

## THIRTEEN WAYS OF LOOKING AT THE SELF IN EARLY CHINA

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I was of three minds,  
Like a tree  
In which there are three blackbirds.

—Wallace Stevens, “Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird”

The realized person has no self.  
The numinous person takes no credit for deeds done.  
The sage has no name.

—Zhuangzi, “The Sorting Out That Evens Things”

Chinese views of the self or person and how or whether they diverge from Western ones remain controversial, and the stakes are high for both philosophical and political reasons.<sup>1</sup> Philosophers tend to ground these debates in the testimony of a small number of the canonical Warring States and Han philosophical texts as if they were transparent reflections of actual Warring States and Han attitudes. Instead, a more historicized point of view may prove fruitful through a deliberately discontinuous set of thirteen ways of looking at the self in China.

Chinese notions of the self (or its absence) figured prominently in a series of pendulum swings in European perceptions of China that begin with sixteenth-century reports from the first Jesuit missions in China. Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) compared the sages of Chinese antiquity favorably to their Greek counterparts and placed special emphasis on the moral probity of Confucius and his followers.<sup>2</sup> Subsequent European accounts stressed a harmony between the Chinese people and their government unimaginable in Europe. Michel de Montaigne (1533–92) considered China a nation organized on rational principles.<sup>3</sup> Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) may have used the hexagrams of the *Book of Changes* in his own formulation of calculus.<sup>4</sup> His student Christian Wolff (1679–1754) went further and praised the Chinese for harmonizing

individual happiness and the welfare of the state.<sup>5</sup> Voltaire (1694–1778) praised the Chinese for perfected morality and social and political wisdom.<sup>6</sup> The accolades of the Enlightenment used China and Confucius as a foil for critiques of European political institutions.<sup>7</sup>

### 1. SELFLESS CHINA

But by the nineteenth century, the harmonious, rational Chinese seem to have lost their selves. G. W.F. Hegel (1770–1831) famously described the Chinese as selfless in several pejorative senses: as a state in which all save the emperor had equality without freedom, whose legal system judged responsibility by families rather than by individuals, and in which there was no self-consciousness or conception of the spirit.<sup>8</sup>

In *On Liberty*, John Stuart Mill (1806–73) praised China for its people's talents and customs, whose inventors "even the most enlightened European must accord, under certain limitations, the title of sages and philosophers." But they also succeeded in "making people all alike, all governing their thoughts and conduct by the same maxims and rules." For Mill, the problem was not that the Chinese had no selves, but that they governed them the same way. And his point was that, unless individuality asserted itself, Europe would become another China.<sup>9</sup>

Marcel Mauss (1872–1950) argued that the idea of a person as a bearer of roles, rights, and responsibilities is a social construction and that the modern sense of self is a recent and uniquely Western European development. He argued that modern notions of self (*moi*), person (*personne*), and "individual" evolved from earlier roles: characters (*personnages*) and masks (*personae*). He described ancient China as having developed notions of individuality in the limited sense of classifying people by names (*ming* 名). Such individuality was neither eternal nor indissoluble. *Ming* was a collective noun, derived from ancestors and passed on to descendants. The individual was a composite of two other collective nouns, *shen* and *kui*. The notion of the person (*personne*) ceased to evolve. Mauss contrasted this limited concept of self with Roman notions of personhood (*persona*) and its related social and legal institutions of full individual identity in law. Mauss identified legal identity and its associated rights as the origin of Western notions of self.<sup>10</sup>

For Hegel, Mill, and Mauss, the inhabitants of early China had no selves, for different reasons in each case. But is selflessness necessarily a bad thing? A wide range of arguments for Chinese "selflessness" or "nonindividuation" have been used to argue for the superiority of Chinese constructions of personhood. To mention a few examples, Joseph Needham attributed de-emphasis on individual autonomy to an "organic" view of the self.<sup>11</sup> Herbert Fingarette emphasized the nonegoistic ori-

entation of Confucianism, that Confucius did not emphasize the “self” and sought, not “egoistic will” but *dao* 道.<sup>12</sup> Roger Ames has argued that Chinese views of the self do not depend on notions of individuality based on class membership but arise from a sense of the uniqueness of each individual: “the Chinese conception of unique individuality stands in contrast to that of the autonomous individuality, which attends the isolation of the European soul.”<sup>13</sup>

For both Hegel and Mill, polity is a key avenue of approach to the self. Hegel’s selfless Chinese took on new lives in the twentieth century. Social theorists stress that the Chinese subsumed individual interests to those of the group (the family or the state). This claim, asserted and denied, became central in debates about human rights in China or its absence. One version is that the Chinese “rejected” the individualism and autonomy that characterize Western modernity.

## 2. RELATIONAL SELVES

Evidence from the earliest strata of the archaeological record suggests some emphasis on the group, rather than the individual. The ritual prescriptions of the earliest bronze inscriptions and the Zhou dynasty ritual texts (the *Zhou li* or *Rites of Zhou*, the *Yi li* or *Ceremony and Ritual*, and the *Li ji* or *Book of Rites*) prescribed behavior for types or classes of people. They did not apply considered ethical judgments to the behavior of individuals. By contrast, in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1094b27), Aristotle argues that each person (*ekastos*) is a good judge of the things he or she knows. The Chinese archaeological record and the textual tradition also reveal a pervasive analogy between the state (*guo* 國) and the family (*jia* 家).<sup>14</sup> For example, according to the *Great Learning*, proper governance of the state is analogous to, and results from, proper governance, first of one’s self and then of one’s family.

Yet it has been argued that Confucian social ethics failed to provide a viable model for relations between the individual (*ji* 己) and the nonfamilial group (*qun* 群) and that, beyond the family (*jia*), it offered only vague concepts of group and society. Of the five fundamental Confucian relations (parent-child, ruler-subject, husband-wife, elder and younger sibling, and friend-friend), three are based on kinship, and the other two are analogized to it, as is the other major nonfamily relation of teacher and student.<sup>15</sup> Roger Ames has attempted to reconcile these tensions with a “focus-field” model of the self, based on hierarchical and concentric “center-seeking” circles of “inner-outer” relations that define different social roles across a spectrum of relationships, starting from the individual and family.<sup>16</sup> Nonetheless, Confucians tended to subordinate the individual to the group or social order, whether understood as the

family or the state. This problem of the relation of the individual, family, and group in Chinese civilization is the subject of ongoing controversy, especially as it bears on the compatibility of Confucianism and contemporary discourses on human rights.

