

세계성과 보편성-동서양을 넘어서 보편적 지평으로

도덕실천학과 수사법에 대한 한 가지 생각

한국학중앙연구원의 이번 심포지엄에서 생각해보자는 것은 어떻게 하여 보편적 휴머니즘이 가능할 것인가 하는 것이다. 오늘의 세계의 가장 큰 흐름의 하나는 교통과 통신 그리고 교역의 급속한 발전에 따라 세계가 하나로 되어간다는 것이다. 이것은 의식적인 노력이 없이도 일어나는 일이기 때문에, 시간이 흐름에 따라 여러 일들과 생각이 섞이고 하나의 통일이 이루어지게 될 것이라고 할 수 있다. 문화연구자들이 말하듯이, “잡종화”가 일어나는 것이다. 의식적인 개입이 있다고 하여도 그것도 작은 일들이 복합하여 하나의 큰 결과가 생기게 되는 데에 또 하나의 작은 요인이 될 뿐일 것이다.

그러나 궁극적으로는 세계와 인간을 전체로서 생각하는 의식적인 틀도 필요하게 될 것이라고 할 수 있다. 그것을 생각하는 것은 세계가 움직여가는 과정을 지적인 이해로서 접하고자 하는 요구에 답하는 일이다. 본인의 발표문이 의도하는 것은 동아시아문화의 어떤 생각의 유형을 규정하여 그것을 서구적 발상의 방법에 대조하여 보려는 것이다. 그러면서 그것이 궁극적으로 하나의 관점에서 세계의 문제를 생각하는 데 작은 기여가 되기를 희망한다. 한 문명 또는 여러 문명의 사고의 유형을 규정한다는 것은 매우 거창한 과제임에 틀림이 없다. 여기에서 시도하는 것은 그 과제 자체를 살피는 것보다는 필자가 생각하는 한 문체적인 특징에 근거하여 그것을 에워싸고 있는 큰 테두리를 짐작해보자는 것이다.

발상의 단초는 한국의 또는 동아시아적 담론에서 발견되는 수사적 특징이다. 그 특징이란 우화적 기술방식 (parabolic mode of discourse)이다. 우화는 이솝의 우화나 라퐁테느의 우화에서 보는 서사의 방법이다. 우리 전통에서 가장 간단한 예는 요즘에도 한국인이 즐겨 쓰는 四字成語이다. 兔死狗烹이나 四面楚歌와 같은 표현은 우화를 요약하여 속어로 정형화한 것이다. 논어의 처음에 나오는 말 學而時習之不亦說乎 有朋自遠方來不亦樂乎도 추상적인 논리보다는 서사적 비유로서 담론을 전개하는 사례이다. 그런데 이러한 수사법은 심각한 정치적 논의에서도 볼 수 있다. 퇴계의 甲辰乞勿絕倭使疏는 일본과의 외교관계의 수립을 건의하는 중요한 내용의 상소문인데, 외교관계의 재개에 대한 주장을 뒷받침하는 것은 순전히 조선과 중국의 역사에서 인용하는 여러 사례들이다.

이러한 수사법의 뒤에 있는 것은 도덕적 윤리적 세계관이다. 이 관점에서 문제는 어떻게 하는 것이 정당한 대책인가 하는 것이다. 윤리적 원리에 기초하면서 실천할 수 있는 답을 찾는 것이 문제를 생각하는 근본적 동기이다. 실천의 효율성을 시험하는데 중요한 것이 상상적 또는 역사적 사례들이다. 정치 영역에서 문제를 생각할 때, 분명한 원리는 백성과 세계의 평안함을 도모할 정책을 생각해내는 것이다. 그것을 목표하는 정치의 수단도, 가령 전쟁과 같은, 폭력 대결을 피하는 것이어야 한다. 위의 퇴계의 상소문은 일본과의 관계가 전쟁을 무릅쓰는 것이 아니어야 한다는 것을 계속 강조한다. 관계를 원할하게 하는 것은 禮樂의 관계를 확립하는 것이다. 퇴계가 들고 있는 흥미로운 사례는 순임금이 苗의 침공을 干羽의 춤으로써 막아낼 수 있었다는 것이다. 오늘날 관점에서 이것은 현실 정치의 문제를 마술적인 방법으로 해결하려 한 것으로 보인다. 그러나 그것은 예악이 천지를 움직이는 이치라는 유학자의 확신을 나타낸다. 달리는 그러한 생각은 문제 대하여 윤리적 해결을 찾는 것이 통치자의 절대적 사명이라는 현실 이해에서 나온다. 유학자에게 그리고 동아시아에서 모든 문제는 “도덕현실학 Moral Pragmatics”의 테두리 속에서 사유된다.

이에 대하여 서양의 문제 제기 방식은 기본적으로 무엇이 진리인가 하는 것이다. 그것은

질문을 원칙적으로 세계의 원리로 향하게 한다. 그리고 그에 대한 답은 논리적 사변을 통하여 이루어진다. 그러한 문제 제기 방식은 동아시아의 도덕현실학에 대하여 이론학(Theoretics)에 속한다고 할 수 있다. 이론이라는 말은 희랍어 theoria에서 유래한다.. 이것은 희랍어에서는 觀照를 말한다. 관조는 인간의 삶을 포함하여 모든 존재를 향한다. 그 물음은 존재론적 성격을 갖는다. 이 이론적 접근 방법을 좁혀 놓은 것이 과학의 이론이다. 이것은 삶의 체험적 사실을 최소화한다. 그러나 과학적 합리성은 윤리 도덕의 사고보다는 문화나 문명의 차이를 넘어 쉽게 보편적 通用性을 갖는다. 과학의 세계화가 용이한 것은 그것이 가져 온 기술적 업적과 경제적 이득 이외에 합리성의 보편적 성격으로 인한 것이다. 그러나 이 보편성은 다분히 인성의 총체적인 욕구 捨象한 것이다. 이러한 관련에서 도구적 이성에 대한 비판이 생겨난다. 이러한 이성은 도덕적 윤리에 대한 요구가 인간의 근원적 소망이며 삶의 조건이라는 사실을 쉽게 잊어버리게 한다. 그러나 다른 한편으로 윤리와 도덕은 구체적인 사회관계, 역사적 문화 속에서 생성된 정신적 자원이다. 그것은 사회관계의 총체에 대응한다. 그 역사성, 구체성, 보편성의 주장에도 불구하고 배타적 성격을 갖기 쉽다. 존재론적 실존적 모든 조건을 포괄하는 보편적인 도덕 윤리의 성립은 간단한 것일 수가 없다.

한스 게오르크 가다마의 해석학에는 모든 텍스트의 해석은 텍스트 그리고 텍스트를 읽는 사람의 의식을 한정하는 문제의 지평을 전제한다는 생각이 있다. 문명에도 문제의 제기와 해답의 향방과 구역을 정하는 지평이 있다. 그 지평은 문답의 구역을 한정할 뿐만 아니라 다른 문명이 내장하고 있는 문답의 지평에서 발의되는 문답의 가능성을 배제한다. 그것은 강한 배타성을 가지고 있다. 동아시아의 도덕현실학과 서양의 진리이론학은 상호 배타적인 성격을 가지고 있다. 새로운 인간주의를 위한 참으로 보편적인 발상은 이 배타성을 넘어가는, 그리고 이론적으로 정당화될 수 있는, 사고의 메이트릭스 속에서 생겨난다. 이것은 단순한 혼용과 잡종화로 이루어질 수 없다. 그것은 주어진 상황에 대한 구체적이고 철저한 사고로부터 쌓아 올려야 한다. 그러나 다른 한편으로 다른 문화 다른 문명의 다른 가능성을 근본으로부터 참조할 것을 요구한다. 이러한 과정에서 모든 문명과 생명 현상 전체를 포용하는 그러면서 반성적 중심이 확실한, 보편성이 생겨나게 될 것이다.

Globality and Universality: Towards a New Horizon Beyond East and West
Observations on the Rhetoric and on the Domain of Moral Pragmatics

Kim Uchang

I Global and Comparative Perspective

When I was invited to make a presentation at this conference organized by the Academy of Korean Studies and was prompted to come up with a title for the prospective paper I would prepare, I gave the title, "Globality and Universality: Towards a New Horizon Beyond East and West," in compliance with the overall theme of the conference conveyed to me: "Korean Studies: New Perspective Toward Global Humanism." My title certainly sounds grandiose and empty, which is, I must say, what was intended as I was at the time not prepared to give a more substantial title, narrowing down my subject to a manageably-bounded area of inquiry. However, the grandiose title is not exactly meaningless as it was originally conceived. As the globalization proceeds on an ever-accelerated pace, the world is coming together as a single *Lebensraum* as well as a single *Denkensraum* or at least as a single *Informationensraum*. The word, "globality," would cover this phenomenon, but, even if globality occurs, the question still remains if it could be contained in a rational process of reflection reaching out to a meaningful totality of meaning, covering diverse cultures intermixing, that is, to "universality"--not exactly as a systematic whole of concepts and things but as a generative matrix of human reflection most humans can resort to for understanding the crowding things of the globe in general. With various parts of the world coming together through movements of material, peoples and informations, there are bound to be negotiations and compromises between the civilizations that go along with these movements, along with clashes, large and small. Could they be contained in some kind of coherent ways of thinking and feeling? That is the question that I thought would be provoked by the juxtaposition of such terms as globality and universality. Hopes are that a universalizing matrix of reflexive practice would be constituted, and civilizational and cultural differences would be eventually aligned in a new perspective.

However, even if assimilation and hybridization would occur as a natural course of things and a reflexive universality would hopefully accompany the process, it would also be a pity if we fail to articulate the differences before the new perspective develops--only if for the interest of enriching intellectual resources for dealing with the cultural world to come. But the differences may also hamper the development of a truly global universality; then there are all the more reasons for trying to articulate them.

One may assume that the Korean studies have moved so far mostly within the confines of the disciplinary boundary as required of any academic field; and, in addition, the trajectory of Korean Studies, unlike other disciplines, may be said to have been compelled by the sense of a national mission, appellation by history, of reinforcing the identity of the nation that suffered multiple injuries by Japanese colonialism and by the compulsion of modernization according to the Western model. Of these forces from outside, the West was especially a dominant presence, as it presented itself, either through direct contact or by way of Japan, as the paradigmatic achievement in the civilizational process of humanity as a whole. The expression, *la mission civilisatrice* was, as often pointed out, the propagandistic facade for Western imperialism, but it also represented a genuine lure to what appeared like a call to a higher stage of human civilization. This was also the case in the methodology of academic research, for the methodology as the West has developed has become a model for all the researchers throughout the world. As a result, in the case of Korean studies, the encroachment of the West, not only in externalities but also in the inner life of society, therein included academic work, has put it on the defensive ever the more, under the proud self-justification of its sacred national mission. Under these conditions, it has not been a customary practice for scholars of Korean civilization to view the field in the light of broader or comparative contexts, East Asian and global, or Western (at this moment of history the Western viewpoint having appropriated a position of panoptical overview). There are other difficulties.

To arrive at a truly comparative view of the material and mental state of things in the present-day Korea, what needs to be done would be to separate what is of Korean and what is of Western origin. This is not simply to strengthen the identity-building, but to arrive at a correct understanding of the native way of thinking. This paradoxically requires a comparative or Western point of view, for clarity of vision demands comparison or contrast. The clarity thus acquired of course would also assist clarification of accepted self-perceptions of the West itself, and general approximation to universality. In terms of general culture that now obtains in Korean society, however, it would be indeed difficult to separate the two elements from each other, the West having penetrated into Korean culture so deeply. In many areas of mental endeavors, the Korean cultural tradition is by-passed, though it remains as the powerful unconscious of the Korean mind to be archaeologically excavated--if a true understanding of the situation is to be attained.

