

THE JESUIT TEACHING ON HUMAN NATURE IN CHINA DURING  
THE FIRST HALF OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY  
-A HISTORICAL OUTLINE AND THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

十七世纪上半叶在华耶稣会士的人性论  
-历史概述和神学思考

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Abstract

During the first half of the seventeenth century, the Jesuit missionaries in China tried to respond to the Confucian idea of following the Heaven-ordained nature. Ricci distinguished the good of nature and the good of virtue to hold the importance of developing virtue. Pantoja and Aleni took a further step by proposing overcoming human nature and insisting that the Christian Way is not the same as the Confucian one. This Catholic response to Confucianism gave people the impression that the doctrine of original sin makes it impossible for Christians to engage in a dialogue with Confucianism concerning the goodness of human nature. In my view, however, the image of God can provide us the source to dialogue with Mencius' famous teaching on the goodness of human nature.

摘要

十七世纪上半叶，耶稣会在华传教士试图回应儒家“率性”的思想。利玛窦区分了“性善”和“德善”，强调了培养德性的重要性。庞迪我和艾儒略则更进一步，提出“克性”，并坚持认为基督教之道与儒家之道不同。天主教对儒学的这种回应给人的印象是，原罪学说使得基督徒不可能与儒家性善论展开对话。然而，在我看来，“天主的肖像”这一神学论题可以提供与孟子性善学说进行对话的基础。

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### Introduction

The question of human nature is one of the controversial issues in the Reformation. In the debate with Protestants, Catholic theologians usually stood for the position which recognized that some good of nature remains after Adam's fall. When Matteo Ricci entered mainland China in 1583, he quickly realized that the question of human nature was popular among the Chinese literati, because nature (*xing*) and mind (*xin*) were topics at the heart of neo-Confucianism. Ricci left us a vivid and interesting account of his debate with the Chinese on the good of human nature in Nanjing in 1599 (Ricci, 2016, p. 316). Around the time of Ricci's death in 1610, his Jesuit collaborator Diego de Pantoja held that one must overcome human nature, rather than follow it. In the 1630s, Giulio Aleni, preaching to converts in Fujian, repeated Pantoja's teaching and formulated "to overcome nature is the Way". Aleni's proposition provided a Catholic counterpart to the Confucian axiom "to follow nature is the Way". In this article, I will outline the development of the Jesuit teaching on human nature from Ricci to Aleni. Following the historical exploration, I will try to present a theological reflection on the Jesuits' teaching on the good of human nature in the context of a dialogue with Confucianism.

#### 1. Ricci on the good of nature and the need to overcome self

The early Jesuits preferred St Thomas Aquinas' teaching in their philosophical and theological formation. Inheriting the Thomistic theological tradition, Ricci insisted that the substance of human nature is good. In *Summa theologiae* I-II q. 85, St Thomas synthesized two traditions in evaluating the effect of original sin on our human nature: one is the Greek tradition that underlines "natural good remains unimpaired" (*naturalia manet integra*); the other is the Latin tradition that emphasizes our nature has been wounded by the corruption of sin

### 导言

人性论是宗教改革中颇具争议的问题之一。在与新教徒的争论中，天主教神学家通常站在承认亚当堕落后仍有一些天性之善的立场上。1583年，利玛窦进入中国大陆，他很快意识到人性问题在中国文人中颇受欢迎，因为“性”(*xing*)和“心”(*xin*)是新儒家的核心话题。1599年，利玛窦在南京与中国学者就人性之善展开辩论，并给我们留下了生动有趣的描述（利玛窦，2016年，第316页）。1610年利玛窦去世前后，他的耶稣会同事庞迪我（Diego de Pantoja）认为，人必须克性，而不是率性。16世纪30年代，艾儒略在福建向皈依者布道时，重复了庞迪我的教导，提出了克性之谓道的观点。艾儒略的主张针对儒家“率性之谓道”的提供了天主教的回应。在本文中，我将概述从利玛窦到艾儒略的耶稣会士人性学说的发展历程。在历史探索之后，我将尝试在与儒家对话的背景下，对耶稣会士关于人性之善的教义进行神学反思。

