Abstract

Wang Bi, who lived during the Zhengshi (240-248) era of the Wei dynasty, is renowned for his *Commentary of the Laozi*. While much attention has been placed on the study of his reading and interpretation of *Laozi*, his *Resolution of doubtful points in the Analects* (*Resolution* hereafter) has often been discredited, largely due to his "syncretic" approach. Though Wang Bi accommodated a Taoist view in his reading of the *Analects*, it should be noted that he never saw a conflict between Confucius and Laozi in the sectarian sense--as two individuals polarized between a Confucian-Taoist dichotomy. This paper attempts to examine how this text in the portrayal of Confucius, could provide us with a better understanding of Wang Bi's thought, in particular, of his view of feeling (*qing*) and what constitutes a Sage.

In the *Resolution*, Confucius is described as "cannot be named (*ming*)". Although Wang Bi points out in *Laozi Zhiliüe* that *ming* is inadequate in the description of Non-being (*wu*), "cannot be named" is more often used to describe Confucius's ability to strike a balance between, for instance being stern and yet affable; rather than to mean an adequate description of Confucius could never be reached. "Cannot be named" as used in the *Resolution* thus connotes a sense of balance or harmony; and it is this quality that Wang Bi sees as an ideal. As Confucius is honored as a Sage by Wang Bi, descriptions of him in this text could perhaps serve as a complement to the discussion of the Sage in Wang Bi's *Commentary of the Laozi*. 
The second part of this paper continues with a further discussion of Wang Bi’s view of Confucius. He believed that the Sage is not one who is devoid of feelings but unlike ordinary beings, the Sage has the ability to keep qing under restraint. The discussion takes on to how qing is used in Resolution. In his commentaries, Wang Bi points out that one’s qing is reflected in the way he speaks. Qing as used by Wang Bi is thus not confined to one’s anger or happiness in the narrow sense but extended to denote one’s internal play of thoughts. These various ways of commenting illustrate how Wang Bi understood qing.

Although some might consider Wang Bi’s Resolution as unorthodox, this text nevertheless shows how Wang Bi as a commentator interpreted the Analects. Without which, our understanding of Wang Bi might be partial.