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Part 3

The relation between economics and politics

Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives



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Learning outcomes

- Governance through managing wealth and human resources (*the Great Learning*)
- Principle of government
- The meaning of true democracy
- Education as the basis of governance
- System of instruction and educational election

I. ECONOMICS AS THE BASIS OF POLITICS

I.1 Ancient governmental departments

- ❑ Water and earth
(interior department)
- ❑ Agriculture
- ❑ Education
- ❑ Justice
- ❑ Labour

- ❑ Natural resources
- ❑ Religion
- ❑ Music
- ❑ Communication

--- *Canon of History, the
System of Shun,*

- Four out of nine departments are directly related to economic management:
 - ❑ Water and earth
 - ❑ Agriculture
 - ❑ Labour
 - ❑ Natural resources

I.2 Governance through economic and human resource management

- When Yan Yuan, Confucius' top student, asked Confucius about the **governance of the state**, Confucius referred to **economic and human resource management**:

- ❑ *“Adopt the calendar of the Xia dynasty. Ride in the state carriage of the Shang dynasty. Wear the crown of the Zhou dynasty. Imitate the music of Shao and Wu. Banish the tunes of Zheng, and keep far from specious talkers. The tunes of Zheng are licentious; specious talkers are dangerous.”*

--- Analects, Wei Ling Gong

- Two things mentioned in the above quote:
- 1. Economic management
 - Production side
 - Calendar of Xia dynasty - (most seasonable) suitable for agriculture
 - Carriage of the Shang dynasty - (the most efficient transportation) promoted commerce
 - Consumption side
 - Music of Shun and Wu - high living standard
 - Banish Zheng's tune - prevent excess of pleasure

- 2. Human Resource Management
 - Crown of Zhou dynasty - officials must maintain a neutral view of people, not to be influenced.
 - Employ the best (more details later in the course)
- Read the last chapter of ***The Great Learning*** and find out about the teaching on economic and human resource management

- Good political management comes from good economic management
 - *“Duke Wen of Teng asked Mencius about the proper **way of governing** a kingdom. Mencius said, 'The business of the people (**economic life**) may not be remissly attended to.’”*
- Mencius, Teng Wen Gong i

- The Duke asks about the business of the state (**politics**).
- But what Mencius discusses in his answer is the business of the people (**economics**).
- It seems that Mencius does not directly answer the Duke's question. But he really answers him from the fundamental point of view.
- The business of the people is the chief business of the state, and if a ruler can attend to such business earnestly, he will govern the state well.
- In short, besides economics, there is no politics, and true politics is economics.