#### 1. 利玛窦论性善与克己的必要性

早期的耶稣会士在哲学和神学教育中倾向于圣托马斯-阿奎那的教导。利玛窦继承了托马斯的神学传统，坚持人性本善。在《神学总论》第I-II章第85节中，圣托马斯综合了两种传统来评价原罪对人性的影响：一种是希腊传统，强调“人性之善依然完整”(*naturalia manet integra*)；另一种是拉丁传统，强调我们的人性已被罪所腐蚀，并被剥夺了超性的恩宠。天使博士认为，自然之善(*bonum*

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and been stripped of supernatural gifts. According to the Angelic Doctor, there are three kinds of the good of nature (*bonum naturae*): 1) the principles of which nature is constituted (*i.e.*, powers flowing from man as a rational being, such as human reason). This good is not diminished by original sin because Adam's offspring is still a rational being; 2) the inclination to virtue, which is diminished by original sin because sin is opposed to virtue. However, the root of inclination (*radix inclinationis*) to virtue always remains (Thomas Aquinas, 1920, ST I-II q. 85, a. 2.); 3) the gift of original justice that is entirely destroyed by original sin (Thomas Aquinas, 1920, ST I-II q. 85). The nuance helps Thomas to illustrate that the good of nature has not been totally destroyed. Besides, Thomas also thought that the disposition or aptitude for grace could not be completely taken away by sin (Thomas Aquinas, 1920, ST I-II q. 85). He adopted the term "naturally capable of grace" (*gratiae capax*) to stress that the soul retains the capacity to receive grace (Thomas Aquinas, 1920, ST I-II q. 113, a. 10). In *De malo* q.2 a. 11, ad. 1, he also used phrases like "the substance of natural good" (*quantum ad substantiam boni naturalis*).

This Thomistic doctrine was received in Ricci's teaching on human nature. He coined the term "the substance of nature" (性之體 or 性體) to explain the existence of good in human nature. We can find its usage at different points in Ricci's catechism, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* (天主實義 hereafter TTMLH), like: "the substance of man's nature (性體) is good and cannot be destroyed because of evil deeds." (Ricci, 2016, n. 578)

*naturae*) 有三种: 1) 自然构成的原则 (即人作为理性存在所产生的能力, 如人的理性)。这种善不会因原罪而减少, 因为亚当的后代仍然是理性的存在; 2) 对美德的倾向, 这种倾向会因原罪而减少, 因为罪是与美德相对立的。然而, 对美德的倾向基础 (*radix inclinationis*) 始终保持不变 (托马斯-阿奎那, 1920, ST I-II q. 85, a. 2.); 3) 原罪完全摧毁了原初正义的恩宠 (托马斯-阿奎那, 1920, ST I-II q. 85)。这一细微差别有助于托马斯说明自然之善并未被完全摧毁。此外, 托马斯还认为, 罪不可能完全剥夺人对恩典的倾向或能力 (托马斯-阿奎那, 1920年, ST I-II q.85)。他采用了“本性能够接受恩典” (*gratiae capax*) 一词来强调灵魂保留接受恩典的能力 (托马斯-阿奎那, 1920, ST I-II q. 113, a. 10)。在 *De malo* q.2 a. 11, ad. 1 中, 他还使用了“自然本性之善的实质” (*quantum ad substantiam boni naturalis*) 这样的短语来说明这个问题。

利玛窦在人性论中接受了托马斯学说。他创造了“性之体” (*the substance of nature*) 一词来解释人性中善的存在。我们可以在利玛窦的《天主实义》 (*The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, 以下简称《天主实义》) 中找到它的不同用法, 比如:

“性体自善, 不能因恶而灭”。  
(利玛窦, 2016年, 第578页)

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The root of our particular sins is spoiled human nature, so the ultimate solution is to overcome human nature's inclination to sin. The effort of overcoming deadly sins culminates in overcoming the wounds of human nature corrupted by original sin. In this regard, one has to say "to overcome nature is the Way", rather than "to follow nature is the Way".

