

II. Voluntarism and eudaimonism

1. ACTION AND AGENT

Kekes introduces two conceptions of morality. The first one is voluntarism in which the action is primary. 'Voluntarists concentrate on action at the expense of agents, because they place choice of action at the foundation of morality.' (KEKES 1989: 42.) According to voluntarism, morality is based on choice of action. In this, morality is 'a human artifact'. They say that, 'what we are is formed by innumerable choices.' (KEKES 1989: 37-39.)

The second view of morality described by Kekes is eudaimonism, the roots of which are Aristotelian. In it the character or moral agent is primary. According to this, persons are moral agents regardless of their choices and actions. The essential moral problem is what type of person the moral agent ought to be. The quality of moral actions follows the quality of the character. A good character or moral agent performs praiseworthy actions without deliberating about choice. There is a dispute between voluntarists and eudaimonists. The problem is how we should judge people morally. 'Should we judge them on the basis of what they have become through their choices or on the basis of their characters independently of how they came to possess them.' (KEKES 1989: 37-39, 42-43.)

According to eudaimonists, moral agents are born. Choices and actions alter them and they are shaped by the moral tradition. These, however, do not produce the agents. The moral agency is more fundamental than choice and actions are. (KEKES 1989: 43.)

The voluntarists, on the other hand, emphasize improvement while stressing that the agents are choosers and actors. The talents and weaknesses, capacities and incapacities of the agent are important concepts for the voluntarists. Moral progress is measured from the starting point. This means that the level of moral achievement does not necessarily indicate the moral progress. If an agent has started from a higher moral starting point, his moral progress is less than the progress of such an agent who has started from a lower starting point, if both have reached the same moral level. (KEKES 1989: 43.)

2. NATURAL SUBSTANCE AND CULTURE

In the following I will attempt to clarify to what extent Confucius emphasizes action or an agent, in other words to what extent he is a voluntarist or an eudaimonist. This should be solved first in order to see the foundation of choice in Confucius' thinking.

Confucius speculates upon the problem in the following:

The Master said, When natural substance 質 prevails over ornamentation 文 you get the boorishness of the rustic. When ornamentation prevails over natural substance, you get the pedantry of the scribe. Only when ornament and substance are duly blended do you get the true Gentleman. (AN. 6:16.)

When natural substance prevails over ornamentation means 'when nature prevails over culture' (WALEY 1964: 119).

Natural substance 質 prevailing over the culture 文 would refer to the moral agent in a natural life situation. Confucius regards such a person as uncivilized. When culture is predominating, even then the person is far from ideal, a pedant. Culture and nature have to be in balance. As an ethical agent the rustic would act naturally without the control of a culture. Confucius does not value such a character.

The relationship between culture and the Gentleman is mentioned in the Analects:

Chi Tzu-ch'eng said, A Gentleman 君子 is a Gentleman in virtue of the stuff 質 he is made of. Culture 文 cannot make a Gentleman. Tzu-kung said, I am sorry, Sir, that you should have said that. For the saying goes that 'when a Gentleman has spoken, a team of four horses cannot overtake his words'. (AN. 12:8.)

Culture 文 is just as important as inborn qualities 質; and inborn qualities, no less important than culture. 'Remove the hairs from the skin of a tiger or panther, and what is left looks just like the hairless hide of a dog or sheep.' (CHENG Shu-te 1974: 729.)

Waley explicates this as follows:

The man of good birth is potentially capable of 'patterning his coat' with culture, and thus distinguishing himself from the common herd. But good birth alone, though essential as a basis for culture, is not enough to make a Gentleman in the Confucian sense. (WALEY 1964: 164-165.)

Confucius clarifies his ideas about innate qualities:

Master K'ung said, Highest are those who are born wise 生而知之者. Next those who become wise by learning, After them come those who have to toil painfully in order to acquire learning. Finally, to the lowest class of the common people belong those who toil painfully without ever managing to learn. (AN. 16:9.)

Confucius continues the same theme when he says of himself:

I for my part am not one of those who have innate knowledge 我非生而知之者. I am simply one who loves the past and who is diligent in investigating it. (AN. 7:19; J. N. WILLIAMS 1988: 164-165.)