II. POLITICS PROMOTES ECONOMIC LIFE

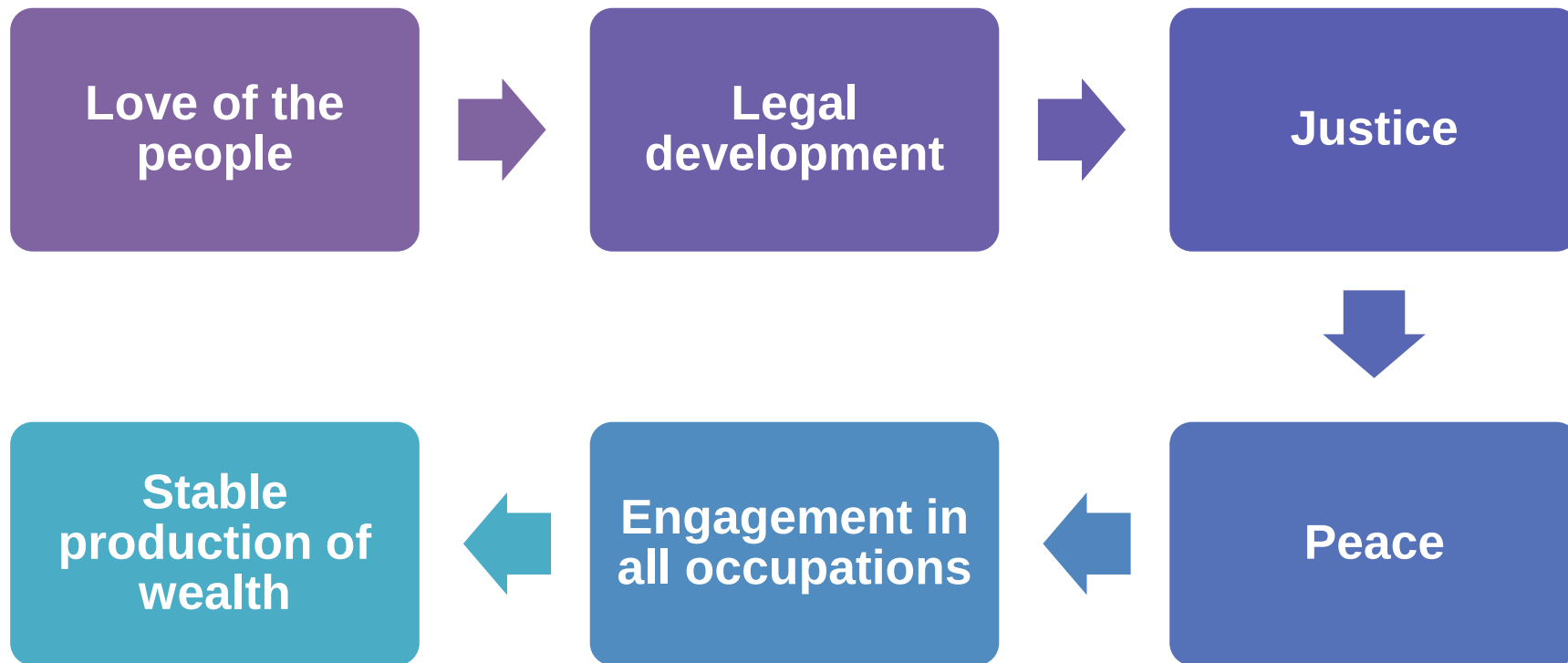
- *“Without the great principles of government, wealth will not be sufficient.”*

--- Mencius, Jin Xin ii

➤ “Jin Xin” means “exhausting all mental conditions”

- “When a ruler attaches importance to the state, he loves the people. When he loves the people, punishments and penalties are just. When punishments and penalties are just, the people are peaceful. When people are peaceful, wealth is sufficiently realized. When wealth is sufficient, all purposes can be realised.”

--- Book of Rites, the Great Treatise



- From the government's perspective, which is more effective in bringing peace to the people: lifeless law provision or promotion of virtue?

- *“If the people be led by laws, and uniformity be sought to be given them by punishments, they will try to avoid the punishment, but have no sense of shame. If they be led by virtue, and uniformity be sought to be given them by the rules of propriety, they will have the sense of shame, and moreover will become good.”*

--- Analects, Wei Zheng

- *“In hearing litigations, I am like any other body. What is necessary, however, is to cause the people to have no litigations.”*

--- Analects, Yan Yuan

- Since politics pave the way for economics, we need to understand the political thinking of Confucius
 - ❑ **So what is the principle of government?**

III. PRINCIPLES OF GOVERNMENT

III.1 (Imperial) Democracy

- According to Confucius, the external form of government is monarchical, but its fundamental principle is democratic.
- In the ideal government of Confucius, the sovereign power is in the hands of the people.

- There is harmony between honouring the ruler and democracy
 - The ruler must be the man who has the best character and talents.
 - More discussion on this harmony later.
 - The definition of a good government of Confucius
 - *“When a prince loves what the people love, and hates what the people hate, this is he who is called the **parent of the people**.”*
- Book of Rites, the Great Learning

III.1.a Keeping the rulers in check

- Confucius does not regard the ruler as sacred but gives the common people the right of being king.
 - *“Heaven and earth are revolutionary, so that the four seasons complete their functions. The revolutions of Tang and Wu were in accordance with the will of God and in response to the wishes of men. Great indeed is what takes place in a time of revolution.”*

--- *Book of Changes, Revolution*

- Confucius' thought over the revolution changing the Shang dynasty to the Zhou dynasty:
 - *“If there were no revolution, what could make the emperor and princes take precaution, and what could make the common people keep up their ambition.”*

