

Soraj Hongladarom
Jeremiah Joven Joaquin *Editors*

Love and Friendship Across Cultures

Perspectives from East and West

 Springer

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Soraj Hongladarom
Department of Philosophy
Faculty of Arts
Chulalongkorn University
Bangkok, Thailand

Jeremiah Joven Joaquin
Department of Philosophy
De La Salle University
Manila, Philippines

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Editors and Contributors

About the Editors

Soraj Hongladarom is a professor of Philosophy and the director of the Center for Ethics of Science and Technology, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University. He is currently serving as a president of the Philosophy and Religion Society of Thailand. He has a wide-ranging interest in philosophy of technology and applied ethics. He is the author of *The Ethics of AI and Robotics: A Buddhist Viewpoint*, recently published by Rowman and Littlefield.

Jeremiah Joven Joaquin is an associate professor of Philosophy at De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines, where he is also a research fellow at the Southeast Asian Research Center and Hub and a research affiliate at the Center for Language Technologies. He is the current president of the Philosophical Association of the Philippines and the founding secretary-general of the Union of Societies and Associations of Philosophy in the Philippines. He specializes in philosophy of mind, philosophy of religion, moral philosophy, philosophical logic and metaphysics.

Contributors

Jerd Bandasak Mahidol University, Nakhon Pathom, Thailand

Hazel T. Biana De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines

John B. Brotamante Bicol University, Albay, Philippines;
De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines

Theptawee Chokvasin Kasetsart University, Bangkok, Thailand

Jonas Holst San Jorge University, Zaragoza, Spain

Andrew Tsz Wan Hung College of Professional and Continuing Education,
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hung Hom, Hong Kong

Jeremiah Joven Joaquin De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines

Joseph Martin M. Jose De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines

Jan Gresil S. Kahambing Leyte Normal University, Tacloban, Philippines

Mira T. Reyes University of Pardubice, Pardubice, Czech Republic

Carlota Salvador Megias University of Bergen, Bergen, Norway

Kevin Taylor Department of Philosophy, University of Memphis, Memphis,
Tennessee, USA

Laureen L. Velasco De La Salle University, Manila, Philippines

An Overview

This collection of essays is a product of the partnership between two Southeast Asian philosophical organizations: The Philosophical Association of the Philippines (PAP) and the Philosophy and Religion Society of Thailand (PARST). The partnership—the friendship—between PAP and PARST officially began in August 2018 at the 24th World Congress of Philosophy held in Beijing, China, where each organization had their respective inaugural society session meetings. Driven by the idea of making Southeast Asian philosophy relevant to the world stage, the representatives of the two associations agreed to hold biennial joint meetings together in order to foster continuing exchanges of philosophical insights between the members of the two organizations, as well as other philosophers interested in Southeast Asian philosophy. This agreement was formalized in December 2018, and in July 2019 the first joint meeting was held at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand. The theme of the First Joint Meeting is “Love and Friendship Across Cultures: Perspectives from East and West,” a theme that this collection has embraced as well.

This collection brings together different philosophical points of view discussing two important aspects of human life, namely love and friendship, within the broad context of comparative philosophy. These points of view differ in terms of their cultural orientations (East or West, ancient or modern), philosophical methodologies (analytical, historical, experimental or phenomenological, broadly construed) and motivation (explanatory, revisionary or argumentative). Most important in this collection is a comparative treatment of how diverse philosophical cultures view love and friendship, such as how Aristotle and Confucius’ views on friendship are similar and different; how the ancient Greeks and the Buddhists view friendship and happiness, and how posthumous love is possible. A diverse set of scholars from Europe, North America and especially Southeast Asia, all of whom presented their papers at the First Joint Meeting mentioned above, were selected and invited to contribute to this volume. This adds to a unique feature of the volume as it

represents emerging views of Southeast Asian philosophers, views that engage energetically with those of philosophers from the other regions. The collection thus provides a multifaceted way of understanding love and friendship across cultures, and invites others to join in the discussion.