In these places in the Analects, Confucius is seeking a balance between the natural qualities of the moral agent and the influence of culture. The main emphasis is clearly on the agent. The agent is formed by his inborn qualities 質, and by the culture 文. Or he may have innate knowledge or acquired knowledge. This discussion does not, therefore, consider the actions themselves, but only the agent, and as such it points in the direction of eudaimonism, where the agent is important.

3. RARE GOOD AGENTS

When discussing preference and choice, a relevant question is what kinds of persons does Confucius regard as being appropriate to be the agent of Goodness and of which persons is he unsure whether he is good or not and to which people he denies the quality of goodness.

In many places in *The Analects* Confucius describes the actions of a Good Agent, although he did not regard many actual persons as Good, *jen* 仁. His sayings can be seen as an area of ethical formation. According to Confucius the living person who was closest to Goodness was Yen Hui. This appears in the following:

The Master said, Hui is capable of occupying his whole mind for three months on end with no thought but that of Goodness, *jen* 仁. The others can do so, some for a day, some even for a month; but that is all. (AN. 6:5.)

This pays attention especially to Hui's mind, not to his actions or choices, for Confucius believed that Hui was psychologically closest to Goodness, *jen*, and that therefore moral emotions were closest to the ideal (GIBBARD 1992: 126–150; FUNG Yu-lan 1989: 3). Strictly speaking, Confucius here does not say whether Hui was Good or not. In this case Confucius speaks about an agent, Hui, who is capable of containing within himself laudable moral qualities. With this emphasis upon the agent, Confucius once again approaches eudaimonism. However, the voluntaristic mood can also be seen, because the question concerns Hui's capacity for high moral performance and his ability to choose the right contents for his thoughts.

Another passage telling about Yen Hui is the following:

The Master in discussing Tzu-kung said to him, Which do you yourself think is the better, you or Hui? He answered saying, I dare not so much as look at Hui. For Hui has but to hear one part in ten, in order to understand the whole ten. Whereas if I hear one part, I understand no more than two parts. The Master said, Not equal to him – you and I are not equal to him! (AN. 5:8, 2:9, 11:6.)

This points out Hui's talent and intellectual excellence. The following passage exposes this further:

Duke Ai asked which of the disciples had a love of learning. Master K'ung answered him saying, There was Yen Hui. He had a great love of learning. He never vented his wrath upon the innocent nor let others suffer for his faults. Unfortunately the span of life allotted to him by Heaven was short, and he died, At present there are none or at any rate I have heard of none who are fond of learning. (AN. 6:2. See also AN. 9:19–21.)

This suggests that intellectual phenomena and ethical behavior are closely bound together. In this ethical behavior it is essential that the agent achieves sentimental balance. Hui was a good example since he could regulate his sentimental reactions, especially his negative ones. He was capable of choosing the right kind of attitudes, acts and emotions. Moreover, the particular emphasis on Hui's talent as a student points towards a voluntaristic moral conception.

Confucius praises Hui as follows:

The Master said, Incomparable indeed was Hui! A handful of rice to eat, a gourdful of water to drink, living in a mean street – others would have found it unendurably depressing, but to Hui's cheerfulness it made no difference at all, Incomparable indeed was Hui! (AN. 6:9.)

Hui's choice of an unassuming and simple lifestyle was the ideal in Confucius' mind. Here Confucius pays attention to his actions and also to his sentimental attitudes. In his simple lifestyle he was cheerful: he did not need luxury in order to be happy. Confucius wanted Hui's unassuming attitude to be reflected in Hui's burial, but the disciples of Confucius did not agree. (AN. 11:10.) Here, again the mood is that Hui was naturally as he was, he did not have to work to achieve it. His choice was spontaneous and had its basis deep in his character. This can be seen as an eudaimonistic moral conception.

To sum up, in Hui's case, Confucius seems to regard Hui Good as a moral agent, and thus approaches eudaimonism. However, there are in Hui's case features which point towards voluntarism: His choices of thoughts and attitudes, and especially the emphasis upon his talent and progress as a student. It seems, therefore, that Confucius' conception of Hui's morality is quite clearly eudaimonistic, but that Hui's intellectual progress and talents can be seen as symptoms of voluntarism.

