

Kato, Morimichi

Humanistic education in East Asia. With special reference to the work of Ogyu Sorai and Motoori Norinaga

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Morimichi Kato

Humanistic Education in East Asia

With special reference to the work of Ogyu Sorai and Motoori Norinaga

Abstract: The term “humanistic education” can adopt a range of meanings, varying with the interpretation of “humanistic” or “human.” For this investigation, humanistic education refers to education that emphasizes humanistic studies (*studia humanitatis*) such as language, literature, and history, which aims to make a human being truly “human.” The basic insight of this education is that, as language is an essential characteristic of humanity, its care and cultivation is crucial in education. This original meaning of humanistic education was developed during the Renaissance. Despite this narrow definition of humanistic education, a similar trend can be found in East Asian traditions, especially in the original teachings of Confucius. In this article, I first discuss the humanistic features of the original Confucian thoughts, as expressed in his *Analects* (Chapter 1). Second, I consider the significance of a Japanese Confucian scholar, Ogyu Sorai, who developed the Japanese humanistic interpretation of Confucian texts (Chapter 2). This is followed by an examination of the central thoughts of Motoori Norinaga, who transplanted Sorai’s interpretation into the study of classical Japanese literature (Chapter 3). Finally, I consider future dimensions of East Asian humanism by referring to both Sorai and Norinaga (Chapter 4).

Keywords: Humanistic Education, Confucianism, East Asian Education, Aesthetic Education, Hermeneutics

Introduction

The term “humanistic education” can adopt a range of meanings, varying with the interpretation of “humanistic” or “human.” For this investigation, humanistic education refers to education that emphasizes humanistic studies (*studia humanitatis*) such as language, literature, and history, which aims to make a human being truly “human.” The basic insight of this education is that, as language is an essential characteristic of humanity, its care and cultivation is crucial in education. This original meaning of humanistic education was developed during the Renaissance (Garin, 1958, 1975).

Now, despite this narrow definition of humanistic education, a similar trend can be found in East Asian traditions, especially in the original teachings of Confucius. In this article, I first discuss the humanistic features of the original Confucian thoughts, as expressed in his *Analects* (Chapter 1). Second, I consider the significance of a Japanese Confucian scholar, Ogyu Sorai, who developed the Japanese humanistic interpretation of Confucian texts (Chapter 2). This is followed by an examination of the central thoughts of Motoori Norinaga, who transplanted Sorai’s interpretation into the study of classical Japanese literature (Chapter 3). Finally, I consider future dimensions of East

Asian humanism by referring to both Sorai and Norinaga¹ (Chapter 4). I occasionally compare the concepts of these thinkers with those of Renaissance humanists to highlight similarities and differences between Eastern and Western humanisms.

1. Confucius, a Humanistic Teacher

The original teachings of Confucius may be considered as predominantly humanistic for the following reasons: First, the Confucian emphasis on *jen* makes Confucian education humanistic. This Chinese term has various translations, such as “goodness,” “love,” and “virtue”. However, the translation “humanity” by Wing-tsit Chan, which was then adapted by Tu Wei-ming, seems the most appropriate. *Jen* is “the holistic manifestation of humanity in its commonest and highest state of perfection” (Tu, 1985, p. 87). Confucian education involved learning to be human in the highest sense.

Consequently, Confucius avoided discussions that might lead to mere metaphysical speculation. When his disciple Chi-lu asked how to serve the gods and spirits of the dead, Confucius answered, “You are not able even to serve man. How can you serve the spirits?” When asked by the same disciple about death, Confucius answered, “You do not understand even life. How can you understand death?” (*Analects*, 11, 12) And according to Tzu-kung: “One can hear the Master’s words on state rituals,² but one cannot get to hear his view on human nature and the Way of Heaven.” (*Analects*, 5, 13)