The collection is divided into three main parts. The first part consists of essays on Eastern and Western perspectives by ancient philosophers on love and friendship. In “Aristotle and Confucians on Friendship,” Andrew Tsz Wan Hung compares Aristotle’s theory of friendship with that of Confucius and Mencius. He argues that Aristotle’s utility and pleasure friendship would not be considered friendship for Confucians and that Confucians’ emphasis on trustworthiness and familism in his theory of friendship and Aristotle’s stress of equality among friends can be mutually supplementary.

Two essays compare Aristotle’s theory and the ideas of the Buddha. In “Aristotle’s and Buddha’s Notion of Happiness: A Comparative Study,” John B. Brotamante identifies similarities and differences between the discourses on happiness by the Buddha and Aristotle and seeks to see how this leads to ideas about love and friendship. Writing on the same topic, Kevin Taylor’s “Friendship in Aristotle and Buddhism: Confluences and Divergences” argues that the Buddhist concept of friendship is necessarily a subcategory of Aristotle’s idea of friendship among members of a community.

In “Philia and Agape: Ancient Greek Ethics of Friendship and Christian Theology of Love,” Jonas Holst presents a comparative study of the ancient Greek ethics of friendship (*philia*) and the Christian theology of love (*agape*). He argues that despite the fundamental differences between the two conceptions of love, they converge on the idea that love must be manifested as a caring concern for others. Finally, in “Towards a Confucian Ethics of Humane Online Relations,” Joseph Martin M. Jose considers how a particular reading of Confucius’s ideas could provide an ethics of online relationships. He argues that such a Confucian ethics of humane online interactions can address the present malaise of the online community.

The second set of essays in this collection is concerned with modern and contemporary historical perspectives on love and friendship. In “When Pompey’s Elephants Trumpeted for Mercy: Levinas and Solidarity for the Animal Face,” Mira T. Reyes extends the Levinasian concepts of face and other toward animals. By using the slaughter of elephants during the reign of Pompey the Great as an analogy, she demonstrates the content and power of the animals’ faces in dissolving the boundaries of social prejudice.

In “The Good in Articulation: Describing the Co-constitution of Self, Practice, and Value,” Carlota Salvador Megias elaborates a neo-Wittgensteinian, philosophical–anthropological alternative to classical Aristotelian approaches in the philosophy of friendship. She argues that the alternative is descriptively and prescriptively superior when what at issue is the status of a social practice like friendship. In “Nietzsche on Actively Forgetting One’s Promise (of Love),” on the

other hand, Jan Gresil S. Kahambing explores Nietzsche's account of promising by delving into the problem of a culture of broken promises. He argues that this understanding of culture can be aptly analogized as a nihilistic one and creates a vapid state of *promiselessness*. In "Love as an Act of Resistance: bell hooks on Love," Hazel T. Biana delves into bell hooks' feminist theory and explores how it relates to her ideas on spirituality and love. She argues that hooks's love ethic theory implies that love is more than just an act with intent toward care, commitment, trust, respect, responsibility and knowledge for oneself and the other; it is also an act of resistance.

The third and final set of essays utilizes conceptual analysis in order to arrive at an understanding of love and friendship. In "Posthumous Love as a Rational Virtue," Theptawee Chokvasin investigates the idea posthumous love from the historical writings of Christian Renaissance thinkers. He argues that keeping a promise of posthumous love can be considered a rational virtue given Nicholas Rescher's definition of rationality as human resource and Huw Price's anthropological explanatory power of concepts.

Further on, in "Awareness and Aloneness as Foundations of Love and Friendship" Lauren L. Velasco claims that, unless one has been keenly aware of, confronted and embraced his aloneness, friendship or any other kind of authentic relationship is not possible. She argues that many people want love but do not realize what they really want is to control or be controlled, and we must, therefore, ask ourselves if we are in a relationship out of strength or out of weakness.

In addition, Jerd Bandasak in "Romantic Love as a Love Story" argues that the mainstream conception of love in analytic philosophy, which tries to analyze the concept into necessary and sufficient components, is insufficient in light of the lived experiences that we concretely encounter in everyday world. Taking a cue from Paul Ricoeur, Bandasak argues that we should instead reconceptualize love as a kind of dynamic story, whose beginnings and endings can fluctuate as lovers struggle to write their own stories.

