
An Aristotelian Account of Yulgok's Theory of Human Beings

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1. Introduction

In this paper, I examine Yi I's (Yulgok, 1536-1584) theory of human beings in comparison with Aristotle's (384-322 BC). When we intend to make such a comparison, we are immediately required to justify the reason for doing it, but it is often difficult to offer any persuasive reason other than to make an appeal to academic or historical interest. I do think that a lot more than mere satisfaction for historical interest can be gained by comparing them, but we shall have to wait until later to see that my belief is not ungrounded.

Although there is about 1,900 years' difference between Aristotle and Yulgok, I chose Aristotle because he was the first Greek philosopher who was deeply concerned with understanding and explaining human beings in terms of the dichotomous terms of form and matter, and, also, I chose Yulgok as the counterpart of comparison with Aristotle because he was the first Korean philosopher who adopted a different set of dichotomous terms, i.e. *li* and *ki*, in explaining human beings. The primary reason for the choice of the two philosophers is thus that both of them were the first philosophers who endeavored to explain human beings in terms of dichotomous principles which do not have any common characteristics. Another reason is because they also had their differences: indeed, the two philosophers not only had similarities on some preliminary points, but also dissimilarities on a number of significant points. And it is expected that one's deficiency can be backed up by the other. To sum up, Aristotle and Yulgok fully utilized their own dichotomous terms to prove the ultimate end of human beings expressed as the sages and the happy men, respectively, and they had many things to learn from each other.¹

This paper thus aims to show similarities and dissimilarities in their views on human beings, hoping to compensate each other's defect and produce a better theory. In the course of following up the development of their views, I shall first analyze the two philosophers' conception of nature and

1. I say "fully" in order to exclude the philosophers who use only one term such as form or matter, or *li* or *ki*. Indeed, the two philosophers are the first in their own countries to utilize both terms, not one of them, in the account of human beings.

go on to discuss their explanation of human beings in terms of the dichotomous principles and the relationship between them. As noted, since the nature of human beings is what makes them as they are, and since in explaining it the philosophers utilize a different set of dichotomous principles, it is worthwhile to compare the characteristics of the principles in detail to see whether there is any difference in their conception of nature. And then I shall turn to examine the principle of classifying different classes of human beings. It is clear from our sensory observation that there are different classes of human beings. The question is then what makes them different despite the fact that all of them are equally explained in terms of two principles. Finally, I shall compare the characteristics of sages and happy men which the two philosophers present as the ultimate end of human beings.

2. The Connotation of Nature in Aristotle and Yulgok

It is an interesting fact that philosophers in the East and the West did not have any direct mutual contact or any mutual exchange of opinions, but they nonetheless had a common interest in the concept of nature as early as in 4 century BC. As Aristotle would say, it might be because human beings have in their genes the desire to know what a thing is and to explain why it is so and so.² Although they did have a common interest in the concept, they often took a different way of dealing with it. First, Eastern thinkers such as Mencius (ca. 372~ca. 289 BC) were not quite keen on offering any grounds for their claims and focused mainly on human nature, whereas Western thinkers such as Aristotle (384-322 BC) were very anxious to provide reasonable grounds for their own claims and focused not only on human nature, but also on the nature of all the other existing beings. For example, Mencius in the *Book of Mencius* (hereafter, the *Mencius*) told us a large number of guiding principles for human actions, but presented them as a sort of dogma or aphorism without any proper grounds that would persuade us to accept them. It appears that he was not as argumentative as Aristotle who tried in the *Physics* to answer the questions about what nature is, what natural beings are, why they behave in the way they do, and the like.

Mencius's doctrine that human nature is good was accepted without much controversy about its validity and, also, without any serious attempt to provide the rationale for it until a new theoretical interest and method of Neo-Confucianism emerged. For example, Chang Tsai (1020-1077) began to introduce the notion of "physical nature" based on *ki* "that provided a hitherto lacking explanation for evil," soon after that, "From the Ch'eng brothers came the dualistic philosophy of *li* and *ki*," and "The overarching metaphysical framework came from Chou Tun-i (1017-1073)."³ By this

2. Aristotle says that "All men by nature desire to know" (*Metaphysics* 980a 22) and, also, that "we do not know a thing until we are acquainted with its primary causes or first principles, and have carried our analysis as far as its elements. Plainly, therefore, in the science of nature too our first task will be try to determine what relates to its principles." (*Physics* 184a 10-16).

