



Opening Remarks

Ethics in Medicine, Public Health and Biotechnology

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What is the “Moral”?

1) *Moral Experience*

Life is about values. Just being alive, negotiating important relations with others, doing work that means something to us, and living in some particular local place indicate that moral experience is inescapable.

2) *Moral Life*

Life is moral because we want to live a moral life. This includes moral imagination, moral responsibility, moral criticism, and moral engagement.



Ethics



- Ethics in moral life
 - The translocal aspirations of individuals to act ethically
- Ethics as a professional discourse
 - A normative language of elites



Examples of Moral and Social Issues in a Transforming Asia



- Decline in familial and filial ties
- Rise of individualism and materialism
- Spread of an urban youth culture to rural areas
- Epidemic of drugs, suicides, and violence
- Transformation of public ethics
- Deepening problem of corruption
- Conflicts between private gains and public welfare
- Inadequate regulatory structures and legal systems



Business and Professional Ethics and Local Moral Worlds

- Ethics training programs typically emphasize generalized principles and individual choices
- Yet such training programs should explicitly take into account the actual social conditions that motivate or discourage individuals to abide by general codes of conduct
- Case-based research and teaching exposes context-specific ethical problems and their social foundations



Moral Experience, Research, and Biotechnology

- I am advocating that we do ethics applied to research and biotechnology **through the empirical study of actual local worlds** in the laboratory, the research clinic, the population research setting and the biotechnology academic and industrial unit
- It is through **real problems and actual conflicts** in these worlds that ethics can be understood and taught



Current State of Ethics Training in East and Southeast Asian Societies



- Despite rich local traditions of ethical thought, ethics training in Asia has lagged behind extraordinary accomplishments in commercial and professional sectors
- Ethical codes of conduct in Asia have often been based on European and American frameworks



New Directions for Ethics Programs in Asia



- Professional and business ethics training in Asia should draw on rich local traditions of ethical thought in these societies
 - For example, should consider virtue-based ethics found in Confucian-influenced societies (as opposed to an exclusive focus on Euro-American principle-based ethics)
- Should take into account social transformations accompanying development in Asian societies



An Approach to Ethics as Self-Cultivation

- Drawing on Confucian traditions, Asian societies, more than Euro-American societies, have emphasized **moral cultivation** and the **virtue of the individual** as approaches to ethics
- Moral cultivation needs to be developed out of engagement with **local ethical traditions** and **real world problems**
- Such cultivation requires that the surrounding local moral world be **encouraging and supportive**



Cultivating the Moral Self

- Education in the **humanities** can help cultivate a deeper, richer, and more receptive sensibility: critical, aesthetically alert, and morally responsive
- The practice of **caregiving**, in which one is responsive to and responsible for another, is also an experience that deepens our humanity and refines our moral sensibilities



Morality and Caregiving

- Caregiving as an existential act that defines our humanity and our relationships with others
- In practice, not a burden but a way of being
- Caregiving provides a model of an ethical orientation we can strive to adopt in diverse aspects of our lives, including in professional settings



Image Credits

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