我们特殊罪孽的根源是被玷污的人性，因此最终的解决办法是克服人性中的犯罪倾向。克服死罪的努力最终要克服被原罪腐蚀的人性创伤。在这方面，应该说“胜天为道”，而不是“顺天为道”。

"Because our nature has been infected with disease, when we come into contact with things, we gain a mistaken impression of them, which is not in accordance with reason; our loves and hates and our judgments concerning the rightness and wrongness of things are seldom correct and seldom true. Nevertheless, our fundamental nature was originally good. So that there is no reason why one should not say it is good. Our fundamental nature (本性) was originally good." (Ricci, 2016, n. 429)

According to Ricci, the goodness of nature remains after Adam's sin, even if this good is no longer perfect. Adam's sin corrupted the root of human nature, so our moral judgments are not always right. However, the substance of human nature itself (性之體/本性) or our fundamental nature is good because God created it. Sin and evil cannot totally destroy it. Here, in the substance of nature (性之體) or the original nature (本性) Ricci accommodates two aspects of Thomistic doctrine on *bonum naturae* in us: 1) the rational capacity in humans remains in corrupt human nature, but 2) there is a diminished inclination to virtue. The good of nature in us provides the possibility for human beings to do good. In this regard, one may still be able to perfect it by virtuous works.

“性情之已病，而接物之际，悞感而拂于理，其所愛惡、其所是非者，鮮得其正，鮮合其真者。然本性自善，此亦无碍于称之为善。”（利玛竇，2016年，第429页）

利玛竇认为，亚当犯罪后，本性的善依然存在，即使这种善不再完美。亚当的罪败坏了人性的根本，因此我们的道德判断并不总是正确的。然而，人性（性之体/本性）的实质或我们的本性是好的，因为天主创造了它。罪恶和邪恶无法完全摧毁它。在此，利玛竇在“性之体”（*substance of nature*）或“本性”（*original nature*）中，容纳了托马斯学说中关于我们的“本性的善”（*bonum natureurae*）的两个方面：1）人类的理性能力在堕落的人性中依然存在，但 2）美德的倾向有所减弱。我们身上的天性之善为行善提供了可能性。在这方面，人仍然可以通过德行来完善它。

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Ricci made a clear distinction between innate goodness (良善) and acquired goodness (德善) to show that the substance of nature is not sufficient for achieving perfection, and thereby one has to be aware of the need to carry out virtuous work (Ricci, 2010, 316). He insisted that virtuous conduct perfects the goodness of nature and expresses nature's goodness (Ricci, 2016, n. 432). In this sense, virtue is the precious adornment of the spirit (Ricci, 2016, n. 438). One should adorn innate nature with embroidered garments that are virtues.

### 2. Overcoming self in Ricci, Pantoja and Aleni

Ricci noted that overcoming self (克己) is indispensable for developing virtue in TTMLH. In Chapter 7, he defined courage as self-conquest (Ricci, 2016, n. 462). In the arguments for the convenience of celibacy in Chapter 8, Ricci reminded his readers of the role of overcoming self and desire in serving God (n. 532). This appreciation of overcoming self is more systematically presented in Pantoja's *Qike* (七克 The Seven Victories, 1614), where the Jesuit explores how to overcome the seven deadly sins. In a similar way, Aleni taught the faithful in Fujian that one should subdue oneself again and again when practicing the Seven Victories to reach the state of having few sins (Aleni, 2007, p. 274). For Jesuits of the early modern period, overcoming self (*vincere seipsum*) was not foreign to their spirituality. Indebted to the *devotio moderna*, Ignatius used this term in the *Spiritual Exercises* to urge his followers to conquer themselves and finally be freed from worldly attachment. The exegesis of Confucius' words "to master oneself (克己 *keji*) and return to propriety is humanity" (*Analects* 12). Due to this similarity, it was not hard for the Jesuit missionaries to link *keji* to *vincere seipsum* and adopt overcoming self in their preaching of the Christian faith.

