

## Article

# A Comparative Study of Shame as Denoted by *Hrī*, *Apatrāpya*, and *Xiuwuzhixin*

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**Abstract:** Mencius' concept of shame has emerged as a space of comparison between shame cultures in the East and West in cross-cultural research. However, comparative research on shame in Buddhist and Confucian cultures is scarce. Hence, this study examines the Buddhist psychological Shame concepts of "*hrī*" (*Can* 慚, shame) and "*apatrāpya*" (*Kui* 愧, abashment) and the Confucian "*xiuwuzhixin*" (羞惡之心, the mind of shame) as representative examples that reveal a subject boundary that restricts shame to human beings and explores the similar subject-subordinate structures of these concepts. The study then analyzes the internal and external forces that induce shame. Finally, it discusses the goodness ascribed to shame and how deviation from shame leads to evil. Results reveal fundamental differences in the understanding of shame between the two cultures. In particular, "*hrī*" and "*apatrāpya*" in Buddhism are rooted in the psychological consciousness function, whereas "*xiuwuzhixin*" in Confucian culture is rooted in the ethics function. This cross-cultural comparison of shame highlights the tension and complexity inherent in this concept.

**Keywords:** comparative study; shame; *Hrī*; *Apatrāpya*; *Xiuwuzhixin*

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## 1. Introduction

Benedict's proposition in his book *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, where he posits that "guilt" is emblematic of Western culture and "shame" of Eastern culture, has sparked remarkable controversy regarding the categorization of moral sentiments (Heller 1985, p. 1). The discussion gained traction as psychological emotion studies became popular, and relevant research achievements have also been transformed from "odd backwater" to "boomtown" (Hutchinson 2008, p. vi), reflecting the transformation from relative obscurity to widespread popularity in the field of emotion studies. At the turn of the last century, Gilbert explored various shame studies from two perspectives. The first is the theory of shame and its schools of thought, such as psychoanalytic theory, affective theory of shame, emotion-cognitive and cognitive-behavioral theory, and sociological and anthropological approaches. The second is the conceptualization of components and mechanisms (Gilbert 1998, pp. 3–4). Recently, existing studies on shame by Lewis, Sartre, Strauss, Scheele, and so on have been explored (Zahavi 2014, p. 240). These explorations have strongly emphasized the cultural factors determining the richness and ambiguity of the definition of shame. Zahavi, for instance, proposed that "it is hardly insignificant that emotions like shame are more culture-specific than the basic emotions, and that a cultural perspective might indeed be indispensable for an understanding of the full complexity of these emotions." Consequently, cultural comparison of shame has emerged as a research hot spot.

The comparative study of shame between the East and the West has garnered considerable attention among Chinese scholars. Scholars have critically examined Benedict's inadequate use of the concept of "guilt" and "shame" in various cultures. This has led to further exploration of Chinese philosophy, particularly regarding Mencius' concept of "*xiuwuzhixin*" (羞惡之心, The mind of shame) (Zhang 2017, p. 40; Yao 2019). In recent years, in

their book *Xiuwu zhixin: Duoweishiyexiade Rujia Gudanguannian Yanjiu* 羞惡之心：多維視野下的儒家古典觀念研究 (*Shame: A Study of Confucian Classical Ideas from a Multidimensional Perspective*), Chinese scholars Lai, Chi-ping and Chen, Lisheng have compiled research achievements on the feeling of shame in China and worldwide, and the cultural differences and changes over time in relation to shame are emphasized (Chen 2006, p. 106). However, few studies have compared Buddhist psychological shame, such as “*hrī*” (Can 慚, shame) and “*apatrāpya*” (Kui 愧, abashment) and Mencius’ psychological shame of “*xiuwuzhixin*”. Such studies hold substantial value compared with domestic and international studies exploring the differences in the presentation and use of shame within distinct cultural contexts (Pattison 2000, p. 55). Given the close relationship between “*xiuwuzhixin*”, “*hrī*”, and “*apatrāpya*”, all of which can be considered part of “The Shame Family” (Stoloro 2010). Therefore, this article aims to compare the Mencius concept of “*xiuwuzhixin*” with the Buddhist notion of “*hrī*” and “*apatrāpya*” to clarify the similarities and differences in their conceptions of shame. This aims to provide some cross-cultural comparative material for understanding cultural differences in psychological shame, particularly focusing on the less examined differences between Confucian and Buddhist notions of shame. At the same time, parts of the limited local context reference Western shame culture for comparison.