Finally, and in a rather similar vein, Jeremiah Joven Joaquin and Hazel T. Biana, in "For a Moment or for Eternity: A Metaphysics of Perduring Lovers," provides a philosophical account of the *relata* of romantic love, the nature of the *objects* in a love relation. In their account, the lover who loves and the beloved who is loved are particular people who persist through time by having temporal parts.

It is our hope that these diverse sets of topics in this collection may serve as an invitation for the global philosophical community to join in the continuing discussion on love and friendship through cultural perspectives. Furthermore, we also hope that the volume will also become a catalyst for scholars around the world to look at the philosophical scene that is happening in Southeast Asia.

We would like to thank everyone who made this anthology possible. Our thanks to the officers of the International Federation of Philosophical Societies (FISP), especially President Luca Scarantino, Secretary-General Suwanna Satha-anand and Steering Committee Member Graham Oppy, the board of directors of the Philosophical Association of the Philippines and the Philosophy and Religion Society of Thailand, the administrators of Chulalongkorn University and De La

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Soraj Hongladarom
Jeremiah Joven Joaquin

Part I
Historical Perspectives: Ancient

Chapter 1

Aristotle and Confucians on Friendship



Andrew Tsz Wan Hung

Abstract This paper compares Aristotle's theory of friendship with that of Confucius and Mencius. It shows that all of them are concerned with how friendship is related to virtuous cultivation. In light of Aristotle's taxonomy of friendship, I argue that Aristotle's utility and pleasure friendship would not be considered friendship for Confucians. Although Confucians' discussion of friendship is not as systematic and theorized as Aristotle, Confucius' biography and his relationship with his disciples show a vivid picture and idea of Confucian friendship. I also argue that Confucians' emphasis on trustworthiness and familism in his theory of friendship and Aristotle's stress of equality among friends can be mutually supplementary. In view of such comparison, I argue that while the family relationship is important in the formation of one's virtuous character which is conducive to making virtue friendship, friendships can be considered a bridge between family and civil society in cultivating civic virtues.

Keywords Aristotle · Confucius · Friendship · Companionship

1.1 Introduction

Friendship is one of the crucial themes in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (hereafter *NE*).¹ Friendship is significant because it "involves virtue... it is most necessary for our life" (*NE*, VIII.1 1155a3–5). Any ideal of human happiness must include enduring and satisfying friendship. As Aristotle states, "It is perhaps strange also to make the blessed person solitary: no one would choose to have all good things by himself, since a human being is political and is disposed by nature to live with others. So, this too belongs to the happy man, for he possesses the things good by nature, and it is

¹Unless stated otherwise, all quotes from *Nicomachean Ethics* come from the translation by Irwin (1999).

A. T. W. Hung (✉)
College of Professional and Continuing Education, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hung Hom, Hong Kong
e-mail: andrew.hung@cpce-polyu.edu.hk

clear that it is better to pass the days together with friends and decent people than with strangers and people at random” (*NE*, IX.9 1169b16–22, trans. Bartlett and Collins 2011). Similarly, friendship is also related to moral cultivation for Confucianism. For Confucius, studying with friends is one of the important sources of enjoyment. Although there are many studies on Aristotle’s friendship (Biss 2011; Brink 1999; Cooper 1977; Curzer 2012; Pakaluk 2009; Pangle 2003; Sherman 1987), there are not as many studies on Confucian friendship (Hall and Ames 1998; King 2018; Kutcher 2000; Lu 2010; Rosenlee 2015); the comparative studies between Aristotle and Confucians on Friendship are still rare (Connolly 2012; Mullis 2010; He 2007; Sim 2007) and thus further investigation of such comparative studies is worthy.