利玛窦明确区分了先天良善和后天德善，以说明自然的本性不足以达到完美，因此人们必须意识到进行德性工作的必要性 (Ricci, 2010, 316)。他坚持认为，德行完善了性之善，并表现了性之善 (Ricci, 2016, n.432)。在这个意义上，德行是精神的珍贵装饰 (Ricci, 2016, n.438)。人应该用美德来装饰先天的本性。

### 2. 利玛窦、庞迪我和 艾儒略的克己

利玛窦指出，战胜自我（克己）是培养美德所不可或缺的。在《天主实义》第7章中，他将“勇”定义为克己（利玛窦，2016年，第462页）。在第八章论证独身的必要性时，利玛窦提醒读者在侍奉天主时战胜自我和欲望的作用（注532）。在的《七克》（*Qike*, 1614年）中，耶稣会士庞迪我更系统地介绍了克己的重要性，并探讨了如何克服七宗罪。同样，艾儒略也教导福建的信众，在修炼七克时要反复克己，以达到减少罪的境界（艾儒略，2007年，第274页）。对近代早期的耶稣会士而言，克己（*vincere seipsum*）在他们的灵修中并不陌生。依纳爵（Ignatius）在《神操》（*Spiritual Exercises*）中从“现代虔敬”运动（*devotio moderna*）中借鉴这个词，敦促其追随者克己，最终摆脱对世俗的依恋。由于孔子也在《论语》中使用了“克己复礼为仁”（《论语》12），耶稣会传教士不难将“克己”与“克己复礼”（*vincere seipsum*）联系起来，并在宣讲基督教信仰时采用“克己”这一思想。

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### 3. Overcoming nature in Pantoja and Aleni

Although Pantoja and Aleni agreed that the substance of our nature is good and overcoming self would further our spiritual progress, the doctrine of original sin led them to doubt the Confucian tenet of following human nature. In *Quan renlei yuanshi* (詮人類原始 *An Explanation of the Origin of the Human Race*, 1610), a work explaining the Christian doctrine on the origin of human beings, Pantoja explicitly announced this position:

“I observe that today most of the people who practise the Way act in the name of following human nature. There is only one nature, and not only one Way. Why? Principle (*li*) and desire are mingled in nature, making distinguishing difficult. It always happens that one mistakes following the evil of nature as following the righteousness of nature. For this reason, the saints in the West see overcoming nature as the way of cultivation. Their efforts to transform people and cultivate the Way do not aim at following nature but worshipping God. It is not because the Way of God is not the same as the Way of nature, but because nature is corrupt. If we follow it to know principle, we would be like the blind; if we follow it to do good, we would fall. Nature is not sufficient for leading a noble path.” (Pantoja, 2019, p. 256)<sup>1</sup>

It is interesting to note that Pantoja expressed the Catholic understanding of human nature after Adam's sin in a neo-Confucian way: “principle and desire are mingled in nature”. According to Zhu Xi's philosophy, the nature of Heaven is always mingled with the nature of material force in a concrete

### 3. 庞迪我和艾儒略论克性

虽然庞迪我和艾儒略都认为人的本性是善的，克己会促进人的灵修进步，但原罪学说却使他们对儒家率性的信条产生了怀疑。庞迪我在解释基督教人类起源学说的著作《詮人類原始论》（*Quan renlei yuanshi*, 1610年）中明确宣布了这一立场：

“我观今修道者多以率性为名。夫性一而道不一，斯何以故？惟性之理欲交杂，殊难剖判，率性之邪而自以为率性之正者，时有矣。故我西国圣贤以克性为功，其化民修道也，亦弗敢以率性为劝而以奉上帝为劝。非上帝之道异于性道，惟性朽坏污秽，以明理则如矇，以行善则如蹶，不足为正道之御故耳。”。（庞迪我，2019年，第256页）

有趣的是，庞迪我用宋明儒家的术语理欲交杂表达了天主教对亚当犯罪后人性的理解。根据朱熹的哲学思想，在具体的人身上，天理之性总是与气质之性混合在一起。两种性的交杂是欲望和激情的起源，因此人必须恢复天理之行。因此，对庞迪我来说，这种表达方式使他能够向中国读者传达原罪给我们的本性带来的紊乱。这种紊乱导致我们的理性和意志薄弱。因此，我们很难认识真理和行善。

1 Translation is mine. (我觀今修道者多以率性為名。夫性一而道不一，斯何以故？惟性之理慾交雜，殊難剖判，率性之邪而自以為率性之正者，時有矣。故我西國聖賢以克性為功，其化民修道也，亦弗敢以率性為勸而以奉上帝為勸。非上帝之道異於性道，惟性朽壞污穢，以明理則如矇，以行善則如蹶，不足為正道之御故耳。)

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In Mencius, the dynamic good in human nature needs development, and the Thomistic perspective on human potentialities to become perfect also calls for cultivation. In this regard, any imperfection found in fallen human nature should not shed a pessimistic light on the Christian life but rather remind us of the spiritual journey, which fulfils the capacity in nature and leads to perfection.

