

Historical Roots of Moral Education in China and Japan in the Light of the New Revelation

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One of the most wondrous aspects of the time in which we live is the view that our technology affords us of the whole world and all of its history in a unified perspective. We've been rapidly adding to and filling in a "connect the dots" way of learning of the past, and in many cases we must revise our entire viewpoints of what we thought was true. When I was a child, China was a "closed country." I could hardly imagine what life might be like there, but I knew that Chinese food was really delicious and that Chinese art and fashion was fascinating. (Those were some of the "dots" in my worldview.) I had heard that there was a lot of superstition in China, but I also knew that there were some very attractive ways of thinking there because I would occasionally watch "Charlie Chan" movies on TV. I heard the clever Chinese detective referring to the words of "Confucius" and always finding the just and most satisfying human solution to any problem. But because there was very little mention of China in the rest of my education, I thought somehow that China's past was not so relevant to our modern or future world. I could not have been more wrong about that.

When I became an adult, I found the Bahá'í Faith. I recognized that the knowledge that was flooding the world had, as one of its purposes, a way for us to understand "the grand design of history" and the wonderful unity in diversity of the peoples and nations of the world. My interest in China was rekindled and became serious when the following words from the Bahá'í Writings were brought to my attention. In what is known as 'Abdu'l-Bahá's "China Tablet" He wrote, "*China is the country of the future.*" "*The Bahá'í teacher of the Chinese people must first be imbued with their spirit, know their sacred literature, study their national customs and speak to them from their own standpoint and their own terminologies.*" (CT) Know their sacred literature? There is Chinese sacred literature? That fact, alas, somehow had escaped me in my Western education. So I was determined to find out more, especially since apparently "studying Chinese sacred literature" was now, as it were, an aspect of my new religion.

To begin my search I was curious as to the station and teachings of Confucius. At that point he was only a name to me. I did not even know where he appeared in historical context. Was he a manifestation like Bahá'u'lláh, Christ or Buddha? If not, what was the source of his tremendous influence over the Chinese culture, and then Japanese culture. Indeed, why was his name a "household word" in the West although few could tell you more than that he was a moral teacher? (This, alas, is also true of most saints, sages, prophets and wise men of the past.) What were Confucius's teachings? How did he come upon them? How were they received and absorbed into these great cultures?

I hope to offer an overview and highlights from 5000 years of history related to the roots of moral thought and movements in China and to some extent Japan. Since others in this Conference are focusing on Buddhism and Japan per se, I would like to focus on Confucius and his teachings as a middle point from which various connections and contexts in time and geography will be made. With the aid of the light of the Revelation of Baha'u'llah to separate the superstition from the profound and still viable truths, I hope to give each of you a taste, and to stimulate your appetite to join me at the banquet table of the Lord to partake of the wonderful guidance contained in China's sacred literature.

Confucius was born in what is now Shandong Province (Santou Sho, in Japanese) and grew up in the town of Qufu (Kyoukufu) about 550 years before the time of Christ. Actually his life may have coincided with the appearance of Buddha in India, and Lao Tsu, who is credited with founding Taoism. His name was Kong. Japanese call him "Ko" or "Ko-shi" (Mr. Kong). He is commonly called "Kong-Zi" in Chinese, and also became known as "Kong-Fu-Zi" (Master Kong) in Chinese, and that title and name has made its way to English as "Confucius." He was orphaned at an early age, a circumstance that provided both tragedy and opportunity in his life. He was an eager learner and because of his loss of a particular inherited "station" in life, he made it his business to learn about everything, to study wherever he could, and to find as many ways as possible to become a truly useful human being. "Heaven is the author of the virtues in me," according to Confucius. He felt that the way to continue to attract the blessings of heaven was for a person to continually attune his virtues to the "Will of Heaven" which could be known through the wisdom handed down in ancient texts, and in the rites performed to honor heaven and earth, to honor the former generations, and to learn arts and crafts and professions. "I set my heart on the Way, base myself in virtue, lean upon benevolence for support and take my recreation in the arts," he said. (3) Good fortune, Confucius taught, came to those who upheld virtues, and although challenges came to all people, true misfortune was observable in personal lives and society when virtues were ignored, for then our actions created or exacerbated imbalances and heaven would find no receptacle for its continuous outpourings of blessings and protections.

