

Xu Fuguan's Confucian Theory of Democracy: Democratic Means to Confucian Ends

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In this paper the ways in which contemporary Confucian thinker Xu Fuguan (徐復觀 1904-1982) understands the conceptual relationship between Confucian ethics and democracy are explained and evaluated. As he sees it, democracy is a desirable means to realize the Confucian political ideal. Regarding his philosophical theorizing, however, there is doubt as to whether his scheme of adopting democracy is Confucian: not because it suggests democratic means to realizing Confucian ends, but that by following his scheme, the Confucian goal of moral cultivation, or the individual pursuit of moral perfection, does not seem to have a role to play. If so, despite alleging to serve a Confucian purpose through governance-by-virtue, his entire scheme falls short of Confucianism.

In the first half of this paper, Xu's understanding of the Confucian political ideal will be analyzed, which includes what he means by governance-by-virtue (德治), and how it takes effect. To realize governance-by-virtue, a good ruler needs to achieve *wu-wei* (無為), which means basically that he should see his people's favor and disfavor (好惡) as his own, rather than impose his moral views and requirements upon his people. In the second half of the paper, his main argument will be discussed, namely that his conception of the Confucian political ideal should be realized by means of democratic political institutions, since democracy can institutionalize and thereby objectify (客觀化) the ruler's virtue. It is argued that although democratization can reasonably situate the people as the principal part of the state; it is not able to objectify the ruler's virtue as such, not only because virtues that sprung from the moral heart-mind cannot be institutionalized, but also that democratic institutions cannot ethically transform people in the way a sage does.

Governance-by-virtue

To begin, Xu Fuguan regards Confucian political thought as an ideology of governance-by-virtue (德治) with reference to its highest moral pursuit.¹ Since Confucius regarded the governance of Yao (堯) and Shun (舜) as the best typical cases of governance-by-virtue, Xu identifies it as the Confucian political ideal.² (Xu, 1979:95) "The political thought of Confucius as well as Confucianism in general is linked throughout by the concept of governance-by-virtue."³ (Xu, 1979:99)

Xu Fuguan maintains that the operation of governance-by-virtue all depends on the ruler who first exerts his own virtue, so that the ruled, by his moral affection, will thereby exert their own virtue.

“Being the ruler, a king is also human, who is but expected to shoulder greater responsibility; hence the king should accomplish his own virtue, so that he can firstly stand up like a person...” (Xu, 1979:99)⁴

“The ruler should firstly exert his own virtues therefore making everyone exert their inherent virtues. The relationship between the ruler and the ruled is one that they both get along with one another by virtue, instead of one in which both impose and coerce one another by power.”⁵ (Xu, 1985:49)

According to Xu, Confucian ideal governance will be achieved when everyone follows the ruler and hence is able to exert their virtues. “Governance-by-virtue is the governance under which everyone is to be led by their human nature.”⁶ (Xu, 1985:50) Stressing the exertion of everyone’s virtues marks the characteristics of this governance. The success of this system, Xu explains, enables the nourishment of the life of the people and the accomplishment of their nature as “the acme of politics.”⁷ (Xu, 1985:49)

The Enactment of Governance-by-virtue

One important question here is whether Xu thinks that the ruler should impose that which is morally required of him upon the ruled. One criticism against governance-by-virtue, according to Stephen Angle on the thought of Mou Zongsan, is “politics being ‘swallowed’ by morality”⁸ (Mou, 2003b:140), in which “leaders who believed in their own virtue sometimes sought to impose their own vision of morality on the realm, with bloody consequences.” (Angle, 2012:24) There is concern over whether ‘rule of virtue’ (為政以德), as Xu understands it, could result in “politics being ‘swallowed’ by morality”.

