CHAPTER 11

Zhong in the *Analects* with Insights into Loyalty

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THIS CHAPTER ATTEMPTS to analyze the notion of *zhong* 忠 in the *Analects.* Since *zhong* is often translated as "loyalty" in the existing literature, it is tempting to read Confucius as placing emphasis on the importance of being loyal, and this will easily call to mind many negative connotations associated with loyalty such as blind submission, ungrounded favoritism, and the erosion of integrity. Such a strong association between *zhong* and loyalty might prevent us from fully understanding why *zhong* is valued. The aims of this chapter are to examine Confucius' use of *zhong* as recorded in the *Analects,* to articulate the early Confucian conception of *zhong,* and to extract ethical insights from such an early Confucian conception by juxtaposing it against the contemporary conception of loyalty.

Zhong is often hailed as one of the cardinal concepts in early Confucian ethics. In English translations, the early Confucian term *zhong* is often rendered as "loyalty." The same tendency is found in modern Chinese translations. For example, in his modern Chinese translation of the *Analects,* Yang Bojun uses a seemingly similar modern Chinese expression, *zhongxin* 忠心, which means loyalty, as a modern translation of "*zhong.*"[1] In addition, there is a tendency to take the early Confucian conception of *zhong* to mean loyalty to a ruler. With regard to the spread of Confucianism to Japan, scholarly interest in *zhong* has been focused predominantly on loyalty to the emperor or the state and on the potential tension between loyalty to the state and filial piety.

If *zhong* is understood as loyalty, this understanding not only potentially conflicts with other ethical attributes, such as filial piety,[2] but it also seems to be in tension with the early Confucian ethical system as a whole. Loyalty requires

one to have a special regard for someone. I give unwavering support to my friend, to whom I am loyal, because my friend stands in special relationship to me. However, even though early Confucians do emphasize special relationships, the ideal seems to be that ethical agents should eventually extend their care to everyone.[3] The emphasis on loyalty is a prima facie obstacle to the extension of care to other people in general. If the focus of *zhong* is more narrowly on one's loyalty to the ruler or state, there are further problems, such as whether one is justified in being loyal to a corrupt ruler or what one should do in practical cases where there is a conflict between one's loyalty and one's duty to the general public. This raises the worry that the Confucian idealization of loyalty is in tension with our current global dynamics. Chenyang Li, for example, points out that one of the main contemporary challenges faced by Confucianism is pressure from liberal-democratic value systems. While Confucianism emphasizes loyalty to one's country and family, liberal democracies tend to emphasize individual autonomy and freedom.[4]

Worries along this line are not unfounded. Indeed, the Confucian notion of *zhong* has evolved throughout the imperial period to mean something ever closer to loyalty to the ruler. As we look for resources in early Confucian thought that could contribute to resolving our current global predicaments, we certainly need to be wary of the failings of Confucianism over its long history. However, we should not let our reading of the early Confucian conception of *zhong* be colored by these later developments. As some scholars have already pointed out, in the early Confucian texts *zhong* does not always mean loyalty, especially not in texts earlier than the *Xunzi*.[5] What I attempt to do here is not to elaborate on the Confucian emphasis on loyalty but to salvage the early Confucian view on *zhong* by clarifying the concept of *zhong* in the *Analects.*

As the following analysis will show, if we discard the assumption that *zhong* means "loyalty" in the *Analects* and try instead to approximate the meaning of the term as it is discussed in the text, we can retrieve valuable insights from early Confucian thought that have contemporary relevance. In section two below, I seek to approximate what *zhong* means in the *Analects* without being guided by any contemporary understanding of loyalty. In section three, I articulate what I take to be the early Confucian conception of *zhong* based on the textual observations made in section two. In section four, I discuss the ethical significance of *zhong* by juxtaposing it with our contemporary conception of loyalty. I attempt neither to equate Confucius' conception of *zhong* with loyalty nor to defend loyalty. Whether or not *zhong* means loyalty does not affect the second and third parts of the present investigation. What matters for the fourth part is that we can retrieve some early Confucian insights on a psychological attitude that has to do with how we relate to others. This attitude has aspects that overlap with those we find appealing about the notion of

loyalty, yet avoids some of the difficulties with the contemporary understanding of and emphasis on loyalty.

Zhong in the *Analects*

The term *zhong* appears in sixteen passages in the *Analects* and is used as either an adjective or a noun. As D. C. Lau aptly points out in the introduction to his translation of the *Analects*:

> Translators tend to use "loyal" as the sole equivalent for *zhong* even when translating early texts. This is a mistake and is due to a failure to appreciate that the meaning of the word changed in the course of time. In the later usage, it is true, *zhong* tended to mean "loyalty" in the sense of "blind devotion." But this was not its meaning at the time of Confucius.[6]

Lau himself translated *zhong* as "doing one's best" instead of "loyalty." Since the nature of Lau's work is translation, he did not have the space to go into detailed discussion of why "doing one's best" is more suitable than "loyalty." Nonetheless, his insightful remark certainly suggests the limitation of translating *zhong* as "loyalty" and alerts us to do justice to the nuances and complexities of *zhong*. The task of this section is to follow up on Lau's suggestion and investigate the usage of *zhong* in the *Analects*. There is, of course, a question about the extent to which the *Analects* is an accurate record or representation of Confucius' thought. Indeed, two of the important quotes about *zhong* come from Confucius' disciple Zeng Can 曾參 (also known as Zengzi 曾子), rather than Confucius himself (*Analects* 1.4, 4.15). Such ambiguity will not greatly affect the discussion, and I leave open the possibility that this is not necessarily what Confucius himself took *zhong* to mean. The goal here is to analyze the concept of *zhong* as it is presented in the text of the *Analects*. For convenience, I shall continue to use the name "Confucius" in my discussion to refer to the ideas expressed in the *Analects*.