Confucius particularly studied the "rites", which he discovered were not only forms of prayer connecting heaven and earth, past, present, and future, but important dramatic exercises and expressions that helped people and society to train the emotions so that people would be able to withstand extremes of joy or sorrow. He noted the important influence of the arts, and especially music. Both in relation to the rites and the arts, as well as other aspects in life, Confucius strongly urged the need for moderation. Extreme austerity or extreme lavishness would lead to imbalances and trouble both at the personal and social levels. He recognized the importance of personal initiative, as well as the importance of social structure. Neither was productive without the other.

Confucius commented that there were four kinds of human beings in the world: At the lowest level there were people who never changed because they lived only a material life and would see no need to do more than eat, drink, reproduce, and die. At a higher level there were people who saw the benefit of good teaching and would try to change a little. Then there was a third level at which a person would realize that the whole purpose of life was to train the spirit, and they would study hard and make great efforts to improve their character. This third kind of person he referred to as a "gentleman" – a refined or superior human being. There was a fourth kind of person – referred to as the "Sages" – who had no need to change, because They innately embodied the will of heaven. Confucius was very clear that he was not a Sage. He was more like the third kind of person. He could do nothing more than strive to be a gentleman. He also said that he had never met a Sage, but he knew they existed in human history because of the legends and work they left behind.

The Sage Fu Hsi

Foremost among the figures of the past revered by Confucius was Fu Hsi (6, 7), who had lived about 2400 years before the time of Confucius in 2900 BC, nearly 5000 years ago. Fu Hsi is accredited with teaching his subjects to cook, to fish with nets, and to hunt with weapons made of iron. He instituted marriage and offered the first open-air sacrifices to heaven. He was said to be the first and greatest King or Emperor of China. He is also given credit for teaching the first forms of Chinese writing. Chinese writing consists of "ideographs" with the lines having symbolic meaning. It is interesting, for example, to note the similarity between the Chinese character for King, and the Baha'i ringstone symbol for the Greatest Name. The top line represents heaven, the bottom line its

reflection in earth, and the line in the middle is the role of civilized man, the kingdom of command or governance, that brings together heaven and earth. Even the name of China – *Chunggwo* in Chinese, or *Chuugoku* in Japanese, means “middle Kingdom”, and signifies this perception of reality. Fu Hsi is also said to be the original author, through mysterious means, of the Sacred Book, the *I-Ching*, the “Book of Changes.”

According to the *Pai Hu T'ung*, written by historian Pan Ku (32 CE - 92 CE) nearly 2000 years ago:

In the beginning there was as yet no moral or social order. Men knew their mothers only, not their fathers. When hungry, they searched for food; when satisfied, they threw away the remnants. They devoured their food hide and hair, drank the blood, and clad themselves in skins and rushes. Then came Fu Hsi, who looked upward and contemplated the images in the heavens, and looked downward and contemplated the occurrences on earth. He united man and wife, regulated the five stages of change, and laid down the laws of humanity. He devised the eight trigrams, in order to gain mastery over the world.” (7)

What are these 8 trigrams? First, of all let us try to understand the basic nature of the universe as Fu Hsi described it. He described it as orders of change – an order of fluctuating, pulsating force moving from creative to receptive and back again. While the force is one, it manifests itself in various ways throughout the heavens (the unseen world), and the earth, (the world of nature) and the world of man or society, which is in between. He represented the creative or active mode of the force as an unbroken line (_____). When the force was in receptive mode, it was represented as a broken line (____). The various states of the force fluctuating at different times through the various levels of existence, can be represented using these “active” (Yang) and “receptive” (Yin) lines to represent several basic conditions of creation which occur simultaneously.

