Shuhai Wenyuan
Classical Chinese Digital Database and Interactive Internet Worktable

A Project of the University of Hawaì`i
http://www.shuhai.hawaii.edu

Reviewed by Jim Deitrick

The *Shuhai Wenyuan Classical Chinese Digital Database and Interactive Internet Worktable* is a Web-based resource developed and maintained by the University of Hawaì`i at Manoa.[1] This valuable resource enables even first-time users with limited knowledge of Chinese languages and cultures to encounter "classic" Chinese texts (jīng) 經 ; e.g. the *Lùnyŭ* or *Analects of Confucius* and the *Dào dé* (jīng) in their original language. Users of this site are enabled, for instance, to construct their own translations of texts using its very well-designed and intuitive worktable. The most useful feature of the worktable is its hyperlinked dictionary: it links every character in its growing list of available texts to lexical content from Charles Muller's *Chinese-Japanese-Korean-Vietnamese/English Dictionary*.[2] In the case of "philosophically pregnant" terms such as *dào* (道) and *rén* (仁), dictionary entries are supplemented with extensive excerpts from major contemporary interpretive works by Roger Ames and David Hall, Arthur Waley, Livia Kohn, and many others. Users may also view texts in Chinese and English translation

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simultaneously when desired, and search for the occurrence of particular terms among available texts. This latter feature makes it a useful tool even for advanced users. Finally, determined users who wish to gain proficiency in reading classical Chinese may work through Edwin Pulleyblank's *Outline of Classical Chinese Grammar*[3] in its entirety.

The intellectual rewards of working with religious, philosophical, and literary texts in their original languages are obvious. Even novice users of this site naturally gain insight into the interpretive difficulties of translating classical Chinese into English. In the process, they also gain deeper insight into the nature of the texts themselves (e.g. their composition and style) and their indigenous meaning(s)—insight that is hard to discover when reading texts solely in translation. What makes this resource particularly useful is that it makes this insight available to those with no background in Chinese languages.

The potential uses of this resource for novices and experts in a variety of disciplines are nearly endless. While particularly well-suited for upper-division and graduate-level courses, it can also be used effectively in lower-division, general education courses, giving students at least a taste for the indigenous flavor of classic Chinese texts. A simple assignment suitable for lower-division courses, for example, might ask students to construct their own, albeit less-than-perfect, translations of short passages using the hyperlinked dictionary. A more advanced assignment might require students, using the search engine, to compare the use of a particular term in two different texts or traditions. These are but two suggestions. Creative educators will have no difficulty imagining additional uses relevant to their own areas of interest and instructional methods. ■

NOTES

1. *Shuhai Wenyuan: Classical Chinese Digital Database and Interactive Internet Worktable*. Brian Bruya, ed. January 2003. University of Hawaì`i, November 15, 2005, http://www.shuhai.hawaii.edu.
2. *CJKV-English Dictionary*. Charles Muller, ed. November 15, 2005, http://www.acmuller.net/dealt/.
3. Pulleyblank, Edwin G. *Outline of Classical Chinese Grammar. Shuhai Wenyuan: Classical Chinese Digital Database and Interactive Internet Worktable*. Brian Bruya, ed. January 2003. University of Hawaì`i, November 15, 2005, http://www.shuhai.hawaii.edu.

Editor's Note: Although this Web site is still under construction, a large number of educators are currently using it.

JIM DEITRICK holds a PhD in Religion and Social Ethics from the University of Southern California. He is Assistant Professor of Comparative Philosophy and Religion and Director of the Interdisciplinary Program in Religious Studies at the University of Central Arkansas. His research focuses on Western engagements with Asian philosophical and religious traditions and the consequences of such engagements for contemporary social ethical theory and practice.