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A Confucian Lesson in Development

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Abstract

Development may be regarded as a form of change and change is suggestive of a future state. Such a future may be considered a transformation into a higher order of existence, even if such a higher order is modelled on a perceived Golden Age of the past, as occurred with the teachings of Confucius. This paper argues that to achieve development in accordance with the moral teachings of Confucius is a nearly impossible task. It represents the pursuit of the ‘hopeless’, and yet such an undertaking has all the hallmarks of a Confucian endeavour. The teaching of high ideals in a world mired in greed and destructive tendencies is both necessary and transformative. It is necessary because, as Confucius said, “If the Way prevailed in the world, I would not be trying to change it.” It is transformative in that morality is being cultivated at different levels and stages, whether between the self and community, or between humans and the planet. Such a process cannot leave society or the world system untouched. Morality is the message and the means for transformative development in the Confucian outlook.

1. The Confucian Undertaking

The theme of lessons for development from the great teachers in history – and, importantly, their implementation – seems an idealistic mission when thinking about the lessons taught by China’s most celebrated ancient philosopher, Kong Qiu (551 – 479 BCE), better known worldwide by his Latinised name of Confucius (Great Master Kong). The essence of his

teaching is that good government that cares for the people needs to be based on morality. His inspiration was the early Zhou dynasty, which was the longest in Chinese history (circa 1050 BCE – 250 BCE). As noted by Keay (2009, p. 51): “The long Zhou centuries, paralleling those of ancient Greece, combine both a heroic age and a classical age. In terms of China’s civilisation, they are seminal times.”

Confucius lived at the end of the Spring and Autumn Period (771 – 476 BCE) that saw the decline of the Zhou and an increase in competitive power politics that often entailed the strong states consuming the weak and then fighting amongst themselves for the prize of unifying all of China under one emperor. This was the aptly named Warring States Period (479 – 221 BCE). The winner, in 221 BCE, was a ruthless and well organised state by the name of Qin. It won the empire but barely survived the demands of peace. Within 40 years the Qin Dynasty collapsed amid widespread revolt. A century later, from the hindsight of the succeeding Han Dynasty (206 BCE – 220 CE), the *Records of the Grand Historian (Shiji)*, the Qin government’s fatal flaw was that it “judged everything according to laws which were harsh, scathing, without humanity, favor, harmony, and righteousness” (Sima Qian 1994, p. 179, note 8). As can be discerned from this appraisal, the ‘grand historian’ Sima Qian not only recorded but also judged events, in order that they may serve as lessons for future rulers. The Han Dynasty – whose Emperor Han Wudi (141 – 86 BCE) was the first officially to adopt Confucianism (or the school of scholars as it was known) – was to endure much longer than the Qin, but not as long as the mighty Zhou which set the standard for rule by virtue. Zhou kings Wen, Wu and Cheng were joined in their exalted status by the Duke of Zhou who advanced the cause of a meritocracy in running the country and the people’s welfare as the ruler’s duty. Confucius was so impressed by the Duke of Zhou that he is recorded in the *Analects* (VII.5) as saying: “How I have gone downhill! It has been such a long time since I dreamt of the Duke of Chou [Zhou].”

Does his imply that we should resurrect the rules of a long-lost Golden Age and apply them as best we can in the present era? This would seem a misguided venture as the intellectual and social climate of any given era provides the enabling context for transforming an underdeveloped society (in many senses), to a thriving one. In this respect, innovation has a significant role to play. From a Confucian perspective innovation would be the servant and not the master of what it is to be a transformed society. Confucius himself said: “I transmit but do not innovate; I am truthful in what I say and devoted to [Zhou] antiquity.” Yet Confucius is remembered in his own right. His reputation is not founded on his role as a mere

‘transmitter’. Rather, he adapted the lessons of the past for the needs of the prevailing times. Thus looking for standards and inspiration from the perceived Gold Age is not a rigid ideology but a dynamic process. Past standards retain relevance by responding to, rather than confronting, changing circumstances. This occurred, for instance, in the Confucian attitude to strangers. To the accusation from fellow philosopher Mozi (circa 470 – 391 BCE) that Confucius privileged family over strangers (and hence the implication of nepotism, contrary to the Duke of Zhou’s meritocracy), Confucian thought evolved to accept greater responsibility for others. Another case concerned the introduction of Buddhist ideas from India. This belief system that emphasised compassion and expressed itself in good deeds and charity, suited the broadening of Confucian values to incorporate strangers. Buddhism was successfully absorbed into Chinese society and became one of the three great traditions of Chinese spiritual thought, alongside Confucianism and Daoism. This was certainly helped by the emphasis on harmony found in all three traditions, even if the path to such harmony varied, and despite historical experience often pointing in the opposite direction.