In this day, Bahá'u'lláh has reaffirmed that

The world of existence came into being through the heat generated from the interaction between the active force and that which is its recipient. These two are the same, yet they are different. Thus, doth the Great Announcement inform thee about the glorious structure. (TB, 140)

So let us look at the eight trigrams and describe how they came to be used to understand nature and its changes, as well as the metaphorical indicators for social and spiritual changes and chances occurring in the heavens and on earth. If three layers of lines are written, there are 8 possible combinations.

_____	____	_____	____
_____	____	_____	____
_____	____	_____	____
Heaven	Earth	Mountain	Thunder
Creative	Receptive	Standing	Arousing
_____	____	_____	____
_____	____	_____	____
_____	____	_____	____
Fire	Water	Wood/Wind	Lake
Clinging	Flowing	Penetrating	Joyous

Do any of these symbols look familiar to you? Do you recognize the symbols heaven, earth, fire, and water from the Korean flag? These symbols can be found here and there throughout the

parts of Asia affected by Chinese culture. It is argued that these symbols became, in fact, the first pictographs (sun, water, mountain) although not all scholars agree. But the psychological meaning of these forms has been used like secret messages throughout many elements of Chinese culture. During the 1000 years after Fu Hsi, society made progress, a golden age waxed and waned. Then a reformer (or perhaps a Prophet), King Wen, took the metaphors to another level by doubling the number of lines into hexagrams and creating 64 characters that represented basic conditions in our paths of life, which call for particular virtues, and the actions necessary to face them successfully. After that his son, the Duke of Chou, added commentaries on these. Not only was each line seen as “active” or “passive” – but the way of divining each of the lines will also tell you whether that particular part of the field is at rest (stable) or in the process of changing directions (unstable/evolving).

The *I-Ching* (Book of Changes) (5, 6)

The *I-Ching* teaches that there are three kinds of change in the universe: Cyclical change (like seasons), sequential change (like stages of development), and non-change, which is the eternal backdrop by which change is measured. The point of life is to develop our virtues through our encounters with these various forces of change, different seasons, different stages in life, etc. Whatever the situation, we will not go wrong if we practice and bring the correct virtues to bear for the particular condition and recognize all things in their proper place. There are times when waiting patiently is better than acting. It’s no use to plant seeds in autumn, but in spring they must be planted in order to grow food. The Taoist doctrine, which has also grown out of the fundamental teachings of the *I-Ching*, is sometimes known as a philosophy of “non-action”. But in fact, the *Tao de Ching* says, “In action, watch the timing.” At all times the doctrine of the “golden mean,” or the principle of moderation, applies. If we allow the forces of ego, self-centeredness, and our emotions to direct our actions we fall out of balance with the great forces moving through heaven and earth and our troubles will multiply. If we continue to consult “the Sage” and adhere to the principles of the *I-Ching* (keeping in tune with natural and spiritual developmental processes), good fortune will eventually be our fate no matter what difficulties we may encounter along the way. “*Nothing but that which profiteth them can befall my loved ones,*” the Sage of this Age, Bahá’u’lláh, assures us.

The *I-Ching* is called an oracle. It is a book that seems to speak for heaven. The recently released statement from the Bahá’í World Center called “One Common Faith” points out that as personal guides, the sacred scriptures of the past are to this day, still valid. And I find this certainly true of the *I-Ching*. However, even by time the book had reached Confucius, over 2000 years after its origin, society had developed and changed, and its use had become encrusted with superstition and misinterpretation. How so? Some of those “diviners” and “fortune tellers” who claimed to interpret the *I-Ching* did so by asking shallow, or simple “yes/no” questions or merely reading the judgments and proclaiming “good luck” or “bad luck” without proper attention to the individual actions and virtues that were being called for. Some of the interpretations were totally off the mark because people of that time did not really understand the symbols that were referred to from the social context of the former age. For example, the *I-Ching* will often advise, “It furthers one to cross the great water.” Although this could at times be taken literally, the figurative meaning was to start some great undertaking (don’t think small!). Confucius brought the book up to date by explaining its images in the context of the social times in which he lived. If one understands the metaphors in relation to ones own times, the Book becomes alive with magical advice.