### 3. CULTIVATION OF SELF

Given these claims for the lack of a self in early China or for its relational nature, it is curious that “self-cultivation” (*xiu shen* 修身) has been an explicit topic of discussion and debate since the beginning of the Chinese philosophical tradition. One aspect of individual moral (as distinct from political) autonomy is that only an individual can practice self-cultivation. When we turn to Chinese evidence from the Warring States period, we find a wide range of accounts of self-cultivation. But what kind of self was being cultivated and how? Was selfhood a universal human potential, or was it restricted to elites, officials, or men? By all accounts, self-cultivation was difficult and becoming a sage almost impossible.

### 4. CONFUCIUS, MENCIUS, AND XUNZI ON SELF-CULTIVATION

The earliest Chinese commentary on the subject is the *Analects* of Confucius (551–479 BCE). When asked by one of his students for a keyword to use as a guide for self-cultivation throughout life, Confucius suggests *shu* 恕, the ability to adopt others’ points of view, and adds, “Do not do to others what you do not want done to you” (15.24). He also describes his own path: “At fifteen I had the intention of learning; at thirty I established myself; at forty I was free of doubts; at fifty I understood the mandate of Heaven; at sixty my ear was attuned; at seventy I could follow the desires of my heartmind without deviating from true” (2.4).<sup>17</sup> Elsewhere, he indicates that most people are capable of change, save those of the highest wisdom, who presumably do not need to, and those of the lowest stupidity, who cannot (16.9). Finally, Confucius distinguishes between people born with wisdom, those who acquire it by study, those who learn despite limitations, and those who have ability but do not learn (17.3).

According to his intellectual descendent Mencius (c. 371–c. 289 BCE; see 2A6), the potential for self-cultivation began with “four sprouts,” which were a necessary but not sufficient condition for virtue. The “sprouts” of compassion, shame, courtesy, and a sense of right and wrong grow into the four virtues of benevolence (*ren* 仁), duty or propriety (*yi* 義), ceremonial ritual (*li* 禮), and wisdom (*zhi* 智), respectively. Mencius (2A6) states that for “people (*ren* 人) having these four sprouts is just like their having four limbs.” Mencius’s view of self-cultivation emphasizes the

development of inherent tendencies and also the role of moral luck in the ability to do so. By contrast, Xunzi (c. 300–c. 230 BCE) emphasizes the need to create one's self from an inherently vicious and instinct-driven nature. For example, in chapter 1, "Encouraging Learning," he likens the transformation of human nature to a skilled carpenter's bending naturally straight wood into a circle. Central elements in that transformation are learning through studying the classics and conformity to ritual propriety.

All this suggests that self-cultivation is accomplished through textual study and the correct performance of ritual (*li*). However, other passages suggest that self-cultivation referred literally to the cultivation of the physical person, the *shen* 身 and a view of self-cultivation as the cultivation of embodied or material virtue grounded in the transformation of *qi* 氣. Mencius describes *qi* as filling the body and moved by the will: "the will is commander over the *qi*, while the *qi* is what fills the body. The *qi* halts where the will arrives." When asked about his own particular strengths, he replies, "I understand language, and I am good at nurturing my radiant (or "flood-like") *qi* (*haoran zhi qi* 浩然之氣). He also suggests how *qi* can be nurtured. If one is straightforward in nourishing it and never harms it, *qi* will fill the space between heaven and earth. It unites righteousness and Dao and is born from accumulating righteousness (2A2).

## 5. SELFLESS SAGES

At first glance, Daoist texts seem to approach problems of the self very differently, rejecting the "self" for very different reasons than their Confucian counterparts. Both the *Daodejing* and *Zhuangzi* argue (very differently) against ego-centered perspectives. In the *Daodejing*, ego-centrism interferes with *wu wei* 無為 or "acting without action." *Wu wei* allows the (presumably male) sage to "put his person (*shen*) in the background, but his person is in the forefront" (chap. 7) and to "dwell in the management of *wu wei* (*wu wei zhi shi* 無為之事, chap. 2). As a result, the sage is so noncompetitive that no one can compete with him (chap. 22) and can accomplish his purposes through *wu wei* (*wu wei cheng* 無為成, chap. 47); without the sage's managing things (*wu shi* 無事), the people are transformed of themselves (chap. 57). The *Daodejing* associates *wu wei* with the "feminine" qualities of softness, weakness, passivity, humility, yielding, and self-effacement. These qualities prevail over "masculine" qualities of hardness, strength, aggressiveness, self-aggrandizement, etc.<sup>18</sup> A text from the silk manuscripts discovered at Mawangdui describes adepts who "constantly put themselves behind but did not lose." They "grasped the One and did not seek, and took the female mode as their model."<sup>19</sup>

The *Zhuangzi* repeatedly disparages the “small knowledge” of limited perspectives. It prefers the high overview of fantastic and long-lived creatures—the Peng Bird soaring over the clouds, the centenarian *mingling* tree—to the constricted and “self-centered” viewpoints (in space and time) of cicadas or turtledoves, which hop from branch to branch, and morning mushrooms that live and die in the course of a day.<sup>20</sup> By contrast: “The realized person has no self. The numinous person takes no credit for deeds done. The sage has no name.”<sup>21</sup>

The second chapter of the *Zhuangzi* begins with a man who has just “lost himself” (*wu sang wo* 吾喪我).<sup>22</sup> It is full of examples of “great and small” perspectives that show the limitations of the “small” viewpoint of the individual self. It compares the “pipes of humans”—the hollow tubes of the human body—to the pipes of earth—hollows and valleys full of the sound of wind—and the pipes of heaven.<sup>23</sup> The author illustrates this selfless perspective by the paradoxes, perspective shifts, and skillful sages that produce the unique humor and flavor of the *Zhuangzi*. Another interrogation of the integrity of the self comes through analogy to the body and which part should rule. If there is no other, there is no self. If there is no self, there is no one “in charge” to rule the components of the body or to prefer one thing to another.<sup>24</sup> The passage compares the components of the body to the hierarchy of a state. Which part can be taken as authority, as (as it were) the self?

The third chapter begins with the cook Pao Ding instructing the Lord Wenhui. His discourse is on the carving of oxen, but what he describes is his own process of mastery of skill. After mastering ordinary skill, Pao Ding “leaves skill behind.” Having activated the numinous (*shen* 神) within himself, he no longer looks with his eyes. He knows when to stop his senses and allow the numinous to run its course.<sup>25</sup> These passages indicate not the absence of self but a different management of it. Unlike the Confucian suppression of self in the interest of the group, these texts recommend a reconfiguration of self in which less, paradoxically, becomes more.