The ideal of harmony had indeed given way to the reality of ‘struggle’ under Mao Zedong’s communist revolution in the early 20th Century. “A revolution is not a dinner party,” Mao Zedong wrote in 1927. Contrasting revolution to Confucian virtues, he said: “It cannot be so refined, so leisurely and gentle, so temperate, kind, courteous, restrained and magnanimous.” He then delivered the intended message: “A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another” (Mao 1927, p. 28). In more recent times, the Chinese Communist Party has recognized the need to return to China’s spiritual roots to ‘humanise’ a society stressed by rapid economic development. Hence the policy of ‘harmonious society’ (*hexie shehui*) was formally incorporated into China’s development policy under the fourth generation leadership of President Hu Jintao and Premier Wen Jiabao. ‘Harmonious society’ became part of China’s Eleventh Five-Year Plan (FYP, 2006–2010), which entailed “scientific, harmonious and peaceful development” for the “goal of building a well-off society in an all-round manner”; and included “ethical education” to “make fresh achievements in building a harmonious society” (NDRC 2006). The current president, Xi Jinping, took the next step in harmonious development to advance the idea of a Chinese dream that embraces nature as well: “We must establish and practise the philosophy that lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets, uphold the basic national policy for energy conservation and environmental protection, treat the ecological environment as we treat life . . . and contribute to global ecological safety” (Xi Jinping quoted in *BBC Monitoring* 2017).

Moreover, the ancient lesson about being inclusive of others, rather than focusing too much on one's own nation or kinship group, was also taken up as a slogan of our *common human destiny* whereby "we need to seek win-win cooperation and common development" (Xi 2015).

Such exhortations for across-the-board cooperation may seem to be a 'mission impossible' in view of the persistence of conflict throughout history unto the present. Maybe Mao was right, but instead of revolution states now need to contend with terrorism and other security threats. This requires struggle. And yet this represents a reactive and resigned attitude. Surely a more proactive stance is required to usher in an era of peace and development. One is reminded of a remark made by the gatekeeper at Stone Gate – believed to be one of the outer gates of Qufu (Confucius' birthplace). As told in the key source of Confucius' teachings, the *Analects* (*Lun Yu*, which dates to the 5th century BCE), the gatekeeper asks Confucius' disciple Zilu: "Where have you come from?" Zilu answers: "From the house of Confucius." The gatekeeper then comments: "Isn't he the one who knows what he does is impossible and yet persists anyway?" (*Analects* 14.38). In another passage it is made clear that one's attempts to transform the world – "putting the Way into practice" – should be pursued, despite knowing all along "it is hopeless" (*Analects* 18.7, trans. D. C. Lau).

When viewed in the context of Confucius' own historical time, the knowledge that one's mission is hopeless makes sense. With the gradual disintegration of the Zhou Dynasty the struggle for power, or just survival, through constant warfare became the norm. So what comes across as a mocking joke from the gatekeeper of Confucius' home town may in fact be a lament about the impracticality of pursuing one's dream within such a nightmare scenario.

The gatekeeper's words, especially in conjunction with *Analects* 18.7 (above), can even be taken as reflecting a different way of responding to difficult times, such as by renouncing the world or stepping away from the responsibilities of providing advice to government. Indeed, the gatekeeper might be better aligned to a different school of thought, that of the early Daoists (see McLeod 2010). They preferred to retreat to the wilderness rather than deal with a corrupt and scheming world. Confucius and his school of scholars (*rujia*), by comparison, persisted in trying to influence policy and the education of the next generation that would uphold Chinese civilisational values (Dellios 2017). Indeed, Confucius could not understand how it was possible to develop one's human potential by removing oneself from society. So to the Daoist criticism of the hopelessness of Confucius' efforts, the Confucian response

could be that trying to cultivate oneself in the wilds is worse: “I cannot herd together with the birds and beasts,” Confucius explains in the *Analects* (18.6, trans. I. Bloom). “If I do not walk together with other human beings, with whom shall I associate?” Then in the next line he returns to his point about persisting against all odds: “If the Way prevailed in the world, I would not be trying to change it.”