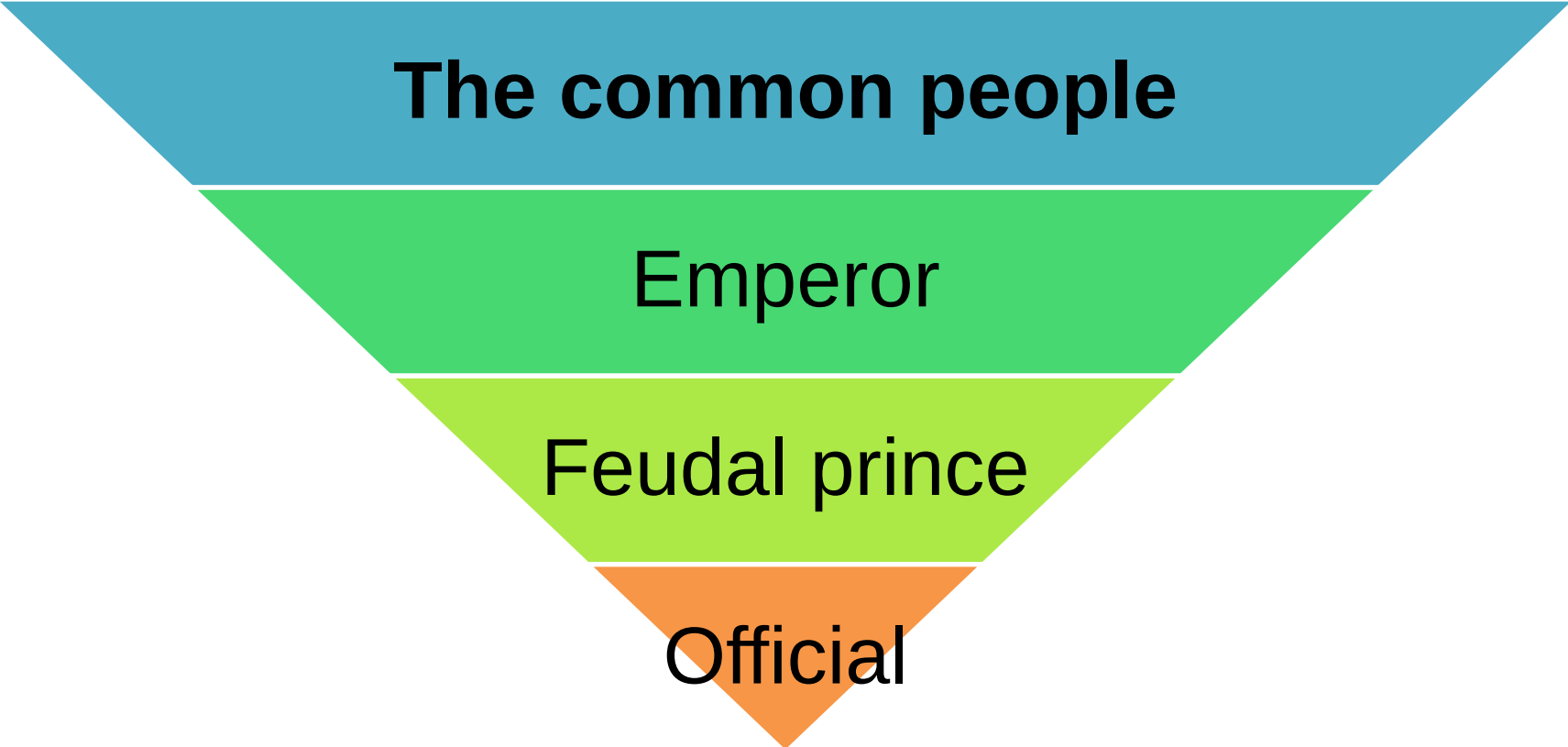
--- Book of Han, Biography of King Yuan of Chu

III.1.b Sovereign power belongs to the people

- Mencius explains the principle of democracy as follows:

- *“The people are the most important element; the state is the next; and the ruler is the least. Therefore, to gain the mass of people is the way to become emperor; to gain the emperor is the way to become a prince of a feudal state; and to gain the prince is the way to become a great official.”*

