VIRTUE AS EMERGENCE FROM CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICES

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In this article, we argue that virtues can emerge from contemplation which can lead us to attunement with the Dao thereby realizing our inner goodness and intrinsic traits. This requires us to persist in doing inner and outer work. Inner work involves meditation and reflective practices to awaken ourselves and others. Outer work involves engaging others and ourselves with loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity. The article discusses the transformative perspectives and practices in Daoist, Confucian, and Buddhist contemplative traditions that lead to the development of virtue and alignment with the Dao; further, it examines contemporary contemplative practices and new scientific discoveries, providing evidence that virtues of a leader can emerge from within. In other words, virtues can be cultivated, and there are rich traditions and methods in both Western and Eastern philosophies and religions that facilitate the emergence of virtues through contemplative and other religious practices. Character building and virtue training are linked to inner contemplative work, which we argue need to be integrated with cultivating vital life energy and doing good for the world. Character education and transformation are much more effective when supported by contemplative practices and inner work because changes come from deep within the heart. The integration of these two elevates our awareness of our interconnectivity with all and enhances our ability to serve the world lovingly and humbly, which are hallmarks of virtuous behaviors.

INTRODUCTION

Virtues can be cultivated, and there are rich traditions and methods in both Western and Eastern philosophies and religions that facilitate the emergence of virtues (Culham & Lin, 2016). In Western traditions, there is a wealth of contemplative practices such as in Jewish tradition the practice of the Sabbath, seclusion, and contemplation (Besserman, 1997); Kaplan (1985) points to numerous references in the *Tanakh* to various forms of contemplative practices. Maimonides, the Medieval Jewish philosopher, outlined how meditation was central to the teachings of the prophets (Shapiro, 1997) and described various forms of prayerful contemplation (Benor, 1995). Today, contemplative practice in Judaism is widespread (Cowan, 2010; Gefen, 2011; Kaplan, 1985; Milgram, 2014; Niculescu, 2015). In Christianity, contemplation has been central to Christian worship ever since Jesus exhorted his

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followers to pray in privacy of one's room (Matthew 6:6) and St. Paul called upon the early Christians to devote themselves to prayer (Colossians 4:2; 1Thessalonians 5:17). Meditation has always been advocated as a spiritual practice in Christian mysticism (McGinn, 2006; Underhill, 2002). Today, contemplative practice in Christianity is widespread, ranging from Quaker practice of silence (Dandelion, 2005) to centering prayer (Keating, 1997, 2002; Pennington, Keating, & Clarke, 2007) and the traditions of *Lectio Divina* (Keator, 2017), and other contemplative approaches.

In this essay, the focus is on Chinese and Buddhist contemplative traditions, but it is worth acknowledging the role of Western forms of contemplative practice on the development of virtue. Hadot (1995) in *Philosophy as a Way of Life* points out that contemplative attention is a central element of the ancient Greek, Roman, and neo-Platonist schools of philosophy through what he referred to as "spiritual exercises," which include contemplation. He writes that contemplative attention is "the key to the spiritual exercises" (p. 84) that are designed to allow one to live well, "causes us to *be* more fully, and makes us better" (p. 83). Christian sages and philosophers carried these traditions forward in which the contemplative exercises were designed to have "as their goal the transformation of our vision of the world, and the metamorphosis of our being" (p. 127); *conversatio morum*—fidelity to the contemplative, monastic life—was outlined in the *Rule of St. Benedict* and can be interpreted to mean "the commitment to a continual change of heart in relation to God" (Christie, 2013, pp. 13–14). In a number of his writings, Thomas Merton (1971, 1972, 1998) explored the role of Christian prayer and contemplation in the development of virtuous character. See also Bourgeault (2004); Harrison, (2006); and Keating, (2012).

So although our focus here is on Eastern contemplative traditions and practices, much of what we write here would also pertain to Western contemplative traditions and practices and their possible impacts on the development of virtue.

In Chinese philosophy and in Buddhist tradition, a virtuous leader starts from contemplation, engaging in inner work through meditation, which eventually leads the individual to be a transformative agent of the world for peace and the common good (Lin, 2018, 2019). In this contemplative process, going into the deeper realm of our being, the interconnectivity and Oneness of all beings and existence become an embodied experience. In the Western tradition, virtues can be developed consciously through practice. Cognitive behavior therapy, for example, in the form of practicing emotional intelligence skills is a means of developing character virtue (Culham, 2013, 2015). In this article, we will discuss how virtues such as humility, compassion, love, cooperation, reconciliation etc. are treated by Eastern spiritual traditions as the underlying mechanism for human beings to live a life of personal fulfillment and become leaders of virtue. We explore how the education of virtuous leaders should nurture a transformation of energies within the person toward love and care for others.