Second, a corpus of literature inherited from antiquity played a decisive role in Confucian learning. Confucius was the legendary editor of the Five Classics (the *Book of Poetry (Odes)*, *Book of History*, *Book of Rites*, *Book of Change*, and *Spring and Autumn Annals*), which supposedly date to the Zhou Dynasty. Confucius cherished these books, especially the *Odes*, and made them the primary subject of his school. In addition, he also cherished music from the Zhou Dynasty. His preference for the Zhou Dynasty derives from it being the last of the three dynasties governed by the legendary wise rulers. The literature and music of the preceding dynasties (Xia and Yin Dynasties) were lost; thus, Confucius regarded the literature and music of the Zhou Dynasty as the only access to golden antiquity (*Analects*, 3, 14). Confucius considered it the will of Heaven for him to inherit culture from King Wen of the Zhou Dynasty and transmit it to posterity (*Analects*, 9, 5).

The Confucian predilection for the Zhou Dynasty is similar to the Renaissance humanists’ predilection for ancient Rome. Petrarch (1304–1374), for example, sincerely believed that the recovery of ancient Roman literature would bring a complete contemporary renewal of not only Italian culture but also politics. Thus, Petrarch compiled and edited the books of Livius, the great Roman historian. Petrarch’s unfortunate enthu-

1 Although Sorai and Norinaga are first names, I use them, following Japanese custom. But for other Japanese persons, I use family names.

2 Lau, whose translation I use in this article, translates *wen zhang* as “accomplishments,” but I follow here the interpretation by Morohashi (1973), who translates *wen zhang* as “rituals.”

siasm for the unsuccessful revolution of Cola de Rienzo in Rome can also be understood considering his dream of restoring the glory of ancient Rome (Kondo, 2010).

The educational importance that Confucius attributed to the Five Classics, especially the *Odes*, and music is attested by many passages in the *Analects*. His faith in the Five Classics made him deny any originality in his own teaching (*Analects*, 7, 1). He asserted, “I was not born with knowledge, but being fond of antiquity, I am quick to seek it” (*Analects*, 7, 20). The *Odes* and music occupied a central place in Confucian learning. Confucius exhorted: “Be stimulated by the *Odes*, take your stand on the rites, and be perfected by music” (*Analects*, 8, 8). The school of Confucius was a learning community of friends striving to attain the highest humanity through the study of ancient books and music (*Analects*, 1, 1; 12, 14).

2. Ogyu Sorai, a Japanese Humanistic Confucian Scholar

Confucianism was brought to Japan in the fifth century, but it only became prevalent in the seventeenth century. In the early seventeenth century, the Tokugawa shogunate adopted Confucianism, in the form of Zhu Xi (Chu Hsi) philosophy, as its official doctrine. During the Song Dynasty, Zhu Xi philosophy was established as an all-embracing doctrine with a strong metaphysical tendency. In addition, Zhu Xi philosophy was eclectic and absorbed metaphysical doctrines originally developed by Taoism and Buddhism (Chan, 1963; Maruyama, 1974). It exerted great influence, serving as the state doctrine in China, Korea, and Japan, thus becoming the Scholasticism of the East. However, it was also subject to criticism. In seventeenth-century Japan, Nakae Toju (1608–1648), a follower of Wang Yangmin, and Ito Jinsai (1627–1705) criticized Zhu Xi philosophy. But it was Ogyu Sorai (1666–1728) whose work became a milestone.

Sorai was a renowned Confucian scholar from the Edo period, but it was a book by Masao Maruyama (1914–1996), a famous political theorist and historian, that made Sorai highly significant in Japanese intellectual history. In *Studies in the Intellectual History of Tokugawa Japan* (originally written in 1952), Maruyama emphasized that Sorai was the first Japanese thinker to distinguish between political and moral philosophy and insisted on the precedence of political philosophy. In addition, Maruyama discussed Sorai as the “discoverer of politics” in the Tokugawa shogunate (Maruyama, 1974, p. 83). It is beyond the scope of this article to examine Maruyama’s thesis. However, Sorai may also be considered as the first humanistic thinker in Japan. To illustrate this, I compare his principal ideas with those of Zhu Xi philosophy (Maruyama, 1974).