The following sections of the paper will explore these similarities and differences from three perspectives: “Subject boundaries that restrict shame to humans and the subject-subordinate structure”, “Differences in internal and external driving forces”, and “Evil resulting from deviation from shame and goodness ascribed to shame”. This study found that these concepts establish a subject boundary such that only humans can experience shame. Moreover, they also share a similar subject-subordinate structure and sources of internal or external motivation. Both affirm that deviating from shame leads to evil, indicating a shared understanding of the concept and its various implications. However, fundamental differences rooted in the consciousness and ethics functions of the two shame cultures highlight considerable differences within this shared understanding.

## 2. Subject Boundary That Restricts Shame to Humans and Subject-Subordinate Structure

In Scheele’s research on shyness and shame, he emphasized that animals exhibit various emotions similar to humans (e.g., fear, disgust, and even vanity). However, studies have suggested that animals lack shyness and specific expressions of shame (Lu 2018). Shyness and shame are thus unique to human beings. Scheele’s conclusions, based on the Western tradition of shame, have drawn my attention to the subject of Confucian and Buddhist shame. Interestingly, Eastern Confucian and Buddhist philosophies also emphasize the singular subjectivity of shame, but they tend to present a subject-subordinate structure of shame. This will be discussed in detail below.

Ven. Yin Shun 印順, a famous Buddhist monk and scholar, recognized early that the shame of Buddhism and Mencius were key to distinguishing humans from animals. He believed that “Buddhism is the same as the Confucians, who believed that shame was the difference between human beings and animals” (Y19, p. 196a). While Yin Shun did not delve deeper into the subject, evidence supporting his view can be found in relevant Buddhist teachings.

Within the *Yogācāra* school, “*hrī*” and “*apatrāpya*” belong to the 11 virtues (*Shan* 善, *kuśala*) of mental concomitants (*Xinsuofa* 心所法, *caitta*) among the 100 dharmas. The concept of mental concomitants directly stipulates that these concomitants must first be included in living beings (*Youqing* 有情, *sattva*). For instance, mental concomitants must be generated together (T1562, p. 384a) and committed (*Xiangying* 相應, *samprayukta*) (T1542, p. 714a) into the mind (*Xinwang* 心王, *citta*), and only living beings can perform these psychological tasks.

Notably, not all living beings share shame and abashment in mental concomitants. Buddhist classics emphasize that shame and abashment are the key differences between humans and animals. *The Collection of Related Discourses* (Za’ahanjing 雜阿含經, *Samyuk-*

*tāgamasūtra*) and *Great Discourse on the Final Nirvāṇa* (*Daboniepanjing* 大般涅槃經, *Mahā-parinirvāṇasūtra*) suggest the following:

Buddha told us that there are two types of clean dharma that can maintain human society. They are “*hrī*” and “*apatrāpya*”. If human society does not have them, there will be no concept of social relations—such as parents, brothers, sisters, wives, families, teachers, and elders—in that human society. Society will turn upside down, just like the world of animals. 世尊告諸比丘：有二淨法，能護世間。何等為二？所謂慚、愧。假使世間無此二淨法者，世間亦不知有父母、兄弟、姊妹、妻子、宗親、師長尊卑之序，顛倒渾亂，如畜生趣。(T99, p. 340c)

If human beings do not have “*hrī*” and “*apatrāpya*,” they could be only called animals. 無慚愧者不名為人，名為畜生。(T374, p. 477b)

The Buddha emphasized that shame and abashment are key to maintaining the human world. Ethical relationships between human beings cannot be established without a sense of shame. Without shame, human beings would be no different from animals, and the moral principles of parents, brothers, sisters, husbands and wives, relatives, teachers, and so on would disintegrate. Shame and abashment promote respect among human beings, leading to ethical relationships between them. Hence, shame and abashment are also called “the guardians of the world” (Bhikkhu Bodhi 2000, p. 1890).