Essentially, character building and virtue training is linked to inner contemplative work, which is to be integrated with cultivating life energy qi and doing good for the world. The integration of these two elevates our awareness of our interconnectivity and also our ability to serve the world lovingly and humbly. In extension, character education in connection with contemplative practices can be much more effectively fostered as changes come from deeply within. The moral and spiritual development students experience can be much long lasting.

CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICES AND CULTIVATION OF VIRTUES: LEADERSHIP AS EMERGENCE IN CHINESE PHILOSOPHY

In Chinese philosophy, virtue is a mechanism to integrate, regulate, and balance the life force that sustains all existence. Qi is a fundamental

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concept in Chinese philosophy. It is believed to be the energy that creates all existence, and Dao is the primordial creative energy and spirit which manifests through virtues as the mechanism to regulate and harmonize the order of the universe and to maintain peace and coexistence in human society. Junzi (sages or enlightened beings) are virtuous leaders who are integrated in their heart, mind and spirit, and who do good for the world out of their conscience, through a deep, embodied understanding of the virtue principles governing the universe. More specifically, junzi sees the whole universe as being sustained by the functional principles of cooperation, interdependence, mutual support and even more deeply, by love as a cosmic force that propels all life forces (Lin, 2018). We are intricately a part of the universe and must follow the same principles.

In Chinese philosophical thoughts, the creative life force qi permeates in the whole universe, and qi has energy that enables those who cultivate it to become transformative agent of the world. The *inner work* (or translated as *inner enterprise* here) says this about qi:

> It is the essence of things that gives life to them.
> Below, it gives birth to the five grains;
> above, it is the ranks of stars.
> Flowing between heaven and earth:
> we call these ghosts and spirits.
> Stored within the breast:
> we call these sages.
> This qi is
> So bright! As though climbing to heaven.
> So dark! As though entering the abyss.
> So broad! As though permeating the sea.
> So compact! As though residing within oneself.
> This qi
> Cannot be detained through physical force,
> but may be brought to rest by force of virtue.
> It may not be summoned by means of sound,
> but may be received through one's thoughts.
>
> To guard it alertly without fail,
> this is called perfect virtue.
> When virtue is perfected wisdom emerges
> and all the things of the world are grasped. (Indiana University, 2010)

Essentially, the inner work says that qi is a type of moral, virtuous, spiritual and physical energy that creates and sustains the universe. As a form of energy, it flows in everything and we embody it. This energy can be accumulated and harbored which highly elevates the awareness and virtues of the junzi who cultivates it. Junzi or virtuous leaders, hence, must cultivate this qi and harbor this creative, primordial qi in their heart and become a sage. Confucius said: Junzi are dedicated to "cultivating the energy of Dao, base their life on virtues, follow the principle of love, and find joy in arts" (Confucius, 1990, chapter 7). Dao therefore is the energy that creates all existence.

Meditation is a cultivation process where one closes out the interference of the outside world and turns inward to connect with the "light of one's soul." In meditation, one enters an energy state that transforms our physical being into a quantum energy state wherein we can connect with more subtle life forces qi (Lin & Parikh, 2019). In such a quantum state, we tap into our deeper levels of awareness, as we activate energy in our body, heart, and brain that are seldom tapped into. For example, recent research finds that meditators register stronger alpha and theta waves in their brain (Lehmann et al., 2012) and experience expanded awareness and intuition (Choi et al. 2018; Gruzelier, 2009).

In Chinese philosophy, a great sage Laozi (also known as Lao Tzu) states in *Tao Teh Ching* (also *Tao Te Ching* or *Dao De Jing*) that in a meditative state, one taps into subtle energies that contain images and information, physical matter, and spirits and energy (there are forms, things, and essence experienced) (Lao Tzu, 1989, chapter 21, p. 43). Daoism contains a great number of methods for cultivation of virtues and qi, and treats working for the good of others, being compassionate, being yielding and humble et cetera to be mechanisms to attract energy from all existence and thereby strengthen the more subtle energy in our being which is called yuan qi, or our origi-

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nal qi which we bring with us when we are born which sustains our life. Daoists believe that virtues such as love, compassion, humility, service, yielding, softness, and simplicity are not just moral concepts but mechanisms to gather the vital life energy qi. Through contemplative practices such as deep breathing and visualization, accompanied by virtuous acts one attracts energy and accumulates the subtle qi energy which elevates one's vision and leadership ability. The embodied cultivation of qi and virtue enables one to tap into the Dao, the universal force underlying everything.

