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Making Moral Education Work:

Tradition and Innovation in the Asia-Pacific

PLENARY SPEECH

Professor Dr. LI Ping

Professor, Sun Yat-sen University, Guangzhou, China;

Member of the Ministry of Education (MOE) Social Science Committee;

Evaluation Group Expert of the National Social Science Foundation of Philosophy;

Vice-chairman of the China National Association for Ethical Studies; and

Chairman of the Guangdong Provincial Association for Ethical Studies

ABSTRACT

*Virtue or Norms: Problems and Solutions
in Choosing Values for Moral Education*

Should we teach virtue or norms? How do we clarify the value status of virtue and norms? In particular, how do we keep the balance between virtue and norms during the transition from a traditional community to modern society? How do we overcome these and other difficulties involved in choosing the values most suitable for contemporary moral education? In this presentation, I try to answer these questions. Virtue is the final goal of moral education. However, this final goal cannot be realised only by moral education; it also needs the support of law. Law is a kind of norms. Virtue cannot be isolated from norms. But this does not imply that any kind of norms or law will support the flourishing of virtue. To support virtue, law itself should be virtuous. In this respect, for the law to be virtuous it does not mean that virtue should be a legal requirement or that law should directly force people to be virtuous. Conversely, it does mean that law should give a just reward or punishment to people. In this way, evil deeds are forbidden and good deeds are encouraged. And as a consequence, virtue, as the final goal of moral education, will be achieved.

LI Ping

Professor LI Ping was born in Jiaoling, Guangdong Province. She graduated from the Philosophy Department of Sun Yat-sen University in 1982, then visited Peking University Philosophy Department, Pacific Lutheran University Education School (USA) and Harvard

University Yenching Institute (USA). She studied Ethics with Professor Luo Guojie and received her Ph.D. in 1997. Recognised as one of the nation's specialists/experts with outstanding contributions, she was among the first group of people selected for the national reserve for the New Century Top 100, 1,000 and 10,000 Talent Project.

Since the early 1980s, Professor LI Ping has mainly researched in the area of Comparison of Ethics and Comparative Study of Ideological and Ethical Education, Bioethics and Values Education. She has led more than ten research projects funded by the National Social Science Foundation or above the provincial level including: *“Studies of the Changes and Laws of Social Consciousness in the Context of Reform and Opening-up”*, *“Ideology and Values Education against the Background of Globalisation”*, *“Studies of Some Major Theoretical Issues Concerning the Construction of Socialist Ideology and Morality System in China”*, *“A Comparative Study of Two Altruistic Morality Education Values”*, *“Studies of the Theory and Education of the Outlook on Life”*, *“Culture Market and Socialisation of Youth Morality”*, *“Changes in Ethics and Morality Education in the Progress of China's Modernisations”*, *“Comparative Studies of Ideological and Morality Education”*, *“Studies of the University Students' Morality in the Opened-up Areas”* and *“Studies of Marxism Education and Dissemination in China”*.

In addition to over forty papers, she has also published more than twenty books and teaching materials such as *“Towards Open Morality”*, *“On Modern Morality Education”*, *“Changes in Ethics and Morality Education during the Progress of China's Modernisations”*, *“Comparative Studies of Morality Education”*, *“General Theory of Outlook on Life”*, *“Youth Moral Socialisation in the View of Culture”* and *“Introductions of Modern Life”*.