Aristotle wrote nearly a fifth of the whole *Nicomachean Ethics* (Books 8 and 9) devoted to friendship. Aristotle’s classification and analysis of friendship is systematic, abstract and clearly defined. He has shown how friendship is related to different goods, virtues and psychological features. Comparatively, Confucians have no such systematic, analytic analysis of friendship. The *Analects* and *Mencius* are collections of aphorisms, dialogs and ideas by Confucius, Mencius and their contemporaries. Confucian teachings about friendship are scattered in different places of these collections. However, gathering these teachings in addition to Confucius’ biography and his relationship with his disciples can give us a vivid picture and idea of Confucian friendship. This article attempts to compare the idea of friendship between Aristotle and Confucians mainly based on the *Analects* and *Mencius* and Confucius’s biography. This will demonstrate the similarities and differences between them, strengthen and weakness of each theory, and how these two theories can mutually enlighten, and are complementary to, each other.

1.2 Aristotle’s Three Concepts of Friendship and Goodwill

The Greek term *philia* refers to a broader range of relationships than “friendship” does in English. The corresponding verb *philein* means “to get well with” which can cover various kinds of relationships, from the closest familial ties to business partnerships and political loyalties. Pangle (2003, p. 2) argues that *philia* in Aristotle’s argument mainly refers to friendship among mature virtuous persons which is the richest and highest kind of human relationship. However, Pakaluk (2009, p. 477) argues that Aristotle regards friendship as a much broader phenomenon than the intimate personal relationships that we usually call friendships. “These are not a treatise on friendship alone so much as Aristotle’s discussion of human sociability generally: personal friendships; romantic bonds; the nuclear family; the extended family; “voluntary associations”; political society; business partnerships; and the market.” It shows that Aristotle’s concern of friendship is not only about one’s ethical life, but also about constituting an ethical political society.

Aristotle argues that a friendship is a relationship in which persons (a) are mutually aware of the fact that (b) they have goodwill (*eunoia*) towards each other, (c) wish good things for each other for one of the aforesaid reasons [virtue, pleasure,

utility], and (d) have reciprocity of sentiment (*NE*, VIII.2 1155b31–1156a5); and such relationship must be voluntary (*NE*, VIII.13 1163a2). Pakaluk (2009, p. 472, 479) summarizes these characteristics of friendship as symmetry, reciprocity, and mirroring. Therefore, Aristotle defines the friend as another self, which demands each related oneself to the other, in affection and well-wishing, as one is to oneself (*NE*, IX.4 1166a29–33). According to Kraut (2012), the notion of the friend as another self means “with whom one has a relationship very similar to the relationship one has with oneself. A virtuous person loves the recognition of himself as virtuous; to have a close friend is to possess yet another person, besides oneself, whose virtue one can recognize at extremely close quarters; and so, it must be desirable to have someone very much like oneself whose virtuous activity one can perceive.”

Aristotle distinguishes three types of friendship: friendship for utility; friendship for pleasure; and friendship for virtue. They correspond to three goals that are lovable for human beings: good or pleasant or useful (*NE*, VIII.2 1156b18–20). Utility and pleasure friendships are accidental in nature and are easily dissolved and short-lived, for if the friends do not remain useful or pleasant, the individual or the others will no longer be friends (*NE*, VIII.3 1156a20). Friendship for virtue is the perfect and genuine kind of friendship, because it is formed by similar virtuous persons based on the mutual appreciation of virtuous character, and they wish good to their friends for the friends’ own sake (*NE*, VIII.3 1156b7–11).

Indeed, Aristotle’s taxonomy can be analyzed in terms of his two kinds of self-love: “vulgar and true self-love” (Hughes 2013, p. 203). While true self-love is expressed in the love of one’s own virtue, vulgar self-love consists in the pursuit of external goods, such as wealth and power. As natural resources are limited, the pursuit of these external goods inevitably brings conflicts among people. And only the virtue friendship is the perfect friendship because of its virtuous nature. Regarding pleasure, Pakaluk (2009 p. 473) argues that, in Aristotle’s theory, there are two ways in which a person is pleasant: pleasant in one’s own right and pleasant in relation to you. To say one is pleasant in one’s own right means one’s life and actions are inherently pleasant which can only be achieved by virtuous persons (*NE*, VII.13 1153b9–15); and befriending virtuous persons is virtue friendship. However, to say that one is pleasant only in relation to you means one is entertaining. And thus, befriending an amusing person is pleasure friendship.