Xu Fuguan does not fall into this ‘trap’, which he alleges belongs to Plato’s scheme of the “philosopher-king”.⁹ (Xu, 1985:169) He uses a discussion from *The Analects*¹⁰, “if the people have no faith in their rulers, there is no standing for the state” (民無信不立) to illustrate his position on the virtue of the ruler. He disagrees with Zhu Xi’s interpretation of the text, in which Zhu states “The people will definitely die without food, whereas death is what no man can avoid; without faith, then even a person is alive there is no way that he can stand... So the ruler should even die in order not to break faith with the people, **so that the people would also die in order not to break faith with me.**”¹¹ (Zhu Xi, *Lunyu jizhu*. Xu, 1979:189; my emphasis)

Xu maintains that the moral requirement of “cultivating oneself” (修己) should not be taken as the same as that in “governing others” (治人), because

If using the standard of cultivating oneself in governing others, as in the case of what Zhu Xi and his fellows think, then it will necessarily evolve into the case in which the Communist Party requires the people to die for their ism, which will become a tragedy of the killing by a thought. On the other hand, if using the standard of governing others in cultivating oneself, then one will misconceive that the essence of Confucianism merely rests upon the natural life of the human, whilst the effort of cultivating oneself in order to ‘establishing the ultimate of a person’ in Confucianism will be entirely ignored.¹² (Xu, 1979:199)

On the contrary, as Xu sees it, in the Confucian tradition, although ‘cultivating oneself’ and ‘governing others’ commonly refer to the exertion of one’s moral heart-mind, their moral requirements are quite different. Whereas ‘cultivating oneself’ requires the agent to improve oneself in terms of his virtue, ‘governing others’ regards the requirements of the natural life of the people as the top priority, whilst the pursuit of moral perfection only comes as the second.¹³ (Xu, 1979:191,197)

The clear distinction between ‘cultivating oneself’ and ‘governing others’ in terms of their individual moral requirement is crucial to understanding the “virtue of the ruler”. The ruler has, among others, two identities: a moral agent and a ruler; his virtue, thus, consists of both ‘cultivating oneself’ and ‘governing others’. (Xu, 1979:106) ‘Cultivating oneself’ simply refers to the pursuit of moral perfection, or ‘establishing the ultimate of a person’ (立人極). As such, “cultivating oneself and thereby brings peace and security to the people” (修己以安百姓) (*The Analects*, 14.42) means that a ruler first exerts his own virtue upon himself, so that the ruled, by his moral affection, will follow his lead and thereby exert their virtue. The self-imposing moral requirement is expected to become higher and higher in the course of pursuing moral perfection; but the ever-higher moral requirement should only target the ruler himself and not the ruled. The ruled that would exert their virtue are only morally affected by the ruler’s demonstration of his virtue, but not politically instructed or even coerced to follow his moral guidance.

Wu-wei (無為) as Virtue of the Ruler

‘Governing others’ (治人) is far more complicated and may sometimes be confusing, despite Xu’s repeated clarification. The above discussion has shown that governance-by-virtue does not mean that the ruler imposes his own moral insight

upon the ruled. Additionally, according to Xu, governance-by-virtue relates closely to the idea of *wu-wei* (無為), “Governance-by-virtue equals to (即是) governance of *wu-wei*.”¹⁴ (Xu, 1979:96) At first glance, the idea is difficult to follow, because the above discussion has also shown that ‘governing others’ regards the requirements of the natural life of the people as the top priority, whilst its fulfillment entails active policy-making in the protection of the people’s welfare.¹⁵ Yet *wu-wei* literally means “non-action”, “effortless action”, or “inactivity”.¹⁶ By examining the interpretations of this term by Bao Xian’s (苞咸 6 B.C.E.- 65 C.E.), He Yan’s (何晏 190- 249), Cheng (程子)¹⁷, Fan Zuyu (范祖禹), and Zhuxi (朱熹 1130-1200), Xu opines that *wu-wei* does not mean that the ruler should simply do nothing¹⁸ (Xu, 1979:96,105), but rather is the desirable effect that governance-by-virtue may bring.¹⁹ (Xu, 1979:102)