在孟子看来，人性中充满活力的善需要发展，而托马斯主义关于人类成为完美的潜能的观点也要求培养。因此，堕落人性中的任何不完美都不应成为基督徒生活的悲观色彩，而应提醒我们注意灵修之旅，因为灵修之旅能发挥人性中的能力，并通向完美。

human. The mixture of two natures is the origin of desire and passion, and thereby one has to restore the nature of Heaven, which is the same as principle. For Pantoja, therefore, this expression enables him to communicate to the Chinese audience how disorder is brought about by original sin to our nature. This disorder causes weakness in our reason and will. For this reason, it is hard for us to know truth and do good.

In another place of the same work, Pantoja elucidates the weakness through the term “the disease of nature” (性病) or “the disease in nature” (性内之病):

“Since the ancestors obeyed the daemon...[h]umans are perplexed by the correct principle and are addicted to evil. The disease of nature starts from it. For people today, ...they put all lifelong endeavor into cultivating the good and subduing evil, but they cannot entirely eliminate evil intentions and dirty desires.” (Pantoja, 2019, p. 256)<sup>2</sup>

在同一著作的另一处，潘托哈用“性病”或“性内之病”来阐释这一弱点：

“自先祖听魔之后，性虽原善如故，然诸德遂堕而诸欲自芽，惑于正理，沈于邪恶，性病从此肇焉。试观今人。即修善攻私，终身不懈，而斜念秽欲不能尽消。此以知行恶甚顺，行善甚逆，非徒因习于恶，乃实性内之病耳。”（庞迪我，2019年，第256页）

在庞迪我之前，“性病”一词曾出现在利玛窦的《天主实义》中，但这一观点并非耶稣会传教士的发明。托马斯在《神学大全》第I-II部第85节第3题中提到了本性的创伤（*vulnera*），它使灵魂失去了应有的秩序。耶稣会传教士很可能是在反思本性之伤的基础上，用“性病”来说明我们现在的本性无法达到完美。

2 Translation is mine. (自先祖聽魔之後，性雖原善如故，然諸德遂墮而諸慾自芽，惑於正理，沈於邪惡，性病從此肇焉。試觀今人。。。即修善攻私，終身不懈，而斜念穢慾不能盡消。此以知行惡甚順，行善甚逆，非徒因習於惡，乃實性內之病耳。)

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Before Pantoja, the term “the disease of nature” appeared in Ricci’s TTMLH, but this idea was not an invention of the Jesuit missionaries. In ST I-II q. 85, a. 3, Thomas mentioned wounds (*vulnera*) of nature which left the soul destitute of its proper order. Most probably, reflecting on the wounds of nature inspired the Jesuits to use “the disease of nature” to illustrate the incapacity of our current nature to achieve perfection. It is because of this weakness of nature that we are unable to overcome all selfish desires even if we put a lot of effort into moral and spiritual cultivation. The problem is not about habit, but our nature spoiled by original sin. Seen from this perspective, one must overcome nature rather than follow it.<sup>3</sup>

In 1631, Aleni repeated the teaching of overcoming nature, but put it in a more explicit way to highlight the discrepancy between Catholicism and Confucianism:

“After a while the crowd [of believers] went home. Weng Yunjian had prepared a meal. I used the occasion to ask for instruction, saying: ‘In [helping to build] the church I may have made a slight contribution, but I still am unable to subdue the sin of gluttony.’”

“The master said: ‘Zisi has said that ‘Following human nature is called the Way’, but I rather would say ‘Subduing human nature is called the Way’. ...But at present the nature of man is no more what it originally was. How could we realize the Way without subduing it?’” (Aleni, 2007, vol. 1, p. 273)

3 We have to note that for the Jesuits, perfection was dependent on grace. Perfection is not purely a human work. For example, “only by grace and virtues man can purify his heart.” (人惟有額辣濟亞及諸美德以清潔潤澤其心。) Pantoja, 2019, p. 254. “Some arrogant people think that the power of cultivation and subduing desire is from themselves. They do not know that in this life every single thought of doing good comes from God.” (夫世之傲然自是者，咸謂修德克欲之力量，我自能之。不知自有生來，但有一念提醒，莫非天主上帝賜我者。) Pantoja, 2019, p. 12.

