

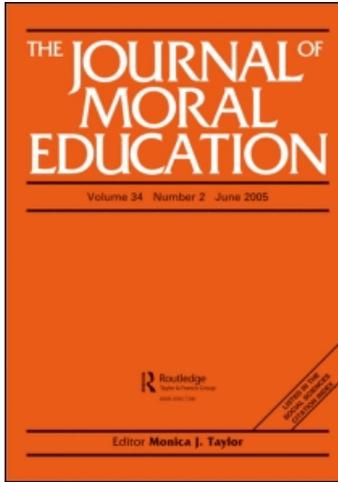
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Journal of Moral Education

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713432411>

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To cite this Article Lee, Angela Chi-Ming(2004) 'Changes and challenges for moral education in Taiwan', Journal of Moral Education, 33: 4, 575 – 595

To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1080/0305724042000315635

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0305724042000315635>

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Changes and challenges for moral education in Taiwan

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Taiwan has gradually transformed from an authoritarian to a democratic society. The education system is moving from uniformity to diversity, from authoritarian centralization to deregulation and pluralism. Moral education is a reflection of, and influenced by, educational reform and social change, as this paper shows in describing the history of moral education in Taiwan. From 1949 to the 1980s, Taiwan's moral education consisted of ideological, nationalistic, political education and the teaching of a strict code of conduct. Since the late 1980s moral education has changed rapidly due to educational reforms. Political ideologies and traditional culture in moral education have gradually been phased out. Since August 2004, diversified and generalized moral education has replaced the special subject of moral education offered in school. Moral education in Taiwan faces great changes and new challenges. The paper concludes by suggesting some strategies, such as facilitating critical thinking, civic values and multiple teaching approaches, for the development of a new moral education suitable to modern democratic society in Taiwan.

In the past five decades, Taiwan has experienced rapid social changes. As a result, education as a whole, and moral education in particular, have also seen significant transformations. The purpose of this paper is to outline and analyse the changing history of school moral education in modern Taiwan (from 1949 to 2004) and comment on its contemporary challenges. The history of moral education can be divided into the authoritarian, transitional and current periods. The changes in moral education in Taiwan have taken place alongside other educational challenges from within schools and in society beyond. In conclusion, some strategies are offered in this paper for the development of contemporary moral education in Taiwan.

Social background

Taiwan, an island with a total area of nearly 36,000 sq km and a population of 22.6 million, is located in eastern Asia and separated from the People's Republic of China

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by the Taiwan Strait. With the exodus of the Nationalist government of Mainland China (ruled by the Kuomintang (KMT)) from Mainland China to Taiwan in 1949, there followed rapid changes in the political, economic, social, cultural and educational spheres.

Political stability and economic growth were the Nationalist's two main missions in the early years. Chiang Kai-Shek, who had lost the Chinese civil war, wished to use the island as a base for his counter-offensive to recover the Mainland. Coming to Taiwan in 1949, Chiang considered himself to be a legitimate ruler for the Republic of China. Taiwan (Republic of China) and Mainland China (People's Republic of China) have had an antagonistic relationship dating from that period. Over the years, this has had ongoing reverberations for moral education. In the initial years, economic aid from the USA and land reform programmes were two main factors in bolstering economic stability. Chiang Kai-Shek's son, Chiang Ching-Kuo, President from 1978 to 1988, followed his industrialization policy. The lifting of martial law in 1987 was a turning point that paved the way for democracy. Taiwan's economy also experienced growth during this period. Lee Teng-Hui, Chiang Ching-Kuo's successor, reaffirmed the working of constitutional processes and continued the erosion of the political system controlled by Mainlanders. He not only oversaw a peaceful revolution, but also succeeded in Taiwan's first direct presidential election in 1996. Chen Shui-Bian, former mayor of Taipei, won the presidency in 2000. He ended more than half a century of Kuomintang rule and peacefully transferred power to the Democratic Progressive Party. He is Democratic Progressive Party Chairman and successfully sought re-election in March 2004. On account of political democratization and economic liberalization, Taiwan has now gradually transformed into a prosperous and high-tech country with a per capita annual GNP reaching US\$13,925 (Taiwan Directorate General of Budget Accounting and Statistics (TDGBAS), 2004).

Over the course of history Taiwan has witnessed great conflicts between East and West, the traditional and the modern, and among the island's many sub-cultures (Kung, 2000). From the 16th century to the 1940s, Taiwan was subject to the influence of a series of Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch and English powers, Han culture during the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911), and Japanese colonization (1895–1945). From the three decades following 1949, Taiwan's leaders gradually erased the colonial influence of Japanese culture and revived Chinese cultural heritage and language, in particular Confucianism, in order to resist Mao's Cultural Revolution, which called for the destruction of the 'four olds', namely old ideas, old culture, old customs and old habits (Kung, 2000). Taiwan became a meeting point for East and West and a repository of traditional Chinese culture. In the past few years, Taiwan has been also profoundly affected by the concepts of modernization and democracy imported from the USA and Europe. Hence, traditional culture and modern culture have become intertwined in Taiwan.

Taiwan's inhabitants are divided into four main ethnic groups: indigenous people comprising twelve aboriginal tribes; Hakka people, mostly from Guangdong Province in the southern coast of China's Mainland; Southern Min people (the largest ethnic group in Taiwan, comprising more than 75 per cent of the population) from south of

the Min River in Fujian Province in the southern coast of China's Mainland; and 'Mainlanders', who followed the Nationalist (KMT) government to Taiwan after Chinese Communists gained control of China in 1949. Since martial law was lifted in 1987, Taiwan's local culture has gradually drawn more attention from the government. In the past, the government's language policies promoted Mandarin as the official language, ignoring and sometimes suppressing other dialects. Today, Taiwanese, as well as Hakka and aboriginal languages, are promoted and taught in elementary schools (Chung, 1999). Taiwan's multicultural society exhibits cultural diversity and richness.