The task remains of scrutinizing Korean thought—from a more universal point of view--as it could have existed before the coming of the West. This of course has to assume, in the case of East Asian thought, another external influence, that it had been so assimilated in the traditional Korea and become part of it that there is no great necessity to separate the threads originating from Korea from those

originating from the rest of East Asia, mostly, China, though it is certainly another task for academic research to identify an independent development of ideas in Korea, even if many of the ideas might have originated in China. Of course, to say this is to lay down an immense task for the students of Korean culture, which sounds almost impossible.

Needless to say, it is not my intention to suggest a possible way of carrying out the task or to lay down any signpost for a direction for the task. What I would like to do at this conference is modestly to suggest existence of a discursive mode that marks East Asian writing in general in the pre-modern era. My hope is that it will help illuminate, however indirectly, a distinctive epistemic regime governing the practice of writing in the East Asian tradition, in the pre-modern era and also even today as outmoded remains of the old habitus. I have discussed the subject once in an conference. I will incorporate part of it, revising it and placing it in a larger context, as befits the topic now being discussed.¹⁾

II The Horizon of Questioning

1) The Exclusive Horizon of East Asian Thinking

Michel Foucault's concept of episteme suggests that there is a pre-existing regime delimiting our conceptualization and thinking, from which we would have a hard time to escape. Similarly, we can think of the horizon of questioning delimiting that delimits, not only the way we think, but also even the possibility of questioning. which would precede thinking, for this thinking would be response to the questioning almost arising by itself. The concept of the horizon of questions is from Gadamer, but I think it would be expanded or radicalized as determining the civilizational boundary in which questions are posed and answers are given. This horizon for traditional East Asian thinking is that of moral pragmatics. I would attempt in this presentation to define it and summarize its effects.

While dealing with the problematik of hermeneutics, that is, the problem of how to interpret a text, Hans-Georg Gadamer, spoke of "the fusion of horizons (*die Verschmelzung [der]...Horizonte*)."²⁾ In order to interpret a text, one must have the sense of the question to which the text constitutes an answer, but this obliges the interpreter to see the question in its context, which he calls the horizon with its multiple possibilities, and of course with multiple limitations. This does not mean, in Gadamer's hermeneutics, that the interpreter should simply be able to transport himself to the horizon in which the text existed--the historical world in

1) Cf. "The Rhetoric of Moral Pragmatics: The Figurative Mode in East Asian Canonical Writing, " at Conference on "Canons in non-Western Civilizations" (비서구문명의 정진), held at Korea University, September 29, 2011.

2) *Truth and Method*, p. 306f. *Wahrheit und Methode*, S. 311.

which it was composed, but that the interpreter must understand his or her own world in which the question of interpretation itself arises; thus a historical consciousness is formed out of the fusion of the two horizons as a preliminary operation for justifiable interpretation. This process of interchange mainly concerns hermeneutics. But, when we think about the Korean or East Asian and Western learning in a comparative perspective, we can posit existence of a similar horizon that circumscribes our questions and answers. What is relevant at this point is, however, more narrowly, Gadamer's observation that "thought is tied to its finite determinacy [by the horizon in which it occurs] (*Die Gebundenheit des Denkens an seine endliche Bestimmtheit [durch sein Horizont]*)."3) Motifs of thought we engage in must also be understood as belonging to a separate realm of thought differently configured in a centripetal civilization ; and any comparative view of these motifs must be filtered through this broader frame of ideas prior to any comparative operation. Moral pragmatics and theoretics designate respectively such horizontal frames for East and West. The historical horizon of East Asian thinking determined the kind of questions that could be raised in thought processes or in dialogic or dialectic exchange of questions and answers; moral pragmatics provided such a horizon.

Now, apart from the problem of inter-civilizational exchange between different horizons of thought, the important point that should be noted in connection with the determinacy of thought by its horizon is that the determining horizon not only encloses in it a certain range of possibilities for problematizing objects of thought, but also precludes a certain other kind of ideational motifs, especially, even the questions that could provoke these motifs as answers. If we suppose the horizon changes throughout history, we may say that the preclusion circumscribes even the range of possible historical changes. The horizon at issue is then not even historical but it is an a priori determinant of all intellectual questioning beyond the vicissitudes of history. Not that questions remained unchanged over time, but they remained mostly within a certain domain; in the East Asian though, that of morality and ethics epistemically charted in the epochal beginning of its civilization.

This exclusiveness of the horizon, rejecting other ways of viewing, marks a civilization as unique or even as inscrutable to the outsider. (To the Western eye, the Chinese were often regarded in earlier contact as "inscrutable.") Before fusion could be possible, that is, a fusion that is not occurring spontaneously but as a conscious operation, we must take into account this unique and inscrutable character of a civilizational horizon, and then consider hermeneutic undertaking, but what I would like to do at this point is not to consider the process of potential

3) Hans Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzuege einer philosophische Hermeneutik Band I* (Tuebingen: J. C. B Mohr, 1986) S. 307. *Truth and Method* (New York: Continuum, 1999), p. 302. If only the German edition is mentioned, the English translation is mine. If only the English is mentioned, the translations is quoted from this edition. Sometimes editions in both languages are used to co-relate the original and the translation.

fusion but the exclusive character of the horizon of thought in East Asia and Korea, which I tried to designate by the term, moral pragmatics, but merely to indicate this horizon of moral pragmatics. I think its traces could be seen in things small as well as larger things, for instance in the parabolic mode of discourse.

2) The Horizontal Parameter of Moral Pragmatics

The delimitation of the possible area of questioning has, needless to say, enormous consequences for intellectual investigation and its trajectory in the Asian tradition. As moral and ethical questions came to occupy the dominating position in the discursive practice, it took a long time for the scientific way of approach to the world to find its own autonomous territory. The epistemic limitation primordially instituted also hampered even full investigations in moral pragmatics as there was difficulty in allowing open-minded consideration of the ontological neutrality underlying moral and ethical questions, which, for example, excludes the possibility of two ethical norms in aporetic collision as Hegel thinks, in his *Aesthetics*, Sophocles' *Antigone* dramatizes: the incompatible rules of family ethic and civil obligation. "The writing mode of *Annals of Spring and Autumn* (春秋筆法)" is often the phrase used to designate the proper way of history writing, which means that history must be written in such a way that righteousness is always proven to win over evils. The moral imperative thus stated often impeded seeing history in its full complexity, righteousness not always coming out the winner in historical struggle. The same moralist pre-judgment is represented, even in common parlance, in the aphorismic idea that the law of "the necessary restitution of just cause (事必歸正)" is the law by which human affairs, including history, run their course. There is seldom awareness of the possibility that there could be cleavage between the moral world and the material world, each following different paths of necessity. The greatest problem with the moralistic view of the world would be the obstacle it places in the development of scientific thinking or, more broadly, rational thinking, reason never obtaining the position of supremacy in intellectual investigation. ("Reason" as *ri* or *li*, 理, was a central principle in Neo-Confucian philosophy, but it does not depart too far from ethical principles and does not become an instrument of reasoning in accordance with logic or with causal laws. The central concern of Confucian scholars remains ethical and moral cultivation, either at the personal level or for social purposes; the main point of the scholarly work lies in virtue ethic, both for personal conduct and for statesmanship, which turns the state into what can be called ethico-cracy. The question of the Confucian canon could be also placed in this context, for ethico-cracy, a term of my own making, is invented to suggest its closeness to theocracy, and it needs certain scriptural texts to base the ethical rules it needs for political purposes. It is customary in East Asia to speak of *Si-shu San-jing* (四書三經), *Si-shu Wu-jing* (四

書五經) or even *Shi-san-jing* (十三經)--*Four Books and Three Classics, Four Books and Five Classics* or *Thirteen Classics*, as the texts that must be studied by an aspiring scholar of Confucian orthodoxy. What we would like to note in this connection is the fact that the texts can be numerically fixed and limited in this way, that it indicates that their canonical status is of scriptural nature.

The moral conviction of obsessive nature has disabling influence on the life of the mind, limiting the possibility of its full openness, as I have just said, but it also has its advantages. For Confucian rationality would not become merely instrumental in the pursuit of technological advancement or self-interest, as in the case of reason, if we are to follow the critiques advanced by Horkheimer and Adorno and their followers, which was conceived in the Western Enlightenment and turned into the instrument of capitalistic economy with its dehumanizing consequences.

We will begin this presentation with the simple fact of the frequent use of parabolic argument in East Asian and Korean expository writing, and try to suggest a horizon which could provide explanation for it; and various connections I have brought up to suggest the horizon that surrounds the occurrence of parables are too haphazard and simplifying, but the horizon outlined, rough as it is, certainly has heuristic significance as a hypothetical adumbration in understanding certain features in the typical mental operation in East Asian and Korean thinking.

III Fables and Parables: Moral Pragmatics

1) Moral Pragmatics, Ontological Theoretics, Ideas of Universality

The discursive mode of discourse I have referred to in the above is no esoteric one, but what may be simply called parable. We are all familiar with fables and parables--fables of Aesop or La Fontaine or parables Jesus often resorted to in order to convey his teachings to his followers. Parables--also fables, though animal figures are not usually employed in serious discourses--are ubiquitous in East Asian writing. This discursive mode, or rather a diegetic mode, employed in various discourses, is not always recognized as such, as it lies embedded in expository writing. Usually, a fable or parable is taken more lightly than admonitory prose, which often unfolds in expository logic than narrative sequence. But it could have a serious function as in Biblical instances, which throws light to a certain perspective that frames its use: that it is employed in fact to teach moral lessons, which is also the case in East Asia. The primary motive of many classical East Asian writers was moralistic or, at least, pragmatic, giving lessons on how to live and how to live correctly. What they were engaged in was the mission of moral or ethical inquiry, not exactly meta-ethical inquiry into the grounds of morality or ethic, but giving more directly pragmatic instructions in concrete situations, though argumentative logic was not entirely lacking as the instructions were given in arguments among

rivalling contenders.

To put it in another way, the main interest of East Asian thought can be said to have lain in moral pragmatics, and it is on account of this dominating interest that the fabular or parabolic mode of discourse became an easy resort. This moral pragmatics contrasts with what may be called ontological theoretics that dominated the West, if we apply the term to the kind of inquiry Greek philosophers from pre-Socratics such as Anaximander or Parmenidas to Plato and Aristotle were engaged in, whose philosophical questions were mainly directed to "the essence of nature." i. e., "what is," rather than to morals, and techniques of "how to live." Thus contrasted, we can indeed suspect existence of civilizational episteme that determines almost a priori questions and problems that thinkers could raise within a civilizational boundary. (Aristotle called pre-Socratic thinkers *physikoi*, physicists, while we may call East Asian sages, ethicists. Even the sophists in ancient China, known as *Zonghengjia* [縱橫家], can be said to belong to the epistemic regime of moral pragmatics or simply pragmatics, though they were mainly concerned with political strategies, which could be either moral or immoral, yet not with questions of truth or being; they were strategists of "what to do," closely related to "how to live." Pragmatic concerns straddle between moral and ethical questions, on the one hand, and real-life questions, on the other, and there are always passageways between the two, whether open or secret.

Our task is then, starting from the parabolic mode of writing, to get some sense of pragmatic concerns of East Asian thinkers, and move on to consideration of ways of moving from that to the possibility of a broader global integration. There is this possibility because moral concern, coupled with moral development, involves, as much as theoretical ambitions in the area of ontological questioning, the idea of expanding human capacity, both moral and theoretical, to the broadest extent, that is, until it embraces universality. Similar universalist aspiration is there in other cultures, including Western culture, and the ideal of integration into global universality will have to tap the ideas of universality in these cultures. The assumption is that universalities would overlap, though a universality may turn out to be a local peculiarity in spite of all efforts to overcome one's peculiarity.