Mencius has a similar explanation about shame:

The mind of pity and commiseration is humaneness; the mind of shame and dislike is rightness; the mind of respectfulness and reverence is propriety; and the mind that knows right and wrong is wisdom. Humaneness, rightness, propriety, and wisdom are not infused into us from without. We definitely possess them. It is just that we do not think about it, that is all. 惻隱之心，仁也；羞惡之心，義也；恭敬之心，禮也；是非之心，智也。仁義禮智，非由外鑠我也，我固有之也，弗思耳矣。(Mencius 2009, p. 124)

Shame is the sprout (*Duan* 端) of rightness (*Yi* 義), which is not acquired a posteriori but is possessed by all congenitally. Mencius posited that affirmative and negative ways to express shame form the difference between humans and animals:

The mind of shame and dislike is possessed by all human beings. 羞惡之心，人皆有之。(Mencius 2009, p. 124)

One who lacks a mind that feels shame and aversion would not be human. 无羞惡之心，非人也。(Mencius 2009, p. 35)

By affirming that shame is a psychological activity unique to human beings, the two types of shame culture in this study, respectively, shape the subject-subordinate structure combined with mind and rightness. The so-called subject-subordinate structure is the relationship between subject and subordinate. This relationship emphasizes the existence of a structure between two objects, where one serves as primary and the other as subordinate.

In *Yogācāra*, shame and abashment are categorized as mental concomitants. Mental concomitants are subordinated to the mind according to “time” (*Shi* 時, *kāla*), “requisite” (*Suoyi* 所依, *niśraya*), and “object” (*Jing* 境, *visaya*). Therefore, shame and abashment are subordinated to the mind, establishing a subject-subordinate structure.

Per Mencius, shame is subordinated to rightness, which indicates that these two factors also constitute a structure.

The mind’s feeling of shame and aversion is the sprout of rightness [*yi* 義]... Human beings have these four sprouts just as they have four limbs. 羞惡之心，義之端也.....人之有是四端也，猶其有四體也。(Mencius 2009, p. 35)

The relationship between shame and rightness can be compared to the relationship between humans and their four limbs, exemplifying a subject-subordinate relationship. As the subject, humans exert control over their limbs just as rightness influences shame.

Moreover, this structure was recognized by the great scholar Zhu Xi 朱熹 of the later Song Dynasty, who proposed the following:

Rightness is the pattern<sup>1</sup> of shame. After the pattern is used, shame remains. 義卻是羞惡之理，發出來方有羞惡。(Zhu 2002, p. 1764)

Shame belongs to rightness, and rightness serves as the fundamental basis for shame. Hence, rightness is only called shame when it is utilized. 羞惡之心屬義，必有這義在裡面，故發出來做羞惡之心。(Zhu 2002, p. 1766)

Hence, the structure of rightness and shame being subject and subordinate, respectively, is undoubtedly revealed. This relationship is also reflected in another Confucian classic, *Zhongyong* 中庸 (*The Middle Way*), which states the following:

The moment at which joy and anger, grief and pleasure, have yet to arise is called a nascent equilibrium (*Zhong* 中); once the emotions have arisen, that they are all brought into proper focus (*zhong*)<sup>2</sup> is called harmony (*he* 和). 喜怒哀樂之未發謂之中，發而皆中節謂之和。(Ames and Hall 2001, p. 89)

As a subordinate entity, shame represents rightness before it is activated. To determine whether the emotions, once activated, meet the requirements of harmony is to measure whether a person's emotions are moderate. Experiencing excessive shame or the lack thereof deviates from the actual focus; thus, individuals should avoid such deviation.