As Cooper (1977, p. 624) states, Aristotle usually refers to virtue friendship as “perfect” (*NE*, VIII.3 1156b7; *NE*, VIII.4 1156b34), “the friendship of people who are good and alike in virtue” (*NE*, VIII.3 1156b7–8) or “the friendship of good persons” (*NE*, VIII.4 1157a20, *NE*, VIII.5 1157b25), because it reveals fully and perfectly all the features that one reasonably expects about friendship. It also shows that Aristotle recognized virtue friendship as involving mutual recognition of moral goodness. Furthermore, a virtuous person does not only have good in oneself, but also is useful and pleasurable to others, because the practice of virtuous persons would also benefit and bring pleasure to those around them. Thus, this kind of friendship tends to endure because it is based on the intrinsic qualities of the person (*NE*, VIII.3 1156b20–24).

In his widely studied articles, Cooper (1977, pp. 624–9) raises two questions against Aristotle’s taxonomy of friends. First, in reality, only a few of us are perfectly virtuous, and Aristotle’s theory of a perfect friendship seems to fail to explain our ordinary friendships. Second, Aristotle seems to hold an extreme psychological condition of human beings and to assert that nearly all friendships are expressions of self-centeredness, if a mutual goodwill can only be found in virtue friendship. Regarding the question of ordinary friendship, Cooper argues that Aristotle’s virtue friendship is an ideal type based on his teleological thinking; and our ordinary friendships in the real world partially approximate this ideal relation. For questions about goodwill, Cooper argues that all three kinds of friendship for Aristotle consist of mutual goodwill which functions as a starting point of friendship (*NE*, IX.5 1167a4). And he suggests that goodwill towards each other is unconditional in virtue friendship, while it is subject to certain conditions in utility and pleasure friendships. If friendship no longer provides utility and pleasure, mutual goodwill of utility and pleasure friendships cannot be maintained. Thus Cooper (1977, p. 626) argues that the motivation behind utility and pleasure friendships is “a complex and subtle mixture of self-seeking and unself-interested well-wishing and well-doing.” While Cooper’s argument of Aristotle’s teleological thinking is very convincing, his response to the question of mutual goodwill is very much controversial.

Pakaluk (2009, p. 476) criticizes Cooper’s idea of a mixture of egocentric and altruistic well-wishing as dubious and inconsistent with Aristotle’s understanding of reciprocity. Curzer (2012) criticizes Cooper for performing an over-interpretation of Aristotle’s text. Aristotle never said that friendships for utility and pleasure tend to wish each other well for each other’s sake, nor did he say anything about the condition of goodwill. Rather, Aristotle states clearly that utility and pleasure friends love each other for the sake of utility or pleasure; they do not love each other for themselves (*NE*, VIII.3 1156a11–16). Thus, Curzer (2012, p. 256) explicitly concludes that utility and pleasure friendships do not meet Aristotle’s definition of friendship, so are not friendships. However, Kraut (2012) agrees that utility and pleasure friendships, for Aristotle, are also friendship with mutual goodwill. He argues that the essential nature of friendship is that “each person benefits the other for the sake of other.”

Indeed, it is difficult to have definitive answers to the debates, because all these different contradicting positions can also find support from Aristotle’s writings. Aristotle himself states that as general people call people with utility and pleasure friendships ‘friends,’ we should say that such relationships are also friendship. And he says that only virtue friendship is “friendship in the primary and authoritative sense, the remaining friendships being such only by way of a resemblance” (*NE*, VIII.5 1157a31–32). This seems to imply that utility and pleasure friendships are also friendships, but just secondary friendships, which support Pakaluk’s and Kraut’s arguments. However, Aristotle also claimed that utility and pleasure friendship cannot produce goodwill (*NE*, IX.5 1167a14–15). It seems that, for Aristotle, goodwill can only arise from the appreciation of others’ virtuous character (*NE*, IX.5 1167a20), which is supportive of Curzer’s argument. Such seeming contradictory assertions make Aristotle’s idea of utility and pleasure friendships so ambiguous and controversial. Instead of exploring Aristotle’s original intention, I would rather

explore Confucianism on friendship in light of Aristotle's taxonomy and see how Confucians would assess utility, pleasure and virtue friendships.

