



Wu Hsing Tao Newsletter

SPRING/SUMMER 2007

AT THE END OF THE SECOND YEAR OF THEIR TRAINING, EACH STUDENT IS ASKED TO WRITE A PAPER ON ETHICS

Here is Rob Terranella's thought on ethics

Does nature and human nature have an ethic structure, and what are the components if so?

It has been suggested by many that ethics are nothing more than a reflection of the laws set by the culture. Thus, if we wish to know the ethical structure of human nature or nature itself, it is essential to examine culture. Following this line of logic, we can imply that different cultures have different morals. Indeed this should prove true if we contrast the culture of native humans to domesticated humans. Some native cultures thought it reasonable to eat and sacrifice their captives. However, this is a crime worth life in prison in today's domestic environment. Before accepting this as truth, let us first look further at the proposition that ethics is a function of the cultural laws. Are there any examples where laws are not governing the ethics of a culture? This task is more difficult than one might think as culture in and of itself implies a set of laws and structures that bring a group together. Thus the supposition that ethics is the function of the laws that govern a culture begs the question of what separates cultures from ethics. In other words, were there morals before there was culture? This brings us back to the original question. Does nature, apart from humans having or not having an ethical structure, have an ethical structure?

(Taoism) would say that nature has no ethical code, implying that there is no position or stance on any outcome. It is the human tendency to anthropomorphize nature that creates the idea that nature has morals. According to Taoism, the workings of the universe are a wonderful mystery. They are mysterious because they are governed by no-one or nothing, they just are. In this right, there are no ethics that govern their workings. Despite cyclical patterns in nature, there is no code of ethics being enforced as the laws of nature are laws that are often broken without answering to any authority.

The naturalist Jim Corbett author of "Jungle Lore" would say that nature does have a cultural law that it follows. This man speaks from

first hand experience, and gives examples of birds and elephants communicating through this 'jungle law.' While he is no less correct than the Taoists, it is easy to see how one could taint their experience of reality to fit their beliefs. The idea of seeing and understanding reality clearly is what we find when exploring the writings of the late Niels Bohr. In his book "Atomic Physics and Human Knowledge" he suggests that all cultures have their own bias and it is difficult for any one person to know where their bias lies until being exposed to different cultures. Indeed, he goes on to say that the intermingling of cultures is an important part of expanding human understanding. In essence, we are blinded by our knowledge and our lack of knowledge, both of which are a reflection of our human culture. Still, we should not be quick to separate human nature from nature itself. It is obvious that humans have an ethical/moral structure. What is not

"In essence, we are blinded by our knowledge and our lack of knowledge, both of which are a reflection of our human culture."

so obvious is if there is a single "correct" moral/ethical code to follow. If there is, can we look to nature to find the correct code or any code at all. Two opposing ethical views might shed some light on this subject.

A book by Thich Nhat Hanh "Love in Action" expresses ideas on morality. In reference to the Vietnam War, he continually reiterates the fact that war is unjust and nonsensical. While I agree with him, I believe this belief to be a product of our domestication. When our instincts to survive superseded our cultural intelligences, killing was a way of life. In earlier times, survival was less dependent on culture and more dependent on survival of the fittest. There were no rules to killing, it was just a way of life. Hanh seems to believe that humans have entitlements, and while this seems intuitively true in today's world, these entitlements may not be so obvious should we take a few thousand year leap back in history. Of the

Continued on next page

HIGHLIGHTS

EVENTS

**Wednesdays
Lunchtime Kundalini Yoga**

Join Yoga instructor, Mollie Wood and the Wu Hsing community for Kundalini Yoga class every Wednesday from 12:30-1:30pm. Just \$8 per class. Open to the community.

**August 18
Open House & 5E Ritual Workshop**

Tour our campus, enjoy refreshments, learn more about the Five Elements.

1:00-2:00: Admission Open House/Tours
2:00-4:00: 5E Ritual Workshop

4:00-5:00: Admissions Information/Q&A

Please RSVP if attending. Call (206) 327-7188 or email school@wuhsing.org

SCHOOL NEWS

Dan Rhoads, our Registrar, has left at the end of May—thank you Dan for the wonderful transcripts that you created. Good luck in your new endeavors and be sure to think of us North westerners as you bask in the California sun.