Three main observations may be made about *zhong* in the *Analects*. First, *zhong* has to do with how one engages with others in general. Although later scholarship tends to understand *zhong* as a normative trait that ministers should embody or the proper attitude that ministers should have toward their superiors, there is no indication that Confucius thought that *zhong* pertains specifically to ministers or any hierarchical relationship. In the *Analects* there is one instance where it is said that ministers should serve the lord with *zhong* (3.19) and another where a minister is described as *zhong* (5.19). But even in these two instances there is no conclusive reason to think that *zhong* is a specific ethical trait of ministers or an attitude that someone in a lower hierarchical posi-

tion should assume toward those who are superior.[7] This observation is in line with those made by Satō Masayuki, who conducted a detailed textual analysis that traces the development of *zhong* in the Spring and Autumn period and argues that the concept of *zhong* at the time of Confucius broadened from an ethical attribute of the leaders to an ethical attribute of individuals in general.[8] A piece of positive evidence suggesting that *zhong* is about how one relates to people in general is *Analects* 13.19. When Fan Chi asks Confucius about *ren,* Confucius says:

> 居處恭，執事敬，與人忠。
>
> While at home hold yourself in a respectful attitude; when serving in an official capacity be reverent; when dealing with others be *zhong.*

It is worth nothing that the emphasis in this passage is that one has to be *zhong* in interacting with others or with people in general (*ren* 人).[9] There is no suggestion that one can only be *zhong* with someone who stands in special relation to oneself.

In a similar vein, one of the things Zengzi reflects on daily is whether he has failed to be *zhong* to others:

> 曾子曰，吾日三省吾身，為人謀，而不忠乎，與朋友交，而不信乎，傳不習乎。
>
> Zengzi said, "Every day I examine myself on three counts. In my planning for others, have I failed to be *zhong?* In my dealings with my friends have I failed to be trustworthy in what I say? Have I failed to practise repeatedly what has been passed on to me?"[10] (*Analects* 1.4)

It is said in this passage that Zengzi would frequently reflect on whether he had been *zhong* with people and *xin* 信 (trustworthy) with friends.[11] It is interesting to note that Zengzi takes *xin* to be the appropriate attitude for one's interacting with friends and *zhong* the appropriate attitude for one's interacting with people in general (*ren* 人).[12] This suggests that the domain of relationships that *zhong* covers is not restricted to special relationships. Another point made about *zhong* in this passage is that *zhong* is concerned with planning on others' behalf.

This leads us to the second observation: *zhong* in the *Analects* is intimately linked to offering advice. As the passage above suggests, *zhong* is an idealized state in which we *mou* 謀 for others. *Mou* in early Chinese texts is often used to mean planning strategies, offering advice to others, or giving thoughtful consideration to how to help others deal with a situation.[13] The association between being *zhong* and one's planning for others deserves attention. Indeed, in about

a third of the passages where "*zhong*" appears, *zhong* is concerned with speech. There is hardly any evidence that *zhong* has to do with doing.[14] According to Confucius, the superior person always keeps nine things in mind, and one of them is *zhong* in speaking:

> 君子有九思，視思明，聽思聰，色思溫，貌思恭，言思忠，事思敬，疑思問，忿思難，見得思義。
>
> There are nine things the gentleman turns his thought to: to seeing clearly when he uses his eyes, to hearing acutely when he uses his ears, to looking cordial when it comes to his countenance, to appearing respectful when it comes to his demeanor, to being *zhong* when he speaks, to being reverent when he performs his duties, to seeking advice when he is in doubt, to the consequences when he is enraged, and to what is right at the sight of gain. (*Analects* 16.10)

The "nine things" identified by Confucius all seem to be concerned with the appropriate attitudes one should strive to assume when one finds oneself in any of these nine circumstances. For example, in looking at something, one should aim at looking at it clearly; in having doubts, one should aim at raising questions.

Similarly, in saying things, Confucius thinks that one should aim at *zhong*. This suggests that *zhong* is a mental state or attitude toward which one should aim when saying things. This impression is further supported by *Analects* 15.6:

> 子曰，言忠信，行篤敬，雖蠻貊之邦，行矣，言不忠信，行不篤敬，雖州里，行乎哉。
>
> The Master said, "If in word you are *zhong* and *xin* and indeed single-minded and reverent, then even in the lands of the barbarians you will go forward without obstruction. If you fail to be *zhong* and *xin* or to be single-minded and reverent in deed, then can you be sure of going forward without obstruction even in your own neighbourhood?"

It is obvious in this passage that both *zhong* and *xin* are attributes of speech. In addition, *Analects* 12.23 discusses *zhong* as the manner in which one should offer advice:

> 子貢問友。子曰，忠告，而善道之，不可則止，無自辱焉。
>
> Zigong asked about how friends should be treated. The Master said, "Advise them in a *zhong* manner and guide them properly, but stop when there is no hope of success. Do not ask to be snubbed."

An important clue in this passage is the latter part where Confucius says that one should stop if there is no hope of success in convincing the friend. This implies that *zhong* advice is not necessarily something that the friend would want to listen to.

Commentator He Yan took *zhong* in this context to mean that one should say what it is that is right and what it is that is wrong. His comment is insightful and it helps us make better sense of *Analects* 14.7:

> 子曰，愛之，能勿勞乎，忠焉，能勿誨乎。
>
> The Master said, "Can you love anyone without making him work hard [alternative translation: without working hard]? Can you be *zhong* without saying something to correct them?[15]

Confucius' view here seems to be that if one is *zhong* toward someone, it is inevitable that one would want to say something to instruct and correct them (*hui* 誨). Both passages convey the point that being *zhong* has to do with telling others what is right—at least what the subject deems to be right. Confucius is probably aware that the hard truth might not be something that the other side can receive very well and therefore says in *Analects* 12.23 that one should stop if the friend does not listen, to avoid possible infringement of propriety.