Zhu Xi philosophy established a great metaphysical edifice, in which concepts such as Heaven and Nature played an important role. The central term of this philosophy is *li*, which can be translated as Universal Reason. Zhu Xi and his followers attempted to discern Universal Reason’s influence on every phenomenon, and their exegesis of earlier Confucian scriptures was accordingly compiled. To establish a metaphysical system, Zhu Xi philosophy actively used certain books written after Confucius’ time: the *Mencius*, the *Great Learning*, and the *Doctrine of the Mean*. These books, together with

the *Analects*, constituted the Four Books, the great Canon of Zhu Xi philosophy. Unlike the *Analects*, in which Confucius rarely mentioned Heaven or Nature, Zhu Xi and his followers made positive references to the same. Even the *Analects*, which contains little speculation and declines speculative and metaphysical questions, became the target of speculative interpretation.

On the other hand, in his principal writings,³ Sorai considered the Four Books, other than the *Analects*, as products of the polemic that later Confucianism faced against Taoism and Buddhism (Yoshikawa, 1975, p. 83, pp. 129–131). According to Sorai, the metaphysical speculations in these books were responses to the polemic against other schools. Ironically, rather than resolve the matter, these responses only led to unending, conflicting interpretations of concepts such as Heaven and Nature. Sorai considered this process a deviation from the original thinking of Confucius.

The rejection of metaphysics simultaneously led to the rediscovery of history. Instead of seeking the ultimate metaphysical ground of Confucianism, Sorai perceived the origin and essence of Confucianism in devotion to the culture and rites of the early kings. Sorai explained:

Learning refers to studying the way of the early kings. The early kings' way consists of the poems of the *Book of Poetry*, the prose of the *Book of History*, the rites of the *Book of Rites*, and the music of the *Book of Music*. The method of learning therefore should consist in studying what is in the *Book of Poetry*, *Book of History*, *Book of Rites*, and *Book of Music*, and that is all. (Sorai, 2006, pp. 312–313)

This led to the rehabilitation of the Six Classics (i. e., the *Book of Poetry*, *Book of History*, *Book of Rites*, *Book of Change*, *Book of Music*, and *Spring and Autumn Annals*).

Although the early kings were also called the Sages, Sorai rejected any metaphysical interpretation: They were sages not because they could intuit cosmic Reason, but because they were the makers of rites, music, penal laws, and administrative institutions (Sorai, 2006, p. 140). Sorai states, “Now, the sages were, like us, mere humans. The virtues possessed by human beings differ according to our particular natures. Why, then, should the sages have the same virtues? They are called sages because they founded the rites and music” (Sorai, 2006, p. 201).

Studying the Six Classics was not easy. Since these books contained different vocabularies than the later Chinese language, Sorai developed a philological method to read them, called the Ancient Rhetoric (*kobunji gaku*). He adapted this from the Ancient Rhetoric School of the Ming period. Sorai was aware of the historical change of lan-

3 At the beginning of his career, Sorai was influenced by Zhu Xi Philosophy. Only after 1716 did his principal writings, such as *Tomonsho* (1716), *Benmei* (1717), and *Bendo* (1717), criticize Zhu Xi Philosophy. This was probably due to the influence of Ito Jinsai as well as the writings of Li P'an-lung (1514–1559) and Wang Shi-chen (1526–1590), the two principal authors of Ancient Rhetoric. See Lidin, 1973, pp. 98–99.

guage and warned against an ahistorical interpretation of ancient texts. Here, too, Sorai blamed Zhu Xi philosophy because

[...] they did not realize that the contemporary language of their day was not the same as that of the ancient sages; nor did they realize that contemporary literature was not the same as that of the ancients. If we dwell in the present and thereby seek through it antiquity, rarely will we ever be able to fathom the ancient names. (Sorai, 2006, p. 172)

Sorai believed that such an effort would destroy history and replace it with theory. Against the background of this polemic, we can understand the significance of Sorai's words, "Learning consummates itself in history" (Sorai, 1983, p. 303).

