

VII. Regionalism and morality

1. I AND REGION

The main focus in the Confucian Analects is on questions of morality and not regionalism, but still it contains numerous passages which refer to place. In several of these references, regionalism relates to morality.

We can see a sense of regionalism already in the opening passage of the Confucian Analects:

The Master said, To learn and at due times to repeat what one has learned, is that not after all a pleasure? That friends should come to one from afar, is this not after all delightful? To remain unsoured even though one's merits are unrecognized by others. Is that not after all what is expected of a Gentleman? (AN. 1:1; CHENG Shu-te 1974: 1-2.)

This presumably refers to Confucius' admirers coming to him from afar, from other states. (WALEY 1964: 83.)

Regionalism has been defined in several ways, for example:

1. the principle or system of dividing a city, state, etc., into separate administrative regions. 2. advocacy or such a principle or system. 3. a quality or characteristic peculiar to a certain area, as of an expression or speech pattern. 4. devotion to the interests of one's own region. (WEBSTER'S 1989: 1208.)

'Region' refers to a unit of space such as a city, province, or country, but 'place' has also been used in this meaning. 'Genius Loci' is 'a living ecological relationship between an observer and an environment, a person and a place'. A source of self-knowledge and a point of reference that is possibly most important in childhood, but which can provide a centre of personal stability and significance throughout life.' (RELPH 1976: 3, 66.)

When we speak about morality connected with a regional paradigm, we in a way link geography and morality together. In principle, this point of view can be defended, since 'the arena of man is the cultural landscape and individuals carry out different activities within this landscape.' (GERGER 1980: 7.) Judging by the literature on morality, this point of view has hardly ever been taken into account, except for philosophy as a 'mental geography'. (BOWEN 1981: 141. Bowen refers here to Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748). See also STODDART 1986: 6-7.) In describing Confucius' life the regional paradigm is important, because he traveled so much.

I 義 occurs only 24 times in the Analects. Nevertheless, it has been generally regarded as an important and even a crucial Confucian term. (BOODBERG 1953: 330-331; ROBERTS 1968: 765-771; CHEN Ta-ch'i 1967: 71; CONCORDANCE 1972: 133-134.) It is important for the Gentleman to have *i*. 'A Gentleman gives the first place to Right.' 君子義以為士 (AN. 17:23.)

The Gentleman is responsible for being *i*, righteous, otherwise there will be disorder. However, Confucius made it clear that he had failed to go to where righteousness was to be found (AN. 7:3). This shows that Confucius regarded a place or region as potentially important for morality.

The Gentleman is emotionally neutral, he 'has neither enmities nor affections; but wherever he sees Right he ranges himself beside it.' (AN. 4:10) This neutrality clearly means that the Gentleman must neither favor nor disfavor anyone, he must be impartial. This impartiality ends when place is in question. The Gentleman has to prefer the places where he sees Righteousness.

Migrating to places or regions where right prevails is one of the guiding principles of the Gentleman (AN. 12:10).²⁸ This moral regionalism means the general mental and ethical environment. Confucius regarded morality as an essential element of the identity of a place. In his mind, morality was a symbol of a place. (RELPH 1976: 54–55.) According to MacIntyre this feature of morality belongs to the 'heroic society' in which 'all morality is always to some degree tied to the socially local and particular' (MACINTYRE 1992: 126). When the morality in a certain place was good according to Confucius' standards, then it was good to migrate to such a place or region. In this way Confucius wanted to identify himself with such a place.

Confucius fulfilled this in his life history by refusing to serve any lord who acted against the good of the state. According to the Analects female musicians were sent from another state to the ruler of Lu state, where Confucius was serving. For three days no court was held, and Confucius left Lu. (AN. 18:4, 15:6, 4:14; LAU 1979: 169–170.) Confucius' deontological duty was to serve his lord. However, he could not apply his axiology of good values in this situation. This therefore meant a dilemma between deontology and axiology. In this situation the axiology overruled the deontology; in Confucius' mind the 'what ought to be because its being so would be good' is far more important than 'what ought to be because it is required by one's station and its duties, by the web of obligations and commitments the past has spun'. Confucius solved this dilemma simply by resigning.²⁹

The moral dilemma was solved by changing the region, not by staying in one place and changing morality or living in a continuous moral tension. Confucius tried to find a moral harmony through this action. Lu state as a region was close to 'Genius Loci' of Confucius, because Lu was his home state. However, he could not identify himself with his home state on moral grounds. China was divided into small states, all of which had

²⁸ Cf. ROBERTS 1966: 21–22, where he combines AN. 4:10, 7:3 and 12:10 and explains that *hsi* 徙 means a halting and difficult movement, a shifting and irregular movement. Roberts refers to a comment on AN. 12:10, from where he derives the idea in AN. 12:10 that the position of the good man is not fixed; wherever the right is he stays.

