

In Memorial

We are deeply saddened by the passing of our good friend and colleague K. K. Hwang on July 30th, 2023, in his sleep.

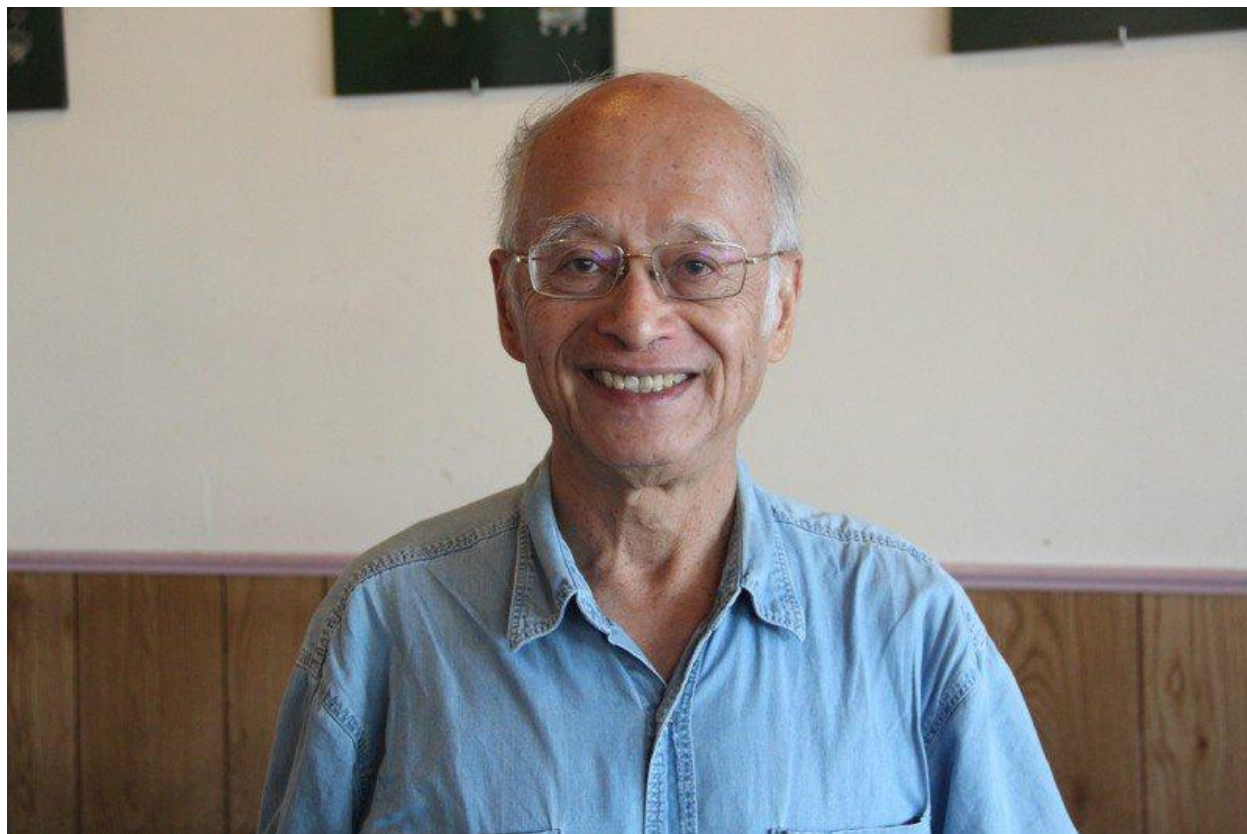


Photo from Zhao, 2023

We have lost a true friend and a superstar in indigenous social science. Recently, we are fortunate to have received his contribution to *Undefeatable: The Saga of Paul T. P. Wong's Search for Meaning and Happiness in a Difficult World* (currently in progress). This contribution might be one of his last papers to be published. Therefore, there is an added sense of poignancy and significance for his chapter.

We have known him for more than 10 years. There was an immediate bonding between him and my husband when we first met him in his office at the National Taiwan University in Taipei.

