these universities of education covers all the subjects taught at primary and lower secondary levels in school. In addition, the field of education is developed in ways that serves both the formal teaching profession and the needs of other organisations and agencies for training, lifelong learning and adult education. It is thus a model quite distinct from that of the comprehensive university, and one which may be undergirded by elements of the Confucian knowledge tradition.

¹ Personal communication with a professor at South China Normal University, who spent ten years as a doctoral student and scholar in Japan, May, 2013.

The Chinese experience of the Normal School and University

Like Japan, China found the model of the European normal school highly appropriate in the preparation of teachers, both women and men, for its early modern schools. A combination of European and Japanese influences between the late 19th century and the early 1920s resulted in the development of a large number of normal schools, which gave the opportunity for higher education to young people from impoverished rural families, who could not afford more expensive forms of higher education. Some of these were called higher normal schools and a few developed into full-fledged normal universities. Thus Beijing had a men's normal university by 1922 and a women's normal university by 1924, with the two being merged in 1931 and later moving to Lanzhou during the Japanese occupation. It is interesting to note, however, that the normal schools that were upgraded to university level in the south, where American influence tended to be strong, became comprehensive universities, the best known case being Nanjing Higher Normal School, which became a part of Dongnan University in 1921 (Hayhoe and Li, 2010:91).

The Nationalist government gave minimal support to Beijing Normal University, yet it was to come into its own after the Revolution of 1949 under Soviet influence. Five more national normal universities were established in China's major regions in the early 1950s, and they have given the country important educational leadership ever since. At the same time each province established a normal university, and normal colleges and schools were established at the prefectural level for the training of early childhood and primary school teachers.

In spite of the enormous influence of Anglo-American models of higher education internationally, China's Ministry of Education made a firm decision to maintain and further develop its normal universities in the mid-1990s. At a time when specialized institutions in medicine and engineering have been merged to form larger comprehensive universities in China, five of the six leading national normal universities have retained their title and enhanced their leadership in education. While they were not permitted to enter into mergers with universities in areas such as engineering or medicine, they were encouraged to bring in nearby colleges of continuing teacher education, primary and early childhood teacher education, thus upgrading the academic and professional levels of these programs. (Hayhoe and Zha, 2011)

Not only are they now responsible for teacher education at all levels, from early childhood to tertiary, they are also taking on important leadership roles in adult education, lifelong education, education for the professions, and new areas such as public administration, media and the arts. This is in addition to their major programs in the humanities and social and natural sciences, and the new programs they have established in areas such as business, management and IT. Thus the original model of the normal university in the French context has been broadened and the field of education has been given a wider mandate and higher prestige.² The decision to maintain and enhance the normal university, in spite of pressure from some

² The East China Normal University in Shanghai provides an interesting example of how one Chinese normal university transformed itself. See the portrait in Hayhoe and Zha, 2011. Others, such as Beijing Normal and Northeast Normal have taken different approaches.

institutional leaders for permission to change their title to that of comprehensive university, since it would be better understood in Anglo American circles, stems from a recognition on the part of the national leadership that education is crucial to China's success in the global knowledge economy. I would like to argue that it may also express an awareness of how well this type of higher learning institution fits with China's underlying Confucian ethos. As noted earlier, the term *normale* in French is expressed in the words "teacher as a model" (*shifan*) in Chinese, and it evokes a deep connection to the Confucian knowledge tradition.

At a time when China is seeking to reach out to the world with its program of Confucius Institutes, and entrusting the development of these institutions to partnerships between its universities and a range of institutions around the globe, the normal university may be in a position to play a particularly significant role. Beyond the negative stereotypes of passivity, conformity, memorization and an overweening respect for teachers, what are the underlying values that have enabled so many students to learn well, to be highly motivated and to adapt successfully when they move into global higher education circles? What further possibilities are there in Confucian pedagogical traditions to enhance the learning process?

Implications for a Confucian pedagogy

In this final section of the chapter, I will introduce an ongoing debate over the nature and possibilities of Confucian pedagogy, as a stimulus for the comparative discussions on teacher education in this volume, and close with some thoughts on why the university of education and the normal university may be worth studying in greater depth as distinctive Asian institutional models for the organization of effective programs of teacher education.