However, the relationships between "*hrī*", "*apatrāpya*", and mind and that between "*xiuwuzhixin*" and rightness differ in their functional structure. "*hrī*" and "*apatrāpya*" emphasize consciousness, whereas "*xiuwuzhixin*" emphasizes ethics. This does not mean that the former does not consider morality or the latter consciousness; rather, each has its own emphasis and characteristics. In *Yogācāra*, "*hrī*" and "*apatrāpya*" place greater emphasis on cognition itself compared to ethical content, as it pertains not only to understanding the world but also to cultivating virtuous actions that lead to good karma, therefore fostering conditions conducive to spiritual practice and ultimate liberation. Mencius' "*xiuwuzhixin*" underlines the importance of the ethics function in restraining people from committing evil deeds.

### 3. Differences in Internal and External Driving Forces

The concept of shame in the two cultures discussed above has certain driving forces, albeit with different emphases. "*hrī*" and "*apatrāpya*" consider auto-criticism as the internal driving force of shame and social criticism and punishment as the external driving forces. Mencius' "*xiuwuzhixin*" downplays the significance of external driving forces and emphasizes ethics as a crucial internal driving force.

The *Pañcaskandhaprakaraṇa* (*Dacheng wuyunlun* 大乘五蘊論, *The Five Aggregates of Mahāyāna*) describes auto-criticism as follows:

What is inner shame [*hrī*]? It is a shame coming about through a committed offense, in which the self, or rather the (psychological) event responsible, is predominant. (Anacker 2005, p. 67) 云何為慚? 謂自增上，及法增上，於所作罪羞恥為性。(T1612, p. 848c)

And what is dread of blame [*apatrāpya*]? It is that shame towards others that comes about through a committed offense in which the outer world is predominant. (Anacker 2005, p. 67) 云何為愧? 謂世增上，於所作罪羞恥為性。(T1612, p. 848c)

When people feel a sense of "*hrī*" about their faults and decide not to commit such faults anymore, and when they decide to advocate virtue and shame to protect themselves from evil, such decisions signify self-reflection. In this context, dharma emphasizes respect for the good law and self-reflection, both of which form the internal driving force of shame. In modern popular language, these internal driving forces of shame can be called self-esteem, shame, guilt, and so on. Here, the internal driving force is the desire to stop evil behavior through self-reflection.

“*Hrī*” emphasizes internal driving forces, while “*apatrāpya*” emphasizes external ones. “*Apatrāpya*” is being ashamed of what one has done, but the emphasis is on the external consequence. The fear and guilt regarding one’s actions stem from the potential for punishment and criticism from others, reflecting an external power. This aligns with the ancient Greek proverb quoted by Aristotle: “The eyes are the abode of shame” (Aristotle 1926, p. 215). Because what we care about is not only the gaze from the outside world but also the sarcasm and criticism brought about by the gaze.

In contrast to “*hrī*” and “*apatrāpya*”, “*xiuwuzhixin*” emphasizes ethics as the primary internal driving force. This weakens and even eliminates the possibility that external driving forces can increase the sense of shame. Contrary to some Western perspectives on shame, which hold that shame is fundamentally an externally driven emotion, as argued by scholars such as Sartre, who deny the independence of transcendental and primitive shame and believe that shame is inevitably driven by others (Zahavi 2014, pp. 238–40). Mencius’ perspective on shame emphasizes the inherent nature of primitive shame and reduces the possibility of shame being driven by external forces, as illustrated in the following example:

Here is why I say that all human beings have a mind that commiserates with others. Now, if anyone were suddenly to see a child about to fall into a well, his mind would always be filled with alarm, distress, pity, and compassion. That he would react accordingly is not because he would use the opportunity to ingratiate himself with the child’s parents, nor because he would seek commendation from neighbors and friends, nor because he would hate the adverse reputation [that could come from not reacting accordingly]. 所以謂人皆有不忍人之心者：今人乍見孺子將入於井，皆有怵惕惻隱之心；非所以內交於孺子之父母也，非所以要譽於鄉黨朋友也，非惡其聲而然也。 (Mencius 2009, p. 35)

When a person witnesses a child about to fall into a well, their moral impulse is to become fearful and compassionate. Naturally, this moral impulse arises internally and not externally. As Mencius explains, the motivation behind this purpose is not the pursuit of giving something back to the parents of the child, obtaining a good reputation among neighbors and friends, or avoiding gaining the bad reputation of someone who refuses to save a child. This is contrary to Aristotle’s *The Art of Rhetoric*, which says, “Let shame then be defined as a kind of pain or uneasiness in respect of misdeeds, past, present, or future, which seem to tend to bring dishonor; and shamelessness as contempt and indifference regarding these same things” (Aristotle 1926, p. 211). “A mind that commiserates with others” is initiated not because of external driving forces such as reputation and utility but because of internal driving forces. These include compassion and shame, both of which are among the “four sprouts (*Siduan* 四端)” of the “heart (*Xin* 心)”, as emphasized by Mencius.