2) Fables of an Earthy Life

The most famous fables in world literature would be, as noted, Aesop's fables. They are, needless to say, fantastically composed stories and yet contain realistic moral lessons. The emphasis is, as Professor Yu Jongho explicates in his translation of the Aesopian fables, par excellence, on "worldly cunning and caution," and yet the secular wisdom in them also connect with moral and ethical injunctions, such as "loyalty, gratitude, moderation, resignation, industry and so on," though the advice of the fables also may lead into some immoral acts carried out in defense of

self-interest.⁴⁾

Narratives of fabular nature in the East Asian tradition overlap with other kinds of writing. Some times they merge with stories of ghosts and fantasies. More straightforward fabular or parabolic examples of the Aesopian kind can be found in Sun Tzu or Han Fei-tzu. Han Fei-tzu, the famous Asian Machiavellian, has, for example, a story that sounds Aesopian, of three lice on a pig's body fighting against each other to grab the delicacy alone; a wayfaring louse tells them that the pig will soon be roasted and eaten by people; the lice start at once feasting together on the pig, which emaciates him and prevents his being slaughtered by humans, becoming a lasting source of food for the lice. (Han Fei-tzu did not recommend the nation becoming wealthy through commerce or warfare.) Another story: a heavy rain damaged the wall of a rich man's house, about which his son and a neighbor informed him; soon there was a thief breaking into the house; the son was commended for his wisdom, and the neighbor came under suspicion. (Evaluation of advisory talk must be expected to differ, depending upon the relation of the advisor to the advised.) One more story: a man who wanted to have his shoes made prepared for it by measuring the size of his feet at home; he went to the shoemaker, forgetting the paper on which it is set down; he goes back to his house to retrieve it, instead of letting the shoemaker do the measurement--all this showing the foolish consequence of obsession with abstract ideas and lack of flexibility.

Needless to say, Han Fei-Tzu and his school, Legalists, belonged to the minority tradition in China fiercely repudiated by Confucian orthodoxy, though their strategic realism was incorporated in *Realpolitik*, unacknowledged as it was by Confucian orthodoxy. Their discursive tactic therefore would not fall in the category of moral pragmatics, but, as already noted, moral pragmatics can easily slip into simple pragmatics as strategic thinking; there was always in Confucian pragmatics, we had better note, apertures to other pragmatic variations, which sometimes had the effect of turning morality into an unacknowledged weapon of political as well as personal power play. (Pragmatic morality turning into strategems turning into amoral instruments of power play.)

3) Parabolic Expressions

Fabular and moral intentions are more often carried by many idiomatic expressions in Chinese called "four-word idioms (四字成語)" or more broadly "old event idioms (故事成語)," which illustrate better the same kind of close connection between prudential and moral wisdom as in the case of Aesop's fables. The ability

4) The first part of the reference is to Prof. Yu Jongho's explanatory afterwords in his 이솝 우화집 (민음사, 2003). His explanation refers to the comments in the introduction to S. A. Handford's *Fables of Aesop* (Hammondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1953).

to quote these expressions was in old days considered a mark of a learned man, and the quotes always carried prestige and authority even in everyday transactions. (These expressions with compressed narratives are coming into fashion again in the present-day Korea—even after several decades after study of Chinese[漢文] have been taken out of public education.) The fables could be jocular but mostly contain some practical wisdom, concerning how to meet contingencies of life or they embody moral lessons.

The expression, "The rabbit killed, and then the dog killed, 兔死狗烹" implying that faithful service could be rewarded with a cruel disposal when its usefulness comes to an end, originating from Ssuma Chien, is well-known in contemporary Korea. In Aesop's fables there are many cases where service terminated leads to termination of life, as in the fable of a fox who appeases the lion by trapping his companion donkey to flatter the lion to end up himself as food for the lion after his service. The fable of the dog who outlived his use reveals the new self-preserving ethic of caution prompted by the decline of old morality or but, more relevantly to our argument, its slippage to the Legalist realism. Another four-word idiom well-known in Korea is "the border man's horse (塞翁之馬)," originating in a story, in *Lieh Tzu*, of the old man whose fate turns over several times after he loses his horse. We find a similar allegorical story--similar in the lesson intended--in *Eu-yadam, The Storybook of Eu* by Yu Mong-in, a 16th Korean scholar-official, on the subject of the uncontrollable and unpredictable nature of human fate. A boy reads in Ssuma Chien's history about a boy who, hearing that a person born on the day that happened to be his own birthday is fated to die when he reaches the height of the window-sill; he was impressed by this boy who has wit enough to say that the remedy would be in raising the window-sill; but the reader-boy who read this happens to get infected by an epidemic disease, which, passed on to his mother, causes her death⁵⁾: death does not come from an anticipated cause, which might have been circumvented, and human fate cannot be controlled by a wise trick. The practical lesson conveyed is similar to the Arab story, attributed to the 13th century Persian or Turkish trickster, Nasreddin. The story tells about a man meeting Death in Baghdad and running away to Samarra; the man's master is later told that Death was surprised to meet him in Baghdad, because his appointment was to be in Samarra. All these fabular or parabolic tales lean to realism than to moral teaching.

Some four-character phrases simply compress lessons of historical events, such as "songs of Chu all around (四面楚歌)," meaning predicament with no escape, "Wu and Yue in the same boat (吳越同舟)," meaning a situation where irreconcilable enemies were forced to face each other.

Such expressions as "cut and polish 切磋琢磨," "renewing the old and learning the new (溫故知新)," "sacrificing life to achieve humanity, 殺身成仁." all taken from

5) 柳夢寅, 어우야담, 柴貴善, 李月英 역주 (한국문화사, 1996) pp. 279-271.

The Analects, are condensed maxims on the method of self-cultivation. Condensing morals into a compact mnemonic form seems to lend lighter tones to the messages conveyed, and yet there is no doubt about moral intention behind them. The moral intention enclosed in these expressions is more in conformity with the overall function of the fables and parables in East Asian writing in general. We may note that, after all, the first statement of Confucius in *The Analects*, the central text in the Confucian canon (though not in the early Confucianism) is admonitory, conveying the moral in a light figurative illustration: "Is it not a pleasure, having learned something, to try it out at due intervals? Is it not a joy to have like-minded friends come from afar? Is it not gentlemanly not to take offence when others fail to appreciate your abilities?"(D. C. Lau translation)

4) Parables and Pragmatic Test

Narratives almost automatically induce human interest; they concern situations which confront persons as concrete events; and it is natural that it is a method of comprehension almost innate in humans. No abstract precepts can completely anticipate concrete cases of situational events confronting human beings, which can be in contrast rendered in the form of stories. The fables of Aesop, La Fontaine or the stories put in the four character expressions in the narrative form contain worldly or ethical lessons, and the narrative form allows them to be tested, if only in imagination or thought experiment.

In a similar way, though there would be difference in seriousness, if one's preoccupation is in pragmatics, moral or realistic, one way of testing whatever theses one advocates would be to put it in narratives, whether imagined or told from personal experience, one's own or others.' The passage from *The Analects*, referred above, does not exactly constitute a story, but it transposes the author's moralistic assertion to an emotional experience, which could have been developed into a narrative: the transposition is, in any case, from abstract assertion to concrete experience. Confucius tries in the passage to persuade the reader or the listener to admit the pleasure of learning, not by a reasoned argument, but by evocation of experience: in this case, the pleasure of meeting with a friend. It is possible, as it is in any evaluation of experience, not to be persuaded by the connection between learning and friendship, either unable to see the appropriateness of the analogy or never having had the pleasure of learning in any similar way to the pleasure of personal relationship.

Chu Hsi's explanation of the first sentence in his commentary on *The Analects* perhaps brings the pleasure of learning and a sensory pleasure more tightly together, as it were, into a single process, making it more persuasive: the part rendered as "trying out one's learning at due intervals" actually refers, Chu Hsi notes by dissecting the character, *sup*, *shi*, 習 in the expression, 學而時習之不亦悅

乎, to a bird learning to fly and trying out its skill of flying from time to time. Learning to train one's bodily agility, though it would require strenuous exercise, would certainly appear to many to be a pleasurable activity. There is no need in this case to allude to pleasure of friendship. The transposition occurred is from mental to physical activity, which latter could be confirmed in a sensory test, though not exactly worked out in a narrative extension; one can easily see the analogy between the change occurring in learning and the fly learning to fly.

The pragmatic test of a thesis could take on diverse diegetic quality. The kind of figurative illustration ranges widely from what can be authentically called fables and parables to historical precedents and to the figurative rhetoric retaining fabular or parabolic origins. The important point is that all involves pragmatic concern; and all fabular and parabolic narration takes on new significance when it is related to the assumption the reader is induced to make about the unity of the normative and the actual in human performance in the story. The unity is tested very often through the plot of action worked out in diegetic unfolding: the plausibility of the plot proves that the initial moral hypothesis works in reality. Fables and parables are creation of imagination, but what is tested usually is moral or ethical premises. Of course, moral or ethical norms tested may be found out to be unworkable in the working of the plot constructed in imagination. Unless it is in a serious literary or dramatic work, the result may be moral cynicism or skepticism, but moral concern is still there in many cases, as it is involved in proving or disproving the validity of lessons in life. We may say the plan of human existence contains a moral and ethical or normative layer, even a minimal kind, and it is not easy to take leave of it entirely just as it is not easy to abide by it consistently.

Yet fables and parables mostly remain at the level of imaginary play, but when serious issues of the world are involved, proof for the test had better come from the real world, most often from history, though there is always, as long as the discourse stays at the parabolic level, some lightness, because parabolic meaning leaves room for interpretation, which depends for success on the sense of discrimination on the part of the reader or listener; and the discourse, on account of its parabolic resort, retains the quality of rhetorical artifice, which has meaning of its own as expression of the author's rhetorical mastery. In any case, history is always there to prove pragmatic postulates with real stories taken from it or stories constructed as real from actual events. Narratives in much of historical writing, east and west, conflate real events and moral and ethical outcomes, turning them into serious parabolic models for future actions. This was particularly the case in East Asia as justice mandatorily realized in the actual course of events was a priori assumption in its tradition of history writing. History occupied a central position for moral pedagogy, and also for serious public discourses. (The pragmatic moral concern may have to do with the fact that history is often told chronologically and anecdotally, that is, as not as sweeping narratives but as

piecemeal narratives, which some Western historians of China have noted.) History was a *sine qua non* resource for supporting public argument; recalling historical antecedents—antecedents cited was needed to support action to be taken. In the following, we will take some look at the examples of fabular elements and historical-parabolic allusions, in the way of exhibiting the parabolic mode of discourse in the Korean ethical tradition.

IV Parables in Political Writing: Moral Pragmatics of Peace

1) Parables in Political Writing

In the Choson dynasy, literati bureaucrats in high offices had direct access to the king and could directly communicate with him, very often with their writing, which was often like learned disquisition. Such personal and epistolary access to the ruling prince must be said to be a rare instance in the world history. It owes to the assumption that the country must be ruled by sagely wisdom, which the king instructed by high officials who were academically accomplished persons must represent. Learned language was therefore natural when they wrote memorials to the king or wrote royal edicts and proclamations on behalf of the king. As they were learned men, when they made policy recommendations, they strengthened their argument by citing historical precedents; it is possible to say in fact that no argument in these writings could proceed without referring to historical precedents serving as *exempla*, most of all, parables of serious meaning; it was the idiom of their thought, because of their learning and, as observed above, because of their primordial motivation in moral pragmatics. We will take a look at some specimens, mostly from Yi Toegye (1501-1570).