--- Mencius, Jin Xin ii



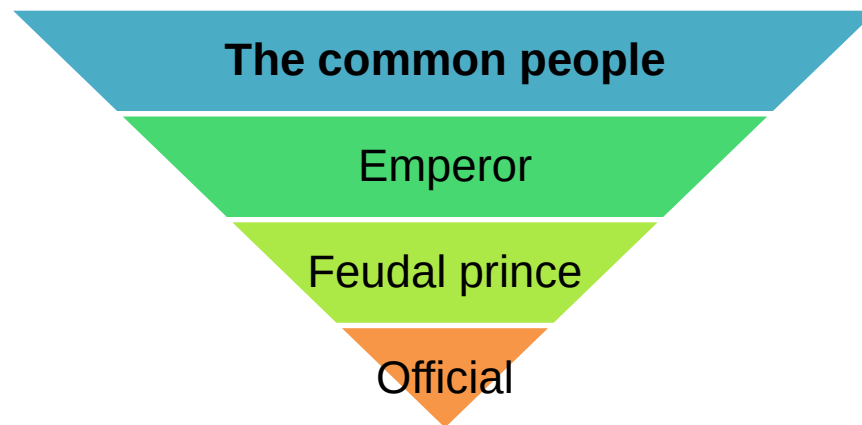
The common people

Emperor

Feudal prince

Official

- The emperor should hold his place by popular consent
- Then, the prince should be appointed by the emperor
- Then, the great official by the prince.



III.1.c Important discussion on government system

- What is the best form of government system?
 - Democracy? Oligarchy? Autocracy? Anarchism?
 - In fact, form is not an important factor in solving the problem of today's world.

- The ancient Chinese had always put great emphasis on the form of government system (i.e. law)
- However, even greater emphasis is put on the “PERSON.”
 - ❑ With a bad person in charge, the best system can produce the worst social outcome
- The most relevant solution is the **education of the leader.**

- Under monarchy in ancient China, there are two features of government human resources:
 - 1. All the emperor's sons (potential future emperors) were assigned to a highly educated official who educated them about ethics, morality, and causality.
 - Highest personal motivation for the emperor to produce the best successor of the throne.
 - 2. The selection criteria for employing government officials include filial piety (孝) and integrity (廉).
 - Moral education is, again, fundamental to governing

- A person's filial spirit has a direction impact on his/her loyalty.
- *"The Master said, 'The filial piety with which the superior man serves his parents may be transferred as loyalty to the ruler. The fraternal duty with which he serves his elder brother may be transferred as submissive deference to elders. His regulation of his family may be transferred as good government in any official position. Therefore, when his conduct is thus successful in his inner (private) circle, his name will be established (and transmitted) to future generations.'"*

--- *The Classic of Filial Piety*

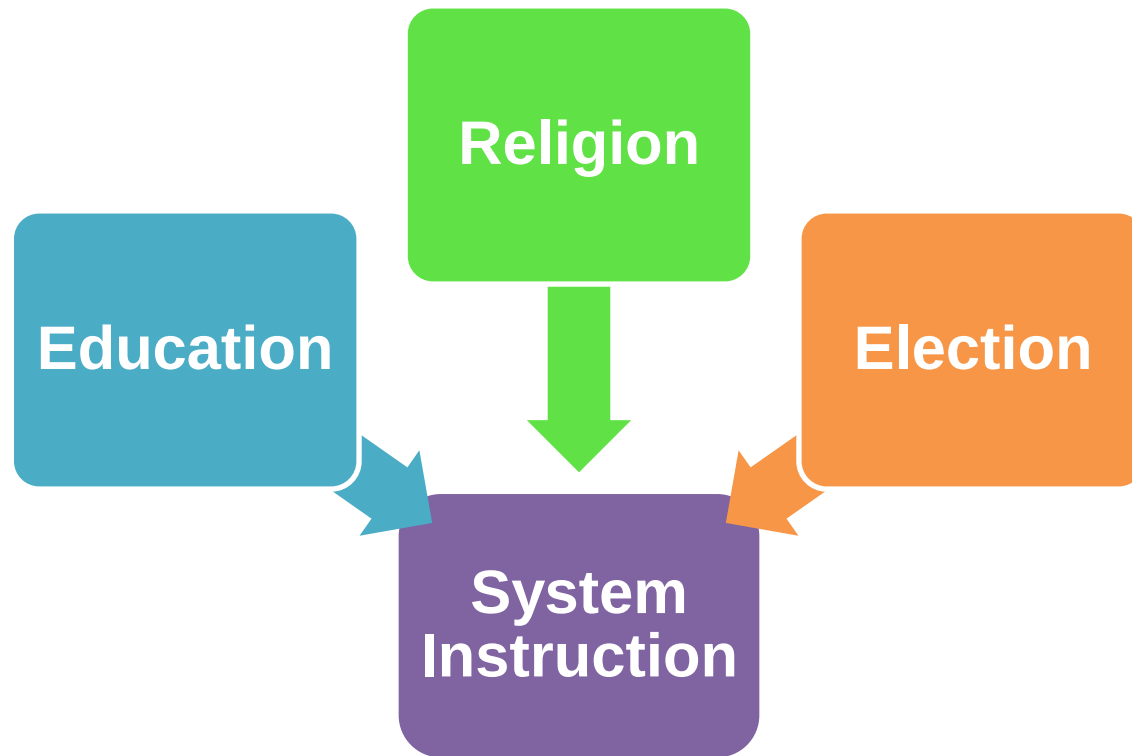
- The same emphasis on moral education is equally suitable to a democratic system
 - Recruitment of party members should demonstrate the assessment of filial spirit, integrity, and superior morality.
 - The winning party during an election should also be superior in its overall moral standard.