正是由于本性的弱点，即使我们在道德和精神修养方面付出大量努力，也无法克服一切私欲。其中问题的关键不在于习性，而在于我们被原罪宠坏的本性。从这个角度来看，人必须克性，而不是率性。<sup>1</sup>

1631年，艾儒略重复了克性的学说，但以更明确的方式强调了天主教与儒教之间的差异：

“过了一会儿，[信徒]们都回家了。翁云坚备好了饭菜。我借机请教说：‘在[帮助建立]教会的过程中，我可能做出了一点贡献，但我仍然无法战胜贪吃的罪’”。

“师曰：‘子思谓’顺乎人性谓之道’，吾宁谓‘克性谓之道’。.....但现在人的本性已经不是原来的样子了。’”

(艾儒略，2007年，第1卷，第273页)

在这段记录中，艾儒略试图解释如何战胜贪食之罪，但显然他并没有停留在如何战胜某一种罪上。相反，他在寻找关于我们罪根源的答案：人性的堕落及其趋向邪恶的倾向。我们本罪的根源是人性的堕落，因此最终的解决办法是克服人性的罪恶倾向。克服大罪的努力最终是要克服被原罪腐蚀的人性创伤。在这方面，应该说“性之克谓道”，而不是“率性之谓道”。

1 我们必须注意到，对耶稣会士来说，完美取决于恩典。完美并不纯粹是人的工作。例如，“人惟有額辣濟亞及諸美德以清潔潤澤其心。”“夫世之傲然自是者，咸謂修德克欲之力，我自能之。不知自有生來，但有一念提醒，莫非天主上帝賜我者。”



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In this record, Aleni tried to explain how to subdue the sin of gluttony, but evidently Aleni did not linger on how to overcome a particular sin. He instead sought the answer to the origin of our sins: the corruption of human nature and its tendency towards evil. The root of our particular sins is spoiled human nature, so the ultimate solution is to overcome human nature's inclination to sin. The effort of overcoming deadly sins culminates in overcoming the wounds of human nature corrupted by original sin. In this regard, one has to say "to overcome nature is the Way", rather than "to follow nature is the Way".

### 4. A theological reflection

After exploring the teaching of human nature in three Jesuit missionaries and outlining the origin of overcoming human nature, I would like to reflect on whether a dialogue between Catholicism and Confucianism can achieve consensus on the issue of human nature. We have seen that the Pantoja and Aleni distinguished human nature in its original state and actual state in order to contend that the actual nature is to be conquered, not to be followed. Nevertheless, we have to note that although phrases like *vincitur natura* appear once in St Thomas' *In Catena in Mt. cap. 22, 19*, overcoming human nature is not a predominant theological theme in Thomistic or Catholic theology. In my view, we should note the following Thomistic theological sources in understanding the good of human nature:

Firstly, our current human nature is not entirely spoiled in a way that no good exists. St Thomas clearly expressed this idea in the ST:

### 4. 神学思考

在探讨了三位耶稣会传教士的人性论，勾勒出克性学说的缘起之后，我想反思一下天主教与儒学的对话能否在人性问题上达成共识。我们看到，庞迪我与艾儒略将人性区分为原始状态和现实状态，以论证现实状态的人性是要被征服的，而不是要被追随的。然而，我们必须注意到，虽然 *vincitur natura* 这样的短语在圣托马斯的 *In Catena in Mt. 22, 19* 中出现过一次，但在托马斯神学或天主教神学中，克性并不是一个主要的神学主题。我认为，在理解人性之善时，我们应注意以下托马斯神学的来源：

首先，我们目前的人性并没有完全变质，不存在善。圣托马斯在《神学大全》中明确表达了这一观点：

“但是，在天性败坏的状态下，人的天性所能做的事是不够的，所以他无法用自己的自然力量去实现它。然而，由于人的天性并没有完全被罪所败坏，以至于被剥夺了一切自然之善，因此，即使在天性败坏的状态下，人也能凭借其天赋禀赋，创造出一些特殊的善”（托马斯-阿奎那，1920，ST1-2，q.1）。（托马斯-阿奎那，1920，ST 1-2，q. 109，a. 2）。

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“But in the state of corrupted nature, man falls short of what he could do by his nature, so that he is unable to fulfil it by his own natural powers. Yet because human nature is not altogether corrupted by sin, so as to be shorn of every natural good, even in the state of corrupted nature it can, by virtue of its natural endowments, work some particular good.”  
(Thomas Aquinas, 1920, ST 1-2, q. 109, a. 2.)