To some people the way of determining the hexagrams seems superstitious. How does one consult the oracle and apply the *I-Ching*? It’s a process that I will not have time to explain here. But one can quickly learn it from the book itself. It is clear, however, that to understand the

I-Ching, one has to consider the underlying concept of “synchronicity,” which is different than the Western view of “cause and effect.” Even if one is skeptical about whether the entire process of seeking the *I-Ching*’s advice is nothing more than chance, there is still no bad advice in the book. It is a fairly complete guide to moral mechanics and natural dynamics for the sincere no matter which way it is read.

An interesting note on the *I-Ching* in our own time, one scientist, Dr. Martin Schoenberger (4), has shown how the 64 hexagrams of the *I-Ching*, if written in “binary” code, are identical to the 64 “letters” of the genetic code which direct our bodies to create certain chemicals in order to respond to the demands of our physical life. The theory is interesting in itself, and if verified by further study, has implications that are fantastic. Imagine, that thousands of years ago, the wise men and Sages of China had revealed the secret of the genetic code already – and that the entire universe can be understood as a multiple layering of the various sequences of this code and their orderly, synchronous “plus/minus” changes.

I-Ching Passages

I would now like to read some passages from the *I-Ching* to demonstrate the kind of moral guidance it has offered to Chinese society across the ages as it became the common root of both Taoist and Confucian thought which developed in a later period of moral reform.

I consulted the *I-Ching* about what I should share from it to this ABS conference concerning the moral roots of China and Japan. The hexagram that appeared in response was “Thunder over the Lake” – Arousing over the Joyous – which is a combination called *Kuei Mei*, “The Marrying Maiden”. (That was an unexpected and odd choice, I thought.) The image is that of a young, carefree girl attempting to marry above her station. Danger exists because she is immature and has no status or treasures to bring balance to the new situation. She must have discipline and be willing to serve, or perhaps she’ll become an unhappy slave. As noted above, one of Fu Hsi’s great contributions to the civilization of China (besides Chinese cooking) was the regulation of family life. Among other topics in the *I-Ching*, the rank, order, rights, and responsibilities of the family members, is reflected upon profoundly. The roles of father, mother, as well as elder, younger, and middle sons and daughters are defined and commented on. Great families, which continued over generations, were those who carried out with sincerity not only the responsibilities, but the spirit of their roles. When family members did not play their roles properly, the entire family structure could become weak, and, as a result, society was weakened. Relationships, especially those based on personal preferences alone, were seen as having the danger of bringing out ego. However, if carried out in the proper spirit and public light, the outcome of relationships could be good and fruitful both personally and socially.

I’ll read to you the comments from a modern abbreviated translation of the *I-Ching* concerning “the Marrying Maiden” (5): “In relationships, desires lead to misfortune. Behave with discipline and balance.”

Kuei Mei (The Marrying Maiden) is concerned with the guidelines for the proper conduct of relationships, whether they be social, romantic, or work related. The image here is of thunder roiling the surface of a lake and it suggests that relationships can be disturbing to our peace of mind. The nature of relationships is that they lead us to the desire state: We begin to desire another, to desire recognition, desire retribution, desire a particular outcome in a given situation. All of these desires lead us away from the equanimity that we aim to maintain as students of the *I-Ching*. This hexagram often comes as a sign that (one is) in danger of sacrificing...composure in an effort to affect a relationship.

When someone does not treat you as you like, you are faced with a choice as to what to do.