Welcome Joya Christy, who will not only be replacing Dan Rhoads as our Registrar, but will be our new Financial Aid Officer also. In addition, she will be assisting Dirk, Chaitania and Konnie with the clinic.

Dirk, Chaitania, and Kristin, along with Dan Seitz, our consultant, have completed the school's first progress and annual report toward accreditation. In addition, they are beginning the process of the self study aspect of the accreditation.

Welcome Class XV!

Continued from page 1

books I read for this project, Nietzsche is the only one that seems to give more merit to other cultures than his own.

Nietzsche points out that there is a marked difference between truth and ethics. The popular ethics are in place among a population because of their supposed utility to provide safety and comfort to the whole of the population, not to individuals. He goes on to say that most ethics are put in place by religions or governments which provide rewards and punishments for acting in accordance or lack thereof with the ethics in place. We should not be mistaken in thinking that the popular ethics are equated to truths, for truth demands to be declared whether ugly or unethical. In Christianity there are ethical codes of conduct such as "don't steal, don't kill etc. Despite their supposed utility to the population, they are not universal truths. A quick scan through antiquity will show this explicitly. Moreover, the laws of Christianity provide a supposed redemptive power for suffering. The implication is that our suffering provides safety or comfort to the population through winning God's grace. I must agree with Nietzsche, this idea seems all too backwards. It seems that the ethics for whom implementation was to provide safety and comfort are providing the very thing they set out to prevent. Being asked to accept our sufferings without resistance provides a consistent punishment and can even be seen as cruelty onto man.

If we look into Greek antiquity, we will see that the ethics of today are not only far from universal truths, they also restrain further human development. Humanity can be characterized by a code of conduct or ethical codes that humans abide by, and it is this code that distinguishes humans from other aspects of nature. In reality humans are not separate from nature at all. I believe the most noble of humans are those who embody nature to its fullest capacity. Those abilities which are terrifying and inhumane may be the most natural of all. Indeed the most humane beings of antiquity, the Greeks, have such traits. Our modern perspective twists the raw human character of the Greeks into notions of cruelty and grotesque insanity. It was proper war conduct for the victor in a fight to kill the entire male population and sell the women and children into slavery. This is a clear display of the Greek necessity to let their hatred flow forth fully. Our perspective on this as cruel only displays our lack of understanding what is truly Greek as well as further exemplifying the fact that ethics are inseparable from the culture within which they are found. Despite our efforts to prove the justness and humanness of our ethical code, the subject of ethics is clearly a debatable one. In this light, I think it would best to side with Niels Borh in his suggestion to take as many cultural perspectives as possible to shape our own. In this process we must pay special attention to the inherent pull to maintain our current views, instead pushing forth to find new ideas and perspective on the old. As technology expands, our world collapses and brings distant cultures closer. The idea of having one universal ethical code based on years of contrasting and extracting ideas from across the globe may be possible someday.

ENJOYING SCHOOL PREGNANT AND WITH A NEW BABY

by Louise O'Sullivan

I am writing to share with you the essentials that helped me survive school pregnant and with a newborn. Firstly, receiving Five Element treatments during my pregnancy was essential for warding off dreadful morning sickness and surging hormones. Receiving treatments was just another way to stay connected with my baby, and ensure that I was providing a peaceful environment for my baby to grow and thrive. I do recall, during the third trimester of my pregnancy, having inner conflict over working so I would be financially ready for the baby, but knowing that it was too much for me and my baby. Thanks to my treatments, I was able to listen to my inner voice and quit nursing at Harborview two months before the baby was due. This ended up being the right decision because my baby relaxed, my blood pressure, and my baby only came a couple of weeks early.