The emergence of social movements, which can be traced back to the 1980s and seen as a backlash against authoritarianism, were significant in several respects. First, the KMT's democratizing standpoint did not happen spontaneously; it was a compromise with the escalating demands of Taiwan's mobilizing civil society (Chung, 1999). Secondly, the impact of social movements on social development has been positive because of their concern with the necessity of environmental protection, consumers' rights, women's rights, political prisoners' human rights and an end to ethnic discrimination (Chung, 1999). Thirdly, 'Comprehensive community construction' was a new social power, based on local grass roots movements. It involved projects that residents initiated and carried out to construct a landscape unique to their own community. It was created in order to encourage people to take part in community activities and public discussion and enhance their love of community (Kung, 2000).

In addition to social movements, modern Taiwan has undergone further transformation in social life. The concept of the extended family, which has been the traditional Chinese family style, embraces the ideas that all family members should live together in one household, care for each other and carry certain responsibilities relating to their age and gender. The core concept on which this family is based is that of filial piety. Changes in business, industry, population and education have had a great impact on family structure and family values over the last twenty years (Taiwan Government Information Office (TGIO), 2001). Extended families have evolved into nuclear families in urbanized Taiwan. The relationship of family members has also altered. Women can be treated more equally in the family than before. Parents can have more open communication with and offer greater encouragement to their children. However, some family and demographic problems have occurred in recent years. The function of family education has diminished gradually because parents are too busy working, the divorce rate is rising continually and the mass media has more and more influence on young people. The burdens on social welfare and public health have increased since the average number of children has declined to 1.3, and the population aged over 65 years old increased to 9.2 per cent. Furthermore, the social adaptation of new immigrants and their children has recently become a new issue. Around 28 per cent of all married couples in Taiwan now have one partner born outside Taiwan, as Taiwanese men, in particular, are marrying women from Mainland China and Southeast Asia (TDGBAS, 2003).

In brief, Taiwan has moved from authoritarianism to democracy, from impover-

ishment to wealth, from traditionalism and orthodoxy to social and cultural diversity in the past fifty years. Nevertheless, Taiwan still faces challenges in such areas as the cultural, ethnic and national identities of the people; the balance between globalization and localization; the complex relationship between Taiwan and China; and the fast paced transformation of social life.

The general educational situation

Education is the foundation of a nation and also an important indicator of social change. Taiwan's government has strongly emphasized the expansion and improvement of education since 1949. Taiwan's educational system is modelled on the American educational system. Since 1968, nine years of education (age 7–15) has been compulsory in Taiwan. Furthermore, a wide range of other educational options is available to citizens of all ages. The entire educational process could cover: two years of pre-school education (age 5–6), six years of elementary school (age 7–12), three years of junior high school (age 13–15), three years of senior high school (age 16–18), four to seven years of college or university, two to four years of a graduate school programme, and two to seven years of a doctoral degree programme. There are also technological/vocational educational programmes, special education programmes and adult/continuing education programmes. In 2003 the total number of schools was 8252 (public 69.7 per cent, private 30.3 per cent). Due to universal education, the national illiteracy rate has dropped to 2.75 per cent (Taiwan Ministry of Education (TMOE), 2003). The number of school dropouts was 9464 (0.33 per cent) in 2001–2002 (TDGBAS, 2003). These facts reveal that Taiwan now has a sound and comprehensive educational system. Nevertheless, inequalities of access to education, academic performance and budget distribution exist in different regions, as well as between different social strata and ethnic groups. For this reason, equality of educational opportunity in Taiwan deserves further examination (TGIO, 2002).

The distinctive features of improvement in Taiwan's education have been in moving from uniformity to diversity, from authoritarian centralization to deregulation and pluralism. From 1949 to the 1970s, the ultimate goal of Taiwan's educational system was to fulfil and reinforce the ideals, enumerated by Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, and stated in the Three Principles of the People: nationalism, democracy and social well-being. However, education was seen as a means of indoctrinating political ideology and Chinese traditional culture into the populace. Since the 1980s, educational reform has been regarded as one of the social movements and introduced to meet the needs of a greatly changing and emerging democratic society, as well as to make more manifest the intrinsic value of education. Official and non-governmental Councils on educational reform were established and published numerous white papers and educational reports during the 1990s. Several education-related laws were promulgated or amended, such as the Basic Law on Education (promulgated on 23 June, 1999) and the Teacher Education Law (promulgated on 9 August, 1995, and amended on 19 July, 2000 and 15 January, 2003) (TMOE, 2004). The goals of educational reform since the 1990s were to: upgrade the quality of education by

setting up a flexible school system; lessen the pressures of academic advancement; remove the burden of the joint university entrance examinations; narrow the gap between rural and urban educational resources; distribute public and private school resources evenly; promote lifelong education; build a society that enjoys learning; and reinforce international cultural and educational exchanges (TMOE, 1999). In other words, Taiwan's educational reform is oriented towards diversification, liberalization and internationalization.

Since 1997, Taiwan's government has instituted a revolutionary educational reform that has had a huge impact on elementary and junior high schools. The *Guidelines for a nine-year joint curricula plan*, which was promulgated by the Ministry of Education in 1998 and scheduled to be fully implemented by August 2004, emphasized ten goals, several of which are concerned with moral and social development: enhancing students' self-understanding and developing their individual potential; cultivating students' capacities for appreciation of others, expression and creativity; upgrading students' capacities for career planning and lifelong learning; enhancing students' knowledge and skills in expression, communication and sharing with others; developing students' attitudes of respecting, caring for and cooperating with others; promoting students' recognition of regional, national and international cultures; enhancing students' skills in planning, organizing and practice; developing students' capacities in computer technology and information acquisition; arousing students' love of active inquiry and research; cultivating students' capacity for independent thinking and problem-solving.