In *The Analects*, Confucius said: for me the One penetrates everything (*Analects*, Li Ren, 4:15). Here the One is Dao as the primordial qi that propels all lives. However, he emphasizes that cultivation of qi energy is not just by sitting at home meditating or hiding away from the society as many Daoists might tend to do. One needs to be actively doing good for the world. Confucius took his students around the country for 14 years traveling to many states and trying to convince rulers and warlords to stop wars and govern their state by love and wisdom. This is an example of how his students learned by doing while they also actively engaged in contemplative practices such as inner self reflection which is much emphasized in the *Analects*. Another highly revered Confucian sage Mencius famously said: "I am good in cultivating my own vital and Great Expansive *qi*" (我善养吾浩然之气). He explains that this is the qi that fills up the universe and that follows the rules of the Dao, and the one who gives selfless help to others accumulates it (Lin, 2018). Although Confucianism also emphasizes cultivation of qi, over the historical time, more and more the practices have receded, and they manifest mostly as practices in arts, calligraphy writing and reading of Confucian classics (Lin, Culham, and Oxford, 2016).

Qualities of a Virtuous Leader

Leadership in Chinese philosophy does not equate with aggressiveness; rather, Laozi (Lao Tzu, 1989) saw a sage or a virtuous leader as someone who is nonaggressive, compassionate, humble, soft, and yielding. True leaders are willing to let go of fame and are not obsessed with possessions. They have a heart as pure as a child. Laozi emphasizes the importance of "emptiness," that is, the leader sees the importance of what is visible and nameable but also values what is invisible and unnameable. In *Tao Te Ching*, Laozi stressed that the use of a house is its empty space, and the movement of a cart depends on the empty spokes. This means leaders leave room for their followers to grow, and they are flexible and they allow ambiguities and space for inner introspection and creativity. Chinese arts are heavily influenced by Daoism, and this feature is very striking (Sun & Lin, 2011). Laozi (Lao Tzu, 1989) emphasizes letting go of excessive desires and living simple lives as greed is the biggest calamity. He said if one has a house full of gold then one cannot travel far. He stresses that humility, care and service will enable one to become a great leader as those who lead often serve under their followers (善用人者为之下). The example is in his description of the virtue of water; water is willing to nurture all lives but it flows to and stays in lowly places, whereas in this process it fills up the valley and forms into a sea and an ocean. So in losing one's self one becomes the larger Self.

Further, Laozi (Lao Tsu, 1989) thinks a true leader does not get taken over by favor or insult (宠辱不惊); she knows a lot but does not show off (大智若愚). He is willing to help and will not give up on saving anyone (圣人常善救人故无弃人). The leader sees what is long lasting and emulates the virtues of the creative force Dao, hence, she values service, softness, reconciliation, yielding, nonaggression, naturalness, and tranquility. The leader values diversity and embraces his opposites as he "knows the white and embraces the black" (知白守黑). The highest virtue of a leader in Daoism is to do good spontaneously, without thinking or calculating about return. Doing good is a natural outflow from one's heart and

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nature. But it is precisely "in this selfless giving she accomplishes her Great Selfish Goal" (以其无私焉，故能成其私) as energy flows to those who do good selflessly. Dao is a unified energy field and doing good attracts energy from all existence.

The virtue of a leader as posited by Confucius focuses on the leader being a transformative agent for achieving and maintaining peace in the human society. The leader loves all people but also demonstrates the virtues of humility, eagerness to learn, and active seeking of wisdom, as Dao can be and must be obtained through conscious efforts. The leader cares about the world, is self reflective and respectful, emulating leaders of high virtues and maintaining her honesty and integrity in all situations. The leader has a profound love for the world. Through this love she helps build peace and harmony in the family, the community, the world, and even the universe (Lin & Wang, 2010).

These virtues are not imposed as standards on the leaders but are a natural outgrowth of the inner experience through contemplative practices and reflections. As it is clearly outlined in the Confucian classic *The Great Learning*, the seekers of Dao start their journey by first engaging in meditation and gaining an understanding of themselves and the world, then achieving a deep level of tranquility, then gaining higher awareness, then starting to feel for the world and developing wisdom (虑而得), and eventually they take actions to transform the world for peace (Lin, 2018).

Daoist and Confucianist cultivation, like yoga and other practices, align the energy of the body with the mind and the spirit, and leaders become much more reflective and mindful of their life's purpose and the needs of those they lead. They cultivate to align their emotions and cognition with higher knowing. The accompanying intuition and vision from cultivation make them true and effective leaders.

Virtues and cultivation are an ongoing process. The leader is always in the process of making herself. The inner strength of the leader reinforces with active acts of doing good for the world and with her constantly returning to her inner self for wisdom. Being and leading becomes integral.

VIRTUE AS EMERGENCE FROM CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICES: BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVES

A primary thesis of Eastern contemplative traditions—not entirely unlike Western contemplative ones—is that virtue is not only emergent from the attainment of enlightenment but also, at the same time, arises from our efforts and actions in the world that are an integral part of a contemplative tradition.