3. Kalton *et. al.* (1994), xvi. I have replaced principle and material force with *li* and *ki*, respectively, for the consistency of the terms used in this paper. As for the translation of YI I's passages, I have largely referred to Kalton's translation (Kalton *et. al.*, 1994), but taken the liberty of modifying some of the terms and expressions.

time, the terminological devices were ready for Zhu Xi (1130-1200) to use so that he was able freely to adopt them in his comments on the classical literature including the *Mencius*. It was only after the Neo-Confucian tradition was introduced to Korea in the thirteenth century⁴ that Korean scholars endeavored to offer a theoretical basis for the arguments and claims made by the previous Confucians.

In what follows, I shall focus on the examination of the connotation of Yulgok's concept of nature in comparison with Aristotle's. However, since Yulgok's views often overlap Mencius' views, in such a case I shall often mention the latter instead without saying so. As mentioned earlier, there are two reasons for comparing Aristotle and Yulgok: first, they were the first systematic philosophers in their own countries, who were deeply concerned with the concept of nature and, second, both of them employed a pair of terms, i.e. form and matter, and *li* and *ki*, to explain nature, both of which were described as having no common characteristics.⁵ In particular, the second point gives us the initial motive for comparing them.

The first question to ask is whether the concept of nature in Aristotle and Yulgok can be explained in terms of essence. As is well known, Aristotle was the one who systematically investigated the concept of nature in the ancient Greek. He in the *Physics* where the concept is closely discussed defines it as the principle or source of movement and rest within natural beings.⁶ He denies to ascribe such a principle to artificial beings which he takes to be non-natural. We know that Mencius in the fourth century remarked on human nature and its moral quality: that is, human nature is morally good. It seems that for him nature merely refers to the moral quality of goodness. If so, it is different from Aristotle's concept of nature which is defined as a source of movement and rest. However, the movement here does not simply mean the motion on the surface or in the air, but various sorts of movements that one performs in order fully to actualize one's own nature. According to him, earth, for example, has its own nature to come to the center of the earth, whereas fire has its nature to be far away from the center. Earth and fire seek the right places for themselves and, when they arrive at the right places, they come to rest, which means that they completed the actualization of their nature.

Aristotle's definition of nature as a source of movement and rest initially implies (a) that the source is inborn and so the movement is not forced from without and (b) that it explains why a thing is in such and such a shape or condition at the moment, that is, it explains why it moves now and not at another time. Moreover, his concept of nature entails more implications:⁷ (c) it is teleological, that is, whatever has nature has an inborn aim, (d) its ultimate aim is what is good or,

4. As for the historical background for Korean Neo-Confucianism, see Chung (1995), pp. 1-36 and Kalton *et. al.* (1994), xviii-xxvi.

5. As for the comparison of the two pairs of terms, see Clark (1975), pp. 212-216. He writes an appendix under the title of "Aristotle and the Sung Neo-Confucians" in which he shows a number of similarities and dissimilarities between them, though without any convincing evidence. However, it is definitely worthwhile to take a quick glance.

6. Aristotle, *Physics* 192b 19 ff.

7. Yoo (2008), pp. 64-65.

rather, the best for the subject, (e) those with nature utilize their nature exhaustively, and the like. In the case of human beings, he tells us that the teleological aim of human beings is happiness in virtue of their inborn nature and so they do everything within their power to be happy. To be brief, Aristotle believes that all the beings that are born with nature will do their best to actualize their nature. He expresses this belief in the proposition that “Nature does nothing in vain.”⁸

Understood in this way, nature for Aristotle means the completion of what a thing or a man is supposed to do and to be by means of utilizing all the faculties the thing or the man possesses. In this sense, the concept of nature appears tantamount to the concept of essence generally defined as what it was to be as such. In other words, essence generally refers to all the attributes that something has to have in order for it to be as such. However, when we apply the term to Aristotle, it comes to have a more active sense. For his concept of nature refers to a collection of faculties that enables the agency to perform the predesigned or predesignated functions within it. Moreover, another difference between Aristotle's concept of nature and the general definition of essence is that the former implies the good or well-being of the agency on its completion, whereas the latter does not necessarily so. That is, having all the essential attributes does not guarantee the possessor's well-being.

