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Wilson Foundation. He teaches a wide array of courses on East Asian religions and in 2013 he was the recipient of the honors Teacher of the Year award.

Murray's principal areas of research include Chinese religions and early Chinese intellectual history. His talk is titled "Debating Meditation and Education in Confucian Moral Self-Cultivation". So most of I think we associate meditation with Buddhism or Daoism but there is meditative practice that happens in
Confucianism and there's lots of debates about the value and purpose of it and my paper is going to explore a bit of that and just to keep you on task I'm going to read some prepared remarks and then hopefully show some images that will make a little bit of this more alive to you all. So my book project examines different variations on a long-standing debate and Confucianism concerning how best to develop people morally. Confucians from different eras of the
traditions history have disagreed on the nature of the approach and here it's ought to employ in their regimen of personal and moral self-cultivation, specifically whether it should mainly consist of an active and engaged course of moral education or a more passive and contemplative form of training utilizing meditation. Today I will examine several aspects of one particular version of this debate between these competing
approaches that took place in Confucian

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00:02:00,360 --> 00:02:04,770
circles in both China and Japan during
approximately the seventeenth and

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00:02:04,770 --> 00:02:08,789
eighteenth centuries. The analysis
focuses on the critical responses of

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00:02:08,789 --> 00:02:13,240
some Confucians to the inclusion of a
practice called "quiet sitting"

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00:02:13,240 --> 00:02:18,400
into the Confucian orthopraxy. Both
proponents of its inclusion and those

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00:02:18,400 --> 00:02:22,570
who oppose this move did not disagree
about the foremost aim of Confucian

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00:02:22,570 --> 00:02:26,950
moral self-cultivation, namely to develop and exemplify Ren which is

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00:02:26,950 -- 00:02:32,370
conventionally translated as humaneness, and in this etymology, this very graph

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00:02:32,370 -- 00:02:37,350
is number two the two lines there on the right that you see and then on the other

33
00:02:37,350 -- 00:02:41,410
side of the character, the radical for the graph is the character of the

34
00:02:41,410 -- 00:02:45,580
human being. So embedded in this graph itself is the sense that we are

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00:02:45,580 -- 00:02:51,640
inherently relational and social beings. Now at this point in the traditions

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history Ren was understood to mean forming a genuine unity between oneself and all the people and things in happening the world. In other words, it entails a profound empathetic more responsiveness to the people things at events we encounter every day based on an assumed continuity of being among all forms of life and their interrelation and interdependence in fashioning a world in which each and all flourish. Although these confusions agreed on this ethical aim, they differed
significantly on the optimal method of moral cultivation that enables people to

exemplify it. First, allow me to outline the contemplative approach under

scrutiny and several of the assumptions and objectives associated with this

approach that critics rejected. What type of meditative practice does quiet sitting entail? Proponents of quiet sitting while influenced by different

Daoist and Buddhist contemplative approaches were keen to distinguish their approach from these others that had a longer history of use and elaboration
in East Asia. Unlike Daoist visualizations or Buddhist meditative techniques or co on training for example, confusion quiet sitting was much less formalized. Basically quiet sitting consisted of sitting somewhere quiet and solitude for unspecified duration of time. Unlike Buddhists who recommended sitting in the lotus position and who often employed different breathing techniques, Confucians conveyed little to
no concrete instructions to its

practitioners concerning their posture
over their breathing. Reciting certain

classical Confucian moral teachings as a
kind of mantra, was sometimes

recommended to put practitioners in the
right frame of

mind. Also practitioners admitted that
quiet sitting needed to be

performed diligently and for a long
period of time in order for it to have a
transformative and lasting impact on them. Now it's more relaxed and freeform

nature was meant to guard against two possible undesirable outcomes. First,

there was a concern that too much structure could degenerate the practice into an unwanted quietism that would undermine the practitioners ability to engage the world and other people. Second, proponents acknowledged that deliberately attempting to quiet the heart mind by focusing thoughts and
feelings forced by - I'm sorry - by forcing thoughts and feelings out of it could be counterproductive to achieving the desired mental and emotional tranquility. Fewer constraints allowed the heart-mind to become quiet on its own accord and for both the Chinese and the Japanese they really only have one character for the heart and the mind and Chinese its Xin and in Japanese its Kokoro and so there's not this sort of distinction drawn in lots of Western philosophical
traditions between a mind-body distinction. Thinking and feeling happen in the xin simultaneously. A survey of Confucian opinions on what quiet sitting can accomplish reveals a wide array of goals - a wide array of goals from the more mundane to the surpassingly transformative. Examples of the former include alleviating anxieties, improving memory, enhancing concentration, eliminating idle thoughts, limiting external distractions, cognizance of both
emeril thoughts and impulses associated with the body, cultivating correct moral

thoughts and developing composure and calm purposefulness. All of which [is]

people in fulfilling the personal and professional duties required of their

everyday relations and affairs. Quiet sitting also [forwards] practitioners

recuperative moments of peace and rest after those daily demands have been met.