Once the baby arrived, I was amazed at how nature did exactly what it was meant to do. Breast feeding felt natural and helped my body recover. My energy was definitely at an all time low for six to eight weeks after the delivery, so I honored that with no physical exertion unless absolutely necessary. I did attend point lab at four weeks and I was still too foggy in the head to get much out of it, but that improved by eight weeks. I remember writing papers starting that third week while my mum and husband watched the baby. I kicked myself because I could have gotten these done prior to delivery, but I was slacking. **ADVICE:** Get your papers done prior to delivery. I was lucky



Louise and her son Joshua

that no seminars were scheduled until the baby was six weeks old. I was able to attend the next seminar and stay on course thanks to my wonderful husband who would come to school and pick up the pumped milk and then feed the baby throughout the weekend.

BABY ESSENTIALS FOR SCHOOL

- Great partner who can care for the baby
- Breast Pump

My Joshua is now ten months old, and my husband and I continue to make changes in our lives to accommodate school and the baby. My work has decreased to just a few days of massaging and teaching yoga because these fit into our schedule. My husband has a flexible schedule so that he is able to watch the baby during observation and point lab. The bottom line is that I definitely have less time for school, but when I do have time, I am more focused. Furthermore, when I get away to point lab or observation, it is a real outing for me. Five Element studies can be done while you are mothering an living. I feel blessed to have school during this stage of motherhood because it is something for me. School makes me happy and that in turn makes my family happy. I do anticipate some childcare challenges when clinic starts but we will cross that bridge when it comes. Life with a baby makes you simplify, slow down, prioritize and get in touch with your earth element.

BOOK FAVORITES FROM THE WU Hsing LIBRARY AND STUDENT READING LIST

Cassandra Knight, Class XIII

Who Can Ride the Dragon? An Exploration of the Cultural Roots of Traditional Chinese Medicine. By Zhang Yu Huan, Ken Rose

Rob Terranella, Class VIII

Nourishing Destiny
By Lonnie Jarret

Dorota Sowinska, Class XIV

Inner Bridges
By Fritz Frederic Smith.

Yvonne Pastika, Class VIII

Dragon Rises, Red Bird Flies Psychology & Chinese Medicine.
By Leon, M.D. Hammer, forward by Ted Kaptchuk.

ABOUT ROLE PLAY

by Keith Judelman

I found the role playing exercises to be quite illuminating. In general, it is a fun activity because we get to try out applying what we have been learning over the last year. I think it brings the didactic Elements to life, in that we can feel and see how they really manifest in people. We learn to recognize them and shift between them on the spot. It is still difficult- some Elements come easier than others, and it is easy to lose one's grasp and fall into another Element. But I can see where we are going and I am excited to get there. At one point, I was stuck in the wrong Element and could not bring myself out. Then all of a sudden it happened. It was really good and reassuring in a way to see the change happen, just like that. It makes it seem not so far off. The role playing exercise has highlighted the enormity of the task ahead of us, but it also illumines part of the way to get there and shows how far we have come.



Photo by Moon-Yun Chang

LIGHT ON THREADS

by Jon Pontrello

When I read *Dandelion Wine* by Ray Bradbury in high school, it shed light on an undiscovered thread in which I became very interested?. It is this same thread that has brought me to Wu Hsing Tao School. As part of the curriculum we have to collect poems. I like to read poems, but what does it have to do with acupuncture? Recently I was reading Bradbury again and found the answer in one of his quotes, "Read poetry everyday, it flexes muscles that don't get flexed enough." In order to become a five element acupuncturist these muscles must become well-toned and ready for action. It is not that poetry is the only way to exercise these muscles, but it is the medium most writers use.

Poetry is the formless language of essence. In poetry it is not the words that are so important, but what lives beneath the words that speaks to us. In the moment a poem is composed, the heart is impressed upon and then translated by the mind that hodge podges existing forms together to create robust rivers beneath the common definitions of words – defining things for which our language has no definition of. As the poem is strung together with common words something else arises. A picture is painted that is unique, new and alive.

I don't think Ray Bradbury wants people to read poetry everyday so they will become scholars. Through the act of reading poetry, we gradually become more receptive to the part of ourselves that takes on impressions of our experience. What kind of song is the poet singing? What kind of picture is this story painting? What is the tone of this foggy morning near the end of January? What is this person really telling me right now? The questions to which I have awakened call



Photo by Drew Sinatra

for answers that must be told! The few words that run around in my head are like the seeds that one can only hold a handful of at a time. When they are thrown into the dirt and given time and the energy of the elements they grow towards the sky.