In Buddhist traditions, or at least in the Shambhala tradition, morals and ethics training is aimed at helping one align oneself with the nondual awareness of "basic goodness" (Trungpa, 1984) that is coexistent with Enlightenment. Nondual awareness is the realization, awakened through contemplative practice, of transcending the "either-or" of I and other, absolute and relative truth, perception and nonperception, good and not-good, form and emptiness (Katz, 2007; Loy, 1998, Mishra, 1988); the state of being described is ineffable and inconceivable (Nagao, 1991). Trungpa's concept of basic goodness emerges from nondual awareness: it is the transcendent realization that all dualities resolve into a basic goodness in the universe; one's spiritual and ethical duty is thus to discover this ground of goodness so it can guide our actions. Awakening to the nature of reality—enlightenment—is the goal of Buddhist contemplative traditions and practices. Virtue, it is claimed, flows from that process of awakening through practice (Eppert, Vokey, Hguyen, & Bai, 2015): one's increasing awareness contributes to the ability to act virtuously.

Chogyam Trungpa (1984) uses the term "basic goodness" to describe both the nature of Reality and basic human virtue. it is both individual and universal but represents the basic nature of reality; that is, it is prior to concepts

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and so “free from good and bad, better and worse” (Trungpa, 2004, p. 211), and, as well, it is “good in the sense that it’s sound, it’s efficient, and it works, always” (Trungpa, 2004, p. 236). Basic goodness is beyond dualisms of good and evil; right and wrong, moral and immoral. It is beyond qualities. It is part of emptiness, what Buddhists refer to as Śūnyatā, wherein we realize that “all things are empty of intrinsic existence and nature” (Williams, 2008, pp. 68–69). An important part of emptiness is that it connects us, a point to which we will return:

> It means that the phenomenal world—our existential home—is devoid of objects (things and beings) that exist independently of each other, in and of themselves, and hence everything exists in connection with everything else. It also means that our mind is empty of preconceptions and so we are able to “truly” perceive the world, that is, the interconnection and interpenetration of all things. (Bai & Cohen, 2014, p. 599)

Moreover, basic goodness is part of our inherent nature; it is open to all in attainment. As Thich Nhat Hanh (1998) maintains in affirming the Buddhist view: “There is no one who does not have the capacity to be a Buddha” (p. 188). Eppert et al. (2015) point out:

> Basic goodness, as ever present and indestructible, is not something that needs to be cranked up or manufactured. Basic goodness is always already there to be experienced when human beings attend, not to the contents of thought, but to the intelligent space in which thoughts and feelings arise. (p. 279)

The process is at the same time a letting go of all the clouds Enlightenment, of disidentifying with all that shrouds the Buddha nature.

Thus, the role of contemplative practices becomes focused on awakening this basic goodness. One is urged to develop, through contemplative arts such as mindfulness and attunement, with the nondual ground of basic goodness. As Bai and Cohen (2014) point out, “moral education cannot be separated from awakening” (p. 598). Again, awakening to the nature of reality—the enlightenment of the awareness of basic goodness—is the goal. Virtue flows from that awakening.

Aligned with the awakened state of basic goodness are what Buddhists refer to as the “Brahmaviharas” (also known as the Four Immeasurables): loving-kindness or benevolence *(metta)*, compassion (*karuna*), empathic joy (*mudita*), and equanimity or tranquility (*uppekka*). When these virtues are manifest, we embody *bodhicitta*, the enlightened heart-mind; it is the embodiment of both wisdom and compassion.

Individuals have the capacity to manifest basic goodness in their lives to the degree that they attain awareness of it. Thus, there is considerable emphasis placed on skillful practice of the contemplative approaches, such as mindfulness. Hence, as Eppert et al. state:

> Contemplative practices such as sitting meditation are essential components of most Buddhist traditions, including the Shambhala path. The intention is that, through training in letting go while on the cushion, meditators become increasingly able to bring mindfulness, sensitivity, gentleness, precision and elegance into the details of everyday living. (Eppert et al., 2015, p. 280)

As Bai and Cohen (2014) put it: “An awakened person is *naturally inclined to be* kind, good-willed, generous, compassionate, nonreactive, and wishes for others’ happiness. By practicing to be more fully awake, one expands one’s capacity for these moral qualities or attributes” (p. 601, emphasis in original).

Attunement with basic goodness through contemplative arts offers a transformation of the self. An increasing awareness of, and identification with, basic goodness allows one the ability to act in a spirit of interdependence, interconnectivity, and intersubjectivity. We go beyond limited egoic consciousness that leads to ignorance, fear, anger, hatred and other unvirtuous dispositions. For that reason, we need to be skillful in these arts that are common to all contemplative traditions: meditation, study, prayer, artistic practices, and other various contemplative arts.