So what exactly should or should not the ruler do? Xu suggests that ‘cultivating oneself’ requires the ruler not to possess his own favour and disfavour, whilst ‘governing others’ requires him to identify the people’s favour and disfavour as his own. He believes that when, and only when, both of these are achieved, the effect of *wu-wei* will take place,²⁰ (Xu, 1979:204) and the political ideal of governance-by-virtue will be accomplished. In other words, “*wu-wei*” equals to not possessing any favour and disfavour of one’s own; this is the “cultivating oneself” characteristic of the ruler and requires that the ruler have no regard of his own desires and comforts, but should rather take on the needs of his people as his own.²¹ (Xu, 1979:204)

So far, the above has addressed how Xu Fuguan understands the Confucian political ideal, how the manifestation of this ideal depends on the virtue of the ruler, and what such virtue, namely *wu-wei*, means. The next question is about the justification of the virtue of the ruler, which looks into the reason behind the ruler’s self-negating actions. First, Xu argues that, according to the Confucian political ideal, the “origin of power” (權原), which stands for political authority, should rest upon the people, which means that the people possess “political subjectivity” (政治主體性). (Xu, 1979:218) Second, historically, the political authority had always rested upon the ruler only; the ruler had been the only one who possessed political subjectivity. (Xu, 1979:218) Third, against the background of absolute monarchy, the Confucians reason that the “origin of power” should be restored from the ruler to the people, which is followed by a dual demand on the ruler, namely the replacement of his own favour and disfavour with the people’s (Xu, 1979:219). Only when the “origin of power” is restored to the people, can the ruler be *wu-wei* and governance-by-virtue be accomplished.

Reasons for Democratic Institutions

Keeping the Confucian political ideal of governance-by-virtue in mind, Xu argues that not only has it never taken place, traditional absolute monarchy also theoretically hampers the accomplishment of the ideal; in the light of the drawbacks of the monarchical rule, he suggests that a democratic institution is the way forward.

More importantly, the whole idea of governance-by-virtue relies too heavily on the part of the ruler. (Xu, 1985:54-55)²² The problem with the reliance on the single-handed expression of virtue by the ruler is either that the ruler needs to shoulder an extremely heavy moral responsibility that no ruler could bear (Xu, 1985:56), or that, when the ruler fails to express his virtue, the ideal of governance-by-virtue will then be nullified. What is equally problematic is the very political system in which the political subjectivity of the people is simply unavailable. Since the traditional political system only embodies the political subjectivity of the ruler, Xu thinks that it results in the ruler “imagining himself as the sole political subject (such as “L'etat c'est moi”), so that his unlimited moral responsibility may easily convert to unlimited want in political domination of power.”²³ (Xu, 1985:58) Xu asserts that this takes place easily, because “a person does not only have a rational facet in terms of self-restraint and self-control, there is also another beast-like facet in terms of ‘the arousal of passions’.”²⁴ (Xu, 1985:57) A person who is in power is highly vulnerable to the temptation to take over people’s political subjectivity.

One way or another, Xu argues that the lack of establishing people’s subjectivity in absolute monarchy fundamentally attributes to the failure of achieving governance-by-virtue. In order to get rid of the inherent institutional constraints of absolute monarchy, Xu puts forward his scheme of democratization as the means to achieve the Confucian political ideal. There are two supporting reasons for his scheme: the first is the establishment of the people’s political subjectivity and the second is the institutionalization, and hence objectification (客觀化), of the moral requirements of the virtue of the ruler. Despite making sense, Xu’s second argument may be subject to an important critique, namely that his scheme of institutionalizing the virtue of the ruler in effect supersedes the role of moral cultivation in Confucian political ethics.

The first reason seems uncontroversial: Xu makes it clear that his introduction of democratic institutions is for the establishment of the people’s political subjectivity.