When Yi Junkyung, who later served as the king's prime minister, was appointed to the king's military emissary to the province of Hamkyung, Toegye, as Master of the National Academy (成均館大司成), composed a royal letter accompanying the appointment.⁶⁾ The king (Toegye as proxy writer) begins his epistolary royal order by first setting down the precarious conditions in the province for which Yi Junkyung is appointed as the border military commander (the king seems to be extraordinarily well-informed of the situation of the border area remote from the capital) and the king feels the national mood is rather lax owing to the long peace the nation has enjoyed, and therefore likely to neglect the problems that might arise in the border area; and then the king goes on to praise the appointee as an accomplished man learned in letters and military affairs who tops even ancient military strategists, such as Fan Zeng (范增), the renowned strategist for Shiang Yu (項羽), the hegemon of Chu(楚), who had the plan in the Warring States period to arm several ten thousand warriors, and the royal epistle also refers to some

6) 韓國의 思想大全集 10, 退溪, 成樂薰 譯 (동화출판사, 1972), pp. 37 - 39.

post-Chi'n shi Huang local rulers who wanted to build the wall of iron and the moat of boiling water for defense, obviously an example of exercise in futility, while disciplined military forces is the correct response. In his praise, the king mentions the virtue, attainment and dignity of the appointee who had the ability to correct the frivolity of the age, like " Dizhu (砥柱)," a mountain in the midst of flowing water, that would not be moved even by the waters of the Huang Ho(黃河) and who will guard the northern border like "a tiger on the mountain." The king then reviews the traditional policies of the government for the region and sets down the general guidelines in governance and defence, which must combine strictness and considerateness, principles and adaptability in accordance with changing situations. He ends the letter by expressing his appreciation of the plan appointee has submitted, which shows him to be capable of the on-the-spot adaptability advocated by Zhao Chong Kuo (趙充國), a Han general, who was sent to fight the northern barbarians, and also of the virtuous magnanimity of Li Te Yu (李德裕), a Tang general who could pacify the southwestern borders of the Tang Empire.

2) Parables in the Moral Pragmatic of Peace

The importance of historical-parabolic allusions for support of argument are clearer in another example from Toegye's writings, the remonstrance to the king he wrote when he was serving as an officer in the seminarium for the king: "Appeal to His Royal Highness not to Refuse the Japanese Mission in the Year of Dragon (甲辰乞勿絕倭使疏)."⁷⁾ It can serve as an representative example of a rhetorically finished statement of policy recommendations based on a solid mastery of Confucian philosophy, though marred at the same time with some unbelievable prejudices inherent in the Confucian ideal of universal culture with its disdain for those who fall outside the civilized domain defined by it. The remonstrance is an apologia, however, for a positive attitude the Korean Royal Government should take in making itself accessible to the Japanese approach for re-establishment of official relationship with Korea.

Toegye's apologia begins with a definition of the status Japan occupies in the Sinic-Confucian concept of the civilized world. It is mistake to expect barbarians to observe the civilized code of conduct, just as it is wrong to deal with animals the human standards of civility. The best way to deal with animals is to let them act and live according to their untrained nature, and let them come and go as they would like to. It is the same with the barbarians coming from outside the civilized world. "To try to teach them the hierarchical order of the king and his subjects, to chastise them for their ignorance of right learning and way, to tell them to discriminate right and wrong, straight and crooked, may give satisfaction to the righteous mind, but it is like trying to teach animals 'ritual and music (禮樂)' ; all

7) Ibid., pp. 42-47.

this is a vain attempt to tame the nature they are born with.” This overall distinction between the civilized and the untamed barbarian is then followed by a series of reference to historical precedents, most from Chinese history, to support and modify the initial declaration. The first reference is to how Emperor Shun(舜) dealt with the invading tribe of Miao (苗). His army could not defeat the Miao even if the battle lasted for a month, but the dance he performed in front of the invaders holding in his hands a *gan* (干, spear) and a *yu* (羽, feather) succeeded after seventy days in making them yield to the wishes of the Emperor. (The prescribed formula seems to have originated from a superstitious belief in the magical effect of some artistic performance, but the lesson seems to be that ritual and music, as marks of civilized conduct, have civilizing effect, softening the willful stubbornness of the barbarians; this is in contradiction to the initial statement that the barbarians cannot be expected to respond to the code of civilized conduct; the underlying idea is, however, recommendation of flexible appeasement, relying both on nature and civility. Another example follows: The northern tribe Xianyun (奚纣) was driven away by Tang ruler, Xuan (宣), but he did not pursue them into their native land in spite of the rule that requires clarification of an issue according to the strict standard of right and wrong. This is certainly a military response, but it avoids extremist measure. Toegye’s recommendation is both appeasement and war, but both guided by principles of moderation and humanity.

Toegye’s argument continues along the same line, holding on to the basic idea of humanity, even at the cost of abandoning certain rules of justice which could be too rigidly taken. At the same time, he never relaxes an wary awareness of real-political forces at work. In spite of what could be called a firm conviction in the validity of the distinction of societies according to the standard of civilization between the civilized and the uncivilized, Toegye is remarkably responsive to the demands of humanity and generosity; we may say that even when he speaks of distinction between nature and civility, he is not entirely on the side of civility, and he believes in nature as the ground of all life, including human life; and full humanity is realized at the moment when the cultivated sense of humans take innate nature into account. The subtle stance which he wants the king to take, as informed by his Confucian cultivation, is illustrated in the historical examples he brings up in addition to the ones we have already looked at.

After noting the effect of civilized behavior figuratively typified in the dance of Shun and the self-restraining moderation in the use of force as exemplified in Xuan’s war against Xianyun, Toegye illustrates the subtle nuanced stance he advocates by examples from the course of events that has taken place recently along with historical episodes from Chinese history. The gesture of reconciliation represented by the Japanese overture for reestablishing diplomatic relationship with Korea has occurred, according to Toegye’s explanation, after a series of events that have occurred lately. The pillages and rampages caused by Japanese pirates at

Saryang made the Korean Royal Government subdue them by force and close the area conceded to the Japanese sojourners in southeast Korea. Now the Japanese have come back, asserting that the pirate invasion was carried out by different Japanese groups and regretting their past wrong. There are observations, he concedes, that welcoming the Japanese back now goes against the rule of justice and that their tributary gesture may hide devious intentions. But it is not the way of the king, Toegye argues, to act according to pre-conceived suspicion and mistrust; the correct conduct is to accept expression of a truthful mind as it is; and give permission to what is permissible. Toegye then cites historical precedents from China: Emperor Kao (高帝), who suffered a seven-day siege by Xiongnu invaders, but persuaded them to withdraw with plentiful gifts; Emperor Hui (惠帝), who ensured peace by a courteous reply to the enemy; Emperor Wen (文帝), who, after bitter battles with the Xiongnu, involving several invasions, duplicitous promises and betrayals, wrote a conciliatory letter, securing a friendly relationship as close as that between father and son, and, when once again betrayed by them and exposed to their plunder and killing, fought them until they were expelled outside the border where he was restrained enough to order his troops to stop.

Besides admonitory historical examples, there are realistic reasons Toegye considers, though we cannot say that he ever gives himself away to the manipulative politics of power. He thinks that at that moment power and justice lie on the Korean side, and they may be taken as justifying a hard-line policy. But the correct way of taking advantage of this situation is, Toegye thinks, to grant, relying upon the power existing in the Korean hand, the Japanese an opportunity to change their way; in the self-restraint of the use of the power and the justice the Japanese would be able to perceive, they would see more gratefully the virtue in the way the Koreans conduct themselves; they would, moved by it, come closer to reconciliation and eventually to the peaceful relationship.

There are other more realistic considerations besides the question of power. There are hostile forces surrounding the Korean kingdom; barbarian forces in the north besides Japan in the south; it is not a good policy to turn these forces in the north and south into enemy at the same time. To be assured of the peace in the south would prepare Korea the better for the northern defence. Besides, there are symptoms in Heaven and Earth that the country is not exactly in an auspicious condition, which is reflected in the feeling of anxiety in the hearts of the people stirred by the threats of foreign invasion. Most important is of course the devastation a war would bring to the life of the people. Emperor Taizong (太宗) of Tang compromised with the invading Turks and Emperor Chenzong (真宗) of Sung with the Khitan, risking the opprobrium of surrendering to unjust demands, all for the sake of the people, for "war is brutal and dangerous, destroying the welfare of the people, peace, and dynastic continuity." Chu Hsi said that it is a shame that Sung capitulated to the unjust demands of the Khitan, but, in Toegye's view, there

was no other choice for Chenzong, given the weakened condition of the Sung Dynasty, but Korea is at a position that could allow control of rightness and power and it is better to let the Japanese feel the virtue the country possesses as Emperor Shun did vis-a-vis the Miao.

Toegye's remonstrance ends, after warning against some personal dealing with the Japanese as shown in the behavior of Kim Anguk (金安國), with the expression of humility, following the conventional formula of the time, in regard to his opinions and in his readiness to place himself under the possibility of mortal punishment for his audacity of writing to the king.

3) Moral Pragmatics of Peace and Confucian Learning

So far we have looked at samples of the parabolic mode of writing we can note in many kinds of writing in the Korean tradition. It could be placed, as noted before, in the context of moral pragmatics, the dominant modality of engagement intellectuals had with the world humans inhabit. As we have seen, they were committed to the right way of living, which was mainly defined in terms of right moral behavior, sometimes carried to ritual rigorism, but intrinsically understood as the efficacious means of ensuring peace, social or international, the basic condition for people's well-being. This linked connection of moral commitment with practical policy is clearly there in the examples of the remonstrative writings of Toegye we have seen above. Morality is, in other words expressed in correctly patterned behavior, but its justification is in its efficacy in keeping peace and welfare of common people. Historical parables are part of the means of persuasion in meeting problems of conflict in social relations and international relations. What stands out in Toegye's deliberation on potentially conflictual international relations is commitment to goals of peace. (In this connection, we may observe that parabolic approach itself shows the fundamental irenic commitment of the mode in that it leaves room for rumination on the part of the addressee, more so than straight argument with a logic that compels.) This moral commitment is not accidental, but part of Confucian learning: the belief was that correct learning leads to cultivation and civility, to embracement of ethics, then to pacification of human existence, personal or collective. In order to see this overall direction in Confucian learning, we may take a look at another case that parallels Toegye's.

Tasan Chung Yagyong (1762-1836) has an essay in which he considers the question of potential threat posed by Japan, which invaded Korea in 1592 and started a seven-year war that devastated the country. (I discussed his view on the subject in other occasions.) The essay seems to have been a response to a question raised about the prospect of another war with Japan. Tasan's response was an optimistic prognosis. "There is little cause to worry about Japan," he declares with a confidence which he thought could be justified from the writings of

Ito Jinsai, Ogyu Sorai, and other Japanese Confucian scholars he had examined. He found that "their learning (i. e. *mun* or *wen*, writing) shines forth in their discussion of classics," which he said assured him that Japan would not engage in barbarous act of war again. "Barbarians are difficult to restrain on account of their lack of learning," he reasoned. "For without learning, there is no sense of ceremonies and ritual(*li*), justice, humility and shame; and without learning, there is no recourse for reining in their wild passions and their rapacity with appeal to long-term views of things." But there is now evidence that Japan has come out of the condition of barbarism. To support his argument, he cites examples from history. The relations with China and then with the Liu'iu had been warlike in the early history of Korea, but the enlightening effect of learning modified the relationship into that of ceremonies and ritual, after which there was nothing but "flowering of learning, well-being, and respect of civility and justice all around until, even when the invaders come, there would be only bowing on the folded-hands and courteous offer of gifts."⁸) (Bowling and courteous offer of gifts for appeasing the invading enemy at the door. The belief in the efficacy of humane learning and courteous gestures in keeping peaceful relations among the states is beyond the credibility of the modern mind. The first political lesson Koreans had to learn in the twentieth century started with the unlearning of this belief, whether applied internationally or domestically--at the terrible cost of colonialism, wars, civil strife, social dislocations and spiritual disorientation. "What is history? It is the record of the struggle of 'us' and 'non-us' producing certain mental states expanding over time and space."⁹) This is a famous statement by Shin Chaeho in 1924, who wanted to stir the Korean people to the passionate liberation struggle against Japan by this statement of his conviction that starkly placed life-and-death conflict as the prime agent of history. In any case, large part of the intellectual history of Korea can be said to be the process of the gradual expansion of this bellicose view that sees not only history but society mainly in terms of conflict between foe and friend in irreconcilable opposition until it became an orthodox understanding of social processes.