The third observation is that what motivates one to make this kind of corrective yet potentially irksome advice is a concern for others rather than the self. The following passage gives us a glimpse into the kind of person whom Confucius considers as *zhong*:

> 子張問曰，令尹子文，三仕為令尹，無喜色，三已之，無慍色，舊令尹之政，必以告新令尹，何如。子曰，忠矣。
>
> Zizhang asked, "Ling Yin Ziwen gave no appearance of pleasure when he was made prime minister three times. Neither did he give any appearance of displeasure [yun 慍] when he was removed from office three times. He always told his successor what he had done during his term of office. What do you think of this?" The Master said, "He can, indeed, be said to be a man of *zhong*." (*Analects* 5.19)

Although this passage tells us very little about Ziwen, one striking characteristic of him according to this passage is that he is neither pleased nor upset by whether he himself holds office. Even when he was removed from office three times, what seems to be at the center of his attention is whether the office itself was handed over properly, rather than how his own standing was affected. It is worth noting that the term that is being used for displeasure here is *yun* 慍. While *yun* roughly

means feeling irritated or upset, it seems to be a special kind of displeasure that arises from one's thinking that something should not have happened to oneself, and one thinks the situation should be rectified. As we can observe from the accounts in the *Guoyu,* a ruler would feel *yun* when he believes that he has been offended and he wants to rectify the situation by going into battle.[16]

A similar idea is found in *Analects* 1.1 when it is said that the superior person is not *yun* even when others fail to appreciate him. This suggests that, in Confucius' view, people will normally *yun* when they are not recognized, presumably because they think they deserve to be recognized. In *Analects* 5.19, not only did Ziwen not show signs of *yun;* he would even ensure that the office was handed over properly so that the next prime minister would know what needed to be done. This suggests that Ziwen's focus was not on whether he was treated the way he thought he deserved to be treated but on what would advance the interest of the state. This is probably also why he did not show any sign of pleasure when he was made prime minister, for what occupied his mind was how he could do his job well in order to advance the interest of the state rather than dwelling on how the appointment reflected well on himself. This brief account suggests that, for Confucius, the state of *zhong* is one in which the subject is preoccupied with considerations of how to advance the interest of others and has bracketed, or at least marginalized, considerations of how to advance the subject's self-interest.

The general shape of these observations on *zhong* in the *Analects* is in line with the uses of *zhong* in early texts before and around Confucius' time. Indeed, scholars have noted that *zhong* is hardly used as a normative concept before the *Analects.* As Qu Wanli notes, there is no mention of *zhong* in the judgments of the hexagrams in the *Zhouyi* 周易, the *Shangshu* 尚書, the *Shijing* 詩經, or the *Chunqiujing* 春秋經.[17] This suggests that *zhong* is not used to describe a concept, or, at the very least, thinkers before Confucius had not paid attention to the importance of *zhong.*[18] It is in the *Zuozhuan* and the *Guoyu* that we start to see relatively more frequent occurrences of *zhong.* Assuming that the composition of the *Zuozhuan* 左傳 and the *Guoyu* 國語 are roughly contemporaneous with the *Analects,* we may through these two texts get a sense of the linguistic context of Confucius' time.

In the *Zuozhuan, zhong* is also concerned with a relational attitude that one has in one's interactions with others, and this attitude has the character of being objective and looking at the facts of the situation. For example:

> 所謂道忠於民而信於神也上思利民忠也祝史正辭信也
>
> What I call *Dao* is being *zhong* to the people and being truthful [*xin*] to the Spirits. When [the ruler] thinks about benefiting the people, it is called *zhong;* when [the priests'] words are all upright, it is called *xin.*[19]

Here, *zhong* is characterized as an attitude the ruler assumes when he relates to his subjects. This further reinforces the impression that *zhong* is concerned with benefiting, rather than obeying, others. In addition, *zhong,* as a relational attitude, is not restricted to one's relation to those superior to oneself.

In another instance in the *Zuozhuan,*

> 公曰 小大之獄 雖不能察 必以情 對曰忠之屬也可以一戰
>
> [When] the Duke said, "In great and small matters of legal process, even though I cannot investigate them thoroughly, I must rely on the facts," [Cao Gui] replied, "This is a type of *zhong,* [and] with it you can go into battle."[20]

In Cao Gui's reply to Duke Zhuang, we again get the impression that *zhong* is taken to mean viewing the situation objectively without being colored by presumptions or biases.

In the *Guoyu,* we also see a tight connection between *zhong* and offering thoughtful advice. In "Jinyu" 3, we find the line

> 不謀而諫不忠
>
> Remonstrating without planning—it is not *zhong.*

It is clear in this instance that what makes one *zhong* is not just giving any kind of advice. Rather, a *zhong* subject would need to plan thoughtfully (*mou* 謀).[21] The thought here is probably that it is not sufficient to credit someone with *zhong* if she just candidly speaks her mind; what is also required is that she has to hold herself responsible and be committed to the person with whom she is *zhong.* Since she is committed in such a way, she has to consider carefully the different factors at play, put herself in the other person's shoes, and devise the best strategy that she can offer.

Another relevant piece of textual evidence is in "Jinyu" 2:

> 除闇以應外謂之忠.…今君施其所惡于人，闇不除矣
>
> To remove dimness in order to respond to the external is called *zhong.*… Now that the ruler imposes what he dislikes on others, the dimness is not removed.

The metaphor of dimness here suggests that a person who fails to be *zhong* is obscured in a certain way. Whether it is selfish desires or a deficiency in cognitive understanding that is obscuring the subject, when the subject is in such a

state of moral obscurity he will impose what he dislikes on others. Interestingly, this idea also echoes the parallel between *zhong* and *shu* in *Analects* 4.15:

> 子曰，參乎，吾道一以貫之。曾子曰，唯。子出，門人問曰，何謂也。曾子曰，夫子之道，忠恕而已矣。
>
> The Master said, "[Zeng] Can! There is one single thread binding my way together." Zengzi assented. After the Master had gone out, the disciples asked, "What did he mean?" Zengzi said, "The way of the Master consists in *zhong* and *shu.* That is all."

And *shu,* for Confucius, is about "not imposing on others what you yourself do not desire" (15.24). Even though we lack the information here to tell what it is that connects the points about being obscured, *zhong,* and imposing on others, we can at least infer that not being *zhong* and *shu* is, in some way, to disregard the interest of others.

The Early Confucian Conception of *Zhong*

In the preceding section, I tried to organize Confucius' ideas about *zhong*. In this section, I shall try to articulate my own interpretation of the early Confucian conception of *zhong* on the basis of the three textual observations above. The goal is to approximate a faithful interpretation of Confucius' view on *zhong*, but I submit that my discussion of *zhong* from this point onward might depart from the way the early Confucians initially thought about *zhong.* The hope is that we can extract from the textual observations above a line of thinking that is of interest to us in contemporary ethical discourse.