Now we should boldly take steps to the open and straight path of democratic politics: Reverse the emphasis of Confucian political thought, which means to re-examine the entire thought itself from the position of the ruled. The

subject in politics should firstly be transferred from the mistaken position of the ruler to the people; the people should be able to prevent the ruler from being morally bad, whilst the people will no longer be those as in the ruler's concept of "people-as-basis", and become democratic as they can stand on their own feet.²⁵ (Xu, 1985:59)

In Xu's view, which understands democracy as a means to the accomplishment of governance-by-virtue, democracy institutionalizes the political subjectivity of the people by the protection of human rights, as well as the establishment of a constitutional government. The establishment of the political subjectivity of the people is founded upon both the natural life of the people (人民自然生命) and their favor and disfavor (人民之好惡), whilst the former is the necessary requirement and the latter is sufficient. As Xu understands it, the Confucian conception of "governing-others" (治人), which obliges the ruler to prioritize the requirements of the natural life of the people (人民自然生命之要求), acknowledges "the rationale behind 'natural rights'."²⁶ (Xu, 1979:192) He insists that "only when the notion of natural rights is affirmed, human rights can thus be irrevocable, whilst the natural life of the people can be genuinely protected."²⁷ (Xu, 1979:192) Although Xu does not really ascertain how natural rights can be justified in Confucian terms, his idea can be well understood merely as an acknowledgement of the instrumental value of human rights, without which the natural life of the people is never secure. Of course, mere protection of the basic wellbeing of the people is not equivalent to an affirmation of their political subjectivity, because their favour and disfavour is not ensured. Xu's additional suggestion is a constitutional government, which stipulates that the "origin of power" belongs to the people, not the ruler. (Xu, 1979:241) According to Xu, democracy institutionalizes the establishment of the political subjectivity of the people by enshrining human rights and maintaining a limited government. It can, thus, settle the problem of "dual subjectivity" as in the case of absolute monarchy. (Xu, 1979:241)

The second supporting reason for the democratization scheme is institutionalization, and hence objectification (客觀化), of the virtue of the ruler. According to Xu,

The virtue of the ruler, in terms of being not self-opinionated, able to correct, and able to take advice, is all objectified as objective institutions such as congressional politics, and freedom of assembly as well as expression, etc...A political leader cannot refuse to do what a sage is required to do, although he is not really a sage...As a result, the Chinese

people of sage-and-wise who have been striving everlastingly yet painfully for a sage-king as well as the way of good governance would find that their requests have become regularized and normalized in a democracy nowadays.²⁸ (Xu, 1979:241-242)

In the light of the drawbacks of monarchical rule, which enables the ruler to be almighty, yet simultaneously places over-demanding expectations on his moral quality, Xu realizes that expecting the person in power to be sagely is simply unrealistic. This explains why he thinks democratic institutions are desirable, as long as they can “regularize and normalize” and even stabilize the expected performance of a virtuous ruler.

There are two problems with this objectification argument. Virtue cannot easily be institutionalized or objectified. Without explaining how this is possible, Xu only insists that “to objectify virtue in politics by means of crystalizing it as institutions that everyone can practice” is “reasonable, natural and easy, without being farfetched.”²⁹ (Xu, 1979:242) However, it is doubtful whether this can really be done. According to Xu, the essence of Confucian ethics is two-fold: one is the theory of an inborn human nature that is good, which differentiates humans from beasts; the other is the externalization of morality that is internal to oneself, so that a ‘ren’ relationship is formed between human and human, as well as between humans and things.³⁰ (Xu, 1979:59-60) Recalling Xu’s understanding of governance-by-virtue, it all depends on the ruler, who first exerts his own virtue in his position, so that the ruled, by his moral affection, will follow and thereby exert their own virtue. This means that the ruled are morally affected by the very behavior of the ruler. As for ‘rule of virtue’ (為政以德), it means that “the ruler puts into practice his normative behavior that is consistent from within and without in the field of politics.” (Xu, 1979:96) To be filial to one’s parents, for example, refers to how moral heart-mind expresses love, respect and gratitude towards parents; and all these expressions can never come from rules or policies. Confucius has made a point in *The Analects* 2.7 and 2.8 that, providing the parents with mere material support, like offering wine and food, does not constitute filial piety. A policy can at best require a person to perform the manifestations of filial behavior; but since taking the very actions can be out of reasons other than moral ones, such performance may be irrelevant and thus is not equal to an expression of the virtue of filial piety.³¹ In this regard, what can be institutionalized and objectified is the expected behavior of a ruler, not his virtue. Therefore, sticking to Xu’s own understanding of Confucian ethics and governance-by-virtue, then either there is no moral affection from democratic institutions or people may learn and internalize the norms underlying democratic

