

Ethics—When the East Meets the West

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Societies and institutions in the East and the West have a very long and proud tradition of education in ethics. In recent years, many grand scale embezzlements by top level government officials, infamous scandals in the business world, and other infamous unethical conducts have steered the academics, business leaders, government officials, and other authorities to re-focus their attention and place more efforts and resources on ethics education. This paper will review the relevant Eastern and Western ethics principles, thoughts and maxims. It will also provide enough real-world examples to help the readers learn how to appropriately apply these ethical standards in the conduct of a personal and business environment.

INTRODUCTION

The polarized words such as north vs. south, and East vs. West often signify differences rather than similarities; however, one of the main goals of this paper is to try to identify some common ground of the Eastern and Western ethical principles. The Editor in Chief of the *Business Ethics Quarterly* identifies three best ways to contribute to the literature of business ethics: (1) theoretical illumination, (2) alternative theoretical perspectives, and/or (3) theoretical integration (Arnold, 2016). Thus, this paper will focus on theoretical integration of the Eastern and Western ethical principles by reviewing the related ethical principles, and by illustrating how to apply these ethical standards on some real-world examples.

China has a very long and proud tradition of education in ethics: 子以四教，文，行，忠，信。 “There were four things which the Master [Confucius] taught—Letter [sic]¹, ethics, devotion of soul, and truthfulness” (Legge, 1966, p. 88). This suggests that Confucius’s teaching concentrates on four main areas. The first one is literacy. The remaining three areas focus on ethical conduct. One needs to have the ability to read, write, and communicate in order to learn and understand such an abstract and difficult concept as ethics. There were many celebrated slogans, or successful anecdotes, such as “The Chinese Dream”, the globalization initiative of “one bell, one road” and the recent economic achievements by China. However, the country has been sullied by many personal and business unethical scandals at all levels—ranging from mundane episodes portrayed on some Chinese TV programs, such as “谈吐” (speak aesthetically) instead of “吐谈” (spit onto public sidewalks), to the grand scale embezzlements by top

level government officials. For example: more than \$16 billion was looted by the former security czar Zhou Yongkang, and more than 10 military trucks of cash, jewelry, and antiques by the former military chief Xu Caihou (Jacobs, 2015). In the business arena, one of the well-known scandals was the horrible "big headed babies", when malnourished children developed swollen heads after drinking the poisonous baby formula made by the Chinese dairy giant Sanlu Group (Ramzy and Yang, 2008; Premack, 2016).

The West also has an extensive history in ethics education. One of the modern Western applied ethics principles is Aristotle's *Personal Virtues*—"never take any action which is not honest, open and truthful, and which you would not be proud to see reported widely in national newspapers and on network news programs" (Hosmer, 1994, p. 21). This ancient Greek philosopher, together with Socrates and Plato, provided the groundwork for the Western philosophy on ethical conduct. Leading the world with the industrial revolution, the West must be credited for successfully modernizing every facet of our lives. However, this much celebrated achievement has also been diminished by a huge dark cloud of ethical misconducts ranging from the presidential level, such as the Lewinsky sex scandal (Lucey, 2016), to the grand larcenies at the corporate level, such as the Enron debacle (Johnson, 2003).

Although modern business ethics research is still in its developing stage in the Greater China region, including Hong Kong and Taiwan, judging by the number of publications in the *Journal of Business Ethics*, the trend indicates a very robust growth in recent years. There were only 34 articles in total for all the years from its inception in 1982 to 2008. Articles regarding ethics increased to 40 new titles in 2009 and decreased to about 18 publications per year from 2010 to 2013. Then a new upward trend began in 2014 and peaked in 2015 with 44 articles. The exposure to ethics for the journals affiliated with the *Academy of Management* (including the *Academy of Management Discoveries*, *Academy of Management Journal*, *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, *Academy of Management Perspectives*, *Academy of Management Proceedings*, and *Academy of Management Review*) shows a similar history (Cumming, Hou and Lee, 2016). President Xi of China re-positioned the ethical ship by "hunting tigers and swatting flies"² and by investing heavily in ethics education and ethics promotion (Jacobs, 2015). China is also organizing and hosting international conferences on business ethics, such as the 2013 "Sustainable and Ethical Entrepreneurship, Corporate Finance and Governance, and Institutional Reform" conference in Beijing, and the 2014 "Business Ethics in Greater China: Past, Present and Future" conference in Lhasa (Cumming, Hou, and Lee, 2016).