V Universality and Cultures

1) The Theme of Peace

Tasan's idea of peace ensured by ritual gesture looks so unrealistic, and it is

8) *Kukyuk Tasan simunchip*, V [Tasan's Selected Poetry and Prose in Korean Translation]. (Seoul: Minchokmunhwa chuchinho, 1983), pp.162-164/ 78-79.

9) Shin Chaeho, *Chosun sangosa*, sangwon, [Ancient History of Korea, Volume 1] (Seoul: Tanchae Shin Chaeo sunsaeng kinyomsauphoe, 1977), p.47

unrealistic, but at the same time it must be admitted that there was this pacifist strain inextricably embedded in Confucian orthodoxy. Tasan was a realistic thinker. Modern scholars assign him to the School of Practical Learning that tried to bend the ideological idealism of Neo-Confucianism to the practical reality of society. He was a trenchant critic of the abuses and corruption rampant in the late years of the Yi dynasty. Even in international relations, he did not of course think that Confucian ideology alone would assure peace among states. Nevertheless, he believed that the general civilizing influence of learning would induce the rulers to take long-term views of things, though he did include the consideration of mutual benefits accruing from trade and exchange of civility contributing to the condition of peace--a view held by Kant in his treatise on perpetual peace concerning the progress of reason and prospect for peace. Given the realistic orientation of Tasan, there is then perhaps a shade of irony in his observation on the bowing and courteous offer of gifts. From evidence of another short essay on Japan, we get the realistic sense of international relations he had where he says that if what matters is only the comparative strength of military power, Japan could have invaded a hundred times, and conquered a hundred times. He is implying that relations among nations is more complex than could be reduced either to the terms of civility or force. Nonetheless, at the root of Tasan's observation on the international situation in East Asia was certainly the belief that Confucian learning can make armed conflict be supplanted by ceremonial and ritual relations among states. We may say then that thinkers both in East and West believed that development of humanistic learning would contribute to peace and the anchoring of flourishing human life in the condition of peace.

Humane learning pursued to the end is bound to arrive at an inclusive and truthful view of human potential, which would be shared by all human beings, and that would lead to hermeneutic universality and to the world peace. The signpost to universality and peace is unmistakably there in the Confucian idea of learning. In a similar vein, Steven Pinker, trying to demonstrate the advancement of non-violence in world history, asserts that the broadened view of human potential was opened up by rational thinking developed in the Enlightenment, and it marks a turning point in Western history. With such development as occurred in the Enlightenment, "... tacit norms of empathy, self-control, and cooperation may take the lead, and rationally articulated principles of equality, non-violence, and human rights" may evolve, though not continuously in all the periods following the Enlightenment.¹⁰⁾ We may say that the moral imperative of peaceful life was the firmer in East Asia, partly on account of the commitment of Confucianism to morality as the indispensable guiding principle in social life--in primary communities, villages or in the state. We will briefly compare Eastern and Western ideas of learning leading to universal

10) Steven Pinker, *The Better Angels of Our Nature: Decline of Violence and Its Causes* (London: Penguin Books, 2011), p. 185.

embracing of humanity and the world which would may help form the basis of peaceful union of humans. In spite of these differences in East and West, would it be possible for the ideas of learning, in two civilizations help form a common basis for understanding of the universal potential of the human self and the world, a global and universal perspective? In the following, we will take a look at some samples of the ideas of self-cultivation and universality from East and West, with the possibility of this global perspective in mind.

2) Ideas of Self-Cultivation and the Moral Regime of the State

First, we will return to Toegye and share some of his he thought about ethics as the basis of the humane state. On the occasion of his appointment to the position of the Master of the Academy of Letters (弘文館大提學) at the age of sixty-eight, Toegye submitted to King Sunjo, *Ten Diagrams in Sagely Learning* (聖學十圖), a compendium of programs of self-cultivation to be studied and mastered by the king for sagely governance. As a admonitory paper for the king, it is somewhat strange to the modern eye that it contains very little in the way of political wisdom or state policie, and it is all about self-cultivation, learning and mastery in ethical conduct, including, on the one hand, its cosmological grounds and, on the other, comportment in daily life, which forms part of self-cultivation. (The last item is only a presentation of the rules of daily life in Confucian academies, which may serve as a model for the king, but, for that matter, other items included in his programs of learning for the king are also reports on the models of sagely pursuit, not exactly adjusted for the special status of the one destined to rulership.) The core conviction running through the compendium is that self-perfection in ethics is indeed the ground of correct statesmanship and rulership. However, we will not deal here with this condensed manual of Confucian learning, as it would require fuller treatment. Instead, we will take a look at a remonstrative memorial written around the same time, containing advice on the basic rules of conduct and stance that will keep the king in correct rulership.¹¹⁾ The advantage of doing so is not only in the fact it is short but also we can note in it the fact that the ethics running through the compendium is not simply stated in abstract terms, but worked out in details as rules of conduct in varied social circles a person's life is bounded by. Universal ethic, at least as claimed by Confucian learning, is derived from such concrete situational rules: it is composed of concrete rules binding socialities, small and large.

Toegye starts the remonstrance with an advice on knowing the importance of the order of correct royal succession. because, we suppose, the new king was a nephew from a half-brother of the deceased king; and emphasis is placed on his familial duty in the royal house as successor: "Lo, there are no two suns in

11) 韓國의 思想大全集 10, "戊辰六條疏," pp. 68 - 86.

heaven, no two kings in a kingdom, and no chief mourners at funeral, and, therefore, ancient sages put weight on acting according to ceremonial rules, knowing the import of filial duty in blood relationship...." Toegye writes. There are many duties for the king to maintain in respect to the Dowager Queen, to the royal ancestors; the duties must be carried out with piety—love and respect. Of course, care of the people must be in his mind. For the purpose of this care, the most important ground is the mind and mindfulness: "To keep the mind pure is more difficult than not to spill water in the plate carried in one's hands; to keep the mind in goodness is more difficult than to keep the candle lighted before the blowing wind." Toegye, after mentioning the maggots in the rotting tree as a metaphor for the mind weakened in its filial duty by the love of wife and offsprings, compares the purity of the mind the king must have to "water with no disturbing waves and a mirror smeared by no particles of dust," though it may easily darken under evil influence. This must apply to everyday life as well, eating, walking or meeting people. After a more detailed exposition of the ways of refining the use of the mind: "broad learning, meticulous questioning, careful deliberation, clear judgement, and sincere action (博學, 審問, 慎思, 明辯, 篤行)," all taken from *Chung Yung*, though the source is not mentioned, he moves on to the art of governing: restraining unfair rewards to old friends, employing honest and trustworthy advisors and administrators, controlling factions whose "sharp-edged knife hurts upright men, sending them into exile, grounding them up like condiments into powder." All the policies and strategies should be for the happiness of the people.

In Toegye's conception, the moral schemes he has outlined has a cosmological backing, for everything ties together, politics, ethics and the cosmic order. The sovereign is the fountain of all good behavior in the nation; his goodness is emulated by his subjects; for, as it is said in *The Classic of Change*, "sound seeks sound, *chi* seeks *chi*, as all seeks one's own kind; water seeks where there is wetness, fire where there is dryness, cloud the dragon, wind the tiger." Toegye quotes Tung Chung-shu, the philosopher-imperial counselor in Ch'in Shi Huang's empire, to put politics in line with the working of heaven: "Heaven visits the state with natural disasters so as to let it know its failure to keep to the Way; if there is no mending after the disasters, there will be inauspicious events; if there is no mending after the inauspicious events, there will be further lessons in damage and defeat; all showing the mind of heaven attempting to prevent calamities from its loving attention to the kind." Toegye cautions, however, that these heavenly omens must be taken seriously only after fully understanding "Heaven's nurturing care for all life, animals and plants, above all for humanity...therefore, electing the most caring and sagely of men to be the ruler." That is, heavenly omens are not simply to be deciphered sortilegically but to be taken as occasions for self-reflection for the ruler.

He ends his memorial following the convention, as he did in the previous

remonstrances we discussed, by stressing his humility in daring to offer counsel to the king: he is "a lowly man, but the king must be able to lend his ear to the lowly voices of people"; even if he [Toegye] is "living a reclusive life in a rural hermitage, suffering from illness," he would be [knowing the virtuous rule of the king] as happy as if he sees the shining light of his sovereign face to face, and it would be as if he were bathed in the bounty of the royal virtue; he would regret even if he dies the death of a reclusive scholar withering away in a cave-like dwelling." Finally, the usual trope: "this remonstrative epistle is submitted with a humble resolution risking a deathly punishment for its insolence."¹²⁾

3) Ideas of Self-Cultivation and Universality--*Bildung*

Toegye's advice to the king was composed with the highest motive of inspiring moral and ethical conduct for the ruler, but it could be taken as a general advice for self-cultivation; in his advice to the king he simply repeats what he has gathered from his learning in the Confucian texts revered in the Choson Dynasty; and what he tells the king is also applicable to other students of self-cultivation. As we have observed, Toegye is putting too much emphasis, from the modern point of view, on the importance of cultivating the sagely mind, making it a document of pure idealism too far away from *Realpolitik* at work even in the Confucian society he idealized, and, even for the general student, his advice may be considered short in realism. There is, however, in the Confucian tradition in general, a firm belief in the evident efficacy of ethical conduct in the world, and it is this belief that grounds the rhetoric through which he would advice the king, and it would also the same in the case of the king's subjects aspiring for acquisition of life's wisdom. The purpose of learning is to acquaint oneself with universal wisdom in the ethic that holds up the world in a balanced order congenial to the original human nature.

There are assumptions in many programs of education or self-cultivation in different traditions that it is possible to come to a comprehensive knowledge of the human self and the world—at least cognitively through learning, though this could also be a way to the practical mastery of the empirical world; and it could foster a more open-minded understanding of different kinds of knowledge under the umbrella of a narrow-minded or different *Weltanschauung*; and it would eventually move on to a universalistic ethic embracing all humanity.

The assumption behind this universalistic engagement of learning is that there is a potential in the human selfhood that could, if properly cultivated, encompass all human qualities so that the mastery achieved through learning would materialize in some special human quality of universal nature, simply put humanity: In East, *ren, jen* or *in* (仁), the highest human virtue (though it is usually placed in the concatenation of other virtues, *ren, yi, li, zhi* in, *yi, ye, chi* [仁義禮智]); in West,

humanitas, Humanitaet as conceived by the Renaissance thinkers or by Kant. There would be, it is assumed, progress in a educational programs of self-cultivation that would lead to this generalized quality: a fuller and more universalized human capacity; capacity to rise above details of life and see them in overall patterns and laws, which are likely to constitute a total order, and act according to it. While this developed capacity will make human faculties and personality more perfect, it will also make them more open to the truths and varied possibilities of truth of the self, society and the empirical world. In the East Asian tradition, it was mastered not only through textual learning, but also in the graceful mastery of conduct in various interpersonal and ceremonial situations as well as in everyday life. while it is seen more as the effect of personal cultivation in the West. If we are looking for harmonious integration of the diversity of cultures and civilizations in the world, not simply in negotiations in externalities but in the generative matrix of universal understanding and amity, based on this understanding (in *Poliques de l'amitie*, to borrow from Jacques Derrida).