## 6. SELF-CULTIVATION OF EMBODIED *QI*

In traditional interpretations, Confucian schools emphasized study and ritual, while Daoist texts described meditative and longevity practices.<sup>26</sup> Recent reconsiderations and new archaeological evidence suggest that some members from both groups may have shared a focus on the cultivation of *qi* by both mental and physical means. If virtue arises in part from the physical cultivation of *qi*, the results should be physically visible. Mencius suggests that self-cultivation does transform the body. The four virtues (*ren*, *yi*, *li*, and *zhi*) are rooted in the heartmind

and produce a glossy coloration of the face and are visible in the limbs (7A21). They are also visible in the pupils of the eyes, which are clear and bright in a cultivated person (4A15). In another context, this passage is a defense of eye physiognomy. Xunzi, by contrast, attacks physiognomy on the grounds that endowments received at birth cannot indicate self-cultivation, which, for him, transforms morally problematic natal endowments.

But Mencius's views can be placed in a more broadly Chinese view of embodied self-cultivation practices or "material virtue traditions." Mencius's view of *qi* conforms to and probably draws on a culture of embodied (bodily based) self-cultivation practices, aptly described in a recent book by Mark Csikszentmihalyi.<sup>27</sup> These practices and the concepts behind them structured much of early Daoism, medical theory, and, more broadly, important areas of early Chinese ethics and metaphysics.<sup>28</sup> Such "material virtue" traditions held that the body-mind was constructed of *qi* and that embodied self-cultivation practices could transform *qi*. Such views informed Warring States accounts of dietary practices, exercise regimens, breath meditation, sexual cultivation techniques, and other technical traditions. Material virtue traditions also had important links with Daoist texts, southern schools, and the "moralization" of health in medical classics such as the *Inner Classic of the Yellow Emperor* (*Huangdi neijing*). Accounts of these practices appear in passing in the texts of the received tradition. More come from texts excavated from tombs.<sup>29</sup>

Several early Daoist texts describe the transformation of *qi*. *Zhuangzi* 22 clearly identifies *qi* as the basis of the physical constitution of the body: "Human birth is caused by the gathering together of *qi*."<sup>30</sup> The first chapter of the *Zhuangzi* describes the *shen ren* 神人 of Guye, who concentrates his *shen*, avoids the five grains, rides the clouds, and thereby "protects creatures from sickness and epidemic and makes the yearly harvest ripen."<sup>31</sup> The suggestion here is that self-cultivation affects the greater world by acting at a distance. Another passage links harmonizing the six *qi* to "nurturing life."<sup>32</sup>

Other fourth-century passages in the *Zuo Annals* (*Zuo zhuan*) and *Guanzi* stress the need to regulate one's *qi* to achieve emotional balance.<sup>33</sup> The point is that these texts describe sages or *shen ren* achieving that status through a continuum of physical and metaphysical means. These techniques are linked to a broad category of "nurturing life" (*yang sheng* 養生) techniques for self-cultivation and longevity.

The problem here is that these texts do not appear within the rubric of the "Masters" (*zi* 子) texts that have largely defined the philosophical tradition. As a result, philosophers tend not to study them or to dismiss them as irrelevant products of religion or popular culture.

Indeed, many do not exist in the received textual tradition at all, save for their titles, which are preserved in the last two sections of the “Bibliographic Treatise” (*Yiwenzhi* 藝文志) of the *Standard History of the Han* (*Han shu*).<sup>34</sup>

The *Han shu*’s “Numbers and Techniques” (*Shushu* 數術) section contains several titles on physiognomy that bear out the idea that self-cultivation transformed the physical self and that a skilled individual could assess not only people but animals, plants, and objects. There are titles on the physiognomy of people, domestic animals, silkworms, military supplies, and agricultural land.<sup>35</sup> Excavated texts on physiognomy also emphasize its practical contexts, such as the physiognomy of dogs and horses. They share the view that if internal *qi* is reflected in appearance, it becomes possible to assess character or potential. The “Recipes and Methods” (*Fangji* 方技) section gives the titles of medical works concerned with physical cultivation, health, and longevity.<sup>36</sup> The subject matter of these texts is borne out by medical and esoteric texts excavated from Mawangdui (Changsha, Hunan, 68 BCE).<sup>37</sup> Most of these excavated and lost texts seem to be part of a “nurturing life” (*yang sheng*) culture that emphasized physiological control over both physical and mental processes understood as transformations of *qi*. This type of mastery was understood as self-cultivation in the coterminous senses of moral excellence, health, and longevity.

## 7. SELVES, REPRESENTATIONS, AND LIFE PLANS

Cultivating *qi* and nurturing life in the above senses are examples of what Charles Taylor has described as the ability to frame representations. For Taylor, a person is a being with consciousness: the power to frame representations in order to make plans and conscious choices. This ability is where humans are strikingly superior to animals and machines. Taylor argues that moral agency requires awareness of the standards one is living by. The power to frame representations does not imply the ability to act on them. A profoundly disabled individual who can frame but not implement representations is no less a person than vigorous individuals with their powers intact. By contrast, when the power to frame representations is *permanently* eliminated (for example by death, as compared to loss of consciousness), that individual ceases to be a person.<sup>38</sup>

In his account of the self, Taylor also emphasizes a different aspect of personhood in moral and legal discourse; persons are “respondents”: rights-bearing beings with moral status. Preconditions for moral status include a sense of self, a point of view, notions of the past and future,



capacities for holding values, making choices, and adopting “life-plans.” A person is thus a “respondent” by virtue of having the capacities to be addressed and to reply. In *Sources of the Self*, Taylor argues that

to know who I am is a species of knowing where I stand. My identity is defined by the commitments and identifications which provide the frame or horizon within which I can try to determine from case to case what is good, or valuable, or what ought to be done, or what I endorse or oppose. In other words, it is the horizon within which I am capable of taking a stand.<sup>39</sup>