As Cajetan observed in his commentary on this text (Cajetan, *In 1-2*, q.109, a. 2, n. 11), if in the state of corrupted nature, one cannot do any moral good by one's own powers, all the acts of pagans would be morally evil. Of course, the Thomistic school never accepted the conclusion that every act of pagans is morally evil. In both ST I-II, q. 85 and q. 109, St Thomas believed that Adam's offspring could do some good, even if only in a limited way.

Secondly, the theme of the image of God provides a fundamental reason for the possibility of becoming perfect. For St Thomas, man as the image of God is closely related to the end of humans. Each human has the supernatural vocation to return to God or take God as the end because everyone is created in the image of God. However, in this life, humans as the image of God are not perfect:

“In the first sense the Son is the Image of the Father; in the second sense man is called the image of God; and therefore in order to express the imperfect character of the divine image in man, man is not simply called the image, but ‘to the image,’ whereby is expressed a certain movement of tendency to perfection.”  
(Thomas Aquinas, 1920, ST 1, q. 35, a. 2, ad. 3)

Thus, as the image of God, humans always incline to their perfection. St Thomas used the term “to the image” to explain this imperfection and highlight the human inclination toward perfection. From imperfection to perfection is a dynamic progression of imitating God. At the end of this dynamic

正如卡耶坦 (Cajetan, *In 1-2*, q.109, a.2, n.11) 在对这段经文的注释中所指出的, 如果在堕落的自然状态下, 人不能以自己的力量做任何道德上的善事, 那么异教徒的所有行为在道德上都是恶的。当然, 托马斯学派从未接受异教徒的所有行为在道德上都是恶的这一结论。在《神学大全》第 I-II 章第 85 节和第 109 节中, 圣托马斯认为亚当的后代可以做一些善事, 即使只是有限的。

其次, 天主的肖像的主题为人类成为完美的可能性提供了根本原因。在圣托马斯看来, 人作为天主的肖像与人类的终极目的密切相关。每个人都有回归天主或天主为目的的超性使命, 因为每个人都是按照天主的肖像创造的。然而, 在今生, 作为天主的肖像的人类并不完美:

“在第一种意义上, 圣子是圣父的形象; 在第二种意义上, 人被称为天主的肖像; 因此, 为了表达神圣形象在人身上的不完美特征, 人不仅仅被称为肖像, 而是被称为 ‘成为肖像’, 由此表达了某种趋向完美的运动” (托马斯-阿奎那, 1920年, ST1, q35, a2, ad3)。(托马斯-阿奎那, 1920, ST1, q.35, a. 2, ad. 3)。

因此, 作为天主的肖像, 人类总是倾向于完美。圣托马斯用 “成为肖像” 一词来解释这种不完美, 并强调人类趋向完美。从不完美到完美是效仿天主的动态过程。在这一动态过程的终点, 天主在人身上的形象将完全实现。因此, “天主的肖像” 这一神学主题突出了人类成圣的潜能。在堕落

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progression, the image of God in humans would be fully realized. Therefore, the theological theme “the image of God” highlights humans’ potentialities to become God. In the state of corrupt nature, even if our capacities of knowing truth or doing good are limited due to the effects of original sin, our supernatural vocation to return to God in a dynamic progression is never lost.

How can we put this meaning of human nature’s good in dialogue with Confucianism? In the Chinese philosophical tradition, Mencius is famous for his teaching on the goodness of human nature. An elaborate explanation of the meaning of this goodness is available in the following text in *Mencius*:

“As far as what is genuinely in him is concerned, a man is capable of becoming good,” said Mencius, “That is what I mean by good. As for his becoming bad, that is not the fault of his native endowment.” (Mencius, 2003, p. 125)<sup>4</sup>

In what sense can we say human nature is good? Mencius used the words *keyi* (is capable of) (See also Dai, 1982, 41) to illustrate the reality of human nature: What human beings really are consists in being “capable of becoming good”. For Mencius, human nature is good, not because all humans are *already* fully good, but because of human potentialities to be good. In other words, to confirm the goodness of human nature does not exclude the possibility or the fact of bad human acts. This point is implied in “[a]s for his becoming bad”.

