

Educating the Child with Camara Laye's *The Dark Child* and Chin Ce's *Children of Koloko*

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Introduction

This study gives an insight into child education in multicultural societies. It specifically targets African societies where western civilization more and more encroaches on African traditions. Examining two bildungsromane: Camara Laye's *The Dark Child* (DC)¹ and Chin Ce's *Children of Koloko* (COK), respectively set in the Guinean and Nigerian societies, this paper argues that despite some points of divergence, both texts present African traditional values as the foundation stone of child education. These traditions, though some may be discarded, are a springboard to the African child's mastery of western technology and science. In Laye's novel, the tension between the traditional caste system, the Koranic and French schools is resolved by the parents' and the community's deep reverence for these cultural values. In Ce's novel, although the capitalist unbridled craze for money and power has perverted postcolonial Koloko, Yoyo attains growth due to

his attachment to African wisdom and cultural values that he successfully blends with western science and technology. In the two works, the main protagonists thus opt for what Amanda Grants calls “a middle course.”²

Western Colonisation and the African writer’s response

Colonization, leading to the hybridization of African societies has generated heated debates on the type of education that should be imparted to the African child. In his article “Hegel on Education,” Allen W. Wood notes that education, “has to do with the activities of school, their pupils, teachers or tutors (including parents) and their students, whether they are children or adolescents” (20). Wood's analysis that examines the various meanings of the Hegelian “Bildung” focuses on the key components of education: the learning of specific skills, the imparting of knowledge, good judgment and wisdom, as well as the imparting of culture from generation to generation. Education is thus a tripartite process that involves the environment (natural and social environments), the trainer (educator) and the child (the trainee). This truism carries great weight today in most African societies where African traditions are more than ever before, jeopardized by globalization and the challenges of western culture. This phenomenon thus raises many questions: What is the responsibility of African parents and societies in child education? What type of education should be imparted to the African child today in a twenty-first century world marked by a flood of mass media and hi-tech that tends to standardize

cultures? In *Homecoming*, Ngugi wa Thiong'o holds that:

The real snake was surely monopoly capitalism, whose very condition of growth is cut-throat competition, inequality and oppression of one group by another. It was capitalism and its external manifestations, imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, that had disfigured the African past. (45)

Continuing the argument, Ngugi further professes:

... in order that one group, one race, one class (and mostly a minority) can exploit another group, race or class (mostly the majority), it must not only steal its body, batter and barter it for thirty pieces of silver, but must steal its mind and soul as well...Through the school system, he can soothe the fears of the colonized, or make them at least connive at the rationale behind capitalist exploitation. (45)

If monopoly capitalism disfigured the African past, generated egocentrism and an exacerbated quest for wealth, today, this quest overrules the key precept of communal good that underpins education in traditional African communities. Kashim Ibrahim Tala points out that “pre-capitalist African society subsists on the social philosophy of the greatest good of the greatest number. In other words, collective responsibility is the very essence of ancestral authority” (Epsa Moto 158). Incorporating this precept, the ideological matrix that prevailed in pre-colonial Africa guaranteed a symbiosis between the individual and the group.

Consequently, from this golden rule, derived a whole pedagogy, which, using African folklore, taught the child sound values such as communal good, compassion, mutual aid, truthfulness, the sense of right and wrong, spontaneity, and love of man and nature. Before the Negritude movement, this ideological matrix was celebrated in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain's nineteenth-century masterpiece where Huck Finn, the white teenager, wholeheartedly espouses Jim's (the African slave's) ideology rooted in the above-cited values. Thus, earlier than Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, and Camara Laye's *The Dark Child*, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was already in the nineteenth century, a strong advocate of African cultural values.