The traits of this new curriculum reform accentuated several goals: to unite the elementary and junior high schools into a coherent system; to integrate curriculum from scattered subjects into main learning areas; to reduce obligatory courses and to develop students' basic competencies; to set up textbook review systems; to establish a national institute for educational research; and to develop various access routes for students entering advanced educational levels (Chen, 1999).

Nevertheless, the past decade of educational reform has provoked critiques from various sectors of society. In July 2003 a group of over 100 professors issued an Education Reconstruction Manifesto criticizing Taiwan's educational reform as too radical. They stressed that educational policy makers should end the disorder in education and pursue excellent education (Taiwan. *China Times E-Newspaper*, 20 July, 2003). In a national survey by Taiwan's Association for Teachers in September 2003, almost 80 per cent of 3,500 elementary, junior and senior high school teachers ranked educational reforms in the previous ten years as 'not good' (reported by *Readers Digest* (Chinese edition) April 2004, pp. 20–21). Another national survey conducted by *Common Wealth Magazine* showed 54.7 per cent of 1,069 elementary, junior and senior high school parents did not support the policies of educational reform (*Common Wealth Magazine*, September 2003, pp.76–84). In response to such opinions the Taiwan Ministry of Education took the initiative in holding an Educational Development Conference in September 2003 to review the previous ten years of educational reform and consider future prospects.

After such intense educational reforms, Taiwan's educational system has some

serious problems: the pressures of academic advancement are heavy; the adaptation from collective to individualized education is a big challenge to the whole educational system; a poverty gap in students' backgrounds has gradually emerged; and teachers' professional training in integrating subjects into learning areas is insufficient. Research into Family and Life Course Studies by the Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica (the Taiwan government research organization) showed that junior and senior high school students did not become happier than before the reforms, even though educational reform stressed 'happy learning'. Approximately 85 per cent of 5,400 junior high school students in Taipei City, Taipei County and Yilan County were very unhappy and depressed due to academic pressure. Moreover, almost 80 per cent of students in famous high schools were, in addition, going to cramming schools in order to pass exams (Taiwan, *China Times E-Newspaper*, 25 July, 2004).

The authoritarian period

Moral education is also a reflection of, or influenced by, educational reform and social change. From 1949 to the 1980s moral education consisted of ideological, nationalistic, political education and the teaching of a strict code of conduct. The goal of moral education was to educate students to conform to the group and nation rather than to be autonomous. At that time, several research findings using the Moral Judgement Interview or Defining Issues Test (Chen, 1977; Shan, 1982; Shen, 1986) showed junior and senior high school students in Taiwan were between the third and fourth stages of Kohlberg's theory of moral development. That is, they made moral judgements based on interpersonal agreements or a law and order orientation, but not on critical and reflective thinking.

One approach used to propel moral education forward was to make use of some official organizations, such as the Committee of Discipline and Morality (CDM) – a sector of Taiwan's Ministry of Education. The purpose of CDM, founded in 1939 on Mainland China and rebuilt in 1955 on Taiwan, was to reinforce ideology education and stabilize school climate (TMOE CDM, 1984). Its corollary, the Department of Discipline (DoD), was set up in every school to oversee students' discipline, codes of conduct and life habits.

Another approach was to set up formal moral or ethical curricula, which were regularly timetabled subjects, at every level: for instance, Life and Ethics in elementary schools, Civics and Morality in junior high schools, Civics in high schools and The Thought of Dr. Sun Yat-Sen in colleges and universities. Certain subjects, particularly Chinese, History, Social Sciences, Geography, were ideologically skewed to fit the agenda of the time (Shi, 1993). In addition, from 1968 the production of moral education textbooks was monopolized by the National Institute for Compilation and Translation (NICT). The NICT is a sector of the Ministry of Education and is responsible for matters related to compiling, translating, editing and examining cultural products and textbooks, particularly in elementary, junior and senior high schools.

A third approach was to implement school rules and hold activities in order to

strengthen students' moral consciousness and codes of behaviour. Pre-existing sets of regulations (e.g., the Outline of Moral Education, issued in 1939 and revised in 1952 and 1968) (TMOE, 1957, 1974) were stressed. Lectures with moral content were given in the Weekly meeting, a ceremony that all administrators, classroom teachers and students attend in the auditorium or playground for approximately 50 minutes once a week. Exhibitions and contests in line with Youth Regulations and cardinal virtues were also undertaken. Youth Regulations comprise 12 items, for example, Article 1: Loyalty and bravery are the bases of patriotism. Cardinal virtues mostly originate from traditional Confucian thinking and include loyalty to ruler or nation (*zhong*), filial piety (*xiao*), benevolence (*ren*), love (*ai*), trustworthiness (*xin*), justice (*yi*), harmony (*he*) and peace (*ping*).

During the past thirty years, some Western scholars have researched the cultural dimension of moral education in Taiwan. Martin (1975) considered the socialization of children in Taiwan by examining elementary school textbooks. He found that Taiwan's government was promoting a revitalization of the traditional Confucian system in moral education. Therefore, at that time, a model Taiwanese citizen should have had the following attributes: 'filial piety, patriotism, academic achievement, aesthetic appreciation of nature, and a sense of propriety in international relations' (p. 152). Meyer (1988a) published an article entitled 'A subtle and silent transformation: moral education in Taiwan and the People's Republic of China'. He discovered that Taiwan's textbooks contained the 'eight virtues' of traditional Confucianism (the same as the cardinal virtues mentioned above). In a further article, 'Moral education in Taiwan' (1988b) Meyer claimed 'Moral formation has always been a central concern in Chinese education ... It remains so today in the Republic of China (Taiwan), the bastion of the Confucian moral tradition in Asia' (p. 20).