While it may be tempting to abandon the relationship in anger or act aggressively to produce a result, neither of these is consistent with proper principles. You are counseled instead to return to inner independence, acceptance, modesty, and gentleness. The greatest influence is always had through inner discipline and balance; less subtle measures may produce more immediate results, but they are seldom long lasting.

...rushing into a relationship, rushing to resolve a relationship, or rushing to escape a relationship, are all akin to rushing on ice: Each invites a painful fall.

Seek to establish relationships slowly and on proper principles, to allow them to evolve naturally, and to resolve disputes with patience and reserve. If your primary relationship – that with the Sage – is open and ongoing, then all other relationships will fall into place.”

In this age, Bahá'u'lláh's teachings also are quite clear about the roles and relationships in families. Compared to the past, in keeping with the needs of this age, the equality of men and women is more keenly stressed and family roles somewhat more broadly defined. However, compared to the contemporary disregard for formalization of relationships through marriage, or the trends toward sexual conduct based simply on personal desires and preferences, Bahá'u'lláh's call for sexual abstinence outside of a properly recognized marriage between a man and a woman, and such marriages conditioned upon the consent of parents, may seem archaic to some. However, the condition of society in many places has become nearly as primitive as in the days of Fu Hsi. The number of children who know only their mothers, not their fathers, or who are fed only when food is conveniently available, are on the rise in this era of social breakdown. This is not a time for rushing into relationships. It is a time in which heaven's guidance and discipline is needed.

But the *I-Ching* is not merely a guide to personal relationships. Thousands of years of refinements and considerations of these hexagrams has not merely left the comments from the *I-Ching* at that. The commentaries point out other metaphors and synchronicities suggested by the simple images. In the case of “thunder over the lake”, for example, it is noted that in nature this is a condition that happens in autumn, or the end of one cycle preceding the beginning of another. It is suggested that this is NOT a time to move forward in a vigorous, outwardly expansive manner, but a period to “bide time”, “to consolidate” and to gather or create inner resources for future change. Indeed we could be said to be living in a time-period of “thunder over the lake”. For it is also a metaphor for the current relationship of earth and heaven as a whole. As earth “parties-on” (suggested by the joyous lake), behaving immaturely and heedless of the “Will of Heaven”, the laws of nature created by God kick in to right the imbalance or to move us along to a higher stage. This combination, “Kuei Mei”, suggests that in the midst of revelry, a new, more stable and mature condition may be brought about through thunderous, arousing and perhaps unfortunate means. Prophets and wise men warn of such conditions, and people who have been caught unaware may experience them as the “wrath of God”. However, it is simply the “Will of Heaven” doing its balancing act.

I started writing this presentation the week before Hurricane Katrina. Considering “Thunder over the Lake/The Marrying Maid” was one of many possible configurations that could have come up, as I continued to meditate on it while the drama in the Southern US unfolded, I was most amazed (as I have often been with the connections between the *I Ching* reading and the synchronicity with events and situations observed.) This reading also had a change marker: The third line, earthly power, is weak. It must be strengthened and matured before the powers of heaven can be applied effectively. When earth becomes receptive as a whole, or when it becomes reflective of the powers and will of heaven, peace and creative expansion will once more be possible.

The *I-Ching* was one of five classics and four books that constitute the main writings of Confucius. Taken as a whole, Confucius and his teachings worked to pragmatically realign Chinese society – at the time known as the Warring States Period – to the principles of the *I-Ching*, to clarify the history and to preserve the arts and refinements that had developed during China’s golden ages. While Confucius lived, only a few people listened. But among those few was his grandson. The family and faithful disciples continued to study, to refine and apply and to spread the teachings of the great master. After a few hundred years of persecution, the Confucian principles of applying virtues to the problems of life in the home, in education, and in governing society came to be accepted and adopted throughout China – leading to a new golden age. Although it has been 2000 years since China first officially adopted Confucian teachings to build a government and society based on merits of excellent character, and history has produced many twists and turns of fate, today the descendents of Confucius up to the 76th or 77th generation continue the great family line and preserve and promote the teachings of Master Kong, Confucius. (I know of no other family who can trace their roots so far back.)