It is not immediately clear whether the Neo-Confucian concept of nature has the connotation of essence which is now understood as referring to a collection of all the faculties which a man or a thing has and guaranteeing the possessor's well-being. As a faithful Neo-Confucian, Yulgok in general accepts the Mencian idea of human nature. He calls *li* nature only when it resides in *ki* and divides it into the original nature which refers to *li* only without considering *ki* and the physical nature to refer to the combination *li* and *ki*. The division of nature is to explain that human beings are born with good nature because of their pure *li* which is always used in Neo-Confucianism as the ground for human goodness and, also, that they, nonetheless, have the possibility of becoming evil.⁹ In fact, Yulgok, like most Neo-Confucians, hardly seems to have any interest in the question whether human nature embraces all the human faculties or not. However, considering that human nature may well be taken by any Neo-Confucians to be what makes human beings human and that to be a human being is not only to have all the faculties, but also to actualize them, we can presumably say that the Mencian concept of nature can be understood in the same way as Aristotle's concept can. Even so, the moral goodness of human nature which Neo-Confucianism claim cannot be ascribed to the concept of essence.

The second question concerning the concept of nature in Aristotle and Yulgok is whether both of them have a teleological implication. As noted, Aristotle's concept of nature entails teleology which implies that all the natural beings have inborn purposes or natural tendencies so that they behave in a certain predesignated way. In his terms, if someone is a man, he should do such and such a

8. Aristotle, e.g. *Physics* 271a 33-34; *De Anima* 432b 21-22 and 434a 30; *Politics* 1253a 9 etc. For more on this, see Yoo (2009a), pp. 198-199.

9. See below for more on the division of two natures.

behavior. Again, this behavior is not something he should do in order to be a man, but something he should do because he is a man. According to Aristotle, a man will do what he/she is supposed to do and, in the end, what he is supposed to be insofar as there is no interruption from outside.¹⁰ However, the Neo-Confucian concept of nature seems to have a different connotation. Above all, the Neo-Confucian concept does not seem to contain any teleological implication that one's behavior will bring about the good result for the agency. To say that one should do such and such a behavior in order to be a human being is not to wait for a good result which will be automatically obtained if there is no interruption, but to make an effort to get a good result perhaps because it will not be automatically obtained without it. One more important point to note at this stage is that Aristotle refers to all the behaviors necessary for the realization of human nature morally good, whereas Yi I considers certain designated behaviors as morally good, i.e. the sorts of behaviors that can be found in the *Mencius*, such as the feelings of commiseration, of shame and dislike, of deference and compliance, and of right and wrong. In sum, Yi I, following the general tendency of Neo-Confucianism, emphasizes human nature and human morality, but Aristotle is not specifically concerned with human nature and so human morality. That is, Aristotle's research in human nature is only part of his interest in nature as a whole. Consequently, his discussion in his ethical works is only descriptive in the sense that it only states what he takes to be true, and he hardly means to present any prescriptive guidance for human behaviors.

The Relationship Between the Dichotomous Principles

The common characteristic about Aristotle's terms, form and matter, and Yulgok's terms, *li* and *ki*, is that they are considered to be the constituents of beings. That is, all the myriad beings are said to be composed of form and matter or *li* and *ki*. Although Aristotle in the *De Anima* prefers to use such terms as soul and body instead in the case of living beings, they are only different names for form and matter, respectively. Indeed, he has quite a strong idea about the composition of things, i.e. hylomorphism, by which he arguably insists that there cannot be any existing things which are not composed of both form and matter because there cannot be any form without matter and any matter without form. Although the inseparability of form and matter is thus claimed, they are not said to be one. More or less the same view can be found in Neo-Confucianism in that it not only denies the separability of *li* from *ki*, which may well be taken to be the Neo-Confucian hylomorphism or, as we might term it, *likism*, i.e. the theory that everything that exists is composed of *li* and *ki*, but also the identification *li* with *ki*.

The second characteristic between the two pairs of the terms is that both form and *li* are considered to be abstract, immaterial, and unchangeable principles such as the governing laws of nature which are not affected by anything material, but whose existence cannot be denied, whereas

10. Aristotle, e.g. *Physics* 199a 10-11; 255b 3 ff.

both matter and *ki* are described as concrete, material, and changeable constituents. The fact that the two entities have different equalities denies the possibility of any interaction between them. That is, form and *li* can neither affect, nor be affected by, matter and *ki*. As mentioned, form and *li* are unchanging, and remain the same all the time. On the contrary, matter and *ki* are changeable and so whatever change the composite things experiences is ascribed to them, not to form and *li*.