Dawson says:

Confucius is depicted as extremely reluctant to ascribe this quality (*jen*) to any given individual. Indeed he expresses doubt that anyone is capable of concentrating his whole effort on humanness for a single day (A 4.6). This reluctance to admit that anyone attains to *jen* is due to the fact that it is the quality of ideal human nature. On the other hand, since *jen* is an essential ingredient of the human being, not something which depends on anything outside himself, it should in theory be easily trainable, if men were true to their natures. 'Is humaneness [*jen*] really so far away', he asks. 'If we really wished for it, it would come' (AN. 7:29). In fact the passage expressing doubt whether anyone was capable of concentrating on humaneness for a single day is directly contradicted by another passage claiming that the Master's favorite disciple Yen Hui was capable of having nothing contrary to humaneness on his mind for three months at a stretch (AN. 6:5). Although these discrepancies may be due to the composite nature of the work, it is consistent with Confucius' apparent attitudes to suppose that in the case of *jen* there was a difference in the Master's mind between the ideal manifestation of the virtue as attained only in the Golden Age of antiquity and the striving towards it which could be attributed to some of his contemporaries even in the decadent times in which he lived. (DAWSON 1981: 39, 40.)²

Fung explains *jen* in this context rather as a mental condition of Hui than an ethical concept (FUNG Yu-lan 1989: 3).

Confucius was asked whether his disciples Tzu-lu 子路, Ch'ih 赤 and Ch'iu 求, who was qualified to be a warden in a city of a thousand families, are virtuous 仁. Confucius did not know. A similar kind of reply was given concerning the minister Tzu-wen, who lived in the middle of the seventh century B.C. Nor did Confucius know whether his disciple Yung was virtuous, although *Jen* does not presuppose readiness of tongue 佞. (AN. 5:7, 18, 4; LEGGE 1969: 174–175.) Thus we see that a living person could hardly ever be identified as an agent of Goodness with any certainty according to Confucius.

² AN. 6:5, 116. 'Three months' means 'a long time'. (CHU Hsi 1952: 35.) Waley says: 'There is nothing to indicate whether this was said before or after Yen Hui's premature death.' (WALEY 1964: 116. See also CHEN Li-fu 1986: 106; WANG Shu-ling 1974: 334.)

Confucius was very chary of attributing the quality of Jen to himself, and in fact never did so. However, Confucius says: 'If we 我 really wanted Goodness, we should find that it was at our very side.'³ We may infer from this that it is one's motive for trying to become Jen that is important, but Confucius did not regard himself as Jen. This could be because he regarded Jen as such a high ideal that it was unattainable or perhaps because he just did not want to promote himself. However, Hui, whom, as we have seen, he regarded as Jen, was his disciple. The honor of the Master consisted in the fact that he could lead his disciple to a higher standard than himself, thus being a good and efficient teacher himself. This is Confucian Jen in the Master and disciple relationship.

On the basis of his not attributing Jen to anyone except to Hui, Confucius can be identified as a representative of ideal ethics in connection with the concept of Jen, rather than a pragmatist. (STOCKER 1990: 105.) However, this does not indicate extreme idealism, since Hui was capable of being Jen, for some time at least. (NIKKILÄ 1992: 129-130.)

In addition to Hui, Confucius did regard some other people as Good. The legendary brothers Po I and Shu Ch'i 'were good men who lived in the days of old' 古之賢人. When the last wicked Yin ruler was attacked by the Chou tribe, these brothers did not take up arms against this tyrant. Each of them had the right to inherit the rulership of their small state. However, they refused to ascend the throne. In this way they showed cession (*jang* 讓) and were loyal to the present ruler. After this act of cession, they did not show any rancour or malevolence (*yüan* 怨). It was in this connection that Confucius made the famous remark about these brothers: 'They sought Goodness and got Goodness 求仁而得仁. Why should they repine?' (AN. 5:22, 7:14; WALEY 1964: 113, 126; CHAN 1955: 311; ALLAN 1981: 130; CHENG Shu-te 1974: 401.)

Waley clarifies the situation of these brothers: When the Yin-ruler 'was attacked by the Chou tribe, the brothers refused to take up arms against their sovereign, despite his great wickedness. Their lack of *yüan* ("rancour") was a classical theme.' The lack of rancour 'was shown by their attitude after each in turn had resigned his rights of accession to the rulership of the small state to which they belonged. Having proposed this act of "cession" [*jang*], they carried it out loyally and uncomplainingly.' (WALEY 1964: 113, 126.) Their loyalty on the one hand and their lack of rancor after their act of cession on the other, earned them the title of *jen*.