Bildung can be said to correspond to the Eastern idea of self-cultivation (修身). The endeavor to achieve it in education and self-cultivation enables one to transcend the limits of one's particularity to a higher plane of existence, for the benefit not only of personal fulfillment but also of communicatively functioning communality. The ultimate aim of humanistic cultivation can be best expressed in Hegel's phrase, "elevation to universality [*Erhebung zur Allgemeinheit*], which Han-Georg Gadamer thinks really forms the dore ideal in the German tradition of humanistic learning. The attainment of universality does not stop at acquirement of a theoretical capability, but a redefinition of oneself as a being guided by "human reasonableness in its entirety (*die menschliche Vernuenftigkeit im Ganzen*)."¹³⁾ It is achieved through humanistic learning, but as it requires rising above one's particularity, it goes along with the regime of mental and moral discipline that would make access to a universal plane of experience: as described by Gadamer, in the first place, an ascetic practice: abstention from one's desire and the object of desire; it also requires limiting one's needs and one's powers. This ascetic restraint stresses a turn to one's interiority, but it opens up the self to the outside world. It is to achieve objectivity in relation to the world. It also helps one see clearly the otherness of the other, different standpoints of others and then different universal possibilities. Thus broadly conceived, universality is more than theoretical or epistemological process but a process involving entire human personality, often manifesting as sensibility, "a universal sense (*ein allgemeine Sinn*)"¹⁴⁾ As it turns to the practical world, universality, one may suppose, serving as a guidance in the practice of life, would result in a universal morality.

This idea of universality morality is common both in Gadamer or the Western

13) *Wahrheit und Methode, Band I*, S. 18.

14) Cf., *Ibid*, S, 17- 23.

idea of moral education` and in the Confucian idea of self-cultivation. There are of course bound to be differences in nuances. However, at the same time, in spite of similarities in superficial features in mental and moral orientations, this difference could be very much of radical nature so that there could be a fundamental rupture in the ideological structures of universality as a whole. In thinking about universal morality in comparative perspective, we note contrasting ways in which its basis could be conceived.

To take one feature, for example: the role of conscience in moral action. The true nature of morality often becomes clarified when it is seen as requiring not simply detachment but a declaration of a sharp break from what rules the actual and passing condition of existence. It often takes the form of responding to an absolute command issuing from conscience, but this command of conscience can be understood as coming from sources differently constructed in East and West. In the Western thinking, it comes ultimately from a noumenal realm above the phenomenal world of socially-contracted moral norms. For universality is—as the empowering capacity coming from training for overview, involvement, and detachment from and with the things of the world—a manifestation from human interiority, even if the interiority itself is the constituted effect of the transformative process of reflexive cultivation socially programmed. However, in the Asian tradition, morality exists, in contrast, embedded in the concrete situations of life as in the learning of the mind. Conscience is the power of totality arising from concrete rules of social ethic. Consequently, the practical modality of Asian conscience is different from the way it functions in the West. (An analogy could be a moral sense arising from nationalism: one belongs to a group constituted as a nation, and a patriotic sentiment becomes natural to this person.)

The question we have begun with was whether a truly global morality based on a global universality could be developed. Can we develop, as an outcome of an integrated regime of reflective process, an idea of global humanity, and, as its practical effect, a global humanism? At this point, all we can do is to remind the urgency of the task, and the need of a universal ethic for all humankind. Putting the question on hold, we will turn now to consideration of the East Asian idea of human universality.

4) Confucian Humanism

The idea of human perfection through elevation to universality, assisted by the study of self-cultivation comes, as observed, mainly from the German tradition of *Bildung*, but the humanistic ideal represented by it can be extended to the Western humanistic studies as a whole. And we can find a comparable and, in many respects, similar, universalist enterprise in East Asia. It is often observed that Confucianism can be identified as a species of humanism, though tradition and

sociality was, compared to the Western case, especially important as indispensable resources for enlightenment as Confucianism understood it.

Tu Wei-ming, one of the foremost exponent of "Classical Confucian Humanism" in the West places its core belief in "the perfectibility of human nature through self-effort."¹⁵⁾ The vision of perfected humanity was quite secular, not relying, as Professor Tu points out, on "revelatory religion" or "speculative philosophy," and yet the ideal was elevated enough that it demanded absolute commitment on the part of the learner, but the command comes in the form of appellation from the world—this world as an entirety of collectivities for moral action in one's relationship with the world; this action expresses the maximal realization of the ideal of self-cultivation (as stated succinctly in the linked expression of moral duties in *Chung Yung*: "cultivation of self, equilibrium of the house, the right rule of the country, and the pacific ordering of the universe [修身齊家治國平天下]"). One would say that the German ideal of *Bildung* too demanded engagement with the outside world, but Tu thinks that this outward turn of the inner-directed pursuit of self-perfection is unique to Confucianism. It can be further noted that this outward turn of the Confucian man is more political than in the case of a more vaguely and broadly conceived spiritual orientation of the holistic man in the German ideal of *Bildung*. (Hence, "the psychological support that could be drawn upon for the inner emigration of intellectuals in Nazi Germany, though even in the Confucian tradition, one can think of the tradition of "hermits 隱士" in East Asia.)

In any case, we may say that the Confucian commitment to political action is so resolute that it may sometimes demand a life-and-death decision. Tu quotes Confucius, "A resolute scholar and a man of humanity will never seek to live at the expense of [his] humanity. He would rather sacrifice his life in order to realize humanity."¹⁶⁾

This resoluteness would be more firmly grounded if it forms part of a mission from another realm. For Confucius, the ultimate justification for rulership was "the mandate of heaven." Though seldom formulated clearly, one can speculate that this must also hold for the scholar who is engaged in simpler self-cultivation. But the general understanding is that the ethical obligations for the one in a less exalted position are this-worldly, but the legitimacy of the rules one follows comes from heavenly approval (hence, unceasing reference to heaven, *yin* and *yang*, and other cosmological concepts and symbols in moral talk). There are then, in fulfilling worldly obligations, intimations that they are in conformity with the way of heaven. This vague affinity can be said to verge on a paradox in the ethical obligations one carries out. Tu Wei-ming the paradoxical ambiguity in Confucian ethics, but he dissolves it through the mutual enmeshment of human and the cosmos in what calls

15) Tu Wei-ming, *Way, Learning, and Politics: Essays on the Confucian Intellectual* (Albany, N. Y.: State University of New York Press, 1993), p. 5 et passim.

16) *Analects* 15:8, quoted in Tu Wei-ming, p. 3.

“anthropocosmic” unity. Humans are the carrier of a heavenly mission, "taking part in the transformative process of the cosmos through personal knowledge and self-cultivation." In this view, "learning to be human... not only entails the possibility of going beyond the anthropological realm but demands continuous effort to transcend anthropocentrism", reaching out to the "anthropocosmic unity of man and heaven."¹⁷⁾

It is correct to see in Confucianism the categorical urgency of perfection in the self and the state, but it is hard to understand how it connects to “anthropocosmical” transformation of the cosmos itself unless there is concrete description of the process. Tu Wei-ming at least tries to suggest where it comes from or where it leads. There is an impulse for transcendence, either in human aspiration for self-perfection or coming from heaven. In the process of self-cultivation involves, as Tu sees it, there occurs "transcendental breakthrough," a leap to a dimension other than the secular. We had better consider this point briefly, for it might help locate the distinctive nature of the East Asian civilization, though we cannot really discuss it fully, as it would take us far into a broader area of inquiry.

5) Confucian Humanism: “Transcendental Breakthrough”?

"Transcendental breakthrough" is a term employed to mark a turning point in human history as conceived in Karl Jaspers' idea of the Axial Age, a historical age begun from a point in history, and permanently enclosing major civilizations in Greece, India or China, between 800 to 200 BCE. As Jaspers explains it, in the time span covered by the Axial Age, by a coincidence which is yet to be explained historically, many persons in the above areas of high civilizations turned into thinkers who began to bring the entire being of humans into radical questioning, as they came to realize the fearfulness of the world and human helplessness, and its relation with a transcendental dimension:"the contingency of human condition in the depth of self-existence and the clarity of transcendence (*die Unbedingtheit in der Tiefe des Selbstseins und in der Klarheit der Transzendenz*)." This was mainly an event in the act of thinking, which turned reflexive, an event in consciousness, and yet it had enormous practical consequences that have lasted to the present. Those persons, somewhat alienated from the given world, and raising questions about the human condition gradually formed a class of their own: intellectuals, more or less independent from the existing divisions of social order and looking at it with a critical eye. Along with a fearful realization of existential condition of being human against abysmal transcendental openness, however, they also came to face the vista of new, limitless, possibilities, including the historical unfolding of rationality and personal development supported by the new possibility

17) Ibid., p. 8.

of the strength of reason; for, by their questioning, "human being discovered in himself a point of origin, starting from which he could elevate himself and the world." One consequence was empowerment of humanity; it was at the same time accompanied by anxiety of existence—unrest and restlessness, questioning as the permanent condition of human existence. Nothing was permanent, and, even until the present age, the "questioning remains (*die Frage bleibt*)."¹⁸⁾ Impermanence of being and permanence of questioning enmeshed.

When Tu Wei-ming applies the term, "transcendental breakthrough," he is relying on this Jaspers' definition of the original impulse instituting a new epoch in major human civilizations in several regions of preceding high civilizations. But the concept is probably changed beyond its original meaning when it is applied by Tu Wei-ming to China: for Chinese civilization could be also perceived to remain entirely within this world, even with some intimations of a heavenly order. Jaspers included China in the category of the new emerging Axial civilizations, but he did not make clear that it really anchored itself in a transcendental vision of the beyond. Transcendence was also not exactly the most important criterion in concern in his attempt to characterize Axial civilizations. Jaspers was more struck by the awakening of a critical self-awareness in the major civilizations at the axial age that made reflexive thinking the major trait of civilized humans. It is true, as S. N. Eisenstadt explains Jaspers' critical breakthrough in human civilization, that there opened up, with this awareness, a deep chasm, on the whole, between the order of this world and the transcendental realm, while human struggle to straddle the chasm persisted; in this disjunction of the two orders, the civilizations of reflexive thinking depart from "homologous perceptions of the relation between the two orders" which prevailed in the preceding high civilizations out of which emerged the new Axial Age civilizations. While in the preceding age, the two orders were seen as closely related, and "the higher order was symbolically structured according to principles very similar to those of the mundane or lower one,"¹⁹⁾ and passage between the two was effected through appropriate magical performances. But the rupture of this world and the other world, creating transcendence, is only one of the consequences of the awakening of critical reflective thinking, and there could be debate about the severity and degrees of the rupture. For Tu, who speaks of 'transcendental breakthrough, there is also no discontinuity in the Chinese tradition between the two orders: "It is not the emergence of the sharp dichotomy of the sacred and the profane nor the breaking away from the magic garden of an archaic religion" that marks the beginning of Confucian humanism. The heavenly way is for Confucius already presaged by the venerable tradition with its unique music and ritual, "sanctioned and sponsored by the mandate of heaven." The culture derived

18) Karl Jaspers, *Vom Urprung und Ziel der Geschichte* (Muenchen: R. Piper & Co, 1949), pp. 19- 25.

19) S, N, Eisenstadt ed., *The Origins and Diversity of Axial Age Civilizations* (Albany, N. Y.: State University of New York Press, 1986), "Introduction," p. 2.

from this tradition was perceived by Confucius "not only as a historical fact but also as the unfolding of a transcendental reality."²⁰⁾ The mission of a person bent on self-cultivation is then to assist this unfolding of the transcendental reality in this world. But when transcendence is in question, this Confucian transcendence does not exactly indicate the discontinuity of humans and heaven.