²⁹ The word deontology comes from the Greek word *δέον* (that which is binding, needful, proper), and the etymology of axiology is *ἀξίωσις* (worth, as in 'is worth more than'). These are both theories of ethics: the former takes the view that some acts are obligatory in the sense that they are binding, needful or proper regardless of their consequences; the latter is a theory of values in which some acts are intrinsically worth more than others. (VAN FRAASSEN 1987: 139. See also VALLENTYNE 1987: 21–27.) Choosing one possibility and neglecting the other does not necessarily solve the contradiction. (MARCUS 1987: 188; TU Wei-ming 1979: 12, 22; MIYAZAKI 1965: 86–87.)

their own characteristics. Confucius saw the identity of the state-regions in terms of morality. He stayed in one of them, which he hoped had the right kind of virtue as its identity, one in which *i* 義 and *jen* 仁 had been spreading. Most probably, this state or region was a moral region only in an abstract sense. The morality did not necessarily prevail in 'empirical observations' (RELPH 1976: 26). Partly because of this tension between reality and theory or Confucius' hopes, he had to move from place to place in order to find a place of high morality. He had to realize the following:

Standing on the bank of a stream, the Master said, Those who leave their native localities are similar, are they not? It stops neither day nor night. (AN. 9:17.)

This 'homelessness' 'show that the Confucian intellectual and, by implication, the Confucian method, was not efficacious in the political arena.' (Tu Wei-ming 1989: 15.)

This Confucian concept of self-identity being tied to the morality prevailing in certain regions can also be seen in an historical perspective. According to Chou ideology, Heaven supervised the actions of the king. However, the kings tended to move towards an unethical inferior administration. Heaven directs this trend of development towards the positive by employing a new ruler. This happened when the wicked Yin king was superseded by the Chou ruler. Here is an oscillatory pattern, where during the wicked regime the pendulum is on the negative side. Heaven then moves the moral pendulum towards the positive by giving the mandate to rule to a new ruler, who has virtue, *te* 德, in himself. In the case of Chou, the method is different. The Chou rulers were afraid of losing the mandate when problems occurred. However, Heaven directed the historical development towards the positive goal of harmonious peaceful coexistence of all people in a hierarchical obedience by means of educative punishments and severity, and not by immediately giving the mandate to a new ruler. In the case of Chou, according to the Chou ideology, Heaven was more patient than in the case of Yin. Terminologically, too, *i* appears in Shu Ching with the change of the dynasty. In this situation the people were *i*, but the non-righteous were the king of the decaying dynasty and his unqualified officials. (NIKKILÄ 1982: 78–115, 145–146, 209. See also MORRIS 1991: 55.)

Now, Confucius changed this pattern by introducing regionalism into it. He wanted to move to and to identify himself with a region where *i* prevailed.

Confucius' principle that one should be ready to move to another region deemphasizes the 'Genius Loci', and therefore it reduces the importance of a deeper attachment to a certain place, in which one can find one's self-identity, the place in which one has spent one's whole life and from where one has not moved, or even perhaps visited other places. (RELPH 1976: 66, 34.)

2. JEN AND REGION

Jen 仁 is the most important early Confucian moral concept, a Confucian innovation compared with preceding traditions. (NIKKLÄ 1992: 154–156.)

The social environment is regarded as very important for obtaining *jen*. When Tzu-kung asked how to act out *jen*, Confucius replied:

A craftsman, if he means to do good work, must first sharpen his tools. In whatever State you dwell, take service with such of its officers as are worthy, make friends with such of its knights as are Good. (AN. 15:9.)

Such advice brings a social insight into the regionalism. According to Relph, the social structure is important for one's identity in a certain place. If one lives in any state, one has to create a social structure which is suitable for one's identity. Confucius here tries to change the image of the place or state. 'Images are not just selective abstractions of an objective reality but are intentional interpretations of what is or what is believed to be.' When he has changed the moral image of the place, he can root his identity into that place. This way Confucius emphasizes the horizontal structure of the place's image, which is 'that of the social distribution of knowledge of places within and between individuals, groups, and the mass'. 'The vertical structure is one of intensity and depth of experience.' (RELPH 1976: 56.)

In Master Tseng's opinion Chang was self-important. 'It is hard to become Good when working side by side with such a man.' (AN. 19:16.) In this social environment the central person is the Gentleman: 'Master Tseng said, The Gentleman by his culture collects friends about him, and through these friends promotes Goodness.' 曾子曰, 君子以文會友, 以友輔仁 (AN. 12:24, 1:1.) This is a characteristic of the horizontal structure of a place in which knowledge is distributed widely. In this case the knowledge is the morality of Goodness.