The seeking of Goodness here is active morality. In this context it appears to refer to the right kind of choice of action. Here, then we have a voluntaristic characterization of Goodness, *jen*.

³ AN. 7:33. See also FINGARETTE 1972: 39; ROSEMONT 1976: 472. AN. 7:29, LEGGE 1969: 204. Concerning the goodness of human nature according to Confucius and Mencius, Hwang writes: 'It is well known that Mencius' philosophy is built on his theory that man is originally good. His whole philosophy can indeed be summarized in one sentence: Every man should do his best to develop or cultivate his original good nature to the utmost, and if he loses it, he should also do his best to recover it... It is generally believed, however, that there is little or no difference between Confucius and Mencius on the problem of human nature. Confucius was truly a philosopher of human nature as much as was Mencius. The only difference is that while Confucius implicitly believed in the original goodness of human nature, Mencius explicitly stated and expanded this position by supplementing his master's view on human nature. I wish to challenge this interpretation of Confucius and to propose an alternative view, namely, that, unlike Mencius, Confucius was not interested in a speculative theory of human nature and that in this sense he was radically different from Mencius in his basic attitude toward human beings.' (HWANG 1980: 45.)

A similar renunciation (*jang* 讓) was shown by the eldest son T'ai Po of King Tan, who was the legendary ancestor of the Chou sovereigns. (AN. 8:1; WALEY 1964: 132.) Even the rulers in power should ideally show cession: 'The Master said, Sublime were Shun and Yü! All that is under Heaven was theirs, yet they remained aloof from it.' (AN. 8:19, 21.)

An example of someone at the opposite pole to the brothers Po I and Shu Ch'i was the Prince of Wei, who refused to ascend the throne after his father, the Duke of Ling, who died in 493 BC. This may be regarded as an act of cession, and the throne went to the grandson of the Duke of Ling. However, the Prince of Wei afterwards attempted to oust the grandson from the throne. (AN. 7:14; WALEY 1964: 125.)

In these passages Confucius considers two choices which were made in a similar historical situation, and he clearly prefers the actions of Po I and Shu Ch'i: after the act of cession there must be no afterthought. In Confucius' opinion, if one chooses a mode of action, one must not change one's mind or alter one's position after acting according to one's choice. This may be called a principle of firmness of choice, and may be seen to include a voluntarist emphasis.

This firmness of choice is motivated in a special manner. By their choice the brothers got Goodness, *jen* 仁, and due to this they had no reason to repine, even though they did not gain an important position in the society. In the scale of values, Goodness is regarded as superior to the leading position in the society. This, of course, is Confucius' interpretation only. It seems, that if Confucius had supported a purely utilitarian calculation in which the position in the society had been highly valued, then the behaviour of Prince of Wei would have been correct. In this case the brothers gained nothing by their cession. The cession in itself seems to be a value as such, a kind of *prima facie* or intuitive principle, which overrules other principles. (HARE 1989: 202.)

The following passage deals with those different types of choices made in a similar situation:

The lord of Wei fled from him, [i.e. from the tyrant Chou, the last sovereign of the Yin dynasty] the lord of Chi suffered slavery at his hands, Pi Kan rebuked him and was slain. Master K'ung said, In them the Yin had three Good (*jen* 仁) men. (AN. 18:1.)

These three men of the royal Yin family, lord of Wei, who was the step-brother of the King, the lord of Chi and Pi Kan, who were uncles of the king, (WALEY 1964: 218) all show different attitudes towards the tyrant. Regardless of their different attitudes, all were taken as Good by Confucius, because their choices of action were governed by Goodness. This shows that Goodness as a principle leaves room for one's own voluntaristic choices of action. All displayed the right kind of obedience or submission. Understandably all cooperated with the tyrant and wanted to act for the good of the legitimate government, even Pi Kan who rebuked him. (WALEY 1958: 126.)