Several Taiwanese researchers also examined the political dimension of Taiwan's moral education in the past. Ou (1990) analysed six characteristics in the textbooks of Life and Ethics and Social Studies: an orientation towards traditional culture; resistance to Communism; glorification of the nation; worship of political leaders; focus on Han ethnicity; and justification of male chauvinism. Chen (1988) pointed out three main narrow-minded goals of Taiwan's moral education, particularly evident in textbooks: to guard the nation/government and maintain social order; to cultivate an ideal person and preserve all the traditional values; and to enhance Chinese rather than Taiwanese identity.

The transitional period

Since the late 1980s, Taiwan's moral education changed rapidly due to educational reforms. Political ideologies and traditional culture in moral education were gradually phased out. Moral education became no longer focused solely on a group or nation, but also on individual students. In particular, the increasing rate of juvenile crime, behavioural deviation, smoking, drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, school drop outs and a rising suicide rate make clear the importance of a new moral educational policy in

Taiwan's newly emancipated society. Some further changes have been made in the last decade to address these issues.

First, changes were made in moral education curricula. Formal timetabled moral curricula existed in Taiwan's compulsory educational system and played a central role in moral education until July 2004. Taiwan's Ministry of Education regulated these formal moral education curricula. In response to recent trends in educational reforms, TMOE issued the *Curriculum guidelines for Morality and Health in elementary schools* in 1993 and *Curriculum guidelines for Knowing Taiwanese Society* in Grade 7 (age 13) (TMOE, 1994a), and the *Curriculum guidelines for Civics and Morality* in Grade 8–9 (age 14–15) for junior high schools in 1994 (TMOE, 1994b).

Morality and Health combined two previously taught subjects, Life and Ethics and Health Education, and was integrated into one subject in Grade 1–3 and separated into two subjects (Morality and Health) in Grade 4–6. The *Curriculum guidelines for Morality and Health* contained the goals and main subject matter of the moral curriculum (TMOE, 1993). Goals for Grade 1–6 were to: follow moral codes and disciplines to cultivate a healthy lifestyle; have proper ethical concepts, basic virtues and lofty sentiments; develop awareness of health, first-aid skills and a positive mental attitude in order to be mentally and physically healthy; learn to respect humanity and life in order to enrich one's moral and physical health; learn to think and judge critically, and develop a sense of responsibility. The main topics covered matters concerning the individual, one's relationship with others, with society and with nature. 'Morality' was defined as eight moral values: benevolence, justice, courtesy, honesty, industriousness and thrift, filial piety, observance of laws and rules and patriotism.

The main aim of Knowing Taiwanese Society (Grade 7) in junior high school was to demonstrate the significance of Taiwan and to increase Taiwanese identity. The goals were to: improve an understanding of Taiwan; develop a broader multicultural perspective and cultivate a love of country; cultivate a pleasant disposition and form a community consciousness; and recognize and follow proper social norms and disciplines (TMOE, 1994a). There were two parts to the subject content. Part One focused on Taiwan's social conditions and comprised ten items: peoples and languages, family and relatives, festivals and customs, geographical features and historical artefacts, introduction to education, introduction to economics, introduction to politics, introduction to recreation, introduction to religion, and the discussion of crucial social problems. Part Two emphasized the eight moral values studied under 'Morality' in the elementary schools, plus social morality, responsibility, cooperation and respect. Besides, the goals of Civics and Morality in Grade 8–9 were 'to implement civic education based on the principles of ethics, democracy and science in order to cultivate good future citizens, i.e. moral, intellectual, athletic, social and artistic individuals' (TMOE, 1994b, p.1). Sub-goals were to: cultivate moral sensibility in order to be well-adjusted in daily life; enhance basic understanding of law and politics in order to form democratic concepts and obey the rule of law; enhance basic understanding of society and economics in order to cultivate social awareness and proper economic values; enhance understanding and appreciation of

Chinese culture and other cultures in order to develop an outstanding domestic culture and also a respect for different cultures (TMOE, 1994b). The main subject content had two parts. Part One focused on the basic concepts of the social sciences and the links with students' lives; for example, school and social life, law and political life, economic life, cultural life. Part Two stressed the same moral values found under Knowing Taiwanese Society (TMOE, 1994b).

Secondly, changes were also made to moral education textbooks. Moral education was delivered mainly through textbooks that the great majority of Taiwan's elementary, junior and senior high school teachers relied on in class. The monopoly of the National Institute for Compilation and Translation (NICT) in producing moral education textbooks was completely ended in 2003. To track the trend of Taiwanese society's diversification and educational liberalization, a system for the compilation of moral education textbooks by private publishers, followed by screening and approval by the NICT was gradually built up, stage by stage. Two systems were adopted for Morality and Health textbooks for the elementary school: both NICT and private publishers published these textbooks from 1994 to 2003. Since 1995 private publishers published Civics textbooks for the senior high school. Moral education textbooks for the junior high school continued to be compiled by the NICT until 2003.