In the historical context in which he makes the argument, Taylor contrasts this construction of agency and the affirmation of ordinary life it makes possible to earlier European aristocratic codes in which a life centered on honor or glory was incommensurable with that of men [*sic*] of lesser rank.<sup>40</sup> But an account of agency that is not restricted to the aristocracy, to men, or to those wielding direct political power as citizen-participants (Taylor’s context) is particularly apt for understanding personhood and individuality in early China as it applies to women and commoners, who were largely excluded from seeking office or membership in textual teaching lineages. An illustrative example comes from the story of the cook Pao Ding in the third chapter of the *Zhuangzi*, titled “The Master of Nurturing Life” (*Yangsheng zhu* 養生主). Pao Ding, a commoner, practices and masters the ordinary task of butchery and cooking. His judgments of what is good or valuable change over time, shifting from wholes to analysis of their parts, to “leaving skill behind.” The choices he makes give understanding of the Way and incidentally put him in a position to instruct a king. Lord Wenhui’s response is, “Wonderful! By hearing the words of Pao Ding I have learned how to nurture life” (*de yang sheng* 得養生).<sup>41</sup> Another example of agency in Taylor’s terms comes from an anecdote in the *Collected Life Stories of Women* (*Lienü zhuan*) about a poor woman named Xuwu from Donghaishang in Qi. Her neighbors had an association of women who met at night to prolong their working hours by weaving by candlelight, but Xuwu was too poor to afford to bring her share of candles. Threatened with exclusion, she argued that the light of a candle was not diminished by adding a person or brighter for one person less.<sup>42</sup> No one could counter her argument that her presence had no negative consequences (it did not diminish the light), but she also took care to benefit the group by waiting on her richer neighbors and arranging their mats. By both arguing against her neighbors and affirming their superior status in the social hierarchy, Xuwu both asserted her agency and preserved her livelihood.<sup>43</sup>

## 8. WOMEN

When Mencius states that people (*ren*) all have the four sprouts, he seems to say that they are a universal human endowment, but was this the view of many early Chinese thinkers? The *Daodejing* repeatedly invokes the feminine but has little to say about women. The *Zhuangzi*, by contrast, describes one woman who sought mastery of *dao* and several sages who were commoners. But whether the early Confucian masters considered self-cultivation an option for women (or for commoners) remains a matter of debate. Does Mencius use *ren* to refer to people or only to men?<sup>44</sup> Is the Chinese “person” gendered male? Until very recently, leading contemporary Confucian scholars have been practically silent on these questions.

Part of the problem is that the Warring States texts typically read by philosophers present little evidence on the question. An alternative is to consider historical evidence of women practicing self-cultivation in Taylor’s sense of respondent, by functioning as active agents in social and political life. Historical sources suggest that at least some women (members of the elite with education and opportunity) were concerned with self-cultivation.<sup>45</sup> They indicate that early Chinese thinkers considered both women and men capable of self-cultivation and sagacity and attributed the same aptitudes for moral reasoning and its attendant intellectual abilities to both men and women.<sup>46</sup> Virtues ascribed to women include wisdom, what Aristotle might call moral virtue, foresight, loyalty, and courage.<sup>47</sup> In these accounts, women make moral arguments from principles and understand human relations. Women also appear in the highest four categories of the *Hanshu*’s “Table of Ancients and Modern Persons,” an extensive list of morally ranked individuals.<sup>48</sup>

Leading twentieth-century Chinese intellectuals had a great deal to say on the intellectual and moral status of women in early China. Hu Shi (a student of John Dewey) notes the achievements of two empresses, but his greatest praise goes to a commoner named Ti Ying for bringing about the abolition of mutilating punishments during the Han dynasty.<sup>49</sup> Yet with few exceptions, even women who enjoyed a measure of economic, intellectual, or artistic autonomy were relegated to an inferior and circumscribed sphere of women’s culture. Their “selves” were excluded from political life (the potential to hold office) and, with it, the “masculine” realms of statecraft, politics, and philosophy. The Chinese sources do not, therefore, describe their selves as different or inferior, probably because of their strong view of women as moral agents within the domestic sphere. Whether their ability to “respond” was significantly constrained depends on one’s view of the adequacy of the agency provided by the domestic sphere.

## 9. SELF AND EMOTION

The emotions are another key element of the history of the development of the person in Europe. Correlation between the self and the emotions or passions can be traced from Aristotle's *pathê* through Descartes' passions and Hume's emotions. Accounts of the emotions reveal what is essential to the self and its boundaries; shifts in the pattern mark shifts in conceptions of self.<sup>50</sup>

A range of early Chinese texts describe a set of six (or occasionally seven) *qing* 情, a term that some scholars translate as "feelings" or "emotions," and others take as "essential nature" or "the genuine."<sup>51</sup> References to the six *qing* appear in a range of Warring States texts, which associate them with regulating behavior and intentions, change as a constant factor of human life, and what makes us "genuine" persons. According to the *Zuo zhuan*, love (*hao* 好), hate (*e* 惡), pleasure (*shan* 善), anger (*nü* 怒), sorrow (*ai* 哀), and joy (*le* 樂) all arise from the six *qi* 六氣.<sup>52</sup> Xunzi identifies the emotions as inborn, genuine, or natural.<sup>53</sup> The *Book of Rites* describes them as inborn, "without learning."<sup>54</sup>

Early Daoist and medical texts tend to regard the manifestation of emotions as imbalances of *qi*. In these traditions, all *qing* are excessive, and emotions are not a necessary or desirable constituent of the self.

## 10. PERSONHOOD AND FILIALITY

Early Chinese thinkers linked virtues to spontaneous emotions, and accounts of the six (or seven) *qing* easily accommodate filiality or filial piety (*xiao* 孝) as a culturally specific variant of love. For Confucius and his intellectual descendants, filiality (understood as a virtue or an emotion) was central to self-cultivation and the self of a realized person. It was understood as a natural human endowment based on the bond between parent and child. (Needless to say, there were unfilial sons, and virtues required cultivation.) Both Confucius and Mencius stress the naturalness of filiality. Confucius (1.2) considers filiality one of the roots of benevolence. He derives all forms of love from familial relationships because of their intimacy, which was crucial for genuine performance of ritual (*li*). It was thus a *natural* emotion.<sup>55</sup>

Mencius (3A5) describes the case of sons who had failed to bury their parents and later found their bodies mutilated by animals. They broke out in a sweat and could not bear to look; the sweat was not a show for others but was an expression of their inmost feelings. Xunzi disagrees with Mencius on the naturalness of emotional dispositions connected with self-cultivation because of his more negative view of human nature.