In the West, the many recent business scandals have also captured the interest of the government officials, educators and industry leaders to emphasize the importance of both personal and business ethics (Johnson, 2003). Today, every business school has integrated business ethics into its curriculum, one of the important reasons being that the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) has promulgated new rules on mandating ethics education. Furthermore, thousands of MBA students all over the world have signed the "MBA Oath,"³ a voluntary pledge to "not to advance my personal interests at the expense of my enterprise or society," to "refrain from corruption, unfair competition, or business practices harmful to society," and to "protect the human rights and dignity of all people affected by my enterprise" (Shaw, 2017, p. 4).

子曰，三人行，必有我师焉，择其善者而从之，其不善者而改之。 "The Master [Confucius] said, when I walk along with two others, they [at least one of them] may serve me as my teachers. I will select their good qualities and follow them, their bad qualities and avoid them" (Legge, 1966, p. 87). Additionally, "if we have a clearer idea of the different sorts of processes that can bring us to ethical judgments, we can better prepare ourselves as individuals, and we can better work with others to develop our collective ethical expertise" (Provis, 2017, p. 14). Therefore, coupled with reviewing the related books and articles, we have also conducted ethics workshops with students and faculty members in our school. In these workshops, we did not only discuss the applicable ethical standards, but also learn how to best apply them on real-world incidents reported in the press, or provided by the workshop attendees. We will provide some of these examples in section three of this paper.

The paper proceeds as follows: In the next section, the background and literature are reviewed. In section three, we will use some real-world examples to discuss and demonstrate how to apply the appropriate ethical standards. We will present the conclusions in section four.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are numerous classical works on ethics and, therefore, it is impractical and injudicious to try to review all of them in such a short paper with limited scope. Instead, we will only review the applicable literature that will assist the readers in understanding of the discussions and applications of the various ethical standards on real-world incidents in section three.

Ethics of the East

子曰，君子成人之美，不成人之恶，小人反是。“The Master [Confucius] said, the superior man seeks to perfect the admirable qualities of men, and does not seek to perfect their bad qualities. The mean man does the opposite of this” (Legge, 1966, p. 167). This is one of the many great maxims of Confucius, the great Chinese philosopher. This ethical thought is thousands of years old; however, it appears similar to the voluntary pledges of the “MBA Oath” that we should “not to advance my [our] personal interests at the expense of my [our] enterprise or society” (Shaw, 2017, p. 4).

己所不欲，勿施于人。“Not to do to others as you would not wish done to yourself” (Legge, 1966, p. 157). This famous golden rule from Confucius’s *Analects* has been used by the Chinese for more than two thousand years to judge whether a person or an entity’s conduct is ethical. Henceforth, we will refer to this ancient ethical principle as “*Confucius’s Golden Rule*” in the remainder of the paper. *Confucius’s Golden Rule* is very similar to St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Augustine’s *Religious Injunctions*, as well as Kant’s *Universal Rules*—two of the Western applied ethical standards discussed in the next sub-section.

Confucius was born on June 19, 551 B.C. His teaching is ethical, non-religious, and aims exclusively at fitting men for conducting themselves honorably and prudently in their daily lives. The great master died in 479 B.C. Soon after Confucius’s death, his disciples began assembling the *Analects*, a book of collection of the great master’s doctrines of political and social ethics, or 德 (*Te*, or “perfect virtue”). The attainment of *Te* is the true aim of daily conduct—much like the teaching of the biblical Gospels (Legge, 1891; Eno, 2012). Confucius’s doctrines of *Te* is perfectly in line with the modern definition of Western ethics. The principles of ethics are all about “right” or “wrong,” “just” or “unjust,” “fair” or “unfair.” Abstract measurements of these types are always difficult because they are not only objective, subject to individual interpretation, but also change greatly with different political, cultural, social and economic conditions (Hosmer, 1994).