- Now, can we see that there is harmony between honouring the ruler and democracy?
 - The people always choose the ruler with the most superior moral conduct
 - The ruler is given the power because people come to him without force.
 - Reading: Excerpts from *Mencius*, (*Wan Zhang i*) – *power of the sovereign*

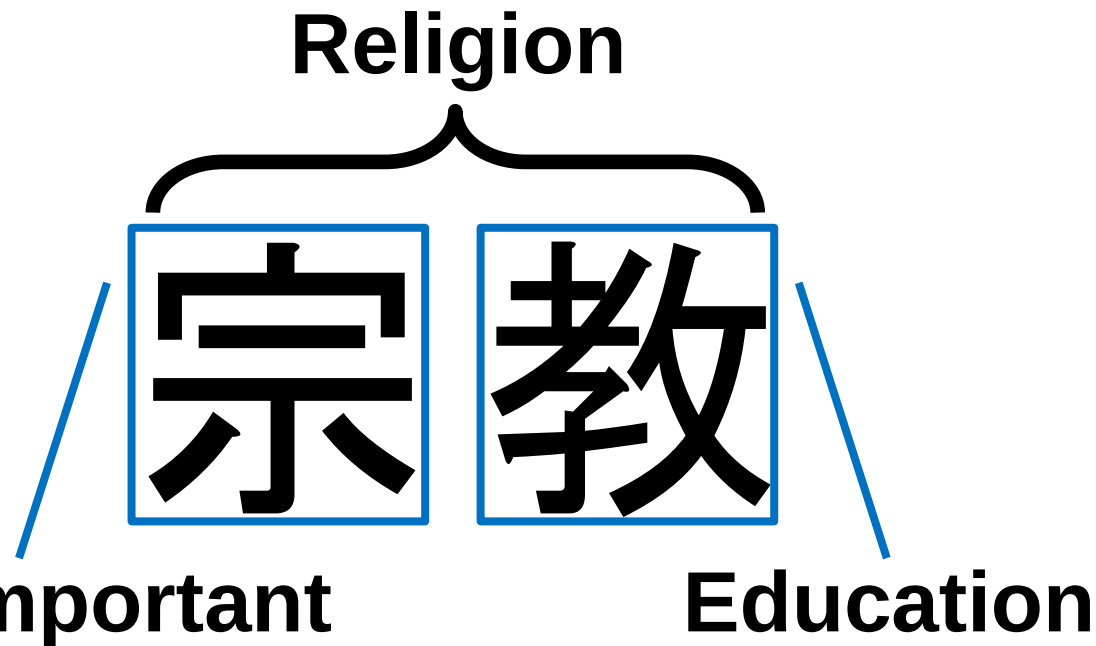
III.2 System of instruction

- Confucius' system of instruction has crucial implications for the democracy in his political system
- “Instruction” is a broader term than “education.”