Emphasis on the historic nature of language and the adaptation of philology as the most highly valued interpretive method are characteristics that Sorai shared with Renaissance humanists who strongly opposed Scholasticism, which interpreted ancient Greek and Latin texts from a universal, ahistorical perspective. A prime example of this opposition is the debate between the Florentine humanist Leonardo Bruni and the scholastic scholar Alonso of Cartagena regarding the Latin translation of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (Birkenmajer, 1922). Thus, I consider Sorai "a Japanese humanistic thinker."

However, Sorai's primary, official interest as a teacher of Confucianism and a political advisor was limited to the interpretation of ancient Chinese texts, even though as a private person, he was highly interested in ancient Japanese poetry. But his philological method later influenced Motoori Norinaga (1730–1801), who applied a rigorous philological method to ancient Japanese texts. Indeed, Norinaga's great achievement is that he liberated Sorai's philology from its Confucian context. In the following chapter, we focus on Norinaga.

3. Motoori Norinaga's Defense of Japanese Literature

Sorai's re-evaluation of history liberated it from a grand theory. However, this liberation had further consequences: the re-evaluation of classical Japanese literature, above all, *Kojiki* (presented to the court in 712), *Man'yōshū* (compiled circa 770), and *The Tale of Genji* (completed by 1021) (dates according to Keene, 1988). This re-evaluation movement was implemented by several scholars, such as Keichū (1640–1701); Kamono Mabuchi (1697–1769); and, above all, Motoori Norinaga.⁴

As a representative of this movement, we consider Norinaga's re-evaluation of the famous novel *The Tale of Genji*. In this case, Norinaga made a spirited polemical argu-

4 Norinaga never met Sorai. But as a young scholar in Kyoto, he learned about Sorai and his school from Horii Keizan (1688–1757), one of Sorai's favorite disciples (Koyasu, 2005, pp. 33–38).

ment against the Buddhist and the Confucian interpretation that was guided by the ethical doctrine of Zhu Xi philosophy. With strong metaphysical and cosmological tendencies, Zhu Xi philosophy also exerted great influence as an ethical theory. It constructed rigid definitions of Good and Evil, excessively stressing the virtues of filial duty and obedience to superiors. This rigorous ethic tremendously influenced the Edo period, including the literature.

We observe an example of such influence in the commentators of *The Tale of Genji* who preceded Norinaga.⁵ Recalling the previous interpretations of *The Tale of Genji*, Norinaga wrote in *Tama no Ogushi*, “There have been many interpretations over the years of the purpose of this tale. But all of these interpretations have been based not on a consideration of the novel itself but rather on the novel as seen from the point of view of Confucian and Buddhist works, and thus they do not represent the true purpose of the author” (Keene, 1988, p. 85; 1993, p. 489; Ryusaku Tsunoda, trans.). What, then, was “the true purpose of the author,” according to Norinaga?

For *The Tale of Genji*, Norinaga’s strategy was to defend the multifarious world of pathos against the rigidly dichotomous moral world of good and evil. In *Shibun Yoryo*, an important work in which he first embraced this problem, Norinaga distinguished poetry and novel from the way of Buddhism and Confucianism: Whereas the latter admonishes and prohibits bad feelings, the former disregards Good and Evil as well as Just and Unjust, valuing feelings instead (Norinaga, 1969, pp. 22, 26–27; Koyasu, 2010, p. 324). In this context, Norinaga introduced a famous, yet enigmatic, expression, *mono no aware*, which Donald Keene translated as “sensitivity to things” (1988, pp. 85–86). Although *aware* usually carries connotations of sorrow, Norinaga used it to denote all types of deep feelings and emotions. According to *Ishinokami Sasamegoto*, a treatise on *waka* (Japanese poetry), written in the same year as *Shibun Yoryo*, *aware* includes a variety of feelings such as joy, delight, love, sorrow, anger, hatred, aversion, and a sense of beauty (Norinaga, 1968, p. 99; Koyasu, 2005, pp. 81–85; cf. Norinaga, 1969, p. 26). The word *mono* indicates things in the widest range of meaning that we encounter in our lives. In the same treatise, Norinaga explains, “whenever the heart moves and feels deeply joy or sorrow, this amounts to knowing *mono no aware*” (Norinaga, 1968, p. 100; Koyasu, 2005, pp. 81–85; 2010, p. 323). Thus, *mono no aware* indicates the deep, heartfelt feelings aroused when we perceive or perform something – their importance involving pathos in the general sense of deep human emotion. Therefore, Norinaga contributed to the history of aesthetics by liberating literature from ethics and accepting “the autonomy of a feeling mind” (Koyasu, 2010, p. 324).⁶

