

The Asia-Pacific Network for Moral Education

9th Annual Conference

24-27 October 2014

Fudan University, Shanghai, China

*Making Moral Education Work:
Tradition and Innovation in the Asia-Pacific*

PLENARY SPEECH

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ABSTRACT

*Moral Education for Real Happiness:
Ethical Thinking on Education in China Today*

Like most ordinary Chinese people, students and teachers in China experience many serious challenges in relation to finding meaning in their lives. Therefore, it might be helpful to discuss the relationship between happiness and education against the background of the massive changes taking place in contemporary China. Understanding the real meaning of happiness can help Chinese people upgrade the current troubled pattern of educational and social development to a higher or more refined level. Happiness, or our quest for it, provides a very valid reason why we should live according to a moral code, although this utilitarian approach cannot always answer critiques from deontology very well. The essential problem, and one that all educators should consider, is most likely that of accurately defining happiness, not just attempting to understand whether happiness provides a reason for moral behaviour. This paper offers some thoughts on these issues as well as the following topics: What is the real meaning of the concept “happiness”? How can we learn life’s wisdom through better understanding this concept? What should, and what can, our education system provide for children and teachers in this regard?

TAN Chuanbao is a Professor of the Faculty of Education and the founder director of the Centre for Citizenship and Moral Education (CCME) at Beijing Normal University, Beijing, China. He is President of the Chinese Academy for Moral Education (CACME), and the distinguished “Tianshan scholars” professor of Xinjiang Normal University.

His research has primarily focused on moral education, citizenship education and teacher ethics. His dissertation *Aesthetic View on Moral Education* (1996) and other books such as *Belief Education and Moral Education* (1998), *Studies on Ethics for Teachers* (2000), *Towards New Teacher’s Ethics: Explorations of Professional Ethics of Teacher* (2009), *Conspectus of Citizenship Education: International Experience, Historical Transition and China’s Choice* (2011), *Romanticism: Freedom*

and Duty: Chuanbao Tan's Lectures on Moral Education (2012), and *Case Studies on Diagnosis of School Moral Education Problems* (2012) are highly reputed in China.

Professor Tan received his PhD from Nanjing Normal University in China in 1996, and completed his Post-doctoral study at Beijing Normal University in 1998. His international academic experience includes: Senior Visiting Scholar at University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA, 2002-2003; Visiting Professor at Institute of Education, London University, UK, 2006; and Foreign Visiting Researcher at Naruto University of Education, Japan, 2009.

He successfully hosted the third annual APNME Conference in Beijing in 2008.

For further information, please see: www.chbtan.net and www.ccme.org.cn.