Not only through social relations, but also generally the Gentleman effects the dissemination of *jen*: 'The Master said, When gentlemen deal generously with their own kin, the common people are incited to Goodness.' 則民興於仁. In regional terms, it is worth noting that *jen* in this passage is a quality of the gentlemen 君子 as well as of the common people 民 who lived all over the region of the state. (AN. 8:2; CHENG Shu-te 1974: 446–447.)

Confucius emphasizes how important the role of a leader who has *jen* is to the spreading of *jen* throughout the community: 'If a Kingly Man 王人 were to arise, within a single generation Goodness would prevail.' (AN. 13:12; LEGGE 1969: 267.) 王者 refers to a saviour king who rules by *te* 德. (WALEY 1964: 49; CHU Hsi 1952: 89.)

Confucius also said: 'If (a ruler) could for one day "himself submit to ritual", everyone under Heaven would respond to his Goodness.' (AN. 12:1. See also the present study, p. 72.) Here the ruler is a perfect example for the people, who emulate the model of their ruler. In this way *jen* works as a uniting bond or element in the region. *Jen* and *li* are related closely to each other in this passage, being almost regarded as one and

same thing. (AN. 12:1.)³⁰ If the morality is intense, then it spreads. Here the intensity is not an intense experience of the place, but it is an intense experience of the morality. The morality works as a binding tissue of the region. Morality is a kind of determining special characteristic of a region. Confucius sees places in terms of how Goodness has been spreading in them. He also wants to experience Goodness spreading everywhere. In this moral imperialism, morality would bind 'all under Heaven'. In this way all places would finally be included in a single region, where the totalitarian morality of Goodness and Righteousness would prevail. We have to see this, however, as special emphasis during his time, when China was divided into small states with many kinds of contradictions.

3. GOLDEN RULE AND PLACE

The so-called Golden Rule is practical. In this context *jen* has been defined in relation to a higher quality than *jen*: the Holy 聖 or Divine Sage. This kind of person, as we have noted before, is a ruler who 'not only conferred wide benefits upon the common people but also compassed the salvation of the whole State.' In this context, Goodness refers to the following: 'you yourself desire rank and standing; then help others to get rank and standing. The ability to take one's own feelings as a guide – that is the sort of thing that lies in the direction of Goodness.' This suggests the general notion that 'ethics rests on the emotional ability or inability to bear the sufferings of others.' (AN. 6:28, 122; BORNEMANN 1922: 34. See also WILHELM 1950: 93; CREEL 1954: 53; GEERTZ 1981: 271; T'ANG I-chieh 1987: 73; the present study, pp. 18, 71.) It seems clear that in practice Goodness means that good behavior is followed and that it therefore spreads wider in the whole region of the community. When the way of Goodness is very successful, it is Sheng 聖. (LIU Pao-nan & LIU Kung-mien 1973: 134.)

The following example is given of the reciprocity or Golden Rule in a strictly limited region or space:

Tsai Yü asked saying, 'I take it a Good Man, even if he were told that another Good Man were at the bottom of a well, would go to join him.' The master said, 'Why should you think so? A Gentleman can be broken, but cannot be dented; may be deceived, but cannot be led astray. (AN. 6:24. See also the present study, p. 51.)

This passage can be interpreted as a dilemma situation, as we did on p. 51, but may also be seen in terms of regionalism. The well would represent a place, a strictly limited region. A Good Man in the well is not able to spread his Goodness. He would need company with him in the well. Another Good Man could fit there, but not many, and not masses of people amongst whom *jen* should be spread. Confucius sees that if one would

³⁰ Lau understands the meaning differently: 'To return to the observance of the rites through overcoming the self constitutes benevolence. If for a single day a man could return to the observance of the rites through overcoming himself, then the whole Empire would consider benevolence to be his. However, the practice of benevolence depends on oneself alone, and not on others.' (LAU 1979: 113. See also LEGGE 1969: 250.) Neo-Confucianism developed the universalistic tone of *jen* further.

join the Good Man in the well one would be led astray. One should avoid too limited a region and too strict a situation in which one cannot enlarge the region of virtue.

Returning to the opening passage of the Analects, which describes Confucius' admirers coming from other regions to meet him, we can see the characteristics of the regions, on the basis of what is said above. Confucius wanted morality to be the binding tissue of all China. Other people came to him. He had a possibility or a chance to spread his virtue amongst his friends and admirers, who in their turn then were spreading the same morality in their home regions or states. In this way, according to this ideal picture, all of China would be combined in one single region, where the Holy Sage would rule and the morality of *jen* prevail.

When spreading virtue amongst people in different regions, Confucius had to choose suitable persons to be good moral agents. He had to define the concept of ideal moral agents and to choose followers.