5 For the history of the interpretation of *The Tale of Genji*, see the introduction by Hiroshi Ohno in Motoori Norinaga, 1969, pp. 5–10.

6 Here again, Norinaga’s precursor is Sorai. Interpreting the *Book of Poetry*, Sorai rejected the moral perspective and asserted that the poems depict the lives and feelings of noble and ordinary people of ancient times. In addition, he asserted that readers of the *Book of Poetry* could enrich their experience by empathizing with the experience of those depicted in the poem (Yoshikawa, 1975, pp. 144–145).

We can appreciate this position's significance when we compare it to that of the Renaissance humanists, who encountered similar problems concerning poetry's educational function. In the first half of the fifteenth century, Renaissance humanists made a great contribution by introducing ancient pagan poetry as a central subject of school curricula (Grendler, 1991). However, their effort met strong resistance from the conservative intellectuals. Nourished by scholastic philosophy, they condemned ancient pagan poetry, such as that of Homer or Ovid, as immoral. The humanists responded by reading ancient pagan poetry as analogies that contained moral messages disguised by apparently immoral stories (Garin, 1958). Thus, at least theoretically, the humanists subordinated the aesthetic to the ethical. I emphasize "theoretically" because, although Renaissance humanists had a good ear for the rhythm and melody of ancient pagan poetry, they were unable to defend poetry on the basis of its own merit. On the other hand, Norinaga knew analogical interpretation, but rejected it (Norinaga, 1969, p. 83) and successfully liberated ancient Japanese literature from moral interpretation by Zhu Xi philosophy.

According to Norinaga, the function of a novel is to express *mono no aware*, the emotions that a person experiences in an encounter with nature or another person. As a result, the readers realize such feelings (Norinaga, 1969, p. 22; Koyasu, 2010, p. 320). In other words, avid novel readers imbue their hearts with the refined manners and feelings of ancient days and deepen their *mono no aware* (Koyasu, 2010, p. 321). Those who have learned this concept are capable of sharing such feelings as joy and sorrow. In addition, they can appreciate the beauty of a flower, the sound of the wind, and the songs of insects, because even in daily life, many occasions move human feelings (Norinaga, 1969, pp. 57–59). Learning these feelings acquaints a person with the way of the world and the most profound human emotion (Norinaga, 1969, p. 18).

This resembles education in the realm of human feelings. Norinaga believed, "by depicting *mono no aware*, a novel let the reader know it. Therefore, if we dare to talk about teaching (even though a novel is not primarily for the sake of teaching), the teaching of a novel is not that of Buddhism and Confucianism but the teaching of *mono no aware*" (Norinaga, 1969, p. 38).⁷ Literature has educational power, not because it teaches morality, but because it shows and affirms the world of feeling. In other words, literature is the affirmation of humanity in its pathetic existence.

Norinaga is sometimes criticized as a fervent nationalist or Shinto fundamentalist. In fact, Norinaga rebuked the preference of reason and morality over feeling as *kara gokoro*, Chinese mind. In contrast, he espoused *yamato gokoro*, Japanese mind, which understands and cherishes life's pathetic aspect. A germ of nationalism is certainly present. However, the term *kara gokoro* was directed mainly against Zhu Xi philosophy, regardless of its nationality. As for the perspective of Confucius himself, Norinaga expostulated, "If Confucius reads this tale [*The Tale of Genji*], he would esteem it higher than

7 Note Norinaga's reluctance in referring to teaching as a novel's function. He uses the term only once here. In other places, he denies the educational function of *The Tale of Genji*. This is because he understands "teaching" as primarily Buddhist and Confucian moral teaching.

the Three Hundred Poems and rank it equal with the Six Scriptures” (Norinaga, 1969, p. 107). This statement reveals Norinaga’s appreciation of Confucius as a humanistic thinker who deeply understood human feelings.