Had its supporters stopped there, perhaps critics would have viewed it as one relatively
harmless component of a broader program of moral education. However proponents sought more ambitious cognitive and ethical goals by practicing quiet sitting and claim to accomplish much grander achievements because of it.

For instance, they claim the practice enabled them to probe and understand fully the depths and original substance of human nature and to observe inner emotions in there emergent unmanifest
state which allowed practitioners to
curtail or properly channel these
emotions and thereby limiting untoward
in an excessive emotional outbursts. Most
notably they asserted quiet sitting aids
in calming the ceaseless flow of
cognitive and affective activities
associated with consciousness.
Particularly those thoughts and feelings
contaminated by subjective biases and
selfish desires that are distortive
obstacles to understanding things and events as they really are. Confusions of

the age conceptualize objective reality in terms of the Chinese character "li"

which is conventionally translated as principal. Originally this graph designated the pattern of colored [vades] found in Jade as these images illustrate,

but it came to signify the distinctive Constitution and functioning [each single]

event naturally has and does as well as the totality of the different principles
that make up the order and structure of the entire cosmos. For example, Confucians theorized that the principle of four - of the Four Seasons is their fixed sequence that of government is to provide order and well-being for the people and whereas animals merely live and reproduce, the li of people is that they're moral. Proponents argued that the mental and emotional quietude attained through quiet sitting enhances the sensory, cognitive, and moral acuity of
those who practice it and allows them to
discern accurately the different

principles they encounter and any
discrete circumstance in the same clear

and objective way that mirrors and
still water reflect the objects placed

before them. Training the heart-mind in
this way occasions an effortless and

unerring empathetic resonance with and
responsiveness to people, things, and

events that manifests in one's conduct.
As now, one is assured of knowing what
should be done morally based on a mirror-like understanding of what is so.

This spontaneous correspondence between is and ought between fact and value in performing our moral duties, in resolving moral dilemmas, and in deciding on suitable courses of action is one key way Ren was conceived as forming a unity with heaven and earth and all things. Critics of quiet sitting rejected this attempt to
have the heart-mind resemble the

qualities of a mirror or still water -

excuse me - arguing that doing so would be

unnatural, too passive and therefore morally ineffective and by asserting

that the practice is elitist. They began by discrediting the metaphors used to

exemplify the goal. One Chinese critic pointed out that the reflections of

flowers in a mirror or the moon on still water are not real. The flowers can't be
plucked or smelled for their fragrance,
and the moon illuminates nothing at all.

These images and the theoretical
extractions they signified were empty,

useless, and therefore unhelpful in
developing people morally. Furthermore on

still waters placidity, a contested point
in this debate concerned where the

stillness or movement is humankind's
optimal natural state. Critics disagreed

that quiescence is the heart-minds
optimal natural condition. If anything, it is
unnatural. They argued that water's quintessential nature is its ceaseless fluidity and flow, not its placidity and the motion and action to find all life.

thinkers observe this about not just water but flora and fauna and human existence. For instance, one critic asserted that endeavouring to make the heart-mind still in blank, severs the heart-mind from its natural feelings of compassion and rightness and thereby
erodes humanities moral nature. If people quiet their natural feelings and desires,

they actually become vacuous and lifeless internally, which transforms them into something less than genuinely human. So instead of comparing them to water, critics like in the heart-mind in this condition to withered wood and dead ashes. Another Chinese critic argued that rather than facilitating the ethical ideal of forming a unity with all things, quiet sitting actually isolates the self.
both physically and morally from all that lies outside it. The problem is

quiet sitting can too easily reify one sense of self to the point that a

self-interested partiality emerges, which ironically is the very thing to practice