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At the same time, as espoused in the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path that the Shakyamuni Buddha espoused, there is more to these contemplative traditions. There is, for example, right speech, right action, right living, and right conduct which are parts of the Eightfold Path; all these are enjoined upon the contemplative aspirant. Not only are there the essential meditative efforts to uncover basic goodness, but there are also proscribed efforts at *developing* virtue.

This is the paradox of Buddhist and, indeed, all contemplative traditions: virtue arises *both* as a result of awakening *and* the efforts of individuals to attain awakening through practices of right action, speech, and living. Paradox is a matter of balancing dualisms to go beyond them and to integrate body and mind, head and heart. Virtue flows just from awakening to basic goodness and, at the very same time, paradoxically, the cultivation of virtue advances one to awakening. There is both the letting go of meditative efforts and the exertion of moral development. As Eppert at al. (2015) suggest, there is a letting go in one's contemplative efforts, and yet, as Thich Nhat Hahn (1991) teaches, one is to practice loving-kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity.

Holistic approaches in both Zen and Shambhala allow practitioners to develop the virtues of calmness, loving-kindness, respect, kindness, and equanimity. Additionally, they work on reducing fear, anger, anxiety, and hatred. There is both inner and outer work to be done; daily practice is enjoined as beneficial. The practice of embodying virtue is seen as an integral part of a comprehensive contemplative approach; it is a way of life required of the practitioner. We are brought to the same argument that Aristotle (2000) made in the second book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*: virtue is a way of being, and you have to practice being virtuous through action to become virtuous.

Contemplation and Virtuous Leadership

Moreover, there is also public as well as personal work to be done; virtue is to be enacted in the public sphere in enacting the Four Immeasurables. We avoid what McMahan (2008) has called the mere "purely personal paths of self-improvement" (p. 260). Eppert et al. (2015) write: "those working within the public sphere, especially in leadership roles, have responsibilities not only to pursue 'inner cultivation' but also to help create institutional and cultural conditions hospitable to the realization of a well, peaceful and sustainable society" (p. 282).

One of the significant features here is awakened awareness of our connectedness, the interrelationships of all beings, part of the fundamental state of basic goodness. Robert Hattam (2004) expresses this idea in his concept "awakening struggle": "Awakening-struggle demands that politics be considered not as always 'out there, outside of self, exterior,' but that politics be simultaneously about both inner and outer transformation, both about self and society, both mind and social structure" (p. 275).

VIRTUES AS EMERGENCE: WHERE CONTEMPLATIVE INQUIRY AND SCIENCE MEETS

MacIntyre (1984), a moral philosopher, argued ethics is a science that assumes a contrast between human nature as it is, and what it could be if it realized its purpose. An important component of ethics is the effort to transform in the direction of the ideal, and a vital human attribute aiding in this effort is the ability to regulate one's emotions (MacIntyre, 1984). Further, neuroscience research indicates ethics decisions are made unconsciously and emotionally (Damasio, 1994; Greene, 2007; Haidt, 2001) emphasizing the importance of emotions in ethics philosophically and scientifically.

Culham (2013) proposed that one can learn to regulate emotions in two ways: consciously through cognitive behavior therapy also utilized in emotional intelligence development, and through contemplative practices. We argue based on neuroscience research that con-

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templative practices specifically enable emergence of the ability to regulate emotions and more generally development of the virtues. We also argue that neuroscience findings more generally support that meditation enables a kind of innate goodness to emerge.

Philosophic descriptions of emergence have been debated and there is not agreement on exactly what it is. It might be thought of in the following way: "emergent entities (properties or substances) 'arise' out of more fundamental entities and yet are 'novel' or 'irreducible' with respect to them. (For example, it is sometimes said that consciousness is an emergent property of the brain)" (O'Connor & Wong, 2015, para 1). In simple terms, we refer to emergence, for the purposes of this article, as the natural growth processes witnessed in nature. For, example, when we cut our hand we do not have to plan or think about how to heal other than to protect the injured area; we simply clean the area, put on some ointment and a patch and the healing process is looked after by the body. We do not have to plan or think about these processes at all. There is an innate natural knowledge that takes over to heal.