This difference is derived from the theoretical foundations established by the two shame cultures. “*Hrī*” and “*apatrāpya*” are rooted in the understanding of “thatness” (*Shixiang* 實相, *tattva*). Conversely, “*xiuwuzhixin*” is rooted in ethics. The internal and external driving forces of “*hrī*” and “*apatrāpya*” are based on the direct connection between the mind, mental concomitants, and the nature of reality. This is because this interaction establishes the foundation of the whole world, including the two driving forces of shame. This interaction is essential for cognition. This is also a religious feature of Buddhism as a type of pursuit of liberation (*Niepan* 涅槃, *nirvāṇa*).

“*Xiuwuzhixin*” is different as it is rooted in the moral code of shame: rightness. This inevitably weakens the positive influence that may be engendered by external norms that deviate from rightness. This is because if shame arises alongside rightness, it will not only weaken the influence of rightness but also likely lead to the self-cancellation of rightness. Unlike the interaction between internal and external factors in the interplay of mind and mental concomitants in the Buddhist concept of shame, the abolition of rightness would result in the lack of compliance with shame, and shame would not be generated. Therefore, external motivation is repeatedly weakened in Mencius’ perspective.

#### 4. Evil Resulting from Deviation from Shame and Goodness Ascribed to Shame

“*Hrī*,” “*apatrāpya*,” and “*xiuwuzhixin*” are all endowed with the nature of ethical goodness. Simultaneously, the two cultures of shame emphasize that deviation from the psychological activity of shame can result in evil behavior.

Mental concomitants, “material factors (*Sefa* 色法, *rūpa*)”, mind, “conditioned forces dissociated from thought (*Xinbuxiangyingxingfa* 心不相应行法, *cittaviprayuktasamskāra*)”, and “uncompounded factors (*Wuweifa* 無為法, *asamskrta*)” constitute the classification of the Buddhist understanding of the world. However, the understanding of mental concomitants changed after the development of Indian Buddhism. For instance, the *Sarvāstivāda* (*Shuoyiqieyoubu* 說一切有部, Teaching that All Exists) has 46 dharmas. *Yogācāra* has 51, but the two mental concomitants “*hrī*” and “*apatrāpya*” are classified under the “ten omnipresent wholesome factors (*Dashandifa* 大善地法, *kuśalamahābhūmika*)” or “eleven wholesome mental concomitants (*Shanxinsuo* 善心所, *kuśala-caitta*).” By examining the contents of the ten omnipresent wholesome factors and the 11 wholesome mental concomitants, we can identify the ethical goodness of shame in the two cultures.

Faith, shame, abashment, avoidance of attachment, avoidance of hatred, avoidance of ignorance, effort, agility, mindfulness, equanimity, avoidance of harm... They are eleven wholesome mental concomitants. 信、慚、愧、無貪善根、無瞋善根、無癡善根、精進、輕安、不放逸、捨、不害...十一是善。(T1612, p. 848c)

Faith, effort, shame, abashment, avoidance of attachment, avoidance of hatred, agility, equanimity, mindfulness, avoidance of harm. They are ten omnipresent wholesome factors. 大善地法有十種：一信、二精進、三慚、四愧、五無貪、六無瞋、七輕安、八捨、九不放逸、十不害。(T1545, p. 220b)

Various moral standards such as shame, abashment, and avoidance of hatred and harm are prevalent in modern society. Some aspects, such as faith (i.e., believing in Buddhism), may not have the same contemporary relevance in moral terms. This difference reflects Buddhism’s understanding of goodness as a religious practice and the ethics of secular goodness. This is also reflected in other Buddhist classics, such as *The Sutra of the Forty-two Sections* (*Sishi'erzhangjing* 四十二章經) and *Demonstration of Consciousness Only* (*Chengweishilun* 成唯識論, *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhi*).