[tries] to overcome to reach unity. Moreover this biased perspective and because so much emphasis is placed on the practitioners

inner life, causes the unnatural in Confucian terms outcome of neglect
fulness on the practitioners part concerning the external world. A Japanese critic who had experimented with quiet sitting in the past complained that his experience with it not only made him grave and withdrawn, but also distracted him from fulfilling his daily responsibilities. Another contested point concerned identifying the activities that were most conducive to enacting Ren in one day - in one's daily life. Recalled
the proponents of quiet sitting claimed

the practice enabled people to draw on
the mental and emotional quiescence and

the heightened clarity they cultivated
through it and respond to the principles

of things and events they encountered in
the optimal moral way. Critics were
dubious about the moral and practical
serviceability of a perception of

non-duality achieved through meditation
because of the short duration of such an
experience and because it was far too abstract and passive an approach. They argued there were more meaningful and more effective activities that ought to replace quiet sitting which included everyday activities such as farming, weaving, and craftsmen's work that contributed materially to the common good. Critics complained that practitioners of quiet sitting were too preoccupied with abstract speculation about the mind and human nature and
compared them to women who are the 
laughingstock of soldiers and craftsmen

and farmers. Critics contended that the
people best suited to the task of moral

cultivation are the average and lowborn,
not the socio-economic and political

elite. In contrast to the latter's
privileged in pampered lives of the

bound with sensual material
gratification, the lower classes are

taught in the school of hardship which
avails to them a kind of practical
wisdom and efficacy. Moreover critics explain that commoners acutely grasp the nature of both changing life circumstances and real human emotions.

Unlike commoners who exemplify their genuine humanity and earnest and productive ways, practitioners of quiet sitting had time to meditate and theorize because they parasitically lived off the labor of hard-working common people in a manner amounting to blatant thievery.
Furthermore, proponents of the practice had conceived of their epistemological and ethical aims in terms that actually glorified the condition of commoners who have a simpler and more straightforward outlook in manner about them and who could thereby mirror their world more readily. In truth however, the schoolmen knew nothing firsthand of the common people's values day-to-day lives and toil. One thinker I'll mention my name,
Ando Shoeki, conceived of the ethical unity Ren signifies through what he poetically termed the way of the living truth. He defined it cosmologically as nature's marvelous, spontaneous, self-generating, and self-sustaining, and self-acting processes and activities.

Examples include birth, growth, vitality, subsistence, assistance, protection, kinship, and love. Two important ways people participate in and manifest this
dao or way are through the universal labors of farming and weaving, which as
noted earlier also contribute significantly to forming their moral character. Another way they engage in it relates to both how they process the
grains they grow into food they can eat and the place and tool they used to do it. Both the symbol and implement of humankind's living truth is the home's hearth, which is the center of the family's life. Not only its subsistence
and activities but also its cohesion and its love. The hearth provides the family with shelter from its warmth and with the heat needed to cook the grains family members will consume to nourish their bodies and thereby perpetuate their own lives, the family line, and humankind itself. The hearth is also the source of warmth emotionally, as families from diverse cultures and all ages have gathered before it in the solidarity born of the mutual love of kinship. It's
where stories are told, laughter and songs are heard, lessons are taught and learned, hopes are conveyed, and tears are shed and consoled. Shoekei explained that the totality of activities and experiences of the great multitudes of people, past, present, and future is subsumed holographically, within a single hearth, family, and person, as this constitutes our shared and unifying living truth. As the whole is inscribed in each of its constituent parts,
one farmer unites with and encompasses all farmers and one hearth unites with and encompasses all hearths. Through farming in the hearth that processes what farmers grow, people succeed in making their own activities unite with and participate in those of all other people and importantly in the same singular living truth. Namely, the vital process of life itself. Thank you. Any questions? Yeah, Mark! Hey Jud, are you able to screen the
shot of the heart-mind character,

00:16:11,149 --> 00:16:17,600
and describe that? You told us how Ren works,
well what about the heart-mind and how

00:16:17,600 --> 00:16:23,569
that actually - it's actually - you on there -what's interesting about this graph, well first off, it's a pictogram,

00:16:23,569 --> 00:16:27,110
it's meant to depict the vows of art.
Sometimes the Chinese very much they

00:16:27,110 --> 00:16:30,380
mimicked their characters by making
pictograms of what is they're trying to

00:16:30,380 --> 00:16:35,750
convey and so the heart - that this
encompasses both what's here and what's

00:16:35,750 --> 00:16:39,319
in here and they only have one character for it and because the Japanese

inked so much from the Chinese language, whereas this is xin in Chinese,

the pronunciation of it is kokoro in the japanese, and it encompasses this xin, this

sort of holistic, connective, integrative, mind-body complex accounts for all

aspects of consciousness, our cognitive functioning, our effective qualities, our

intentions, our moral reasoning, our judgments, our perception, our emotions
and desires. Both the problematic aspects of our existence that things like either farming, weaving, or meditative practice are meant to correct, but also it encompasses sort of the highest order of our the realm or the organs or the sensibilities that we have that allow for this kind of moral development and comes as both.

Thank you.