As we have noted, emergence involves an innate kind of knowledge resulting in a change. The premise for emergence at work with respect to regulation of emotions arising out of contemplative practices is based on the following. First, according to Doidge (2007), the brain is not passive, "it is always learning how to learn" and is more "like a living creature that can grow and change itself with proper nourishment and exercise" (p. 47), that is, its innate nature involves a desire to learn and grow. While Doidge (2007) acknowledges that conscious effort directed to an end changes the brain and is vital for learning, the statement further implies that conscious effort is not necessarily required to affect changes in the brain. Rather, creating conditions supportive of brain health will enable transformation in the brain and behavior. Second, and in support of this view, Fosha (2009a) stated "Transformation is fundamental to our natures"; it is an "overarching motivational force that strives toward maximal vitality, authenticity, adaption, and coherence, and thus leads to growth and transformation" (p. 175). Further, Fosha (2009b) noted that positive psychology proposed transformation to a better state which is an innate property and desire of humans and it is enabled by providing safe, caring, loving interactions with others. Indeed, transformation results in secretion of hormones accompanied by positive emotions, enabling open states of mind motivating the brain to seek more, resulting in growth (Fosha, 2009a). These phenomena emerge spontaneously under the right conditions and it appears positive psychology and contemplative practices are tapping into the same phenomena because they "are not the epiphenomena of a particular practice rather, they are qualities of mind that are wired within us, intrinsic properties of the organism associated with healing and well-being" (Fosha, 2009b, p. 252). In general we conclude that transformation is an inherent property of the brain, enabled by certain conditions such as an emotionally positive environment and meditation, and the direction of transformation is positive toward learning and growth and enhanced mental health. We will argue later that virtuous thinking and behavior is important to mental health. Now we explore the specifics of whether and how meditation might contribute to the ability to regulate emotions through an emergent process.

Historically, meditation was not utilized to improve health, help with relaxation or improve work performance as it is being promoted currently in Western applications; rather the purpose was to produce long lasting changes or alter human traits (Goleman & Davidson, 2017). It is also important to note that meditation did not stand alone in this effort, rather it was one of three components, the other two being the teachings on how to be a better human being and a community of people sharing the same path. It is likely that a community and the teachings provide a positive environment supporting the conditions the brain requires to support transformation. The

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focus of the next discussion is on the impact of meditation on the brain and how it alters the trait of emotional regulation.

Neurologically, a trait is an innate emotional response to a situation observed in the brain circuitry. A state, on the other hand involves top down processes such as conscious cognitive appraisal or attention state (Lutz, Greischar, Perlman, & Davidson, 2009). As we noted above, that regulation of emotion is a foundation of ethics. To provide an example of how emotion can be regulated, think of two people who are driving down the freeway and another car cuts them off. A state effect is observed when a person regulates their emotion through force of will, that is, they consciously must choose not to give the other driver the finger. Conversely, one who is able to regulate their emotions effortlessly will simply not react and this is an example of a trait effect. The distinction between state and trait is similar to the distinction between effortful and effortlessness that is observed as skills develop when one advances from novice to expert in any practice (Lutz, Slagter, Dunne, & Davidson, 2008). That is, the more one practices a skill the more likely it will become automatic and not require thought to execute it. With respect to regulation of emotions, it is possible to reach a trait effect (an automatic ability to regulate emotions) in two ways: one is through cognitive behavior therapy that involves practicing regulating one's emotions in a particular circumstance many times until it becomes automatic, and the other is through meditation which changes the neural structure of the brain without consciously focusing on regulating emotions (Goleman & Davidson, 2017). We argue this is an example of emergence, that is meditation results in changes in the brain and behavior that does not require a focused effort to change behavior. Cognitive behavior therapy on the other hand requires conscious repeated effort to effect regulation of emotions as a trait.

Changes in brain anatomy supporting this conclusion is provided in a meta-analysis of studies that examined brain images of meditators. Increases in the size of brain components related to regulation of emotions were identified including: the cingulate cortex and orbitofrontal cortex (Fox et al, 2014). A specific conclusion we draw from this research is that the size of the cingulate cortex and orbitofrontal cortex are increased in meditators through an emergent process, and both are involved in foundations of ethics: regulation of emotions and decision making. A general conclusion that arises from the previous discussion is that the brain is designed with inherent abilities that support health, survival and interactions with others, one of which is to regulate emotions. Indeed, Goleman and Davidson (2017) stated that "preexisting virtues and intrinsic goodness" are likely present in humans" (p. 268) and "some aspects of meditation practice may be less like learning a new skill, and more akin to recognizing a basic propensity from the start" (p. 269). Next we consider ideas on the role of meditation in the moral development in adults.

MacIntyre (1999; MacIntyre & Dunne, 2002) proposed an approach for moral education that relies on a discursive and intellectual approach to knowing what is good and moral. Vokey (2001) agrees that it is important to know the Good in order to be motivated to act virtuously. The approach articulated above is fine if one participates in a religion which provides a purpose and set of values that one can learn to live by. Vokey argues that it is possible through life experience to know intrinsic value[1] (another term for the Good) through both an intellectual and an embodied emotional understanding (2005). It is also possible for people to rely on a positive or negative cognitive-affective response to life experience as a foundation for their assessment of intrinsic value (Vokey, 2005). For example people are: "profoundly moved in positive ways by experiencing or witnessing freedom, solidarity and compassion; and profoundly moved in negative ways by experiencing or witnessing oppression, alienation, and indifference" (Vokey, 2005, p. 95). An example that elicited such a response nationwide occurred in 2015

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when the image of the young Syrian boy, Alan Kurdi, motivated Canada to open its doors to Syrian refugees. People were cognitively and emotionally moved by the image, that is, there was a gut response accompanied by an awareness of the tragedy the image represented. This kind of response is elicited in much less dramatic situations such as when one witnesses a child taking their first step or when one witnesses dishonesty.