institutions, but these are not necessarily virtues. One way or another, the argument that virtue can be institutionalized is not as 'reasonable, natural, and easy' as Xu says. This is not to deny that elected officials and representatives may still practise traditional virtue, as they may exert their moral heart-mind by wholeheartedly endorsing and following democratic rules and norms. An elected minister can, and normatively should, maintain integrity, be accountable, protect the minority, and defend the wellbeing of the people in her job position. Such a moral requirement is not only consistent with democratic norms, but is also expected according to the Confucian moral heart-mind. In any case, however, this is not the same as what Xu had attempted to say, which was that democratic governments institutionalize, and thereby objectify, *Confucian* virtues.

The second problem might seem as paradoxical as the first. Assuming that democratic institutions can somehow institutionalize and objectify virtue, then the Confucian assertion of moral cultivation and moral transformation may be rendered unnecessary. When Xu says that in a democracy, "a political leader cannot refuse to do what a sage is required to do, although he is not really a sage," it suggests, on the one hand, that institutions that can defend 'what a sage is required to do' are more reliable than expecting a ruler to be morally inspired to do good; on the other hand, it also implies that a political leader does not need to be morally inspired, because, as Xu's argument goes, institutions that can objectify virtue can substitute for a sage. Here it is crucial not to forget what a sage-ruler should do in his position: to make good policies by which the wellbeing of the people is properly taken care of, *and* to ethically transform the people. Granted that democratic institutions can help achieve the former, it is unknown how they can achieve the latter, especially in a democracy politicians are not required to be sagely. Perhaps Xu needs to admit that democratic institutions cannot fully replace what Confucian ideal governance requires; some kind of moral edification, which goes beyond the scope of democratic political institutions, is needed.

To summarize, Xu's whole line of argument for justifying democratic institutions may at best help realize part of the Confucian political ideal, which sees democratic political institutions as a better means than absolute monarchy in identifying the people as the principal part of the under-Heaven. The institutions of 'congressional politics, and freedom of assembly, as well as expression' may function and thereby take the place of the expression of the ruler's virtue in terms of 'being not self-opinionated, able to correct, and able to take advice'. But the Confucian political ideal of governance-by-virtue means more than this, since it also envisions the moral transformation of the people in the under-Heaven; it seems that Xu is lacking an explanation of how the latter can be achieved by democratic institutions alone.

Conclusion

Based upon the Confucian premises of developing one's inborn moral heart-mind and morally affecting others, Xu Fuguan develops his conception of governance-by-virtue along with the assertion of the mesh of ethics and politics, which means that the Confucian political ideal requires the ruler to exert virtue in his political position. Xu maintains that a Confucian ruler is obliged to "cultivate oneself" and "govern others". By "cultivating oneself", he means that every individual should improve and spread his own virtue. In addition, he should never impose his own favour and disfavour in governance. By "governing others", whilst it is necessary for the ruler to ensure the natural life of the ruled, it is sufficient to identify the people's favor and disfavor (or needs) as his own. As a ruler is cultivating himself and governing others, he may actually best rule when he is active and proactive in his political office. By simultaneously fulfilling both, he will bring the *wu-wei* into effect, and governance-by-virtue will be thus accomplished.