In a controversial and much debated article entitled "Interpretation, Autonomy and Transformation: Chinese pedagogic discourse in a cross-cultural context," influential Chinese scholar of linguistics and language education Wu Zongjie has sketched out two opposite pictures of the way in which the classics are taught in China – one through an overlay of Western epistemological and analytical assumptions that have become part of an unchallenged world culture, the other a snapshot of the Confucian learner and teacher taken directly from *The Analects*. (Wu, 2011) Wu sketches out an impressive picture of autonomy in the early Confucian learner, who is vividly depicted in *The Analects* as having both an inner frenzy (憤) to learn, and a facial expression that expressed intense effort (悱). This is a learner who initiates dialogue with the teacher, and fills out the contours of a vision for the growth of knowledge that involves inner transformation as well as a deeper understanding of the external world. It is the picture of a learner for whom words are simply a vehicle through which to get clear insight into the nameless whole that is the understandable universe in which we live. Wu argues that this quality and spirit of learning has been entirely lost in the overlay of "modern epistemology" from the West that shaped the development of Chinese education over the 20th century. He illustrates this with a depiction of a current Chinese lesson in the classics, in which the text is discussed as a series of propositions established within a system of signs, along lines of a linear logic that is associated with Western language systems.

Wu's essay stimulated a lively set of responses from senior scholars who were invited to comment. Some raised points regarding the continuity of the early Confucian tradition, the

question of whether its insights into the relationship between language and thought or understanding might be more Daoist than Confucian, and even the desirability of a revitalized Chinese pedagogy that is rooted in China's early education classics. Others argued that the rigidity of China's celebrated civil service (*keju*) examination system had stifled the creativity and unique characteristics of Confucian pedagogy long before Western influences came in to shape China's patterns of curriculum and learning. (Cheng, 2011, Curran, 2014)

Wu was invited to make a final response to the various commentaries offered on his original piece, and his essay, "Speaking in the place of the sages" goes directly to the issue of the *keju* examinations by analyzing the assessment of an eight-legged essay from the late 19th century, not long before the examination system itself was abolished in 1905. In this paper he suggests that pedagogy might be seen as a process of meaning making and that the purpose of education was primarily to establish a language rather than knowledge, so that the learner could speak/act in the place of the sages. He goes on to comment that this could be an intellectual tool to construct new visions of pedagogy that resonate with both the Western and Eastern pasts. (Wu, 2014)

Wu then illustrated the way in which the Chinese examination tradition required students to use the classics to construct meanings by presenting the assessment of this successful 19th century examination which emphasized the profundity of meanings that emerged through the student's ability to comment on the text. It was no less than a subtle rephrasing of the classics to make the past speak again in order to throw light on the present, or to put it in simpler words, "I comment on the six classics and the six classics comment on me." (Elman, 1997:7). The Chinese character for language, *wen* (文), which might be interpreted as texture, pattern or fabric and stands for the textual or visual awareness of language, "refers to the deepest sense of intelligibility and clarity felt in the heart." (Wu, 2014:327) Confucian pedagogy thus embraces an integrated learning of the mind, body, spirit and emotions that goes deeper than propositional or logical representations of truth and nurtures a profound sense of responsibility to serve the good of family, community, and the world of nature. From this perspective, Western readers may reflect on experiences of reading the Bible less for its propositional truth than its spiritual and moral inspiration, also on the repetition of liturgical prayers and readings in the environment of Christian worship services that have some resonance with Confucian ritual practices.

I hope this brief discussion of a lively set of interactions over Eastern and Western approaches to pedagogy will stimulate readers to explore the interchange in these two issues of the *Journal of Curriculum Studies* for themselves. It remains for me to note how the organization of knowledge in the curriculum of the university of education, a model invented in East Asia and spreading from there, may be more conducive to this kind of pedagogy than that of the global research university. Its emphasis on applied knowledge oriented towards the social good, and its tendency to integrate disciplinary knowledge with an understanding of human development processes that engages moral and aesthetic understanding as well as cognitive ability resonates with the Confucian tradition. The normal university, an invention of 18th century France that is taking on a new form in contemporary China, might be seen as a hybrid that can knit together curricular features of both Western and Chinese higher education in ways that could support elements of this Confucian pedagogy and enrich current debates over pedagogical reform.

Let me close with a final thought from Wu's text, and my own personal experience. *Wen*, the Chinese term for language, depicts words not as signifiers or concepts but as the track of life and the *Analects* may then be seen as Confucius' footprints in the world. For Christians the parallel experience of following the footprints of Christ in the world through reading the Gospels may be far more important than the theological propositions later put in place by ecclesiastical authority. These texts from the East and West can thus be seen as complementary approaches to nourishing "a disclosure of virtue, a heart for learning and a care for all knowledges." (Wu, 2014: 328)

References:

Altbach, Philip (1998). Issues in the Development of Education for Teaching: Hong Kong in International Perspective. *Comparative Education Bulletin*, 1, (Comparative Education Society of Hong Kong), 2-5.