2. How to Change the World into a higher state of Development: *Ren and Li*

So how does one change the world? The first step, according to Confucius, is to change oneself. Self-cultivation is the essence of bringing about change for the better, and in Confucianism this entails cultivating *ren* (仁). *Ren* can be translated as ‘benevolence’, ‘humaneness’ or ‘human-heartedness’ and represents a core concept of Confucian philosophy. It does not stand alone but is advanced by a number of ‘virtues’, such as *zhi* (智), translated variously as a sense of rightness, wisdom, knowledge; and *yi* (義), meaning righteousness in the sense of “morally correct choices” (Eno 2015). There are also *xiao* (孝 filiality); *zhong* (忠 loyalty), and *xin* (信 trustworthiness), among others. In view of the theme of lessons for development, it is worth noting the ‘actualising’ attribute of *yong* (勇), meaning courage or fearlessness on behalf of *ren*. In other words, it is not easy to change and strength of character helps. However, there is a catch. *Yong* needs to be informed by the various Confucian virtues if it is not to become a “vice” (Im 2008). The zealotry of today’s ‘political correctness’ comes to mind. Rather than rectifying society through fear of punishment, in Confucian terms it is better to do so through a sense of shame in one’s ill-advised behaviour. Shame, unlike guilt, is depends on moral guidance (see below, *Analects*, 2.3).

Ren requires, in the first instance, interaction between people. This is evident in the character for *ren*: 仁, ‘person’ and ‘two’. Self-cultivation, therefore, is not one of being selfishly self-absorbed but involves another. In our mutuality we help realise each other and expand relationships from family to community to the state and the world. One may even extend the traditional metaphor of rippling circles, like a stone thrown into a pond, to reach to the category of the planet. This “anthropocosmic vision”, as explored by Tu Weiming (2004), addresses both the human dimension of “fruitful interaction between self and community” as well as a “sustainable harmonious relationship between the human species and nature” (Tu 2004, p. 19). Such an inclusive understanding, which allows for some hope in Xi Jinping’s

above-noted message of cooperation, brings in the Daoist regard for nature as well as the pressing ecological concerns of the current era – including climate change, caring for the environment and seeking sustainable ways to achieve prosperity. But it all comes back to cultivating *ren*. Much like harmony and peace, *ren* is externalised and structured through the practice of *li* to become embedded within society.

What is *li* (禮)? It refers back to traditional ritual or rites from the aforementioned Golden Age of the Zhou Dynasty, but in its transformative qualities for the individual, it represents the externalisation of *ren* and its social ordering effects. Here is one way *ren* and *li* are represented in the *Analects* (12.1, trans. I. Bloom): “Through mastering oneself and returning to ritual one becomes humane. If for a single day one can master oneself and return to ritual, the whole world will return to humaneness.” How does self-cultivation result in the whole world acquiring *ren*? A great deal of debate has accompanied this passage over time. Among the commentaries which Kieschnick (1992) explores is that of the Neo-Confucian scholar Wang Yangming (1472-1529), whereby “the social order and self-cultivation” are viewed in a holistic fashion: “In Wang’s holistic world-vision, to order the self is to order society – a process that for the good man is spontaneous, objective, and above all, selfless” (Kieschnick 1992, p. 571).

A *ren*-infused society can be described as a Confucian humanism, while its individual practice constitutes a form of ethics. Also like harmony and peace, *ren* via *li* cannot be enforced or policed, though *fa* (law) does have a role to play in the functioning of society. *Fa*, however, is not meant to take the place of morality that requires a “sense of shame” and promises the prospect of reform:

The Master said: ‘Guide them by edicts, keep them in line with punishments, and the common people will stay out of trouble but have no sense of shame. Guide them by virtue, keep them in line with the rites [rules of propriety], and they will, besides having a sense of shame, reform themselves. (*Analects* 2.3)

This would indeed represent a progress towards an idealistic mission for the world of peace and security, providing the conditions for a higher form of development. But who would do it?