Time and growing awareness has been my experience at Wu Hsing Tao School as I have begun to communicate my observations of nature as it manifests within the environment, people and myself. Poetry was the long ago spark, but now the fire is going good as my creative flame burns brightly. I no longer need to throw books of poetry into the fire to

“Read poetry everyday,
it flexes muscles
that don't get flexed enough.”

keep it alive because I know the substance of life that flows all around me. However, I keep reading books of black words on white paper. Life is more than these two colors, but I have read books that penetrate to the source of the infinitely deep richness of life as well as met people who only see existence as a black and white page, one after another, cover to cover. They act as if they already know the ending, and don't realize the book is being written with each beat of their own hearts. Through reading and writing, we nourish that place where creativity originates – it is not just something that happens at home with a pen and paper. Life becomes a blank page for us to write on with actions and words. With practice we can become receptive to the moment and can express ourselves freely in relation to what we hear until everything we do and say has the vital essence of a long living poem. Practice makes perfect!

FIVE ELEMENT ACUPUNCTURE WORD SLEUTH

Created by Laurie MacMillan

Chi
Needle
Water
Earth
Sedate
Wood
Fire
Tao
Worsley
Metal
Tonify

E	B	P	O	M	R	Y	Z	N	E
A	T	O	N	I	F	Y	W	T	B
R	C	T	P	N	M	O	E	C	I
T	F	A	Q	J	R	D	F	H	I
H	D	O	I	S	A	J	C	L	F
G	A	L	L	S	Z	P	Q	I	I
H	R	E	T	A	W	I	U	V	R
X	Y	E	L	D	E	E	N	V	E
Y	B	Q	Z	W	O	O	D	M	T
O	M	E	T	A	L	R	U	J	W

FROM THE EDITOR

The arrival of spring heralds new growth in and around the Wu Hsing Tao School. Outside the classroom windows, an emerald carpet surrounds oak trees unfurling their leaves. Inside the school, Dirk, Chaitania, Kristin and school consultant, Dan Seitz, have brought to fruition the first progress and annual report toward accreditation. Meanwhile, students continue to ripen and mature their way toward becoming fledging Five Element acupuncturists.

Furthest along the path, classes VIII and IX are nearly half way through clinic under the guidance of Dirk, Mark and Konnie. Not far behind these interns, classes X and XI are now in the final observation phase of their studies. With CNT certificates in hand, classes X and XI anticipate internship. Dirk, Mark, Chaitania, Konnie and adjunct faculty, water, prune, and fertilize classes XII, XIII, XIV, and XV who are in didactic phase of their journey, so they too can achieve full maturation.

Simultaneously, in the far corner of the classroom, Isadora, the class skeleton, weeps as she watches all the students wishing that she too could flex and arc her spine under the guidance of Mollie Wood, school Kundalini Yoga instructor; Or wrap her digits around a bamboo brush, dip the rabbit fur tip in a well of ink and follow the strokes of LuSheng Chong, school calligraphy instructor; Or even, plant her tarsal bones into the bamboo floor and sink and step with Joseph Pau, the school Tai Chi instructor. Isadora's moans can be heard under the rustling spring winds.

Working quietly behind the scene, Kristin makes the necessary preparations for the new class in May as Judith weeds through the clinic files and the librarian plants rows of books along the library shelves. Meanwhile, a tendril of corkscrew leaves dangle over a willow branch by the backyard pond where ducks witness all the comings and goings at the Wu Hsing Tao School

— Laurie MacMillan

2005 - 2007 Donations:

Thank you to the Team Trio Fund, Judith Adams, Loren Lukens and Deyerle Anderson for their generous contributions to WHTS.

A thank you from the school to Judith B. for working as interim Office Manager and assisting Konnie as Clinic Coordinator. Thanks from the Dean and Director to Laurie, Moon and her husband Doug, and Taunya for the newsletter and to all the students for their contributions to the newsletter which make it possible.

Submissions

Keep those submissions coming. If you don't see your articles in this newsletter they will be in the next one. Next submission dead line is September 1, 2008.