If we piece together the three observations about *zhong,* we start to get the picture that *zhong* is a state of mind in which one interacts with others, most often in the context of offering advice. A *zhong* person is someone who would offer this advice or strategic plans, even though she knows quite well that this is not something the recipient can comfortably accept. It might be easier for her to say something that is conveniently pleasing to the recipient, but a *zhong* person would choose to tell the hard truth because her concern is to advance the interest of others instead of her own. She would, of course, still observe the basic etiquette and behave with decorum (12.23), but this will not change the content of her advice if she sincerely thinks that the advice is right and will do the recipient good. If this picture is roughly what Confucius espouses, then we can probe further into this conception of *zhong* by analyzing the nature of *zhong* advice, the objects of *zhong,* and the motives *zhong* entails.

Let us first analyze the nature of *zhong* advice. For convenience, I will label

the *zhong* person as Z and the recipient of the *zhong* person's advice R. As we have seen, a piece of *zhong* advice is not necessarily something that would please R. But since Z cares about R, she would want to correct the mistake that she sees R is making (*Analects* 14.7) or potentially making. In considering what benefits the other, the *zhong* person's sole focus is on what is the right thing for R to do. The characteristically Confucian assumption operating in the background is likely to be that there is a distinction between what is in fact good for the self and what satisfies self-regarding desires, and that there is identification between what is in fact good for the self and what is in accordance with ethical standards. Hence, when I say that Z is one who offers advice that advances R's interest, I do not mean that she tries to satisfy R's desires or help R obtain whatever it is that R wants; instead, I mean Z will try to tell R what is in fact good or, equivalently, what is in fact right for R to do. From Z's point of view, her advice to R is what she thinks will in fact advances R's interest, which is also to say that her advice is about what is in fact in accordance with ethical standards.

It is not necessary for Z in fact to be right about what R should do. What is necessary is that she tell R what she sincerely believes to be the right thing to do. She might in fact be wrong, but it will not affect her being *zhong*. We can imagine a particular cultural setting where it is believed that a woman has to be confined to bed for a year after giving birth or else there will be far-ranging negative effects on her health. Let us suppose this is a myth. It is possible that someone who comes from this cultural setting would advise her friend who has just given birth to stay in bed for a year because she sincerely believes that this is good for her friend's health. Even though she is mistaken in this case, she can still be considered *zhong* in offering what she sincerely deems to be the advice that accords with the right standards. This is probably why, in Confucius' view, *zhong* is still short of *ren* (*Analects* 5.19, 5.28), for it is still possible that one misjudges a situation and imposes bad advice on others.

Paul Goldin suggests that *zhong* in the *Analects* conveys the sense of "being honest with oneself."[22] It should, however, be emphasized that, in my interpretation, *zhong* is different from just offering one's honest opinion. Honesty is certainly important here, for I have to say what I take to be the case, but it is not the defining feature of *zhong*. A subject may be required to be honest under other ethical constraints; she can also be dictated by her natural temperament to say what she thinks is true. However, if she has not put serious thought into what furthers the interest of R, honest opinion alone cannot count as *zhong* advice. *Zhong* has the constraint of good cognitive judgment. Z does not simply report true beliefs to R but has to make the effort to work out the various factors at play in the situation and form a view about what is best for R.[23] The requirement for good judgment also implies that the subject must have her own view on what the ethical standards are and which ones are applicable in the situation.

Our analysis so far shows that it is the psychology of having someone's best interest at heart that is constitutive of *zhong,* and this psychology is often instantiated in the context of offering advice. One important feature of being in a *zhong* psychological posture is that the *zhong* person holds herself responsible for others' well-being. People sometimes undertake responsibilities by publicly entering into special relationships, such as politicians assuming duties at office and doctors taking patients. In these relationships, there is an external set of responsibilities that the subject is required to fulfill. If a doctor fails to advise the patient on the best treatment available because of certain self-regarding considerations, the patient can accuse the doctor of failing to be *zhong* because the doctor is supposed to be responsible for her health problem. However, it is not always the case that our responsibilities for others are clearly and formally defined. Coming to see someone as a friend, for example, is often a gradual process that is not formalized by a public act.

Also lacking is a set of clearly defined responsibilities between friends. Suppose Z and R are friends. It is conceivable that there are many circumstances under which it is ambiguous as to when R can hold it against Z for failing certain responsibilities and Z herself might well be aware of it. If there is some kind of psychology ensuring that Z will still have R's best interest at heart even if R cannot hold her responsible, then this psychology is not R's holding Z responsible, but Z's holding herself responsible for R. The upshot of this is that *zhong* does not necessarily require a mutual understanding or acknowledgment of the *zhong* person's responsibility. It is crucial to being *zhong* that one hold herself responsible and commit herself to promote the best interest of those with whom she is *zhong.* A failure of *zhong* is when Z fails to deliver on her responsibility, and it is possible that this kind of failure is only known to Z herself. For example, I would have failed to be *zhong* if I had advised my friend not to apply for a certain job partly because I myself wanted to apply for the job and saw her as a rival. Even if the advice actually turned out to be beneficial to my friend and she would never have found out that I had factored in my own selfish interest in my planning on her behalf, I would still have failed to be *zhong*.

Let us now turn to the kind of relationship to which *zhong* pertains. Recall from our first textual observation that the scope of the object of *zhong* is broad and covers other people in general.[24] Although there is no textual evidence suggesting that the object of *zhong* must be someone who stands in special relation to the subject, there are good reasons to think that, in practice, *zhong* is an attitude that usually pertains to special relationships. This is so because the circumstances that call for *zhong* are likely to be those that involve people with whom one is in some kind of special relationship. Suppose I were approached by a stranger on the street who happens to ask me for advice on whether she should quit her job; I think the intuition here is that I am not in a position to

give advice because I do not know her. Hence, in order to be in a position to give *zhong* advice, the *zhong* person must be in a position where she has adequate knowledge of the other person, the circumstances she is in, and the different factors at play. In our everyday life, the latter position is usually attained in special relationships.

That *zhong* is more often called for in special relationships further explains why *zhong* is a difficult psychological posture to sustain. Since the interests of both parties in a special relationship are so intimately intertwined, it is both practically and epistemically more difficult to separate considerations of what is good for others from what is good for oneself. Sometimes considerations creep in without the subject's awareness. A finance minister, for example, might propose a tax reduction for vehicle purchases. It might be true that such a tax reduction is in fact good for the state, but she might have factored into her consideration that this policy would serve her own interest in purchasing a vehicle. There could also be cases where the subject is not so blatantly self-serving. From an external standpoint, the public might insist that the finance minister take advantage of her position to benefit herself, but from the finance minister's own point of view, she might sincerely think that she was only considering what is good for the general public.