The Buddha said, “There are ten virtuous actions and there are also ten non-virtuous actions. Three are performed with the body, four with speech, and three with mind. The three [non-virtues] performed with the body are killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct; the four [non-virtues] of speech are deceit, slander, lying, and idle talk; the three [non-virtues] of mind refer to jealousy, malice, and ignorance. Those who do not believe in the Three Jewels take evil as truth. (Shih 2005, p. 32). 眾生以十事為善，亦以十事為惡。身三、口四、意三。身三者：殺、盜、淫；口四者：兩舌、惡罵、妄言、綺語；意三者：嫉、恚、痴。不信三尊，以邪為真。(T784, p. 722b)

Good is so-called as it benefits one in this life and a later life... bad is that which is disadvantageous in this life and in a later life (Hsiian-tsang 1999, p. 155). 能為此世、他世順益，故名為善.....能為此世、他世違損，故名不善。(T1585, p. 26b)

Buddhism emphasizes the positive role of good deeds in the process of religious practice, which comes from the understanding of the world. Behaviors that are not conducive to people performing religious practice are classified as evil. The connotation of goodness revolves around Buddhist practice, and behaviors that contribute to this practice are considered good. As Engle said, “They are virtues either because they are antidotes to lack of faith and the like or because they occur in concomitance with any of the roots of virtue” (Engle 2009, p. 275).

Although Mencius often spoke of good nature (*Shanxing* 善性) and good governance (*Renzheng* 仁政), he rarely discussed the positive aspects of how to be good. However, we can catch a glimpse of its characteristics from the four sprouts described by Mencius:

The mind's feeling of pity and compassion is the sprout of humaneness [*ren* 仁]; the mind's feeling of shame and aversion is the sprout of rightness [*yi* 義]; the mind's feeling of modesty and compliance is the sprout of propriety [*li* 禮]; and the mind's sense of right and wrong is the sprout of wisdom [*zhi* 智]. 惻隱之心，仁之端也；羞惡之心，義之端也；辭讓之心，禮之端也；是非之心，智之端也。 (Mencius 2009, p. 35)

The feelings mentioned above can be considered the core of Mencius' concept of goodness, which is also connected to modern moral theories. As part of the four sprouts, "*xiuwuzhixin*" is naturally an important aspect of ethics.

In addition to affirming that shame contains general ethical and moral goodness, both cultures emphasize that deviation from shame may engender evil behaviors in people. Additionally, although the norms of evil share general ethical and moral attributes, they still contain nonethical components due to the functional difference between consciousness and ethics.

Buddha has proclaimed the harm caused by deviation from shame: "He has shame; he is ashamed of misconduct in body, speech, and mind, ashamed of engaging in evil unwholesome deeds" (Bhikkhu Bodhi 1995, p. 462). This deviation from shame was classified into two types of mental concomitants, namely "shamelessness" (*Wucanxinsuo* 無慚心所, *āhrīkyā*) and "absence of abashment" (*Wukuixinsuo* 無愧心所, *anapatrāpyā*). These were referred to as "the two harmful dharma[s] [that] can destroy the world, i.e., shamelessness and absence of abashment" (T1545, p. 179a).

How the psychological activities of "shamelessness" and "absence of abashment" gradually contribute to evil behavior in people is recorded in *Demonstration of Consciousness Only*:

What is "shamelessness (*āhrīkyā*)?"<sup>3</sup> Its nature is that of disregard for oneself and the dharma and a disrespectful resistance to the virtuous and good. Its activity is that of obstructing conscience and nourishing evil; that is, because he who has no regard for himself or the dharma has a disrespectful resistance to the virtuous and good and is unashamed of his transgressions, obstructs shame, and produces and nourishes various evil actions (Hsiian-tsang 1999, p. 199). 云何無慚？不顧自法輕拒賢善為性，能障礙慚生長惡行為業。謂於自法無所顧者，輕拒賢善不恥過惡，障慚生長諸惡行故。(T.1585, p. 33c)