Xu regards the traditional form of government, namely absolute monarchy, to be defective in accomplishing the Confucian political ideal, because of the "problem of dual subjectivity". He therefore envisions the accomplishment of the Confucian political ideal by another political system, new in Chinese political history: democratic politics. In this regard, Xu clearly sees democracy as a means to the Confucian political end. By enshrining basic rights and liberties, as well as setting up a limited government, Xu believes that all these will help in retrieving the idea that let the people be the principal discerning members, and thereby demanding that the ruler perform and be *wu-wei*. His argument, however, is not without problems. Despite the emphasis of the wellbeing of the people in governance, the idea of objectifying the virtue of the ruler remains doubtful, because the Confucian moral transformation, which depends on moral exertion and affection of a moral agent, is not properly dealt with in Xu's democratization scheme. In this regard, the Confucian ideal governance, namely governance-by-virtue, is not likely to ever be fully realized by this scheme. The main problem with Xu's whole argument lies in his wish to justify democratic political institutions directly in Confucian terms. Xu wants to ascertain the possibility of embodying Confucian virtues in the political institutions by institutionalizing and, thereby, objectifying those virtues.

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- ¹ 儒家的政治思想，從其最高原則來說，我們不妨稱之為德治主義。
- ² 堯舜在孔子心目中是最高的德治典型。
- ³ 孔子以至整個儒家的政治思想，都是由德治觀念所貫通的。
- ⁴ 作為統治者的人君也是人，而且是負有更大責任的人；則人君應完成自己的德，使首先能作為一個人而站立起來...
- ⁵ 治者必先盡其在己之德，因而使人人各盡其秉彝之德。治者與被治者之間，乃是以德相與的關係，而非以權力相加相迫的關係。
- ⁶ 大家率性以成治的德治。
- ⁷ 人人能各盡其德，即係人人相與相忘於人類的共同根據之中，以各養生而遂性，這正是政治的目的，亦正是政治的極致。
- ⁸ 那是政治被吞沒於道德
- ⁹ 這都是上了柏拉圖「哲人為王」的大當。
- ¹⁰ 子貢問政。子曰：「足食。足兵。民信之矣。」子貢曰：「必不得已而去，於斯三者何先？」曰：「去兵。」子貢曰：「必不得已而去，於斯二者何先？」曰：「去食。自古皆有死，民無信不立。」
- ¹¹ 朱元晦論語集注對此的解釋是：「民無食必死，然死者人之所必不免；無信，則雖生而無以自立...故寧死而不失信於民，使民亦寧死而不失信於我也。」
- ¹² 若以修己的標準去治人，如朱元晦們認為民寧可餓死而不可失信，其勢將演變而成為共產黨之要人民為其主義而死。成為思想殺人的悲劇。另一方面，若以治人的標準來律己，於是將誤認儒家精神，乃停頓於自然生命之上，而將儒家修己以「立人極」的工夫完全抹煞。
- ¹³ 孔孟乃至先秦儒家，在修己方面所提出的標準，亦即在學術上所立的標準，和在治人方面所提出的標準，亦即在政治上所立的標準，顯然是不同。修己的，學術上的標準，總是將自然生命不斷底向德性上提，決不在自然生命上立足，決不在自然生命的要求上安設價值。治人的政治上的標準，當然還是承認德性的標準；但這只是居於第二的地位；而必以人民的自然生命的要求居於第一的地位。
- ¹⁴ 德治即是無為之治。
- ¹⁵ Xu argues that the policy suggestions that Mencius made in his scheme of 'royal government' (王道) as in *Mencius* 1A:3 are a further development of Confucius' governance-by-virtue. (Xu, 1979:110-111)
- ¹⁶ *Wu-wei* as translated as 'non-action' is by Carson Chang in the English version of *The Declaration*. 'Effortless action' is a translation by Edward Slingerland (2003). 'Inactivity' is a translation by Daniel Gardner (2003).
- ¹⁷ Zhao Shunsun (趙順孫 1215-1276) argues that Zhu Xi refers to both Cheng Hao (程顥) and Cheng Yi (程頤) collectively as 'Master Cheng', since they seem to hold a similar, if not the same, view of *The Analects*. (Gardner, 2003:31 n.3)
- ¹⁸ 但所謂無為...並不是一事不作，這是二千多年來的共同認定。(Xu, 1979:96) 孔老提倡無為...並不是完全不作事。(Xu, 1979:105)
- ¹⁹ 但孔子信任德治必然有無為而治的效果，則是很明顯的。
- ²⁰ 「無為」即是不自有其好惡；這是統治者的修己。以無為去成就人民的好惡，使人民能遂其好