1.3 Confucianism on Friendship

Friendship in Chinese is formed by combining two characters: *peng* 朋 and *you* 友. According to Zheng Xuan, a famous Confucian scholar of the later Han period (206 BCE-8 CE), in his *Commentary of the Analects* 《論語註》, *peng* 朋 means having the same teacher while *you* 友 means having the same will or same purposes (as cited in Heyan et al. 1999, p. 3; see also Hall & Ames 1998, p. 261). Although nowadays the meanings of these two characters are not so different and they are usually used together as *pengyou* 朋友 to denote friendship, the original meaning of *peng* 朋 and *you* 友 seems to show that friendship in Confucius denotes friends learning together with the same will and same purposes. Indeed, Confucius' and Mencius' concern about friendship is similar to Aristotle's virtue friendship. And there are many resemblances existing between their view of virtue friendship; both of them agree that virtue friendship is also useful and pleasant (Sim 2007, p. 200).

Confucianism has no taxonomy of friendship such as Aristotle's. In Confucianism, there is no debate over whether utility and pleasure friendships are friendships or not. Unlike Aristotle, Confucius and Mencius never give an abstract definition of friendship. However, they have given many advices about making friends. For instance, Confucius reminds us to distinguish virtuous and vice friendship. As in his words,

Having three kinds of friends will be a source of personal improvement; having three other kinds of friends will be a source of personal injury. One stands to be improved by friends who are true, who make good on their word, and who are broadly informed; one stands to be injured by friends who are ingratiating, who feign compliance, and who are glib talkers. (*Analects*, 16.4)²

In short, one's character will be influenced by friendship, no matter whether it is a good or a bad influence. One can benefit by making friends with trustworthy and well-informed persons, and misled by boastful, insincere persons. Mencius (5B3) also suggests that "in making friends one should not rely on advantage (whether it grows out of the age, position, or power of the other) but should consider his or her virtue or moral goodness" (Mullis 2010, p. 393). This shows that like Aristotle, Confucians are very much concerned about virtue friendship. Confucius and Mencius never discuss friendship which is irrelevant to moral cultivation. Furthermore, in view of Confucius' distinction between gentlemen and petty persons by saying, "gentlemen understand righteousness and petty person understand profit" (4.16 author's own translation), and Mencius' (1A1) idea of priority of righteousness over profit, it seems that Confucianism would not consider friendship for simply utility or pleasure as friendship. However, based on Mencius' (6A6) idea of goodness of human nature,

²Unless stated otherwise, all quotes from the *Analects* come from the translation by Ames and Rosemont (1998).

there is no person who is purely egocentric in the real world. For Mencius, even in the Warring States Period, one of the cruelest times in ancient China, he still believes that people still had a sense of commiseration when seeing a child about to fall into a well. Thus, for Confucian, there would not be purely utility or pleasure friendship in Aristotle's sense in the real world.

Actually, the *Analects* start with a discussion on study, friendship and being a gentleman (*junzi* 君子). In the first eight passages of the *Analects*, there are five talking about friendship; and the rest talk about filial relationships and *ren* that have optimal value for Confucianism. It shows the significance of friendship in the formation of moral character for Confucians. In the first passage of the *Analects*, Confucius associates the joy of studying and the joy of friendship and being a gentleman without being acknowledged. As he states,

The Master said: "Having studied, to then repeatedly apply what you have learned—is this not a source of pleasure? To have friends (*peng* 朋) come from distant quarters —is this not a source of enjoyment? To go unacknowledged by others without harboring frustration—is this not the mark of an exemplary person (*junzi* 君子)?" (*Analects* 1.1)