We would also like to introduce the readers to another great ethical work of the East: Mencius. 孟子曰，不以规矩，不能成方圆。“Mencius said, without the compass and square [ruler], [one] could not form [draw] squares and circles” (Legge, 1966, p. 686). This is Legge’s literal translation from Chinese to English; however, it figuratively means that any peaceful society or well-functioning organization requires adequate and fair rules and regulations. This ethical thought has very close resemblance to Hobbes and Locke’s *Government Requirements*—one of the Western applied ethical standards reviewed in the next sub-section.

Mencius lived from 372-289 BC. He was a disciple of one of the students of Zisi who was a grandson of Confucius. One of Mencius’s most famous maxims is that human nature is inherently good. His works were considered to be more advanced than the *Analects* in terms of sophistication of argument, because Mencius not only defended, but also expanded Confucianism—especially in explaining how individuals can achieve harmony with nature resulting in benevolence and justice in a society (Ebrey, 1993).

Ethics of the West

In the West, Aristotle, an ancient Greek philosopher, together with Socrates and Plato, laid much of the groundwork for Western philosophy. Aristotle was born circa 384 B.C. in Stagira, Greece. When he turned 17, he enrolled in Plato’s Academy. In 338 B.C., he began tutoring Alexander the Great. In 335 B.C., Aristotle founded his own school, the Lyceum, in Athens, where he devoted most of his remaining life studying, teaching and writing. Aristotle died in 322 B.C., after he left Athens and fled to Chalcis (Morison, 2009).

At the very abstract level, Western ethics generally have roots of *consequentialist theories* or *non-consequentialist theories*. For example, Csordas (2013) studies the relationship between morality and cultural systems from the anthropological lens. He analyzes people from different cultural backgrounds and their perceptions on evil and witchcraft. He concludes that “cultural systems like religion, ideology, science, common sense, and aesthetics may interact and even overlap, but morality is uniquely distributed across them all” (p. 535). At a higher supernatural level, Parkin (1985) determines that “Evil is morality reflecting on itself” (p. 242). Abstract ethics theories are usually very difficult to decipher; therefore, it is very hard for any person, who has not received advanced education in ethics, to use them to judge whether a person or an entity’s conduct is ethical or not. Applied ethical standards, on the other hand, help to make this task more manageable. Hosmer (1994) has summarized ten major applied principles of ethical conduct from her review of various secular and religious theorists. The universal attributes of these ethical principles are independent of any specific mores or culture. The following applied ethical standards can be used to evaluate personnel and/or business conduct:

- *Self-interests* (ethical egoism)—an individual or an organization should engage in behavior that is beneficial for the long term and not focus on the potential short term rewards. This ethical standard is most applicable in encouraging a chief executive officer to maximize a firm’s profits in the long term and not merely achieving short-term profits.
- *Personal Virtues* (Aristotle)—never take any action that does not conform to a system of fairness, honesty and truthfulness. One who engages in such behavior would be concerned if the actions are publicized such as discrimination practices in employment advancement and promotion.
- *Religious Injunctions* (St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Augustine)—honesty and truthfulness are insufficient unless it is coupled with compassion and kindness. Various religious theorists have associated this as the “Golden Rule” of behavior. All actions that embrace kindness and compassion will contribute to the general welfare of the community and society. This is manifested where corporations contribute to various social and civic activities such sustainability efforts in order to encourage this area of ethical behavior.
- *Government Requirements* (Hobbes and Locke)—government regulations and rules are required because not all of a country’s citizens are compassionate and kind. Automobile emission standards are enacted in order to insure a clean and non-hazardous environment.
- *Utilitarian Benefits* (Bentham and Mill)—an action should only be performed where it contributes to the overall welfare of society, because some regulations may only benefit certain members of society. A progressive tax system attempts to achieve fairness for the society as a whole.
- *Universal Rules* (Kant)—all ethical behavior must be measurable in order to determine whether it is beneficial for everyone within a society in order to evaluate the *Utilitarian Benefits*. A mandatory recycling program separating paper and plastic refuse may be measured by the reduction of landfills.
- *Individual Rights* (Jefferson and King)—unfortunately, Universal Rules are insufficient because human behavior is motivated by *Self-interests* and may infringe on the rights of others such as freedom of speech and protection of one’s privacy. Banning the ownership of fire arms presumes to result in a safer society, but it infringes on the individual rights to bear arms such as the second amendment of the United States Constitution.
- *Economic Efficiency* (Smith, Friedman and Blinder)—basic rights must include the caveat of an efficient market where maximum profit is achieved. Under the provisions of Pareto Optimality, a society utilizes resources in the most efficient manner. An import tariff may not result in the maximization of economic resources.