In African literature, the celebration of the untainted African traditions reverberates in the bildungsroman or the coming of age story. Jerome Buckley, explaining the German origin of the bildungsroman in *Seasons of Youth*, argues that while “roman” means novel, “bildung” connotes “portrait,” “picture,” “shaping,” and “formation,” which all converge to the idea of development or creation. “The development of the child can also be seen as the creation of the man” (13-14). The bildungsroman thus revolves around childhood, a recurrent theme in African literature. Maxwell Okolie posits that “childhood, like the past with which it is associated, occupies a prominent psychological part of African literature.” In his words,

the evocation of individual childhood, calls up as a corollary the evocation of Africa's 'childhood' itself,

which, in effect, is an indirect apology and illustration of its splendour before the advent of colonization. ... Rediscovering this glory is in a way an indirect exhortation to the Africans engrossed in the pursuit of Westernization and its allurements, to retrace their steps back to the honourable values they are inclined to despise thus re-equipping themselves with the pride of their worth and the psychological reassurance vital to their existence and rejuvenation. (35)

Like Ngugi, Okolie points an accusing finger at western culture and its impingement on African traditions. Both Ngugi's and Okolie's statements will lay the foundations of this analysis which seeks to prove that despite the prevalent cult of Westernization in modern African societies, African genuine and positive cultural values are the stepping stone of a successful African child education.

The Dark Child and *Children of Koloko* are possibly two bildungsromane that retrace the lives of two protagonists from childhood to maturity. Far from being mere evocations of childhood experiences, both works pose the crucial problem of the African child's growth in the contemporary global village. They bring to the limelight the encroachments of western civilization on African traditions and their impact on the African trainee. Comparing the two, this study shows analogies and differences in the protagonists, their training and growth. It focuses on the three main factors of child education: the society (the settings of the novels), the training (the way education is imparted) and the trainee (the impact of education on the protagonists and their subsequent response

and growth).

Traditional Education in *The Dark Child*

The Dark Child, an autobiographical novel, furthers the Negritude aim to uphold African values that were jettisoned under slavery and colonization. The novel outlines the conflict between African traditions and Western culture imposed by colonization. Though Camara Laye from his country of exile (he was writing from France) revives the memory of the mythological Africa, he overtly presents himself as the prototype of the modern African who hovers between the black tradition and the white civilization. In contrast to Deicy Jiménez who argues that Laye's work “shows the African struggle and search for an identity in colonial times” (CASA), this paper asserts that the struggle and search for identity in the work is a contemporary quest in postcolonial African societies.

Laye's autobiographical novel is divided into three main sections that show the protagonist's development from childhood to maturity. The first section that may be titled “Childhood,” covers the first five chapters (1-5). This part of the book depicts the family's compound at Kouroussa where the child comes into contact with the family totem. The totem is a small black snake, the guiding spirit of the family. As the father enlightens the boy on the small snake, the clash between traditional education and the colonial school already looms: “I fear, I very much fear, little one, that you are not often enough in my company. You are all day at school, and one day you will depart from that school for a greater one.

You will leave me, little one...” (27). This statement uncovers the parent's fear: the father, a famous goldsmith knows that he will pass to his elder son neither the totemic tradition, nor the profession of his caste. Even at Tindican (the mother's village) where the child spends his holiday among a loving grandmother and innumerable kind playmates, the young boy does not really feel part of the village community. He will not therefore inherit his mother's magic power and her crocodile totem despite his rite of passage that is carried on in the second section. The second section of the autobiography “Years of Initiation” (chapters 6-8), recalls the boy's experiences both in the Koranic and the French schools which are the first steps of the protagonist's initiation. The trek to the sacred place (a prelude to circumcision), the enormous baobab tree at the junction of the Komoni River, and the mysterious Konden Diara stratagem instill fear and at the same time teach the Guinean young men to overcome their fright. The protagonist's initiation is then achieved through a long journey in the forest. However, even at the apex of this initiation rite, the reader perceives the narrator's fear that one day, the white culture will annihilate this traditional practice that gives rise to a village feast, to a community communion. During the dancing ceremony, the new men are presented objects, symbols of their allegiance to their fathers' castes (professions). Unlike other boys who are shown articles that are related to their fathers' professions, the protagonist is shown an exercise-book and a fountain pen, embodiments of the white culture. Here, once more, the boy is gradually taken

away from his tradition. He is on his way to exile which the final section of the book concretizes. The last part of the text “Exile” (chapters 9-12), depicts two different types of departure: the journey to Conakry after the narrator has been admitted into the technical high school and the longer journey to France where he will learn engineering.