In view of this homology and continuity, it is understandable that in the symposium papers on the theme of the Axial Age Civilizations edited by Eisenstadt, Mark Elvin, an Oxford Sinologist, puts the title of his paper in the interrogatory mode, "Was There a Transcendental Breakthrough in China?" He doubts, in fact, that there was in China any real take-off into the transcendental. This is so in Confucianism as well as in other Chinese schools of thought, Moist, Legalist or Taoist. Taoism, for example, attacked the worldly virtues of the ruling order that lay claim to the truth of the world, and yet the Taoist truth itself remained with the self-contained totality of the world; for, as Elvin puts it, "The Tao... was the sum total of the patterns of potential action that made nature to be the way it was."²¹⁾

6) Secular Totality as Sacred

"The sum total of the patterns of potential action" can indeed be taken as a term that characterizes the Chinese conception, both Taoist and Confucian, of the transcendental—the transcendental as a totality emerging from the particulars of worldly practice rather than from the realm beyond this world. This is really a strange but frequent effect humans experience when confronted with generalities, of varying dimensions. An easy illustration for this effect, I referred to patriotism: when one realizes that he or she is a member of an organized group of people called a country or a nations, there arises a compulsive sense of loyalty, which can be called patriotism. This is true also with the experience of other kinds of groups, school alumni or clan organizations. Names and nouns invoking larger generalities may give, however faint, some stirred-up emotions of a similar kind. And then there is human search for meaning in names, concepts and substances, which is also search for a larger whole and totality. One can even conceive of individual life as a search for a totality, Life is lived from moment to moment and yet adds up to a unity—morphing into something similar to a plot with beginning, middle, and end as in a drama, though a fictional plot is just a simplification of the complex factors of life. The idea of self-perfection can also be considered as motivated by the same search for a meaningful whole. A form of perfection can emerge by means of the individual who realizes himself or herself, to borrow from Althusser and Lacan, by responding to the appellation of a larger subject, which could be an abstract

20) Tu Wei-ming, *ibid*, p.2.

21) Mark Elvin, " Was there a Transcendental Breakthrough in China," in Eisenstadt, *op. cit.*, p. 343.

entity or a totality emerging from miscellaneous particulars of life.

How does an individual life constitute an integrated whole? By responding to the call of a larger subject. But he or she could become a whole by gathering all the moments of life into one. At our first thought, to think of individual life as perfectible in itself is to suppose that the individual is master of his or her own life. But this is to attribute to the individual too strong a role as an autonomous agent in his or her life. Even even if that is the case to an extent, much of his or her decision and the life shaped by his or her decisions would have been under the influence of causes other than the agent's free decisions. When we consider these causes, the individual is not a free agent in any full sense, even from the fact that the individual agent has become what he or she is by what he or she has done, under the directions and suggestion of external factors. Precisely this is the reason behind our belief in education, fashioning of a person through intervention. Confucian training requires study of many texts privileged as canon and some others beyond it: developing skill in writing, calligraphy, painting, music archery; sitting still for meditative exercise; ritual performance—performance practiced not only in social and ceremonial settings, but in the daily routine of washing, cleaning, eating, speaking and greeting. These all form part of the process of becoming fully human through cultivation of personal virtues as far as possible. A person is what he or she is, as the sum total of these actions. Actions are of his or her own except under some extraordinary circumstances, whether they are instigated from outside or not. Regardless of the question whether he or she has the free will or not, an individual person is an agent moving spontaneously when in action as long as real coercive power is not tangibly present. But the motivation for action may not entirely originate from the person's inner psyche. When following the program of self-cultivation, where does the curriculum come from? How does one learn proper conduct in various social situations? Who passes on teachings on right virtues—filial duty, worship of ancestors, respect to the elders, values of kinship, friendship, hospitality and, most of all, loyalty to the king—especially when these virtues are expected to be expressed in well-choreographed comportment, graceful and dignified? These are all prescribed duties in Confucian life, but they are not merely duties, but they are tools for developing one's humanity, and also great sources of satisfaction—partly due to the aesthetics of choreographed behavior in ritualized setting; it stirs up a sense of the self in harmony with the world.

Among practices in real life, as an instrument for the shaping of human personality, ritual must be given a particular place in the Confucian ideal of human perfection, for much of Confucian learning in practical terms consists in mastery of ritual performance, which is supposed to tame human nature which was born rough-hewn, and demands obedience to normatively patterned forms of conduct, with little coercion. There is satisfaction in its performance as we have noted. Satisfaction has to do with sharing of power coming from collectivity, and this

collectivity is organized into rituals, that is, aesthetic forms whose appeal needs little justification: and they have noumenal aura as ritual and inspire awe as they are hallowed by tradition. Ritual or ceremony, *li* (禮), in short, enables the individual part-spontaneous and part-deferential participation in empowered sociality--aesthetized and spiritualized.

The most celebratory modern interpretation of the role of ritual in Confucianism is given by Herbert Fingarette in his book, *Confucius--The Secular as Sacred* (1972). His interpretation of ritual really shows what constitutes the source of transcendence, supposing that there is this element in the new opening of a civilizational change in China and East Asia.

In Fingarette's interpretation, ritual is an indispensable agency for a fulfilled human life, personally and communally. This was of course the case in traditional times, but according to Fingarette's reading, it is entirely relevant even in today's world for its civilizing and shaping capacity. From the Confucian point of view, a human being is, in any case, only a potentiality, "stuff" for "shaping," which needs to go through the process of "cutting, filing, carving, polishing" to be completed,²²⁾ This shaping is achieved through the work of self-cultivation, but it is also the work of social cultivation. If the individual person is to become truly human, he or she must come into a public space constituted by well-performed ritual. It is "in the beautiful and dignified, shared and open participation [in ritual and ceremony] with others who are really like oneself that man realizes himself."²³⁾ Through ritual, something more than individual or even secular, namely, something sacred descends to the human world to become realized, though the sacred finds its embodiment entirely in the secular, as the title of the book suggests.

This sacred power is, once again, not strictly transcendental, though nothing can be really justified and stabilized without reference to it. Where does it originate? Apart from the aesthetic appeal, the answer would be that ritual comes from the social, which is part of individual existence, while transcending it at the same. There is a chapter in Fingarette's book, with the title, "Locus of the Personal." In spite of the title, Fingarette is, in this chapter, not confirming the reality of the personal, if it means the individual as the original motive power for action. The individual may perform an action, but in most cases it unfolds in social space. Fingarette warns that the individual person in Confucianism must not be taken psychologically, as a separate entity with a separate reflective and enabling center in its interior. The individual is, for sure, a power but the power comes from being part of the social, and being human, and I should add, from being part of nature or, to go back to the terminology of Tu Wei-ming, of anthropocosmic totality. The metaphor Fingarette brings to illustrate the mode of relationship between the individual and the larger public frame in which he or she acts is

22) Herbert Fingarette, *Confucius--The Secular as Sacred* (New York: Harper, 1972), p. 3.

23) Fingarette, p. 16.

“vector,” concept taken from physics. Once placed in the vector field, the position and movement of an entity, while not losing its own energy, is determined to a great extent by the energy permeating the field. In a similar way, virtues in the Confucian understanding, are functions operating in the vectorial space of society. Fingarette observes that Confucian virtues, *jen*, *li*, and also *shu*, mutuality, *chung*, loyalty, represent forces working in the dynamic fields that society constitutes as a whole, and there are no “static” or “inner” virtues, such as purity and innocence in Confucianism. Of these virtues, especially important are, of course, *jen* or *ren* and *li*. They best illustrate the working of virtues in the social field. According to Fingarette, *jen* is the enabling power behind *li*, ritual and mannered-comportment, and *li*, performed by the cultivated person, comes into being in the field constituted by the social.

In the case of *jen* [Fingarette writes], we should conceive of a directed force operating in actions in public space and time, and having a person as initial point-source and a person as the terminal point on which the force impinges. The forces are human forces, of course, not mechanical ones.²⁴⁾

Li is the expression of this power of *jen* “radiating” to the participants in the patterned forms of ritual. Fingarette illustrates the power of *li* by the well-known image of the Emperor, who “sat facing the south (as was ritually proper), and everything (duly) took place.” (In this connection, we had better note that the power of *jen* or *li* is not simply symbolic. Needless to say, the ruler is not simply a figurative signpost in the space of the social or political.) There is in any case an enabling power of all encompassing nature behind the pattern of it: *jen*. The cultivated person similarly acquires power or shared power in social space through cultivation of virtues, expressed in *li* but energized by *jen*. *Jen* sums up the totality of virtues: “... *jen* is the complete and concentrated power of sectors—perfect loyalty and great faith, complete respect for human dignity and so on.” This is what is embodied in the practice of *li*. “When one has used all one’s energy in learning how to master *li* and has at last accomplished this, then...”, as Fingarette says quoting what Yen Hui is supposed to have said about Confucius, “It looms up before me.”²⁵⁾

7) Two Sources of Universality: Theoretics and Pragmatics

We have been looking into the makeup of the ideal of self-cultivation in East Asia, and have argued that it does not simply mean individuality, but an individual

24) Ibid., p. 55.

25) Ibid., p. 56.

developing his or her human capability by participating in the social, patterned by ritualistic and ceremonial rules of conduct. *li*. But the ideal may represent an ideal of human perfection, and yet how does it relate to the development of a universality, and of an accessible way of thinking and ultimately of the evolution of a global and universal ethic? The question we have begun with was the possibility of a global perspective, to which the ideas of self-cultivation would lead, for they would hopefully help forming a universal open-mindedness. But we can take comfort that our reflection has not really departed far from the underlying question of global humanity and humanism. We have referred to Herbert Fingarette's interpretation of the practice of *li* and then *jen* as the enabling power behind *li*. But this is to read *jen* in its broadest and complex sense. Needless to say, *jen* is often simply translated as humanity. Fingarette too admits that its translation includes "Good, Humanity, Love, Benevolence, Virtue, Manhood, Manhood at the Best and so on,"²⁶⁾ which can be taken as the sense in which Koreans normally understand the terms. Fingarette is only reluctant to reduce it to a simple English equivalent, which he would regard as psychologizing, but he does not exclude, however, the humanistic sense that forms part of the meaning of *jen*: after examining its complex entwining in the social network of virtues, he explains that "*jen* is intimately linked to the relationship between man and man; and he then goes on:

In the first instance, this link is to the general reciprocal good faith and respect among men (*shu* [恕] and *chung* [忠]); in the second instance this reciprocal good faith is given a specific content: it is that set of social relationships articulated in detail by *li*. In short, where reciprocal good faith and respect are expressed through the specific forms defined in *li*, there is *jen*'s way.²⁷⁾

Consenting to Fingarette's finessing distinction, we may then say that the Confucian ideal of *jen* expresses a humanistic openness to humanity as a whole, but the humanism in it is articulated in the accepted social patterns. The totality of humanity thus open is linked, in Mark Elvin's phrase we have referred to in the above, to "the sum total of the patterns of potential action that made nature to be the way it was"—potential action at ready as it has been articulated in the patterns accepted by society, in patterns hallowed in tradition and almost become nature.

Returning to the question of universalism, we may say the overall virtue of *jen* opens up the individual who has cultivated himself or herself to other humans, but mostly in concrete forms of reciprocity, and this reciprocity is extended as much as possible, and then it becomes inclusive humanism. This seems to be different from what we mean by humanism in general and, as the core forming it, by universality—probably as it is understood in the context of the Western tradition. The Hegelian

26) Ibid., p. 37.

27) Ibid., p. 42.

conception of Bildung culminates, as we have seen, in “elevation to universality.” This is not simply a theoretical progress in learning, but includes practical aspects of life; but on the whole the guiding rule of universalistic turn is rationality or achieving “human rationality in its entirety (*die menschliche Vernuenfutigkeit im Ganzen*). We can say then that it could be close to the principle of scientific thought—rationality for ascertaining truth in mathematics or in natural sciences, except that rationality in Bildung and in humane sciences is directed to the world of experience, that is, human experience, while science is occupied with the natural world. But science is more open to universalist access. Anybody can have access to science, if he or she puts himself to scientific study, and science or some approach to the world close to science may offer a broad path to global universalism. And there is no doubt that scientific study could mediate universalism of humanity beyond scientific agreement. Then it could be argued that there are varieties of universalism.

Gadamer puts out considerable effort to distinguish between two kinds of universality in science and humane learning. In fact, his major opus, *Truth and Method*, is devoted to the work of distancing hermeneutics from scientific methodology, which seemed to await for incorporation in humane sciences since the nineteenth century. For Gadamer, the meaning of hermeneutics lies exactly in understanding the world represented in humane sciences as distinguished in aims and methodologies from those postulated in mathematics and natural science, .