All the above reforms of moral education curricula and textbooks revealed some changing ideas of educational philosophy: transferring the curriculum paradigm from inculcation of moral knowledge to the development of critical thinking; enhancing students' moral judgement competence; strengthening students' learning and life experience; designing diverse approaches in moral teaching; integrating all learning environments; emphasizing moral behaviour; encouraging parental participation; reinforcing qualitative evaluation in moral teaching; combining moral education and civic education; fostering democratic values (e.g., freedom, respect, tolerance) (Deng, 1994; Ou, 1995). Analysis of several moral theme items used in the moral education textbooks revealed a great contrast with earlier textbooks. The moral education textbooks in elementary schools emphasized the importance of morality in relationships, while junior high school textbooks stressed public morality. Furthermore, process values (e.g., decision-making, critical thinking and communicative skills) were emerging in moral education textbooks and political ideology was declining (Lee, 2001). Nevertheless, in practice the delivery of the formal moral curriculum was sometimes replaced by other courses because of intense competition to enter senior high school or university; in some cases, the moral curriculum was seen as an unnecessary subject because it did not form part of the main course of examinations required for entering the next school phase.

Thirdly, changes were made to teacher preparation and development. In the past, the great majority of teachers teaching in elementary schools graduated from junior teachers' colleges (five years) or teachers' colleges (four years) while those teaching in junior and senior high schools graduated from normal universities (teacher training universities) (four years). The homeroom teachers, who usually taught all or most of the courses, also taught moral education courses (Life and Ethics or Morality and

Health) in elementary schools. In junior high schools, the moral education course (Civics and Morality) was partly taught by specialist teachers and partly taught by other teachers, who did not major in civic and moral education. Most specialist teachers in junior high school graduated from the Department of Civic and Moral Education (re-named Department of Civic Education and Leadership in 2001) of National Taiwan Normal University. NTNU provides initial professional training to prospective teachers of moral education, and civic and moral education to in-service teachers. Under the Teacher Education Law, first issued in 1995, colleges, universities, normal universities and teachers' colleges, with teacher education departments or programmes, are eligible to provide teacher training. Junior high school teachers need only take one or two optional courses, such as The Foundation of Moral Education or Ethics, in moral education in initial teacher training courses. There is now no longer any adequate moral education training programme during the teachers' initial training period. Even in NTNU there are fewer optional moral education courses than previously.

It is hard to clearly delineate the stages of moral education from 1980s to date because the new and old reforms are not precisely defined. Previous reforms, including those instituted in 1996 (elementary school) and 1997 (junior high school), were abandoned following the promulgation of *Guidelines for a nine-year joint curricula plan* (TMOE, 1998). Not enough data exist to evaluate the effectiveness of those moral educational reforms. However, there are certain indicators of the transitional moral education reforms. According to my own case study, observing one elementary and one junior high school, the most popular teaching method used at elementary level was group discussion, followed by values clarification, role-play, lecturing, media teaching, moral discussion and service learning; and at the junior high level the most popular method was lecturing, followed by group discussion, role-play, media teaching, issue-centred debate and service learning (Lee, 2000). Take the common method of group discussion as a real-life class example. When talking about justice, teachers usually tell a story, relating a case, and then pose some questions to students. Students, divided into several groups, discuss with each other within the group. Afterwards, a representative of each group makes a report and answers the teacher's and other students' questions. Finally, the teacher and students can ask questions of each other. This seems to be an effective method of promoting students' capacities of thinking and communication. In my study moral education was evaluated according to how well the formal moral curriculum was taught and according to student conduct and the rewards and punishments given in daily school life. Both were measured by a number of methods: written tests, oral tests, observation, topic reports, homework portfolios, student self-evaluations and peer evaluations (Lee, 2000). These findings showed that recent reforms of moral education led to diversified methods in teaching and evaluation.

Taiwan's moral education can be evaluated not only through the formal curriculum, but also in everyday school life, as shown by another case study I carried out, using observations, interviews and a small survey in one elementary school and one junior high school (Lee, 2002). First, moral education in school life depended to a

large degree on environmental cues, such as posters, slogans and statues, which emphasized core values of traditional Chinese culture, e.g., the 'four pillars' (courtesy, justice, anti-corruption, sense of shame) and eight cardinal virtues, mentioned above. Secondly, whilst the formal moral curricula usually emphasized justice-oriented moral education, school life focused on discipline and a caring oriented moral education. The former included concepts of autonomy, freedom and equality, while the latter was concerned with rules, orders, etiquette, caring and responsibilities. Thirdly, a moral school life, as perceived by teachers, students and parents, meant a harmonious atmosphere similar to that of an extended family. However, in such an environment there might be insufficient active and participatory morality as needed by modern civil society (Lee, 2002).

The current period

There is no longer an explicit moral education curriculum in Taiwan since the *Guidelines* were formally implemented in August 2004. Some scholars and teachers criticized this as a hastily put-together plan because traditional cultural values had been removed (Zhang, 2002). Accordingly, character and moral education became one of the main themes of discussion and review at the Educational Development Conference held by the TMOE in September 2003. Researchers and teachers were concerned about how to rebuild and implement moral and character education in schools. Some other researchers argued that moral education, particularly in elementary schools, should not be merely a reflection of Taiwan's traditional morality and should not be confined to direct moral teaching. Moral education could take place through various curricula, in school activities and the hidden curriculum (Dan, 1999; Lee, 2002). Although moral education is no longer a timetabled subject on the curriculum, the following analysis and description shows how, through more integrated and diverse strategies, it is still possible to deliver moral education. This may indicate a new direction for Taiwan's modern moral education.