- *Distributive Justice* (Rawls)—*Economic Efficiency* is insufficient because a society may have citizens that are disadvantaged such as lacking education opportunities. Distributive justice requires that any action should result in the minimum harm to the least advantaged members of society. The American Disability Act (1990) prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities. Erecting wheel-chair accessible ramps will require additional economic resources but is necessary for the benefit of the least privileged among us.
- *Contributive Liberty* (Nozick)—personal liberty is paramount in comparison to Distributive Justice to insure that each member of society has equal opportunity for self-development. College admission standards often attempt to satisfy *Distributive Justice* by using quotas rather than merit based criteria. Merit based standards provides all members of society to achieve self-fulfillment and satisfies *Contributive Liberty*, but may violate the provision of *Distributive Justice*.

Many studies in ethics use codes of conduct or standards similar to the above ten applied ethical principles, although the exact nomenclature may vary (e.g., Plante, 2004; Schwartz, 2005; Ruhe and Lee, 2008; Joseph, 2016; Werhane, Freeman, and Dmytriyev, 2017). In the following section, we will use some of these applied ethics principles, Confucius's and other Chinese doctrines of *Te*, whenever applicable, to analyze some personal and business conducts in determining whether they are ethical or not.

UNETHICAL CONDUCTS

In this section, we will analyze some representative incidents by applying both the aforementioned applied ethics principles and the ancient Chinese doctrines of *Te*. The authors will demonstrate how such practices and behavior violate the ethical principles. This will be demonstrated using seven examples of personal and business related conduct. The ten applied ethical principles as summarized by Hosmer are specific prescriptions of acceptable personal and/or business conducts. The management literature classifies these standards as “observables”. In contrast, the *Golden Rule* as espoused Confucius is more abstract, and it is generally classified as a “construct”. We will be judging each example first with one of the most applicable western applied ethical principles. We will then evaluate the example using the *Confucius's Golden Rule* to determine whether we arrive at the same conclusion.

In a recent ethics workshop conducted by one of the authors, one of the attendees referred to an anecdote she found online: James Fallows (2012) recounts that in an enclosed Shanghai neighborhood, his wife saw a young boy and his mother taking a walk on a street. The boy was eating a bag of potato chips. When the boy finished his chips, he simply dropped the bag onto the sidewalk. His mother briefly glanced over and saw the whole thing but simply kept on walking and talking with her son about something else.

Some of the students argued that this conduct violated the *Universal Rules* principle. Dumping garbage on a public street certainly deprives other citizens' right to enjoy a clean environment. The students also pointed out that if this happened at their home, the mother would have picked up the bag and put it in a trash can. Based on the fact that the treatment is the exact opposite for “ours” vs. “theirs,” the workshop audience determined that both the boy and his mother failed the *Confucius's Golden Rule*.

Ethic and virtue may also be present even when the practice would be in favor of one's self interest. One of the most celebrated and contested disputes was adjudicated by the ancient King Solomon, who was known for his vast wisdom. Arriving before his court, two women who resided in the same house gave birth where only one child survived. The women both claimed to be the birth mother of the surviving child. King Solomon decreed that the child be cut in half and be distributed equally to the two women. The mother who gave birth to the living child implored the king to give the child to the other woman. The King instantly knew who was the actual birth mother, and awarded the child to her (Cohen, 1998).