3. How the World is Changed: The *Junzi*

Let us return to Confucius’ disciple, Zilu, whose persistent questioning of his Master helps reveal the trajectory of self-cultivation to the wider world. Zilu asks his Master about the

exemplary person (君子, *junzi*). Confucius replies that such a person cultivates himself and thereby achieves reverence. To which Zilu says, “Is that all?” The Master then explains that the exemplary person cultivates himself and thereby brings peace and security to the people. Again, Zilu asks: “Is that all?” Finally Confucius says that this is what the *junzi* does: he cultivates himself and thus brings peace and security to the people, adding that even China’s great legendary emperors, Yao and Shun, “would have found the task of bringing peace and security to the people taxing” (*Analects* 14.42).

So what do we understand about the *junzi*? Those who become exemplary through *ren* are morally noble. They have achieved human realisation, and are termed *junzi*, though they cannot be described as saints or sages (*shengren*) – which represents the highest level. A *junzi* is no slave to the dictates of tradition but exercises sound judgement. The *Analects* (4.10) points out that a *junzi* “is not invariably for or against anything” but “is on the side of what is appropriate” (*yi*).

To Zilu’s question, “Is that all?” we might reflect that progress towards an ideal already represents a huge undertaking. It causes transformations that may be likened not only to the expanding circles from self, family, community, nation and onwards to the planet, but also to an individual’s maturing moral consciousness. Confucius paused to reflect on his own life stages of development. As the famous passage from the *Analects* (2.4) reveals: when he was 15, Confucius set his heart on learning; by 30 he found his balance through the rites; by 40, he was free from doubts about himself because, to quote sinologist Jonathan Spence (2008), he was “beginning to understand the purpose of his enquiries into the moral world and the wellsprings of purposive social action”; at 50 Confucius understood what Heaven (天, *Tian*) intended him to do – in other words, his life’s purpose; when he reached 60 his moral sense was well attuned; and at 70 – two years before his death – he could follow his heart’s desire without overstepping the line.

These moral stages may also be applied to the world and its affairs. Development, therefore, is not only a material and economic measure but ultimately a moral one. This is where self-cultivation and actualising a better world meet. This is, indeed, ‘all’ – in the sense of being all-inclusive. It echoes Wang Yangming’s holistic approach and also the courage (*yong*) to bring it about, be it through institutions, policy advice or the cultivation of international norms that promote a *li* of humane conduct. Im (2008) sees *yong* not as a Confucian virtue but as “instrumental to the pursuit of virtuous ends”.

4. The Inner Workings of Change and Transformation

The discussion so far has created a horizon of hope, but it is a hazy one. One can sympathise with those who are sceptical about Confucianism being capable of transforming modern society “from greed to morality and human flourishing” (McLeod 2007). The famous Confucian philosopher Xunzi (453-221 BCE) believed that if people were left to their own devices they would in fact pursue greed, and therefore needed to be educated into becoming moral beings. Xunzi’s understanding is often contrasted with the common Confucian view of human nature being innately good (as expressed in the *Mencius*). Whether *ren* is something we are born with or a virtue we must learn, in either case it needs to be worked on.

The foregoing suggests that it is perhaps easier to return to the pursuit of the ‘hopeless’ and, as with the case of ‘socialism’, explain it as an ‘early stage’ on the road to the ideal. The ‘stages’ – like the expanding ‘anthropocosmic’ circles – are related to ‘process’, as distinct from revolutionary change or a sudden ‘clash of categories’ (e.g. Eastern and Western, American and Chinese). This concurs with the inner workings of change from a Chinese philosophical perspective – one that is *relationally* oriented. Recall the character for *ren* (仁) contains ‘person’ and ‘two’. The well-known Chinese cultural symbol of the *yin-yang* is also relational rather than oppositional, with each hemisphere containing the seed (or eye) of the other in the form of a dot. With this in mind, the following points made by Qin Yanqing, Professor of International Relations at China Foreign Affairs University, are worth noting (Qin 2010):

- “Anything, no matter whether it is an individual or an institution, is in this process of transforming” (p. 140).
- “A being continues its life through becoming” (p. 140).
- “In the logic of relational thinking, international society, as any society, is a process rather than an entity, a process of complex, entangled, and ongoing relations” (p. 141).
- “Norms, rules, and institutions, including those accepted and shared by most of the nations, will in practice have variable versions with local characteristics. Intersubjectivity and complementarity will increasingly be a distinct feature of this increasingly diverse world” (p. 153).