There are even fussier cases where it is difficult to tell what the subject's intention is from both external and internal standpoints. A parent might know the temperament of her child so well that she knows what kind of advice would upset the child. It is very likely that this worry about her upsetting the child would bias her consideration, and it turns out that the advice she gave is the kind that does not upset the child. However, in both cases, from the finance minister's and the parent's point of view, they might sincerely believe that they are offering advice on what is in fact the right thing to do. We do not have to go so far as to suppose that there is something like self-deception or unconsciousness involved. It can simply be that the interests in special relationships are so tightly connected that it is a challenging epistemic task to separate and differentiate considerations of the two.

What will ensure that the *zhong* subject does not slide into considerations of her self-interest, then? It seems that what grounds the *zhong* subject's focus on others' welfare is not a cognitive appraisal of the situation, for, as we have seen, there are cases where even if one holds herself responsible and is committed to the welfare of others, her self-interest might be so bound up with that of her object that it is genuinely difficult for her to keep track of where one ends and another begins. My proposed understanding is that *zhong* is grounded in the subject's affective concern and care for others, which motivates the subject's entire psychological posture to shift from focusing on the self to focusing on others. It is by virtue of this affective concern for others that, even if the subject

cannot cognitively discriminate between others' interests and those of her own, her entire attention is directed to others rather than herself. All the considerations and planning that a *zhong* person undertakes for others occur under a guiding light that is directed to others.

This interpretation also has the advantage of explaining the parallel between *zhong* and *shu*. While *shu* is about not imposing on others what one dislikes, *zhong* is about helping others to obtain what is good for them. What is common between the two notions is that both are grounded in the affective concern for others. At first glance, it might be tempting to understand *shu* as grounded in rational reflection. For example, it is convenient for me to shovel the snow in front of my house to my neighbor's side. But on reflection, my neighbors might shovel snow to my side, and this is something I would not want. However, if I know for certain that what I impose on others will not come back to me, what is it that holds me back from taking a free ride? If we take seriously the parallel between *zhong* and *shu*, a plausible explanation is that it is because I care about my neighbor that once I come to see on reflection that this is something that I myself will dislike, I would not want to do it to my neighbor. The reason I do not want to impose on my neighbor is not that I rationally reason that I would not want her to do the same to me but because I have an affective concern for her so that I do not want her to go through the feeling of discomfort that I would go through if it were imposed on me.

Zhong and Loyalty

In this section, I extract several ethical insights from the early Confucian conception of *zhong* outlined above and make it relevant to contemporary interests by juxtaposing it with loyalty. I do not want to suggest that *zhong* is the Confucian conception of loyalty. Even if the early Confucians did have in mind a certain idealized psychological posture that is akin to loyalty, it is unlikely that such a posture is exhausted by the concept of *zhong* alone. If there is some early Confucian conception of "being loyal" that we can model, such a conception must involve a broader cluster of related concepts, such as *jing* 敬, *cheng* 誠, *zhong* 忠, *yi* 義, and *xin* 信. My limited goal here is to show that *zhong* partially captures in some important ways the psychological terrain of loyalty, and this gives us a basis to think that early Confucians still have some important insights to offer to present-day discussions. It will also be shown how *zhong* can avoid some key difficulties with our contemporary understanding of and emphasis on loyalty. This should help us further appreciate the distinctive insights of early Confucian ethics. Since my purpose is to make relevant early Confucian insights to contemporary interests, the notion of "loyalty" under consideration is not a technical one but a colloquial one. In that regard, a dictionary definition of loyalty should

suffice to capture what we mean by "loyalty." According to the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary,* "loyal" is defined as "giving or showing firm and constant support or allegiance to a person or institution."[25] Throughout my discussion of "loyalty" below, it is this commonsense view of loyalty that I have in mind.

Loyalty is not an outdated concept. People across cultures still value loyalty in many domains of our contemporary life, whether it is the loyalty of a friend, of a spouse, of a family member, of an employee, or of a citizen. In modern multinational corporations, for example, loyalty is still expected from employees. However, if the balance between loyalty and duty to public justice is not maintained properly, things done in the name of loyalty sometimes have unfortunate consequences, with large-scale impact on the public. The Ford Pinto case is an example wherein excessive emphasis on loyalty had disastrous consequences.[26] Between 1970 and 1977 there were about five hundred to nine hundred burn deaths resulting from explosions of the Ford Pinto model caused by a faulty fuel system. Records show that in the pre-production period, engineers had already discovered that the gas tank used in the Pinto was unsafe and seriously considered switching to a different kind of gas tank. However, the loyalty of many of these engineers had prevented them from speaking up to the executive vice-president of Ford or "blowing the whistle." In another case at the B. F. Goodrich plant, engineer Kermit Vandivier handed in a fraudulent report of a new brake design for LTV Aerospace Corporation against pressure from his supervisor and resigned. The resignation was supposed to take effect a few weeks later, but the chief engineer, citing Vandivier's "disloyalty" to the company, informed Vandivier that he would accept his resignation "right now."[27] In view of the tension between the demand of loyalty and the sometimes disastrous consequences that result from being loyal, let me briefly highlight how *zhong,* in three respects, preserves the appeal of loyalty and avoids its difficulties.

One prominent feature of loyalty that normally appeals to us is its emphasis on special obligations. There is usually a history that we share with people who are special to us, and these historical qualities make us think that we have stronger obligations to those who stand in special relationship to us. For instance, I have a stronger obligation to support my friend because she is the one who stood by me and helped me during a difficult time. There are also circumstances under which by entering into special relationships, like getting married, I also make a promise always to be supportive to my partner.