The cases of these rare Good Agents show that it was their choices of actions which were the critical qualifications which for them being called Good. In addition, the possession of talented intellectual excellence is a good characteristic in a person, but it was regarded as including the choice of the right kind of attitudes towards the intellectual activity of

learning. The choice of unassuming attitudes towards the amenities available is also a critical qualification for being regarded as Good. Similarly, the choice of cession in politics when a chance of gain is available, and the choice of loyalty to the legal rulers are the choices of a Good Agent. However, one should remain firm in this choice. In addition, Goodness did in fact allow the agents to choose in differing ways in similar situations provided the choices were made according to the principle of legitimate obedience in hierarchy. In this discussion, therefore, Confucius approaches voluntarism. However, the choices of action seem to be complex or intellectually taxing with many factors involved in them.

In his choice of persons to represent these ideals he is very strict. Only very few can reach the standard. He prefers some personages from the past who have had a certain exceptional moral ability and only one of his students. He himself cannot reach the standard.

4. GOOD ACTS

Although the Analects describe actual Good Agents comparatively rarely, since Confucius could find only very few suitable persons, it describes in many passages the actions of a Good Person without linking this goodness to any actual person. Most of these descriptions are in the more reliable parts of the Analects.

In some of these sayings, the choices of actions are described first and then it is confirmed that such a person is Good or has some other ethically recommendable feature.

A filial son who has carried his household for three years 'exactly as in his father's day', is a good or filial 孝 son (AN. 1:11.); a Gentleman, (*chün tzu* 君子) who

never goes on eating till he is sated, who does not demand comfort in his home, who is diligent in business and cautious in speech, who associates with those that possess the Way and there by corrects his own faults – such a one may indeed be said to have a taste for learning. (AN. 1:14.)

Fan Ch'ih asked Confucius to what rulers the title 'Wise' 知 could be accorded. 'The Master said, He who devotes himself to securing for his subjects what it is right they should have, who by respect for the Spirits keeps them at a distance, may be termed wise.' (AN. 6:20; WALEY 1964: 120.)

Master Tseng said, The man to whom one could with equal confidence entrust an orphan not yet fully grown or the sovereignty of a whole State, whom the advent of no emergency however great could upset – would such a one be a true Gentleman? He I think would be a true Gentleman indeed. (AN. 8:6.)

The Master said, If anyone had the wisdom of Tsang Wu Chung, the uncovetousness of Meng Kung Ch'o, the valour of Chuang Tzu of P'ien and the dexterity of Jan Ch'iu, and had graced these virtues by the cultivation of ritual and music, then indeed I think we might call him 'a perfect man'. He said, But perhaps to-day we need not ask all this of the perfect man. One who, when he sees a chance of gain, stops to think whether to pursue it would be right; when he sees that (his prince) is in danger, is ready to lay down his life; when the fulfillment of an old promise is exacted, stands by what he said long ago – him indeed I think we might call 'a perfect man'. (AN. 14:13.)

He who could put the Five into practice everywhere under Heaven would be Good [*jen*]. Tzu-chang begged to hear what these were. The Master said, Courtesy, breadth, good faith diligence and clemency. (AN: 17:6.)

Tzu-kung said, If a ruler not only conferred wide benefits upon the common people, but also compassed the salvation of the whole State, what would you say of him? Surely, you would call him Good? The Master said, It would no longer be a matter of 'Good'. He would without doubt be a Divine Sage. Even Yao and Shun could hardly criticize him. As for Goodness – you yourself desire rank and standing; then help others to get rank and standing. You want to turn your own merits to account; then help others to turn theirs to account – in fact, the ability to take one's own feelings as a guide – that is the sort of thing that lies in the direction of Goodness (AN. 6:28.)

In AN. 6:28 a good action produces an agent which is ranked higher than a person who is Good, *jen* 仁. (SHANG Chü-te 1992: 1191.)

It is noteworthy that this Confucian thinking in the quotations above pays attention to actual reality. Earlier the perfect man had been morally on a higher plane than was thought to be possible during Confucius' time.

Confucius also infers the quality of a person by observing his actions.

Look closely into his aims, observe the means by which he pursues them, discover what brings him content – and can the man's real worth remain hidden from you, can it remain hidden from you? (AN. 2:10, 3:1, 22.)

One can see from the faults 過 whether one is a Gentleman.

The Master said, Every man's faults belong to a set. If one looks out for faults it is only as a means or recognizing Goodness. (AN. 4:7.)