His strong support for my husband's research was clearly articulated in the first paragraph of his 2-paged letter of recommendation for the Tang Prize as shown below:

As a senior researcher who has devoted his academic career to the development of indigenous psychology, it is my great pleasure to recommend Dr. Paul T. P. Wong for the 2022 Tang Prize for Achievements in Psychology. During the positive psychology bloom, few psychologists cared about the wellbeing of those who were suffering. Dr. Wong is a pioneer who has dedicated his life to helping the suffering people search and reconstruct their meanings in life in order to find their inner peace and sustainable happiness. People usually flock to places of bustle and laughter, but Wong compassionately brings light and hope for those suffering in the dark. Dr. Wong is the best candidate who deserves the Nobel Prize of Psychology - the Tang Prize for Achievements in Psychology – to recognize his great contributions and life-long achievements.

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<https://udn.com/news/story/6656/7335644>

On Mature Happiness: Life Thrives in Sorrow and Calamity

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As a senior researcher who has devoted all his academic career to the development of indigenous psychology, it is my great pleasure to contribute a chapter for this Festschrift in honor of Dr. Paul Wong's 85th birthday. His long-term work in the field of Existential Psychology has inspired numerous colleagues and followers to reflect on the nature of mainstream psychology. His efforts in advocating the importance of "mature" happiness have made significant contribution to contemporary psychology by encouraging many psychologists to seek for remedy to Western scientific psychology from Eastern philosophies, including Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism.

Mature Happiness

According to Wong & Bowers (2018), as a part of modern Western culture, scientific research on happiness primarily focused on the pleasant life (hedonic wellbeing) and the flourishing life (eudaimonic wellbeing) with little attention to the third type of happiness which can best be described as "mature" or "noetic" happiness (Wong, 2017), which is a positive mental state of inner serenity, harmony, and connectiveness, resulting from disciplined self-cultivation of spiritual-existential capabilities. He argues that true happiness is a consequence of learning how to live a meaningful life and maintain inner harmony regardless of the circumstances; it is a byproduct of living a meaningful life (Frankl, 1946/1985).

In his article on Chinese positive psychology, Wong (2016) discusses the position of disciplined self-cultivation in Chinese cultural heritage that may facilitate the mental state of mature happiness. Being the largest nation with the longest history in the world, the cultural heritage of self-cultivation has endowed Chinese people with the character strengths of

endurance and patience. Such a cultural heritage has demonstrated itself again and again in their collective history of having survived natural disasters, oppressive regimes, and foreign occupations. Wong (2016) argues that the Chinese cultural beliefs, which stem from Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism, have provided the Wisdoms to cope with the complexity and vicissitudes of life.

Mencius' Concepts on Live Thrives in Sorrow and Calamity

I strongly agree with his argument. For the sake of explaining how a cultural tradition may have influenced an individual, I developed an epistemological strategy of two steps for constructing culture-inclusive theories: First, construct the universal models of *self* and *social interaction*; Second, use those models to analyze a particular cultural tradition (Hwang, 2015a, 2017). Here in this article, I would like to endorse Wong's argument by using my *Mandala* model of self (Hwang, 2011, 2015b) as well as psychodynamic model of *Self-nature* (Hwang, 2018a, 2018b) to analyze one passage of Mencius' famous sayings on self-cultivation, namely, *Chapter on Life Thrives in Sorrow and Calamity* (生於憂患章), which is very popular in Chinese culture:

“When Heaven is going to bestow a great responsibility to a particular person (故天將降大任於斯人也), it first trains his mind with various difficult problems (必先勞其心智), exhausts one's muscles and bones (勞其筋骨), starves one's physical flesh (餓其體膚), empties one's body with fatigue (空乏其身), frustrates and confounds all his undertakings (行拂亂其所為).

All those means are designated to exercise one's mind with an ability to control one's temper (所以動心忍性), so as to enhance one's capability to handle problematic situation which was beyond one's ability before (曾益其所不能).

A person may reform oneself only when he reflects on his own mistakes constantly (人恒

過，然後能改), because solution can be worked out only after the problem has distressed his mind and perplexed his thoughts (困於心，衡於慮，而後作); and the whole situation can be understood after things have been (evidenced in others' looks and set forth in their words) (徵於色，發於聲，而後喻).

If a state has no strong team of Legalist advisors in the court to cope with external calamities from hostile countries, the state will generally come to ruin (入則無法家拂士，出則無敵國外患者，國恒亡). From all these things we see how life thrives in sorrow and calamity and perishes in ease and pleasure (然後知生於憂患而死於安樂也).”