In this bildungsroman, the family is the bedrock of the boy's education. The young boy's “relationship with his parents is the link between the child and his African roots” (CASA). Both the mother and the father assume responsibility by monitoring the son's education. They see to it that the boy imbibes the fundamental values of African culture: the sense of community and solidarity that characterize social relations in African communities. John Mbiti holds that in the traditional African community, an individual only exists as an element of a group. Joining Mbiti, Kange Ewane, a Cameroonian historian, argues that in the African context, animate and inanimate beings commune in the same unit of life and participation. Within such a context, solidarity is not assistance with a taint of condescension: it is rather a vital necessity; it becomes co-possession and co-utilization (*Semence et moisson* 62). The protagonist's father thus teaches the son this principle by example. He is himself a good model to the youth: “I have nothing which other men have not also, and even that I have less than others, since I give everything away, and would even give away the last thing I had, the shirt on my back” (DC 25). The father has been given the totem, the guiding spirit because he is “the most worthy” member of his tribe (25). Being “the most

worthy” implies possessing and respecting everlasting values such as the sense of solidarity, compassion, spontaneity, and the precept of communal good inherent in African culture.

The father and the mother thus teach the young boy the powers of the natural world. They introduce him to the small snake, the totem of the family which embeds customs, beliefs, morals and discipline handed over from one generation to the other. In fact in the novel, the family and the society at large are conducive to child education. The father instructs his son: “Take care never to deceive anyone. ... Be upright in thought and deed. And God will be with you” (182). The hero's education is successfully carried out thanks to three elements that Laye regards as key actors in the education of a child: a stable family (parents), the school, and a viable society. William Plomer notes that “where [Camara] grew up, the sense of community is implicit and inherent. Tradition and long usage have created politeness, correctness, mutual respect, and simple dignity” (*Current Concerns*). The narrator himself highlights this point in his statement: “I lived actually amidst a deeply united family where all domestic quarreling was strictly forbidden” (150). In other terms, this assertion implies that a peaceful environment is a primordial requirement for child education. When the young trainee moves to Conakry, a bigger town, Uncle Mamadou, whom the narrator describes as being “tall and strong, always very correctly dressed, calm and dignified”(150), perpetuates these values. He thus ensures the continuity in the imparting of culture from generation to

generation.

After the family and the community at large have laid solid foundations of the child's moral and spiritual education, they can now hand him over to the western school that will teach him science and technology as the father rightly points out:

Each one follows his own destiny, my son. Men cannot change what is decreed. Your uncles too have had an education... This opportunity is within your reach. You must seize it. You've already seized one, seize this one too, make sure of it. There are still so many things to be done in our land.... Yes, I want you to go to France. [...] Soon we'll be needing men like you here. (182)

Camara's father and mother understand that though the child may lose some of his traditional cultural values, his mastery of science and technology is useful to the community. Here again, the African traditional principle of “co-possession and co-utilization” underpins the father's decision. When the parent observes that “soon we'll be needing men like you here,” he implicitly advises the son not to forget his allegiance and duty to his community. Although this blend may not eradicate the tension that arises from the contrast between African and western cultures, it lessens it and thus validates G. N. Marete's view that there is absence of conflict in the narrator's maturation (*Childhood* 93). In effect making a choice is the protagonist's dilemma: “And I was no longer sure whether I ought to continue to attend school or whether I ought to remain in the workshop: I felt unutterably

confused” (DC 27). But the narrator's indecision is short-lived as it is quickly resolved by his father's order: “Go now” (27). Later the parent never mentions the little black snake again to the son (28). The male parent's decision portends a choice: the son must attend the western school. This choice releases the tension that reoccurs in the last chapter when the boy is faced with the mother's objection to his departure to France. At the end of the novel, the metro map given to the young traveler by the director (the school headmaster) symbolizes guidance, orientation, knowledge, and conquest. It is a tool that will enable the African child to reach Argenteuil, the new environment where he has to complete his training.

The African community thus monitors the child's education from the opening to the close of the novel, giving the action its linearity. As a result, the narrator's departure to France is not, as Jiménez mentions, “the metaphor of the social and cultural oblivion of his African roots” (CASA). It is rather a symbolic appropriation of western technology and science to the benefit of the African (Guinean) community. When the father punctuates that: “Your uncles too have had an education,” he covertly refers to the “middle course” that is neither the abrogation of western culture nor “oblivion” of African roots. Uncle Mamadou, whom the boy “regarded as a saintly personage” (151), successfully imbeds both African and western cultures. By the end of the novel the reader infers that the narrator will follow the same course, thus fulfilling his promise to his male parent: “I will come back” (DC 182). The same promise is reiterated to Marie: “Surely I would be

coming back” (188). “Coming back” to Guinea symbolizes a return home (to roots) with the much needed science and technology that may enhance the economic development of Guinea.