Failing to be loyal is also in some ways like breaking a promise. This prompts philosophers like Andrew Oldenquist to argue for the moral priority of special obligations over universal moral principles.[28] But once we take this route, there is the problem of grounding special obligations. As William Godwin puts it: "What magic is there in the pronoun 'my', that should justify us in overturning the decisions of impartial truth?"[29] One might adopt an "objective

consequentialist" reply along the line suggested by Peter Railton,[30] arguing that the form of deliberation that puts special relationships first is in fact conducive to bringing about the best possible outcomes. An objectivist consequentialist should indeed cultivate the trait of being loyal even though traits like this might sometimes manifest themselves in acts that do not seek to maximize the good. Railton himself gives the example of a couple, Juan and Linda, who live apart.[31] Suppose Juan faces the choice of paying Linda a surprise visit to temporarily cheer her up or donating his money for travel to charity. The difficulty with this line of thought, however, is that it is unclear how a consequentialist agent can identify her consequentialist commitment with an agent-relative commitment. It seems that the commitments of the consequentialist agent are, after all, commitments that make reference to the commitment to the best outcome, rather than the well-being of a particular person. Even if the objective consequentialist is committed to the person, such commitment is still derivative.

By contrast, the notion of *zhong* preserves the emphasis on special relationships and circumvents the problem of grounding special obligations. *Zhong* is not grounded in special relationships. Instead, *zhong* is constitutive of special relationships.[32] If we really are friends, I will necessarily want to take your best interest to heart and sincerely tell you what I think is the best thing for you. If in offering advice to you I have always factored in my own interest or made sure your interest will not conflict with my own, it is questionable if there really is a relationship between us as substantial as friendship. Indeed, as I argued in the previous section, the early Confucian reply is that there should not be any "magic of 'I' " in consideration of *zhong* at all. What *zhong* requires is precisely that any consideration of "my X" will be out of the picture in one's deliberation of what is good for others without sliding into consideration of oneself. A mother who is a lawyer may advise her child to pursue a career in law as well. Whether or not this is a piece of *zhong* advice does not turn on how well her child ends up doing in her career but on whether, when she offered the advice, she was only thinking about what is in fact good for the child or was thinking that "because she is *my* child, she has to follow in my footsteps." The latter kind of thought would discount her advice as *zhong* even if the child turns out to enjoy her career in law. Since a *zhong* person's regard for others is not further defined in terms of a regard for something that is "mine," she will not let any consideration pertaining to herself affect her judgment of what really is good for others.

It is precisely because *zhong* does not focus on the "mine" component, *pace* Oldenquist, that it also extends to non-special relationships. A *zhong* subject holds herself responsible and is committed to looking out for others who are related to her by virtue of certain undertakings or social roles in a way that is in accordance with ethical standards. This means that the content of a *zhong*

person's obligations is not derived from special obligations but is derived from ethical standards. The obligation of a doctor to work in the best medical interest of her patient, for example, is not derived from the special relationship the doctor has with the patient but from the ethical standards to which the doctor is subject.[33]

A second appealing feature of loyalty is the resoluteness or perseverance of a loyal subject,[34] who will remain committed to her object even when doing so might be disadvantageous to her own interest. For many loyal subjects, it is not that they do not have alternatives available to them. But because of their loyalty, they do not see the alternative options as available to them. Instead, they dedicate all their strength and will to serving the interest of their object. This resoluteness is especially valuable when a third party potentially rivals the object of loyalty, which is most often seen in soldiers' putting their lives on the line to protect their country. It is very tempting to think that there is something admirable in how a subject would unwaveringly put her object's interest above her own. The obvious worry with this kind of resoluteness is that it threatens integrity. The demand of loyalty might require the subject to willingly compromise or overlook her ethical standards, as we saw with engineers involved in the Ford Pinto case. Moreover, since loyalty requires one to follow and support the object of loyalty, some form of loyalty might even discourage the subject from forming a view about what matters to herself because it is always the object's interest that should be at the forefront of her mind. For example, for centuries women were discouraged from thinking for themselves about what matters to them because that could potentially conflict with the interest of their husband. Hence, in demanding loyalty there is the danger of reducing the subject to a servile state in which she has little self-respect.

The early conception of *zhong* also values resoluteness. One will offer whatever advice one sincerely believes is good for others, even if the consequence of doing so is costly to oneself. As we saw in the case of Ziwen (*Analects* 5.19), it is possible that a minister's *zhong* might result in his removal from office; however, this will not deter him from saying what he thinks is the right way to safeguard the interest of the ruler and the people. And even though Confucius says that one should stop advising when there is no hope of success (*Analects* 12.23), it is not far-fetched to surmise that Confucius would think, should the friend come back and seek advice again, that the subject would still be required to be *zhong*. Implicit in the notion of *zhong* is the expectation that the subject herself needs to have her own beliefs about and commitment to ethical standards. Since the subject sees herself as accountable to others, she will also endeavor to form a view of the situation and deliberate about the relevant ethical standards at issue. This is also why *zhong* advice is not just an honest opinion but has to be something that is thoroughly thought through by the subject. Hence, what

makes a *zhong* person's concern for others resolute is her firm commitment to observe ethical standards because of the assumption that what is good for one must be what is in accord with ethical standards.

The emphasis on a consideration of others' interests in a way that is independent of self-interest in *zhong* might lead some to worry that the subject's own interest and self-respect are threatened. This worry stems from a conflation of seeing oneself as one factor in the situation and seeing self-interest as the objective of one's consideration. It is possible that the subject's is one factor at play in the situation, in which case she should also take that into consideration. When sage Shun married without his father's permission, he did not do so out of self-interest. Rather, he took himself into account when thinking about what would further the interest of his father. Since Shun thought it would in fact be good for his father if his father had descendants, he felt it would be best for himself to get married so that his father could have descendants (*Mencius* 4A26). With *zhong* there is no connotation of obedience, implying that there is no requirement in the concept of *zhong* for the subject to go along blindly with the demands of others. If *zhong* is primarily a mental attitude that concerns how we offer advice to others, there is also little reason to think that there can be conflicting *zhong* as in the case of conflicting loyalties. If I am loyal to Team A, the nature of my loyalty will prevent me from supporting any team other than Team A. But if I am *zhong* to person X, there is nothing in the structure of *zhong* that prevents me from offering my honest advice to person Y about what I take to be right for her. This does not preclude the possibility that there is something else in my relationship with X that prevents me from offering *zhong* advice to Y.

It is interesting to note that, for the early Confucians, the image of the *zhong* subject is almost the exact opposite of the village worthies (*Analects* 17.13). While a village worthy is always eager to please her audience so as to advance self-interest when she in fact does not have any view that can be called her own, the *zhong* subject is only concerned with thinking about what advances her audience's interest.[35] She will carefully form her own view of the situation lest her object is obscured and, in voicing her honest opinion when necessary, she is willing to risk offending her audience.