Instead of a being a unique subject, moral education can be imparted through several formal curricula, such as the learning areas of Social Studies, Comprehensive Activities, and Language classes in elementary and junior high schools. The *Guidelines for Social Studies*, which integrate formal courses of History, Geography, Civics and Morality, have several morally related goals, such as: to cultivate students with a sense of identity, caring and global perspectives on their own culture and country; to educate students with democratic attitudes; to be law abiding with a sense of responsibility; to develop skills of critical thinking, value judgement and problem-solving; to foster in students skills of self-expression, communication and cooperation. In addition, the nine main themes in the standards of competence in *Guidelines for Social Studies* have some morally related items: to care about nature and life through approaches to nature (indicator 4-1-1); to reflect on one's own virtues and moral beliefs (indicator 4-3-4); to justify one's own choices and communicate with others through reasonable and reflective viewpoints (indicator 4-4-2); to respect, and avoid prejudice towards, different individuals and groups (e.g., on grounds of gender,

ethnicity, status) (indicator 6-2-4); to predict the consequences of using technology without professional ethics, morality and law; to be concerned about the global environment and human well-being (indicator 8-4-3) (TMOE, 2001a).

Another morally related learning area is that of Comprehensive Activities, integrating guidance activity including counselling and careers guidance, home economics and scouting. For example, the goals are: learning by experience; reflecting on one's own opinions and values; broadening one's learning experiences; fostering pluralism and respect. The items in the four main themes of the standards of competence are: to appreciate and accept others (indicator 1-3-1); to respect and care about other groups (indicator 1-3-2); to experience the meaning of cooperation and care about other people (indicator 3-1-2); to participate in students' self-governed activities and have positive attitudes toward the disciplines of respect and responsibility (indicator 3-2-1); to take part in social service and to learn by doing (indicator 3-2-3); to care about all human beings and disadvantaged minorities (indicator 3-4-2) (TMOE, 2001b).

Academic fields such as Chinese (native language), English (first foreign language), Health and Physical Education, Art and Humanities, Natural Science & Life Technology have a certain generalized morally related content. Moreover, according to the *Guidelines*, Human Rights Education and Gender Education, which may be seen as closely linked to moral education, should also be integrated into other learning areas. Some goals in the *Guidelines for Gender Education* have moral implications, such as: to eliminate discrimination, gender-related bias and to respect social diversity; and to build a positive attitude, with respect, equality and harmony, between genders (TMOE, 2001c). In the *Guidelines for Human Rights Education*, the goals are: to educate students to understand the meaning of human rights; to help students to develop the basic values of human rights; to enable students to practise respect for human rights and participate in human rights activities (TMOE, 2001c).

The missions of Taiwan's official organizations are also being gradually transformed to fit with the new diversified and generalized moral education and to be ostensibly more student-oriented. In the central government, the former Committee on Discipline and Morality has changed its English name to the Student Affairs Committee (SAC), although the Chinese name remains the same. At school level, the Department of Discipline in senior high schools and colleges has been renamed the Department of Student Affairs (DSA) in both Chinese and English, while in elementary and junior high schools that department has also been renamed as DSA in English. The functions of three units in school, including the Department of Student Affairs, the Department of Academic Affairs and the Office of Guidance, have been enhanced to integrate with and complement each other in teaching, discipline and counselling. Both the SAC and DSA promote and deliver student affairs, student guidance, students' clubs, the mentor system, and campaign against juvenile delinquency and school violence.

Moreover, as government and non-governmental organizations wish to avoid the stigma, stereotypes and jargon of traditional moral education, they often use different terms to refer to this field. For example, Democratic and Legal Education, Life

Education, and Human Rights Education, are main themes for Taiwan's recent morally related educational policies. These are implemented as cross-curricular activities and interdisciplinary topics, at teachers' discretion. Whilst there has been some progress in the delivery of Democratic and Legal Education since 1987, it has also been vulnerable to shifting priorities. From the 1980s to the early 1990s, some grass roots movements contributed to educational policies of 'school democratization' (e.g., academic freedom, student self-government, school policies developed by teachers and parents). This was summed up in the slogan 'Law without democracy is empty, democracy without law is blind' (Wang, 1989). But since 1995, government officials and school administrators have stressed the concept of the 'rule of law' instead of democracy. Recently, the Ministry of Education joined with the Ministry of Justice in enforcing key points for Democratic and Legal Education in relation to compiling and editing law-related manuals and teaching materials and supplementary reading matter for pupils, promoting schools' democratic and legal environments, and evaluating their effectiveness, as well as building up sound systems of students' rewards and punishments and setting up an appeals system.

The term Life Education originated in the Australian Life Education Center, established in 1979 and aimed to offer remedial, preventative and educational assistance to young people and to those addicted to drugs and alcohol (Wu *et al.*, 2002). Life Education in Taiwan can be traced back to the 1980s. Some missionary schools set up an *ad hoc* school-based ethics curriculum, and religious organizations compiled teaching materials to foster 'holistic education', which stressed the personal, social, moral, cognitive and emotional aspects of education. Until the end of 1997, Life Education was officially promoted for junior and senior high schools by Taiwan's former Provincial Authority of Education. In 2000, the Ministry of Education set up a Life Education Implementation Committee to promote the planning and delivery of Life Education from primary to higher education. Moreover, to reiterate its significance, 2001 was designated the 'Year of Life Education' (Hsu, 2003; Wu *et al.*, 2002). The goals of Life Education are to encourage pupils to understand the meaning of life, to have positive attitudes to life and to cherish their own lives. Life Education comprises three main dimensions: life and religious philosophy (spiritual dimension), basic and applied ethics (rational dimension), and the integration of personality and affective education (emotional dimension) (Sun, 2001).