The two characteristics stated above are common to the pairs of the terms, but the pairs also have their difference. In fact, there arises a question whether both pairs are two different natures or only two types of one and the same nature. This question arises because, when Aristotle claims that form and matter are called nature,¹¹ he clearly says that they are two aspects of one and the same nature, but not two natures that belong to different entities or whatsoever. As we shall see below, he strongly believes in hylomorphism that everything that exists is composed of form and matter and never talks of the nature of form or that of matter, or of any characteristic nature derived from either of them in separation. At first sight, the same reasoning appears to apply to Neo-Confucianism. For, on the one hand, Yulgok, following Zhu Xi, seems, on the one hand, to acknowledge two types of nature and, on the other hand, to deny that they are two natures, but one and the same nature. The Neo-Confucians do not immediately identify *li* and *ki* with nature(s) but, in general, introduces the *li*-based nature and the *ki*-based nature and call them the original nature and the physical (or, rather, psychophysical) nature.

However, as briefly seen above, Yulgok's view on the relationship between the two natures seems to be different from Aristotle's view. Yulgok explains that the original nature has the characteristics derived from *li*, whereas the physical nature does not only have the characteristics derived from *ki*, but the characteristics derived from the combination of *li* and *ki*. However, since the characteristics derived from the combination of *li* and *ki* might be understood to imply the emergence of some new characteristics which were not in *li* and *ki* before their combination, it is better to say that the physical nature has the combining characteristics derived from *li* as well as *ki*. If so, since the characteristics derived from *li*, i.e. the original nature, are only parts of has the combination of the characteristics derived from *li* as well as *ki*, i.e. the physical nature, one might legitimately say that the original nature is part of the physical nature.¹² This is indeed Yulgok's concept of the physical nature which he inherited from Zhu Xi. Yulgok thus regards the physical nature as the only nature and the original nature as an abstract term.¹³ He uses the term "the original nature" to provide the theoretical ground for the moral goodness of human nature in

11. Aristotle, *Physics* 194a 12 ff.

12. See *Yulgok jönsö* (*Complete Works of Yi I*) 10: 29b, "Considered in this way, the original nature and the physical nature are in no way two natures. It is just that when one approaches the physical constitution and only points out its principle, we call it the original nature, and when one points out the combination of *li* and *ki*, we call it the physical nature."

13. Cf. *Yulgok jönsö* 10: 22a-b, "The nature is a composite of *li* and *ki*. In general, only after *li* is in the midst of *ki* is it called the nature. If it is not within the physical constituent, it should be called *li*, but not the nature. However, when we point out only the *li* within the physical constitution, it is the original nature; the original nature cannot have *ki* mixed in."

which he deals with *li* as being separated from, and independent of, *ki*.

The Principle of Classification of Human beings

Yulgok's famous theory of *litongkikuk* suggests that, although all the myriad things share one and the same kind of *li*, but due to the delimitation of *ki* there can be various kinds of beings.¹⁴ He applies this view to human beings and claims that they can be divided into different classes due to their *ki*.

Only human beings have received integral and penetrating *ki* and at the same time have innumerable variations as to the degree of clarity of turbidity, being pure or mixed. They do not have the pure uniformity of Heaven and Earth; but the mind, being empathy, spiritual, and penetrating, is fully endowed with the myriad *li*.¹⁵

Yulgok distinguishes four types of man, i.e. the sage 聖人, the worthy 賢者, the middle sort 中人, and the inferior 不肖者. First, he gives an account of the sages.

The psychophysical endowment of a sage is perfectly pure and his nature is in integral possession of its substance without a single bit of the self-centeredness of selfish human desires. Therefore, as the issuance of this nature, "he can follow his heart's desire without transgressing the norm," and the human mind is likewise the Tao mind. It is like a perfectly clean vessel filled with water since there is not a speck of dirt, when it moves and the originally clear water is poured out and flows forth, it remains entirely clear water.¹⁶

According to the above passage, the sage refers to a man without any selfish desire. Moreover, whatever he does from his heart, he always fits the norm. Elsewhere, he adds thus,

Among human beings, there are sages. They alone have received perfectly penetrating and perfectly integral, perfectly clear and perfectly pure *ki*, and so they are at one with the character of Heaven and Earth. Therefore, the sage likewise has a fixed nature that does not change. ... the sage is the norm for the ordinary man. That which is termed techniques of self-cultivation are nothing more than a matter of following the norms that have already been formulated by the sages, that is all.¹⁷

14. Yi I, *Yulgok chōnsō* 10:2a in Kalton *et. al.* (tr.) (1994), p. 177.

15. Yi I, *Yulgok chōnsō* 10:3a in Kalton *et. al.* (tr.) (1994), p. 127.

16. Yi I, *Yulgok chōnsō* 10:14a-b in Kalton *et. al.* (tr.) (1994), p. 151.

17. Yi I, *Yulgok chōnsō* 10:3b in Kalton *et. al.* (tr.) (1994), p. 128.

Now, the sage refers to someone who has perfected his/her inborn nature. Indeed, the sage refers to a man who does not have to make an effort to complete his/her nature since he/she is someone who already has “perfectly penetrating and perfectly integral, perfectly clear and perfectly pure *ki*” which is in harmony with Heaven and Earth. Moreover, the sage himself/herself is the norm itself and formulates the norm for the ordinary man. Once again, whatever he/she does, it does not transgress the norm.