What is "absence of abashment (*anapatrāpyā*)?" Its nature is that of disregarding the world and exalting violence and evil. Its activity is that of obstructing shame and producing and nourishing evil actions; that is, because he who is without regard for the world exalts violence and evil and is unashamed of his transgressions, obstructs shame, and produces and nourishes various evil actions (Hsiian-tsang 1999, p. 199). 云何無愧？不顧世間崇重暴惡為性，能障礙愧生長惡行為業。謂於世間無所顧者，崇重暴惡不恥過罪，障愧生長諸惡行故。(T.1585, p. 33c)

"Shamelessness (*āhrīkyā*)" and "absence of abashment (*anapatrāpyā*)" are the antitheses of correspond to "*hrī*" and "*apatrāpyā*," respectively, and the prefix "*a/an*" indicates negation. The emergence of "shamelessness" and "absence of abashment" prompts people to disregard the internal and external constraints of shame. Thus, they partake in psychological activities such as rejecting good, not being ashamed of evil and sin, and showing reverence for violent evil. In Buddhist classics, the influence of "shamelessness" and "absence of abashment" on people's evil deeds has been interpreted comprehensively. The power of these two mental concomitants is considered to be the greatest when people do bad things. Moreover, the dynamic internal and external constraints of shame and abashment are obstructed when "shamelessness" and "absence of abashment" increase. As the power of "shamelessness" and "absence of abashment" gradually increases, people will eventually be prompted to ignore all ethics and laws. People will then experience a psychological shift from disrespecting the good and virtuous to valuing the violent and evil, leading to the creation of bad behavior.

Similar to “shamelessness” and “absence of abashment”, when people do not preserve “*xiuwuzhixin*”, they deviate from shame; that is, they do not feel shame when they should. Although Mencius emphasized that shame only has an internal driving force, this did not mean that he completely denied the possible external influence. For example, Mencius’ allegory of “The Trees on Ox Mountain” emphasized external influence based on the internal power of virtue. Mencius proposed that the trees of Ox Mountain were originally beautiful. However, if they were not taken good care of, if the cattle and sheep were allowed to eat randomly, and if people were allowed to cut down the trees with axes, the mountains would eventually become barren. Mencius stressed the importance of the external environment, the day and night, and the moisture of rain and dew in keeping the trees rich, i.e., development and preservation together. If shame is not cultivated, the result will be similar to that of the trees of Ox Mountain. Mencius lamented, “Confucius said, ‘Hold on and you preserve it; let it go and you lose it’” (Zhu 2002, p. 1147). People should preserve shame; otherwise, they may freely do evil things—and, as such, the Ox Mountain will become barren.

Although “*xiuwuzhixin*”, “*hrī*”, and “*apatrāpya*” all possess the connotation of goodness and can potentially prevent evil behavior, they have completely different structural systems. “*Hrī*” and “*apatrāpya*” emphasize that the overpowering nature of the wrong understanding (i.e., “shamelessness” and “absence of abashment”) temporarily defeats the right understanding (i.e., shame and abashment) in the struggle between the two strands of mental concomitants. Conversely, Mencius emphasizes the absence of “*xiuwuzhixin*”. The former struggle is a contest between two opposing strands of mental concomitants. The dichotomy between the absence and contest structures is central to understanding the fundamental differences between the Confucian and Buddhist approaches to shame. In the Buddhist framework, “*hrī*” and “*apatrāpya*” are conceptualized within a structure of mental concomitants where the presence or absence of shame and abashment is seen as a dynamic interplay between right and wrong understanding. This dynamic is not merely a static state but rather an ongoing struggle where shamelessness and absence of abashment can temporarily overpower their counterparts. The Buddhist perspective acknowledges the existence of both positive and negative forces within the human mind and emphasizes the cultivation of the former to overcome the latter. In contrast, the Confucian concept of “*xiuwuzhixin*” takes a different approach by emphasizing the absence of shame rather than its presence as a competing force. According to Mencius, the absence of the heart of shame is not due to a struggle between opposing forces but rather a lack of the very conditions that give rise to shamelessness. This missing structure does not allow for the existence of evil as a separate entity to be fought against; instead, it posits that evil is simply the absence of the proper moral disposition.