Due to the highly complex convergence of history, culture, politics and other factors, human rights education have failed to receive either consistent or due attention in Taiwan. In the authoritarian system of the last few decades, Human Rights Education was taboo (Huang, 2003). The extent to which human rights policies and practices are implemented is a leading indicator of a country's democratization in the 21st century. The Ministry of Education not only organized its first human rights press conference in 2000, but also promulgated the *Guidelines for Human Rights Education* in 2001 to highlight Taiwan's resolution to promote Human Rights Education. The government also established the Human Rights Education Committee and announced a Human Rights Education Proposal in 2001 (Huang, 2003). Both government and civil society (e.g., the Taiwan Association for Human

Rights) have conducted a series of promotional activities for students and workshops for teachers on human rights. Human Rights Education in Taiwan has several key objectives: to ban corporal punishment in schools; to limit teachers' disciplinary methods; to establish a learning environment that is safe and free from censure and violence; to enhance students' respect and defence of their and others' freedoms and rights (Huang, 2003).

Following the Educational Development Conference, the Ministry of Education planned a five-year Character Education Programme, initiated at the end of 2003. The programme's four goals, covering students from elementary to higher education, are (in draft, TMOE meeting document on 5 January, 2004): to facilitate the development of moral thinking, choosing, reflecting on, cherishing and identifying with core ethical values and codes of conduct; to develop 'character-based school culture' that integrates the endeavours of teachers, students, administrators, parents and communities into building an excellent school environment for character education; to reinforce the functions of parent education and community education in character education; to make use of some religious organizations, cultural and educational foundations and the mass media to participate in character education.

At this point in time, when the new *Guidelines* and a more diversified morally related curriculum are being implemented, it is difficult, without a curriculum audit, to demonstrate where moral education is taking place in schools and to calculate the amount of time spent on it per week. Two key factors influencing the delivery of moral education are school policies and teachers' professionalism. Take a typical example of Grade 7 (age 13) in junior high school. In one week there are thirty-four periods of forty-five minutes each. These periods have to cover seven learning areas: Language Arts (8 periods), Health and Physical Education (3 periods), Social Studies (3 periods), Arts and Humanities (3 periods), Mathematics (4 periods), Science and Technology (4 periods), Comprehensive Activities (3 periods) and optional courses. Every teacher, irrespective of the learning area s/he teaches, has opportunities for moral education, to different degrees. Besides learning areas, the homeroom teacher session every morning, lunch/nap time, class cleaning time and class meetings offer good situations for homeroom teachers to blend moral education into students' school lives. Furthermore, schools are empowered to: organize and conduct activities for Alternative Learning Periods (including activities for the whole school or on a Grade basis); carry out curriculum or other activities designed to correspond to the school's own goals and objectives; provide optional courses for learning areas; implement remedial teaching programmes, conduct group counselling or self-learning activities. Hence, this new school-based curriculum model is able to contribute to more flexible school practices in moral education if schools and teachers choose to make moral education a priority.

Although the morally related themes, as outlined above, can be distinguished within mainstream educational policies and can enrich Taiwan's moral education, several general limitations nevertheless exist. These include: a lack of training curricula designed to cultivate teachers' knowledge and capabilities for delivering moral education systematically; a lack of time to educate pupils within those morally

related activities or programmes, due to the continuous pressure to enter a higher level of education; a lack of objective evaluation of the morally related courses and of assessment tools to gauge student outcomes; and a lack of sustainable policies and economic support from central or local government.

Contemporary challenges for moral education

Moral education in Taiwan at present thus faces great changes and new challenges within and beyond schools, as follows.

Revolutionary educational reforms are being put in place

Since 1997, Taiwan's government has developed new and revolutionary educational reforms. The *Guidelines for a nine-year joint curricula plan* in elementary and junior high schools were promulgated in 1998 and fully implemented by August 2004. Thus there is no longer an explicit moral education course in Taiwan's elementary and junior high school systems. The government also plans to unveil new curriculum guidelines for senior high schools. In the current curriculum the Three Principles of the People will be discontinued. Civics and Society will replace Civics, refocusing on civic education, social sciences and Taiwan's social situation. The effects of this momentous moral education reform, moving from a separate formal curriculum subject to diversified and generalized morally related education, will depend on more precise government curriculum policies, long-term financial support, school cooperation, and both pre-service and in-service teaching training.

School ethics and authority structures are gradually changing

There have been some important changes on Taiwan's school campuses in the past decade (Lee, 1999). First, the relationship between teachers and students has changed gradually from a parent-child relationship to a client-centred relationship. Due to the influence of TV, the Internet and other media, teachers are playing a less important role than before. A national survey of 1,433 elementary and junior high school teachers, undertaken by *Common Wealth Magazine* in 2003, showed that in their perception the four greatest influences on pupils' values system and character are the mass media, parents, the peer group and the Internet. Teachers were ranked fifth (*Common Wealth Magazine*, November 2003, pp.42–46). Secondly, the authority structure of school administrations has been reorganized, due to the establishment of the Association of Teachers and the Association of Students' Parents. Administrators, teachers and parents now share authority in the running of schools (i.e. participating in school policy decisions, personnel matters and attending some important school meetings). Thirdly, to enable students to enter a higher level of education has become the central goal of school teaching, particularly in the junior and senior high schools. This unhealthy approach not only distorts the true meaning of education, but also, for students, leads to over-competitiveness, narrowing viewpoints and an increasing

disregard for social interaction. Although recent educational reforms have sought to mitigate the great pressure on students to achieve highly in entrance exams and to restore healthy educational practices, their effectiveness is, in practice, limited.

How can moral education prevent the weakening of traditional values from leading to moral relativism?

Moral education in Taiwan assumes the importance of traditional Confucian moral values, which are rooted in Chinese culture. The role of an authoritarian moral hierarchy or values system has gradually faded in some modern societies, which emphasize openness and pluralism. Unfortunately, in Taiwan the old moral values system has become bankrupt while a new, more open system has not yet been established. Therefore, some are inclined to moral relativism, which can result in social fragmentation or lack of social cohesion. It is a great challenge for moral education to prevent the weakening of traditional values from leading to moral relativism, and to build a suitably modern moral values system based on democracy, justice and caring. This requires mutual cooperation and positive modelling in the family, at school and social education. The government should take a lead to implement moral education policies effectively and to offer adequate financial support at this turning point.