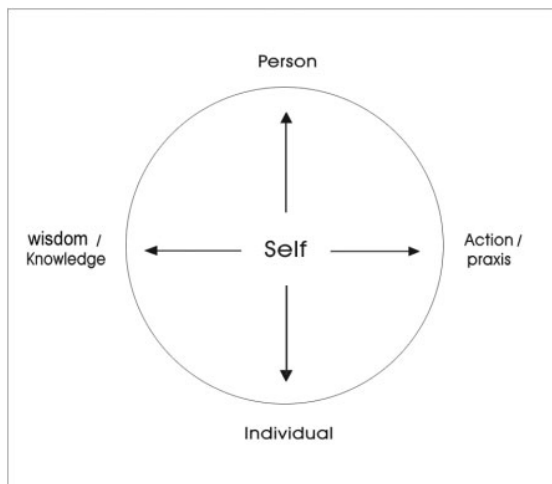
Mandala model of self

This message of Mencius' sayings has been frequently cited by Chinese people for self-encouragement or to encourage others in circumstances of hard times. It consists of three parts, the first two parts can be well-explained by *Mandala* model of self and psychodynamic model of *Self-nature* respectively, while the third part is the conclusion of his discourse. Here, I would first like to present my universal Mandala model of self (Hwang, 2011).

In Figure 1, *self* in the circle is situated in the center of two bi-directional arrows: One end of the horizontal arrow points toward *action* or *praxis*, the other end points toward *wisdom* or *knowledge*. The top of the vertical arrow points to person and the bottom points to individual. All of the four concepts are located outside the circle but within the square. The arrangement of the five concepts indicates one's *self* is being impinged by several forces from one's lifeworld. But, all the five concepts have special implications in cultural psychology, which can be elaborated with a consideration of Mencius' *Chapter on Life Thrives in Sorrow and Calamity*.

Figure 1

Mandala Model of Self (Adopted from Hwang, 2011, p. 330)



The distinction between *person*, *self*, and *individual* was proposed by Grace G. Harris (1989). Based on an intensive review of previous anthropological literature, she indicated that the triple structure of personality can be found in most cultures worldwide, but these three concepts have very different meanings in the Western academic tradition. As a biological being, the individual regards each human being as a member of the human species who is motivated to pursue resources to satisfy their biological needs as other animal.

Person is a sociological or cultural concept. A person is conceptualized as an agent-in-society who takes a certain standpoint in the social order and plans a series of actions to achieve a particular goal. Every culture has its own definitions of appropriate and permitted behaviors, which are endowed with specific meanings and values that can be passed on to an individual through various channels of socialization.

Self is a psychological concept. In the conceptual framework of Figure 1, self is the locus of experience that is able to perform various actions in different social contexts, while also able to indulge in self-reflection when blocked from goal attainment.

Exercise One's Mind and Control One's Temper

The dual belief in Heaven(天) and spirits(鬼神) is the metaphysical foundation of Confucian morality (Hwang, 2015a). Heaven is the transcendent source of Confucian value, its interaction with Earth (地) may produce everything in the world, including human being (人). When an individual died, his spirit may become either god (神) or ghost (鬼), depending on his moral performance or conduct of immorality in the world, but it is impossible for him to become Heaven.

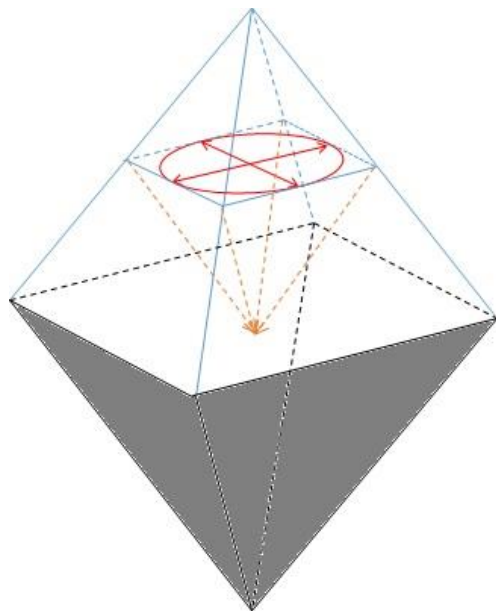
One's fortune or misfortune is determined by the Heaven, therefore, it may "exhausts one's muscles and bones", "starves one's physical flesh", "empties one's body with fatigue"; but, the meaning of an *individual's* biological sufferings is interpreted by one's *self*. If he identifies himself with a sociological *person* and believes that he has been bestowed a great responsibility by the Heaven, the meaning of frustration for *actions/praxis* in one's lifeworld might be understood as Heaven's training program which contains various difficult problems that may "frustrate and confound all his undertakings." At this time, one may find that his *knowledge* is insufficient for his *wisdom* to deal with the problematic situation. If he believes that all these means are designated to exercise one's mind with an ability to control one's temper, he should make up his mind to enhance one's capability, which was beyond one's ability before.