惡以保障其基本權力，這是統治者的治人。

²¹ 「無為」即是不自有其好惡；這是統治者的修己。

²² 所以雖然是尊重人性，以民為本，以民為貴的政治思想：並且由仁心而仁政，也曾不斷考慮到若干法良意美的措施：以及含有若干民主性的政治制度：但這一切都是一種「發」與「施」的性質（文王發政施仁），是「施」與「濟」的性質（博施濟眾），其德是一種被覆之德，是一種風行草上之德。而人民始終處於一種消極被動的地位...

²³ 幻想自己即是政治的主體，（如「朕即國家」之類）於是由道德上的無限的責任之感，很容易一變而引起權力上的無限的支配的要求...

²⁴ 然現實上則人有其理性的自剋自制的一面，也有其動物性的「慾動」的一面。

²⁵ 我們今日只有放膽的走上民主政治的坦途：而把儒家的政治思想，重新倒轉過來，站在被統治者的立場來再作一番體認。首先把政治的主體，從統治者的錯覺中移歸人民，人民能有力量防止統治者的不德，人民由統治者口中的「民本」一轉而為自己站起來的民主。

²⁶ 這種以人民自然生命之生存為目的的政治思想，其中含有「天賦人權」的用意。

²⁷ 承認人權是出於天賦，然後人權才成為不可動搖，人的生存才能得到保障...

²⁸ ...則把虛己、改過、納諫等等的君德，客觀化為議會政治，結社言論自由等的客觀制度...一個政治領袖人物，儘可以不是聖人，但不能不做聖人之事...於是中國聖賢千辛萬苦所要求的聖君，千辛萬苦所要求的治道，在今日民主政治之下，一切都經常化，平凡化了。

²⁹ ...把對於政治的「德」，客觀化出來，以凝結為人人可行的制度。這是順理成章，既自然，複容易，而毫不牽強附會的一條路。

³⁰ 蓋儒家之基本用心，可概略之以二。一為由性善的道德內在說，以把人和一般動物分開，把人建立為圓滿無缺的聖人或仁人，對世界負責。（《論語》：“若聖與仁，則吾豈敢”）一為將內在的道德，客觀化於人倫日用之間，由踐倫而敦「錫類之愛」，使人與人的關係，人與物的關係，皆成為一個「仁」的關係。

³¹ For example, according to Article 18 of *Law of the People's Republic of China on Protection of the Rights and Interests of the Elderly*, “Family members who live separately from the elderly should visit them often.” (與老年人分開居住的家庭成員，應當經常看望或者問候老年人。) Retrieving on 1 August 2014, the full text of the Law, in Chinese, can be download at:

<http://iso.hrchina.org/en/law/law-peoples-republic-china-protection-rights-and-interests-elderly>.

It is clear that according to this law, children are legally obliged to pay visits to the elderly. But in the case that children visit their parents because of a legal obligation, then such visits are not an expression of the virtue of filial piety. They behave because of a legal reason, not a moral reason.