Critics of Confucius such as the Mohists and Han Fei also argue for the importance of filiality.<sup>56</sup>

Thus, filiality was part of what defined Warring States and Han views of self, but that filiality is implicitly male-gendered because of radical differences between the ways in which filiality was defined for men and for women. Male filiality was defined genetically throughout life, but women's filiality was cut in two by marriage. Girls were permitted, and expected, to feel filiality toward their parents, but at marriage a woman was expected to shift her filial emotions to her husband's ancestral lineage. Philosophical texts make no explicit distinction between male and female filiality. By contrast, historical narratives treat them very differently. Warring States and Han narratives contain relatively few stories about filial daughters and daughters-in-law. When they do appear, they are typically praised for some other quality, often intelligence or cleverness. By contrast, many Song and Ming dynasty accounts of virtuous women focus on filiality to parents-in-law.

### 11. REMOVING ONE'S SELF: INDIVIDUALISM AND EREMITISM

Another key aspect of framing representations and making life plans is the ability to remove one's person from an undesirable place or situation. One manifestation of such "removal" is eremitism, self-isolation from social and political life, sometimes by retreat to an isolated rural setting. Eremitism was a later development in China that was closely associated with medieval Chinese Daoist traditions. It provides another view of Chinese individualism that is overlooked by exclusive attention to "relational" selves. In contrast to Western eremitist traditions, Chinese hermits sought more than solitude and its independence; they also sought escape and concealment.<sup>57</sup> In this sense, escape from family or state was defensive, and solitude was thus an aggressive aspect of eremitism, whether expressed as resigning office and leaving the capital and one's family or as leaving the world of humankind in the search for immortality.

Traditions of eremitism and retreat during times of menace, danger, and bad government date back to the story of Bo Yi and Shu Qi, the virtuous hermits who try to save their states, if only by not participating in their decline.<sup>58</sup> Confucius extols them as paragons of virtue, and theirs is the first of the nonroyal biographies in the *Shi ji* (*Annals*) of Sima Qian. Other Warring States anecdotes describe populations following a virtuous leader who were driven from their states.<sup>59</sup> Thus, relocation or emigration was a recognized form of self-determination and political protest.

The unification of China into a single state under the Han might appear to make eremitism a moot issue. Yet, another pattern of eremitism emerged during the Later Han that went beyond a Zhuangzian avoidance of political life. In the Wei-Jin period, a new pattern of active retreat from politics became an intellectual mass movement, with a new power of hermits to legitimize or delegitimize dynasties.<sup>60</sup>

Eremitism also influenced Buddhism and monasticism. Buddhist monasticism eventually took over eremitism in China. Buddhists eventually took up some eremitic debates on whether to “return to the world,” but both Buddhist and Daoist monasticism were forms of noncooperation with the state. In periods of non-Chinese rule, monasticism became an expression of disinclination to serve a foreign dynasty.<sup>61</sup>

## 12. SUICIDE AND AGENCY

The most final mode of exercising moral choice by removing one's self is suicide, which was and remains a powerful expression of individuality throughout many strata of Chinese society. Suicide as the ultimate form of individual self-expression is attested in the literary record and in social history, across sex and class; to this day, Chinese women have one of the highest suicide rates in the world.<sup>62</sup> In contrast to views of suicide as a sin or a pathology, suicide was considered normal and in some cases, positively honorable. In particular, suicide offered a way for someone without other recourse to choose, either by refusing a course of action (through death) or by using shame to call attention to wrongdoing.<sup>63</sup> Suicide was particularly valorized as a form of protest or admonition by a loyal minister. To this day, the Dragon Boat festival commemorates the suicide of the Han poet Qu Yuan, who, according to tradition, drowned himself in the Milou River to protest the neglect of his advice and talents.<sup>64</sup>

Suicide remains a recognized form of personal and political protest at all levels of society. To take a famous example from the twentieth century, on June 2, 1927, Wang Guowei, an eminent professor at Qinghua University in Beijing and one of the most important reformers of modern China, drowned himself in a nearby lake in what had been the imperial gardens. His suicide was controversial at a time when many Chinese intellectuals were actively embracing Western values, which included disapproval of suicide. Wang's actions were defended by his colleague and equally eminent fellow-reformer Liang Qichao, who cautioned his colleagues and students against trying to adopt a Western perspective to judge Wang's suicide. Liang's point was that Europeans viewed suicide as an act of cowardice or a sin, whereas in ancient China, many eminent individuals used suicide to express their values and aspirations. These

were praiseworthy suicides, who should not be reproached through alien European values.<sup>65</sup> Here, the Chinese tradition leaves no doubt as to who owns one's life and self and who has the right to chose to dispose of it.

Chinese women chose suicide as an escape from poverty or arranged marriages but also to bring shame on abusive husbands, mothers-in-law, or other relatives. Suicide was the primary and sometimes the only way for a woman to assert moral choice, point of view, or disagreement with a father, husband, or son. Sometime women suicides used poetry carried or even written upon their physical persons to protest wrongs done against them.<sup>66</sup>

Widow suicide is another example of moral choice. Young widows were often forced into remarriage for practical reasons by parents, parents-in-law, or grown sons. Its importance as a form of self-expression was recognized at the highest levels of the Chinese state. Widow suicide became a virtual cult in late Ming China, in part because the state rewarded the families of these "virtuous women" with titles, plaques, and financial incentives. The Qing court introduced extensive legislation on widow suicide. Qing emperors repeatedly tried to ban it, but other policies indirectly encouraged it.<sup>67</sup>

### 13. RIGHTS-BEARING PERSONS

A series of tacit "rights" in imperial China provides a different perspective. Rulers, elites, and commoners were possessed a range of individual and collective rights.<sup>68</sup>

Several were universal. First, everyone, including women and children, had a right and duty to perform sacrifice as part of ancestral cult. Festivals such as the New Year and Qing Ming were observed by all. Second, in principle the right to marry and raise a family was universal, although in practice it was qualified by circumstances. For example, Mencius considered not bearing children one of the three unfilial acts. Third, in principle, anyone could and should remonstrate with a superior, including husbands and parents. (The ruler was an exception by definition.) Virtue stories about ministers and women prominently feature the exercise of this right.<sup>69</sup>

There were other acknowledged rights. By custom, commoners enjoyed the rights to farm communal land and the right to travel and relocate, and many Warring States narratives describe this kind of movement as a form of political protest. It did not apply to rulers and was not held by women, who could not move freely without their husbands' consents. To these, we may add a "right" of revolution, first

articulated by Mencius but implicit in the ideology of the Mandate of Heaven (*tianming* 天命). Mencius (5B9) argues that if a lord (*jun* 君) made serious mistakes, his ministers would remonstrate with him, but if after repeated attempts he did not listen, they would dethrone him.