4. Future Perspectives of East Asian Humanism

In this final chapter, I consider the future perspectives of East Asian humanism. However, before embarking on this task, I note the immense breadth of the East Asian humanistic tradition. It is reasonable to assume that its different features, developed in countries such as China, Korea, and Japan have future relevance. In this article, however, I exclusively focus on the heritage of Sorai and Norinaga and examine what we can learn from them.

Sorai and Norinaga advise caution toward grand theories and urge us to examine history and value literature. Superficially, this advice sounds trivial in an age that has experienced the tumult of postmodernism, which brought about the decline of grand theories and the end of metaphysics. However, the temptation for a universalistic viewpoint is sufficiently strong for it to repeatedly emerge in different forms. In the modern age, it emerged as Hegel’s systematic philosophy, Marxism, and positivism. In the current age, globalization and standardization exercise a subtler form of dominance. Similar to how Zhu Xi philosophy and Scholasticism were founded on the lingua franca of their ages, that is, Classical Chinese and Latin, respectively, so too has English become the basis of globalization and standardization.

However, these views – Zhu Xi philosophy, Scholasticism, and globalization and standardization – tend to be insensitive to cultural and linguistic differences. Instead, they assume the validity of Universal Reason, such as Chinese *li*, Greek *logos*, or Latin *ratio*. In the current age, number has replaced these metaphysical concepts. Number has become a secular form of the once metaphysical *logos*, and in our educational practice, it serves as the basis of accountability. Academic achievement translated into numbers has become the basis of evaluation and international competition.

Keeping pace with globalization and standardization, the English language is gaining dominance in educational and academic fields. In these cases, learning English as a second language is not the problem; the problem is that English tends to become the “only” language. Furthermore, as a global language, English tends to become the common, exclusive tool of communication, which results in a callous attitude toward the historical and cultural aspects of language.

Sorai and Norinaga’s thinking can serve to counter such trends. They teach us to guard against the temptation of a universalistic and often one-dimensional perspective as well as to train ourselves to listen to the nearly forgotten voices of the past. As a remarkable hermeneutic thinker, Sorai’s main contribution is the discovery of history enabled by his philology. Norinaga’s contribution lies chiefly in liberating the interpretation of literature from the influence of Zhu Xi philosophy, resulting in the culture of feeling occupying the central educational role of literature.

The previous two chapters have addressed these themes, which we examine in greater detail.

1) History has long been a favorite subject of school curricula in both East and West. In each tradition, there were temptations to create a “universal” history, founded on such concepts as Divine Providence or Universal Reason. This temptation has become secular in the modern West: The Hegelian and Marxist concepts of history are well-known examples. The universalistic view of history is problematic because it interprets cultural differences from the perspective of historical development that culminates in a supposedly superior stage.

Sorai teaches us resistance against such universalistic temptation, which, during his time, was offered by Zhu Xi philosophy (Sorai, 2006, p. 150). He also states that we should recognize contingent aspects of history that are not governed by Universal Reason but are manmade.

To study history, Sorai zealously adapted the teachings of the Ancient Rhetoric, developed in sixteenth-century China (Yoshikawa, 1975, pp. 118–172). He narrates the unusual story of how he discovered the books containing these teachings:

As a middle-aged man, I acquired and read the collected works of Li P’an-lung and Wang Shih-chen. All the books contained many ancient words that I could not understand. Therefore, I made up my mind to read ancient literature. I vowed that my eyes would not concern themselves with literature from the Eastern Han period or later. As Li P’an-lung says in his teaching, this takes years to achieve. I began with the Six Classics and ended at the Western Han; then, I restarted. I read them continuously and repeatedly for a long time, mastering them to the extent that they came naturally to my mind. The meanings of the words were revealed in their contexts, and there was therefore no further need for annotations or commentaries. The collected works of these two gentlemen constitute a delight that is akin to having a section of sugar cane in the mouth. When I examine the interpretations of later Confucianists, I notice frequent mistakes and misinterpretations. It was just that Li and Wang paid attention only to good history works and did not address the Six Classics. On the other hand, I make use of the Six Classics; this represents the only difference between them and myself. (Lidin, 1973, pp. 99–100)

Sorai actually found the books among a collection – probably brought from China – priced at 160 gold ryo, an enormous amount of money. To raise this sum, Sorai was compelled to sell even the tatami mats of his house. The purchase took place in 1705, when Sorai was 39 years old (Lidin, 1973, p. 100).

As the quotation indicates, discovering the books of Li and Wang, the principal writers of the Ancient Rhetoric, prompted Sorai to read the ancient texts with great care. As a result, he noticed many errors in later Confucians’ commentaries. However, Sorai was aware of the difference between the Ancient Rhetoric and his work. He mentions that whereas in the Ancient Rhetoric, Li and Wang focused on good historical works, he made use of the Six Classics. This difference is significant. The writers of the An-

cient Rhetoric were interested in writing prose in the style of classical Chinese historians or a poem imitating classical Chinese poets. Their interest lay in rhetoric. Sorai's engagement with the Six Classics, on the other hand, was not primarily to write prose or poetry imitating them, but to interpret obscure texts. His interest primarily lay in philology and hermeneutics (Sorai, 1983, p. 28). His principal works, such as *Benmei* and *Bendo* (both written in 1717), are masterpieces of hermeneutics. His sensitivity to linguistic differences, which is crucial to understanding various past ages, will be helpful in future ages, when linguistic differences will be threatened by the monopoly of English (Crystal, 2012).

2) Literature, like history, has long occupied an important spot in educational curricula. In the West, this is largely due to the tradition of rhetoric and humanism represented, for example, by Isocrates, Cicero, and Petrarch. Yet, from its origin, this tradition has received severe criticism from philosophers. Plato chided Homer for moral and educational reasons, and expelled him from his "ideal city." He treated the Greek tragic poets similarly. Plato's criticism of the poets is manifold, ranging from the mode of representation to the educational analysis of musical rhythms and melodies. Yet, as Book 10 of the *Republic* shows, his criticism centers on their relationship with truth. According to Plato, poets lie, and they are dangerous liars because their words are attractive. During the Renaissance, scholars influenced by Scholasticism launched a similar attack against poetry, resulting in a series of debates between the humanistic defenders of ancient pagan poetry and its scholastic critics (Garin, 1958). In the previous chapter, we observed the difficulties Renaissance humanists faced in their defense of poetry. Until the rise of romanticism, and partially even after that, literature labored under the yoke of truth and morality.

In Japan, as in the West, the study of literature has been an important constituent of education. But from the eighth century to Norinaga's time, and even afterward, officially taught literature was mostly classical Chinese, even though the ability to compose *waka* poetry was highly esteemed. Even a great masterpiece such as *The Tale of Genji*, written by the female author Murasaki-shikibu, had long been criticized for its allegedly immoral content.

Against this background, Norinaga's defense of literature deserves special attention because it was a unique attempt to liberate literature's aesthetic and educational roles from metaphysics and ethics. Norinaga may be compared to Kant, who separated aesthetics from metaphysics and ethics. Yet Norinaga's thinking greatly differed from Kant's, as indicated by Norinaga's emphasis on feeling. As the *Critique of Judgment* reveals, Kant tied beauty to disinterestedness (Kant, 2009), but this position is incompatible with Norinaga's. Another Western thinker who approached Norinaga's position is Nietzsche, with the conception of tragedy expressed in *Birth of Tragedy* (Nietzsche, 2010). Yet, Norinaga's affirmation of pathetic human existence has a wider range, because he accepts and affirms all types of feelings, not only the tragic emotions of pity and sorrow. Overall, the Western thinker who comes closest to Norinaga's position may be Richard Rorty, with his criticism of traditional metaphysics and his reappraisal of the emotional aspects of great novels (Rorty, 1989).