To elaborate in detail, we can examine the relationships between “*hrī*”, “*apatrāpya*”, and thatness, as well as “*xiuwuzhixin*” and rightness. The theoretical structure of mind and dharma is based on understanding thatness. Hence, dharma can be classified as different or even opposite understandings of good and evil. Good and evil also emphasize the properties of general ethics and morals, but the fundamental principle is thatness. Thus, the struggle between good and evil does not affect the establishment of thatness. In the relationship between Mencius’ concepts of shame and rightness, there can only be an absence of rightness, while the absence of evil cannot be allowed. This is the inevitable result of the basic provisions of moral law initiated by rightness as a shame. The struggle affirms the existence of evil. Therefore, evil will become the basis of evil behavior, which will inevitably lead to the self-cancellation of rightness and the collapse of secular society. In contrast to the “*xiuwuzhixin*”, dharma does not directly dictate behavior but the understanding of the content of the world. This understanding constitutes the fundamental law of thatness. Therefore, rightness can be placed at the level of thatness to establish the structure of absence; however, rightness should not be derived from the perspective of mental concomitants.



## 5. Conclusions

In conclusion, “*hrī*”, “*apatrāpya*”, and “*xiuwuzhixin*” all emphasize that shame is unique to human beings. Based on the physiological and psychological structures of humans, it is deduced that the two similar yet different subjects of mental activities are mind and rightness, as well as two distinct types of shame. Thus, “*hrī*”, “*apatrāpya*”, and the mind point to cognition. “*Xiuwuzhixin*” and rightness focus on ethics. These two theories of shame provide different understandings of the driving forces of shame. “*Hrī*” and “*apatrāpya*” recognize both internal and external driving forces of shame in the relationship between the mind and mental concomitants. Conversely, “*xiuwuzhixin*” is based on the formal criterion of rightness and weakens the possible influence of external factors to emphasize the internal motivation of shame. Although the two types of shame have different driving forces, they both ascribe shame to ethical goodness and admit that deviation from shame engenders evil deeds. However, a fundamental difference exists in the understanding of good and evil between the Indian Buddhist culture and the Confucian culture of Mencius. In Indian Buddhist culture, good and evil are framed within the context of religious practice. Good actions are those that positively contribute to the realization of thatness, while actions that hinder this pursuit are considered evil. In contrast, Confucianism, as exemplified by Mencius, defines good and evil based on the standard of rightness. An action is deemed good when it aligns with the appropriate and balanced state of rightness, and it becomes evil if it deviates from this standard either by excess or deficiency. This comparison not only highlights the commonalities of shame culture in a general sense but also reveals the understanding of shame within different cultural backgrounds. The study demonstrates the necessity of shame and its development and identifies the understanding of shame as a psychological activity restricted to humans and driven by internal and external forces; it also elaborates on the function of shame in reducing evil and promoting goodness. The cultural differences highlight the tension of shame itself, offering insight into the role of shame culture in traditional contexts.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The concept of “*li*”, which we translated as “pattern”, is complex and controversial in the Neo-Confucian system, for specifics, please see “Pattern and Vital Stuff” chapter of *Neo-Confucianism: A Philosophical Introduction* (Angle and Tiwald 2017).

<sup>2</sup> Here, “proper focus” should be translated as “中節”, it seems that the Chinese character “節” is missing.

<sup>3</sup> In Francis H. Cook’s original text, “*āhrīkya*” is translated as “lake of conscience,” while “*anapatrāpya*” is translated as “shamelessness” (Hsiian-tsang 1999, p. 199), and to maintain consistency in the text, we translate “*hrī*” into “shame” and “*apatrāpya*” into “abashment” for direct coherence, therefore “*āhrīkya*” is translated as “shamelessness” and “*anapatrāpya*” is translated as “absence of abashment”.

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