Capitalism and Child Education in *Children of Koloko*

Unlike *The Dark Child*, Chin Ce's *Children of Koloko*, written more than three decades after Laye's book, is set in a postcolonial African country (Nigeria). Colonization has given way to neo-colonization, and monopoly capitalism has permeated most of the genuine positive African values depicted in the first novel. *Children of Koloko* thus presents the turbulent community of Koloko where communal good, compassion, mutual aid, truthfulness, the sense of right and wrong, spontaneity, and love of man and nature have been replaced by a monomaniacal pursuit for money and power. Within such a context, Ngugi's statement that “capitalism had disfigured the African past” rightly applies to Ce's novel. The craze for wealth has established corruption, thievery, drunkenness, egocentrism, and violence as commonplace practices. In the second episode, “Coming to Koloko,” Koloko is a metaphoric representation not only of postcolonial Nigeria but of most post-independence African countries ridden with disunity and turbulence:

Koloko was not much like one had thought. The very name which sounded to me like the noise of empty gallons falling on dry earth --ko-ko-lo-ko-- was now something else beyond my little imagination. As we drove past the Market Square, in the heart of the town, I saw that the road

meandered right through as if splitting the town in two. Now who would live in a town split in halves? Koloko didn't look good at all. (27)

The town is characterized by division discernible in its various social strata and economic classes: the rich include Dogkiller, Fathead and the numerous unscrupulous businessmen. The poor comprise teachers like Old Bap, and Bap, small workers that are involved in petty jobs, crapulous men and women who spend their time at De Mica's (JJC, Da Kata), and a group of youths whose rascality and crapulousness rival the elders'. Da Aina, head of the women, and the main female social critic in the book, clearly points at the causes of the prevalent depravity of the community: 'The elders have spoiled the village'...because they lost the wisdom to teach their young who look up to them' (102). Both old and young people are corrupted by their craze for monetary gratification that undermines their morals and sense of common good. Yesterday, young people used to respect their elders, women used to respect their husbands, and the husbands used to give them their due. But today, women and young people join the elders in off licenses where all indulge in vices. Their inebriety thus reflects their irresponsibility and failure to build stable families and a stable nation. The population of Koloko is thus divided into three groups:

Koloko had a lot of men whom you didn't get to see except in a season like Christmas. There were fat folks whose bulging eyes and beefy cheeks probably only served to

frighten children. There were the returnees: young men, polished and dressed to reflect the places they lived and worked. There were those you could see were struggling to make a living and look respectable in their lavish dressing. [...] These were Koloko's children. (130)

Despite the dissimilitude that exists among the members of the various groups, each social stratum imbeds the numerous foibles and deficiencies of the society. The fat folks' "bulging eyes and beefy cheeks" signal affluence and greed. These folks overfeed on the masses' sweat and their ill-gotten wealth and authority separate them from the children they are supposed to educate. The returnees, who experience economic hardships, cover up their misery by lavish dressing, a veneer of wealth that badly conceals their struggle to make a living. As for the bad-tempered youths that harbor "mischievous grins," they have lost the childhood primeval innocence while the elders, a symbol of wisdom and dignity in traditional African societies, no longer typify these values despite their great attempts at dignity.

In this perverted environment, as Grants notes:

three youngsters ... are negotiating their passage into adulthood ... keenly aware of the deficiencies of their environment- and of themselves. [...] They are all participants in a drama of social transition and psychological awareness. The result is a kind of growth. (*JALC* 14)

Koloko contrasts sorely with Kouroussa; it is hardly an appropriate environment for child education; Buff's and

Dickie's (the protagonist's friends') education is thus impaired in such a locale. These teenagers acquire neither the perennial moral and spiritual values of African culture, nor the science and technology of the western school. While Buff's failure to get admission into college causes his decision to become a businessman in the North, Dickie's three unsuccessful attempts to go to college lead him to schizophrenia. It is not only the town that is split in halves. Most of the city dwellers, though descendants of the same ancestor, do not share many things in common: "they have fallen apart" in a community where sound values are transformed into a general make-believe. The inhabitants of Koloko are split subjects in quest of an identity in a community whose traditional moral values, guideposts of pre-capitalist African societies, are uprooted.