The third aspect of loyalty that we normally find appealing is the emotive aspect. Josiah Royce poignantly characterizes this aspect of loyalty as follows:

> The finding of one's rest and spiritual fulfillment even in one's life of toil itself—this state is precisely the state of the loyal, in so far as their loyalty gets full control of their emotional nature.[36]

The idea that one's loyalty is at least supposed to have some grip over one's affective state is implicitly accepted in our everyday understanding. Suppose

one claims to be a fan of a certain sports team but never shows any excitement or disappointment when the team wins or loses. It is difficult to see how one is really loyal to the team, even if one attends every game just as a fan would do. Supposing this affective dimension of loyalty to be what makes loyalty valuable, it cannot be the particular kind of affective state that can sustain the loyal subject's perseverance and devotion.[37] At least it cannot be the fleeting or primitive kind that directly responds to stimuli in the environment. Then, what causes or sustains this kind of ongoing emotional state wherein the subject has "neither eyes to see nor tongue to speak" and will serve her object "with all [her] might and soul and strength?"[38] Royce's own answer is that if one has the need to glorify oneself it is only by devoting oneself to an object that one sees oneself as worthy. However, there is something paradoxical in this line of thought. If the starting point built into loyalty is a self-serving one after all, how can we attain the kind of wholehearted devotion to the other that is idealized in loyalty?

In a *zhong* state, even though the way one works toward the interest of another is regulated by ethical standards, this kind of psychological posture, which requires effort and is demanding to sustain, is grounded in an affective concern for others. This is not to say that the emphasis of *zhong* is affective concern as such. What it means is that the kind of resoluteness and strictness with oneself in doing what is ethically appropriate is grounded in affective concern. If this is correct, the proposed interpretation of *zhong* captures the necessity of both *ren* 仁 (benevolence) and *yi* 義 (propriety) in being *zhong.* While one has to be *yi,* that is, subjecting oneself to ethical standards, one's resoluteness in subjecting oneself to ethical standards is grounded in *ren,* an affective concern for others.

The question, then, is what causes one to have such affective concern for others in the first place. It is at this point that I also lack the textual evidence to speculate what Confucius' answer would be. The following passage perhaps gives us a clue:

> 季康子問使民敬忠以勸，如之何。子曰，臨之以莊，則敬，孝慈，則忠，舉善而教不能，則勸。
>
> Ji Kangzi asked, "How can one get the common people to be reverent, *zhong,* and to be filled with enthusiasm?" The Master said, "Rule over them with dignity and they will be reverent; treat them with kindness and they will be *zhong;* raise the good and instruct those who are backward and they will be filled with enthusiasm." (*Analects* 2.20)

Confucius' response suggests that one's becoming *zhong* has to do with treating others with kindness. I surmise from this and my early observation about the

affective dimension of *zhong* that, for Confucius, what causes one to be *zhong* is that one is being *affected* or feels a certain resonance. The subject is jolted into a *zhong* state not only because she values her ethical commitments at a cognitive level but also because her heart, so to speak, is moved at an affective level. If this is something close to what Confucius had in mind, then an implicit assumption or nascent idea underlying his conception of *zhong* is that human beings are beings that have the capacity for affective resonance. It is by virtue of this capacity that we are affected by others' kindness and thereby develop an affective concern that motivates an attitude of *zhong*.

The preceding analysis has sought to piece together fragments about *zhong* in the *Analects* and to use these as the basis for articulating an early Confucian conception of *zhong*. I hope I have approximated a picture, even if it is not a completely accurate representation of the original, that helps us retrieve certain early Confucian ethical insights that are of contemporary interest to us.

Notes

The first draft of this chapter was presented at the conference on Confucian Values and a Changing World Cultural Order, held at the East-West Center in Honolulu, Hawai'i, in October 2014. I thank the participants for their helpful comments and questions. I am particularly indebted to the following people whose comments prompted significant revisions of the chapter: Roger Ames, Nicolas Bommarito, Bernhard Fuehrer, Peter Hershock, Karyn Lai, Chenyang Li, Michael Nylan, Kwong-loi Shun, and George Tsai. A revised version of the chapter was presented at the Ancient World reading group at Yale-NUS, and I would like to thank the participants for their very helpful comments and suggestions.

1. See Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, *Lunyu yizhu* 論語譯注 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1980). For references to the *Analects,* I have benefited from James Legge, trans., *Confucian Analects* (Whitefish: Kessinger Publishing, 2010 [1967]); and D. C. Lau, trans., *Confucius: The Analects* (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2002 [1979]). I have also consulted *Lunyu jijie yishu* 論語集解義疏 in *Sibu yaoji zhushu congkan* 四部要籍注疏叢刊, 1998 ed. (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju). References are to the volume, page, and line numbers. Unless stated otherwise, I follow D. C. Lau's translations of the *Analects* throughout, with some modifications, including the use of pinyin romanization.

2. See, for example, Heiner Roetz, *Confucian Ethics of the Axial Age* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), pp. 93–100, for a discussion of the tension between loyalty and filial piety.

3. For example, in *Analects* 12.22, *ren* 人 (benevolence) is characterized in terms of loving people (*ai ren* 愛人), and in *Mencius* 1A7, Mencius emphasizes that the ruler should extend his bounty (*tui* 推) to all his subjects.

4. See Chenyang Li, "Five Contemporary Challenges for Confucianism," *Journal of East-West Thought* 21, no. 2 (2012): 58.

5. See Lau, *Confucius: The Analects*, p. xvi; Paul Goldin, "When *Zhong* (忠) Does Not Mean 'Loyalty,'" *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy* 7, no. 2 (2008): 165–174; and Satō Masayuki 佐藤將之, *Zhongguo gudai de 'zhong' lun yanjiu* 中國古代的「忠」論研究 (Taipei: National Taiwan University Press, 2010).

6. Lau, *Confucius: The Analects,* p. xvi n. 6.

7. I am not suggesting that *zhong* as a concept does not have political implications. My point is simply that there is no textual support in the *Analects* for us to think that the scope of *zhong* is restricted to certain qualities of the ministers.