In these passages we cannot know whether the choices only alter the moral agent to become good (eudaimonism) or whether the Good Agent is produced by his choices of action (voluntarism).

All these sayings follow a similar pattern. When one acts in certain ways, one can be said to be an agent of laudable moral quality. If the pattern of thought were the other way round (an agent of laudable moral quality performs certain good moral actions) this would clearly refer to eudaimonism in which the agent is primary. These sayings should therefore be regarded as sayings where the voluntaristic conception of morality is the model behind them. Certain good actions produce, and not just alter, the moral agent.

MacIntyre says:

A man in heroic society is what he does. Herman Fränkel wrote of Homeric man that 'a man and his actions become identical, and he makes himself completely and adequately comprehended in them; he has no hidden depths ... in (the epics) factual report of what men do and say, everything that men are, is expressed, because they are no more than what they do and say and suffer.' (Fränkel 1973: 79.) To judge a man therefore is to judge his actions. By performing actions of a particular kind in a particular situation a man given warrant for judgment upon his virtue and vices; for the virtues just are those qualities which sustain a free man in his role and which manifest themselves in those actions which his role requires. And what Fränkel says and suggests about Homeric man holds also of man in other heroic portrayals. (MACINTYRE 1992: 122.)

The Analects reveal also that certain actions do not necessarily produce an agent which could be called good. In several instances Confucius was asked whether a person, who could perform certain specified actions could be called Good. Confucius' reply to these questions was often 'I do not know' 吾不知也 or 'I see nothing in that to merit the title Good.' Examples of such actions were: to be able to carry out military recruiting, to be able to work as a Warden, to be able to converse with strangers and guests. (AN. 5:7.) The grand minister Tzu-wen, who was a minister in Lu-state in the seventh century BC, did not show a sign of elation when he was appointed to this office three times. When he was deposed three times, he did not show a sign of disappointment. Ch'en Wen Tzu went from state to state in order to find an ethically good environment. (AN. 5:18.)

5. THE MIDWAY BETWEEN VOLUNTARISM AND EUDAIMONISM

The above materials show that the Confucian Analects contains elements of voluntarism and of eudaimonism. In eudaimonism the choices and actions have a formative influence on the moral agent, as stated at the beginning of this chapter (KEKES 1989: 43).

We will now attempt to discover whether according to Confucius' view choices and actions themselves alter moral agents, without producing them. Above it was seen that certain actions do not earn the agent the title of Good, *jen* 仁. The question is, whether an action alters the agent in such a way that by practicing the said action the agent would be changed or improved.

The following quotation may suggest that the moral agent can be improved:

The Master said, At fifteen I set my heart upon learning. At thirty, I had planted my feet firm upon the ground. At forty, I no longer suffered from perplexities. At fifty, I knew what were the biddings of Heaven. At sixty, I heard them with docile ear. At seventy, I could follow the dictates of my own heart; for what I desired no longer overstepped the boundaries of right. (AN. 2:4; KEKES 1989: 41.)

Chen explains the passage:

This is the description of a man who consciously cultivated an interior life, who trained his mind to apprehend the truth and his heart to grasp the will of Heaven, until his instincts were also transformed, and who learned to appreciate the things of the spirit. Still, the mention of Heaven is discreet. Confucius' words do not vibrate with a passionate longing for union with Heaven, or God, as do the words of many Western mystics. (CHEN Li-fu 1987: 67)

Schwartz offers the explanation that Confucius may mean that he has a clear understanding of what it is that is not in his control as well as of what is his true sphere of autonomous action.⁴

⁴ Chen supposes that Confucius studied the Book of Changes at fifty. He refers to AN. 7:17, where Confucius says, according to the Ku version; 'If some years were added to my life, and I could study the Book of Changes after fifty, then I might come to be without great faults.' Chen adds that Confucius 'could well see that the Book of Changes would give him the knowledge of Heaven and destiny.' Chen says of the Book of Changes: 'The usefulness of the volume is extensive, for all

This shows that the agent, in this case Confucius, was indeed changed. However, it is not clearly shown that the action itself has changed the agent, except according to the interpretations above.

The Gentleman who ever parts company with Goodness does not fulfil that name. Never for a moment does a Gentleman quit the way of Goodness. He is never so harried but that he cleaves to this, never so tottering but that he cleaves to this. (AN. 4:5.)