So this brings us to the question of harmony and its deficit in this world. One need only think of civil wars (Syria, Yemen), terrorism, cyber security, rivalries between countries (like India

and Pakistan, China and Japan), nuclear ambitions (North Korea and Iran having occupied the international spotlight in recent times), the plight of minorities (such as Myanmar's Rohingya Muslims), refugees on the move in larger numbers than ever before, the erosion of press freedom and human rights in many parts of the world, environmental degradation, resource depletion in many regions, and climate change everywhere. How might harmony be created?

5. Harmony – A Recipe

A core doctrine of Confucian philosophy is harmony (*he*). In its root sense *he* means 'and'; it goes back to harmony in singing (Zhang 2005, p. 270). The character is of grain and the mouth (和), indicating food as a balance of ingredients that are tasty and life-giving. The importance of diversity to create a musical or culinary harmony is notable. Indeed, harmony needs to be distinguished from "identity or assent since only diverse elements can be in harmony, and this includes political views and ministerial advice" (Dellios and Ferguson 2013, p. 12). This indicates that harmony is not necessarily a status quo condition – especially if the status quo is more reliant on *fa* (law and punishment) than *li* (rites and setting a good example). "Harmony thus becomes an active and transformative principle" (Dellios and Ferguson 2013, p.12); but it relies on the middle way of moderation to realise itself.

To this end, harmony is associated with centrality and balance, preferring flexibility to achieve this. Illustrative is Confucius' above-noted view of a *junzi* as one who "is not invariably for or against anything" but "is on the side of what is appropriate". This invokes the Confucian moral ideal of the *Doctrine of the Mean* (中庸, *Zhongyong*), which is also the title of one of the Four Books in the Confucian canon (along with the *Analects*, the *Mencius* and the *Great Learning*). *Zhongyong*, meaning moderation and middle way, is considered "one of the greatest ideals of daily life" among Chinese and "refers to moderation in all things, neither going to excess nor falling short of the mean" (Zhang 2005, p. 329).

6. Three Present-day Examples

Indeed, change by revolution and struggle is no longer in vogue in world affairs today, but a slower transformative change appears to be underway. Three examples –the first a regional organisation, the second driven by a great power, and the third promoted by a world body – are as follows:

1) **BRICS**, comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, is one organisation endeavouring to promote more cooperative development. This can be seen in the terminology employed at the 9th BRICS summit held at Xiamen in China in September 2017; for example, “promoting mutually beneficial cooperation for common development” was the theme of a dialogue at the summit. Already BRICS has made considerable progress in promoting development, including through its \$100 billion New Development Bank (NDB) launched in 2015. NDB approved loans worth \$1.55 billion in 2016 to “programs on sustainable development” and its loans approved in 2017 totalled \$2.5 billion (Xinhua 2017). According to its strategy document for 2017-2021: “The Bank will dedicate around two-thirds of all financing commitments in this period to sustainable infrastructure development, i.e., infrastructure projects that incorporate economic, environmental and social criteria in their design and implementation” (NDB 2017).

2) Another example of development through cooperative and inclusive policies is China’s megaproject, the **Belt and Road Initiative**. Formally introduced in 2013, the BRI’s full name is the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. A vast number of countries across Asia, Europe, Africa and the Pacific stand to benefit from the creation of infrastructure that includes roads, railways, ports, energy projects, and telecommunications across land and sea. Besides recourse to its own ‘policy banks’, China has set up a special US\$40 billion Silk Road Fund, and initiated the multilateral Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) with its registered capital of US\$100 billion. The AIIB has expressly stated that it seeks to meet “the challenges of sustainable development in Asia” (AIIB, 2016, p. 1). At the 2017 Belt and Road Forum held in Beijing, China’s President Xi Jinping said of the BRI partnerships: “No matter if they are from Asia and Europe, or Africa or the Americas, they are all cooperative partners in building the Belt and Road” (Goh & Chen 2017).

3) This message is similar to the **UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, which are all-inclusive: no one is to be left behind. As noted in the UN SDG website:

In 2015, countries adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals. In 2016, the Paris Agreement on climate change entered into force, addressing the need to limit the rise of global temperatures.