Dogkiller's complex of superiority, his mansion, his love for lavish titles, and his avoidance of close-ups (35) mask his dwarf-size, wrinkled face and a shallow bogus identity constructed on flimsy foundations. Fathead, an exhibitionist, harangues the crowd by citing his numerous donations to curb a dire need for praise (132). His false modesty aims at rationalizing his profligacy and egocentrism manifest in his fleet of cars and mansion that have engulfed so much money in a town that lacks basic infrastructures. Fathead's 'generosity' is a semblance that does not match the African traditional principle of "co-possession and co-utilization." His 'generosity' is assistance with a taint of condescension; it sharply contrasts Camara's father's generosity in *The Dark Child*. Dickie, the schizophrenic is a split subject par

excellence in Ce's novel. His schizophrenia is an outcome of economic and psychological violence that leads to frustration, drug addiction (the smoking of weed), and finally to madness, a sort of retreat from a stifling society. This retreat confers freedom on the schizophrenic as Deleuze and Guattari point out:

Such a man [the schizo] produces himself as a free man, irresponsible, solitary and joyous, finally able to say and do something simple in his own name, without asking permission; a desire lacking nothing, a flux that overcomes barriers and codes, a name that no longer designates any ego whatever. (131)

Overcoming barriers and codes that engender repression, Dickie can openly chastise his community and party bigwigs in particular:

All their hidden crimes in community history were revealed to Dickie in regular moments of mystic illumination and he dutifully hollered the secrets to the roof tops and street corners in the wee hours of every morning. (179)

Dickie's violence against his townsmen and bigwigs is a replica of the same violence he has been subjected to during his childhood. His invectives against Koloko's bigwigs are criticisms against a materialistic money-minded upper class that has set numerous barriers that impede the youths' economic and psychological growth. To attain growth, Yoyo has to transcend these barriers. As Grants observes, “while

the society records painful imperviousness to change, the pace of psychological growth of the hero predictably outmatches all of his contemporaries” (14). In effect, among the three friends, only Yoyo succeeds in going to college; his success and later maturity are attributable to three factors: the community's ethics at Boko where he was born and spent the early years of his childhood, his family background (Old Bap's presence at Koloko), and his departure to Gamji College. The first episode of the novel, “Last day in Boko,” shows Yoyo's feelings about his natal land:

If I had to break my silver cord with Boko, I thought, then I might as well have the rest of what's left of this morning, feel the sky, feel the ground, re-live every bit of what came to mind about the little province of Boko where I was born and grew before leaving it for good.
(17)

Boko, like Kouroussa and Tindican in *The Dark Child*, is a peaceful provincial environment that favors Yoyo's communion with the natural world. He learns to understand the “mysteries” of nature that, in the Emersonian terms, “never wears a mean appearance” (Cain 479). Nature in this sense exemplifies purity, honesty, and truthfulness, values that are transmitted to Yoyo before he goes to Koloko. His relationship with the ants: “I always had a great respect for the ant community...great workaholics!” (COK19) shows his attachment to community life and communal good. He is amazed at the way ants always find their way back home, and he makes it a duty to bring back home blackhead, the

wandering ant: “But as I gently picked up the blackhead with the stick and brought it near the dark hole, I knew a home was almost ready for this adventurer and his kind” (22). Providing a home to the ant is both a sign of generosity as well as a metaphor that forecasts Yoyo's later commitment to home at Koloko and to his ancestral roots despite his stay at Gamji College and his internship at the northern Trium Press. At Boko, Yoyo's father stands for authority, discipline and order: “And there stood daddy, whom all of us called Bap, a huge thundering demigod. My legs shrank at the prospect of confronting the violent rage that shook the face and hands of Bap (22). Yoyo is afraid of Bap whenever he misbehaves because Bap represents sanction and the son's bad conscience. Yet Bap can also be gentle and communicative: “Bap said with a fond and gentle pat on my head, 'C'mon son, it's time to pack your things. We are going home. We are going back to Koloko” (22). Bap thus combines strictness, gentleness and communication, indispensable elements to child education. Before his journey to Koloko, the father's home state, Yoyo has imbibed all the African values necessary to child education. At Boko, Yoyo's playmates Nunu, Ngoo and Tukur resemble the narrator's kind playmates in *The Dark Child*. They lack Buff's and Dickie's precocity and rascality. When he arrives Koloko, Yoyo is constantly with Buff and Dickie who initiate him into drunkenness and teach him some means he can use to know and adapt to his new environment. Yet the boy is more influenced by his grandfather (Old Bap) who becomes his role model. In Koloko's society fraught with immorality, Old