From the same time period, Taoism also flourished. The Taoist philosophy was a more metaphysical contemplation of the workings of the Spirit/the Way (what we might call the Holy Spirit) in life. Taoism was more often seen as a complementary rather than a competing viewpoint to Confucian teachings. Chinese medicine, and the martial arts are among the practical applications of the Taoist teachings brought to modern times. When Buddhism came into China around 2000 years ago, Confucianism and Taoism had already aroused widespread interest in the workings of the Spirit, so that in many localities the teachings of Buddha were well received. Among other things, the teachings of Buddha provided answers to how to reorder the traditional forms of community life to ways more reflective of the spiritual needs of that age. It is true that there was animosity between these movements from time to time. But for the most part, the teachings of tolerance that were central to each provided for mutual respect, as well as creating some movements that brought two or three of them together. In China, rather than analyzing by saying “either – or” (as in Western rationalism), the search for truth is along the line of synthesis: “Both – and” (Chew, 1993). It is true that in periods of time since, there have been reforms, and then imitation of those “forms” that led into downward cycles and immovable social structures. Golden ages exist when there is a balance between the spirit, the form, and the movements in society. When social forms become too rigid and spirit cannot move, revolutionary movements arise. Various sects crystallized here and there over time and created their own “blind imitations” and superstitions. Communism claimed to try to wipe away Confucianism – to try to rid China of doctrine altogether. However, Mao’s little Red Book was full of aphorisms that were essentially lifted from the old Master Confucius. The concept of education as “moral education first” is deeply ingrained in China. When people of today call for “re-introducing” Confucian education, however, some confusion arises (similar to moral controversies found elsewhere in the world) about WHICH brand of Confucianism is to be applied in the modern world, a world that is admittedly in desperate need of moral guidance.

Simply speaking, the code of Confucius that has affected the moral education of China, Japan, and Asia as a whole can be said to have five aspects: Devotion to one’s parents (so-called “filial piety”), being on good terms with people in general (harmony), sincerity in keeping promises, industriousness and modesty, and striving for excellence and knowledge. (9)

But people argue over just how these virtues are to be expressed, to what degree and in what form in the modern world. Actually, the texts no longer hold authority for organizing the social context. If we go back to the original texts, it is interesting to me that within Confucius’ work are continuous references to the Sage and His authority for recreating social order. Bahá’u’lláh clearly has the qualities of the Sage, which Confucius identified. Bahá’u’lláh, Himself, has written regarding the Sages or Manifestations of God who appear from age to age, “*The light which these*

souls radiate is responsible for the progress of the world and the advancement of its people.” He, clearly, should be consulted on these matters, and I believe, all will be resolved.

Confucian and Buddhist Teachings Revitalize Japan

While China’s society advanced in those days, Japan, prior to the introduction of Confucian and Buddhist teachings, was a languishing society. It was outgrowing its old tribal forms, but it was not without its own moral and spiritual understandings and traditions. Until the Chinese introduction of writing to Japan, however, Japan’s spiritual concepts and legends remained unrecorded. Then thousands of years of myths and legends, many rather mixed up by then, were recorded in the 7th or 8th century AD. From these legends, it seems that there was in the Japanese concept, a goddess representing the Sun, Amaterasu Omikami. She seems to represent the power and will of Heaven. She directed the creation of the islands through a couple of intermediaries “Izanami” and “Izanagi” (perhaps they can be said to represent the active and the receptive forces of creation). In one of the many legendary tales, it seems that Amaterasu had a brother who became unruly, destroyed her gardens, and acted extremely rudely. (Perhaps he can be said to represent tyranny or the embodiment of immature, ungodly, earthly power.) So, it is said, the Sun Goddess retreated back into a cave and refused to shine. The other creatures, hoping to coax her back out to bring back her life-giving spirit and her blessings, set up a *torii* (a perch upon which a cock could sit) and when the cock would crow, the Sun Goddess would be called out of her darkness. Wherever you see a *torii* today, it is a sign that someone believes there are blessings of heaven to be called out there. (It is interesting to note that in Christianity, Islam, and the Bahá’í teachings, the crowing of a cock represents the announcement of a new Messenger of God.) So *torii* are set up at the precincts of the Shinto shrines. In addition, the areas around the shrine are made clean and purified so that Amaterasu will be pleased. Traditionally arts have been displayed and music has been played, and dances performed around that area so that charm would be added in the hope of attracting the Sun Goddess and inviting her to shine completely on all. Cleanliness, orderliness, arts, and music are ways to call out the glories and bounties of the Heavenly One.