However, we must still answer the following questions: Is Plato's theory not suitable for education? Is the pathetic not merely irrational? Was Plato not right in expelling the pathetic from education?

These questions propose that "I" should keep emotions firmly under check. But, what is this "I"? Usually, the "I" is considered different from emotion. Plato, for example, considered the "I" a rational part of the soul. But if we accept such a dichotomy, we must remain split. Indeed, the history of education, to a great extent, attests to this dividedness.

Yet, we cannot eliminate feeling. As Heidegger explained, an essential characteristic of human existence is *Stimmung*, which I translate as feeling (Heidegger, 2006), and human feeling perennially accompanies us. Even a supposedly calm bureaucrat cannot escape it. Even the dullness and boredom we may experience in daily life attests to the impossibility of eliminating feeling. How should we address this human condition? We have discussed Plato's solution: Control feeling. Norinaga offers an alternative: Learn to know and cultivate feeling. Indeed, by learning the multifarious world of feeling, we can appropriately judge our actions and those of our fellow human beings. To learn how to be human in the highest sense, a simple principle of justice does not suffice. Great works of literature enable us to understand the breadth and depth of human pathos: Literature can help us understand ourselves.

Literature can also stimulate what John Stuart Mill called "the culture of the feelings." In his *Autobiography*, Mill attests that in his period of great depression, caused by the strict, utilitarian education his father insisted upon, he discovered Wordsworth's poems. Regarding the effect of this discovery, Mill writes:

What made Wordsworth's poems a medicine for my state of mind, was that they expressed not mere outward beauty, but states of feelings, and of thought coloured by feeling, under the excitement of beauty. They seemed to be the very culture of the feelings, which I was in quest of. In them I seemed to draw from a source of inward joy, of sympathetic and imaginative pleasure, which could be shared in by all human beings, which had no connexion with struggle or imperfection, but would be made richer by every improvement in the physical or social condition of mankind. From them I seemed to learn what would be the perennial sources of happiness, when all the greater evils of life shall have been removed. And I felt myself at once better and happier as I came under their influence. (Mill, 1990)

If we overlook the utilitarian connotations concerning mankind's progress in Mill's words, they have an affinity with Norinaga's thinking on the educational role of literature. Reading great literature not only deepens our knowledge of feelings but also helps us acquire the refined feelings that poets and novelists have experienced in their encounters with nature and other human beings.

At this final point, we may sense a danger of chauvinism. Such a danger exists as long as we limit ourselves to the narrow boundaries of a nation or culture and seek the authentic only within those boundaries. As mentioned before, Norinaga's thought was

beset by a dangerous element that could lead to nationalism – even though he admired Confucius. To avoid this danger, we must broaden Norinaga’s viewpoint by introducing multicultural and cosmopolitan perspectives.⁸ If we succeed, world literature can become a common resource for the education of feelings. But most importantly, feelings are not the “subjective” properties of an individual. They are deeply related to ways of life in which members of a certain culture encounter one another and the natural world. Understanding this will promote an understanding of cultures other than our own, thus enriching our emotional lives. Moreover, this may prevent the depression that is a negative effect of globalized competition and mind-narrowing standardization.⁹

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8 In her defense of liberal and cosmopolitan education, Martha Nussbaum emphasizes the educational power of literature that creates “compassionate imagination” (Nussbaum, 1997, pp. 85–112). I fully agree with her that cosmopolitan education and education in literature should go hand in hand. However, compared with Norinaga’s affirmation of all types of feeling, I consider her emphasis on compassion as too narrow.

9 Earlier versions of this paper were read at the 13th International Conference on Education Research at Seoul on October 18, 2012, at the 42nd Annual Conference of the Philosophy of Education Society of Australasia at Chiayi, Taiwan on December 8, 2012, and at the Annual Conference of Asian Association of Christian Philosophers at Manila on April 11, 2013.

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