This anecdote illustrates the Self-interest principle where the actual birth mother of the surviving child was willing to renounce her claim in order to save the child from harm. Both women had a self-

interest in the dispute, but the self-interest of saving the biological child was the overwhelming motivation. This also conforms to the Confucius's Golden Rule where one would not wish to harm her own child.

We will now examine some examples that have direct or indirect effects on business activities. A few days after celebrating the New Year of 2014, one of the authors attended an annual academic conference in Tianjin China. He was one of the directors of the conference and was required to arrive at the site early to assist in the registration process. He was informed by the conference organizers to fly to Beijing and then continue the journey by bus or a high-speed train to the destination. At the Beijing Airport, he went to the information counter and learned that the bus stop is just outside of entrance number 1. He was rushing toward the entrance to the bus stop and was greeted by an individual that falsely represented himself as an airport official. The individual misled the conference author, informing him that the last bus to Tianjin had departed and he would need to continue his journey via a high speed train. This individual further stated that there were no trains or buses scheduled to Tianjin before the start of the conference in the following morning. He suggested that he could arrange a car service at a very exorbitant price. Being distraught, the author was resigned to cancel his organizational duties. The author returned to the information counter to obtain Wi-Fi access in order to email the conference chairs and inform them to find a substitute for his registration tasks. Upon arriving at the information counter, an airport officer informed him that there were several buses and trains that were available throughout the evening and it was not necessary to travel to Tianjin by car.

After being informed that he would be able to arrive at the conference by bus in enough time to perform his duties, the author realized that he was misled by a dishonest individual. The unethical business conduct violated the applied ethical principle of *Personal Virtue*, because one would not want to see such practices publicized. This also failed the Confucius's Golden Rule because that individual would not wish to be cheated in a similar manner.

We will now present two well-known examples of unethical conduct. Heather Cho was the vice president of Korean Air Lines (KAL) and her father was the chairman and CEO of the company. In December 2014, she boarded KAL Flight 86 at John F. Kennedy International Airport, destined for Incheon International Airport in South Korea. Before takeoff, she was served nuts in a closed bag rather than on a plate. Cho began yelling at the flight attendant and also called over the cabin crew chief. According to the witnesses, Cho felt disrespected and ordered the cabin crew chief to kneel down before her and beg for forgiveness. Cho repeatedly struck his hands with the edge of a digital tablet and eventually ordered him to get off the plane. The incident delayed the flight with 250 passengers for approximately 20 minutes.⁴

The incident was immediately publicized and became a major issue with the Korean press. Cho's behavior was criticized as an example of the widespread power (and abuse of it) held by the members of powerful family businesses known as *chaebols* (Taylor, 2014). Subsequently, criminal charges were brought against Cho and she was given a one-year prison sentence for obstructing aviation safety in February 2015. However, in May 2015, the Seoul High Court found her not guilty of delaying the airline schedule. The sentence was reduced to 10 months, and to be served after a 2-year probation. This means that she need not to serve any more jail time if she does not commit another crime in the next two years (Choe, 2017).⁵

It is obvious that Cho violated the *Self-interest* principle where she was only interested in her own personal comforts at the detriment of the other 250 passengers. She also violated her executive and fiduciary responsibilities for the KAL Airlines. Her behavior also violated the *Confucius's Golden Rule* where she would not wish to be treated in such a shameful and disrespectful way.

The following example is very well-known to American citizens, especially to baseball fans. In 2006, a former Senate Majority Leader and federal prosecutor, George Mitchell was appointed by the Commissioner of Baseball, Bud Selig, to investigate the use of performance-enhancing drugs in Major League Baseball (MLB). After a 20-month investigation into the use of anabolic steroids and human growth hormones (HGH) in MLB, Mitchell released *The Report to the Commissioner of Baseball of an Independent Investigation into the Illegal Use of Steroids and Other Performance Enhancing Substances*

by *Players in Major League Baseball*, a.k.a. the "Mitchell Report" (Mitchell, 2007). The report was unique where it disclosed the identity of 89 MLB players who were alleged to have used steroids or other performance-enhancing drugs. The names included super stars such as Roger Clemens, Andy Pettitte, Miguel Tejada, and Éric Gagné.