In an even stronger passage (1B8), Mencius is asked whether a minister may kill his ruler. The context of the question is King Wu's inauguration of the Zhou dynasty by deposing the last Shang king (also named Zhou, written with a different graph). Mencius replies that he has heard of the "execution of a certain Zhou" (*zhu yi fu Zhou* 誅一夫紂) but never of regicide (*sha jun* 弑君, literally "killing a lord"). By referring to Zhou's death as (appropriate) punishment or execution rather than murder or regicide, Mencius is effectively saying that Zhou's death was "punishment" (*zhu*) rather than regicide (*sha*). In other words, he is affirming the propriety of King Wu's revolt against the Shang. Ruhists described the propriety of deposing a tyrannical ruler (in particular, the revolt of the first Shang king against the Xia and the King Wu against the Shang) as expressions of the Mandate of Heaven.

Rulers and elites, including women, had the right and duty to perform sacrifice and other rituals on behalf of their subordinates. The ruler sacrificed to heaven, while local rulers sacrificed to local spirits. The poor were not explicitly prohibited from ritual practice, but in many cases expense made the *li* an unaffordable luxury. Finally, rulers and elite men had the right to hold patrilineal clan or ancestor names.

## CONCLUSION

These thirteen various ways of looking at the self in China began with the early classics and introduced a series of questions and qualifications, ending with ramifications of early Chinese views of the self for theories of human rights. Human-rights theorists have repeatedly questioned the universality, nature, source, and specifically Western provenance of human rights.<sup>70</sup> Chinese views of self figure in these debate in two ways. One is the argument that human-rights theory is grounded in specifically Western notions of self and the "rights-bearing" individual. The other lies in attempts to reconcile human rights with "traditional," usually meaning "Confucian," China, based on what are claimed to be Chinese constructions of the self. But, as these thirteen views show, we need to read beyond the standard philosophical texts to understand this nuanced and complex subject. The pejorative Chinese selves of Hegel and Mill readily reveal themselves as narrow and externally imposed. Idealized selves (or nonselves) extrapolated from Confucian or Daoist texts also go wide of the mark. They are philosophically and politically convenient abstractions that suit a variety of purposes: politi-

cal theories, philosophical categorizations, and claims for one univocal Chinese culture or state. They also suit the conveniences of comparative philosophy: both the Eurocentric comparisons that have given it a bad name for much of the twentieth century and the *prima facie* assertions of incommensurability.

Do these thirteen views imply that early Chinese thinkers have no notion of a unitary autonomous “self”? Not necessarily. The relational selves of Confucius, Mencius, and Xunzi deemphasize its importance if not its possibility. Yet they certainly retain its ability to frame representations and to envisage life plans, including in some cases its elimination through suicide. Daoist texts have distinctive strategies for (dis)engaging it in effective action, for cultivating it in embodied selves, and for removing it from a state for purposes of escape or concealment. But none corresponds, for example, to the Buddhist view of the self as a destructive illusion. They may be closer to David Hume’s approach of casting doubt on our perception of having a “self” based on continuity of perception, emotion, etc.<sup>71</sup> They are entirely consistent with Derek Parfit’s argument that personal identity is not what matters and, in general, with his notion of constitutive reductionism (that a person is an entity that has a body and has thoughts and other experiences). In particular, quasi-Daoist self-cultivation practices based on embodied *qi* are interestingly consistent with Parfit’s view that “though a person is distinct from that person’s body, and from any series of thoughts and experiences, the person’s existence just consists in them.”<sup>72</sup> These thirteen viewpoints are intended to suggest some ways of thinking about the self in China and the need to roam beyond the usual sources. There is no one Chinese self, and these thirteen ways of looking at it only begin to suggest the possibilities.

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## NOTES

1. The pinyin system of transliteration is used except in cases of personal names. Translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.
2. Matteo Ricci, *Opere storiche*, ed. Fr. Tacchi Venturi Macerata, 2 vols (1910–13), vol. 1, bk. 5, 22 and vol. 1, bk. 10, 85–86.
3. Michel de Montaigne, “On Experience,” in *Essays*, trans. J. M. Cohen (Harmondsworth, UK: Duckworth, 1958), 352.



4. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Discourse on the Natural Theology of the Chinese*, trans. Henry Rosemont Jr. and Daniel J. Cook (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press), 20–23. See also Franklin Perkins, *Leibniz and China: A Commerce of Light* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

5. See Julia Ching and Willard Oxtoby, trans., *Moral Enlightenment: Leibniz and Wolff on China*. Monumenta Serica Monograph Series 26 (Nettetal, Germany: Steyler Verlag, 1992).

6. François Marie Arouet de Voltaire, *Essai sur les moeurs et l'esprit des nations et sur les principaux faits de l'histoire depuis Charlemagne jusqu'à Louis XIII*, ed. René Pomeau, 2 vols. (Paris. 1963), 1: 68, 170, and 224.

7. See Zhang Longxi, "The Myth of the Other: China in the Eyes of the West," *Critical Inquiry* 15, no. 1 (Autumn 1988): 108–31.

8. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (1830; repr., New York: Dover, 1956), 123–29 and 138.

9. John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, in *On Liberty and Other Writings*, ed. Stefan Collini (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), chap. 3, 71 and 72.

10. Marcel Mauss, "A Category of the Human Mind: The Notion of Person, the Notion of Self," trans. W. D. Halls, in *The Category of the Person: Anthropology, Philosophy, History*, ed. Michael Carrithers, Steven Collins, and Steven Lukes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1985), esp. 13. A Roman citizen had a right to the *nomen*, *praenomen*, and *cognomen* assigned to him by *gens* (14–16).

11. Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954), 18–26.

12. Herbert Fingarette, "The Problem of the Self in the Analects," *Philosophy East and West* 29, no. 2 (April 1979): 135.

13. Roger T. Ames, "The Focus-Field Self in Classical Confucianism," in *Self as Person in Asian Theory and Practice*, ed. Roger T. Ames with Wimal Dissanayake and Thomas P. Kasulis (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 195.

14. David N. Keightley, "Early Civilization in China: How It Became Chinese," in *Heritage of China: Contemporary Perspectives on Chinese Civilization*, ed. Paul S. Ropp (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 17.

15. Ambrose Y. C. King, "The Individual and Group in Confucianism: A Relational Perspective," in *Individualism and Holism: Studies in Confucian and Taoist Values*, ed. Donald Munro (Ann Arbor: Center for Chinese Studies, University of Michigan, 1985), 59–61.

16. Ames, "Focus-Field Self," 195, elaborated in David Hall and Roger T. Ames, *Thinking from the Han: Self, Truth, and Transcendence in China and the West* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1998).