8. See Satō, *Zhongguo gudai de 'zhong' lun yanjiu,* chap. 1, for a detailed discussion on this point.

9. I am indebted to Kwong-loi Shun for his insightful remarks on the use of *zhong* in the *Analects.*

10. I have modified Lau's translation of *mou* as "In what I have undertaken on another's behalf" to "In my planning for others" here because Lau's translation might create the impression that *mou* means doing something for others in a dutiful manner and is therefore evocative of what loyalty requires.

11. My translation of *xin* 信 as "trustworthy" is only tentative. In the *Analects, xin* is often discussed in association with *zhong.* In a majority of the passages where *zhong* appears (1.4, 1.8, 5.28, 7.25, 9.25, 12.10, 15.6), the term is used in connection with *xin.* It is clear that both *zhong* and *xin* are esteemed as ethical traits.

12. It is also interesting to note that in contemporary philosophical discussions, loyalty is often taken to be an attitude necessary for friendship. Here in the *Analects* it is suggested that trustworthiness (*xin*) is an attitude pertaining to friendship, whereas *zhong* encompasses the broader domain of relationships in general. For a recent discussion of the relation between loyalty and friendship see John Kleinig, *On Loyalty and Loyalties: The Contours of a Problematic Virtue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

13. See, for example, *Guoyu,* "Luyu shang" 魯語下; *Zuozhuan,* "Xianggong Fourth Year" 襄公四年; *Shijing,* "Huang huang zhe hua" 皇皇者華.

14. I thank Nicolas Bommarito for pressing me to clarify this point.

15. I have modified Lau's translation of *hui* 誨 here. Lau has translated *hui* as "educating." Since *hui* in early texts has the connotation of using words, I opted for "to say something to correct them" to capture the verbal dimension of *hui* although this is not an elegant translation.

16. For example, Xu Yuangao 徐元誥, *Guoyu jijie* 國語集解 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2002), "Jinyu" 晉語 3, "Jinyu" 晉語 4, and "Wuyu" 吳語.

17. Cited in Satō, *Zhongguo gudai de 'zhong' lun yanjiu,* p. 37.

18. A few scholars have suggested that *zhong* 忠 is connected or may even be used interchangeably in the early texts with the phonologically indistinguishable term *zhong* 中, which has the connotation of impartiality or conformity to penal laws without bias. If this is really the case, it will further strengthen my interpretation; however, textual evidence seems inconclusive in showing that there is such a connection. Scholars who have made this observation tend to rely on annotations in the Han period that define 忠 in terms of 中 (see, e.g., Wang Zijin, "Zhong" *guannian yanjiu—Yizhong zhengzhi daode de wenhua yuanliu yu*

lishi yanbian "忠" 觀念研究—一種政治道德的文化源流與歷史演變 [Changchun: Jilin Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 1999]). The methodology of interpretations of early texts based on Han texts is disputable. Paul Goldin ("When *Zhong* [忠] Does Not Mean 'Loyalty'") reiterates this point about the connection between 忠 and 中, but it is not clear what substantial textual evidence Goldin has in thinking that the two terms are intimately connected in early texts other than that they are phonologically indistinguishable and he uses a passage in the *Zuozhuan* to suggest that the meaning of the passage will not change even if we replace 忠 with 中. See Satō, *Zhongguo gudai de 'zhong' lun yanjiu,* chap. 1.1.2 for a discussion of and references to studies of the connection between 忠 and 中 in early texts.

19. Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, "Huangong liu nian" 桓公六年 (Huangong sixth year), in his *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu* 春秋左傳注 (Beijing: *Zhong*hua Shuju, 2006 [1981]), p. 111.

20. Yang Bojun, "Zhuanggong shi nian" 莊公十年 (Zhuanggong tenth year), in his *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhu,* p. 183.

21. The connection between *zhong* and *mou* is also found in *Guoyu,* "Jinyu" 8.

22. Goldin, "When *Zhong* (忠) Does Not Mean 'Loyalty,'" p. 170.

23. I am indebted to Jay Garfield for prompting me to address this point.

24. See Satō, *Zhongguo gudai de 'zhong' lun yanjiu.*

25. "Loyal," in *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

26. This case is widely discussed in business ethics and is also cited by Marcia Baron in her discussion of loyalty. See Marcia Baron, *The Moral Status of Loyalty* (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt, 1984), pp. 2–3.

27. Cited by Baron, *The Moral Status of Loyalty,* pp. 1–2.

28. Andrew Oldenquist, "Loyalties," *Journal of Philosophy* 79, no. 4 (1982): 173–193.

29. William Godwin, *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and its Influence on Morals and Happiness,* 3rd ed., photographic facsimile, ed. F. E. L. Priestley (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1946 [1798]), vol. 1, p. 127.

30. See Peter Railton's distinction between "subjective consequentialism" and "objective consequentialism" in his "Alienation, Consequentialism and the Demands of Morality," *Philosophy and Public Affairs,* no. 13 (1984): 152.

31. Ibid., p. 150.

32. I rule out cases of defective special relationships here, such as one's relationship with an enemy.

33. I owe this example to Kwong-loi Shun.

34. For further discussion on this point see John Kleinig, "Loyalty," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy,* Fall 2013, ed. Edward N. Zalta, http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2013/entries/loyalty/, Section 2.1.

35. For a discussion of village worthies in early Confucian thought see Winnie Sung, "*Xiang Yuan* 鄉原: The Appearance-only Hypocrite," *Dao: A Journal of Comparative Philosophy* 15, no. 2 (2016): 175–192.

36. Joshua Royce, *The Philosophy of Loyalty* (New York: Macmillan, 1908), p. 97.

37. Some philosophers like R. E. Ewin and Simon Keller exclude loyalty as a virtue because of the emotional dimension of loyalty. The reservation is that loyalty hinders or dis-

courages epistemic judgment. Since the overall concern is related to the earlier point about how loyalty can threaten integrity and self-respect, I will not rehearse that here. Even so, they do not deny that this emotional dimension is what makes loyalty valuable. See R. E. Ewin, "Loyalty and Virtues," *Philosophical Quarterly* 42, no. 169 (1992): 403–419, and Simon Keller, *The Limits of Loyalty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

38. These are phrases used repeatedly by Josiah Royce in *The Philosophy of Loyalty*.