A similar scandal occurred in 2013 where several MLB players were accused of obtaining HGH from Biogenesis of America, the defunct rejuvenation clinic (Schmidt and Eder, 2013). The names of the alleged violators were Alex Rodriguez, Ryan Braun, and Nelson Cruz. These players received lengthy suspensions of fifty or more games (Lengel and Busfield, 2013).

The use of any performance-enhancing drugs allows athletes to gain an unfair advantage. These players could unfairly compile an outstanding career and gain admission to the Baseball Hall of Fame (HOF). To be inducted into the HOF, a player needs to receive 75% or more votes from the Baseball Writers' Association of America (BWAA).⁶ According to the 2018 HOF election results announced on January 24, 2018, Roger Clemens and Barry Bonds, who were alleged to have used performance-enhancing drugs did not get inducted to HOF (*MLB.com*). However, what is concerning is that the voting percentages for those players are increasing constantly over time. For example, in 2013 when both Clemens and Bonds became eligible for the first time, the percentages of ballots received were 37.6% and 36.2% respectively. In 2018, their voting percentages reached 57.3% and 56.4%, respectively (Anderson, 2018). Judging by the increasing trend of the voting results, one may speculate that these player may eventually be admitted to HOF.⁷

As we can tell from the trend in the voting for the HOF, whether Clemens and Bonds should be inducted is a controversial issue. However, whether those baseball players' behaviors were unethical is not difficult to determine. This is a clear violation of the Individual Rights principle where one gains an unfair advantage over the other competitors that abstained from using performance enhancement drugs. This also violate the *Confucius's Golden Rule* where one would not wish to be at such an unfair disadvantage in a competitive contest.

Unethical behavior occurs in diverse societies and cultures other than the examples previously presented in China, Korea, or the United States. For example, in 1994, Michael Fay, an American teenager living in Singapore engaged in vandalism when he spray-painted cars. He was arrested and sentenced to four months in prison and a fine of over \$2,000. In addition, he was also sentenced to a caning punishment for being in possession of a highly dangerous substance—chewing gum. He was beaten four strokes with a cane. The government of Singapore concluded that imposing strict penalties would eliminate the littering problem, and it became illegal to chew, sell, possess, or import chewing gum (Mazza, 1994). Both spray-painting cars and possessing of a banned substance violated the *Government Requirements* principle. An individual may not engage in behavior that violates any laws or regulations that protect the general welfare of the citizens, because the law represents the minimal moral standards of our society. Michael Fay's conducts also violate the *Confucius's Golden Rule* where one would not wish to have his or her own automobile debased.

The Union Carbide India gas leak incident, also known as the Bhopal Disaster, caused 2,259 immediate deaths. The accident eventually resulted in approximately 16,000 additional deaths and 58,125 injuries; of which about 3,900 caused permanent disabilities. The tragedy is considered the world's worst industrial disaster (Matilal and Höpfl, 2009). Methyl isocyanate gas, a deadly toxic substance, had mixed with other harmful chemicals leaked from one of the three underground storage tanks in an American-owned insecticide plant in central India. These storage tanks were designed to neutralize with some effective process and render the gas harmless prior to its release into the atmosphere. Nevertheless, the unchecked rapid pressure that built up resulted in a spurt of gas forcing a rupture of a valve and allowing the toxic gas to pass into the atmosphere (Hazarika, 1984).