Vokey (2005) argues that based on Buddhist theory of the mind, the ability to know intrinsic value can be developed through meditation. When one meditates, the mind's default mode of discursive becomes quiet (Goleman & Davidson 2017), and when this happens dualism where I and others are seen as separate also is attenuated (Vokey, 2005) enabling a nondual state of mind providing the individual with an increased awareness of intrinsic value. This might appear to be a mystical esoteric state beyond our everyday understanding but states of oneness are more common than one might think. Musicians, dancers, and athletes report they experience oneness or nondualistic awareness where the separation between action and themselves disappears (Vokey, 2005).

It is interesting to note that states of oneness or nondual awareness have been reported in situations where there has been damage to the left hemisphere of the brain. Neuroscience research indicates that the left and right hemispheres of the brain have very different modes of processing our perceptions and that normally the left brain mode dominates our awareness. In simple terms, the left hemisphere is guided by the principle of division, in the sense that it separates experiences into segments to enable the understanding of the thinking cognitive mind. Conversely, the right hemisphere, guided by the principle of union or unity, experiences life in totality as a unity, without a focus on any given component. Further, it has been argued that the left hemisphere principle of division dominates our usual awareness (McGilchrist, 2009).

Jill Bolte Taylor (2008), a neuroscientist suffered a stroke to the left brain which provided her the opportunity to observe the state of awareness of the right brain. This is how she describes it:

> As the language centers in my left hemisphere grew increasingly silent and I became detached from the memories of my life, I was comforted by an expanding sense of grace. In this void of higher cognition and details pertaining to my normal life, my consciousness soared into an all-knowingness, a "being at one" with the universe, if you will (p. 41). My entire self-concept shifted, as I no longer perceived myself as a single, a solid, an entity with boundaries that separated me from the entities around me (p. 68).… My stroke of insight is that at the core of my right hemisphere consciousness is a character that is directly connected to my feeling of deep inner peace.… In this shifted perception, it was impossible for me to perceive either physical or emotional loss because I was not capable of experiencing separation or individuality. Despite my neurological trauma, an unforgettable sense of peace pervaded my entire being and I felt calm. (p. 133)

She also articulates intrinsic values that appear to be expressed by the right hemisphere and the source of those values in the following statements:

> My right mind character is adventurous, celebrative of abundance, and socially adept. It is sensitive to nonverbal communication, empathic, and accurately decodes emotion.… My soul was as big as the universe and frolicked with glee in a boundless sea.… My right mind is open to the eternal flow whereby I exist at one with the universe. It is the seat of my divine mind, the knower, the wise woman, and the observer. It is my intuition and higher consciousness. My right mind is ever present and gets lost in time. (p. 140)

Contemplative exercises like meditation and yoga, appear to quiet the left brain enabling the emergence of the right hemisphere nondual awareness; the kind of awareness that sages and mystics talk about. Perhaps it is not quite as mystical as we believe. Perhaps it is available to us if we can find a way to fully open ourselves to right hemisphere

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consciousness. The means to achieve this opening is not through the will of logical, reasoned thinking but by letting go of will, purpose and entering a state between consciousness and unconsciousness something similar to that which occurs just before sleep arrives or just after waking from sleep. It's a between world of awareness. Elsewhere in this chapter, we discuss how this is achieved in the Daoist, Confucian, and Buddhist traditions. Here we want to offer our thoughts on how this might be momentarily achieved through practicing cognitive behavior therapy or what we call emotional intelligence exercises. Below is one of the authors, Tom Culham's classroom intervention in support of emotional intelligence development.

Since 2010, I have required students in my business classes to practice what I refer to as the emotional intelligence skills of informing, listening or conflict management (Lombardo & Eichinger, 2002). The purpose for introducing these skills in classes is to assist students in managing their relationships with others which is now recognized as a vital business skill; after all business at its root is about working with others to achieve some purpose. If one is unable to work with others effectively reaching goals and targets is made more difficult if not impossible.