As I mentioned before, the construction of *Mandala* model of self has been inspired by my visit to the Borobudur Temple located 40 kilometers northwest of Yogyakarta, Indonesia (Hwang, 2011). The *Mandala* itself can be conceptualized as a cross-sectional slice of the Borobudur tower, which is actually a tri-dimensional Mandala. Nevertheless, as I indicated in my article on *Psychodynamic Model of Self-nature* (Hwang, 2018b), viewing from the perspective of Jung's psychology, even a tri-dimensional Borobudur tower cannot represent the structure of whole personality adequately. In the last chapter of Jung's (1951/1969) *Aion*, which was completed in his late years, he tried to depict the structure of the *Self* by quaternity. Among many

figures made by Jung, there was an ogdoad composed of two pyramids (see Figure 2). I do believe that it can be used to denote the formal structure of *Self-nature* (自性, *zixing*) more adequately.

Figure 2

Ogdoad: Formal structure of Self-nature



The formal structure of ogdoad is composed of two pyramids. The top of lower pyramid upside down denotes the moment of conception when one's life begins; while the top of upper pyramid means the ultimate goal of one's life which had been defined in various ways by different religions. The quaternity of their common base denotes the moment when a baby was born (Figure 2). The *Mandala* model of self in Figure 1 represents one's *punctual self* (Taylor, 1989), existing at a particular moment of one's life which should be conceptualized as a tri-dimensional model like a Borobudur tower or a pyramid.

A complete psychodynamic model of *Self-nature* (*zixing*) is composed of two pyramids: The upper one represents one's course of life, while the opposite one represents one's *collective unconscious*. All previous experiences will be stored in the *personal unconscious* with the

passage of time from the moment of birth. Thus, the formal structure of ogdoad represents the topography of *conscious*, *personal unconscious* and *collective unconscious*.

Capability of Problem-Solving

The second part of Mencius' *Chapter on Life Thrives in Sorrow and Calamity* can be interpreted in the context of my psychodynamic model of *Self-nature*. When an individual is facing a very difficult problematic situation which has been defined as extremely important to one's self, he has to mobilize all resources or *knowledge* stored in his *personal unconscious* or even *collective unconscious* to seek for a tentative solution by various means of trial-and-error. He certainly may make mistake in the process of seeking for solution, therefore, Mencius emphasized that "a person may reform oneself only when he reflexes on his own mistakes constantly", "because solution can be worked out only after the problem has distressed his mind and perplexed his thought".

Sometimes the problematic situation is much more complicated because it may involve many interpersonal conflicts. In this case, Mencius suggested that one must take into consideration of all parties involved for "the whole situation can be understood after things have been evidenced in their looks and set forth in their words". His suggestion is most applicable to the interaction between prince and ministers for discussing affairs of state in the court. This is the reason why Mencius argued that if a state has no strong team of Legalist advisors in the court to cope with external calamities from hostile countries, the state will generally come to ruin.

Conclusion

Conceiving in the context of psychodynamic model of *Self-nature* (Hwang, 2018b), the mental state of one's *punctual self* as described by the *Mandala* model (Figure 1) is located at a particular time (t1) in the tri-dimensional model of *Self-nature* (Figure 2). The *Mandala* model describes one's time-engaged self, while the model of *Self-nature* depicts one's whole

personality. The Confucian discipline of self-cultivation may expand his *knowledge*, enhance his capability of coping with problems, and transform one's *self* to a new mental state that enables him to deal with difficult problems easily at later time (t2), when he may experience mature happiness with inner serenity, harmony, and connectiveness as described by Wong & Bowers (2018).

In this short article, I reinterpret Mencius' *Chapter on Live Thrives in Sorrow and Calamity* in terms of my *Mandala* model and psychodynamic model of Self-nature. Together with Wong's *Mandala* model of mature happiness, we have shown that the Asian treasure of wisdom can make a significant contribution to contemporary study of positive psychology beyond WEIRD societies (Wong & Cowden, 2022).

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