How can moral education help to balance Eastern and Western cultures and avert a cultural identity crisis?

Taiwan is influenced by Western culture, particularly American culture (e.g., political, economic and educational systems). For the last ten years, English, as the first foreign language, has been taught from Grade 5 in elementary schools. At the same time traditional Chinese culture is still vibrant (e.g., the lunar calendar, lantern festival, moon festival). Taiwan is trying to face how to balance the forces of traditional Eastern and postmodern Western culture, in order to build a Taiwanese native cultural life that is both indigenous and globally oriented. Attention needs to be given to increasing respect for Taiwan's diverse cultures, whilst demonstrating concern for traditional culture and encouraging cultural innovation so that Taiwan's native culture can blend with globally oriented cultures. Moral education should be expected to play a role in promoting greater appreciation of cultural diversity and building a sense of cultural identity.

How can moral education help in reducing cross-Strait tensions caused by opposing political ideologies?

Due to cross-Strait tensions between Taiwan and Mainland China, moral education in Taiwan has been influenced in several respects. First, Taiwan's government regards moral education as a tool of politics. In the authoritarian period, the moral education curricula reflected ideologies of Chinese consciousness and anti-Communism. From

the transitional period to date, traditional Chinese cultural values in moral education were intentionally ignored in educational reforms and replaced by the rising awareness of Taiwanese consciousness and native culture. Moral education in Taiwan is in the process of transformation and working out its own distinctive values. Secondly, moral education in Taiwan is influenced by crises of national and ethnic identity. According to a survey by the Mainland Affairs Council in 1998, about 38 per cent of Taiwan's population felt they were Taiwanese rather than Chinese, while 12 per cent thought they were Chinese rather than Taiwanese. About 45 per cent embraced a 'double identity' (Chung, 1999). Thirdly, due to unstable and uncertain relations in cross-Strait affairs, some Taiwanese people have become opportunistic and have lost core ethical values (e.g., honesty, patriotism). In order to create a peaceful future, with cross-Strait parity and ways in which both sides can treat each other with equality and good will, cross-Strait cultural and educational interaction should be further promoted to contribute to endeavours to achieve reciprocity and a win-win situation for both Taiwan and China. Moral education could help in reducing cross-Strait tensions if it can avoid being affected by political ideologies. In addition, moral education could serve to create a truly worthwhile values system in seeking for peace.

Strategies for the moral education of the future in Taiwan

In order to face these kinds of challenges from both inside and outside school, the current purpose and objectives of moral education in Taiwan need to be clearly formulated. In my opinion, moral education in Taiwan would benefit from implementing the following three approaches.

Critical thinking

Placing an emphasis on 'critical thinking' in moral education could help to develop a better balance between morality, culture and politics. Critical thinking could also serve to prevent various political ideologies and cultural traditions from unduly influencing moral education. The term 'critical' does not indicate negativity or faultfinding, but rather reflection, appraisal, rational judgement and communication. There are four main principles of critical thinking, which could be used in moral education. First, moral education should be regarded as a social process and put in historical context in order to make manifest both its objectivity and its subjectivity. Secondly, moral education should have its ideal core values system, one which is flexible and determined by public discourse and consensus, thus, hopefully, helping to balance different voices and perspectives. Thirdly, moral education should have clearly defined goals, thus preventing teachers and students from becoming political pawns or cultural conservatives. Fourthly, moral education should cultivate in students the ability to think critically and reflectively and to communicate rationally (Paul *et al.*, 1995; Lee, 2001).

Civic values

Civic values rather than private values should be emphasized in Taiwan's moral education, as a basis for a democratic and pluralistic society. That is, a good and modern citizen should possess the general knowledge, good character and skills needed to participate in public life. Being a person of good character in a democratic society should include having and practising civic values, including political values (e.g., respect for others' political positions, national identity), legal values (e.g., rule of law, justice), economic values (e.g., honesty, diligence), social values (e.g., caring, cooperation) and cultural values (e.g., tolerance, esteem) (Zhang & Lee, 2002). In addition, professional ethics should be stressed in school, especially in higher education and adult/continuing education.

Multiple teaching approaches

We should encourage multiple teaching approaches in Taiwan's moral education, so as to make it a more open, democratic and diverse process, instead of being merely doctrinaire and formalistic. Multiple approaches to moral education should comprise: blending moral education into all courses; emphasizing the moral dimension in school activities; paying attention to the moral atmosphere of the school; developing the moral awareness of teachers to enhance their moral professionalism and empower them to be role models for students; facilitating partnerships between parents, community representatives and teachers in moral education; finding ways in which the mass media and social organizations can share in responsibility for moral education.

In conclusion, by describing and analysing the history of moral education in Taiwan from 1949 to 2004, it can be seen that school-based education has played a significant role. However, more empirical research on the provision and practices of moral education is urgently needed in order to improve its delivery and evaluate its effects. The tasks of moral education are delicate and long-term projects. Since the family and various forms of social education have also become two influential domains for modern moral education, more emphasis needs to be given to the cooperation and coherence of the school, family and society in the moral education of young people. Thus, by means of multiple positive influences, either directly or indirectly, the quality of life and the moral culture of society may be raised.

Acknowledgements

My gratitude goes to Dr. Monica J. Taylor, two anonymous referees, Mr. Erik Johnson, Professor Frank W. Stevenson and the Academic Paper Editing Clinic, National Taiwan Normal University.

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