Governments, businesses and civil society together with the United Nations are mobilizing efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Agenda by 2030. Universal, inclusive and

indivisible, the Agenda calls for action by all countries to improve the lives of people everywhere. (UN 2018)

The above examples of cooperation (rather than competition or ‘struggle’) in development – that of a regional organisation, BRICS; a China-led megaproject, BRI; and a UN-led sustainable development agenda – are not the only examples and they are not without problems, but their efforts are aimed at transformational change for the betterment of humankind. BRICS shows a concerted effort on the part of ‘rising powers’ to improve conditions in the developing world. China’s BRI, although commonly criticised as a strategy for geopolitical domination, is infused with cultural and educational content that would suggest a more collaborative process. Though still in its infancy, the BRI is expected to outgrow dependence on its parent, China. If the positive features of sustainable and humane development are followed, the BRI can be expected to “live independently [of its parent] under a moral code well developed in its youthful years” (Dellios 2018).

Unlike the ceaseless warfare of Confucius’ time when any endeavour to bring about a peaceful and humane world order must have seemed a doomed enterprise, the world today – for all its extremities of human suffering, weapons of mass destruction, and economic vulnerabilities – is not in a state of open warfare. Progress across many fronts, including a layered and interlocking system of global and regional governance, has been built into the world system. While still daunting, tackling the problems associated with development should not be viewed as a ‘mission impossible’. Even in the classic television (and subsequent film) series by this name, *Mission: Impossible*, no mission is impossible. It is more in the nature of a challenge. Realising this represents the first step to fostering a higher order of development.

7. Conclusion

This paper has been guided by a Confucian outlook in achieving development in accordance with the moral teachings of China’s most renowned philosopher, even if the ideal or goal is beyond reach and may be considered utopian. Utopias, after all, serve as inspiring models for change rather than achievable targets – though these too are worth pursuing, as expressed in the UN SDGs. Already the world is experiencing cooperation across countries in their multilateral efforts and across peoples who work within civil society and non-governmental organisations.

The ethical inspiration of Confucianism is centred on *ren*. Its cultivation leads to “self-aware persons concerned with humanity and benevolence, the proper conduct of social relations, and a disposition to do good utilizing a moral wisdom honed by reflection, reasoning and experience” (Ferguson and Dellios 2017, p. 138). The Confucian project in modern times may be said to pursue a better world through transformative change. The metaphor of expanding circles, from self-cultivation to caring for the planet, form an interacting whole; so too the ‘stages of life’, as applied to moral maturation, develop one upon the other. It is change that is both profound and almost imperceptible in its occurrence. It is as much concerned with ‘process’ (getting there) as with ‘product’ (a better world), which in any case needs to be dynamically constituted if it is to flourish. Enacting process represents an achievement in its own right. Even the pessimist Xunzi agrees that it is up to humans to order the world. Confucius said, as we saw earlier, “If the Way prevailed in the world, I would not be trying to change it.” However seemingly hopeless the task, this would have to constitute a valuable Confucian lesson in transformation.

The lesson here is that high ideals are worth pursuing, but not in a zealous or ideological fashion. Rather, the moral standard of humaneness and proper cultivation of social relations represent a foundation for transformative change in which development occurs across many sectors. If the Way were to prevail in the world, according to Confucian thought, morality would be the energising force for further development. In this, the future takes heart from a past that Confucius resuscitated. The lessons learned are not lost. They are beginning to be found once more, and through the common cultural language of morality.

To summarise, the first step in the process of transformative change is to recognise that a morally-based development will seem an impossible task. Undeterred, one embarks on the next step, which is to begin cultivating oneself through the ancient teachings of what it is to be human. Foremost among these teachings is the virtue of *ren* – humaneness. A maturing moral consciousness expands among others, and is assisted through the innovations of the current age – the internet, social media and connectivity resulting from globalisation. With such a changed attitude, the world of strife may seem even more recalcitrant but the inner workings of transformation are stirred through persistence in one’s endeavours and flexibility in responding to the challenges. Like Confucius at a turning-point in his life, one begins to understand the purpose of one’s “enquiries into the moral world and the wellsprings of purposive social action” (*Analects*, 2.4). Greater efforts are made to cooperate with others in advancing development and influencing policy under a *junzi*-informed governance. Such

enlightened governance relies on the middle way of moderation to realise its agenda of inclusive and balanced development.

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