The word, theory, can serve as one key word for making clear this distinction. Theory, *theoria*, is used with different connotations in the Greek origin and in modern European languages which adopted it. A brief look at it will lead us to see that there are two kinds of universality, and help us to place the East Asian universality as well in the map of universality or of universalities. (Two different meanings of universality in science and humanities actually also overlap, while differing at the same time, which comes out in Gadamer’s argument, too.)

The aim of science is to arrive at correct explanation of the natural world; for that purpose, theory plays a pivotal role; for it is instrumental in ensuring the objectivity of scientific knowledge, as it allows to validate and verify the subject of study by referring it to the coherent scheme of things, tested and made paradigmatic by accumulated scientific experiment and thinking. But scientific theorizing can have only partial validity when it is driven, and it is bound to be driven, by utilitarian purposes of humans. The purity of scientific endeavors then is brought into question. Gadamer says, “ Modern theory is a tool of construction by means of which we gather experiences together in a unified way and make it possible to dominate them.” This exaggerates too much the will to dominate as the ulterior motive in science. The explanation that follows the statement of the motive for domination, however, does more justice to the validity of scientific procedure: as he admits that “construction” of theory has to do with the validity test that

scientific truth has to undergo: it “implies that one theory succeeds another, and from the onset each commands only conditioned validity, namely insofar as further experience does not make us change our mind.” Furthermore, scientific theory is not necessarily conceived purely for the purpose of domination, Gadamer admits. “[T]he application of his knowledge is secondary in the mind of the individual scientist, in the sense that the application follows from the knowledge yet only comes afterward....”

However, theory was in classical Greece more clearly justified for its own sake. “Ancient *theoria* is... the end itself, the highest manner of being human.”²⁸⁾ As it is normally understood, “*theoria*” means “looking at something,” or, put a little more philosophically, “contemplation” or “speculation.” But if it is “looking,” what does one look at through contemplation? For Plato, it meant looking at or contemplating the true and the divine above worldly opinions (*doxa*) or at forms—forms in the Platonic sense of ideas; for Aristotle, getting in touch with reality as it is, and arriving at truth by conforming to it. Gadamer accepts the truth of reality: contemplation is coming into contact with, but emphasizes a little deeper involvement with what one is looking at. The Greek word, *thoros* means the spectator, a typical example of which is the spectator at a Greek festival. A Greek festival involved participation, joyous and yet sacred. The spectator was also a participant. So, as he defines it, “*Theoria* is a true participation, not something active but something passive (*pathos*), being totally involved in and carried away by what one sees.”²⁹⁾ This sense of participant spectator may be regarded as the normal meaning of the word, but its linkage to the festive activities may have to do with Gadamer’s commitment to ontology and also to his existentialism, as he thinks that our sense of reality and truth has its origin in our fundamental involvement in the world of experience, which can be shaped by language prior to any scientific or theoretical understanding; ontological truth is revealed in participating spectatorship, which could be given representation in language. From this view of human relation with the world of being, theory can be defined once again as “sharing the total order itself (*Teilnahme an dem Ordnungsganzen selbst*)”—that is, the orderly whole of reality as the spectator participates in it.

In exploring the meaning of theory and saying that it is an experience of partaking in “the total order,” it is important to note that it involves the paradox of the epiphany of truth. It is participation in totality, but also it is a moment in the flow of time. Hence the expressions, an “absolute presence (*absolute Gegenwart*),” “absolute moment (*absolute Moment*)”; one’s participation is momentary, but the truth of one’s being comes to the fore at this moment in the total order of reality; from this total presence is confirmed “the continuity of his self,” “the continuity of

28) Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Continuum, 1999) p. 454. *Wahrheit und Methode*, S. 458.

29) *Truth and Method*, pp. 124–125. *Wahrheit und Methode*, S. 130.

meaning or thought (*die Kontinuität des Sinnes*,” and “the whole of his being (*Das Ganze des seines Seins*).”³⁰) The spectator’s experience occurs incited by a particular occasion, but it opens up the larger reality of the world and being; it thus opens the self to universality as well.

These observations of Gadamer are taken from his analysis of the experience of the spectator’s participation in the festival, which is also collated with the play unfolding before him or her. (The play and the festival belonged to the category of sacred rituals in classical Greece.) But one can think of a similar experience one comes to have after a certain progress in self-cultivation or *paideia*, in practice of *theoria*, contemplation, which allows, especially for Plato, an overview of reality, this-worldly and the other-worldly, and which constitutes for Aristotle the highest stage of good living.

Considering this progress to theory (that is, in the Greek sense), to a universal vision of reality, we can note the resemblance between this experience and the progress to the vision of universal humanity in the Confucian ideal of self-cultivation. The Confucian vision of universal humanity culminates in the constant participation in the force field of *jen* and *li*. The Confucian scholar devotes his self to learning, but what he aims at is attainment of capacity to be part of the totality of various virtues including *jen* and *li*, emanating from “the sum total of the patterns of potential action that made nature to be the way it [is].” In the Greek experience of play and ritual, too, the experience basically consists of participation in an ontological process of reality, the truth of reality manifesting itself, as *parousia*, even if it occurs in a play and a ritual. Gadamer denies that experience of a play or a ritual and of theory is of psychological nature but it is subjectively-untainted participation in objective being (*das reine Dabeisein bei dem wahrhaft Seienden*),³¹ or in the essence of being (*Sein*).

Yet there are, between East and West, great distances and differences—of critical nature. What stands out most is the role of the social in the universalist vision of Confucianism, and this social totality is patterned in minute detail, namely, by *li*. Though some transcendental intimation is not absent, what comes to one’s enlightened vision is the meaning of the patterned whole of the social with elevated power—sacred and yet also secular, though the performance of ritual could take off to the religious dimension, with emphasis remaining in its performative aspects. The Greek, and Western, idea of a universal vision is, in contrast, directed to the ontological entirety surrounding human existence. There is ritual, to be sure, and in that respect, there is another analogy to the Confucian ritual, but the ritual elements in Greek experience of the world have either simply aesthetic significance, as in a play or metaphysical significance in the Platonic vision of ideas and forms, or even it could be part of religion—religion remaining in the

30) *Wahrheit und Methode*, S. 133.

31) *Ibid.*, S. 129,

transcendental or sortilegic realm. Forms and ideas are not exactly applicable to social reality. They take off, on the one hand, to the transcendental realm, but liberate the visionary from patterned sociality. The vision of forms, aesthetic or transcendental, is closely related to the internalization of *logos*, for one cannot help being concerned with the cohesion of parts constituting a formal whole, and with the principle running through it, that is, reason.

All these differences may be said to originate in the motivating force behind the search for an ultimate vision of the world. The Greek search is basically for ontology of the world and truth that could be ascertained in it. There are of course ethical concern in Greek philosophy, but it seldom envisions a totality of the world woven together as an ethical totality. The primary concern for East Asians is morality and ethics, not the relationship of parts and the whole in the natural world, but relationships in the moral order of the world or the state organized as a worldly and heavenly whole (天下). To put it simply, the Western interest in its intellectual adventure can be summed in the word, theoretics. We have noted in the above that there could be two kinds of theory, scientific and humanistic, the former concerned with theoretically valid, that is, lawful construction of the natural world or reality, and the latter with the human experience of the world as the primordial ground of the experience of the world preceding its reduction in science. But both perspective are theoretically oriented, though theory must be understood as having different meanings, and the different meanings merge and coalesce; for the core concern is with truth, as the basis of human existence and knowledge. The East Asian concern lay in moral pragmatics, as I argued in the very beginning of this paper: the central question is what could be the right ethical order to keep the self, the family, the state, and the world in peaceable equilibrium. I also pointed out in the above, there could be easy slippage between moral pragmatics and simple pragmatics, which raise questions concerning strategies of effecting change in social and political reality for the purpose of carrying out moral imperatives or politically advantageous imperatives. For this purpose, science, especially, technology, an offshoot of science, could be put to good use. Moral pragmatics are thus open to simpler pragmatics and strategic thinking, with its moral and ethical concern deteriorating. What comes to mind in saying this is the facile transition of the theoretics of Western origin to the simple condition of instrument for technological and economic exploitation. We can relate this critique of instrumental reason to this original free-floating condition of theoretical interest in the West. In contrast, it is difficult to conceive of the release of East Asian intellectual enterprises from its moral and ethical binds, even if morals become simply hypocritical subterfuges or strategies of obliquity. Things have changed a great deal, but return to pre-modern or classical times is to ascertain ethics and morality as *the* central concern in their tradition, and especially poignant is the unshakable commitment to peace in society between states; this irenic orientation is

indeed unique in the political thought of the world.

VI Possibilities of Universal Unity

The original question we started with was the possibility of a global humanism. To arrive at it, there needs to be a universal understanding of the human condition and its earthly environment. From the practical point of view, globalization has become one trend that few can deny as shaping the present world as a whole, and the world is bound to become a global whole, even if there occur in the process negotiations, hybridizations, and artificial amalgamation, but conflicts and clashes, too. If the negative factors are to be avoided, there must be mutual understanding between societies and civilizations, and this could be best effected under the regimen of universality, that is, a systematic understanding of humanity, its environs and resources. And then are ideals of universality—but of diverse kind. Of these, the ideal that could obtain most facile currency would be that which unifies science, even if there does not yet exist a unified science. Its advantage is, from a utilitarian point of view, the technological development that would evolve in conjunction with science. It would easily combine with the economy of profit, and would become the dominant conception of universality as rationality. In terms of ideas, the advantage of scientific theoretics is that its principle is obvious, for rationality is accessible universally to any aspirant. It also permit to dismiss many irrelevant details in the epistemic map of the world, and therefore would serve as an easy signpost for unification of humanity—that is, under the scientific view of the universe. There are of course losses. Besides the narrowing and therefore illegitimate association of science with technological views of life, it could cause loss of a great deal of humanistic heritage of humankind containing prudential, aesthetic, eudaimonic and philosophical insights into life's diverse potentiality. Another universal point of view on life would be the examination of life from a moral perspective, that is, from what I called in the above moral pragmatics. It will help maintain the absolute centrality of morals and ethics in human projects of ordered life, both at the personal and collective level, especially at the level of interstate politics. But the obsessive preoccupation with the pragmatics of ethics would have the oppressive effect on the human desire for liberation and autonomy. It will also make humanistic achievements of the past and the present lose their visibillity, since its narrow-angled vision of human reality occlude the open horizon of diverse facts and potential. The facts made invisible would make it difficult to cope with human situations containing conflicts and contradictions; obscurity would veil not only truthful perception of reality, which stands above ethics and yet provides the sustaining ground for it, but also it would erase much of the normative boundaries of conflicting ethical rules, as would be presented, let us say, in Greek tragedies; for truthful grasp of ontological and ontic reality is the foundation of

human existence, whatever color it is, dark or bright. More comprehensive and universal would be the basic stance of contemplation posited in the original kind of theoretics that adopts *theoria* to enable humans fully present in the totality of things; it could be possible then to work out scenarios of humane, and possibly, flourishing life, even in defiance of adversarial elements. Of course, it could end up in cynicism or nihilism. Besides, it could help humans to forget another kind of the indispensable ground of being and of human existence and living creatures: namely, ethical imperative and the imperative of peace.

Reviewing varied programs of universalism, simplifying as it is, does not presuppose that one could pick and choose diverse elements in different traditions and create a pullulating synthesis. If there is any universal synthesis, it would have to be organically developed by hard questioning directed at the problems of the situation humanity faces, but our questioning is already determined, as it were, *a priori*, keeping us from asking even questions appropriate to the given situation. We cannot here think about easy strategies of a universal synthesis, hopeful and yet realistic, but what we could do is, on the contrary, to get some sense of how our strategies suffer from various constraints, and to return to our prologue on the determinant horizon constricting even questions that can be raised. It would constitute a kind of epilogue making us aware of constraining boundaries of our mind, including the horizon that divert even our questioning from the right direction. We must find a right way of getting back to center of gravity of society and life so that we could fan out to the anthropocosmic realm of universality.