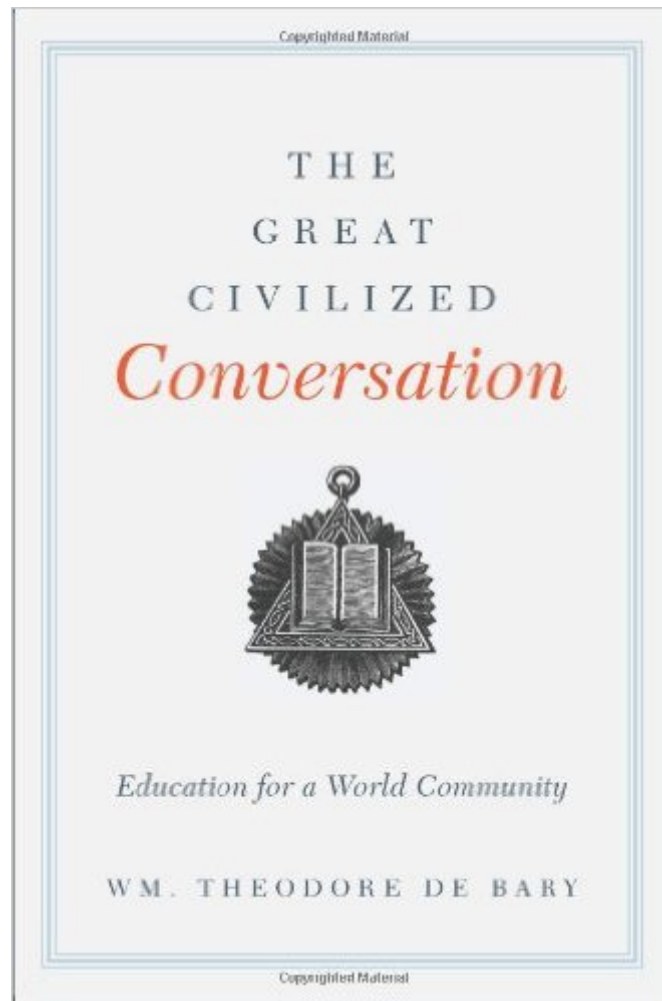


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The Great Civilized Conversation: Education For A World Community



Synopsis

Having spent decades teaching and researching the humanities, Wm. Theodore de Bary is well positioned to speak on its merits and reform. Believing a classical liberal education is more necessary than ever, he outlines in these essays a plan to update existing core curricula by incorporating classics from both Eastern and Western traditions, thereby bringing the philosophy and moral values of Asian civilizations to American students and vice versa. The author establishes a concrete link between teaching the classics of world civilizations and furthering global humanism. Selecting texts that share many of the same values and educational purposes, he joins Islamic, Indian, Chinese, Japanese, and Western sources into a revised curriculum that privileges humanity and civility. He also explores the tradition of education in China and its reflection of Confucian and Neo-Confucian beliefs. He reflects on history's great scholar-teachers and what their methods can teach us today, and he dedicates three essays to the power of *The Analects of Confucius*, *The Tale of Genji*, and *The Pillow Book of Sei Shonagon* in the classroom.

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Customer Reviews

"There are two ways of getting home; and one of them is to stay there. The other is to walk round the whole world till we come back to the same place." --G.K. Chesterton
This book contains three parts: a defense of the world's classics, discussions of aspects of Confucian education, and some scattered reflections on De Bary's century-long commitment to academia. De Bary's Neo-Confucian lifework, as summarized in the lectures and essays compiled here, seems to those of us who

succeed him in the 21st century to be a serendipitous ramble across the Pacific and back again in order to affirm the worthiness of the Western liberal tradition. What he's found is that the traditional Chinese academy had a lot in common with the pre-1960 American academy. There is a lot to chew on, and definitely a lot worth affirming in De Bary's discoveries. But he occupies a kind of middle space-- not entirely Western, and not entirely Eastern-- that makes his book more of a jumping off place for those who would fight for the liberal arts, or for Confucianism.

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