- Three branches of the system of instruction:

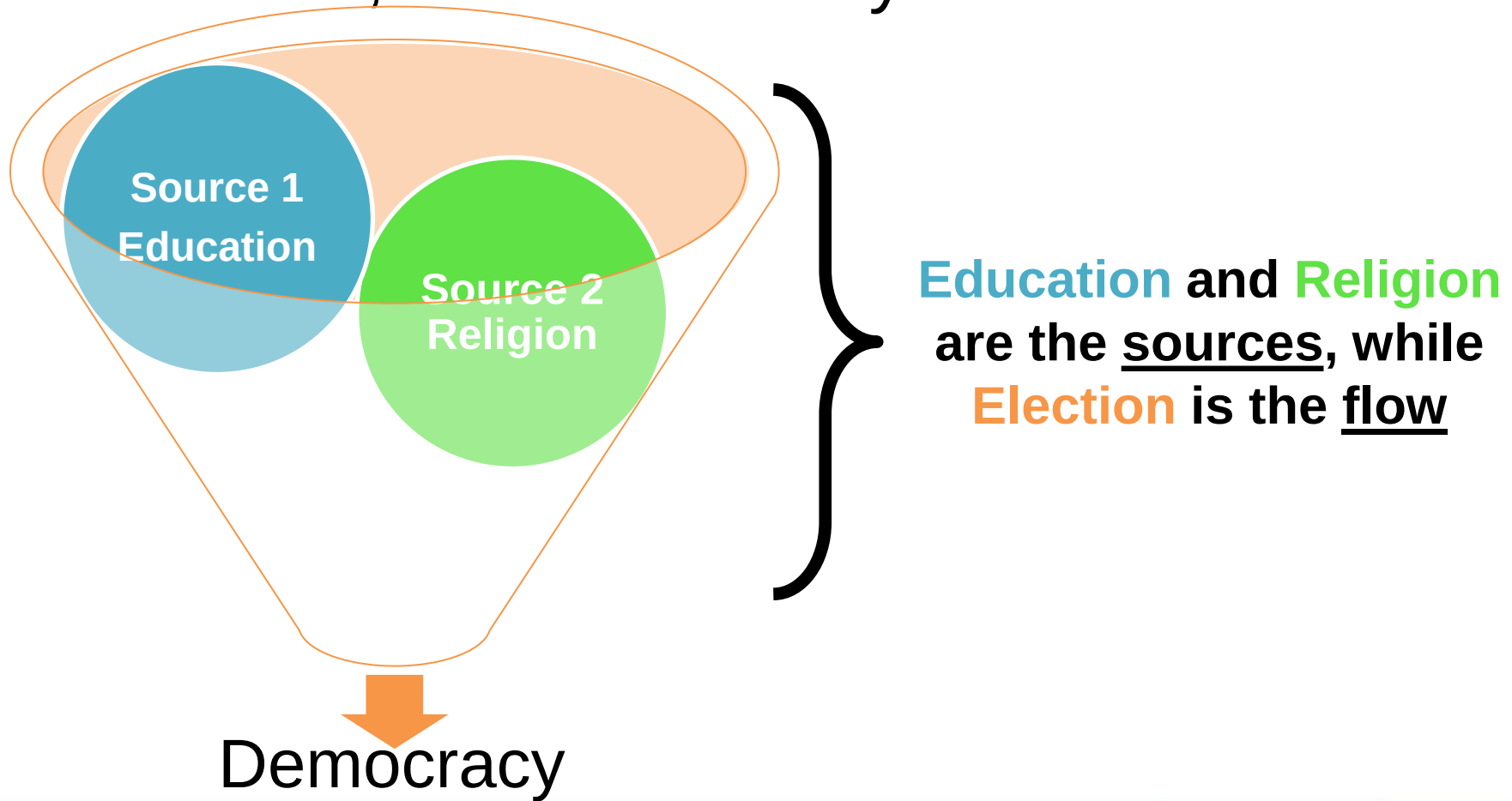


- Note that in Chinese culture, religion is INCLUDED in education.



- According to Chinese writing, religion is the most essential teaching in one's life, including moral, ethical, and philosophical education.