Implicitly this has behind it the idea that the agent has to follow Goodness. (FU 1978: 183.) And this may imply that following Goodness will possibly change the agent.

He asked about Goodness. The Master said, Goodness cannot be obtained till what is difficult has been duly done. He who has done this may be called Good. (AN. 6:20.)

The concept 'difficult' 難 includes ridding oneself of love of mastery, vanity, resentment and covetousness (AN. 14:2; WALEY 1964: 120). However, in contradiction with AN. 6:20, according to AN. 14:2 this does not necessarily imply that such a person can be called Good. If we think according to AN. 6:20 that doing what is difficult entitles one to be called Good, this does not necessarily mean that doing difficult has changed the agent. Only the action of doing something what is difficult shows that the agent is Good. This lists certain actions which makes the agent competent for Goodness. This does not necessarily mean that the agent is changed by these actions, but only that the actions show that the agent is Good.

As regards carrying out the duties of a Gentleman in actual life, I have never yet had a chance to show what I could do. (AN. 7:32.)

For those who approve (the moral sayings) but do not carry out, who are stirred, but do not change, I can do nothing at all. (AN. 9:23.)

Here the change of the agent is very clear. A similar idea appears in the following:

The Master said, Let a man be first incited by the *Songs*, then given a firm footing by the study of ritual, and finally perfected by music. (AN. 8:8.)

Confucius encouraged one to put a maxim into practice when one has heard it, but not fanatically. (AN. 11:21.) We can see that the agent can be changed, but this does not clearly state that the action itself changes the moral agent.

The materials examined therefore reveal the following facts: Confucius does not follow exclusively either voluntarism or eudaimonism. However, he does not necessarily teach that choice of action or action would alter the moral agent. In this place he teaches

persons who work in sciences that deal with these changes – medicine and the military, for instance – will find it helpful, perhaps essential. Later generations have disparaged this book, regarding it as merely a study of fortune-telling, but they have failed to see that its essence and great utility lie in the fact that it does indeed present the 'knowledge of Heaven's decree and exhaustion of human effort.' (CHEN Li-fu 1987: 67.) — The view of the present author, that the often quoted passage AN. 11:11 is of a doubtful origin, because it does not follow the general theme of the book, which is Confucian appraisals of different people or groups of people, does not support the Neo-Confucian views. See also AN. 20:3, 233; WANG Ming-sun 1986: 203; R. M. CHEN 1974: 91–93; CHING 1986: 66; SCHWARTZ 1985: 126; YÜ Chia-chü 1976: 78.

that active learning and the socio-ethical environment has this agent-altering function (NIKKILÄ 1992: 143–146), thus emphasizing the talent, which is a characteristic of voluntarism. Also, several statements of the birth of a moral agent point towards the voluntaristic direction. However, Confucius' description of Hui and of Gentleman generally clearly show the importance of the moral agent, and it is obvious that the moral thinking behind these is eudaimonism, although Hui had clear voluntaristic qualities as well.

This result poses a further question: is the distinction between voluntarism and eudaimonism really relevant? Confucius' thinking is from the time when ethical conceptions were first being formed. Even so, thinking during his time already had a long tradition behind it. This early thinking is more 'natural' than sophisticated. Because of the sophistication the later thinking tends sometimes to be artificial without sufficient points of contact with actual life.

The system of voluntarism presupposes the importance of choice and the system of eudaimonism presupposes the importance of the ethical agent. In eudaimonism the choice cannot be very important. Since Confucius discards this distinction, he is at this point more free to develop his ideas about choice and agent in a new direction of his own.

Confucius either has a double system, eudaimonism and voluntarism operating side by side, or a single system in which he has formed a synthesis of these two systems. It seems, however, that he did not think through such a distinction. It is possible to find sayings which point to eudaimonism and others to voluntarism.

The main result at this stage is that in terms of voluntarism and eudaimonism, Confucius is free to develop his ideas of choice without being forced to do so by voluntarism and without being prevented from doing so by eudaimonism. However, this is not a sufficient basis for moral preference and choice. In order to know whether Confucius can have any moral choices and preferences, we will need an insight into the values themselves, into whether Confucius recognizes different kinds of values to choose from, like in pluralism, or whether he sees only one dominant value, like in monism. This problem will be discussed in the following chapter.