The Bhopal tragedy definitely dwarfed the Enron debacle—at the time the most costly bankruptcy in United State history. While Enron's employees lost more than a billion dollars in their retirement accounts, its investor as a whole lost about 28 billion dollars in market value. The price of Enron's stock plunged precipitously to nothing in a short period of two months once its illegal accounting practices were investigated by the Securities and Exchange Commission (Shaw, 2017). Bothe the Union Carbide India

and Enron violated the *Government Requirements* principle. An organization may not engage in behavior that violates any laws or regulations that protect the general welfare of the citizens, because the law represents the minimal moral standards of our society. Both Union Carbide India and Enron also violated the *Confucius's Golden Rule*, because one would not wish to have his or her loved ones harmed with a contaminated substance. One also would not wish to be financially ruined by a company's fraudulent conduct.

For each of the examples presented in this section, we have used the most appropriate Western applied ethical principles to determine whether a personal or business conduct is ethical or not. In addition, we have also demonstrated how the *Confucius's Golden Rule* arrived at the same conclusion regarding appropriate ethical behavior. Thus, we have illustrated how Eastern and Western ethical thoughts can be integrated.

CONCLUSION

Many recent personal and business unethical behavior have refocused the importance of ethics education. In an attempt to find an alternative approach in teaching personal and business ethics, the authors used the *Confucius's Golden Rule* and the ten Western applied ethical standards in examining real-world examples of unethical behavior. This paper does not only provide detailed review and discussion on the relevant Eastern and Western ethical principles, thoughts and maxims, but also demonstrates that they all have a common goal—to teach their citizens to behave in an ethical manner. We are confident that ethical conduct is a universal and desirable goal. The striving for economic success without the guidelines of an ethical compass will inevitably lead to failure. An advance society cannot be sustained unless it follows an ethical code of conduct. We have presented personal and business examples of unethical conduct. The recent infamous business failures such as Enron and the colossal fraud perpetuated by Bernard Madoff's Ponzi scheme (Gibson, 2016) demonstrated the violation of ethical standards.

知耻近乎勇. "To possess the feeling of shame is to be near energy [sic]" (Legge, 1966, p. 386). Recently, President Xi of China has addressed the unethical personal and business conduct of various government officials. This has been demonstrated by promoting the Good Samaritan program of 学雷锋 (Learn from Lei Feng) to combat the Chinese society's obsession with economic and materialistic pursuits without any consideration to civic or charitable engagements (Yuan, 2013). China has also commenced a program to combat corruption by party members and government officials. In 2013, more than 100 thousand punishments were handed down to both "tigers" and "flies." The objective was to ensure that officials are honest, government is clean and political affairs are handled with integrity (Jacobs, 2015). In the same year, the Xi government has also announced to allocate ¥1.7 trillion, or \$277 billion to reduce air pollution (Press TV, 2014). In the West, every business school has integrated business ethics in its curriculum. Furthermore, thousands of MBA students all over the world have signed the "MBA Oath" (Shaw, 2017).

Throughout the paper, we might have used some strong words at times. That is because we following Lao Tsu's teaching of: 信言不美, 美言不信. "Truthful words are not beautiful; beautiful words are not truthful" (English, Feng and Lippe, 2012). Our primary goal is to underscore the perniciousness of any unethical thoughts and behaviors. We also like to advocate that every government in the world must re-prioritize its efforts to emphasize ethics education, legislation and enforcement.

ENDNOTES

1. The correct translation of the Chinese character 文 is literacy.
2. This means that he is fighting government official corruptions at both the high and low levels.
3. See the MBA Oath website at <http://mbaoath.org/> for more detailed information.
4. This incident was reported by various media outlets including *The Wall Street Journal* (Nam, 2014, December 8) and *The New York Times* (Choe, 2014, December 18). See articles at <https://www.wsj.com> and <https://www.nytimes.com>.
5. The West also experienced a similar incident. In 2015, Conrad Hilton, the youngest brother of Paris Hilton, was on a British Airways flight when he called other passengers "peasants" and threatened to kill crew members. Hilton was sentenced to community service and a \$5,000 fine (Associated Press, 2015).
6. See the detailed rules and procedures at the official website of Baseball Hall of Fame (<http://baseball.org>).
7. Players receiving 5% or more of the votes but fewer than 75% are reconsidered annually until a maximum of ten years of eligibility.
8. The correct translation of the Chinese character 勇 is bravery.

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