Secondly, the worthy has the pure physical quality 氣質, but his/her physical quality is slightly mixed with turbidity. However, the worthy can remove the turbidity and regain “the full perfection of the original nature.”¹⁸ Yulgok describes it as “a vessel filled with water that is basically clean, but has not escaped a slight bit of dirt inside.” And so, he adds, “there must be further cleansing before the water regains its original clarity.”¹⁹

Thirdly, there is the middle class of people which refers to the class that falls between that of the worthy and that of the inferior. That is, the physical quality of the middle class is clearer than that of the worthy dirtier than that of the inferior.²⁰ Yulgok has no doubt that even the nature of the middle class of people is originally good, but can be influenced by the turbidity of the physical quality and devolved into evil.²¹

Finally, there is the class of the inferior. Yulgok says that the people who belong to this class have “a lot of the turbid and little of the clear in it, much that is impure and little that is pure. The original condition of the nature is overwhelmed, and, moreover, there is no application made to cultivate and perfect it.”²² As it stands, he appears to deny the possibility of this class of people to be somehow cultivated so that their physical quality can regain clarity. Although he does not clearly say that the inferior can also be cultivated, but he elsewhere claims that all the human beings have the capacity for self-cultivation.

... the practice of self-cultivation belongs only to man, and the ultimate perfection of that practice extends even to bringing it about that Heaven and Earth assume their proper positions and all creatures are properly nurtured. Only then is the service that is within the human capacity fulfilled.²³

Yulgok thus thinks that that human beings that are equally composed of *li* and *ki* can be divided into four classes in accordance with the clarity or purity of *ki* and believes in the goodness of human nature as well as the human capacity for actualizing the nature by means of self-cultivation.

18. Yi I, *Yulgok chönsö* 10:14b in Kalton *et. al.* (tr.) (1994), p. 151.

19. Yi I, *Yulgok chönsö* 10:14a-b in Kalton *et. al.* (tr.) (1994), p. 151.

20. Yoo (2018), p. 51.

21. Yi I, *Yulgok chönsö* 10:15a in Kalton *et. al.* (tr.) (1994), p. 152.

22. Yi I, *Yulgok chönsö* 10:14b in Kalton *et. al.* (tr.) (1994), p. 151.

23. Yi I, *Yulgok chönsö* 10:3a in Kalton *et. al.* (tr.) (1994), p. 127.

Now let us turn to Aristotle's views on the different classes of human beings. In examining his views, we need first to ask whether he ever divides human beings into different classes. The answer might be "Yes." In the *De Anima*, where he divides living beings into different species, he only distinguishes them into plants, animals (stationary animals and locomotive animals), and human beings, and does not quite show any interest in the further division of them. However, the differentiating factor he uses in dividing the living beings is the soul rather than the body. That is, plants have the nutritive soul, animals the locomotive soul that also has the vegetative, the sensory, and the appetitive as its parts, and human beings the rational soul that also has the vegetative, the sensory, the appetitive, and the locomotive as its parts. In this way, the soul which is identified with the form is that which divides living beings into different species.²⁴ Indeed, Aristotle often claims the primacy of form by which he says that for an axe to perform its given function it has to have the right kind of shape to cut the trees. However, although in saying this he appears to emphasize the formal aspect of the axe such as its shape, he does not mean to say that only the formal aspect is necessary for cutting trees, but that the form presupposes the material necessary for the axe to cut trees. In other words, the axe must be made of the right kind of material such as iron or stone, but not jelly.²⁵

It thus appears that this is the main difference between Aristotle and Yulgok. That is, Yulgok thinks that human beings can be divided into different classes in accordance with the clarity or turbidity of their physical quality, whereas Aristotle does not quite divide them into different classes. However, he surely distinguishes males from females and considers their physical difference (the defective material of the female, to be precise), but there is no sufficient evidence to take it to be his general views.