This seems to show that true friends are based on "common interests and a wealth of shared experience to draw upon" (Mullis 2010, p. 395). This also implies that, for Confucius, friendship provides a unique kind of joy and enjoyment that can only be achieved through cultural and intellectual exchange between friends. Such joy is not equivalent to the joy in Aristotle's pleasure friendship, because such joy of friendship is not out of amusement, but out of a sense of companionship of studying with virtuous persons. As Lu (2010, p. 236) argues, "When friends, those who share a common goal in learning, come from a different social context to discuss and exchange learning with oneself, the joy resulting from this relationship and exchange appears to be more profound than the simple pleasure one acquires from learning and practicing on one's own." Indeed, such enjoyment of friendship and sense of solidarity can in turn enhance the motivation of studies and moral cultivation. It also gives gentlemen strength and capacity to resist the frustration and disturbance caused by lack of recognition and resentful attitude by others, in particular those who are in power and rich but are morally inferior. Indeed, apart from studying, Mencius (1B1) also stresses that enjoying music in the company of many is greater than enjoying music by oneself. This shows Confucians' concern of relationship, companionship and sense of community.

1.4 Companionship Among Friends

If the best expression of friendship for Confucius is to study and to self-cultivate together with friends, for Aristotle, such enjoyment of friendship is best expressed in living life together with virtuous friends. In *Nicomachean Ethics* 9.9, Aristotle asserts that to spend time and to live with friends help to achieve a kind of mutual sharing in perception and thought. As Pakaluk (2005, p. 260) states, "Friendship

finds its greatest fulfillment when friends are thinking about the same truths, and each recognizes that the other thinks the same as he, and each recognizes that each recognizes this.” Furthermore, Aristotle argues, in adversity, our friends are not only useful in offering substantial help, but also sweet and pleasant through their companionship. Their presence could lighten pain because they share our distress. Such experience is puzzling for Aristotle as it is unclear whether our friend has taken part of the distress from us or our awareness of their presence helps relieve the pain (*NE*, IX.11 1171a25–33).

According to *Biography of Confucius in Records of the Grand Historian (Shiji)* (史記. 孔子世家) by Sima (司馬遷) (2014, p. 2316), Confucius’ life had been one of enduring hardship and poverty. His political career was full of frustration. His political ideal was not endorsed by political leaders (the duke and three aristocratic families) of his own state of *Lu*. He then left *Lu* with a few of his disciples and went into exile. He traveled in different states aiming at looking for a ruler who might employ him with his political ideal. However, what he met was indifference and sometimes severe danger and hardship. When he got lost at the gate of the state of Zheng, a person there said that Confucius appeared to be depressed and in despair, and looked like a “stray dog,” which Confucius himself also admitted. And the gatekeeper at the Stone Gate also said that he was “the one who keeps trying although he knows that it is in vain” (*Analects* 14.38). Through the dialogs among Confucius and his disciples, it seems that during his exile and his whole political career, the companionship of his disciples as well as their friendship gave great support to Confucius’ insistence on his pursuit of the realization of his moral political ideal.

Like Aristotle’s virtue friendship, Confucian friendship also provides mutual understanding and recognition (Lu 2010, p. 236) among friends. Although Confucius said that a gentleman should not be disturbed by being unacknowledged (*Analects*, 1.1, 1.16, 4.14), in reality, there are passages showing that he had been deeply distressed by being unappreciated and unrecognized (Lu 2010, p. 37), and he further lamented, “It is only *tian* (Heaven) who appreciates me!” (*Analects*, 14.35). According to Charles Taylor (1994, p. 25–6), recognition is a vital human need. Our identities are partly shaped by the recognition of others. A person or a group of people, who lack recognition by others, could be seriously hurt and distorted, if the people around them show contempt for them or mirror back a disdainful picture of them. If what Taylor said is true, it means that unless one has acquired certain recognition from one’s significant others, one cannot really be unbothered by a total lack of recognition. Thus, even though a gentleman should not be disturbed by being unacknowledged by the masses, s/he should firstly at least acquire certain appreciation and recognition from their significant others so that their psychological will power is strong enough to insist on one’s direction and to resist temptations and contempt from others. And these significant others are usually one’s family members and close friends, whose understanding and recognition can provide great support to one’s moral motivation. And it is believed that it is the companionship and recognition provided by his disciples which support Confucius’ spirit in his insistence of the moral ideal, by the fact that he “keeps trying although he knows that it is in vain” (*Analects*, 14.38).