- Inter-relation between education, religion, election, and democracy:

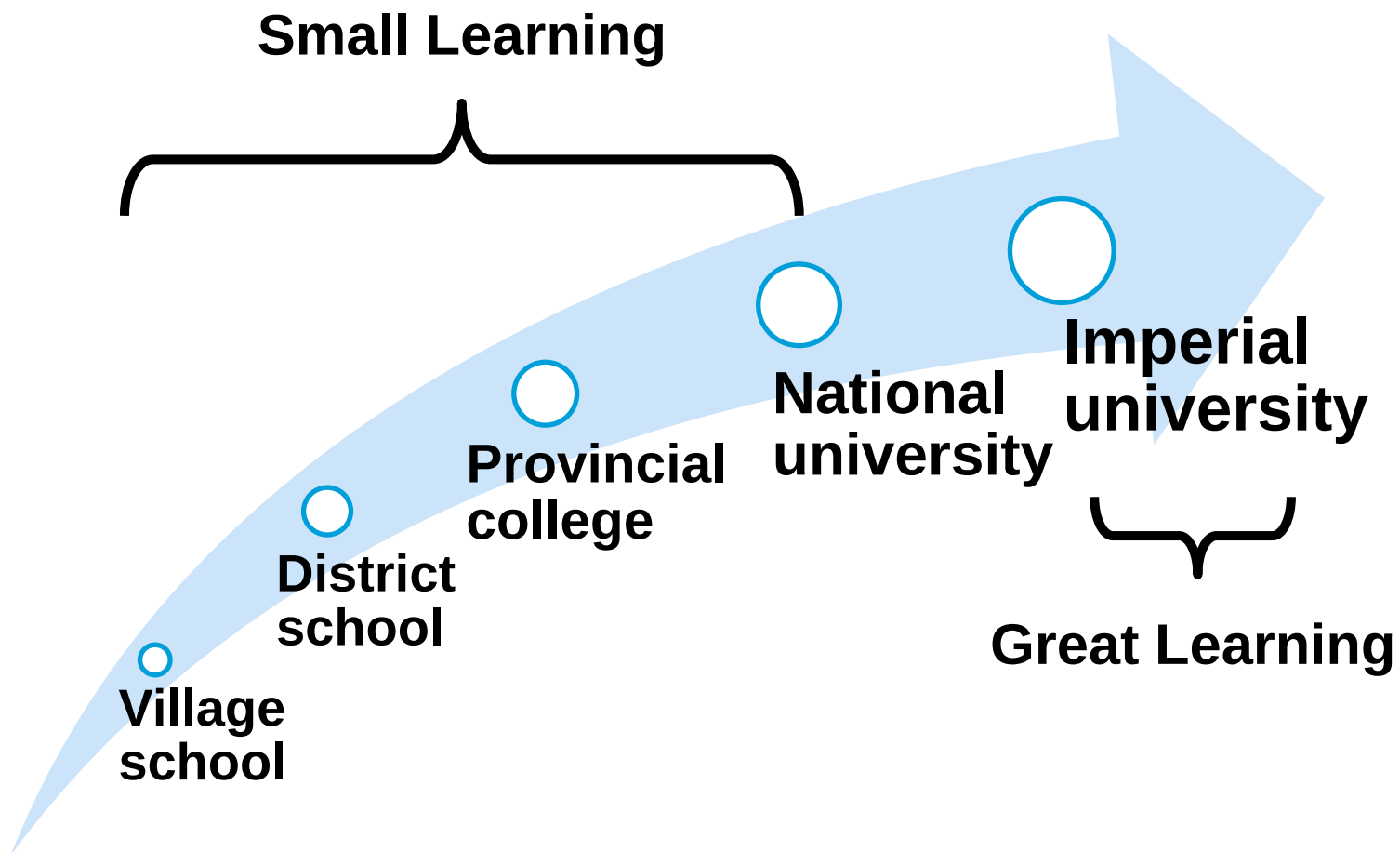


III.2.a School system

- After people can make their living and satisfy their physical needs, development of mind and character is needed.

■ Pre-school education

- ❑ Before the age of seven, pre-school education aims to help children establish good habits and excellence in behaviour.
- ❑ The main textbook is *Guidelines for being a good person*.
- ❑ The importance of building a good foundation at such an early age is that good habits are difficult to form later in life when bad habits have already taken place.