Cheng, K. M. (2011). Pedagogy: east and west, then and now. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 43(5), 591-599.

Curran, T. (2014). A Response to Professor Wu Zongjie's 'Interpretation, Autonomy and Transformation: Chinese pedagogic discourse in a cross-cultural perspective. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*. 46 (3), 305-312.

Elman, Benjamin (1997). Zaisuo kaoju suan [Re-comment on textual research] *Dushu* 1997 (2), 72-80.

Hayhoe, Ruth (2001). Lessons from the Chinese Academy. in R. Hayhoe and J. Pan (eds.) *Knowledge Across Cultures: A Contribution to Dialogue among Civilizations*. Hong Kong: Comparative Education Research Centre, University of Hong Kong, 323-347.

Hayhoe, Ruth (2008). Philosophy and Comparative Education: What can we learn from East Asia? in K. Mundy, K. Bickmore, R. Hayhoe, K. Madjidi and M. Madden (eds.) *Comparative and International Education: Issues for Teachers*. New York: Teachers College Columbia University Press, 23-48.

Hayhoe, R. (2009). The Idea of a University of Education, Keynote Speech for the Asian Forum of Presidents, Hong Kong Institute of Education, May 22, 2009.

Hayhoe, Ruth and Li, Jun (2010). The Idea of a Normal University in the 21st Century," in *Frontiers of Education in China*, 5 (1), 74-103.

Hayhoe, R. and Zha, Q. (2011). East China Normal University: Education in the Lead. In R. Hayhoe, J. Li, J. Lin, Q. Zha, *Portraits of 21st Century Chinese Universities: In the Move to Mass Higher Education*. Hong Kong: Comparative Education Research Centre, University of Hong Kong and Springer.

Hayhoe, R. (2014). Hopes for a Confucian Pedagogy? *Journal of Curriculum Studies*. 46 (3), 313-319.

Holmes Group (1986). *Tomorrow's Teachers: A Report of the Holmes Group*. East Lansing, Michigan.

Holmes Group (1995). *Tomorrow's Schools of Education: A Report of the Holmes Group*. East Lansing, Michigan.

Huntington, Samuel (1993). The Clash of Civilizations? *Foreign Affairs*, 72 (3), 22-49.

Lee, Thomas (2000) *Education in Traditional China: A History*. Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill.

Lucas, Christopher J. (1997). *Teacher Education in America: Reform Agendas for the Twenty-First Century*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Luk, Bernard (1997). Aleni Introduces the Western Academic Tradition to Seventeenth Century China: A Study of the *Xixue Fan*. in Tiziana Lippiello and Roman Malek (eds.), "*Scholar from the West*" Giulio Aleni S.J. (1582-1649) and the Dialogue between Christianity and China (Brescia: Fondazione Civiltà Bresciana and Sankt Augustin: the Monumenta Serica Institute), 479-518.

Maguire, Meg and Stephen J. Ball (1995). "Teacher Education and Education Policy in England" in Nobuo K. Shimihara and Ivan Z. Holowinsky (eds.) *Teacher Education in Industrialized Nations: Issues in Changing Social Contexts*. New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc.

Ogren, C.A. (2005). *The American State Normal School: An Instrument of Great Good*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Smith, Robert (1982) *The Ecole Normale Supérieure and the Third Republic*. Albany: State University of New York.

Shimihara, Nobuo K. (1995). Teacher Education Reform in Japan: Ideological and Control Issues. in Nobuo K. Shimihara and Ivan Z. Holowinsky, (eds.) *Teacher Education in Industrialized Nations: Issues in Changing Social Contexts*. New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc.

Stevenson, Harold W and Lee, S.Y. (1990). *Contexts of achievement : a study of American, Chinese, and Japanese children* /Chicago : University of Chicago Press.

Stevenson, Harold W. and Stigler, James W. (1992). *The Learning Gap: Why Our Schools are failing and what we can learn from Japanese and Chinese Education*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Wu, Z. (2011). Interpretation, autonomy, and transformation: Chinese pedagogic discourse in a cross-cultural perspective. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 43(5), 569–590.

Wu, Z. (2014) Speak in the place of the Sages: Rethinking the sources of pedagogic meanings. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, . 46 (3), 320-331.