When Chinese missionaries and traders brought Buddhism as well as Confucian teachings to Japan in about the 6th century AD, it was as if the cock crowed. Japan awoke from a long slumber and somehow the Japanese could see how becoming more excellent human beings would indeed bring greater bounties of Spirit. In the 7th century, under Japan’s only female Empress, Suiko, Prince Shotoku’s 17-article constitution mandated Buddhism as the state religion and instituted neo-Confucianist elements into public government. The Nara period that followed was one of the richest ever seen in terms of rapid development – economically, socially, and spiritually – in any country. The arts, architecture, poetry, music – in every way – exploded. Nearly all that we see today of the unique beauty of Japan can be traced to that golden age. I can really understand how ‘Abdu’l-Bahá could remark on the spiritual capacity of Japan to “turn ablaze” once its spirit is reawakened. And I can also understand the comment of Shoghi Effendi that the Japanese are more attracted to the Holy Spirit through Beauty than through Truth (or reason). After the Nara period, Japan retreated and wanted to wean itself from “foreign influence,” but it consolidated its moral forces drawn from Shinto, Buddhism, Confucianism, and even Christianity, into the concepts of “Bushido” which it commended to its warriors and gradually spread through various levels of society.

Moral Education Integrated into Daily Routines

I would like, now, to make note of how, in both Japan and China, moral education has been strongly integrated into the arts, and then into the daily routines of the people. Until the beginning of the 20th century, most people in Asia were unable to read, so moral training was done through rituals and rites, through ceremonies and dramas, by applied craftsmanship in their work, and by simple word of mouth. Virtues of purity, harmony, simplicity, moderation, fidelity, beauty, and excellence were etched deeply into the arts, and the daily lives of people. In the 21st century we have come to rely heavily on intellectual forms of education. However, education of the heart and the virtues was somehow expected to continue without further cultivation. This negligence has led our societies, all around the world, into peril and evident loss.

Educators, globally, are in the midst of rethinking and restructuring education systems that will re-integrate education of body, mind, and spirit. There is a dawning RE-cognition that education is not just a “school” activity, but a life-process involving the home and communities, as well as the schools. It requires attention to the body and the mind, and most importantly the heart and soul.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá warned us early in the 20th century that “*a superficial culture unsupported by a cultivated morality is as ‘a confused medley of dreams’*” (SDC, 60). He warned that “*in a time to come, morals would degenerate to an extreme degree.*” (SWAB, 100). And yet we have at hand the treasury of wisdom of the Sages of past ages as well as the Sage of this age to guide us and to expand our consciousness for a truer understanding of the nature and purpose of our lives. And we are assured that “if only men would search out truth we would find ourselves united.” I believe that in reviewing the sacred literature of China, and even Japan, we can become imbued with a greater receptivity to, and appreciation of, the bounties and protections of Heaven in this day that Bahá’u’lláh has revealed at “the banquet table of the Lord”.

References from the Bahá’í Writings

- (TB) Bahá’u’lláh, *Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh*
- (CT) ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The China Tablet*
- (SDC) ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *The Secret of Divine Civilization*
- (SWAB) ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Selections from the Writings of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá*

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