By reading Thomas Aquinas and Mencius together, we may find a foundation for a dialogue between Catholic theology and Confucianism. As we have seen, both of them noted the dynamic feature of human nature. In Mencius, the possibility of becoming good exists in human nature, so one must not let go of his true heart and should pay

的自然本性状态中，即使我们认识真理或行善的能力因原罪的影响而受到限制，但我们在动态发展中回归天主的超性使命却从未丧失。

我们如何将人性本善的学说与儒家思想对话呢？在中国哲学传统中，孟子以其关于人性之善的学说而闻名。《孟子》中有如下一段文字对“善”的含义作了详尽的解释：

“孟子曰：‘乃若其情，则可以以为善矣，乃所谓善也。若夫为不善，非才之罪也。’”

（《孟子》，2003年，第125页）。

在什么意义上我们可以说人性是善的呢？孟子用“可以”来说明人性的真实性（参见《戴震全集》，1982年，第41页）：人的本质在于“可以为善”。在孟子看来，人性之所以为善，不是因为所有人都已经完全善了，而是因为人有成为善的潜能。换言之，确认人性本善并不排除人的劣行的可能性或事实。这一点隐含在“若夫为不善”中。

将托马斯-阿奎那和孟子放在一起阅读，我们可以找到天主教神学与儒学对话的基础。正如我们所看到的，他们都注意到了人性的动态特征。在孟子看来，人性中存在着向善的可能性，所以人不能放任本心，要注重人性的滋养。主张人性本善，并不一定要承认每个人事实上都是善的。同样，圣托马斯的天主的肖像主题提供了一些原罪学说通常不强调的见解。它帮助我们认识到，即使在本性堕落的状态下，人性也有可能达到最终的辉煌。

4（孟子曰：“乃若其情，则可以為善矣，乃所謂善也。若夫為不善，非才之罪也。”）

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attention to the nourishment of human nature. To contend for the goodness of human nature does not necessarily lead to admitting that each man is *de facto* good. Similarly, the theme of the image of God in St Thomas provides some insights which are usually not emphasized in the doctrine of original sin. It helps us appreciate human nature's possibilities of culmination in its final glory, even in the state of corrupt nature. Since we are created as the image of God, the full sense of humans can only be discovered with reference to their supernatural end. Adam's offspring still keep the aptitude for grace, and thereby the possibility of attaining the likeness to God remains in them. Grace does not destroy nature, but perfects it. This well-known axiom in Catholic theology illustrates the point. God's grace first heals corrupt nature and then elevates it. To put it in another way, grace must be received in human nature. Fulfilling the capacity of one's nature amounts to becoming a human in the full sense. Finally, in Mencius, the dynamic good in human nature needs development, and the Thomistic perspective on human potentialities to become perfect also calls for cultivation. In this regard, any imperfection found in fallen human nature should not shed a pessimistic light on the Christian life but rather remind us of the spiritual journey, which fulfils the capacity in nature and leads to perfection (Cai, 2022).

既然我们是作为天主的肖像而被造的，那么人类的全部意义只有参照其超自然的结局才能被发现。亚当的后代仍然保持着接受恩宠的能力，因此他们身上仍然存在着与天主相似的可能性。恩宠不是毁灭自然，而是完善自然本性。天主教神学中这一众所周知的公理说明了这一点。天主的恩宠首先治愈堕落的天性，然后提升它。换一种说法，恩宠必须在人的本性中接受。发挥人的天性就等于成为一个完整意义上的人。最后，在孟子看来，人性中的能动之善需要发展，而托马斯主义关于人的潜能的观点也要求修养。因此，堕落人性中的任何不完美都不应为基督徒生活的蒙上悲观色彩，而应提醒我们注意灵性之旅，以实现本性中的能力并通向完美（蔡，2022）。

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