Bap is an icon of morality and dignity ('consequence'), while his wife (Old Mam) and her sister (Da Kata) who abuse and fight each other symbolize 'inconsequence.' When the two crones use all sorts of bad names during their quarrels, Old Bap only mutters: "This inconsequence is becoming too much" (52). Although he addresses the two querulous old women, Old Bap targets his society where fights are daily issues. As the chairman of the Peace Council, he has to settle innumerable conflicts:

He seemed to have too much work in his hands for every house in Koloko had a fight, a quarrel and perhaps a curse to settle. The circle revolved viciously seven days a week and even on God's day of rest. (53)

This turbulent setting is diametrically opposed to Tindican, Kourroussa and Uncle Mamadou's home where "all domestic quarreling was strictly forbidden." (150). As his community's peacemaker, Old Bap shows his commitment to the group. In other words, Old Bap has been chosen as Chairman of the Peace Council because, like Camara's father in *The Dark Child*, he is "the most worthy" (25). A former mission school teacher, Old Bap, Bap, his son, and later Yoyo, his grandson, blend African traditions and western education. It is this blend or 'middle course' that explains the hero's positive balance sheet at the end of his education:

I had begun to consider myself a man of my own world. After all my CV was quite impressive I had finished college, done a stint of press work, joined national defence

academy, deserted almost immediately and in the few months ahead, I hoped to find my bearing although I knew not what it would be at present. Did I add I was a father too? (167)

However, this positive balance sheet is somewhat tainted by the protagonist's short-lived jobs. This job instability poses the question of the quality and usefulness of western education dispensed in modern Nigeria and in many other postcolonial African countries since the 1990s. JJC castigates this education when he tells Buff, Dickie and Yoyo that “You knows it's a rotten system you operate here. Your education is in shambles y' know?” (65). This statement replicates Ce's argument in “Bards and Tyrants”:

The 1990s Nigeria witnessed the final crumbling of all that constituted its educational heritage... The social impact of degenerate education in Nigeria had taken its toll by the high incidence of unemployed graduates, the collapse of its economy and the erosion of cultural values. (ARI)

Due to its fallen standards and its unsuitability for the present job market in which cutthroat competition obtains, education for many African youths since the 1990s has given rise to bitter critique. In most African countries today, many youths and parents echo De Mica's brother's statement: “No job anywhere for school-leavers” (COK 66). Western education is thus open to critique not just because of the youths' awareness of rampant unemployment, but because of its problematic teaching strategies that have supplanted

traditional African pedagogy.

Conclusion

In Camara Laye's *The Dark Child* and Ce's *Children of Koloko*, the education of the child starts by the trainee's (the child hero) mastery of the natural environment and his/her African cultural values. Camara Laye's and Ce's protagonists may have been strengthened in nature (vegetation, rivers, animals etc.) through their ritualistic journeys and exposure to folklore and tradition. However, the moral and spiritual values ingrained in African culture are more and more eroded by monopoly capitalism in Ce's *Children of Koloko*. To curtail these deleterious effect of western school and monopoly capitalism on African culture, the African child is taught positive traditions at family and community levels, the "Village meeting" in *Children of Koloko* being a good example. The cognizance of these basic principles of African communal life ensures the child's future mastery and exploitation of modern science and technology skills. In a way, Laye and Ce are saying that Westernization and globalization may threaten African traditions, but genuine traditional values will prevail if they are made the cornerstone in the education of the African child.

Notes

¹“The African Child” was the first translation of the original title “L'enfant noir” of Camara Laye's novel. The edition used in this work is entitled “The Dark Child.”

²In “Memory, Transition and Dialogue: The Cyclic Order of Chin Ce's Oeuvres,” Amanda Grants notes that “the three ways: left, right and middle signify three choices involving two extremes and a middle course, an important element in Chin Ce's oeuvres (JALC 11).

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