--- According to Book of Rite, Record of education

- Village school system of Confucius:
 - ❑ Schoolhouse in the centre of each village
 - ❑ Admission at the age of seven
 - ❑ Study reading, writing, mathematics, geography.
 - ❑ Ethical teaching includes ethical rules of family and society, filial piety, fraternal love and respect, loyalty, and trust.
 - ❑ The teaching from the parents' side includes respecting the teachers by doing. This way, the school and the family work together to help the children learn.

- Imperial university system of Confucius:
 - *“Every alternate year there is a comparative examination. At the end of the first year, the examination is to see whether they can **read the texts intelligently**, and what the **individual taste** of each is; in the third year, whether they are **reverently attentive to their work**, and what **companionship** is most pleasant to them; in the fifth year, how they extend their studies and **seek the company of their teachers**; in the seventh year, how they can **discuss the subjects** of their studies and **select their friends**. They are now said to have made some **small accomplishments**. In the ninth year, when they know the different relative subjects and have **gained general intelligence**, **establishing themselves firmly so that they cannot be moved**, they are said to have made some **great accomplishments**.”*

--- Book of Rite, Record of education

- In all these five exams at Imperial University, students are examined on both knowledge and character.
- Balance between mental and moral training is key to the Chinese system of education, as handed down by Confucius.

III.2.b Educational election

- *“The principles of the government of Wen and Wu are always displayed in the records. But, when there are **the right men**, such a government flourishes; while without such men, such a government decays and ceases. With a good quality of men, the growth of government is rapid, just as vegetation is rapid in land of good quality. Thus a government is like an easily-growing rush. Therefore, **the administration of government depends upon man.**”*

--- Book of Rites, Doctrine of the mean

- It is clear that the quality of men is key to governance.
- Where do we find these men of quality?
- By the system of educational election, no privilege is given to aristocrats
 - ❑ *“The eldest son of the son of Heaven by his proper queen (was capped only as) an ordinary officer. There was nowhere such a thing as being born noble.”*

--- *Book of Rites, Jiao Te Sheng*

- ❑ *“The eldest son of the king and his other sons, the eldest sons of all the feudal princes, the sons, by their wives proper, of the high ministers, Great officers, and officers of the highest grade, and the eminent and select scholars from (all) the states, all repaired (to their instruction), entering the schools according to their years.”*

--- Book of Rites, Royal regulation

- ❑ *“Even among the sons of the emperor, the princes, and the great officials, if they were not qualified to rites and justice, they should be put down to the class of common people; even among the sons of common people, if they have good education and character and are qualified to rites and justice, they should be elevated to the class of ministers and nobles.”*

--- Xun Zi, Royal regulation

- Education is the only determinant of social standing.
 - ❑ We may call this educational aristocracy.
- Discussion:
 - ❑ Is educational aristocracy an indication of injustice? What is its implication on fairness and equality?
 - ❑ **The key to equality is universally free education.**

- The next question is, what does education mean?

- *“They who are first informed should instruct those who are later in being informed, and they who first apprehend principles should instruct those who are slower to do so.”*

--- Mencius, Wan Zhang i

- What does education entail?
 - Ethics, morality, the truth of our world.

■ Election process

- ❑ The best students of the local school are elected and transferred to the district school; the best of the district school, to the provincial college; and the best of the provincial college, to the national university.
- ❑ Every three years, the feudal princes send the best students from their national universities to the emperor and let them study at the imperial university. The best students of the imperial university are called "complete scholars". If their conduct and capability are equal, they are distinguished by archery.
- ❑ Then titles are conferred upon them.

- The students improve themselves while the emperor selects officials through examination (both ethics and knowledge).
 - Personal cultivation and education are the only ticket to an official position.
 - ❑ *“Let the people elect the virtuous to be their leaders outside, and let them also elect the able to be their governors inside”*
- Rites of Zhou, Di Guan Minister of Internal affairs
- “Outside” means central government, “inside” means local government, “leaders” means representatives.
- Selection criteria are, again, about a person’s filial piety and integrity.

- The key to fairness and democracy is that, through universally accessible education, everyone has the opportunity to rise.
- Reading: *World Peace Through Education, by venerable master Chin Kung*
- Reading: *Six Principles for Resolving Conflict and Promoting World Peace, by venerable master Chin Kung*