The skills were chosen because they engage students in emotional interaction with others. Students are advised to select a skill that they are not comfortable with. For example, if someone usually prefers speaking in a group, they are advised to listen to others for an uninterrupted time. Conversely, if someone usually prefers listening they are advised to speak to others for an uninterrupted time. This puts students out of their comfort zone and gives rise to emotions such as fear, in the case of those practicing informing and impatience in those practicing listening. One instruction accompanying these exercises is that the students need to pay attention to the experience of regulating emotions. This means acknowledging the emotion that one experiences and then choosing what to do about it rather than acting impulsively on the emotion. For example when someone who normally likes to speak, practices listening without interrupting others for a set time, after listening for a while they might notice the urge to blurt out something or add their views on the topic being discussed. Given the instructions noted earlier they are required to acknowledge how they feel and then choose to continue to listen. I believe this exercise opens the individual to acknowledging and experiencing emotions arising from the unconscious, thereby shortly connecting the student to their right hemisphere consciousness. Further, the instruction to make a choice to continue listening engages the left hemisphere such that the two hemispheres operate in a balanced integrated way as proposed by McGilchrist (2009).

Something interesting arises from this process and that is the emergence of virtues and the calming of the emotions of fear and impatience. Students who practice speaking transform fear into courage and those who practice listening transform impatience into patience. Other transformations emerge as well. "Othering," where one sees other people as strange, transforms into empathy for those people. Self-loathing or self-criticism transforms into compassion for oneself and others. In sum, virtues such as compassion, courage, patience, empathy, etc. arise out of these seemingly simple exercises. I believe the reason is that the exercises provide a safe means of accessing emotional experiences in a way that is bounded, that is, one is able to experience the power and sometimes impulse to act on emotional experiences without being overtaken by them. This integrated way of working with emotions enables the emergence of intrinsic virtues that are available within each and every one of us as Jill Bolte Taylor described.

CONCLUSION

Daoist, Confucian, Buddhist and other contemplative approaches such as emotional intel-

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ligence exercises have much to offer with respect to the development of virtue and its enactment in our personal and public lives. Our capitalist societies, especially in their neoliberal manifestations, embody a "separationist ethos" (Eppert, 2013) that stresses differences, division, and opposition (Davis, 2016; Duménil, & Lévy, 2011). As Bai, Eppert, Scott, Tait, and Nguyen (2015) write:

> In our view, it is precisely because many Eastern philosophies are embedded not in a separationist but rather in a relational ethos—understanding reality as inherently interdependent rather than isolationist—that they can speak well to contemporary social and environmental crises. They resonate in the attention given to the integration of self with environment and cosmos and also the integration of mind, body, soul, and spirit. (p. 644)

Our point is not that Western philosophies are not relational or that Eastern cultures necessarily are; our focus is on the relational ethic inherent in Eastern contemplative approaches. Our time calls for virtuous leadership, or virtuous leaders. David Loy (2003) has said this: "Recent history provides us with many examples of revolutionary leaders, often well intentioned, who eventually reproduce the evils they fought against. In the end, one gang of thugs has been replaced by another" (p. 35).

We have argued in this article that virtues can emerge from contemplation which can lead us to Dao, to realize our inner goodness and intrinsic traits. We have to keep doing both inner and outer work. We need to engage in the inner work of meditation and other practices to awaken ourselves and others. We need to do the outer work of engaging with loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity. Much of this outer work is what Bai, Eppert, Scott, Tait, and Nguyen (2014) refer to as "inter/cultural work," involving "becoming more receptive to the influence of ideas from diverse cultures and worldviews," that also involves a "looking in," or the development of awareness of the ways in which what is seen in any "other" is influenced by mostly tacit social concepts, ideologies, and practices" (p. 643).

The adoption and practice of these contemplative approaches is, of course, no guarantee that practice will "automatically" lead to the development of virtuous behavior even though arguments have been made to suggest the practices contribute toward the cultivation of virtue (Hughes, 2013; Upton, 2017) and there is some evidence that contemplative practices do have a positive impact on the development of prosocial behaviors (Condon, 2017; Condon, Desbordes, Miller, & DeSteno, 2013; DeSteno, Lim, Duong, & Condon, 2018; Leiberg, Klimecki, & Singer, 2011; Weng et al., 2013). Researchers themselves express both caution and positive attitudes about extrapolating from research findings (Condon, 2019); as Condon states, we do have evidence that "meditation training in a variety of forms increases social behavior," and he adds that there are moderating variables that we need to better understand through more research (p. 17).

Condon (2019) adds another point we would endorse: "a consideration of Buddhist traditions indicates that contemplative training involves a range of practices that support each other through their integration" (p. 17).

We believe the transformative perspectives and practices that Daoist, Confucian, Buddhist contemplative approaches, among the many other contemplative traditions of East and West, and modern scientific discoveries, that offer evidence of their positive influence on the development of virtue offer us valuable consideration for us as educators.

NOTE

1. "Intrinsic value has traditionally been thought to lie at the heart of ethics. Philosophers use a number of terms to refer to such value. The intrinsic value of something is said to be the value that that thing has "in itself," or "for its own sake," or "as such," or "in its own right." Extrinsic value is value that is not intrinsic" (Zimmerman, 2015).

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