**“Empathy with Those with Obscured Heart/Mind (*xin* 心)”: What We Can Learn from Wang Yangming**

Huang Yong

The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Although it is now generally accepted that the philosophical discussion of empathy appeared in China much earlier than in the West, it is also believed that such discussion in traditional Chinese philosophy has been rendered out of dated by the extensive contemporary philosophical and psychological studies of empathy in the West. While I think this claim is partially true, I believe that there are a number of important Confucian insights into the phenomenon of empathy that have been largely neglected in these contemporary studies. In this paper, by focusing on Wang Yangming, I shall discuss one of them: empathy for the empathy for devils or, to use a term that Wang Yangming would use, people with obscured heart/mind. Empathy as commonly understood is the emotion or feeling that an empathic person experiences vicariously with a person who suffers or is going to suffer some physical pain. Wang Yangming, however, has a broad understanding of empathy. It is not only a feeling about another person’s physical pain but also about other people’s “moral pain,” the pain people should, could, and would feel when their internal wellbeing is harmed, i.e., when their heart/mind is obscured, resulting either in their being unempathic about other people’s suffering or in their positively causing other people to suffer. A truly empathic person vicarious feels such moral pain with devils and is inclined to help relieve them of such pain, i.e. to help them cease to be devils and become empathic people, just as he/she would vicariously feel physical pain with another person actually experiencing it and is inclined to help relieve the person of such physical pain.

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