The Sages and the Happy Men

Nowadays, the division of the four types of human beings in accordance with the degree of clarity and purity of *ki* might look rather arbitrary. Although it is also unclear why he divides them specifically into the four types rather than five or six types, it is nevertheless clear that he tries hard to claim that human beings are capable of becoming sages by way of cultivation. Indeed, the basic idea of Neo-Confucianism is that human beings should do their best to become sages. In other words, becoming sages is the final aim of human beings. As seen, sages refer to the people who are in harmony with Heaven and Earth, whereas the other kinds of people refer to the people who aim to reach the standard of sages. Neo-Confucians in general including Yulgok believe that human beings are born with good natures and will act accordingly. This might well be understood as suggesting that they will not agree with such a belief that "Once a villain, always a villain." Indeed, Yulgok strongly emphasizes that even villains are capable of rectifying their evil deeds, recovering

24. Aristotle, *De Anima* II. chs. 2-3.

25. Cf. Aristotle, *Physics* 193b 7.

their original natures, and becoming sages through cultivation.

What is to be noted here is that Yulgok's understanding of human beings focuses on explaining their moral characteristics and allowing for the possibility for their becoming sages. In his other works such as *Hakkyo mōbom (Model for an Academy)* and *Sōnghak chipyo (Essentials of the Learning of the Sages)* in *Yulgok chōnsō*, he endeavors to show a number of practical ways to educate students. Neo-Confucians do not advise them to achieve happiness or something like that, but tell them to complete their natures to be sages. Indeed, for them to complete their natures or to be sages or, even, to be human beings refer to one and the same thing. It might be legitimate to conclude that the objective of Neo-Confucianism was to cultivate oneself to become a human being in its proper sense of term. Thus, it particularly emphasizes two points, i.e. the completion of human nature and the education to be a sage.

In contrast, Aristotle presents happiness as the ultimate aim that human beings pursue by nature.²⁶ He defines happiness as something self-sufficient, noble, and pleasant.²⁷ It is not something that can be obtained all at once, but throughout one's whole life. In general, Aristotle maintains that the nature of things will be fully actualized if there is no intervention from without.²⁸ However, although he believes that human beings have the nature to pursue happiness, he does not think that it will be obtained even if there is no intervention. As is well known, he emphasizes the concept of mean (*mesotes*) in his account of human happiness. That is, for one to be happy one needs to choose a mean between two extremes or two vices,²⁹ but in order to choose a mean one needs the capacity for excellence, i.e. the capacity to choose a mean.³⁰ He introduces two kinds of excellence, i.e. the intellectual excellence and the moral excellence, and claims that the former comes about by education and the latter by habit.³¹ At this stage, we do not need to discuss how to educate well or how to have a proper habit, but to note that Aristotle's happiness is not something that can be obtained automatically without any effort. Indeed, one might say that Aristotle's teleological account of human beings reaches the limit here since the nature of things cannot be fully actualized even without the external intervention. In any case, his account of human beings in this way appears very similar to Yulgok's account that we have seen earlier, in particular, in that they say that one needs appropriate education to be a sage or a happy man.

I do not mean to start a whole new discussion but, but there is one remaining question worthwhile to ask. I will simply raise the question and offer a brief answer to it. The question whether it is ever possible for one to be a sage in Yulgok's theory (or in the general Neo-Confucian theory) or a happy man in Aristotle's theory? This question primarily arises from Aristotle since he thinks that happiness does not refer to an instant feeling of happiness, but a state that lasts

26. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1097b 20-21 and 1099a 24.

27. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1176b 4-5 and 1097b 5-7.

28. Aristotle, e.g. *Physics* 199a 10-11, 255b 3 ff.

29. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1109a 20 ff.

30. Cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1102a 5-6; cf. 1106b 36, "Excellence... is a state concerned with choice."

31. Cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1103a 14 ff.

throughout one's whole life and, also, that there are three conditions required for happiness, i.e. the psychological, the physical, and the external, which are almost impossible for one to satisfy. The happy man for Aristotle is just a norm or an ideal form of man which can never exist in the real world. If so, what is the use of talking about it? For us human beings, it seems to be presented as the road not taken or, rather, the road that cannot be taken for ever. Nonetheless, Aristotle shows the road because he knows that we have the habit of dreaming, i.e. the dreaming of taking it one day. That is, although it looks almost impossible to reach the standard, he tells us about it because he knows that we will somehow keep trying. What about the sage case in Neo-Confucianism? Can we think of it in the same way? I will leave this question open to the audience.

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