17. Literally without deviating from the right angle of the carpenter's square, *ju* 拒.

18. Roger T. Ames, "Taoism and the Androgynous Ideal," in *Women in China: Current Directions in Historical Scholarship*, ed. Richard W. Guisso and Stanley Johannesen (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1981), 21.

19. Mawangdui hanmu boshu zhengli xiaozu, *Mawangdui hanmu boshu*, vol. 1/2 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1980), 154–56.

20. *Zhuangzi* 1.1–17 (Guo Qingfan 郭慶藩, *Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋, Beijing: Zhonghua, 1961). For another translation, see Angus C. Graham, *Chuang-tzu: The Inner Chapters* (London: George Allen & Unwin; 1981), 43–45.

21. *Zhuangzi* 1.17 (cf. Graham, 45). *Shen* refers both to spirits and to the numinous powers that an individual might cultivate through practices including meditation, breathing, and alchemical and sexual techniques.

22. *Zhuangzi* 2.43 (Graham, 48).

23. *Zhuangzi* 2.45–50 (Graham, 48–49).

24. *Zhuangzi* 2.51 (Graham, 51).

25. *Zhuangzi* 3.119 (Graham, 63–64).

26. Recently discovered archaeological texts have increased our knowledge of these developments. See Donald Harper, *Early Chinese Medical Literature* (London and New York: Kegan Paul International, 1998).

27. Mark Csikszentmihalyi, *Material Virtue: Ethics and the Body in Early China* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

28. See Vivienne Lo, "Self-cultivation and the Popular Medical Traditions," in *Medieval Chinese Medicine: The Dunhuang Medical Manuscripts*, ed. Vivienne Lo and Christopher Cullen (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), 207–25.

29. Most important are the medical texts excavated from Mawangdui. See Mawangdui hanmu boshu zhengli xiaozu, *Mawangdui Hanmu Boshu*, vol. 4 (Beijing: Wenwu, 1985). For a translation, see Harper, *Early Chinese Medical Literature*.

30. Ren zhi sheng, *qi* zhi ju ye 人之生，氣之聚也。Zhuangzi 22.733.

31. 使物不疵癘而年穀熟。Zhuangzi 1.28; cf. Graham, 46.

32. 我願合六氣之精以育戕生。Zhuangzi 11.386.

33. People have love and hate, pleasure and anger, sorrow and joy. These are born from the six *qi*. Therefore, be careful to choose your models from the fitting categories in order to regulate the six intentions (*Zuozhuan*, Zhao 25.3, p. 1458). Cf. Guanzi X 26:2a (*Sibu Beiyao* ed.).

34. *Han shu* 30.1701–84. The Bibliographic Treatise (Yiwenzhi) was compiled in the first century CE by Ban Gu (32–92), based on earlier compilations. The other categories are the Six Classics (*Liujing* 六經), "Masters" (*zhuzi* 諸子), Poetry (*shifu* 詩賦), and Military Works (*bingshu* 兵書).

35. *Hanshu* 30: 1773–75. For example, “Military Prohibitions and Physiognomizing Clothing and Materiel,” “Shen Nong on Cultivating Fields, Physiognomizing the Earth, and Plowing and Planting,” “Planting Trees, Storing Fruit, and Physiognomizing Silkworms,” “Physiognomizing People,” “Physiognomizing Precious Swords and Knives,” and “Physiognomizing Six Kinds of Domestic Animal.”

36. For example, “Food Prohibitions of Shen Nong and Huang Di,” “Recipes for Nurturing Yang of Huang Di and the Three Sage-Kings” and the “Stepping and Pulling Book of Huang Di and Other Masters.”

37. Titles include “Eliminating Grain and Eating Vapor” (on dietetics and breath cultivation), “Drawings of Guiding and Pulling” (drawings of human figures performing “pulling and guiding” [*daoyin*] exercises), and “Recipes for Nurturing Life.” This site is also well known for its two versions of the Laozi and medical texts on yin-yang theory and acumoxa. See Harper, *Early Chinese Medical Literature*, 25–30.

38. Charles Taylor, “The Concept of a Person,” in *Human Agency and Language: Philosophical Papers*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 97–105, esp. 103–5.

39. Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Ming of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 27.

40. *Ibid.*, 212.

41. *Zhuangzi* 3.119, discussed above.

42. *Lienü zhuan* 6:13a–b (*Sibu beiyao* edition, story 6.14). For a translation, see Albert Richard O’Hara, *The Position of Women in Early China according to Lieh nü chuan* (Taipei: Mei Ya, 1971).

43. The *Lienü zhuan* contains many other accounts of women exercising agency by admonishing more powerful husbands, fathers, or rulers. For references to additional examples, see note 46.

44. A recent suggestion that the operative polarity is between “female (*nü* 女) and “person” (*ren*) does not resolve the issue. See Roger T. Ames, “Chinese Sexism,” in Hall and Ames, *Thinking from the Han*, 294n18.

45. These stories are collected from diverse sources in the the *Lienü zhuan* or *Collected Life Stories of Women*.

46. See Lisa Raphals, *Sharing the Light: Women and Virtue in Early China* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1998); “Gendered Virtue Reconsidered: Notes from the Warring States and Han,” in *The Sage and the Second Sex*, ed. Li Chenyang (LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 2000), 223–47; “Arguments by Women in Early Chinese Texts,” *Nan Nü* 3, no. 2 (2001): 157–95; and “Gender and Virtue in Greece and China,” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 29, no. 3 (September 2002): 415–36.

47. Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.* 1103a1.

48. *Han shu* 20 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1962). The table was completed by the female historian Ban Zhao (d. c.125 CE) and classifies almost two thousand individuals from legendary times to the Qin dynasty under four named and

five unnamed categories, descending from “Sage Persons,” “Benevolent Persons,” and “Wise Persons” at the top to “Stupid Person” at the bottom. See Raphals, “Gendered Virtue Reconsidered.”

49. Hu Shi, “Women’s Place in Chinese History,” in *Chinese Women through Chinese Eyes*, ed. Li Yu Ning (Armonk, NY, and London: East Gate Books, 1992), esp. 6–7. This incident can be dated to 167 BCE, during the reign of Emperor Xiao Wen of the Han dynasty (r. 180–57 BCE). Her father Chunyu Yi was born in 216 BCE and is known to have practiced medicine during the early Han.

50. Amélie Oksenberg Rorty, “The Coordination of the Self and the Passions,” in Ames, Dissanayake, and Kasulis, eds., *Self as Person in Asian Theory and Practice*, 35–56; and Richard Sorabji, *Self: Ancient and Modern Insights about Individuality, Life, and Death* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

51. A. C. Graham, “The Mencian Theory of Human Nature,” in *Studies in Chinese Philosophy and Philosophical Literature* (Singapore: Institute of East Asian Philosophies, 1986); Chad Hansen, “Qing 情 in Pre-Buddhist Thought,” in *Emotions in Asian Thought: A Dialogue in Comparative Philosophy*, ed. Joel Marks and Roger T. Ames (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 181–212.

52. *Zuo zhuan*, Zhao 25.3 in James Legge, *The Ch’un Ts’ew with the Tso Chuen*, in *The Chinese Classics*, vol. 5 (repr., Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1960).

53. *Xunzi* 83/22/3.

54. *Li ji* 9 (Juan 5/20A/15).

55. See Yu, Jiyuan, “Virtue: Confucius and Aristotle,” *Philosophy East and West* 48, no. 2 (April, 1998): 333.

56. Mozi 2 (“Exaltation of Virtue” 尚賢) and Han Feizi 51 (“Loyalty and Filiality” 忠孝) on the usefulness of filiality to the state.

57. The first accounts of such hermits appear in the *Hou Hanshu* (Standard history of the later Han) biographies of “the solitary” (chap. 81, “*Du xing*” 獨行) and “independent conduct” 83 (“*Yi min*” 逸民). Subsequent accounts appear in the biographical sections of the standard histories of later dynasties. For example, see *Jinshu* 94, *Songshu* 93, *Weishu* 90, and *Suishu* 77.

58. See *Shiji* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), chap. 61.

59. Probably the most famous example is the legend of Danfu (King Tai of Zhou), the grandfather of King Wen, the historical Zhou dynastic founder. Danfu was a local ruler of the small state of Bin. Realizing that his fertile homeland would be a constant target of invasion, he decided to leave it for a less fertile area near Mount Qi. The entire population of Bin followed him, bearing the elderly on their backs and their children in their arms. As a result, nearby states also sought alliances with him. See *Shiji* 4:113–14 and *Mencius* 1B5, quoting *Shijing* (Book of Odes) Mao no. 237.

60. See Wolfgang Bauer, "The Hidden Hero" in *Individualism and Holism*, ed. D. J. Munro, Michigan Monographs in Chinese Studies no. 52 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1985), 166–68.

61. See *ibid.*, 175–77. Bauer describes the three roots of eremitism as the desire for autonomy, for nurturing life, and the search for purity.

62. According to a 2007 study reported in both the Chinese and foreign presses, the suicide rate in China is twenty-three people per one hundred thousand (more than double the U.S. rate). The suicide rate for women is 25 percent higher than for men, and the rural rate is three times the urban rate. See Maureen Fan, "In Rural China, a Bitter Way Out: Programs Take Aim at High Suicide Rate among Hinterlands' Poor, Young Wives," *Washington Post*, May 15, 2007; and Xie Chuanjiao, "China's Suicide Rate among World's Highest," *China Daily*, September 11, 2007.

63. For the view that a sage should be prepared to suffer death in order to preserve values of greater importance than life, see *Analects* 15.9 and Mencius 6A10. Probably the most famous example of the honor attached to suicide in some situations was the choice of Sima Qian, the author of the *Shiji*, to forego honorable suicide and suffer castration after being condemned in a court intrigue. This choice allowed him to complete the *Shiji*.

64. His biography appears in *Shiji* 84. For a translation, see Burton Watson, *Records of the Grand Historian of China*, vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), 499–508.

65. Liang Qichao, "Wang Jingan xiansheng muqian daoci" 王靜安先生墓前禱辭 (A eulogy at the grave of Mr. Wang Jingan [Wang Guowei]), 1927, in *Wang Guowei zhi si* 王國維之死 (On the death of Wang Guowei), ed. Luo Jizu, Wang Qingxiang, and Wang Tongce (Taipei: Qiling chubanshe, 1995), 75. For a discussion, see Ping-Cheung Lo, "Confucian Views on Suicide," in *Confucian Bioethics*, ed. Ruiping Fan (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999), 624–25.

66. For examples, see Paul S. Ropp, Paola Zamperini, Harriet Thelma Zurndorfer, eds., *Passionate Women: Female Suicide in Late Imperial China* (Leiden: Brill, 2001). For poems written on the suicide's body, see the contribution in this collection by Grace Fong "Signifying Bodies: The Cultural Significance of Female Suicide Writing in Ming-Qing China," 105–42.

67. The most detailed study is T'ien Ju-k'ang [Tian Rukang], *Male Anxiety and Female Chastity: A Comparative Study of Chinese Ethical Values in Ming-Ch'ing Times* (Leiden: Brill, 1988).

68. This list is based on, but expanded from, the "rights" identified by Stephen B. Young and Ngoc Huy Nguyen in *The Tradition of Human Rights in China and Vietnam* (New Haven, CT: Council on Southeast Asia Studies, Yale Center for International and Area Studies, 1990), 41–95. Their discussion focuses on the rights of commoners, elites, and rulers and does not address questions of gender or selfhood.

69. For examples, see Raphals, *Sharing the Light*, esp. 12–15 and 27–60.

70. For an account of human rights that is not based on European a priori, see Amartya Sen, "Human Rights and Asian Values," *The New Republic*, July 14–July 21, 1997, and "Universal Truths: Human Rights and the Westernizing Illusion," *Harvard International Review* 20, no. 3 (Summer 1998): 40–43. See also Arvind Sharma, *Are Human Rights Western? A Contribution to the Dialogue of Civilizations* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). For China, see Stephen C. Angle, *Human Rights and Chinese Thought: A Cross Cultural Inquiry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). For a "Confucian" critique of purely Western notions of human rights, see William Theodore De Bary and Wei-ming Tu, eds., *Confucianism and Human Rights* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

71. David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, 1.4.6 (Garden City, NY: Dolphin Books, Doubleday, 1961), 227–38.

72. Derek Parfit, "Is Personal Identity What Matters?" The Ammonius Foundation, December 31, 2007, [http://users.ox.ac.uk/~ball2568/parfit/parfit\\_-\\_is\\_personal\\_identity\\_what\\_matters.pdf](http://users.ox.ac.uk/~ball2568/parfit/parfit_-_is_personal_identity_what_matters.pdf) (accessed June 1, 2009), especially 4 and 80. See also Derek Parfit, *Reasons and Persons* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).